Rescue at the Drowned Crossing

The Marshbound · 5 × level 6
High estimate · 5,400 XP · SRD 5.2.1
Budgets: Low 3000 / Moderate 5000 / High 7000

Objective

Free the ferrymaster from the cage on the old causeway and get them to the far bank. The party can win by escaping; defeating every troll is optional.

Terrain

A narrow stone causeway crosses waist-deep water. Two broken wagons provide cover. The cage hangs from a winch on the center platform; opening its simple latch takes an action once a character reaches it.

Complication

One troll guards the cage while two search the reeds. At the end of round three, the winch slips and lowers the cage into the water. Show the fraying rope before combat so the players can act on it.

DM notes

Keep the rescue objective visible throughout the fight. The trolls pursue anyone carrying food or the prisoner, but hesitate at fire. Check their regeneration and other traits in the included stat blocks. Three trolls total 5,400 XP: High for this party under the revised 2024 budgets. This is a demanding example, and its length depends on the party and tactics.

3 × Troll

Troll
Large Giant, Chaotic Evil
AC 15 Initiative +1 (11)
HP 94 (9d10 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.
MOD SAVE MOD SAVE MOD SAVE
Str 18 +4 +4 Dex 13 +1 +1 Con 20 +5 +5
Int 7 -2 -2 Wis 9 -1 -1 Cha 7 -2 -2
Skills Perception +5
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Giant
CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)
Traits
Loathsome Limbs (4/Day). If the troll ends any turn Bloodied and took 15+ Slashing damage during that turn, one of the troll's limbs is severed, falls into the

troll's space, and becomes a Troll Limb. The limb acts
immediately after the troll's turn. The troll has 1 Exhaustion level for each missing limb, and it grows replacement limbs the next time it regains Hit Points.
Regeneration. The troll regains 15 Hit Points at the start
of each of its turns. If the troll takes Acid or Fire damage, this trait doesn't function on the troll's next turn.
The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 Hit Points
and doesn't regenerate.
Actions
Multiattack. The troll makes three Rend attacks.
Rend. Melee Attack Roll: +7, reach 10 ft. Hit: 11 (2d6
+ 4) Slashing damage.
Bonus Actions
Charge. The troll moves up to half its Speed straight
toward an enemy it can see.

Source: SRD 5.2.1, p. 333
https://media.dndbeyond.com/compendium-images/srd/5.2/SRD_CC_v5.2.1.pdf

Sources and guidance

Difficulty is an estimate. XP budgets estimate difficulty; terrain, resources, tactics, and dice can change the result. Fight duration is not predicted.
Creative encounter notes are DM guidance, separate from official statistics.
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