



TROLL OUTPOST

A Web Enhancement for
Monster Manual III

A SHORT ADVENTURE FOR FOUR
8TH-LEVEL PLAYER CHARACTERS

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and on the new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.



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The newly released *Monster Manual III* offers a host of new foes to bedevil player characters. Some of these, such as the new trolls, are variants on old standbys; others are entirely new. This short scenario takes a sampling of these deliciously nasty creatures and puts them through their paces.

Troll Outpost is a short D&D adventure for four 8th-level player characters (PCs). It takes place in and around a cavern complex hidden in a forested hillside. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.



PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks—the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*—as well as *Monster Manual III* to run this adventure. This scenario utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules.

To get started, print out the adventure, including the map. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs (particularly their motivations). Then review the information on the trolls and mindshredder in *Monster Manual III*. Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the proper page in the *Monster Manual* or *Monster Manual III* is referenced.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND


The war troll Hurdrac has decided to retire from the mercenary life and set himself up as a petty lord. Once established, he plans to build himself a small nation of trolls.

To that end, Hurdrac has assembled a small contingent of troll followers through bribery (with the money he has amassed over the years) and intimidation (via his fiery greatsword, which can strike fear into the hearts of most ordinary trolls.) He has recently located a modest cavern complex hidden in a forested hillside that he deems suitable as a base of operations and moved into it with his band. From there, he plans to terrorize and conquer the whole forest as the first step in his quest for personal glory.

Unbeknownst to Hurdrac, however, a colony of mindshredders lives in the neighborhood, and a mindshredder scout has already infiltrated his outpost. For the moment, the scout is content to observe the trolls and enjoy the occasional snack when it catches one asleep. Its favorite treats are the cave trolls that guard the outpost's main entrance, since they aren't too perceptive at the best of times, and they're in the habit of getting good and drunk when they're not on duty. So far, the trolls haven't noticed the mindshredder's Wisdom-damaging attacks.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters must penetrate Hurdrac's outpost and clean out the trolls as well as the mindshredder that secretly watches the place from below. Once the



complex has been cleared of monsters, the surrounding area is safe until the next tenant takes up residence in the cavern complex.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

As DM, you know best how to involve your PCs in an adventure. You can use the following hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to fit your campaign or the characters.

- While traveling through a thickly forested area, the PCs stumble upon a weird caravan in which several wretched humanoid slaves are serving as beasts of burden. The caravan masters might be drow, duergar, or some even more sinister creatures, such as mind flayers. The caravan's contents, however, seem quite mundane for such an unusual expedition: low-quality wine, some salt, and a considerable quantity of low-grade iron ore. The slaves know only that they're bound for a hidden fortress somewhere in the forest. The overseers claim to be honest businesspeople who are delivering a perfectly legitimate shipment to a private customer. If the PCs press the issue, they learn that the customer is an upstart petty lord with plans for conquest. A little kindness toward the slaves (or intimidation aimed at the overseers) reveals the approximate location of the planned delivery. (In fact, the caravan is bound for Hurdrac's outpost. The war troll has forged a tentative alliance with the overseers, who have agreed to sell him supplies.)
- Various forest dwellers have been complaining about increased activity from trolls in the area. The trolls (who are actually Hurdrac's forest trolls) have in fact been competing with the local populace for game, and they seem to be brutally efficient hunters. However, they have not limited themselves to hunting game, and the leaders of several forest communities want the trolls driven out before they kill any more people. Thus, the community elders have put out a call for help with the problem.
- The PCs come upon a wrecked homestead deep in the forest. The house and barn have literally been torn to bits. Oddly enough, the wreckage appears to have caught fire at some point, but someone evidently doused the flames very quickly with water from the well. If the PCs comb the area, they might find a survivor or two hiding in the woods, or perhaps a sylvan creature that witnessed the attack. Because the attackers came in the dark of night, it was difficult to see them clearly, but they were bigger than humans

and very strong. They quickly killed the settlers, then pried apart the building plank by plank. When the embers from the kitchen fire started a blaze, the attackers immediately put it out. The brief firelight, however, revealed that most of the attackers had tall, thin silhouettes, muscular bodies, and long arms ending in big, clawed hands. Two of them had a similar build but were closer to human size. (The attackers were Hurdrac's normal troll minions, plus a pair of forest trolls serving as guides.)

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Troll Outpost is a site-based scenario in which the action occurs in and around the hidden cavern complex that houses Hurdrac and his followers. The adventure begins when the characters find an entrance to the outpost (see Entry Points, below).

HURDRAC'S OUTPOST

The outpost occupies a cave complex beneath a rocky slope in a rugged and heavily forested area. The surrounding land could be low mountains or hills, possibly with a valley to one side.

INTERIOR FEATURES


Noteworthy features and conditions within the outpost are described below.

Ceilings: On the main level, the ceilings in the corridors are about 15 feet high, and those in the chambers are about 30 feet high. Below the main level, the ceilings in both the corridors and the single chamber are only about 7 feet high.

Floors: The floors throughout the complex are uneven but fairly smooth as natural stone floors go, thanks to the many creatures that have inhabited these caves over the years. Running or charging within the complex requires a DC 10 Balance check. Characters who fail the check can still move but cannot run or charge during their turns.

Light: Most of the complex is unlit and remains dark even during the day. A few areas have some illumination, which is noted in the appropriate area descriptions.

Natural Staircases: Several passages inside the complex have fairly steep slopes with ridged floors that form stony terraces. Characters can walk up or down these natural staircases without making Climb checks, but doing so hampers movement. Each square that a character moves



on the terraces costs 10 feet of movement. Characters cannot run or charge on these natural staircases.

Sinkholes: Several areas within the complex feature natural sinkholes. Each has a vertical shaft that drops more or less straight down to the subterranean level below. The vertical distance to the lower level varies and is noted in the descriptive text for the chamber where the sinkhole is located.

Originally, the sinkholes and the vertical shafts below them were made of the same smooth stone as the walls inside the complex (see below). Recently, however, the mindshredder living in area 12 has been lining them with chrysalis material (see page 102 in *Monster Manual III*) to a thickness of 1 foot. This substance looks and feels like very smooth, wet rock and has a pale rose color. Though it appears slippery, it has been cleverly shaped to provide good handholds and footholds (at least for a mindshredder). The Climb DC for a sinkhole is 20, and a mindshredder gets a +5 circumstance bonus on the check. A DC 15 Spot or Search check reveals that the sinkhole has a resinous lining, and a DC 20 Spot or Search check reveals the handholds and footholds. A DC 30 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or bardic knowledge check reveals that the lining is mindshredder chrysalis material.

Each of the shafts was originally about 5 feet wide, but the lining has narrowed the diameter to less than 3 feet. A Small or Medium creature must squeeze to move up or down the shaft (see page 29 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The trolls in the outpost know about the sinkholes but cannot fit down them. They simply assume that the shafts get narrower and narrower the farther down they go until they end in solid rock.

◆ **Mindshredder Chrysalis Lining:** 12 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 180; Break DC 31.

Walls: The walls inside the complex are made of fairly smooth, natural stone with a brownish yellow color. They are slightly damp and slippery, and their Climb DC is 25.

ENTRY POINTS

The outpost has two entrances—one more or less at ground level that provides access to area 1, and another about 200 feet up the slope that leads to area 11.

Lower Entrance

The lower entrance is the easier of the two to find. Anyone searching the base of the hill comes upon a trail that winds through the woods and eventually leads directly to area 1. The dirt of this trail is packed hard

enough that it shows few footprints, but an occasional print can be found in a soft spot. A DC 20 Survival or Search check in such a location reveals a print made by a biped, most likely of Large size, with clawed feet. The prints aren't clear enough to reveal any other information. Even if the PCs don't find any tracks, however, they can still follow the trail right into area 1.

Upper Entrance

If the PCs climb the slope above area 1 and work their way back toward the top of the ridge, they can find a cave with a square hole in the floor. This hole is the top of a vertical shaft that leads about 200 feet straight down to area 11 (Climb DC 10). The trolls don't bother to maintain this exit because they hardly ever use it, so thick brambles almost completely obscure the cave entrance. Even a PC who looks at the hole must still make a DC 25 Search or Survival check to recognize it as an opening. Once the characters locate the cave, they must tear through the brambles to get inside.

◆ **Bramble Curtain:** 18 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 150; break DC 29.

Creatures: While the PCs are poking about near the upper entrance, four forest trolls take the opportunity to attack them.

◆ **Forest Troll Guards (4):** Male or female forest troll; CR 4; Medium giant; HD 5d8+25; hp 47; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 plus poison, claw) or +7 ranged (1d8+3 plus poison/×3, composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 plus poison, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4+1, bite) or +7 ranged (1d8+3 plus poison/×3, composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrow); SA poison; SQ darkvision 90 ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +6, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +5; Improved Initiative, Track.

Poison (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 179.


Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 10 masterwork arrows.

INSIDE THE OUTPOST

The following areas are keyed to the outpost map.

1. CAVE OPENING

The main entrance lies in a rocky niche at the base of the hill. This area is outdoors and is lit whenever the sun or a fairly bright moon is shining.



In a small hollow in a hillside lies a pleasant grotto filled with moss, ferns, and saplings. Behind it, the hill rises steeply, its slopes covered with massive trees. Two openings are visible in the grotto's depths. Through the opening straight ahead is a natural staircase of smooth, slightly wet stone that seems to lead upward into the hillside. Beyond the opening off to the right, a fairly level corridor with a sandy floor also leads into the hillside.

A DC 10 Search check or Survival check made to track reveals many footprints going to and from both openings. A character with the Track feat can make a DC 20 Survival check to determine that the tracks going to the right are both fewer in number and slightly older than the ones going straight ahead.

1a. Pit Chamber (EL 7)

Shadowy illumination (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*) reaches this chamber from area 1 whenever the sun or a fairly bright moon is shining.

Traps: Hurdrac has placed a pit trap in this dead-end chamber to catch invaders who take the wrong path.

➤ **Well-Camouflaged Pit Trap:** CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 70 ft. deep (7d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 18. Market Price: 24,500 gp.

Development: The sentry at area 1b can hear any noisy activity here (such as characters falling into the pit).

1b. Guardpost (EL 8)

Shadowy illumination (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*) reaches this chamber from area 1 whenever the sun or a fairly bright moon is shining.

The natural staircase ends in an irregular chamber that has a crystalline pool in the center of the floor. The pool appears to be fed by water seeping down the walls opposite the stairs. Two exits are visible—a corridor straight ahead on the other side of the pool and a natural staircase to the left.

Fresh, cold water fills the pool to a depth of about 4 feet. This pool once held a few fish, but the trolls have scooped all of them out. A few crude, wooden buckets lie here and there on the floor. The trolls use these to carry water into their chambers when they need it.

A long-forgotten tenant fitted this chamber with a secret door. It is watertight, and the water flowing down the back wall flows across it as well.

☞ **Stone Secret Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; Search DC 25; Break DC 28.

Creature: A cave troll is always on guard here.

☛ **Cave Troll:** hp 112; see *Monster Manual III*, page 177.

Tactics: The cave troll lurks in the alcove at the west end of the chamber. It tends to doze, so unless the PCs make a lot of noise or dally in area 1 (discussing plans, casting spells, or otherwise making their presence known), it doesn't notice them until they reach the top of the stairs. When it does notice intruders, it moves to the staircase to block the chamber entrance with its body if possible, then it simply fights to the death. If set afire, it plunges into the pool to put itself out.

If the cave troll manages to catch the PCs while they're still on the stairs, it gains a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls because it is on higher ground.

Development: Thanks to the secret door, noise from this chamber isn't audible in the rest of the outpost. If the smith is in area 3, however, he can hear fighting in here. When he does, he picks up two heated pots from his forge and hurries to join the fight, using the tactics noted in area 3.

If the PCs manage to capture either the smith or the cave troll guard, they can try to question their captive. The cave troll is almost too stupid to answer questions, and the smith is very stubborn, so each gets a +4 bonus on Sense Motive checks made to oppose Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks.

If the PCs get the cave troll to talk, all they can learn is that many trolls live on the other side of the "magic wall" (his term for the secret door), including the boss (Hurdrac), who is a great and terrible troll indeed. The cave troll can also tell the party that his mate is asleep in area 2, and he can't figure out why she didn't wake up and join the fight. The cave troll doesn't know how to open the secret door and is convinced that anyone who attempts to do so without the boss's leave will surely die.

The smith knows more but plays dumb. He tells the party that a dozen trolls just like the guard live in the complex (a lie), in addition to their even more formidable boss (the truth) and a few useless apprentice smiths that look just like him (true as far as the smith is concerned). If pressed, the smith admits that most of the trolls in the outpost are just regular trolls. He has never made an exact count, but he knows they number about a dozen. He also knows there is a second cave troll in area 2, and he assumes that she didn't join the fight because she's dead drunk—after all, both cave trolls both frequently drunk.

2. SLEEPING CAVE (EL 8)

The two cave troll guards share this chamber, but one of them is always on duty in area 1b.

On a pile of damp twigs and ferns sleeps a large, chunky, rubbery-looking humanoid with thick, ropy hair. A low table, two flat rocks, and several barrels complete the crude furnishings of the cave.

The flat rocks serve as chairs for the cave trolls. One of the barrels holds smoked meat from area 10, another is filled with water from area 1b, and the third with sour wine, also from area 10. The chamber also has a sinkhole that leads down 20 feet to the subterranean passage below.

Creatures: A female cave troll is asleep in here. Normally, a disturbance in area 1b or area 3 would cause her to wake up and go to join the fray. Today, however, the mindshredder from area 12 was feeling hungry, so it crept out of the sinkhole and attacked the sleeping troll with its tentacles, dealing 6 points of Wisdom damage. That damage plus the wine she consumed when she went off duty has left her dead to the world.

Cave Troll: hp 112, see *Monster Manual III*, page 177. Because this cave troll has taken 6 points of Wisdom damage, her current Wisdom score is 7, which produces the following changes in her statistics: Will +3; Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent).

Tactics: The PCs can attempt a coup de grace on the sleeping cave troll. If she survives that attack (or any attack that deals normal or nonlethal damage), she lumbers to her feet and then fights to the death.

Ad Hoc XP Award: Dealing with the sleeping troll should prove easy, so give only half the usual experience award for defeating it.

3. SMITHY (EL 8)

The trolls have just begun making their own weapons and armor in this chamber. The ruddy glow from the forge always fills the room with shadowy illumination.

This chamber stinks of coal smoke, and a banked fire glows in a crude forge. Several clay pots and glowing metal ingots lie in the hot coals. Along one wall stands a high, flat stone and a workbench made from logs.

The trolls placed iron ore in five clay pots and put them in the fire to heat as a prelude to making a small amount of steel. The metal hasn't yet melted, but some of the

impurities have, so some molten slag is now mixed in with pieces of iron ore. The ingots are bits of finished steel that are ready for forging. The flat rock serves as an anvil, and the homemade bench holds an assortment of tongs and hammers for metalworking. A leather bag under the bench contains about three dozen steel arrowheads, all newly made and razor sharp.

The clay pots are searing hot. Touching a pot deals 1 point of fire damage, picking up a pot deals 1d4 points of fire damage, and carrying a pot deals 1d4 points of fire damage per round. If someone manages to toss a pot, it functions as a splash weapon. A direct hit deals 2d4 points of fire damage immediately and 1d4 points of additional fire damage each round for 1d4 rounds, or until the hot slag is quenched. (A plunge into the pool in area 1b would do the trick.) A splash from a pot deals 1d4 points of fire damage, and the creature splashed must make a DC 15 Reflex save or take an extra point of fire damage each round for 1d4 rounds or until the hot slag is quenched.

The sinkhole in this chamber leads down 30 feet to the subterranean passage below.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive at the outpost, the smith has a 50% chance to be here and a 50% chance to be in his quarters at area 9.

Crystalline Troll Smith: Male crystalline troll expert 2; CR 8; Large giant; HD 10d8+70 plus 2d6+14; hp 136; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+6, claw) or +9 ranged touch (2d6 fire, pot of molten slag); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d6+3, bite) or +9 ranged touch (2d6 fire, pot of molten slag); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rend 2d6+9; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent, vulnerability to sonic; AL CN; SV Fort +14, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 25, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (metalworking) +7, Craft (trap-making) +4, Hide -2, Listen +7, Spot +8; Alertness, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Craft [metalworking]), Track.

Rend (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 178.

Regeneration (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 178.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, ring of minor energy resistance (fire).

Tactics: The smith immediately attacks any intruders by grabbing a pot from the forge and hurling it at the closest foe. He keeps throwing pots until he runs out of them or until someone comes within melee reach, whereupon he switches to melee attacks. Like most trolls, he doesn't fear death, but he realizes the value of



Troll Lair Outpost

Legend:


- Covered Pit
- Natural Chimney
- Subterranean Passage
- Natural Stairs
- Pillar
- Pool
- Secret Door
- Sinkhole

Map Features:

- Room 1: Top center, contains a covered pit (1a) and a pool (1b).
- Room 2: Middle center, contains a secret door.
- Room 3: Middle right, contains a sinkhole.
- Room 4: Middle left, contains a natural chimney.
- Room 5: Middle right, contains a pillar.
- Room 6: Middle right, contains a pillar.
- Room 7: Bottom right, contains a pillar.
- Room 8: Bottom center, contains a sinkhole.
- Room 9: Bottom center, contains a natural chimney.
- Room 10: Bottom left, contains a natural chimney.
- Room 11: Bottom left, contains a natural chimney.
- Room 12: Bottom right, contains a sinkhole.

Compass rose: N (North), S (South), E (East), W (West).

One square = 5 feet



living to fight another day. If reduced to 60 or fewer hit points, he tries to withdraw from the battle, overrunning a character in the process if necessary. If he manages to break away, he tries to flee through the secret door in area 1b and move to area 5 to warn the guards there.

Development: The smith goes to assist the guard in area 1b if he hears a fight there. If the PCs get into the smithy without dealing with the guard in area 1b, the latter joins any combat that happens in here.

4. SHOOTING GALLERY

This natural staircase serves to slow down intruders. It is 110 feet long and rises a total of 70 feet to area 5.

A natural staircase leads upward from west to east. Tangled ropes and threads hang from the ceiling like strands of tattered cobwebs. They aren't thick enough to block vision, but they would probably impede movement.

The threads and ropes hang from the ceiling all the way down to the stairs and cover the entire staircase. They serve to alert the guards in area 5 to the presence of invisible creatures on the stairs. Pulling down all the threads and ropes would take days, but an area spell such as a *lighting bolt* cleans out a section of them immediately. It's possible to move up the stairs without disturbing the mass, but doing so requires a DC 20 Escape Artist check for each round of movement. Smaller creatures have an easier time with the task, however. Apply the following modifiers for size to the Escape Artist check: Fine +16, Diminutive +12, Tiny +8, Small +4, Large -4, Huge -8, Gargantuan -12, Colossal -16.

Development: The guards at area 5 can see 90 feet down the stairs thanks to their darkvision. They keep a steady watch on the staircase and fire their bows at any intruders they see approaching. Thanks to the threads and ropes, they can pinpoint the location of any invisible intruder traversing the stairs unless she successfully avoids the threads or clears them out first.

5. STAIRCASE GUARDPOST (EL 8)

The trolls have constructed two 4-foot-high walls west of this chamber, one at the top of the stairs and one 10 feet west of that (farther down the staircase). The walls are temporary and as such are not shown on the map. A Medium or Large creature can cross one without a Climb or Jump check by spending 10 feet of movement in addition to the extra movement cost for traversing the stairs. Smaller creatures must jump or climb

(Climb DC 15) the walls, and larger creatures can just step over them.

Creatures: A quartet of forest trolls is always on guard here.

Forest Troll Guards (4): Male or female forest troll; CR 4; Medium giant; HD 5d8+25; hp 47; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 plus poison, claw) or +7 ranged (1d8+3 plus poison/×3, composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 plus poison, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4+1, bite) or +7 ranged (1d8+3 plus poison/×3, composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrow); SA poison; SQ darkvision 90 ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +6, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +5; Improved Initiative, Track.

Poison (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 179.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 10 masterwork arrows.

Tactics: Two forest trolls hunker down behind the lower makeshift wall on the stairs and keep watch over the staircase. The remaining trolls stand at the south entrance to the chamber and watch for intruders.

When the forest trolls notice the PCs, they fire their bows and call for help. If the foes are coming up the stairs, the trolls at the south entrance to area 5 move to the top of the stairs and begin firing their bows from there, since they can shoot over their comrades' heads without any penalties. The trolls have cover (+4 bonus to Armor Class) against attacks that cross a wall. Once their foes come within melee reach, the two forest trolls behind the lower wall try to hold them off while the others hang back and shoot into the melee as best as they can. When a front-line troll is reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, it drops back to the second rank and a fresh troll steps up to replace it in the front line. In this way, the forest trolls hope to make full use of their regeneration ability. They fight to the death.

Development: The forest trolls can usually spot foes coming through area 4 (see that area's Development section). Calls for help or sounds of a fight from area 5 alert the trolls in area 6, but they require 1 round to wake up and grab their weapons before they can go and join the fray. Noise here also alerts Hurdrac in area 7. Once he becomes aware of an attack, Hurdrac gathers the trolls from areas 9 and 11 to mount a defense, as noted in the Development section for area 7.

6. FOREST TROLL BARRACKS (EL 8)

Hurdrac's forest troll followers sleep in this chamber. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs look into this chamber, adjusting as needed if any of the inhabitants are present.

Twelve log-and-plank beds topped by mattresses stuffed with leaves and ferns occupy the rear section of the room. In front of them stands a crude table littered with dirty dishes and food scraps. Two log benches flank the table to provide seating. Barrels line the east wall, and a rack holding weapons and armor stands against the west wall.

The barrels contain the same kinds of provisions as those in area 2.

Creatures: A dozen forest trolls live here, but only four are present at any one time. Of the remaining eight, four stand guard in area 5 and four are outside hunting for provisions.

Forest Troll Guards (4): Male or female forest troll; CR 4; Medium giant; HD 5d8+25; hp 47; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 plus poison, claw) or +7 ranged (1d8+3 plus poison/×3, composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 plus poison, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4+1, bite) or +7 ranged (1d8+3 plus poison/×3, composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrow); SA poison; SQ darkvision 90 ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 6. *Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +6, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +5; Improved Initiative, Track.

Poison (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 179.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 10 masterwork arrows.

Tactics: The trolls in here spend most of their time sleeping, but they wake up if fighting occurs in area 5, taking 1 round to get out of bed and arm themselves before heading out to join the fray. In a fight, they use the same tactics as their comrades in area 5 do.

Treasure: The dirty dishes on the table include 5 tarnished silver platters worth 50 gp each, and hidden among the twelve mattresses are eight deep blue spinels (250 gp each). The barrel filled with meat has 275 pp hidden in the bottom. To find the silver platters among the dirty dishes, a character must appraise them (DC 12 Appraise check). Finding the gems in mattresses requires a DC 20 Search check, and finding

the platinum pieces in the barrel requires a DC 10 Search check.

7. BEDCHAMBER (EL 12)

This room is Hurdrac's private chamber. Read or paraphrase the following aloud, adjusting as needed if Hurdrac is present.

A massive, canopied bed dominates this chamber. At its foot stands a huge chest with metal fittings. On one side of the room is a small banquet table, and on the other side is a well-padded divan. The bedclothes and the divan's upholstery appear soiled, and the whole room smells of rotting food and waste.

Hurdrac obtained the bed as part of his loot while serving in a mercenary campaign. The chest is made of teakwood, and its fittings are mithral.

Creatures: Hurdrac spends most of his time here exercising and planning tasks for his minions.

Hurdrac: Male war troll; CR 12; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 12d8+108; hp 162; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +12; Grp +26; Atk +21 melee (1d8+10, claw) and +19 melee (1d6+5, bite) or +24 melee (2d8+17 plus 1d6 fire/19–20/plus 1d10 fire, +2 *flaming burst greatsword*) or +15 ranged (2d6+10/×3, masterwork composite longbow [+10 Str bonus]); Full Atk +21 melee (1d8+10, 2 claws) and +19 melee (1d6+5, bite) or +24/+19/+14 melee (2d8+17 plus 1d6 fire/19–20/plus 1d10 fire, +2 *flaming burst greatsword*) and +19 melee (1d6+5, bite) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d6+10/×3, masterwork composite longbow [+10 Str bonus]); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA dazing blow; SQ damage reduction 5/adamantine, darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 9, scent, spell resistance 20; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +12; Str 31, Dex 16, Con 29, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 10.


Skills and Feats: Hide –4, Listen +11, Spot +12; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Rend (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 181.

Regeneration (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 181.

Possessions: +1 *breastplate*, +2 *flaming burst greatsword*, masterwork composite longbow (+10 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, key to the teakwood and mithral chest.

Tactics: Hurdrac keeps his eyes and ears peeled for any signs of invasion from outside the complex or dissent among his underlings. He automatically notices any disturbance in area 5, 9, or 11 and draws troops from nearby chambers in preparation to meet the attack. For example, if he notes fighting in area 5, he gathers the



crystalline trolls from area 9 and the regular trolls from area 11. Likewise, if he hears trouble in area 11, he takes the crystalline trolls from area 9 and the forest trolls from areas 5 and 6.

Hurdrac prefers to waylay invaders in area 8. He places half his troop there and the other half here in area 7. When the trolls in area 8 enter melee, Hurdrac leads the rest of his troops there in a flanking maneuver. Both groups use tactics similar to those of the forest trolls in area 5—they keep a front line supplied with fresh troops, while the trolls in the second line hang back to let their regeneration work.

If the PCs manage to catch Hurdrac unawares, he picks out the most formidable-looking fighter type and engages that character in melee while bellowing for help. If any of the trolls in areas 5, 9, and 11 are still alive, they begin moving to this area 1 round after hearing Hurdrac's cries.

Treasure: The table in this room is worth 1,000 gp, and the teakwood chest is worth 5,000 gp. In addition, the chest contains 510 pp, 1,600 gp, and 8 rubies (500 gp each).

◆ **Teakwood Chest:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 100; Break DC 32, Open Lock DC 30.

8. ANTECHAMBER

This chamber is bare. The sinkhole in the floor leads down 90 feet to the subterranean passage below.

9. SMITH'S ROOM (EL 10 OR 11)

This chamber is similar to area 6. It is furnished with four beds, a table, and three barrels of provisions with the same contents as those in area 2.

Creatures: The smith and his three assistants, all crystalline trolls, live in this chamber and are here most of the time. When the PCs enter the outpost, however, the smith has a 50% chance to be here and a 50% chance to be in area 3.

◆ **Crystalline Trolls (3):** hp 105 each; see *Monster Manual III*, page 178.

◆ **Crystalline Troll Smith:** Male crystalline troll expert 2; CR 8; Large giant; HD 10d8+70 plus 2d6+14; hp 136; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+6, claw) or +9 ranged touch (2d6 fire, pot of molten slag); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d6+3, bite) or +9 ranged touch (2d6 fire, pot of molten slag); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rend 2d6+9; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent, vulnerability to sonic; AL CN; SV Fort +14, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 25, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (metalworking) +7, Craft (trap-making) +4, Hide -2, Listen +7, Spot +8; Alertness, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Craft [metalworking]), Track.

Rend (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 178.

Regeneration (Ex): See *Monster Manual III*, page 178.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, ring of minor energy resistance (fire).

Tactics: If the three apprentices face the PCs alone, they simply try to gang up on one character at a time and claw their way through the party, fighting to the death. If either the smith or Hurdrac is on hand to direct them, they try to encircle their foes. When heavily damaged, they attempt to retire for a few rounds to regenerate before rejoining the fray.

Development: The trolls here go to join any fighting that occurs in area 7 or 11.

10. LARDER

The trolls keep their supplies in this chamber. Dressed carcasses of various creatures hang from the ceiling, and seven barrels of sour wine are stacked against the wall.

The sinkhole in this chamber leads down 90 feet to the subterranean passage below.

11. TROLL BARRACKS (EL 9)

This chamber is similar to areas 6 and 9 and contains four beds, a table, and several barrels of provisions. The natural chimney begins 30 above the floor and connects with a vertical shaft that rises to the outpost's rear entrance (see Entry Points, above). The trolls use a ladder to reach the chimney, but they usually leave it lying on the floor.

Creatures: The four normal trolls that live here are charged with keeping an eye on the back door.

◆ **Trolls (4):** hp 63 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 247.

Tactics: These trolls use the same tactics as the crystalline trolls in area 9 do.

Development: The trolls here join any fights that break out in area 7 or 9. Likewise, the trolls in those chambers come to join any fighting here, as noted in the Development sections for those areas.

12. LOWER CHAMBER (EL 8)

The walls of this dank chamber are lined with smooth mindshredder chrysalis material. The room's sinkhole is blocked about 15 feet down by a plug of chrysalis material.

◆ **Mindshredder Chrysalis Lining:** 3 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 45; Break DC 27; Climb DC 30.



◆ **Mindshredder Chrysalis Plug:** 24 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 360; Break DC 33.

♣ **Creatures:** A single mindshredder zenthal dwells here. The creature is a scout for its colony, which is located underground, several miles away.

♣ **Mindshredder Zenthal:** hp 84, see *Monster Manual III*, page 104.

♣ **Tactics:** The mindshredder tries to remain aware of events that occur on the level above, so it listens carefully for any fighting up there. If it suspects invaders are present, it keeps track of their progress as best it can by moving from sinkhole to sinkhole and listening carefully. Even if it is unaware of the PCs' presence in the outpost, the mindshredder tends to sit and use its thought sense ability whenever it is not otherwise occupied. The ability has a range of 60 feet and some ability to penetrate barriers, but the twisting passages around its chamber effectively limit the power's range to the nearest turns in the corridors leading in here.

When the mindshredder notes an approaching creature, it scuttles off into a corridor and tries to work its way around behind the intruder. As soon as it is in position, it uses its hypnotism and confusion abilities against the nearest foe. Once battle is joined, it tries to keep its distance while maintaining the attack with its spell-like abilities. If forced into melee combat, it uses its tentacles but tries to move out of reach as quickly as it can.

♣ **Development:** The trolls are aware of the sinkholes, but they don't usually don't pay much attention to them because they have noted no creatures coming up from below thus far. Thus, they don't notice any activity down here unless the PCs use some flashy spells. In that case, Hurdrac orders the trolls from area 11 and area 6 down a sinkhole to investigate. If Hurdrac is dead, the surviving trolls are content to keep watch over the sinkholes and attack any creatures that might come up to their level.

If the PC break through the plug at the bottom of the sinkhole, they find another cave complex below this one. See Further Adventures, below, for some possible scenarios using this area.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs slay Hurdrac, they've effectively put an end to his outpost and his dreams of conquest. Any surviving normal trolls, forest trolls, and crystalline troll apprentices pack up their remaining treasures and gear and go find another lair somewhere in the forest. The crystalline troll smith is reluctant to abandon his forge, but he does so after his apprentices leave. Any surviving cave trolls, however, stay right where they are.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

As noted at the beginning of the adventure, the cavern complex in which Hurdrac built his outpost has had many tenants over the years, so it probably won't stay empty for long after the PCs drive out the trolls. If the crystalline troll smith survives the adventure, he eventually returns to his forge. He might set himself up as the new lord of the outpost, or he might strike a deal with whoever or whatever has taken up residence in these caverns in the meantime. The complex would make a decent lair for a fairly young green dragon or a family of lycanthropes, though it could also serve as an outpost for drow or duergar raiders—possibly the same group of duergar that sponsored the caravan mentioned in the Character Hooks section. Mindshredders also might move in after the trolls are gone.

If the PCs find their way into the caverns below the outpost (see area 12), they might simply find a few tunnels that lead to the surface a mile or two from the outpost, or they might find themselves inside an active cave complex—perhaps even a mindshredder colony or outpost. In any case, it's a good bet that a few more mindshredders are prowling around that area.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies, and he has just completed an eighteen-year run as *Dragon Magazine's* Sage. Skip was a codesigner of the D&D 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (his borscht gets rave reviews).