

The
TORTURED
LAND

TASTER

A 5E SOLO GAMEBOOK
BY PAUL BIMLER



THE TORTURED LAND (TASTER)

A SOLO ADVENTURE FOR DUNGEONS &
DRAGONS (FIFTH EDITION)

BY PAUL BIMLER

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*Dedicated to my Mum Margaret and my Aunty Norma
Who instilled in me a love of books and learning.*



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THE TORTURED LAND

ADVENTURE IN THE FRIGID NORTH



INTRODUCTION

This document is a taster of the latest solo adventure from 5e Solo Gamebooks. Here you will find the first part of the adventure, designed just to give you a taste of how 5e Solo Gamebooks are structured. This series was started with the solo adventure *The Death Knight's Squire*, and sees your PC continuing their quest across Faerun, exploring the area north of the Moonsea known as The Ride, and venturing into The Tortured Land. This adventure is designed for a single level 4 player, without a DM, and comes after the Level 3 adventure *Citadel of the Raven*. It can also be played as a standalone. The written narrative entries in this book serve in place of the dungeon master, and guide you through the adventure.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED?

All you will need for this adventure is a level 4 PC, ideally created using the guidelines in the *Player's Handbook* and, if you like, one other core sourcebook (not including *Unearthed Arcana*). You can use any race and player combo you like, but keep in mind that this adventure is designed to be balanced for core classes. If you are using a homebrew class, and find the adventure too easy, then perhaps you need to examine aspects of your class to see whether they are OP. The adventure has been extensively playtested to make sure it is not too easy, nor ridiculously difficult to complete.

TOKENS

If you are playing a tabletop style of adventure with printed map, find something to function as PC and

monster tokens: game tokens, coins, dice, anything with a bit of weight.

PROGRESS POINTS

Some of our previous adventures used a mechanic named *Progress Points*, and future adventures will also. However, this book does not use that mechanic as it doesn't fit with the story. Time is not so much of a factor here. As you will discover, survival, useful items, and avoiding exhaustion are more relevant factors as you journey across *The Tortured Land*.

MOVEMENT

All battle maps utilise a standard 5 ft. grid. When moving diagonally, treat every *other* square as 10 ft of movement.

COMBAT SHEETS

All encounters in this adventure are managed via the use of custom combat sheets, which are found at the back of the book (but don't look now!) They progress you through a series of events that make up each encounter, and which can take many different paths.

You will need to roll dice, saving throws and all other appropriate rolls for yourself AND any enemies. Keep in mind that a few of the encounters in this adventure would be considered 'deadly'. You will enter some dangerous places in the course of this adventure, and if you blunder into somewhere you shouldn't be, you may end up paying for it with your life!

FEATS

Every class has combat feats; a fighter's action surge, a bard's cutting words, a barbarian's rage, a rogue's sneak attack... the list is long and varied. Use these in your combat encounters. You do not need to be prompted by the text to do this.

HOUSE RULES

Death saves:

There are no death saves in this adventure, unless there are two or more PCs (see below), or an NPC present. If you die, you will simply have to roll up another PC and try again!

Max HP:

To balance out the above rule of no death saves, and to account for the fact that there is only one of you, we've added the additional rule that when you level up, you take max HP instead of rolling. It keeps the combat a bit more interesting and means you're not so squishy! So, take max HP for every level of your PC (and your con mod too).



MULTIPLAYER AND DM VERSIONS OF THE QUEST

If you are playing with a friend as a two-player party, **death saves are allowed**, but also, ignore the Max HP rule. To make the game more balanced, you should also consult the **Multi PC Conversion Table** at the back of the book, after the Combat Sheets section. This contains adjusted monster numbers for every encounter, depending on whether you are adventuring with 2, 3 or 4 PCs.

When the narrative text calls for skill checks, all PCs will get to try, but the DC is raised by 2.

Also, keep tabs on *who* is interacting with whatever is going on in terms of what's happening in the story - it could be both of you, or, if appropriate, it could be just one of you while the other stands a little way off observing.

You can also run this adventure as a DM'd campaign. The DM keeps the Adventure Book to themselves, runs the combat, and both DM and players have the maps visible. The DM controls the maps and reads the entries to the player.

DM IDEAS: DMs, if you are running this adventure for any number of players then obviously you have free license to read whatever entries you want and examine the elements of the book in depth. Whole encounters of your own could easily be inserted into the adventure, as long as you know the start and end entry numbers.

Theoretically, this adventure could

serve as the framework for a multi-week campaign.

SPELLCASTING

I have given options throughout the adventure for casting spells (eg: "*Do you know the spell **Detect Magic**? You could use this to see whether this weapon is enchanted or not.*"). So if you're playing a mage, think about what



spells could be useful in a solo adventure. (Hint: combat spells are what you should probably focus on, although you will get occasional opportunities to use other spells as well). When in combat, you do not need to be prompted by the text entry to cast spells.

So, feel free to cast spells even if the text does not call for it. Use common sense. For example, if you want to cast *Feather Fall* to prevent fall damage, but the option is not given, still go ahead and cast it, avoiding

the damage. Even if the options are not given, if you think the spell is appropriate for the situation and all the conditions are met, then go with it. Ask the question "What would a DM do?" Also, keep track of your spell slots.

RESTING AND HEALING

Opportunities will be given to rest at certain points. Follow normal rules for resting and recovering hp.

If you have healing abilities (Lay hands, Goodberry, Cure wounds etc etc), or healing potions, use those when you like and as appropriate, following normal 5e rules. You do not need to be prompted by the text to use these.

SKILLS

Skill checks will be asked for when appropriate.

NON-DARKVISION PCS

If you are playing a character *without* darkvision, then you will need torches. When you are in combat situations in dark places, you will not be able to wield a two-handed weapon or a shield and a weapon simultaneously, and you will not be able to use two-weapon fighting, unless that space is illuminated in some way. Outside there will always be a small amount of light. So, when you are entering dark spaces, it is presumed you are always kindling a torch (otherwise entering such spaces and encountering scenarios is

basically impossible). This rule is circumvented if you happen to find some aid to vision within the adventure.

OTHER ISSUES

Any issues where you are not sure of the judgement or how you should play it, just exercise common sense and ask yourself...

WHAT WOULD A DM DO?

This should be your guide when in doubt.

GO WITH IT

Feel free to improvise. The last thing I want this adventure to be is too prescriptive. You might decide that the monster you are fighting does something different, even if its not so great for your PC. If it's in the spirit of the game, go with it.

Sometimes you may need to roleplay something your character would *definitely* do in this circumstance. In that situation, you have my permission to perhaps look an entry or two ahead to see what the outcome is, and decide which is the fairest outcome for your character. Try to keep this sort of thing for an emergency, however, when you are certain you *must* play it in this way.

CHARACTER CREATION

If you are new to our adventures, please create a level 4 character, equipping them with gear according to class. In addition to that, let's say they've already completed one quest and received 300 gp, which they will

get a chance to spend early on in the book. For ability scores, use point-buy or standard array.

If you have played our previous solo adventures, you might have a PC who has completed those quests and collected loot and other items. If this is the case, use that PC.

XP in this adventure is not awarded by defeating monsters, it is awarded by milestone. Expect to advance your PC to Level 5 at the successful completion of this quest.

Also, come up with a compelling personal backstory and background for your character as well, just because its fun, and helps you to enjoy the adventure. Your backstory will give the events within your quest a unique flavour and context, so this is highly encouraged.

There are no restrictions on race or class – go with whatever you’re feeling, but keep in mind that this adventure is designed to be balanced with core classes. If you’re new to D&D

just stick with creating a character using the *Player’s Handbook*, as the PHB already contains numerous options for character creation. For the sake of my own sanity, I do not include feat options for non-core classes in the adventure text. I can’t possibly account for every known class and their feats by level and still keep the adventure entries at a manageable size! So if you are playing a non-core class, and in general really, accept that you won’t be able to do everything you can think of – that’s just the nature of this style of play – and enjoy *The Tortured Land* for what it is.

Fair warning – in true gamebook style, there are one or two choices in this adventure that will result in sudden death, so choose your options wisely. Don’t rush when considering your options, especially if the outcome appears to be potentially deadly.

With all that out of the way, let’s get into the adventure!



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS!

BACKSTORY

The vast, bitterly cold expanse of steppes known as The Ride has been your home for the last month. During this time, the only people you have been in contact with are a small tribe of barbarians known as the Erakan, who welcomed you into their village with open arms. But now you crave solitude, and so you strike out into the wind-whipped tundra once more. This north, it is cold year-round and those hardy souls who make this land their residence are few and far between. The Erakan told you of a village to the east. Your scant knowledge of their language suggests that the village is called Bearfoot, but you can't be sure. With nothing better to do, you set out for Bearfoot which lies just south of a small mountain range. There you plan on picking up supplies and continuing east. Perhaps you will visit Ilinvur, or perhaps pass it to the north on your way to Vaasa. East seems to be the way you are going.

North of the mountains is The Tortured Land - a barren, icy wasteland, inhospitable to all but the most twisted, hardened creatures. You say your farewells to the Erakan people and set out for the village, keeping the sun's path across the sky as your guide.

Taking your time, you walk for three days, enjoying the solitude once more. By nightfall on the third day, you see a cluster of lights some way off, which you reason must be Bearfoot.

Not quite ready for civilization yet (although this barely qualifies) you spend the night camped out on the steppe, surprisingly warm in the tent you obtained from the Erakan. You bank stones high around your campfire so that they are protected from the wind - and from far-off eyes. After cooking a basic but hearty meal over the embers of your fire, you turn in for the night. Sleeping peacefully under the stars, it occurs to you that you have become very attached to the



empty space of The Ride and are starting to feel quite at home in it. The wide open plains have a beauty all their own.

You sleep soundly, only waking once when you heard an animal snuffling just outside your campsite. Always primed, you have become highly alert to any sounds that don't belong and always waken when something is nearby. Breaking camp the next morning, you shoulder your pack and look east towards Bearfoot, which sits upon a slight rise.

When the sun clears the horizon and touches the plain, you are about half a mile out from Bearfoot. You wonder what awaits you in this small town. It has been a long time since you visited anything resembling a town. You hope to get in, get the supplies you need, and then leave, continuing east. A night's sleep in an actual bed might be nice, but you certainly don't want to linger here. At least, that's your intention as you approach the gates of Bearfoot.

Now proceed to Entry 1.

1

The town is ringed by a wall of wooden stakes about ten feet tall. Approaching the western side of the settlement, you see it is manned by a single guard standing atop a tower about twice as tall as the fortifications.

"Good morning," you call out. "Morning," the man returns, in a thick northern accent. "Where are you coming from?" You see he is dressed in leather armour and wears a broadsword strapped across his back. He is not your usual lazy-

looking town guard, however. This man looks hardened, battle-ready. Only the strong survive out here on The Ride, and it is certainly wise to have your best warriors manning the gates of a village so exposed.

"From the Erakan settlement to the west," you say. "Is this the village of Bearfoot?"

"Bearclaw," he replies. "Hold on, I'll open the gate. We don't get many visitors this time of year, especially on foot."

The man descends the tower quickly. His friendliness and eagerness are a welcome change. It's not the suspicious treatment you are used to when entering cities of late.

A large wooden gate creaks open to reveal the main street of Bearclaw.

You thank the guard and enter the town.

The first thing you notice is the wind - or rather the lack of it. The buildings shelter you from the relentless, icy breeze that scours everything on The Ride. It is nice to be out of it for a change.

Despite the hour, the town is quiet, but you do see a few faces peering out at you as you make your way down the main street. A tavern bearing the name The Crackling Hearth sits halfway down this street, and you also see a general supplies store, named Durfar's General Supplies. Towards the end of the street, what appears to be a temple bears a thick totem pole at the apex of its entrance. The image of a warrior wearing a necklace of crystals sits there cross-legged, looking impassively out over the town. A little further down, an

interesting-looking shop name
Kannoth's Rare Books and Tomes
sits.

Where will you visit?

To pay a visit to The Crackling
Hearth, go to 17.

To have a closer look at the temple,
perhaps trying to decipher what
deity it is devoted to before visiting,
go to 35.

Or to simply enter, go to 10.

To pay a visit to Durfar's Supplies
Store, go to 13.

Or, to visit Kannoth's Rare Books
and Tomes, go to 21.

2

"Ach, look who's coming to
challenge, Gruggus!" says one of the
half-orcs, visibly drunk. "Fancy your
luck do ya matey? Oh, well, put your
stake down, roll up your sleeve and
let's see what you've got!" Despite
their macho talk, the half-orcs are
friendly and welcoming, but also
keen for a bit of light-hearted
competition. Gruggus, the one who
you will face, is built like a brick
outhouse with thick arms, and he
plonks himself down opposite you,
lifting and draining a large tankard
of ale in one draught, before calmly
placing one elbow on the table and
fixing you with a cheeky grin. "Come
on then, traveller. Do your worst!"
There's no backing out now. Choose
between a stake of 50 or 100 gp, and
then make an Athletics check, DC 17.
If successful, go to 50.
If unsuccessful, go to 39.

3

You know this mark, and it fits with
what you have encountered so far on
this quest. This is the mark of Auril,
also known as the Cold Goddess,
Icedawn, the Frostmaiden. She is
known as an enemy of Ulutiu, due to
her siphoning his power while he lay
in slumber.

You naturally wonder why these
gnolls bear this mark. Certainly, you
have never heard of gnolls
worshipping human gods. The dog-
like humanoids invariably worship
Yeenoghu, who also holds domain
over ghouls. This is most odd.

Take the codeword *frigid*.

Storing this information away, you
turn your mind to finding a suitable
campsite. Proceed to entry 11.

4

The half-ogre lies dead at your feet.
If you had not seen him before, you
now see a young tribal warrior
bound and gagged and lying by the
large fire the half-ogre had been
trying to start. You cut his bonds
and remove the gag from his mouth.
The warrior speaks Erakan, and from
the little you know, you get the
following: he expresses his
gratefulness, tells you that he was
alone, foraging for game when the
half-ogre ambushed him and beat
him unconscious. He also conveys to
you that he is the son of the chief of a
small Erakan tribe that lives
northeast of here, in the direction of
Poison Pass. He points the direction
out to you. He says if you are going
that way, to make sure you pass
through their tribal encampment
where you will be treated like a king.

Then he tells you he must return to his father as he has been gone for some time.

Take the codeword *saviour*, and then you bid the young warrior farewell and both of you set out, the warrior north and east, and yourself due north, towards the Frozen Stones. Turn to entry 31.

5

The day dawns crisp and clear, and you wake early, stoking a fire and cooking yourself a nourishing gruel over your campfire. You sit for a while with a hot cup of tea which warms you from the inside. By the look of the terrain that stretches north towards the mountains, you are going to need all the warmth you can get.

After breakfast, you search the area north of the Frozen Stones.

Make a Survival check, DC 12.

If successful, go to 53.

If unsuccessful, go to 26.

6

The gnolls lie dead, their blood staining the sacred ground. Still on the alert, you check the area to see if any more of them are hiding behind the stones, but it seems the area is clear. It was just these two.

Were these part of the band who stole the staff Frostbringer from the temple of Ulutiu in Bearclaw? Or were they just random wanderers who happened to be in the area?

To search the bodies of the gnolls, go to 36.

To move on, looking for a place to camp, go to 11.

7

Roll a d20+3.

If the result is equal to or greater than your AC, go to 38.

If lower, go to 51.

8

Remigius shows you a space in the monastery where you can set up your bedroll. The floor has been laden with rushes so it is not too hard, and the monks who reside there provide good company, regaling you with fascinating stories regarding the myths and history of the local area. Despite sleeping on a hard floor, you are kept warm by a cheerful fire which the monks keep blazing all night, and you get an excellent rest in the monastery. You wake up the next morning, have breakfast with Remigius, and then prepare to get on your way, in search of the thief who stole the staff of Tolrik Bearclaw! Go to entry 33.

9

You walk over to the inebriated halfling who has plonked himself down by the raging hearth and try to strike up a conversation with him.

"Ah, new in town eh?" he drawls.

"Well, you'll have a tough time making friendsh here, I can tell ya... one shlip-up, and they never forgive ya!"

Prying a little further, you discover that the halfling was a guard in a temple, the same one you saw out in the street. "Then the relic wash shtolen.... not my fault though! How could I guard againsht... those... those ANIMALSH!"

"What animals?" you ask.

"Her... you know... the dogsh!
Walking dogsh, bearing weaponsh,
yapping like fiendsh!" The halfling
then drains his tankard, stands
unsteadily and staggers to the bar. It
appears the conversation is over!
To talk to the innkeeper, go to 43.
Or, if you have spent enough time
here, you can leave by going to 16.

10

You make your way inside the
temple. At the end of the room, lit by
an atmospheric blue light, an idol
stands atop an altar, similar to the
figure depicted on the totem, but in a
standing position. Behind this idol is
a pedestal that bears a wooden rack.
The rack looks as if it was designed
to display something, but it is
currently empty.

"The Lord of Ice blesses you,
traveller," comes a soft voice to your
left. From out of the shadows a
young man in priestly garb emerges.
"What brings you to our humble
temple?"

You explain that you are new in
town, and just finding your way
around.

The young priest steps back and
looks you up and down. "The
adventuring type, eh?" he says.

"Perhaps you were meant to come
here, friend. Perhaps you have come
here to aid us in the time of our
greatest need."

You ask the priest what he means by
this.

"We have had our soul, our lifeblood
taken from us," he says, looking at
the floor. "A great relic has been
stolen from this temple.

Frostbringer, the Staff of Tolrik

Bearclaw, our forefather and the
founder of this village." He waves a
hand at the empty rack behind the
idol. "It used to sit up there, behind
the image of our benevolent god."

"Stolen? By whom?"

The priest sighs. "Three nights ago,
we were invaded by a marauding
band of gnolls... do you know of
these creatures?"

You reply that you have heard of
them, and the priest continues.

"The priests of this temple believe
they were acting under duress,
fulfilling the quest under the orders
of someone much more powerful than
they."

"Who would that be?" you ask.

"That we do not know. What we
really need is a skilled warrior or
mage to venture north - for that is
the direction that the brutes departed
in - to investigate this, hopefully to
return Frostbringer to us. In
return... we can offer the services of
a great weaponsmith, a devotee of
Ulutiu and a patron of this temple.
We will have him forge an arcane
weapon for you, to your
specifications. A bow, a sword, a
greataxe... he will craft it for you,
and our mages will place
enchancements on it. Gold we do not
have much of, I'm afraid. But we can
offer this."

You nod, and look around the
temple. You told yourself that you
would only stay in Bearclaw for a
short time, not allowing yourself to
be distracted. But you find yourself
drawn in by the offer of a quest...
something you have not had for quite
some time!

Turn to entry 32.

11

Night is descending fast, and with it the temperature. The moon comes up and casts its white glow over the snowy mountaintops to the north, enhancing their striking beauty. Yes, this is a harsh place, but it has a certain majesty to it.

You busy yourself finding a nice flat area within the stones and make camp. With every hour, the cold settles in more and soon you see the grass glistening as frost begins to take hold. You see patches of snow here and there and reason that, by tomorrow, you will probably enter country where the ground is completely frozen.

You may take all the benefits of a long rest.

Then, proceed to entry 5.

12

Arriving at the monument known as The Frozen Stones, you scour the area for signs of life.

Choose between a perception or survival check, DC 14.

If you are successful, go to 44.

If unsuccessful, go to 52.

13

You push your way through a solid wooden door into a warm, well-maintained shop. A fire blazes in a hearth at the side of the room, and around the walls of the spacious interior you see shelves arrayed, all bearing a wide variety of wares. Bear and elk heads peer down from mounts on the wall. Most of the equipment for sale here is survival-based, which makes sense given the surrounding terrain, but there are

also home-brewing supplies, barrels of grain, wine and everything that the citizens of Bearclaw could possibly need.

However, you are more concerned with things that are going to be of use to you on your travels, and so you restrict your perusal to the relevant items.

A cheery-looking dwarf who introduces himself as Durfar, the proprietor of the shop, greets you as you enter and asks you if you would like a brandy to help ward off the cold, compliments of the shop.

He is very cheerful and you soon get chatting.

Make a DC 12 charisma check (you can attempt this again if you are visiting for the second time). If successful, he will give you a 20% discount on anything you wish to buy. "You're one of the locals now!" he'll tell you after you've chatted for a while. Durfar will also change gems and other coins for gp, up to a value of 500 gp.

For a list of items available in this shop (and their prices), consult the *Player's Handbook*, p.150. Also, be sure to read the item descriptions on pp.148-154 to discern what their uses are. The shop also has a selection of the following weapons (in case you want to buy them): Dagger, Handaxe, Spear, Light Crossbow, Shortbow, Sling, Battleaxe, Longsword, Shortsword, Whip, Net. Prices are as listed in the *Player's Handbook*, p.149. Leather and Hide Armour is also available. There are also Cleric's supplies such as holy water and holy symbols.

Additional goods that may be of use to you are listed below.

Compass (100 gp, weight ½ lb) A small metal compass which points to the magnetic north pole. Using a compass grants advantage on Survival checks to avoid getting lost. A PC with a compass always knows which way is north.

Fur-lined Tent (50 gp, weight 32 lb) This heavy tent, which packs away into a surprisingly compact roll, is made from bear fur and will keep you sheltered against even the coldest nights.

Smoke Bomb (25 gp, weight 2 lb) Created by an alchemist, a smoke bomb is a small round glass bottle filled with a swirling black cloud. As an action, you can throw a smoke bomb up to 20 ft, shattering it on impact. Thick smoke fills an area in a 5 ft radius around where the smoke bomb shatters: this area is heavily obscured. The smoke disperses after one minute. A strong wind can also disperse the smoke after one round.

Snow glasses (10 gp, weight -) These eye protection devices, crafted from bone, are designed to stop snow blindness when travelling through snowy terrain.

Snowshoes (1 gp, weight 1 lb) Frames constructed of wood and sinew can be attached to your boots. Wearing snowshoes allows you to ignore difficult terrain caused by snow.

Choose the items you wish, and then bid the dwarf farewell and return to entry 1 to choose a new destination.

14

As you near, you begin to pick up on the tale which is keeping the villagers enthralled. "Well anyway, I don't know where the thing came from, but it's infested my cellar, and won't go away! I think it must have leaked up from underground somehow, maybe from the tunnels of those horrible drow!"

"Don't be bloody silly Stellan, the nearest drow tunnels are in Vaasa! Their realm doesn't extend this far west."

Stellan waves his hand dismissively and begins describing the creature. "Horrible thing it is, like sticky red glue. Marta tried to go near it and it gave her a terrible headache... she couldn't think straight for the rest of the day. So we've locked the cellar, and we daren't go down there. But I'll tell you what..." The man picks up and takes a long swig from his tankard. "There's a reward for anyone who can get rid of the thing." At this, most of the villagers shake their heads. "Not me," you hear, and "Sounds like your problem, mate!" Gradually they all leave the table. What will you do now? Do you offer your services to this poor chap? If so go to 28.

If not, you could go and see if the half-orcs will accept you as a challenger for an arm wrestle - go to 2.

Or you could sit down and strike up a conversation with the sullen-looking priest in the corner. Go to entry 41.

15

Looking out over the terrain that lies below this ridge, you continue along,

wondering how long it will take you to reach The Frozen Stones. By your reckoning, it should take about an hour to reach them from your current position.

You are lost in thought when suddenly, you descend into a slight dip and see, right ahead of you, a half-ogre, trying to start a fire.

Nearby is a young man, trussed with thick rope, his mouth gagged. The half-ogre quickly turns and sees you, and gives an almighty roar, incensed that you have interrupted his dinner! It picks up a wicked-looking blade and strides towards you.

Go to Half-ogre Combat Sheet.

16

You push open the door of The Crackling Hearth and emerge once more in the main street of Bearclaw. The chilly north wind whips along the street as you consider where you will visit next.

Return to entry 1 and choose a new destination.

17

Pushing your way through a heavy wooden door, you enter a cosy little tavern populated by local townsfolk. Faces turn towards you as you walk to the bar, most friendly, one or two suspicious.

"Greetings, traveller!" the barkeep says. "Welcome to The Crackling Hearth. What'll it be? We've ale, of course, brewed in the village, or else there's mulled elderberry wine, or a little spirit I brew myself called Arsekicker. Warms the cockles, I tell thee!"

"Don't drink hish homebrew, friend!" a drunk halfling shouts across the bar. "It'll bloody well kill ye, shure as the day ish sshhort!" You chuckle at these villagers and their banter and order yourself a drink (the first one is on the house). Sipping on it, you feel warmth spreading through your body. Looking around the bar, you see various characters seated at various tables or by a large, roaring fire that is set into one wall, heating the room.

Who will you talk to?

Two large half-orcs, laughing and challenging patrons to an arm wrestling contest? Go to 2..

A sullen-looking priest, sitting alone in a back corner of the room? Go to 41.

Or, you could join a large group of villagers seated around a merchant who is narrating what is obviously a gripping tale. Go to 14.

18

You head towards the ridge which lies to the northeast and begin the long ascent up to the highland. The views across the tundra are spectacular. As the morning wears on, the weather begins closing in and soon the sky is covered with thick, grey cloud. Spitting rain turns into drizzle, and you soldier on through the rain. In the distance, you think you can make out an area where obelisks are arranged in some sort of pattern. This must be The Frozen Stones.

Make a Perception roll, DC 14,

If you are successful, go to 25.

If unsuccessful, go to 15.

19

The mark borne by these gnolls is not familiar to you, but you reason that perhaps it marks them out as belonging to some sort of cult or order perhaps. Maybe their whole tribe bears this mark. In which case, maybe they are part of some larger group.

Pondering all this, you set about finding a camp. Go to entry 11.

20

You continue towards the circle of stones, keeping an eye out for a good spot to make camp. There are patches of snow on the ground here and there. You are starting to reach far enough north that the chill of the mountains reaches down to the tundra. From here, it's only going to get colder, and with a clear sky, it will be a frigid night ahead!

You enter the stone circle, seeing that these monoliths, which each stand about 15 feet tall, are arranged in a rough circle. They provide some shelter from the elements. You wonder what purpose this monument was erected for.

Make a perception roll, DC 14.

If successful, go to 37.

If unsuccessful, go to 7.

21

Pushing the door of this small shop open, you enter a dark, musty-smelling interior. The shop appears deserted. At least, no-one is in sight currently, and it is silent in this dusty, cramped little shop.

The store is piled from floor to ceiling with interesting-looking tomes, and you begin to look through

the stacks for anything that might prove useful.

As you are looking through, you hear motion from out the back, and the sound of book stacks collapsing, followed by loud cursing in what sounds like Orcish, if you're not mistaken.

Then, from a door behind the counter, an elderly half-orc appears, all clad in furs. When he sees you, he is utterly shocked.

"Gruumsh, a customer! Welcome, welcome friend! What can I interest you in?"

The half-orc, whose name is Brukor, is highly knowledgeable on all matters concerning the area. He quickly locates the books that he thinks will be most useful to you. Most of the books concern wilderness tracking and survival. However, as most of the tomes are quite large, you will realistically only be able to choose one to fit in your backpack. Also, as this is one of the only sources of local knowledge and culture, these tomes are very rare and some of them are the only copies in existence. The prices reflect this fact.

Brukor shows you three tomes that appear to be particularly useful. You may select from one of the following.

Tracking Across The Tundra by Lathiel Anmar

This book will improve your ability to survive on the tundra of The Ride and The Tortured Land, giving you a +2 bonus to Perception and Survival rolls while on the tundra. (200 gp)

Surviving in the Snow: The Tale of a Dwarven Scouting Party by Drinskor Farkdaldrin.

When traversing a mountain pass or climbing a mountain, this will enable you to gain a +2 bonus to Perception, Dexterity or Survival skills that deal with avoiding hazards like avalanches, crevasses, getting lost in blizzards or digging snow caves. (200 gp).

Ice Magic by Zadel Akgrytan.

This obscure tome, written by an orcish mage, teaches spellcasters how to channel the energy of the surrounding environment in order to enhance their ability to cast cold-based spells. The caster, while in the environs of the frozen north, gains an extra 2 spell slots that can be used to cast spells that inflict cold damage (300 gp).

Once you are done here, you could choose another place to visit.

Durfar's General Supplies: go to entry 13.

The Crackling Hearth Tavern: go to 17.

The temple: go to 35.

22

Heading generally northwest, you take the lowland route towards The Frozen Stones. A chill wind whips across the tundra but as your path descends into a valley you soon find yourself sheltered from it. The river meanders its way beside the track, ice forming at its edges. To your east, the plateau that bears the highland route rises up steeply and you are grateful for having chosen this route.

After about an hour's walking, the path enters a section of ancient forest. The path, seemingly quite well maintained (you reason that hunters and trappers from Bearclaw must use it) meanders through the wood.

Make a Survival check, DC 16.

If successful, go to 47.

If unsuccessful, go to 42.

23

Creeping up towards the ring of monolithic stones, you prepare your attack. The gnolls come into sight... one of them is preparing a campfire, the other is approaching with an armful of wood. They have not seen you.

Go to Gnoll Hunter Combat Sheet. You may make one surprise ranged attack with advantage, then roll initiative and proceed with combat as normal. If you do not have any ranged attacks, you will need to go straight to initiative and melee as it will be impossible to stay concealed once you move inside the ring of stones.

24

You can discern nothing about the strange totem that sits atop the temple building.

To enter, go to 10.

Or to choose a different place to visit, return to entry 1 and choose a new option.

25

A sound from ahead makes you freeze. You hear a low muttering, a guttural voice cursing and debating with itself. Quickly you duck down

and begin to make your way stealthily forward, using rocks and tussock as cover. Not an easy job, as this highland terrain is fairly bare. Make a Stealth check, DC 14.

If successful, go to 40.

If unsuccessful, go to 55.

26

You make a thorough search of the area north of the Frozen Stones but find nothing. Where would the thieves have gone, what direction would they have taken?

You remember the monk Remigius's words, and consider your options. The northwest path leads towards the Pass of Auril, known for its treacherous weather and avalanches. The northeast path will take you towards Poison Pass, which is notorious for its bands of marauding orcs, known for ambushing travellers.

Which is the lesser of the two hazards - death by ambush or by avalanche?

*Unfortunately, this taster of **The Tortured Land** ends here. to experience the full adventure, and see if you can recover the treasured staff known as Frostbringer, you will have to purchase the full module! If you do this, when you resume play, go immediately to Entry 60.*

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27

Stellan Smithhand is overjoyed at having his cellar cleared of the red

goo, and pays you the promised 75 gold pieces. After feeding you and letting you rest a while (take a short rest), you leave and continue your exploration of Bearclaw.

Return to Entry 1 and choose another location. You may visit the temple, the general supplies store or Kannot's Rare Books and Tomes, but The Crackling Hearth has gone pretty quiet now, the patrons having all departed for their homes.

28

You seat yourself at the man's table. He regards you with some surprise. "What?" he asks.

"I couldn't help overhearing your story," you say. "I might be able to help."

The man's face transforms into an expression of delight. "Really? If you could, I'll reward you with all the gold I have!"

You confirm that yes, you will help him. The man quickly finishes his drink and together you leave The Crackling Hearth.

Turn to 34.

29

You wait until the brute has his back turned, and then, staying low, move quickly on him, attacking while you have a chance!

Go to Half-ogre Combat Sheet. You may make one attack before rolling initiative.

30

Eager to treat yourself to at least one night of comfort, you head back to The Crackling Hearth and pay for a room.

Deduct 5 gp from your inventory. You take a meal in the tavern: potato-topped fish pie with mountain herbs and root vegetables, accompanied by a goblet of hot mulled wine. In the almost too-warm interior of The Crackling Hearth you are the only customer and you relish the pleasant glow that comes as a result of excellent food and wine. Soon you feel yourself begin to nod off, so you say goodnight to the Innkeeper and head up to bed. A comfortable bed with clean linen is a decadent luxury for a travel-hardened soul such as yourself, and after soaking in a hot bath and washing the cares of the road away, you fall into bed and into the deepest sleep you have known for some time. At some point during the night, you dream that you are lost in the middle of a white-out blizzard. Trudging through a mountain pass, you traverse a snowy expanse that never seems to end. Always there is a face, shimmering, just out of sight, in the sky above you. The face is female, beautiful, but is laughing at you, defying you. Determined, you always press on, but never find the end of the pass, and you are becoming colder and colder...

You awake the next morning feeling well-rested, but the memory of that dream lingers with you. You cannot shake the feeling that it was significant in some way. Take the benefits of a long rest. Then turn to entry 33.

31

The day wears on and the land begins to dip down towards the plain

the stretches all the way to the northern mountain range, which has been slowly growing in size as you travel towards it. You are nearing the ring of sacred monoliths known as the Frozen Stones, looking down on it as you descend from the highland path.

After about half an hour's walk, you arrive at the ancient site.

Turn to entry 12.

32

Overjoyed that you have decided to accept the quest, the priest, who introduces himself as Remigius, helps you prepare for the journey.

"The area north of here is fraught with peril," he says. "Some of our men tracked the gnolls as far as The Frozen Stones, a monument some five miles north of here. It is an ancient, sacred place.

"On these frigid plains, as I'm sure you are well aware, your greatest enemy is the cold. Take care to look after yourself at all times, and if you are near or on any mountains, be on the lookout for avalanches. They are a constant threat. Also, the lights this far north sometimes play tricks on you. Beware of illusions. If your path leads you to the mountains, there are two ways you could progress. Poison Pass is to the northeast and leads into the Tortured Land through a series of twisting gullies. To the northwest, the Pass of Auril is a low saddle between two mountains, and a very hard climb. You'll be exposed to the elements there and will need to be on the lookout for crevasses, avalanches and severe weather."

“Poison Pass it is, then,” you say. Remigius raises a finger. “You might think that, but Poison Pass is home to orc raiding parties who are ever on the lookout for travellers they can relieve of their money. And their lives. So it’s a choice between dying under snow or dying under a hail of arrows,” Remigius concludes with a wry grin.

The priest takes you into the temple storerooms where he provides you with two things: a set of heavy furs to keep you warm (add to your inventory, 5 lb), and provisions: hard bread, cheese, dried meat and root ginger to chew to aid digestion and also to keep you warm.

Having concluded your conversation with the priest, you may now wish to visit some of the shops on the main street (if you haven’t already).

Remigius tells you that, as this is the quiet part of the year, you will probably only have time to visit one of these shops as business generally shuts at midday, and time has gotten on. If you do, take note of this entry number, and then choose one of the following shops to visit. When you are finished at those shops, you may return to this entry. Choose between Kannot’s Rare Books & Tomes (entry 21) or Durfar’s General Supplies store (entry 13), and then return here. If you have already visited these, then they are probably closed by now.

The priest offers you a bed for the night in the small monastery that adjoins the Ulutiu temple. It is free, and you will be fed, but it is certainly not the luxurious bed you had been looking forward to.

Alternately, the priest tells you that The Crackling Hearth has very comfortable rooms for 5 gp a night, which will cover accommodation and meals.

If you think your character would be fine sharing a room with the monks, then go to entry 8.

If you think that they would rather spend at least one night in comfort before heading into the wilderness once more, then go to entry 30.

33

You are ready to leave Bearclaw and track the gnolls who stole the staff of Tolrik Bearclaw. At the northern end of town, another guard mans the gate. He is bald and well-built, but not as talkative as the guard manning the gate you arrived by. He merely gives you a grunt which you translate as “good luck.”

You stand at the northern gate of Bearclaw and look out over an expanse of grassland that leads towards a range of mountains spanning the horizon. On the other side of those mountains is the frozen steppe known as The Tortured Land. The further north you go from this point, the colder it will get. You also see some ominous-looking slate grey clouds blowing in from the northeast, darkening the mountain tops in that area.

Remigius joins you as you stand by the gate, preparing to depart. He comes near.

“Good luck, dear friend,” he says. “I cannot tell you what this means to us. If you can retrieve the staff, you will have saved not only the spirit of this village but the Order of Ulutiu

as well! We are one of the few remaining temples left in all of Faerun. Who knows, maybe the Lord of Ice will return from his sojourn and bless us all!"

You assure the priest that, no matter what, you will try your best. He reiterates his promise to you that when you return, an enchanted weapon will be forged according to your specifications.

Saying your final goodbyes, you shoulder your pack and set out from the north gate of Bearclaw.

Two paths lead out from Bearclaw towards the Frozen Stones. One follows an unnamed river that runs down from the Pass of Auril and traverses the lowland, going through a forest for one part of the journey. The second ascends a ridge and takes the highland, overlooking the plain. To take the lowland route to The Frozen Stones, which goes by the river and through forest, go to 22. To take the highland route to The Frozen Stones, which travels along a ridge, go to 18.

34

The man introduces himself as Stellan Smithhand, a local grain merchant and family man.

"Thank the gods you've agreed to help," he says. "My house isn't far, just at the western edge of town." You ask Stellan to describe the beings that have infested his cellar, spoiling his supply of grains which was supposed to get him through the winter.

He shudders. "Terrible things they are. Red, sticky things, like great

blobs... No idea where they came from."

Following Stellan, you finally reach a humble little shack. You follow him inside and see a woman and three children, all huddled by the fire.

They look at you with alarm.

"Nothing to worry about, my love," Stellan assures his wife. "Our friend here is going to help us with the little problem in the cellar!"

The wife smiles faintly at this.

Stellan leads you towards a narrow opening. Looking down, you see a staircase leading to a door below.

Stellan passes you a key.

"I don't think they're too bright," he says. "So if you're stealthy, you might be able to catch them by surprise.

Good luck, friend. There's 75 gold waiting for you when you return!"

You look down the narrow staircase towards the door and slowly begin your descent.

Turn to Red Goo Combat Sheet.

35

You approach the temple. The entrance to the low building is marked with a squat totem. A single figure is depicted on the totem. It appears to be a giant of some sort, in a crouching position, wearing a necklace of blue and white crystals. To see if you can recall what deity this is, make a Religion check (DC 16).

If successful, or if you already know, go to 46.

If unsuccessful, go to 24.

36

The gnolls carry their weapons and basic survival equipment. Initially

your investigation turns up nothing, but searching further you find something of interest: a mark that both of them bear on their chest. It appears to be a religious symbol of some kind, and it is not so much tattooed there as branded. It appears to be a crude depiction of a snowflake, with six points. Something or someone burned this mark into these creatures. To try and discern the meaning of this mark, make a History or Religion check, DC 14. (If you have succeeded at one Religion check already in this adventure, you may make this check with advantage). If you are successful, go to 3. If unsuccessful, go to 19.

37

Just in time, you catch sight of two gnolls. One is advancing on you, the other standing at a distance nocking an arrow into a longbow! Go to Gnoll Hunter Combat Sheet and deal with these cowardly dogs!

38

An arrow pierces you deeply, and you stifle a cry of agony. (Take 1d8+2 piercing damage) Looking in the direction it came in, you see two gnolls, one advancing on you, the other standing at a distance. Go to Gnoll Hunter Combat Sheet and deal with these cowardly dogs!

39

Unfortunately, Gruggus is just too strong for you and he finally succeeds in getting your knuckles down to the table.

"Oosh, that wasn't easy friend," he says, wiping sweat from his brow. "You're stronger than you look. But anyway... pay up!"

Grumbling to yourself, you push your stake across the table to Gruggus who gathers it all in happily.

"Nice to know you, eh! Let us know next time you're in town!"

Cheeky sod, you think, and look around the bar, considering your options. Who will you grace with your presence next?

The large group of villagers who were listening to their friend's tale have now dispersed, but you could talk to the drunk halfling. He could be quite entertaining. Go to 9.

Alternatively, you could seat yourself at the bar and see what tidbits of information the innkeeper has to offer. Go to 43.

If you have spent enough time here, you can leave by going to entry 16.

40

Creeping carefully up, you see that the land dips away ahead into a small depression in the plateau. The grunting and muttering get louder as you approach. Cautiously, you move even closer, using a bush as cover, and then poke your head out to get a view of the terrain ahead.

In the area to the north, amongst a shelter of boulders, you see a burly half-ogre, trying to start a fire and cursing at the wind for frustrating his efforts. Nearby is a young man, a warrior, trussed with thick rope, his mouth gagged. By chance, the young man catches sight of you and his eyes go wide. You put your finger to your

lips and shake your head. The prisoner appears to be some sort of tribal warrior, possibly Erakan. The half-ogre has not noticed you. What do you wish to do? Make a surprise attack on the half-ogre? Go to 29. Stealthily move away and leave the poor warrior to his fate? Go to 56.

41

You seat yourself at the priest's table and introduce yourself. He looks up and gives you a faint smile, then introduces himself as Farius, a priest at the local temple to Ulutiu. "The Lord of Ice, the Eternal Sleeper," he tells you. "Worshipped by many around here, for many centuries. Some think him dead, but he is not. We feel his presence here, in the ground, in the mountains, in the very air itself. He lives here in the north. You won't find his presence in Waterdeep or anywhere to the south... but he is here, mark my words."

You listen patiently to the old priest who is obviously passionate about his god. You ask him why he appears so sullen.

"My friend," he says, "I cannot begin to tell you the reason. I am trying to put it out of my mind. If you really want to know, you should visit the Ulutiu temple, a little way down the street from here. But before you go..." the priest takes out a small piece of parchment. "I can see that you are a righteous soul. Take this small verse, this stanza. Commit it to memory. In times of peril, when the cold assails you, it will serve you well."

You take the piece of parchment. On it are written a few lines of text in Common. Add it to your inventory: "Parchment Verse." If you are ever assailed by the cold, this hymn to Ulutiu will grant you advantage on Survival checks to resist the cold. What would you like to do now? The table that was listening to the villager's tale has dispersed, but you could try your luck arm-wrestling a burly half-orc, go to 2.

You could go and try to strike up a conversation with the drunk halfling, although he doesn't look like he'll be very coherent. Go to 9.

Or, you could sit at the bar and try to chat to the innkeeper. Go to 43.

If you feel you have spent enough time here and wish to leave, go to 16.

42

You continue through the dark, silent forest, thinking over the quest that Remigius has given you. So, gnolls stole this staff. You wonder what use they would have with such a relic. Then, you remember that Remigius said that he thought they were acting on someone's orders. If so, who would that person be? Who even lives out here in this cold, inhospitable terrain?

Your reverie is broken by a growling, slavering sound coming from up ahead.

You freeze, watching as three wolves emerge from the undergrowth, baring teeth and licking chops. Cautiously, they begin advancing towards you, spreading out in order to surround you. They appear to have on thing on their minds: dinner! Go to Wolves Combat Sheet.

43

Making your way back to the bar, you plunk yourself down on a stool and attempt to engage the innkeeper in conversation. He tells you various tidbits of local knowledge, including information about orc raiding parties that have been journeying down from The Tortured Lands to the north.

"Steer clear of Poison Pass, my friend, if you know what's good for you. They've set up camp there, and they're raiding settlers in the area. A dangerous lot they are."

You ask the innkeeper if he has any other interesting information.

"If you come across the local Erakan, make sure you mind your manners. Mention the name Grokkung and you should be all right."

"Who's Grokkung?" you ask.

"The descendant of the Lord of the North," the innkeeper replies. "Bit of a legend around here. Tolrik Bearclaw. Town's named after him. It's his staff that was stolen recently."

"Stolen?" you say.

"Yes, from the temple. Look, I've got a lot to do young'un. Can't believe you haven't heard about that... but if you want to know more, head down to the temple. They'll fill you in. The whole town's practically in mourning because of it!" With that, the innkeeper leaves the bar area and heads into a room out the back. The bar is more or less empty now that everyone has had their breakfast ale! Seeing nothing else for it, you depart and head back out to the street.

Take note of the name Grokkung and the entry number 48 (relevant in full adventure only).

Then go to entry 16.

44

On the air, you catch the scent of wood fire coming from the direction of the monoliths. Someone - or *something* - must be camped out there! Taking your time, you change your approach to the monument so that the standing stones block any sight of you from those that might be within the circle.

When you are about a hundred yards away, you hear it: a doglike yipping and yowling. Something is here, maybe the gnolls that Remigius spoke of. You wonder if they might have the staff with them. If so, then this has been a short mission indeed! Perhaps you can be back in Bearclaw by nightfall if you can recover the relic now.

Due to your knowledge of these creatures' presence, it should be fairly easy to creep up on them and make a surprise attack. Make a Stealth check, DC 10.

If successful, go to entry 23.

If unsuccessful, go to 49.

45

If your stealth roll was 13 or over, go to 54.

If your roll was below 13, or you chose not to roll, go to 20.

46

You are familiar with this god, or at least have some knowledge of him. It is a lesser deity known as Ulutiu, Lord of Ice, The Eternal Sleeper. Ulutiu is worshipped in cold parts of Faerun, but he is an obscure god. He is known as the father of the giant-kin races and the god of glaciers,

polar environments, and arctic dwellers.

You enter the humble little temple.

Go to entry 10.

47

Keeping an eye out, you see that there are many tracks on this path, but a few stand out. Doglike tracks, but only in pairs, can be seen quite frequently, obviously heading northwest, in the same direction as you are. You reason that these are possibly the gnolls that the priest Remigius told you of. It seems they came this way as well! You wonder how far ahead they might be. Perhaps you'll find some camped out at The Frozen Stones. Or, perhaps they have moved on from there. You are just considering how you might deal with such creatures when all of a sudden you hear a growling, slavering sound coming from up ahead. On the other side of a shallow stream, three large wolves emerge from the undergrowth, baring teeth and licking their chops. Cautiously, they begin advancing towards you, spreading out in order to surround you. They appear to have on thing on their minds: dinner!

Go to Wolf Combat Sheet.

48

You catch your breath, relieved that you survived the encounter with these ferocious forest beasts. But you do not linger. You are keen to be away from here before the smell of warm blood attracts any other creatures to your location.

Quickly you leave, continuing along the path.

The forest path twists and turns, taking you down shallow gulleys and across small rivers.

Eventually, after about three hours of walking, the forest thins and finally ends, and ahead you see, not too far away, a ring of stones that look deliberately arranged in some sort of ritualistic circle.

This must be the monument known as The Frozen Stones. Cautiously you approach the circle.

Proceed to entry 12.

49

Creeping carefully towards the monolithic stones, you spy the gnolls preparing a campfire. However, as you approach, they catch your scent and look up, straight at you! Barking with alarm, they take up their weapons and prepare themselves for combat!

You have lost any advantage you may have gained by surprise. Go to Gnoll Hunter Combat Sheet and proceed straight to combat!

50

You relish the look of shock on Gruggus's face as his fist hits the wood of the table. You can't help a broad grin spreading across your lips.

Gruggus shakes his head. "But I... how..."

"Pay up!" you demand, taking a long draught from your own beverage.

"Come on, brother," the second half-orc, Duggus, says. "You were beaten fair and square, now pay the victor!"

Reluctantly, Gruggus produces a pouch - these two half-orcs look to be fairly well-off (trappers by their

attire) - and pay you an amount equal to the amount you staked.

Collecting your stake and your winnings, you thank the lads for a bit of healthy competition and turn to consider who you will grace with your presence next.

The large group of villagers who were listening to their friend's tale have now dispersed, but you could talk to the drunk halfling? He could be quite entertaining. Go to 9.

Alternatively, you could seat yourself at the bar and see what tidbits of information the innkeeper has to offer. Go to 43.

If you have spent enough time here, you can leave by going to entry 16.

51

An arrow flies past you, embedding itself in a nearby tree. Looking in the direction it came in, you see two gnolls, one advancing on you, the other standing at a distance.

Go to Gnoll Hunter Combat Sheet and deal with these cowardly dogs!

52

Approaching carefully, you keep your eyes and ears peeled for any signs of habitation, but detect none. Perhaps you'll be able to make camp here. Evening is not far off as it is, and now that the sun has dipped below the horizon, the temperature is dropping accordingly. A chill breeze blows steadily across the open tundra.

Would your PC be moving with stealth? If so, make a Stealth check, taking note of the roll, and proceed to entry 45.

53

Surveying the hard ground as best you can, you discover tracks leading off northwest and northeast. They appear doglike, possibly left by the gnolls who stole the staff from the Ulutiu temple. But you cannot tell which path they took.

Then it occurs to you that perhaps they split their party in two in order to confuse anyone who might be following. Which path did the staff take, though? The tracks tell you nothing in that regard.

You remember the monk Remigius's words, and consider your options.

The northwest path leads towards the Pass of Auril, known for its treacherous weather and avalanches.

The northeast path will take you towards the Poison Pass, which is notorious for its bands of marauding orcs ambushing travellers.

Which is the lesser of the two hazards - death by ambush or death by avalanche?

*Unfortunately, this is where this taster of **The Tortured Land** ends. To experience the full adventure, and see if you can recover the treasured staff known as Frostbringer, you will have to purchase the full module! If you do this, when you resume play, go immediately to Entry 60.*

We hope you have enjoyed this little taste of our products. At 5e Solo Gamebooks our goal is to create high-quality solo experiences for players of D&D. May all your hits be crits!

54

You continue towards the circle of stones, keeping an eye out for a good spot to make camp. There are

patches of snow on the ground here and there. You are starting to reach far enough north that the touch of the mountains is coming down to the tundra. From here, it's only going to get colder, and with a clear sky above it could be a frigid night ahead!

Suddenly you pull up short, looking straight ahead at a dog-like creature, standing on its hind legs and staring straight at you! The thing narrows its eyes and growls menacingly, then gives a short, violent bark! From behind a stone to the north, you see a second one of the creatures appear, carrying a load of firewood. It promptly drops the firewood and takes a longbow from its back, nocking an arrow!

It looks like you will have to fight these two! Go to Gnoll Hunter Combat Sheet.

55

You do your best to creep towards the area where the noise is coming from without being seen. However, the wind suddenly changes, and whoever is ahead suddenly growls with menace. Standing up from where you are crouching, you see a

huge half-ogre, bearing a three-headed battleaxe, striding towards you across the tundra.

You will have to fight this massive brute! Go to Half-ogre Combat Sheet.

56

Quietly you back away and move out of sight, giving the area a wide berth. You have your mission in mind, and regardless of how cruel your decision might seem to that warrior, the fate of a whole village is at stake.

You heartless wretch!

You move quickly, putting as much distance between yourself and the half-ogre as possible.

Go to entry 31.

COMBAT SHEETS

COMBAT SHEET: RED GOO

OBLEX SPAWN (x2)

Tiny Ooze, Lawful Evil

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 18

Speed 20 ft.

STR 8 (-1)	DEX 16 (+3)	CON 15 (+2)
INT 14 (+2)	WIS 11 (+0)	CHA 10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +2

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 12

Languages -

CR ¼

Amorphous The oblex can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Aversion to Fire If the oblex takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

ATTACKS

Pseudopod Melee Weapon Attack +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 1d4+3 bludgeoning damage + 1d4 psychic damage.



COMBAT NOTES (Use MAP: OBLEX SPAWN BATTLE MAP)

1. Place tokens. O: Oblex Spawn, PC: You. Roll initiative.
 2. A DC 18 Nature roll, or a DC 20 Perception roll will enable your PC to realize the Spawn's aversion to fire.
 3. The Oblex Spawn will slither towards you by the shortest route and attack. They will attempt to flank you if possible, and will move towards the most advantageous position possible in order to achieve this.
 4. A Dexterity check (DC 12) will enable you to jump on top of the barrels (when you are adjacent). This will prevent the Spawn from flanking you. If you fail, leave your token next to the barrels. You can attempt this move more than once. A jump constitutes 10 ft of movement. If leaving melee, it will provoke an attack of opportunity, even if it fails.
- ◆ *If you are victorious, go to entry 27.*

COMBAT SHEET: HALF-OGRE

HALF-OGRE

Large Giant, CE

Armour Class 12 (hide armour)

Hit Points 30 (4d10 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 17 (+3)	DEX 10 (+0)	CON 14 (+2)
INT 7 (-2)	WIS 9 (-1)	CHA 10 (+0)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Giant

CR 1

ATTACKS

Battleaxe *Melee Weapon Attack* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 1d10+3 slashing damage.

Rock Ranged *Weapon Attack* +2 to hit, range 30/50, one target. *Hit* 1d4 bludgeoning damage.



COMBAT NOTES (USE MAP: HALF-OGRE BATTLE MAP)

1. Place tokens. O: Half-ogre, PC: You. Roll initiative.
 2. The Half-ogre will immediately move into melee range and attack. At the end of each of its attacks, it will try to push you back. Make a strength save, DC 17. If you fail, move your token back 10 ft. If at any time you crit fail this save, then you stumble backward. The half-ogre will then make its next attack with advantage.
 3. If it cannot get to within melee distance, it will move as close as it can, pick up a rock (there are plenty around) and hurl it at you.
- ◆ *If you are victorious, go to entry 4.*

COMBAT SHEET: WOLVES

WOLF (x3)

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 11

Speed 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1)	DEX 15 (+2)	CON 12 (+1)
INT 3 (-4)	WIS 12 (+1)	CHA 6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 13

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

CR ¼

Keen Senses The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5ft of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ATTACKS

Bite *Melee Weapon Attack* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 2d4+2 piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



COMBAT NOTES (Use MAP: WOLF BATTLE MAP)

1. Place tokens. W: Wolves, PC: You. Roll initiative.
 2. The wolves will move to flank you. Note the Pack Tactics feat. They will use this whenever possible. Also note their increased speed.
 3. If at any time you kill one of the wolves, have the wolves make a single Wisdom save as a whole, DC 10. If they fail, the wolves will flee.
- ◆ *If you are victorious, go to entry 48.*

COMBAT SHEET: GNOLL HUNTERS

GNOLL HUNTER (x2)

Medium Humanoid, CE

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 22

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)
INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Languages Gnoll

CR ½

Rampage When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ATTACKS

Multiattack The gnoll makes two melee attacks with its spear or two ranged attacks with its longbow.

Spear Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit* 1d6+2 piercing damage, or 1d8+2 when used with two hands in a melee attack.

Longbow Ranged Weapon Attack +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit* 1d8+2 piercing damage, and the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.



COMBAT NOTES (USE MAP: FROZEN STONES GNOLL ENCOUNTER)

1. Place tokens. G: Gnoll Hunters, PC: You. Roll initiative.
2. The north gnoll will stay in position and fire its longbow. The south one also uses longbow, but will also use cover while moving towards you on its turn, aiming to get on the opposite side of you, with the PC between the two gnolls.
3. In melee, the gnolls will use spear attacks.
4. If you begin making ranged attacks on the north gnoll, it will use the stones as total cover, only emerging to fire at you. If it cannot see you, it will take cover again.
5. You may also use the stones to provide yourself with total cover. The south gnoll will then move so he has line of sight towards you, and will make a longbow attack (if he can see you) until he can engage you in melee.
6. If you kill the south gnoll first, then a game of cat and mouse will ensue with the north gnoll. Both you and the gnoll will take your turn simultaneously. Each turn, you can either 1) emerge from cover to move/attack, 2) stand in the open until it emerges to shoot at you, when you may make a readied ranged attack, 3) remain in cover, perhaps taking actions to heal.
7. Emerging from cover will require a d20 roll every time. On a 1-10, the gnoll will also emerge and loose an arrow at you. On 11-20, it remains in total cover.
8. If you come within 15 ft, it will engage you in melee. Re-roll initiative and continue until one of you is defeated.
9. *If you are victorious, go to entry 6.*

MULTI PC CONVERSION TABLE

ENCOUNTER	2 PCs	3 PCs	4 PCs
Red Goo (Oblex Spawn)	3 Oblex Spawn	4 Oblex Spawn	6 Oblex Spawn
Half-ogre	2 Half-ogres	2 Half-ogres	3 Half-ogres
Wolves	4 Wolves	6 Wolves	7 Wolves
Gnoll Hunters	4 Gnoll Hunters	6 Gnoll Hunters	7 Gnoll Hunters

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