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THE  
SLAYER'S  
GUIDE  
TO

# TROLLS

Johnathan Richards

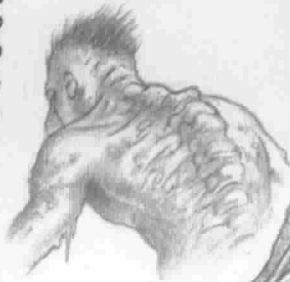
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EYES SUNKIN  
DEEP INTO  
CRANIUM

ENLARGED  
SPINE



NATURALLY  
CROUCHED  
POSTURE



WIDE  
POWERFUL  
HANDS



ELONGATED  
FEET

# The Slayer's Guide To Trolls

Johnathan M. Richards

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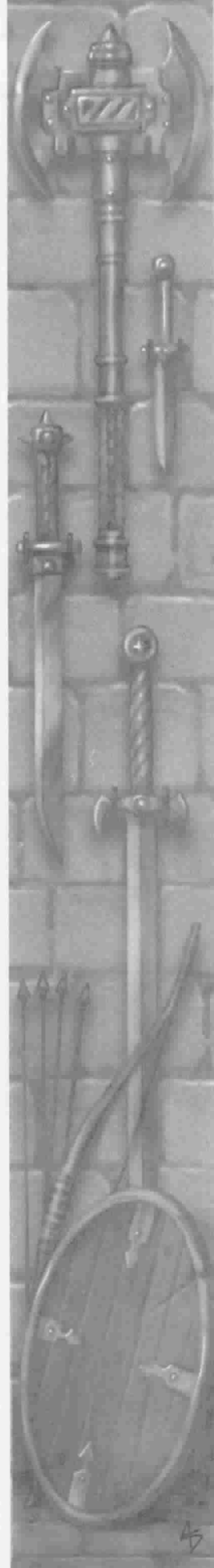
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# INTRODUCTION

**T**rolls are a staple of fantasy adventure, often used when the player characters have advanced to the point where goblins, orcs, and even bugbears pose little threat to the party. Trolls are poised right at the boundary between goblinoids and giants. While technically classified as giants, they are unquestionably the smallest of such creatures yet, standing some nine feet tall, they easily tower over even the greatest of bugbears. Furthermore, the troll's distinctive regenerative abilities make them memorable foes and a much greater challenge than a mere 9-foot goblin.

Trolls are often first encountered singly, as powerful, brutish strong-arms for a group of the lesser goblinoids. Games Masters often throw a troll into the mix to toughen up an encounter with a band of orcs or hobgoblins, with little thought as to the reasons for such a relationship between the species. However, as will become evident as we explore troll culture, such mixed-race encounters are not only plausible but even quite commonplace.

The knowledge that follows has been compiled over the ages by those adventurers and scholars lucky enough to have encountered trolls and live to tell the tale. Games Masters will learn many behind-the-scenes details about troll culture enabling them to make memorable encounters with this race for their

players, while the players themselves may learn a fact or two that could possibly save the lives of their characters.

## THE SLAYER'S GUIDES

This series of supplements, designed for use in all fantasy-based d20 game systems, takes an exhaustive look at specific monster races, thoroughly detailing their beliefs, society, and method of warfare. Typically, these will be races all but ignored by Games Masters and players alike who view them as little better than cannon fodder.

## TROLLS — RAVENOUS PREDATORS

Each Slayer's Guide features a single race, in this case the troll. You will find detailed information on trollish physiology, habitat, and society, giving you a fundamental level of understanding on how this race exists and interacts with the rest of the world. Players can learn the types of combat tactics trolls are likely to employ against their characters and Games Masters are given guidelines on how to introduce trolls into their existing campaigns, and will also benefit from material demonstrating how to portray these creatures to the players. A few troll subspecies can change the expectations of any encounter, as do the new trollish feats that alter the standard troll into something even more horrific.

Finally, a complete troll lair is featured to be used as either an extended encounter, the basis for a complete set of scenarios, or even just as an example of how such troll lairs are generally laid out.

There are more to trolls than first meets the eye. After reading the *Slayer's Guide to Trolls*, you may never view these monsters in quite the same way again.



Naturally, Bjorgus was the first to see it. He was, after all, well ahead of the rest of us, in the musty darkness of the dungeon, out of the range of our sputtering torches. It was of some comfort to us, here in the middle of our first underground excursion, that such a sturdy and battle-hardened dwarf veteran led us in this foray. Thomas and I had thought it great fun to leave our village for a life of high adventure, but here, in the dark, we felt small and exposed. The others didn't look much more confident either. We were lucky to have the dwarf, I reckoned. In his many years of adventuring Bjorgus had seen it all, or so it seemed, and had lived to tell of it. He had a collection of scars that was the envy of us younger folk, and a story to go with each one. Sometimes I thought he did go on a bit, particularly with a yard of ale inside him, but that was to be expected. I'd never even been in a tavern until I met him. There was not a man among us that did not look up to old Bjorgus, despite the fact that we stood a good head taller than him. He was almost our surrogate father.

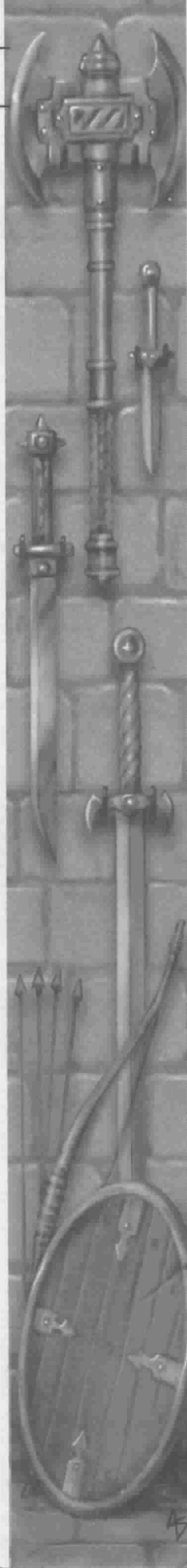
Our first indication that something was wrong was when we heard a dwarven curse from beyond the gloom of the corridor ahead. None of us spoke Bjorgus' language, but a man knows the sound of a curse when he hears it no matter what tongue it is spoken in. This was followed by the sound of booted feet running quickly in our direction.

We tightened our grip on our weapons and raised our shields to the ready position. I felt my knees trembling like leaves in the wind. If whatever lay ahead had old Bjorgus backing up for a tactical retreat... Well then, we were going to be ready for it and show the old dwarven fighter that we were not afraid, that our months of training would be put to good use.

'Out of my way, ye ninnies!' shouted Bjorgus as he sped into the circle of torchlight. 'It's a troll! Run! Run ye weasels! If he catches us we're all doomed!' And he sped past, ploughing through us like a scythe through wheat. Tomas and I exchanged looks, and neither of us could believe that our hero's nerve had left him like that. Bjorgus, who we had seen cut his way through half-a-dozen goblins before we could even draw our swords. Bjorgus, who once killed two kobolds by smashing their ugly heads together. Whatever it was that had spooked him so badly, it had to be pretty nasty. I know Thomas and I were both thinking of turning tail and following Bjorgus in a hasty retreat, but neither of us wanted to be the first one to do so, and I am willing to bet the three guys behind us were feeling the same way too, because we did not hear them running either.

The firm grip I held on my sword seemed to loosen of its own volition as the troll entered our little circle of torchlight, hooting and gibbering. I looked in horror at it. Thick, rubbery lips curled back from its mouth to expose a wicked set of pointed teeth, its long arms waving back and forth as it loped in our direction. I can clearly remember noticing there was drool running from its mouth. I do not remember dropping my weapon, or my shield, but I did.

Rounding several corners without really noticing where I was going, I found out that I did one thing eminently better than old Bjorgus. Actually, two things. I turned out to be pretty good at overtaking as well.



# TROLL PHYSIOLOGY

The first time an adventuring party comes up against a troll they are liable to be taken aback by the creature's ferocious demeanour and bestial appearance. Unlike the more 'civilised' goblinoids, the troll is unlikely to be wearing any armour or clothing, and more often than not will be weaponless as well. Of course, this is not necessarily a good thing, for the troll has natural weapons in the form of wicked claws and a set of vicious, razor-sharp teeth, all of which are put to good use on the battlefield.

Although weighing in at an average of 500 pounds, trolls are often lanky to the point of seeming frail, but they possess a surprising amount of strength despite the thinness of their limbs. A troll's arms are disproportionately long for its body, and the fact that the creature's posture is stooped, with its knuckles often dragging on the ground when it runs, contribute to give it a somewhat simian appearance. Its skin coloration belies any resemblance to the simian races, as troll flesh runs the gamut from a moss green to a sickly grey, often with a mottling effect combining both colours. The skin is often lumpy and warty, and from a distance may resemble scales. Thick, hairlike tangles sprout from the top of a troll's head, writhing of their own accord depending upon its mood. While these movements may seem erratic to an outside observer, trolls are remarkably perceptive to the moods of others of their race just by observing the motion of their hairlocks. These growths are present only on the top of the head; trolls are otherwise hairless.

While female trolls are larger and stronger than the males, it is difficult to differentiate between the sexes at a distance since females do not sport breasts any more so than gorillas or chimpanzees, and facial features and hairlocks bear very little sexual dimorphism. Trolls have no taboo against nudity and usually stride around unclad, viewing clothing and armour as something to be worn only when it suits an obvious purpose.

Trolls have four digits on each wide hand, with three strong fingers and a powerful thumb each ending in blackened claws. Their massive feet bear only three similarly clawed toes, leaving unmistakable tracks

that rangers quickly learn to recognize in troll-infested areas.

Trolls speak the common language of the giants. Both sexes speak in rough, deep, grating voices; the females' voices are if anything even deeper than those of the males. Trolls speak in short, clipped (almost barking) sentences, as if they are physically ripping the words out of their throats. Despite sharing the same language, many of the more civilised giant races have a hard time understanding troll speech.

## HEIGHTENED SENSES

The troll's most distinctive facial feature is its lengthy, drooping nose. Trolls have as much muscular control over their noses as some dogs have over their ears: For instance, a troll can pull its nose upright when actively sniffing, for instance, a common practice during combat that prevents it from getting in the way of bite attacks. As might be expected in a creature with such a well-endowed proboscis, a troll's sense of smell is exceptional. It can detect intruders within 30 feet by sense of smell alone, and often uses its olfactory abilities to track down prey by their scent-spoors. Furthermore, trolls can detect the subtle pheromones others of their race exude through their pores, and interpret the slight nuances in odour caused by differing emotional states. So important is the creature's sense of smell that the size of one's nose is not only a status symbol, but also a measure of attractiveness and a major influence in attracting potential mates.

Their other senses are slightly less impressive except for eyesight, which allows them to see perfectly well in the dark to a range of 90 feet, significantly further than most other races gifted with this ability. A troll's eyes are dull and black, sunken into its face behind furrowed brows. Trolls dislike bright lights, but suffer no combat penalties even in direct sunlight. Trolls have small, lobeless ears that are pressed tightly to the sides of their heads. While their hearing is nothing spectacular – almost on par with that of a human – trolls are constantly alert to their surroundings and often pick up on small sounds that a human might disregard. Thus, while a troll's hearing covers a slightly smaller audible range than a human's, trolls usually pay more attention to what they do hear.

## REGENERATION

The troll is perhaps best known for its extraordinary ability to heal its wounds almost instantly.

Regeneration not only allows the troll to shrug off most damage, but also to reattach severed limbs or regrow lost ones; any appendage can grow back in under 20 minutes, even the head. If the troll's body regrows a missing part, the original, severed part usually withers and rots away, despite countless rumours and numerous wives' tales of severed troll hands continuing to scratch at their enemies or decapitated troll heads snapping their teeth at their intended victims.

In game terms, all damage from most normal attacks is considered subdual damage, and the trolls' regenerative powers automatically heals them of 5 points of subdual damage each round.

Because of this extraordinary ability, there is little that can permanently harm trolls, except fire and acid. Any wounds caused by either of these inflict normal damage that the troll cannot regenerate, only heal naturally over time. However, since trolls regenerate all other forms of damage, burn marks from acid or fire are the only types of scars a troll will ever carry. Also, once burned, a troll's flesh 'remembers' such scars, so that if a troll's hand is burned and scarred and then later severed, the hand that grows back will bear identical burn marks to the 'original' hand.

Trolls can eventually be knocked unconscious by the same kinds of attacks that would kill other creatures. Once a troll is unconscious, it is possible to perform a coup de grace to finish the troll off, but it must be an attack form that the troll cannot regenerate, meaning fire or acid. Because of this, most trolls are unable to slay others of their kind despite the ferocity of their attacks. This causes some stability within troll clans in a way, for they can fight amongst themselves with abandon, revelling in the bloodshed they cause without doing any permanent harm to the clan's overall strength.

As for troll's blood, it is highly notable both in that it is green and figures prominently in recipes for many antidotes and non-magical healing potions. The collected blood from a single troll is enough for three such potions and can be sold to an alchemist for about 400 gp. Unfortunately, the tricky bit is harvesting the blood from the ferocious troll in the first place. Some alchemists rely upon captive trolls, kept docile thanks to a *charm monster* spell

and locked in cages. Such practice provides them with a steady supply of troll blood, but it is inherently dangerous and not recommended.

There is a much-dreaded troll disease, the gunge, which temporarily shuts down a troll's regenerative abilities. The gunge is characterised by an outbreak of reddish welts on the troll's skin, which itself becomes flaky and peels off in areas. While the disease is not contagious, no troll in its right mind is ready to take the chance that it could be, and diseased trolls are immediately cast out of their clans until such time as they can prove that their ability to regenerate works once more. In a way, such trolls are lucky, for the superstitions against touching a gunge-infected individual are probably the only thing preventing them from being slain by others in their group in an attempt to climb up the clan hierarchy. The gunge usually runs its course in a few weeks.

### The Gunge

This is a rare disease that only affects troll species. It attacks their regenerative abilities and this is greatly feared for it makes trolls extremely vulnerable.

Infection: Injury

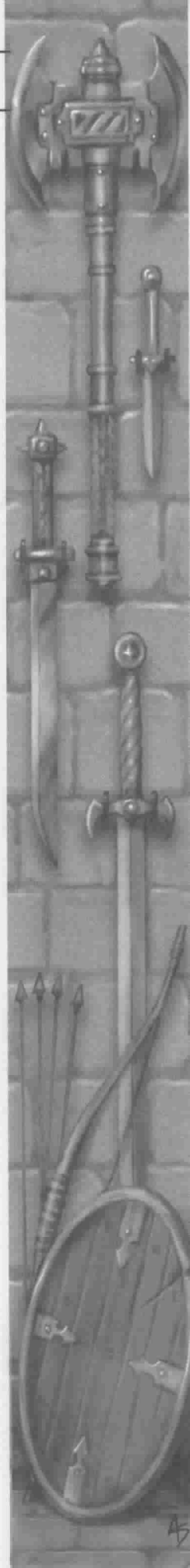
DC: 5

Incubation: 2d6 days

Damage: loss of regeneration

Although the gunge can be passed on through injuries, it is far more likely to develop spontaneously in unlucky trolls, seemingly at random. Gunge infections usually last for 7+2d4 days.

The troll lifespan is about 80 years, and elderly trolls around that age find their regenerative powers failing, taking progressively longer to heal damage until they are finally unable to do so. A troll that reaches this condition usually leaves the clan on its own accord, before the other trolls find out. The chaotic evil trolls would otherwise have a great time at the elder's expense, ripping it to shreds and marvelling at its inability to spontaneously heal the damage. Trolls greatly enjoy attacking others of their kind when they are at such a distinct disadvantage. A troll unable to regenerate is weak therefore of little use to a troll clan. Nearly all trolls would consider such an individual to be a burden on the clan's resources.



## DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Trolls are carnivores by choice, preferring the taste of raw meat above all else but, at a pinch, can survive on raw vegetable matter as well. They have ravenous appetites and eat the flesh of anything they can kill. While they do not particularly enjoy the taste of carrion, a sufficiently hungry troll has been known to devour it with as much relish as it does anything else in life. Perhaps because of their healthy respect for fire and the permanent damage it can cause, trolls refuse to cook any of their food.

Another interesting thing to note about the trollish diet is their lack of squeamishness regarding cannibalism. Trolls prefer carrion to the taste of their own flesh but, lacking any other prospects, will gladly devour their own kind. The interesting thing about troll cannibalism is that the victims are not killed. A hungry clan can rip and devour the limbs off its weaker members (usually the males and children), but they heal shortly, none the worse for wear. Cannibalism is a powerful incentive for the males to put some effort when they hunt for the rest of their clan. Being hacked and chewed may not kill the unlucky hunters, but it certainly *hurts*.

As an absolutely last resort, these creatures can subsist on their own flesh if the need arises. There is no known upper limit to this ability, and there have been documented cases of trolls surviving for several years in this manner.

Trolls have hearty constitutions and are capable of ingesting substances others would find deadly poisonous. Such fare includes varieties of mushroom and toadstool, as well as venomous creatures like scorpions and rattlesnakes. It should be noted that trolls cannot regenerate damage from poisons, so a poison deadly enough to overcome the troll's 'iron stomach' slays it as easily as it would any other humanoid species. Trolls take note of any poisonous substance that kills one of their kind and take steps to avoid ingesting such substances themselves in the future.

## THE TROLL'S LIFECYCLE

Despite having a warty skin that is often confused with scales, trolls are mammals. The females give birth approximately every five years after a six-month gestation period, usually to a single child, although twins and triples are not unknown. They

nurse their young only until their teeth start coming out at about two weeks later, when the whelp is ready for a diet of solid flesh.

It should be noted that pregnant females are in no way hampered by their condition, nor are they offered any preferential treatment by the other trolls in the clan. They are still expected to join in hunts for prey, scavenge for food, and battle clan enemies. The signs of pregnancy are noticeable only in an overall growth in the size of the female's abdomen and a general increase in her hunger, crankiness, and vindictiveness. Pregnant trolls are the most vicious monsters an adventurer will ever want to meet, and males of all ages make it a point not to cross their path, because they have no qualms about taking a bite out of the next troll that happens by if there is not enough food available.

Young trolls grow rapidly, reaching their full adult size when they are around ten years old. The first decade is a difficult time for the growing whelps, for troll parenting skills appear barbaric when viewed through the lens of human civilisation. Rather than protect their children from harm, adults go out of their way to expose them to all manners of hardship and pain, the better to toughen them up and make them strong. After all, a troll's remarkable regenerative ability is of less use if it is afraid of the pain involved in limb-rending and subsequent regrowth. Trolls must learn to ignore all physical pain if they are to attain their full strength. To this end, troll children often suffer the periodic claws and bites of their elders to inure them to such pain. Furthermore, if a clan must resort to cannibalism it is usually the young that first give up their limbs to the community's dinner table. This is done not only to help the young get used to the agonising pain of having its limbs rent apart, but also because their flesh is less gamy and stringy.

When a young troll finally attains full adult size, it demonstrates its usefulness to the tribe by chewing off each of its own limbs in turn. This rite of passage proves the troll has mastered the concept that 'all pain is merely transient,' and is also a literal self-sacrifice to the clan. The clan leader is the first to partake of the young's offering followed by the rest of the adults. This is the only time that trolls eat the flesh of one of their own willingly. When the troll's limbs regenerate and can once again stand before its clanmates, it is welcomed into adult society and treated accordingly.



Jezelyn followed the old man into the clearing. 'It was right here, I found it,' he said, the words choking in his throat. Jezelyn saw the tears forming in the corners of his eyes, and watched him struggle to keep them back, but said nothing.

The old man sighed, and blinked back the wetness in his eyes. 'Do you have the item?' Jezelyn asked quietly, once he had composed himself.

'Here,' the man replied, pulling a silver brooch from his pocket and passing it to the wise-woman. Jezelyn handled it carefully, noting the clasp was still attached to a piece of torn cloth, and that a tiny drop of dried blood stained the brooch's front. 'I just want to know,' he said, looking Jezelyn helplessly in the eye, silent pain etched across his wrinkled face.

Jezelyn held the brooch in her hands and quieted her mind. When she felt sufficiently composed, she cast her spell and watched as past events unfolded inside her closed eyelids.

A young woman struggled fruitlessly in the grip of a huge, hulking brute that gripped her under one arm like a toy. Others of its kind sprang up, wicked grins spread across their primitive features. Jezelyn's heart skipped a beat as she recognised the feral faces of trolls, her most hated enemies. Jezelyn counted five of the brutes drawing close.

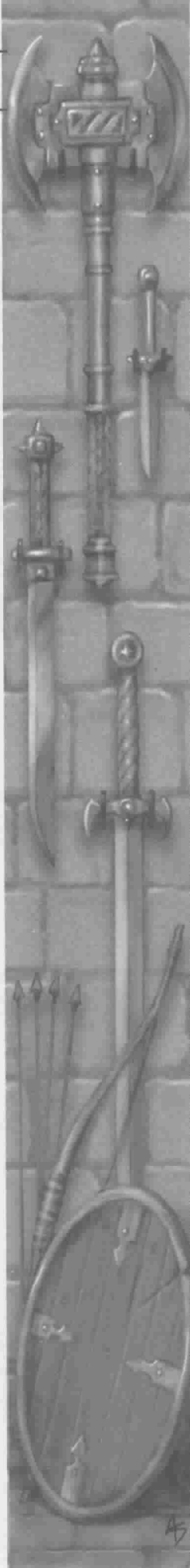
The trolls formed a rough circle. The largest one threw the woman roughly into the centre, and she fell to her side. She scrambled quickly to her feet, eyes darting in all directions, desperately looking for a way out. There did not seem to be one.

A troll stepped up and pushed her from behind, sending her reeling into the waiting claws of another. This one grabbed her roughly by the arm and sent her flying off in another direction. A good chunk of her sleeve, and a piece of the flesh of her arm, remained behind in the troll's bloody claws. The trolls continued their game, each one ripping another gash into the panicked young woman's body. Blood streamed from a dozen wounds as she staggered weakly from troll to troll, unable to fend off their relentless attacks. She held her arms up above her face, shielding her eyes and trying to block out the pain being cruelly inflicted by her tormentors. Jezelyn grimaced as she made out the words of a desperate prayer on the young woman's lips. Mercifully, the wise-woman's mystical visions did not include sound.

One troll, apparently tired of digging furrows into their collective victim's flesh, took a good-sized bite from her right shoulder when she was pushed its way. She screamed and fell to the ground where she lay. Immediately, the trolls were on her, ripping off limbs and carrying them away into the darkness to devour. A silver brooch lay overlooked on the ground, the clasp to the young woman's cloak.

Jezelyn opened her eyes and ended the spell. 'I'm sorry,' she said quietly to the old man. His wizened face turned to her, barren of all hope. 'It was...' began the wise-woman, her throat suddenly dry. She swallowed, and started again. 'I'm sorry, Ebert. It was wolves. A small pack, half-starved from the looks of it. They chased her, she fell and hit her head on a rock. I think... I think death was instantaneous.' She looked at the old man. Tears now flowed freely down both cheeks, and he made no effort to hide them. Jezelyn placed a hand on his shoulder, trying to provide comfort through human touch where no comfort was possible. 'She... at least your granddaughter did not suffer.' The words were hollow in her own ears, but Ebert nodded quietly and placed his gnarled hand upon her own. Jezelyn returned the silver brooch, and he slipped it back into his pocket.

'Thank you, wise-woman,' he said in a cracking voice. 'At least now I know.' Jezelyn just nodded silently, then watched the old man stumble off down the forest path back to the village. Only when he was out of sight and well out of earshot did she break down and cry.



## SUBSPECIES

There are almost as many subspecies of troll as there are types of terrain. Trolls can be found living in the harshest deserts, in the steamiest jungles, in the icy wastes of the tundra and on barren mountaintops; there are even a few species that live underwater. Each has adapted to its particular ecosystem: sea scrags and their freshwater cousins can breathe underwater through gills in their necks, sand trolls are resistant to the desert's extreme temperatures and have developed a skin tone that allows them to blend in with their environment, while polar trolls have adapted so well to their frigid climate that they no longer feel the cold that dominates their world.

In addition, trolls have been known to breed with various other humanoid species, producing even greater numbers of variant troll strains. Giant trolls have been born to troll and hill giant parents, while breeding with ettins produces ferocious, two-headed trolls. Often, these half-breeds join up with a troll clan, so it is not uncommon to see a number of different troll subspecies living and working together.

There are rumours of even larger trolls hidden among the barren mountain peaks or far beneath the ocean's depths, either the result of unions between trolls and even larger giants or the products of magical experimentation. Such monsters are said to reach a height of 20 feet or more. Fortunately, these rumours are as yet unfounded.

The following troll subspecies are offered for use in the Games Master's campaign.

### Sand Troll

#### Large Giant

**Hit Dice:** 7d8+42 (73 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +9 melee, bite +4 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d6+5, bite 1d6+2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+7

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft., fire/cold resistance 5

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 21, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +5 (see below), Listen +5, Spot +5

**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will

**Climate/Terrain:** Any desert

**Organisation:** Solitary or gang (2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 6

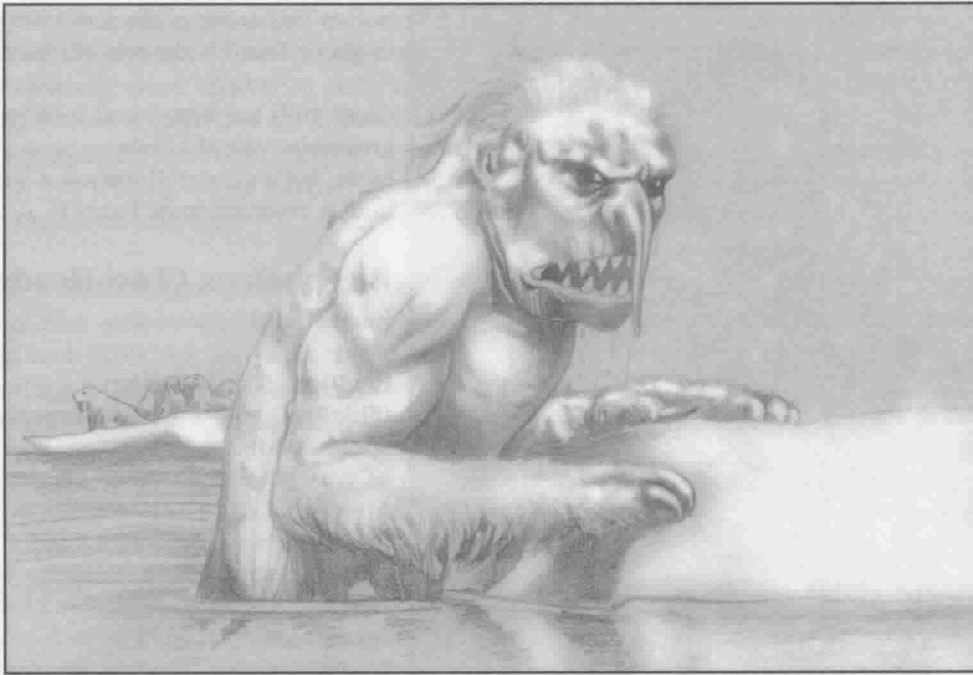
**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

Sand trolls have tan skin often mottled with various shades of brown, which makes excellent camouflage in the desert environment, giving them a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when surrounded by sand. They have further adapted to their surroundings by requiring very little water intake and developing a resistance to temperature extremes, both the parching heat of the desert sun and the freezing nights. Because of the scarcity of food to be found in the desert environment, sand trolls are found in fewer numbers. Perhaps not coincidentally, sand trolls are also more intelligent than most





other troll subspecies; eking a successful living in the harsh desert environment takes more skill than does living in a forest or jungle with plentiful game.

## Polar Troll

### Large Giant (Cold)

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+24 (42 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**AC:** 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +7 melee, bite +2 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d8+5, bite 1d4+2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d8+7

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 3, scent, darkvision 90 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +5, Spot +5

**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will

**Climate/Terrain:** Arctic

**Organisation:** Solitary or gang (2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

Polar trolls have a mottled skin coloration ranging from white to light grey to a slightly bluish tinge. Their hairlike masses are a uniform white, and dirty yellowish-white hair grows from their lower arms and legs. They are smaller than most trolls, generally standing no taller than 8 feet. Like the sand trolls, polar trolls have a keener intellect than the standard troll, sharpened by the necessity of survival in the harsh environments they call home.

Polar trolls usually lair in ice caves near the coastline, or in hand-carved caves dug into the sides of ice floes. Some live in caves along the coasts of subarctic rivers and lakes. They are strong swimmers but cannot breathe underwater like scraggs can. Polar trolls seldom stray too far from water, for their regenerative powers, which are somewhat weaker than that of standard trolls, only takes effect when they are in contact with it. Polar trolls are immune to cold-based attacks, but take double damage from fire.

## Giant Troll

### Large Giant

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+48 (84 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 17 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +12/+7 melee or huge greatclub +13/+8 melee



**Damage:** Claw 1d6+7, huge greatclub 2d6+7

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+10

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +10, Listen +5, Spot +5

**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (Huge greatclub)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any hills, mountains, or underground

**Organisation:** Solitary or gang (2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

Giant trolls are the result of a union between a standard troll and a hill giant. They retain the trollish physiology in most respects, but giant trolls have blunt teeth like their hill giant parents and thus do not bite in combat. Their lumpy skin is a mottled reddish brown. Giant trolls stand over 10 feet tall, and are occasionally found ruling a clan of normal

trolls. This is one of the few times that a male might be found in the role of clan chieftain.

Giant trolls are often found wielding huge greatclubs instead of relying upon claws in battle, but a giant troll without a weapon has no trouble reverting to its instincts.

### Bicephalous (Two-Headed) Troll Large Giant

**Hit Dice:** 9d8+54 (94 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +11/+6 melee or 2 greatclubs +11/+6 melee, 2 bites +6/+1 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d4+6, greatclub 1d10+6, bite 1d8+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Superior two-weapon fighting, rend 2d4+9

**Special Qualities:** Fast healing 3, scent, darkvision 90 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +4



**Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 8

**Skills:** Listen +5, Search +2, Spot +5

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

**Climate/Terrain:** Cold and temperate hills, mountains, and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary or gang (2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

That a bicephalous troll's parentage includes an ettin is made obvious by the creature's two functional heads. These two-headed trolls often have brownish tones to their skin mottling, but otherwise conform to the standard troll physiology. They can be found living with normal trolls, ettins or on their own.

A bicephalous troll attacks with either two claws and two bites, or with two greatclubs. When biting, each head attacks the same victim, but a two-headed troll can attack two different foes with its arms without an off-hand penalty, as each arm can be 'controlled' by a different head. These crossbreeds have a much weaker form of regeneration (fast healing) that heals damage but cannot rejoin severed limbs.

## Megalotroll

### Huge Giant

**Hit Dice:** 18d8+126 (207 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 40 ft. (plus swim 40 ft., aquatic strains only)

**AC:** 19 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +19/+14/+9 melee, bite +14/+9/+4 melee

**Damage:** Claw 2d4+8, bite 1d10+4

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 4d4+12

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 10, scent, darkvision 120 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +18, Ref +9, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +14, Jump +13, Listen +7, Spot +7

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Climate/Terrain:** High mountains or oceans (separate species in each terrain)

**Organisation:** Solitary or gang (2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 16

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

The existence of megalotrolls is mere rumour, with tales accounting of a physiology identical to that of a normal troll except for sheer size. Its attacks and tactics would be the same, although even more deadly coming from such a huge monster. Sailor's tales speak of aquatic versions looking like enormous marine scraggs. They stand at least 20 feet tall and are attributed with even more powerful regenerative abilities than normal trolls.



# HABITAT

Trolls prowl around just about every corner of the world in some form or another, adapting to their particular environment. In more hostile climates, the adaptations might have altered the troll physiology somewhat, but they are still easily recognised as trolls.

The 'standard' or 'common' troll prefers temperate or warm climates, and can also be frequently found living an entirely subterranean existence. Surface trolls lair in caves or in crumbling ruins, depending of which is available and more comfortable. Otherwise, they usually dig underground lairs commonly referred to as 'trollholes.' In forested areas, trollholes are often dug at the base of a large tree and frequently have several entrances, each camouflaged with a large woven mat of twigs and leaves. These mats disguise the dwelling's entrances to avoid unwelcome visitors, and they occasionally provide a free meal when an unsuspecting victim steps on it and crashes into the trollhole. Entryways are vertical shafts some five or six feet in diameter and ten feet deep. This makes it difficult for victims falling into the trollhole to escape, while the 9-foot trolls simply place their hands on the surface of the ground and effortlessly hoist themselves up.

Beyond the entrance, there are usually several tunnels slanted downward in various directions, leading to the larger individual areas of the troll families. Inside its own dwelling, each troll builds a nest out of whatever materials are available – straw, twigs, leaves, grass, and the like –, with remains of recent meals likely to be scattered about and incorporated into the nest as well. Troll habitats are filthy, often crawling with insects such as fleas, ticks and lice. Larger animals like rats and mice are scarce as they are large enough to warrant the trolls' attention as a food source. Moulds and fungi growths are common and even encouraged in troll lairs, for those that are not edible can be put to use as primitive bedding.

Most of the treasure found in a troll cave or trollhole is all that is left from previous victims. Weapons might occasionally be put to use by various clan members, with any magical object incorporating fire or acid effects going directly into the chieftain's hands. Armour is less likely to be used, and coins

and gems are almost certainly tucked away in some corner as inconsequential, or at best shiny objects for the young to play with on occasion. Most trolls place no value on money. After all, it is not as if they are going to spend it anywhere, and even those trolls who recognise the importance other races place on gold and gemstones, are not likely to use their valuables to purchase goods when they can just take what they need by force.

Because of their inherently lazy natures, trolls tend not to move on to new territories once establishing a home unless forced to. While other races are more nomadic and willing to pack up and move to greener pastures when food sources become scarce, most troll clans will resort to self-cannibalisation before finally admitting to themselves the necessity to move on.

When seeking out a new home, the primary consideration is, of course, food. This takes precedence over factors like defensibility and distance to potential enemies or allies. Trolls like having access to easy meals, whether those be bountiful forests filled with abundant wildlife, pasture land teeming with succulent sheep or cattle, or even small humanoid settlements. Trolls have been known to pick off the inhabitants of a small village one by one during a series of nightly raids until nobody remains alive, everyone having either been driven off in fear or become a day's supper. Of the various humanoid races, humans and elves have the dubious honour of being favourite prey, but trolls will eat just about anything that moves.

One habitat the main troll species tends to avoid is deep water. Most trolls are not good swimmers, and they are well aware that despite their regenerative abilities they are just as susceptible to drowning as any other non-aquatic race. Probably the best way to avoid a predatory troll is to swim away to deep water. Despite their constantly ravenous hunger, most trolls will not pursue their prey into a body of water that rises above their own heads.

'Found a troll's arm once. Put the thing in my backpack, and by the time I got back to the camp, it had grown back into a full-sized troll. True as I'm standing here.'

**Harlan the Ranger, sitting at the bar of the Strutting Wench tavern**

# TROLL SOCIETY

**M**ost trolls live in a clan-based society. Clans are rather small affairs, generally numbering no more than a dozen individuals. This is primarily due to the trolls' ravenous appetites, as larger gatherings of trolls would rapidly deplete the surrounding land of potential food sources. When a clan's numbers increase too much, they usually split off into two smaller groups, with the younger trolls moving off to form a new clan elsewhere.

On the other hand, most troll clans are willing to let other trolls join them, as long as their ranks are not already too full, because new blood keeps the clan healthy. Naturally, once a troll enters a new clan the 'pecking order fights' begin almost immediately, as the clan members try to determine where the 'new guy' falls in their hierarchy. A troll supplicant to a new clan has the option of turning down such fights, with the understanding that he places himself at the bottom of the ladder.

Unlike most humanoid and goblinoid races, trolls very rarely name their clans. This is partly due to their inherent arrogance and superiority complex: as long as they know who they mean by 'the clan,' what do they care whether or not other races know who is meant? The closest a clan comes to having a distinct name is when the clan is referenced by the name of the chieftain. Thus, while there will not be a 'Bloody Claw Clan' or a 'Clan of the Severed Hand,' there might well be an 'Oograk Clan' or a 'Clan of Vraask.'

## Clan Structure

Within the clan there exists a definite hierarchy, and every troll knows where he or she stands in the chain at any given moment. Given the chaotic nature of trolls, however, this hierarchy is constantly shifting and changing as individual trolls fight among themselves, jockeying for position in the clan. Females, being larger than males as a rule, are usually found holding the dominant positions in the clan, but large males capable of fighting their way up the ladder can also attain power, prestige and influence. Nonetheless, the vast majority of troll clans are led by the dominant female.

The troll had just about run the party ragged. Nothing they could do seemed to damage the repulsive creature. It was a female, apparently, considered Klort, standing at the back and hoping that the troll would get bored and leave before it got to him. No doubt the others would blame him for not having enough spells ready to deal with the thing. Well, it was easy for them. They hardly had to do any thinking at all, and that ox Tharg was the dimmest of the lot. In fact, he was so dim that he'd wandered off just when they needed him most. Stupid barbarian ignoramus!

Lost in his thoughts, Klort noticed a shadow cover him. He looked across jerkily, prepared for the worst, but it was the familiar shape of the barbarian, standing with his arms folded. No weapon even drawn. What a buffoon, thought Klort contemptuously.

Norbert, the woodland druid, was thrown out of the melee as they stood there, landing in a heap nearby. Tharg looked down easily. 'Go look after him, Klort. I'd better sort out this business.'

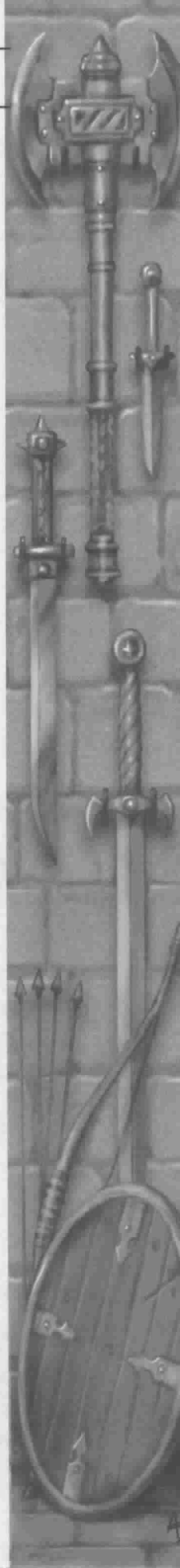
'Well you'd better get your axe out,' advised the mage as the huge barbarian strode off almost nonchalantly towards to troll.

For reply Tharg just laughed over his shoulder, intent now on the troll. 'Oi, girlie! Come over here and take on someone your own size!'

The troll shrieked angrily, confused by the new arrival. Still, the man was small compared to her, and she lumbered towards him.

'I didn't know you could punch like that,' said Norbert in admiration, looking down at the flattened troll, her droopy nose even flatter than before.

Tharg smiled, looking around for a rag. Troll snot made one hell of a mess.



## ON THE LEADERSHIP OF FEMALES

The largest and strongest *female* in a troll clan is almost always the largest, strongest *troll* in the clan. She acts as the chieftain and quite frequently also as the head shaman, casting divine spells for the betterment of the clan or, more commonly, simply to cement her position as clan leader. Leadership of a troll clan is held only through combat, and any time another troll thinks that she (or, less commonly, he) can wrest power from the current incumbent, a battle for power ensues. There is no proper etiquette to these challenges, no ritual and no oratory as to why it is being made; an attack can come at any time, without warning. It is for this reason that most troll chieftains also wield divine magic: it gives them an edge in what would otherwise be a simple physical combat of claws and teeth. These battles are seldom fought to the death, thanks once again to the troll's remarkable regenerative abilities, but the victor traditionally decapitates the loser's head and displays it on a stick after proudly parading it around in front of the other clan members.

Meanwhile, the defeated troll has to lie there and wait for her head to grow back. Often, once the loser's head has regrown it is forced to wear its 'previous' head on a rope or chain around the neck for a week or so as a constant reminder of its previous defeat and a public warning against further dissidence.

Fortunately, such challenges for leadership are rare, as a troll only attains the level of chieftain by proving to all other clan members that it can easily defeat them. Furthermore, most males realise they will never be strong enough to wrest power from one of the mighty females, let alone the strongest of them all, and most females are patient enough to wait for a moment of weakness on the part of their leader before striking.

The chieftain's duties primarily consist of leading the clan on their nightly forages for food. She might approve of sending off a small group of trolls to hunt in other areas or she may insist that the clan stays together. She is also in charge of overseeing the proper raising of the troll children in the clan. This usually means that she is the main dealer of 'necessary pain' to the young. This has the added benefit of teaching the whelps to fear their clan chieftain, even as they learn to master their fear of pain. Chieftains see being feared by the members of

their clan as an obvious boon, helping them to cement power at the top of the clan.

Along with greater chances of assuming clan leadership, adult females have positions of power over the lowly males. Trolls seldom mate for life, and this is at the preference of the females, not the males. Female trolls choose their mates or, more frequently, choose two suitors and let them fight it out to see who wins the right to breed. This ritual has several benefits, for the bloodthirsty males it is a chance to fight and demonstrate their combat prowess to the other females in the clan, because even the loser stands to impress other females if he makes a good showing. The female gets the thrill of having two males fight over her, and the ensuing offspring is sure to enjoy a strong set of genes. Once impregnated, the female maintains the male as her mate until she delivers her child. During this time, the male is seen as the 'property' of his mate and is ineligible for breeding selection by another female. This keeps the gene pool healthy by preventing the single strongest male in the clan from siring children with all of the females.

Some select few females within a clan may have a level or two as an adept, and the chieftain keeps a constant watch over them, as they are usually her greatest potential rivals for power. Males rarely become adepts or wielders of magic in any of its forms and, when they do, it is usually when sorcerer abilities manifest of their own accord. However, troll sorcerers of either gender are extremely rare.

Another female duty is the keeping of the oral history of the clan. Since trolls do not bother with a written language, the only means they have of recording the clan's past accomplishments are the stories they pass down from generation to generation. Usually, only female trolls take on the duties of storyteller, as the males are generally seen as too lazy and undependable. Nearly all females will know some of their clan's stories, but there is usually one chief storyteller per clan. She is liable to know the complete history of the clan going back many decades or even centuries, and may even have attained a level or two as a bard, although this is certainly not true of all chief storytellers. Troll bards are a rarity, but those that do exist rely upon spoken oratory rather than music, as trolls are universally tone deaf and dislike most music in any case.



Males are typically the drudge-workers of the troll clan, and a different pecking order exists among them so that, when females start giving orders, they can delegate 'down the chain' to those weaker than themselves. Of course, all troll males dislike having to take orders from females, let alone other males, so most male-to-male orders devolve into a quick battle to see whether there ought to be a change in the male hierarchy. Once a victor has been established, the loser is forced into doing the work unless a female gets tired of the bickering and steps in, at which point both males are likely to end up with the chore.

## THE OUTCAST

Some trolls, especially males in low standing, dislike the thought of spending their lives under the dominance of the females and may decide to do something about it. They leave the clan and strike out on their own. These self-exiled outcasts often hook up with groups of other humanoids like kobolds, goblins, hobgoblins, orcs, gnolls, bugbears, or even ogres, ettins or hill giants. A troll living among much weaker creatures upgrades his social standing significantly, often going from being lowest male in the clan to most powerful creature in the new tribe. Life is good for a troll among kobolds or goblins: it is valued for its strength, can demand the lion's share of all food, strike fear into the hearts of everyone around, and does not have to put up with constant demands from pushy female trolls.

Female trolls are well aware of this male tendency and keep a sharp eye to prevent them from deserting in such a fashion. A successful troll outcast usually attains his status by sneaking off during a raid when the females are too engrossed in the heat of battle to notice, or by slipping away during the day when most trolls are in blissful slumber.

Of course, some trolls become outcasts by being exiled by the chieftain. This is seldom done as a punishment for wrongdoing, as chieftains would much rather subdue such transgressors, render them helpless in the lair, and torture them until the lesson finally sinks in. The most common reason for casting out a clan member is if he or she succumbs to the dreaded gunge disease, although troll sorcerers who start manifesting fire-based abilities are cast out immediately before they can upset the chieftain's power base. Fortunately for the chieftain, troll sorcerers are few and far between.

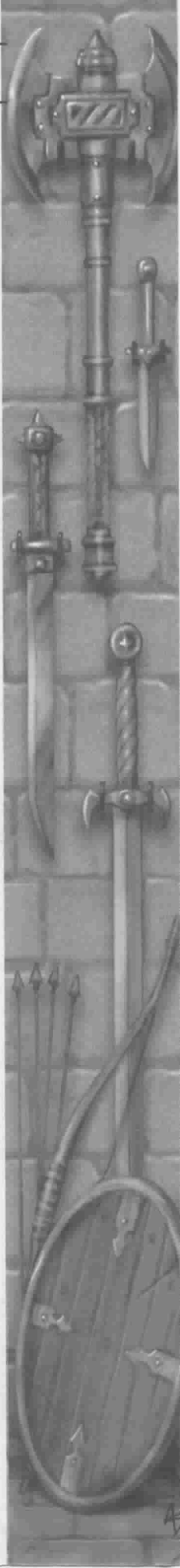
The lowest troll outcasts are those that failed to master their indifference to pain. Adults that still fear pain despite their regenerative powers are seen as cowards and failures in the eyes of other trolls, and no clan will harbour such a drain on their resources. These outcasts find refuge among goblinoids, at least until their new tribe discovers that the 'added muscle' they have been supporting is afraid of battle, at which point the outcast troll finds itself running for dear life. Goblinoids like nothing better than to attack and destroy a troll that fears pain, as they do not often get the opportunity to bring down such powerful prey.

## TROLL SPIRITUALITY

Troll spirituality is relatively easy to categorise: non-existent. Trolls are too instinctually savage and generally do not possess the necessary level of intelligence to worry about something as metaphysical as the divine. There is no pantheon of gods, or even a single troll deity looking out for the welfare of its mortal children. The trolls do not see this as a lacking, since trolls do not even believe in the existence of gods of other races, despite the evidence of divine magic. Arcane magic does not require gods to make it work, and from a troll's point of view divine magic is merely the same thing under a different name.

However, as with nearly all generalities, there are exceptions. Some trolls have the necessary faith to manifest divine magic, they just do not receive their spells from troll deities, as there are none. Troll clerics are referred to as 'shamans' by other trolls, and they worship chaos, evil nature as divine forces, while others are 'adopted' by gods of other races. The latter is especially true among troll outcasts living with members of another race: a troll shaman living among orcs will probably worship Gruumsh or another orcish god, and the same holds true for troll adepts.

Unlike many other divine spellcasters, troll shamans do not try to convert others to their beliefs; quite the opposite, in fact. Being selfish to the core, no troll shaman will try to give away his or her own tactical advantage by introducing others to the benefits of divine spellcasting. In fact, most troll shaman/chieftains use their divine-derived powers to defend any potential threats to their leadership. Fire spells like *produce flame* and *burning hands* remind other clan members of the price of challenging a chieftain's authority, and no shaman in her right



## TROLL SOCIETY

mind is ever going to cast *imbue with spell ability* and give one of her strengths away to another, no matter how tactically sound it may be.

For similar reasons, many troll adepts try to keep their powers hidden from the chieftain, or any others who might feel they could profit from announcing such a discovery. The first time a troll adept demonstrates her powers to others is often when she attacks the chieftain in a bid for leadership, hoping to strike with an advantage, using powers none knew she possessed.

The closest most trolls come to spirituality, however, is a deep-rooted superstition. A hunting group that managed to slay a purple worm on a rainy day might consider all rainy days to be inherently lucky. If a troll slits open a vein on her arm to smear herself with her own blood before entering battle, and subsequently slays more than her share of foes, she may believe the blood-anointing ritual is what brought her such success. Troll superstitions work on a personal level, with each member of a clan having its own rituals and beliefs.

Gronkorzonk waddled clumsily down the game trail, his trusty greatclub balanced on a meaty shoulder and gripped in a hand the size of a baked ham. The ogre whistled cheerily, if somewhat out of tune, for he was in a good mood today. After all, today was Tribute Day, when the goblins in their ramshackle little wooden fort paid him for another week of 'safekeeping'. He wondered idly what his payment would be this time. Gold coins, silver bars, polished gemstones? Or, if they did not have a sufficient tribute, perhaps just a goblin or two for his stew pot? Gronkorzonk was an easygoing ogre; it mattered little to him.

He came to a stop a few scant paces from the barred door of the goblin fortress. Surprisingly, the two goblins on guard duty up in the ramparts had their crossbows aimed in his direction. Surely they did not mean to take him on again? Had they not learned their lesson the hard way the last time?

'I'm here for my tribute,' thundered Gronkorzonk. 'Open your gates and present your payment for my week of protection.'

'We don't need you any longer!' Called down one of the guards. 'We protect ourselves from now on. Go away, and leave us alone!'

Gronkorzonk snorted his disbelief. 'Protect yourselves? And just how are you going to do that? You scrawny little goblins need a leader like me to keep your miserable hides safe! There are dangerous beasts out here, including me! Enough of this, open the gates and give me my tribute!'

'He wants in!' One of the goblin sentries cackled suspiciously. 'Better open up and let him have it!'

'I'm glad to see you smarted up,' remarked Gronkorzonk, watching as the shoddily reinforced door to the goblin fortress was slowly pushed open. Lucky for you, I'm in a good mood, so I will only double the usual...' The words caught in the ogre's throat, for the gate swung fully open and there stood a hideous troll, arms folded and face split in a crooked-toothed grin. Standing behind him were a dozen goblins, all armed with swords. The goblin chieftain poked his head warily from behind the troll's massive bulk.

'We don't need your protection no longer,' he repeated. 'Voragg here will be doing all our protection now.'

Gronkorzonk gulped, the blood draining from his face as he gazed at the troll. The troll just stood there grinning at him, squeezing his biceps over and over with his own claws. Blood dripped down the troll's arm and pooled at his feet; he did not even seem to notice. 'I... I get it,' Gronkorzonk finally replied. 'Fine, if you're safe... that's all I was worried about.' He spun on his heel and started waddling away.

'Oh, Gronky, something else.' The goblin chieftain said gleefully. The ogre bridled at the nickname but said nothing. 'About that money we 'loaned' to you? We want it all back, now that Voragg is here to keep it safe for us. And I'm sure Voragg would be happy to help you bring it back here, if you don't think you can handle it alone.'

Gronkorzonk hung his head. 'I can do it,' he grumbled.

'See you soon, then, Gronky!' replied the goblin chieftain with a hearty wave. Gronkorzonk plodded back to his cave in silence, dragging his greatclub behind him. Somehow, he did not feel like whistling.

# METHODS OF WARFARE

Trolls are not overly complicated in their attack strategies, preferring to charge straight at the nearest enemy hooting and hollering with unrestrained joy, and let the victim have it with everything the troll has. Clans seldom co-ordinate their attacks; regardless of the number of trolls on the battlefield, it is usually every troll for itself, as befitting their chaotic bent and selfish tendencies. Scholars and civilised commanders refer to such erratic attacks as 'the wilding.' Trolls go on the wilding when hunting too, rushing madly at any potential prey as soon as it is spotted, every creature trying to be the first to rip it to shreds. A favoured troll tactic is to rend a victim's flesh once it connects with both sets of claws. Trolls usually concentrate on a single opponent and slay him before moving on to the next rather than splitting their attacks among several foes, even if it means allowing one attacker to remain unscathed while slaying the other. The troll's own wounds will heal fast enough, after all.

Trolls caught up in the wilding attack in reckless abandon and are heedless of their own safety. There have been occasions of trolls flinging themselves over the edges of cliffs in an attempt to grab winged prey fleeing to the safety of the skies. A troll spotting prey at the bottom of a mountainside might leap down a nearly vertical slope, confident in its ability to regenerate any damage incurred by the rough tumble en route to its victim.

Trolls do not usually have the patience or the good sense to employ stealth before an attack. During their nocturnal food raids, trolls stroll carelessly and take what they want. It does not matter if it is an attack upon livestock in a barn or the denizens of a small human village. Trolls do not seem at all concerned that, if they sneak quietly into a dwelling and make off with the inhabitants therein, they might escape without alerting the neighbours to their presence. Instead, they seem to relish the panicked screams of their prey and are arrogant enough to regard alerting others as insignificant. After all, are they not trolls? Can they not handle anything thrown at them?

Fortunately for some potential meals, trolls caught up in the wilding become so savage that they often attack one another, especially if there are not enough victims to go around. Tales have been told of a lone woodsman escaping with his life after an initial troll attack was blocked by another troll intent upon making the woodsman its victim. While the two trolls tore each other apart, the woodsman had the presence of mind to escape as fast as he could.

'Don't be put off by the look of them. They might seem like some sort of circus act, what with their arms dangling down and their gangly bodies. Those devils are killers, and no mistake.'

Harlan the Ranger

## WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

Most trolls eschew both armour and weapons, preferring the visceral appeal of ripping into opponents with bare hands and sharp teeth and relying upon their own considerably thick skins to protect them. Armed and armoured trolls are not unknown, as some pick up the concept from the foes they slay. Outcasts living among other races that employ weapons and armour might demand the best of both that their adopted tribe has to offer, if only because they can. Trolls are familiar enough with all simple weapons to wield them without penalty. One fact bears stressing: trolls seldom, if ever, craft their own weapons or armour. Rather, trolls that wield weapons use those taken from their allies or previously slain foes, and those that wear armour generally wear piecemeal sections taken from several different sources. Because of the troll's large yet lanky build and long arms, most armour made for other races will not fit a troll properly.

The sole exception to the trolls' inability to make their own weapons is in the use of bone. Some males have nurtured a belief in the luck inherent in using a weapon crafted from their own bones when battling creatures much larger than themselves. Traditionally, a male chews off his own leg above the knee and crafts a weapon from his shin bone, usually by just sharpening one end of it into a point for stabbing. Since trolls do not possess a written language the bones are usually etched with a made-



up symbol that the male has decided is his personal mark. Such males traditionally begin a combat by first stabbing their bone weapon into their victims, then abandoning it and reverting to attacks with teeth and claws. The males believe that the bone weapon helps guide their subsequent attacks, and it furthermore marks the victim as theirs. Male trolls have nurtured this superstitious belief so much that they will actively hunt dangerous creatures most trolls avoid, such as purple worms or dragons, armed only with their lucky bone shafts. The bone weapons do piercing damage as a halfspear, although they are never thrown.

Upon occasion, even trolls relying upon teeth and claws hurl rocks at their enemies as they close to melee range. Because of their exceptional strength, troll-hurled rocks can do devastating damage to those they hit. Rock throwing is more of an opportunistic attack, occurring only when there happens to be handy ammunition lying around, as trolls seldom carry rocks with them for use as missiles.

## DEFENDING THE LAIR

With their arrogant attitudes regarding their own superiority, trolls usually give only cursory thoughts to defending their lairs. Obviously, they want to be protected from dragons, wyverns, and similar-sized predators; but trolls only guarantee their safety against such beasts by ensuring that the entrances are too small to allow them entry. Trollhole entrance shafts are thus rarely wider than six feet, and if a troll clan takes residence in a cave with an overly large opening, they will partially block the entrance with large boulders.

As far as sentries go, trolls are similarly unconcerned by attacks from creatures small enough to enter their dwellings, so a single guard is more a token show of force than anything else. Guard duty, being tedious, dull, and potentially dangerous, is usually passed off to one of the hapless males in the clan, although not without stern warnings as to what should happen if the male tries to sneak off and become outcast. The chieftain usually has a pretty good idea about the trustworthiness of the males in her clan, and ensures that only those with little likelihood of abandoning the others are given the task. Troll young are also frequently put on guard duty, as it gives them something to occupy their time and they are less likely to wander off than are the older males.

Trolls almost never raise watch beasts to guard their lairs, for the same reason they seldom keep slaves: their short-term hunger almost always outweighs their long-term thoughts about the advantages of keeping such lesser beings alive. For the same reason, troll sorcerers and rangers are never found with familiars or animal companions for very long.

One very rare exception to this rule is when a sufficiently powerful troll shaman casts *animate dead* on a troll skeleton. Other trolls will not bother an animated skeleton, as it cannot be eaten. Very powerful animated troll skeletons can be made when the cleric uses a complete set of her own bones, each ripped from her body and allowed to regrow. Such monstrosities have maximum hit points, the same strength score as the caster, and are turned as if they were two Hit Dice higher than normal. They can be mentally commanded by their creators without uttering a sound, so great is the link between the spellcaster and her own old set of bones. Fortunately, these forms of undead are extremely rare, for few chieftains have the luxury of cutting off their own heads to provide the skull for their unliving guardians without having their status as chieftain being challenged while they are in such a helpless state.

If a troll on guard duty sees an intruder, he will either retreat into the lair and wake up the rest of the clan if it is a worthy foe he is unable to beat by himself (for example, a dragon) or yell out a warning and immediately engage the threat himself if it is a foe he is reasonably sure he can beat on his own simply disregarding the rest of the sleeping clan and engaging the foe single-handedly if he is sure he can defeat or if he is hungry and does not want to share the kill with anyone else. This latter case is yet another example of a troll 'thinking with its stomach.'

'Take my advice. If you get invited to a troll's coming-of-age party, then don't go. You wouldn't like the buffet.'

**More sage advice from Harlan the Ranger**

# ROLE-PLAYING WITH TROLLS

**S**o far, the *Slayer's Guide to Trolls* has examined the primitive and bestial nature of the trollish race, their unusual regenerative capabilities, the factors that motivate them, and their tactics in battle or lack thereof. Now it is time to put all of that knowledge together to make an encounter with trolls a different role-playing experience than one with any other formidable humanoid race. The main thing to remember about running a troll encounter is that they are single-minded, arrogant and fearless. In addition, keep the troll's exceptional senses in the back of your mind.

The single-mindedness actually makes your work as a Games Master a little easier, for you will not have to come up with elaborate strategies for troll characters unless you are planning on using an exceptional troll that deviates from the racial norm. Trolls are not known for their elaborate combat strategies, and once one troll spots the adventuring party, it is going to make a beeline toward them with nothing but quick and bloody evisceration on its mind. A troll is not going to be concerned about cover, and it will not care about suffering attacks of opportunity as it unerringly heads towards the nearest potential victim.

The troll's fearlessness and arrogance come into play when the adventurers start fighting back. Despite the fact that the dwarven fighter just pulled out a flaming waraxe or that the party's cleric is preparing to hurl a vial of acid, the troll will not let anything like that keep it at bay. Trolls literally have no fear of death, and are certain of victory whenever they enter combat. They will still attack the dwarf with the flaming waraxe, trusting in their combat prowess to slay the dwarf before he can get any good hits in with his magic weapon. The troll is probably thinking about the advantages such a weapon would give it over the other trolls in his clan...

Finally, remember that trolls have an astonishing sense of smell. They will know by smell when a party member opens a flask of oil, and deduce from

experience that the character is planning to douse the troll and set it aflame, so it will target that character first to prevent getting covered in the flammable substance. Trolls will probably smell any adventurers in hiding hoping to ambush them unaware, especially if the trolls have been tracking them by scent for a while. They might even smell the fear an adventuring party usually feels while battling trolls. Such a heady aroma acts as a powerful stimulant for the bloodthirsty monsters, encouraging them on to further bloodshed. If the trolls were not under the effects of the wilding before the blood of first victim is shed, the rich, coppery scent of warm blood being spilled is sure to drive them into a frenzy as soon as they smell it. Many witnesses of trollish violence have compared creatures caught up in the wilding to sharks in the midst of a feeding frenzy, and with good reason.

## Troll Names

Troll names are usually short and guttural with hard consonants. In the event you need to name one of the trolls in your campaign, any of the following can be used as troll names:

Borakk	Brakk	Brog	Bokrag	Darpok
Frak	Glung	Gorrug	Grok	Gund
Jukk	Korak	Muk	Nogur	Plokk
Traag	Ulek	Varg	Vrukkus	Vrogar



# SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

Trolls are best used against experienced parties, as combat against even a single troll is not recommended for adventurers of less than 5th level. And if the troll has anything to say about it, you can be certain that any encounter involving one will result in combat. Still, it is easy to add a troll outcast to a band of orcs, for example, especially if the adventuring party is of mixed levels, the troll will keep the higher-level characters busy while the less experienced members tackle the orcs. Encountering an entire clan of trolls is best reserved for high-level adventurers, especially if the trolls have levels in character classes themselves.

The Games Master can use the following scenario hooks and ideas to bring trolls into his games. Note that not all of these ideas are suitable for low-level parties.

## BRING ONE IN ALIVE

A wizard or alchemist hires the party to subdue and capture a living troll, so he can use its blood as an exotic ingredient in a magic item. The trick is to find a troll alone, subdue it into unconsciousness, somehow bind it securely so it cannot escape, and transport it back to their employer, all without being discovered by any of the troll's clan-mates. A possible follow-up scenario might involve a party of the captured troll's clan-mates tracking it down, and the heroes having to fight off the enraged trolls intent upon freeing it.

## I WANT A TROPHY!

The party members are hired as guides for a wealthy noble who wants to impress his peers by going 'into the field' and slaying a fearsome troll. Naturally, the noble has much more in the way of riches than fighting prowess, and is liable to be more of a hindrance to the party than an aid. Furthermore, he insists on landing the killing blow

himself; he just wants the party to find him a troll and 'soften it up a bit' for him.

## RUNNING AMOK!

A retired adventurer (perhaps an old associate of the player characters) built himself a fine manor house, behind which he has established a menagerie of dangerous monsters. Unfortunately, although he had the iron bars of the troll cage made thick enough to prevent the creature from bending them, he failed to take its animal cunning into account and was dismayed to learn the troll had bitten off its own limbs and squeezed through the bars. Once its limbs grew back it escaped the menagerie, leaving its cast-off limbs behind. There is now a hungry troll lurking in the midst of a city, and it is up to the player characters to find it before it kills anyone.

## FRIEND OR FOE?

A single male troll approaches the party in broad daylight, but rather than attacking them he begins gnawing off his own arms as a sign of goodwill. He is a troll outcast, and has decided to ally himself with the adventurers! Should the party accept him into their ranks, they will have to bridge the communication gap (unless one of them speaks the language of giants), 'train' him to the adventuring lifestyle, and decide whether or not he can be trusted not to turn on them when his hunger outweighs all other considerations. This could be a good way to give a low-level party a 'boost' in strength that may or may not be permanent, and opens the way for all sorts of role-playing opportunities. What happens the first time they enter a town with their 'henchtroll' in tow? How do they convince the paladin they meet on the road not to kill their new-found companion? What happens when a female from the troll's clan comes searching for their errant member?

## PIT FIGHTERS

The party members run afoul of the local Thieves Guild and wake up in a combat arena hidden deep in the bowels of the city's underground levels. There, the Guildmaster runs illegal gladiatorial fights and makes a small fortune on the betting generated by the bouts. Stripped of their magic items and armed with but a single weapon apiece, the adventurers are pitted against a captured troll,

the Guildmaster's house favourite. Somehow, they must not only defeat the troll but escape the arena and bring the Thieves Guild's illegal operation down.

## INFILTRATION

This scenario can be fun when only a single player shows up for the session. The character is polymorphed into a troll by a wizard, who asks him to infiltrate a troll lair and retrieve a magic

item that belonged to the wizard's retainer, recently slain and devoured by the trolls. Despite wearing the shape of a troll, the character does not have a troll's regenerative abilities, and interacting with the troll clan, the *polymorphed* character will not dare get into a fight with those he meets in the lair. The fact that the wizard will only return the character to his normal form upon retrieval of the item is liable to be a powerful incentive to do as asked.

Tharg sat looking at the troll, fascinated as its new arm grew out of the stump hacked away by Portia. The rest of the party could hardly bear to watch, but to the barbarian, it was just another facet of nature. Odd that the druid didn't think so, he considered idly.

As if called by thought, Norbert sidled up to the fire, gesturing across at the troll. 'What's she doing?' he asked, rather simply.

'Regenerating,' advised the barbarian knowingly, pleased to be the one with the most information for a change. 'It's name is something like Grizzle-bottom, but I don't quite understand. Oh, and she's a *he*.'

'Really?' said Norbert, without conviction or interest. The troll looked up from re-growing, and appeared to smile, which confused the druid.

'Have a word,' encouraged Tharg.

So, bizarrely, druid and troll sat across a fire, one with a bandaged head, the other regenerating an arm, and had a conversation. After a few minutes the druid turned around, shaking his head in wonder.

'Well?' enquired Tharg, who had lost the track of the conversation shortly after *hello*.

'He's impressed. Very impressed. With you,' said Norbert, not noticing that he was unconsciously talking at the same speed as their guest. 'In fact, he's so impressed he wants to stay. He's never been beaten in a fight by anything other than another troll, and then only female ones.'

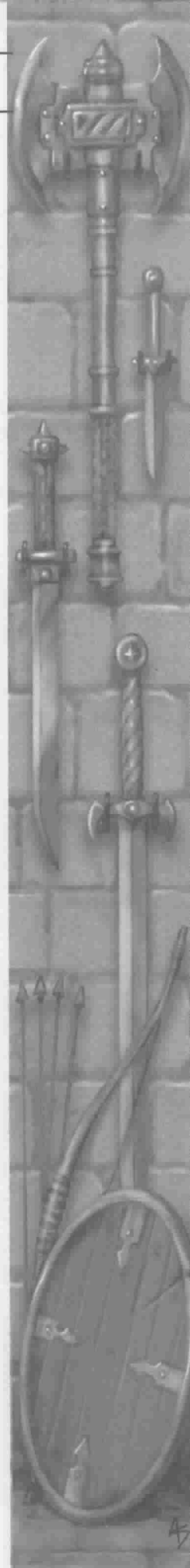
'He got duffed over by bints?' asked Tharg, incredulously.

Norbert shook his head. 'Not quite the same in their society, old chap. The ladies rule the roost, you know.'

Tharg belched out an expletive, drawing a grunt of amusement from their guest. 'What's he going to do now then?'

'Rather surprisingly, he'd like to come along with us. He seems to think you'll be good company. Can't imagine why.'

The barbarian paused for some seconds before replying, and when he did so, it was with a hushed voice. 'Don't know if I fancy hanging about with a bloke who gets beaten up by girls,' he said at length, scratching his chin thoughtfully.



# TROLLS AS CHARACTERS

As if trolls were not dangerous enough as they are, some of them have the patience or the single-minded stubbornness to acquire class levels. These exemplary creatures soon rise to be clan leaders or, in the case of outcasts, highly paid mercenaries. Even more rare are adventurer trolls who venture out of their known life to expand their horizons; these are the truly dangerous ones, worthy of becoming a party's nightmare and even a recurring villain. It is recommended that trolls be limited to the following classes: Adept, Barbarian, Bard, Cleric ('shaman'), Fighter, Ranger, Sorcerer and Warrior.

Troll adepts are almost always female, and might hide their abilities from the rest of the clan. The troll's favoured class is barbarian, as their lifestyle makes this class a logical choice. Troll bards are very rare, and almost always female. They share the standard trollish dislike for music, deriving their bardic powers through storytelling. Troll bards rarely gain more than a level or two of this class. Clerics choose two of the following domains: Chaos, Evil, Fire or Strength. A troll's worship of fire comes from the fact that it is one of the few things that can actually cause it permanent harm, and why clerics frequently steer toward the fire domain to enjoy an advantage over the other trolls in their clan. Many male trolls take levels in either Fighter or Ranger, especially those intrigued with the concept of using weapons. As has been mentioned before, troll sorcerers are almost unheard of, but there seems to be no predilection toward either gender as to which trolls have an innate ability to intuitively wield arcane magic. Warrior is a common class for trolls to take, and most clans will have several warriors in their midst.

Challenge Ratings are calculated by adding the class levels to the creature's base CR in case of a Player Character Class (Barbarian, Bard, Cleric, Fighter, Ranger and Sorcerer), but in case of a Non-Player Character class (Adept and Warrior) add the class level minus one. This means that a

4th level troll Barbarian has a Challenge Rating of 8 (base troll CR of 5 plus 3 class levels), while a 4th level troll Adept has a rating of 7 instead (base troll CR of 5, plus 4 class levels minus 1 for being a Non-Player Character class).

Troll characters have different ability scores than a normal troll, especially spellcasters who need Wisdom or Charisma scores above 10 to be able to cast even the weakest of spells. In addition, these are the trolls' racial traits to be used when creating a troll character from scratch.

## TROLL RACIAL TRAITS

† Large size: As Large-sized creatures, trolls suffer a -1 penalty to their Armour Class and attack rolls.

† Trolls start their first level with 6d8 Hit Dice plus one extra Hit Die as appropriate to their character class. Constitution modifiers apply to *each* Hit Die.

† Troll base speed is 30 feet.

† Trolls have a +8 bonus to Strength and Dexterity but a -4 penalty to Intelligence and Charisma.

† Trolls have the following racial bonuses: +5 to Listen and Spot. This already takes into account their bonus due to the Alertness feat.

† +7 natural armour bonus to Armour Class. Trolls have a naturally tough hide.

† Automatic Language: Giant. Bonus Languages: Common. Furthermore, a troll outcast can choose the racial language of the race it has adopted as a bonus language.

† Favoured Class: Barbarian. A multiclass troll's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for

'You know that trolls are thick, don't you?'

**Harlan the Ranger**



multiclassing. Troll 'monster levels' do not count either, since they are considered to be a racial trait, not an actual character class. Barbarian skills are of primary importance to trolls and are drilled into them at an early age. Furthermore, a troll's susceptibility to the wilding shows a racial sensibility to the barbarian's rage.

† Illiteracy. Trolls do not know how to read or write any of their spoken languages, although they can learn such skills at a later date, provided someone is willing to teach them, and they even care to learn. (Most trolls cannot be bothered.)

† Troll characters start with bonus Alertness and iron Will feats.

### Common Troll Skills

Troll characters have more skills thanks to the points they get with each class level. The following make good choices for trolls: Climb, Craft (weaving), Intimidate, Jump, Search, Speak Language and Wilderness Lore.

### Troll Feats

In addition to the collection of feats troll characters can acquire depending on their chosen character class, there are a few feats that are only available to members of the trollish races, as they tie in with their regenerative abilities.

#### Body Incorporation (Troll)

The troll can attach severed body parts to other areas of its body.

**Prerequisites:** Regeneration, Body Link, Body Shaping, being reduced to half total hit points by self-inflicted damage.

**Benefit:** Identical to Body Shaping, but the troll can reattach severed body parts just about anywhere on its body.

#### Body Link (Troll)

The troll can retain control over its severed body parts.

**Prerequisites:** Regeneration, being reduced to half total hit points by self-inflicted damage.

**Benefit:** A troll with this feat could cut off its left hand, fling it at an enemy, and attack that enemy

with its severed hand, or a decapitated troll could continue attacking with its body as long as the head could see the battle area. While exerting control over its severed members, the troll also suppresses the regrowth of the missing limb, so that it can be reattached at a later time. As long as the troll concentrates on controlling its separated body parts, they count as being 'alive', thus not decaying.

**Special:** If the troll has Blind-Fight, it can still fight even if it cannot see what its body is doing.

#### Body Shaping (Troll)

The troll can reattach severed limbs to its body and still regrow new ones.

**Prerequisites:** Regeneration, Body Link, being reduced to half total hit points by self-inflicted damage.

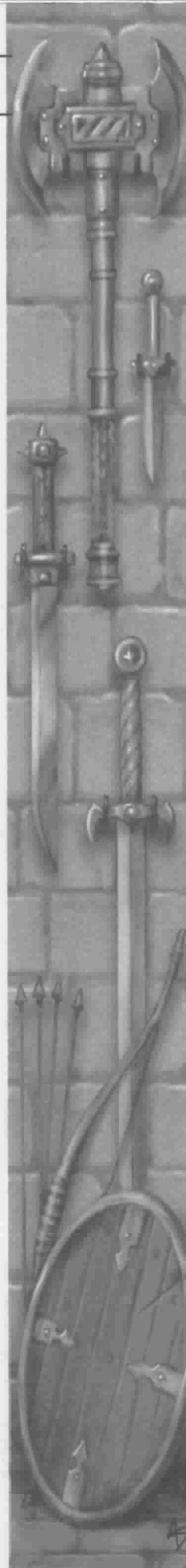
**Benefit:** By both regrowing severed body parts and reattaching the old ones, a troll can add additional limbs and enhance its combat abilities. A troll with this feat could add extra arms to its body and later learn the multiattack feat, or even add a second head. Whole arms could be grown next to each other at the shoulder, or a pair of forearms could extend from one elbow, depending on how the original limb was severed. A second head is always placed right next to the other one, facing the same direction.

#### Graft Bone (Troll)

The troll can graft severed pieces of its own bones back into its skeleton.

**Prerequisites:** Regeneration, being reduced to half total hit points by self-inflicted damage.

**Benefit:** The troll can take severed bones from its own body, sharpen the ends, and fuse them back into its body by plunging the bone shards into its flesh until they hit bone. Trolls can, in this fashion, craft sharp bone spikes on their bodies that can be used as natural weaponry. Typically, a troll with this feat adorns the outer edges of its arms, elbows, knees, and possibly even its skull, with these shards. Bone spikes allow trolls to deal 1d6 points of base piercing damage (plus by the troll's Strength modifier) with each successful grapple attack. Trolls with makeshift bone 'horns' can gore their victims for a like amount of damage.



'No, I ain't drunk, nosirree; well, mebbe I am now, but Hell, can ye blame me? But lemme tellya, I was as sober as ever when I saw the— when I saw the *thing*.'

'It were full midnight, it were, but what with the full moon an' all I could see plenty fine. I was takin' the path through the forest—yeah, I heard the stories 'bout them bein' haunted an' all, but so what?— I figger I can take care of meself, right? An' this here axe's fer more'n jest cuttin' trees. An' besides, jest about every forest I ever seen's got tales 'bout it bein' haunted, so whassa dif'rence? So anyway...'

'I'm jest cestin' the big hill down by Cooter's Creek, ye know the one I'm talkin' 'bout? So whatta I see but this big shadow down there by the bridge, risin' up like it's been waitin' fer me. I'm thinkin', cripes, it's a werewolf—was a full moon out, 'member?—an' I grip my axe an' get ready to fight the thing off if'n I gotta.'

'Well, it were not no werewolf, it were too big fer that, it were as big an' ugly as a troll. Now, I ain't heard of no trolls around here, but I heard folks tell of what trolls look like, folks what have seen 'em, like, and lemme tellya, that were no regular troll. It rose up to its full height, mebbe half again as tall as I am, an' it spread its arms out wide, like it was gonna crush me inna bear hug or sumpin'. And I gotta tell ya, that sucker had *four arms*! No joke, an' no lyin', four arms, each one longer'n I am tall! An that ain't even the worst thing. It looked over at me, its eyes all a-glintin' in the moonlight, an' it grinned at me with this evil set of teeth, and they was all pearly white and a-gleamin' in the moonlight. And then— and then, another set of eyes opens up, square in the middle of that thing's chest, an' another set of teeth opens up in the middle of that thing's stomach, and it started cacklin' out loud and lemmetellya, that was it, I was outta there. The thing chased me from here to Hell'n back, I swear it, gibberin' like a madman, but I finally lost it somewheres back there in the forest, and it's a good thing I'm a woodsman, an' know m'way around back there, or I would not be alive now to tell the tale.'

'So yeah, I heard lotsa tales 'bout haunted forests, prolly more'n ye ever will, but lemme tellya—this one's haunted fer sure. Haunted by what, I dunno, but it's haunted all right. I seen it fer myself, an' I do not ever wanna see it again.'

### Total Pain Insensitivity (Troll)

The troll can totally ignore pain.

**Prerequisites:** Regeneration, suffering damage at least twice per week during a period of ten years.

**Benefit:** The troll can ignore pain effects from such spells as *symbol of pain* and the *sicken* version of *eyebite*. It gains immunity to pain-based magic from items like *pipes of pain* and *robes of vermin*. The troll is immune to death by massive damage.

### Troll Spells

Despite their rather limited intelligence, some troll spellcasters have actually created new spells. These spells are seldom seen being cast by members outside the trollish races.

### Gunge Blight

*Necromancy*

**Level:** Adp 3, Clr 3, sor/wiz 4

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Living troll touched

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell is greatly feared among trolls, making it popular among shamans and chieftains for keeping their underlings in line. Casting this spell causes the spellcaster's hand to glow and pulsate with a sickly red light. A successful touch attack transmits the dreaded gunge disease into the victim, who is allowed a Fortitude save to negate the effects. If the save is failed, the victim immediately shows signs of the gunge: reddish welts appear on its body, its skin becomes flaky

and starts to peel. Trolls who fall victim to this disease lose their regenerative abilities until the disease runs its course in  $7 + 2d4$  days. Despite the fact that trolls enjoy healthy constitutions and most can successfully save against this spell, many are unwilling to take the chance. In fact, in more than one troll clan where this spell has been used, the lead storyteller (with bard levels) has taken to casting a *silent image* on her hand duplicating the appearance of the reddish glow of a latent *gunge blight* spell to bluff her clan-mates into thinking she has the power to inflict the disease upon them.

*Gunge blight* has no effect on non-trolls, as the *gunge* is a troll-specific disease.

## Second Helping

*Necromancy*

**Level:** Adp 3

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 2 minutes

**Range:** Close (10 ft. + 1 ft./level)

**Effect:** Dead flesh regenerates on the bones within range

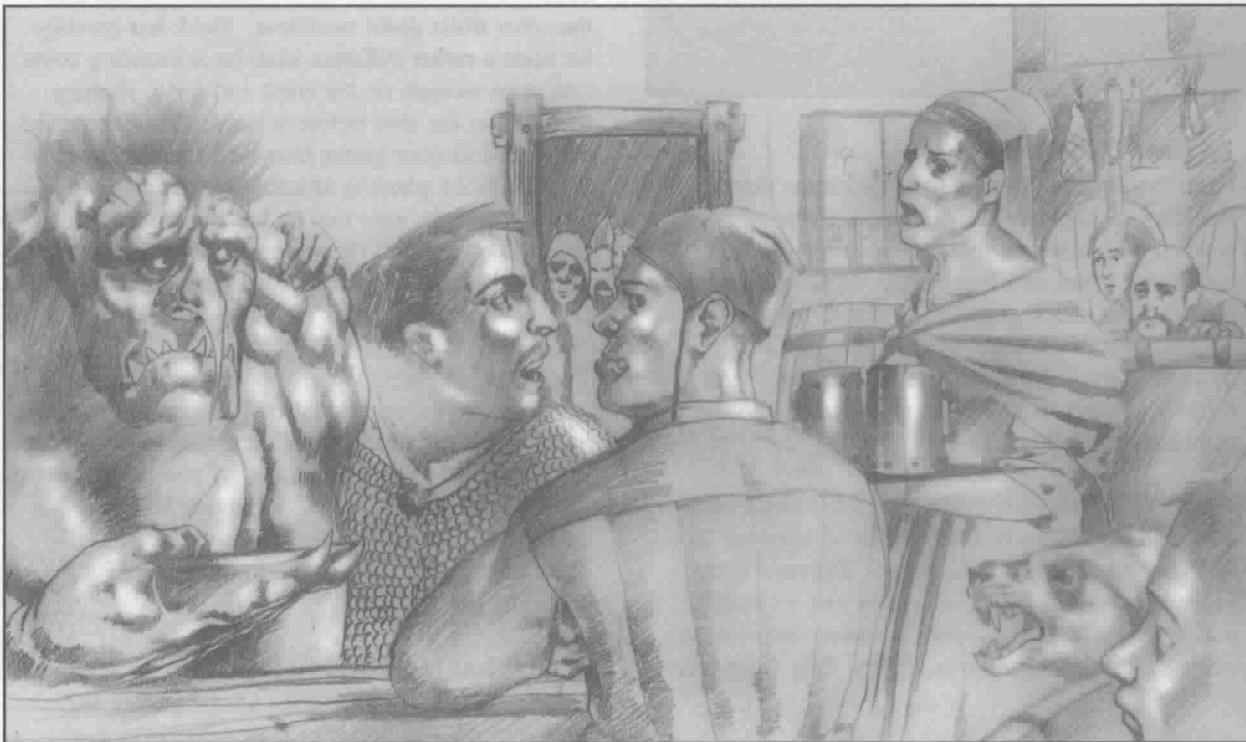
**Duration:** 24 hours (see text)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

The casting of this spell causes all bones within range to regrow the flesh that once adorned them. Trolls use this spell to get a 'second helping' of flesh from the bones of their previous victims. The material components for this spell are the bones to be affected, which are not consumed in the casting. Any bone can only be affected by a *second helping* spell once.

The flesh that regrows as a result of this spell is fresh, as if the victim was just recently slain. The flesh rots to putrescence after 24 hours if not eaten, which is generally not a problem with most trolls. However, if *second helping* is cast upon a complete skeleton followed by an *animate dead* spell, the resulting undead will be a zombie rather than a skeleton, and the zombie's dead flesh does not putrefy 24 hours after the casting of the *second helping* spell, as would normally be the case. Trolls use this spell exclusively for food, not to create zombies, although the possibility certainly exists. Spellcasters theorize that a dead body treated in this manner is once again susceptible to resuscitation magic, treating the body as if it was recently slain. No wizard or cleric has coaxed the knowledge of this spell from a troll shaman.



# AZKHAK'S LAIR

A small troll clan led by a powerful chieftain/shaman named Azkhak has recently made a lair in the heart of the Greenglade Forest. The lair is a simple trollhole, dug in the junction between two large oak trees, and is typical of such dwellings. The Games Master may use this chapter as the location for an encounter with a troll clan or simply as a springboard to design trollholes for his own campaign.

## Clan Strength

Azkhak's clan consists of ten trolls, currently ranked in the following hierarchy of strength:

- Azkhak, female shaman/chieftain.
- Gloora, female adept (who openly uses her adept spells).
- Togla, female adept (who has so far kept her adept abilities hidden from the clan).
- Zogg, male barbarian hunt leader.
- Nokklar, female warrior.
- Glunk, male warrior.
- Pok-Tor, male warrior.
- Bokk, male warrior.
- Pooma, young female.
- Broglo, young male.

## 1. Entry Shaft

From the outside, there is little indication that Azkhak's trollhole exists. The tunnel entrance is covered with a woven mat interspersed with oak leaves and grass, and looks perfectly natural at first glance (Spot check at DC 15 to notice the mat). Anyone over 20 lb. that steps on the mat falls through to the entry shaft below. The entry shaft is 6 feet wide and 10 feet deep, spilling out into the common area below.

There is a strong rope made of braided troll-hair anchored to the side of the shaft by an exposed root from one of the great oaks above. The rope is tied to the side of the shaft when not in use, its length kept coiled around two bones pounded deep into the ceiling of the common area. When fully extended,

the rope is 20 feet long, and strong enough to bear the weight of an adult troll.

## 2. Pit

A pit that is 10 feet in depth opens directly below the entry shaft, also with a six-foot diameter opening. The pit's floor is ten feet wide and the walls are canted inwards to prevent prey from climbing out. Anyone crashing through the trollhole entrance actually falls for 30 feet, taking 3d6 damage. The pit also functions as the clan's garbage disposal area and latrine, making for poor sanitary conditions. The trolls like to throw opponents into the pit in dominance challenges.

## 3. Common Area

This is the central living area of Azkhak's clan, where they eat their grisly meals, fight their endless hierarchy battles, tell their clan's stories, and otherwise spend 'quality time' when not on the prowl in the forest above or sleeping in their chambers. When the trolls go off on one of their nightly hunting excursions, they usually keep one troll behind on guard duty, defending their lair. This is usually Bokk, the youngest and weakest of the males, or Pooma, one of the two troll children in the clan.

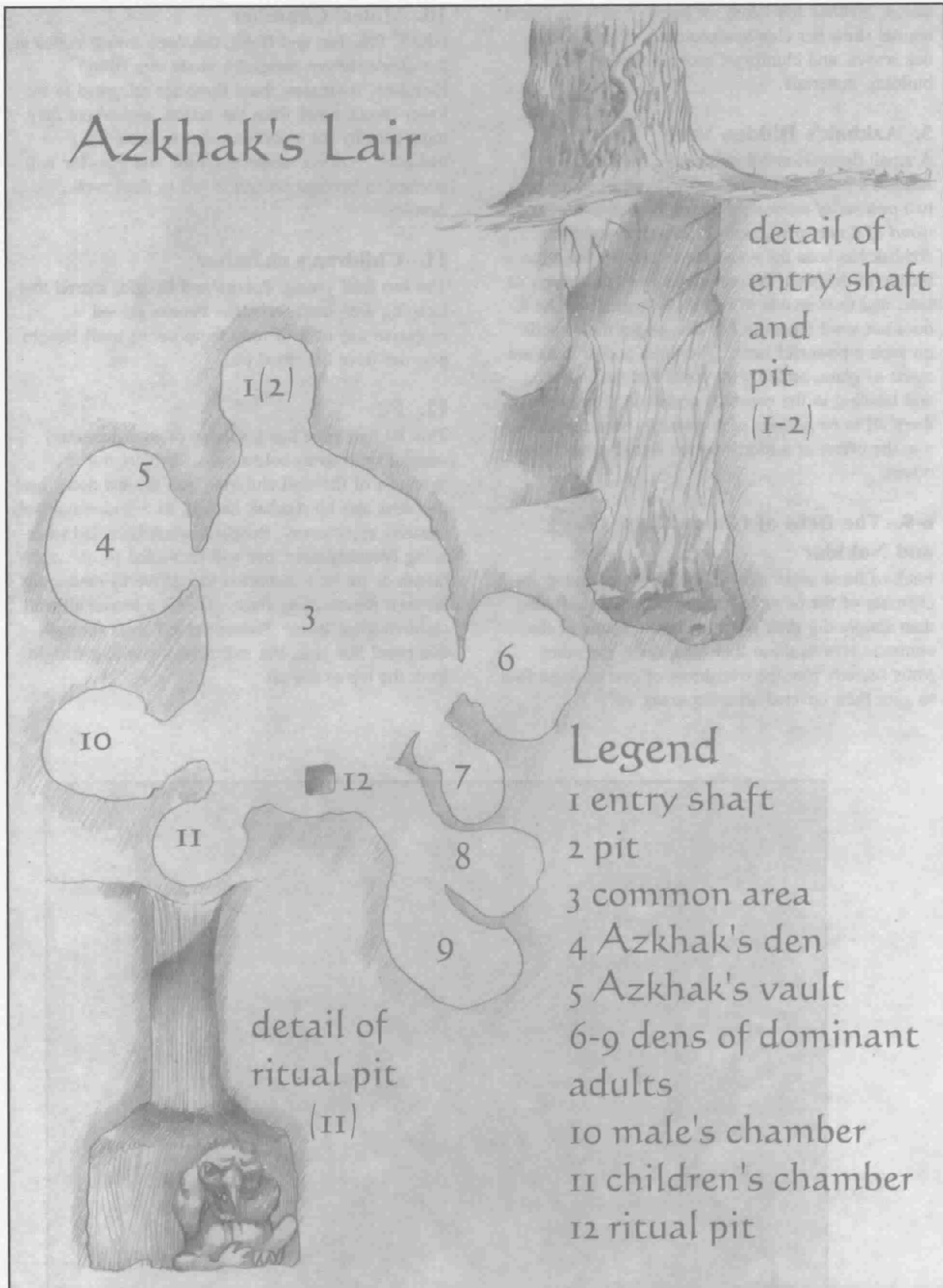
Bokk spends much of his time while playing with the numerous coins scattered over the floor of the common area, treasure from previous victims that the other trolls deem worthless. Bokk has recently hit upon a rather different idea: he is inserting coins into open wounds on his chest and torso, slipping them under the skin before it heals. This improvised subdermal armour grants him a +2 armour bonus to his AC. Bokk plans to attack Pok-Tor when the moment is right, sure that he has the advantage he needs to overwhelm the stronger male and supplant him in his place in the clan hierarchy. If slain, Bokk's body gives up 67 gp, 12 sp, and 32 cp.

The rest of the common area contains a total of 23 gp, 52 sp, 29 cp, and three small rubies valued at 50 gp each, all scattered among scraps of torn clothing and the bones of recent victims. A pair of daggers, a short sword, a scimitar, and a hunting knife are embedded point first in the walls; the trolls occasionally grab them when in the midst of a hierarchy battle.

## 4. Azkhak's Den

This is the shaman/chieftain's sleeping area, the largest of such additions in the lair as befits her

## Azkhak's Lair



detail of  
entry shaft  
and  
pit  
(1-2)

## Legend

- 1 entry shaft
- 2 pit
- 3 common area
- 4 Azkhak's den
- 5 Azkhak's vault
- 6-9 dens of dominant adults
- 10 male's chamber
- 11 children's chamber
- 12 ritual pit

status. Azkhak has taken for her own nest the finest animal skins her clan has acquired. Pine needles, oak leaves, and clumps of moss complete the building materials.

### 5. Azkhak's Hidden Vault

A small depression behind a large rock hides Azkhak's personal treasures: the skull of a mouse, two *potions of wisdom*, a *potion of darkvision*, and a *wand of flame arrow* with 11 charges remaining. Azkhak has seen the wand put to use firsthand but is unable to decipher the command word etched on its side, and thus unable to use it. Nonetheless, she does not want others in her clan to get their hands on such a powerful item. The three potion vials are made of glass, sealed with corks and sealing wax, and labelled in the common script. Azkhak believes them all to be *potions of swimming*, because that was the effect of a fourth potion found along the others.

### 6-9. The Dens of Gloora, Togla, Zogg, and Nokklar

Each of these small dens is the private sleeping chamber of the other four dominant adults. Rather than simply dig their own den into the side of the common area as these four have done, the other trolls secretly plot the overthrow of one of these four to gain their coveted sleeping areas.

### 10. Males' Chamber

Glunk, Pok-Tor, and Bokk, the three lowest males in the clan's current hierarchy, share this filthy chamber. As males, these three are relegated to the lower levels, away from the action, and where they must pass by the chieftain's den to leave the trollhole. Azkhak suspects Glunk and Pok-Tor will attempt to become outcast if left to their own devices.

### 11. Children's chamber

The two troll young, Pooma and Broglo, shared this sleeping area until recently. Pooma gained exclusive use of it, if only temporarily, until Broglo gets out from the ritual pit.

### 12. Pit

This 10-foot cube has a narrow (4-foot diameter) vertical shaft as its sole access. Broglo, the youngest of the troll children, was thrown down here two days ago by Azkhak herself, as a traditional troll learning experience. Broglo has not been fed since being banished here, nor will he be fed for the next month or so; he is expected to survive by devouring his own regenerating flesh. This is a lesson all troll children must learn. Pooma herself went through this ritual last year, but still enjoys taunting Broglo from the top of the pit.



# TROLL REFERENCE LIST

The following are provided as a quick and easy reference for Games Masters to use on short notice. However, it is suggested that Games Masters use these examples as mere starting points to build unique trollish adversaries for their player characters to confront.

## Troll Shaman/Chieftain

### Large Giant

#### 7th Level Cleric (Evil, Fire)

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+7d8+78 (136 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +14 melee, bite +9 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d6+7, bite 1d6+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+9

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft., rebuke undead

**Saves:** Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb +9, Listen +5, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

**Challenge Rating:** 12

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Spells:** 0- *create water, detect magic* (x2), *detect poison* (x2), *resistance*; 1- *burning hands, command* (x2), *divine favour, endure elements (fire)* (x2); 2- *bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, hold person, produce flame*; 3- *bestow curse, blindness/deafness, resist elements (fire)* (x2).

## Female Troll Adept

### Large Giant

#### 3rd Level Adept

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+3d6+54 (91 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +10 melee, bite +5 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d6+6, bite 1d6+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+9

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 7

**Skills:** Climb +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, Power Attack

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Spells:** 0- *create water, guidance, purify food and drink*; 1- *burning hands, endure elements (fire)*.

## Male Troll Hunt Leader

### Large Giant

#### 2nd Level Barbarian

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+2d12+48 (88 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +11 melee, bite +6 melee or bone weapon +11 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d6+6, bite 1d6+3 or bone weapon 1d4+6 (critical x3)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+9

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft., rage 1/day, fast movement, uncanny dodge

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6

**Skills:** Climb +9, Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

## Troll Hunter

### Large Giant

#### 1st Level Warrior

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+1d8+42 (73 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

## TROLL REFERENCE LIST

**Speed:** 30 ft.  
**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)  
**Attacks:** 2 claws +10 melee, bite +5 melee  
**Damage:** Claw 1d6+6, bite 1d6+3  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+9  
**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft.  
**Saves:** Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +3  
**Abilities:** Str 22, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Listen +5, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +2  
**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will

**Challenge Rating:** 5  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

### Typical Troll Clan Member

**Large Giant**  
**Hit Dice:** 6d8+36 (63 hp)  
**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)  
**Speed:** 30 ft.  
**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)  
**Attacks:** 2 claws +9 melee, bite +4 melee  
**Damage:** Claw 1d6+6, bite 1d6+3  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d6+9  
**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft.  
**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Listen +5, Spot +5  
**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will

**Challenge Rating:** 5  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

### Troll Infant

**Medium Giant**  
**Hit Dice:** 3d8+15 (28 hp)  
**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)  
**Speed:** 30 ft.  
**AC:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)  
**Attacks:** 2 claws +7 melee, bite +2 melee  
**Damage:** Claw 1d4+5, bite 1d4+2  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d4+7  
**Special Qualities:** Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft.  
**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +0  
**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Listen +3, Spot +3  
**Feats:** Alertness

**Challenge Rating:** 3  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil





Borrag and Skrung loped down the forest path, wielding their bone weapon shafts in their hands. Above them the moon gleamed through the canopy of trees, throwing arced highlights across their unpleasant features. Borrag, who had been busy picking at a boil under his armpit suddenly tensed, nose erect, and tentatively sniffed at the night air. 'Elves,' he announced.

Skrung, the younger of the two, stopped short and, copying the actions of his companion, took a few cautious sniffs of the air as well, lifting his nose high to take in every waft of scent on the breeze. He grunted his agreement, then scowled.

'Wanted bigger game,' he said at length, fingering the bone shaft in his hand. Carved on the side of the weapon was his personal sigil, two straight claw marks bisected by a third at an angle.

'Yuss,' admitted Borrag. 'Do not want elves here, though. Trespassing. Eat our food. Look.' He pointed at a rune carved into a tree trunk. It was *his* own personal sigil, three parallel grooves centred in a rough circle, underneath which he had carved a number of straight lines of varying lengths. He was considered something of an artist in the tribe.

Skrung peered at the carving, clearly impressed. 'What it say?' he asked of his elder clan-brother.

'Says: "Borrag the Mighty claims this forest for the clan. All others go away." That's me,' he announced, rather obviously, although Skrung was grateful for the confirmation. Borrag the Mighty was quite a common name, after all.

'Elves not listen,' concluded the younger troll, gesturing down the track.

'Elves pay for it then,' stated Borrag, his ugly features taking on a scowl which did nothing to alleviate the impression. He gestured again to the random scratches he had carved into the trunk of the tree. 'Also says, "Trespassers get eaten,"' he decided, on the spot.

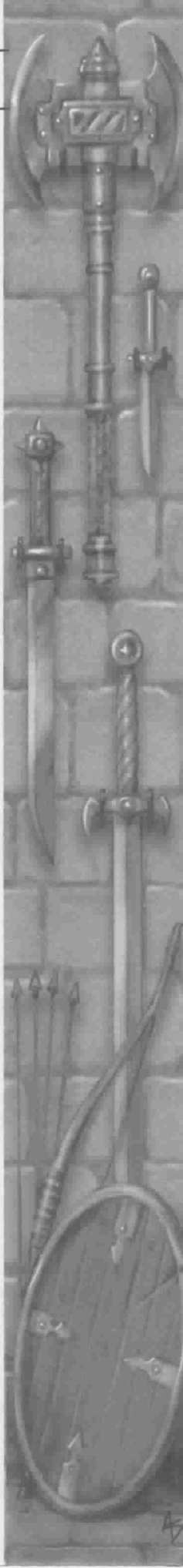
'Eat elves...' mused Skrung, his face breaking into what passed for a grin in Trollish circles. 'Skrung likes.'

'Borrag likes too,' replied the elder troll, chuckling in anticipation. 'Come.'

'Hang on,' admonished Skrung. Holding his bone weapon in his left hand, he scratched his own sigil in the tree trunk underneath Borrag's. He added a few random scratches below it, looked at it, and added a few more for good measure. 'There,' he said. 'Says: "Skrung kills all trespassers. And eats them. And drinks the marrow from their bones." What you think?'

'Not bad,' said Borrag, his head tilted as he appreciated the new artwork. He made a mental note to alter his own sigil to keep ahead of the game. Skrung obviously bore watching. 'Come. Find elves,' said Borrag, scampering off, tired now of the writing game, and having already forgotten his mental note.

Skrung waited a second or two, taking one last glance at his new, improved rune. Then he hefted his weapon and followed, nose twitching as he followed the elven scent-trail into the forest gloom, tummy rumbling in anticipation of what was to come.



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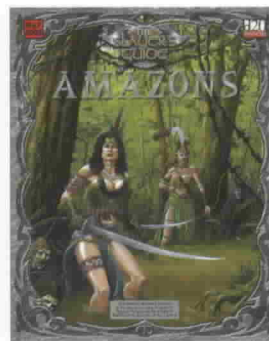
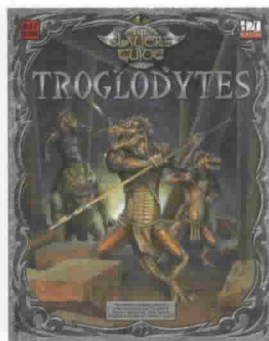
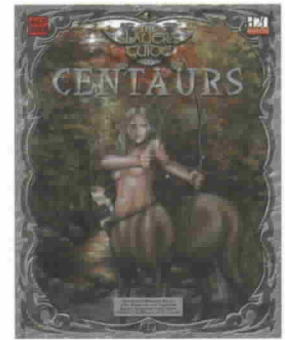
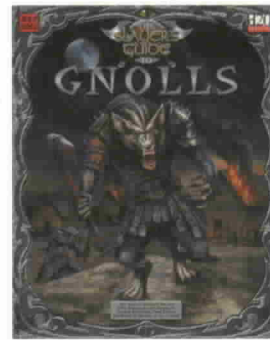
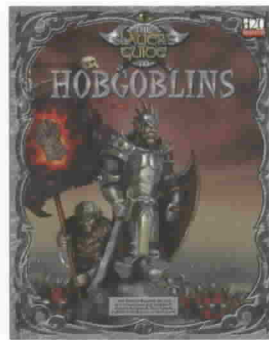
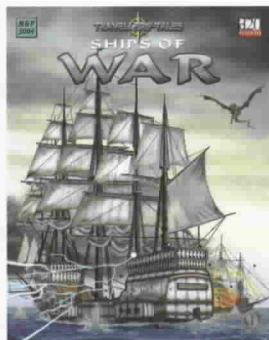
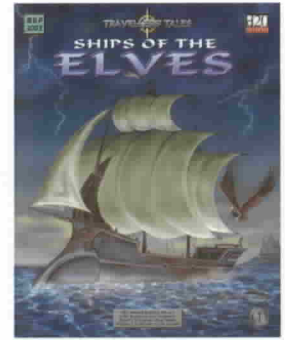
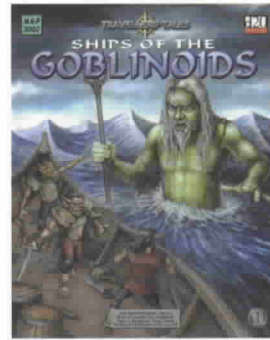
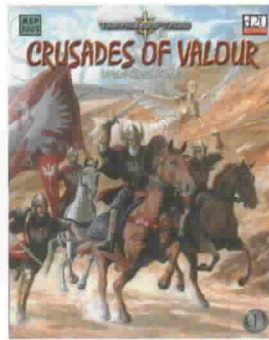
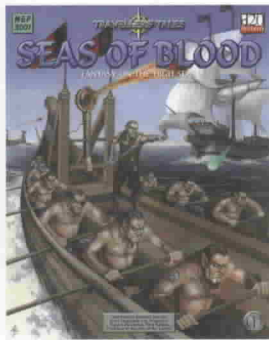
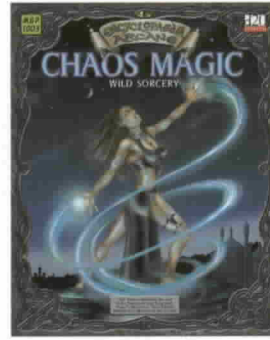
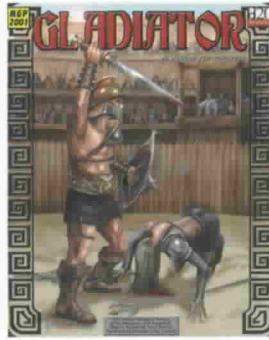
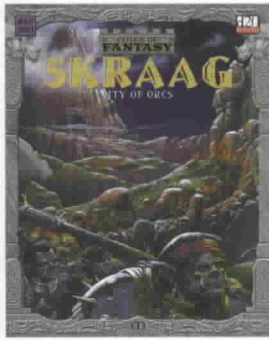
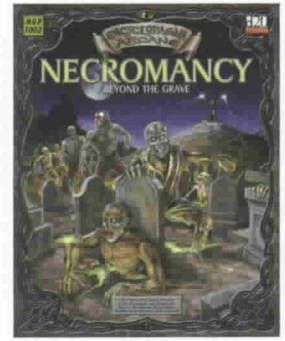
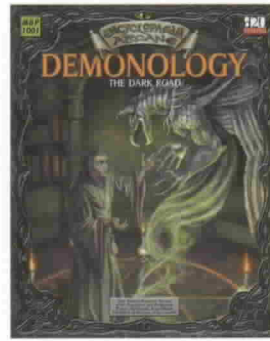
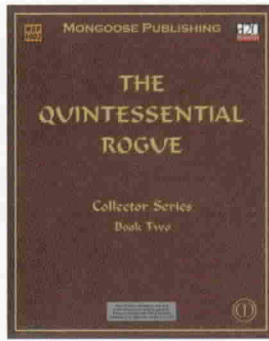
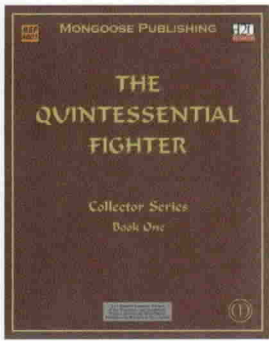
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A Horrid Enemy

The Slayer's Guide to Trolls provides detailed information on trollish physiology, habitat, and society, giving you a fundamental level of understanding on how this race exists and interacts with the rest of the world. Players can learn the types of combat tactics trolls are likely to employ against their characters and Games Masters are given guidelines on how to introduce trolls into their existing campaigns, and will also benefit from material demonstrating how to portray these creatures to the players. A few troll subspecies can change the expectations of any encounter, as do the new trollish feats that alter the standard troll into something even more horrific. Finally, a complete troll lair is featured to be used as either an extended encounter, the basis for a complete set of scenarios, or even just as an example of how such troll lairs are generally laid out. There are more to trolls than first meets the eye. After reading the Slayer's Guide to Trolls, you may never view these monsters in quite the same way again.

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