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Monstercology

ORCS



RICK MAFFEI



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ORCS

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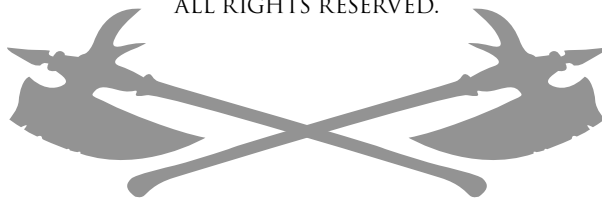
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For use with the 4th Edition

**DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS**
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Requires the use of the D&D *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and *Dungeon Master's Guide* core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

They had been warned a tempest was coming.

Merchants arriving at Lowbridge spoke of seeing odd gatherings of figures in the distance as they traveled the dusty caravan roads. They told of creatures that walked with a surprisingly fast, scuttling gait and seemed to avoid the sunlight. Humanoid bands of some type, furtively moving to places unknown. As the days went by, the sightings steadily increased. Then suddenly, without warning, they stopped altogether.

That was one week ago.

Marta huddled in the hall with her young son, Erik, her fear growing with every passing minute. The militia had been called, the town elders assembled, and all available able townfolk without young ones to tend were handed weapons. Some of these latter individuals milled about outside, clutching axes and wooden staves uncertainly. The worst fears of the populace had come to fruition, it seemed, for travelers over the last few days had reported seeing ever-greater numbers of orcs gathering in the distant hills and forest. This morning scouts had been sent to the hills, brave men who were experienced, properly equipped, and accepted the task without complaint. They did not return at the appointed hour.

In the distance a great horn sounded, its terrible blast echoing over the hills and fields. The dreadful din seemed to shake the building to its very foundations. Armed men ran through the hall, knocking aside chairs. A clay tankard rolled off the nearest table and fell to the floor, shattering into pieces. Marta pulled Erik close to her chest, as if to shield him from the din.

“Do not fear, Marta,” said Father resolutely. “My men and I have fought ogres. We have fought trolls and burned their remains. We have even drawn swords against a hydra and survived. We can put down a few raging orcs.”

He pulled his longsword free of its worn leather scabbard and walked resolutely toward the door. As Father reached the doorway he paused, and turned back to her.

“Remain here. Keep him safe.”

As he turned back, the door suddenly burst open. Afolen, Father’s brave second in command, stood in the doorway and seized his shoulder in a strong grip. Afolen’s eyes were wild, and Father felt his blood grow cold as he realized he saw fear in Afolen’s gaze. Father pushed the warrior aside and looked outside.

The distant hills were covered with what appeared to be thousands and thousands of ants. The flowing black mass slid over the hills and grew closer. From far away, the hellish war horn again sounded, and its droning cry boomed over the entire village. The closest “ants” soon revealed themselves to be orcs clad in fire-blackened armor. Snarling, they waved jagged swords and spears as they surged relentlessly forward, wave after wave of them.

Father staggered back. “By the gods above,” he said, his voice now a hollow whisper.

There are many fierce monsters in existence. Adventurers tell tales of all manner of fantastic magical beasts, weird aberrations, and beings from other planes. Yet the common orc, a humanoid that is found in most areas and climes of the world, is given little attention and is rarely understood. Many human leaders or settlements have underestimated the might or cunning of orc groups to their extreme sorrow.

Orcs have demonstrated a resiliency and diversity only exceeded by humans. They exist in nearly every clime and country. Despite many attempts by great elven kings or human commanders to rid their lands of orcs, somehow the orcs always survive, slither away into the shadows, regroup, and return to attack when least expected. They breed quickly, grow to maturity rapidly, and their talent for making war is only matched by their extreme hostility.

Yet so little is known about orcs as a race. How do they organize themselves? How do they worship? How do they tend their young, and what do they teach them? Are they all simply mindless savages?

A better understanding of orcs and their many forms may aid the good folk across the Known Realms to better prepare for the days when orc hordes raise the grim flag of war.

This book is divided into nine chapters:

Origins explores the origin of the orc race, presented in different theories and in a historical scroll that has recently come to light.

Physiology and Habits provides a look at orc anatomy, diet, habitat, motivations, and superstitions of the orc.

The Life of the Orc examines the day-to-day life of tribal orcs, defines the positions held by orcs in a tribe, and speaks about the fearsome super-tribes known as hordes and the mysterious Warbringers.

Relations with Other Races covers the interactions and behavior of orcs toward other humanoid species. This section also speaks about orc “pets” and the rat-like rhodenar.

Orc Subspecies and Half-Breeds provides a detailed look at the many orc subspecies, from the rare cave orc to the greatly feared orog, as well as information about mongrelmen and the diseased vizdshadi. This section also offers glimpses into the psychology of the half-orc and provides role-playing tips for those playing half-orcs.

Orc Equipment presents new weapons, armor, and battlefield items used by orcs, as well as information a GM may use to determine the contents of orc pockets or containers.

Orc Feats introduces new feats for use by orc and half-orc characters.

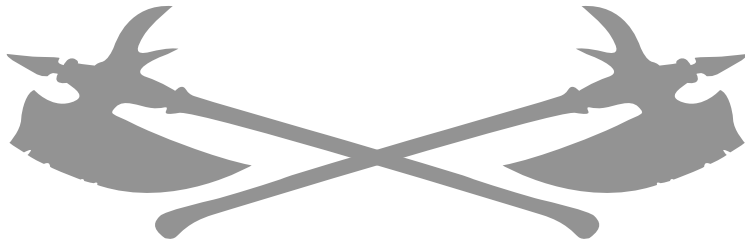
Orcs in Battle covers basic orc combat tactics, including a detailed illustration of an orc ambush, and also provides strategies that characters may employ when fighting these humanoid.

Orcish Religion and Relics delves into the worship of three popular orc demigods, and well as the importance of relics in orc society.

Orcs in the Campaign presents ideas for using orcs in various settings and ideas for creating campaigns in which orcs play a major part.

Appendix One provides a fully fleshed-out orc lair, ready to be inserted into a GM's campaign with minor development.

Appendix Two provides statistics for all the new orc classes, subspecies, and half-breeds introduced in this book, as well as racial traits for PC and NPC development.



CHAPTER I: ORIGINS

The arrow sank deeply into the wood, and the sound startled the blackbirds in the trees nearby. Erik drew back the bowstring and slowly aimed at the crude, torso-shaped target constructed of fallen tree limbs. He carefully aimed again, as he had done for the last two hours of this afternoon, and the eight afternoons before.

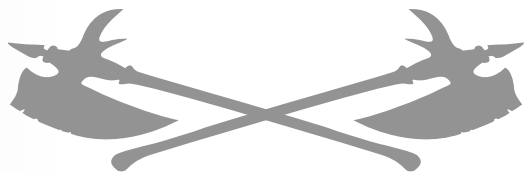
Erik released the string too quickly, and the arrow went wide, scoring one edge of the target. The bowstring grazed his arm, raising a fresh welt—he had forgotten his armguard in his hurry to practice, and did not wish to make the long walk back to retrieve it. He tried to pay it no mind.

He drew back the string again and again, and soon he was forced to collect all his spent arrows (something the elders demanded in any case) before he could continue. His aim was off today, and, to his anger, a great number of arrows went astray. Moments later, he drew back the string yet again and released, and the string grazed his sore arm for yet another countless time. He felt tears welling up in his eyes. He angrily wiped them away with one hand, and, uttering a foul oath beneath his breath, again took aim.

Erik focused on the worn wooden target, brow creased in concentration. His vision swam, and he saw not the manlike form constructed of old tree branches, but a man-sized humanoid standing in a sloped crouch, with cobbled armor, greenish skin, and a hideous, snarling face. Erik let the image take form, until he could make out every detail—the setback ears, the sloped forehead, and the yellowed teeth jutting out of the sneering crescent that was the creature's mouth. The creature's amber eyes fixed on him, and it charged toward him with a howl.

He calmly released the string and watched, detached, as the arrow struck the center of the target.

At the tree line, a hundred yards away, the old elf stood, deep in thought. His enchanted cloak hid him from casual view within the woods, and he had long since mastered the art of hiding among the towering, leafy giants that made up this copse and the larger forest nearby. He watched as the young man narrowed his eyes and sent a sharp arrow sailing into the target's center, and he frowned. Watching the boy's dark expression made him think back to his own youth, and his frown grew deeper. Time was running out. If he did not intervene, this boy for whom he cared would be forever lost.



The origin of the common orc is a mystery that has puzzled the greatest sages and sparked passionate debate between the greatest scholars of the Known Realms.

The one fact that is known with certainty: orcs have been in existence a long time. The oldest living elves remember orcs existing when they were young, and the existing ancient writings of the eladrin also make references to them. It can be guessed that they are at least as old (or older) than humans, and most probably younger than the elven race, but exact dates are unknown.

Sages knowledgeable in orc lore generally subscribe to one of four common origin theories.

The first theory maintains that orcs evolved completely on their own, being seeded in the deepest caves by the evil gods, and eventually working their way toward the surface and the common races. Their basic form has remained the same, though exposure to the surface lands and other races helped give rise to the many subspecies and offshoots of the main breed. This theory may be the most accepted by scholars.

The second theory, often proposed by non-humans, holds that when humans were first created, they were primitive, savage creatures. Eventually, they evolved into a more civilized, intelligent race, but at some dark point in their history, a large offshoot of the race—perhaps separated by land mass geography or by dwelling deep underground—did not evolve and remained savage. Needless to say, this theory has its detractors, a great many of them human scholars, who point out that primitive tribes of humans have been discovered on various remote islands and in secluded valleys and that they, although barbaric by modern human standards, are obviously not *orcs*.

The third theory has moderate support among scholars. It maintains that orcs are actually the descendants of a group of minor demons that were placed, for reasons unknown, on the Prime Material Plane. This theory is supported by many religious figures, and it comes in many variations, some holding that the orcs were punished with banishment by an angry god or demon, and other variations holding that the demon ancestors of the orc race landed on the Prime Material via their own foolhardy actions. This theory has many detractors, among them sages learned in demonology who note that no ancient tomes have emerged speaking about a race of demons that resemble orcs being transplanted on the Prime Material.

The last, most controversial theory maintains that orcs were once elves, and at some point in the past exposure to a great magical force changed them, twisting their minds and bodies into something completely different. Indeed, the shock of the change may have played a great part in turning these first orcs from the ways of good to evil. This theory, too, has a great many detractors, and many younger elven scholars take offense at the very idea, pointing out the huge differences in culture and civility between the races. Still, proponents point out that common orcs exhibit some similarities in eye and ear structure (though the orcs' features are far more monstrous), and they feel the great enmity that orcs have demonstrated for elves may have its origins in a time the species were more similar. Some sages refute this, stating that some important event that transpired between the races in the dim past could be the root of the hatred, but that such a feud doesn't necessarily prove that the species themselves are related.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE ORCS

Recently, a tattered scroll came to light, originally unearthed by the eladrin master scholar Rathammonol with other tomes from the tombs beneath the ruins of the great elven hold of Sildrath Nosassar. The thief Sharl Blackhand a short time before her untimely end stole several of the ancient volumes. Many claim it

to be a forgery, and state that if Rathammonol had unearthed such a revelation years ago, he would have shared it with sages across the Known Realms. Unfortunately, Rathammonol did not return from his expedition to the Outer Planes several years ago, and he cannot shed further light on the matter.

The scroll remnant is presented here, translated as best possible from the Old Eladrin, for whatever insight the reader may gain from it:

and so it was put forth by the valiant Oaeltheros, why were these dark creatures allowed to live? He spoke well and passionately to the elders. In this way he engendered their respect, and so gained their wisdom of the Early Days. Compassionate, they took heed to him, soldier of the sharpened sword and arrow, and did conference with him, sharing that which they knew of the Early Days before the rise of the great cities—before Sildrath Athroihl and Sildrath Nosassar. They bade him sit.

Oaeltheros emerged a lengthy time later, as the sunlight kissed the horizon, and it was said he was a changed person. The secret he held might have been lost, but he confided in me, his swordbrother and second. I had agreed with his earlier counsel, and so was bewildered by this change of stance. Long hours we had spoke of the dark ones who dwell in the lower reaches of the Underlands, the degenerate eladrin of darkened skin and light hair, who now ever sought our destruction above all things. They were truly evil things and trafficked with demon-kind and all manner of personages devoted to wickedness and strife. They bred savage beasts and unleashed them on the surface world, while they plotted on, unfettered. Their great magicks and incantations were greatly feared, and they strove to blot out the very sun, it was told. Why had they been allowed to live? Surely the might of the just ones eclipsed the sorcerous ways of these traitorous devils? We understood the way of mercy from our youngest days and spoke of compassion for the wicked, but the extreme threat these dark elves posed was truly appreciable. Why simply banish them? Would their hatred of the surface lands and the eladrin not simply cause their future return?

I dared asked Oaeltheros of these things, for he greatly respected my counsel, and in due course he came to disclose what he had learned from the Circle of Elder Magi. Oaeltheros had asked the venerable magi these same things, and their answer unsettled him greatly. He agreed to share what he had learned with me alone, although it pained him to do so. I cannot relate in words the emotion this warrior-born demonstrated upon telling me thus, suffice it that the message was expressed clearly, so I hold, and I commit it to writing so my youngest noble grandchildren—Felana, Mathellon, and Fyalen—may one day benefit from this great wisdom that has remained hidden for so long.

I here set to paper the tale told to Oaeltheros by the Circle ~

It was centuries ago when the Great Schism occurred, and those elves that were irredeemably evil had left the company of noble-folk, banished to the darkest forests, steepest hills, and the endless Underlands beneath where no good elves tread. There were those that desired retribution, for the dark ones strove endlessly to claim their revenge against our peoples. These voices made a great cry, and they were not limited to those of military mien: Had we not all be threatened by the dark ones?

And so the great echanterean and wizardfey set their minds to the task, seeking a way to rid us of this menace. There were voices raised in protest, but they soon were drowned out by the call to arms and cajoled into obedience. The elves isolated themselves from their kin and toiled a great length on the dire task. The winter's chill gave way to warmer winds, and at last they emerged, those elves that did dedicate themselves to the task, and they offered a solution that was final and terrifying. Those of peaceful ways were torn, and some departed, but most fell under the great sway of the war-abiding spirit that seemed to possess our people.

The great wizards turned to the forest-dwelling dark elves first, for they posed the closest threat upon our homelands, and they began a great enchantment the like of which had never been seen. Scores worked to exhaustion, and a few older wizards perished ere the spell-weave was complete. The younger elves took comfort in the magic's might, but the older elves were shaken and warned that little good could come of such an act. But it was too late.

The spell-weave fell upon the large forests of the Northern Lands, shaking the tallest treemounts and driving all folk around to their knees. A grim glow flooded over the lands where the dark ones dwelled, and it sought them out with a terrible blue light that shone brighter than the most brilliant celestial bodies. All around the forests were struck blind for hours, it was said, from this most fateful radiance. For a time there was silence, and it seemed that every creature in the forests around, large and small, held mute, but soon their came a great cry that echoed from the trees. We clapped our hands over our ears at the sound, for it was the howl of the damned.

It took some days for the elves to realize what we had wrought that dark day. The dark elves, the drow-kind, had been struck down as planned, but instead of slaying them, the magic had twisted them into savage versions of themselves, while stripping away their intellect. It was thought that the threat might end there, though we knew in our hearts we had made a dire situation far worse. A few of us sought out the exhausted echanterean and implored them to make preparations to defend our forests against this new threat we had created. Alas, confusion ran deep, and the Council was divided. Our fears were proven soon enough, as the twisted ones surged from the forests in a great host, wild eyed and murderous, and came to lay waste to our

CHAPTER II: ORC PHYSIOLOGY AND HABITS

The elf was venerable, even by elven standards, but his eyes had a way of locking your gaze to his in a grasp that was somehow gentle yet firm. Grand Elder Fyalen's eyes still sparkled with mischief sometimes, two bright beacons shining forth from twin nests of wrinkles in his timeworn face, but now Erik saw only a growing somberness. Fyalen's gaze always demanded respect, but now it demanded Erik's unconditional attention.

"You have been in our care for fifteen winters, young master Erik. Even by the standards of your birth-kind you are still but a child, yet you have become kin to us and like a son to me personally. I feel I know your heart, and over the years, you have demonstrated both patience and forbearance, two traits we elves value greatly. Yet I sense a seed of anger growing within you, a bitter seed that will bloom into hatred before long, and so I feel compelled to speak. What I would tell you, however, is a long-held secret of the elven race and is not to be entrusted easily."

Fyalen paused and waited for an answer, his mouth set in a grim line. A tight orange spiral of embers suddenly burst up from the fire, reflecting in Fyalen's steady eyes as they soared upwards.

"Your trust in me will not be forsaken, Elder Fyalen," said Erik with genuine gravity.

Fyalen studied his young charge for a long moment before continuing. "I have studied your actions over your lifetime, observed them as a gardener observes the growth of her favorite plant, and your growth until now has been healthy," he said. "This is why I would not see your future growth impeded by the blossoming hatred I sense within you."

Erik said nothing.

"Your silence tells me you know the hatred of which I speak," said Fyalen. His face was sad. "You hate all of orc-kind for what they have done to you."

"Not me! What they have done to my family!" Erik burst out. "They slaughtered everyone in my village."

"Not everyone," said Fyalen, not unkindly, "otherwise, we would not be speaking now." He leaned toward the human boy. "I do not disregard their crimes, but I say what they did to you, because you still carry the results of that dark day in your heart."

"How could I not? They took away my family!"

"That is true, and it is no small matter to be sure. But do you not consider we elves your family now? Did we not take you in, show you our ways, trust you with our secrets, as I am doing again now?"

Erik remained silent for a moment, and forced himself to consider what had been said. "You speak truth."

"And how do you feel about me, young Erik? Do you trust me?"

"Yes! I love you, Elder Fyalen. You and your people saved me."

The wizened elf closed his eyes in gratitude, despite himself. This boy touched his heart with frightening ease. He had to remember the boy's extreme youth, and that humans, by their nature, did not take the long view of things. Even the noble ones rarely did—it simply wasn't in their blood. He had to speak carefully, lest the boy soon take a dark path and be forever lost.

"Then listen carefully to me now," said the old elf. "What do you know about the orcs? About their history?"

"I know they are evil."

"That, sadly, is true. They are indeed evil, and they commit evil deeds, as you know all too well. Yet their origins are with us."

"Us?" said Erik, genuinely confused.

"Listen closely, my son, and accept the wisdom of an old elf. What I say now is never to be discussed outside the elven lands to non-elven ears. Precious few humans, even those we care for, have been entrusted with this knowledge."

Fyalen grew silent as a young elf appeared at his side with a slender ewer of freshly brewed blackleaf tea. The elf poured two cups of tea and placed the ewer at their feet. He then quickly bowed and departed. Fyalen took a long sip of tea, seemingly considering something, and then began speaking again.

"I have told you of the dark elves, the evil ones among us that we long ago drove away into the lands below." Erik silently nodded. "What I did not tell you," said Fyalen, "was that when we good elves achieved our hard-won victory over those evil elves among us, there were those who wished to destroy them. The destruction of any fellow elves, even those dedicated to evil, seemed itself an evil act and anathema to many, but those were harsh times. The elders gathered the great wizards and a mighty enchantment was cast, poisoning those elves with evil in their hearts who remained above ground."

For the first time, Erik saw pain in his master's eyes. That, and what may have been regret.

"The mighty enchantment was the grand sum work of a thousand elven wizards, a feat that today would be well nigh impossible, but, as I say, those were very different times, and the might and hubris of the elven nations was great. We thought, in our arrogance, that we could rid the world of a great evil. But we were wrong. Instead of poisoning the evil elves, the great magic twisted them into physical mockeries of their former selves. It also affected their minds, robbing them of much of their intelligence and memory, but replacing it with blind hatred of all other good-aligned races—especially the elves responsible."

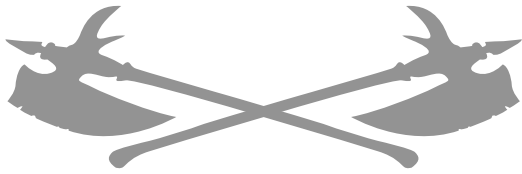
"In the years that followed, the orcs, as we and the humans now call them, greatly multiplied and came to forget how they came to the world, but their evil and hatred remained intact. We paid dearly for our monumental act of arrogance." He sighed. "The elven nations swore collectively to never attempt such a feat of magic again, whatever the need, and we have held to that promise."

The boy shook, and tears ran silently down his cheeks. Fyalen placed a gentle hand on Erik's knee.

"Hatred is a dangerous goblet from which to drink. After a few sips, even strong warriors may helplessly continue to swallow until they are forever drunk and forsake everything they hold most dear."

Erik looked up, eyes red. Fyalen sensed the boy was ready to speak and he raised a hand to silence him.

"I know why you have hatred for the orcs, and you are justified in that. They are hopelessly evil, and never to be trusted. They hate elves above all things, for reasons even they do not recall. But remember that their ancestors were once elves, different from your adoptive family only in philosophy, and so take pity on them as well. Strike them down when needed, but take no pleasure in it, for that is a dark path to tread. Learn about them and study them to gain greater insight, and strive to protect your fellows from their machinations, but do not seek revenge, lest it destroy you. Your parents would not want the latter, and I certainly do not, my most beloved son."



Orcs average slightly taller than human height, and individuals weigh an average of 190 pounds. They are born muscular, with long, strong limbs and powerful legs. The skin tone ranges from greenish-brown to tan, with a barely noticeable blue sheen that tends to give all orcs a pale, sickly appearance (in actuality, orcs have excellent immune systems and rarely catch colds or get ill). The skin itself is rough and warty. Orcs have large and deep-set eyes, flat noses, slanted ears, and wide mouths. Their canine teeth are very pronounced, and all their front teeth come to blunt points. Their facial bones are prominent, with high cheekbones and strong chins. They may have hair of any dark color, with brown being the most often encountered, and as they age, the men often grow bald in a manner similar to humans.

Some scholars tell of orcs having poor eyesight, but this is untrue. The visual acuity of an orc is roughly equal to that of a human. Most of their other senses are sharper, however, as orcs are blessed with good hearing and an excellent sense of smell.

Orcs are not known to be greatly intelligent, but, like humans, their intelligence varies by individual. Some species of orc are also generally more intelligent than others. All orcs, even the most feral, can understand some of the Common tongue and obey simple commands from their leaders—though orcs on long missions or on extended duty often stray from their instructions after a time. If told to guard prisoners, for instance, they may think nothing of "eating just one" if left without deliveries of fresh rations for too long. The most popularly known languages among orcs

(beyond Orcish) are Common, Giant, Goblin, Dwarven, and Gnoll, in that order. Most orcs speak Common and Giant, and about 30% speak Goblin as well.

HABITAT

Orcs are found in all except the hottest of environments. Orcs prefer hilly or mountainous terrain, they are also found in forests, swamps, wastelands, and coastal areas. Enclaves of orcs may be found deep underground, but they usually avoid areas inhabited by the dark elves or other intelligent underground races. Orcs dislike ocean travel, and although they can swim if necessary, most avoid duty onboard sailing vessels and the like. Each subspecies of orc has its own favored terrain, as detailed later.

Most non-nomadic orcs prefer to live in hillside caves, wooden huts, or edifices originally built by other races. This is not to say orcs lack construction skill—many are surprisingly skilled carpenters, masons, or miners—but they prefer to seize existing shelters and "improve" them by adding their own defensive touches and decorations. They are not fussy in this regard, orcs have been seen to seize keeps, castles, and even whole cities and make them their own in a shockingly short period of time.

In similar fashion, orcs dislike making their own tools, arms, or armor if they can salvage them elsewhere. Orcs continually raid well-traveled roads and forest paths in the hope of gaining objects of value. Metal armor is most prized, for orcs dislike forging armor themselves (and orc-forged armor suits are usually crude affairs at best). Humans often wonder why orcs also lust for coins, as they cannot simply enter a civilized city and spend their gold in the traditional sense; orcs however, make good use of coins, bartering with other races and intelligent creatures for quality tools and magic. A chieftain may demand a large percentage of all monies seized from caravans or plundered villages, only to give the accumulated gold and gems a year later to a hag in exchange for a magic weapon. In this way, orc leaders acquire magic items beyond the power of their shamans and witchdoctors to create.

DIET

Orcs have very fast metabolisms, and as a side effect they are driven to eat several meals per day. Orcs are, by nature, omnivorous, but meals high in protein are favored, and they prefer fresh meat when possible. Contrary to popular belief, orcs don't prefer their meat raw—they will eat raw meat in battlefield situations, but otherwise they roast it directly over a fire and eat it hot. They delight in beer and similar beverages, stealing them when possible, but also sometimes brewing suchurl, a thick, oily black beer. Most meals include small game—grouse, venison, bear, or fish, but they will occasionally eat the flesh of other humanoids, demihumans, or intelligent beings. (The latter is done more as a ceremonial act—a way of dominating or stealing

the strength from one's enemies—than out of hunger. That said, orcs that have no other recourse have been known to eat nearly anything, and even resort to cannibalism to survive.) Orcs supplement their meat-heavy diet with any sweet berries, mushrooms, and edible tubers a tribe can find in their territory. Male orcs hunt for game, whereas the females of the species fill the gatherer role (sometimes accompanied by younger children).

They are intelligent enough to preserve extra food by smoking or salting it, though often they simply allow it to spoil out of laziness and eat the best parts available.

Another side effect of their fast metabolisms is a general restlessness that affects all orcs. They rarely sleep for more than 4 hours at a time—the longest sleep periods coming after periods



GORGEFEASTS

Gorgefeasts, sometimes mistakenly called *gorgefests* by human scholars or giants, are enormous repasts held by large orc groups after significant battles or events. The event must be considered a victory for a gorgefeast to be held. Gorgefeasts are communal events in which an entire orc group or tribe indulges in an hours-long orgy of eating and drinking. Table manners are beyond horrendous, and the area in which a gorgefeast has taken place typically looks wrecked. As the orcs eat, they bellow dire challenges, sing songs, utter warcries, wrestle each other, fistfight, and basically make merry in a very rough way.

Often gorgefeasts are held within keeps or fortresses that the orcs have seized in battle. This stands as a very visible display of victory over an enemy and a demonstration that the orcs now possess that enemy's goods. Gorgefeasts involving large tribes are very rare, but when they do occur they are memorable events.

KAZNAHK NOR

Kaznahk nor is a common orcish coming-of-age ritual. Young orcs nearing their seventh birthday are set loose in the wild in small groups with only rude cloaks on their backs and their wits to sustain them; they are given no other weapons or equipment. They are encouraged to hunt, raid, steal, and kill, whatever must be done to survive the one-month period they are alone. Each orc is expected to return in reasonably good health with a trophy of some kind—such as the antlers of a great beast, a statuette stolen from a merchant, or, better yet, the head of a demihuman.

Trophies can vary wildly, but almost anything will do, provided it proves the holder committed some act deemed “acceptable” by orcish adults. Naturally, the greater the trophy an orc child returns with, the greater the honor in the eyes of the tribe. Some of the greatest orc chieftains demonstrated their cunning or savagery in their younger years by returning to their tribes with outstanding trophies. Desperate orc youngsters that have found themselves lacking a trophy near the end of the ritual have sometimes turned on one another in an attempt to secure something to bring back to the tribe. Far more often, however, the children work together—cooperation is necessary to remain safe in a world with other humanoid, adventurers, and monsters lurking about, and it helps the children later blend into the slavishly obedient lifestyle normal for most members of larger tribes.

of extended battle or after huge revels known as *gorgefeasts* (see sidebar). Feral orcs, such as ravager orcs, sleep even less than their distant cousins. If deprived of food for more than 12 hours, orcs grow more sluggish and sleep for longer periods.

LIFESPAN

Orcs have a short lifespan in comparison to most humans and demihumans—about 35 to 50 years is standard, assuming an orc actually survives to reach old age and die of natural causes. The oldest known orc on record to die of natural causes was 78 years old. The great majority of orcs die in combat or via accidents.

THE YOUNG

The period of gestation for an orc is five months. Mothers often give birth to twins (fraternal or otherwise), and each female orc usually gives birth several times within her lifespan. There is no family unit in larger orc tribes, and orc males typically show little interest in their offspring.

Young orcs are completely able to fend for themselves after four years of age. Before that time, the care and feeding of the young falls to older tribe members, usually females; however, the level of care a young orc receives is barely adequate at best. In orc tribes, the females tend to many children as a group, and a mother does not give any greater attention to her own child than those belonging to other females. Children are often left to fight amongst themselves for the biggest cuts of meat, the warmest place to sleep, etc. Such squabbles are rarely fatal, though injuries can and do occur. Sickly or extremely weak children typically perish, and orcs consider this the natural way of things. Sometimes weaker orc children leave the tribe and strike out on their own, becoming adventurers or lone agents, but they rarely survive without the protection of the tribe.

At approximately seven years of age, tribal orcs must prove themselves in a tribal ritual known as *Kaznahk nor* (defined in detail in the sidebar). Orcs failing the ritual are abandoned immediately or slain outright, depending on the tribal custom and religious practices.

After the *Kaznahk nor* ritual, as orcs grow older, those attached to larger tribes typically receive some sort of military training from their older kin. Training includes basic instruction in holding and swinging weapons, fixing minor dents in armor, making arrows, and the like. Youngsters are given menial or tedious duties at first, such as fletching arrows or sharpening weapons. Later, they are taught to shoot bows and are subjected to mock sword contests with their peers.

Eventually, as orcs grow older, subchieftains and their assistants may take notice of their skills and order them to serve certain roles in the tribe. Orcs showing a propensity for violence and fearlessness may be “tutored” by a bloodrager, or orcs showing a gift for hiding may be trained to grow into the role of longshadow. Those rare orcs showing some skill for spellcasting may be accepted as apprentices (basically slaves) to a tribal shaman or witchdoctor and taught some spellcraft... or they may simply be eliminated for the threat they pose. It is at this point in life that certain orcs break away from tribal life and venture out into the wider world as lone agents or in small groups.

OLD AGE

Orcs that survive to reach old age are usually able to accomplish the same physical tasks they did when young, though they may move a bit slower. Orcs of 36 years and beyond are considered old, in orcish terms.

Unlike most other humanoid races, orcs do not turn on their older brethren. Older orcs are respected by all but the youngest, wildest orcs. That said, elder orcs still must fight to gain more than a meager amount of food or tribal resources. Older orcs, like the younger members of the species, often resort to thievery to gain enough food and treasure, and for this reason, some of the most skilled orc thieves are more advanced in years. Older orcs often act as shaman or witchdoctors, studying the arcane or clerical arts. Other older orcs serve as trusted advisors to tribal leaders (who are younger and stronger).

Older orcs are expected to contribute to the tribe. They are assigned menial tasks, such as carving wooden religious tokens or painting tribal shields and banners. Older orcs that become sick or infirm are quickly dispatched by their younger brethren.

ORC PSYCHOLOGY

Most orcs are creatures of the simplest needs: food, warmth, and the most basic of creature comforts. Orc psychology is simple: Most orcs react to their own needs and wants, with little forethought. Long-range plans or well-thought contingency arrangements are not considered by the common orc. Orcs are selfish, giving little thoughts to the needs of others or of their tribal group. The asperities of their race are legendary.

Orcs by nature are restless creatures, and they like having a purpose. A tribe of orcs on a two-day forced march may complain endlessly, but they will attempt to reach their goals rather than rebel. If a lone orc sees a group of orcs marching, he will have the impulse to join the march even before the destination is known. If a solitary orc witnesses its fellows in battle, he feels compelled to join the fight. In this way, orcs make excellent soldiers, following orders and staying loyal to overall mission goals despite their often selfish or rebellious natures.

Orcs believe that anything within their range of sight is theirs to take, unless held by a creature of greater power. These humanoids also possess very little patience or self-control, and they are creatures of impulse—acting first and worrying about the consequences later. If they are aware of their many gaucheries, they do not show it.

It has been famously said by scholars that orcs have no morals, no ethics, and no conscience. To some degree this is all certainly true, but some scholars feel much of orc behavior is due to the aforementioned lack of willpower and impulse control—something that is “born into” all orcs, and a part of their hereditary make-up. Whether genetics or decision, orcs seem to feel no guilt seizing the property of others or stealing from their fellow orcs. They understand the concept of punishment well enough, and harsh tribal laws against stealing from superiors or consuming limited

group resources are enough to keep most orcs in check. The “willpower argument” does not explain one obvious facet of orc behavior—they enjoy causing pain. Orcs happily degrade those they consider inferiors, bully weaker humanoids, and enjoy torturing prisoners. This seems to solidly establish that, regardless of their lack of willpower, they are also evil-minded creatures at heart.

Orcs are quick to anger and quick to fight, but they also forget slights fairly easily. They also band together if the circumstances dictate; two orcs may come to blows over a prisoner’s weapons, but they immediately work together to capture that same prisoner if he escapes. Minor scuffles over weapons or food are extremely common among orc-kind, and losers of such scuffles rarely hold a grudge—although some more intelligent orcs take great delight in exacting revenge against their fellows for a slight. Orc leaders typically toss equipment into a mass of orcs and let them sort things out amongst themselves.

Orcs are not as territorial as many humanoids—it takes time for them to claim an area as their own. If they seize the territory of a hated enemy, such as a cave system inhabited by a dwarven clan, or a small forest held by wood elves, they tend to become more protective of the area and kill to defend it. Likewise, if they expend the blood of many warriors seizing an area, they are much more likely to hold it. Many orc tribes are completely nomadic, moving through areas, depleting them of usable resources, and moving on to fresh territory.

Orcs famously have *no* sense of personal hygiene. Most humanoids, such as gnolls or goblins, although dirty creatures in comparison to humans, occasionally wash in rivers or comb through their hair. Orcs are different. Their bodies are always covered with a layer of sweat and dirt, and their bedding is always soiled and riddled with vermin. Orcs prefer wearing certain colors and armor types, but they do not care for their clothing or keep it clean; patching garments on the verge of falling apart is the best they do.

SUPERSTITIONS

Orcs are, by nature, highly superstitious creatures. Individuals often carry small lucky charms on their person or grow attached to a piece of clothing or a small object (which need not be valuable). Some orcs retain a part of their *Kaznabh nor* trophy and carry it on their persons their entire lives, whereas others carry more recent trophies or stolen items.

Orcs attribute bad luck to places or missions, and may rebel if they feel a mission is jinxed. Likewise, they are both respectful and fearful of magic. Flashy or destructive displays of magic can have a detrimental effect on the morale of orc troops. Those lairing near elven, eladrin, or human lands typically have a bit more experience with spellcasters and are less fearful, but all regard magic with some suspicion.

Witchdoctors and shamans within their own ranks are respected and feared. Non-orc spellcasters joining forces with an orc tribe are never fully trusted, and are sometimes butchered in their sleep by the apprehensive humanoids.

POPULAR ORCISH SUPERSTITIONS

1. *Walking past a body without stopping is bad luck.*

Orcs hold that any fallen foe (or comrade, for that matter) may possess something of value, and they dread the idea that they may bypass a beneficial item, weapon, or free gold. Given a choice, they always stop to at least crouch by a body and look it over before moving on, even if they have already witnessed a fellow orc doing the same. It is for this reason that orc armies tend to get delayed on the field of battle; the individuals loot the bodies of friend and foe alike, and only the strictest of commanders can get the host moving in short order.

2. *Elves can curse individuals with a glance.*

Orcs do not trust elves as far as they can throw them, and they assume that all elves wish them ill (which many do). Moreover, they are aware of the great aptitude elves have for magic, and most have come to believe that elves can cast spells through their large eyes without uttering a word, cursing humanoids to a painful death.

3. *A drawn blade must taste blood.*

If an orcish warrior unsheathes a bladed weapon, it is considered bad luck to sheath it again unless it is given blood to “quench” its bloodlust. If a drawn blade is not “sated” in this manner, it may grow dull at the prospect of being wielded by a coward and fail its owner at some vital junction. For this reason, orcs that have drawn a weapon but not used it may keep it drawn until it sees true use. Other, old-fashioned orcs, simply run an unused blade across an arm or leg to “feed” it with blood before putting it away. This practice has led to the orcish moniker *bhargaden thumes*, or “banded legs”—a derisive nickname for a coward derived from the sight of old warriors with heavily scarred legs.

4. *Being caught on open ground under the rising sun is bad luck.*

Given the orcish dislike of sunlight and their tendency to lair in dark places, this superstition is not a surprising one. Orcs have given the sun many names, and most of them refer to it as a giver of pain or a hated thing, and being caught exposed at daybreak is considered an omen of a bad day or week ahead. For this reason, even force-marching armies usually pause before dawn under trees or within shallow caves and wait for the first moments of sunlight to pass before they venture out.

5. *The first warrior to retreat dies a coward's death.*

This tale was most likely spread and reinforced by orc commanders to dissuade their troops from retreating. Orcs are conditioned from youth to believe that the first orc in a large group that runs away from a foe, even a vastly superior one, will die before the day is out. In cases where orcs retreat, they can usually be seen watching their fellows, just waiting for a comrade to lose nerve and run so they may safely follow. There is also some evidence that orc chieftains and subchiefs help give this rumor credence by identifying orc individuals that are the first to retreat and making sure they never live to see the morning...

CHAPTER III: THE LIFE OF THE ORC

When they finally came to a halt, the moon hung white and boated in the sky, like a huge, lidless eye. Grishnak hated extended marching, and he hated marching on nights of the high moon, when his company stood out on the stark plain to any who chose to watch them. He felt exposed, and longed for the security of the caves.

Now it was time for a brief rest, before their subchief, curse him, pushed them on again toward their goal. The tribe had been split into many groups, and each splinter of warriors went its own way, later to meet at the designated place. In this way, the chieftain hoped to hide the size of their tribe, until the Bloodied Fist met the Tribe of the Red Lash and treated with them. This was their time of maximum risk, traveling in small groups, but they were strong warriors all, and Grishnak had seen nothing yet that could challenge them.

Grishnak grabbed a wineskin from the warrior next to him, took a swig, and tossed it back. The orc next to him grunted, but did nothing else. Grishnak was feared by most of his fellows. Grishnak liked this.

All too soon the orogs were cracking their whips, threatening a lash for those that did not take to their feet quickly enough. Grishnak hated them, as he hated a great many things. He did not know, or particularly care, if this plan to merge with the Red Lash was wise; he only wished food and drink and blood sport, and soon! If the merging brought new plunder, as the shaman whispered it would, that was enough for him.

Grishnak didn't trust the shaman—which is not to say that he particularly trusted anyone—but he trusted this shaman least of all. The old shaman muttered to himself, chanting in odd tones and invoking the greater powers to do his will. Recently, he had invoked great Sanguinal the Bloodbather, and had won over the chieftain and his advisors with his oration. Now the chieftain followed the will of Sanguinal, and the demigod asked for blood in great quantity and conquest without end. Grishnak didn't mind this, but he still hated the marching. He eyed the troops near the front, tall greenish things with the stink of troll blood about them. They shambled forward with an odd gait for orcs, their hands touching the ground with every step. A great many odd creatures had joined the tribe as of late, some of which Grishnak respected, if not feared. It mattered little; fear is dispelled by a sharp axe, so said the Overlord.

Grishnak took to his feet, cast a quick, insolent glance at the whipmaster, and began to march.

TRIBAL SOCIETY

Orcs divide themselves into tribal units, typically numbering from 50 to 200 individuals. Some tribes can be much larger however, and in less hospitable terrain, orcs often band together into extremely large tribes for the sake of survival. In such instances, orc tribes may easily number 1,200 members or more.

Tribal society provides many benefits, among them cooperation and a combining of varied talents for the use of all. Hunting and gathering functions are done by many orcs together, ensuring a respectable amount of food for a group. Raids, and rarely, full-scale warfare, have the benefit of numbers, reducing losses and also frightening some foes into outright flight or surrender.

Orcs are taught from a young age that the tribe comes before all else. Given that orcs are evil, grasping creatures, they still look out for themselves when given a chance, but years of being socialized in the tribal structure does tend to make orcs very loyal to their tribe and its leaders. Committing an act that is seen as weakening the tribe leads to immediate death or banishment. Betraying the tribe or attempting to join another tribe also merits severe punishment. Private conflicts between individuals within the tribe are quite acceptable, provided the overall tribe is not hurt. The chieftain has the final say on such matters.

All tribes adopt a clan theme, and draw or paint a distinctive icon on shields, chests, or arms. Large tribes with a longer history and extremely loyal members usually brand the symbol somewhere on their bodies as well. Some tribal themes reflect tribal actions or customs, such as the Legbreakers, the Wolfriders, or the Blooddrinkers. Others venerate natural (if grotesque by human standards) objects, such as the Stirgeskulls, the Tigerclaws, or the Clan of the Cleaved Eye. Yet others take animal names to the forefront, such as the Sliding Serpents, the Howling Wolves, or the Wild Drake Clan. There appears to be no end to the variety of names and concepts, but all reflect strength, dominance, ruthlessness, or a similar bestial quality. Scholars theorize that orcs take comfort and draw courage from these fearsome icons.

Lone orcs approaching an established tribe may be allowed to join that tribe, provided they do not wear the insignia of another tribe (orc or otherwise), and provided they perform an act of fealty, such as gifting the tribal leaders with a weapon or armor of fine make or an item of magic. On rare occasions, large tribes slay such newcomers, but often they are accepted rather easily into the tribe and given drudge status (which can elevate with time or with the demonstration of skill). Groups of unaffiliated orcs are treated a bit more warily, but they too may be accepted into the wider tribe.

If two or three tribes are allied, they often create a new tribal icon that combines elements of all the unified tribes' emblems. This icon is normally painted over existing icons, as displaying the old "solo" tribal icons is considered an insult by the other allied tribes. In effect, such joined tribes act as one tribe in regards to their tribal icon.

Orc tribes use *totem markers* to mark the outside edges of their territory. Such markers usually come in the form of carved poles or trees, painted boulders, elaborate cairn-style mounds, or similar large works. Artistry of totem markers, while often disturbing in theme, can be surprisingly good. Creating such markers is usually the work of days rather than hours, and orcs prefer larger markers to smaller ones. Tribes at rest during long journeys sometimes create such markers to mark their passing. Any rival tribes or other humanoid, humans, or demihumans coming within one mile of a marker, or passing a boundary demarcated with a tribal marker, is marked for immediate and pitiless attack. Regardless of the form it takes, any orc can immediately recognize a tribal marker for what it is.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION

Orc tribes follow a rigid hierarchy. Organization from the top downward resembles a great triangle, starting from a few powerful individuals at the top and descending to a broader base of many orcs, until the last, least-powerful members of the tribe are reached. Some tribal jobs, such as witchdoctors or shamans, hold a position somewhat outside the standard hierarchy. The exact names given to tribal positions vary from tribe to tribe, but the positions are best summarized, from greatest to least prestige, as follows:

WARCHIEF

An orcish warchief is a very special type of leader, one capable of commanding a combined group of several united tribes (see the section on Hordes). Little is known about them, and sages learned in orcish ways lust after information about the habits of these secretive but charismatic ultra-leaders. For reasons of security, chieftains not fighting on the battlefield tend to spend their time hidden deep in the tribal lair, planning the next raid or tribal movement.

Warchiefs are typically of higher than average intelligence and charisma; surprisingly, scholars have observed that most known warchiefs have some mixed blood and are actually half-orcs rather than full-blooded orcs. It is unknown why this is the case, though some have speculated that since half-orcs tend to be more intelligent on average, they come equipped with greater political instincts and ambition than their pure-blooded brethren. Certainly, some half-orcs have greater experience with other cultures, and this may help them when leading forces to combat other species, thus helping to build their reputation with the tribe. Warchiefs are usually either

chieftains of religious figures that have been elevated to the role for a short time.

Warchiefs must maintain a delicate balance, perched in command of several tribes with chieftains of their own and a huge number of troops. Chieftains do not share power well, and suspicions can run high, even among formerly allied tribes. It is thought that the post of warchief is a temporary one out of necessity. Those who have seen the power of combined orc tribes dedicated to a single purpose fear that one day a leader may emerge who is sagacious and determined enough to forge the ephemeral crown of warchief into a permanent one.

CHIEFTAIN

Chieftains are the grand masters of the tribe. They wield absolute authority over tribal decisions and actions, deciding when the tribe migrates, when the tribe goes to war, and where the tribe lives. In cases of migration, the chieftain decides the tribal destination or direction, though shamans or advisors often advise them in this regard.

Orcish chieftains are normally orc warriors of incredible battle prowess, and they are individuals who have proved themselves in battle many times. Often chieftains also possess higher than normal intelligence as well, demonstrated by a solid grasp of military tactics and group warfare.

Chieftains are afforded every luxury—as orcish luxuries go—and they receive first choice of all weapons, equipment, and food. After a raid or military battle, the chief is customarily offered first selection of any treasure or residences claimed. Chieftains normally strengthen their hold over the tribe in this manner by seizing powerful magic weapons and armor.

All chieftains are attended by several assistants who faithfully see to their every need. Some assistants also act as advisors or bodyguards. Bodyguards are expected to lay down their lives without hesitation in defense of their chieftain. Slain defenders are immediately replaced with appointed successors. Despite the long hours of service, many orcs envy the position of assistant because assisting orcs are privy to much information.

Chieftains rarely involve themselves in the minute details of the tribe, such as how food is prepared or which particular orcs have sword-sharpening duty. They leave such things to subchiefs or experienced warriors beneath them. Instead, chieftains issue general orders on larger matters—such as, "We attack the human settlement in two days. Prepare the warriors!" They trust their underlings to whip the lesser orc warriors into compliance. Because of this, chieftains appoint subchiefs or advisors not only based on the martial prowess but also on their personal loyalty.

Challenges to a chieftain's authority do occur, but not as often as most non-orcs would guess. Becoming a chieftain involves either bloodline ascension, or more often, challenging a standing chief. The latter act serves as a fearsome demonstration of an orc warrior's tenacity and might, and typically, chieftains

rule for life after rising to their position. Instances that may provoke a challenge to an existing chieftain are: losing a major battle, disputes regarding bloodline legitimacy, or instances where the chieftain is seriously wounded or ill.

Upon the death of a chieftain, the tribe must appoint a new leader. If the chieftain has a living son serving as a subchief or advisor, often that individual rises to the level of chieftain—though one or more subchiefs who wish to vie for the position may challenge such ascension. Battle for the role of chieftain is often deadly, though a badly hurt challenger may surrender. In this latter case, it is customary for the loser to immediately offer their life to the victor (who often strikes them dead). For this reason, most challengers fight to the death even if the battle turns against them. It is worth noting however that some chieftains have spared the lives of would-be challengers and appointed them as subchiefs or advisors, and such individuals normally serve the chieftain faithfully, and with fanatical loyalty thereafter. For obvious reasons, former challengers are not typically offered the role of bodyguard to the chieftain.

Chieftains enter battle wearing good armor and impressive weapons, often magical. Chieftains favor scale or plate armor, and they often use heavy shields. Their favored weapons range from the battleaxe or warpick to pole arms such as the tuagh or warstaff (see *Chapter Six: Orcish Weapons*).

SUBCHIEF

Orc tribes with 50 or more warriors will have one or more subchiefs. Subchiefs are subservient only to chieftains, occupying a secondary position in the tribal hierarchy. Each tribal subchief has control over a portion of the overall tribe, except in cases where there is a single subchief—in this case the subchief acts as an intermediary between the chieftain and the entire tribe.

A chieftain meets regularly with his subchiefs, who in turn relay orders down the line. Subchiefs are responsible for enforcing the will of the chieftain and most are given considerable leeway in accomplishing this. They do not meet with the chieftain's personal advisors, but they may freely confer with the tribal shaman or witchdoctor.

Subchiefs are appointed by the chieftain, based on a demonstration of battle prowess and proven instincts. Because subchiefs are responsible for tribal management tasks, chieftains try to select orcs that are respected by the tribe at large, but also loyal and predictable.

SHAMAN

Shamans are tribal clerics, specializing in divine magic. They wield absolute authority over all matters spiritual, and they often serve an advisory role to the chieftain. Rank-wise, they are roughly equal to a subchief, though they are expected to follow the orders of a subchief.

Typical duties of a shaman include dictating religious rites to the tribe, orchestrating religious activities and sacrifices, and supervising the creation of totems and magic items. Many shamans serve in an advisory capacity, giving advice and spiritual guidance to the chief directly; these privileged relations sometimes lead to antagonism between tribal shamans and subchiefs.

Shamans operate somewhat outside the normal chain of command, enjoying higher status and respect, but rarely issuing orders to other tribe members on non-spiritual matters unless the subchiefs and other high leaders are elsewhere.

Most tribes give allegiance to one of the orc demigods or deities, so shamans can be extremely influential in tribal politics. Although they do not lead the tribe, most shamans have their chieftain's ear and through their spiritual advice, they can often direct the actions of a tribe, at least in part. It can be a powerful but dangerous position—being in the unique position to steer the actions of tribal leaders, while being surrounded by often suspicious or jealous subchiefs—but these spellcasters tend to be among the smartest of orcs and most walk the tightrope well.

WITCHDOCTOR

Orcish witchdoctors are mysterious figures, regarded with an odd mixture of respect and suspicion by their fellow orcs. They are very similar to shamans, except they are multifaceted spellcasters dabbling in both arcane and divine magic. They specialize in similar areas as shamans, and they also are often found advising chieftains. It is exceedingly rare that a tribe will have both a shaman and a witchdoctor—in these cases, the shaman is considered the spiritual expert and the witchdoctor focuses on magic item creation and similar arcane-related concerns. Witchdoctors are respected in the tribal system, but have less say about overall tribal matters than most shamans.

If a tribe encounters unknown magic, the witchdoctor is summoned. Likewise, the witchdoctor brews the potions and creates the amulets worn by the most powerful warriors in the tribe. Because they are rare in most tribes, their fellow orc warriors regard witchdoctors with some wariness (if not outright suspicion), as well as respect. If the tribe is adversely affected by magic of some sort, the witchdoctor must find a cure or risk being blamed. On the favorable side, witchdoctors tend to share the shaman's capacity to steer a tribe in the direction of their choosing through the rapport they share with tribal leaders—indeed, chieftains treat witchdoctors with great respect because of their mastery over both clerical and wizardly magic.

In battle situations, witchdoctors have been known to aid their tribes by summoning beasts to join the fray or through destructive magic that downs many enemy warriors at a time. Witchdoctors tend to lob their spells from a distance if possible, remaining safely away from the central fray.

Witchdoctors usually live slightly apart from the tribe, in their own private hut or cave. This allows them to study their craft undisturbed and also grants them an air of mystery with the common tribesmen. Some witchdoctors keep a summoned familiar or a pet of some sort for companionship or as a personal guard.

There will never be more than one witchdoctor affiliated with a single tribe.

BLOODRAGER

So-called bloodragers are orcs of great battle prowess and fanaticism. They fearlessly attack any and all opponents, regardless of the opponent's size or armor. Bloodragers are usually among the very best and most ferocious warriors of a tribe.

Bloodragers tend to be deployed in the final sweep of an attacking tribe or army, though individuals (who are often subchiefs) can be found leading groups of orc warriors and berserkers. Bloodragers live for glory in battle, and they delight in singling out enemy warriors for one-on-one conflict.

Bloodragers mark themselves to draw attention to their status as great warriors; this serves to both strengthen the morale of nearby orcs and also to strike terror in the hearts of

enemy soldiers that understand the symbolism. The forms these marks take vary: they may consist of elaborate facial paint, special jewelry, such as spiked collars or studded armbands, feathers woven into the hair, or small bones that pierce the skin. A few bloodragers take this act a step further, wearing trophy belts that incorporate items taken from past victims. No two bloodragers look the same, but all can still be identified to their mother tribe.

Bloodragers use many types of armor, but leather and chainmail are most commonly seen. They rarely are seen using armor heavier than chainmail, as it impedes their freedom of movement. Orcish bloodragers delight in causing great carnage on the battlefield, and they favor weapons that hack and slice over blunt or piercing weapons. The implements most often used by bloodragers are greataxes, glaives, bardiches (see *Chapter Six*), and greatswords.

WARHULK

Stories of orc invasions sometimes include tales of huge orcs lumbering across the battlefield in plate armor, using a great maul to smash aside armored knights as if they were mere stray dogs. These tales are not fear-driven flights of fantasy, but are based on real encounters.



Orc “warhulks” are very similar to bloodragers, but physically they are enormous and demonstrate incredible physical strength. They are not known to display great intelligence or tactics, but instead wade into battle with bloodragers and simply charge at all enemies they see. Warhulks can play an important role in battles, not only through their strength, but also via intimidation. Tales of the exploits of these ferocious, well-armored engines of destruction sometimes reach enemy troops, with devastating results on morale. At times, a warhulk need only approach a cadre of soldiers to frighten them into submission without a single blow being struck.

Because of their great size, power, and rarity, it is probable that most warhulks are of mixed blood, either orc-ogre (orgrillon) or an extremely rare orc-giant mix.

Warhulks favor heavy armor; either scale or custom-forged plate pieces over chainmail. They always carry several weapons, favoring a maul or polearm as their primary implement, and handaxes or short swords as their secondary arms.

LONGSHADOW

Orc longshadows may possibly be the most greatly feared orc warriors, even beyond bloodragers and warhulks. This fear may be justified for a simple reason—they are invariably deadly, and you can rarely see them coming.

Longshadows are orc warriors of considerable skill who are trained in stealth-based attacks. Not mere thieves or raiders, they attack in the dead of night, slipping into enemy camps and fortifications and striking with lethal skill. They follow a credo that demands they do not retreat once they and their fellows have begun a fight, and they always strike to kill. Longshadows are not above retreating if a battle goes against them, but they hate to leave witnesses to their retreat. When they do retreat, longshadows often cover their exit by employing *ashpots*—hide-wrapped packets of soot that burst when flung against a hard surface, causing a black cloud of obscuring ash.

Orcs that demonstrate a talent for both hand-to-hand combat and stealth at a young age are selected by existing longshadows for training. This training is kept secret, even from chieftains, shamans, and subchiefs. Those that succeed in their training become new longshadows; those trainees that don't perform up to expectations are slain to maintain the secrecy of the training process and longshadow tactics.

Tribes accept the secretive nature of longshadows, but jealous subchiefs sometimes harbor suspicions about these stealth-trained orcs. For this reason, a tribe rarely has many longshadows at any one time. The slow training and initiation process also ensures that longshadows are among the least-seen orc warriors.

Longshadow warriors typically wear black cloaks over dark leather armor. They do not use shields. Their weapons of choice are

a sword and dagger combination, a short sword, or the garrote. Before undertaking a mission, they usually smear their faces with long lines of soot that radiate down from their eyes, aiding their natural camouflage and turning their faces into grim masks.

WORGRIDER

Worgriders act, in essence, as orcish cavalry. Orcs have natural dislike of horses – and horses typically panic in the presence of orcs in any case –so most orcs have instead adopted worgs as their riding beast of choice. Worgs have proven to be excellent mounts for orcish warriors; they are intelligent, large and strong enough to bear riders, and they have excellent endurance. Both worg and orc have another commonality—an intense hate of demihumans.

Worgriders are typically used for fast raids in hilly terrain, but they can also move with agility through dense forests. The worgs can be equipped with saddlebags ready to accept any ill-gotten gains. In battlefield strategy, worgriders are sent to either oppose enemy cavalry, or they are used to harass enemy foot soldiers. The riders usually appear quickly, surround their foe, attack, and then retreat before an effective counterstrike may be undertaken.

A last use of the worgriders is to “run down” escaped slaves or prisoners. Worgs can easily outpace and outlast tired prisoners, and such matches are terribly one-side affairs. Occasionally a chieftain or subchief orders some prisoners or slaves to be let loose on purpose, with the express intent of providing a bit of training (and sport) for the worgs and their orcish riders.



Orcish worgriders wear light armor, typically leather, as not to slow their mounts. Preferred weapons can vary, but bows, longswords, and war-scythes (see Chapter Six) are especially popular. The worgriders' use of the war-scythes in particular is well known, and many worgriders have perfected the act of aiming these bladed polearms at enemy necks during a full charge, with devastating results. Some riders also employ spiked bolas (see Chapter Six) to bring down fleeing prey.

When not used as mounts, worgs lair within the tribal campground or cave system. Worgs have an excellent sense of smell and can serve as a "warning system" for the tribe, howling at the approach of an enemy force or intruders. They delight in feasting on the flesh of downed enemy soldiers, especially elves and halflings.

Exceptional orc leaders have been observed riding into battle on guulworgs and wyverns.

BERSERKER

Orc berserkers are warriors that set themselves above the masses by virtue of their fearlessness. They possess the ability to enter a great rage in battle, and once a combat begins; they do not stop fighting until the enemy has been defeated. Berserkers know no surrender and consider such things for cowards.

Some berserkers devotedly follow bloodthirsty demigods and honor them and their tribal shaman with their rage. Others pursue battle-related victories as a way to advance within the tribe toward the position of subchief. Most berserkers, however, simply crave battle because of their own bloodlust.

Most tribes mix berserkers in with standard warriors, in the hope that the rage-fueled orcs will inspire their less-devoted brethren. This "salting" of berserkers can be very effective, and often berserkers act as the leaders of small groups of warriors and lead the attack. The only drawback to this tactic is that once blood has been spilled, berserkers tend to get lost in battle-lust and they forget about the troops they are supposed to be leading! Their hatred of surrender also makes it wise to appoint berserkers in leadership roles when the opposition is fairly weak, otherwise, their "fight to the last man" ethos can needlessly cause the death of many orcs.

Berserkers, like bloodragers, usually mark themselves in some fashion owing to tribal or personal custom. They enjoy setting themselves apart from the regular troops and take great pride in their reputations. Accusing a berserker of cowardice can be the height of foolhardiness for a fellow orc!

Like bloodragers, berserkers enjoy spilling the blood of their foes in great quantity. To this end, they usually wield greataxes or other chopping weapons. Their relentless fury in battle leads to weapon damage, so often their axes are crude affairs forged of cheap metal. Berserkers always carry some type of backup weapon in the event their main weapon breaks in the heat of battle. Berserkers eschew shields, considering

them cowardly, and they tend toward lighter armor that allows for the greatest maneuverability in the heat of a melee.

WARRIOR

Orc warriors are the standard troops in any tribe, warriors of average ability and experience. They are generally loyal to tribal leaders, but quick to fight with one another for choice spoils. Warriors lack the fanaticism of berserkers or bloodragers, and they can turn cowardly if confronted by a superior enemy or a display of great magic.

Warriors make up the bulk of any orc tribe, counting for approximately 60% of males in the group. It takes no great intelligence to be a common warrior; they are used in large numbers and given relatively simple tactics and orders by orc commanders.

Warriors go to battle wearing hide or leather armor, sometimes carrying a light shield for additional protection. Some individuals add scraps of plate armor to their shoulders or torsos in an attempt to protect themselves to a greater degree. Warriors favor battleaxes, longswords, and bows.

RAIDER

Orc raiders are lightly equipped warriors used for daring raids, theft, and quick surgical strikes on larger enemy camps. They are usually the first wave of orcish soldiers in any battlefield formation, but more commonly they are seen in small groups or mixed with orc berserkers in small raiding parties.

Raiders typically employ longswords, battleaxes, or greataxes as their primary weapon. Their real strength, however, lies in their mastery of thrown weapons. Raiders train long hours by hurling axes at targets until their aim is finely honed (their targets are typically tree stumps, hay-stuffed dummies, or prisoners). A typical raider tactic is a frontal assault, throwing axes as they charge, and then following up with greataxes or swords in face-to-face combat. A group of raiders have often seized a victim's valuables and moved on to the next target before the body is cold. These orcs always wear light armor so they can retain maximum speed and agility.

In some instances, raiders are carried by worgriders via special "side saddles." Once a target is reached, the raiders leap off and rush to the attack. After the raid is finished, the raiders can mount waiting worgs for a quick exit. This tactic delivers the raiders to their target very quickly, but it also has its dangers—the overloaded worgs can rarely maintain speed for long, and if the wolf-like creatures are wounded they tend to overturn, spilling both riders rudely to the ground.

SCOUT

Orc scouts are typically drudge-level warriors that have demonstrated speed or stealth in combat. They are sent ahead of

larger forces in an attempt to gather information about an enemy's size, location, tactics, and weaknesses. Orc grunts (see Chapter Five) make excellent scouts and are often used in this fashion. Scouting parties usually have 10 members or less.

When possible, scouts take the higher ground and attempt to get a good comprehensive view of the enemy territory. When scouting a town or village, they arrive at night so they may travel the streets unseen and peer through the windows of meeting halls and temples. If discovered, scouts make every attempt to flee back to the safety of their tribe.

Scouts wear light hide or leather armor covered by scraps of cloth that match the terrain in which they are operating. Weapons used by scouts are typically small, light weapons such as handaxes and short swords. During large-scale battles and open warfare, parties of scouts are equipped with enough rations and supplies to survive away from the larger tribe or horde for a week or more if needed. Large tribes and hordes may send out several such scouting parties in different directions, in the hope that at least one party will return with valuable information.

DRUDGE

Orc "drudges" are the least experienced warriors in the tribe. They often represent the young and most inexperienced warriors, and most chieftains remorselessly use them as cannon fodder. Drudges rarely go into battle alone, but instead serve a support role and bolster the more skilled orc warriors. They are considered expendable.

Bloodragers and berserkers allow drudges to swarm their foes and soften them up before the more experienced orcs wade into battle themselves. Taken singly, drudges do not pose much threat to seasoned militiamen or adventurers, but when attacking in great numbers, they can surround more powerful foes and drag them down.

Drudges, as can be expected, tend to be the most cowardly of orcish warriors. They enthusiastically participate in fights that go their way, but if met with a larger opposing force, the smartest drudges retreat if possible. Drudges are often assigned to guard duty, watching over less-important tribal resources.

Drudges go into battle with the simplest equipment available. Armor consists of hide armor or armor made from scraps. Weapons of choice are daggers, clubs, crude spears, or other simplistic weapons that may be used with only a modicum of training. Drudges tend not to use shields, and they do not use missile weapons as a rule.

FEMALES AND YOUNG

Females and young generally do not fight. Females serve a gatherer role in tribal society, and they also care for the young. When caring for children, females organize themselves into large groups to best distribute food and manage their young, savage charges. If pressed into battle or forced to defend their young, female orcs

should be considered drudges for purposes of battle ability.

Females do not wear armor of any kind, but in colder months they garb themselves in thick hide garments that are functionally similar to hide armor. They do not normally carry weapons, but grab any hand axe or tool within reach if threatened. Although not known to be particularly "motherly" some female orcs have demonstrated surprising battle fury when protecting the young. Adventurers are cautioned that females or young orcs do not always make for easy prey, nor are they easily intimidated. If confronted within their tribal lair by intruders, females tend to think (often rightly so) that the other warriors have already been defeated, and if easy flight isn't an option, they either resolutely offer themselves as slaves or they fight to the death.

Orcs younger than 5 years of age cannot fight in any sense, and are effectively helpless without female protection. Tales are told of females discovering slain children going to great lengths to track down and slay the perpetrators. Sages believe these tales to be factual.

SAMPLE TRIBES

ORCS OF THE GRASPING CLAW

The Orcs of the Grasping Claw total some 240 in number. An ancient chieftain advised by a venerable shaman lead the tribe. A group of five subchiefs, all advisors in their own right, make the daily decisions, but only the chief can proclaim war or initiate a major migration of the tribe. The tribe has no worgriders, but they pride themselves on an unusual number of berserkers willing to give their lives for any cause the chieftain deems worthy.

The device of the Grasping Claw is a wyvern claw gripping an eye that drips blood. This icon is always set on a black background, and they paint it liberally on their shields and breastplates. Those of the Grasping Claw are prone to accenting things with the color red, such as twisting strands of interwoven red leather around a weapon haft or tying red feathers to the blunt end of a spear. Sometimes they enhance the color of their shields and such by smearing fresh blood atop the red paint for a touch of realism.

The Grasping Claw has amicable relations with a small clan of ogres living in the area and they have also, after some long negotiation, forged a truce with a nearby trio of bog hags in the swamps to the east. Occasionally, the ogres accompany the tribe on local raids, and the tribe rewards them with first choice of any jewelry and similar baubles found. The tribe trades gems (useful as spell components) to the hags in exchange for potions and magical salves.

The Claw, as locals call them, were nomadic for a time, but have now settled down in a cave system at the end of a narrow valley that provides water via a natural spring. The



tribe protects “their” valley by laying snares and tripfalls for the unwary. The Claw creates such traps from natural materials local to the area and cleverly camouflages them, often alleviating the need for them to fight intruders face-to-face at all. Sentries posted high in the surrounding trees alert the tribe if intruders avoid or survive these initial defenses.

Local settlements regard the Claw with worry, as the tribe has been expanding its territory in ever-widening sweeps in the past months. Soon the tribe shall encroach on the local trade roads unless something is done soon.

SHATTERSKULL ORC CLAN

The Shatterskull tribe is fully 180 members strong. Tribe hierarchy includes a chieftain with three assistants, two subchiefs (each having one bodyguard), a witchdoctor, an ogrillon warhulk, sixteen worgriders and their mounts, and twelve bloodragers. The compliment of the tribe is made up of raiders, scouts, berserkers, females, and young.

The Shatterskull icon is an axe blade being driven down into a jawless skull. This icon appears on all tribal shields and banners. A similar device, depicting a cracked skull (sans jaw)

appears on their totem poles. Sometimes animal skulls are found surrounding these poles, always facing outwards. Many Shatterskull orcs carry a tiny skull (usually from a rat or bird) somewhere on their person for luck. These skulls can become very detailed as their owners may paint them or drill a hole every time they are involved in a noteworthy battle.

As orc tribes go, the Shatterskulls are very religious, holding ceremonies once every fifteen days or so. The ceremonies are very elaborate and typically involve the sacrifice of one or more prisoners to the gods. The witchdoctor supervises all ceremonies, dressing in long black robes and wearing a headpiece made from a cyclops skull for the occasion. Once a year, the tribe holds a particularly large ceremony coupled with the slaughter of many prisoners (or slaves if prisoners are not available), followed by a gorgefeast. The witchdoctor then retires into seclusion for several days, and the tribe establishes a camp.

Shatterskull orcs paint their faces with white clay before battle, drawing different patterns on their cheeks and forehead depending on tribal rank. The drudges and scouts simply put smears of white on each cheek, whereas the subchiefs and chieftain painstakingly paint their faces to resemble skulls for the purpose of terrifying their enemies.



The Shatterskulls jealously guard whatever territory they occupy at the time, for the tribe is largely migratory. Intruders coming within a mile of camp are usually tortured, killed, and strung from totem poles at the edge of Shatterskull lands as a deterrent for the strong and a warning to the foolish. Their favored weapons are handaxes and bardiches, and their experienced warriors enter the field of battle heavily armored.

HORDES

In rare instances, numerous friendly tribes may band together for a singular purpose. Such a grouping of tribes is called a horde, and may number in the thousands. Hordes are only raised under the strict command of orc commanders of incredible personal charisma and might. Such commanders are known as warchieftains (or warchiefs). Once a horde has fulfilled its singular purpose, it again breaks down into individual tribes.

Hordes are very different from *allied* tribes, in which the tribal units retain their separate command structure and leaders, but work together toward mutual goals. Allied tribes usually stay allied for many years. Orcs born into an allied tribal system know that to attack or raid against members of the allied tribes is punishable by severe humiliation, sanction, banishment, or death.

In the case of a horde, the tribes have effectively become one massive tribe. Such a uniting of tribes only lasts until the purpose for the joining has been fulfilled (or is deemed impossible). Hordes are typically formed for reasons of warfare, either to attack a specified target (a city, forest settlement, cave system, etc.) or to rid an area of unwanted individuals. Hordes have been observed to form to attack other humanoid tribes, and then to disband shortly after the battle has ended and some sort of resolution has been reached.

THE WARBRINGERS

One of the most enigmatic orc-related groups, unheard of by most, are the Warbringers. The Warbringers are rumored to be a secret council composed solely of tribal chieftains from the largest and most powerful orc tribes. Even most orcs know nothing of the Warbringers, though some have observed that their chieftains leave on private "hunting missions" once a year and take only a single advisor or trusted bodyguard with them. Sages learned in orc habits suspect that the chieftains meet to discuss subjects of mutual interest to their tribes, hashing out territorial boundaries and dividing up potential targets. Darker theories hold that all hordes begin as a decision made by the Warbringers, who have some say in appointing the warchieftain. This is, of course, impossible to prove unless greater investigation is conducted, but if such a council exists, it could pose a grave danger to the Known Realms.



CHAPTER IV: RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

The trail was cold.

Erik had been hiking fourteen miles through very difficult terrain, and soon the daylight would be fading. Already the sun hung low, coloring the scattered clouds a pale rose. He had been traveling for three days now, following faint markings left by large feet. The month of Coldfast was approaching, and the ground was hard; none but the heaviest creatures left a trace in these conditions. Thus far he had traveled from clue to clue—a torn piece of cloth on a branch there, a partial footprint here—and each time he had considered giving up, another trace of his quarry revealed itself. Now, it seemed, he was out of clues.

Resolute, he continued his unwavering march through the light brush. The incline here was growing steeper, and soon the larger wooded hills would give way to the Old Son, the smallest and nearest of the mountains. Aware that it would be dark soon, he made an effort to walk silently. These hills were not a wise place for a lone traveler to attract attention. A single bird took flight from a tree above, startling him. He turned up in time to glimpse the short-winged silhouette before the starling disappeared into the darkening sky.

Erik wondered if this was a fool's errand. Unaware of the autumn migration of local humanoid tribes, he had stolen away from his village days ago for what was to be a several-day hike. He enjoyed such trips, and they "brought stillness to the mind," as the old elves said. The first afternoon, while climbing the eastern side of a thickly wooded bluff, he had smelled smoke. Curious, he had climbed higher, and pushed through the sticking briars to the edge of the precipice. Far below, he could see many dark figures swarming around large campfires. Moments later, an animalistic, grunting sound had reached his ears—it was speech, but a rough speech that sounded more like wild animals grunting words through clenched teeth than individuals speaking a language. Erik did not understand the words he had heard, but the cadence had an eerily familiar ring.

He overlooked a large tribe of orcs, similar to the ones that had slaughtered his parents so many years before. The orcs were at least a half-mile distant, but he had immediately started to sweat uncontrollably. His mind raced, filled with images of the past and things best left buried and forgotten. He had felt both fear and anger, but, beyond that, raw curiosity. He had been watching an orc tribe, safe in his high perch, and the creatures below were completely unaware. He knew his safety hung on that fact remaining unchanged. If they knew he was there... He had swiftly turned the thought away.

He had watched them, rapt, for the rest of the night. He had awoken sometime the next morning and realized to his horror that at some point, weary, he had drifted off to sleep. The orcs were now nowhere to be seen. Thankful his slumber hadn't exposed him to the tribe or caused him to tumble to his death down the steep hillside, he had quickly retreated back into the woods to more familiar surroundings.

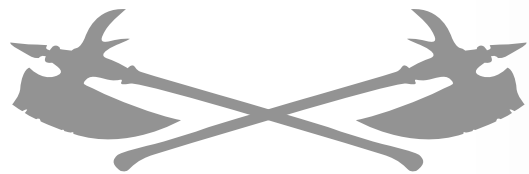
He had decided he would take a meal and then continue to shadow the orcs at a safe distance, to learn more about the structure of the tribe. Already, he had seen some fascinating things. There were several obvious leaders, orcs who were in charge of large groups of their fellows. It stood to reason that they in turn reported to some greater figure, a superior, but he had not caught a glimpse of that individual. In addition to the warriors, there were females, hard workers who cared for the young ones and gathered edible berries and other foodstuffs at dusk. Even the children were given tasks, he noted—for all the reputed laziness of orcs, this orc tribe was a humming hive of activity after nightfall. During the day all the members of the tribe retired to parts unknown, presumably to sleep.

After eating he had hiked back up the ridge and caught up to the tribe by mid-afternoon. He had watched them until dusk. He still saw no overall commander, but he did see troubling things: great wolves that ran with the troops—perhaps the dire wolves the villagers called worgs—and unusual orcs that appeared much larger than their fellows. These orcs had troubled Erik most of all. Were they half-breeds or something completely different? Another humanoid race working with the orcs, perhaps? He had so many questions and no one to ask. It had been four years since Fyale's death, and he missed the old elf's counsel the most. That evening he marched back down the incline to a more secure location before setting up camp for the night.

That was two days ago.

He stooped down on one knee on the stiff earth and checked again for prints. Nothing. A cold breeze ran fingers through his chestnut hair and tossed leaves in tiny whirlwinds. He stood, rubbed his arms, and drew his dark olive cloak about him. A bright leaf drifted by; it was an unusual shade of yellow. Without thinking, he reached out and plucked it out of the air in a single dexterous grasp. It wasn't a leaf after all, and it took his tired mind a moment to realize what it was. A single yellow feather. Hanging from the quill was a thin bit of sinew, braided tightly like string.

He closed the feather in his fist and smiled. There would be no camping now; if he hurried, he might catch them by tomorrow evening. He continued up the steep incline.



Orcs have a history of troublesome relations with other races. As a rule, orc tribes tend to be insular, but chieftains realize that some degree of cooperation with other humanoid races and animals is necessary for the greater success and security of their tribes. The relationships and degree of comity between orcs and others vary on a race-by-race basis. In no circumstances do full-blooded orcs ever work with good-aligned races—they view halfings, dwarves, and especially elves as only fit for slavery, torture, or target practice.

BUGBEARS

Bugbears are treated by orcs with some antipathy and aversion. The stealthy bugbears are sometimes referred to by orcs as “ghost goblins”—a nod to their ability to move about without being spotted. Most orcs, especially grunts, are scared of the goblin giants (often with good reason) and actively avoid them. Bugbears sometimes bully orcs if given a chance, though orogs and feral orcs are too strong to merit this treatment. Indeed, orogs actively hate bugbears and usually attack them on sight.

Trust between common orcs and bugbears is minimal, and when inhabiting the same general area under one master, violence and mutual raiding and counter-raiding is nearly certain unless there is a strong overseer. Likewise, a common outcome is that one of the races will simply desert.

DROW

Orcs have a history of mixed relations with the dark elves. Some enclaves of drow have used orcs as guards, shock troops, or raiding parties; in these situations the orcs are treated well, if still treated as inferiors. In other instances, orcs—especially those blundering into drow settlements—have been enslaved or slain in large numbers. Drow demonstrate great knowledge of magic and spellcasting, something most orcs fear. In a contest of spells, orcish witchdoctors always lose to the incredible dark elven mastery of magic. In addition, drow clerics are also highly skilled and worship their own degenerate portfolio of gods; this draws the ire of most orc shamans. Given that most shamans serve as advisors to their tribal leaders, this tends to align orc tribes against the goals of nearby drow.

Orcs tend to think in terms of smaller, short-term plans, whereas drow create elaborate schemes that may take years to fully develop (as befits their long lifespans); in the simplest psychological terms, orc and drow are not socialized in the same mindset. This lack of common goals leads to situations where orcs may assist the dark elves for their own reasons or short-term gains, but they rarely have a greater stake in drow machinations. Drow relentlessly involve themselves in the politics of both their own houses and the underworld itself, and this concept is foreign to humanoids that simply steal what resources they require to live from day to day.

It is also worth mentioning that the very nature of the drow and their origins has helped set the stage for the odd, always changing relationship between the races. Orcs hate elves above all things, and drow are elves of a type, so most orcs have an inner loathing for the dark elves, their architecture, and their art. At the same time, drow themselves have an intense hatred of the surface elves and continually plot against them, giving orcs and drow a mutual enemy they both despise. Orcs are hard pressed to find another race that hates good elves more than they, but drow may well hold that position. This leads to many confused emotions when orcs enter into relations with drow groups.

GIANT-KIND

Giants accept feral trolls, ogrillons, and otrollons into their ranks with some minor suspicions, but they do accept them. The other orc races, including orogs, typically are drafted into forced servitude if they come into contact with giants... or they are simply driven away.

Grunts, due to their relatively diminutive and cowardly nature, take to slavery better than all other orcs and sometimes gladly join the ranks of giants for the sake of security (especially in areas or terrain the orcs consider dangerous). In these cases, the lesser orcs may serve faithfully for months or years before their rebellious nature asserts itself, and they either revolt or desert. Such rebellions are not always violent, and sometimes rebellions are not bids for freedom but rather a way to achieve better food, treatment, shelter, and other necessary resources. Sages do not yet understand the reasons, but grunts are most commonly found in the servitude of hill giants beyond other giant species.

GNOLLS

Orcs get along passably well with gnolls. Gnoll and orc tribes may occasionally work together when traveling the same path through wilderness terrain, but some mild suspicion is always evident.

In such cooperative instances, the races do not mix—rather the tribes camp a distance apart, each post guards, and minor crimes (such as stealing items from the other race) are likely unless steps are taken to prevent them.

On rare occasions, a warlord of great ability may form an army of orc and gnoll warriors, but the races still stay separate, and even smaller patrol units are usually all-orc or all-gnoll in composition. The only time the races inhabit the same immediate territory is during missile weapon practice or when actually carrying out an assault.

GOBLINS

Orcs actually like goblins to some degree, but this “like” largely stems from the fact that they enjoy bullying the smaller race. Open hostilities or violence does not normally break out, but orcs happily shove goblins about or even draft them as slaves if possible. Unless the goblins attack or do something rash, orcs work with such creatures as they encounter them, provided the orcs receive a greater share of goods from any mutual enterprise undertaken.

In cases of slavery, goblins are used as servants, assistants for orc leaders and commanders, or for stationary guard duty. (If the latter, the guard duty will be in a controlled area deep inside orcish tribal territory to prevent the slaves from simply deserting their posts for the freedom of the outside world.) If

rebellious or disobedient, goblins face the same punishments as most orc slaves—imprisonment, torture, or death.

Goblins, slaves or otherwise, that show “proper respect to their orcish masters” are harassed and verbally denigrated, but are provided proper shares of food and furnished with suitable equipment (though slaves are rarely given good arms, even if on guard duty somewhere).

HOBGOBLINS

Hobgoblins are treated very similarly by orcs as gnolls are, which is to say they are almost treated as equals. Hobgoblins are psychically large enough that orcs rarely bully them, but insults and challenges are freely exchanged. Aware of the higher level of military organization hobgoblins possess, orcs refrain from battlefield challenges and prefer that combat versus hobgoblins take place on favored terrain or with favored numbers.

Orc tribes sometimes travel with hobgoblin tribes (and usually the omni-present goblins as well), exchanging food and tools between groups. Hobgoblins and orcs readily exchange information about local creatures and threats, but they do not go into combat as a mixed force. The chaotic nature of a typical orc’s fighting style is contrary to the ultra-organized, well-drilled battlefield maneuvers used by hobgoblin soldiers; in full-scale combat situations, this can lead to disaster if an attacking force is comprised of both races. Both orcs and hobgoblins, perhaps due to tales of past failures, seem to realize that cooperation cannot extend to the field of battle.

KOBOLDS

The relationship between orcs and kobolds is a tenuous one. Orcs relish bullying creatures weaker than they, and kobolds, because of their diminutive stature, are well suited to this role. Orcs treat kobold slaves badly, sometimes killing them for minor offenses, such as talking out of turn, and they work the smaller humanoids unceasingly. Kobolds that are not slaves, but have merely joined the tribe (either through a tribal partnership or working in a more mercenary role) are not treated much better. In either case, the kobolds are given the dirtiest, most thankless tasks and are given only small shares of anything gained in raids and similar ventures.

Mercenary kobolds working with an orc tribe of their own free will are often employed as tribal scouts, moving ahead of the main group and sending lone runners sneaking back to the tribal leaders with information. Most kobolds prefer this role, as they gain the security of being close to the tribe without having to subject themselves to the constant abuse incurred when they are within the ranks. Kobolds serving alongside orcish soldiers usually desert after a few weeks of service. There have been recorded instances of

kobolds acting as assistants or messengers for orc chieftains or subchiefs, and in these cases, the tiny humanoids are treated better, rewarded better, and they tend to stay with the tribe for much longer periods of time.

OGRES

Orcs and ogres get along surprisingly well under most circumstances. Ogres are too dumb to be very demanding and tend to forget slights, and the orcs appreciate having the strength of the ogres on their side of a conflict, and somehow the two races co-exist well. Very often, a single ogre or a pair will join an orc tribe for a time, sharing shelter, food, and loot. Ogres that faithfully serve at the side of the tribe in hard times are “adopted” by the tribe and even given the tribal colors to wear or are tattooed with the tribal symbol.

For ogres, joining an orc tribe can be a comfortable arrangement. In exchange for serving as a guard or participating in the occasional brawl, they gain the security of being a part of the tribe. Ogres always prefer being led to good raiding spots, and they prefer to follow tribal strategies than invent their own.

Needless to say, ogres and ogrillons get along well, and much goodwill extends between the two species.

SCALYFOLK

All orcs, especially feral orcs and otrollons, despise lizardmen. Orcs have a bloody history of warfare with these scaled humanoids, and the orcs often come out worse for the wear when facing even-numbered opposition. The scalyfolk are extremely territorial and have proved themselves masters of fighting in swampy or flooded environments. The orcs have learned to give them begrudging respect after years of hard experience. The xenophobic lizardmen also tend toward a decidedly neutral outlook, caring most that they conduct their own affairs without interference, and this conflicts with the selfish, evil-minded orcish outlook.

All but the strongest orc tribes avoid lizardman territory if possible, and the more experienced orc leaders recognize the tribal markers and cairns of the scaly folk. Sages have noted that in cases where an orc tribe tries to simply “bully through” lizardmen-held areas, the result has nearly always been a fierce, bloody conflict with great losses on both sides. Most orc chieftains, despite their great pride, make the decision to steer their tribes toward more vulnerable areas, where there is something to be gained from a possible conflict—with the exception of metal weapons, lizardmen have little orcs want. Lizardmen also tend to keep ferocious pets suited to their home terrain—huge alligators, drakes, and worse—further adding to the possible danger. For the orcs, the possible gains simply aren’t worth their coming into conflict with these creatures and their pets.

Orcs also regard troglodytes with caution. As a rule, orc and trogs are almost evenly matched in combat, and orcs are actually more sophisticated in their tactics and scouting techniques, yet troglodytes have an instinctual love of cruelty and torture that give even most orcs pause. Trogs display another difference—if they win a battle against orcs they usually eat the losers. Cave orcs and otrollons lairing deep underground are usually able to repel trog raids and fend off the creatures when their territories overlap, but surface orcs move through the Underlands with a greater degree of vigilance. Orc groups carrying metal weapons are sometimes the targets of trog raids, because of the great desire trogs have for forged weapons. Luckily, the keen orcish sense of smell usually alerts them to the presence of nearby trogs before the creatures can mount an ambush. If clued in to the presence of trogs, smaller orc groups avoid them completely or attempt parley (usually by tossing them an old sword or two in exchange for information). Larger or more powerful orc groups simply stage their own counter-ambushes and take their chances, trusting that their experienced warriors can win the day.

As with lizardmen, the primitive troglodytes have very little orcs find valuable (indeed they have even less), so orcish raids into troglodyte areas are usually motivated by security or territory concerns rather than a quest for easy plunder. Orcs learning of nearby trog settlements often exterminate the trogs completely, if possible, rather than risk having these dangerous, unpredictable creatures nearby.

TROLLS

Trolls are hated and feared by orcs, save for otrollons and feral orcs. Tribes encountering lone trolls usually attempt to slay them or drive them far away from tribal territory. If trolls are encountered in greater numbers, orcs carrying torches and flasks of pitch set troll nests alight and hope to defeat them with fire. Barring that, orcs sometimes overwhelm a troll with greater numbers, hack it apart, and carry the pieces to a waiting bonfire. (Orcs are all too aware of trolls' regenerative properties and are knowledgeable about the effectiveness of fire as a weapon against them.)

Orc-troll half-breeds and feral orcs get along reasonably well with trolls, assuming that the cohabitation doesn't last more than a few weeks (after which, tempers sometimes flame into physical fighting).

OTHER ORCS

Individual orcs, especially members of the cave, feral, and grunt subspecies, tend to get along well. Lone individuals band together to find food, seize shelter, go raiding, and protect themselves from attackers. Orc tribes however, are a very different matter.

As a rule, orc tribes are territorial and fiercely proud of their clan theme. Although most orc tribes are allied with at least one local tribe, they are usually enemies with *several* nearby tribes. Rival tribes meeting in the open immediately fall into deadly fighting unless a leader or leaders of truly exceptional personal charisma are on hand to stem the violence. These fights rarely escalate into full-fledged conflicts, but it is not uncommon for several deaths to result before the “losing” tribe saunters off, hurling insults at the victors as they depart.

In cases where one tribe has committed a major offense against the other, a *chagzar tadk* is said to be in place: a blood feud. In these instances, which are uncommon, a great enmity exists between tribes. Children are raised to hate members of the enemy tribe and are taught to recognize the unique icon and dress of their rivals. Members of tribes in a *chagzar tadk* attack each other once the opposing tribal icon is sighted. Battle is deadly, and every attempt is made to exterminate all members of the rival tribe, including women and children. No attempt is made to take prisoners, hostages, or slaves.

Offenses that may trigger a *chagzar tadk* are the assassination of a chieftain, subchief, or influential shaman; desecration of numerous tribal totems, the slaughter of unguarded women or children; or switching sides against the tribe in question on the battlefield. Such rivalries usually end with one tribe slaughtering the other.

PETS

Orcs are happy to keep “pets” that serve as tribal guards or that keep them amused. Creatures seen keeping company with orcs include basilisks, bears, carrion crawlers, chimeras, destrachan, gricks, hook horrors, oozes, otyughs, owlbeats, rats, rhodenar, ropers, snakes, stirges, worgs, and wyverns.

The more intelligent creatures listed above, such as destrachan and chimeras, often serve more as partners than pets, demanding an equal share of treasure, food, and other resources acquired. The more mindless creatures—carrion crawlers, oozes, and stirges—are simply fed and tended by the orcs, and the orcs take care to confine them to certain areas of the tribal lair.

Worgs are too intelligent to be kept as pets in the traditional sense, but they share common values with orcs and are often happy to cooperate and even cohabitate with orc tribes. For the worg, it can be a good arrangement, coupling the security of being surrounded by orc soldiers with hosts that are happy to allow it meals of human flesh. The orcs, in turn, gain ferocious guards with keen senses that may double at times as steeds. Like goblins, some orc leaders have learned to ride and master guulworgs, but this is uncommon and goblins are still considered the masters at training these evil beasts.

RHODENAR

Rhodenar (singular and plural) are beasts that resemble enormous rats more than any other animal, but they are not related to rodents directly. The average rhodenar stands 4 feet in height and weighs approximately 60 pounds. As mentioned they resemble great rats, but they are hairless except for a puff of fur at the end of their tails. These creatures possess six legs, and they can keep a rapid pace for long periods of time. Their skin is a greasy, translucent shade of gray, through which veins may be clearly seen. Rhodenar always appear somewhat emaciated; even when well fed, their ribs can be seen and their limbs look rather scrawny. Despite this appearance, rhodenar are muscular and supple, able to climb, swim, and wriggle through tight areas easily. Rarely, mutations of rhodenar have been observed; these horrid creatures have one or more additional heads and usually additional tails as well, but they tend to have shorter lifespan than average rhodenar.

Rhodenar are evil creatures possessing a nervous, restless energy and a deep malicious nature that leads them to kill smaller animals for sport or spoil food they cannot consume in one sitting (somewhat in the nature of wolverines). Cowardly at heart, rhodenar tend to flee if confronted with tough opposition. They are easily spooked by fire or displays of colorful or loud magic.

Rhodenar

Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

XP 150

Initiative +5**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision**HP** 49; **Bloodied** 24**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 16; **Reflex** 14; **Will** 13**Speed** 8, climb 4

⊕ **Diseased Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 +3 damage, and the target contracts hobbles (see below).

Combat Advantage

The rhodenar gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the rhodenar's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** —**Str** 16 (+4)**Dex** 14 (+3)**Wis** 10 (+1)**Con** 17 (+4)**Int** 3 (-3)**Cha** 6 (-1)

Advanced Rhodenar

Level 3 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

XP 300

Initiative +5**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision**HP** 98; **Bloodied** 49**AC** 19; **Fortitude** 18; **Reflex** 16; **Will** 13**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 8, climb 4**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Diseased Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 +3 damage, and the target contracts hobbles (see below).

Combat Advantage

The rhodenar gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the rhodenar's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** —**Str** 16 (+4)**Dex** 14 (+3)**Wis** 10 (+1)**Con** 17 (+4)**Int** 3 (-3)**Cha** 6 (-1)

Hobbles

Level 2 Disease

Victims of hobbles suffer from swelling of the extremities, tenderness of the feet, and joint pain. Walking becomes uncomfortable and running painful (if not impossible) as the disease progresses.

Attack: +5 vs. Fortitude**Endurance** improve DC 19, maintain DC 15, worsen DC 14 or lower

Target is cured



Initial Effect: The target suffers a -1 penalty to Initiative.



The target's speed is reduced by 1 until cured.



Final State: The target's speed is reduced by 2.

CHAPTER V: ORC SUBSPECIES & HALF-BLOODS

Grishnak watched his prey, secure in the knowledge that his position was well hidden from casual view.

Grishnak had sat on the same tree limb for hours, its hated bark tearing his skin, hoping that his prey would pass along the worn forest trail below. He had not been disappointed. Eventually, he saw a man come into view below. The man's arrival was so silent—unlike the loud, clomping arrival of most men warmakers—that he had nearly fallen into a short slumber when the figure walked beneath him.

The man below dwelled a moment beneath Grishnak, unfurling a paper from a tube and studying it. The paper had pictures of trees and hills and lines, as well as some man-words that meant nothing to Grishnak. Words were for priests and blades were for warriors, his subchief always said.

After what seemed a long time to study words, the man quickly rolled up the paper and stowed it away in his pack. The man looked around suddenly, and Grishnak silently held his breath. The man-walker couldn't see him, not Grishnak. It wasn't possible. A thin line of sweat ran down the side of his face, and he licked the saltiness from his cheek with a single darting swipe of his tongue. He grimly held his position, gripping the tree limb tightly with both hands. Soon the man below seemed to relax and took a sip from his odd-looking waterskin. At this, Grishnak relaxed. Soon that waterskin would be his, along with any shiny-shinies, and anything else of value the man-walker below carried with him.

Grishnak eased the bow from his back, calm in the knowledge that he hadn't been spotted. He was a sneaky one, clever Grishnak, a master at not being seen. Many times he had surprised his prey, shooting them with his powerful bow or drawing their blood with his cruel blade before they even knew he was near. He gripped his bow tighter. So it would be with this one.

The man below appeared to be very relaxed to be in the wild hills alone. This was unusual, for he was a mere man-child, Grishnak saw now. Grishnak knew that men, hate them, lived terribly long lives—many, many winters, it was said, unless something cut their lifelines short. At this last thought, Grishnak smiled. He had sent a great many men to meet their cowardly man-gods, if men believed in such things. He firmly believed they did, for many of his prisoners over the years had uttered what may have been pathetic prayers before meeting their fate.

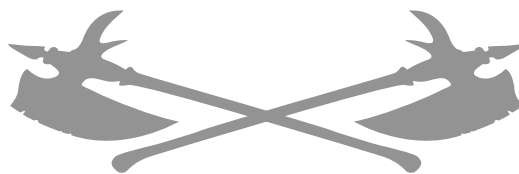
This man had been following his tribe for days now, but Grishnak sniffed him out. How long had he been observing the tribe? Grishnak didn't wish to dwell on it. Not long, to be sure, for the worgs would have howled a warning. Still, the man-child was terribly clever. He moved silently, like a wolf, and he dressed as the elves did, hate them all most. The man's dark green cloak blended in with the leaves and shadowed trees well.

Why did this man follow them? Why had he not attacked? Some of Grishnak's fellows were camped in the hills nearby, and even now the smell of their cooking fires reached his eager nostrils, so it was possible the man-cub smelled it as well. Grishnak knew of scouts, of course, and of the dread longshadows and their shadow-walking ways, but why would a man-cub follow the tribe for so long? Why was he so relaxed if he knew they were here? There was no trace of any man-army about. Man-armies were such obvious things, with their wagons and their fires, love it, and their camps and noise and sweet smell of man-sweat.

Grishnak silently drew a black-feathered arrow from his quiver and nocked the arrow on his shortbow.

There were no answers to be found below, he felt. This man would die and take his mysteries with him. Perhaps if Grishnak drank the man's blood, he would know the man's heart. Grishnak smiled his churlish grin again, revealing a single jutting fang from one side of his mouth. He very much liked this last idea.

Grishnak leaned forward slightly on the branch and slowly drew back the arrow. He sighted the barbed arrowhead on the center of man's muscular back and prepared to release.



Orcs intermingle and breed with numerous other species, and this intermingling of bloodlines has created numerous subspecies of the primary orc species. In addition to the humanoid recognized as the “common” orc, there are three principal species of orc-kind: the feral or “woodland” orc, the lesser orc (or grunt), and the greater orc (or orog). There are also some orcs of mixed blood that feature important attributes derived from their mixed parentage.

CAVE ORCS

Gharltuns, sometimes referred to as cave orcs, are the rarest of orc subspecies. Not to be confused with grunts or other orcs that simply live underground, gharltuns are a completely separate species.

Gharltuns are short, perhaps 5 feet tall on the average, and they weight an average of 150 pounds. They have short torsos, potbellies, and slender, gangly limbs. Despite their scrawny appearance, gharltuns are very strong. Their hands and feet are tipped with strong black claws and they are said to be excellent natural climbers. Their faces have wide, sightless eyes without noticeable pupils; small, high-set noses that sit directly between their eyes and large, round ears. Their skin tone is a wan greenish-white shade, and some gharltuns have been observed suffering from an unknown skin ailment that causes their skin to slough off in large patches to reveal pink, pasty raw skin beneath. They are usually bald, but their bodies are normally covered here and there with odd little patches of tough, wiry hair.

Gharltuns are completely blind, but they make up for this with an excellent sense of smell, hearing, and touch. Smell is most important to them, and encounters with gharltuns are always complete with the sound of them constantly sniffing the area.

Gharltuns do not follow a rigid tribal system, but lair in many small groups around a central area of importance (such as an underground spring or stream). These groups largely avoid one another, but in times of need, they join together without advance agreement to fight off invaders. Gharltuns are extremely xenophobic and fiercely territorial—any humanoid entering their area, even other types of orcs, are subject to attack. There have been tales of human parties striking bargains with these underground dwellers, trading food and tools for safe passage or information, but scholars warn that gharltuns are said to attack first and ask questions later. Needless to say, gharltuns do not get along with other underground races, though some underground dwellers keep things peaceful by simply giving the cave orcs a wide berth and respecting their territorial boundaries. Cave orcs happily eat nearly anything they can catch, including other humanoids.

Little is known about the religious practices of cave orcs, but gharltuns are assumed to worship deities of some type.

It is said that cave orcs are a dying breed. Inbreeding has led to hideous mutations among their number, and many gharltuns have simply gone sterile. Fewer reports of gharltuns emerge every year, which may simply be because greater numbers of the beasts have moved deeper underground.

Cave orcs clothe themselves in hide remnants and scraps. They fashion crude weapons from stone or bone, wielding homemade clubs, hammers, and daggers. They have been known to create devious traps for the unwary.

FERAL ORCS

Feral orcs, sometimes mistakenly referred to as “forest orcs,” are normally encountered in swamps, dark forests, and underground. They dislike wide, open spaces such as plains. They nest in shallow caves, in shelters constructed of fallen trees, and similar places. Feral orcs are found in cold or temperate climes and prefer dampness. Feral orcs endure cold fairly well, but are never encountered in cities, deserts, or hot, dry areas.

This orc subspecies is best known for their savagery. Once locked in combat, they rarely give any thought to retreat, and if wounded they enter a near-mindless frenzy.

Feral orcs are tall, typically 6 feet in height or more. They are thin, gangly creatures with ungainly looking limbs, knobby knees, large hands and feet, and narrow faces. Their skin is either a gray-green or an unpleasant mottled mix of green and brown. Their beady eyes are glassy and black in color, and have been likened to the eyes of a doll. Feral orc facial features are narrow—ears, chin, forehead—and unlike most other orc species, they tend to have long (and narrow) noses. Both males

and females wear their hair long and matted. Female feral orcs normally twist their dirty tresses into long braids adorned with interwoven bones or other small items as ornament.

Despite their gangly appearance, feral orcs are swift on their feet and can move with startling stealth when they need to. They delight in sneaking up on their prey and then attacking in a shocking burst of speed. Feral orcs delight in toying with their prey and are fond of torturing their victims. When hungry, however, they attack to kill. Their bodies require large amounts of protein, and they think nothing of feeding on other humanoids. They often use the remains of their victims as ornament or for more practical purpose, such as making simple tools from bones or drums from their victim's skin.

Two types of feral orc have been encountered: gapejaws and ravagers. Gapejaws are named for their low-slung, oversized lower jaw. Their mouths are ringed with long teeth that are not completely concealed even when their mouths are closed. On sighting food, they acquire their iconic slack-jawed facial expression and often drool uncontrollably. Gapejaws often stand nearly stock-still, giving the expression of dimwittedness, before unpredictably launching themselves at their prey. Gapejaws attack with their tough claws and strong jaws, eschewing all but the most primitive weapons.

Ravagers look superficially like gapejaws, but they have smaller mouths. These horrors make up for this by growing their steel-hard claws to incredible lengths, sometimes a foot in length or more. As with gapejaws, ravagers rarely use weapons, instead relying on their claws and teeth to rend their enemies to bits.

Unlike common orcs, feral orcs travel in small groups—rarely more than eight in number—and often prefer to live and hunt alone. Despite their reputation for savagery, they can work well with other races (when they discern some benefit for themselves), and are often found serving with giants, trolls, harpies, or hags. In such arrangements, feral orcs usually act as guards, scouts, or spies. They treat all smaller humanoids as prey ... including other species or orcs. They dislike elves of any kind (as do all orcs), and they sometimes come into deadly feuds with tribes of lizardmen when lurking in boggy areas. Feral orcs occasionally keep pets, such as snakes or crocodiles, as both guards and companions.

Feral orcs are also unusual in that their groups are matriarchal in nature, and the strongest warriors and primary leaders are always female members of the subspecies. Subchiefs may be of either gender. Young feral orcs are completely capable from an extremely young age, and are treated as equal members of any feral orc community.

GREATER ORCS

Greater orcs, sometimes known as ologs, are specialized orcs that are enhanced and bred with the use of magic for extreme savagery. Ologs have incredible endurance, and they can famously march for very long periods of time without tiring.



Feral Orc

*Lesser Orc
(Grunt)*

*Greater Orc
(Orog)*

*Cave Orc
(Ghartun)*

Orogs are physically larger than most other orcs, standing an average of 7 feet tall and weighing an average of 280 pounds (much of it muscle). Their skin tone varies from black to dark gray to a ruddy red shade. They have jagged teeth with pronounced canines; dark lips and tongue; blunt, vestigial noses; and reddish-orange eyes. Their ears are swept back at an angle and vaguely resemble elven ears. Some have long, lanky hair but many are bald.

Orogs adapt well to all climes and conditions. They happily infest caves in mountains or deep underground. They can operate in daylight if necessary, but dislike fighting under the bright sun. Unlike most other orcs, orogs have demonstrated considerable aquatic prowess and can swim as easily as the strongest humans.

Greater orcs are renowned for their fearlessness. Once combat has been joined, they only reluctantly break it off—and then only if ordered to do so by a strong commander. Orogs are creatures of purpose, and unlike other orcs, they tend to accept duty without complaint, though stationary tasks, such as guard duty, are ill-suited to their restless nature. Orogs, perhaps because they have been bred to do so, are willing to lay down their lives for a superior. They do not abandon a cause even if hopelessly outnumbered.

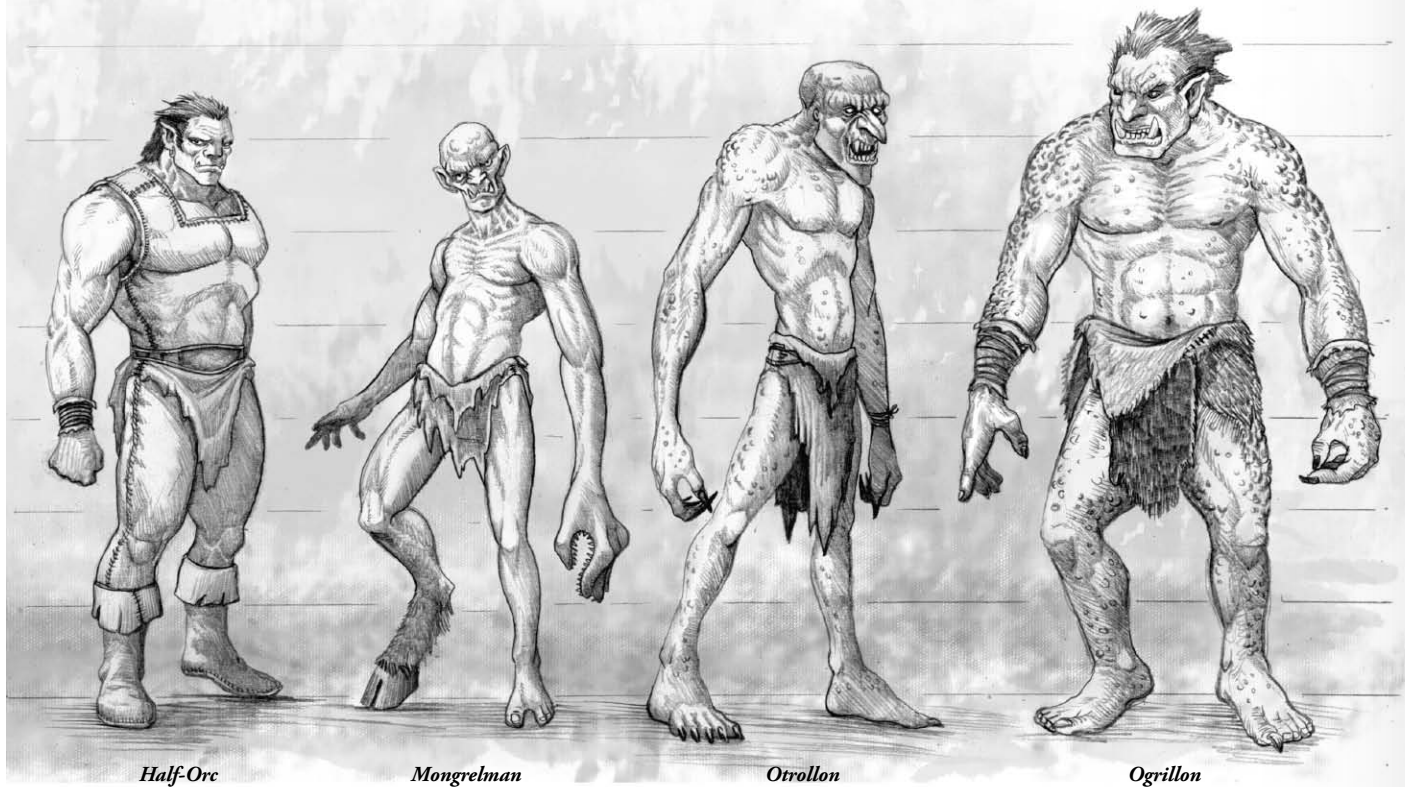
Orogs usually operate in large packs or small tribes serving a clear leader. Because they are specially bred, they are only rarely found in numbers greater than 500 or so.

Orogs work best in groups made up of only their own kind. They work with ogres, trolls, and giants if ordered to do so, but they dislike all goblins (especially bugbears), gnolls, and kobolds. They despise dwarves, elves, halflings, and humans, and they delight in besting these species in hand-to-hand battle. Losers may be eaten, for orogs have ferocious appetites. They tend to get along well with common orcs, though they are far less tolerant of smaller orc species such as grunts, which they are quick to bully.

In general, greater orcs prefer direct assaults and fearlessly challenge all those before them. Orogs often stride up to the most powerful-looking enemy in sight and roar a challenge before attacking. This orog love of head-on attacks does not preclude sneak attacks; an orog strike force often begins combat with a large or superior enemy group by leaping to the attack from a clever ambush point. Orogs are clever enough to use higher ground and other natural terrain to their advantage, to a degree greater than most other orcs. Their preferred weapons are the scimitar, greatsword, greataxe, longspear, or the longbow. Many orogs are extremely skilled archers, as some humans and elves have learned to their extreme sorrow.

LESSER ORCS

Lesser orcs are a major subspecies of the common orc. They are sometimes referred to as grunts, a slight on their



porcine appearance and grunting manner of speaking. Grunts may be encountered in any temperate area, particularly in hills, plains, and in mountainous terrain. They often lair in intricate underground cave systems, emerging at night to raid or commit acts of petty thievery. Grunts avoid extremely hot climates or areas exposed to bright light (although they are not adverse to dwelling in shallow hillside caves).

Lesser orcs stand approximately 5 feet tall on the average, and the tallest specimens are rarely over 6 feet tall. It's worth noting that grunts sometime affect a stooping posture, and may seem shorter than their actual height. They typically weigh the same as humans of their height. Grunts have an odd scuttling gait, but despite this, they are excellent thieves and capable of practiced stealth. They tend to have thick torsos and stubby limbs, adding to their stunted appearance.

The facial features of lesser orcs are rather pig-like: upturned, snout-like noses; beady eyes of a glassy black (or rarely pink-red) color; short, bristle-like hair; and slanted, flapping ears. Their skin color varies from white to mottled pink-green to brown-green. Their ears and noses have a pinkish hue. Grunt heads are somewhat large for their bodies.

Grunts usually employ cast-off weapons salvaged from human settlements, and so groups encountered usually carry rusty swords or weapons of poor make or in poor repair. Their clothing is similarly made from sewn scraps and findings, though they prefer wearing russets, reds, greens, and brown

shades when possible. Grunts often wear short tattered demalions in similar colors. They are quite capable of forging their own weapons or creating their own goods, but laziness usually prevents them from doing this if any salvageable remnants are to be found nearby.

If properly motivated, grunts are excellent miners. They have a natural instinct for the work and share the dwarven ease at being underground. If properly galvanized, they are also excellent workers, but if not managed carefully, they can lapse into laziness or outright rebellion at a moment's notice.

Grunts normally travel in large tribes of 40 individuals or more. As the smallest orcs, they make up for their lack of individual might in numbers, and they supplement their strength by constructing devious traps.

As a sub-race, grunts are generally argumentative, quick to react, and quick to startle. They are, in many ways, the most intelligent of the orc species, but this does not prevent some incredibly poor acts of judgment. Their meanness and overt hostility toward other races (particularly elves and dwarves, whom they loathe) can lead them to commit huge blunders ... such as overloading a catapult with flaming oil and setting their own soldiers aflame. They happily quarrel with their own kind, and if two tribes of grunts meet, violence can often erupt unless their tribal leaders or masters have great influence. They are stubbornly loyal to their own tribes and think nothing of openly fighting with other rival tribes, even if the tribes are

united under a common cause. Beneath all the hostility, grunts are cowardly. If confronted by a superior force or powerful foe, they simply flee. This cowardice leads many grunts into living their lives as virtual slaves of larger humanoids or powerful wizards, as once intimidated, they rarely rebel in force except for causing minor acts of unrest (demanding greater rations, sleeping on the job, etc.). They are far too pusillanimous by nature to stage large revolts unless goaded into doing so by an outside agent.

Lesser orcs occasionally work with other humanoids, but they also seize any opportunity to bully weaker races (such as kobolds or goblins). Grunts, like common orcs, take prisoners as slaves, but can also be found serving as slaves themselves to stronger creatures, such as giants. Sometimes grunts serve human masters if they see benefit or are strongly intimidated.

HALF-BREEDS

Orcs can and do breed with nearly every race save elves (including eladrin). All such half-breeds are technically described as *half-orcs*, but the term half-orc usually describes a humanoid of mixed parentage in which the orc blood has clearly overwhelmed the other. In some cases, the non-orc parentage manifests itself more strongly, and sages refer to the resulting humanoids as *orcish half-breeds*.

New half-breeds are encountered every so often, but several types have been observed with regularity, and so are addressed here; these being ogre half-breeds and troll half-breeds. The ogre half-breeds are the most common. All half-breeds vary wildly; the descriptions given in the following sections for the abovementioned notable half-breeds are for average specimens.

OGRE HALF-BREEDS

Half-breeds of ogre and orc parentage are commonly referred to as ogrillons. Ogrillons gain both strength and size from their ogre parent, as well as a longer lifespan. Approximately 10% of ogrillons may pass as common orcs or orogs, but most are immediately identifiable to those learned in *orcish half-breeds*.

Ogrillons vary in size, but most stand approximately 7 feet tall and weigh upwards of 300 pounds. Skin color varies from dull yellow to dirty brown, and many retain the purple eyes and white pupils of their ogrish heritage. Ogrillon hides are warty, bumpy, and thick. They tend to have large, flat noses, sunken eyes, a prominent forehead ridge, and some amount of brown or black hair.

Ogrillons tend to be loners, not traveling in groups or tribes of any sort. They normally establish a “hunting area” of about 50 square miles and stalk the region relentlessly. Any intruders, including orcs, are attacked unless they come ready to bribe the ogrillon into talk of a parley. They do not lair long in one area, instead living nomadic lifestyles.

Ogrillon lairs are often temporary affairs—places away from sunlight, with beds made from thick layers of rushes or leaves. Sometimes they construct crude lean-tos or teepees made of animal skins.

These large half-breeds tend to be the most stupid of orc-kind, and as such, subtle planning and double-crosses are beyond them. They usually attack first and later negotiate with anyone left alive. They are brutal, wanton killers, but sometimes they may be distracted or spooked by something as simple as magically produced fireworks or very loud sounds. Ogrillon live simple lives, securing food and other necessities (by deadly force if necessary), consuming vast quantities of edibles, and moving on.

Ogrillons get along reasonably well with other races, though they tend to bully kobolds or goblins when given an opportunity. They loathe elves and eladrin, as do all orcs. Ogrillons get along well with their larger parent-race, and they also have been observed working or traveling with evil giants, oni, and trolls. Humans of unsavory mien sometimes hire ogrillons as either bodyguards or enforcers. Of all the half-breeds, save perhaps half-orcs, the ogrillons are very migratory, eschewing the normal tribal lifestyle. Because of this nomadic lifestyle ogrillons often cooperate with all types of creatures when it suits them.

Ogrillons prefer direct, face-on attacks. The charge foes and trust in their great strength to see them through the day. Their preferred weapons are greatclubs (often spiked), huge mauls, and longswords.

TROLL HALF-BREEDS

Troll-orc half-breeds, better known as otrollons, are fierce half-breeds known for their physical resistances. Many (80%) can pass for normal orcs, but on closer examination, elements of their troll heritage can be seen. Otrollons have slender features, with long noses and long, sloping foreheads. Their ears are tiny to the point of being nonexistent, though they can hear perfectly well. Their eyes are deeply set and are often colored dark brown or black with small pupils. Their thick skin is warty and greenish-brown or greenish-gray in color. Otrollons possess long, sharp nails and are quite capable of using them as impromptu weapons. They are tall as orcs go, averaging 7 feet in height and weighing approximately 270 pounds.

Otrollons are loners by nature, but occasionally they can be found in orc tribes. They also work well with ogres and giants, and they are surprisingly well accepted by trolls. Otrollons can be found in any clime, from the hottest to the coldest, and they also are found underground.

Otrollons possess two physical characteristics of their troll parent: their stench and innate regenerative ability. Although it is not strong enough to weaken opponents, otrollons have terrible bodily odor and are rarely able to surprise opponents. They sometimes litter their lairs with refuse in the manner of trolls, and this adds to the problem. They enjoy meals of meat, as do most orcs, but they also eat

carriage on occasion—another horrid if unintentional nod to their mixed bloodline.

Otrollon veins pulse with regenerative troll blood; they may regenerate lost flesh and fluid as easily as their troll parent. They may regenerate lost limbs, given time, but unlike trolls, cannot regenerate back from grievous injuries such as a beheading. They are vulnerable to acid and fire just as their trollish parents are. Sometimes, for reasons unknown, otrollons' regenerative abilities do not function at peak efficiency. This could perhaps be attributed to their mixed blood. In these cases, limbs or body parts do not regenerate properly—limbs grow back stunted, regrown fingers lead to cases of polydactylism (extra fingers), etc.

Otrollons are independent and given to random rages, making them uncertain allies at times. They are, however, known to be quite fearless, and this makes them a valuable commodity to evil humanoids or wizards seeking strong enforcers or warriors that will not shrink in the face of opposition. Unafraid of most weapons, otrollons have been known to calmly pull longswords from their torsos, take them in hand, and attack their attackers while their flesh knits back together. They also are much stronger than their slight appearance would suggest.

MONGRELMEN

Mongrelmen is a derogatory term for a humanoid of unusually mixed blood. These humanoids are usually the products of inbreeding by humanoids already of mixed bloodlines. Some mongrelmen possess truly unusual parent species not usually seen in half orcs, such as cave chokers, lizardmen, or minotaurs.

Visually, mongrelmen are the one half-orc type that does not appear to be of orcish nature, instead appearing as a patchwork mix of various races. This blending is obvious to the extent that mongrelmen may have differing limbs, such as one hooved foot and one orcish foot, or one human-appearing arm and one that is covered in fur. Their skin may likewise be a mixed bag of racial specimens, combining tufts of coarse fur with areas covered with scales or bare areas. Their faces, as might be expected, are often ghastly, and many have mismatched eyes.

Mongrelmen, in general, are not individually strong as a rule; they often suffer from various odd maladies, and their deformities tend to work against them—mismatched feet can

cause them to walk with a pronounced limp, for instance. On rare occasions, their odd limbs or feet provide them with natural weapons, such as pincers or long claws, but this is rarely seen.

Mongrelmen are normally unaligned, and they typically prefer stealth (some are amazingly stealthy) to hostile action. They shy away from contact with other races, forging out enclaves for themselves in remote areas and underground. They may be found in any clime. Mongrelmen have been known to make use of stolen equipment and clothing, but some have demonstrated excellent building and mining skills. They use simple weapons—wooden clubs and daggers—and wear light armor or none at all.

THE VIZDSHADI

The Vizdshadi, an orcish term that translates roughly as the “diseased ones,” are orcs infected with a disease known as searing fever. The origin of searing fever is unknown, but sages suspect it may have originated deep underground. The large amount of cave orcs infected with searing fever would seem to lend some credibility to this theory.

Searing fever can infect any orc species, humanoid, demihuman, or human. The plague is not airborne—it perishes quickly in sunlight—but it may be passed via touch or by contact with an infected individual's blood or saliva. The disease is considered very contagious in enclosed spaces.

Searing fever manifests as a simple headache, followed soon by severe joint pain. In the second stage, the headache transforms into a searing pain behind the eyes coupled with high fever. The infected patient may become confused, agitated, or see extremely realistic hallucinations. After 24 hours, the infected individual either recovers from the illness (though weakness and lingering joint pain can last for weeks) or he progress to the third stage. At the third stage, the head pain stops, but the infected person loses sight in one or both eyes permanently. In addition, the skin takes on a mottled, scaly appearance, and the victim may shed long strips of dead skin periodically.

The disease is more common among orcs that are older than 25 years, but any individual older than a child may catch the dread disease. Vizdshadi apply herbal remedies to their skin and drink tribal remedies, but magic is the only known way to cure infection.

The vizdshadi normally dress in robes or long hooded cloaks. Beneath these loose, comfortable outer garments, they

Searing Fever

Level 8 Disease

The symptoms of searing sickness include fever, extreme headache, joint pain, and blindness.

Attack: +11 vs. Fortitude

Endurance improve DC 25, maintain DC 21, worsen DC 20 or lower

Target is cured



Initial Effect: The target loses one healing surge until cured.



The target cannot use action points.



Final State: The target is blinded.

often wear loincloths and wrap their limbs and torsos in windings of cloth or linen bandages. The dress and shuffling gait of the vizdshadi has sometimes led adventurers to mistake them for mummies or other types of corporeal undead.

Vizdshadi are turned away from most tribes before reaching the contagious third stage, but subchiefs and chieftains are allowed the “time to fight,” un-harassed, in the hope that they make a full recovery. Most tribesmen are not so fortunate; they are “branded” with long smears of white clay and declared outcasts. Survivors that have successfully shrugged off the disease and later return to the tribe will be accepted. Those still carrying the disease that attempt to return are slain.

THE HALF-ORC

The “true” half-orc is simply a humanoid that has a mixed heritage of orc and a different race. In common usage, however, the term “orcish half-breed” implies a more monstrous union (usually involving giant blood), whereas a so-called half-orc is genetically half orc and half some other similarly sized race, usually human, goblin, hobgoblin, bugbear, or gnoll. Kobold/orc mixes are very rare, and elf or eladrin mixes cannot be conceived. Dwarf/orc crossbreeds, despite what many sages believe, are indeed possible, but they rarely survive birth and so are scarcely seen.

Half-orcs strongly reflect their orcish heritage in their physical appearance and attitude. Only 10% of half-orcs with a human parent may pass for human, and the GM may wish to allow a Perception check for those seeing them up close to discern their orcish bloodline. In cases of orc/humanoid blends, the orcish half is still more prominent, due to the robust genetic make-up of orcs.

PLAYING A HALF-ORC CHARACTER

The half-orc character offers some unique opportunities to the intrepid player. The half orc is the one mainstream character “race” that is actually designated as having mixed blood. This provides the chance for special role-play and additional character possibilities.

Playing a half-orc character to the fullest potential involves giving thought to the character’s origin and relationship to each parent race. It is not enough to focus on the ability statistics; instead, a player should ask the big questions about the character. Where was the character born? Where did the character live as a child? What knowledge does the character have of each race? Does the character have any misconceptions about one of its parent races? Any character of mixed race may feel the simultaneous pull of both cultural worlds, but a

human/orc mix straddles the line between two very different cultures that are generally hostile to one another. Even a humanoid half orc, such as a hobgoblin/orc cross, must come to terms with the differences between races (in this example, between a less-chaotic evil race and a very chaotic one).

The orc side of such a character represents a savage, evil race, which lends a unique attribute for role-play. Half-orc characters need not be of evil alignment, but the coarseness of the player character’s orc heritage should be difficult to suppress. A half-orc might use rougher language, get angry easier, have terrible manners, have a barely suppressed bloodlust, or have other special traits. The player should focus on creating one or two special character attributes to illuminate the adventurer’s orc half.

It is important for the GM to focus on these issues with regard to the half-orc character as well. The GM should also give thought to the reaction many intelligent, unaligned or good-aligned races may have to the presence of one of orc blood in their midst. Are there prejudices or even deep-seated hatreds that the character might encounter? Will the character be accepted, loathed, or feared? Will there be issues of trust? Surely, some humans may act differently toward having an adventurer that resembles an orc enter their town, home, or church. The GM is encouraged to give thought to these interactions, but should not punish the player for choosing to play a half-orc. Instead, the GM should provide opportunities for adventure and character growth.

ARCHETYPES

THE BERSERKER

“Come at me with your worst! I stand ready!”

You are fearless and skilled in battle, and your greatest desire is to prove your worth in armed conflict. The tribal life has taught you much, but exposure to other races has opened up new vistas to you: new fighting styles, new weapons, and new opponents awaiting defeat at your hands!

Example 1: You are a mercenary, selling your martial services to the highest bidder. You live for excitement and delight in the glory of battle. You have no use for menial tribal tasks or religious ritual! Unhappy with the tribal lifestyle, you wish to visit far-off nations and best the greatest warriors they can offer, thereby ensuring that your name lives on in history forever. Be it grand gladiatorial combat in cities or mere pit fighting against slaves; you seek out these armed conflicts wherever they may be.

Example 2: For you, the glory of the hunt is an all-consuming thing. And what splendid hunts you have seen with the tribe! But now it is time to embrace experiences not to be found with a large tribe: the honor of stalking and conquering exotic beasts alone or with a few trusted companions. It is said

that adventuring companies draw such dangerous encounters like the flame draws the moth. You shall seek out such a company, demand they accept you, and see if this is true firsthand!

THE REFORMED SAVAGE

“Let me prove to you that appearances can be deceiving.”

You are aware that your appearance and heritage frightens “civilized” beings, but inside lives a scholar curious to drink in all the knowledge the world has to offer. You face your share of prejudice, but by showing humans your noble side, you hope to eventually be accepted into the culture in which you truly belong.

Example 1: Found abandoned in the forest by a merciful woodsman, you’ve embraced the human side of your mixed bloodline. You can and do fight to defend those you hold dear, but you prefer to take a more peaceful route, traveling to fascinating lands, seeing the great cities, and someday, hopefully discovering more about your human parent.

Example 2: Once you were a great subchief, leader of a third of your tribe. But the wanderings of the tribe seemed aimless, the teachings of the shaman false, and your life empty. Then one day while alone in the woods, you gazed into the surface of a pond and a shining being appeared in the water and spoke to you, asking you to fulfill a higher purpose. The being awakened a part of you that had seemed asleep until now. With renewed vigor you struck out, leaving the slumbering tribe to seek your destiny in the lands beyond.

Example 3: It was to have been a slaughter, an easy battle in a string of bloody conquests for your tribe. The shaman said that the blessings of the Dark One hung over the deed, and all was assured. But it was not to be ... the battle was a catastrophe. Armed humans surged forth to meet your screaming hordes, and hours later, when the blackbirds came to pick at bones of the losers, it was your tribesmen that lay bloodied and unmoving in the dirt. Around you lay every single warrior you knew—dead. Somehow, by a freak stroke of luck, you survived, though your great injuries prevented flight or even movement. Soon humans came to you and discovered that you still lived. You silently waited for the falling blade, unwilling to give them the satisfaction of a scream. But then came the greatest surprise – they spared you. A man garbed in bright robes beseeched the others to let you live, and he offered you a life with the human tribe. Shocked, your anger quickly dulled and was replaced with raw curiosity... what kind of creatures were these humans? You had to learn more. You would return to the city with them, enemies no longer.

THE OUTCAST

“I must prove my innocence, whatever the cost.”

For whatever reasons you or your GM determines, you are a pariah. You have been either banished from orc or human society for your crimes (real or imagined) or agents of your former community are actively pursuing you.

Example 1: Once you lived among orcs, but you were never regarded as an equal. You longed to prove yourself, anxious to settle the murmurs about your mixed heritage. But alas, your prowess or intelligence frightened a jealous subchief into turning the tribal chieftain against you. The chieftain, angered that you would dare disagree with his favorite subchief, ordered your immediate banishment and left you to the wilds alone to forge your own way. To return to the tribal lands means death; you must go your own way, alone.

Example 2: While visiting a large, mostly human metropolis, you stumbled upon the scene of a murder! You tussled with the murderer but he escaped, and the authorities arrived in time to discover you at the scene, with blood on your hands and a weapon lying nearby. The guardsmen drew their crossbows and began firing at you, the “killer orc,” and you barely escaped with your life! Now, traveling across the countryside with a price on your head, you seek to catch the real culprit and clear your name... before the bounty hunters find you first.

THE OUTSIDER

“I shall aid you, but in the end I stand alone.”

You are trapped between worlds—human and orc—but accepted by neither. You must decide which culture to embrace, or whether you are better off wandering outside the confines of both cultures and finding a new home where you are truly accepted.

Example 1: Abandoned as an infant, you made your way to civilization, but have found the endless stares of human-folk difficult to bear for very long. It is easier to be a nomad, wandering the land, taking each day as it comes, and calling no one place your home. Your home is not with orc-kind or humankind; instead, you find your place on the open road and within the seclusion of nature. You are content to let adventure find you, and you hold no hatred for those who cannot understand who you truly are.

Example 2: After years of slavery to a rival clan, you made your escape, disavowing the orcish way of life entirely. You know little about your goblin or orc heritage, but you’ve learned firsthand the cruelty of humanoid. Your path must lay another direction. You have seen odd bands traveling the countryside, cloaked individuals bearing blades and fighting together, yet representing mixed races. It is said such groups work together despite their differences to achieve great things. Perhaps this is the way to follow... the life of an adventurer.

CHAPTER VI: ORC EQUIPMENT

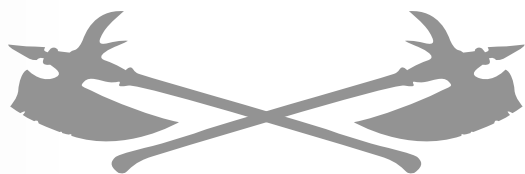
There was a slight stirring in the trees around, and several more birds took flight. Erik stopped, pausing by several large oaks. He stood silently, waiting. Moments passed. He heard nothing, but the forested hillside around him had grown eerily silent. Instinctively, his hand reached for the dagger at his side—the one gift from his father he always carried with him. He ran his fingers along the leather grip, and scanned the surrounding foliage for any sign of movement.

From high overhead came a soft sound—the sound of a drawstring being pulled along a wooden arrow shaft. Erik knew the sound well from his many months of archery practice. He threw himself roughly to the ground, knocking the wind out of his lungs. A black-feathered arrow thudded to the ground mere feet away.

Erik struggled to get to his feet, but his legs moved slowly, and his ribs ached dreadfully on the side that had struck the ground. He finally stood unsteadily, after what seemed like minutes, but was more likely seconds, and he pulled out his own bow. From above, a large form hurtled down through the branches and landed before him, striking aside his bow with a clawed fist. Still off-balance, he rocked back slightly as the glaring figure drew out a short, notched sword.

The orc stood before him, clearly intent on ending his life. The humanoid's face was a mask of hate—deep-set, red-rimmed eyes beneath wild brows; a squat, squashed nose, and yellowed fangs jutting from beneath black lips. Two long scars, relics from some past battle no doubt, ran down the left side of its face. The humanoid was tall, perhaps a foot taller than he. The orc was dressed in soiled brown and green garments, over which hung a tattered green cloak and leather straps holding weapons and other small items. He again locked eyes with the orc, and it grinned widely, exposing an amber row of uneven teeth.

Erik tore his eyes away from the creature's horrid features and backpedaled in an attempt to put some distance between them. Suddenly, his back bumped against something hard and unyielding, and he felt rough tree bark bite through his linen tunic. The orc shambled toward him eagerly, sword held high overhead to strike. A line of something shiny slipped from the orc's mouth and down its pebbly chin ... it was drooling with expectation. There was nowhere for him to run.



WEAPONS

BARDICHE

Orc bloodragers often use bardiches as their weapon of choice, in part because these weapons, handled properly, can cause long, deep wounds.

A bardiche is a short polearm constructed of a long cleaver or axe-like blade attached to a wooden shaft by one or two sockets. Bardiches have an excellent blade to shaft ratio, and can do grievous damage on a good hit. However the weight of the blade and relatively short haft (as polearms go) can make this a tiring weapon to use for any real length of time. This weapon has reach.

Orc bardiches are made from wooden shafts topped with iron blades.

CHARDA

A charda is a venerable orcish weapon that resembles, for all intents and purposes, a two-bladed dagger. The wide, primary blade extends forward from the handle and usually has a very slight curve. The top blade extends from the pommel end of the weapon and curves forward over the handle, pointing in the same direction as the main blade. Both sides of each blade are sharp, and sometimes the topmost blade has a sharpened, backwards-pointing spur as well. The weapon is held with the gripping fingers directly beneath the top blade and the thumb pointing toward the rear of the device.

The charda is chiefly employed as a stabbing weapon. The topmost blade may be used for slashing, but in practice, this maneuver proves clumsy and impractical. The thicker top blade is most useful for protecting the user's hand from enemy blades. The charda may be used as an off-hand weapon, and orogs have been observed using them in conjunction with battleaxes or longwords. Skilled users can catch an enemy's sword between the charda's two blades and break it with a simple twist of the wrist, though this requires a great deal of strength.

The charda is a common weapon. It is used by most orcish subspecies and is especially popular with orogs.

KRUWAR

The kruwar is a long, bladed weapon that resembles a polearm on first glance. The weapon consists of a long, central shaft capped on both ends with curved blades. Each blade somewhat resembles the blade of a scythe in shape, but they are somewhat shorter, and each bears an additional outcropped spur. The central shaft has three handgrips: two toward either end, about a foot from the blade, and one in the center of the shaft. The central grip sits at the center of a C-shaped band of metal.

The kruwar is used to slash or prod at opponents, much in the manner a war-scythe is used. The inner curved edges of the blades are not sharp, but rather thicker than the sharpened outer edge. This allows the sharp edge to achieve greater penetration on a swing. In normal usage, only the two smaller grips are used, and the wielder slashes at opponents with one end of the weapon or the other. Truly proficient wielders, however, can use the central grip to spin the weapon, achieving a much faster, more powerful swing, and possibly allowing them to strike a single opponent with both blades in one fluid strike—doing great damage in the process. The curved pieces

of metal around the central handle help the user rapidly spin the weapon with less chance of accidentally flinging it away.

The kruwar is most effective against lightly armored opponents, though the thickened rear edge of each blade does allow some penetration (much in the manner of a falchion). Orcs delight in using kruwars on the battlefield when they are facing many opponents. They also use the long reach of the kruwar to strike at enemy mounts, thereby bringing enemy riders to the ground where they may be more easily dispatched by conventional weapons.

ORCISH SIMPLE MELEE WEAPONS

One-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Charda	+2	1d4	—	xx	2 lbs.	Light blade	Off-hand, high crit

Two-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
War-scythe	+2	1d10	—	10 gp	12 lb.	Heavy blade	Reach

ORCISH MILITARY MELEE WEAPONS

Two-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Bardiche	+2	1d12		25 gp	16 lb.	Heavy blade, polearm	Reach
Warstaff	+2	1d10		25 gp	14 lb.	Polearm, spear	Reach, high crit

ORCISH SUPERIOR MELEE WEAPONS

One-Handed

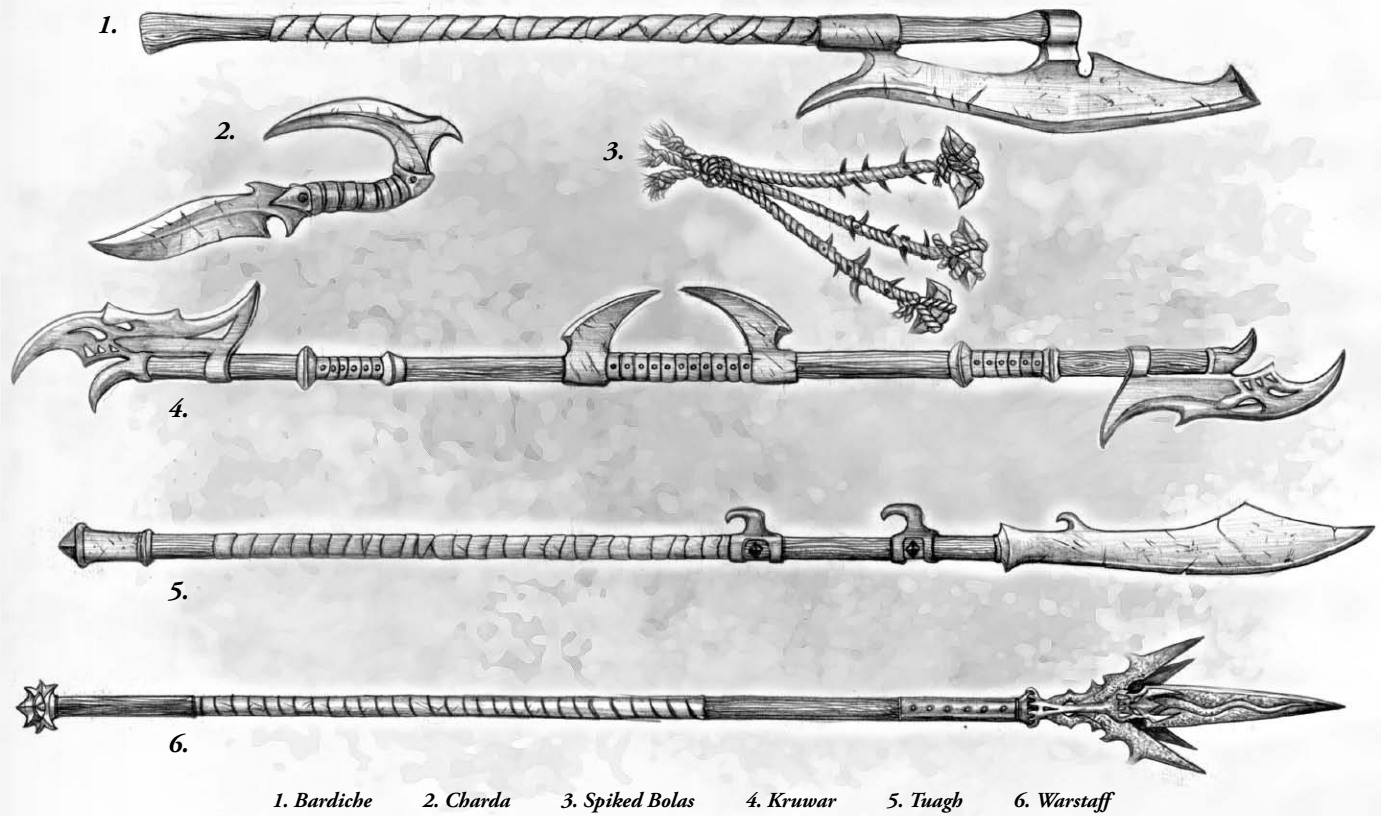
Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Spiked bolas	+2	1d4(–1)	10/20	10 gp	2 lb.	Light thrown	Entangle ¹

Two-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Kruwar	+2	1d8	30 gp	10 lb.	Polearm, spear	Doublestrike ²
Tuagh	+2	2d4	25 gp	12 lb.	Axe, polearm,	Reach

¹ **Entangle:** After a successful ranged basic attack, make a secondary ranged basic attack against the target's Reflex defense at a –2 penalty to the roll. If the secondary attack is successful, the target is slowed and takes ongoing 1 damage (save ends both). *First Failed Save:* The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). *Second Failed Save:* The target is restrained instead of immobilized (save ends).

² **Doublestrike:** When a character wields a weapon with the doublestrike property, he is considered to be wielding two weapons. Primary and offhand damage are the same.



Kruwars are usually constructed of metal and wood, hardwoods being preferred to give the shaft additional strength. Grips are typically leather straps wound tightly around the wood. Kruwars have been seen with blades of other materials, such as copper or even bone, but these are typically more ceremonial in nature and are borne by shamans in religious rites. Kruwar blades made of these softer materials rarely hold up long in actual combat.

SPIKED BOLAS

Orcs have been observed to employ spiked bolas to bring down game or immobilize fleeing prisoners or slaves. On rare instances these weapons have been used on enemy targets when the goal is to capture and not kill. They are relatively light and easily carried.

Bolas are essentially weights at the ends of interconnected cords that are swung several times in a circular fashion to build momentum and then hurled at the target. The number of weights can vary from two to nine, but three weights seem to be the most popular design. Set along the length of each cord is several sharpened barbs or spurs.

In the case of bolas with three weights, two cords are shorter and have slightly heavier weights, and the third cord is longer and carries a lighter weight. The shorter lengths of cord strike the legs of the target, after which the long cord winds around the legs, immobilizing the target further. The barbs

cause some injury on impact and prevent undue wriggling or movement; bound enemies struggling to free themselves risk further damage. The initial impact of the bolas causes minimal damage, though sometimes bone damage or bruising is inflicted on the legs of the target.

Orcs typically make their bolas from twisted leather strands and stone weights, but some specimens have been recovered that are created from other materials, such as cords constructed from hide or even coarse, twisted hair, and weights made from metal. The barbs—there are usually three to five along each strand—are usually made from metal, wood, or natural thorns. Feral orcs have been known to use bolas made from sinew with bone weights and barbs.

TUAGH

This weapon consists of a long shaft topped by a blade that curves out at its widest point. The tip of the weapon sometimes has a small, spear-like tip, but this is uncommon. The weapon has reach.

Orcish tuaghs have downward-pointing hooks on the side of the shaft directly opposite the blade. Skilled wielders are able to use these curved hooks to yank riders from their mounts or yank down soldiers perched on walls or higher ground. The hook itself does little damage, but it can bring an enemy into closer range or knock a rider prone.

Tuaghs are mainly employed in battle by chieftains, subchiefs, bloodragers, and other experienced orc warriors.

WARSTAFF

Orc chieftains and subchiefs primarily use warstaves. To carry a warstaff in orcish tradition is considered a sign of great influence and power; typically, the penalty for a common orc who touches a warstaff is death, the only exception being if the individual has bested the former wielder in single combat. In this latter case, the victor is considered owner of the warstaff. There have been reported cases of non-orcs vanquishing orc leaders and seizing their warstaves. In these tales the orc tribe subsequently allows the victor to depart unharmed as a gesture of respect ... but these may be mere tales only.

Warstaves are special, ornate polearms forged of strong metals and honed to razor sharpness. The head of a warstaff is shaped somewhat akin to a spetum, with four short, curved secondary blades extending forward at the base of the flanged main blade. These secondary blades are rarely used for blocking and are too short to entrap enemy blades; they are primarily used to cause additional damage, and to add to the intimidating appearance of the weapon. Skilled wielders give the weapon a subtle turn as the blade slides home, causing grievous wounds.

Warstaves are typically constructed of hardwood staves tipped with steel blades. They are often enchanted for greater effect. These weapons are always decorated in some fashion, either with carved runes along the shaft, feathers or bones affixed to the butt end, or some other decoration that fits the tribe's iconic theme.

ARMOR

BONE ARMOR

As the name suggests, bone armor is almost entirely made from actual bones, woven together with straps of leather or wire and attached to a leather undergarment of some type. Depending on the composition, these suits may be very elaborate and fanciful, or they may simply be grotesque. Orc shamans favor bone armor, but occasionally, orc commanders wear it for brief engagements or ceremonial events (such as the appointing of a new subchief). In some cases bone armor is reinforced by magic and worn more actively by commanders.

ENHANCED HIDE ARMOR

This variant of hide armor is made from a hide hauberk or jack with attached pieces of metal, such as shoulder guards, small chest plates, or even full spaulders. Often these suits of armor are reinforced with several pieces of scrap metal salvaged from other damaged suits of armor or refuse piles. The bits of metal make the armor slightly heavier and more cumbersome, but grant the wearer a bit more protection. This armor is a favorite of most common orcs, orogs, ogrillons, and otrillons.

SCRAPHIDE ARMOR

Scraphide armor is a favorite of drudges and lesser orcs. This so-called armor consists of bits of leather or hide sewn to a normal cloth garment. In other instances, the armor is a very poorly made hide garment patched together from ill-fitting portions of hide from different beasts in a sort of patchwork affair. The protection affording by this armor is minimal, but it weighs very little, and allows the same maneuverability as leather armor.

ORC ARMOR

Type	Armor Bonus	Minimum Enhancement Bonus	Check	Speed	Price (gp)	Weight
Bone armor (heavy)	+7	—	—	-1	40	40 lb.
Enhanced hide armor (light)	+4	—	-1	-1	32	30 lb.
Scraphide armor (light)	+1	—	—	—	1	15 lb.
Spiked collar* (n/a)	—	—	—	—	1	1 lb.

*Grab attempts against the wearer are made at -1 penalty to the attack roll. If the wearer is grabbed and makes a successful escape attempt, the wearer may immediately make an attack as a free action: Dexterity vs. AC to cause 1 damage against the former grabber.

SPIKED COLLAR

Orc berserkers, bloodragers, and warhulks often wear spiked collars. The item is simply a wide band of leather set with metal spikes or studs worn around the neck to evoke a feral appearance. Of the various orc species, common orcs and orogs favor them most.

BATTLEFIELD EQUIPMENT

Orcs employ certain special items in large-scale engagements only, storing them in secure areas until needed. Such items include scaling ladders, warhorns, and warskulls.

Scaling Ladders: Scaling ladders are sturdy ladders, typically made of hardwoods or metal, which are specially designed for scaling the sides of keeps or other tall fortifications. The ladders vary in length, but they are always at least 16 feet long. Attached to the top of each ladder is a pair of curved metal hooks that can swing freely in a circular fashion. The end of each flat hook comes to a sharpened angle. Orcs push the ladder forcefully against the wall they wish to mount, and the force of the ladder striking the wall sends the twin hooks swinging up and over the top of the wall in a circular motion; the hooks penetrate the rear of the wall, penetrating wood or biting into masonry.

Once the ladder is secured, the orc invaders swarm up, while the defenders struggle to release the hooks. Usually the orcs reach the top of the ladder well before the defenders can dislodge it from the wall. The first orc that successfully surmounts the wall usually eliminates any nearby defenders, and then uses the handy pommel of a weapon to tap the ladder hooks in deeper, thus securing the ladder for additional orcs.

Some larger scaling ladders are enclosed, consisting of a metal framework over which hides are stretched, making the whole affair appear rather like a ladder inside a hide tunnel. The hides protect the scaling orcs from arrows and falling debris, and are usually doused with water before use to fend off torches and flaming oil.

Skinmasks: Skinmasks are ghastly forms of headgear worn by orcs—especially bloodragers and orogs—into battle. Skinmasks are full head coverings, with eyeholes cut out of the front, more akin to leather helms than masks, though they do cover the face. These grotesque items are fashioned from the cured facial skin of one or more victims, sewed together in wearable form. The masks usually cover the back of neck and stop in front just above the mouth area. They provide no armor benefit.

Skinmasks are worn for one reason: to terrify the enemy. Orcs trust in the ability of their skinmasks to demoralize and terrify enemy soldiers.

Wearing a skinmask grants the following ability (only effective on members of the race or races represented in the skin of the mask):

Power (Encounter ♦ Fear): Free Action. Use this power whenever you hit with a weapon or are hit by a weapon. The target takes a –2 penalty to AC and Will defenses (save ends).

Warhorns: Warhorns are enormous instruments, usually a minimum of 8 feet in length—though some specimens measuring 30 feet or longer have been observed—that are wound on the battlefield. These great instruments have much ceremonial importance to tribes, and they are always decorated with tribal icons and emblems, as well as religious runes or imagery. Important members of the tribe, such as subchiefs (rarely), chiefs, shamans, witchdoctors (rarely), heroes, or warchiefs are usually the ones to sound these instruments. The horns are sounded at very specific times in the combat: as a call to arms, at the start of an invasion, to rally or regroup troops, and (rarely) to sound a retreat from the battlefield. The main purpose of such horns is to inspire bravery among orc troops and terrify the enemy.

Warhorns may be constructed out of nearly any material—horns of metal, bone, wood, ivory, and even precious metals and jade have been observed. Some warhorns may be made of several materials used together, such as a wooden horn with metal studs, or an iron horn with inset gold runes. Some war horns are enchanted after creation to increase their fearful or confusing effect on enemy troops.

Warhorns are usually transported on wheeled carts or similar devices. Common orcs—though not females or young—may push the cart, but to even touch a warhorn once it has been created is usually means death for orcs of lower tribal status.

Warskulls: Warskulls are special weapons almost exclusively reserved for battlefield use. There are countless varieties of warskulls, but two types are relatively common: plagueskulls and thunderskulls. Both can be deadly instruments to encounter.

Plagueskulls are normal skulls filled with some material incorporating disease, such as rotted flesh from a plague victim or spores from dangerous fungi. Some plagueskulls are filled with green slime, yellow mold, or acid. Once filled, the skull is carefully sealed, after which it may be hurled at the enemy or tossed over a fortified wall. These items are not usually hurled by hand, but are instead stacked into catapults or similar war machines and thrown en masse at the startled enemy.

Orcs are not particularly careful in the use of plagueskulls, and there have been battles in which the orcs managed to wipe out much of their own force by carelessly handling plagueskulls filled with contagious material. Humans have learned to fear these items, however, for more than one mighty castle has fallen to scores of skulls soaring over the parapets to shed their death on the helpless defenders within. In recent years most tribes prefer to create less lethal skulls, using acid or ground rust monster antennae to fill their skulls.

One sinister variant of the skull weapon detailed above is the thunderskull. A thunderskull is a magical weapon that is hurled at a target and explodes with a great concussive force, injuring soldiers and bringing down defensive walls as needed. Tribal witchdoctors are usually charged with creating thunderskulls. Fortunately, thunderskulls are not often seen.

Thunderskull

Level 3+

This skull bursts with a thunderous blast when thrown against a hard surface.

Lvl 3	360 gp	Lvl 3	360 gp
Lvl 8	680 gp		
Lvl 13	1,000 gp		

Wondrous Item

Power (Consumable ♦ Thunder): Standard Action. Make an attack: Area burst 1 within 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; on a hit deal 1d6 thunder damage and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

- Level 8: +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 thunder damage.
- Level 13: +16 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 thunder damage.
- Level 18: +21 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 thunder damage.
- Level 23: +26 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 thunder damage.
- Level 28: +31 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 thunder damage.



POCKET ITEMS

There may come times when adventurers search (or pickpocket) an orc's pockets, or investigate sacks or containers carried by these humanoid. The following table is provided for GMs to use in these instances to determine items found of no great worth. The GM should roll a d4 for the number of items found, and then roll a d% for each specific item. It is suggested that duplicates be re-rolled.

Roll	Pocket Item
01	Chunk of petrified dung
02-03	Acorn, nuts, or dried corn
04-06	Animal tooth or tusk
07-09	Tiny animal pelt (chipmunk, rodent, or similar)
10-12	Animal claw or talon
13-15	Small bone (may be carved with a decoration or undecorated, 50% chance either)
16-18	Small skull (bird/rodent/pixie, 50% / 45% / 5%)
19-21	Bird feather(s)
22-24	Toothpick (wood or ivory, 90% / 10%)
25-28	Spoon (wood or metal, 50% either)
29-30	Small bundle of string
31-33	Die (made of ivory or bone; 20% chance it is "loaded")
34-36	Lucky charm (carved wood or stone, 50% chance either)
37-39	Small religious fetish
40-42	Tiny figurine (any material and shape the GM wills)
43-45	Candle stub(s)
46-48	Piece of chalk
49-52	Whetstone
53-54	Hard piece of sap for chewing
55-57	Strip(s) of venison or rat jerky
58-60	Chunk of hard bread or hardtack
61-63	Piece of moldy cheese
64-66	Pretty (but worthless) rock crystal(s)
67-69	Clay pipe
70-72	Lump of charcoal
73-75	Fishhook and 7 feet of coiled fishing string
76-78	Arrowhead
79-80	Whistle (wood or bone, 50% chance either)
81-86	Knife (pommel may be made from small animal claw or foot)
87-89	Small hammer
90-92	Flint and steel
93-94	Pin or brooch (wood, metal, or bone; 50% / 30% / 20%)
95-98	Flask (see subtable for contents)
99	Rolled map (may be real or fake as the GM wills)
00	Special item*

*The GM should prepare a special item that can provide campaign intrigue or lead to new adventures. Suggestions include an unlabeled key, a weird glowing gemstone, or a tiny artifact of some kind.

Flask Subtable	Roll 1 d6 for contents
1	Empty
2	Normal water
3	Eyeball floating in liquid
4	Flammable oil
5	Holy or unholy water
6	Potion or powered gem dust

CHAPTER VII: ORC FEATS

Grishnak surged forward with his trusty jagged sword. The human was backing against the trees and had nowhere to run. This would be an easy kill. Soon the man-cub's blood would run from his sword like a red rain. He licked his dark, cracked lips in anticipation.

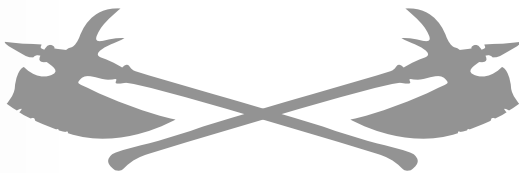
It was time. The human began to hold out a pale hand in a warding gesture, but Grishnak ignored it, launching himself at the human-meat with a snarl. These stupid humans, with their smooth skin, thinking to command an orc, warrior-born!

The man moved sideways with a speed that startled even Grishnak, but his trusty blade, his preciously sharp innards-tugger, still sliced cleanly through the man-cub's tunic and cut the flesh beneath. The coppery smell of blood filled Grishnak's nostrils. He inhaled the sweet scent and reveled in it. Mighty Sanguinal the Bloodbather was sending him a sign of coming victory. He would honor strong Sanguinal and the Overlord by smearing his cheeks with this human's blood and feasting on his red heart. Soon the weaker warriors would see the blood on his cheeks, and he would feast proudly tonight, perhaps with the subchiefs. He couldn't help but smile at the thought.

For months he had watched the subchiefs and elders take the choicest treasures after raids, eat the best meats... soon they would honor him, and it would be his time. His time to get the best spoils, his time to get the choicest meat! Clever Grishnak would join the subchiefs in their red tent to plan the raids and choose among the spoils, and the lesser warriors and females would bend low before him...

But already the human was moving again, trying to escape strong Grishnak! This one thought himself clever! Not cleverer than Grishnak, no! This man of the smooth skin would fall like the other men-warriors, man things with sharp blades and hard armor that still cried like weakling old ones when struck down.

Grishnak swiftly raised his trusty innards-tugger overhead, clutching it tightly in his meaty fist. This blow would end the man-cub's thrashing once and for all! He swung the blade down with all his might.



Orcs specialize in brutal combat tactics, and they are trained from youth to channel their fury into their strikes. Some orcs have learned to master unusual weapons or to focus their hatred for the elven race into their attacks.

Note: To qualify for the Orcblood prerequisite, a character must be a half-orc or be of any orc species or half-breed species.

HEROIC TIER FEATS

BATTLECRY

Prerequisite: Orc blood

Benefit: When you reduce a target to bloodied status with a melee attack, your allies gain a +1 to bonus to attack rolls against that target until the start of your next turn.

DANGEROUS FLANKER

Prerequisite: Dex 15

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to damage rolls against targets you are flanking.

FEROCIOUS CHARGE

Prerequisite: Orc blood

Benefit: When you charge, you gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

KRUWAR MASTERY

Prerequisite: Orc blood, Str 13, any martial class, Weapon Proficiency (kruwar)

Benefit: You may invoke the *dual-bladed strike* power.

Dual-Bladed Strike	Feat Power
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You strike your foe with both blades of your weapon.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Standard Action

Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a kruwar.

Target: One creature.

Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Increase to 2[W] + Strength modifier damage at 21st level.

Secondary Attack: Strength -2 vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Increase to 2[W] + Strength modifier damage at 21st level.

Special: You must take the Weapon Proficiency (kruwar) feat to use this power.

TUAGH MASTERY

Prerequisite: Orc blood, Str 15, Dex 13, any martial class, Weapon Proficiency (tuagh)

Benefit: You may invoke the *tuagh pulldown* power.



Tuagh Pulldown

Feat Power

You have mastered the tuagh, and can yank enemies off their feet with a twist of your weapon.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a tuagh.

Target: One creature.

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and make a secondary attack against the same target.

Increase to 2[W] + Strength modifier damage at 21st level.

Secondary Attack: Dexterity –2 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target is knocked prone.

Special: You must take the Weapon Proficiency (tuagh) feat to use this power.

PARAGON TIER FEATS

AMBUSH MASTER

Prerequisite: Orc blood

Benefit: You deal an additional 1d6 damage on ranged and melee attacks against opponents you have combat advantage against in the first round of an encounter.

ELIMINATE THE WEAK

Prerequisite: Orc blood

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to damage rolls with an axe or heavy blade against a bloodied target that is 3 or more squares away from any ally.

UNDYING HATRED

Prerequisite: Orc blood

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to damage rolls against eladrin, elves, and half-elves.

UNSTOPPABLE CHARGER

Prerequisite: Orc blood

Benefit: You ignore difficult terrain when you charge.

EPIC TIER FEAT

ETERNAL HATRED

Prerequisite: Orc blood, Str 20

Benefit: When you make a melee weapon attack against an eladrin, elf, or half-elf, you can score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20.

CHAPTER VIII: ORCS IN BATTLE

Chuckling, the humanoid swung the jagged short sword in a vicious downward arc. Its eyes blazed with triumph. It intended to gut him with a single brutal stroke.

Erik caught the orc's wrist—barely—just as the sharp blade descended. They stood, locked in struggle, nearly face-to-face. He could smell the creature's sweat and its warm, foul breath wafting into his face. The orc growled and pulled sharply upwards in an attempt to pull his wrist free, but Erik had no intention of letting go. Erik heard a small snapping sound and felt a burst of pain in his right wrist, but still he held firm. If he released his grip now, he would die. It was that simple.

The two combatants struggled in place for a moment, and Erik looked about desperately for a weapon. His own knife was, stupidly, anchored on the rear of his belt. He spied a short dagger hanging from a leather strap on the orc's chest. Taking the risk, he removed one of his hands from the creature's wrist and made a desperate grab for the dagger. As soon as his grip weakened, the orc wrenched his sword free. The creature again raised the sword and began to emit a horrible, grunting laugh that suddenly transformed into a howl of agony. The orc dropped the sword and clutched at the dagger that now jutted from his thigh.

Now was the moment! Erik attempted to bolt past the creature, but the orc somehow swatted out with a single heavy fist, striking Erik in the temple and knocking him roughly to the ground. He landed heavily on his hurt side, and the resulting flare of pain caused his own scream of agony. He touched his side, and his fingers came away damp. The orc stood over him, gazing down at his supine form, and calmly pulled the long dagger from its calf. Amazingly, it spoke.

"Now death takes you, manling. You must accept it," it said in a voice that sounded as if it came from a mouth full of sharp gravel. "Soon it over."

The orc spun the dagger into a stabbing grip with a single, well-practiced motion and leaped on him.

Erik grabbed the fallen short sword and turned it upwards in both hands just as the grimy figure fell on him. The weight pushed him flat, and the orc howled again and then shivered. Erik felt wet warmth running down his hands and realized it was the orc's blood. The figure quivered one last time and was still.

Erik lay still for several moments. The creature's face was inches away, eyes sightless and mouth agape. He could still smell its sweat. With great effort, he pushed the body to the side and then his head fell back to the dirt. He turned his head and regarded his foe one last time before dropping the sword by his side. He slowly, painfully, got to his feet. The slash in his side was bleeding freely, but didn't appear very deep. He removed a blanket from his bedroll and tore off a long strip, winding it around his waist and tying it tight. Erik then turned south to begin the long journey back to his village.

Because they are a race that lives by the sword, using violence to acquire most of their needs, orcs are skilled in the art of warfare. Inexperienced adventurers sometimes make the mistake of assuming that because orcs are not very intelligent they are poor fighters—this can be a fatal error. Orcs, for such chaotic creatures, have many standard combat tactics that they employ with efficiency and an ease that comes from years of practice. This humanoid race is educated in the ways of combat from an extremely young age, and the GM should play them that way! The following are some standard orc stratagems for combat:

1. Target obvious wizards. Orcs dislike and fear spellcasters on an almost primal level, and powerful magic is one of the easiest ways to panic an orc force. Therefore, it's not surprising that most orcs have been trained from youth to attack all non-tribal spellcasters on sight. Orcs are intelligent enough to recognize the typical garb and accoutrements associated with spellcasters, and they target such individuals first. Likewise, individuals making ominous hand gestures or speaking in unusual tongues may also be at risk for early attack. Once they have eliminated enemy spellcasters, orcs turn their attention to their more martial opponents.

2. Soldiers are expendable. Orc forces of large size are quite willing to sacrifice some of their own warriors if that means winning the battle. Tales have been told of orc warriors charging into spellcasters and pulling them over cliffs (plunging to their own doom in the process), or orc commanders sending legions marching toward more powerful foes if they think they can accomplish their ultimate goal. If it comes to eliminating an enemy leader or spellcaster, ruining an enemy war machine, sundering the walls of an enemy fortification, or accomplishing any major goal that might turn the tide of battle in favor of the orc side, orc commanders do not hesitate to risk a few of their own. In such cases, drudges are always considered the most expendable. Obviously small groups of orcs may not use this tactic, but for larger groups it is standard practice.

3. Swarming the enemy. Orcs often employ "swarm" tactics, sending many lesser warriors against one powerful foe. Adventurers leading a group into battle against orcs, especially spellcasters or those carrying obvious magic, may expect to face a great number of opponents. As mentioned above, the opponents may not be the equals of the adventurer, but they are expendable, and the goal for the orcs is to bring down their foe, regardless of the cost.

4. Use natural terrain to your advantage. Orcs are skilled at fighting in the wilderness and in underground settings, and they use this to their advantage. Orcs, if given time, lay all manner of traps for their enemies. Traps are cleverly concealed, and are usually constructed of natural materials; if in a forest setting, for instance, they might rig a tree trunk to swing from trees adjacent to a walking path to stun enemies walking by. In regular combat, orcs also make use of the terrain when possible. Orc warriors employ natural cover, use local clays or foliage for camouflage, or use narrow defiles to funnel enemies into more



vulnerable, single-file formations. Orcs also make good use of higher ground whenever possible.

5. Terribles out front, reserves behind. Orcs use a surprisingly complex tactic when utilizing special allies, such as ogres or trolls. They typically send a few “terribles” (as they call them) out in front of their main force in order to strike terror into the enemy. At the same time, they withhold a few monsters in the rear if they have them, restraining them until the regular orc warriors have already worn down the opposition. The orcs then release the reserves, sending some of their strongest allies tearing into the winded enemy lines. Many human commanders have taken note of this tactic, and those recognizing its effectiveness sometimes send a detachment of soldiers or adventurers around to the rear of the orc force to engage such monsters.

6. Avoid even confrontations. Although orcs often confront stronger forces, as mentioned previously, they dislike a fair fight. When possible, they gang up on opponents, or send their strongest warrior against lesser foes rather than immediately sending their best against the enemy’s best. Orc commanders would rather lose their drudges to the enemy’s finest, while using

their best warrior(s) to eliminate many secondary threats. For a race that regards death lightly, it is an equitable trade.

7. Make victory costly. Orc chieftains are usually bitter old warriors that nurse great hatreds for elves and humans. They will not accept defeat easily. When faced with certain defeat and great loss of troops, many chieftains hold to the policy of *chersah nol fastar* or “make defeat cost.” In short, they try to make their defeat come at a cost for the victors. This many involve slaying all prisoners before capture. It might involve sabotaging their own supplies, lest the enemy gain them (something very often done when defeat by a rival tribe or other evil humanoid is imminent). Sometimes, however, this doctrine takes a more extreme form, and a commander may sacrifice his remaining force in spectacular fashion if it means destroying the victorious force as well.

For example, an orc tribe trapped in a cavern complex that has lost three-quarters of its warriors may trigger a cave-in in an attempt to entomb their foes with them before they are struck down. This dangerous policy of some chieftains makes orc tribes particularly dangerous to oppose.

AMBUSH AT TALLIN'S CROSSING: AN EXAMPLE OF ORC TACTICS

This sample encounter illustrates a typical orc ambush. (If used in actual play, this encounter provides a challenge suitable for five 9th- or 10th-level characters.)

Tallin's Crossing is the local name for a sturdy stone bridge that crosses over the strong Silverflow River. The stone bridge was built 40 years ago by a group of farmers (organized by a man named Tallin), and it is of very solid construction. A large band of orc raiders has taken to ambushing travelers and pilgrims crossing the bridge toward the Northlands, and they have had great success.

The majority of the orcs lie on the far bank of the river—berserkers, drudges, and an ogrillon warhulk, all led by a shaman. Two bloodragers, second in command after the shaman, lurk behind a copse on the near side of the bridge. On the far side of the bridge are a smattering of trees and the crumbling remains of an ancient stone cottage. Many of the orcs lurk behind the dilapidated walls of this structure. (See Map 1: Tallin's Crossing for exact orc starting positions.)

The hidden, alert orcs swiftly spring into action once they detect a party of victims crossing the bridge heading northward.* As the party exits the bridge, two groups of orcs—each consisting of four drudges led by a fierce berserker—move into position. The first, western group emerges from the ruins of the cottage, and the second group moves down the steep incline to the east, meeting the first group just north of the bridge. The shaman and his loyal berserker bodyguard emerge from the ruined farmhouse but hang back slightly, so the spellcaster can aid his fellows without direct risk.

Shortly after the drudges and berserkers engage the targeted party, the second phase of the ambush is triggered: two hidden bloodragers move north to block egress via the bridge, and a huge ogrillon warhulk emerges from behind a moss-covered wall to block the north-most area of road, trapping the victims in a natural defile.

Once the orc force has surrounded their victims, the berserkers happily lead the charge, followed by the obedient drudges. The bloodragers have been given firm orders to maintain post at the end of the bridge, but if the melee continues for more than 4 rounds or the berserkers fall, they scream a war cry and charge across the bridge to engage. The shaman does not involve himself in personal melee unless his life is imperiled, and both his bodyguard and the ogrillon defend the shaman with their lives.

**This ambush can easily be used to entrap travelers heading south as well, simply adjust the starting positions slightly so the orcs are not visible to southward-bound visitors.*

It was yet another chill day, and Erik's breath came in white clouds that hung on the air like idle pipe smoke before drifting away on the next zephyr. He had been at his post for hours now, and his knees ached. The cold threatened to cut off his circulation—already his toes were growing heavy—and he flexed his limbs once silently before returning to his original position.

Until now, a solitary red hawk had been his only company. Falhonnen was the name the elves gave such birds, which translated roughly to far-eye in Common. This far-eye had circled overhead for the last hour, and now, with a gentle grace, it caught a downdraft and fell from the sky. It disappeared from his sight a moment, and then it was up again with prey, clutching a field mouse in its firm talons.

He turned his gaze back to the road. The caravan road was seldom used in this weather, and the empty path looked like a twisting gray ribbon on a field of white. Today, there had been no traffic along the path at all. Erik was starting to think it would be another eventless day when three figures appeared over the ridge. They were mounted on creatures that moved in great, loping strides. Not horses. He blinked his eyes and waited for them to draw closer. The figures wore dark furs, and he could not see their faces but only a shadowy oval under their thrown hoods. They were mounted on wolf-like creatures that moved close to the ground with fast, somehow furtive leg movements. The small banner they carried left no doubt. They were scouts of the Bloodied Fist.

The sight of the red banner brought back the old anger, like awakening a bear that was hibernated peacefully until the thaw. It was not the same tribe that claimed his parents—they had long since departed these lands—but the colors were similar and it stoked a smoldering hatred deep in his gut. He reached for his longbow.

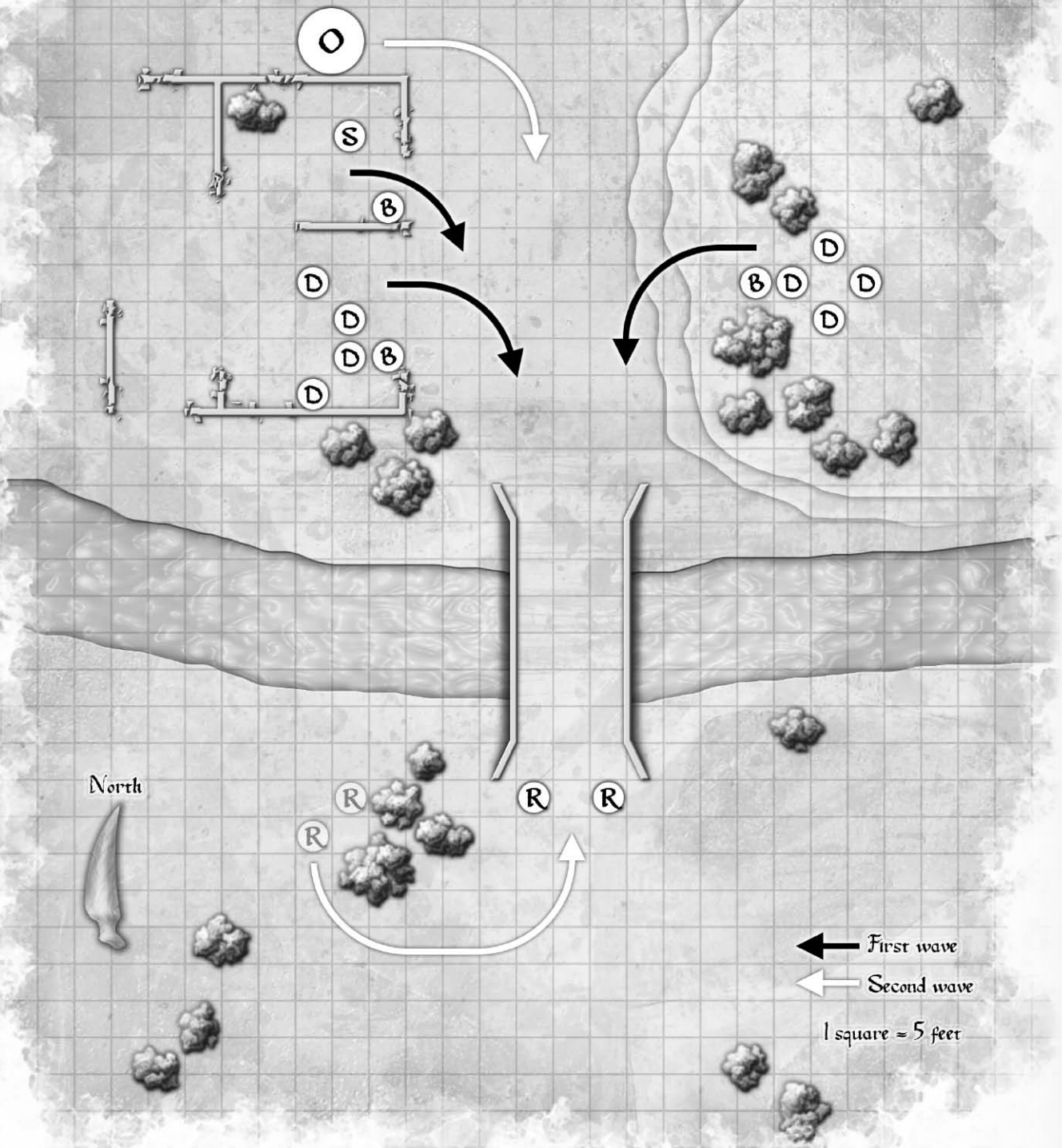
The three riders moved swiftly along the path. Say what you would about worgs, he thought, but they could move quickly indeed. Erik reached back and plucked an arrow from his quiver with practiced precision and set it against his bow. He drew the string back, sighting on the lead rider. The riders continued, and then the lead scout drew to a stop, halting the others. Erik kept his sight fixed. The riders were all stopped now, their mounts panting heavy, gray billows. They had stopped on another rise, and the scouts appeared to be surveying the surrounded terrain. Holding the reins tightly, each rider dismounted. Erik wasn't concerned, his white cloak and gray leathers would fade him carefully into the background.

Erik waited until the lead scout was remaining almost still—only its head was turning as it spoke to the others. Erik drew back the string and grew ready to let his first arrow fly—and then paused. It was important that these scouts not reach their tribe, for the signs these last few months had been troubling, yet he felt himself hesitate. The anger was still there, but suddenly diminished, like smoldering coals covered by a wet cloak. Fyalen, rest his spirit, would have been pleased no doubt.

He had eased the string back and was preparing to lower himself from the tree when a sudden howl jarred his senses. His head snapped up. At the ridge, the figures were mounting their worgs again, moving with a swift purpose now. The lead rider's worg stared at Erik's tree and let out another low howl. Damn.

The scouts were heading for the tree at full speed now, their snarling mounts panting in the cold air. He still could not hear their approach, but they were closing on his position with startling speed.

Map 1 Ambush at Tallin's Crossing



Erik hastily nocked an arrow to his bow and saw with horror that the riders had drawn out their own dark bows. Quivers full of black-feathered arrows bounced against their backs as they rode toward him. One of the riders pointed at his tree ... they knew exactly where he was.

Erik quickly sighted on the lead rider and let an arrow fly, but the shot went high. The riders followed the road down behind a copse, and a moment later, two riders emerged. Where was the third? There was no time to consider it; the riders were now close enough that he could see them much better, clearly see the lead worg's muscles rippling under its fur as it charged toward his perch. The red banner flapped in the air as they approached.

He again sighted an arrow, and released. He heard a dim cry, and the lead scout tumbled off its mount. The worg skidded to a stop, uncertain, and circled back toward the fallen orc. The other rider threw back its hood and brought up its bow, nocking its own arrow. Erik could feel beads of sweat growing on the small of his back despite the frigid weather, and the thought of it made him angry once again. He let loose another arrow, missed, and cursed. At full gallop the worgrider was a difficult target. He hoped that a moving rider would have some difficulty sighting on him in turn. As if in answer, an arrow whistled by his head, almost close enough to touch his hair. In the distance, a single walking figure emerged from behind the copse, but Erik didn't understand until the full-throated growl came from the base of his tree. Somehow the worg had circled around, despite the relative lack of cover, and had approached his perch undetected. The monster snarled and reared up at him, barking. It let out another baritone growl. And with its red eyes fixed on him, dug its nails into the tree and began to pull itself up toward his position.

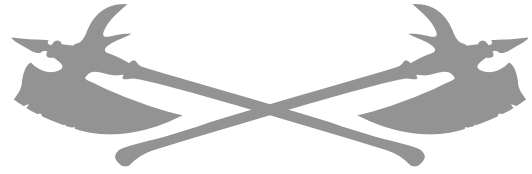
A second black-tipped arrow flew toward him, this one sinking deep into the tree trunk beside him. Ignoring the snarling creature struggling to reach him, Erik loosed another arrow, but he was distracted, and at the moment of release, he knew the shot would go wild. Another orc arrow slammed through the foliage by his head, loosing a miniature rain of leaves and snow on him. He fell sideways, almost lost his balance, but caught the branch with one hand while somehow retaining a grip on his bow. He felt his quiver slide off his shoulder, and was helpless to stop it; his arrows spilled to the ground below. He clutched for the falling arrows and succeeded in grasping two. Two arrows left.

The worg below howled a long, wavering cry and launched itself at the trunk with renewed fury. Erik watched, fascinated despite himself, as the creature actually succeeded in pulling itself up the tree with what appeared to be a hideous, muscular ease. He blotted the thought from his mind and nocked his second to last arrow. The worgrider was approaching the tree, and he saw the orc clearly now. It was close enough for him to see its eyes and black lips. The rider was taking careful aim, he saw. He laid down flat on his branch, ignoring the wolf just below and his own tired muscles, trying to present the smallest target possible. The rider's mount was closing the distance with great bounding leaps. Another arrow slipped by his shoulder, slicing open his leather armor and stinging the flesh beneath. Erik ignored it, as he forced himself to ignore all other things. All that existed was his arrow and his target. Sighting on the worg mount's chest, he loosed his arrow and seconds later the mount went crashing over, sending the surprised rider tumbling head over heels to the rocky ground.

A dull growl sounded just below him, and he looked down to see the worg's face, tongue lolling over its long teeth, straining to reach him. It was perhaps four feet away. He drew back his last arrow and

released it at full draw. The arrow sank deep into the worg's eye, and it fell howling to the ground. It was dead soon after it landed.

Erik struggled to sit up, but his numb legs were slow to comply. The fallen rider wasn't moving. In the distance, the last rider was running back over the ridge toward the faraway safety of its tribe. Erik settled his head onto the tree limb wearily and let out a low breath into the cold air.



FIGHTING AGAINST ORCS

Experienced adventurers facing orcs can increase their chances of survival if they understand their enemy. Knowledge of orc mannerisms and habits are key to successful engagements with these dangerous humanoids. Below are some basic strategies to utilize against them:

1. Lure them onto your ground. Orcs are masters of using natural terrain to their advantage, and they are skilled at setting traps. The easiest way to combat this is not to fight the orcs on their ground at all, but to lure them to yours. Orcs are emotional creatures, and taunting them or employing quick hit-and-run attacks can be enough to coax orcs onto a battleground more favorable to you and your party.

2. Don't show any fear. Orcs involve themselves in battles on a very emotional level, losing themselves in wild bloodlust and overconfidence one moment, and suddenly routing the next when things turn against them. Wise adventurers do not show fear in the face of orc attacks, denying the orcs an easy confidence-builder. When faced with a stalwart enemy, many common orcs hesitate or retreat.

3. Play on their fears. Orcs fear and respect magic. Flashy or destructive displays of magic can have devastating effects on tribal morale unless the orcs have a spellcaster of their own involved in the battle. If the orcs do have a shaman or witchdoctor present, defeating that individual in a spellcaster-versus-spellcaster bout can hurt the morale of surviving orc soldiers.

4. Target their leaders. Orc warriors are great fighters, but they are also unruly individuals that are difficult to control and direct. Strong commanders are necessary to keep the less-disciplined warriors in check. By targeting and eliminating the leaders, you can remove the glue that binds an orc force into a cohesive unit; once the leaders are gone, the group dissolves into chaos and panic.

5. Hit them with close and area attacks. Orcs prefer to attack in large groups, and they travel in tight packs. A few well-placed burst or blast powers can affect many orcs at once, eliminating many enemies in one fell swoop. Spellcasters should aim spells carefully for maximum effect.

CHAPTER IX: ORCISH RELIGION & RELICS

The council stood still and said nothing; for all intents and purposes, they might as well have been statues of men placed around a table. Erik sighed, and changed tactics.

"They were advance scouts, placed well ahead of the main tribe," he said. "They are real. You've seen the bodies, seen the standard."

"Of course they are real," said the man near the head of the table. "But three lone orcs doesn't seem like a great cause for concern."

The man was Brahdas, senior military advisor to the Council of the Twelve Towns. He wore his shining scalemail even now, its polished brilliance reflecting the torchlight in contrast to his dull, heavily bronzed skin. This was a man who had spent much time in the field, sword in hand, and the others respected him. Erik had to proceed carefully.

"As I said," Erik began, "They were..."

"Yes, we heard you." The wizard Treyden now chose to enter the conversation after an hour of silence. The man stood like a tall, brooding willow, looking down over the council. His eyes blazed with confidence and not a little arrogance. "Scouts, you say," he said wryly. He shook his head. "My magic has not revealed any approaching army."

"Perhaps they have hidden themselves behind Murgan's Alehouse?" said Brahdas, with a laugh. There were a few laughs at this, but most of the men held their silence. A few of the older council members had survived the massacre of Bristolford, and Erik was relieved to see that their faces were grave.

Erik stood. "I have told you of my encounter with the three scouts..."

"If they were three scouts!" came the retort.

"Let him speak." This came from a solemn Larrosen, head of the council. His voice cut across those present like a cold lash. Brahdas opened his mouth to speak, and then closed it again. His great mustache seemed to droop in consternation, but the old warrior held his tongue. He looked around at the faces present and settled back into his chair in resignation.

"As I have said, the three scouts bore a standard. A red fist held high on a yellow field. It is the emblem of the Bloodied Fist. They are on the move again."

"We know of the Fist," said the wizard Treyden petulantly. "They rarely raid beyond the high northern hills, and they have not been seen below the Old Son in my lifetime. A lifetime considerably longer than yours, I might add."

"Say on!" shouted Brahdas. "I too am no stranger to the field, as all here know. Long have I toiled in the garden of blood, harvesting what I could." He laughed grimly. "I know something of humanoid



and something of war. The orcs in the hills around are little threat and rarely dare to show their faces. I've faced humanoids, remember ... my forces turned away a band of goblins not two years ago."

"The Bloodied Fist numbers more than four hundred warriors strong. They are not a mere band of goblins," Erik said with conviction. He ignored the stern glare of Brahdas and continued.

"What is your proof?" Brahdas demanded.

"I have watched this tribe for the last twelve years. I have seen their great numbers. I have seen the mixed bloods in their company. For the last three months I and a few other souls have stood constant watch, waiting for just a sign as this."

"That still does not address the main point," said Treyden. "You say you know they will advance soon, yet there has been no sign save a few lone wolf-riders." His eyes grew sympathetic. "I know you were ambushed by an orc not ten years ago and nearly killed. I know that you spent your younger years in the care of the elves of Ashenleaf, themselves great enemies of the orc tribes of the mountains. Perhaps you are letting your personal experiences cloud your judgment."

"The death of my parents and the teachings of the elves do not change what I have..."

"I'm sorry. Even if the tribe is as large as you say, which I doubt, there is simply no reason the orcs would turn in this direction. They are insular and do not travel beyond the mountains," Treyden lectured.

Erik had not been watching the elder members of the council, and he was surprised when one of them suddenly stood. Erik was surprised further when the old man spoke in a reed-thin voice that commanded attention only by virtue of its deadly gravity.

"Hear him out, all of you. Bristolford fell but 30 years ago ... are you so foolish as to think such a thing could never happen again?"

No one answered, not even Brahdas. Larrosen held up a hand for silence, and gestured to the old man to continue.

"Thank you," the old man replied, his eyes fierce points shining from his weathered face. He turned back to Erik. "Tell us all that you have seen, Erik." It was not a request.

"My thanks. I shall show you, so all may see," said Erik. He dropped an orcish shield onto the table. "This was carried by one of the riders. One of the scouts." He gestured to the emblem on the shield. "Some of you might recognize, as I mentioned, the sign of the Bloodied Fist."

Some of the men nodded. No one raised an objection. Erik pointed now to the lower corner of the shield; a smaller emblem was painted there, more difficult to see from a distance, of a bloodied axe-like blade, hanging slantwise over a yellow smear of color.

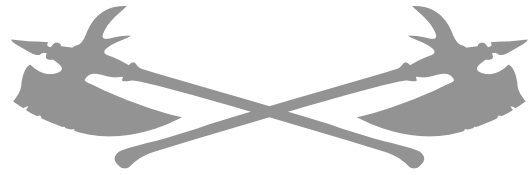
"This is an icon of allegiance to the orc demigod Sanguinal. This demigod urges his followers to widespread destruction and plunder. One orc does not display the icon of a demigod before his tribe unless the tribal shamans have decreed that demigod to be the patron demigod of the entire tribe, from the chieftain on down," said Erik.

He tapped the shield for emphasis.

"I have never seen this emblem on their equipment before. Sanguinal demands blood sacrifice and widespread violence from his followers, and tribes that pay him allegiance follow his dictates. They will seek out all nearby settlements and attempt to enslave the occupants. The arrival of these tribal scouts is proof that they are preparing for war!"

Larrosen sat quietly for a moment, and no one dared speak. Erik recalled that Larrosen too had lost family at Bristolford. Larrosen finally stood and addressed him.

"Tell us what we can do."



ORCISH DEMIGODS

All orcs pay some degree of reverence to the One-Eyed Overlord, a mighty orc deity said by sages to dwell in the Outer Planes or the Astral Sea. Orc shamans tell their tribes that eons ago, the Overlord was ambushed by the god of the elves, a cowardly attack that cost the Overlord one of his eyes, because the elven god feared the orc so. For this reason, orcs hold great enmity for all elves and many shamans or particularly devoted warriors show their great reverence for the Overlord by purposefully plucking out an eye. The Overlord often rewards such personal sacrifice, granting those individuals special powers related to their remaining eye.

Orcs honor their heroes above almost all else, and so personages that exemplify certain aspects of orcish life can sometimes transcend their mortal existence and become demigods. Orcs warriors like the idea that their courage and savagery may be rewarded with eternal life at the Overlord's side.

There are many obscure orc gods and demigods; some of the more popularly worshipped entities are presented here.

GHORAGOSH THE GLUTTON

In life, Ghoragosh was an immense warhulk of mixed racial bloodlines (this last bloodline aspect is unknown to many worshippers) and prodigious appetite. He was an incredible sight on the battlefield, smashing through enemy lines and crushing those who dared stand in his way. Tales of his great combat prowess have led to his second moniker, the Unstoppable, but this is less often used.

Ghoragosh had a greed for all things—food, treasure, mates, and inflicting pain—that surpassed all his peers. He amassed a great amount of personal treasure over his lifetime

and he frequently gorged himself at meals, to the chagrin of his less-accomplished rivals. Frightened subchiefs dared not abscond with his treasures, so he amassed a great amount of personal items before his passing. After his death—a meal at which he ate himself into a stupor and was shortly thereafter ripped apart by jealous tribemates—the orc gods took pity on him and gave him demigod status for his great avarice.

Followers of Ghoragosh share his infamous greed and covet his great strength. Ogrillons figure chiefly among his disciples, but his followers include all types of orcs. Warhulks often invoke an oath to Ghoragosh before entering great battles, and his name is sometimes honored at gorgefeasts as well. Ceremonies dedicated to the demigod always involve some form of eating or drinking before their conclusion.

The favored weapon of Ghoragosh is the maul. His areas of influence are Conquest, Greed, and Wealth. His symbol is a gold coin inside a fanged mouth on a brown field.

PARAGON PATH: JUGGERNAUT

Prerequisite: Cleric class

You have become a living embodiment of your liege's great, unstoppable might. The very air vibrates as you charge your enemies and prepare to seize what is theirs.

JUGGERNAUT PATH FEATURES

Disciple of the Hammer (11th level): You gain the Weapon Proficiency (maul) feat. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with all hammers.

Juggernaut Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, all allies within 5 squares gain immunity to any effect that forces movement through a pull, push, or slide until the end of your next turn.

Unmovable (16th level): Until bloodied, you are immune to any affect that forces movement through a pull, push, or slide.

JUGGERNAUT PRAYERS

Flattening Charge Juggernaut Attack 11

You run at your enemies at full speed, secure that your divine power makes you unstoppable.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must charge and use this power in place of the melee basic attack.

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, the target is knocked prone, and you may make a secondary attack on the target.

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Iron Gut

Juggernaut Utility 12

There is little you cannot consume.

Daily ♦ Divine

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: You are hit with an attack that deals ongoing poison damage.

Effect: Make an immediate saving throw against the effect and gain resist 5 poison until the end of the encounter.

Divide and Conquer

Juggernaut Attack 20

You call upon a powerful oath that surges from your limbs, hurling your enemies in all directions.

Daily ♦ Divine, Implement, Force

Standard Action Close burst 5

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier force damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

SANGUINAL THE BLOODBATHER

Sanguinal began life as a simple orc raider, but his delight in conflict and inflicting pain on wounded enemy soldiers soon led him to be marked as a bloodrager. For all of his short life, Sanguinal demonstrated battlefield cunning and a passion for bloodletting that greatly exceeded his fellow bloodragers. This bloodlust, however, sometimes caused the death of allies, as Sanguinal fell into a wanton trance of destruction, hacking and swinging with his greataxe, until all other figures within his fell radius lay dead.

The deities of war granted Sanguinal demigod status immediately after his passing. His nickname comes from his gruesome habit of stopping on the battlefield to drink or bathe in the blood of his enemies.

Sanguinal is a popular demigod, honored by many orcs including the half-breeds. Devotees of Sanguinal conduct elaborate ceremonies in his name that always involve the spilling (and sometimes consumption) of blood. It is said that Sanguinal ignores the pleas of those who do not make proper sacrifices, and many orcish prisoners have met their ends as sacrifices to the demigod. Bloodragers and berserkers nearly always pay some homage to Sanguinal, even if they do not participate in larger ceremonies. Warriors do not openly invoke his name on the battlefield, but sometimes place their axes across their chests in a slantwise fashion before their first charge in silent testimony to the grim demigod.

The favored weapon of Sanguinal worshipers is the greataxe. His areas of influence are Strength, Trickery, and War. His symbol is a bloodied axe laid slantwise across a yellow field.

PARAGON PATH: BLOODRAGE ACOLYTE

Prerequisite: Cleric class

The greatest bloodrager has honored you with a tiny portion of his divine power. On the field of battle, you let loose your most savage instincts. When releasing your divine abilities, your eyes glow blood red.

BLOODRAGE ACOLYTE PATH FEATURES

Acolyte Training (11th level): You receive a +2 bonus to AC when wearing light armor.

Bloodrage Acolyte Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take another action, you regain 2 hit points for every bloodied enemy or ally within 5 squares.

Weapon Training (11th level): You gain the Weapon Proficiency feat for any axe of your choice. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to damage with all axes.

Ravage the Bloodied (16th level): You gain a +4 bonus to damage rolls against bloodied targets.

BLOODRAGE ACOLYTE POWERS

Eviscerating Strike Bloodrage Acolyte Utility 11

You open up your opponent's abdomen with your axe, spilling his entrails on the ground.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding an axe.

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and that target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Bloody Tactics Bloodrage Acolyte Utility 11

You draw strength from the screams of your victims.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You score a critical hit with an axe.

Effect: You may spend a healing surge and regain the use of a single encounter power.

Berserk Circle of Death

Bloodrage Acolyte
Attack 20

You whirl your axe in a vicious circle, striking any that dare oppose you!

Daily ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding an axe.

Primary Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you may make a secondary attack on up to two foes adjacent to you.

Secondary Targets: Up to two adjacent enemies.

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage to primary target; no secondary attacks.

TORNAZSH THE MUTILATOR

Tornazsh was a great orc chieftain of a tribe once some 1,200 members strong. He rose through the ranks rapidly by force of will, cajoling shamans and bullying subchiefs until he eventually became the highest-ranking subchief himself. By this time, Tornazsh was known for his deadly use of the bardiche, and his habit of slicing the limbs from his enemies before dispatching them. He challenged the standing tribal chieftain when his rival was deep in his cups and arrogant, and a deft swing of Tornazsh's weapon sent the grizzled orc's head rolling. Tornazsh assumed control of the tribe immediately thereafter.

The One-Eyed Overlord, god of all orcs, praised Tornazsh's daring and habit of humiliating his enemies (especially elven warriors), and gifted him with some of his divine essence, making Tornazsh a demigod.

Followers of the Mutilator include the cruelest and proudest orcs, usually those that already have proven themselves in many battles. The ranks of the devoted include many orc chieftains and subchiefs. Those who honor Tornazsh do it proudly, and they often carve or paint his symbol on their armor, axe blades, or on the walls of their crude living quarters. (Demigod symbols are never placed on shields or banners, lest they be confused with tribal emblems.)

The favored weapon of Tornazsh worshipers is the bardiche. His areas of influence are Battle, Domination, and War. His symbol is a horizontal bardiche blade, pointed downward, poised above a sundered arm over a wavy sea of blood.

PARAGON PATH: DREAD MUTILATOR

Prerequisite: Fighter or warlord class

You live to cut down foes in the name of mighty Tornazsh. You follow the path of the true mutilator, ignoring pain and delighting in the howls of the fallen. When employing your divine powers, your muscles ripple with tendrils of gray energy.

DREAD MUTILATOR PATH FEATURES

Strength of Tornazsh (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you gain +4 bonus on all attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Fearless (11th level): You gain a +2 bonus to your Will defense to resist effects with the fear or psychic keywords.

Mutilating Critical (16th level): When you score a critical hit with a bardiche or glaive, the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter (save ends).

DREAD MUTILATOR EXPLOITS

Bloody Surge Dread Mutilator Attack 11

You draw strength from the screams of your victims.

Encounter F Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Personal

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage

Effect: If you are bloodied, you may spend a healing surge and add your Strength modifier to the hit points regained.

Commanding Bellow Dread Mutilator Utility 12

You roar encouragement to your allies, rallying them to your side in the name of drawing enemy blood.

Daily ♦ Martial

Minor Action Personal

Effect: All adjacent allies gain +2 power bonus to damage rolls until the end of the encounter.

Mutilating Blow

Dread Mutilator Attack 20

You swing your unholy weapon with devastating skill, hewing the limbs of your opponents.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a bardiche or glaive.

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target suffers one of the following effects (determined randomly).

1. The target is slowed (save ends).
2. The target suffers ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
3. The target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).
4. The target suffers a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Miss: Half damage; no additional effects.

ZELTHRAS THE STRANGLER

In life, Zelthras was perhaps the greatest of the longshadows, an orc of great personal duplicity and stealth. Such was his ability to remain unseen that Tornazsh was said to possess the ability to become invisible, something that was not true. He was also said to be impossible to wound, something that was also a myth, though his hidden *ring of regeneration* (salvaged during a raid from a human adventurer) probably led to this belief.

Zelthras was a master of the ambush; he normally struck from behind, strangling his foes before they could react. His tactics served as an example to many orcs that stealth was also deserving of glory and that face-to-face attacks were not the only strategy to be used in battle. The deities of war gave him new life as a demigod based on his unearthly abilities.

Orcs desiring greater stealth, luck with thievery, or cunning pay allegiance to Zelthras and pay him honor. Worshipers do not always honor the demigod openly, but tend to observe him in secret ceremonies. Zelthras worshipers favor garrotes or short swords. His areas of influence are Death, Darkness, and Secrets. His symbol is a black, upwards pointing hand on a red field.

PARAGON PATH: UNHOLY AMBUSHER

Prerequisite: Rogue class

Stealth is your ally. You ambush your foes, strike with precision, and withdraw before they can think of retaliation. Zelthras guides your blade to the heart of your opponents. When demonstrating your powers, shadows leap up from the ground and curl about your body.

UNHOLY AMBUSER PATH FEATURES

Unholy Ambusher Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take another action, you gain concealment against all enemies with 5 squares until the end of your next turn.

Short Sword Advantage (11th level): In your hands, any short sword has the high crit weapon property.

Surprise Tactics (16th level): You gain a +3 bonus to attack rolls against targets you have combat advantage against. This bonus increases to +4 at 25th level.

UNHOLY AMBUSER EXPLOITS

Seizing the Moment

Unholy Ambusher
Attack 11

You strike quickly, darting in and hitting an unaware opponent and then stepping away.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a light blade.

Target: One creature that has not yet acted in an encounter.

Special: You may shift 2 squares before making this attack.

Attack: Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and the target grants combat advantage to you until the end of your next turn.

Cloak of Darkness

Unholy Ambusher Utility 12

Shadows slide around your form, cloaking you in darkness and making your features indistinct.

Daily ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You gain concealment until the end of the encounter.

Deep Strike

Unholy Ambusher Attack 20

You thrust your short sword deep into your opponent's torso.

Daily ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a short sword.

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). On a critical hit, the target suffers ongoing 15 damage (save ends).

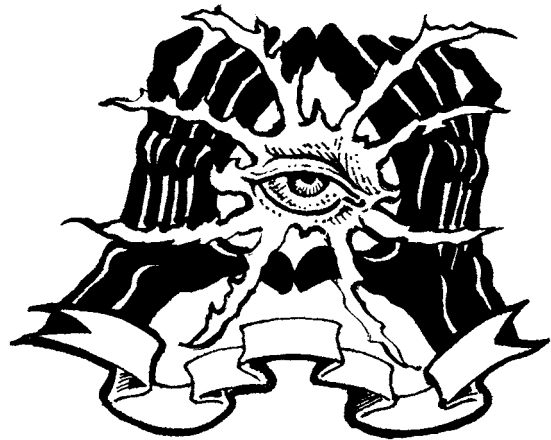
Miss: Half damage; no ongoing damage.

RELICS

Artifacts, ancestral weapons, and relics are important to orcs. They revere bits of respected warriors, such as the skull of a chieftain or a hunk of bone remaining from a great witchdoctor. Tribe members carve their specialized runes into their more valuable possessions, and take great care in erecting totems and crude statues (often carved of wood or sculpted from natural clay).

Orcs do not have many ceremonies with regard to death. Fallen orc warriors are usually left on the battlefield without concern. Orcs believe that after death, the orc spirit wages battle against enemies in an afterlife elsewhere, unconnected to the mortal remains. Orcs do, however, hold ceremonies honoring great warriors or chieftains that die in battle, and often the first stage of selecting a new chieftain is honoring the previous one. In these cases, the mortal remains are burned while the tribal warriors dance and shout around the bonfire. Great feasts often follow these ceremonies honoring the fallen, but other times, they are followed by mass executions of slaves or prisoners.

When orcs pay permanent tribute to their fallen heroes, it is usually through statuary or great idols, which need not be located near the remains of the one so honored. Lesser orcs are more prone to honor their heroes and honored dead, and often build elaborate tombs or halls devoted to dead commanders.



CHAPTER X: ORCS IN THE CAMPAIGN

The arrows soared up in a terrible cloud, crashing like a grim wave upon the men below. The three men huddled, shields turned high, and Erik found himself watching the salvo with odd detachment. He knew from experience that an arrow shot directly at you was nearly invisible; these were the opposite, and you could helplessly watch them swoop down, unable to do naught but try to protect yourself.

After the last of the arrows thudded to the ground, the men rose. They had to move upfield and quickly! Erik was glad that Randolph and Tarken were at his side; they were experienced, careful men. Together they were reaching the heart of the enemy, and this part of the battlefield was a chaotic swirl, an awful storm of men and orcs and clashing blades. Around them they could hear the screams of the dying, men and orcs both, and still and crawling figures lay all around. Ahead, several large orcs took notice of them and charged.

Erik stood his ground, meeting their eyes with blade outstretched as he had been taught by the elves years ago. Soon the orcs were upon them. Randolph stepped to the side nimbly and struck his opponent down with a quick cut to the stomach. Erik could hear Tarken next to him, panting as he exchanged blows with one of the creatures, but Erik was forced to concentrate on his own opponent.

The orc swung his axe down with a murderous howl, and Erik deflected the blow, feeling the concussion of the mighty swing run along his arm. He aimed his weapon at the orc's exposed side, but his blow was off-balance, and the creature evaded it. They circled each other, obvious to the din around them. The creature swung again, missed, and attempted a third try when Erik's sword struck home. A stray arrow whistled past them both, near enough that Erik could feel its wind. The wounded orc clutched the sword buried in his gut, holding it tight, and swung his axe. Erik felt a burning sensation across his chest and saw a thin line of red appear across the front of his leather armor. Suddenly a strong hand grabbed the orc's head from behind and a long blade slashed across the orc's throat. The creature slumped forward, away from Randolph's sword.

"You looked as if you could use a bit of help there, my friend," said Randolph. Erik tried to answer, but his breath was not yet back, so he nodded. Nearby Tarken stood, hair tussled and panting. Randolph inspected Erik's chest. "Tis a scratch, I dare say. Catch your wind, both of you, and then let us keep moving!"

They advanced quickly, moving around fallen figures and smashed war machines. A single howling orc ran up to them, fearless, and Erik coolly struck it down. It had been nine long years since Erik killed his first orc, back when a lone sentry had ambushed and nearly killed him on a wooded hill not five miles from here. He still took no pleasure in it. He suspected that Randolph and Tarken did not either, and he was glad for that.

They passed close to two soldiers; both were wounded but walking, albeit barely. Erik stared at the one man's bloody face for a moment before realizing he knew the man.

"Thomsen?"

The man's eyes swiveled wildly and then met his. The man stopped walking for a moment and caught his breath. The second man clung to him silently for support.

"Erik," the man said flatly. He then gave a weak smile.

"The first company?"

"We are all that's left. The second company is holding the line, despite our losses. I agreed to bring Alsoen here to the rear." The second man didn't speak.

"What of Commander Brahdas? Has he taken lead of the second company?"

"Brahdas fell an hour ago. He didn't go easily. I wish you men better luck. Gods grant you strength." The two men staggered on, leaving the three soldiers to continue forward.

As they crested the ridge, they could see the bulk of the army engaged below, men and orcs swirling in a lethal dance. Nearby lay a downed worgrider, and as Tarken moved by, a snarling head reared up, spittle flying. Tarken staggered backward, caught his feet on another body, and tumbled to the ground. The worg's front legs were crushed, but it strained forward to reach them. Randolph stepped up and swiftly dispatched it. Laughing, he helped his comrade to his feet.

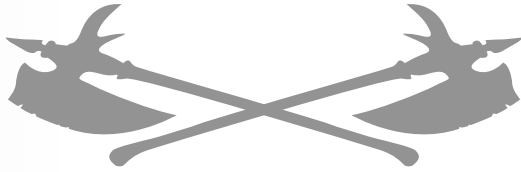
Randolf began to say something, still chuckling, when a number of smaller, large-headed orcs a distance in front of them squealed and parted. From behind them, a massive figure, nearly ogre-sized, sprinted forward. The orc—if that is what it was—was clad in black plate armor and a spiked helm.

The creature reached them with frightening speed, stopping before Tarken. Randolph leaped at the creature, and it lashed out with an elbow, knocking him aside like a doll. Tarken's mace glanced off the creature's breastplate, and with a snarl, it brought its terrible maul down with lethal force, driving the man to the ground. Erik ran forward, but the horror was already turning to face him. Grinning mirthlessly, it again brought down its weapon on the downed Tarken. Furious, Erik pulled out his dagger and attacked the creature two-handed. It easily turned aside his sword, but the dagger struck home between two plates of dark armor. The thing's bellow of pain confirmed the strike, but all too soon it swung the bloodied maul, striking the sword from Erik's grasp and knocking him sprawling to the rocky, body-strewn ground.

Randolf, back on his own feet, whirled his blade at the creature's head, and the sound of steel on steel rang out. Weaponless, his dagger still jutting from the colossus' side, Erik snatched up an orcish battleaxe nearby. Randolph stood bravely toe-to-toe with the giant creature, exchanging strikes and somehow evading its blows. Finally, the creature landed a glancing strike, and Randolph staggered backward, holding his side. Sensing weakness, the great orc closed in for the kill. Standing with grim determination, Erik hurled the axe he held with all his might. The

battleaxe struck just above the creature's breastplate, slicing cleanly through its neck, and then continued on. The behemoth staggered, took a single step forward, and fell to the ground.

Still clutching his side, Randolph moved closer. "Tarken is dead," he said with finality. Erik wearily closed his eyes, oblivious to the faraway sounds of battle.



WAYS TO USE ORCS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Orcs can be considered the quintessential humanoids, backed by a long history in fantasy novels, film, and popular culture. This makes them an easy blend for nearly every type of campaign. Below are a few suggestions for presenting orcs in more unusual settings.

AQUATIC SETTING

There's no reason you cannot incorporate orcs into an underwater setting, if a variant of the species is used. The presence of underwater orcs would probably come as a surprise to adventurers expecting the more usual underwater humanoids! Acting alone or as servitors to an underwater mastermind, aquatic orcs can present new challenges for the heroes to face.

Adventure Idea: The shipping lanes of the Northern Runner Fleet have been jeopardized by pirates in the past, but sailors reaching port now tell tales of green-skinned humanoids climbing up the sides of their ships, raiding their holds, and disappearing back into the deep water after the attack. The coastal merchants are demanding action and the heroes have been asked to serve onboard the next ship out.

ARTIC SETTING

Orcs, hardy and primitive by nature, are a good fit for an arctic setting. Colder settings also provide a natural setting for creatures that might work well with orcs, such as ogres, giants, and ettins. Greater orcs work well in this setting because of their greater toughness, and the subspecies of ogrillon and otrillon also are ideal for use in colder climes.

Adventure Idea: The orc tribes of the howling hills have always been warlike, but usually their hostilities focused as much on each other as toward the humans around them. Recently, a frightening change has been observed: several orc tribes working in unison have struck the northern human forts and seem to be

specifically seeking certain types of treasure. Unbeknownst to the human settlers of these savage lands, a venerable white dragon has forged an unlikely alliance with the tribes and struck a bargain with them—if they can locate a sapphire of good enough quality and size to ensure its transformation into a dragon-lich, it will then lead them to victory over the largest northern cities! The player characters must investigate and stop the dragon from reaching immortality.

JUNGLE SETTING

Orcs may be used in a jungle setting with little adjustment, and the subspecies of feral orc (presented elsewhere in this book) is ideal for a jungle setting where more primitive, wild orcs are needed.

Adventure Idea: Recently, a strange map was discovered in the collection of a deceased sage, a map that shows a legendary city named Zhustarn in the heart of what was considered uninhabitable jungle lands. Zhustarn is mentioned in several ancient tomes as a place of great wealth and lost magic, guarded by a race of ferocious humanoids that are said to resemble orcs yet constitute a new race. The heroes, if they dare, may forge their way through the wilderness to Zhustarn and discover the secrets of this lost city and its mysterious guardians.

URBAN SETTING

Orcs in an urban setting might seem like a stretch, but there are situations where this makes sense. Wild frontier settlements or decadent cities might contain small orc populations. In other nations, orcs may control whole cities they took in war years before. In more civilized areas, orcs of mixed blood might be present in the populace, struggling for acceptance or plotting crimes.

Adventure Idea: The city of Northpoint is a city in turmoil. The regent and his council maintain control by a thread, and various power groups desire control of the city. Rumors swirl that one Abbaruytar, former head mage of the Autumn Ring, the city's school of wizardry, is up to evil doings in the cavernous undercity ruins beneath Northpoint. The heroes are tasked with venturing into the dangerous undercity and seeking out Abbaruytar. This is a case where the council assumes the worst, and they are right. Abbaruytar is indeed plotting evil, and he has used his magic to awe the tribe of cave orcs living secretly within the undercity into compliance. When the time is right, the orcs will swarm to the surface and eliminate all opposition to Abbaruytar's rule... unless the characters can stop him.

NON-FANTASY SETTINGS

Orcs are clearly the bread and butter of fantasy campaigns, but with a little imagination, orc-loving GMs can place them in nearly any setting.

Science fiction settings are easy! A race (or several varied races) or space orcs could exist, as yet another space-faring species for the player characters to encounter. They could represent a species once evolved enough to achieve space travel, but now devolved to the point of savagery, destined to salvage technology from other races by means of force.

In a horror setting, orcs could be used to represent humans distorted by evil magic, the whim of an insane elder being, or some other force. Investigators could visit a secluded pastoral village or old seacoast town only to find the inhabitants are less than human!

Using orcs in modern-style espionage games might be more of a challenge, but if the campaign can accept mad doctors conducting experiments, a few orcs are great examples of humans turned into savage mockeries of humanity by genetic experimentation.

In super hero or pulp type games, the mad doctor theme is even easier to utilize, as a madman with delusions of world conquest could be using a ray he invented to create his own race... of orcs! Half-orcs also make great examples of super heroes—or super villains—that must struggle with a less human, savage side.

In short, any game that allows for imagination and adventure allows for orcs!

ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR AN ORC-CENTERED CAMPAIGN

The orc race presents many ideas for a creative GM to use as the basis for an ongoing campaign or linked series of adventures.

By employing an orc-centered campaign, the GM can start with common orcs and gradually seed in some of her preferred variant subspecies or half-breeds. As the characters accomplish adventures and smaller quests, they can be exposed to different orc types and differing aspects of orc culture. This can yield the best of both worlds—a campaign with a central theme that still manages to remain fresh and exciting for all concerned.

Here are a few ideas for orc-centered campaigns:

INVASION!

An enormous horde of orcs, led by an unknown force, is surging toward one or more human cities. The army has already swept past several smaller settlements with little resistance and the player characters are asked to help turn the tide of battle!

This campaign could easily be broken into a series of related missions that involve aspects of stopping the invasion, such as:

- a. Rescuing villagers from areas already under attack.
- b. Reinforcing the defenses of vulnerable areas.
- c. Cutting off possible invasions routes for the slow-moving horde.
- d. Seeking out possible allies to fight the orcs.
- e. Assassinating orc commanders or leaders (may be unsuitable for lawful good characters).
- f. Seeking out the ultimate leader or motivating force behind the attack.
- g. Finding or recovering a weapon that can turn the tide.

A campaign of this sort could be structured around these missions and skirmishes, so each mission or major engagement would constitute an adventure (perhaps five sessions of game play) in the overall campaign. As the players work their way through the adventures and missions, NPCs can relate the state of the war, if the tide of battle has turned, etc. This connects the actions of the PCs to the larger campaign environment in a very tangible way, and helps players feel their characters have a stake in the proceedings.

WAR!

Similar in many aspects to *Invasion!* above, this scenario presents a more even battle (but not necessarily equal-powered) between two opposing sides, such as forest elves against a large orc tribe lairing nearby, or a human army marching to meet an opposing orc legion. The war need not be a single battle, but like most “real-life” wars, it may consist of a number of related skirmishes, larger battles, and non-military (i.e., political or stealth) actions.

Possible related adventures:

- a. The adventures must scout ahead and gather information about the orc forces, such as size, number and type of troops, allied monsters or humanoids, and possible leaders.
- b. Sabotaging key enemy resources, such as ruining their food supply or damaging their siege machines.
- c. Laying traps or ambushes for individual forces.
- d. Assuming command of key portions of the good-aligned force for certain battles.

As in the aforementioned *Invasion* theme, the GM should attempt to provide the players (via their characters) a steady stream of information about how the war is progressing so they feel connected to ongoing events. (Note that not all information that reaches the player characters need be accurate!)



INFILTRATION

The heroes are tasked with infiltrating an orc settlement of some type. The settlement could be a large encampment, a huge cavern system, or even an entire city of orcs! Reasons for the infiltration could vary, but they could involve simple intelligence gathering for inquisitive rulers or sages, or the investigation of something more specific, such as unusual lights appearing over the settlement. The player characters might have to use stealth or magical disguises to enter the settlement and explore, unless an extremely short campaign is desired! In a full-scale campaign, the heroes might have to travel through an entire country filled with and ruled by orcs.

Infiltration could also involve visiting cities where much, but not all of the population is made up of evil humanoids. Decadent cities in evil-aligned lands or wild frontier outposts might have sizable orc populations, and visiting humans would not be attacked outright, but they would have to maneuver through streets filled with dangerous characters and humanoids while accomplishing their mission. Those GMs and players desiring a more intrigue-centered campaign might find this “strangers in a strange land” approach appealing.

HOW TO USE THE NEW ITEMS IN THIS BOOK

This book is presented as a toolbox of sorts, a resource for the enterprising GM to loot for ideas and concepts to use in his own campaign. The Introduction and Chapter One are meant to give the GM a better idea of the mindset and lifestyle of the common orc, so he may easier understand what motivates these creatures and how they might act in different situations.

Chapters Two and Three may be used when constructing orc tribal groups or lairs, or when giving thought to the different “classes” an orc may have. Gamemasters may introduce hordes or the warbringers into high-level campaigns to maintain the threat orcs present. Chapter Four may be used when the GM considers lairs or armies composed of mixed races, or adds guardian creatures to orc lairs. Chapter Five presents a number of orc variants—subspecies and half-breeds – that may be sprinkled into a campaign to keep things fresh and the players on their toes.

It is recommended that the GM introduce only one or two subspecies at a time.

The new equipment and feats in Chapters Six and Seven may be sprinkled into adventures as the GM sees fit, to present new challenges for the player characters or new feats for half-orc player characters. Chapter Eight is meant to aid GMs, and perhaps players, by providing insight into the battle habits and strategies used by orcs. The GM may use these guidelines to set battle tactics for his orcsish antagonists, perhaps contrasting them against the battle tactics of other types of humanoids.

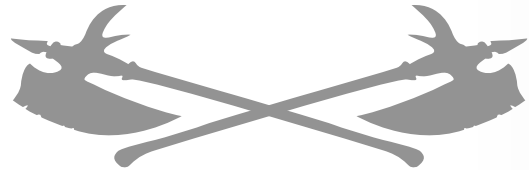
Chapter Nine offers new demigods that may be used either as gods for half-orc player characters or deities worshipped by an orc tribe the PCs encounter. The demigod honored by a tribe may shape their behavior and tactics. Chapter Ten is meant to offer suggestions for when the GM wishes to use orcs in unusual climes or non-fantasy settings. This chapter also offers adventure suggestions for structuring long-term orc-related campaigns. Finally, the appendices present hard statistics for the orc variants offered in this book and a fully-developed lair that a GM may use in time of need—when enterprising players decide their characters are going to “track those orcs back to their lair!” This is your book and it’s your campaign—use what you find interesting, ignore what you don’t, and above all, have fun.

AFTERWORD

Erik stood respectfully in the grove, silently reviewing his thoughts. It was now spring again, and the animals were active and the air was suffused with birdsong. The air around seemed bright with color. He drew his thoughts inward, as the elves had taught him, and slowly exhaled, listening to the rhythm of his own breathing until the emotions passed and one by one his anxious thoughts drifted away.

The combined army of the Bloodied Fist and Red Lash tribes had been turned aside and rent asunder. It had cost a great many men—too many—and not a few wizards, but the threat had been halted and the towns spared. He tried to forget the horrors he had seen on the battlefield. Many of the soldiers bore scars from the conflict, both real and emotional, but the day had been won, and the people had moved on with a great optimism. The survivors were not idle; even now, walls were being built and defenses prepared in case such a threat ever again reared its head. There had been some token opposition to the new work, but wiser heads prevailed, and the council vote was near unanimous. Erik was himself in charge of establishing new signal posts on the high hills around the Old Son. There was much to do, but his recent post to the council had earned him much respect and the local men had joined the cause admirably. At the current pace, the new defenses would be completed in a few months and still others were being discussed. If the orcs came again, they would be ready.

Erik bent and placed a wreath on his parents' grave, being careful to set it softly on the earth. He looked around at the other crumbling wreaths and wished peace on the survivors of the great battle, now referred to as the Battle of Old Son. He hoped that Fyalen, wherever his spirit roamed, was proud of him. Erik stood and left the grove without looking back.



AUTHOR'S COMMENT

In many ways, orcs help define the game we love. They are the quintessential monster, a villainous race that alights our memory of classic fantasy fiction and film. We hate to admit it, but we love these savage, axe-swinging, ugly-faced critters. They are the archetypal fantasy bogeyman given form. They are the challenge all must face as players—if you have played the game; your character has most likely faced down orcs at some point. It is a collective experience we share, a rite of passage for evolving characters. Before defeating the demons, before conquering the dragons, before besting the great giants, first come the orcs. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Long live the axe-swingers!

—Rick Maffei, 2008



APPENDIX I: SAMPLE LAIR— THE CAVES OF THE BLOODTUSKS

Suitable for Characters of Level 4

This section presents a fully fleshed-out orc lair for use by the GM as an example, or with some development, for actual use in play. This appendix is not meant to present a fully developed adventure—the GM must provide possible plot hooks and development—but it offers a sample, medium-sized orc lair that may be dropped with minimal effort into an ongoing campaign as needed. The GM is encouraged to modify the lair to make it a better fit their campaign and play style, or, better yet, to use it as a springboard for her own ideas and orc lairs.

The Bloodtusks settled in the caves approximately 8 years ago. The surrounding area has plentiful game and minimal threats from other humanoid tribes, so the tribe has remained in the area and enjoyed good fortune. This tribe honors Sanguinal the Bloodbather.

AREA 1-1: HIGH WATCH

Encounter Level 2 (XP 600)

SETUP

6 Orc Scouts Boulder Trap

Orc Scout

Medium natural humanoid

Level 5 Minion

XP 50

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 4 damage.

🏹 **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+2)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 6 (+0)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, quiver with 10 arrows

Boulder Trap

Level 7 Warder

Trap

XP 300

Perception

DC 15: The character notices scratches on the ramp or corridor walls from the passage of the boulder.

Trigger

When an orc scout triggers the trap.

Attack

Standard Action

Melee

Target: All creatures in the boulder's path.

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Trample: The boulder moves its speed (8) every turn until it reaches the cave entrance. As it enters a square occupied by an enemy, it makes an attack.

Countermeasures

- ♦ A character adjacent to the boulder (in front or behind) may stop its progress with a DC 20 Athletic check. Characters failing the Athletics check are automatically hit by the trap (those behind the boulder get pulled along and hurt as well).
- ♦ A character adjacent to the boulder (in front or behind) may stop its progress with a DC 20 Thievery check.

If the players are outside the entrances to the caves and make a DC 10 Perception check, read or paraphrase the following:

Perhaps 50 feet above you is a natural opening in the rock face. For a moment, you see movement—a flitting dark shadow that might be a moving figure—and then it is gone.

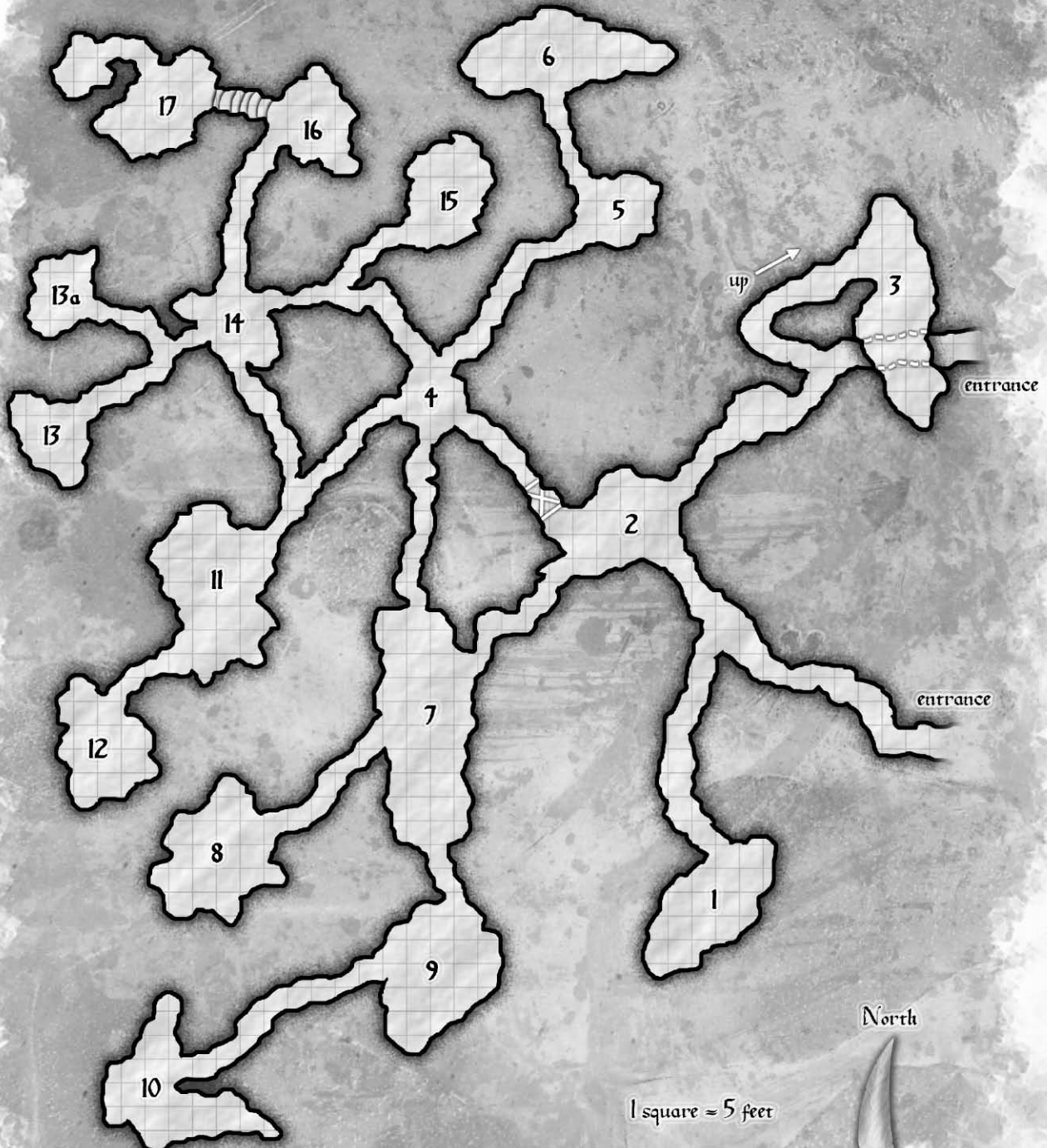
If the players enter this cave via the inclined ramp, read or paraphrase the following:

A distance ahead of you part of the passage splits off to the north, curving gently upwards. The main passage continues onward into darkness.

Those inspecting the elevated passage and making a DC 12 Dungeoneering check realize it has been worked smooth by intelligent hands. When (or if) the boulder trap is triggered, read also the following:

You hear a deep rumbling sound from somewhere nearby, and soon the source becomes apparent—a huge boulder is rolling down the incline directly toward you!

Sample Lair Caves of the Bloodtusks



If the party reaches the top of the ramp, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A long cave stretches out before you. A few mats made of woven reeds and rushes are here, as well as a low slab of stone that appears to have seen service as a table. A number of orcs are here, weapons drawn and ready!

This cave is the elevated perch of six scouts, four of which always maintain (under threat by their commanders) a constant watch over the cave entrances below. Two orcs watch each entrance, while the other two rest on the mats or eat. They rotate duty roughly every six hours.

TACTICS

If the orcs spot intruders, one scout readies the boulder (see below), and the other five nock arrows to their short bows and begin firing once targets come within range. Given warning, these orcs can also prepare kegs of flaming oil or barrels of fist-sized rocks to drop on large parties of intruders. These orcs are not particularly brave, and if half their number are slain, the rest immediately flee.

Trap: If the orcs observe invaders entering either of the two entrance tunnels, the orc to the rear shoves his shoulder against a large boulder poised at the top edge of the curved, inclined ramp leading up to this cave. (This cave lies approximately 50 feet above the main level of the lair.) The elevated cave is natural, but orc hands have shaped and polished the ramp to provide a smooth path for the rolling boulder. Once pushed, the rolling boulder tumbles into the smooth passage and swiftly picks up speed, rolling all the way to the northern entrance point. Even if intruders enter the southern passage, the orcs still trigger the trap so the loud sound alerts the guardposts below that invaders lurk within the Bloodtusk lair.

The trap may not be deactivated unless the orcs in the cave above are slain before the PCs enter the caves. The boulder rolls down the smooth incline, gaining speed, and emerges into the main passage to roll until it smashes against the northern cave entrance (blocking the entrance thereafter to creatures of Medium size or larger). Moving the boulder requires a combined Athletics check of DC 40 (up to three Medium-size PCs may work in unison to accomplish the task).

Treasure: The scouts carry their treasure on their person: 130 gp between them.

AREA 1-2: GUEST QUARTERS

Encounter Level 6 (XP 1,200)

SETUP

4 Otrollon Savages

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The narrow passage opens up into an oblong cave. A noisome scent fills the air here, a reek of offal and spoiled meat. Squatting at the far end of the cave are four tall humanoids with greenish-gray skin and shiny black eyes. As one they flex their claws and rise to a standing position. Near the humanoids are several large heaps of refuse.

This cave is the temporary lair of four otrollons, free agents that have wandered the region and desire a more stable base from which to loot and engage in a bit of fun bloodletting. The orc chieftain does not yet trust these fellows, despite their orcish blood, so he is allowing them to dwell here where he may keep an eye on them.

Otrollon Savage

Level 7 Brute

Medium natural humanoid

XP 300

Initiative +5

Senses Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49

Regeneration 5 (if the otrollon takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage.

⊖ **Ripping Claws** (standard; at-will)

The otrollon savage makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the target takes an additional 5 damage.

Otrollon Healing (immediate reaction; encounter) → **Healing**

If the otrollon is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 9 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +13, Intimidate +8

Str 20 (+8)

Dex 15 (+5)

Wis 12 (+4)

Con 18 (+7)

Int 7 (+1)

Cha 8 (+2)

Equipment hide armor

TACTICS

The otrollons are resting, but not sleeping. They hasten to engage any non-orcs that enter (they are aware that an ogre is working with the tribe and regard Lubbash (see area 1-8) with suspicion but not open hostility.

Treasure: The refuse heaps are the otrollon's nests; each heap contains hide scraps, pieces of old garments and cloaks, bones, and other detritus. Searching the nests thoroughly takes 20 minutes, and the searchers risk catching filth fever. Hidden within the nests (found on a DC 15 Perception check for those taking the time to search) are 45 gp, a fine silver bracelet (worth 280 gp) and a *potion of healing*.

AREA 1-3: GUARD POST

Encounter Level 3 (XP 750)

SETUP

4 Orc Raiders (see D&D 4E Monster Manual) Covered Pit Trap

If the boulder trap (see area 1-1) has not been activated, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A number of humanoids squat in a circle here, playing some sort of game with crude bone dice. As they take sight of you, they quickly reach for their weapons and rise, knocking over small piles of coins onto the rocky floor.

This cave serves as a guard post. These fellows are supposed to be on duty, but they grew bored and began an impromptu game of knucklebones. They hastily move to intercept any intruders, and they do their utmost to prevent intruders from moving further into the caves.

Covered Pit Trap

Level 3 Warder
XP 150

A 2-by-1 section of the floor hides a 30-foot deep pit.

Perception

DC 20: The character notices the gray canvas covering the trap sags a bit in the middle.

Trigger

When a creature enters either of the traps two squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Attack: +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: Target falls into pit, takes 3d10 damage, and falls prone

Miss: Target returns to the last non-trapped square occupied and loses any remaining movement.

Effect: The canvas sheeting falls into the pit and the trap is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character that makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) may leap over the pit area.
- ◆ A character may climb the walls of the pit with a DC 15 Athletics check.



If the boulder (see area 1-1) has rolled down the ramp, the noise has alerted these orcs to the presence of intruders.

Trap: Just inside the passage leading away to the northeast is a pit trap constructed of a sheet of gray canvas laid over a 30-foot deep pit.

AREA 1-4: CROSSROADS

Encounter Level 4 (XP 800, or nothing; see below)

SETUP

2 Orc Warriors (see D&D 4E Monster Manual) 4 Rhodenar

Read or paraphrase the following to the players once they enter this cave:

Five separate corridors appear to converge on this small cave. A few slender stalactites hang from the ceiling here, and they have been rubbed with a reddish material of some sort, giving them a dark red color. A small skull lies on the floor.

Rhodenar

Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 49; **Bloodied** 24

AC 17; **Fortitude** 16; **Reflex** 14; **Will** 13

Speed 8, climb 4

⊕ **Diseased Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 +3 damage, and the target contracts hobbles (see below).

Combat Advantage

The rhodenar gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the rhodenar's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** —

Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)

The stalactites are covered in natural red clay, purposely applied by the orcs to evoke the tribal emblem. The skull is that of a giant rat.

If the party lingers in this area for more than a minute or two, an orc patrol arrives from a random passage (other than the one the party entered by). The orc patrol wastes no time in attacking intruders. The patrol consists of two orc warriors and four rhodenar, which the warriors release from their leashes immediately.

AREA 1-5: GLUBBOTZ THE FAT

Encounter Level 3 (XP 800)

SETUP

Glubbotz the Fat, Advanced Orc Raider Tornwhiskers and Snaggletooth, Advanced Rhodenar

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The passage opens into a smallish, round cave. A few items of furniture are here—a rude table, a chair, an old crate, and a tapped beer cask—and the walls here are decorated with crisscrossing smears of red, ochre, and tan clay. In the center of the area, a rotund orc is roughhousing with two snarling creatures that appear to be pale, 4-foot high rats.

This orc, Glubbotz the Fat, is the tribe rhodenar trainer. He shares an odd bond with the creatures, and he much prefers their company to that of his orc brethren. The rhodenar like the strong, obese orc as well, and happily attack any that threaten him. These two creatures are his favorites, Tornwhiskers and Snaggletooth. (If he witnesses the slaying of either, he goes mad with rage and

gains +2 bonus on all attacks against their slayers for the encounter!) He has yet to completely train the largest rhodenar of them all (see area 1-6), but he is slowly making progress.

Glubbotz the Fat, Advanced Orc Raider

Level 5 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid

XP 200

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 64; **Bloodied** 32; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d12 + 4 damage (crit 1d12 + 16).

↘ **Handaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage; see also *killer's eye*.

‡ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
Glubbotz makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.

Killer's Eye

When making a ranged attack, Glubbotz ignores cover and concealment (but not total concealment) if the target is within 5 squares of him.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +10, Intimidate +6

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+2)

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 9 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, greataxe, 4 handaxes, *ironskin belt*

Tornwhiskers and Snaggletooth, Advanced Rhodenar

Level 3 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

XP 300

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49

AC 19; **Fortitude** 18; **Reflex** 16; **Will** 13

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, climb 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Diseased Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 +3 damage, and the target contracts hobbles.

Combat Advantage

The rhodenar gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the rhodenar's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** —

Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)

TACTICS

If confronted with intruders, Glubbotz orders his two pets to the attack, while he stands back and hurls axes at any easy targets. His loyal pets give their lives defending him. If Glubbotz is bloodied, he hastily retreats into area 1-6.

Treasure: Glubbotz has little personal treasure, but he wears an *ironskin belt* he removed from a murdered dwarf noble years ago.

AREA 1-6: THE KENNEL

Encounter Level 5 (XP 1050)

SETUP

5 Rhodenar Ben, Advanced Rhodenar

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The passage terminates into a large natural grotto. Heaps of torn cloth and shredded clothing abound, and some bones are littered about. Disturbingly, you can see three nearly whole skeletons here as well.

Six huge, rat-like creatures squirm between the mounds of clothing, fighting over gobbets of some unknown meat. The monsters are ugly things, their pale skin pulled tightly over their twitching forms. One of these creatures is a particularly bloated and disgusting specimen; it calmly looks in your direction and bares its yellowed incisors, almost seeming to grin, before it turns back to pulling at its food.

This area serves as the ‘kennel’ for the rhodenar. The creatures are not trapped here, but their keeper, Glubbotz, feeds them in this cave, and they feel most at ease here. The largest rhodenar, which Glubbotz has nicknamed Ben, is shrewder than most rhodenar, and it has bullied its way to gaining more food. Glubbotz has yet to train this huge creature as a companion, and is actually a bit afraid of it.

TACTICS

The rhodenar do not immediately attack those that enter the grotto, provided the intruders do not walk too far into the area. Eventually, however, intruders remaining here for more than a few moments draw the attention of these curious creatures (particularly the largest), and the rhodenar attack in the hope of gaining an easy meal. If confronted with fire in any form, they flee into the cave passages.

The heaps of clothing are rhodenar nests. The remains are those of two kobolds and an elf, all former prisoners of the tribe. The bones are well gnawed and bear obvious teeth marks. The rhodenar have no treasure.

Rhodenar

Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

XP 150

Initiative +5**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision**HP** 49; **Bloodied** 24**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 16; **Reflex** 14; **Will** 13**Speed** 8, climb 4

⊕ **Diseased Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 +3 damage, and the target contracts hobbles.

Combat Advantage

The rhodenar gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the rhodenar’s allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** —**Str** 16 (+4)**Dex** 14 (+3)**Wis** 10 (+1)**Con** 17 (+4)**Int** 3 (-3)**Cha** 6 (-1)

Ben, Advanced Rhodenar

Level 3 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural beast

XP 300

Initiative +5**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision**HP** 98; **Bloodied** 49**AC** 19; **Fortitude** 18; **Reflex** 16; **Will** 13**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 8, climb 4**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Diseased Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 +3 damage, and the target contracts hobbles.

Combat Advantage

The rhodenar gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the rhodenar’s allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** —**Str** 16 (+4)**Dex** 14 (+3)**Wis** 10 (+1)**Con** 17 (+4)**Int** 3 (-3)**Cha** 6 (-1)

AREA 1-7: COMMUNAL AREA

Encounter Level 4 (XP 840)

SETUP

10 Orc Drudges (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)

4 Orc Warriors (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)

Read or paraphrase the following to the players as they approach the cave entrance:

A clamor reaches your ears as you near a cave opening, a sound of raucous guffaws and grunts coupled with the discordant sound of metal dishes striking the floor.

If the player characters enter the area, read the following text:

A great stone table dominates much of this area. Around the table are a variety of orcs, drinking, eating, arm-wrestling, cursing, and indulging in a messy repast. The table is littered with pewter dishes and wooden mugs, joints of meat on trays, a few roast birds on propped up spits, chunks of unidentifiable meat on brochettes, piles of cracked bones and feathers, spilled liquids, and other things. A few chairs surround the table (most knocked over). Several of the orcs turn in your direction.

TACTICS

The orc drudges at the table fumble for weapons. The closest drudge, lacking the time to draw a weapon, throws his goopy bowl of gruel at the nearest PC to buy time. (Treat this as a +7 vs. Reflex attack that does not damage, but blinds the target until the end of the drudge's next turn.)

Characters making a successful DC 15 Perception check notice several slumped figures beneath the table—these are four orc warriors sleeping off their meal. After the first round of combat, the warriors awaken, pull their weapons, and wait for a lull in combat to catch the intruders by surprise. (If the player characters achieve surprise and notice the sleeping warriors by the *first* round of combat, they may attempt a *coup de grace* on the sleeping figures. The GM should award half experience for all orcs killed in this manner.)

Treasure: The orcs here do not have any treasure on their persons, but mixed in with the pewter dishes is a silver serving set (consisting of two trays, an ewer, a gravy bowl, and a serving bowl) worth a total of 470 gp. The dishes and serving set were seized in separate raids by the tribe some years ago.

AREA 1-8: LUBBASH'S DEN

Encounter Level 3 (XP 750)

SETUP

Lubbash, Ogre Savage (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)
Worg (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)

Rear or paraphrase the following to the players as they enter:

An oblong cave lies before you, dotted with a few tiny stalagmites, but most noticeable is a strong, unmistakable bestial odor that wafts from this place. Toward the rear of the cave, a great figure takes to its feet and lumbers unsteadily toward you!

This cave is the current home of Lubbash the ogre.

Lubbash encountered the Bloodtusks months ago, and the frightened tribal scouts were able to hastily parley with the giant humanoid. As time passed, Lubbash came to work with the tribe on a regular basis and he is now a tribal mascot of sorts. He is mean and violent, but shares in the tribal values and happily takes part in any fight the orcs begin. Between raids, Lubbash retires to his cave for long slumbers. Today, he is particularly tired and grumpy after ingesting too much food and beer, and woe to those that disturb him!

TACTICS

The ogre has just awoken from a light snooze and is feeling peckish and irritable. Lubbash snatches up his greatclub and moves to “greet” any trespassing in his private abode. Lurking under a heap of furs near the southern wall is Lubbash's pet worg, Blacky. The creature is alert and springs out from beneath the furs if any intruders enter, howling, and then fighting alongside her master. Both the ogre and worg fight to the death.

Treasure: Mixed in with Lubbash's bedding material is a *bag of holding*. He also wears an armband set with three large garnets (worth 300 gp).

AREA 1-9: SLEEPING DEN

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following:

The sour tang of sweat hangs in the air here. This abhorrent cave is crowded with heaps of dirty, loathsome furs and mangy blankets. Strewn about are a few dirty mugs. There do not appear to be any occupants here.

Most of the tribe normal sleeps here or in area 1-7. The area is currently unoccupied.

AREA 1-10: THE NURSERY

Encounter Level 4 (XP 828)

SETUP

12 Orc Drudges (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)
Grick (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)

When the party enters this small cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Before you is a narrow cave studded with stalagmites and rocks. The floor is littered with bones, scrap of meat, and refuse. A number of bedraggled female humanoids tend to a small group of young orcs here.

Twelve orc females tend to numerous orc children here.

If confronted, they shoo the children out and attempt to flee themselves. If cornered, or somehow forced to fight, the GM should treat the female orcs as drudges.

Crawling on the ceiling is a large grick. The orcs discovered this creature in the caves when they first arrived here and spared it, disliking the taste of rubbery grick meat. The females began to feed the grick, and soon, it learned to recognize the distinct smell of orc and to not attack the orcs lurking in these caves. The females continued feeding the creature, and eventually, they came to trust it around their children. The grick now guards the nursery ruthlessly ... even the rhodenar (see area 1-6) do not dare enter this area. The grick drops down on any non-orcs entering the nursery, and the retreating females are happy to use it to cover their exit.

It is recommended that the GM award no experience for PCs killing the female orcs.

AREA 1-11: THE HALL OF THE BLOODBATHER

Encounter Level 5 (XP 1,050)

SETUP

3 Orc Skeletons
Orc Boneshard Skeleton
Statue Trap

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The coppery smell of blood enters your nostrils as soon as you enter this large cave. The walls here are decorated with crude murals of battle scenes featuring orcs clashing with elves and other humanoids. In all the illustrations, the orcs always seem to have the upper hand. Overhead, the many jagged stalactites have been painted red.

Dominating the western portion of the cavern is a huge, ghastly statue with eyes of carved red gems. The figure depicts a huge orc, dressed in spiked plate armor and brandishing a two-handed sword overhead, as if to strike a foe in front of it. The figure appears to be in the process of emerging from a square pool of reddish-black liquid, with the statue only visible from the waist up. The body of the statue is covered in dark, rusty stains. Before the statue is a stone block, some four feet tall, atop which sits a heavy stone vessel akin to a huge bowl. Looped about the arms and shoulders of the figure are strings of rope and sinew festooned with teeth and animal tusks of all sorts.

In the southern end of the cave is a small pile of gems in an open stone box. Most of the gems appear to be quartz, but the largest glows with an orange-red glow, bathing the whole area in a weird light.



Orc Skeleton

Level 3 Soldier

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 150

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +3; darkvision

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22

AC 19 **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 5 (7 while charging)

⚔ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the orc skeleton's next turn.

Fury of the Dead (while bloodied)

The orc skeleton gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 3 (-3)

Cha 3 (-3)

Equipment scaphide armor, battleaxe

Orc Boneshard Skeleton

Level 6 Brute

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 250

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

HP 87; **Bloodied** 43; see also *boneshard burst*

AC 18; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;
Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⬇ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage plus 5 necrotic damage.

⬇ **Boneshard** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

↶ **Boneshard Burst** (when first bloodied and again when the orc boneshard skeleton is reduced to 0 hit points) ⬆ **Necrotic**
Close burst 3; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d6+3 necrotic damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 17 (+6) **Int** 3 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-1)

Equipment scaphide armor, battleaxe

The area is a temple of sorts, dedicated to the demigod Sanguinal. The entire tribe, including the subchiefs and chieftain, pays homage to Sanguinal in this place. The shaman orchestrates all ceremonies (see area 1-12), but offerings may be left here at any time and are collected by the shaman.

If any non-orcs approach the statue, three orc skeletons clamber out of the pool at the statue's base and hasten to attack the interlopers.

Trap: The statue is a surprisingly complex mechanism (constructed by a pair of dwarf prisoners under extreme duress). If any Medium-sized person enters a map square adjacent to the statue, a tiny pressure plate is triggered, sounding a tiny gong in the shaman's room. The stone block holding the bowl rumbles forward 5 feet, and the block sinks to a comfortable 3-foot height. Once this occurs, a hidden counterweight starts unbalancing inside the statue body. If a gallon or more of any liquid is poured into the stone bowl, the stone block rises to its normal height and rumbles back into position, after which nothing further occurs. If no liquid is poured into the container within one minute, the statue's sword separates into two halves, and each arm of the statue swings in a circle, swinging each "sword" through the area in front of both side of the statue. Any character in a square adjacent to the statue when this occurs is subject to an attack. After the trap is triggered, the sword halves come back together seamlessly and the trap resets.

Statue Trap

Level 6 Blaster

Trap

XP 250

Perception

DC 20: The character notices that the statue's sword is vertically split in two halves.

DC 22: The character notices that the statue's arms are jointed.

Initiative +5

Trigger

The trap rolls initiative when a liquid counter-weight is not placed in the offering bowl.

Attack

Standard Action **Melee**

Target: All creatures in trapped squares.

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage.

Countermeasures

- ♦ A character making a successful Acrobatics check (DC 15) may duck beneath the swinging sword blades. Characters shorter than 5 feet in height gain a +2 bonus to this check.
- ♦ A character adjacent and to the north or south of the statue may stop the progress of a single sword blade with a DC 20 Thievery check.
- ♦ A character adjacent to the statue may jam the counter-balancing mechanism with a successful DC 22 Thievery check.

Characters inspecting the bowl and making a successful DC 20 Perception check discover the remnants of dried blood.

Treasure: The quartz gems are only worth 1 gp each (there are 16 in all). The large glowing gem, a 100-gp ruby, is cursed. Anyone bearing the gem for an hour or more is magically slowed (no save) until he or she is rid of the gem. If the bearer disposes of the gem, there is a 50% chance the malignant thing appears in the original bearer's belongings 1d4 days later, appearing silently inside a haversack or bedroll; likely only noticed when the PC becomes *slowed* again. If a Disenchant Magic Item ritual or Gentle Repose ritual is cast upon the gem, it crumbles to harmless dust. Aside from these gems, the only other valuables in the room are the statue's gem eyes—two large reddish-brown carnelians worth 100 gp each that can be pried out with about 10 minutes of careful work.

AREA 1–12: THE SANCTUARY OF THE WISE ONE

Encounter Level 3 (XP 700)

SETUP

2 Iron Cobras (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)
Shabrut, Orc Shaman

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The short corridor from the temple area leads to a most unusual cave. The walls and ceiling of this place are decorated with a profusion of bones, skulls, and weird fetishes, all laid over smears of bright red.

Standing by a table to the south is an orc dressed in thick furs and wearing an ornate necklace of woven tusks. He holds an ornate staff in his hand and wears an unusual knife on his belt. Two serpents made of iron slither around his legs. You hear metallic creaks as these artificial snakes writhe quickly toward you.

This area is the lair of the tribal shaman, Shabrut. He has decorated his abode as suits his tastes, with fetishes and religious icons all around. Wooden pins affix these many trinkets to nearly every surface in the cave. Shabrut has also painstakingly smeared a layer of red clay on all walls here. Most of the fetishes are constructed of sticks, catgut, small bones, bird feathers, and painted stones. Lying across the stone table is a half-painted tribal banner, and two pots of clay paint and a crude fur brush sit nearby. The room also contains a large wooden chair, a sleeping pallet, a jug of vinegary wine, a small cask of water, a metal flagon, a dirty plate and bone fork, a trunk, and a small box. The box holds a handful of throwing runes, all carved from femur bones.

TACTICS

Shabrut targets any obvious spellcasters with his *curse* ability, counting on his iron cobras to give him some breathing room. If intruders get too close, he cuts loose with *ashen blast* and draws out his charda. The iron cobras have been instructed to defend the shaman, and they faithfully do that even if it means their own destruction.

The staff Shabrut holds in his left hand is a +2 *holy symbol of power*; it looks like a wooden staff decorated with wound snakeskin and topped with two large boar tusks curved over each other.

Treasure: The trunk holds old cloaks, furs, and junk, but beneath everything else is five 50-gp gems (nice lumps of smoky quartz). Shabrut's boar tusk necklace is worth 20 gp.

Shabrut, Orc Shaman

Level 5 Controller

Medium natural humanoid

XP 200

Initiative +4

Senses Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 62; **Bloodied** 31; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⊕ **Charda** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage (crit 1d4 + 7).

‡ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc shaman makes a melee basic attack and regains 15 hit points.

↘ **Curse** (minor; at will) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 5; +9 vs. Will; the target suffers a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the orc shaman's next turn.

↙ **Ashen Blast** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Necrotic**
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+3 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the orc shaman's next turn.

↙ **Frozen Blast** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Cold**
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+3 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the orc shaman's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +9, Religion +7

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 14 (+4)

Wis 16 (+5)

Con 14 (+4)

Int 11 (+2)

Cha 15 (+4)

Equipment +2 *holy symbol of power*, leather armor, fur cloak, charda

AREA 1–13: OZKORL'S DEN

Encounter Level 2 (XP 600)

SETUP

Ozkorl, Orc Subchief

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

This cave is comfortably appointed—in humanoid terms—with a wooden pallet heaped with clothes and blankets, a wooden table, a barrel holding two spears, and a crude, foot-long wooden carving of what looks like a figure holding an axe. Wood shavings litter the floor. A wooden pot of what appears to be cold stew of some kind and a spoon are on the table.

Give the party a brief moment to fully enter the cave and survey the scene. Then read the following:

A muscular orc appears at the doorway to the cave carrying a flagon. The humanoid stares at you, mouth agape, and then bellows in anger, hurls the flagon aside and pulls a weird weapon from its back. The orc grips the double-bladed weapon in both hands and begins spinning it as he steadily approaches...

Ozkorl, Orc Subchief Level 7 Elite Brute (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid XP 600

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision

HP 192; **Bloodied** 96; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 21; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 20

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5 (7 while charging)

Action Points 1

⊕ **+2 Kruwar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 1d8+6 damage.

⊕ **Kruwar Double Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
The orc subchief makes two kruwar attacks.

✂ **Inspire Ferocity** (immediate reaction, when an ally within range drops to 0 hit points; recharge ☼☼☼)
Ranged 5; the ally makes a basic melee attack.

⊕ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc subchief makes a melee basic attack and regains 48 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +10, Intimidate +11

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment +2 kruwar, chainmail

TACTICS

Party members not making a successful DC 15 Perception check are surprised by the orc subchief's sudden arrival. (If the party has taken obvious precautions, such as posting a door guard, this does not occur.) The subchief fearlessly attacks those intruding in his private den, and even if outnumbered, he attacks until slain.

GM Note: Keep track of the total number of combat rounds for this conflict. This information may come into play in area 1-16.

Treasure: The subchief fights with a +2 kruwar, and carries 25 gp and four 50-gp bloodstones on his person. The room's furnishings and carved figurine (his take on Sanguinal) are worthless. Any character sampling even a sip of the "stew" is nauseated (treat as *slowed* and *weakened*) as an ongoing condition until the PC makes a successful saving throw (ends both).

AREA 1-13A: ABANDONED QUARTERS

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

This cave may have once been the quarters of some orcish higher-up, but it appears wrecked, as if the area was roughly searched or a fight took place here.

This area was once the lair of a (second) subchief, but he was recently killed while hunting by an irate griffon. The cave has been thoroughly ransacked and searched for valuables by the chieftain, the shaman, and the surviving subchief. There is nothing here of value.

AREA 1-14: STORAGE CAVE

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Several passages converge on this low-ceilinged cave. Most of the space here is crammed with trunks, boxes, bales of clothes, casks, barrels, and similar containers, as well as a few smoked carcasses (sheep and deer, apparently). A few foodstuffs, such as a length of sausage and a large wheel of cheese (fuzzy with green mold), are also here. The place is clearly a storeroom of sorts.

This area is indeed where the tribal foodstuffs are stored, and the subchief watches over this area carefully. The chieftain and subchief are careful to share some liquor with the other warriors, while saving the choicest cuts of meat and beverages for themselves or the shaman. There are cask of water here (filled weekly from a nearby stream), watery beer, salted fish, and a few hanging haunches of bear and venison.

The party can potentially spend a great deal of time searching the many containers here, but aside from foodstuffs of dubious quality and old clothing, the only item here to be found (on a successful DC 20 Perception check) is a forgotten *cloak of resistance +1* stuffed in a trunk with some other old clothing.

If the PCs spend more than 15 minutes here searching through the containers, the GM should allow a 25% chance of a patrol finding them for each additional 5 minutes spent in the storage cave.

AREA 1-15: THE CAVE OF CROSSED SWORDS

Encounter Level 3 (XP 700)

SETUP

Owlbear (injured, currently at 170 HP; see D&D 4E Monster Manual)

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A huge feathered beast is chained by one limb to the far northern wall of this cave. The hulking, clawed creature growls with rage and pulls at its thick bindings for a moment before falling back.

The cave itself is largely devoid of any furnishings, but the walls here are painted with bloody scenes of conflict between orcs and all manner of other humans and humanoids. There are illustrations of savage orc commanders hacking apart enemy commanders, fearlessly storming human fortifications, and burning forests. A wooden rack to the east holds a few weapons.

The beast again roars fiercely and tugs at its shackle, and to your horror, you hear the sound of fatigued metal snapping asunder!

The beast is a ferocious owlbear, which has been used for sparring practice by the tribe after being knocked unconscious and dragged through the narrow tunnels. The wounded owlbear is now enraged and happily vents its fury against any targets within reach. It attacks until slain.

The main purpose of this room is a place for tribal weapon practice or interrogating prisoners. The rack against the eastern wall holds a few swords and staves in poor repair—worthless, second-rate weapons used for practice.

AREA 1-16: COUNCIL CHAMBER

When the party enters this cave, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A scarred wooden table sits in the center of this cave, surrounded by six rickety chairs. Painted on the northern wall is a mural of some sort.

A spear has been set alongside the western exit from this place. Stuck on the spear is a maggot-covered orc head.

This area is used for larger meetings between the chieftain, his advisors, and his subchiefs or other subordinates. It is currently unoccupied.

The mural depicts the surrounding lands, including forests, highlands, and all human communities of note. Some of the communities have been marked with odd symbols, a unique shorthand used by the chieftain, subchief, and advisors to denote the size of the communities, how vulnerable they are perceived to be, and their likely resources.

The orc head is that of a rival to the chieftain, who challenged the chieftain's authority after the recent death of a subchief and lost. The chieftain placed his head here as a warning to those who might dare challenge him in the future.

AREA 1-17: THE LAIR OF THE HIGH WARRIOR

Encounter Level 8 (XP 1,900)

SETUP

2 Orc Bloodragers (see D&D 4E Monster Manual)
Ghazdur, Orc Chieftain

When the party enters this area, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The cave is decorated with bearskins and grim battle standards. The table before the creatures is littered with foodstuffs: dried meat, a loaf of bread, hard sausages, and wrinkled fruit, as well as a pair of candles and a firebox. Near the table are a small bucket and a stoppered jug. Beyond the table, you can see comfortable chairs, a tappered keg and tankards, pottery containers, and a dark hanging curtain to the west.

Your gaze is held to the low table however, for three figures sit about it. Two of them, both large, are armed with greataxes. The largest orc here, however, is the third figure—a massively muscled orc garbed in flowing furs thrown over a suit of chainmail. The giant, sneering humanoid wears a helm replete with sharp horns atop his sloped forehead. The creature seizes a nearby polearm and begins to rise.

The chieftain holds court here, attended by his trusted bloodrager advisors. They are enjoying a private meal together and planning their next raid when the characters enter. The bucket holds cooking oil, the keg dark beer, and the jug wine.

TACTICS

These fellows are strong, crafty, and quite fearless. They do not hesitate to engage any intruders. One of the bloodragers begins combat by throwing the bucket of cooking oil at the characters, and the other bloodrager responds by plucking a smoldering tinder from the firebox and hurling it at the oil-soaked PCs!

Treat the bloodrager's oil attack as a close blast 2 attack: standard action; +9 vs. Reflex. The oil does no damage, but the tinder strike thereafter (standard action, an automatic hit unless a natural 1 is rolled) sets the oil alight, and all oil-covered characters take 2d6 + 3 fire damage and 5 ongoing fire damage (save ends).

Behind the curtain is the chieftain sleeping area. It contains a large bed constructed of a wooden frame heaped with thick furs and cloaks, a small table, a small chest, and an iron-banded trunk. The trunk holds only clothing and trinkets. The chest appears to hold several daggers and some hard biscuits, but it has a false bottom (found on a DC 25 Perception or Thievery check) that holds 60 gp and three bloodstones worth 125 gp each. The chief also wears a raven skull necklace set with a 100-gp ruby beneath his armor. The bloodragers carry a total of 18 gp between them.

Treasure: Ghazdur, Orc Chieftain wields +2 *lifedrinker warstaff* and wears a *horned helm*.

**Ghazdur,
Orc Chieftain**Level 8 Elite Brute
(Leader)

Medium natural humanoid

XP 700

Initiative +5**Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision**Blood of the Enemy** aura 5; bloodied allies in the aura deal an extra 2 damage with melee attacks.**HP** 216; **Bloodied** 108; see also *warrior's surge***AC** 22; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 5 (7 while charging)**Action Points** 1

⊕ **+2 Lifedrinker Warstaff** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage (crit 1d10 + 2d6 + 16).

† **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc warchieftain makes a melee basic attack and regains 54 hit points.

↘ **Inspire Ferocity** (immediate reaction, when an ally within range drops to 0 hit points; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ)
Ranged 10; the ally makes a basic attack.

Lifedrinker Warstaff When Ghazdur drops an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer with a melee attack made with his warstaff, he gain 5 temporary hit points.

Horned Helm Ghazdur's charge attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Endurance +12, Intimidate +13**Str** 20 (+9)**Dex** 14 (+6)**Wis** 12 (+5)**Con** 18 (+8)**Int** 10 (+4)**Cha** 19 (+8)**Equipment** chainmail, +2 *lifedrinker warstaff*, *horned helm*

APPENDIX II: ORC VARIANTS AND MONSTERS

ORC VARIANTS

A greater examination of orc society has revealed a surprising number of previously unknown roles and tribal positions. Larger orc tribes may contain a great number of orcs serving specialized roles within the tribe. Several subspecies of orc also exist, proving the adaptability of this warlike race.

Orc Longshadow Level 7 Elite Lurker Medium natural humanoid XP 600

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision

HP 128; **Bloodied** 64; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 15

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

Action Points 1

⬇ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⬇ **Garrote Strike** (standard; sustain standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Requires combat advantage; +10 vs. Reflex; 2d6+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). A target trying to escape the grab takes a -2 penalty to the check. The orc longshadow can sustain the power as a standard action, dealing 2d6+4 damage and maintaining the grab.

⬇ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc longshadow makes a melee basic attack and regains 32 hit points.

Fade into the Night (minor, usable only while bloodied; encounter)
The orc longshadow gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex and shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +11, Intimidate +8, Stealth +12

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, leather garrote

ORC LONGSHADOW TACTICS

Orc longshadows strike from behind and attempt to strangle their targets without opposition. If backed into a corner and unable to fall back to a guarded position, they will draw out their short swords and fight to the death.

Orc Shaman Level 5 Controller Medium natural humanoid XP 200

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 62; **Bloodied** 31; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⬇ **Charda** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage (crit 1d4 + 7).

⬇ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc shaman makes a melee basic attack and regains 15 hit points.

➤ **Curse** (minor; at will) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 5; +9 vs. Will; the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the orc shaman's next turn.

⚡ **Ashen Blast** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Necrotic**
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+3 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the orc shaman's next turn.

⚡ **Frozen Blast** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Cold**
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+3 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the orc shaman's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +9, Religion +7

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+5)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 11 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Equipment leather armor, fur cloak, charda

ORC SHAMAN TACTICS

This orc uses its *curse* ability as often as possible in an attempt to weaken enemies. If it spots multiple enemies grouped together, it uses its *ashen blast* or *frozen blast* to debilitate several targets at once. It uses its hand weapon as a last resort only.

Orc Scout Level 5 Minion Medium natural humanoid XP 50

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⬇ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 4 damage.

➤ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+2)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 6 (+0)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, quiver with 10 arrows

ORC SCOUT TACTICS

Orc scouts observe foes from a distance and attempt to return to their tribes with information. When raiding with longshadows they strike with bowfire from a hidden position, peppering their foes with barbed arrows. They only reluctantly engage in hand-to-hand combat.

Orc Subchief Level 7 Elite Brute (Leader) Medium natural humanoid XP 600

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision

HP 192; **Bloodied** 96; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 21; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 20

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5 (7 while charging)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Kruwar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage

‡ **Kruwar Double Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
The orc subchief makes two kruwar attacks.

↗ **Inspire Ferocity** (immediate reaction, when an ally within range drops to 0 hit points; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ)
Ranged 5; the ally makes a basic melee attack.

‡ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc subchief makes a melee basic attack and regains 48 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +10, Intimidate +11

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment chainmail, kruwar

ORC SUBCHIEF TACTICS

Subchiefs exist to prove their might to their peers. They are canny fighters and try to take "front stage" in fights while allowing their fellow orcs to take strikes meant for them. They use their kruwar to maim or slay opponents and prefer the glory of close combat to ranged-weapon warfare.

ORC WARCHIEFTAIN TACTICS

Orc warchieftains fearlessly rally their troops and stride up to enemy leaders with their warstaff in hand. They use their *rallying cry* early in combat to galvanize their troops and ensure an early victory. If wounded and targeted by a ranged weapon, they use their *hard target* ability to change places with another orc and avoid damage.

Orc Warchieftain Level 10 Elite Soldier Medium natural humanoid XP 1,000

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 212; **Bloodied** 106; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 23

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5 (7 while charging)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Warstaff** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage (crit 1d10 + 16).

‡ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The orc warchieftain makes a melee basic attack and regains 53 hit points.

↶ **Rallying Cry** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Healing**
Close burst 10; all bloodied orcs within range can make one basic melee attack as a free action. Affected orcs regain 15 hit points on a hit or 10 on a miss.

Hard Target (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; usable only while bloodied; at-will)
The orc warchieftain chooses an adjacent ally to be the target of the ranged attack and shifts 3 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +14, Intimidate +15

Str 23 (+11) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 18 (+9) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+10)

Equipment scalemail, warstaff

Orc Witchdoctor Level 6 Controller Medium natural humanoid XP 250

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 70; **Bloodied**: 35

AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 18

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

⊗ **Bloodburn** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**
Ranged 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d8+4 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

↶ **Drain Life** (standard, recharges when bloodied) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**
Close blast 3; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the orc witchdoctor regains 3 hit points for each creature damaged by this attack.

Cruel Rebound (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; encounter)
The orc witchdoctor switches the attack's target to the attacker. The attacker rolls another ranged attack roll against its own AC (or other defense), and if successful, suffers full damage from the attack.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Arcana +10, Endurance +10, Intimidate +11

Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 14 (+5) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+6)

Equipment fur-trimmed robes, spear



ORC WITCHDOCTOR TACTICS

Orc witchdoctors use their *bloodburn* ability from a distance on as many targets as possible. If multiple enemies draw near, this orc uses *drain life* to weaken opponents and strengthen itself. If aware of attackers using ranged weapons, witchdoctors do not hesitate to use *cruel rebound* to redirect incoming missiles to devastating effect.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Level 7 Encounter (1,500 XP)

- 2 orc longshadow (level 7 elite lurker)
- 6 orc scout (level 5 minion)

Level 9 Encounter (2,150 XP)

- 1 orc subchief (level 7 elite brute)
- 1 orc witchdoctor (level 6 controller)
- 10 orc warriors (level 9 minion)
- 2 ogre thugs (level 11 minion)

CAVE ORCS

Cave orcs lair in extensive underground cave systems. They exist in small groups and defend their lairs with surprising ferocity. They rarely emerge from their holes to visit the surface world

CAVE ORC LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Cave orcs, also called gharltuns, are the most distant of orc subspecies. They only dwell underground and often come into conflict with other underground races. They are very strong for their size, and many are excellent climbers.

DC 20: They do not gather in large tribes as most orcs do but instead form small, tight-knit circles led by deepdwellers, shaman-like gharltuns. Cave orcs are completely blind, but make up for their lack of sight with the input of their other acute senses.

DC 25: Some gharltuns suffer from an unknown skin ailment that causes patches of their skin to slough off. The cause of the this disease is unknown.

Cave Orc Roamer	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (blind)	XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +7; blindsight 10
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>warrior's surge</i>	
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 14, Will 13	
Immune gaze	
Speed 6 (8 while charging)	
⊕ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) +9 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
⊕ Dying Bite (immediate interrupt, if reduced to 0 hit points; at-will) The cave orc roamer makes a bite attack.	
⊕ Warrior's Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing, Weapon The cave orc roamer makes a melee basic attack and regains 13 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Giant
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidate +5	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 8 (+1) Cha 7 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, bone spear	

CAVE ORC ROAMER TACTICS

Cave orc roamers rush to attack any trespassing into their territory. They attack with hand weapons and are smart enough to flank foes. If struck down, they use their dying bite.

Cave Orc Deepdweller

Level 5 Controller
(Leader)
XP 200

Initiative +5	Senses Perception +7; blindsight 10	
HP 62; Bloodied 31; see also <i>warrior's surge</i>		
AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune gaze		
Speed 6 (8 while charging)		
⊕ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) +10 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage.		
➤ Darken Vision (immediate interrupt, when targeted by an attack or effect with the arcane or divine keyword; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂ) Ranged 5; +9 vs. Will; target is blinded (save ends).		
➤ Rally Ally (immediate reaction, when ally is bloodied; at-will) Ranged 8; the target can shift 2 squares and make melee basic attack as a free action.		
⊕ Warrior's Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing, Weapon The cave orc deepdweller makes a melee basic attack and regains 15 hit points.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Giant	
Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +5		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 10 (+2)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 7 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, bone spear		

CAVE ORC DEEPDWELLER TACTICS

Cave orc deepdwellers dislike direct attacks and save their bites as a last resort, instead rallying wounded allies and directing troops. They attempt to use their darken vision ability to blind any known spellcasters as soon they are identified.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Level 4 Encounter (925 XP)

- 3 cave orc roamers (level 4 skirmisher)
- 4 dire rats (level 1 brute)

Level 6 Encounter (1,300 XP)

- 4 cave orc roamers (level 4 skirmisher)
- 1 cave orc deepdweller (level 5 controller)
- 1 gelatinous cube (level 5 elite brute)

Level 8 Encounter (1,925 XP)

- 3 cave orc roamers (level 4 skirmisher)
- 2 cave orc deepdwellers (level 5 controller)
- 2 cave bears (level 6 elite brute)

FERAL ORC

Cruel, fast, denizens of the wilderness, feral orcs are feared by many. They exist on the land and kill what food they require, tearing apart their hapless prey with their claws and teeth. They prefer to lair in dismal, dark forests and fens.

FERAL ORC LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Feral orcs are lean, fast, distant cousins of the common orc. They are fearless and often enter a berserker-like rage in combat. They lair in shunned forests and similar outdoor places.

DC 20: Feral orcs are rarely encountered with common orc tribes, but they ally with harpies, hags, and similar creatures. They also keep dangerous animals, such as crocodiles, as pets and guardians. They often fight with lizardmen for territory or food.

Feral Orc Gapejaw Level 5 Skirmisher Medium natural humanoid XP 200

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 64; **Bloodied** 32; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14

Speed 7 (9 while charging)

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.

⊖ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.

⊖ **Double Attack** (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐)
The feral orc gapejaw makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the feral orc gapejaw makes a bite attack as a free action.

⊖ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ⊕ **Healing, Weapon**
The feral orc gapejaw makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +6

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+2)

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+1)

Equipment hide armor

FERAL ORC GAPEJAW TACTICS

Gapejaws do not employ any common combat strategies, they merely attack all moving targets with their claws and teeth until all enemies are defeated. They are slow to retreat, especially if their lair or territory has been invaded.

Feral Orc Ravager Level 7 Elite Skirmisher Medium natural humanoid XP 600

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision

HP 160; **Bloodied** 80; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 16

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7 (9 while charging)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

⊖ **Rending Claws** (standard; at-will)
The feral orc ravager makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the target suffers an additional 5 damage.

⊖ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ⊕ **Healing, Weapon**
The feral orc ravager makes a melee basic attack and regains 40 hit points.

⊖ **Clawing Circle of Death** (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐)
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +10 vs. AC; 2d8+5 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +10, Intimidate +7

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Equipment hide armor

FERAL ORC RAVAGER TACTICS

Ravagers fearlessly attack with their claws, growing more excited and bloodthirsty as combat continues. Once they are wounded by an enemy, they attack until dead and give no quarter whatsoever.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Level 6 Encounter (1,300 XP)

- 1 feral orc ravager (level 7 elite skirmisher)
- 2 feral orc gapejaws (level 5 skirmisher)
- 1 howling hag (level 7 controller)

Level 8 Encounter (1,900 XP)

- 5 feral orc ravagers (level 7 elite skirmisher)
- 2 feral orc gapejaws (level 5 skirmisher)
- 3 vine horrors (level 5 controller)
- 1 vine horror spellfiend (level 7 artillery)

Level 10 Encounter (2,700 XP)

- 3 feral orc ravagers (level 7 elite skirmisher)
- 2 harpies (level 6 controller)
- 1 destrachan (level 9 artillery)

GRUNT

Lesser orcs are small humanoids that enjoy eating, quarreling, and torturing small animals. They are cruel, argumentative, and easily dominated by stronger races. They prefer to live in caves away from the harsh sunlight.

GRUNT LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Lesser orcs, also called grunts, are a diminutive subspecies of orc. They are recognizable by their short stature, pig-like features, and shuffling gait. They like to bully and quarrel with goblinoid races and other orcs, but are also quite cowardly. They can be cruel for those weaker than they, but they are not particularly strong or hardy.

DC20: Lesser orcs dislike light and often dwell in elaborate underground lairs, coming to the surface after the sun sets to raid for food and needed items. Grunts are often enslaved by stronger races and sometimes serve as servants for evil giants—especially hill giants and earth titans.

Grunt Snitch

Level 2 Minion

Medium natural humanoid

XP 31

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 3 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +4, Stealth +5

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 12 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Equipment scraphide armor, short sword

GRUNT SNITCH TACTICS

Grunt snitches prefer to ambush foes or attack them while sleeping. If confronted by a strong opponent or a display of powerful magic, they immediately flee.

Grunt Raider

Level 3 Brute

Medium natural humanoid

XP 150

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 15; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

➤ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

⚔ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The grunt raider makes a melee basic attack and regains 13 hit points.

Grunt Tactics (immediate reaction, when struck by a melee attack; at-will)

The grunt raider switches places with an adjacent ally.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +9

Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 9 (+0)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 javelins in sheaf

GRUNT RAIDER TACTICS

Grunt raiders specialize in fast attacks, wherein they attempt to strike down easy targets and grab what they can. They dislike long, protracted battles and retreat from serious opposition unless accompanied by strong allies.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Level 2 Encounter (636 XP)

- 6 grunt snitches (level 2 minion)
- 3 goblin blackblades (level 1 lurker)
- 1 goblin hexer (level 3 controller)

Level 4 Encounter (725 XP)

- 4 grunt raiders (level 3 brute)
- 1 rat swarm (level 2 skirmisher)

Level 5 Encounter (1,000 XP)

- 3 grunt raider (level 3 brute)
- 3 human bandit (level 2 skirmisher)
- 1 human mage (level 4 artillery)

OGRILLON

Ogrillons are evil, simple-minded, bullying orc-ogre half-breeds.

OGRILLON LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Ogrillons lead nomadic lifestyles and seldom lair in one area for very long. They establish a hunting area and attack any intruders entering their habitat. They are not terribly bright, and complex attack plans are beyond them. They normally attack enemies in a direct, head-on fashion.

DC 20: Ogrillons live in huts or teepees made of animal hides. They dislike sunlight and are easily startled by bright magical displays. They join other groups of humanoid when it suits them, and have been seen in the company of evil giants, goblinkind, and even oni.

Ogrillon Brute

Level 6 Brute

Medium natural humanoid

XP 250

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision

HP 88; **Bloodied** 44; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 18; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

Speed 6

⬇ **Greatclub** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

⬇ **Sweeping Blow** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ **Weapon**
Requires greatclub; +9 vs. AC; 3d6+5 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is knocked prone.

⬇ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The ogrillon brute makes a melee basic attack and regains 22 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidate +9

Str 21 (+8) **Dex** 10 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 18 (+7) **Int** 7 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Equipment hide armor, greatclub

OGRILLON BRUTE TACTICS

Ogrillon brutes tend to make straightforward attacks, using their huge clubs to mash opponents to a bloody pulp. If possible, they begin combat by sweeping their opponent's legs out from under them via their sweeping blow before following with more standard bashing swings.

Ogrillon Warhulk

Level 9 Elite Brute

Medium natural humanoid

XP 800

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 236; **Bloodied** 118; see also *warrior's surge*

AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⬇ **Maul** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 2d8+5 damage.

⬇ **Colossal Blow** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 4d8 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⬇ **Warrior's Surge** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
The ogrillon warhulk makes a melee basic attack and regains 59 hit points.

Spiked Collar

Grab attempts made against the ogrillon warhulk suffer a -1 penalty. If the ogrillon warhulk is grabbed and makes a successful escape attempt, it may immediately make an attack on the grabber as a free reaction: +10 vs. Reflex; 2 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +15, Intimidate +11

Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+4)

Con 18 (+8) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+4)

Equipment hide armor, spiked collar, maul

OGRILLON WARHULK TACTICS

Ogrillon warhulks wade into battle, seeking out the most obvious targets and smashing them with their mauls until no targets remain standing.

Encounter Groups

Level 4 Encounter (900 XP)

- 1 ogrillon brute (level 6 brute)
- 2 orc raiders (level 3 skirmisher)
- 2 orc berserkers (level 4 brute)

Level 10 Encounter (2,650 XP)

- 1 oni mage (level 10 elite lurker)
- 1 ogrillon warhulk (level 9 elite brute)
- 3 ogre thugs (level 11 minion)
- 1 troll (level 9 brute)

OROG

Orogs are a large subspecies of orc. They raid other communities for food and supplies when needed, slaughtering any defeated defenders.

OROG LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Orogs are a large, extremely aggressive species of orc. They delight in bloodletting and pillaging, and seemingly live for battle. They are said to be hardy and nearly fearless.

DC 20: Orogs cannot be reasoned with, and they give little mercy to prisoners or enemies. They typically are found in small groups of their own kind but sometimes work with ogres and trolls. They fiercely hate goblins, dwarves, halflings, humans, and elves.

Orog Fist	Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 66; Bloodied 33; see also <i>warrior's surge</i>	
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 14, Will 14	
Speed 6 (8 while charging)	
⚔ Bardiche (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d12+4 damage.	
↘ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 10/20; +10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.	
† Warrior's Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing, Weapon The orog fist makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.	
† Retributive Hit (immediate reaction, if the orog is bloodied by an attack; at-will) ♦ Weapon The orog fist makes a melee basic attack against its attacker.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +14, Intimidate +8	
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 10 (+2) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 18 (+6)	Int 9 (+1) Cha 9 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, bardiche, 4 javelins in sheaf	

OROG FIST TACTICS

Orog fists typically attack by hurling javelins at the strongest-looking opponent within range. When circumstances allow, they happily switch to a great bardiche so they may see the blood of their enemy. If a specific opponent strikes and wounds them, they concentrate future attacks on that individual until that enemy is dead.

Orog Raider	Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 64; Bloodied 32; see also <i>warrior's surge</i>	
AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 14	
Speed 6 (8 while charging)	
⚔ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +10 vs. AC; 1d12+4 damage (crit 1d12+16).	
↘ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 20/40; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.	
† Warrior's Surge (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing, Weapon The orog raider makes a melee basic attack and regains 16 hit points.	
† Retributive Hit (immediate reaction, if the orog is bloodied by an attack; at-will) ♦ Weapon The orog raider makes a melee basic attack against its attacker.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +13, Intimidate +8	
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 16 (+5) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 8 (+1) Cha 9 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, greataxe, longbow, quiver with 10 arrows	

OROG RAIDER TACTICS

Orog raiders attack in quick, hit-and-run strikes. They use ranged weapons first if possible, and then close on weakened enemies with their crude greataxes. Once engaged in close combat, they do not retreat.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Level 6 Encounter (1,350 XP)

- 5 orog fists (level 5 soldier)
- 1 ogre skirmisher (level 8 skirmisher)

Level 8 Encounter (1,800 XP)

- 2 orog raiders (level 5 skirmisher)
- 4 orc raiders (level 3 skirmisher)
- 2 worgs (level 9 brute)

OTROLLON

Otrollons are voracious creatures known for the bravery and physical resilience. They may be found in any clime and sometimes serve in humanoid armies or tribal groups.

OTROLLON LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Otrollons are nearly fearless carnivores that attack most other creatures entering their habitat. They are able to regenerate physical damage, much in the way of trolls. Fire and acid are said to be the most effective weapons against them.

DC 20: Otrollons are a mixed breed born from an orc parent and a troll parent. They are usually encountered with only their own kind but have been known to ally with trolls, ogres, and evil giantkind.

Otrollon Savage Level 7 Brute Medium natural humanoid XP 300

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49

Regeneration 5 (if the otrollon takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage.

‡ **Ripping Claws** (standard; at-will)
The otrollon savage makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the target takes an additional 5 damage.

Otrollon Healing (immediate reaction; encounter) ◆ **Healing**
If the otrollon is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 9 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +13, Intimidate +8

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 18 (+7) **Int** 7 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Equipment hide armor

OTROLLON SAVAGE TACTICS

Otrollons instinctually attack their prey with their claws. If confronted with acid, fire, or vastly superior numbers they are intelligent enough to retreat or seek aid.

Otrollon Ragelord

Level 8 Skirmisher

Large natural humanoid

XP 350

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 92; **Bloodied** 46

Regeneration 5 (if the otrollon takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 22; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

Speed 7 (9 while charging)

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+13 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

‡ **Ripping Rage** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂ)
The otrollon ragelord makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the otrollon ragelord gains combat advantage against that target for the rest of the encounter.

Otrollon Healing (immediate reaction; encounter) ◆ **Healing**
If the otrollon ragelord is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidate +8

Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+5)

Con 20 (+9) **Int** 8 (+3) **Cha** 8 (+3)

Equipment hide armor

OTROLLON RAGELORD TACTICS

Otrollon ragelords are nearly fearless; they attack all enemies within reach, especially those that have attacked them. Attacks consist of clawing at an enemy's vitals. They flee if confronted with acid or fire in quantity, but otherwise they fight to the death.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Level 5 Encounter (1,076 XP)

- 4 orc raiders (level 3 skirmisher)
- 4 orc drudges (level 4 minions)
- 1 otrollon savage (level 7 brute)

Level 9 Encounter (2,250 XP)

- 1 otrollon ragelord (level 8 skirmisher)
- 5 otrollon savages (level 7 brute)
- 1 troll (level 9 brute)

Level 14 Encounter (5,200 XP)

- 2 otrollon ragelords (level 8 skirmisher)
- war troll (level 14 soldier)
- fen hydra (level 12 solo brute)

RACIAL TRAITS

Racial traits and powers of orc half-breeds are provided here to assist GMs in creating NPCs. In addition, a few of the orc variations presented in this book are also suitable for use as player character races if the GM so rules. This information may be used as a guideline. Players should ask their GM about these races before assuming they may be used for character creation.

GRUNT

Average Height: 4' 10" – 5' 6"

Average Weight: 160 – 240 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity

Size: Medium

Speed: 6 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, Giant

Skill Bonuses: +2 Endurance, +2 Stealth

Running Charge: When you charge, add 2 to your speed.

Grunt Tactics: You can use grunt tactics as an encounter power.

Grunt Tactics

Grunt Racial Power

When wounded, you know how to seek assistance from your allies.

Encounter

Immediate Reaction

Personal

Trigger: You are bloodied by a ranged or melee attack.

Effect: You may switch squares with an adjacent ally.

OGRILLON

Average Height: 6' 8" – 7' 4"

Average Weight: 260 – 340 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Strength, +2 Constitution

Size: Medium

Speed: 6 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, Giant

Skill Bonuses: +2 Athletics, +2 Intimidate

Oversized: You can use weapons of your size or one size larger as if they were your size.

Sweeping Blow: You can use sweeping blow as an encounter power.

Sweeping Blow

Ogrillon Racial Power

You know how to land great blows on your opponents that knock them off their feet.

Encounter ♦ Weapon

Standard Action

Melee weapon

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Increase to 2[W] + Strength modifier damage at 21st level.

OROG

Average Height: 6' 8" – 7' 6"

Average Weight: 220 – 300 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Strength, +2 Constitution

Size: Medium

Speed: 6 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, Giant

Skill Bonuses: +2 Athletics, +2 Intimidate

Retributive Hit: You use retributive hit as an encounter power.

Retributive Hit

Orog Racial Power

When your enemies dare strike you, you are able to channel your fury into a savage counterattack.

Encounter ♦ Weapon

Immediate Reaction

Melee weapon

Trigger: You are bloodied by a melee attack.

Target: The creature that bloodied you

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Increase to 2[W] + Strength modifier damage at 21st level.

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