

The Frothing Sloth

It is (correctly) said that this fantasy inn was first owned by one Jon the Surly, a mercenary of fearsome visage and skill who terrorised whatever battlefield he was on until a magical curse forced him into retirement. It is also said that the curse was one of shapeshifting, which is *also* correct. Every night, on the night of the full moon, Jon the Surly turned into an equally surly [giant sloth](#).

This was even *less* than a problem for others than it at first seemed. Like most involuntary shapeshifters, Jon lost all of his ability to reason, while gaining supernatural powers of regeneration and an infectious bite; whether his temper was actually fouler as a were-sloth was never successfully resolved. It simply didn't matter, because as a were-sloth Jon the Surly was **sloooooow**. He was also largely a herbivore in his were-sloth form, which meant that the usual food cravings that trigger blood-lust in lycanthropes and suchlike merely caused Jon to attack the nearest shrub. Again, very **sloooooowly**.

This new condition made Jon a bit of a liability on the mercenary front; but as an advertising 'hook' for an inn it wasn't half bad. The Frothing Sloth quickly got a name for

itself as being the sort of place where anybody who could come in, drop a bag of money on the ground, and **not** eat the staff would be given a room and a drink. It wasn't a reliable sanctuary for anything being *actively* hunted, and you ate and drank what the help damned well served you, but it's the only place around where a magically-cursed frog or something can hope to get a beer. Or, indeed, a sympathetic ear from the rest of the clientele. Which, if you're trying to get cured, is admittedly a start.

The Frothing Sloth is currently run by a half-gorgon named Straight-Eyed Meg (her mother was a gorgon called Cross-Eyed Meg, which in a roundabout way explains how she managed to have half-human children) who took over the tavern when her parents grew too old to run it. She doesn't turn people to stone with a look; she just glares at them until they suddenly decide to lie down and take a nap. This is a **very** useful trait for an innkeeper to have, and most of the regulars enjoy watching would-be robbers and bravos discover it.

But these days the inn is usually quiet enough (the clientele tends to be both weird and magically-touched, which makes interlopers thoughtful). In fact, Meg's never had to take down and brandish her great-grandfather's steel murder-claw sheaths (usually found hanging over the

bar; some people aren't sure that they even **can** be taken down by now. It will be a memorable day, if or when that ever happens.

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