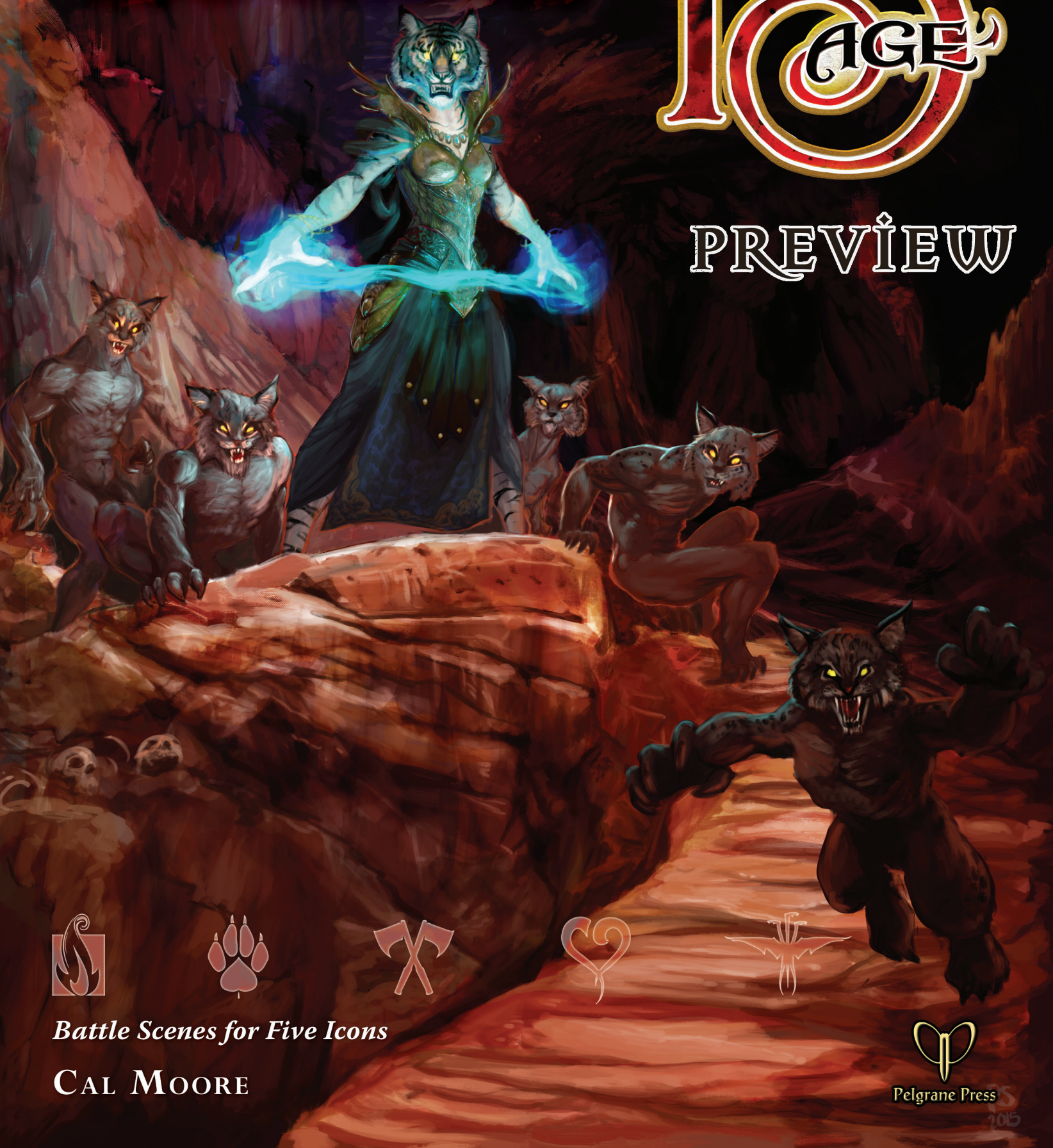


HIGHMAGIC & LOWCUNNING

13TH AGE

PREVIEW



Battle Scenes for Five Icons

CAL MOORE



Pelgrane Press

2015

13TH AGETM

HIGH MAGIC & LOW CUNNING: BATTLE SCENES FOR FIVE ICONS

A 13TH AGE ADVENTURE

BY CAL MOORE



13TH AGE IS A FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME BY
ROB HEINSOO, JONATHAN TWEET,
LEE MOYER, & AARON MCCONNELL



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CREDITS

PUBLISHER

Simon Rogers

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Cathriona Tobin

AUTHOR

Cal Moore

DEVELOPER, EDITOR, AND ART DIRECTOR

Rob Heinsoo

COVER

Patricia Smith

ARTWORK

Rich Longmore, Patricia Smith

CARTOGRAPHERS

Pär Lindström (The Three),
Gill Pearce (Archmage), Ralf
Schemmann (High Druid, Orc
Lord, Prince of Shadows)

MAP WRANGLER

Simon Rogers

ICON AND MONSTER TILES

Lee Moyer, Aaron McConnell

LAYOUT

Aileen E. Miles

PLAYTESTERS

Matt Adelsperger, Kate Irwin, Doug Jacobson,
Sarah Keortge, Marc Weddle, Steve Robinson,
Allison Shinkle, Joe Smith, Emi Tanji, Rich
Williams, Steve Ellis, Cat Tobin, Dave, Steve
Dempsey, Mark Fulford, George Thaw, Jay Godden,
Christopher Godden, John Scott, Beth Lewis,
Joanna Piancastelli, Simon Hibbs, Roland Rogers,
Whit Mattson, Josef Castiel, Stephen Hoffman,
Matt Hoffman, Candace Koller, Jacob Fleming,
Victor Andrade, Aaron Pérez, Sebastian Pérez,
Luis Gallardo, Carlos Negrete, Laura Elisa Jiménez,
Sean Nokes, Jeremy Bednarski, Cory Milligan, Mike
Fuller, Christopher Duncan, Kevin Elmore, Stephan
Pfuetze, Brendon Hays, John Edwards, Robert
Dempsey, Crystal Elmore, Matthew Parmeter,
Steven Cagle, Samuel D Frazier II, Robert Dorgan,
William Ansell, Chad Brown, Jonathan Duhrkoop,
Vincent Foley, Edward Kim, David Stenkampf,
Kristofer Wade, Jeff Hewartson, Will Holden,
Derek Storey, Jackson Martin, Larissa Black, Terry
laForge III, Wayne Ergang, Andrew Sturman,
Duncan Sellars, Glenn Jones, Linda Streatfield,
Jacqlyn Edge, Stefanos Anastasiadis, David Brandt,
Felipe Bouroncle, David Brandt, Chris Collier,
Miah Collier, Rick Lewis, David Aldridge, Yannis
Choupas, Sigurd Kirkevold Nass, Mikko Kivelä,
Joseph Norris, Max Renner

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BATTLE 3: RAZOREDGE ORC CAMP

The steep canyon walls of the gorge seem to be behind you now as the river begins to slow and the cliffs flatten out. As you pass around a tight bend, the current spins you into calm water formed by a long sandbar and the raft hangs up on some bushes in the shallows. That would be fine, except for the surprised-looking orcs fishing in the shallows, and a full orc camp spread out behind them on a sandy tree-filled beach. With howls to the rest of their tribe, they lift their spears toward you.

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

The camp holds the leader of the Razoredge orcs, a shaman named Tok'rash Razorknife, and the warriors who follow him.

The main camp covers an area from the beach to some short cliffs surrounding it that are riddled with caves where many of the orcs sleep during the day. The beach is 90 feet wide and stretches back 60 to 70 feet to the cliffs (far away), which climb to a height of 60 feet, then slowly descend down the back side. A narrow ledge leads up the cliffs to the caves, and then on up over the top, switching back once on the right.

There are a few 80-foot tall beech trees scattered along the beach. A few tents of varying sizes are pitched on lines strung between some of the trees. There's also some ziplines from the caves on the cliffs down to branches on trees by the water.

Between the tents is a large fire pit with low, smoldering coals giving off heat and a little smoke. A small deer carcass hangs gutted from a tree branch not far from the fire.

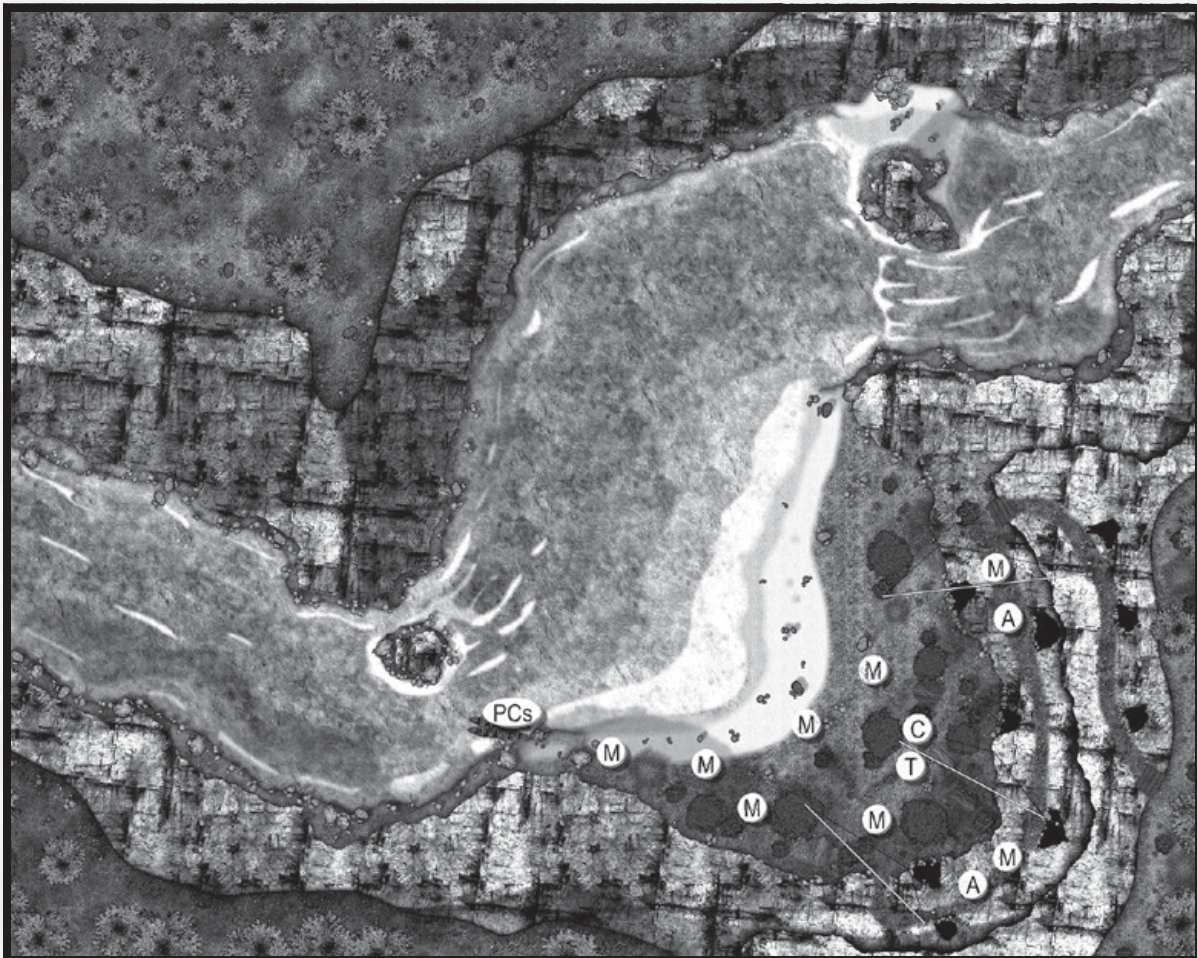
TERRAIN & TRAPS

The Raft & the River: The raft is caught up on some short trees/bushes at the edge of the beach. It will take four move actions (any number of PCs) to free it enough to push back toward the slow current on the far side of the river.

The river where the raft is stuck is shallow (2 feet) and sandy, so footing isn't an issue. Anyone farther out needs to make a DC 10 Strength check to swim back to the shallows, otherwise they gain no ground as the current pushes them.

Fire: The fire pit is 4 feet in diameter, but the coals are almost dead. Anyone entering (or pushed into) the pit will take 1d6 fire damage, and the same amount if they end their turn there.

Beech Trees: The trees have low branches and are easy to climb. If a PC is interested in the trees or chooses to climb the ones by the beach, they will notice four zip lines connected back up to the ledges. Climbing a rope up to the ledges requires two move actions and a DC 15 Strength check, and they are weakened while doing so.



Any dicey moves while in the trees requires a DC 15 Dexterity check; on a failure, that creature falls and takes 2d6 damage.

Cliffs: Moving from the ground up the ledge to the switchback takes one move action, and a second move action to get to the top caves, or a PC can climb the zip lines (see trees above) or directly climb the cliffs with a DC 18 Strength check. Of course, the orcs will be coming to the PCs, mostly.

The ropes secured to the top ledge and tied to the lower branches of the beech trees close to the water allow the orcs there to zipline down with a leather strap. The Razoredge orc warriors on the ledge will try to slam into a PC standing at the edge of the beach or in the water near the trees.

Using the zipline to attack this way requires a move action and standard action. When one of the mooks tries it, use the following attack (and GM, feel free to let a natural 1 mean the orc slams into an ally or takes damage from plowing into the ground or a tree limb).

C: Zipline smash +7 vs. PD—8 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends); in addition, the orc takes 4 damage

Natural 18+: The orc times it perfectly and takes no damage.

Miss: The orc takes 1d8 damage and ends up in the river.

MONSTERS

Tok'rash the shaman will be in a tent toward the cliffs at the start of the battle and will emerge to kill the intruders and issue commands to the warriors.

Tok'rash has (somewhat) tamed a bear he unoriginally calls Claws. He has fed it on humanoid meat and trained it to attack anyone attacking him. Claws comes out of the tent with Tok'rash, lets out a roar, and stays close to the shaman. If there's a second bear, its name is, of course, Fang.

The orcish archers are scattered between the base of the cliffs and the cliff ledge. The Razoredge orc warriors are fishing in the shallows, scattered about the camp, and up on the cliffs waiting to swing down.

This is a double-strength battle, so there' are a lot of mooks. If you want to reduce the number of enemies, add an orc berserker and remove 4 mooks (1st level) or 3 mooks (2nd level). Also, if there's more than one mob, feel free to hold it back until the escalation die reaches 2 if you're worried this battle might overwhelm you or your players.

Additional Reinforcements: If you want to challenge the PCs more, have a heavy hitter, an ogre named Quarg (core rulebook, page 240) rush out of a tent to put a stop to all of the racket. If that feels a bit too much for the PCs, especially those at 1st level, make the ogre old and half-blind, with half the hit points of a normal ogre.

TACTICS

Tok'rash will stay back, using his *battle curse* attack for as long as he can. Claws (and Fang) will stick close, intercepting any non-orc who tries to attack the shaman. If he has both bears, Tok'rash might send one of them to attack a nearby enemy who's causing trouble. While brave, the shaman didn't get to be leader by being overly stupid. He will use move actions to try to put interceptors between him and his enemies.

#/Level of PCs	Tok'rash (T)	Claws (C)	Orcish Archer (A)	Razoredge Orc Mook (M)
4 x 1 st level	1	1	2	8 (1 mob)
5 x 1 st level	1	1	3	11 (2 mobs)
6 x 1 st level	1	2	4	9 (2 mobs)
4 x 2 nd level	1	2	3	10 (2 mobs)
5 x 2 nd level	1*	2	4	9 (2 mobs)
6 x 2 nd level	1*	2**	4	15 (3 mobs)

* Make Tok'rash double strength: he has 72 hp, his *spear* attack deals 12 damage, and his curse deals 8 psychic damage.

** Give each bear a +1 attack bonus, and its *bite* attack deals 3 extra damage (9 total).

Half the archers will be on the cliff ledges, and half on the beach back by the tents at the foot of the cliff. They will try to stay mobile and use ranged attacks as much as possible, until engaged by two or more enemies.

The Razoredge orc mooks are scattered everywhere. At least three of them will be in the water with hunting spears, and at least two will be on the top ledge ready to swing down. The rest will emerge from the tents with howls, ganging up on the PCs as much as possible. They are smart enough to use basic tactics, but generally trust in their ferocity to see them through.

LOOT

The Razoredge orcs have managed to do fairly well of late raiding river travelers and those in the surrounding lands. Scattered among the various orcs is a total of 200 gp in mixed coinage and small jewelry.

In Tok'rash's tent, there's a leather satchel holding 75 gp and various war trophies (most disgusting) but including a small ceremonial jade blade worth 50 gp. There's also an oval iron disc with two crossed axes painted on it in red dye—any PC with an Orc Lord relationship will know it for a summons from the icon's lieutenants to a council of war. Whoever bears such a token might be given safe passage to and from the council—though it would help to *look* like servants of the Orc Lord instead of adventurers. It might be useful to the PCs or of interest to those watching the Orc Lord's troop movements for signs of the next attack.

Icons

A PC that has relationship advantages with the Orc Lord, Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Lich King, or the Three (the Blue) could use one or more of them to remove the curse effect from a PC (from the shaman's *battle curse* attack), perhaps by bringing up a dishonorable action that Tok'rash committed in the past.

A PC with one or more advantages with the High Druid could use them to distract one of the bears for a round or two, whether it's consuming a convenient piece of humanoid flesh the character happens to throw at it, or through other means of communication.



A PC that has an advantage with any icon could use it to break the morale of the orcs before the battle starts, causing them all to take a -1 attack penalty or suffer some other setback (reputation is important to the orcs), at least until at least one PC drops to 0 hit points.

TOK'RASH, ORC SHAMAN

2nd level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Spear +6 vs. AC—6 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

R: Battle curse +7 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—4 psychic damage, and for the rest of the battle, melee attacks by orcs deal +1d4 damage against the target (non-cumulative)

AC	18	
PD	12	HP 36
MD	16	

CLAWS/FANG, BROWN BEAR

Big, mean, and a taste for humanoid flesh. What's not to hate.

3rd level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +5

Bite +8 vs. AC—10 damage

Natural even hit: The target takes 1d10 extra damage from a claw swipe.

Likes man-flesh: The crit range of the bear's attack against humans expands by 1.

AC	18	
PD	18	HP 45
MD	13	

ORCISH ARCHER

It takes patience to be a true archer. Orcs lack that. So they fire as many arrows as possible, hope for the worst, and work themselves toward a frenzy that demands the sword.

2nd level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Scimitar +6 vs. AC—6 damage

R: Short bow +6 vs. AC—7 damage

Natural 1–5: Reroll the attack against a random nearby creature. If the rerolled attack is also a natural 1–5, the orcish archer takes 3 damage from sheer agonized frustration, but it doesn't get to make another attack.

Final frenzy: When the escalation die is 3+, the orcish archer gains a +3 bonus to melee attacks and melee damage.

AC	18	
PD	17	HP 32
MD	11	

RAZOREDGE ORC WARRIOR

Most of the ones who survive are fiercer than the rest, not smarter.

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Spear or axe +7 vs. AC—5 damage

Ferocious: The crit range of the Razoredge orc warrior's melee attacks expand by an amount equal to the escalation die -2.

AC	18	
PD	15	HP 8 (mook)
MD	10	

Mook: Kill one Razoredge orc warrior mook for every 8 damage you deal to the mob.

ADDITIONAL REINFORCEMENTS

QUARG, OGRE

Large 3rd level troop [GIANT]

Initiative: +5

Big honkin' club +7 vs. AC—18 damage*Miss:* Half damage.**Big shove +9 vs. PD (each enemy engaged with ogre)**—1d6 damage, and the target pops free from the ogre*Quick use:* This power only requires a quick action (once per round) instead of a standard action when the escalation die is even.**AC 19****PD 16****MD 12****HP 90 (or 45)**

NEXT STEPS

With the Razoredge orc tribe defeated, the PCs have made it much safer to travel the river, at least until some new threat moves in. If the heroes needed to continue downriver, the gorge ends shortly after the camp and becomes open land, with civilization only a few hours away by raft.

Other story results depend on the opening used; see endings below.

RAFTING RAZOREDGE GORGE STORY ENDINGS

Here are outcomes for each story opening, detailing what success or failure might mean.

If the PCs fought all three battles, remember to give them a full heal-up.

WE NEED TO GET DOWNRIVER QUICK

Success: The PCs reach their destination in time by rafting the river. They accomplish whatever they were trying to do, and word gets out, starting a competition among adventurers to make the Rivergorge Run in under two days. Their fame also brings them interest from the representatives of an icon, who needs to transport something somewhere in a very short amount of time, and they seem like just the heroes to do it.

Failure: The PCs fail to reach their destination in time, probably suffering a campaign loss. They miss whatever opportunity was waiting, or their delay allows their enemies' plans to be set in motion.

A TEST OF COURAGE

Success: The PCs make it through the Gorge unscathed. The spiritcaller seems surprised to see them (or not, because you know, spirits). But he honors his word and gives the PCs the location they seek for showing such great courage. He might also give the heroes some information that will help them in their upcoming endeavor if they're willing to use advantages.

Failure: When the PCs return to the half-orc's camp, it's gone. He's packed up and moved on. They'll have to find what they seek some other way, probably one more dangerous than rafting the river.

INTO THE RAIDER'S DEN

Success: By navigating the river through Razoredge Gorge, the PCs travel quick enough to take out the Razoredge orc tribe leadership before the other raiding groups can rally. Demoralized and without strong leadership, the orcs in the hills fall to infighting and break apart into smaller bands that don't pose as much of a threat to the area. Even better, the mayor of a nearby town had posted a reward for anyone who could solve the problem, so the PCs just have to convince her that they did.

Failure: The PCs' attempt to strike the Razoredge orc tribe leadership directly was bold, but doomed to fail. Now the orcs have increased their defenses in the gorge, and they raze the closest softskin (as they call humans) village to pay for their insolence. A nearby town will surely be next. The town's mayor has connections to one of the PCs' icons and pressures the heroes to help defend the town, to make up for riling the orcs up.

GUARD THE SILVER SHIPMENT

Success: The PCs fend off the attacks of the Razoredge orcs and manage to get the silver shipment to the jeweler for the dwarves, picking up some nice loot along the way. The dwarves gain the contract, pay the heroes well, and some of the PCs make good connections to the Dwarf King's people (gaining an advantage or another opportunity), or to the Emperor (each PC gets a 6 with the Emperor that lasts until they use it or level up).

Failure: The PCs lose the silver somewhere during the ride down the river while fighting and can't find the lockbox again. When the dwarves hear that the PCs aren't dead, but that the shipment is gone, they're not happy. Any future dealings with dwarves or Dwarf King folk until the next level take a -2 penalty to social skill checks, and any 6s the PCs roll with the Orc Lord or Dwarf King are 5s instead as word of their actions/failure gets around.

BATTLE SCENE CONNECTIONS

The stories from this set of battle scenes can lead to scenes in future books:



Temple Reclamation (Priestess): The PCs find a prisoner among the orc camp. It's a priest from the temple of Lasturr. He tells them that a half-orc shaman with a troop of goblinoids came to the Razoredge orcs to see if they would join her in a raid on the temple. They had made the priest tell them of the temple's riches, and then traded him to the orcs to get the meeting.

The King's Tribute (Dwarf King): After the orc battle, the PCs find a magic item among their loot. It's the item that Lord Silveraxe seeks, taken from a thief who was trying to cross orc lands.





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