



## Background:

Vulture's Crag sits at the outer edge of civilized lands, looming over a vast plain of tar pits and boiling mud. It's said Trolls have dwelt in its timeworn caverns for millennia, but they had caused little trouble in recent times. Now, with the arrival of the Troll witch, Stencheye, those troubles have begun anew. Stencheye's children ravage the holdings of the nearby Lords, devouring cattle, serfs, and men-at-arms. Worse, they have begun looting caravans on the Imperial Road, threatening trade with neighboring lands.

Expeditions by the Lords' own garrisons have proved disastrous. In desperation, they have posted a sizeable bounty on Stencheye's head. Adventurers and mercenaries have begun to gather, some drawn by the bounty, and some by rumors of more precious cargo, looted from the Imperial caravans...

## Common features:

Vulture's Crag is a steep-walled mesa, riddled with caves and crowned with the nests of countless scavenger birds. Red-painted pictographs and Troll symbols cover the surrounding cliff-side. Tunnels are sized for giants, at least 15' wide and 20' high, with hard packed earthen floors. All are smooth and worn from centuries of use, and many bear ancient markings in an unknown script. Roars and sounds of fighting are commonplace, but lightning, explosions, and other unusual sounds may bring investigation from adjacent rooms.

**Stencheye** -- Stencheye is a notorious Troll witchdoctor of unusual cunning and ability. She is never without her *amulet of fire resistance*, hidden beneath layers of fur and rags, and wears a filthy *Robe of Eyes* as a shawl. Stencheye is crafty, and does not hesitate to flee for reinforcements. Seldom idle, she is typically found roaming throughout the caverns (roll 1d4 for her location: 1. meeting with *Molly Longfingers*; 2. Just leaving the Tusk, on the outer bridge; 3. In the Reeking Dens, flogging a juvenile Troll; 4. dallying in her chambers with one of her lovers). When outside her quarters, she has a bodyguard of 2 large trolls.

**Half-Trolls** - Stencheye's children have many fathers, and not all are trolls. Appearances vary, but most are smaller and less regenerative than their brothers, and armed with banded mail, longbows (often with arrows treated with a *Slow* poison), and polearms. Much less common, **Devil-Trolls** have additional spell-like abilities, and are marked by demonic or diabolic features. Devil-Trolls attack with spell-like powers or their natural weaponry.

**1. Treacherous Ascent.** A narrow ledge climbs steeply to a large cave mouth. Kelgg the Gatekeeper, a **giant 2 headed troll**, stands guard. He hoots and snorts happily as he rolls boulders down upon intruders. If approached, he rushes out to hurl enemies from the ledge. Coiled around his shoulders is a **giant constrictor snake**, which he tosses at lightly armored foes. Kelgg is too stupid to summon aid.

**2. Upper Guardroom.** Cracks in the ceiling provide dim light. A **drunken troll** slumps against the wall, singing loudly. He ignores the party, but any "cultured" characters are horrified by his performance. 3 **half-troll warriors** throw horseshoes, their ears plugged with cloth. A **Cave Bear** pet sits chewing bones. Sounds of combat may awaken 2 **Trolls** from the connecting caves, but only if the singing is silenced. One of the caves doubles as a latrine, and emits an eye-watering stench.

**3. The Grisly Larder.** Curtains of stiff, uncured hides screen the entrances. A large fire-pit holds a spit and huge cook pot. Butchered horses and a human torso hang from a wooden rack. Tending a chopping block is Meat-Hacker Yog, a deranged, hog-headed **Hill Giant** (the head was a Faerie curse) in a chainmail apron. 2 **Troll** assistants and a **Dire Boar** rush enemies while Yog grabs his arbalest. A trapdoor reveals a notched log, serving as a ladder down to area 7. A wooden cage holds 2 would-be troll-hunters. One has a severed leg, and is delirious with fever. The other is lucid, but has a broken collarbone and cannot fight. If rescued, he describes a spear and beaded satchel taken by his captors, both of which would be useful against Trolls.

**4. Cistern.** A natural chimney rises 30' to the top of the crag. Water, 12' deep, collects below in a natural cistern. A natural ledge allows those in area 5 to look down into this lower chamber, but no one appears to be watching. Observant characters notice someone has lowered a rope down the chimney, but there is no one in sight.

**5. The Drinking Room.** A **Giant Troll** sits munching live chickens from a pen, while 2 **half-troll archers** and a thorny-skinned female **Devil-Troll** drink and play dice. The Giant Troll hurls intruders into the cistern, then tosses rocks. A crude still sits in one corner, along with 3 jugs of *troll moonshine* (treat as a highly-flammable, low-grade poison). A small collection of coins and jewelry sits on a stone table.

**6. Stencheye's Chambers.** A 200 lb. stone lid blocks the entry hatch. A glowing dagger imbedded in a crate lights the room, revealing rich tapestries and thick (though soiled) carpets. Two censers waft narcotic incense throughout the chamber, causing those unused to the effects to hit at -2. One of Stencheye's lovers will be here, lounging in a heap of soiled furs (roll 1d4: 1. A **Minotaur Chieftan**; 2. A **Type III Demon**; 3. An **Ogre Mage Warlord**; 4. The **Scragglebeard Brothers**, a pair of insane, lecherous **Dwarven Warriors**). Stencheye's treasure is in a triple-locked iron chest on a shadowed ledge, 12' up. Within are gems, jewelry, and several potions, but if a hidden catch is not released, a second compartment releases a puff of **yellow mold**.

**7. The Reeking Dens.** These disgusting caverns house most of the Trolls. Mounds of furs, straw, and soiled bedding lie in lice-ridden heaps. 1d6 **Trolls** snore peacefully.

**8. Lower Guardroom.** 2 **Trolls** wrestle for the hundredth time while a blue-scaled **Devil-Troll** and 2 **Dire Wolves** look on in boredom. The Devil-Troll has a paralytic touch and a poison bite. A stout gate of logs blocks an exit onto the cliff-side. The entire place reeks of troll urine.

**9. The Plunder Trove.** A heavy stone door stands slightly ajar. Inside lie three dismembered and acid-scorched Trolls. The cave is piled with looted goods, awaiting trade to parties unknown. Two thieves are already here, rifling through boxes. They are *Feargus the Cutter* (a **Human Thief**) and his **Spriggan** partner, *Droopteats*. Both are villains of the worst sort, and neither likes to share a score. The loot includes valuable silks, spices, ingots, amphorae of wine and oils, and piles of weapons and armor (total contents and value to be determined by the referee). If players know to look, they can spot the troll-hunter's satchel (holds 6 acid vials and 2 *potions of fire breathing*). Otherwise, a search takes hours, and is certain to be interrupted.

**10. Visiting Giantess.** These are temporary quarters for *Molly Longfingers*, a powerful **Annis** seeking Stencheye's aid. To ease negotiations, she appears as a statuesque Troll queen in a dress of bones. Accompanying her are two eunuch **Ogre Champions** (plate armor, 2-handed swords). If her Ogres are killed, she may parley. A locked chest holds gold and gems intended as tribute for Stencheye.

**11. The Tusk of Gwall.** A gleaming, ivory spike, 20' wide and 40' high, thrusts up through the center of this vaulted cavern. Ledges circle the walls, dropping to steaming pits of boiling mud, 15' below. The Tusk is considered holy by many Trolls and Ogres, though they will not explain its importance. It vibrates with a high, keening sound, affecting Trolls as a *Chant* spell. Along the outer wall, 3 **Trolls** hoot and pound on drums, while a visiting **Ogre Mage** meditates near the Tusk. Perched near the ceiling is a winged **Devil Troll** (gaseous breath; magic resistance). The Ogre Mage waits to assess the party's strength before committing to combat. ...The Tusk is unbreakable, but if struck it releases one of several **primordial troll spirits** (banshees). Its base is heaped with gold, silver, and numerous bloody offerings.

**12. Littered Shoreline.** Mounds of half-submerged detritus poke from the shallow mud, including several splintered wagons. 15' from the shoreline, a pole with an ornamented grip sticks up from the tar. It is the troll-hunter's spear - a *flametongue lance*. Anyone trying to wade out to it becomes stuck in the tar.

**13. Ancestral Barrow.** Hidden behind an illusionary wall is an undiscovered cave, its walls lined with ancient cave paintings of animals and Trolls. Three images hold bound **Animal Spirits**, which attempt to possess intruders (one attack per spirit; those possessed run out into the tar and immerse themselves). ...At the far end, a set of fossilized Troll bones lies on a heap of flint shards, flanked by disintegrating mammoth tusks. Within the remains sit a bone necklace and a green stone club. If approached, flint shards swirl up and begin to spin around the body. Passing through them on the first round does minimal damage, but the shards accelerate rapidly, becoming a *Blade Barrier*. If players retreat at least 30', the shards settle until approached again. By darting in and out when the shards first rise, a player can grab a single item with only minor cuts. The necklace acts as a *Ring of Free Action*, while the club functions like a *Staff of Striking* (24 charges).

**Notes for Further Development:** Returning raiders replenish the population by 1d4 per day (max. 16). If Stencheye is displaced, a rival band of Ogre Magi may seize control. Vulture's Crag is ancient, and larger than the area shown. Its numerous caves hold more Trolls, Giants, and many forgotten secrets...