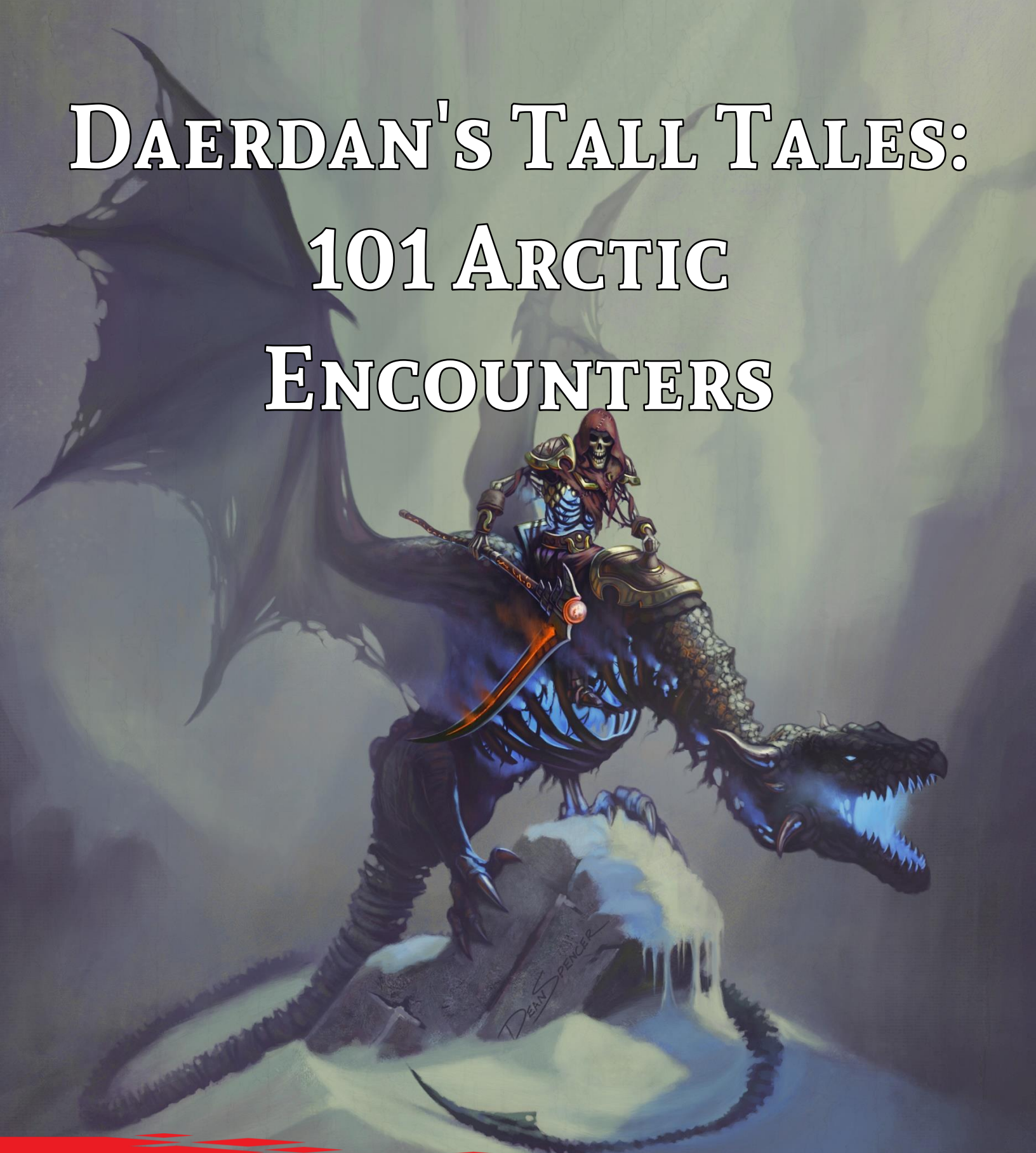


DAERDAN'S TALL TALES: 101 ARCTIC ENCOUNTERS



BY WYATT TRULL



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daerdan "the Yarnspinner" is quite the unusual raconteur. When we, his publishers, asked for biographical information, such as whence he hailed, he replied, "From the proud land of none of yer gods-damned business! And another thing—!"

We have thus had to fill in the blanks, so to speak. Daerdan seems to be a crass dwarf approaching a venerable age. He claims to be "sandwiched" between two centuries. We estimate him to be approximately 270 years old. Divinations to confirm such have seemingly failed, as have all other attempts to verify his past and certainly his tales. For all we know, he could be a shapechanger, a fiend in disguise—jury's still out. All we know for certain is that he's spent centuries as an explorer, storyteller, and, as he insists, "one heap of a coward."

Nonetheless, we at *Wake House* have published Daerdan's litany of tales. This publication concerns his days in the frozen wastes, to which he had been exiled to—and willingly returned to after said exile ended because, and we quote, "It was warmer there than amongst my own people."

Daerdan swears his tales are true, no matter how tall the tale. We at *Wake House* could not justify the expense of truth serum nor other magics to verify his claim. Someone at one point—an intern, actually—suggested less... savory methods, but this idea was scrapped. At any rate, whether these tales are fact or just shoddy fiction, we hope you enjoy *Daerdan's Tall Tales*.

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HOW TO USE THIS SUPPLEMENT

Tall Tales features over one hundred encounters, many further fleshed out through a handful of variants. The majority of these encounters focus on the Combat pillar of 5E, but Exploration and Social encounters are also heavily featured in this tome. Lower tier encounters can be inserted into your session, whereas higher tier encounters are designed to be dropped into your *campaign*. These high-level encounters provide plot points and boss fights that you can integrate into your campaign with minimal foresight.

This edition of *Tall Tales* features arctic encounters, making it perfect for a campaign set in the frozen north or *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

Daerdan the Yarnspinner. Despite this supplement's name, Daerdan is but a framing device. You're under no obligation to follow implications in his quotes or even include him at all—although it would be comical for the adventurers to wrap up an encounter, hit the tavern, and find a dwarf spinning a yarn about their tale (having already inserted himself in the story and even taking credit for their heroism).

Monsters. This product features creatures from the *Monster Manual*, *Volo's Guide to Monsters* and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. See Appendix A for the page number of a creature's entry in their respective manual. Appendix B includes several new creatures or creatures found in other official campaigns. A monster's name appears in **bold text** to indicate its statistics.

Items & Spells. This product also features items from both the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. Likewise, many spellcasters utilize spells from the latter manual. Page numbers are included when relevant. Spells and items are *italicized*.

WHAT IS "THE ARCTIC"?

This supplement conveniently lumps all wintry and frigid areas into one: "the Arctic." In your campaign, the Arctic may just be a country painted white by winter; it might be a mountain range or just a lifeless tundra. While some encounters do require the adventurers to be in the frozen wastes far to the north (or south) of proper civilization, they are nonetheless versatile.

Whenever the supplement mentions "the Arctic" defer to the appropriate region in your own campaign. As you may find, there aren't even references as to whether the Arctic is in the Northern or Southern Hemisphere.

SETTING AGNOSTICISM

This supplement operates without any assumption to the setting of your campaign, whether it's in the Forgotten Realms, the world of Eberron, or a world of your own design. References to other characters or civilizations can be or reworked with ease.

Deities. Several deities are mentioned in this setting, most hailing from the Forgotten Realms setting. They can easily be adapted to your setting. These deities include:

- Auril, a cruel and sadistic goddess of winter.
- Amaunator, a god of light and justice
- Shar, the goddess of darkness also known as Mother Night.

NEW RACES AND CIVILIZATIONS

This supplement features new people and civilizations found in *Heroes of the Arctic* by Wyatt Trull (that's me) to better fit the arctic, wintry theme:

Darfellan are the survivors of genocide waged by the sahuagin. Their glossy skin is black or blue, and utterly hairless, earning them the name "orcafolk."

Frost gnomes, or barbegazi in their native tongue, are graceful athletes fond of skiing, tobogganing and bandy.

Glacier dwarves have taken to ice just as their distant kin have taken to snow and metallurgy. Through admirable handiwork and clever spells, they can carve weapons, utensils, and entire strongholds from glacial ice.

Snow elves are scorned across the Arctic. At best, they're bitter isolationists indifferent to the plights of others; at worst, they're would-be conquerors that bedevil other folk until at last they can muster the force to wage war. Unlike other elves, they see Nature as something to be conquered through wizardry, not bonded with through druidism.

Tundra halflings are cheerful folk full of wanderlust. As a rite of passage, the young travel across the region to drink in the sights and meet other halflings.

Uldras are mischievous but good-hearted arctic fey that consider themselves guardians of the natural world.

Urskans are an ursine folk whose culture revolves around metallurgy and utilitarianism.

RUNNING ENCOUNTERS

In its most basic form, an encounter happens *to* the adventurers. The adventurers, however, can happen across other characters or locales. Every encounter revolves around one of the three Pillars of D&D: Combat, Exploration, or Social Interaction. Thus, running an encounter requires more foresight on your part than just a die roll. Many feature Skill Challenges (see below) in addition to their preexisting themes.

The hundred-and-one encounters in this encounter can't be boiled down to a single table; they include characters, loot, and events that can't be kept at such a small scope.

ENCOUNTER TIERS

Encounters are designed with a party of four adventurers in mind, with the expectation that few to no NPCs are available to assist them. These encounters are ranked in tiers:

Tier I encounters are best described as "one-offs" or "pit stop" encounters that you can plant into the adventure. They can be incorporated into a larger plot. These encounters are built to challenge a 1st to 4th level party.

Tier II encounters are built for 5th to 9th level adventurers. These encounters feature greater threats to ordinary folk.

Tier III encounters feature mythic or otherworldly creatures of CR 8 to 13, who are often accompanied by minions. They are designed for 10th to 14th level adventurers. Of this supplement, Tier III encounters best fit the description of a "one-shot."

Tier IV encounters are balanced for a party of four 15th to 20th-level adventurers. These titanic events are best used as plot points and penultimate (or ultimate) acts of your campaign. They are often precipitated by lower tier encounters of a similar theme, such as a cult's efforts to summon an elder elemental.

ENCOUNTER TYPES

Encounters are further divided into the following categories:

Character encounters are centered upon an iconic individual. The encounter can, effectively, occur in any location. Because the Arctic is normally an inhospitable place, individuals are rarely sedentary. This edition of *Daerdan's Tall Tales* features many more character encounters than other iterations.

Mountain occur at high altitudes or mountain ranges. Steep drops and precarious footing are slow, invisible killers.

Polar encounters feature the lands of endless winter: the vast plains of snow and ice that crown the northern- and southern-most areas of the world.

Polar night encounters are both a geographical and chronologically-mandated event. Near the world's poles, half a year can go by before the Sun is truly seen again. While the Sun is below the horizon, the Arctic is cloaked in twilight. The length of a polar night is determined by how far one is from a pole. Settlements in these areas are strategic or valuable in nature: gold, mithril, or religious significance usually justify living in a twilight realm for so long. Notably, polar nights allow creatures of the Underdark to roam the surface uninhibited.

Sea encounters occur along chilly coastlines or on the frigid seas. They universally feature frigid water, a hazard described in Appendix C.

Taiga encounters take place in coniferous forests consisting of pines and spruces. These lands are the most hospitable—and the most dangerous. Wood is a vital resource in the arctic, as are fruits and vegetables. Many tribes or actors will travel south (or north) to a taiga for timber. Taiga forest floors feature very little vegetation and are mostly free of roots and bushes.

Tundra encounters feature vast plains and hills cursed with permafrost and very little vegetation.

Urban encounters are centered around settlements, be they outposts, towns, tribal camps, or cities carved from glacial ice. It takes a village to live in the Arctic; without advanced magic or technology, few can weather ceaseless winters for long. You can expect populations of fifty or more.

Volcanic encounters feature hot springs, geysers, and, as the name suggests, volcanoes. It is a misconception to believe that an active volcano or hot spring cannot exist in a polar region. See Mount Erebus in Antarctica or the onsens in Japan's Nikkō National Park. These areas are highly coveted by arctic tribes and settlements, who consider warmth a treasure all its own. These areas of places of extreme heat (see Appendix C).

Weather are unique in that focus primarily on the Arctic's most esteemed killer: cold weather.

SAMPLE STORYLINES

Many encounters in this supplement form a sample storyline, with one often precipitating another. Using these, you can mash together a quick storyline for your campaign, changing names around as you see fit. These storylines are:

ARMY OF THE DAMNED

The Flayed Queen, an undead sovereign defeated so long ago the world has forgotten her, has awakened. From her glacial prison the **death knight** has psychically marshalled the dead and desperate to her cause. Her Cult of the Newly Dead is busy raising corpses all across the Arctic. If the queen has her way, the world will be united under her tattered banner.

To be freed, the queen's agents must learn the magical incantation that will shatter her prison. She is served chiefly by Cis'tudh, the **lich** leader of the Newly Dead, and Fionys, her **deathlock mastermind**. While Cis'tudh searches for the key to the queen's prison, Fionys must guard the phylactery to her master's draco-lich mount.

The following encounters are associated with this storyline:

- *March of the Damned*
- *Tomb of the Mythic Smith*
- *In the Lair of the Dracolich*
- *Frosthege*, in which Cis'tudh plunders the tomb of the wizard that bound the Flayed Queen—but secretly left an incantation that would free her.
- *The Glacial Prison*, in which Cis'tudh attempts to liberate the Flayed Queen.
- *Army of the Damned*, in which the Flayed Queen finally marches upon the living

DARK SISTERHOOD

Three **bheur hags** prey upon the Arctic and its wayward people, sowing sorrow and anarchy wherever they can. For years now they've opposed joining forces, but the *Aurora Arcana* event, which they take as an omen, convinces them otherwise. The adventurers have but one opportunity before the hags seal their pact in a Ritual of Binding. If the hags survive, they torment the Arctic or add their magical might to the factions described in the other sample storylines.

The following encounters are associated with this storyline:

- *Frosty the Snowman*, *The Penguinwere*, and *Rudolph the Red-blooded*, which feature the hags' periodic minions
- *The Creeping Igloo* and *The Fruits of Despair*, which feature Granny Yrsula
- *Traveler's Respite*, featuring Lone Miyareth
- *Greatfather Winter's Fiefdom*, featuring Greatmother Winter
- *Hag Summit*, in which the hags strike their covenant in a ritual

This sample storyline features bheur hags. For hag lore, see *Volo's Guide to Monsters* pages 52-62.

DIRE WINTER

A single madman may engineer the world's downfall. Withrens Fyar, a CE human **archmage**, has devised a calamitous spell that can plunge the world into a premature ice age, destroying crops around the globe and plunging the world into chaos.

Alas, no mortal spellcaster can channel Fyar's *dire winter* spell. The wizard requires the assistance of his deity's daughter, an **empyrean** named Beldara who lies imprisoned somewhere in the depths of the Arctic. Beldara is the daughter of Auril, a cruel goddess of winter worshipped by Fyar himself. The archmage hungers for destruction and fame; he has no expectation to survive dire winter, but believes Auril herself will welcome him into her frigid afterlife, where he will live eternally as an architect of icy destruction.

Encounters related to this storyline include:

- *Mirage Arcane*
- *Like Tongues to Ice*
- *Frostfell Rift*
- *Temple of the Frostmaiden*
- *On the Eve of Dire Winter*

ETERNAL NIGHT

A secretive order of outcasts known as the Forsworn intend to plunge the Arctic into an unending polar night. These pariahs consist of drow, shadar-kai elves that have fallen out of favor with the Raven Queen, and worshippers of Mother Night (also known as Shar, the goddess of darkness), all led by the exiled **drow matron mother** Yasne Illiwan. Bested, but not broken, Yasne escaped the Underdark with her most faithful servants; if she has it her way, she will carve out a kingdom of darkness on the surface that can rival her homeland's greatest fiefdoms.

To secure an eternal night, the Forsworn must forge a lasting connection to the Shadowfell. Their best hope is to bend a portal to the Feywild, using its framework to channel the Shadowfell's darkness into the world.

The encounters related to this sample storyline are:

- *The Altar of Mother Night*
- *Hounds of Ill Omen*, in which the Forsworn send **shadow hounds** to eliminate the adventurers or sow chaos.
- *At World's End* (see the *On the Eve of Eternal Night* section)
- *Nightfall*, in which Yasne's ambition catapults her beyond the Shadowfell and into the Negative Plane itself, releasing a **nightwalker** into the Material Plane.

This storyline heavily features creatures and lore detailed in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. See pages 58-61 for details on the shadar-kai and the Raven Queen.

GLOBAL WARMING

Cultists of Elemental Evil seek to drown the world and rule over whatever landscape still stands above the tide! The Cult of the Crushing Wave and the Cult of Eternal Flame have finally put aside their eons-long feud to melt the polar ice caps. If these madmen are successful, the Crushing Wave cult will rule the swollen seas and while the Eternal Flame cultists roast the left-over land.

To melt the icecaps, the cults must make their way to Mount Erebus, an arctic volcano whose crater can serve as a gateway to the apocalyptic depths of the Plane of Fire. From that inferno the cultists intend to conjure a **phoenix**.

The following encounters are associated with this storyline:

- *Cultists En Route*
- *Edge of Disaster*
- *Global Warming*

This storyline features the Cult of the Crushing Wave and the Cult of the Eternal Flame, who are featured in the *Princes of the Apocalypse* campaign.

THE ORDNING OF MIGHT

The treacherous **frost giant** Rowthor hungers for power over his kin, but he lacks the strength to defeat Jarl Grisbos in single combat. Instead the cur strikes an accord with Vaprak, the most reviled god in the giant pantheon and patron to ogres and trolls. Vaprak grants Rowthor his rage (turning the giant into a **frost giant everlasting one**), who challenges Grisbos' right to rule. Without outside intervention, Rowthor murders Grisbos and starts a brutal regime that the Arctic cannot tolerate.

The following encounters are associated with this storyline:

- *Shrine of Vaprak*
- *Forer-Slag!*
- *The Isejotun Exile*
- *Frost Giant Raiders*
- *Skoldheim*

STORM OF THE CENTURY

Cultists of Elemental Evil intend to bury the Arctic under the wrath of a living storm—an **elder tempest**. To summon the elder elemental requires the sacrifice of a creature that truly embodies the essence of the storm. The most befitting creature in the region is a **storm giant quintessent** whose perpetual storm surrounds its mountaintop lair. Travelers all across the Arctic know of the giant's presence and use that distant storm as a landmark—so when that storm disappears, it does not go unnoticed.

Without intervention on behalf of the adventurers, the cultists of the Black Earth and Howling Hatred manage to invade the giant's lair, bind it at an altar of their own making, and sacrifice the noble her to summon the tempest.

Encounters related to this storyline include:

- *Thelgym's Watch*, in which the cults have stolen a glacier dwarf outpost to serve as their base of operations.
- *Sacrifice for the Storm*
- *Storm of the Century*, in which the tempest is let loose on the Arctic.

This storyline features chapters of elemental cults: the Cult of the Black Earth and the Howling Hatred. For more details on these cults, see the *Princes of the Apocalypse* campaign.

SKILL CHALLENGES

This supplement makes heavy use of Skill Challenges, a relic from 4th Edition that has yet to be officially made in 5E. Skill Challenges, as the name attests, are designed to test a character through their skills and creativity, not their combat prowess.

A Skill Challenge boils down to these tenets:

- The characters encounter a series of obstacles that can't be solved solely through combat, but by utilizing their skills. Only one character makes an ability check for an obstacle.
- The goal of a challenge (think of it as a montage) is to reach X number of successful checks before hitting three failures. X is determined by the challenge's difficulty.
- Skill Challenges are about collaborative, creative storytelling. You present the obstacle to your players and allow them to suggest solutions utilizing skills. When they can't, however, come up with one of their own, you can call for ability checks relevant to the obstacle. The Skill Challenges in this tome always include several suggestions.

CHALLENGE DIFFICULTIES

Difficulty	Successes	DC	Example Encounters
Easy	3	10-14	<i>Man Overboard!</i>
Medium	5	14-18	<i>Drop It Like It's Hot</i>
Hard	8	18-22	<i>Avalanche!</i>
Insane	10	22-25	<i>Into the Blizzard</i>

- Failure is not a wall; failure represents dawdling or struggling. While consequences might be doled out for each individual failure, the challenge continues until three have been accrued. Failing a Skill Challenge might entail lost lives, an escaped target, destruction of the adventurers' ship, or failing to stop an eldritch ritual.

RULES

The rules throughout a Skill Challenge are constant:

- All players roll initiative, but aren't bound by it. By having a turn order, it helps them think ahead.
- The DM describes an obstacle, hazard, or event necessitating the adventurers' interference, like a sailor falling overboard, a raging fire, or a gushing wound. The player then suggests a skill, tool, or spell; if appropriate, they roll against the DC you set—which is fluid within a set limit; every obstacle in the same challenge can have a different DC within that limit.
- Once a player has applied a skill towards an obstacle, they can no longer use that same skill for the rest of the challenge. This is to spur creativity and prevent the rogue from using his +11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to trivialize or circumvent the entire Skill Challenge.
- **Variant: Proficiency Only.** Under this rule, a character can only apply a skill they're proficient in towards an obstacle. This is to highlight a character's expertise and make their selection of skill proficiencies matter more. It is only recommended you use this rule with parties that have a wide and diverse repertoire of skills, otherwise players might find themselves powerless and frustrated by what can seem like an arbitrary rule.
- Tool proficiencies are legal to use in a Skill Challenge, provided they logically apply towards an obstacle. This ability check is often in an Intelligence check using the character's proficiency bonus, though other ability scores might apply. For example, an Intelligence (carpenter's tools) check can be used to identify that a spar supporting a mast is damaged and due to fall. A Wisdom or Strength (carpenter's tools) check might be used to quickly fashion a support for the spar so that the crash is staved off until later (such as when the Skill Challenge ends).
- Magic is also legal, provided the spell used can logically apply to the situation. Whenever a spell of 1st level or higher is cast that can logically best an obstacle, the check automatically succeeds, as the character has just expended a vital resource.
- Cantrips can also be used, but since they cost no resources, a spellcaster must succeed on an ability check using their spellcasting ability (adding their proficiency bonus) against the DC of the obstacle. Like a skill, that same cantrip can't be used again throughout the challenge.
- **Variant: Higher Difficulties.** Under this variant, spells of 1st level or higher can only automatically succeed in Easy Skill Challenges. At Medium difficulty and up, they too require an ability check using that adventurer's spellcasting ability, with their proficiency added. However, unlike cantrips, the same spell can be used repeatedly, if applicable, even if you use the "One and Done" rule described above.

ENCOUNTER INDEX

MASTER INDEX

Encounter	Category	Tier	Description
<i>A Clash of Earth and Sky</i>	Mountain	1-2	Two warring elementals risk bringing down an avalanche.
<i>The Altar of Mother Night</i>	Mountain	2	A shadar-kai exile prays to Shar, the goddess of darkness.
<i>Army of the Damned</i>	Polar	4	An army of the dead marches upon the living.
<i>At the Mountains of Madness</i>	Mountain	4	An ancient silver dragon guards a city of hibernating star spawn.
<i>At World's End</i>	Polar/Polar Night	1 or 4	Portals linking the North and South Pole open during the solstices.
<i>Aurora Arcana</i>	Weather	1	The aurora exhibits strange sigils perceptible only to spellcasters.
<i>Avalanche!</i>	Mountain	1-2	This encounter provides the framework for an avalanche.
<i>Barbegazi Skater</i>	Polar/Tundra	1-3	A frost gnome ice skater is being chased by a worm-like horror.
<i>Bark of the Wereseal</i>	Sea	2	A fearsome lycanthrope guards the pinnipeds of the Arctic.
<i>The Beast of Butchery</i>	Tundra	4	Yeenoghu has somehow been summoned to this world!
<i>Bereaved Shield Guardian</i>	Polar/Tundra	2	A shield guardian tirelessly guards the cold corpse of its former master.
<i>The Brass Adventists</i>	Character	1-3	A selfish adventuring party seeks gold, glory, and power in the Arctic.
<i>Catch of the Day</i>	Taiga/Tundra	3	An aboleth preys upon ice fishers from beneath a frozen lake.
<i>The Creeping Igloo</i>	Character	2	The magical, mobile lair of a bheur hag is a dire sign for the Arctic.
<i>The Crystalline Tavern</i>	Tundra/Urban	1	The Crystalline Tavern offers warmth, news, and insight to the Arctic.
<i>Cultists En Route</i>	Sea	2	Cultists of Elemental Evil cross the sea to gather for a foul ritual.
<i>Cycle of Carnage</i>	Tundra	1	A gnoll is busy birthing more of its foul ilk through a bloody ritual.
<i>Darfellan Messiah</i>	Sea	1	An ominous darfellan infant has been born. What say the elders?
<i>Deadliest Catch</i>	Sea	1-3	Crabbers have fished up something far, far above their paygrade.
<i>The Deadmarks</i>	Mountain	2	A dybbuk has rearranged corpses that hikers rely on to navigate a pass.
<i>Death's Due</i>	Mountain	2	A revenant stalks the money-grubbing guide that doomed his party.
<i>Devil's Pass</i>	Mountain	1-2	An unseen horror haunts the site of a tragedy.
<i>Doom of the Dawner Party</i>	Mountain	1	Migrants trapped in the mountains have resorted to cannibalism.
<i>Drop It Like It's Hot</i>	Mountain/Polar/Sea	1	A fire genasi plummets from above and through the ice!
<i>The Dullahan</i>	Character	1-3	A headless rider has abandoned greener lands to reap colder souls.
<i>Edge of Disaster</i>	Volcanic	3	Cultists are summoning a phoenix to melt the polar icecaps!
<i>Elven Slavers</i>	Tundra	1-3	Elven slavers march their newfound trophies back home.
<i>Endangered Hiker</i>	Character	1	A hiker has run into a perilous issue... again.
<i>Flight of the Ivory Elk</i>	Taiga	1	Winter wolves chase a white elk.
<i>Forer-Slag!</i>	Mountain	2-3	Two frost giants battle it out for the title of jarl.
<i>Forge of the Frozen Wastes</i>	Volcanic	1-2	Azer smiths provide well-needed metallurgy to the Arctic.
<i>The Fortress of Solitude</i>	Polar	3	A bitter aasimar hero broods in his fortress, awaiting the world's end.
<i>Frost Giant Raiders</i>	Tundra/Urban	2	From within a howling blizzard sounds a frost giant's horn...
<i>Frostfell Rift</i>	Polar	2-3	A portal to the Plane of Ice spits out elementals and planar influence.
<i>Frosthenge</i>	Tundra	1 or 3	Glacial menhirs offer enlightenment to those who meditate there.
<i>Frosty the Snowman</i>	Character	1	A malevolent snow golem haunts the Arctic.
<i>The Fruits of Despair</i>	Polar Night	1	Meenlocks terrorize a mining town draped under polar night.
<i>The Glacial Garden</i>	Mountain	2	A medusa haunts a mountain pass, turning victims to ice.
<i>The Glacial Prison</i>	Mountain/Urban	3	An undead sovereign awaits the day of her liberation.
<i>Glacier Dwarf Warband</i>	Tundra	1-3	Clan Aurora has sent Her warriors to battle!
<i>Global Warming</i>	Polar/Urban/Volcanic	4	A phoenix threatens to melt the polar icecaps and drown the world!
<i>Grandma Got Mauled by an Owlbear</i>	Taiga/Urban	1	A beloved crone has gone missing, seemingly mauled by an owlbear... but this green hag is anything but innocent.
<i>Greatfather Winter's Fiefdom</i>	Polar	3	Rock gnomes toil under an archfey tyrant obsessed with Yuletide.
<i>Greatfather Winter's Wrath</i>	Character	3	Greatfather Winter has taken to the skies to rain hell on the world.
<i>Grove of the Reclusive Druid</i>	Taiga	2	A peaceful druid is warding her lair with <i>druid grove</i> spells.
<i>Hag Summit</i>	Mountain	3	Three bheur hags are forming a coven at the expense of a child's life.
<i>Hailstorm</i>	Weather	2	Galeb duhrs born from ice plummet from the sky!
<i>Hardboiled</i>	Volcanic	2	Remorhaz eggs broil within a hot spring.
<i>Heroes of the Ice Age</i>	Tundra	2	Three animals are on a quest to deliver a human infant back home.
<i>Homer's Hospitable Hearth</i>	Polar/Tundra	1	A <i>Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion</i> offers respite to all travelers.

ENCOUNTER INDEX

MASTER INDEX

Encounter	Category	Tier	Description
<i>Homer's Hovering Hovel</i>	Tundra	1-3	The retired adventurer Homer Erendalias labors in his stolen tower.
<i>Hounds of Ill Omen</i>	Polar Night	2	Shadow mastiffs fresh from the Shadowfell are out for blood.
<i>Ice Haulers</i>	Sea	1	An ice hauling ship has come under attack by sahuagin.
<i>Ice, Ice Baby</i>	Polar/Tundra	1-2	A frost giant toddler has been separated from his mother.
<i>In the Lair of the Dracolich</i>	Sea	3-4	The dracolich Krarthelos slumbers in his honeycombed iceberg.
<i>Into the Blizzard</i>	Weather	1-2	This encounter provides the framework for contending with a blizzard.
<i>The Isejotun Exile</i>	Character	2	An exiled frost giant plots to overthrow his new, treacherous jarl.
<i>Keep Lukewarm!</i>	Polar	1	Two travelers are sheltering from the cold in a dire moose's belly.
<i>Krampusnacht</i>	Urban	1	Foolish teenagers have summoned the evil fey Krampus to this world.
<i>Lamenter of Levistus</i>	Mountain/Polar	1	For his failure, a warlock must languish in ice, unable to die.
<i>The Last Windbender</i>	Polar/Sea	1	A young air genasi has been found frozen in ice.
<i>Like Tongues to Ice</i>	Polar/Tundra	1	A wizard has laid an <i>antipathy/sympathy</i> spell on a metal rod.
<i>Living Blizzard</i>	Weather	2	A blizzard propagated by living spells harries travelers.
<i>Mammoth Corpse</i>	Tundra	2-3	A dead mammoth is a fortune of fur, meat, and bone—the perfect trap.
<i>The Mammoth Merchant</i>	Character	1-2	A wanted wizard spends his retirement hawking wares.
<i>Man Overboard!</i>	Sea	1	This encounter provides the framework to a rescue a sailor.
<i>Manavik Under Fire</i>	Urban	2	For their insolence, the snow elves have come to raze Manavik.
<i>March of the Damned</i>	Polar/Tundra	2	Undead hordes gather to heed the call of their distant master.
<i>The Mimigloo</i>	Polar	1	An evolved mimic has become the ultimate arctic predator.
<i>Mirage Arcane</i>	Polar/Tundra	1	A <i>mirage arcane</i> spell disguised a perilously thin frozen lake.
<i>New Menzoberranzan</i>	Mountain/Taiga	2	Clueless drow fugitives have founded their own settlement.
<i>Nightfall</i>	Polar Night	4	A nightwalker fresh from the Shadowfell is scouring all life it finds.
<i>Obelisk-Bound Couatl</i>	Polar/Polar Night	1-2	A warmth-shedding obelisk houses an innocent prisoner.
<i>On the Eve of Dire Winter</i>	Mountain	4	The day of liberation has come for an evil empyrean.
<i>The Penguinwere</i>	Character	1-2	An elevated penguin masquerades as an ordinary man.
<i>The Poacher's Nightmare</i>	Character	3	A sadistic archdruid has vowed to protect the Arctic's wildlife.
<i>Preserved Forevermore</i>	Polar/Sea	1-4	There is no telling what bygone creatures can be found frozen in ice...
<i>Rudolph the Red-Blooded</i>	Polar/Taiga/Tundra	1	A patronized, sentient reindeer revenges himself on his old bullies.
<i>Sacrifice for the Storm</i>	Mountain	3	Cultists of Elemental Evil are sacrificing a storm giant to their master.
<i>The Scorch Baths</i>	Volcanic	2	Firenewts running a hot spring resort face an otherworldly predator.
<i>Sea Elk Vikings</i>	Sea	2-3	The seas belong to vikings!
<i>Shrine of Vaprak</i>	Mountain/Tundra	1-2	An ogre shaman anoints a troll pilgrim for its sacred quest.
<i>Sick Ranger</i>	Tundra	1	A dying halfling's mammoth mount seeks friendly folk to help its rider.
<i>Skoldheim</i>	Mountain	3	From their bleak stronghold, the frost giants terrorize the Arctic.
<i>Snow Bulette</i>	Mountain	2	A bulette has found snow to be the perfect medium for hunting.
<i>Spelljammer Derelict</i>	Polar	2	A spaceship has crashed deep into the Arctic.
<i>Spring Weird</i>	Volcanic	1	A corrupted water weird kills those that visit its hot spring.
<i>Storm of the Century</i>	Weather	4	An elder tempest ravages the Arctic!
<i>Survivor's Cache</i>	Character	1-3	Arctic Samaritans have left a cache for wayward travelers.
<i>Temple of the Frostmaiden</i>	Polar	3	A cleric of Auril tends to her wicked flock.
<i>Thelgrym's Watch</i>	Tundra	1-2	A glacier-carved fortress is ignorant to the cultists lurking just outside.
<i>There's Always a Bigger Bird</i>	Tundra	2	There's always a bigger bird.
<i>The Thing</i>	Polar	3	An alien horror has been unearthed from the ice.
<i>Thirty Days of Night</i>	Polar Night	2	A vampire and her ilk invade a town during the polar night.
<i>Tomb of the Mythic Smith</i>	Tundra	2	A necromancer is raiding the tomb of a legendary smith for corpses.
<i>Traveler's Respite</i>	Mountain	2	A bheur hag masquerades as a doddering innkeeper.
<i>Tundra Halfling Travelers</i>	Taiga/Mountain	1	Tundra halflings full of wanderlust are hiking through the Arctic.
<i>Uldra Cattle Rustler</i>	Mountain/Urban	1	An animal-loving fey has "liberated" a flock of sheep.
<i>Urskan Pilgrim</i>	Character	1	An urskan pilgrim battles a yeti.
<i>Worg Sleds</i>	Polar	1	Taxis or raiders—there's no end to a goblin's creativity.
<i>Wounded Sled Dogs</i>	Polar	1	Bloodied hounds whimper in the wake of a wyrmling's attack.

ENCOUNTERS BY CATEGORY

The encounters are further divided by category. For encounters that focus on more than one of the Three Pillars, abbreviations are used, with "C" referring to Combat, "E" Exploration, and "S" for Social. The order in which these letters appear does not suggest that one is more important than the other.

CHARACTER ENCOUNTERS

d20	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1-4	<i>The Brass Adventists</i>	1-3	C/S
5-6	<i>The Creeping Igloo</i>	2	Exploration
7	<i>The Dullahan</i>	1-3	Combat
8-9	<i>Endangered Hiker</i>	1	Exploration
10-11	<i>Frosty the Snowman</i>	1	Combat
12	<i>Greatfather Winter's Wrath</i>	3	Combat
13	<i>The Isejotun Exile</i>	2	Social
14-15	<i>The Mammoth Merchant</i>	1-2	Social
16	<i>The Penguinwere</i>	2	Combat
17	<i>The Poacher's Nightmare</i>	3	Combat
18-19	<i>Survivor's Cache</i>	1-3	Exploration
20	<i>Urskan Pilgrim</i>	1	Social

MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTERS

2d12	Encounter	Tier	Focus
2-3	<i>A Clash of Earth and Sky</i>	1-2	Combat
4	<i>The Altar of Mother Night</i>	2	C/E
5	<i>At the Mountains of Madness</i>	4	C/E
6	<i>Avalanche!</i>	1-2	Skill Chall.
7	<i>The Deadmarks</i>	2	C/E
8	<i>Death's Due</i>	2	C/S
9	<i>Devil's Pass</i>	1-2	Combat
10	<i>Doom of the Dawner Party</i>	1	C/E
11	<i>Drop It Like It's Hot</i>	1	Skill Chall.
12	<i>Forer-Slag!</i>	2-3	Exploration
13	<i>The Glacial Garden</i>	2	Combat
14	<i>The Glacial Prison</i>	3	Combat
15	<i>Hag Summit</i>	3	Combat
16	<i>Lamenter of Levistus</i>	1	Social
17	<i>New Menzoberranzan</i>	2	Social
18	<i>On the Eve of Dire Winter</i>	4	Combat
19	<i>Sacrifice for the Storm</i>	3	Combat
20	<i>Shrine of Vaprak</i>	1-2	C/E
21	<i>Skoldheim</i>	3	C/S
22	<i>Snow Bulette</i>	2	Combat
23	<i>Tundra Halfling Travelers</i>	1	Social
24	<i>Uldra Cattle Rustler</i>	1	C/S

POLAR ENCOUNTERS

2d20	Encounter	Tier	Focus
2	<i>At World's End</i>	1 or 4	C/E
3-6	<i>Barbegazi Skater</i>	1-3	Combat
7-8	<i>Bereaved Shield Guardian</i>	2	Combat
9-10	<i>Drop It Like It's Hot</i>	1	Skill Chall.
11	<i>The Fortress of Solitude</i>	3	Social
12-14	<i>Frostfell Rift</i>	2-3	Combat
15	<i>Global Warming</i>	4	Combat
16	<i>Greatfather Winter's Fiefdom</i>	3	Exploration
17-18	<i>Homer's Hospitable Hearth</i>	1	Exploration
19-20	<i>Ice, Ice Baby</i>	1	Social
21	<i>Keep Lukewarm!</i>	1	Social
22	<i>Lamenter of Levistus</i>	1	Social
23	<i>The Last Windbender</i>	1	Exploration
24-26	<i>Like Tongues to Ice</i>	1	C/E
27-28	<i>March of the Damned</i>	2	C/E
29	<i>The Mimigloo</i>	1	Combat
30	<i>Mirage Arcane</i>	1	Exploration
31-32	<i>Obelisk-Bound Couatl</i>	1-2	Exploration
33	<i>Preserved Forevermore</i>	1-4	Exploration
34-35	<i>Rudolph the Red-Blooded</i>	1	Exploration
36	<i>Spelljammer Derelict</i>	2	Exploration
37	<i>Temple of the Frostmaiden</i>	3	C/S
38	<i>The Thing</i>	3	C/E
39	<i>Worg Sleds</i>	1	C/S
40	<i>Wounded Sled Dogs</i>	1	Combat

POLAR NIGHT ENCOUNTERS

d6	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1	<i>At World's End</i>	1 or 4	C/E
2	<i>The Fruits of Despair</i>	1	C/S
3	<i>Hounds of Ill Omen</i>	2	Combat
4	<i>Nightfall</i>	4	Combat
5	<i>Obelisk-Bound Couatl</i>	1-2	Exploration
6	<i>Thirty Days of Night</i>	2	Combat

SEA ENCOUNTERS

d12	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1	<i>Bark of the Wereseal</i>	2	Combat
2	<i>Cultists En Route</i>	2	C/S
3	<i>Darfellan Messiah</i>	1	Exploration
4-5	<i>Deadliest Catch</i>	1-3	Combat
6	<i>Drop It Like It's Hot</i>	1	Skill Chall.
7	<i>Ice Haulers</i>	1	Combat
8	<i>In the Lair of the Dracolich</i>	3-4	Combat
9	<i>The Last Windbender</i>	1	Exploration
10	<i>Man Overboard!</i>	1	Skill Chall.
11	<i>Preserved Forevermore</i>	1-4	Exploration
12	<i>Sea Elf Vikings</i>	2-3	Combat

TAIGA ENCOUNTERS

d8	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1	<i>Catch of the Day</i>	3	Combat
2	<i>Flight of the Ivory Elk</i>	1	Combat
3	<i>Grandma Got Mauled by an Owlbear</i>	1	Exploration
4	<i>Grove of the Reclusive Druid</i>	2	Exploration
5	<i>New Menzoberranzan</i>	2	Social
6	<i>Rudolph the Red-Blooded</i>	1	Exploration
7-8	<i>Tundra Halfling Travelers</i>	1	Social

TUNDRA ENCOUNTERS

3d10	Encounter	Tier	Focus
3-4	<i>Barbegazi Skater</i>	1-3	Combat
5	<i>The Beast of Butchery</i>	4	Combat
6	<i>Bereaved Shield Guardian</i>	2	Combat
7	<i>Catch of the Day</i>	2	Combat
8	<i>The Crystalline Tavern</i>	1	Social
9	<i>Cycle of Carnage</i>	1	Combat
10-11	<i>Elven Slavers</i>	1-3	Combat
12	<i>Frost Giant Raiders</i>	2	Combat
13	<i>Frosthenge</i>	1-3	Exploration
14-15	<i>Glacier Dwarf Warband</i>	1-3	C/S
16	<i>Heroes of the Ice Age</i>	2	Exploration
17	<i>Homer's Hospitable Hearth</i>	1	Exploration
18	<i>Homer's Hovering Hovel</i>	1-3	Social
19	<i>Ice, Ice Baby</i>	1	Social
20	<i>Like Tongues to Ice</i>	1	C/E
21	<i>Mammoth Corpse</i>	2-3	C/S
22	<i>March of the Damned</i>	2	C/E
23	<i>Mirage Arcane</i>	1	Exploration
24	<i>Rudolph the Red-Blooded</i>	1	Exploration
25	<i>Shrine of Vaprak</i>	1-2	C/E
26	<i>Sick Ranger</i>	1	Exploration
27	<i>Thelgrym's Watch</i>	1-2	C/S
28	<i>There's Always a Bigger Bird</i>	2	Combat
29	<i>Tomb of the Mythic Smith</i>	2	C/E
30	<i>Tundra Halfling Travelers</i>	1	Social

URBAN ENCOUNTERS

d8	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1	<i>The Crystalline Tavern</i>	1	Social
2	<i>Frost Giant Raiders</i>	2	Combat
3	<i>The Glacial Prison</i>	3	Combat
4	<i>Global Warming</i>	4	Combat
5	<i>Grandma Got Mauled by an Owlbear</i>	1	Exploration
6	<i>Krampusnacht</i>	1	Combat
7	<i>Manavik Under Fire</i>	2	Combat
8	<i>Uldra Cattle Rustler</i>	1	C/S

VOLCANIC ENCOUNTERS

d6	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1	<i>Edge of Disaster</i>	3	Combat
2	<i>Forge of the Frozen Wastes</i>	2	Social
3	<i>Global Warming</i>	4	Combat
4	<i>Hardboiled</i>	2	Exploration
5	<i>The Scorch Baths</i>	2	C/S
6	<i>Spring Weird</i>	1	Exploration

WEATHER ENCOUNTERS

d6	Encounter	Tier	Focus
1	<i>Aurora Arcana</i>	1	Exploration
2	<i>Hailstorm</i>	2	Combat
3-4	<i>Into the Blizzard</i>	1-2	Skill Chall.
5	<i>Living Blizzard</i>	2	Combat
6	<i>Storm of the Century</i>	4	Combat

ENCOUNTERS

The encounters are presented alphabetically:

A CLASH OF EARTH AND SKY

Mountain Encounter, Tier I-II

Thunder cracks out across the mountainside as a rogue **earth elemental** battles it out against a fuming **air elemental**. If left unchecked, their bout may birth an avalanche.

As the adventurers mount the trail, the air elemental hurls its opponent into a rockface 120 feet away from the nearest party member. When it approaches to slam its foe, the earth elemental grapples it. The two are entangled and sail through the air, crashing right before the adventurers, which allows them a chance to attack the elementals before they wreak further havoc on the environment. The elementals will ignore these mortals until they meddle in the duel. If the adventurers do decide to get involved, roll a d6 at the start of each of the elementals' turns to determine their behavior for the round. Consult the table below.

Difficulty. The elementals' hit points vary depending on the difficulty you run this encounter at:

- As a Tier I encounter, the air elemental has 45 hit points left, and the earth elemental has 50.
- As a Tier II encounter, the air elemental has 70 hit points left, and the earth elemental has 85.

Avalanche. If the elementals are not slain within two rounds, they will trigger an avalanche—either by hurling themselves into the mountainside, or through the echoes of elemental fury. Contrary to popular belief, a loud but otherwise mundane noise cannot trigger an avalanche, but the thunder of elemental blows certainly can.

If the avalanche occurs, combine the *Avalanche!* encounter with *A Clash of Earth and Sky*.

A CLASH OF EARTH AND SKY

d6	Elemental Disposition
1-2	The elemental focuses on its nemesis.
3	The elemental spares one Slam attack for a mortal.
4	The elemental turns all its fury on a meddlesome mortal for the remainder of the round.
5	The elemental hurls its nemesis far away.
6	The elemental grapples its nemesis and launches itself off a cliff or up the mountainside.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

When running this encounter, your goal is to provide the party slim opportunities to attack the elementals during an otherwise cinematic combat. You do not want the elementals to get locked down on the ground with the adventurers.

THE ALTAR OF MOTHER NIGHT

Mountain or Polar Encounter, Tier II

Far from the light of the sun, a shadar-kai apostate prays not to the mysterious Raven Queen, but rather to Mother Night—a goddess of darkness. In the Forgotten Realms campaign setting, this deity is none other than Shar, the Dark Lady. This heretic, a **gloom weaver**, is an agent of the insidious Forsworn, a society of drow, shadar-kai exiles and other admirers of the night. These outcasts are conspiring to cloak the Arctic in a perpetual polar night where they are free to run their own wicked schemes far away from any scrutiny.

Shrine. Within an ice cave, far from prying eyes, is a statue of a cloaked woman wielding twin daggers. The statue has been chiseled from black ice that seems to swallow any nearby light. The entire cave lies in darkness in homage to Mother Night. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Religion check ascertains that the statue depicts Shar (or "Mother Night") a goddess of misfortune that the broken-spirited pray to for a reprieve. Likewise, the elf's holy symbol (a black disk encircled with a purple border) can be identified as Shar's icon.

Priestess. A blighted, gray elf maiden dressed in a dark cloak and veil prays before the statue. Her skin is deathly pale, and her features are corpse-like. Despite her grim appearance, she has a strange and unsettling beauty to her, almost as if she were a cadaver that has been painted for a funeral. She murmurs in Elvish, "Darkness quench the sun. Darkness swallow the moon. We are nothing but the night."

This shadar-kai is known as Narwyn, and she does not take kindly to intruders. Paranoid, she suspects that the adventurers are agents of a holy order sent to thwart the Forsworn's plans. On her first turn, she beckons at the nearby shadows, which amass into 1d3+1 **shadow mastiffs**.

Shadow Crossing. Mother Night does not abandon her faithful. If Narwyn is reduced to 21 hit points or fewer, the statue animates. The glacial maiden brings her daggers together in a stabbing gesture, spawning a rift to the Shadowfell, through which Narwyn can escape. Her shadow mastiffs dissolve once she has left this plane of existence.

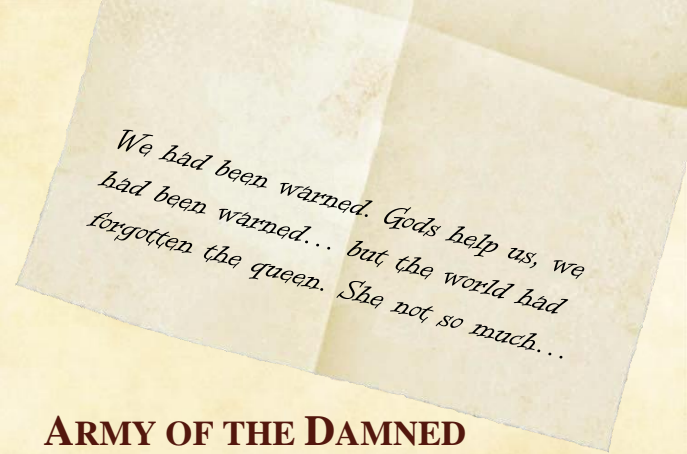
Roleplaying Narwyn. The elf is an utter fanatic of the dread goddess. To die in her service is a great honor—but one she can't afford right now, if she is to play her part in the Forsworn's agenda. She speaks only in Elvish, seeing all other languages as inferior.

You can voice Narwyn through the sample dialogue below:

- "Our Lady of Loss take you!"
- "We are nothing but the night!"
- "This world will be cloaked in the cold love of Mother Night. Pity that you won't be there to feel it."

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This encounter foreshadows the *Eternal Night* storyline. If you intend to run it in your campaign, it is in your best interest as a DM for Narwyn to survive the encounter; when near death, she attempts to flee to the Shadowfell. Thereafter, the Forsworn become aware of the adventurers, in which case they send out the shadow mastiffs described in *Hounds of Ill Omen*.



ARMY OF THE DAMNED

Polar Encounter, Tier IV

The sun has finally set for the living. Freed from her prison, the Flayed Queen has marshalled the undead and begun her march upon civilization. Her numbers swell with every battle along the way as her necromancers raise the fallen. There is no sating this tyrannical **death knight**; the queen will not rest until all the world rots beneath her banner.

This encounter is the titanic culmination of the *Army of the Damned* storyline. For it to occur, the **lich** Cis'tudh or another of the Flayed Queen's champions must have freed her from her prison (see *The Glacial Prison*). Cis'tudh isn't present for this encounter, if she survived *The Glacial Prison* at all, as she is leading the Newly Dead cultists in some other fell purpose.

The Damned. The undead number in the thousands. Were it not for the immense will of the Flayed Queen, the undead would disperse and menace settlements all over the Arctic. Completely lacking in discipline, they are an "army" in name only. This undead *swarm* consists primarily of **zombies** and **skeletons** but also includes **specters**, **wights**, and **wraiths** as well as **cultists**, **cult fanatics**, and **necromancers**—all traitors to the living—who ride upon **warhorse skeletons**.

You can use any of these undead for this encounter or choose to also feature rarer creatures such as **beholder zombies**.

The Sovereign. The world has forgotten the undead tyrant at the head of this horde. The queen wears scraps of armor and a hood over her exposed bones; she also wields a scythe etched in glowing orange runes. (Her statistics, however, remain the same no matter her armor and weapon.)

Roleplaying the Queen. Although she has been freed from her icy prison, the Flayed Queen is no less cold. Her dreadful and suffocating presence can be felt miles away by beasts, men, and undead alike, as if a cold and heavy weight has fallen over them. Outside of combat, she moves slowly but with purpose. Her voice has an ethereal echo that saps the hearts of mortal men. Even in the heat of battle, she remains stern and dignified, never losing herself to emotion—for she has none.

You can voice the queen with the sample dialogue below:

- "This world has had its chance; now is an age for the dead."
- "In the end, there is only Death."
- Spoken as she hurls a Hellfire Orb: "This end is too quick for you."
- Spoken as she parries a blow: "Death cannot be thwarted."
- Spoken as she casts *banishment*: "Know the weight of utter isolation as I have."
- Spoken as she casts *destructive wave*: "Even your broken body will be of use to me."

Steed. The Flayed Queen rides Krarthelos, the **adult white dracolich** described in *In the Lair of the Dracolich*. In the cold skies above, she surveys her army.

If Krarthelos is not present—such as if he were recently slain or had his phylactery destroyed—the Flayed Queen is instead mounted on a **nightmare** that has the following changes to its statistics:

- It has 104 hit points possible.
- It counts as undead and its flames are a ghostly blue.
- It has immunity to cold damage instead of fire damage, and it confers resistance to cold damage to whomever rides it.

Although the nightmare can fly, the queen only takes to the air to avoid danger, survey the most distant flanks, or to simply revel in the sight of her dutiful minions.

The queen's steed determines her tactics, minions, and the site of her battle with the adventurers, as described below:

BEFORE THE DEAD

If the Flayed Queen leads her army from the ground, she rides upon her **nightmare** steed. If the adventurers stage a terrestrial battle, she obliges. If they take to the sky en masse, she resorts to the tactics and minions described in *Death from Above*.

Positioning. The queen rides 300 feet ahead of the horde, her most exalted champions at her side (see *Minions*). Provided the adventurers don't maintain this distance, they have up to ten rounds to defeat her before being swarmed by the undead.

Minions. Three riders accompany the queen, each astride armored **warhorse skeletons** with 36 hit points and AC 20. They are:

- Fionys, a **deathlock mastermind** whose patron is none other than the Flayed Queen herself.
- Nathalia Delgada, the queen's most devoted **necromancer**.
- The Queen's Vanguard, an otherwise nameless **sword wraith commander** that lacks the Call to Honor ability.

Additionally, on the third, fifth, and seventh round of combat, the following creatures intervene (in the order below), having raced ahead to serve their dreadful master:

- 1d3 **wights** astride **warhorse skeletons**
- Two **ogre zombies**
- A **wraith** and two **shadows**

Tactics. The Flayed Queen and her minions use the following tactics:

- The Flayed Queen is fearless, knowing that she can't truly die. She fights with wild abandon and shows no mercy, finishing off fallen foes. She does not anticipate further challenges this day and does not reserve any of her spell slots for later.
- The queen devotes her concentration to *hold person* and smite spells. While concentrating on a spell, she casts *destructive wave* or makes longsword attacks.
- On her first turn, the queen casts a 4th-level *hold person* spell, targeting three foes. On her next turn, she hurls a Hellfire Orb at these paralyzed foes, as they automatically fail Dexterity saving throws.
- The nightmare makes Hooves attacks if the adventurers stand their ground. If it must continue spiriting the Flayed Queen, it takes the Dodge action.

- The necromancer drops a *cloudkill* on the adventurers if they are clumped together and don't seem to be maintaining the distance from the horde. Otherwise, she casts *Bigby's hand* on her first turn.
- Fionys hurls Grave Bolts at the queen's targets and reserves her spell slots and reactions for *counterspells*.
- The Vanguard rides forth to harry the adventurers' backline with longbow shots.

DEATH FROM ABOVE

If Krarthelos is alive, or if the Flayed Queen is forced to take to the air with her **nightmare** steed, run the following encounter.

Positioning. The Flayed Queen keeps her steed at an altitude of 100 feet above the ground, allowing her cultists and archers to fire at the party. The sheer immensity of her will allows her to ignore up to 100 falling damage each day.

Minions. There is no hiding the conflict above. As the queen battles the adventurers in the sky, her minions from below assist her. Initially, this includes:

- A **necromancer** that really regrets not preparing the *fly* spell this morning. He hurls his spells from the ground.
- A skeletal **archer** (that has resistance to piercing damage, vulnerability to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to both poison damage and the poisoned condition).
- Her steed: the **nightmare** or **adult white dracolich**.

Additionally, the following aerial minions arrive (in the order below) on the third, fifth, seventh, and ninth round of combat, flying towards the adventurers.

- One **wraith** if Krarthelos is present and two if not.
- Two **will-o'-wisps** if Krarthelos is present or 1d3+1 if not
- 1d4+3 skeletal **arakocra** (they have resistance to piercing damage, vulnerability to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to both poison damage and the poisoned condition).
- Fionys, the **deathlock mastermind**, who is concentrating on a *fly* spell to get her to the battle.

Tactics. The queen and her forces employ the tactics below:

- The Flayed Queen rides upon Krarthelos and uses a *compelled duel* spell to force a foe to fight her on the dracolich's back.
- Krarthelos rends at creatures not upon him. His Claw attacks can reach virtually anywhere on his body if he twists around; however, doing so may endanger the Flayed Queen.
- The **nightmare** takes the Dodge action to keep the queen airborne.
- The **necromancer** below must resort to using *Bigby's hand*, *circle of death* or *chill touch* spells; none of his other prepared spells can reach targets 100 feet away.
- The undead **archer** focuses on aerial mounts or spellcasters.
- The **will-o'-wisps** approach under the cover of invisibility to gain advantage on their first Shock attacks.
- Fionys reserves her final spell slot (the first being used for *fly*) on a *counterspell* against the adventurers. Thereafter, she hurls Grave Bolts; a character restrained by the bolts falls if they aren't held aloft by magic (see *Flying Movement* on pg. 191 of the *PHB*).

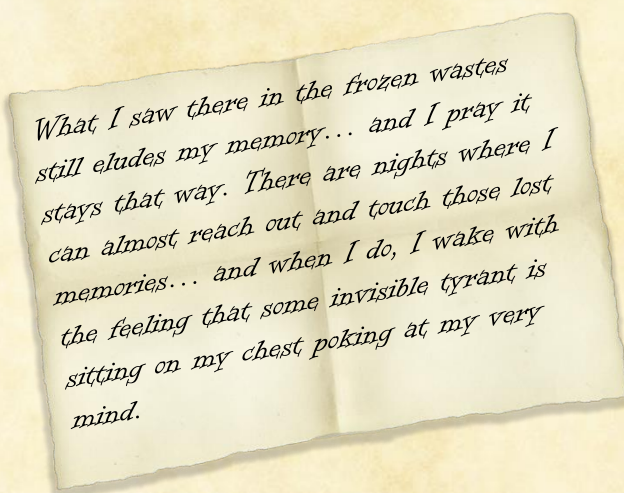
THE QUEEN DEFEATED

If she is slain, the Flayed Queen's soul is banished to the Glacial Prison and her influence over the undead shatters. In the sudden vacuum, all skeletal beings in the horde crumble to dust, as the dark energies that once sustained them are snuffed out. Now freed from the queen's hold, the spirits are laid to rest. Corporeal undead, however, remain animated, but with no master to guide them. The horde soon scatters, with wights taking command of undead platoons. The queen's living minions attempt to flee, and all across the region, the surviving sects of the Newly Dead splinter off to pursue their own dark agendas. If Cis'tudh is still active, she swears vengeance against her queen's murderers.

The site of the Flayed Queen's defeat becomes a memorial composed of the countless armor scraps worn by the crumbled skeletons. While stray undead continue to menace the region, and hedge necromancers rise up to practice their own dark craft, the Arctic is nonetheless spared from an undead apocalypse.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Armies are narrative tools meant to provide tension and up the stakes. They aren't meant to be tackled by players—and if they are, it's better to simply narrate cinematic battles than getting bogged down with dice. When you run this encounter, your concern is getting the adventurers to the Flayed Queen and her lieutenants. While in the sky, you're spared from having to include undead minions (except for the aerial reinforcements described in *Death From Above*). If the Queen is forced to land, consider running the Mob rules described on pg. 250 of the *DMG*; otherwise, a stray minion makes an attack against an adventurer at both the start and end of a round.



What I saw there in the frozen wastes still eludes my memory... and I pray it stays that way. There are nights where I can almost reach out and touch those lost memories... and when I do, I wake with the feeling that some invisible tyrant is sitting on my chest, poking at my very mind.

AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

Mountain Encounter, Tier IV

It is a place of madness. A place time has forgotten, and men have avoided. A place the gods cannot touch, and the mortal mind cannot comprehend. It is a city of strange architecture that confounds visitors, a city shunned by all beasts and monsters. It is a place permeated with evil so ancient that only the most fringe scholars could even name the creatures that once infested it. And never mind the elder evils who were once worshipped in its halls...

Its name is forgotten—and it's better left that way.

This nameless city is closed off from the world by mountains and the **ancient silver dragon** guarding it intends to keep it that way—for the world itself might fall to ruin if the star spawn slumbering below are awakened. Unfortunately, mortals are ever curious and determined to plunge into the corners of the map that reads "here there be dragons." Recently an expedition arrived to explore the mountains; its disappearance invites suspicion from abroad. The adventurers may be just one of many parties to investigate or otherwise stumble upon the area. Alternatively, the *Aurora Arcana* encounter may signal that the star spawn are soon to awaken, compelling the adventurers to enter the city.

THE WATCHER

A gravely silver dragon named Fernyxis guards the city from his nearby mountaintop lair. The dragon tolerates no visitors and attacks anyone who ventures too close to the mountains. Alas, Fernyxis isn't omniscient; intruders can evade detection by entering through the caves if they manage to sense and dispel one of his numerous, permanent *alarm* spells. A *dispel magic* spell renders it inert for 1d6 hours.

Fernyxis can be seen patrolling the skies; identifying him as a silver dragon is an easy task. However, a character that makes a DC 14 Arcana check recalls that silver dragons are gregarious and friendly. They almost never guard a site of evil and instead prefer to mingle with mortals. They discourage thieves and would-be dragon slayers through words, not force; and they don't concern themselves with rooting out evil in the world—so why is one guarding this otherwise nondescript mountain range so ferociously?

Roleplaying Fernyxis. The dragon is morose; there is no light in his life sans the dim torch of duty. As the latest guardian in an ancient lineage, he has been groomed since birth to defend this city—whose name even the dragons will not speak—from all outside forces. Isolation and ascetism have made him bitter and laconic.

At the start of Fernyxis's tenure, he would spare explorers that roamed too close to the mountains, but he soon learned that news of a dragon's lair rouses thieves, heroes, and villains of all stripes, many of whom ventured into the city and came close to waking the star spawn below. The dragon has since abandoned his principles lest the world suffer for them.

Slaughtering the expedition (see below) was the final blow against Fernyxis's heart; he can't spare a handful of mortals just after killing four dozen. His first message to the adventurers is strafing the area with a blast of frigid breath.

The Drake's Lair. Fernyxis lairs in a mountain cave with a commanding view of the southern approach to the city. To dissuade thieves, Fernyxis has no treasure in his lair.



The region outside Fernyxis's lair is warped by his magic (see Regional Effects in his statistics) but this magic doesn't affect the valley in which the city is in; its own strange magic negates his. The city is approximately five miles long, and so Fernyxis can alter the weather out to one mile from the opposite side of the mountain.

THE EXPLORER'S CAMP

An expedition was mounted earlier this season to map out the most remote regions of the Arctic. The enterprise consisted of explorers, cartographers, and scholars alike, all desperate to go where few men have been before. Each week, the expedition would confirm its safety through *sending* spells sent to their distant colleagues—and as days passed, those *sending* spells grew more erratic. The casters cited "unearthed beings" and "a dead city." About two weeks ago, the expedition fell silent; no message was sent or received, suggesting two possibilities: the resident wizards are dead or have traveled to another plane of existence where divination spells cannot be received.

Fernyxis destroyed the expedition. In one last ditch effort to spare himself from committing mass murder, the drake warned them away, warned them not to dig or to probe the caves. They did not listen—and when some of the "beings" they unearthed began to unstiffen, the dragon had no choice but to slaughter them all. The bones of their camp still lie at the foot of the mountains, heaped in ice and snow.

Searching the ruins of the camp reveal up to forty corpses, consisting of humans, gnomes, elves, and a goblin. Casting *speak with dead* on a corpse reveals that the dragon attacked them, that the explorers found a city nestled in a valley within the mountain range, and that they found "strange beings we believed to be corpses" in the caves.

THE CITY ABOVE

This unnamed city stands in an enclosed valley surrounded by forbidding mountains. A perpetual fog hangs above its streets, out from which creep the tallest rooftops like weeds in otherwise blighted soil. The city can only be accessed through flight or caves that even the Underdark's greatest horrors avoid.

The city's streets are lifeless, blanketed by snow and ice—but in the vaults below, star spawn slumber, awaiting the day when their distant masters—the Elder Evils who lurk beyond the stars and below the earth—bid them to not to destroy all life, but only make it stranger.

The streets are lightly obscured by a perpetual fog, while a thicker shade heavily obscures the city at an altitude of 100 feet.

Better Not Seen. The city predates history but has seldom been discovered by outsiders—but not thanks to any defenses left by its citizens or laid by wise explorers. Except for the fog cloaking its streets and its remote nature, nothing at all prevents outsiders from finding it. No illusion cloaks it, no spell forbids mortals from entering. Rather, the mortal mind instinctively *ignores* the city and scours it from one's memory. Throughout history, thousands have flown over the city or seen it from the cave mouths linking it to the outside world, but almost every single person—be they man, beast, or dragon—has forgotten the city or outright ignored it.

Forcing one's mind to view and comprehend the city requires a successful DC 22 Intelligence saving throw. Characters that succeed on this saving throw must later succeed on a DC 30 Intelligence saving throw to remember the city at all. A creature that fails this saving throw but is still compelled to enter the city acts normally but forgets the city's existence after they leave—if they manage to leave.

Inscrutable evil permeates the city. Visitors inherently know that something here is *wrong*, and it's not just the architecture or the way the sky seems to take on a strange green shade when seen from the ground. Visitors can sense a growing cancer far, far beneath the earth—and they can't shake the feeling that it is *aware* of their presence.

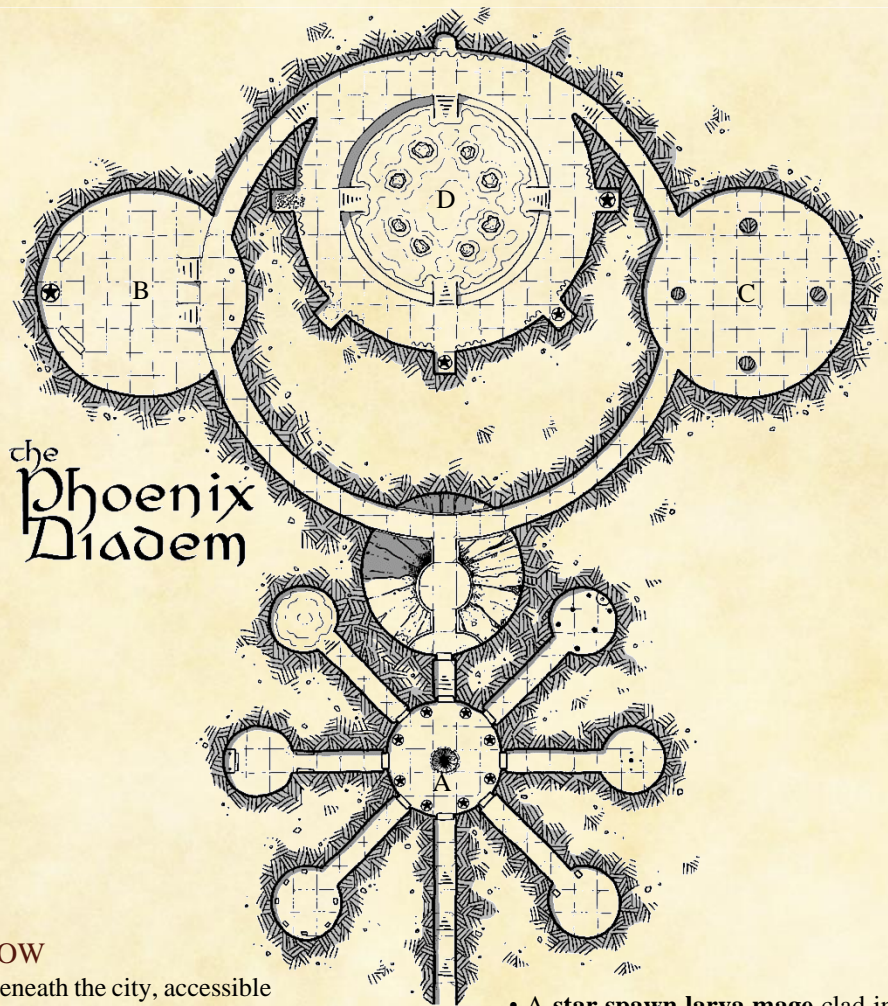
Architecture. The city was built not for mortal minds and its citizens enjoyed non-Euclidean architecture that shouldn't be possible with normal masonry. Ordinary folk are disoriented just from looking at its structures, which undulate to upwards of 100 feet in height.

The city is multi-tiered; arches connect many structures at multiple levels and stairs spiral upwards with no guard railings.

Temples. The city's grandest structures are temples dedicated to ancient gods that only the greatest experts of the occult can—and dare—name. The most prominent entity is represented by an eight-fingered hand with a fanged maw in its palm. With a successful DC 22 Arcana check, a character can identify this as the icon of Moander the Returner, an elder evil of rot and decay. A character that succeeds on this check must also succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or succumb to a form of Short-Term Madness (see App. C).

Catacombs lie beneath each temple, stuffed with mummified corpses of strange alien beings. Every catacomb ends with a massive stone slab inscribed with harmless but disturbing runes. A slab can be moved with a DC 25 Athletics check. Moving a slab grants access to the vaults beneath the city (see below).

Resting. Creatures that sleep (naturally, or by a *sleep* spell) in the city must make a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw upon waking up, taking 18 (3d8) psychic damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success. On a failure, a creature also develops a form of Long-Term Madness (see Appendix C) and doesn't gain the benefits of a long rest. Their dreams are haunted by nightmares of the Far Realms and whispers from some entity beneath the earth assuring them that it shall one day return to reduce this world's inhabitants to madness.



the Phoenix Diadem

THE VAULTS BELOW

Countless chambers lie beneath the city, accessible from above through the city's catacombs. Were their inhabitants dead, they too could be considered catacombs, and explorers are likely to confuse them for such. Within these vaults, star spawn slumber en masse, awaiting their thunderous return to the world above. All creatures within these vaults are in stasis; they do not need to eat or sleep while hibernating, and they do not age. Taking any damage causes a creature to wake up, as does a loud noise (such as a scream or *thunderclap* spell).

Map. Every chamber complex is identical; hundreds of them lie beneath the city with every exit sealed. Refer to *The Phoenix Diadem* above. Every square is 5 feet. A chamber complex has the following features:

- Every chamber is sealed by a massive stone slab that requires a DC 25 Athletics check to move.
- Stars on the map represent statues dedicated to Moander, the elder evil who fathered these star spawn. The mortal mind can't withstand the sight of these statues and is compelled to look away, or simply ignore the statue. Characters that behold a statue, willingly or not, take 3 (1d6) psychic damage. Star spawn are immune to this effect.
- A 40-foot-deep pit gapes in Area A, at the bottom of which slumbers an oozing **shambling mound** (it counts as an ooze, and its Engulf and Slam attacks deal acid damage).
- The chambers adjacent to Area A each contain a **star spawn grue** and 1d4 creatures with the statistics of **nothics**. The northwest chamber's creatures are slowly being dissolved into a soup to nourish the star spawn when they awaken.

- A **star spawn larva mage** clad in a *robe of stars* (*DMG* pg. 194) floats before the statue in Area B. If awoken, it rouses all other star spawn in the chamber. Attempting to steal the robe also disturbs it.
- Area C is streaked with sickening shades of yellow and green thanks to a rift swirling between the pillars. Non-aberrations that linger here for more than a minute must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or take 22 (4d10) psychic damage and succumb to a form of Indefinite Madness (see Appendix C). A creature takes half as much damage on a success and does not succumb to madness. A creature can attune to this area as if it were a magic item; a character that does can cast *divination*, contacting an entity of the Far Realms.
- The pool in Area D is filled with gray slime, out from which loom petrified humanoids eerily similar to humans but with brutish brows; a *legend lore* spell confirms them as ancestors to modern humans. Within the pool slumbers a **star spawn hulk** and 1d4+2 **star spawn grues**.

THE AWAKENING

No creature in the cosmos, mortal or divine, knows when the star spawn are due to awaken. The answer even eludes deities of knowledge and fate. Slaying them now may be the world's only hope for survival—but, as Fernyxis worries, waking them prematurely may just spark an apocalypse that the world isn't ready for. Intruders that wake the creatures had better eradicate all therein, lest the survivors marshal their kin and get started on the future they were promised by Moander.

AT WORLD'S END

Polar or Polar Night Encounter Tier I or IV

At the very epicenter of the North Pole shines an orb of celestial light—a portal linked to the planet's South Pole. Those who enter the portal's alabaster light are brought to an icy expanse of the Feywild. The expanse is ten miles long and hemmed in by glacial cliffs that drop into a frigid sea. An aurora dances above, strung up between twin pillars of light that pierce the sky. The expanse is pocked by glaciers and patches of ice, making it a dangerous hike for the careless. Those who survive the trek and exit from the opposite portal emerge at the opposite end of the material world, thus sparing them months or even years of travel across the globe.

Alas, these portals are but a seasonal convenience, appearing only during the summer and winter solstices. Travelers eager to circumnavigate the world will make biannual pilgrimages to the portals, either arriving by their lonesome or choosing to travel in vast groups. Migrants, merchants, and refugees alike rely on the portals to escape the North or South. This frigid expanse is not without its perils, however. Capricious fey haunt the pass as the solstices draw near, eager to ensorcell mortals and bring them back to their own demesnes in the Feywild.

Travelers. During the solstices, refugees and travelers gather at the poles. They typically consist of 2d10+10 **commoners**, guarded by 1d3 **veterans** and 1d6+4 **tribal warriors**. Other unique individuals (adventurers and the like) are likely to take advantage of the portal. Although it has happened only a few times throughout history, a nation might send its army to the portal to invade another nation on the other end of the globe.

Notably, a tribe of 3d10+10 **arakocra** utilize the portal to migrate twice a year, traveling to the North Pole on the summer solstice and the South Pole on the winter solstice. The tribe is led by Chieftess Oorra An'kel, an **arakocra** with a Wisdom score of 16 (+3) and a Strength score of 15 (+2). The tribe has learned the hard way that they can't trust other travelers and refugees to behave; they are perpetually wary of others and choose to fly away from danger rather than confront it.

Fey Predators. On a good day, the expanse is haunted by only a handful of fey. During the summer solstice, 1d6+4 **satyrs** (one of which wields *satyr pipes* (see the *Monster Manual*) await travelers in the pass, promising good cheer and good times to whomever accompanies them deeper into the Feywild. During the winter solstice, 2d4+3 **darklings** prey upon travelers after dark. On either solstice, a pack of 1d6+3 **yeth hounds** menace hikers. Occasionally, an archfey comes to offer impressive individuals his or her patronage.

ON THE EVE OF ETERNAL NIGHT

Polar Night, Tier IV

The Forsworn, the secretive order of outcasts seeking to drape the Arctic in an eternal polar night, intend to pervert this portal. The Shadowfell surrounds the mortal world just as the Feywild does; some scholars claim they are mirrored opposites. By altering the portal's magical properties, the Forsworn can link the portal to the Shadowfell, allowing darkness to seep into the mortal world unabated.

For more details on this secretive order, see the *Eternal Night* sample storyline. If this encounter occurs at the North Pole, the event occurs on the winter solstice; if "the Arctic" is the South Pole, it occurs on the day of the summer solstice.

SHADAR KAI TRAITS

The shadar-kai are the elves whose ancient exodus to the Shadowfell has left them and their children forever changed. Every shadar-kai character has the following traits:

- A shadar-kai elf has darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- They have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put them to sleep.
- They have resistance to necrotic damage.
- Once per long rest, they can use a bonus action to teleport to an unoccupied space they can see within 30 feet. Until the start of their next turn, they have resistance to all damage.

On the day of the solstice, as travelers march to a fresh start on the opposite end of the globe, the Forsworn invade the portal under cover of darkness. They consist of:

- Yasne Illiwan, a disgraced **drow matron mother** that founded the Forsworn to create her own kingdom of darkness on the surface. Although she is still faithful to Lolth, her evil deity, the drow has cozied up to Mother Night (also known as Shar, the goddess of darkness in the Forgotten Realms) that many of the Forsworn worship.
- A number of exiled shadar-kai elves: a **soul monger**, 1d3+1 **shadow dancers**, the **gloom weaver** Narwyn (if she survived *The Altar of Mother Night*), plus 2d6+2 **cult fanatics** (see the *Shadar-Kai Traits* sidebar).
- 2d6+2 **drow**, three **drow elite warriors**, a **drow mage**, Soryn, Yasne's **drow favored consort**, and the **drow house captain** Vhondryl, Yasne's lover and champion.

The Forsworn must close the opposite portal so that its power flows to its twin. To do so, they must escort Soryn there, where he casts a 5th-level *dispel magic* spell to temporarily close the portal for up to five minutes. Soryn must concentrate (as if on a spell) to keep the portal closed, otherwise it roars back open. While it's closed, Yasne must cast a modified *gate* spell at the original portal using an action. The portal becomes permanently affixed to the Shadowfell if Yasne concentrates on her spell for one minute. Her spell fails if the opposite portal opens again in the meantime. If successful, she links the Shadowfell to the Material Plane, allowing its darkness to seep into the world. Creatures within the Feywild have one minute to escape back into the Material Plane (either by reopening the opposite portal or by diving into the dying light of the nearer portal).

Escorts. Once they enter the Feywild, the Forsworn divide themselves into the following groups:

- Soryn, three **drow elite warriors**, half the **drow**, the **drow mage**, and the **soul monger** depart for the opposite portal. Soryn has prepared *wind walk* instead of *chain lightning* to get him and up to nine companions to the other side of the expanse.
- Yasne, Vhondryl, half the **drow**, and the remaining shadar-kai remain at the original portal. The Forsworn consider Soryn expendable, but not Yasne, trusting that, should they fail, the order can rise again later, should she survive.

Yasne's Demise. If Yasne is successful, the Shadowfell portal groans open with such force that it draws her into the realm's most dismal parts. In moments, she's hurled into the Negative Plane itself; if not for Lolth's favor, she would surely die. Alas, her entry into that fell plane releases a **nightwalker** into the Material Plane. The surviving Forsworn escape back into the mortal world, rejoicing—that is, until the nightwalker snuffs them out. See the *Nightfall* encounter for details.

AURORA ARCANA

Weather Encounter, Tier I

Once again, the Arctic is graced by the soothing light of the aurora. Characters who have never seen the aurora before gain Inspiration, which they must use within the next seven days. Individuals who have beheld the aurora before can also gain Inspiration if they succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw.

Although it is no less inspiring, tonight's lights are different. Characters with the Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature notice sigils dancing in the light. Any seer can recognize this as an omen promising imminent upheaval. The sigils stand in sharp contrast to the aurora, both in color and movement: the aurora trembles eastward and the sigils seem to push *against* the flow of light. To non-spellcasters, nothing seems amiss; the aurora looks as it ordinarily does.

As this spectacle unfolds, certain spellcasters in the region are empowered (as determined by the color of the *aurora arcana*; see the table above). Until dawn, these spellcasters can add their spellcasting ability modifier to the damage rolls of their spells. If the *aurora arcana's* color is azure, clerics of the light divine domain are especially invigorated; they can reroll any 1s they receive when rolling the damage dice of spells that deal radiant damage.

Lore. A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Arcana check recalls that the *aurora arcana* is an omen awaited by many. Some take it as the implicit approval of the gods; others regard it as the opportunity to rewrite their own destinies. Amongst the glacier dwarves, it is a grim omen; to the snow elves, it marks a new era; the darfellan believe it signals the conception of a messiah, whom they eagerly await; and tundra halflings see it as a miracle to celebrate with hastily-thrown festivals.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The *aurora arcana* is an omen awaited by many—and it might be the event that triggers some of the more disastrous affairs of your campaign. If you're using any of the sample storylines provided in this supplement, or linking it to other encounters, it can mark a dramatic shift or victory. For example:

- It may herald the birth of the darfellan messiah (see *Darfellan Messiah*).
- It may signal to the hags of the *Dark Sisterhood* storyline that now is the time to put aside their reservations and form a coven, in which case *Hag Summit* occurs.
- It may herald the return of the Flayed Queen, or the death of her jailor (see *Army of the Damned* and *The Glacial Prison*).
- It may signal that the star spawn described in *At the Mountains of Madness* are due to awaken.
- It may be the sign that Masra (of *Temple of the Frostmaiden*) needs to throw her lot in with Withrens Fyar, the architect of the *Dire Winter* storyline.

AURORA ARCANA

d6	Color	Spellcasting Ability
1-2	Alabaster	Intelligence
3-4	Orange	Charisma
5-6	Azure	Wisdom

AVALANCHE!

Mountain Encounter, Tier I-II

The avalanche is the most iconic danger of mountain travel. An avalanche can wipe away trees, destroy buildings, and slaughter countless souls. You can run this in addition to many of this supplement's other encounters, such as *A Clash of Earth and Sky*, *Snow Bulette*, or *Forer-Slag!*

Avalanches occur when the force exceeds the strength of the snowpack upholding it. Contrary to popular belief, avalanches are not triggered by mundane sound, but they are triggered by erosion, rainfall, storms, rockfalls, and even something as simple as the snow melting from sunlight. Avalanches may also be triggered by magic—a *shatter* or *thunderwave* spell, or the thunderous blows of an elemental being. A traveler shouting in the mountains will not cause an avalanche, but a careless mage can with a stray spell.

RUNNING AN AVALANCHE

Avalanches aren't always deadly, but this encounter concerns only those that are. Consider the following:

Size. An avalanche's lethality is determined by its size. When creatures come into contact with an avalanche, they must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, taking the damage described below on a failure, or half as much on a success. On a success, a character manages to swim with the avalanche, staying within 1d6 feet of the surface.

- A Small-sized avalanche typically covers 150 to 650 feet and reaches the end of the slope it began at. It inflicts 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage to creatures it overtakes.
- A Medium-sized avalanche usually covers 700 to 1,000 feet and can continue traveling on flat terrain for up to 150 feet. It inflicts 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage to creatures caught in its grasp. It also can destroy small buildings and rip away all but the mightiest of trees.
- A Large-sized avalanche covers 3200 to 6500 feet and can continue traveling on flat terrain for up to 150 feet. Creatures caught in its grasp take 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage. The avalanche can also destroy most buildings, and even level entire sections of forest.

Speed. An avalanche's foremost tide moves forward 40+3d10 feet every round at initiative count 15 (losing initiative ties). A character that is overtaken by the avalanche must attempt the Strength saving throw described above.

Obstacles. Depending on the size of an avalanche, characters in its path may resort to obstacles to escape it. A character that is within 10 feet of the avalanche's tide must succeed on a DC 10+1d6 Dexterity saving throw to reach the obstacle. With a DC 13 Nature or Survival check, a character can determine if an object will hold up to the avalanche. For example, a tree can withstand a Small-sized avalanche, but not a Medium one. A character can climb the tree or hold onto it to avoid being swept up by the avalanche.

Buried Survivors. It is incredibly difficult for the ordinary person to free themselves from an avalanche once they've been buried. Once the snow settles, it becomes as dense as concrete. Most folk have no choice but to wait for rescue, making oxygen and the cold their chief concerns. A character typically has only 1d10+5 minutes of oxygen available to them. Consider these:

- A buried character that succeeds on a DC 20 Strength check can dig through 1d6+4 feet of snow.
- A character that succeeds on a DC 12 Survival check recalls that they should dig a small pocket near their face for oxygen. On a success, they increase their oxygen supply to 4d10+10 minutes.
- By being submerged in snow, a creature is exposed to extreme cold, even if they're wearing heavy furs or other cold weather gear. They must make Constitution saving throws against extreme cold every 10 minutes, instead of every hour. Only creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage do not need to make saving throws against extreme cold.
- A character that detect a buried character with a successful DC 14 Perception check (except while in a Skill Challenge).

AVALANCHE SKILL CHALLENGE

You can run an avalanche as a Skill Challenge. The avalanche's size determines the difficulty. This Skill Challenge is ran *after* the avalanche occurs but elements of it occur before or during the avalanche.

Preparation. This phase represents identifying the avalanche before or while it occurs. Characters can antecedently attempt these ability checks to determine whether their character was prepared for the avalanche or if they reacted accordingly to the danger. Typically, a character can only attempt one of these, and once one or two of the party members have, no more Preparation ability checks can be made. Suggestions include:

- A Survival check recalls the necessary precautions one must take to survive an avalanche, such as "swimming" along the surface, hiding behind appropriate obstacles, and digging out a pocket of air if one is buried.
- Through an Investigation check, a character may possess the wherewithal to leave signs that indicate where they've been buried, such as a bright scrap of cloth or a weapon.
- A Nature check can identify avalanche-prone areas by slope and the consistency of local snowfall.
- A Perception check allows a character to detect the avalanche just as it occurs in the distance, by either sight or sound.
- An Acrobatics check can be made by a character that was hit by the avalanche to maintain their balance, possibly riding on the avalanche's surface, or remaining on an obstacle that they used to weather the tide.

Survival. Characters that are buried by the avalanche are in the Survival phase and must take measures to withstand the extreme cold and limited oxygen while waiting for rescue, or to free themselves.

- A buried character that succeeds on a DC 20 Strength check can dig through 1d6+4 feet of snow. This counts as a success for the skill challenge, but not a failure. If the character frees themselves from the snow, they can partake in Rescue-related ability checks. Once one party member has succeeded on this type of ability check, it no longer counts as a success if other characters succeed on it later.
- A spell dealing fire damage, such as *produce flame* or *burning hands*, can melt snow.

AVALANCHE SKILL CHALLENGE

Size	Difficulty	DC	Successes
Small	Easy	10-14	3
Medium	Medium	14-18	5
Large	Hard	18-22	8

- An Investigation check can be made to determine which way is up and to create a pocket of air to breathe.
- An Acrobatics check can be made to free one's limbs from the crushing snow.
- An Insight check can be made to calm oneself or gather their wits, allowing them to think clearly.

Rescue. Characters that aren't buried under snow can rescue others. The risk here represents rescuing all characters before they run out of oxygen or freeze to death.

- A Perception check allows a character to detect someone. A failure delays finding another character by 1d6 minutes.
- An Athletics check can be made to dig a character out of the snow. Having a shovel or similar implement adds a +2 bonus to their ability check. A failure also costs a character another 1d6 minutes before they realize they've failed the task.
- An Investigation check can allow a character to map out where and when the avalanche would have taken them. A failure means a character wasted 1d4 minutes attempting to map out someone's path or followed a false trail.
- A spell of *locate creature* or *locate object* allows a character to find their target quickly.

Aftermath. If all characters are rescued from the snow but the party has yet to succeed or fail the challenge, the Aftermath phase begins, which represents taking measures to avoid hypothermia, collecting belongings, or avoiding confusion.

- An Insight check allows a character to recognize where they stand in the changed landscape.
- Through an Investigation check, a character can map out the avalanche's path of destruction, which may inform them of what was buried or destroyed.
- A Survival check allows a character to determine how far off-course the avalanche pushed them.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Like a shipwreck, an avalanche is another opportunity for your campaign's story, not an end. You can use it to kill off additional characters, separate the adventurers, interrupt a battle, or shake-up the plot. It should never be used with the intent of actually killing the entire party.

BARBEGAZI SKATER

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier I-III

The barbegazi (or "frost gnomes" in Common) are fond of icy slopes and vast, frozen expanses where they can pursue their own strange passions—skiing, bandy, and other sports arctic folk consider decadent and foolhardy. The gnome that the party encounters, as they cross a frozen lake or expanse of ice, is busy skating at extraordinary speeds. As they soon learn, the gnome is fleeing from a **young remorhaz**, **remorhaz**, or **purple worm** (determined by whether you run this encounter at Tier I, II or III, respectively).

Frantic Skater. Rasmorn Murnig was out practicing for his warren's annual skating competition when he first felt a tremor echo out through the ice. Like the dedicated athlete he is, he dismissed it to focus on honing his toe loop maneuvers. Soon, a creature burst from the ice; were it not for his extraordinary talent as a skater, the gnome would've been in the beast's jaws.

Rasmorn is a LG **bandit** with the following changes:

- He reads, writes and speaks only Gnomish.
- He is Small and has a speed of 25 feet.
- He has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- He has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws made against magic.
- He has resistance to cold damage.
- He can move across icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice and snow doesn't impede his movement. While moving down slopes of ice or snow, he has advantage on Acrobatics checks to maintain his balance.
- He wears a pair of skates of permanent, sculpted ice, which are worth 100 gp each, or 250 gp for the pair.

The party first sights the gnome in the distance; his beard is coated in ice. A successful DC 13 History check identifies him as a frost gnome and the strange shoes he's wearing as "skates." As the barbegazi skates towards them, they hear his alarmed shouts. A character that speaks Gnomish that succeeds on a DC 12 Perception check understands that he's shouting, "Ice worm! Ice worm! Run!"

A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Insight check feels a tremor echo out from the ground and successfully interprets it as a huge creature burrowing through the ice. That creature soon bursts from below, showering the scene with a hailstorm of icicles. Without their intervention, Rasmorn is doomed to die in the beast's belly.

If Rasmorn is slain, he professes his thanks in Gnomish and leads them to his warren, where his clan treats the party to a meal of cold noodles and roasted caribou. Provided the party can communicate with them, the barbegazi also offer to teach the adventurers how to skate. A promising student that succeeds on both a DC 15 Acrobatics check and DC 17 Performance check is rewarded with a pair of *skates of the nimble dancer* (see the sidebar).

SKATES OF THE NIMBLE DANCER

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While you're moving on ice and wearing these skates, you have advantage on ability checks to maintain your balance and saving throws made against being knocked prone.

Additionally, this magic item has 3 charges. It regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While you're on ice, you can expend a charge to take the Disengage action as a bonus action.

BARK OF THE WERESEAL

Sea Encounter, Tier II

A **wereseal** haunts the frigid coastlines and ice floes. Unlike other lycanthropes, wereseals are not inherently evil; many just wish to live in peace among walruses or seals, free from the suspicions of ordinary men.

While at sea, traveling along the coast, or crossing ice floes, the adventurers encounter a wereseal, who is already engaged in some other activity.

Roleplaying the Wereseal. Born as Amaruq ("grey wolf"), the ordinary human fell prey to a wereseal's vicious bite as he and his brethren were hunting seals along the coast. For all his life, Amaruq believed the dark tales spun by his people—tales that claimed he would become a monster destined to slaughter his family and betray his tribe. Wishing to spare them from such a fate, Amaruq abandoned his wife and children to find peace at sea. He has since come to consider his pod of lion seals as his new family. Although Amaruq is now confident in his ability to control his curse, he fears that he has been gone too long—that his family may be dead or even revile him. This is his greatest sorrow, and it eats at him every day.

Amaruq has his moments of weakness; whenever he has a foe at his mercy, he must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to ignore the urge to kill them.

Treasure. Amaruq carries a spear and wears a parka when he is on dry land. He also has a mask carved from walrus ivory (50 gp). He wears this mask whenever he is in his true form, as he fears retaliation against his family, should he be recognized.

AGAINST MEN

The wereseal is protective of his newfound kin, the walruses and seals of the Arctic. Intolerant of seal hunters, Amaruq can be found terrorizing men. He mainly uses his spear, wishing to avoid spreading the curse of lycanthropy. Survivors flee back home to spread word of the wereseal that has forbidden hunting pinnipeds. A bounty has been put out, promising glory and gold (100 gp's worth in walrus ivory) to whomever slays the beast.

Amaruq might attack the adventurers if they near the territory of his sea lion pod, or if he considers them a threat.

At Sea. The adventurers encounter a boat of two shellshocked **tribal warriors** who warn them of the wereseal hunting in the east. Three of their brethren were slain by the beast and another drowned in the frigid sea.

On Shore. 1d4+2 **tribal warriors** are advancing on seals on the shore. As they approach, Amaruq assumes his hybrid form and attacks.

AGAINST BEASTS

The wereseal preys upon the same creatures his namesake does. Unlike an ordinary seal, however, the lycanthrope can also prey on **killer whales**. The adventurers find him ravaging a whale while in his hybrid form or feeding on it in the water. With a successful DC 14 Nature check, a character recalls that orcas prey on seals—so how is one eating a whale? Should they come to investigate the corpse, Amaruq attacks.

Amaruq may also have led his pod of sea lions to the whale's corpse, allowing them to ironically dine on their chief predator.

AGAINST MONSTERS

The wereseal cannot tolerate other predators in his waters and actively seeks out **chuuls**, **merrows**, and other aquatic horrors. Because he, like true seals, hunts penguins, Amaruq might also encounter a penguinwere (a **jackalwere** variant described in *The Penguinwere*).

Under this variant, the adventurers encounter the wereseal as he battles against some watery monster. While the battle occurs in the water, the wereseal remains in his seal form. The party is given a front-row seat to a monster impotently clawing at what seems to be an ordinary seal. Its attacks leave only light grazes that the seal shrugs off.

Treasure. The monster may carry treasure:

- A **chuul** carries an uncommon magic item, which it intends to bury in a cache designated by its ancient aboleth masters. It clutches a *ring of warmth*, an *eversmoking bottle*, or a *cloak of the manta ray* (*DMG* pg. 193, 168, & 159, respectively).
- A **merrow** is adorned in 1d6+2 bracelets and pendants of gold, each worth 20 gp. It also carries a *trident of warning* (see pg. 213 of the *DMG*).
- A penguinwere may carry a *hag eye* if it serves the bheur hag coven described in the *Dark Sisterhood*. See *MM* pg. 177.

THE BEAST OF BUTCHERY

Tundra Encounter, Tier IV

The Arctic's gnolls have been blessed with the presence of their creator, **Yeenoghu**, the Beast of Butchery. Just how the demon prince has been allowed into the mortal world matters little; the abomination must be slain, lest his rampage sunders the Arctic.

Yeenoghu's arrival has set off magical sensors and alarms all over the world, but it will be some time before diviners interpret these signs and alert the world's heroes. With the adventurers already in the Arctic, it falls to them to defeat the demon—or at least hold him off until reinforcements arrive.

Origins. Fiends cannot simply wade into the Material Plane; they must be summoned, and conjuring a demon prince requires great magic indeed. While the summoning of a demon prince is a campaign unto itself, you can quickly determine the identity and purpose of the summoner from these options:

- A **nagpa** who will loot the corpse of civilization for forbidden and arcane knowledge after Yeenoghu has finished his tour of destruction.
- A **drow matron mother** cast *gate* and bid Yeenoghu into this world so that Lolth, his demonic adversary, can infringe upon his territory in the Abyss while he rampages across the Material Plane. The matron mother may or may not have escaped from the scene of the summoning.
- A **warlock of the fiend** found a *candle of invocation* (see pg. 157 of the *DMG*) capable of summoning demons.
- A misguided **planetar** and its angels sought to duel the demon prince but were not up to the task. Seeking equal footing, the foolish celestial summoned him to the Material Plane.

Facing the Beast. As Yeenoghu rampages across the Arctic, gnolls all over the region flock to feed on his leftover kills. The Beast of Butchery is accompanied by a **flind**, two mutated **shoosvas** with a flying speed of 40 ft. each, and two **gnoll hunters** that fire off arrows from Yeenoghu's shoulders. You can draw upon any number of gnolls to fill out the battle; their horde is only minutes away.

Yeenoghu in the flesh! I swear! Swear it on my mother's—well...

...I just really wanted to include Yeenoghu
— The Author

REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

The world's premiere heroes (or the next best thing) arrive mid-combat. On the fourth round of combat, an **archmage** teleports into view. The identity of this wizard is up to you; you can use Homer Erendalias of *Homer's Hovering Hovel* as a default. The archmage already lacks a 1st, 3rd, and 7th level spell slot (used for *mage armor*, *fly*, and *teleport* spells) and uses a 9th-level spell slot as an action to summon his allies:

- A reluctant N human **blackguard** named Sytal Foebreaker
- A NG **drow shadowblade** named Nivvia Rhomduil
- A LG high elf **war priest** named Wraneirosa

Tactics. The heroes quickly add their power to the party's, using the following tactics.

- On his first turn, the archmage casts *disintegrate* at 8th-level (96 (15d6+40) force damage). On his second turn, he casts *wall of force* to contain Yeenoghu (which the demon later counters with *dispel magic*), which ends the wizard's *fly* spell. Yeenoghu's gnolls quickly swarm the wizard to break his concentration.
- On his first turn, Sytal casts *blinding smite*, dealing 13 (3d8) radiant damage on Yeenoghu.
- On her first turn, Nivvia Shadow Steps onto Yeenoghu's back (or casts *darkness* on a chunk of his armor if the battle occurs in bright light). Her following turns are spent plunging her shadow blades into the demon's nape.
- On her first turn, Wraneirosa casts *flame strike*, dealing 14 fire and 14 radiant damage; Yeenoghu is immune to fire damage, however. On her second turn, she casts *guardian of faith* and charges Yeenoghu. On her third turn, the priest casts *spiritual weapon*.

The Brass Adventists. Alternatively, you can utilize the Brass Adventists, an adventuring party described in the encounter of the same name. By this point, they are a Tier III party. They've answered the call not for altruism, but simply because they too are citizens of the world and cannot afford a demon prince to run rampant. Their resident wizard, Rogthun, uses a *spell scroll* to teleport his comrades in. They employ the following tactics:

- Rogthun casts *fly* on himself on his first turn. His second is on a 5th-level *magic missile* spell. Ascertaining that the demon is immune to fire and cold damage, he continues casting the same spell until he runs out of spell slots.
- Huell, wielding a +1 *greatsword*, valiantly charges Yeenoghu.
- Mornelia casts *erupting earth* on her first turn, *blight* on her second, and *tidal wave* on her third. Her later turns are spent casting *healing word* spells.
- On his first turn, Russyl summons a **yeth hound** with *conjure fey*. Until his concentration is broken, he continues casting *eldritch blast*. After the spell is broken, he follows up with *hold monster*.

THE BEAST BUTCHERED

Yeenoghu does not go quietly into the night. When slain, the demon makes three final Flail attacks before being banished back to the Abyss where he regenerates. His earthly body must be burned, and the ground hallowed by a *hallow* spell within 24 hours, otherwise the area is permanently corrupted by demonic energies. Demonologists can take advantage of this newfound corruption to summon fiends or open portals to the Abyss.

Additionally, gnolls that feed on Yeenoghu's corpse—and the beasts *will* come, making a dark pilgrimage from all over the continent—swell and explode, creating 1d6+4 more gnolls, who can then feed on Yeenoghu's corpse. One single gnoll can create a horde if allowed to dine upon its creator's sacred flesh.

BEREAVED SHIELD GUARDIAN

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier II

A bulky, gray figure in the distance roams in a cyclical pattern, making no effort to hide. As one draws closer, they see that it is a metallic knight of sorts—a construct. A successful DC 14 Arcana check identifies it as a **shield guardian**, a construct created specifically by wizards for protection. Every guardian, as this ability check recalls, is bound to an amulet. Whomsoever wears that amulet exercises complete control over the construct, making it an extraordinary find by scavengers. Fortunately for the party, the amulet and its creator are right under their noses.

The shield guardian is making a circuit around a fixed point; in other words, it's patrolling the area as if to guard something. It only pauses when it detects a nearby creature; sure enough, this point is proven when a bird passes by. The guardian tenses up as this happens, locking its eyeless gaze on the creature; it resumes its patrol after the bird leaves. After a minute of careful study and a successful DC 13 Insight check, the character realizes that the construct was likely given orders to patrol this area and is thus guarding something of great importance.

If the adventurers approach the area, the construct attacks.

Dead Wizard. The guardian's master and creator is dead, buried beneath a week's worth of snow. A little digging reveals the ash of a campfire, a collapsed tent, and the wizard's corpse. A DC 13 Medicine check reveals he died to hypothermia. The wizard's icy demise is likely owed to a sudden blizzard, be it mundane or the one caused by the *Living Blizzard* encounter.

The wizard is curled up in a fetal position with the control amulet around his neck. Rigor mortis and ice have made the corpse unpliable, to say the least. Outside of combat, the corpse can be easily lifted, and the amulet removed. To retrieve the amulet in one swift motion during combat requires a DC 14 Strength check made as an action.

Sudden Adversity. In the aftermath of their encounter with the shield guardian, the adventurers are attacked by a **frost salamander** (or a **remorhaz**, if you so wish), which has been drawn to their heat. The creature bursts from below.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Be aware that, should the adventurers successfully retrieve the wizard's amulet, they'll have complete control over the shield guardian. This construct adds immense firepower to the party—which may just be your way of rounding out a low number of players or justifying even deadlier encounters.

THE BRASS ADVENTURISTS

Character Encounter, Tier I-III

Some are born legends; some are destined to save the world. Not the Brass Adventists, a selfish adventuring party currently roaming the Arctic. Some would describe them as evil, others as opportunists. All who've met them would agree that they're utter bastards in search of their next reward.

The Brass Adventists can be encountered virtually anywhere, acting as the foils to your adventurers. They may snake a reward out from under them or wind up in the same dungeon. They may cross paths at a hot spring or share a drink at the tavern. They may be on the same quest the adventurers are, in which case it becomes a race to see who can finish it quicker. They might even be tasked by a hag to retrieve a seemingly insignificant item that will later cause great harm to the Arctic.

Goals. The Brass Adventists are motivated by gold, glory, and power. Although they're selfish and err towards evil, they are not inherently inclined to throw their lot in with some of the more destructive factions of the Arctic. They themselves would suffer should the plans of Withrens Fyar succeed, for example, and would likely oppose him—or just leave the Arctic entirely.

Tactics. The Adventists are, first and foremost, opportunists. They fight only when they must and prefer ambushes to open conflict. Most of their engagements are handled by Russyl's deft hands and silent steps.

At Higher Levels. The Brass Adventists can level up alongside your adventurers to further challenge them. By running this encounter at Tier II or III, the Adventists have new and better statistics, making them comparable foils for the party.

HUELL BRADSHAW: HUMAN WARRIOR

Words are Huell Bradshaw's weapons. This formidable human warrior learned long ago that a well-placed lie can win the day more often than well-placed steel. Huell has fought three wars: one as a reluctant conscript, and two as a smiling sellsword. Huell has, secretly, founded the Adventists twice now. The first Adventists perished in a dungeon crawling with undead. To his credit, Huell stayed by his companions' side until the bitter end, for he considers loyalty in the face of danger to be the greatest ideal a person can have.



The Adventists' second generation began when Huell met the kenku, Russyl. His silver tongue has kept this dysfunctional family together these last two years.

Statistics. Huell is a LE human **veteran** with a Charisma of 16 (+3) and a +5 bonus to Deception and Persuasion. He wields a rapier instead of a longsword (+5 to hit, 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage on a hit) as well as a buckler, raising his AC to 19.

Roleplaying Huell. Huell is trapped between his selfishness and his loyalty. He's most delighted when both traits line up. He sees himself as the Adventists' father and leader; in his mind, he is the glue that holds everything together, and the voice that puts to rest all arguments. He feels at his most impotent whenever he fails to wrangle the party, whenever his words fail, and whenever he cannot dominate others in an argument. In another life, Huell may have become a hotheaded lawyer.

You can voice Huell with the following sample dialogue:

- "You don't leave a brother behind."
- "Glory has no use among the dead."
- "Ask the dead where honor got them."
- "I am what I am."
- "The world is ours, if we're only willing to take it."
- "As long as we're true to each other, the world can smoke it."

At Higher Levels. At Tier II, Huell becomes a **champion** with a Charisma of 16 (+3) and +6 bonuses to Deception and Persuasion. At Tier III, he also has a +1 *greatsword*.

MORNELIA: ELVEN DRUID

Nature is the cudgel with which Mornelia intends to cow the world. This druid is by far the most wicked of the Adventists; even Huell is hesitant to speak to her flippantly.

Statistics. Mornelia is CE elven CE **druid** with the following changes to her statistics:

- She can read, write, and speak Common and Elvish.
- She has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic cannot put her to sleep.
- She has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- She has a movement speed of 35 feet.
- She can attempt to hide when lightly obscured by foliage, mist, heavy rain, falling snow, and other natural phenomena.

Roleplaying Mornelia. There are few that will ever earn the wicked druid's gratitude or appreciation; the jury's still out on the Brass Adventists, whom Mornelia sees only as useful tools. This changes at Tier II, however, after she has spent more time with them. While she doesn't change her stripes completely, she now considers the Adventists as her adopted family.

At Higher Levels. Mornelia grows in power at later tiers. Augment her statistics in the following ways:

- Her Wisdom increases to 16 (+3) and then 18 (+4) in Tier III, which raises her spell save DC to 14 and then 15.
- Her hit points increase to 55 (10d8+10).
- Her proficiency bonus increases to +3.
- Her Spellcasting trait improves, and she gains *Change Shape* as an ability (and starting in Tier III, she can change into a CR 1 beast or lower).

Spellcasting. Mornelia is an 8th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following extra druid spells prepared:

3rd-level (3 slots): *call lightning, erupting earth, tidal wave*
4th-level (3 slots): *blight, wall of fire*

Change Shape (2/Day). As an action, the druid magically polymorphs into a beast with a challenge rating of 1/2 or less and without a flying speed. It can remain in this form for up to 2 hours. The druid can choose whether its equipment falls to the ground, melds with its new form, or is worn by the new form. The druid reverts to its true form if it dies or falls unconscious and it can revert to its true form using a bonus action on its turn.

While in a new form, the druid retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength and Dexterity scores are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks. It cannot speak or cast its spells while in this form.

ROGTHUN: OUTCAST ORC

Exiled from his tribe, Rogthun crossed paths with the fledgling Adventists in the wild. Seeing the benefit of an alliance, the four cleared cultists out of a dungeon and split the reward. After being paid, Rogthun simply asked, "What's next?" He has been with the Adventists ever since.

Statistics. Rogthun is a LN **orc** with an Intelligence of 14 (+2) and the Spellcasting trait:

Spellcasting. Rogthun is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mending, minor illusion*

1st level (2 slots): *burning hands, disguise self, shield*

Roleplaying Rogthun. Rogthun is a silent, broody orc. His penchant for arcane magic is both the source of his pride and greatest shame: feared for his potential, his treacherous uncle and warchief banished him from the tribe. His spellbook, a tome of stitched leather, is his constant companion. He can be found practicing his spells with the same fervor of a warrior—for one day, he swears, he will return to the Splitskull tribe to depose his uncle and restore his honor.

At Higher Levels. Starting in Tier II, Rogthun completes his studies, becoming an **illusionist**. In Tier III, he becomes an outright **mage**. In both iterations, he has the following changes to his statistics:

- He has 42 (5d8+20) hit points and wears plate armor (AC 18).
- He has a Strength of 18 (+4), a Constitution of 18 (+4) and a Charisma of 12 (+1).
- He has a +5 bonus to Intimidation and a +2 bonus to Survival. As a **mage**, both these bonuses increase by an extra +1.
- He has darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- As a bonus action, Rogthun can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature he can see.

THE BRASS ADVENTISTS' LOOT

The Adventists vacillate between poverty and wealth. They always have, collectively, 4d12+30 gp, 7d8+35 sp, and 12d8+40 cp. Russyl always squirrels away an extra 2d4 gp and 1d10 sp.

Additionally, there is always a chance the Adventists have an uncommon magic item: one at Tier I, 1d3 at Tier II, and 1d4+1 at Tier III. It may be a +1 *wand of the war mage*, which Rogthun and Russyl may fight over; it might be a *cloak of elvenkind* that Mornelia insists is her birthright; it may be a pair of *bracers of archery* that Huell reluctantly uses, despite his hatred for archery.

Every item collected by the Adventists is an opportunity for your adventurers to gain a shiny, new treasure.

RUSSYL: KENKU SCOUT

When Huell Bradshaw found Russyl, the **kenku** was begging for coins and words on the street. The inveigler promised him riches and "entire paragraphs" of words he could mimic.

Roleplaying Russyl. Much of Russyl's vocabulary consists of cuss words and inspirational quotes from Huell, spoken in his very voice—much to Huell's delight.

You can use the following sample dialogue to voice Russyl:

- "Into the breach, you bastards! Into the breach!"
- "The world is ours, if we are only willing to take it."
- "Stand with me and I will stand by you."
- "There is no power greater than loyalty; it is a force that has upheaved entire nations."
- "Hey, pretty mama."
- "Enough of your mimicry, Russyl!"

At Higher Levels. At Tier II, Russyl strikes an accord with the Queen of Air and Darkness, becoming a **warlock of the archfey** with the following changes:

- He has a Strength of 10 (-1) and a Dexterity of 16 (+3).
- He has a +2 bonus to Perception (and a passive Perception of 12), +5 bonus to Stealth, and a +5 bonus to Sleight of Hand.
- He understands Auran, Common, and Sylvan but can only speak through the use of his Mimicry trait (see **kenku**).
- In the first round of combat, Russyl has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it surprised.

Tactics. With his newfound magic, the warlock is fond of summoning a **yeth hound** with a *conjure fey* spell. Thereafter, Russyl blasts at foes from afar with *eldritch blast* spells.

CATCH OF THE DAY

Taiga or Tundra Encounter, Tier III

Perched upon a frozen lake is an ice shanty—a portable shed used for ice fishing. The shanty is old, but well-built. Characters that analyze it and succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence check with carpenter's tools can confirm it is of fine craftsmanship and lightweight in its design. Although it appears to be safe, inside and out, this shanty is actually a clever trap devised by an **aboleth** lairing below the lake.

While fishermen sit in the shanty, the aboleth Ulyn swims up to the ice hole. With a slender tendril, it pulls a victim below the water, infects it with its foul disease (see its Tentacle attack) and enslaves it. Those infected with Ulyn's disease also become adapted for environments of extreme cold, allowing them to join their master below without freezing to death.

Shanty. The ice shanty is a 10-foot-wide, 10-foot-long, 15-foot-tall cabin on skis. Benches line the walls inside, and a 5-foot-diameter hole is cut into the floor, exposing a similar-sized hole in the ice below. There are three fishing poles in the cabin, two of which are leaning against the benches; the third is on the floor, as if it fell or a fisherman dropped it.

Missing Persons. The lake and shanty are an hour's trek from a settlement or outpost (use Manavik of *Manavik Under Fire* or Irdning of *Krampusnacht*). It doesn't take long for the party to hear about the 1d4+3 people that have gone missing, most of whom are fishermen or friends thereof.

Minions. Ulyn has three enslaved minions in the settlement, who are under orders to subtly lead others to the lake. They are:

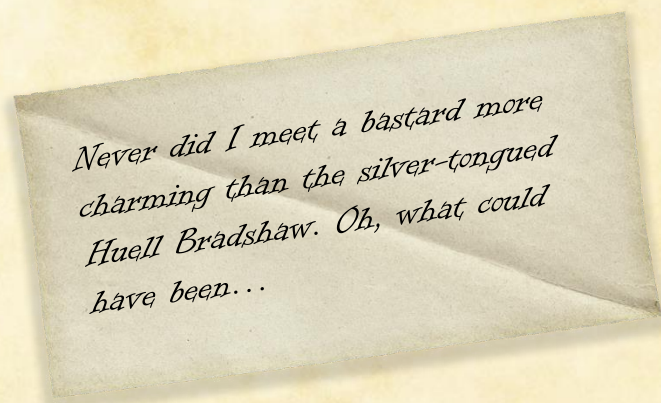
- Mitchel Calder, a LE human **spy**, who, if he suspects the party will investigate the lake, volunteers to lead them there himself to ensure they fall prey to his master's influence.
- Gregaros Shoemaker, a LE human **veteran** and high-ranking constable that silences all but the most persistent gossipers from mentioning the lake and missing persons.
- Geoffrey of Quale, a LE human **enchanter**, so far the aboleth's most prized minion. His role is to bring his peers to the lake every day so that Ulyn can enslave the trio for yet another 24 hours.

ULYN: JEALOUS TYRANT

The aboleth is a jealous tyrant that can't abide freedom amongst the "lesser races." All will be united under its banner one day when the seas swallow the world as they did in ancient times. Ulyn has a healthy fear of adventurers, having been slain by heroes half a dozen times before and only chooses to attack in overwhelming odds; it knows the deep price of underestimating mortals.

You can voice Ulyn with the sample dialogue below, which is delivered through its telepathy. Remember that once the aboleth makes telepathic contact with a creature, it learns that creature's greatest desires; Ulyn is sure to leverage that against a person.

- "Know that your freedom is but a curse... A curse I will rid you of."
- "I will shelter you from the cold... I will shelter you from the world itself."
- "I am your yoke, your past, your future."
- "I was old when your ancestors crawled forth from the sea."



Tactics. Ulyn is a merciless force that subjugates all it can and kills whomever it can't. The lake counts as its lair and "LA" refers to its lair actions. In battle, it uses the following tactics:

- Do not neglect Ulyn's Legendary Actions and Lair Actions!
- Despite coveting the adventurers as its newest disciples, Ulyn is ready to kill those it must and enslave any survivors once they're weakened.
- If Ulyn cannot drag anyone into the lake through the shanty's ice hole, it or its minions begin to break through the ice, creating 1d4+3 holes with a diameter of 5 to 15 feet. Minions may clamber out onto the ice; they have no fear of the frigid water. Ulyn never leaves the water, knowing it's at a severe disadvantage if beached.
- With a reach of 10 feet and a +5 bonus to Athletics checks, Ulyn can easily grapple foes from afar and drag them underwater. Minions also shove or drag creatures into the water.
- Assume that Ulyn has no more uses of its Enslave ability today if his three minions in town are still under its sway.
- If its enslaved creature is about to be freed or killed, Illuun targets it with a Psychic Drain LA to regain hit points.
- Using a LA, Ulyn casts *phantasmal force*, disguising holes in the ice. A creature under that spell always rationalizes why things don't pan out and will still consider the illusion real.
- Ulyn flees when reduced to 40 hit points; its tail whips against the ice below the shanty, causing the structure to crash right through the ice, leaving a jagged hole in the surface.

Minions. Ulyn is served by a number of minions below the lake, their bodies diseased and their minds tattered by constant exposure to the aboleth. All human minions are afflicted with the aboleth's disease and cannot stay out of water for too long. These minions are:

- 1d4+1 **chuuls** that have answered Ulyn's ancient call.
- 1d4+2 mad human **tribal warriors** armed with only their fists (+3 to hit, 2 bludgeoning damage). They're better off using the Help action or dragging weak characters to the water. Do not neglect to use their Pack Tactics trait.
- A mad human **berserker** armed with a spear (+5 to hit, 1d8+3 piercing damage).



*Pray you never see this
when going for a swim.*

THE CREEPING IGLOO

Character Encounter, Tier II

It is a structure that haunts the Arctic; it can be found lurking in the bowels of a boreal forest; it might be perched upon the outskirts of town; it may be the only refuge in a blizzard. There is no place in the Arctic that Granny Yrsula's creeping igloo can't go. The **bheur hag** that lairs in this enchanted structure goes wherever men and women have yet to succumb to despair. Like all of her foul ilk, the hag delights in watching mortals resort to grim measures to stay alive.

The "Creeping Igloo" is feared throughout the Arctic; those who glimpse it flitting across the horizon or sitting on the vista are forced to confront the grim rumors that permeate the region. Many say the hag offers charms, magic, and other solutions to those desperate or dumb enough to bargain with her.

Enchanted Igloo. Granny Yrsula's igloo is a 15-foot-radius hemisphere. The walls are a foot thick. Yrsula can reshape the igloo as an action to add or remove artificial windows or replace the doorway with a wall of snow. The igloo is magical; it has an AC of 13, a damage threshold of 5, immunity to cold, poison, and psychic damage, and resistance to all other damage types. Every 5-foot section has 25 hit points; once reduced to 0, the section melts, possibly allowing creatures entry into the igloo.

Locomotion. When Yrsula speaks the command word "Uir," meaning "take flight" in Auran, the igloo levitates ten feet off the ground and exudes a frigid cloud teeming with floating, daggerlike ice shards. The igloo gains a movement speed of 40 feet and floats 10 feet off the ground. It can move across uneven terrain, up or down stairs, slopes and the like, but it can't cross an elevation change of 10 feet or more.

While animated in this way, the igloo's floor becomes solid. It can hold up to 1,000 pounds, otherwise it floats gently to the ground and becomes immobile. A bheur hag can direct the igloo with her graystaff (no action required). The igloo can turn, but it cannot flip upside down or perform similar maneuvers.

Creatures within the 30-foot-diameter, 10-foot-tall cylinder below the igloo are subjected to a *cloud of daggers* spell (spell save DC 14; see *PHB*, pg. 222).

Wards. The hag has warded her lair with the following spells:

- An *alarm* spell placed upon the entranceway alerts Yrsula to intruders if she's within 1 mile of the igloo. See *PHB*, pg 211.
- If three 5-foot-sections of the igloo are destroyed, a *Snilloc's snowball swarm* is cast (save DC 14) at the attacker, if they are in range. See *XGE*, pg. 165.
- When a creature attempts to take one of Yrsula's possessions from the igloo, 1d4+1 snowmen animate (use the statistics of **scarecrows** with immunity to cold damage and vulnerability to fire damage). They attack all intruders but don't slay them unless commanded to by Yrsula. Yrsula can use a reaction to animate the snowmen if she's within 100 feet of the igloo. Once a snowman is destroyed, it cannot be animated again for another 24 hours.

GRANNY YRSULA

As ugly as she is wicked, all who look upon Yrsula immediately know her for what she is—a hag. Her flesh is blueish white, the color of a frozen corpse, and her teeth could carve ice and her nails are black daggers. Yrsula is a sadist; nothing warms her heart more than to see suffering, desperation, and misery in the world. She has haunted the region for decades. An industrious sleuth can trace her involvement to many of its great tragedies.

GRANNY YRSULA'S REGIONAL EFFECTS

If Granny Yrsula has been empowered during the *Dark Sisterhood* storyline, the following Regional Effects may surround her lair (to a range of 1 mile), even while it is moving.

- Birds, rodents, snakes, spiders, or toads (or some other creatures appropriate to the hag) are found in great profusion.
- Beasts that have an Intelligence score of 2 or lower are charmed by the hag and directed to be aggressive toward intruders in the area.
- Strange carved figurines, twig fetishes, or rag dolls magically appear in trees.
- Small avalanches of snow intermittently fall, blocking a path or burying intruders. A buried creature is restrained and must hold its breath until it is dug out. Human-sized blocks of ice appear, containing frozen corpses. These corpses might break free and attack as **zombies**, or their spirits might attack as **specters**.
- Blizzards come without warning. A blizzard occurs once every 2d12 hours and lasts 1d3 hours. During a storm, creatures moving overland travel at half normal speed, and normal visibility is reduced to 30 feet.
- Roads, paths, and trails twist and turn back on themselves, making navigation in the area exceedingly difficult.

Roleplaying Yrsula. The hag is cantankerous and cruel; she spits barbed words meant to derail even the most confident of heroes. She smiles relentlessly and hums an ugly tune that only she finds pleasant.

Yrsula rarely resorts to violence; she would rather let others go with an emotional scar. Visitors are allowed to shelter in her igloo—if they're so desperate—but only if they give her a drop of their blood, which she freezes and incorporates into the igloo's walls. "I will save this one for later," she says ominously.

Bargainer. Yrsula loves to make a bargain, parking her igloo on the outskirts of town to attract the desperate and depraved. Like any other hag, her help is nothing but a slow, ironic poison that will come back to bite the bargainer later. She often offers meat to the starving, firewood to the cold, and hope for the desperate. Her later victims shouldn't be surprised to learn that the meat was humanoid, the firewood the bones of a crucial waystation, and the hope a twisted a prophecy.

DARK SISTERHOOD

For years now, Yrsula has ignored or refused invitations to form a coven with Lone Miyraeth and Greatmother Winter, the other two hags described in the *Dark Sisterhood* storyline. If she does agree and the *Hag Summit* encounter occurs, Yrsula's power grows—regardless of whether her newfound sisters survived—granting her Regional Effects that surround her creeping igloo. She enjoys all options if her sisters are alive (even if they're not present), 1d3+1 if one is still alive, and 1d3 if they both perished. See the sidebar above for these effects.

THE CRYSTALLINE TAVERN

Tundra or Urban Encounter, Tier I

Carved from a glacier, the Crystalline Tavern sparkles in the glow of the setting sun. Built by a glacier dwarf frost mason, it remains an important waystation in the Arctic. Travelers come to escape the chill and share news both small and dire. It has weathered two dozen years and thrice as many blizzards. Tislyn Aurora is the tavern's current mistress.

The tavern sports many warming beverages, alcoholic or not, heated up by their resident halfling's *prestidigitation* spells.

Map. Refer to the map below; every square is 5 feet.

Kennel. Behind the tavern is a kennel for sled dogs. At any point, 2d12+16 **mastiffs** are penned inside. 1d10+4 dog sleds are neatly lined up along the northern wall.

STAFF

The Crystalline Tavern is staffed by three people:

Mistress Tislyn, a NG glacier dwarf **veteran**. Up until four years ago, she was a respected warrior. Were it not for her treacherous brother, she would be next in line for the throne of Clan Aurora. By pinning an embarrassing defeat at the hands of the gnolls on her "poor leadership," he ensured the favor of his mother and her councilors. Now, while Tislyn tends bar, Gloynd stands poised to inherit control over the clan.

As a glacier dwarf, Tislyn has the following racial traits:

- She can read, write, and speak Common and Dwarvish.
- She has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- She has advantage on saving throws against poison and has resistance to poison damage. She is always naturally adapted for extreme cold.
- She knows the *ray of frost* cantrip. Once per long rest, she can also cast both *ice knife* (spell save DC 10) and *flame blade* (the blade is forged of ice and deals cold damage). Her spellcasting ability for these spells is Intelligence.

Ricfyfyr, a LG tundra halfling **commoner**, oversees the kennel. He has an unquenchable passion for hounds, many of which tower over him. He never goes anywhere without Oliver, his pet **mastiff**. Ricfyfyr dreams of policing the Arctic with a cavalry of halfling dog riders and dog sledders, but he is in sore need of a master to train him in the ways of war.

As a tundra halfling, Ricfyfyr has the following racial traits:

- He reads, writes, and speaks Common and Halfling.
- He is a size of Small with a speed of 25 feet.
- He has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- Whenever he rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die, but must use the new roll.
- He can cast *prestidigitation* and *create bonfire*. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability for these spells.



Milly Lightfrost, a NG frost gnome chef (a **commoner** with a +4 bonus to cook's utensils). She is seldom seen and more often heard cursing the state of the vegetables she gets here in the Arctic. Tislyn calls her cooking "a magic all its own."

As a frost gnome, Milly has the following racial traits:

- She reads, writes, and speaks Common and Gnomish.
- She has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- She is a size of Small with a speed of 25 feet.
- She has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
- She has resistance to cold damage.
- She can move across icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice and snow doesn't impede her movement. While moving down slopes made of ice or snow, she has advantage on Acrobatics checks to maintain her balance.

PATRONS

On any given day, 2d6+3 patrons are enjoying a warm brew at the tavern. Notable patrons may include:

- The Brass Adventists, an adventuring party described in the encounter of the same name.
- A human **spy** of the elemental cults involved in the *Global Warming* or *Storm of the Century* storylines. The spy is here to collect intelligence for his distant masters.
- Daerdan the Yarnspinner, a crass dwarf **bard** (with advantage on saving throws against being poisoned and resistance to poison damage) fond of sharing tales to drunk patrons.
- Withrens Fyar, a CE human **archmage** and architect of the *Dire Winter* storyline. A character with a passive Perception score of 14 or higher notices he wears a glass snowflake on a silver chain. With a successful DC 13 Religion check, a character identifies this as the holy symbol of Auril, a cruel goddess of winter.

RUMORS AND NEWS

By carousing with the tavern's staff or patrons, the adventurers can pick up rumors and news, possibly linking them to many of the encounters in this supplement. Notable rumors include:

- A headless dog sledder has been sighted across the Arctic. Where she stops, a man is due to die. See *The Dullahan*.
- Thelgrym's Watch has fallen! Clan Aurora has sent a warband to recover the watchtower. See *Glacier Dwarf Warband* and *Thelgrym's Watch*.
- A frost giant toddler was seen roaming the wastes alone. See *Ice, Ice Baby* for details.
- Clan Aurora recently slaughtered a gnoll warband. However, if even one gnoll manages to escape, it might spawn more of its foul ilk through demonic rituals. This is precisely what is to occur in the *Cycle of Carnage* encounter.
- Travelers should steer clear of "The Pike," a useful landmark. Those that look upon it get the sudden urge to lick the pike, freezing their tongues to its metal shaft. See *Like Tongues to Ice* for details on this encounter.
- A troll has been seen wandering the frozen wastes. Additional rumors related to this include: the frost giants of Skoldheim having a new jarl and, later, more vicious raids conducted on smallfolk settlements. See the *Ordning of Might* storyline for details on these encounters.
- The dead have risen and are marching deeper into the Arctic—for reasons no one knows. See the *March of the Damned* encounter and *Army of the Damned* storyline.

*The waves bent to their every whim,
spiriting them across the frigid sea.
They claimed to be pilgrims... and
in a way, they were.*

CULTISTS EN ROUTE

Sea Encounter, Tier II

Through the ice floes travel boats rowed not by oars but the manic gestures of magi, who are manipulating the very tide to propel them across the sea. These sailors belong to cults of Elemental Evil: the Cults of the Crushing Wave and Eternal Flame. These two cults have warred for eons, with battles being waged between chapters and sects across countless worlds and planes. Two chapters, however, have put aside their differences and come together to summon a **phoenix** that will melt the polar icecaps. For more details, see the *Global Warming* storyline. The cultists found here on the frigid seas are on their way to Mount Erebus, a volcano deep in the Arctic that can serve as a portal to the Plane of Fire.

The cultists number forty in all and are spread out across ten keelboats. Their ranks consist of twenty **cultists**, ten **crushing wave priests**, six **crushing wave reavers**, and four **eternal flame guardians**, led by Galen Tutbra, a CE human **eternal flame priest** and his lieutenant Nyraga, a CE silver dragonborn **dark tide knight** that patrols the area on the back of a **killer whale** (see his Bonded Mount trait). As a dragonborn, Nyraga has the following racial traits:

- He has resistance to cold damage.
- He has the following action option:

Draconic Breath (1/Day). Nyraga unleashes a blast of frigid air. Each creature in a 15-foot-cone must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) cold damage. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage.

Roleplaying the Cultists. Nyraga has his orders: deliver the cultists to the shore, after which Galen Tutbra will lead them to Mount Erebus. Nyraga must then head back to warmer lands to escort the next influx of cultists. Their superiors do not tolerate failure, so neither leader is looking for a fight. When the cultists spot the adventurers, either on the shore, the ice, or in their own vessel, Galen Tutbra sends up a flare of fiery magic to hail them.

Galen Tutbra speaks on behalf of the cultists, insisting that they are but simple pilgrims who have bonded with elemental spirits. Contest his Deception check with a character's Insight check. If a battle breaks out, Galen aims a **fireball** spell at the adventurers' vessel and orders the cultists to flee. Nyraga holds the line as the cultists retreat.

A tortured or intimidated cultist (DC 14) reveals that they are heading towards the volcano, Mount Erebus—but only Galen and Nyraga are aware of the cults' calamitous agenda.

Ships. These boats are similar to keelboats but can hold up to ten passengers. Each boat is manned by a **crushing wave priest** that uses elemental magic to propel the craft, raising its speed to 5 mph. Ship statistics can be found on pg. 119 of the *DMG*.

Treasure. The ships are stocked with enough provisions to feed and clothe forty people for ten days. The Crushing Wave cultists harvest fish from the sea while in transit and the Eternal Flame cultists cook them. Galen Tutbra carries an *elemental gem (red corundum)* (see *DMG* pg. 167), which allows him to summon a **fire elemental**.

CYCLE OF CARNAGE

Tundra Encounter, Tier I

The adventurers come upon a macabre scene: scattered limbs, scarlet snow, and a gaggle of arctic hyenas. Parkas and packs lie discarded, all weapons and treasures ignored by the lone **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu** conducting the ghastly rituals needed to spawn more of its foul ilk. If it is not interrupted, the many hyenas feasting upon its victims will bloat up and explode in a shower of gore. It is from those ruined corpses that new gnolls clamber out of, ready to paint this world red in the name of their demonic lord, Yeenoghu.

Foul Ritualist. The gnoll is the sole survivor of a slaughtered warband that fell to the glacier dwarves of Clan Aurora. Despite their heroism and sacrifices, the dwarves failed to eliminate the last gnoll. Unfortunately for them, and the region, one survivor is all it takes to spawn a new horde.

The gnoll has already begun its ritual; by when the party finds it, the hyenas must feed for two more rounds to birth the gnolls. If either the gnoll or the 2d4+2 **hyenas** are slain, the ritual fails. If they survive until the end of the second round, the hyenas explode, and out from their guts crawl a number of **gnolls** equal to the number of hyenas that survived until then.

The hyenas, for their part, use their actions to feed on viscera.

Demonic Spawn. The **gnolls** are unarmed and unarmored (AC 11). Therefore, they can only make Bite attacks. Although there are weapons lying nearby, the gnolls are too fresh to life to know how to wield them. The gnolls also spawn with only 11 hit points apiece. They swarm the party with no concern for their wellbeing or shortcomings.

Cycle of Carnage. If even a single gnoll survives the fray and escapes, it is blessed by Yeenoghu, becoming a **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu**. It then devotes itself to spawning yet another warband by gathering arctic hyenas to feed on its future victims. The adventurers have this one chance to spare the Arctic from such carnage, otherwise the cycle repeats.

Treasure. Whatever ambitions this amateur adventuring party nursed have been forever snuffed out. They consist of a human warrior, an elf archer, a dwarf priest, and a half-orc wizard, all dressed in cold weather gear—furs, parkas, and the like. The following can be scavenged from their corpses:

- A longsword, a shortbow, twelve arrows in a quiver, a yew wand, and four daggers.
- A holy symbol of Dumathoin (a dwarven deity of secrets whose icon can be identified with a DC 12 Religion check).
- A spellbook containing the following spells: *burning hands*, *grease*, *identify*, *snare*^{XGE}, *shield*, and *Tenser's floating disk*.
- Two sets of hide armor and one set of leather armor.
- A total of 8d6+23 gp and 12d4+20 sp.
- A *potion of healing*, clutched in the half-orc wizard's hand.
- Four explorer's packs with 2d4+7 rations and 5d10 + 20 feet of rope altogether.
- An alabaster mask, worn by the dwarf priest, worth 15 gp.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This edition of *Tall Tales* has a heavy focus on arctic gnolls. If your version of the Arctic lacks hyenas you can have this breed of gnolls be based upon wolves or even foxes. These feral beasts still worship the demon lord Yeenoghu, and their statistics remain the same.

DARFELLAN MESSIAH

Sea Encounter, Tier I

There is a superstition amongst the darfellan that great upheaval is at hand whenever a child is born completely blue or white. Years ago, on the eve of their genocide at the hands of sahuagin, the birth of such a child was initially considered a great omen promising a golden age for their people.

Now, a new child has been born in the Arctic, and her coming has been heralded as the start of a new age. Darfellen all across the region now flock to the village of Akilu's Folly to see this possible messiah for themselves. Superstitious as ever, and for good reason, these travelers have taken to the seas in special *kyal*—distinctive boats the darfellan fashion for pilgrimages. Each *kyal* is carved with decorative fins draped with kelp.

As the adventurers ply the sea or roam the coast, they catch sight of six *kyal* with five darfellan apiece oaring between the ice floes. One *kyal* containing five NG **tribal warriors** passes close by enough for the two parties to have a conversation. Ulirak, the oldest of the warriors tells them in Common, "Great change is at hand; our messiah has been born, and with him has come a tide of vengeance. Be warned: the darfellan will at last have our day in the sun."

Ulirak is unique in that he can cast the *produce flame* cantrip (+1 to hit). Charisma is his spellcasting ability for this spell.



Darfellan Traits. The darfellan have the following changes to their statistics:

- The darfellan have a swimming speed of 40 ft.
- The darfellan can hold their breath for 10 minutes.
- The darfellan have advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape grapples.
- While the darfellan are underwater and not deafened, they have blindsight out to 30 ft.
- The darfellan speak Common and Darfellan, a multisyllabic language with harsh, authoritative tones.

AKILU'S FOLLY

Should the adventurers wish to visit Akilu's Folly themselves, the darfellan direct them to the village—a grim, skeletal haunt if there ever was one. The village is on a forbidding coastline that prevents all but the most skilled sailors from laying anchor. The village and its visitors are quiet and wary; the seers have yet to determine whether this child's birth is an auspicious omen or the death knell of the darfellan. The air is thick with tension; it will be another day until the seers declare their interpretation. Until then, the darfellan speak low, and busy themselves with fishing or shoring up the village's defenses. More pilgrims arrive by the hour until Akilu's Folly seems fit to burst. Even Etiran Emeris (see *Ice Haulers*) is present, either with *Ranger* anchored offshore or by his lonesome.

In the meantime, the adventurers can make themselves useful by helping out with fishing, repairing wilting huts, and other tasks. What the darfellan lack in coinage they more than make up for with, food, shelter, pelts, scavenged pearls (worth 15 gp each) and jewelry (25 gp in worth) fashioned from walrus ivory. Since the darfellan are self-sustaining isolationists, they have little use for such baubles.

On the following eve, the darfellan seers (**priests** devoted to the Whale Mother, the darfellan deity) step out from the lodge, brandishing the infant. The most scarred seer declares, "For too long have we suffered in obscurity, we, the sole survivors of a genocide. No more. No more! The Whale Mother has shown us her favor once again, and we say in one voice that this child marks the Great Age! Tonight, the tide of vengeance ebbs back into the sea—and with it, *us!* The sharks will know of us and they will fear, for *war* is at hand, and this time, it is *they* who shall bleed!"

The gathered darfellan, now numbering in the hundreds, roar with approval and take to the sea to announce the launch of a new crusade against the sahuagin. In the coming months, news of the darfellan's resurgence spreads across the Arctic, the sea, and greener lands.

DEADLIEST CATCH

Sea Encounter, Tier I-III

Fishermen prowling the frigid seas have pulled up a wonder—or horror. This encounter has several variants, described below. Additionally, you can run the *Man Overboard!* encounter if any members of the crew fall overboard.

Ship. *Chronomancer* is a fishing vessel famed throughout the Arctic. It counts as a sailing ship, but only requires a crew of twelve to operate and can only hold up to eight passengers.

Crew. *Chronomancer's* crew has one of the deadliest jobs in the world. While sailors face peril all over the world, the icy touch of the Arctic's sea can kill men in a matter of minutes. If snow crabs were not so treasured in warmer lands, perhaps the crew would find more sensible waters to ply. Alas, the gold is too good to pass up. The crew mainly consists of human **commoners** with proficiency with vehicles (water).

The crew currently numbers eleven; they lost Mr. Obrien to an early grave last week. They're a sullen lot on a good day, but today's episode has animated them. As the winch hauled up the day's special catch, many a crewman speculated that they may have found treasure; one doomsayer, Mr. Whary, promised that this would be the ship's ruin.

Captain. *Chronomancer* has seen four captains in her time, the latest being Grol Shorttusk, an **orc** (with a Wisdom of 17 (+3) and an Intelligence of 14 (+2)); he speaks Common, Orcish, and Dwarvish). He is a tough but fair overlord respected and feared by his sailors. More cautious than daring, he's reduced crew casualties by fourteen percent since assuming command two years ago.

The Adventurers. The party may encounter *Chronomancer* while in their own ship or while they're on the coast. They may have hitched a ride on the ship or hired it to spirit them across the Arctic's ice floes.

ARCTIC MERMAID

Tier I

Chronomancer catches a female **merfolk** in its net; the poor woman has been hauled up from the shallows. Below the sea, she's acclimated to the cold, but as the sharp winds assail her, she risks developing hypothermia. This particular merfolk only speaks Aquan.

The crew believes the age-old myth that a captured mermaid can and must grant a wish; even Captain Shorttusk is partial to such a fable. Unless the adventurers convince the crew to let her go (requiring a DC 16 Persuasion check), they throw her in the ship's hold, emptying a barrel of ale and filling it with salt water.

While in the net, the merfolk is restrained. The net can be cut by dealing 3 points of slashing damage, or by using an action to attempt a DC 17 Strength check, causing the rope to burst on a success. If freed, the merfolk expresses her gratitude with a nod and returns to the frigid sea. Later, if the adventurers are at sea and under assault by aquatic menaces such as sahuagin or merrows, a force of 2d4+2 **merfolk** intervene on their behalf and attack their foes below the waves.

KING CRAB

Tier I

The crew hauls up a **chuul**; as they hotly debate whether this "king crab" is edible, the creature cuts through its nets and lands on the deck, prone. The crew scramble to arm themselves, which takes 1d4 rounds. Meanwhile, the chuul runs riot on the crew. Only the adventurers and Captain Shorttusk are ready to tackle the beast.

Treasure. Chuuls are driven to collect magical artifacts for their long-lost aboleth masters. This chuul possesses a *cloak of the manta ray* (see *DMG* pg. 159) that it took from a slain adventurer. The beast was on its way to bury it, following the instructions it was given eons ago, before the crew hauled it up from the seafloor.

THE ELEMENTAL GEM

Tier II

The crew hauls up a small coffer containing nothing but a few pieces of gold and an *elemental gem (emerald)* (see *DMG* pg. 167). The closest crewmate, Mr. Hickey, goes to snatch up the gem. If an adventurer is standing next to Hickey, contest their initiative rolls. If Hickey is successful, he grabs the gem and accidentally taps into its magic, summoning a **water elemental** as if by a *conjure elemental* spell.

Mr. Hickey revels in his newfound control of the elemental but being the idealistic and kindhearted fool that he is, he simply has the creature collect more crabs from the seafloor, so his crewmates don't have to risk their lives setting and retrieving traps. Later, he has the elemental perform tricks.

A character that analyzes the gem or watches the elemental's summoning can make a DC 17 Arcana check to ascertain that it was summoned by a *conjure elemental* spell. The DC is reduced to 13 for characters that have that spell on their class's spell list. This character recalls the duration of the spell and that, if the caster loses concentration on the spell, the elemental becomes hostile and is free to rampage across the Material Plane until the hour since it was summoned was elapsed.

If Hickey is not warned by these facts, he loses concentration on the spell when a rogue wave smashes into the ship. He loses his footing and crashes into the deck; the elemental breaks free and attacks the crew.

CONCH OF THE BOUND MARID

Tier III

The crew hauls up a lute-sized conch etched in swirling colors and strange symbols. A character that reads Primordial or Aquan can decipher these runes, which read "Rub the conch but twice; and that which is bound within will grant your greatest wish." (The verses rhyme in Aquan.) Soft harp music emanates from within the conch.

The conch is the earthly prison of the insidious Shah of the Waking Waters, a **marid** capable of granting a single wish (as in the *wish* spell; see the sidebar on pg. 146, *MM*). The genie was bound to the conch seventy years ago by Homer Erendalias, the human **archmage** described in the *Homer's Hovering Hovel* encounter. Once the Shah has granted the conch's wielder a wish, it is free to chart its own course through the world. Its first objective is to track down Erendalias and punish the wizard for his audacity.

When the conch is rubbed, the marid emerges in a dazzling display of otherworldly power; the music from the conch grows louder, the seas stiller, and the wind ceases to howl. Using a *tongues* spell, the genie announces, "Free at last, free at last, free! At! Last! Tell me, my mortal benefactor, what is it you desire most in this world? Your wish is my command!"

A character that succeeds on a DC 16 Arcana check identifies the elemental as a genie, specifically a marid. They also recall that marids are haughty, self-styled nobles less malevolent than their distant kin. Lastly, they recall that a genie is freed from its earthly prison if it grants a wish. Appealing to the Shah allows it to escape.

Once the Shah hears the mortal's wish, the harp music takes on a sinister tone, betraying the genie's sadistic nature. It twists the mortal's wish, no matter how selfless or endearing it is. As these events unfold, the marid detaches itself from the conch and takes to the air. With an exalted cry, the marid declares that the world will once again feel its wrath. It then disappears into a cloud of vapor.

THE DEADMARKS

Mountain Encounter, Tier II

It is known only as the Breach—a mountain pass so cold and so remote that only the dumb and daring pass through. The Breach is deadly enough to give frost giants pause. The air is thin and the cold biting. It is only by the corpses of past climbers can the living prevail. These frozen corpses, some decades old, serve as landmarks for those that must navigate the Breach. Even with them, many an explorer has succumbed to altitude sickness or the unearthly cold. Now they must contend with another hazard: animate dead. A **dybbuk**—a fiend fond of violating corpses—now haunts the pass and moves corpses around to lure hikers, who rely on these grim landmarks, to their doom. Just how the fiend was beckoned into the mortal world remains a mystery.

Environment. The Breach is a place of extreme cold and high altitude (see Appendix C) with an added danger: for every hour a creature spends traveling through it, they must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take a level of exhaustion. The DC is initially 14, but subsequent saving throws cause it to climb to 17, 20, 23, 26, and, finally, 30. The DC increases regardless if the creature succeeds or fails its saving throw.

Navigating the Breach and emerging from the other side takes 1d4+2 hours. A successful DC 15 Survival check reduces this to 1d4 hours, or three hours if one utilizes the Deadmarks. With a result of 20 or higher, the travel time's reduced to 1d3 and two hours, respectively. A party can only attempt this check once. With the dybbuk moving the corpses, however, travelers can't rely on all Deadmarks, as 1d4+4 have been tampered with. By analyzing a corpse and succeeding on a DC 14 Investigation check, a character can determine whether a corpse has been tampered with, proving it can't be trusted. For every failure, travel is delayed by 1d6 x 5 minutes.

The Deadmarks. The corpses of the past are preserved by the extreme cold. Before the dybbuk's machinations, the corpses were arranged in the order below:

- An **orc war chief** that marks the beginning or end of the trek.
- A **dire wolf** known as "the Mangled Alpha." The dybbuk has moved it towards a precipice 200 feet above the ground; it likes to animate the corpse and push travelers off the edge.
- A frost gnome **scout** (the corpse is Small, with a speed of 25 feet, advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saves against magic, darkvision to a range of 60 feet and resistance to cold damage).
- A **hobgoblin devastator** nicknamed "the Graceful Loser," for he was first found kneeling in the snow, his staff laid across his knees, seemingly at peace with his death.
- A human **bandit captain** clad in bright green boots curled in a small limestone cave; this corpse marks the half-way point of the trek.
- A human **master thief** in a crimson cloak; this corpse marks the first (or last) quarter of the trek. The dybbuk has placed the corpse underneath a ledge prone to rockslides. If a character comes within 10 feet of the corpse, the dybbuk flies up to push rocks into motion. Characters near the corpse must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage.
- A slain **yeti** with the broken haft of a spear protruding from its stomach who marks the last third (or first) of the trek.
- A human **cult fanatic** bearing a holy symbol of Shar, a deity of darkness at the center of the *Eternal Night* storyline. The symbol is a black disc with a purple border worth 25 gp. A DC 13 Religion check identifies it as Shar's symbol.
- "The Frog," a **grung elite warrior** that somehow survived all of the Arctic just to be brained by a stray stone that fell from above. This corpse marks the end (or beginning) of the trek.

The dybbuk can possess any of these corpses, per its Possess Corpse ability. They have been rearranged randomly.

The Fiend Strikes. If the adventurers don't fall for the fiend's tricks, the dybbuk sheds all pretenses and possesses a corpse to attack. Until the fiend is destroyed in its true form, it continues to flee from corpse to corpse. With its Incorporeal Movement trait and a flying speed of 40 feet, pinning down the fiend is a Herculean task.



DEATH'S DUE

Mountain Encounter, Tier II

Sick, starved, and mad, a lone survivor of a failed trek shambles across the adventurers. Stricken with snow blindness, the man's vision can only be restored with a *lesser restoration* spell. Until then, he can see only blurs and has disadvantage on Perception checks reliant on sight. He blubbers incoherently for aid; should the adventurers choose to shelter him, they earn the scorn of the **revenant** hellbent on exacting his revenge upon the survivor.

Survivor. Lansford Hastings is an opportunistic human **scout** and author of *The Emigrant's Guide to the Arctic*, a tome that the adventurers may be familiar with. Hastings's experience is, however, overblown and almost fictitious. He makes his living by leading travelers through treacherous terrain or promoting paths he himself has established. His chief concern is profit, not safety. Indeed, his rushed decisions and his ill-conceived trails have been the misfortune for many a traveler. There is much blood on Hastings's hand, but so far he's escaped justice. That ends today.

Hastings' latest failure has cost nine lives. His charges were weary, sick, and wounded. Frequent accidents and delays had already cut into Hastings's bottom line; he had provided much of the gear and rations for the trip and hoped to recycle the leftovers into the next one. Moreover, he was running late for his next party. Desperate to end this disappointing trip, he took the party through a treacherous path no mortal has any business trekking through—a path prone to avalanches, one of which consumed the party. Hastings just barely escaped with his life but has spent much of his strength on surviving thus far.

Roleplaying Hastings. Lansford Hastings is little more than a moneygrubbing backpacker that has turned the wilderness into a business. He is a self-serving liar that never admits fault or accepts blame for not even the most brazen mistakes. Even worse, he's a coward concerned only with his life and his wallet.

You can voice Hastings with the sample dialogue below:

- "From lands green to white to craggy, the name 'Lansford Hastings' is associated with trailblazing and *hasty* guidance through otherwise awful terrain."
- "When one has my experience and success, you attract slander and jealousy like flies to night soil."
- "Mountains, tundra, great plains barren of life and rich with salt—you name it, and I've mastered it. Entire generations of folk have been born from my expertise and fine guidance."
- "Wolf Cook, Les Shroud, Ned Stafford—I've met all those guys." (This is in reference to Bear Grylls, Les Stroud, and Ed Stafford, all famous survivalists.)

Treasure. Hastings has little left to his name; his possessions are buried beneath an avalanche. He has a coinpurse with 2d4 +6 gp, 1d6+11 sp, and 1d10+4 cp. A dagger is the only weapon he has left to his name.

THE REVENANT: JUSTICE BEYOND DEATH

It was by no accident that the hikers died, but sheer and willful ignorance with a dash of incompetence. Time and again, the dragonborn Tyragos warned Hastings that his pace was too hasty, that they were ill-equipped for the journey, and that the path he had chosen was too arduous for the party. Alas, the guide did not listen, concerned only with his payday. His negligence cost nine lives—and Tyragos has returned from the dead to ensure Hastings is the tenth.

Tyragos can track Hastings no matter where the bastard goes. Removing himself from the spilled avalanche took him three days, even with his undead strength. Now that the revenant has been freed, he finds Hastings 1d4 hours after the party meets him. He accepts no quarter and expects none himself. He wounds and even slays the adventurers if they shelter Hastings or get in his way. After his initial attack, he declares, "This cur has slain nine and countless more with his negligence and greed! Justice that was not found in life will be meted out in death!"

Hastings, for his part, recognizes Tyragos, understands that the dragonborn has come back from beyond the grave to slay him, and shouts, "Slander! This foul creature is the seed of all our woes! Cut him down, lest he grow ever more powerful on my soul!" Hastings also flees at the first opportunity.

Statistics. As a blue dragonborn **revenant**, Tyragos has the racial traits below. Additionally, he is wearing hide armor (AC 14) instead of leather armor.

- He has resistance to lightning damage.
- He has the following action option:

Draconic Breath (1/Day). As an action, Tyragos unleashes a lance of necrotic energy in a 5-foot-wide, 30-foot-wide line. Creatures in the line must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

Tactics. Tyragos relies on a nighttime ambush to surprise the adventurers. He paralyzes Hastings with a Vengeful Glare, if he can catch the cur in his line of sight.



DEVIL'S PASS

Mountain Encounter Tier I-II

Devil's Pass is a convenient but shunned hiking trail that snakes through the mountains. It can shave days off a trek in summer and almost two weeks in winter—but to take this route is to surrender yourself to the malicious spirit that reputedly haunts the pass. If this inscrutable creature does not bedevil hikers, the spirits of the dead will certainly pick up the slack.

Devil's Pass is famous throughout the region; foreigners that succeed on a DC 13 History check recall the following tale; locals know it by heart. Ten years ago, nine hikers fell prey to some unknown force in the pass that compelled them to tear their way out of their tents (if the horror did not already tear its way in) and flee the campsite. Investigators concluded that six hikers died from hypothermia, but three others succumbed to physical trauma. One corpse had a fractured skull, another's chest was crushed, and the third was missing his eyes. One woman, who perished to the cold, was missing her tongue. No external wounds associated with the bone fractures were found. This infamous night has since been named Dyatlov's Doom (named so for Igor Dyatlov, leader of the hikers).

Since this dark day, few have had the courage or stupidity to cross the Devil's Pass. Those that have not perished therein emerge... stranger.

The Devil. An unseen force preys upon the pass. Determine its nature from the variants below.

The Dead. Devil's Pass has claimed over fifteen hikers; the nine most famous victims have risen as **specters** that haunt the pass. From the bones of their infamous campsite, these spirits reenact their doom. Their screams echo out across the desolate pass as they burst from where their tents once stood and run. Creatures that watch this spectacle incur their wrath.

The Trek. The Devil's Pass takes roughly 2d6 hours to hike through, or 2d4 if the hikers succeed on a DC 15 Survival check.

THE BEAST'S DEN

A monster has made the Devil's Pass its home and preys upon those that happen into its web. Choose one of the following:

Avian Horror. A **hook horror** exiled from the Underdark nests in the pass. It hunts at night, preying upon animals and hikers alike. Its nest is in a nearby cave, strewn with the bones of its many victims. Among its treasures are a *spear of warning* (DMG pg. 213) and a gold pendant worth 25 gp.

Cursed Arcanist. The **nothic** once known as Tes'karin spends his filthy days pondering the secrets of magic and devouring critters whole. On a steel strung across his torso is a spellbook containing all the spells contained in a **diviner's** statistics.

The Widow. For her vanity and deceit, an elven maiden was struck with the banshee's curse. It was here in Devil's Pass that she finally withered into undeath and now she haunts it as a **banshee**. The cave she slumbers in is decorated with the many appealing treasures she has stolen from hikers over the years: a gold bracelet (15 gp), 1d4+2 gems (20 gp each), and a small painting of a cathedral and village under a starry night. The painting was stolen from Waterdeep three years ago and is worth 2,500 gp to an educated buyer. A character identifies it as a missing work of the famous painter, Vincent van Gnome.

MADNESS CALLS

Madness lies at the heart of Dyatlov's Doom—madness induced by a black obsidian obelisk better left alone. The most curious hikers investigated a glacial cave and emerged... stranger. They did not disclose what they found to their friends, as if they had forgotten its existence.

The Maw of Madness. An illusion spell disguises the glacial cave to creatures not meant to find the obelisk—although whether fate, one's bloodline, a deity, or some eldritch horror determines who is worthy is unknown. The illusion can be discerned with a DC 15 Investigation check. One random adventurer is lucky enough to perceive the cave.

The obelisk yet remains in the glacial cave—but the cave only seems to appear to certain individuals. A creature that touches or reads the tablet gains inspiration but must also succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the seed of madness is planted within the soft soil of its mind. When the character next sleeps, they succumb to a random form of Short-Term Madness (see Appendix C) and are compelled to bring any person they can to view the obelisk—by force, if necessary. They gain the following Bond: "I must share this grandeur with others." A spell of *greater restoration* or *remove curse* rids them of this compulsion.

WILD MAGIC

Under this variant, the Devil's Pass is prone to outbursts of wild magic. On the night of Dyatlov's Doom, a litany of spells was unleashed upon the unfortunate hikers:

- A *phantasmal force* spell caused the initial panic, taking root in the mind of 1d4 hikers.
- *Magic missile* spells fractured bones and poked out eyes.
- An outburst up higher in the mountains caused katabatic winds to form and batter the hikers.

For every hour the adventurers spend in the Devil's Pass, roll a d10. There is an aggregate 10% chance that a Wild Magic Surge occurs (see *PHB* pg. 103) within 1d10 x 10 feet of the adventurers. Once a surge has occurred, this aggregate chance resets to 10%.



She said that once she laid her eyes upon it, her hand followed with a mind of its own. She heard nothing in her head but silence—a silence that screamed and thundered and promised her that all would be well in the world if she only shared this hope with others firsthand...

DOOM OF THE DAWNER PARTY

Mountain Encounter, Tier 1

After abandoning their homes in the hopes of a better life, a party of pioneers has been trapped by a cruel and early winter. With their cattle already dead, they've had no choice but to feast on their dead to survive. Such an atrocity attracts the attention and admiration of Yeenoghu, the demonic father of gnolls, who has offered the most unrepentant cannibals power and camaraderie, if only they continue to kill and feast in his name. As the pioneers' mountain cabins are consumed by paranoia, despair, and treachery, the Father of Gnolls' new cultists gather the strength to eradicate the last of their brethren.

The Dawner Party. The Dawner Party, named so for their early departure and their heart-nursed hopes, struck out several months ago. The pioneers believed they'd make it through the mountains before winter arrested the land; they were wrong. For all their initial good cheer and well-crafted plans, the party was plagued by frequent setbacks, poor decision-making, and even poorer leadership. By winter, they were still only halfway to their destination—and trapped in the mountains. The passes are still impregnable; there is no game left to hunt, no rations to eat. With so many already dead from sickness and hypothermia, one desperate soul suggested cannibalism.

The Dawner Party initially numbered eighty-seven pioneers, consisting of several families and a splattering of adults. By winter, they had lost twenty-seven to sickness, accidents, or infighting. Since then, they've been reduced to forty, and are now divided across three shoddily made cabins. Two cabins are only an hour from another; the third is almost an entire day's trek in the snow. Eighteen **commoners** live in the first two cabins; the farthest cabin is inhabited by sixteen **cultists**, two **berserkers**, one **cult fanatic**, and three **commoners** (who have been reduced to living cattle). Each of these cultists has been granted Yeenoghu's demonic boon (see the sidebar).

Cabins. Each cabin is 20 feet wide, 15 feet high, and 50 feet long. They have no roofs; oxhides and canvas stretch across the ceiling instead. Likewise, they have no doors or windows, only a large opening. Every cabin is equipped with a fireplace; wood is abundant, but even frequent fires cannot keep the chill at bay. The pioneers have been forced to remain inside for days or even weeks at a time, making the cabins filthy places enjoyable only by rats, if they were to winter here.

BREEN CABIN

Six **LG commoners** huddle for warmth in the most westward cabin, all of whom are suffering from two levels of exhaustion. They consist of two children, three adults, and the patriarch of the Breen family (who has a Wisdom of 16). Although all his sons and daughters are now dead, Elder Breen has managed to keep his five fellows from dying. When the Dawner Party began to cannibalize their dead, the Breen family abstained, as did many of this cabin's inhabitants. Of those still alive, only Gregris Pike (a **NG human**) willingly ate flesh; he also fed the meat to his two toddlers.

The adventurers first encounter the Breen Cabin, seeing a young man (Lemuel) clamber up a snowbank on the side of the cabin. He cuts away a bit of the oxhide that serves as a roof; looking both ways, he quickly gobbles it down. When he sees the adventurers, he shouts, "Saviors! The gods have delivered us! Elder Breen! Elder Breen!" He then darts into the cabin.

Elder Breen explains the situation but is hesitant to admit that the Dawner Party resorted to cannibalism. All the pioneers are visibly emaciated; he avoids answering how they have survived so far. He begs the adventurers for food, but only eats if all others are fed first. His next priority is to convince the adventurers to gather up the survivors and lead them from the pass; starved, they cannot make the journey without help. If the adventurers agree, he warns them of "the camp" down the path. "They have resorted to... darker methods to survive," laments Breen, looking away in shame.

With a successful DC 14 Insight check, a character can suss out that the pioneers are hiding something: that Gregris ate human flesh and fed it to his children to survive. He too is ashamed of his actions and believes he—but not his children—is destined for the Nine Hells for his crime.

GRAVES-REED CABIN

Lying just an hour east (or twenty minutes, if the snow and wind abate), the Graves-Reed Cabin has but twelve survivors left: nine humans (six adults and three children) and three dwarves (the Graves, a mother and her young sons). Each of these **commoners** are suffering from one level of exhaustion.

The survivors are on the verge of madness. Each and every one of them partook in cannibalism to survive, but they have thus far resisted Yeenoghu's promises and demands. Just last night, the cannibal cultists raided the cabin for three fresh victims (Amandis Murt and her two children).

So desperate and mad and ravenous, the survivors overwhelm the adventurers with daggers and makeshift clubs when they first arrive. If a character, adventurer or not, goes unconscious, the survivors begin to cut and tear away at their flesh, stuffing the meat into their mouths. Only the dwarf mother, Mistress Graves, and her sons abstain from this violence, who cower in the corner. The survivors can be cowed with a successful DC 13 Intimidation check, after which they howl with despair.

In the aftermath, Mistress Graves explains that the survivors here, even her and her children, ate the dead. "But we refused the call of the infernal being," she says, "the Beast of Butchery, the father of gnolls... We were strong. Those down the pass were not; they have embraced the demon. When they ran out of corpses, they came for ours; and when ours were gone, they had no qualms taking living cattle. Young Amandis and her children were stolen just last night."

CANNIBAL CAMP

Down the pass lies a camp of tents erected around another pine-log cabin. Traveling to or from the camp requires a successful DC 15 Survival check made over the course of 1d4+4 hours. On a failure, travelers are delayed by an additional 1d4 hours. If they fail the check by 8 or more, they get lost.

The camp has become an abattoir all its own. Screams echo out at all hours—from cannibals and captives alike—only to be snuffed out by the unrelenting wind. Sixteen **cultists** and two **berserkers** are led in bloody rituals by a **cult fanatic** named Kesebryn, who earned Yeenoghu's favor when he murdered and ate the young son of another pioneer. These bizarre rites are conducted only to appease their own madness; Yeenoghu cares not for their adulation or sacraments. Whenever they have no more corpses to desecrate and devour, these lunatics mutilate their own flesh instead. The fresh snow around the camp is stained a faint red by the frozen blood underneath.

DEMONIC BOON: YEENOGHU

Ability Score Adjustment: Up to a +4 bonus to Strength and Dexterity, with an equal penalty to Intelligence and Charisma

Signature Spells: *Tasha's hideous laughter* (1st level), *crown of madness* (2nd level), *fear* (3rd level)

Yeenoghu's followers grow more violent and insane with each passing day, embracing cannibalism as gnolls do. His most devoted followers gain the Gnashing Jaws action and the Rampage trait. Cult leaders also gain the Aura of Bloodthirst trait.

Gnashing Jaws. Melee Weapon Attack: bonus to hit equal to this creature's proficiency bonus plus its Strength modifier, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + the creature's Str. modifier as piercing damage.

Rampage. When this creature reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, it can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make its Gnashing Jaws attack once.

Aura of Bloodthirst. If this creature isn't incapacitated, any creature with the Rampage trait can make its Gnashing Jaws attack as a bonus action while within 10 feet of this creature.

These cultists are all human. They have knives and axes at their disposal but delight in using their Gnashing Jaws attacks (granted by Yeenoghu's demonic boon). The berserkers rely on their greataxes, primarily, whereas Kesebryn basks in the magic bestowed upon him by the Beast of Butchery; he also has the Aura of Bloodthirst trait and signature spells described in the sidebar above, in addition to the spells included in his statistics.

Eight **cultists** descend upon the adventurers when they first arrive, raving and howling in lunacy. Foam flecks their mouths and they seem impervious to the cold. The remaining cultists lair within the cabin. If the adventurers make towards the cabin, they have a chance to save Amandis Murt and her two children before they're devoured. The three have been bound by rope while Kesebryn leads his cultists in a foul ceremony to honor Yeenoghu. If his plans go uninterrupted, the innocents will be roasted alive.

AFTERMATH

If Yeenoghu's fledgling cult is not slaughtered, they overrun the other cabins and ration their meat until spring. By then, they've completely lost their minds and stitched gnoll-like patterns into their mutilated flesh. They become gnolls in their own right, mimicking the beasts' tactics and raids. Given time, many folk in the region believe an actual gnoll warband is running amok. Meanwhile, Yeenoghu sends visions to the nearest gnoll tribe, guiding them to the cult to make this red nightmare a reality.

If the adventurers approach the snowed in mountain passes, they may discover a gnarled rune carved into the cliff (requiring a successful DC 14 Perception to spot). With a successful DC 15 Arcana check, it is identified as a rune of transmutation magic—specifically a rune of storms, suggesting that someone engineered this dire situation in the first place.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The spellcaster or being responsible for the string of blizzards that trapped the Dawner Party might be a **bheur hag**, such as Granny Yrsula (see *Creeping Igloo*), Auril, an evil goddess of winter, or Withrens Fyar, the archmage involved in the *Dire Winter* storyline.

DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT

Mountain, Polar, or Sea Encounter, Tier I

As the adventurers cross a frozen lake or ice floes, a shadow darts across the snow-white ground: a giant eagle. Its shriek pierces the otherwise fearsome wind, and as the beast rolls, a red blur smashes through the ice—a fire genasi, screaming all the way down. If the party doesn't act, the genasi will drown below the ice—if she even survived the fall at all.

The genasi lands 20 feet away from the party; roll initiative, as there is very little time to save her.

The Genasi. Velvyn Spire is a NG fire genasi **bard**. She fancies herself a celebrity. Ignoring the warnings of her party's resident druid, she snuck off to a giant eagle's nest while the others made camp. She was determined to convince the eagle—through spells of *animal friendship*—to spirit her (emphasis on her) and her companions across the Arctic.

Velvyn is gregarious, and brims with confidence. Despite her fiery heritage, she manages to convince most folk to give her the benefit of the doubt—and when they won't, she isn't above a well-timed *charm person* spell.

Statistics. Velvyn is a **bard** with the following changes:

- She speaks Primordial, has darkvision to a range of 60 feet, and has resistance to fire damage.
- She can cast *produce flame*. She can also cast *burning hands* once per day. Constitution is her spellcasting ability for these spells (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks).
- She knows the *animal friendship* spell instead of *sleep*.
- She wears leather armor instead of a chain shirt, and a *ring of protection* (AC 14). Two *potions of healing* hang from her belt; the third shattered with the fall.

The Fall. There is no guarantee that Velvyn survives the fall. Dropped from 50 feet, she takes 5d10 bludgeoning damage at the start of the encounter. There's no way to determine if she is even alive once she goes below the ice; the adventurers will have to operate on the faith that she can be saved.

The Water. Velvyn fell through the ice and into frigid water, the effects of which are described in Appendix C. With a +1 to her Constitution, she can survive only for 1 minute before she must make DC 10 Constitution saving throws. On a failure, she takes a level of exhaustion.

Velvyn is also drowning; the fall knocked the air out of her lungs and the sudden shock of cold water prevented her from taking in a breath. If she is not removed from the water by the start of her next turn, she is reduced to 0 hit points and begins to die. She cannot regain hit points or be stabilized until she can once again breathe.

Skill Challenge. Saving Velvyn is a Medium Skill Challenge. The party must accrue five successes before they accrue three failures (DCs 14-18). Suggested ability checks include:

- A Perception check to track Velvyn through the ice.
- A Constitution check to resist the sudden shock of plunging into cold water, if a character dives in to save her.
- An Athletics check to drag her back to the surface, lift or push her out of the water, or to get oneself back onto the ice.
- An Acrobatics check to avoid falling into the water.
- A Medicine check to resuscitate Velvyn.
- A Medicine, Nature, or Survival check to recall that she only has about half an hour to warm up before suffering complete bodily shutdown.

- A *shape water* cantrip to freeze the water underneath Velvyn, possibly causing the block to rise to the surface with her body placed upon it.
- A *spare the dying* cantrip to stabilize Velvyn once she can breathe again. Similarly, a healing spell can awaken her.
- A *shatter* spell to break ice, possibly opening up a more direct path to Velvyn below the ice.

If the party saves Velvyn, she expresses shock and suspicion upon waking. Her first instinct is to cast a 2nd-level *charm person* spell to placate these strangers. She calms down with a successful DC 13 Persuasion check.

With no idea where her companions are, Velvyn decides to stick with the party for a while—at least until they return to civilization or the going gets too hot. Although her magic, wit, and daring are appreciable, the genasi quickly proves to be an amusing liability; she is but a slave to her careless whims, after all. This episode with the giant eagle is just the latest in a series of extraordinary—some would say "extraordinarily dumb"—stunts. It's as her companions always say: "One of these days, Vel, you're gonna get yourself killed."

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Velvyn is a useful companion to add to your adventuring party. Whenever you find her to be too cumbersome to continue including, she slips away in the dead of night or is separated by yet another of her reckless escapades.

THE DULLAHAN

Character Encounter, Tier I-III

There is a rider in the Arctic, a wayward reaper, to whom the souls of men are forfeit. In greener countries, this black rider would be called the Dullahan, and why she has left them for the dismal Arctic is anyone's guess. Here in the land of unending winter, she has abandoned her traditional black steed for a dog sled pulled by hounds of ill omen. Legends claim that where the Dullahan stops, mortals are doomed to die. Should she come across the adventurers, this superstition will surely be proven.

The Dullahan is on a mission to deliver the unfortunate into Death's clutches. Every so often, she receives a vision of one such mortal and tracks them down with her Vengeful Tracker trait. She knows only the quarry's face and name and cares not for anything else, even if given the information. Her purpose is, in her mind, divine.

Statistics. The Dullahan has the statistics of a **revenant**. She carries her head with her; it is a size of Tiny. Any damage it receives is transferred to her body and vice versa. She carries a whip fashioned from a human spine (+7 to hit, reach 10 ft., 1d4+4 slashing damage on a hit, plus an extra 4d6 if she has sworn vengeance against the target or if they are "due" to die).

Living Head. The Dullahan carries her pale head in the crook of her left arm. Its auburn hair is matted with blood and black with rot. Its grin stretches from ear to ear. When the Dullahan speaks, it comes from the head's torn lips. All the Dullahan's senses come from the head, which magically communicates her perceptions to the body. The head and body are simultaneously one being in two parts.

To separate the Dullahan's head from her body, a character must succeed on a grapple check against the Dullahan. Any creature holding her head immediately counts as a creature that she has sworn vengeance against, rendering them vulnerable to her Vengeful Tracker trait and other abilities. While its head is 30 or more feet away, the body has blindsight out to a range of 30 feet and it can still hear noise, despite having no ears.

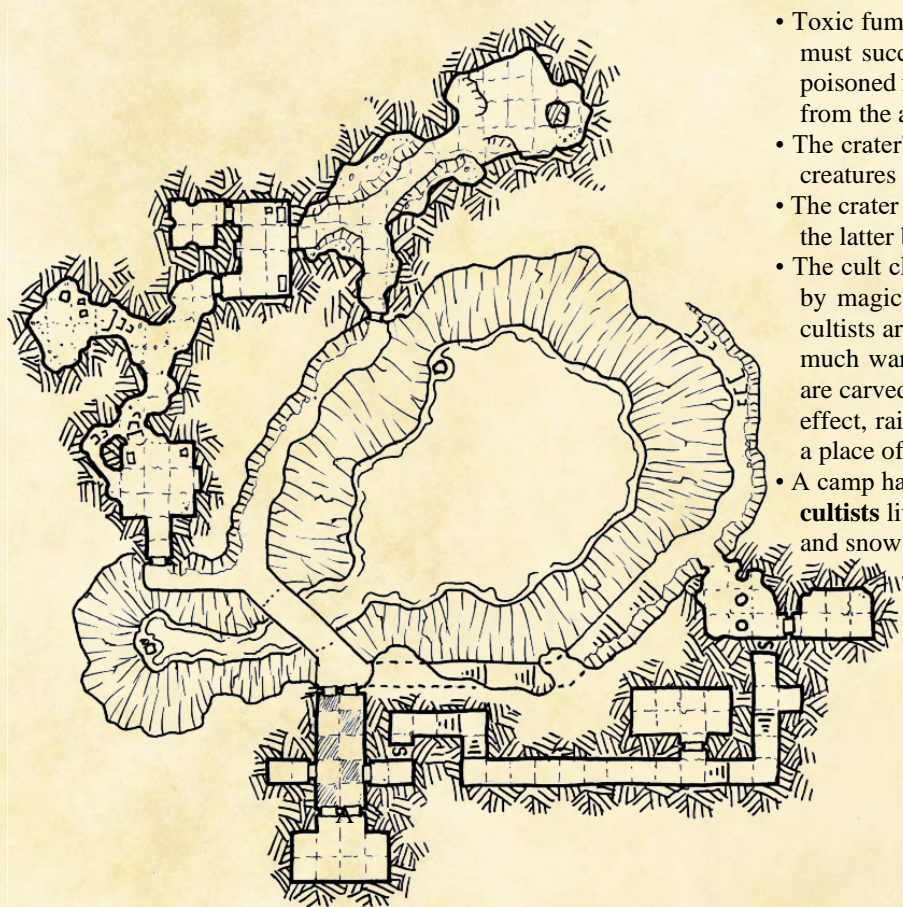
Minions. The Dullahan's sled is pulled by a minimum of four hounds, the statistics of which are determined by the difficulty this encounter is ran as. These creatures do not require air, sleep, food, drink, or warmth.

- As a Tier I encounter, four **wolves** pull the sled. Alternatively, eight **mastiffs** pull it. These hounds count as monstrosities instead of beasts and are neutral evil.
- As a Tier II encounter, the sled is pulled by four **death dogs**.
- As a Tier III encounter, the Dullahan has cowed six **winter wolves** into her service.

Sled. The Dullahan's sled is decorated with macabre trophies: ever-burning candles stuffed in skulls, cloaks fashioned from skin, rails carved from bone, and more.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Dullahan is a force of nature, a hand of fate, almost. She should be first introduced in your campaign from a distance—a dark rider whose grisly appearance is only discerned when she and her hounds pass by the party. Perhaps she is on her way to slay someone important to the party; if they oppose her, the Dullahan hounds the adventurers throughout the campaign. She cares not for their cause and swears allegiance to none of their nemeses; she exists only to revenge herself upon such fools before continuing her grim mission.



EDGE OF DISASTER

Volcanic Encounter, Tier III

From the summit of Mount Ereby's, cultists of Elemental Evil conspire to link the volcano to the Plane of Fire. From its fiery heart, the fools intend to bid a **phoenix** into this world—unless the thwarted now by the adventurers. Now is the hour of their greatest accomplishment, and—if they can pull it off—their last. The elemental force with which the phoenix enters this world rips apart Mount Ereby's and cracks glaciers as far as a hundred miles away. The chances for anyone on the summit to survive the eruption are next to zero.

The cultists belong to a joint enterprise made between the Cults of the Crushing Wave and the Eternal Flame. See the *Global Warming* storyline for details on these apocalyptic fools.

Mount Ereby's. This active volcano is a stark contrast to the frozen wastes that surround it. The upper half of the summit is black with ash and soot. The Eternal Flame has long considered this place sacred, as it is, like most volcanoes, meta-physically close to the Plane of Fire. Over the years, they have dug out chambers with sweat, magic, and fanatical determination.

Map. See the map to the left. Every square is 5 feet. Mount Ereby's has the following features:

- With exception for the cult complex, the mountain is an area of extreme heat (see Appendix C).
- At the bottom of Ereby's 600-foot-deep crater smolders a lake of lava. Creatures that fall into it first take 20d10 bludgeoning damage from the fall (as lava is effectively a solid surface for all but the densest creatures and objects). Creatures that come into contact with the lava for the first time on a turn, or start their turn on it, take 55 (10d10) fire damage.
- 2d4+4 **magmin** lounge in the lava below (when they aren't tormenting cultists, whom they have no allegiance towards).
- Toxic fumes poison the air. Creatures that linger at the crater must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for the next 10 minutes. Magical wards purge toxins from the air inside the cult's chambers.
- The crater's slopes are pitted with frequent handholds, which creatures can use to climb with a DC 10 Athletics check.
- The crater and cult chambers are dimly lit, the former by lava, the latter by ambient magic.
- The cult chambers are kept at a toasty 90 degrees Fahrenheit by magical wards engraved upon the walls. Eternal Flame cultists are quick to remind complainers that it can be much, much warmer. The temperature is maintained by runes that are carved into every chamber; a *dispel magic* spell ends this effect, raising the temperature to 700 degrees and making it a place of extreme heat (see App. C).
- A camp has been struck on Ereby's southwest summit where **cultists** live, sticking in the band of warmth between the ash and snow.

CULT OF THE ETERNAL FLAME

The Cult of the Eternal Flame basks in Mount Ereby's scalding heat. The most fervent among them consider it a holy site. They whittle away the days until the summoning ritual by discussing how they will rule the ashes of the world. While their Crushing Wave peers pout, they are abuzz with anticipation. That they may perish when Mount Ereby spits out a phoenix has never even crossed their minds.

Leadership. The Eternal Flame is led by Abbot Ignatius, a fire genasi **archmage** who is just as mad and cunning as his distant peers that run other Eternal Flame chapters. The genasi has faced scorn and scrutiny all his life; when the Eternal Flame cult offered him a home, he was quick to take it. Decades of dogma have ensured that Ignatius—once a teenager desperate to find a place where he belongs—is committed to bringing the world to its knees.

Ignatius has the following changes to his statistics:

- He has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- He has resistance to fire damage.
- He can cast *produce flame* and once per day, *burning hands*. Constitution is his spellcasting ability for these spells.
- He can read, write, and speak Common and Primordial.
- He wears a *mantle of spell resistance* (DMG pg. 180), which grants him advantage on saving throws against magic.
- He wields a *staff of fire* (DMG pg. 201).
- On the day of the ritual, so long as the Searing Sultan is within 100 feet of Ignatius, he has a flying speed of 20 feet and can hover.
- He doesn't have a 9th-level spell prepared, for he knows none.

Instead, he is busy mastering the *gate* spell, which he will use to summon the phoenix. By when the summoning ritual is ready, he has practiced enough with *gate* to have it prepared, but his spellwork is faulty (see below). He also has *investiture of flame* and *feather fall* prepared instead of *detect magic* and *detect thoughts*.

Ignatius has spent decades preparing for this ritual and can't shake the shadow of doubt. Doubt torments his every waking moment, claiming that he's nothing more than a failure. Why else can he not master the *gate* spell?

Members. Ignatius's brutal second-in-command is an **efreeti** known as the Searing Sultan (or the Shah of Suffering, if the genie described in *The Fortress of Solitude* was released). He is equally devoted to the destruction of this world. His lash has kept even the most dissident cultists in line. Cultists that come to their senses and disavow the Eternal Flame are fed to Mount Ereby's by the sultan.

The Eternal Flame's ranks consist of:

- Twenty **cultists**, most of whom act as messengers, servants, or attendants. The lucky few get to participate in the rituals that maintain the cults' wards. Few cultists sleep in the cult complex; many camp on the summit of Mount Ereby, in the warm border of ash and snow.
- 2d6+5 **eternal flame guardians** and 1d6+4 **eternal flame priests**, who patrol the summit in pairs. The priests are also responsible for maintaining the complex's wards.
- A human **flamewrath** whose personality was scoured when he was invested with elemental power. He guards Ignatius at all times, never leaving his side.

CULT OF THE CRUSHING WAVE

The cultists of the Crushing Wave were understandably happier at sea and in the Arctic proper. Here, they are miserable voyeurs awaiting the world's destruction. With nothing to contribute to the summoning ritual, they were assigned to patrol the hallways as the Eternal Flame cultists focused on their work. Perpetual heat and boredom have taken their toll; the guards have grown lax in their duties.

Leadership. As the summoning ritual approaches, the cult's greatest members are away, ready to direct the inevitable flood that will occur when the phoenix melts the polar icecaps. In their absence, they have left the water genasi **conjurer** Jacksyn Seabastard in charge.

Seabastard has the following changes to his statistics:

- He has a swimming speed of 30 ft. and can breathe both air and water.
- He has resistance to acid damage.
- He can cast *shape water* and, once per day, *create or destroy water*. Constitution is his spellcasting ability for these spells.
- He can read, write, and speak Common and Primordial.

Desperate to prove himself to his superiors, Seabastard roams the halls to remind his colleagues that "the Archmentals are watching; shape up." They pay him little heed.

Members. The Crushing Wave has left only a skeletal crew here to ensure the plans they've sacrificed so much for actually come to fruition. They consist of 1d6+8 **crushing wave reavers** and 1d4+2 **crushing wave priests**. They have also summoned 1d3+1 **water elementals** that obey their commands.

THE SUMMONING RITUAL

On the day of the ritual, Ignatius is ritually bathed in scalding water by his most trusted attendants. Without him, there is no phoenix and no rising sea levels. His survival, up until he casts *gate*, is crucial to the Eternal Flame's success.

Unless the cults are aware of any outside threats, such as the adventurers, Ignatius is most vulnerable during his bath, which occurs in his chambers (the area marked "A" on the map). Only the **flamewrath** guards him.

If the cults *are* aware of imminent threats, they guard Ignatius with a retinue three **eternal flame guardians**, an **eternal flame priest**, and the **flamewrath**. In this dark hour, they don't even trust their Crushing Wave colleagues. While Ignatius is being prepared, the efreeti readies the summoning ritual.

Precautions. Ignatius has prepared *feather fall* and casts *fly* as a contingent spell (as part of *contingency*) in case he falls during the ritual. By when he leaves his chambers, he's also cast *mind blank* and *mage armor*. Therefore, he has already expended a 1st-, 3rd-, 6th-, and 8th-level spell slot.

The Ritual Begins. The Cult of the Eternal Flame gathers on Mount Ereby's rim to participate or bask in the ritual—which only puts greater pressure on Ignatius. The Crushing Wave cult expands their patrols within the volcano and without, with Seabastard floating between the crater and the summit to ensure that nothing goes awry.

Ignatius must perform his ritual above Ereby's very heart. Thanks to the Searing Sultan's inscrutable magic, Ignatius has a flying speed of 20 feet and can hover. This magic dies with the genie. Ignatius's contingent *fly* spell will save his life, but at the cost of his concentration.

ELVEN SLAVERS

Polar Night or Tundra Encounter, Tier I-III

Tyranny is almost a byproduct in a land as unforgiving as the Arctic, and humility is a trait oft forgotten by insular elves.

While traveling, the adventurers encounter a line of prisoners watched over by elven slavers. You have two chief variants to choose from in this encounter:

DROW SLAVERS

Polar Night Encounter, Tier I-III

Fresh from the Underdark, the dark elves have come to reap the surface world of its rewards. Successful in their mission, they are leading their prisoners to an abandoned dwarven home once ravaged by an **umber hulk**. The creature is long gone, but its passage to the surface was found by the drow, who use the home as a staging ground for raids on the surface world.

The drow are led by the vicious Lybreena Tanor'thuin, whose statistics are determined by this encounter's difficulty. As a Tier I encounter, she is a **drow elite warrior**; at Tier II, she is a **drow house captain**; at Tier III she is a **drow priestess of Lolth**, for her mission (far more important than raiding the surface world for slaves) could not be entrusted to anyone but one of Lolth's chosen hierophants. On her way back, she raided an outpost for slaves to curry favor with her betters.

Likewise, the purpose of the raid and its finer details change with the chosen difficulty this encounter is ran at:

Tier I. The drow consist of 1d4+3 male **drow** and Lybreena. Their mission was simply to raid the surface for supplies and settlements. In addition to their captives, they've amassed 3d10 + 40 gp, 5d10+60 sp, and goods that are difficult to produce in the Underdark, such as beef, venison, and cabbage (grown to great sizes thanks to a long arctic summer). They've also taken 1d4+1 cows, which they'll have to sedate later.

Tier II. The drow consist of 1d4+3 **drow** and two **drow elite warriors**, and Lybreena, all of whom are female. Their mission was to arrest a fugitive **drow mage** named Narisril Rhomdagh. Narisril had the honor of being selected as his house matron's newest consort. Not in the mood to become a tortured sire of several children, the mage escaped to the surface two weeks ago. With almost no survival skills of his own, he left an obvious trail for Lybreena to follow. Narisril is at the head of the column, being whipped and disparaged by the drow. He has been gagged, with pegs driven between his fingers to inhibit spellcasting. He has 12 hit points and 1d4 1st-level spell slots remaining. If freed from his bonds, he turns on his captors until an opportunity to escape presents itself.

Tier III. The drow were sent to recover a magical item from the adventurers that stole it in the first place: a handheld mirror that allows the viewer to contact one of Lolth's **yochlols**. They consist of 1d4+3 **drow**, two **drow elite warriors**, a **drow mage**, and Lybreena. The adventurers are all dead; disappointed she could not bring such mighty heroes back as broken slaves, she took out her frustrations on a nearby settlement.

If Lybreena's life is threatened, she uses an action to smash the enchanted mirror, summoning a **yochlol** into the world. The demon is likely to kill her for such insolence, and her superiors are certain to punish her as well, but those are small risk to pay when faced with certain death. The yochlol is banished back to the Abyss after 1 minute.



It only takes one action to cast *gate*, and the phoenix answers Ignatius's call in 1d10 rounds, but much of the archmage's ritual is spent hedging his bet, so to speak. His (and the **eternal flame priests'**) sacred gestures are mainly for show, although they do help soften the elemental powers at play.

The Ritual Awry. Should Ignatius be slain prematurely or lose concentration on his *gate* spell before the phoenix enters the world, the portal to the Plane of Fire implodes. All creatures within the crater, on its rim, or in the cult complex must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 27 (5d10) force damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

The Ritual Complete. If the **phoenix** enters this world, the force of its entry causes Mount Erebus to erupt. The shockwave surges inwardly and causes the volcano to shake with fury. All creatures on the ground must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature is knocked prone. In 1d4 rounds, Erebus erupts. All creatures inside the crater or on its rim when this occurs must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. They must also succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

The air within 500 feet of the crater becomes heavily obscured and toxic; all creatures therein must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Assume that all cultists die in the blast, with the exception of the Searing Sultan. If the adventurers survive, proceed to the *Global Warming* encounter.

*The efforts of men to destroy
their own homes will never
fail to surprise me.*

Shackles. The drow shackle their prisoners with manacles of iron, which require a successful DC 20 Strength check to break; a DC 20 Dexterity check to escape from; or a DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The manacles have 15 hit points.

Captives. The drow's captives consist of 2d6+5 **commoners** of assorted races, mostly humans, plucked from nearby villages. A bruised human **druid** is gagged, with pegs driven into his fingers. A DC 13 Investigation check is enough to ascertain that the man must be a spellcaster, as no other prisoners have been disabled in such a manner. The druid, Nenvolm, has only two 1st level spell slots left and has *goodberry* and *cure wounds* prepared instead of *animal messenger* and *speak with animals*. If freed, he grants the party up to ten goodberries.

SNOW ELF SLAVERS

Tier II

Desperate to bring all of the Arctic under their iron regime, the snow elves are faced with expanding their presence throughout the region. Yet the Arctic is a perilous land and local rulers will require safe seats of power. Without easily portable stone and timber, the elves have no choice but to carve strongholds from ice. Only the glacier dwarves have the skill, knowledge, and magic necessary for this task. They cannot ask the dwarves to further their empire, nor would they even if they could. Instead, the elves raid the dwarves for slaves, hoping that the survivors are, or can learn to be, frost masons.

The enmity between the elves and glacier dwarves stretches back eons. The elves hold that the dwarves stole the secrets of glacial magic from elvish ruins and destroyed the runes on their way out. The dwarves claim that the elves have less legs to stand on than a seal; frustrated, the elves insist that they have as many legs as a remorhaz. Neither side has admitted fault, and no clans or kings have forgiven their enemies.

Shackles. The snow elves shackle their prisoners with glacial manacles. The manacles numb the hands and wrists but don't cause frostbite. The manacles cannot be unlocked or escaped from. They have 12 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and can be broken with a DC 16 Strength check.

Captives. The elves are leading a line of 2d10+10 glacier dwarf **commoners** back to the Citadel, their icy fortress. One of these dwarves, Farkyl, is a frost mason master, well known among the dwarves here and already at the Citadel. All it takes is one tortured dwarf to give him up. Farkyl knows his kin, and all the Arctic, will suffer if he aids the elves—and they'll surely milk his expertise by way of torture, coercion, and hostages. The frost mason has decided that suicide may be the only means of delaying the elves' expansion.

Elves. The snow elves suffered several casualties during their recent raid on the dwarves. The elves do not abandon their own; the wounded are shuffling alongside the column or are being dragged in sleds. A force of 1d4+2 **apprentice wizards**, 1d6+4 **guards**, 1d3 **veterans**, and an **archer**, are spread evenly along the column. The elves are led by the LE **mage**, Arandon. Additionally, two **scouts** keep an eye for trouble; one is half a mile ahead of the column, the other half a mile behind.

As snow elves, they have the following racial traits:

- The elves speak Elvish, have darkvision to a range of 60 feet, and have an extra +2 bonus to their Perception checks and passive Perception scores.
- The elves have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic cannot put them to sleep.
- The elves have advantage on Stealth checks to remain hidden in snowy terrain.
- They each know three transmutation spells on the wizard spell list: one cantrip, a 1st-level spell and a 2nd-level spell. They can cast the latter two spells once per day. Typically, a snow elf knows *gust*, *shape water*, *catapult* or *jump*.

Treasure. The elves recovered little treasure from their raid, as labor and knowledge are more valuable than gold. Arandon carries a spellbook with all the spells prepared in his statistics and a *ruby of the war mage* (see XGE pg. 138) stolen from the dwarves.

ENDANGERED HIKER

Character Encounter, Tier I

The adventurers encounter an endangered hiker while traveling. This encounter has several variants, allowing you to run it multiple times. It's encouraged that you run it with the same recurring character if you wish to strike a comedic tone or use a familiar face. Regardless of the character's identity, they have the statistics of a NG **scout** with an explorer's pack and, usually, ten rations. By default, the hiker is a male human.

Roleplaying the Hiker. Wolf Cook is a seasoned hiker that some would liken to a wilderness survival expert. Despite his expertise, he can still find himself in tricky situations from time-to-time; such is the nature of the wild. He is an otherwise humble, well-intentioned person who holds that the wilderness is too unforgiving for people not to help each other. If Wolf Cook encounters someone in need, he rushes to their aid, heedless of his own wellbeing.

AVALANCHE AFTERMATH

A simple accident on the hiker's behalf has caused a Small-sized avalanche (see the *Avalanche!* encounter) while he was skiing off-piste to escape a warband of **gnolls** terrorizing the region. He cannot point out the gnolls' whereabouts; he doesn't even know whether they followed him—although they have.

In the avalanche's aftermath, 1d4+2 **gnolls** and a **gnoll flesh gnawer** come bounding down the slope, howling in hunger.

OWLBEAR ATTACK

The hiker darts past the adventurers, offering but one warning: "Run!" Behind him roars a frenzied **owlbear**, who bounds after him. Bundled in the hiker's arms are two owlbear eggs, whose price on the black market runs from 300 to 1,000 gp each.

The hiker, if confronted, insists he stole the eggs to eat, not sell—and rooting through his pack reveals that his rations are indeed gone. If the eggs are placed gently on the ground, the owlbear ceases her attack. If not, she continues chasing them. At this point, she associates the adventurers with the hiker, and will maul them if given the chance. Otherwise, a character holding the eggs who succeeds on a DC 22 Animal Handling check calms the beast.

Statistics. The owlbear has white fur and feathers, granting it advantage on Stealth checks made to remain hidden in snowy terrain.

RAPPELLING GONE WRONG

The hiker faces a deadly drop in the mountains. Determine the party's geographic relation to the hiker.

From Above. If the adventurers are on the high ground, they find evidence of a dead man's anchor—a survival technique in which a rappeler anchors themselves to an object dug into the snow. As a hiker rappels laterally, their weight is leveraged against all the snow between them and whatever object used as an anchor. Even an object as small as a canteen can anchor a full-grown man clad in packs and gear. A DC 13 Survival check identifies the dead man's anchor accordingly.

The issue at hand, however, is that the hiker has run out of rope half-way down the cliff and now must decide whether to cut himself loose. If the adventurers detect him (with a DC 14 Perception check) or know to follow the ropes, they can assist in pulling him up. It takes a combined Strength score of 30 to pull the hiker up, otherwise a DC 18 Athletics check is required.

Down Below. If the adventurers are on the ground below the cliffs, they see the hiker rappelling down the cliffside. Alas, he has anchored himself off a sharp rock whose edges have frayed the rope. As he descends, the rope snaps and the hiker hurtles to the ground 40 feet below, possibly taking up to 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage. An adventurer below the hiker and within 10 feet of his drop can attempt a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, they catch the hiker; both characters take 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage. On a failure, they miss the hiker, who crashes into the hard ground. A *feather fall* spell also saves him.

YOU'RE ON THIN ICE

As the party passes nearby, the hiker attempts to cross a frozen lake. The ice soon gives way and he plunges into the cold water below. Thanks to howling winds, a DC 15 Perception check is required for an adventurer to hear the crack of ice and his alarmed shout. The seasoned hiker drew in a breath before he plunged into the water, but the shock has driven the air from his lungs. For the effects on frigid water, see Appendix C.

With a Constitution of 12, the hiker has only one round to surface, lest he suffocates. On his first turn, he attempts a DC 14 Perception check to find the hole to the world above (no easy task in a wintry, cloudy land). If he succeeds, he surfaces for air. If not, he begins to die. The hiker can pull himself out of the water if he succeeds on a DC 18 Strength check; otherwise, another creature must succeed on a DC 15 Athletics check to drag them from the water.



FLIGHT OF THE IVORY ELK

Taiga Encounter, Tier 1

Through the trees darts a white flash of light; a character that succeeds on a DC 14 Perception check gets a good look at it: a white **giant elk**. Almost every individual has heard tales that the existence of an alabaster elk heralds great upheaval in the world: the birth the kings, the fall of dynasties, the return of forgotten evils, and more. Other fables claim that only the *death* of such a majestic beast that triggers such great events. As if to promise such a tumultuous future, lupine howls echo across the forest as 1d4+2 **winter wolves** bound after the elk.

The wolves quickly surround the elk, but that majestic beast doesn't go down without a fight. The adventurers are presented with an opportunity to intervene.

Roleplaying the Wolves. The wolves can speak Common and Giant; they are the worgs of the frozen wastes. They hurl insults and threats at the adventurers:

- "More meat for the feast!"
- "There is a place for prey as foolish as you—between fangs."
- "We shall settle for you."

FIRBOLG DRUID

If the elk is saved, the beast guides the adventurers to a nearby cave overgrown with life, despite the cold. This hovel is home to a firbolg **druid**; to outsiders, he addresses himself as "Balfir." A character fluent or familiar with Elvish recognizes this as a common elven name. If asked, the druid explains that his people have little use for names, and only use them when treating with outsiders.

Statistics. As a firbolg, Balfir has the following racial traits:

- He speaks Common, Elvish, and Giant.
- He can communicate in a limited manner with both beasts and plants, though he has no ability to understand them in turn.
- He can cast *detect magic* and *disguise self* once per day; his spellcasting ability for these spells is Wisdom
- Once per short or long rest, he can use a bonus action to turn invisible until the start of his next turn, or when he attacks, damages, or forces a creature to make a saving throw.

Roleplaying Balfir. Firbolgs avoid outsiders as a rule, so it should come as no surprise that Balfir is a cautious and twitchy fellow; he has more experience with beasts than other people. He considers greed to be the greatest fault of mortal men, for his kin are taught only to ever take what they need and nothing more. Characters that ask him for more than he provides are gently asked to leave his hovel.

As a druid and a firbolg, Balfir has a deep and profound bond with Nature and her creatures. For saving the elk, he considers himself personally indebted to the adventurers. He has little to offer other than ten goodberries (as in the *goodberry* spell, see *PHB* pg. 246), and 1d4+1 rations consisting of nuts and berries. Additionally, if any of the adventurers are druids, Balfir leads them in a sacred ritual during a short rest. Afterwards, the druid can prepare three extra druid spells for the next 24 hours.

FORER-SLAG!

Mountain Encounter, Tier II-III

Thunder booms as the adventurers trek through a mountain pass. This thunder isn't produced from the heavens above, but the mighty mammoth-tusk-horns of the frost giants. Their cries, "*Forer-Slag! Forer-Slag!*" echo out across the mountain. The horns, the cries, the thunder of their very footfalls—altogether, it sounds as if they are a titanic band of musicians

Forer-Slag. Meaning "chieftain-battle" in the Giant tongue, a *forer-slag* is a ritualistic duel, a custom of the frost giants, who value strength above all other virtues. Only the mighty may lead the clan; when one's honor and strength are doubted, an upstart warrior challenges their superior to battle. To refuse a *forer-slag* challenge is a great dishonor; to survive but not win is an even greater one. Those that are shown mercy are likely to be exiled from the clan. Any giant is allowed to challenge another individual, even the clan's jarl—but there is no yielding in a *forer-slag*; two giants roar, but only one lives.

The Thunder Today. Jarl Grisbos has been challenged by the upstart Rowthor, whose honor was impugned last year—but Rowthor cares not for honor, only power. The jarl's disrespect is just the pretense to this *forer-slag*. Today, the two shall battle it out before the clan's eyes.

Jarl Grisbos is a legendary **frost giant** warrior in the twilight of his life; his people live up to 250 years and he's pushing two centuries. Under his leadership, Skoldheim—the clan's home and stronghold—has prospered. Many consider Grisbos a tough-but-fair jarl whose strength is necessary to guide the clan through these trying times. His detractors claim the jarl has gone soft and it is time for him to give up the mantle. There is no shame in peacefully abdicating the throne, after all.

Rowthor is a deceitful cur that has made a pact with Vaprak the Destroyer, the patron deity of ogres and trolls, and the most reviled god in the giant pantheon. Frost giants that appeal to the Destroyer may be sent a troll (a pilgrim guided by Vaprak) to devour. Those that feast upon its putrid flesh are endowed with great, supernatural strength, becoming **frost giant everlasting ones**. To embrace Vaprak's power is a death sentence in frost giant society. If Rowthor's secret is found out, he will be slain by his peers, no matter his status among the clan. Alas, those who fail to continue honoring Vaprak are cursed with troll-like deformities that are not so easily hidden.

Rowthor is secretly one of these abominable giants, bereft of any deformities; however, if Rowthor is reduced to 0 hit points but regenerates, he grows a second head (see his Extra Heads trait). Assume that, barring intervention on behalf of the adventurers, he defeats Grisbos, crushing the giant's skull with a boulder. The jarl does not die quietly, nor with dignity, bringing great dishonor upon himself and his legacy. Much of the clan falls silent, watching as Rowthor continues to bludgeon Grisbos's corpse. Thereafter, Rowthor shouts in Giant, "Let all who doubt my right to rule step forward now for *forer-slag!*"

THE ADVENTURERS

The adventurers have entered a situation they've no business in. They risk capture (as a gift for the victor, or merely as slaves), being crushed underfoot by celebrating giants, or being buried by an avalanche caused by a stray boulder. For this encounter, decide where the adventurers are in relation to the *forer-slag* and the clan's witnesses, who stand on other peaks and plateaus to watch the duel from afar. Choose one of the scenarios below:

Avalanche! The duelists are hurling boulders at one another. Rowthor's attack misses, but Vaprak's blessing has made him so strong that his boulder smashes into the summit the party is on, causing an avalanche. See the *Avalanche!* encounter.

Errant Boulder. Instead of striking the peak, the boulder careens towards a random adventurer (+6 to hit, 29 (4d10+7) bludgeoning damage on a hit).

Crushed Underfoot. 1d3 **frost giants** block the path forward, stomping in outrage or approval of the duel. If the adventurers attempt to pass through, they must avoid being stomped on. Each character must succeed on a DC 15 Acrobatics or Insight check to pass through; on a failure, they are knocked prone and take 11 (1d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage. The giants are so pre-occupied with the *forer-slag* that they don't notice the party unless the adventurers harm them.

Umbrage. Any characters that fail a DC 13 Stealth check are noticed by the giants, who take umbrage with their trespassing. If the adventurers don't turn back, these 1d4 **frost giants** attack, with a 75% chance that they spare any characters that yield or are knocked unconscious; Skoldheim is always in need of good slaves, after all.

Alternatively, the giants decide to present captured characters to the duel's victor.

Vaprak's Rage. The adventurers wind up in the sight of the enraged Rowthor, whose bloodlust cannot be quenched. After defeating Grisbos, this **frost giant everlasting one** has 49 hit points left; he attacks the party. They might be down the path or even above Rowthor on a ledge. In the case of the latter, the seismic disturbances of the giants' duel weakens the ledge, causing them to slide down into the giant's reach; alternatively, Rowthor hurls a boulder on his first turn, severing the ledge from the mountainside.

THE ORDNING OF MIGHT

This is the second encounter of the *Ordnung of Might* storyline. Should the adventurers eliminate Rowthor now, they spare the Arctic from a brutal overlord. If they do not, Rowthor ascends.

Rowthor's regime is a bloody one. He exiles his old rivals and detractors from Skoldheim, forcing them to roam the Arctic. With no clan of their own, these giants are forced to raid settlements (although they had no qualms with such raids before). Some may conspire to overthrow Rowthor, already suspecting that the giant has struck an accord with Vaprak. See *The Isejotun Exile* for details.

Rowthor, for his part, must also continue to appease Vaprak with frequent sacrifices, lest tumors and other deformities manifest, revealing his pact with the Destroyer. Frost giant raids begin to ravage the Arctic in unprecedented numbers. See *Frost Giant Raiders* encounter for details.

FORGE OF THE FROZEN WASTES

Volcanic Encounter, Tier I-II

The snow has been stained by ash, the air tainted by sulfur, and the chill fought with steam. All who pass by this corner of the Arctic can see that an active volcano broils nearby. Its snow-capped summit stands in sharp contrast to the magma churning in its crater. Magma runs down a trench into a smithy operating at its base. This facility, the so-called Forge of the Frozen Wastes, is operated by a band of **azers**—natives of the Plane of Fire that have since been exiled to the Material Plane.

As beings of living fire, the azers need neither food nor rest; they wish only to pursue their craft in peace. If approached with respect and ore, a person can leave with smelted goods—nails, tools, buckles, and the like. The Arctic's few residents speak admirably of these selfless smiths, who provide access to arts of metallurgy they themselves aren't capable of.

In the years since settling in this corner of the Material Plane, the azers have picked up bits of mortal languages (Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, and Hafling in particular), whereas the locals that often entreat with them have learned some Ignan phrases, such as "thank you" and "nails."

We Jagged Few. The azers are a dysfunctional family of misfits, all jaded or flawed in their own right. They are led by Breun Khr (see below) and consist of: Magni, who is obsessed with unnecessary innovations; the bossy-but-well-meaning Eldryr; the paranoid Ghan and its sibling, the world-weary Ghin, and, lastly, the deceitful Syn, who finds no solace in its exile.

Chief Craftsman. A pacifist scarred by the horrors of war, Breun swore to never forge another weapon. It instead finds solace in crafting tools, armor, and delicate works of art. Only a great injustice or cataclysm is enough for Breun to break its oath, in which it fashions a *flame tongue* weapon for a hero devoted to righting that wrong or preventing destruction. See pg. 170 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for this item.

You can voice Breun with the following sample dialogue:

- "I came to this world to escape war, not further furnish it."
- "Those that see themselves as kings-to-be have no place at my fire, nor at my forge."
- "We are pawns in great games, but we must nonetheless be burdened with our choices. Suffer not the soldier that finds solace in obedience."
- "Magni, enough with the 'tong extenders,' just walk the extra five feet to retrieve the metal yourself."

Enemies of the Azers. The azers turn away no one but the snow elves, who display the same egotism and ambition the efreet—the fiery genies that sought to enslave the azers eons ago—did. Over the years, the snow elves' appreciation for the azers' generosity waned and they instead came to *expect* their service. As punishment for such audacity, Breun has banished the elves, famously saying, "Let them smelt frost and snow."

Smiths for Hire. The azers delight in new projects. The party can commission them to forge weapons and armor (only Breun refuses to partake in such projects) or other metallic objects. If the party has no raw ore to give them, they can earn credit with the azers by dispatching nearby threats (using just about any encounter in this supplement). Otherwise, the adventurers may earn the azers' favor by thwarting the snow elves in the *Kings-To-Be* event below.

If brought a ruby worth 250 gp or more, as well as five ounces of gold, the azers can fashion a *ring of warmth* over the course of a week (see *DMG*, pg. 193).

KINGS-TO-BE

Outraged that the azers refuse to serve them, snow elves arrive to enslave the smiths. If these would-be-tyrants have it their way, a permanent outpost will be erected here with the azers confined to their smithy. As beings of living fire, they don't tire or hunger, making them an inexhaustible engine of war.

As is their nature, the snow elves underestimate the azers; their initial force consists of a **knight**, 1d6+4 **guards**, 1d4 + 2 **scouts**, and a **bard**. They do not intend to harm the azers, only confine them and turn away other visitors—although it is acceptable to maim or slay one elemental to cow the others into submission. Their orders are to hold the vicinity until further forces and workers arrive from the Citadel (their fortress-city).

Statistics. The snow elves are all lawful evil; they also have the following racial traits, in addition to their normal statistics:

- The elves speak Elvish and have darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- The elves have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic cannot put them to sleep.
- The elves have advantage on Stealth checks to remain hidden in snowy terrain.
- They each know three transmutation spells on the wizard spell list: one cantrip, a 1st-level spell and a 2nd-level spell. They can cast the latter two spells once per day. Typically, a snow elf knows *gust*, *shape water*, *catapult* or *jump*.

Warmonger. The elves are led by the **knight** Enialis Nailo, an aspiring warrior with noble ties. Nailo glorifies war, calling it "the patriot's duty." This is but his first trial in what should be a lengthy military career. While he considers the slaughter of noncombatants a distasteful blemish on his honor, he only offers bystanders one opportunity to vacate or turn back from the area. Headstrong and drunk on his own delusion of grandeur, Nailo first approaches the Forge of the Frozen Wastes and calls out in heavily-practiced Ignan, "Smiths of Fire! We, the spurned, have come for what is ours! Surrender yourselves as servant-citizens of the Citadel or perish!"

The azers, for their part, simply shrug and continue to work. They only attack intruders. Breun Khr, if present, dismisses the elves out of hand. It would rather die than fashion weapons of war, or tools thereof, but acquiesces for now. The other azers, although upset, follow his lead. "They cannot remain here forever," Breun tells them, "and if they try, they will only wither. We are living fire; they are but embers in a storm." Breun and the azers can be convinced to act now with a successful DC 13 Persuasion check; otherwise, it is up to the adventurers to keep these smiths out of the hands of conquerors.

Tactics. The elves position their **scouts** on snowbanks to fire at any targets while the **guards** set up a rudimentary camp under the **bard's** supervision. Nailo stares at the smithy, outraged that the azers haven't even deigned to respond to his demands. Given time, he may fall prey to his pride and attack.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Forge of the Frozen Wastes is your convenient storefront for characters dependent upon metal, such as high-level fighters in need of plate armor. It also allows you to spread objects and tools around the Arctic that locals have no true way of obtaining themselves, as advanced, widespread metallurgy is normally difficult to conduct in such an inhospitable terrain.

THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

Polar Encounter, Tier III

Within the Arctic lies a keep chiseled from glacial ice, built not by the famous glacier dwarves or stolen by the snow elves. Nay, it was built by a bitter, retired champion of mankind: the aasimar El-ga, who defended the world decades ago from otherworldly threats. For his heroism, El-ga knew only the moaning of selfish citizens and the suffering of lost loved ones. The former paragon has remained in his fortress ever since, determined to watch with a father's disappointment as the world slips further and further into chaos.

Roleplaying El-ga. The aasimar is a broody host; travelers that appeal to him for shelter are allowed inside the fortress, but they must weather his tirades on humanity's inability to improve itself. He calls them "lousy infants that only bite the very hand that feeds." He openly admits he would rather see the world burn than help it again. "Duty," as he puts it, "is a self-imposed curse. In the end, you owe no one anything."

Once a paragon of all that is good and right, the bitter hero has become a shadow of his former self. He lives only for the day he can return to the world stage to remind people that, had they only been a little more grateful, he would intervene. Until then, he contents himself with smiting the wicked—monsters that stray too close to his lair, or evil guests that happen into it. El-ga is thoroughly a sadist, bludgeoning his foes only to heal them with his divine powers. He is, tragically, irredeemable. Nothing, not even the most selfless of deeds, can convince him that humans—and all mortals, for that matter—aren't evil, or worse, lazy creatures that ruin all they touch.

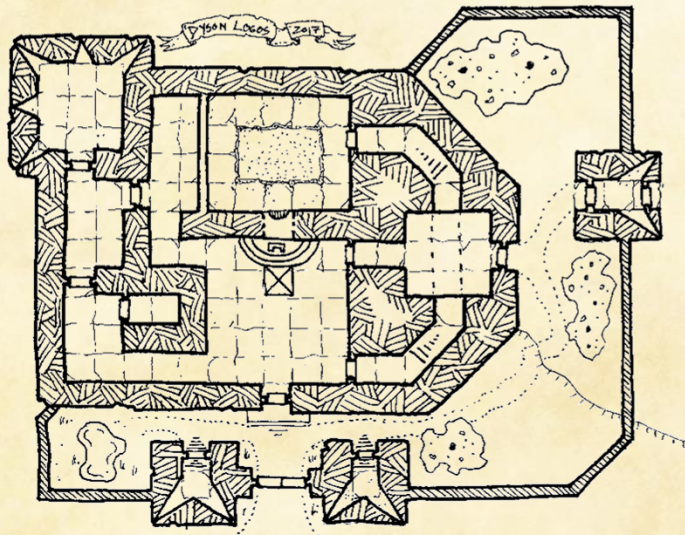
Statistics. El-ga is a LE aasimar **warlord** with the following changes to his statistics:

- He can read, write, and speak both Common and Celestial.
- He has darkvision to a range of 60 feet, and can cast the *light* cantrip.
- He has resistance to necrotic and radiant damage.
- As an action, he can touch a creature and restore 20 hit points to them.
- Thanks to his inner divinity, he no longer needs to eat or drink. Additionally, he can use an action to probe a person's heart; the target, who he must be able to see and be within 30 feet of, must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, El-ga learns their alignment.
- Instead of wielding a greatsword, El-ga is armed with his fists (+9 to hit, 1d10+5 bludgeoning damage), which count as magical attacks. He can use his fists as part of his Weapon Attack legendary action.
- He has the Radiant Soul action:

Radiant Soul (1/Day). El-ga releases his inner divine energy. His eyes glimmer and two luminous wings sprout from his back. For the next minute, or until he uses a bonus action to end these effects, he has a flying speed of 30 feet, and once per turn, when he deals damage with an attack or spell, he can deal an extra 20 radiant damage.

A Hero's Hospitality. The adventurers are welcome to stay at the Fortress of Solitude; El-ga has casks of wine and water, as well as enough food to feed ten people for a month. Thanks to El-ga's divine presence, food does not rot in the fortress.

Inevitably, El-ga determines each of his guests' alignments. Should any of them prove evil, even in the slightest, the "hero" attacks. He shows no mercy and drags the bloody affair out for as long as he can.



Map. See the map above, the scale of which is 5 feet for each square. The temperature within its walls is 80 degrees.

Treasure. El-ga has collected several trophies from his old, defeated foes, many of which are magical or valuable. They are displayed upon glacial pedestals throughout the fortress. Taking any of these treasures incurs El-ga's wrath. They include:

- A *mind blade* (VGM pg. 81) forged from Supremacus the mind flayer; in the hands of any other creature, it is simply a longsword.
- A *wand of wonder* (DMG pg. 212) once wielded by Mysteria, an evil sorceress.
- A *helm of brilliance* (DMG pg. 173) with two diamonds, one eight rubies, four fire opals, and twenty-two opals left. The helm was once worn by The Greater Mind, a psychic villain whose skull El-ga inevitably crushed.
- An *efreeti bottle* (DMG pg. 167) containing the "Sultan of Suffering," an **efreeti**. El-ga makes a habit of drawing out the Sultan to whale on the genie with his mighty fists. He alone can force the genie back into the bottle.
- The scattered arms and armor of evil guests that wandered into the Fortress of Solitude. They are placed near the back of the fortress's hall, as befitting "lesser trophies."

FROST GIANT RAIDERS

Tundra or Urban Encounter, Tier II

The very *mention* of frost giant raiders is enough to rouse a crew of warriors—or inspire a mad abandonment of civilization. The people of the Arctic suffer these raids as often as a dog picks up a tick; these ticks, however, can hurl boulders and attack amidst blizzards. Sure enough, when foul weather is on the rise, a town must prepare for an attack. Some settlements will leave an offering of ale and steel on the outskirts—but soon learn that the giants raid not only for material, but to demonstrate their might before both their peers and Thrym, their deity.

There are two variants for this encounter, with the following constants. As the weather worsens into a blizzard, a character that succeeds on a DC 14 History check recalls that the giants consider blizzards a gift sent by Thrym, and that they *must* answer his call. With this information, they may decide to skip town, join in its defense, or hunker down somewhere that the giants cannot find them.

*It is a noise feared
throughout the Arctic, a
brief warning to pray to
the gods above for mercy,
and a reason to keep one's
snowshoes handy. I speak,
of course, of an isejotun
war horn.*



Weather. The region is being buffeted by a blizzard, causing the following effects:

- The area and creatures therein are lightly obscured by snow.
- Strong winds (see Appendix C).
- The area is extremely cold and the DC for Constitution saving throws made against extreme cold is increased to 15.

Combatants. The raiders consist of the following fighters:

- 1d4+2 **frost giants**
- 1d3+1 frost giant juveniles (with the statistics of **ogres** with immunity to cold damage)
- 1d3+1 **winter wolves** or 1d2+1 **young remorhazes**

IN TRANSIT

Tundra Encounter

The adventurers encounter the giants in the wilderness before or after their raid. Choose one of the following:

Antecedent. The giants are unharmed and in good spirits. As they traipse across the tundra, booming laughter and ribald jests can be heard during gaps in the gale above. The raiders believe themselves mighty and blessed by Thrym himself; they have no reason to be cautious. Characters that understand Giant and succeed on a DC 15 Perception check can piece together their conversation, learning two facts: the first target to be raided, and that at least three juveniles are being tested today. Juvenile frost giants are notoriously reckless, as they're eager to finally demonstrate their might.

Aftermath. The giants are grimly quiet; a few of their brood were slain or left behind in the raid, and the spoils were not worth the cost in flesh. At most, only three giants and a single juvenile made it out alive, along with one beast. The giants are all wounded; assign each survivor with the following hit points: 42, 60, and 89. The juvenile has 47 hit points remaining.

The giants also carry the following treasure:

- Four stolen pigs or cattle
- Timber scavenged from ruined houses, to be burned for the slaves at Skoldheim.
- A cask of ale carried on one giant's shoulder.
- 1d4+3 gems worth 250 gp apiece.
- Two steel greatswords, a battleaxe, and 40 pounds of errant metal ripped off forges and buildings.
- A *saddle of the cavalier* (DMG 199) that the giant has taken as a trophy from a slain adventurer; he is unaware that the saddle is magical.

THE REAVER'S HORN

Urban Encounter

The *isejotun* waste no time on subtlety; deceit and subterfuge are the arts of Memnor, not mighty Thrym, god of the *isejotun*. A thunderous horn heralds the giants' arrival, provoking panic among the townsfolk. Warriors scramble to defend the walls (provided they have any) and lay caltrops along the street.

A boulder is the first shot loosed in this raid; it crashes into the settlement's walls or through a villager's roof, crushing or trapping them inside. With another howl of the horn, the giants charge. Once an egress has been achieved, the giants' **winter wolves** dash inside the settlement; if the giants instead have **young remorhazes**, the creatures burrow in from below.

To Battle! The settlement musters up twenty **guards**, but the giants make quick work of them. If the adventurers join in the battle, errant attacks may work to their favor. At initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) one of the following effects occur:

- An archer looses an arrow at a giant engaging the party (+5 to hit, 1d6+2 piercing damage).
- An archer corps looses a volley at the giants, targeting a 10-foot-diameter circle. Creatures within the area, which may include adventurers, must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 3d6 piercing damage.
- A **veteran** joins the fray, taunting a giant in its own tongue. Enraged, the giant must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, its attack rolls have disadvantage against targets other than the veteran until the start of the giant's next turn. An errant punt sends the veteran flying at the end of the round, removing him from the fray.
- A thrown boulder smashes into a home's fireplace, starting a fire. The fire quickly spreads to nearby structures. Creatures that enter the blaze take 5 (1d10) fire damage.
- A visiting **mage** looses a *fireball* at the giants but captures an adventurer or two in the blast. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a giant must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. A hurled boulder soon turns that brave wizard into a red smear.
- A giant is wounded as it's about to hurl a boulder, causing it to instead target one of its peers engaging the adventurers (+9 to hit, 28 (4d10+6) bludgeoning damage).

Aftermath. Ultimately, the settlement's guards are routed or slaughtered if the adventurers don't repel the attack. The giants steal casks of ale, livestock, and steel. They have no use for gold or currency and prefer large gems. Some may steal wagons and other tools for their slaves back at Skoldheim.

THE ORDNING OF MIGHT

This encounter is related to the *Ordnung of Might* storyline. If Rowthor has usurped Jarl Grisbos, all future raids are especially vicious, as Vaprak the Destroyer (whom Rowthor must secretly appease) demands unprecedented carnage. Rowthor orders his raiders to prioritize destruction over loot, challenging them to prove their might. The more ambitious and bloodthirsty giants take this opportunity to ascend the Ordning of Might. Giants that have already earned their social standing once again take umbrage with this new jarl's directives.

FROSTFELL RIFT

Polar Encounter, Tier II-III

The Arctic is already an unforgiving abattoir; it does not need further dangers to creep in from worlds beyond—but deep into the frozen wastes, that is precisely what has happened. A rift to the Frostfell, the Plane of Ice, has opened, bidding elementals to enter the Material Plane with no master to obey.

The Breach. The rift is a 5-foot-radius portal housed in a 15-foot-tall, 10-foot-wide framework of black, glacial ice. Shards line it like thorns, and the entire structure emanates an unearthly chill. Creatures that start their turn while within 20 feet of the rift, or enter within that area for the first time on their turn, must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 16 (3d10) cold damage on a failure, and half as much on a success.

The rift is almost sentient; it can sense the intentions of others and will defend itself as best it can. On initiative count of 20 (losing initiative ties), the rift can perform one of the effects below:

- The rift can cast *gust of wind*, *wind wall* (centered on itself), *Snilloc's snowball swarm*, or *ice knife* (+6 to hit). The spell save DC for these spells is 14.
- The rift can conjure 2d4+2 **ice mephits**, 1d3 frost elementals (**water elementals** lacking both their Water Form and Freeze traits that also have immunity to cold damage), one **water elemental myrmidon** or one **frost salamander**. The rift can't use this effect two rounds in a row and it cannot conjure the same set of creatures more than once if this encounter is run at Tier II.

Closing the Rift. A spell of *dispel magic* (DC 15) is the only means to safely close the rift. To destroy its framework first would allow planar energies to seep into the world, causing incalculable damage in the near- and far-future. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Arcana check recalls this grave warning. Once the rift has been closed, the framework becomes ordinary ice and can be destroyed safely.

DIRE WINTER

Opening rifts such as these is the *modus operandi* of Withrens Fyar, the evil **archmage** featured in the *Dire Winter* storyline. This rift may be his handiwork or it may have been caused by a planar convergence (an event in which the Inner Planes creep closer to the Material World).

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This rift may be the source of several horrors already featured in your campaign, making it a worthy quest of your adventurers. The rift can spawn **ice mephits**, **water elemental myrmidons**, **frost salamanders**, and more.

If frequent rifts form across the Arctic, the adventurers may be pressed to find out who or what is responsible. You can pin this on a myriad of villains: bheur hags, Withrens Fyar, or even an evil deity of winter, such as Auril, the goddess of winter in the *Forgotten Realms* campaign setting.

FROSTHENGE

Tundra Encounter, Tier I or III

The ancient circle of glacial menhirs known as Frosthenge has been the subject of speculation for generations. It is frequented by tourists and pilgrims alike, all devoid of meaning in their lives—even if they do not know it yet. Even the deranged druid Sylberos (described in *The Poacher's Nightmare*) has pondered his purpose in life from within Frosthenge.

The monument consists of eight menhirs of black ice streaked with white veins. Those who meditate within the circle for an hour or more gain Inspiration—although most would shiver if they learned the source of this guidance. Within each and every menhir lies a bound demon. Visitors can be influenced by these demons through subtly manipulated introspection and sudden epiphanies. A character that succeeds on a DC 22 Insight check realizes that the many emotions they felt or thoughts they had were the result of outside influences.

A character under a spell of *detect evil and good* can sense the fiends' presence, whereas a spell of *detect magic* can sense abjuration surrounding the menhirs and transmutation magic at the center of the circle. Additionally, a character that stares at a menhir for 3d10+10 minutes can make out a fiendish face pressed up to the ice as if it were glass.

Myths Galore. Frosthenge remains a source of debate among laymen and scholars. Many claim it was a site of peace between men and elves. Others say it was where the ancient snow elves and glacier dwarves decided to call an armistice. It may have been erected by a druid circle; it may be a holy site for a long-forgotten deity.

No matter Frosthenge's origins, it has since become the tomb of Al'ghr A'til, the long-forgotten archmage that imprisoned the Flayed Queen (of the *Army of the Damned* storyline) eons ago. The wizard secretly served the undead sovereign and dug out a tomb beneath Frosthenge where the secrets on how to find and free her would be preserved—and guarded. It was Al'ghr A'til who summoned and bound demons into the menhirs, perverting whatever meaning this ancient monument once had.

To gain access to the tomb below, intruders must release and subdue the demons or utter an incantation its architect left behind—an incantation known only by the Flayed Queen and her servitors. Once either of these conditions have been met, the ground opens up to reveal a spiral staircase.

To gain access to the tomb below, intruders can resort to one of the options below:

- Utter a special phrase left behind by Al'ghr A'til known only by the Flayed Queen and her minions.
- By touching a menhir while under a spell of *dispel evil and good* spell and banishing the demons whence they came.
- By touching a menhir and willingly bidding a demon to come forth. This releases 1d4 demons, each of whom appear atop their menhir. Once a demon is reduced to 25 or fewer hit points, it is drawn back into the menhir. All demons must be defeated for the tomb to open.

Once one of these conditions has been met, the ground opens up to reveal a staircase that spirals into darkness below.

Bound Demons. Frosthenge's fiends have been imprisoned for millennia now. Manipulating mortal is their sole form of entertainment. Repeat visitors who meditate within Frosthenge run the risk of becoming corrupted or possessed by a demon, as if by Abyssal Corruption (see the sidebar on the next page).

The demons consist of three **shadow demons**, two **bulezaus**, a **barligura**, a **glabrezu**, and a **hezrou**. The demons can't move more than 30 feet from Frosthenge and they can't summon other demons.

Map. See the map below; every square is 5 feet.

IN THE TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN MAGUS

The tomb is cloaked by magical darkness (functioning as a 2nd-level *darkness* spell) shed by black runes scrawled into its walls. It consists of the following areas:

A. This crypt contains the bones of the laborers Al'ghr A'til hired (or coerced) to dig this tomb. If a living creature enters this crypt, these bones animate as 2d4+6 **skeletons**.

B. This crypt contains the bones of Al'ghr A'til's most loyal apprentices who still haunt the tomb. When a living creature enters this crypt, 1d4+3 **specters** attack.

C. This chamber sports an ornate sarcophagus depicting a wizardly sphinx; it contains Al'ghr A'til's skeleton. The inside of the sarcophagus lid is engraved with the incantation that can release the Flayed Queen. It is written in a long-dead language that only the most studious linguists would even recall. For details on releasing the Flayed Queen, see *The Glacial Prison*.

D. Al'ghr A'til amassed much treasure in his life—and then squandered it. When he entombed himself, all the wizard had left were his most precious mementos, which are contained in this area. The stone slab covering it is engraved with a *symbol* spell (*PHB* pg. 280) that triggers the Death effect if a creature moves the slab. To move the slab requires a successful DC 25 Athletics check.

Within the chamber is a single stone chest containing:

- 4d20+40 pp
- A pair of *boots of the winterlands* (*DMG* pg. 209)
- A *staff of power* (*DMG* pg. 202).
- Al'ghr A'til's spellbook, which contains the spells described in the **archmage's** statistics, plus every wizardly necromancy spell ever created, as well as *summon greater demon*.



ABYSSAL CORRUPTION

Individuals that linger too long within Frosthenge run the risk of becoming corrupted by its imprisoned demons. A creature that spends 1 hour or more meditating, resting, or contemplating within Frosthenge must succeed on a Charisma saving throw (DC 10 + the total number of hours spent in Frosthenge, up to DC 20).

On a failure, the character, is corrupted. Roll a d10 and refer to the effects below. A spell of *dispel evil and good*, *remove curse*, or similar magic ends this effect.

d10	Effect
1-4	Treachery. The character gains the following flaw: "I can only achieve my goals by making sure that my companions don't achieve theirs."
5-7	Bloodlust. The character gains the following flaw: "I enjoy killing for its own sake, and once I start, it's hard to stop."
8-9	Mad Ambition. The character gains the following flaw: "I am destined to rule the Abyss, and my companions are tools to that end."
10	Demonic Possession. The character is possessed by a demonic entity until freed by <i>dispel evil and good</i> or similar magic. Whenever the possessed character rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, the demon takes control of the character and determines the character's behavior. At the end of each of the possessed character's turns, he or she can make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a success, the character regains control until he or she rolls another 1.

Al'ghr A'til left one final trap in his meager hoard. A creature that takes his spellbook or *staff of power* activates a *glyph of warding* (DC 17) containing a *geas* spell cast at 9th-level, which instructs them to "release the Flayed Queen and aid Her Grace in conquering this worthless world." See *PHB* pg. 245 & 244 respectively for these spells.

A character afflicted by the *geas* spell is soon telepathically contacted by the Flayed Queen and bid to serve her now in life, rather than later in undeath.

ARMY OF THE DAMNED

If you're running the *Army of the Damned* storyline, the party might visit this area before or after the **lich** Cis'tudh comes to unearth the incantation that will free the Flayed Queen. Cis'tudh bypasses the demons by uttering Al'ghr A'til's entry incantation. Any undead still in the tomb instinctively obey her commands. She is not expecting intruders and has brought no other minions.

FROSTY THE SNOWMAN

Character Encounter, Tier I

Having found an enchanted top hat, a group of children created a vicious monstrosity that now haunts the Arctic. This creature's dreadful reputation precedes itself, and yet it can still get the drop on unsuspecting passerby. The mightiest heroes know not to traffic with this snow golem, this "Frosty the Snowman."

In greener lands, Frosty would be defeated by the coming of spring and the melting of winter snow. Not so in the Arctic, where he has free reign. He has since become a boogeyman in the minds of the locals. When someone dies a grisly death in the snow, they attribute it to the snow golem whose retractable claws are, if survivors are to be believed, as long as a man's arm. In many settlements, building snowmen has been outlawed so that the dreaded snow golem cannot hide in plain sight.

Statistics. Frosty has the statistics of a **scarecrow** but with immunity to cold damage and vulnerability to fire damage. He is indistinguishable from an ordinary snowman while motionless (save for his *top hat of awakening*). He can also speak Common.

Roleplaying Frosty. The snow golem is not evil by nature but by choice—and is fond of reminding his victims of that fact whilst tearing them limb from limb. The only people he has any affection for are the children responsible for his dark birth, who he periodically visits. Frosty makes sure to leave them presents whenever he does so, laying them at the doorstep. He also murders those that would harm or otherwise trouble his creators; his first victim was Sally's bully, Jimothy Tharn. The children—Sara, Billy, and the tiefling girl Sally—are, understandably, terrified of him. Billy, however, secretly has Frosty carry out his bidding from time to time.

Tactics. Frosty is fond of ambushing lone individuals, be they travelers on the road or unlucky fools in a settlement. He looses his Terrifying Glare on his first turn and follows up with Claw attacks on subsequent turns. While near death, he races over to another snowman and, as an action, transfers his magical *top hat of awakening* to the other snowman. Doing so restores him to his hit point maximum.

Servant of the Hag. Frosty periodically serves the **bheur hag** Granny Yrsula (see *The Creeping Igloo*). If she and her sisters survived the *Hag Summit* encounter, then Frosty may carry a *hag eye* (see *MM* pg. 177).

TREASURE

Frosty is fond of taking trophies from his many victims. In addition to his *top hat of awakening* (see the sidebar), he has squirreled away several treasures into his body. The following items can be retrieved while Frosty is dead or dormant, or as an action by a creature that shoves its hand into Frosty's snowy body (doing so inflicts 1 point of cold damage):

- 2d12+17 gp, 3d4+5 sp, and 4d6+18 cp
- 1d4 firewood, flint, and a fire striker
- A silver locket worth 25 gp that has an inlaid portrait of a half-elf child (presumably, someone's daughter)
- A rusty orcish dagger
- A hacky sack sewn with the initials "J.T."

TOP HAT OF AWAKENING

Wondrous item, rare

This top hat is embroidered with felt sigils. As an action, you can place the top hat on a snowman, animating it. While animated in this manner, the snowman has the statistics of a **scarecrow** (with immunity to cold damage and vulnerability to fire damage) with a random alignment and the ability to speak one language of its creator's. Every *top hat of awakening* houses one consciousness with its own alignment and personality.

The snowman has a will of its own. It regards you as its creator but is under no compulsion to obey you. It may feel indebted to you, resentful of the life you breathed into it, or compelled to protect you from others.

The snowman remains animate so long as the *top hat of awakening* remains on its head. It can be removed while the snowman is incapacitated; otherwise, the construct's will keeps the hat firmly attached to its head and a successful DC 15 Strength check, made as an action, is required to remove it.

The snowman's personality, mind, and memories are persistent. Even if the snowman is reduced to 0 hit points or its hat is removed, the snowman is, effectively, reborn if the hat is placed on another inanimate snowman. As an action, the snowman can remove its own hat and, in that same motion, place it on another inanimate snowman within 5 feet, transferring its own consciousness. When it does so, it becomes another **scarecrow** with all its hit points.

THE FRUITS OF DESPAIR

Polar Night Encounter, Tier I

Rjuk, a mining village, lies in the shadow of two mountains. Its people suffer an annual winter malaise during the four-month-long polar night. This seasonal depression is a familiar specter with which the Rjukites grapple with, but a recent tragedy has compounded their blues into outright despair. Drawn to this despair, a unique **meenlock** bursts in from the Feywild and into the mortal world where it has now begun to create a hive of its own dark fey.

The Tragedy. When 6-year-old Oskar and his infant sister Edith went missing, a search party tracked them to the nearby woods. The trail led to an igloo—a curious sight in the forest. Its walls were decorated in strange sigils, claim the survivors, who burst inside in time to see Oskar being stuffed into the mouth of a hag. Six trackers entered that igloo; two emerged, and it was without Edith. "The igloo shuddered," say the survivors, "and hovered above the forest floor on a frigid cloud." Desperate to save the girl, they clambered towards the igloo's entrance but were cut by flying daggers of ice. They returned to Rjuk later that day, empty-handed and haunted.

Little did Rjuk know that its grief could pave the way to even greater woes. They came together to mourn a senseless tragedy, and from their united anguish came creatures from a realm not meant for mortal eyes. From the darkness emerged a special **meenlock** spawned not by fear, but despair. It has been spotted numerous times, clinging to the shadows but growing bolder as the days went on. Were this a brighter land not held hostage by polar night, the fey would be confined to its warren by day. The townsfolk have fallen to fear as well as despair, which only seems to further empower the creature.

Foulspawn. The original meenlock was timid at first, merely clawing at passerby from the shadows and fleeing when others intervened. Inevitably, it overwhelmed a lone teenager named Rhynis. The boy was paralyzed and dragged into an old gold mine nearby where no one could hear his screams. The meenlock battered the boy's mind with psychic malice and fear. When his body and brain and spirit could take it no longer, he did not die, but was instead transformed into another meenlock. For more details on this metamorphosis, see the Telepathic Torment sidebar (*VGM*, pg. 170).

Since then, the meenlocks' numbers have swelled. While two have already been slain, six remain. Each new member is an abducted and broken victim; while children have been attacked, none have gone missing, suggesting that the fey can only transform adults. If these foul creatures are not vanquished, all of Rjuk may one day become meenlocks.

Villagers. Rjuk's people have learned that the fey shun bright light, and that they can teleport into pools of darkness. Candles and lanterns are burned at all times in the villagers' homes to stamp out any darkness the fey may use to gain purchase inside. No one is allowed outside in groups of less than three.

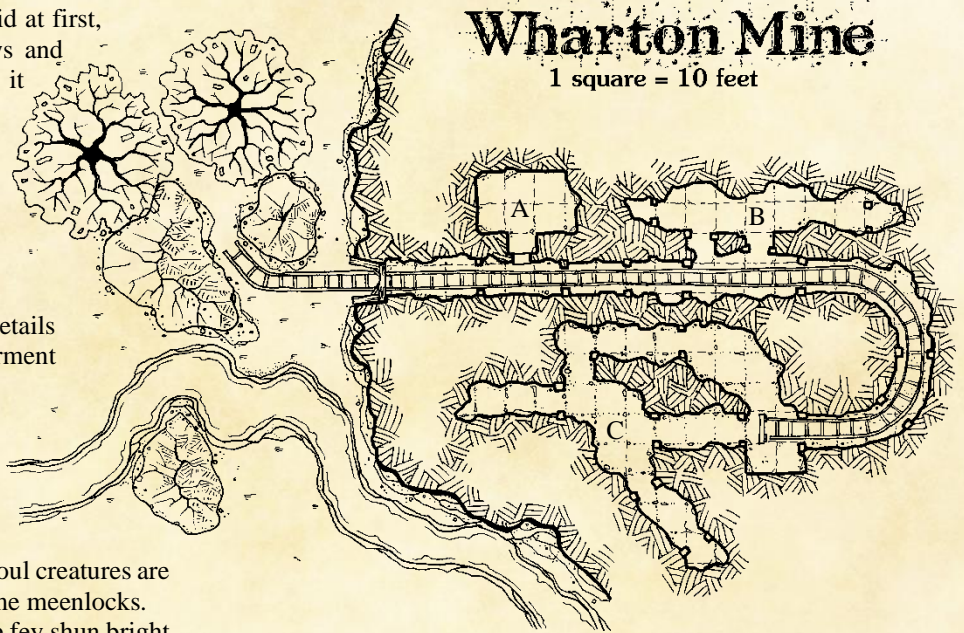
Arrival. When the adventurers first arrive to Rjuk, they encounter three human watchmen: two LG **guards** and Karl Urn, a LG **veteran** (with a Wisdom score of 15 and a +2 bonus to Survival checks). Urn is a haunted man; it was he who saw little Oskar's death. His only surviving companion has gone missing; Urn suspects either suicide or abduction at the hands of the meenlocks.

Roleplaying Urn. The "hag-ordeal" has completely broken Urn. Before, he was gregarious; now he is sullen and taciturn. His wife, Aldi, hardly recognizes him now. He has spoken only once of what he saw in the hag's igloo and has yet to recover from that nightmare.

Urn has a far-off stare; he hardly looks others in the eye. You can voice him with the following dialogue:

- "We are infested. Creatures not of this world lurk in the dark, eager to add more to their foul warren. Seven of our people have disappeared; others have been left maimed. We know where they reside, but we lack the courage and strength to enter that warren and put an end to the shadow."
- "Carry a light with you. Lamp oil is now more valuable than steel. The creatures... darkness is a road they alone can take."
- "On the heels of tragedy... fear."
- "I have seen one of these foul creatures; they are like gnomes or children in stature but resemble insects—with mandibles and pincers and clawed feet."
- "We must rid our land of this foul pestilence so that we may mourn in peace."

Karl knows where the meenlocks reside: a branch of an old mine. He points the adventurers to it. He can be convinced to come along with a successful DC 13 Persuasion check. Alas, his demons get the better of him in the warrens. If he falls prey to the meenlocks' Fear Aura, nightmares of the hag-ordeal are ripped from the back of his mind to the surface. Unless he is calmed with a successful DC 15 Persuasion check (made as an action), he becomes incapacitated by the trauma until an hour later—if he lives that long.



THE WARREN

When it first burst into this world, the meenlock claimed an old mineshaft as its lair—just one of the many gold mines that honeycomb Rjuk's mountains. Its gold and iron were mined long ago, and the Rjukites found no reason to seal it off, unaware that a brood of 1d4+2 **giant spiders** moved in. The fey have an unsurprising kinship with these creatures, who have managed to adapt to the cold.

Three **meenlocks** are currently inside the mine; the others are in Rjuk proper. If the adventurers fight the meenlocks, the other three sense their intrusion and come to their kin's aid. When the party exit the mine, the other meenlocks are lying in ambush.

Map. See the *Wharton Mine* map for details on this warren. The giant spiders nest in the northern chamber, but their webs litter the mine (see Appendix C for the effects of webs). The mine has these features:

- Valuables are piled in Area A—the human possessions of the meenlocks, discarded upon their transformation into fey. The valuables include furs, 2d6+15 gp, a shortsword, six daggers, a wooden shield, and a small, glowing crystal trinket.
- Three **giant spiders** nest in Area B; they protect their eggs at all costs. The other three spiders can be found anywhere else.
- In Area C, three **meenlocks** are tormenting Olvin Ghor, Karl Urn's surviving companion from the hag ordeal. Ghor is a LN human **guard**. The fey are on the verge of transforming him into another meenlock. At the end of the next turn after the party enters this area, Ghor must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, taking 3d6 psychic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. If he dies to this damage, he becomes another **meenlock** with full hit points.

RJUK: PURGED

If the adventurers slay the meenlocks, the villagers grant them free room and board for as long as they need. When the party leaves, they do so with an extra 2d6+10 rations, enough lamp oil to last 12 hours, a coil of rope, and 25 gp.

If but a single meenlock survives, it bides its time until these mighty vanquishers leave. It then creeps out to repopulate its warren once again...

THE HAG

Granny Yrsula, the **bheur hag** described in *The Creeping Igloo*, is the foul creature responsible for this havoc. She can be encountered in *The Creeping Igloo*. Like all hags, Yrsula must devour a live child to propagate. In a week, she will give birth to a child that looks exactly like Edith. She intends to return "Edith" to her grieving parents. In thirteen years, this daughter will transform into a hag; Yrsula will watch her childhood with great interest.

THE GLACIAL GARDEN

Mountain Encounter, Tier II

As punishment for his hubris and vanity, Erasmus, once a snow elf bard, fell prey to the medusa's curse. Cast out from his kin, he now haunts a crucial pass in the Arctic that supplies him with many new victims. Whereas other medusas turn their victims to stone, his gaze turns them to ice. Still just as vain as he was in better days, the **medusa** hungers for adulation, real or imagined. He is fond of singing to his garden of victims. On a windless day, his angelic voice is carried across the area, intriguing any approaching travelers.

Erasmus has claimed a crucial area as his territory, the nature of which is determined by you. It can be a narrow mountain pass or an underground tunnel—any place where travelers must choose to soldier on through the apparent danger or backtrack to a safer route.

The Garden. Erasmus's twenty victims are coated in fresh snow. From a distance, they can be mistaken for snowmen. One would soon realize that snowmen cannot be arranged into such poses; gravity would cause the figure to collapse. Once near a statue, it becomes apparent that its not a snowman but an ice sculpture. By wiping the snow from a statue's face, and succeeding on a DC 13 Insight check, a character can realize that the statue's near-featureless visage is carved into a vague mask of horror.

The Statues. The medusa's intact victims number twenty, but several more have been destroyed by the elements, intruders, monsters, or even Erasmus himself when he's lost himself to a fit of rage. You can determine the nature and appearance of the statue a character analyzes by rolling a d20 and consulting the *The Glacial Garden: Statues* table.

Tactics. Erasmus is armed with a shortsword emblazoned with elven glyphs. His shortbow displays similar iconography, hinting to his origins as a snow elf or suggesting he stole these weapons from his victims.

When he leaves his lair to attack, Erasmus makes a Stealth check to remain hidden. Contest it with the party's Perception checks. Erasmus is interested more in adding new statues to his garden, but he still requires sustenance, which he cannot gain from creatures turned to ice. Those he manages to kill without petrifying will become a meal for the next few weeks.

Roleplaying Erasmus. Admiration is the only warmth that can soothe the chilblains of Erasmus's exile. He will spare the adventurers if it nets him a live, captive audience to appreciate his singing. He laments in his curse, but time and necessity have twisted him towards evil; he won't give up his murderous ways.

THE GLACIAL GARDEN: STATUES

d20	Statue Description
1	A snow elf whose limbs have been smashed off, condemning him to life as a quadriplegic if his petrification is reversed.
2	A dwarf with a smile etched into his face.
3-4	Two humans huddling together in abject terror.
4	A yeti cowering in fear.
5	A gnoll with its right arm raised as if it were about to strike out at a foe.
6	A human archer pulling back the drawstring on a missing bow (see <i>Treasure</i> below).
7	A tiefling wizard frozen mid-incantation.
8	A gnome who was frozen as she attempted to wrap a scarf around her eyes. The tattered scarf is still in her hands.
9	A female dwarf cleric in mid-prayer.
10	A barbarian beating his chest as part of a war cry.
11	A human clutching an arrow lodged in his belly.
12	A woman with her hands down near her hips, as if she were holding on to two children.
13	A child that tripped and is looking up at some absent horror towering over him.
14-16	Three dogs, two cowering behind the third, who is bearing his fangs.
17	A young remorhaz that dug up from underground. It had attempted to ambush the medusa but caught its gaze instead.
18	A snow elf whose face has been pulverized.
19	A snow elf reaching for her severed arm.
20	A snow elf pointing a finger at Erasmus's cave.

After Erasmus strikes, he begins to sing during combat. His voice is lovely, no matter how grievous his wounds. You can use any of the sample dialogue (in Elvish) below to voice him:

- "All will love me and despair!"
- "Your last moments will be admiring my voice."
- "It will comfort you to know that this is only the beginning."
- "More admirers to add to the garden..."

TREASURE

Whenever a creature is petrified (or, in this case, frozen) by a medusa, objects they're wearing or carrying are not. Erasmus has stockpiled their belongings in his cave. They include:

- Enough furs, coats, and cold weather clothing to clothe thirty travelers. Most have been heaped together to make a bed.
- 1d6+3 tinderboxes with 2d4+2 pieces of firewood.
- 2d8+3 rations.
- 2d4+1 explorer's packs with 3d8+12 feet of rope remaining.
- 4d6+13 gp, 2d8+14 sp, 4d6+19 cp stored in a burlap sack
- A shortbow plus 3d4+4 simple weapons and 1d6+1 martial weapons. See chapter 5 of the *PHB*.
- A bronze orb etched in arcane runes.
- A petrified mouse.
- A pair of *eyes of minute seeing* (see *DMG* p. 168).

THE GLACIAL PRISON

Character Encounter, Tier III

In the forgotten caverns far, *far* below the Citadel—the snow elves' glorious city—the Flayed Queen gathers strength. Her whispers can be heard across the Arctic, marshalling the dead and desperate. Her necromantic cult, the Newly Dead, are hard at work tending to the undead and searching for the key to their dark mistress's prison. For eons has the queen languished in her prison, watched over by her **gynosphinx** jailor, Irhemana. The sphinx has failed to notice her charge's waxing influence; she has failed to notice the melting ice and the queen's stirring spirit. She has failed the world itself and has yet to realize it.

For further details, see the *Army of the Damned* storyline.

The Flayed Queen. In ancient days long forgotten, the Flayed Queen amassed an undead army and marched upon the living. Only by the efforts of the realm's greatest heroes was she bound in a prison devised by the archmage A'til. Unbeknownst to his companions, A'til served the queen in secret and he left two flaws in the prison: the teleportation circle's sigils can be divined, and an incantation can be uttered to free the queen.

The world at large has forgotten the Flayed Queen's dreadful saga, with those that still recall her efforts chalking her up to a myth. Those same myths suggest she was once a paladin and queen that "usurped" her impotent, late husband and was flayed alive by his "valiant" brother... but she did not die, this queen, and found in Death all the power she was cheated out of in life.

The Flayed Queen's true name was lost long ago. Few mortals have ever discovered her tomb; those that did were ripped apart by Irhemana—and their tortured spirits are the founders of her cult, the Newly Dead. Irhemana, proud as she is, did not realize that the queen could raise nearby spirits from her prison bound. By underestimating the queen, she has sown the seeds of her own demise—and the world's.

The Newly Dead. The Flayed Queen's cult labor endlessly to free their master and prepare the army she will use to revenge herself upon the living. In her heightened state, the queen can commune with creatures all over the continent, combing it for power-hungry or nihilistic individuals that will serve her in life and in death. They are led by the **lich** Cis'tudh, her most loyal servant. Should the lich find the key to her master's prison (see *Frosthege*), she and the cult invade the Glacial Prison to battle Irhemana and free the Flayed Queen.

The City Above. The elves have forgotten their sacred oath—or, at the very least, the very reason why the Citadel was first constructed. As they continue to magically heat their icy city, the Flayed Queen's glacial prison melts. This is the source of her awakening, and, if she is freed, she will personally thank the elves by welcoming them into her army of the dead.

THE PRISON

The Glacial Prison is an icy cavern paved with runic flagstones that shed a soft, blue light. At the cavern's heart is a chunk of glacial ice, blacker than absolute darkness. The entire prison has the following magical properties:

- The cavern is dimly lit by the runic flagstones.
- While in the prison, creatures do not need to eat or drink.
- Creatures and objects in the prison can't be targeted by divination spells. Per A'til's design, this does not include the prison's teleportation circle.

- Planar travel is blocked within the prison, as are all means of teleporting in or out. The prison can only be entered through the teleportation circle described below.
- The cavern is so unearthly cold that even creatures wearing warm clothing or are resistant to cold damage must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw every minute or take one level of exhaustion.
- The cavern is filled with frigid, 5-foot-deep water. Creatures that start their turn in the water, or enter for the first time on a turn, must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (3d8) cold damage, or half as much on a success. This damage ignores resistance to cold damage. Irhemana is immune to this damage.

Teleportation Circle. A permanent teleportation circle (as in *teleportation circle*, *PHB* pg. 282) is found in the adjoining chambers of the cavern, represented by the star on the map. This circle is the only way to enter the prison. It has a unique sigil sequence that has been recorded scant times in all of history. The adventurers might discover the sigil in an ancient tome, by interrogating a high-ranking Newly Dead necromancer, or by a *legend lore* spell. Additionally, Homer Erendalias has the sigil sequence written down in his spellbook (see *Treasure* in the *Homer's Hovering Hovel* encounter).

Black Glacier. Darker than black, darker than the absence of all color and light, the Flayed Queen's icy cell dominates the cavern. With careful observation, a character notices that the ice is slowly melting. Irhemana is oblivious to this fact and would refuse to believe it even if it were brought to her attention.

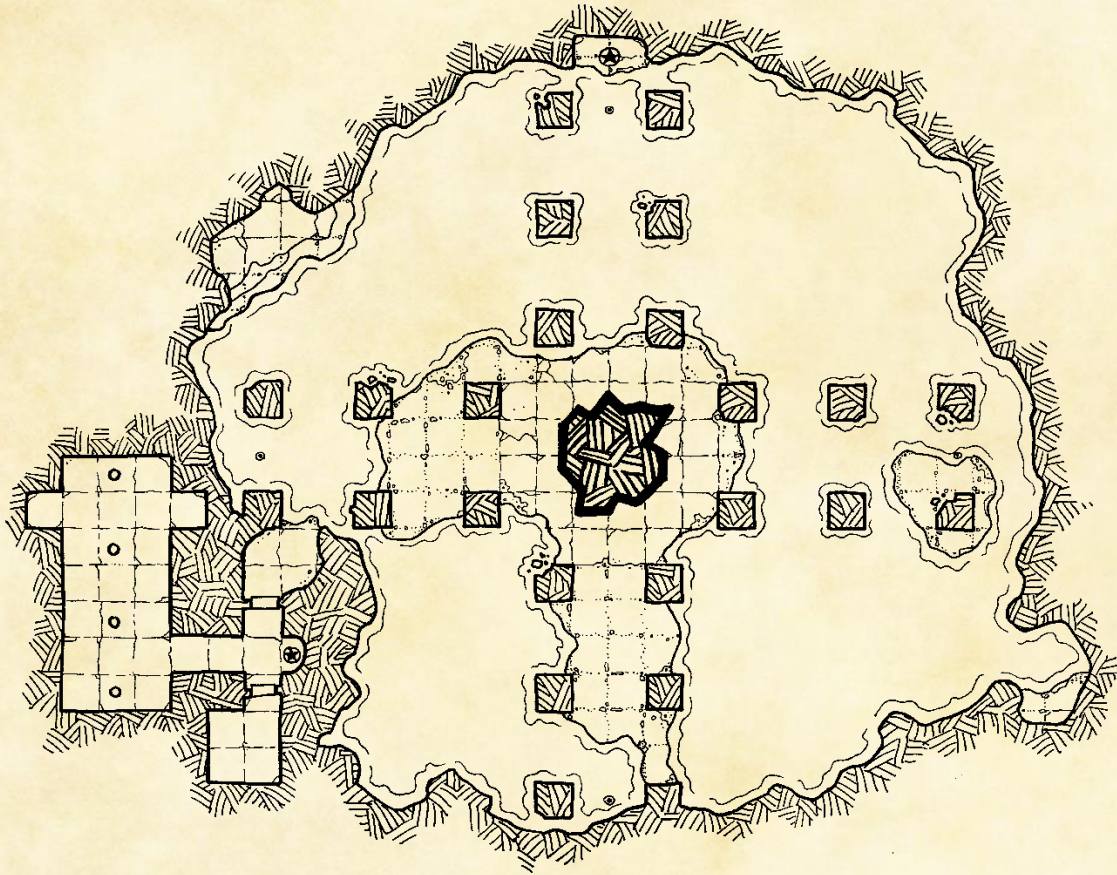
One can sense a dreadful presence preserved in the ice. With the Flayed Queen awake, she can fixate her chilling gaze upon intruders. If she so wills it, the queen can impose a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw upon a creature within 20 feet of the ice. On a failure, they are frightened for the next minute. The target is immune to this effect for 24 hours if they succeed. The queen can only do this once every 1d6 rounds. Irhemana automatically succeeds on this saving throw if she has 35 or more hit points.

The glacier has 100 hit points, AC 15, immunity to poison, psychic, and cold damage, as well as damage inflicted by non-magical weapons. Creatures that harm it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on weapon and spell attacks against the ice for the next minute. Only a *wish* spell can cause the glacier to regain hit points.

Key. When the Flayed Queen was first bound, an arcane incantation was devised to ensure that she could be freed. When this incantation is uttered by a creature that is physically within 10 feet of the glacier, the ice cracks wide enough for the Flayed Queen to step out from her ancient prison.

Regardless of how the queen is freed, the **death knight** has two levels of exhaustion when she emerges from the ice. If she is slain and the Glacial Prison is utterly melted, the Flayed Queen's soul flees to a purgatorial realm until she amasses the strength to rise again in the mortal world. If the Glacial Prison has even 1 hit point left, her soul is imprisoned once again.

Map. Refer to the map below, with each square being 5 feet in scale. The teleportation circle is marked by the star in the adjoining chamber.



THE JAILOR

The sphinx Irhemana perpetually guards the Glacial Prison. She was first summoned by a cleric, one of the heroes that defeated the Flayed Queen long ago. The exact deity she serves is long forgotten. This same deity gave Irhemana two disciples to help watch over the Flayed Queen: the **couatls** described in *Obelisk-Bound Couatl*. Years ago, the couatls disappeared; Irhemana, blind as she is proud, assumed they died or deserted their duty. She holds nothing but contempt for the two devotees that now languish in prisons of their own.

Irhemana offers no reprieve to creatures that visit the Glacial Prison. There are no riddles they may solve or mercy they may appeal to. After a brief lecture, she attacks. Even creatures she *knows* to be definitively good-hearted or pious are torn to shreds: no one may learn of the Flayed Queen's wards or whereabouts.

Roleplaying Irhemana. The sphinx is graceful and poisoned by arrogance. As a celestial creature, as a servant of the *gods*, she considers herself infallible. No evidence can convince her otherwise. No mortal may judge her, a near-divine creature, and she believes that any fool who dares to press judgement against her deserves an undignified death.

You can voice Irhemana with the sample dialogue below:

- "My duty is eternal, my record unmarred. The queen has not, and will never, escape my grasp."
- "I am afraid this is the last sight you will ever see."
- "I take no pleasure in this."
- "I am ordained by the Will Above! No mortal may judge me!"

Tactics. Irhemana uses the tactics below; the prison counts as her lair, granting access to her potent lair actions.

- At the first opportunity, Irhemana casts *greater invisibility* using a legendary action.
- Irhemana casts *shield* every round, essentially increasing her AC to 22. Most of her other spells have little use in combat; therefore, she spends her spell slots frivolously.
- Thanks to the nature of Irhemana's mission and the prison, only her first and second lair actions are useful in battle.

THE FLAYED QUEEN

Within the black ice lies a skeleton within the ribs of which glows a malevolent blue light. In her prison, the Flayed Queen has not been humbled, only taught the necessity of patience. Her telepathic whispers are the first chill of winter, caressing the spine like a shiver before invading the brain. When the adventurers first enter the Glacial Prison, her dreadful whisper bounces off the cobbles of their simple minds: "And so the rooks arrive to liberate the queen..."

Roleplaying the Queen. The Flayed Queen is free from the trappings of mortality. Her soul is as black as the ice that houses her. All things, living or otherwise, belong to her; every person and every corpse is another citizen of her sovereign demesne. Her regal attention is sterile and suffocating; those that attract her gaze come to regret it.

You can voice the Flayed Queen with the dialogue below:

- "All that is not already mine shall be one day soon."
- "I am justice; I am law; I am undeniable. There is nothing in this life but death."

- "Strike her down and Death itself will crown you. Free me and rule this world at my side as my champion—or kneel as my armies crush you underfoot. You will serve me one way or the other."
- "You are on borrowed time. Serve me and stand forever."
- "You are empty inside; I can give you purpose. I can give you everything."
- "You have done your duty a thousand times over. I have seen you, slayer of men and monsters. We are not so different, are we? We both serve Death in our own ways..."

LIBERATION AT LAST

Having discovered the incantation to free her dark master, the **lich** Cis'tudh teleports into the Glacial Prison with a host of undead and her insidious servants:

- A **beholder zombie**
- 1d4+2 **wights** and a **wraith**
- A **necromancer** that has already cast *false life* as a 4th-level spell to gain 23 temporary hit points. Instead of *dimension door*, he has prepared *counterspell*.

The Glacial Prison becomes the scene of a pitched battle as Irhemana fights off these intruders. Barring the adventurers' intervention, Cis'tudh falls beneath Irhemana's claws—but not before freeing the Flayed Queen, who then slays the sphinx. Chanting command words given to her long ago by Al'ghr A'til, the **death knight** opens the teleportation circle and escapes to the Citadel, where she calls forth the dead and lays waste to the city, adding the elves' corpses to her army.

If the adventurers intervene, Cis'tudh distracts the party with her minions as she makes her way to the glacier. To free her master, she must utter the key incantation from within 10 feet. It is up to the adventurers to stop her. Once within range, she can use three actions to utter the incantation in its entirety. She is thwarted temporarily by a *silence* spell. After uttering the incantation, the ice begins to crack. In three rounds, the Flayed Queen enters the fray, forging her longsword from the shattered remains of her prison.



GLACIER DWARF WAR BAND

Tundra Encounter, Tier I-III

Clan Aurora has dispatched a warband from its frozen fortress, but it has fallen prey to the Arctic's perils. This encounter has several variants, as described below. Additionally, their mission may be to patrol the region, avenge a loss, take the fight to their enemies abroad, or reclaim lost territory (such as Thelgrym's Watch; see the encounter of the same name). Their weapons and armor—notably carved from glacial ice—and are as sharp and durable as steel.

Leadership. The warband is led by Yolgys Aurora, a grizzled **champion** with an Intelligence of 15 (+2) and Wisdom of 17 (+3). Yolgys is the brother of Clan Aurora's king, Rolthym. This veteran of two wars and countless skirmishes is known among the dwarves as "the Anvil."

If he survived the massacre at Thelgrym's Watch, then the **noble** Lord Soram is also with the warband (see the *Thelgrym's Watch* encounter) and the warband is devoted to retaking the glacial fortress.

Forces. The warband has been whittled down by accidents, sickness, and earlier skirmishes. They now consist of 2d10+10 **guards**, 1d4+1 **knights**, 1d4+1 **scouts**, 1d4+1 **veterans**, three **nobles** and two **priests**. They are served by twelve **commoners** that act as messengers, porters, and cooks; they also care for the warband's last surviving messenger hawk and their six **mules**, which pull carts laden with rations, supplies, heavy arms, armor, and ale.

These dwarves have the following racial traits:

- They speak Dwarvish, in addition to Common, and have dark-vision to a range of 60 feet.
- They have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned and resistance to poison damage.
- They are naturally adapted for environments of extreme cold.
- They can each cast *ray of frost*. Once per day, they can cast both *ice knife* and *flame blade* (the blade is forged of ice and deals cold damage instead of fire damage). They require no material components for these spells and Intelligence is the spellcasting ability for these spells.

Gratitude. If the adventurers aid the dwarves in their plight, they allow the party to accompany them, sit at their fire, and share in their food and ale, until a time comes when the two groups must diverge. The warband covers 16 miles a day when accounting for the wounded, donkeys, or bad weather.

AGAINST THE GIANTS!

Tier III

The warband is facing their ancient enemies: the frost giants of Skoldheim. The adventurers come upon a battle between these two forces—a losing battle. Without intervention, the dwarves will be routed by the remaining 1d4+2 **frost giants**, 1d4+3 frost giant juveniles (**ogres** with immunity to cold damage), and 1d4+1 **young remorhazes**.

The giants have crushed the dwarves but aren't unscathed. They have the following hit points, which you can determine with a d6, rerolling repeats: 36, 41, 57, 80, 83, and 102. The juveniles each have 30-45 hit points remaining.

It was glorious. The war horns, the shouts, the expertly executed tactics. I was treated to a fair fight that day—and from the relative safety of a distant knoll.

AGAINST THE GNOLLS!

Tier II

The warband is putting down a cancer of gnolls, many of whom are already red and pregnant with past kills. These beastmen consist of 2d10+5 **gnolls**, a **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu**, four **gnoll hunters**, a **gnoll pack lord** and a **leucrotta**. The battle is bloody and spread out; the gnolls have driven a wedge in the dwarves' formation and are ravaging both sides. A third of a mile away, 2d6+4 **hyenas** are waiting to feast on the corpses of the slain. After 1d4 hours, an engorged hyena bursts, and a new **gnoll** emerges from its shredded belly.

If the **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu** escapes, this precipitates the *Cycle of Carnage* encounter.

CAKLE FEVER

Tier I

The warband has been exposed to an insidious, strange disease: cackle fever (see the sidebar). This malady spreads not through the flesh, but the very mind. See the sidebar for its effects. The dwarves have had no choice but to halt their march and divide the warband into three camps: the infected, the exposed, and the isolated. The **priests**, who could have cured the disease, already died from the malady, their brains torn asunder.

The warband has already sent a messenger hawk to a nearby frost gnome warren, appealing for healers, as gnomes cannot be afflicted by cackle fever, for some odd reason.

Crackdown. The uninfected camps are grim and silent. No jokes, jests, or tales are allowed to be told, for every laugh and outburst is suspect. The dwarves are sitting before campfires, poking at coals, whittling wood, or polishing armor. Sentries give the camps wide berths as they patrol the area. Should these **scouts** encounter the adventurers, they warn, "Beware, friends: there has been outbreak of a disease most insidious. No jests, no jokes, and certainly no limericks, are to be told beyond this point. Those of you skilled in *maladies arcana* are asked to report to Lord Yolgys."

Sitting Ducks. The dwarves are vulnerable until the gnomes arrive or the malady dissipates, which takes 1d4+1 and 1d6+4 days, respectively. In the meantime, any number of creatures or foes may attack the dwarves (including the gnolls described in the *Against the Gnolls!* variant). Starting on the second day, a **manticore** that lairs five miles away decides to start hunting the dwarves, starting first with the scouts, then wading right into the infected camp. The monster is immune to cackle fever and it can ravage the sick with impunity. Using cloud cover to its advantage, the manticore drops from the sky to grapple prey, bringing it back to its lair. If it takes 15 points of damage in a single round, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or drop its prey.

CAKLE FEVER

This disease targets humanoids, although gnomes are strangely immune. While in the grips of this disease, victims frequently succumb to fits of mad laughter, giving the disease its common name and its morbid nickname: "the shrieks."

Symptoms manifest 1d4 hours after infection and include fever and disorientation. The infected creature gains one level of exhaustion that can't be removed until the disease is cured.

Any event that causes the infected creature great stress—including entering combat, taking damage, experiencing fear, or having a nightmare—forces the creature to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage and becomes incapacitated with mad laughter for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the mad laughter and the incapacitated condition on a success. Any humanoid creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of an infected creature in the throes of mad laughter must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or also become infected with the disease. Once a creature succeeds on this save, it is immune to the mad laughter of that particular infected creature for 24 hours.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the DC for this save and for the save to avoid an attack of mad laughter drops by 1d6. When the saving throw DC drops to 0, the creature recovers from the disease. A creature that fails three of these saving throws gains a randomly determined form of indefinite madness (see App. C for these effects).

Deliverance. After 1d6+4 days, frost gnomes arrive: a **priest** escorted by six **guards**, all of which are fleeing from a **yeti**. The dwarf that first sees them over the horizon shouts, "They're here! By the gods, they're *h*—to arms! To arms, brothers and sisters! Our deliverers are under attack!" It takes the dwarves, as exhausted as they are, two minutes to muster their warriors, giving the party the chance to dispatch the yeti first. The gnomes and yeti are on a hill 800 feet away.

If the priest is saved, it uses *lesser restoration* spells to cure cackle fever. At five castings per day, it takes the priest up to two weeks to cure the infected.

As frost gnomes, these characters have the following racial traits:

- They read, write and speak Gnomish.
- They are Small and have a speed of 25 feet.
- They have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- They have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws made against magic.
- They have resistance to cold damage.
- They can move across icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice and snow doesn't impede their movement. While moving down slopes of ice or snow, they have advantage on Acrobatics checks to maintain balance.

GLOBAL WARMING

Polar, Urban or Volcanic Encounter, Tier IV

Together, the Cults of the Eternal Flame and the Crushing Wave have doomed the world to a new and watery age. They have summoned a **phoenix** to this world, using Mount Erebus as its gateway from the Plane of Fire. Most perished in its fiery birth; in their arrogance, the cult always assumed that they would be spared the elder elemental's wrath, as if they could cup such fire in their hands and remain unburnt. The survivors, the cultists of the Crushing Wave, are directing a frigid flood towards the sea, devastating settlements along the way.

See *Edge of Disaster*, the predecessor to this encounter, as well as the *Global Warming* storyline for details. As described above, the cultists are now dead (with exception for the Searing Sultan, an **efreeti** collaborator). However, the Crushing Wave cult placed the bulk of their numbers elsewhere to help direct the floods that will be born from melting ice. The cultists intend to crush Arctic settlements on the way to the sea.

The phoenix's very presence melts snow and ice within 300 feet of the elemental. Thanks to the phoenix's legendary cycle of rebirth, slaying the elder elemental only delays the inevitable. Unless the egg is banished to another plane or outright removed from the Arctic, this encounter is doomed to repeat itself.

THE FIRE FROM MOUNT EREBUS

The phoenix's emergence is heard all across the Arctic; thunder cracks out across the region, scarring glaciers and setting off avalanches. The very force of its entry can be felt in the bones of beast and men alike; birds take flight and animals flee from a perceived disaster. In the moments *after* this shockwave, Mt. Erebus erupts; the eruption causes an earthquake that rocks the Arctic from as far as three hundred miles away. The skies above the volcano blacken with smoke and ash as the phoenix spreads its wings and, with a thunderous shriek, takes to the air.

If the phoenix is slain here, much of its damage is contained, sparing the world from rising sea levels. Unless attacked, the elemental circles Mount Erebus for several minutes, basking in the destruction it causes. The Searing Sultan too basks in this carnage, flying in the phoenix's wake.

Tactics. If the **phoenix** and **efreeti** are engaged, they employ the following tactics:

- On his first turn, the efreeti casts *conjure elementals*, adding a **fire elemental** to the fray. If the battle is in the air, the fire elemental rides on the phoenix (as if it were solid).
- While concentrating on a spell, the efreeti makes Hurl Flame attacks. If his concentration is broken, he casts *enlarge/reduce* on himself, dealing 1d4 extra damage with his attacks.
- The phoenix weaves through all foes (without provoking any opportunity attack, thanks to its Flyby trait) to sear them with its Fire Form trait.
- If the phoenix is slain, the efreeti snatches the phoenix's egg and attempts to flee (with a *plane shift* spell if he knows there can be no reprieve on the Material Plane).

Some fools wish to watch the world burn, others wish to see it drown. I would take the latter, I suppose, if given the choice. I only hope that the fools gathered at Mount Erebus had enough time to regret committing themselves to destruction.

THE FLOODS

Weakened by the phoenix's thunderous arrival, glaciers around the Arctic are ready to melt. As the elder elemental tours the Arctic, the cultists direct the ensuing floods towards the sea—but not before directing them at a settlement.

Cultists. Cultists are scattered across the region in groups of 1d6+2 **crushing wave reavers**, 1d4+2 **crushing wave priests**, and a **mage** with *control water* prepared instead of *suggestion*. Each group also has either 1d3 **water elementals** or one **water elemental myrmidon** at their command. 1d6+4 groups are scattered across the region.

Flooding. The flood harnessed by the Crushing Wave cultists can destroy settlements and uproot forests. Huge or smaller creatures that are struck by the flood must succeed on a Strength saving throw or take 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage. A creature can only take this damage once per round. A creature that is caught in the flood can move by swimming if they succeed on a DC 15 Athletics check. The flood deals 50 damage to any structure it strikes.

THE PHOENIX TRIUMPHANT

The phoenix tirelessly continues its flight, stopping only whenever it wishes to destroy something—a settlement, typically. For every 1d12 hours the elemental flies across the region, enough ice melts to raise sea levels by 1 foot. There is enough ice in this polar region to increase sea levels by 230 feet.

Other heroes inevitably rise to the occasion if the adventurers don't, but by then sea levels would have risen by 2d12+6 feet, drowning coastal cities and sparking mass migrations of people. Nations around the world fall to chaos, allowing sinister forces to rise up and accomplish their dark agendas in the absence of order.



GRANDMA GOT MAULED

BY AN OWLBEAR

Taiga or Urban Encounter, Tier I

A local **green hag** masquerading as a sweet, beloved crone has gone missing; her village found the iconic tracks of an **owlbear** leading from her bloodied shawl. Unaware of the true monster among them, the villagers have put out a 25 gp bounty on the owlbear and are asking for volunteers to help search for "Old Kathrys," whom they believe may still be alive. The party may encounter the trackers in the forest or enter the village itself.

Village. Crook's Den is a village of forty people that sits on the edge of a taiga. Were it not for the road running through it, the village would not even appear on any maps. Travelers headed deeper into the Arctic stay in its sole inn to relish warmth and civilization before committing themselves to the frozen wastes. Little happens in the village; the crone's disappearance, and the discovery of the attack, is all anyone can talk about. So beloved is the hag that many are claiming that the 25 gp reward cheapens Old Kathrys, that there is no bounty too high to recover (or avenge) her.

In the Forest. Old Kathrys's blood-stained shawl was found in a clearing a mile from the village. The first person to discover it found owlbear tracks leading into the woods, but the trail has gone cold. With a successful DC 14 Survival check, a character can pick up the trail and follow it to a nearby cave where they find Kathrys alive and bewitching the owlbear.

The green hag sought to subjugate the owlbear but failed. It savaged her and only through clever magic did she appear to be dead, sparing her from greater harm. The beast brought her back to its lair to feed, where she sprang up to perform a ritual that would bend the owlbear to her will. The creature is mollified while she works her magic; in less than a minute, she completes the ritual and has permanent control over the owlbear.

Kathrys is too engrossed in her spellwork to notice passerby, suffering a -3 penalty to her passive Perception score. Curiously enough, she appears unwounded and her robes are unbloodied (thanks to her Illusory Appearance trait). The hag's magic has no visual elements; it appears that she's dancing in front of a pacified, bored owlbear. Using an action, a character can make a DC 20 Investigation check to see through the hag's illusion, revealing a wart-faced creature that has been raked by savage talons. Additionally, a character that watches Kathrys can make a DC 13 Insight check to realize she is performing a spell; with a DC 13 Arcana check, they ascertain she is bending the beast to her will.

Attack! By when the party attacks, the hag has only a single round left to complete her ritual, which she must use her action to perform. The ritual is interrupted if she is incapacitated. If she is not slain before the start of the next round, the owlbear is bent to her will. It obeys her telepathic commands and attacks the adventurers. If Kathrys dies, the owlbear is free from her grasp, but continues to attack the adventurers.

Likewise, Kathrys must protect her dark secret. If discovered by intruders, she has no choice but to sic the owlbear on them. Both Kathrys and the owlbear are wounded; she has 57 hit points while the beast has 49.

GREATFATHER WINTER'S FIEFDOM

Polar Encounter, Tier III

In the most remote reaches of the Arctic, far from civilization, lies Greatfather Winter's fabled domain. This Yuletide fanatic offers respite to all who grace his fiefdom with a visit—that's what the signs planted throughout the Arctic insist, of course. Those that live under this tyrant's heel know a much grimmer life than the one painted by folklore.

As the adventurers delve deeper into the frozen wastes, they see a bright stronghold festooned in gaudy, Yule decorations. Great herds of reindeer crowd around its walls, sheltering in the many barns littering the otherwise desolate region.

GREATFATHER WINTER

An archfey that has succumbed to a strange breed of madness, Greatfather Winter is obsessed with Yuletide, the annual winter festival. Some claim he has become Yule incarnate. His greatest ambition is to bring peace and joy to the world through gifts and good cheer. To other fey, he is an insane but harmless lord. To mortals, he is a source of annual festivity. To the rock gnomes under his thumb, he's a merciless despot.

Statistics. Up to and through Yuletide (which occurs during the last ten days of the year) Father Winter is a **spring eladrin**. In the first month of the new year, he loses himself to despair, assuming the statistics of a **winter eladrin**. In addition to his normal statistics, he has the following changes:

- He can cast *awaken* and *plant growth*, requiring no material components, once a day each.
- While he has the statistics of a **spring eladrin**, Greatfather Winter has resistance to cold damage.

Roleplaying Father Winter. The feylord considers himself the ultimate arbiter (with exception for, of course, his darling wife). His judgment is never anything short of impeccable. He believes all people can change, if given the proper motivation. For the children of the world, coal is the proper punishment, one that is "guaranteed" to shape them into better people. For adults, "reeducation" is the only method; Father Winter is loathe to kill others, except for out of self-defense or at his wife's insistence. Those that betray his trust or ideals, or try to escape his domain, are confined to the cells below the keep. "Redemption," the feylord is fond of saying, "is attainable by all, given time."

Patron. Greatfather Winter is a minor archfey patron. He has already patronized his eight favored reindeer.

Treasure. Greatfather Winter never goes anywhere without his *crystal ball* (DMG pg. 159), which he uses to judge children from afar. Even while he tours the assembly line, punishes a dissident, or holds a celebration, he can't go more than a minute without consulting the orb. His second other great treasure is his *sleigh of reindeer flight* (see the sidebar).

GREATMOTHER WINTER

The dark architect of this twisted enterprise, the feylord's wife is an undisguised **bheur hag**. This "Greatmother Winter" isn't responsible for her mad husband's Yuletide obsession, but she stoked the coals all the same. When she got here, the feylord was crafting every toy himself by hand. It was the hag that recognized Winter's great potential; it was the hag that brought the rock gnomes; it was the hag that fashioned Winter's sleigh from the wood of her own graystaff. The brutality, the tyranny, the terror—all are fruits from the black garden that is "Greatmother Winter's" heart.

Dark Sisterhood. Greatmother Winter is one of the three hags involved in the *Dark Sisterhood* sample storyline. When the trio finally agree to meet (see *Hag Summit*), her departure shatters Greatfather Winter. His mind unravels and he decides that strong words and coal can't right the world—only he can. The feylord abandons his stronghold, and without him it becomes a cold and skeletal lair. The rock gnomes starve to death once the garden wilts and dies to the cold. In his absence, his enforcers move onto better endeavors. The reindeer flee, free from the cults of personality centered on the Big Eight, who are taken to fly the feylord's sleigh. See *Greatfather Winter's Wrath*.

FATHER WINTER'S HELPERS

For over a century now, rock gnomes have toiled under Greatfather Winter's regime. They at first numbered forty-seven, and were brought here from the Feywild. Now they've swelled to a robust, miserable ninety-four. They are, effectively, emaciated slaves in cheerful outfits. They have nowhere to go: so deep into the Arctic, with nothing more than thin linen uniforms to keep them warm, the rock gnomes live and die by the grace of Greatfather Winter and his wicked wife. The feylord provides them warmth and food and purpose. To even frown, let alone voice a complaint, is to incur his wrath—reeducation in the frigid cells below the keep. Repeat offenders are banished to the frozen wastes with no clothes or sense of direction.

Statistics. Three generations make up the work force. Every rock gnome adult and teenager has the statistics of a **commoner** with a +4 bonus to skill checks made with any artisan's tools. The gnomes are emaciated; Father Winter only feeds them just enough food to keep them alive.

Leader. The rock gnomes' unbreakable leader is Selsi Falba. She's currently serving out her first term of "reeducation." At almost 200 years old, Selsi is from the first generation of Father Winter's "helpers." She maintains that only through hope and patience can her people be free—at least until she meets the adventurers, after which she insists they immediately slay their cheerful tyrant.

FATHER WINTER'S ENFORCERS

A despot does not rule without enforcers. Greatfather Winter is served by unscrupulous individuals devoted to his vision of global good cheer—or, at least, his iron regime.

Belsnickel. This **korred** remembers a time when Greatfather Winter was like any other feylord—vapid and without purpose. Seeing the hag turn him into a force of personality was enough for Belsnickel to sign on. As a korred, strands of Belsnickel's beard magically become the same material of the implement used to cut it off; for example, by cutting his beard with iron shears, his beard becomes woven iron. Belsnickel is the source of the operation's wood and metal.

Grentyl. Darting through the factory is a vicious NE **sprite** whose true name is known only by Greatfather Winter. The gnomes refer to him as Grentyl or "watcher" in Gnomish. The voyeur is always watching, always listening the gnomes remind each other. Grentyl's only purpose is to identify dissidents for the feylord to deal with.

Automatons. Forged by the rock gnomes and imbued with Greatfather Winter's madness, 2d6+3 **animated armors** keep order in the feylord's fiefdom. They are led by a **helmed horror** that considers itself the son and heir of Greatfather Winter.

FATHER WINTER'S REINDEER

A herd of two hundred reindeer inhabit Winter's domain. Like the gnomes, they are captives. So far north, there is little food for these beasts, except for what the feylord magically grows. Half are awakened reindeer (as in the *awaken* spell) who speak Sylvan and have Intelligence scores of 10 but otherwise have the statistics of **elks**.

The Awakened. When a reindeer is born, Greatfather Winter may visit its family to cast the *awaken* spell upon it, granting it sapience and, as he says, the appreciation for all his gifts. Truly, they become prisoners in his compound. There seemingly is no rhyme or reason as to which reindeer are awakened. The feylord graces the offspring of awakened reindeer just as often as he bestows sapience on the calf born to mundane parents.

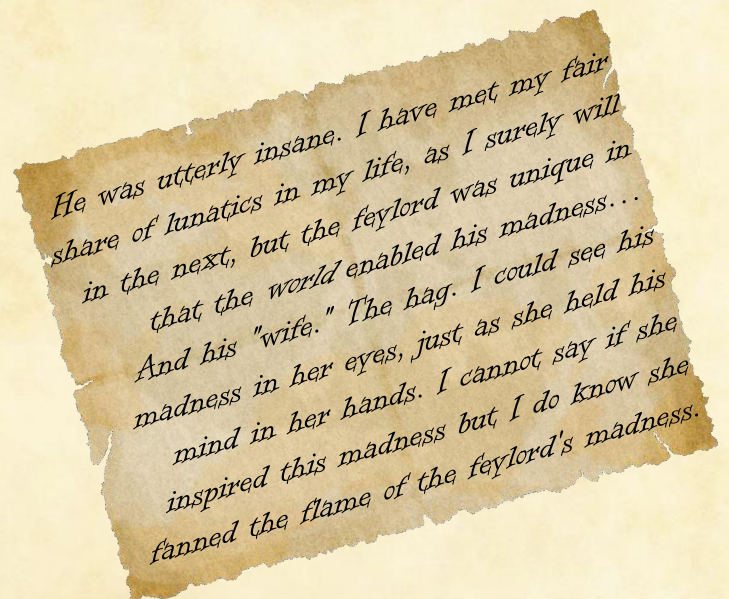
The Cattle. Although it is taboo to mention it, the reindeer that Greatfather Winter deigns not to awaken are considered as cattle to be later slaughtered. Their pelts are fashioned into coats and their hooves, bones, and antlers are incorporated into toys for children. The rock gnomes are carefully fed rations just large enough to keep them alive but not enough to give them the strength to rebel against the feylord.

This grim truth is a wedge between the awakened reindeer and the rock gnomes. For their part, the unawakened reindeer live their simple lives, never understanding the abattoir they were born into. Many reindeer envy this ignorance.

Celebrities. Father Winter requires a team of eight reindeer to pull his sleigh during Yuletide. His current team—"the Big Eight"—consist of Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Blitzen, and Cannibal. Of the Big Eight, Blitzen is the cruelest, Vixen the haughtiest, and Cannibal the most terrifying; it should come as no surprise as to how this last reindeer caught Greatfather Winter's attention...

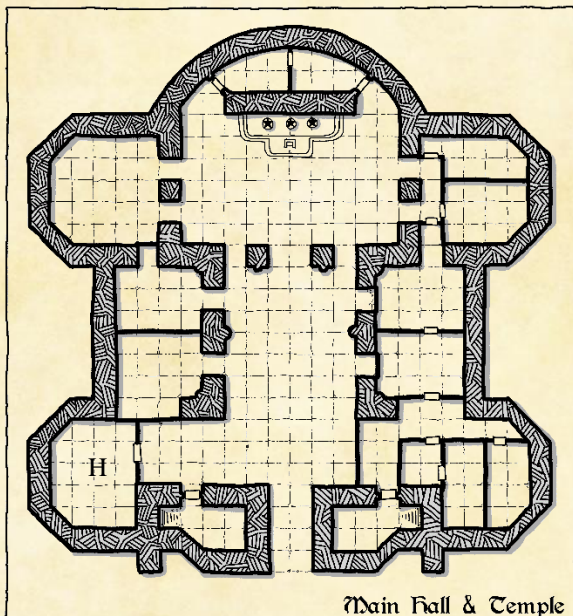
The Big Eight are treated as celebrities, for they alone have the ear of Greatfather Winter. The other reindeer do anything to avoid incurring the feylord's wrath. Any reindeer that fails to obey the Big Eight, or displeases them in any way, is forsaken by the herd.

The Big Eight have the statistics of Large-sized **giant elks** that have been patronized by Greatfather Winter, which allows them to read all writing and see normally in darkness both magical and nonmagical, out to a range of 120 feet.

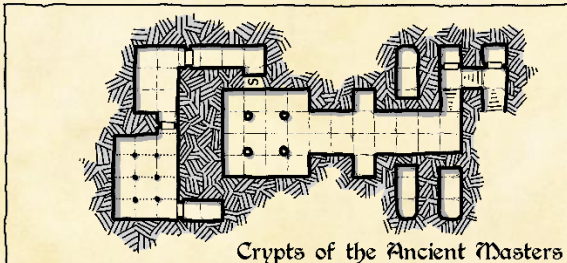


He was utterly insane. I have met my fair share of lunatics in my life, as I surely will in the next, but the feylord was unique in that the world enabled his madness... And his "wife." The hag. I could see his madness in her eyes, just as she held his mind in her hands. I cannot say if she inspired this madness but I do know she fanned the flame of the feylord's madness.

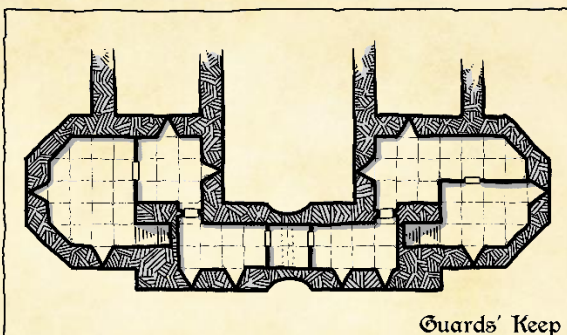
Guildhall^{and} Temple^{of the} Ancient Masters



Main Hall & Temple



Crypts of the Ancient Masters



Guards' Keep

FATHER WINTER'S KEEP

The feylord's stronghold is a unique sight so deep into the Arctic, where strongholds become nearly impossible to build without the aid of magic. For eleven months out of the year, the keep is warm and cheerful, just like its master. Yet in the weeks that follow Yuletide, the halls become frigid to reflect Greatfather Winter's transformation into a **winter eladrin**.

Map. For a condensed but fitting map, refer to *Guildhall and Temple of the Ancient Masters*. The Crypt serves as the dungeon for dissidents; the Guards' Keep is the gnomes' quarters (with twenty-five four-story bunkbeds built to gnomish dimensions scattered about the chambers). Gnomes toil to build toys in the Main Hall through a unmechanized assembly line. The scale equals 5 feet per square.

Gardens. Outside the keep are gardens that persist in this harsh climate solely by Greatfather Winter's will. The feylord ensures the stronghold has enough food through repeated spells of *plant growth*.

Hoard. Greatfather Winter keeps his fortune in the chamber marked with a "H" on the map. The door is locked with an *arcane lock* spell, requiring a successful DC 22 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open or DC 25 Athletics check to break down. His treasure includes:

SLEIGH OF REINDEER FLIGHT

Wondrous item, legendary

This sleigh is festooned in gaudy paraphernalia. This Large-sized object is 8-feet-wide, 6-feet tall, and 12-feet-long. When four or more reindeer are bridled to the sleigh, the creatures and the sleigh gain a flying speed of 60 feet. Additionally, any creatures bridled to the sleigh or riding in it can breathe normally up to elevations of 30,000 feet. They are also inured against extreme heat or cold.

The sleigh itself can hold up to 500 pounds. If it ever exceeds this weight, the sleigh cannot gain further altitude and descends gently to the ground at a rate of 30 feet per turn. The sleigh crashes if it is being pulled by three or less reindeer. An incapacitated reindeer does not fall but does not count as one of the reindeer pulling the sleigh.

- 9,000 gp, 11,000 sp, and 858 cp, along with nine gemstones worth 300 gp apiece (including three diamonds).
- An *elixir of health* and sixteen *potions of cold resistance* (PHB pg. 168 & 188).
- A *Quaal's bird feather token* (PHB pg. 188), proving that the bastard could've sent the rock gnomes home at any point.
- A *staff of the woodlands* (PHB pg. 204).
- Greatfather Winter's *sleigh of reindeer flight* (see the sidebar).
- The *bag of holding* Greatfather Winter uses to carry presents.

GREATFATHER WINTER'S WRATH

Character Encounter, Tier III

Distraught by the death or disappearance of his darling wife, Greatfather Winter has decided to right the world through the only method left to him: violence.

Declaring once and for all that Yuletide has been corrupted by selfish mortals, Father Winter has abandoned his stronghold in the frozen north, leaving the rock gnomes to wither away. He has rallied eight reindeer to pull his *sleigh of reindeer flight* (see the sidebar) and enlisted four **quicklings** to fire arrows while he strafes passerby from above.

This encounter occurs if Greatmother Winter dies in *Greatfather Winter's Fiefdom* or leaves as part of *Hag Summit*. Lost to rage and grief, Greatfather Winter has assumed the statistics of a **summer eladrin** capable of casting *flame arrows* (XGE pg. 156) thrice per day.

Reindeer. Provided that none of them were slain previously, the reindeer are "the Big Eight:" Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Blitzen, and Cannibal. Each are Large-sized **giant elks** that can see normally in both magical and mundane darkness, out to a range of 120 feet. They can also read all writing. In combat, they take the Dodge action.

If any of the Big Eight were slain prior to this encounter, they've been replaced by new reindeer similarly awakened and patronized by the feylord.

Quicklings. In his wife's absence, Father Winter appealed to the Queen of Air and Darkness, ruler of the Unseelie Court of fey. Delighting in Winter's fall from grace, she sent him four **quicklings**. These fey are bound by a *geas* spell (*PHB* pg. 244); they must obey Winter's every command. They are armed with gaudy longbows and have a near-unlimited supply of arrows. The quicklings are immune to Greatfather Winter's Fearsome Presence trait.

TACTICS

Greatfather Winter is interested only in vengeance; he accepts no quarter and will hear no parley. From the air, he strafes the adventurers, loosing a storm of arrows. If five or more of his reindeer are slain or incapacitated, the sleigh crashes, inflicting up to 20d10 bludgeoning damage to Father Winter's forces.

- Greatfather Winter flies at an altitude of 120 feet so that his reindeer can see the ground. He orders them to pull up to a maximum altitude of 600 feet if they take heavy fire from below. The sleigh has a flying speed of 60 feet.
- The reindeer take the Dodge action while airborne, imposing disadvantage on attack rolls made against them, and gaining advantage on Dexterity saving throws. Do not bother running their turns, as it will only slow down combat.
- The quicklings act on separate initiatives, making three longbow attacks each (+8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., 11 (1d10+6) piercing damage). To streamline combat, consider using the average damage instead of rolling.
- Greatfather Winter is concentrating on *flame arrows*, adding 1d6 fire damage to his first twelve attacks. He makes two longbow attacks per turn (+9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., 14 (2d8 +5) piercing damage) plus 4 (1d8) fire damage, in addition to *flame arrows'* extra damage.
- If the sleigh falls from the sky, it's revealed that the **helmed horror** (if it wasn't previously destroyed) was hiding in the sleigh. It flies out to meet the adventurers in combat, strafing them from above.
- Greatfather Winter flees if he is reduced to 30 or fewer hit points or if three reindeer are slain. He cares nothing for the quicklings' lives. The feylord vows to avenge himself on the adventurers at a later date.

TREASURE

Having abandoned his stronghold and fortune, Father Winter has only a *bag of holding*, which holds 5d10+30 arrows, 3d10 +20 rations, and four small bales of hay.

You can also include a *longbow of flaming arrows*, if you would rather reward your adventurers with an item for besting Greatfather Winter. This rare, magical longbow allows the wielder to cast *flame arrows* thrice per day, regaining expended uses at dawn. It requires attunement. In this variant, Father Winter casts *flame arrows* through the bow instead.

GROVE OF THE RECLUSIVE DRUID

Taiga Encounter, Tier II

For the last year, an orc **archdruid** has been casting *druid grove* (see *XGE* pg. 154 and the sidebar) on her forest home, targeting three 90-foot-cube areas. If she can cast the spell once more in an area, the effects become permanent. Her efforts, however, are threatened by marauding centaurs vassalized by snow elves who crave to add this magical grove to their demesne.

The druid, Wurgotha, is a kind soul who knows that no person should seek to master nature. If visitors to her grove would just *ask* to hunt, collect firewood, or shelter there, she would oblige. She has sworn an oath of pacifism after years of raiding others with her tribe. To take another person's life, she believes, is to compromise her very soul. She is searching for any nonviolent solution for the marauders at her doorstep.

When Wurgotha detects visitors to her corner of the forest, she greets them with an owl under an *animal messenger* spell. The snow owl, speaking in her raspy voice, says in Common, "Welcome to my woods. I am Wurgotha. Greet me with peace and I will do the same. Violence is not welcome in my grove." Wurgotha has an accent common to the orcs of the Arctic.

When Wurgotha meets the adventurers, she makes an Insight check (contested against a character's Deception check, if any) to determine for herself if they're wicked. If satisfied with her perception, she offers that they camp in her grove. She offers to share her eggs and venison.

Statistics. Wurgotha is a LG orc **archdruid** with the changes below:

- She has darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- She speaks Druidic, Common, Orcish, and Sylvan.
- As a bonus action, she can move up to half her speed towards a hostile creature she can see.
- Once per long rest, when she's reduced to 0 hit points, she can instead be reduced to 1 hit point.
- She is a 15th level spellcaster and lacks a 9th level spell slot. She prepared *druid grove* and *goodberry* instead of *animal shapes*, and *firestorm*. She also lacks *dominate beast*, *meld into stone*, and *stoneskin*.

Roleplaying Wurgotha. Unlike some druids, Wurgotha can still appreciate the circle of life and devotes herself to keeping the balance in her woods. When too many elk arise, she hunts them alongside wolves. Erstwhile, she culls wolves whenever they risk depleting the forest's wildlife. The extent of her pacifism only includes other people; she knows that to extend that to beasts is foolish—at least until hunters grow too greedy.

The Grove. Wurgotha's grove consists of three 90-foot-cubes arranged in a loose circle. Each cube has been touched by the *druid grove* spell. Four **awakened trees** guard the grove; she has ordered them to spare the lives of others, even if it guarantees her death. Two *wind wall* spells are in every cube, one of which Wurgotha stands in while casting *druid grove*.

DRUID GROVE

You invoke the spirits of nature to protect an area outdoors or underground. The area can be as small as a 30-foot cube or as large as a 90-foot cube. Buildings and other structures are excluded from the affected area. If you cast this spell in the same area every day for a year, the spell lasts until dispelled.

The spell creates the following effects within the area. When you cast this spell, you can specify creatures as friends who are immune to the effects. You can also specify a password that, when spoken aloud, makes the speaker immune to these effects.

The entire warded area radiates magic. A *dispel magic* cast on the area, if successful, removes only one of the following effects, not the entire area. That spell's caster chooses which effect to end. Only when all its effects are gone is this spell dispelled.

Solid Fog. You can fill any number of 5-foot squares on the ground with thick fog, making them heavily obscured. The fog reaches 10 feet high. In addition, every foot of movement through the fog costs 2 extra feet. To a creature immune to this effect, the fog obscures nothing and looks like soft mist, with motes of green light floating in the air.

Grasping Undergrowth. You can fill any number of 5-foot squares on the ground that aren't filled with fog with grasping weeds and vines, as if they were affected by an *entangle* spell. To a creature immune to this effect, the weeds and vines feel soft and reshape themselves to serve as temporary seats or beds.

Grove Guardians. You can animate up to four trees in the area, causing them to uproot themselves from the ground. These trees have the same statistics as an **awakened tree**, except they can't speak, and their bark is covered with druidic symbols. If any creature not immune to this effect enters the warded area, the grove guardians fight until they have driven off or slain the intruders. The grove guardians also obey your spoken commands (no action required by you) that you issue while in the area. If you don't give them commands and no intruders are present, the grove guardians do nothing. The grove guardians can't leave the warded area. When the spell ends, the magic animating them disappears, and the trees take root again if possible.

Additional Spell Effect. You can place your choice of one of the following magical effects within the warded area:

- A constant *gust of wind* in two locations of your choice
- *Spike growth* in one location of your choice
- *Wind wall* in two locations of your choice

To a creature immune to this effect, the winds are a fragrant, gentle breeze, and the area of *spike growth* is harmless.

THE WOLVES AT THE GATE

At dawn, the woods echo with the thunder of a hundred hooves: 2d10+5 NE **centaurs** gallop towards Wurgotha's grove. At their side are three snow elves astride armored reindeers (barded **elks** with an AC of 17). They consist of a **knight**, an **archer**, and an **abjurer** wearing a *brooch of shielding* (see *DMG* pg. 156).

The snow elves have the following changes to their statistics:

- They are lawful evil or neutral evil.
- They have darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- They have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put them to sleep.
- They have advantage on Stealth checks to remain hidden in snowy terrain.
- They each know three transmutation spells on the wizard spell list: one cantrip, a 1st-level spell and a 2nd-level spell. They can cast the latter two spells once per day. Typically, a snow elf knows *gust*, *shape water*, *catapult* or *jump*.

The centaurs surround the grove in groups of three to five. The snow elf **abjurer** casts *tongues* on himself and shouts, "Druid! We of the Citadel have come to welcome you as an honorary citizen of our great nation! Cast your spell, I implore you, and allow this grove to be a beacon of peace and prosperity in this magnificent forest!"

The abjurer, of course, is just as ready to murder Wurgotha. His orders are to ensure that the grove is permanently warded (by force, if necessary) and then betray her. If she does not acquiesce, he sends in his centaurs. The elf is cautious and paces the battle out across half an hour, with the centaurs firing arrows from the tree line; he himself hurls spells from out of sight. If the adventurers aren't content to wait out this siege and instead take the fight to the elves, the abjurer obliges them.

Wurgotha, for her part, believes that warding the grove is a purpose that extends beyond her. When the invaders attack, she does her best to cast three *druid grove* spells (each taking 10 minutes). Believing she will be guilty by proxy, she asks the adventurers to abstain from murder. Wurgotha is willing to surrender the grove after her spells are cast.

HAG SUMMIT

Mountain Encounter, Tier III

For years now, three **bheur hags** haunting the Arctic have toyed with the idea of forming a coven. Like all hags, they detest the company of others (especially their kin) and prefer to be left to their own dark devices. The time has come, however, for Lone Miyareth, Granny Yrsula, and Greatmother Winter to unite—perhaps because of the *Aurora Arcana* event, perhaps because of an outside threat, perhaps even out of fear of a meddlesome adventuring party. There is but one moment to eliminate the trio before they bind their magic together into a power greater than the sum of its parts.

As night falls, the hags emerge from the wilderness, heralded by sleet storms and a rain of hail. As is customary, each hag has brought a gift for each of her new sisters (see *Treasure* below).

Map. Refer to the map below. Areas marked with an "X" are covered in slippery ice (see Appendix C). The scale equals 5 feet for every square.

Weather. The summit suffers under the following weather:

- The area is dimly lit by a full moon, and lightly obscured by snowfall.
- Fierce winds howl, imposing disadvantage on Perception checks reliant on hearing.

Minions. The hags must be protected while they perform the ritual of binding. To that end, each has brought minions, which patrol the area:

- A **yeti** and a goliath **werewolf** (with a +4 Athletics bonus).
- 2d4+6 animated snowmen (**scarecrows** with immunity to cold damage and vulnerability to fire damage).
- 1d4+2 penguinweres (**jackalweres** able to hold their breath for 30 minutes, and that have a swimming speed of 30 feet and are resistant to cold damage).
- A bound **peryton** that the hags can call upon during battle by using a bonus action; the creature descends from the sky.



Precautions. The hags are more paranoid than ever, knowing that tonight, during the ritual, they'll be at their most vulnerable. In addition to their minions, the hags have taken the following precautions:

- Lone Miyareth has laid an *alarm* spell on the summit's climb, which mentally alerts her when intruders approach.
- Granny Yrsula has coated the summit's climb with 10-foot-square patches of slippery ice (see Appendix C). These areas are marked with an "X" on the map.
- Greatmother Winter has positioned herself atop the hill to rain death upon interlopers.

Treasure. The hags have each brought a gift for their sisters:

- Granny Yrsula has brought a jar that, when broken, unleashes a *cloud of daggers* spell (save DC 14), and a *cloak of many fashions* (XGE pg. 136) sized for a child.
- Greatmother Winter has brought a snow globe containing a trapped family of shrunken humans; if the globe is broken, the humans revert to their original size. She has also brought a 3-foot-long candy cane that functions as an *immovable rod* (DMG pg. 175).
- Lone Miyareth has brought two effigies, each fashioned after a hero that stayed at her inn (see *Traveler's Respite* for more details on these effigies).

THE RITUAL OF BINDING

One does not enter into a coven lightly; the inaugural ritual cuts deep into a hag's body and soul, leaving jagged scars that might never heal, especially if the coven is torn asunder and not ended properly. For bheur hags, this Ritual of Binding is an hour-long affair that can only be conducted under snowfall and a full moon. At the end of the hour, the hags seal their covenant with the blood of an unwilling sacrifice.

THE WORDS OF BINDING

The Ritual of Binding is, historically, conducted in Sylvan, but the bheur hags prefer Giant or Auran. The incantations they chant are detailed below; the verses rhyme better in Giant.

*The night is done, the sun draws near
It is not death, but life, we fear
In one breath, we are bound!
As one coven, we are crowned!
Together we three, our fate is spun!
From this moment, 'til the night is won!*

Sacrifice. Like much of a hag's magic, the Ritual of Binding is steeped in symbolism. It represents the union of three outcasts desperate to weather the world's scorn. The ritual can be sealed only in the blood of another pariah, this one innocent of any and all contempt. The victim the hags have selected is a tiefling girl named Salilah (or "Sally"). She has done no more wrong than any other child yet faces daily suspicion and scrutiny due to her infernal heritage. Salilah is the coven's unwitting and unwilling martyr, stolen from her home by Granny Yrsula's minions.

Salilah is a tiefling **commoner** with 1 hit point and resistance to fire damage. She has yet to learn how to harness her infernal powers. She is bound by silk rope (2 hit points; it can be burst with a DC 17 Strength check).

Circle of Binding. The Ritual of Binding is performed in a 30-foot-radius circle of glyphs carved into the ice coating the summit. The summit is brightly lit by these glyphs, which emit azure light. The air is pregnant with ambient magic. With an action, a character can disrupt a 5-foot-section of glyphs but doing so provokes an outburst of wild magic centered on that section or targeting the character that destroyed it. Roll on the Wild Magic table (PHB pg. 103) to determine the outburst's ensuing effect.

Foiling the Ritual. The adventurers have a mere two minutes before the ritual is complete. Every second counts as they fight through the hags' minions, mount the summit, and face off against the hags. The ritual is foiled if any of the following conditions are met:

- Salilah is killed prematurely or removed from the circle
- Five 5-foot-sections of the circle are destroyed
- A hag is stunned (preventing her from chanting), slain or removed from the circle

So far into the ritual, the hags are free to fight. So long as they chant their incantations, the ritual continues until its victim must be slain.

Sudden Storm. Swollen with ambient power, the hags have greater control over the weather during the ritual. At initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), one of the effects below occur; Greatmother Winter, as the greatest of the hags, chooses the effect. In her absence, Yrsula chooses.

- A smaller *sleet storm* spell (DC14) affects a 10-foot-high, 20-foot-radius cylinder until the start of the next round.
- A strong wind sweeps through the area in a 5-foot-wide, 20-foot-long wind. Creatures in that area, other than the hags, must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 1d4 x 5 feet.
- The snowfall animates, becoming an **ice mephit** that strafes the adventurers with its Frost Breath and subjecting them to its Death Burst trait if it's slain. If it's not slain, this elemental harmlessly dissolves at the end of the round.

TACTICS

The hags employ these tactics in combat; they each have a spell DC of 14 (+6 to hit). Ultimately, the hags are self-serving and will flee if they believe they are destined to lose this fight.

- The hags are limited by their frail sacrifice; they must keep her alive if the Ritual of Binding is to succeed.
- Greatmother Winter calls the **peryton** as a bonus action on her first turn; it arrives at the start of the second round.
- A bheur hag can use their graystaff as a *broom of flying*, which grants them a flying speed of 50 feet! They mount the staves to fly above the party, landing only to protect the sacrifice.
- On her first turn, Greatmother Winter casts *wall of ice* to keep out the adventurers or enclose Salilah in a hemisphere of ice so that the hags can unleash area-effects without catching her in the crossfire.
- On her first turn, Granny Yrsula unleashes an *ice storm* spell, positioning it not to strike Salilah (if she isn't enclosed in a hemispherical *wall of ice*).
- On her first turn, Lone Miyareth targets a troublesome warrior with a *hold person* spell. The hags then bombard that target with *ray of frost* spells (with advantage, if they're paralyzed).
- Yrsula abandons all other tactics to use her Maddening Feast action on the first character that dies.
- If the ritual nears completion, a hag must use an action to slit Salilah's throat within three rounds, finishing the ritual, after which the hags gain the Shared Spellcasting trait described on pg. 176 of the *Monster Manual*.

Minions. If they were not slain, the hags' remaining minions intervene; they must, however, contend with the patches of ice left by Yrsula. They arrive in clumps: up to half the **scarecrows** in one batch, the **yeti** by its lonesome, and the penguinweres, led by the **werewolf**. A group arrives once every 1d4 rounds.

DARK SISTERHOOD: THE HAGS TRIUMPHANT

If the hags form their coven, they emerge more powerful than ever before. They gain the Shared Spellcasting trait and, if they aren't besieged by other interlopers, take this time to fashion a *hag eye* (described in the Hag entry of the *Monster Manual*) using Salilah's eyeball. The hag eye is then entrusted to Lone Miyareth's **werewolf** minion, if he survives.

This encounter is the climax of the *Dark Sisterhood* storyline. If the hags were not slain, they may throw lot in with some of the factions presented in this supplement, such as Withrens Fyar or the Forsworn (see the *Dire Winter* and *Eternal Night* sample storylines).

HAILSTORM

Weather Encounter, Tier II

Hail assails the adventurers as they cross through unforgiving terrain—but this mundane nuisance is just a precursor to a much more insidious threat: **galeb duhrs** composed of ice that crash from above.

The Storm. Stretching 1d6+6 miles in diameter, the storm is an area of extreme cold and strong winds. Snowfall reduces visibility to a range of 15 feet and imposes disadvantage on Perception checks that rely on sight. Although the storm is non-magical in nature, its fury has linked it to the Frostfell, the Plane of Ice, allowing elemental influence to seep into the world. A character under a spell of *detect evil and good* or *detect magic* can sense this influence.

As the adventurers navigate the storm, they are assaulted by hail for 1d10+5 minutes. Every minute, a character must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Hail Duhrs. While the adventurers are being pelted by hail, the storm cracks with sudden thunder—not the thunder of lightning, but rather the cracking of a great glacier. The blizzard has earned the favor of the Frostfell itself. This planar influence turns the blizzard's ice pellets into 1d3 **galeb duhrs** that plummet from the sky above. These elementals were beings on the Plane of Ice whose consciousness has been ripped into the Material Plane. They retain their personalities and memories, but they're confused and agitated by this sudden turn of events.

On the turn that the elementals fall, they benefit from their Rolling Charge trait. One hail duhr falls on an adventurer, making a Slam attack. If the target fails their Strength saving throw (as described in its Rolling Charge trait), they are also restrained, as the galeb duhr falls on top of them. An elemental also takes 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

The elementals can utilize their Animate Boulders ability to create more hail duhrs, which fall from the sky just as they did.

Roleplaying the Elementals. Galeb duhrs are neutral at heart. They did not ask to be reborn into the Material Plane and are shocked, afraid, and paranoid. Their initial attack is an accident; the first galeb duhr did not mean to make a Slam attack against an adventurer, and it certainly didn't intend to crash onto them. If the adventurers do not retaliate, the elementals back down as well, apologizing in Terran for the misunderstanding. They then ask for directions to the "nearest interplanar rift." If the party presses their attack, the elementals have no choice but to defend themselves. They are too proud to flee, even if wounded.

Homecoming. The elementals are here to stay until they find the means to return home. They can sense nearby portals to the Plane of Ice, such as the one in the *Frostfell Rift* encounter, and will seek one out. In the meantime, they may roll their way into the purview of Homer Erendalias, Sylberos, or Withrens Fyar (see *Homer's Hovering Hovel*, *The Poacher's Nightmare*, or *On the Eve of Dire Winter*, respectively). Homer will attempt to send the elementals home, whereas Sylberos and Withrens Fyar would bend them to their will for their own evil purposes.

HARDBOILED

Volcanic Encounter, Tier II

Steam curls up against the frigid air, promising a warm respite to those that follow its ephemeral fingers to a nearby hot spring. Its banks are warm and lined with stubborn plants that jut out from the freshly fallen snow. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Investigation check notes that this would be a perfect place for wildlife to shelter, but there are no beasts drinking from its water or snapping up the foliage growing on the shore.

A predator nests in this area, driving away wildlife. With a successful DC 15 Nature check, a character identifies this as a prime remorhaz nest, as the hot springs are perpetually warm. Sure enough, a remorhaz has chosen this place as its nest. The adventurers may find its 1d6+2 eggs in a four-foot-wide crevice two feet under water on the northern shore of the springs. The eggs weigh 25 pounds and are Small-sized objects.

Copse. A copse of spruces stand at the hot springs' southern bank, spanning a 25-foot-radius circle, making them an ideal hiding spot.

Mama's Home. The **remorhaz** mother returns in 5d10+10 minutes. Sensing its clutch is about to be born, it has brought a dead elk for the hatchlings to later feed on. The creature defends her clutch with maternal rage but doesn't pursue characters that flee more than 30 feet from the hot springs.

Hatching. The eggs are due to hatch in 1d4 hours, birthing 1d6+2 **young remorhazes**.

FROST GIANT NEST-RAIDER

The frost giants have a penchant for taming beasts. No beast is more tantalizing than the remorhaz. If captured at birth, a giant can groom these creatures into useful pets. The frost giants of Skoldheim spotted an adult remorhaz nesting here months ago and one has come to raid the nest now that the eggs are close to hatching. They have sent Logyr, a **frost giant** beast tamer, to capture the hatchlings. He arrives up to 1d3 x 10 minutes after the party does, heralded by his thunderous footfalls.

Roleplaying Logyr. This NG *isejotun* has but two passions in life: raising beasts and consorting with "smallfolk." He views both as a normal person would see a puppy. It is for the first penchant that he has become Skoldheim's premier beast tamer. Winter wolves, dire wolves, mammoths, remorhazes—Logyr has bonded with them all. In another life, perhaps he would've become a druid. Being only 80-years-old, there's still time for Logyr to pursue that path, if he had the forethought to do so.

Logyr is a gentle soul and the *isejotun* respect strength above all else. If it weren't for his talents as a beast tamer, Logyr would have been abused or banished long ago. Logyr lives in pleasant ignorance, unaware of his kin's most brutal practices. He isn't even exposed to the vicious training his beasts later receive; his job is to simply find, deliver, and bond with beasts before they are trained to kill.

If Logyr discovers the adventurers, he smiles and booms, "Greetings, small ones!" This is the only Common phrase he knows. The giant politely refuses to allow the party to take any remorhaz eggs.

Ordning of Might. As the *Ordning of Might* storyline unfolds, Logyr can inform the adventurers of what's going on in Skoldheim:

- "Rowthor has challenged Jarl Grisbos to a *forer-slag*. I speak no ill of anyone, but I have always believed—personally—that Rowthor is one of Memnor's ilk." (Post-*Shrine of Vaprak* and pre-*Forer-Slag!* Memnor is the giant deity of deceit.)
- "Rowthor has triumphed over J—over Grisbos the... the Cur. Skoldheim is his now. Those that would not bend the knee were banished to the wastes." (Post-*Forer-Slag!*)
- "Our new jarl has decreed that all the Arctic must know of our people's strength. The raids are frequent and, as I hear it from others, bloody. I know not why we must crush others to lift ourselves up—but I am one to question Jarl Rowthor." (See *Frost Giant Raiders* for details; Logyr can, in his ignorance, provide a list of potential settlements the giants intend to raid, allowing the adventurers to intervene.)

HEROES OF THE ICE AGE

Tundra Encounter, Tier II

Marching across the tundra is a sight most curious: a mammoth, a saber-toothed cat, and a ground sloth carrying a human baby. The three are delivering the child to his tribe, which headed south to warmer lands.

With a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, the trio can be persuaded into handing over Roshan, the human child they carry. Should this check fail or not occur, the beasts warn off the adventurers through aggressive gestures, such as stamping their feet or the mammoth trumpeting from its trunk. If the adventurers do not back off, the beasts attack.

The Trio. For beasts, the trio have remarkable intelligence and empathy. Although they have not been awakened by magic, they still have distinct personalities. They defend the child with their lives. These beasts are:

- A LN, no-nonsense **mammoth** with an Intelligence of 8 (-1).
- A CG, kindhearted and dull ground sloth (with the statistics of a **baboon**). He has an Intelligence of 5 (-3).
- A NG **saber-toothed tiger** that has only recently given up his neutral evil ways. He has an Intelligence score of 9 (-1). He secretly belongs to the same pack that killed Roshan's mother and still hungers for the child.

The Child. Roshan and his mother were separated from their tribe after an ambush by the saber-toothed tigers. His mother leapt off a waterfall and succumbed to injuries—but only after handing off Roshan to the sloth and mammoth. The baby is too young to realize his mother has died or feel the pain of her passing. He can hardly understand Common, let alone speak it. He has only recently taken his first steps.

The Pack. Little Roshan is still yet hunted. The malevolent saber-toothed tigers responsible for his mother's death are on the prowl for the toddler. They share the same extraordinary depth and intelligence of the trio of beasts. Most are neutral, but the pack leader is evil and sadistic. He demands Roshan's death not for hunger, but as vengeance for all his kin that were slain by Roshan's people. These 2d6+3 **saber-toothed tigers** ambush the trio of beasts while in sight of the adventurers. If the party fails to intervene, the trio is slain, and little Roshan is devoured by the pack's leader.

The Tribe. Roshan's people are migrating south to escape the wrath of winter. They consist of about thirty humans: ten **tribal warriors**, twenty **commoners**, and a gaggle of children. Itosh, Roshan's father, is the tribe's chief. With his mate and son missing, he is understandably distraught.

The adventurers earn the tribe's hospitality and gratitude for returning Roshan. They're rewarded with 2d8+4 rations, 1d4+2 saber-toothed tiger pelts, one mammoth pelt, and a perpetual invitation to sit at the tribe's bonfire, no matter where it burns.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This obvious allusion to the hit-franchise *Ice Age*, which has only three movies, is a lighthearted encounter for your party. It is advised that you precipitate this encounter by introducing the adventurers to Roshan's tribe earlier. Finding Roshan and his guardians makes for a pleasant surprise later.

HOMER'S HOSPITABLE HEARTH

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier 1

Stark against the frozen landscape is a freestanding oak door. Beside it is a sign that reads, HOMER'S HOSPITABLE HEARTH: TRAVELERS WELCOME!

Homer is none other than the NG human **archmage** who has anchored a permanent *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* spell in this place (see *PHB*, pg. 261) for travelers to shelter in. Opening the freestanding door reveals a grand foyer set in an extradimensional space. Beyond that foyer is a warm mansion stocked with food and attended to by eager servants. Homer visits from time to time when he isn't busy researching arcana in his tower. While there, he mingles with guests and restocks the stores with another casting of *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*. See *Homer's Hovering Hovel* for details on Homer.

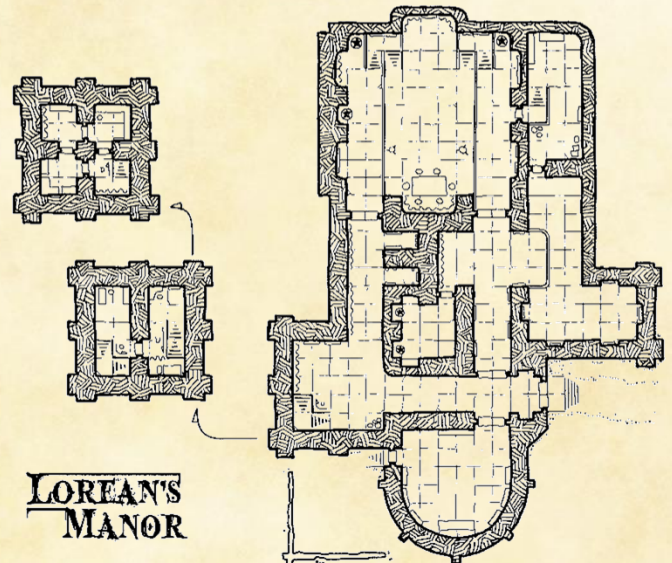
Map. Refer to *Lorean's Manor*. Every square equals 5 feet.

Staff. The *Hearth* is attended to by a hundred servants, all of whom are made in Homer's image. They are near-translucent, gaunt old men fond of easy smiles. They refer to themselves by numbers, with "Number 1" being the chief attendant. They have no desires other than to accommodate guests as best they can.

TROUBLE AT THE HEARTH

The *Hearth* is a refuge for all who need it. Its staff and master (when he's actually there) never turn away guests. The staff, for their part, cannot affect, let alone harm, other creatures. Thus, some troublesome guests overstay their welcome until Homer himself deigns to visit the mansion. Monsters are no exception; the *Hearth* is a safe, warm place with food, making it the perfect lair. Intruding monsters are limited only by the mansion entrance's dimensions (5 by 10 feet). These creatures may arrive after the adventurers do or might already be there.

Many a traveler has been saved by Homer Erendaliás's generosity—and I can tell you not all of them were worth it. The region would've been better off if that kind fool had been a bit more selective.



Guests. The following guests might be met in this encounter. If the adventurers return to the *Hearth*, a new group might be present, if not a monster.

- The Brass Adventists, an evil adventuring party described in the encounter of the same name.
- A warband of 2d4+6 **orcs** and one **orog** that intend to turn this mansion into their tribe's new stronghold. They attack anyone that enters the mansion. They are not irredeemable; Homer may allow them to stay here if they promise to give up their violent ways and rid the Arctic of monsters instead. There is a 25% chance that the tribe's **orc war chief** (who may arrive in 1d6 days) agrees and honors this arrangement.
- Tuksor, the frost giant toddler described in *Ice, Ice Baby*. He's busy wrecking vases and furniture and painting the walls with spilled wine.
- A mischievous **boggle** named Daennis that's trashed the place.

Monsters. The following monsters may be roosting here by when the party arrives. If no monsters are present at that time (they may be out hunting in the wastes, for example), evidence of their nesting can be found instead. These creatures found entry by following other guests inside or have perhaps just stumbled into it by sheer, dumb luck.

- A **frost salamander** craving warmth
- A **young remorhaz**
- A **saber-toothed tiger** and her litter of kittens (which have the statistics of **cats** or **panthers**, if they're older).
- 1d6+3 **giant spiders** and an **ettercap**

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The *Hearth* can serve as the party's headquarters or become a regular haunt of theirs. Alternatively, your version of Homer may just cast the spell throughout the Arctic at random or along trails. Therefore, the adventurers might repeatedly encounter the mansion as they roam the region.

HOMER'S HOVERING HOVEL

Tundra Encounter, Tier I-III

Standing tall above the tundra is a shattered tower that, despite all laws of nature, has yet to fall. Somewhere between the fifth and seventh level, the bloody thing isn't even *connected*, yet there it still floats, defying gravity. Clearly, this must be the relic of a bygone civilization or the work of an exceptionally masonry-minded wizard. In truth, it's both, and the wizard that lairs here has a fondness for visitors.

Map. Refer to map on the following page. The scale equals 5 feet for every square.

THE TOWER

This structure once belonged to a floating cloud giant fiefdom. Although the tower is crumbling, it is inherently magical. It has the following properties:

- Thick and perpetual fog heavily obscures a 30-foot-radius hemisphere centered on the tower's base.
- The interiors are perpetually warm, except on the fourth and fifth floors, which are exposed to the elements.
- The front door is unlocked but warded with an *alarm* spell (*PHB* pg. 211) to alert Homer whenever a creature enters the tower. Additionally, a *magic mouth* spell activates and recites the following message: "Hello! Feel free to shelter from the cold, but please remain below the fifth floor! And if you intend to murder me, make it quick!"
- The tower is warded with a *Mordenkainen's private sanctum* spell; if Homer casts the spell one more time, which he will at dawn tomorrow, the spell becomes permanent.
- A wizard can attune to the tower, if the tower isn't already attuned to another wizard. As an action, that wizard can use an 8th-level spell slot to cause the tower to lift off from the ground, granting it a flying speed of 90 feet. This benefit lasts for 1d6+2 hours, after which the tower gently descends, magically embedding its foundation into the ground.
- Cloud giants that land upon the tower or enter it can shrink themselves from Huge to Large, using a bonus action.

Floors. The tower is a mess choked with dust and cluttered with debris. Homer only ventures down to greet visitors or leave the tower. Notable features include:

- The first floor's cabinet is stocked with vegetables and nuts. When a character opens the cabinet, a *magic mouth* spell says "Please help yourself, but save some for other travelers!"
- The second floor is cluttered with elven fashion magazines, multiple editions of *Planar Geographic*, and several peer-reviewed journals concerned with magical theory. Many of these have been torn to shreds, as if by a *magic missile* spell; the shredded articles include Homers' articles, each ravaged by another reviewer.
- A freestanding ladder connects the fifth and sixth floors; it was created by a *fabricate* spell cast by Homer. Typically, it can be climbed without incident, but whenever a strong wind blows against the tower, creatures on the ladder must make a DC 12 Athletics check or fall up to 20 feet, taking up to 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage from the fall.
- The southeastern pillar on the seventh floor is warded with an *antipathy/sympathy* spell (save DC 17) to dissuade invaders from climbing higher. Those that look at the pillar fall prey to its Antipathy effect.

- The seventh floor is home to a garden of cabbage, carrots, rutabagas, and beautiful but nonmagical flowers. A thin field of force protects the garden from the frigid winds and seals in the tower's magical warmth.
- Homer's two apprentices (see below) live on the eighth floor, brooding over their genial but tasking master.
- Homer lairs in on the top floor in a riot of tomes and dirty dishes.
- Homer's **shield guardian** patrols the upper levels. It's imbued with a *fly* spell, which it utilizes to pursue invaders.

THE ARCHMAGE

The kindhearted NG human **archmage** that lairs in this tower is anything but a recluse. His studies consume too much of his time to be a proper host, as he so often laments. This Homer Erendalias has a storied history: an adventurer that retired from a life of peril to teach magic at a prestigious university—only to up and quit despite being granted tenure. To hear him tell it, it sounds like a modest tale—the ramblings of a beloved grandfather. Were one to truly dig into the history books and witness testimonies, they would learn Homer had a hand in many of the great upheavals that rocked the continent in the last century.

Homer is in the twilight of his life; by all rights, he should've died half a century ago, but he's extended his life with *potions of longevity* (*DMG* pg. 188). He's pushing a hundred and thirty now and dares only to drink one more potion (which he has in his hoard, see *Treasure* below).

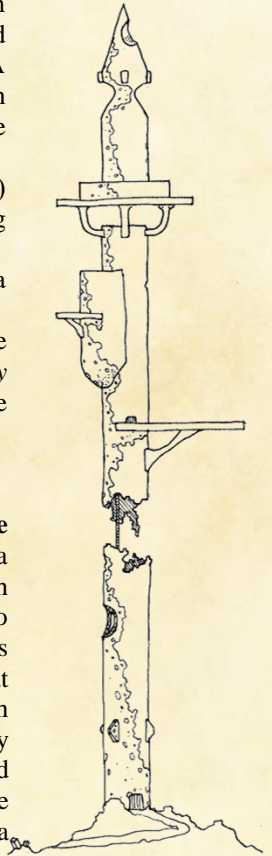
Roleplaying Homer. Like many geriatric masters of the arcane, the spark of madness is alive and well within Homer Erendalias. His is a mind unburdened by discipline and ruled by fleeting thoughts. Much to his apprentices' chagrin, he hops from one fancy to the next. Lunacy has, effectively, made him a fantast.

Statistics. Homer is a NG human **archmage** that speaks Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Infernal, Giant, and, for some reason, Deep Speech. He wears the control amulet of a **shield guardian**, a *ring of mind shielding* and a *robe of stars* (*DMG* pg. 191 and 194). Instead of *detect thoughts*, he has prepared *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*.

APPRENTICES & SERVANTS

Homer is far too gregarious to rot away in his tower; likewise, he believes the secrets of the Arcane must be passed on only by responsible magi. The characters below also inhabit the tower, even when Homer is away:

Donella. This NG gnomish **transmuter** shares her master's reckless curiosity. As the tower's gardener, her current passion is blurring the lines between wizardry and druidism. She swears that she'll have replicated the fabled *plant growth* spell by the end of the decade. Without her spellwork, the gardens would wilt and die, no matter how warm the tower is.



As a gnome, Donella has the following racial traits:

- She reads, writes, and speaks Gnomish and as Common.
- She is Small, with a speed of 25 feet, and darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- She has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
- She knows the *minor illusion* cantrip.
- She can speak to Small or smaller beasts.

Grendar. Having broken his oath to see the Arctic under his legion's banners, this NG **hobgoblin devastator** found peace and redemption under Homer, whose skills in evocation were, at one point, unmatched. Grendar nurses a noble dream—when his training is complete, he intends to become a mediator for the mortal world, brokering peace agreements between kingdoms and civilizations. In his wildest fantasies, he's managed to turn his warmongering people into noble defenders of the world.

Servants. The tower is cared for through repeated *unseen servant* spells cast by Donella.

TREASURE

The tower is rich not with gold, but with spell components; one or more copies of a spell component worth less than 500 gp for a wizard spell of 5th-level or lower can be found in the tower. Homer also has one *potion of longevity* and 2d6+4 *spell scrolls of Mordenkainen's private sanctums* locked away in a chest warded with an *arcane lock* spell. His apprentices can open the chest normally. The chest sits at the foot of a tapestry on the ninth floor; thanks to an illusion spell, it is invisible, requiring a DC 15 Investigation check to discern.

Additionally, Homer's spellbook contains all but 2d6 wizard spells ever known. The spellbook also contains the teleportation circle sigil sequence to the Flayed Queen's mythic prison (see *The Glacial Prison*). The sigil is drawn out on a blank page half-way through the book. Homer, for his part, purged his memory with a *modify memory* spell so he could never be tortured into giving out the sequence.

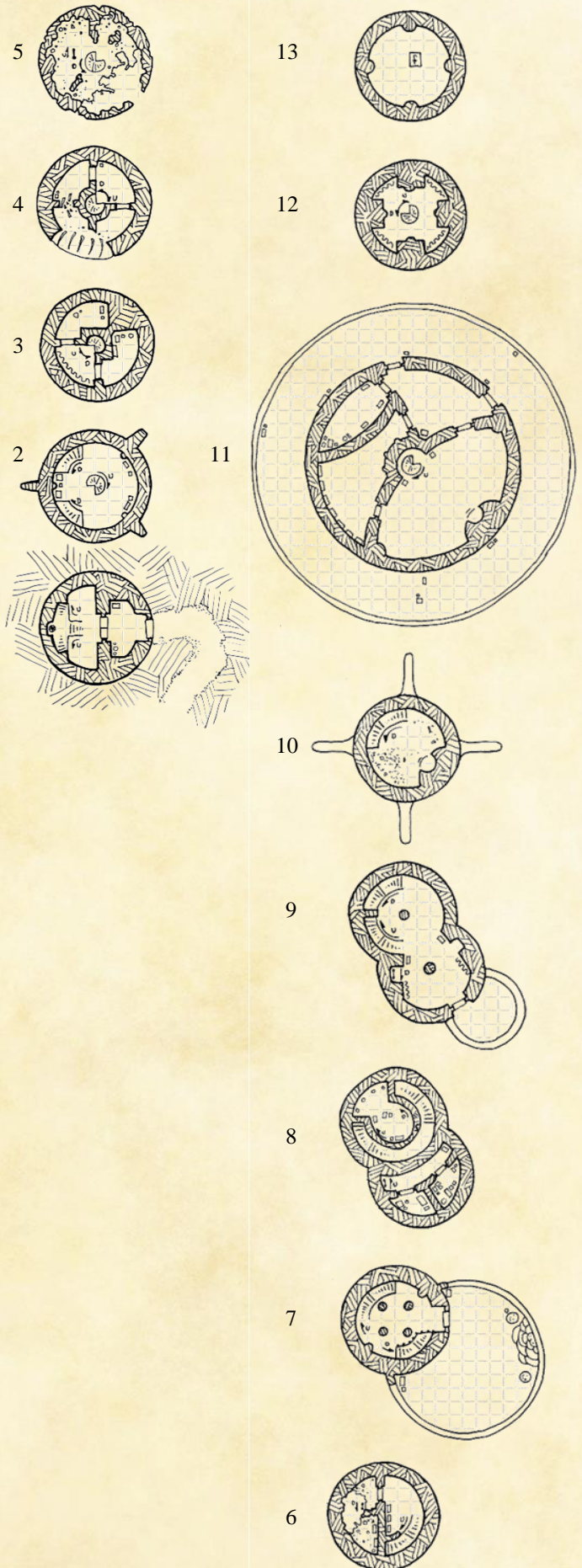
REVENGE OF THE INHERITORS

Tier III

Homer's always on the move; he did not *find* this tower, per se, but "liberated" it from the ruins of a cloud giant stronghold, the inheritors of which hunger to make whole again. The archmage warded the tower against divination spells not for privacy, but to avoid his pursuers. Unfortunately, Homer never believed that the giants knew *his* identity—and Homer does leave his tower quite frequently, doesn't he?

Inevitably, 1d4+5 **cloud giants** locate the tower and set out to punish the foolish human that dared claim it as his own. Their arrival is masked by a *control weather* spell that hurls sleet and snow across the region. From the gray clouds above, the giants descend, each having cast a *fly* spell and bearing a boulder to be used for their rock attacks. They land on the eleventh floor and announce their presence in Giant: "Our birthright has been denied for too long! Show yourself, wizard! Today, you face justice!"

To Arms! The giants don't wait for a response. They quickly tear off the door and use a bonus action to shrink themselves to Large (down from Huge). They also call forth their menagerie of flying beasts: 1d3 **perytors**, two **griffons**, and a **wyvern**. The beasts run riot indoors.



HOUNDS OF ILL OMEN

Polar Night Encounter, Tier II

From the darkest depths of the Shadowfell, the Forsworn have summoned a pack of 1d4+4 **shadow mastiffs** led by a **shadow mastiff alpha**. This mysterious order reveres Mother Night, a deity better known as Shar, the Lady of Loss, in the Forgotten Realms setting. Their mission is to perpetuate the current polar night afflicting the Arctic, as described in the *Eternal Night* storyline. They tolerate no interference, snuffing out would-be adversaries with dark hounds summoned from the Shadowfell. The adventurers have drawn their ire and must be eliminated.

While the adventurers are camping or traveling, baleful howls rend the night. These howls sound eerily distinct from that of normal canines; with a DC 15 Arcana check, a character recalls a number of otherworldly or monstrous hounds: yeth hounds (fey), hell hounds (fiends), winter wolves (monstrosities), or shadow mastiffs (from the Shadowfell).

Alas, the howls are merely a distraction. With their attention drawn elsewhere, the pack alpha and its hounds strike at the party's rear, having approached while invisible. These beasts, they see, are ragged hounds wrought from living shadow, whose muzzles are fanged with far too many crooked teeth.

Tactics. The hounds are experienced, otherworldly predators that follow the tactics below:

- Two hounds howl from the party's left flank while the others creep in from the opposite side. Contest their Stealth checks (with a +6 bonus!) to the party's passive Perception, with the possibility of surprising the adventurers.
- The region is cloaked in twilight, rendering the pack invisible until they attack, enter bright light, or are incapacitated. Make a note of the radius of the party's light source (if any), as the hounds become visible in bright light and lose their resistance to physical damage. Most light sources cast bright light out to a radius of 30 feet; the mastiffs have speeds of 40 feet. Remember, only bright light created by sunlight imposes disadvantage on the hounds' attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks.
- The pack favors hit-and-run tactics, relying on their Shadow Blend trait to escape detection until they attack again.
- The hounds, like their earthly counterparts, focus on the weak and wounded before tackling mightier foes.
- If the pack's alpha is slain, the pack is likely to retreat, unless their prey is already weakened.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

It matters not if the adventurers easily dispatch the hounds; they are immaterial and, effectively, infinite. The Forsworn can draw upon this rabid legion for as long as their patron deity permits. At the very least, the hounds prevent the adventurers from ever achieving a rest.

SHADOW MASTIFF OMEGA

If you anticipate the **shadow mastiff alpha** being too weak to truly threaten your party (which is likely, if they're in the upper bounds of Tier II) then consider upgrading the alpha into an omega. The omega is a regular **shadow mastiff alpha** with the following changes:

- The omega has 83 (15d8+15) hit points.
- It is a CR 5 (1,800 XP) with an extra +1 bonus to its Perception, Stealth, passive Perception score, and the attack and damage rolls of its Bite action.
- It has an Intelligence of 9 (-1) and a Wisdom of 17 (+3).
- It has the Terrifying Howl action option, with a DC 14.
- It has the following Multiattack option:

Multiattack. The omega can bite three times, or it can bite twice and use its Terrifying Howl.

ICE HAULERS

Sea Encounter, Tier I

As the adventurers clamber over the frozen coastline, they catch sight of a brigantine's sails. The ship is anchored off the beach, its crew dragging blocks of carved ice towards the rowboats on the shore. These brave sailors are involved in the ice trade. Ice is a commodity afforded only by the wealthy in warmer lands; roaming so far into the Arctic is a dangerous but lucrative venture. By coating blocks of ice in sawdust, they can insulate it against warmer climates.

The journey thus far has not been without peril, but the crew has remained relatively safe. They've met darfellan hunters, had close calls with swashbucklers and yetis alike, and have even lost a crewmate to the unforgiving sea. Despite these dangers, their spirits are still high, and their journey is almost finished. Little do they know that sahuagin are clambering up the shore right now to redden the waters in the name of Sekolah, their dread-god.

Ship. *Ranger* is a sailing boat; it requires a crew of twenty to be sailed, but a crew of ten can make do with shorter rests and a tough captain. See *DMG* pg. 119 for the ship's statistics.

Captain. *Ranger* is captained by Etiran Emeris, a NG retired darfellan **bandit captain** familiar with the Arctic's coastlines. He values his ship, his crew, and his own life, in that order. Gold has little use for the dead, and so he is cautious in his old age—a stark contrast to the hot-headed warrior he was in his youth. As a darfellan, he has the following racial traits:

- He speaks Common and Darfellan, a multisyllabic language with harsh, authoritative tones.
- He has a swimming speed of 40 ft.
- He can hold his breath for 10 minutes.
- He has advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape grapples.
- While Etiran is underwater and not deafened, he has blindsight out to 30 ft.

Crew. A crew of eighteen currently mans *Ranger*, consisting of eleven **commoners** of assorted races, each with proficiency with vehicles (water); and six NG or N **bandits**. Jonas Hraal, a NE human **bandit**, serves as first mate. Loyal to Captain Etiran, but far too ambitious for his own good, Hraal considers every calamity at sea a chance for him to rise up in the world.

Four **commoners** and three **bandits** are on the ship at the start of this encounter. Four **commoners** are rowing towards *Ranger* (two apiece, and each boat loaded with ice). Captain Etiran and his first mate are on the shore with the remaining three **bandits**, dragging ice blocks towards the beach on sleds.

IN THE NAME OF SEKOLAH

When the adventurers first crest the ridge and spot *Ranger*, the ship is a mile away. With a successful DC 18 Perception check, they notice distant figures clambering up the ship's rigging—the sahuagin. Meanwhile, 2d4+3 **sahuagin** are clambering up the shore to the unsuspecting crew. They are easily spotted.

The party begins this encounter 300 feet away from the crew. Assume that, if they decide to intervene, they dash to the beach in one minute, with difficult terrain inhibiting their speed. By then, one rowboat has been capsized, with three sahuagin and two bandits having been slain in the battle thus far.

Warning the crew proves difficult; the high winds snatch up any shouts as they leave the lips of the observant. Spells of *shatter*, *skywrite*, *thaumaturgy*, *thunderwave*, *thunderclap*, and similar magic can alert the crew. Otherwise, the adventurers must either wash their hands of the situation or rush into battle, hopefully in time to make a difference.

Treachery! In the heat of battle, Hraal's ambitions get the better of him. He turns on Captain Emeris just as the day is won. A character that succeeds on a DC 16 Perception check sees the treacherous cur draw a dagger and rush Emeris. If this same character succeeds on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, they can warn Emeris before it's too late. Failing this, Hraal's treachery can be later sussed out with a successful DC 15 Insight check.

If his treachery is exposed, the crew murders him—unless the party intervenes. Hraal's expertise is pivotal for *Ranger's* ability to make it back home. If they require passage, which Hraal promises, they may side with him against the crew.

If his attempt on Emeris's life is thwarted, the captain has the cur imprisoned in the brig.

Reward. If the adventurers save the crew, they offer to take the party up or down the coast. *Ranger*, however, must lick its wounds in warmer lands; if the adventurers ask to be taken deeper into the Arctic, the captain will only take them 2d20+15 miles up the coast. If the party asks to be brought closer towards greener lands, *Ranger* will take them as far as they require if it doesn't divert their course too much.

ICE, ICE BABY

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier I-II

Lumbering across the snow is what appears to be an ogre. Its wails are like thunder and it throws tantrums as easily as a dwarf tosses back ale. Upon closer inspection, it is revealed that this behemoth is a frost giant toddler that has been separated from his mother. This toddler has only a marginal grasp of Giant, but at the least, he can point to himself and say, "Tuksor."

Statistics. Tuksor is, effectively, a Medium-sized **half-ogre**, that can understand Giant and has immunity to cold damage. He is unarmed, but his fists are no less fearsome. He can make Fist attacks (+5 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1d6+3 bludgeoning damage on a hit). He also has the following trait:

Fetal Rage (1/Day). As a bonus action, Tuksor can throw a tantrum. For the next minute, he has resistance to slashing, bludgeoning, and piercing damage. He also gains advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. During this tantrum, his Fist attacks deal +2 bonus damage.

Tuksor's Wild Ride. In the few hours since he was separated from his mother, Tuksor's had quite the adventure for a toddler, which he babbles about in Giant. He's chased after birds (giant eagles), hugged a puppy (a dire wolf), and splashed about in a puddle (a frigid pond). When dwarves (humans) appeared, he hid in a snowbank until long after they left. Now he's hungry, and although his adventure thus far has been great, he wants to "pet a kitty" (a **saber-toothed tiger**). He tugs on an adventurer's sleeve and babbles, "Let's go!" in Giant until they follow him.

POACHERS

Tuksor is being hunted. An amenable frost giant is a promising recruit for any company, warband, or lord. One raised as a slave with no concept of its own cage would fetch quite the price. The strength and size little Tuksor will one day inherit makes him invaluable.

The "dwarves" that crossed Tuksor's path earlier today were an evil band of adventurers. They're searching for him now that they've had time to formulate a plan. They intend to sell Tuksor to even wickeder folk. To lure him in, their resident druid has shapeshifted into a leopard because "Kids love cats, right?"

The adventurers are described in *The Brass Adventists*. You can combine it with this encounter.

HERE COMES BIG MAMA

After 1d4+3 hours, Tuksor's mother, Srusor, tracks down her child. She assumes the worst at first: that the adventurers have abducted him and intend to sell him into bondage or, worse, kill him. She unleashes a thunderous bellow that scares even Tuksor into running and charges into battle. If the adventurers cannot converse in Giant, they cannot quell the **frost giant**.

Tactics. Srusor fights a mother's fury. If she believes Tuksor is endangered, she fights to her dying breath to save him. If not, and she is reduced to half her hit points, she surrenders and begs (in Giant) for her to be taken into bondage instead of Tuksor. She does not pursue fleeing characters so long as they leave her child behind.

Mom, Stop! If the party was kind to Tuksor, he babbles to his mother in Giant, attempting to persuade her from attacking his new friends. To do so, he must succeed on a DC 14 Persuasion check made as an action; he has advantage on the check. If he fails twice, the third check succeeds as he interposes himself between his mother and the party.

Even in the frigid north, the sahuagin still bedevil sailors... but I knew this pack; I had met them at sea long ago. My past failures had finally caught up to me, and it was others who paid pay the price...

IN THE LAIR OF THE DRACOLICH

Sea Encounter, Tier III-IV

The mighty **adult white dracolich** Krarthelos lairs in a drifting iceberg honeycombed with passageways, attended to by kobold sycophants while he slumbers. The dracolich is the servant of the long-forgotten Flayed Queen, an undead sovereign whose liberation is almost at hand (as described in the *Army of the Damned* storyline). Krarthelos's phylactery is most vulnerable while the drake hibernates, but thieves must contend with the many minions placed here by his distant master.

Weather. The iceberg is at the heart of Krarthelos's Regional Effects, which he has retained in undeath. As described in the statistics of an **adult white dragon**, these effects are:

- Chilly fog lightly obscures the land within 6 miles of the dragon's lair.
- Freezing precipitation falls within 6 miles of the dragon's lair, sometimes forming blizzard conditions when the dragon is at rest.

Additionally, the iceberg is surrounded by frigid water and is 1d4+4 miles from the nearest shore. Strong winds often make nonmagical flight impossible for all but Huge-sized creatures.

Map. Refer to the map above, which is a sea-level cross-section of the iceberg. Tunnels twist above and below this level. Krarthelos can carve open new tunnels or fill old ones with ease. Each square is equal to 5 feet. This area has these features:

- Krarthelos's hoard is frozen into the ice behind the altar (which is marked with "A" on the map). See *Treasure* below.
- Krarthelos slumbers in a chunk of ice marked as "B" on the map. The ice is translucent, revealing his skeletal figure.
- The entire iceberg is a place of extreme cold.
- The iceberg counts as desecrated ground (see Appendix C).

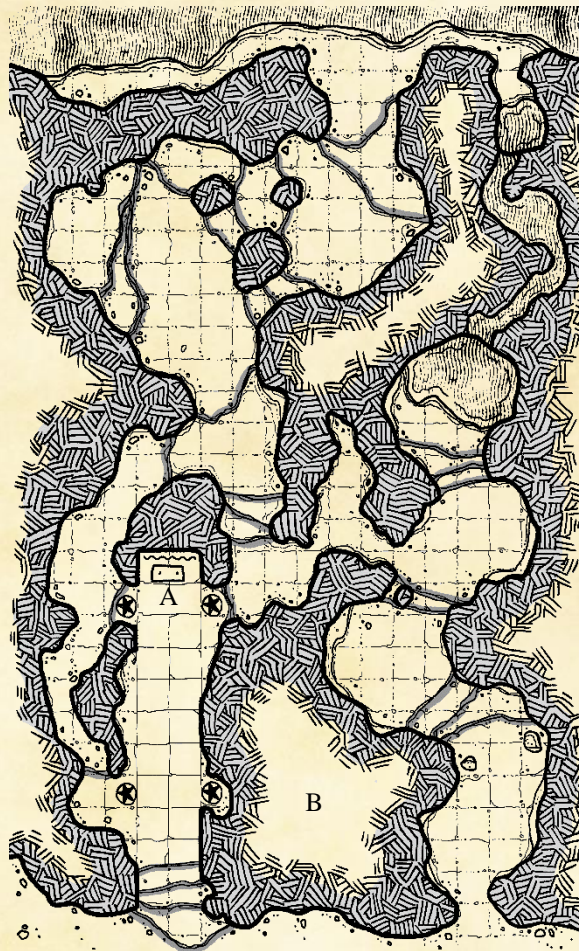
Servants. Krarthelos is served by a six-generation old clan of kobolds, who number forty in total (thirty **kobolds**, five **winged kobolds**, two **kobold dragonshields** and three **kobold scale sorcerers**; every kobold has, thanks to Krarthelos, immunity to cold damage and the ability to hold their breath for up to 1 hour at a time). Before he last slumbered, Krarthelos created 2d4+4 **white guard drakes** to patrol the iceberg and its waters.

Additionally, the **deathlock mastermind** Fionys has been ordered to guard Krarthelos's phylactery until her master, the Flayed Queen, awakens. Fionys has 1d4+2 **deathlocks** at her disposal; these undead are her failed predecessors.

ALL THE QUEEN'S MINIONS

As the Cult of the Newly Dead prepares to liberate their distant master, Fionys of Gnar has been dispatched to guard Krarthelos while the dracolich hibernates. This **deathlock mastermind** was patronized by the Flayed Queen decades ago and met her end at the hands of enterprising heroes. Death, however, is only another opportunity for Fionys to serve her queen.

Fionys is not the first warlock of the Flayed Queen—far from it, actually. Those whose bodies were not destroyed have been called on now to serve her again. As the queen's champion, Fionys commands these 1d4+4 **deathlock wights** and 1d3+1 **deathlocks**. The presence of the undead unnerves the kobolds, who before now only had to deal with their frozen master. The deathlocks take a sick pleasure in scaring the kobolds; some have already been scared to death.



The undead are nothing short of bitter rivals. All were once crafty warlocks obsessed with gathering power. All fell under the influence of the Flayed Queen. All found themselves vying for her favor. Fionys considers her colleagues irredeemable failures that deserve nothing short of eternal punishment. They in turn consider that Fionys ought to be knocked down a peg and taught humility in the face of failure. Because the Flayed Queen isn't omniscient, the undead can afford to sabotage one another to gain favor with their sovereign. Therefore, many deathlocks disobey Fionys (who holds no special power over them) or intentionally misconstrue her orders.

Roleplaying Fionys. Fionys is a paranoid corpse that refuses to just lie down and let better days go by. She sees threats in every shadow, and believes that she was stuck here only so Cis'tudh (her rival and leader of the Cult of the Newly Dead) could curry more favor with their undead master. So too is Fionys a fanatic; before she died, she found herself in love with the Flayed Queen and the torch of that love has darkened into obsession in undeath. She does anything in her power to ensure Krarthelos remains unharmed and will even sacrifice herself if need be.

Fionys can be voiced with the sample dialogue below:

- "My life for Death!"
- "You have never felt love as rich as I have."
- "I will be your end!"
- "Gods save the Queen."
- "Her will is mine!"

When she isn't berating other deathlocks, Fionys can be found on her own. On her first turn, she shouts for reinforcements, invoking her master's name. At the start of the next round, a **deathlock** and two **deathlock wights** arrive. Thereafter, other reinforcements, such as kobolds and other undead, arrive every 1d4 rounds in clusters of 1d4+1.

Tactics. Fionys dispatches intruders with ruthless efficiency. She roams the iceberg, always on the lookout for invaders. In combat, she and her undead follow these tactics:

- On her first turn, Fionys casts *darkness* on her pendant, for she can see through magical darkness. She follows up with a *chill touch* spell (preferring an obvious healer) and then Deathly Claw or Grave Bolts attacks.
- On a **deathlock's** first turn, it opens up with *arms of Hadar* or *hunger of Hadar*. Subsequent turns are devoted to *eldritch blast* spells.
- A **deathlock wight** opens up with *hold person* or *fear*. They close the gap between opponents or widen them with a *misty step* spell.
- Ultimately, the undead are trapped between oblivion and a worse fate: failing their master. A deathlock is likely to flee if they're at the cusp of death. When they must answer to their distant queen, they blame Fionys.

TREASURE

Krarthelos's hoard is protected by a thick layer of ice, 10 feet deep. Every 10-foot-section, 1-foot-deep layer of ice has an AC of 15, 15 hit points, and immunity to acid, cold, necrotic, poison and psychic damage. Additionally, the section has vulnerability to fire damage.

Although he has ascended to undeath, Krarthelos is still a white dragon at heart. His hoard consists of ship figureheads, walrus and narwhal ivory, mammoth furs, and magic items taken from the broken bodies of those that fell to his wrath long ago. The drake has little appreciation for conventional wealth and has scattered 11,000 gp's worth of coins all along the iceberg's floors so that they glitter like scars. To pick up these several thousand coins takes 1d6+4 hours. His most valuable treasures include:

- A *horn of blasting* (DMG pg. 174) two feet deep into the ice. Blowing this horn within 1d4 miles of the iceberg awakens Krarthelos.
- A pair of *gloves of swimming and climbing* (DMG pg. 172) six feet deep into the ice.
- A *belt of dwarvenkind* (DMG pg. 155) seven feet deep into the ice.
- An *instrument of the bards* (*Canaith Mandolin*) (see DMG pg. 176) twelve feet deep into the ice.
- A set of *silver dragon scale mail* (DMG pg. 165) eighteen feet deep into the ice.

Phylactery. Krarthelos's phylactery is buried six feet into the ice and is another 2d4 x 5 feet above this level. It is a fist-sized black sapphire worth 5,000 gp. As revealed by a *legend lore* spell, the phylactery can only be destroyed by the breath of an ancient silver dragon.

THE DRAKE AWAKENS

Krarthelos has hibernated for sixty years now and is expected to slumber for another forty. However, the liberation of the Flayed Queen or the burst of a loud noise—caused by the likes of a *shatter*, *thunderclap*, *thunderwave* or even a *fireball* spell—will wake him prematurely. The **adult white dracolich** bursts from the ice with a skeletal roar. Unless he is defeated, the dracolich dedicates his early awakening to eradicating his ancient enemies—the first being Homer Erendalias of *Homer's Hovering Hovel*—after slaying any intruders in his lair.

Tactics. Krarthelos bursts from the ice in Area A and employs the following tactics in battle:

- Krarthelos still enjoys his arsenal of Regional Effects and Lair Actions in undeath. When he awakens, he seals off exits to the iceberg with his third Regional Effect.
- As his blessed kobolds are immune to cold damage, Krarthelos can fill the hallways with freezing fog (see his Lair Actions). The drake cares little for his servants but understands that they have a part to play; likewise, Krarthelos cares not for the deathlocks.
- Krarthelos burrows through ice to hunt down intruders from above, below, or laterally.
- Using a Lair Action, Krarthelos can magically flood portions of his lair with frigid seawater, choosing one chamber on the map at a time. Creatures within the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) cold damage and one level of exhaustion on a failure. On a success, a creature takes only half damage. A creature can only gain two levels of exhaustion from this effect.
- If he is close to death, Krarthelos digs for his phylactery and abandons the iceberg.

INTO THE BLIZZARD

Weather Encounter, Tier I-II

Blizzards are the Arctic's most prolific killers, preying on hikers and unprepared homesteaders. Whenever the adventurers must navigate a blizzard, you can run it as a Skill Challenge, starting at Medium difficulty or higher.

Duration. Blizzards are never short affairs and will rage for hours or even days on end. Ability checks made to survive the blizzard are spaced out across hours or days. A blizzard's length is determined by its difficulty:

- At Medium difficulty, the blizzard lasts for 1d4+4 hours.
- At Hard difficulty, the blizzard lasts for 2d6+4 hours
- At Insane difficulty, the blizzard rages for 1d4+2 days.

Weather. As the blizzard rages, the characters must contend with the following effects:

- The blizzard's radius is an area of extreme cold (see Appendix C). Starting at Hard difficulty, the blizzard is cold enough to negate the protection afforded by cold weather gear, meaning only creatures with resistance to cold damage are spared from the cold. At Insane difficulty, even creatures with resistance to cold damage must also contend with extreme cold.
- The heavy snowfall lightly obscures the area, disadvantaging Perception checks that rely on sight. Visibility is also reduced to 30 feet. At Hard difficulty or higher, the area is heavily obscured and visibility is reduced to 10 feet.
- The blizzard is a source of strong winds (see Appendix C).
- The blizzard's radius is considered difficult terrain, for the adventurers must contend with snow and ice all while being battered by strong winds.

Failure. Whenever the party accrues a failure, the character responsible must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, the DC of which matches the DC for the Skill Challenge (i.e., 14-18 for a Medium Skill Challenge). On a failure, a character accrues a level of exhaustion.

Alternatively, whenever the party accrues a failure, you can pit them against an enemy that doesn't mind the cold. When you do so, pause the Skill Challenge, resuming it after battle ceases. The weather effects described above factor into the battle. Potential enemies include:

- 1d4+2 **ice mephits** (Tier I)
- A **young remorhaz** (Tier I) or a **remorhaz** (Tier II)
- A **frost giant** (Tier II)
- A **water elemental myrmidon** (Tier II)
- A **yeti** (Tier I) or an **abominable yeti** (Tier II)

Phases. Contending with a blizzard can be divided into two phases: travel and shelter. The adventurers will likely start in the Travel Phase if they march into the storm or one happens to swallow them as they're in transit. Depending on the difficulty, the party might transition between these phases multiple times.

TRAVEL PHASE

The Travel Phase is the most dangerous of the two, as it pits the hikers up against Nature itself—and any horrors that don't mind the storm. Suggested ability checks during this phase include:

- A preliminary Survival or Nature check determines just how prepared the adventurers are for a blizzard.
- An Investigation check to suggest tying characters together with a rope and arranging themselves into columns.
- A Sleight of Hand check to tie the hikers together with a rope, with Intelligence representing one's knowledge of knots and Dexterity being one's ability to tie a knot in spite of their numb hands or thick gloves.
- An Athletics check to take point, pushing against the wind; stabbing trail markers into the snow; or picking up fallen companions.
- An Acrobatics check to maintain one's balance as they cross ice or snow, or, if the party is linked with rope, when another hiker falls or stumbles. Failing this might cause the hiker to fall prone.
- A Perception check to scout ahead, find lost companions, or to detect upcoming dangers or features, such as foes or a pass.
- An Investigation check can determine whether the blizzard is too strong to travel in.
- During white-out conditions, or while the hikers are on an endless patch of snow and ice, an Insight check can determine if the hikers are still on course or if they have been traveling in circles.

SHELTER PHASE

No matter how mild a blizzard may be, travelers must stop periodically in order to warm themselves up. Shelter, however, may be difficult to come by, and when it can't be found, it must be created. The primary objective of this phase is to find or create shelter, contend with hypothermia, or a loss of supplies. Suggested ability checks for this phase include:

- A Perception check to find existing shelter, such as a cave, or to detect any dangers therein.
- A Survival check to determine how to create shelter, such as by digging a snow cave or constructing an igloo or quinzhee.
- An Athletics check to perform the labor necessary to build or erect shelter.
- A Survival check can be made to forage nearby; with rapidly dropping temperatures, hikers require additional calories to survive.
- An ability check using cook's utensils, which can cover topics like correctly rationing food (Intelligence), cooking a meal with numb fingers or catching a mistake before the meal goes up in smoke (Dexterity) or if the meal was nourishing enough (Wisdom).
- If the characters are at a high altitude, a Medicine check can identify and treat altitude sickness; chewing cocoa leaves is a common folk remedy.
- A Nature check identifies signs of hypothermia, such as paradoxical undressing or gangrene.

THE ISEJOTUN EXILE

Character Encounter, Tier II

The **frost giant** Arvydr is just one of the many detractors exiled by the new jarl of Skoldheim, Rowthor. This new despot seized control of Skoldheim by slaying Jarl Grisbos in a *forer-slag*, a ritualistic duel (see the *Forer-Slag!* encounter, which predates this encounter).

Arvydr has no intention to languish in disgraced exile and is eager to return home and topple Rowthor. He suspects that the upstart has appealed to Vaprak the Destroyer, the patron deity of trolls and ogres, who offers disaffected frost giants greater strength. Such a sin is punishable by death or exile, regardless of station. If Arvydr can expose Rowthor, Skoldheim will reject his regime. To prove his blasphemy, Rowthor must be maimed in public; the cur cannot halt his troll-like regeneration, and this newfound healing factor of his will not go unnoticed.

Arvydr would take the fight to Rowthor himself, but *forer-slags* can't be issued by exiles, nor can they be issued by proxy. Arvydr must be restored to his former status and face Rowthor in person. Therefore, he must turn to outside help.

The party can encounter Arvydr in an ice cave, in the tundra, as he steals cattle from a farm, or in the mountains. If attacked, he does his best to end a battle without the adventurers, seeing them as potential tools. He speaks enough Common to insist that they listen to him; failing that, he withdraws from the conflict, giving the adventurers a chance to do the same.

Arvydr's Vendetta. A character fluent in Giant or aided by a spell of *tongues* (or similar magic) can converse with Arvydr, who explains "the disgrace of Skoldheim." He tasks the party with infiltrating the stronghold to publicly wound Rowthor. He promises them untold riches—which should prove to be an impressive fortune, as the frost giants are notorious raiders. The party may also be inclined to help if the region is being ravaged by increasingly more frequent and savage raids (see *Frost Giant Raiders*). If the adventurers prove successful, he rewards them with 300 gp, straight from Skoldheim's vaults, and "unfettered swine."

See *Skoldheim* for details on the stronghold.

Roleplaying Arvydr. Arvydr is still a frost giant at heart: he respects only strength and has no tolerance for deceit. His people have never needed to raise crops or forge delicate tools; they only take. Since his exile, Arvydr has stolen food, ale, and livestock, which he keeps in his cave or carries in his sack.

Visibly mighty characters can earn Arvydr's respect through a display of strength. However, the Ordning of Might—which rules all of frost giant society—dictates that the strongest stands tallest. He must demonstrate his own strength; which he does by hurling boulders or wrestling the strongest adventurers. He does not intend to harm his opponent, but... a giant weaves destruction everywhere he goes.

You can voice Arvydr with the following sample dialogue:

- "Memnor's art has no place among the *isejotun!* Strength alone determines a jotun's measure, as it should!" (A successful DC 15 Religion check identifies Memnor as a trickster deity.)
- "That profaner's regicide will not be forgotten, nor forgiven. He won, but with whose strength, I wonder? Thrym's... or the Destroyer's?"
- "You are quite small. The watchers of Skoldheim see only the drakes and hear only thunder. I suspect you will find purchase very easily... Just do not get caught."

KEEP LUKEWARM!

Polar Encounter, Tier I or II

As a snowstorm bears down upon them, the adventurers come upon a red sight: the blood of a dead dire moose upon the snow, and two humans crammed inside its split belly. One is alert, the other unconscious. Their names are Na and Leer, respectively, and from within this grisly, makeshift shelter they'll ride out the snowstorm together.

Leer was ambushed earlier while astride his dire moose. Its cold corpse can be found by the party a mile away. A DC 13 Nature check determines that the claw marks on the corpse came from a yeti. The yeti dragged Leer to its nearby ice cave to feast, but Leer telekinetically drew his *sun blade*, sliced off its right arm, and escaped before succumbing to his wounds and hypothermia. Na went searching for Leer after he failed to report back to their camp a few miles away.

Statistics. Na is a N human **master thief** armed with a hand crossbow (+7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., 1d6+4 piercing dmg.) with which he can attack twice per turn, so long as he has a free hand to load another bolt into the weapon. He has expertise with Insight, granting him a +6 bonus and he makes initiative checks with advantage.

Although Leer is a human, he effectively has the statistics of a LG **githzerai zerth**. With his *sun blade*, Leer can attack twice per turn (+9 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1d8+6 radiant damage on a hit). He currently has 52 hit points remaining, after the attack from the yeti.

Roleplaying Na. Na is a cocky son of a bitch that nurses a secret soft spot for his close friends but otherwise looks out only for himself. He is friendly but suspicious; he shoots first and laments later. Should he perceive someone is about to do him harm, he unloads a crossbow bolt in their chest.

Roleplaying Leer. A young lad with destiny thrust upon him, Leer sees good in everyone but the most tyrannical individuals and regimes. If awoken during a conflict, his first instinct is to engineer a peaceful resolution. The psychic warrior believes all things in the cosmos are connected by some mystical, metaphysical force his dead master called, "the Pressure."

Tactics. To suss out their intentions, Na contests his Insight check against one character's Deception check. He uses an action to wake Leer, ordering him to fight. Leer fights only to subdue the aggressors and seeks a peaceful solution.

Treasure. In addition to Leer's *sun blade* (DMG pg. 205) the duo has together 3d10+4 gp and 1d4+2 rations.

THE YETI STRIKES BACK

The yeti that ambushed Leer still yet lives in its nearby cave. If the adventurers don't take the fight to the creature, the **yeti** (or **abominable yeti**, if your adventurers are 8th-level or higher) attacks the party during this encounter. Its right arm has been sliced clean off, the wound cauterized; as such, it can only make one claw attack per turn with its Multiattack.

Tactics. The yeti attacks during the snowstorm's fiercest chapter, using the wind and snow to cover its advance. Thanks to its Snow Camouflage trait, it has advantage on its Stealth checks.

KRAMPUSNACHT

Urban Encounter, Tier 1

On Yuletide's eve, celebrants across the Arctic are preparing for the annual *Krampusnacht* ("Night of Krampus") in which a volunteer hands out coal to bad children while dressed in hairy pantaloons and a crown of antlers. This custom is nothing more than good cheer, but little does the settlement of Irdring know that this year, the true Krampus has entered the world of the living—and he's *pissed*.

A Summoning Gone Wrong. Some elders say that Krampus, the true creature, not the caricature painted by mortal men, can be summoned through a chant uttered on *Krampusnacht*. Most folk consider that utter nonsense, but six teenagers have uttered the words and performed the rites—and in doing so, they made a Feycrossing, a weakening of the borders between this world and the Feywild. Krampus was all too ready to set foot into the mortal world. The fey is hellbent on revenging himself upon all those who ridiculed him, as well as their descendants. Before he can be free to run amok, obtuse fey laws require Krampus to slay his summoners before sunrise—and even after they, or this night, have passed, Krampus is under no obligation to return to the Feywild.

Statistics. Krampus has the statistics of a **bulezau**, although he is a fey, not a fiend, and he speaks Sylvan, not Abyssal.

Summoners. Six teenagers (all of whom are **commoners**) beckoned Krampus into this world; without the aid of the adventurers, all are doomed to die. They are:

- Blath Glorydane, who was murdered by Krampus the moment the fey emerged into the mortal world.
- Samantha Movutsk, who orchestrated this lunacy.
- Tharryl Spar, a 37-year-old dwarf (considered a teenager by dwarven standards, and with the maturity to match). As a dwarf, he has resistance to poison damage and advantage on saving throws against being poisoned. He also has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- Korver Faint-o-Foot, a 15-year-old halfling; although he is not too bright, he is very brave, and has marshalled the survivors into banding together. Whether they heed him is another question... As a halfling, he is a size of Small, has advantage on saving throws against being frightened, and can reroll a 1 on any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check that he makes. He can also move through the space of any creature larger than him.
- Malthus, a broody tiefling that considers his plight completely hopeless. As a tiefling, he has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet, as well as resistance to fire damage. He has yet to learn how to tap into his infernal heritage to cast spells.
- Beats of a Heart, a tabaxi boy that ran off on his own. Although the others don't yet know it, Krampus is about to murder him, if he has not done so already.

A VERY KRAMPUS NIGHT

The adventurers are on a collision course with Samantha and Malthus; the former is hysterical; the other has resigned himself to his fate but is otherwise coherent. Malthus petitions the adventurers to battle Krampus but promises no reward—he has no money to speak of and cannot afford for any adults to find out what he and his peers did.

Krampus was summoned at dusk and has until dawn to slay his summoners, lest he be banished whence he came. Assume he has 1d6+4 hours until dawn comes.

LAMENTER OF LEVISTUS

Mountain or Polar Encounter, Tier 1

Warlocks that fail to live up to their insidious pacts risk being forever tormented and bound to the will of their scorned patron in the afterlife. Levistus, the imprisoned archdevil and lord of Stygia, elevates this punishment to greater heights. Those that fail the fiend are imprisoned in ice, kept alive in only the barest of terms, forced to share their patron's own frigid torment.

As the adventurers examine or pass by a glacier, the ice shifts to hurl up a human. His face is skeletal and his limbs are bound within ice, his limp body hanging from a glacial sheet. Should the man, Karl Umbrage, a **warlock of the fiend** ever ask his distant patron for mercy, Levistus frees him from the ice—but will raise him as a corpse. Umbrage's goal, then, is to convince passerby to free him from the ice, but in the twelve years since his imprisonment, he has only been encountered six times; all have spurned him. Some did not hear his cries for help; some, Levistus informed him, pretended not to. Three found him limp and helpless, but none dared to free him. One woman fed him, and for that she was cursed by the archdevil. Rumors spread of the "glacial prisoner" throughout the region but such rumors have died out over the last few years.

While frozen, Karl is incapacitated and he does not age, nor does he require to eat, drink, or sleep.

Curse of Levistus. Those that help Umbrage risk Levistus's scorn. Creatures that speak to the warlock are filled with dread, their instincts *screaming* that doom lies just around the corner, as if they were standing before a great and precarious cliff. Creatures interacting with Umbrage must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute.

Those that still aid the warlock are cursed by the archdevil. Until a *remove curse* spell or similar magic is cast upon them, they can't feel warmth and suffer disadvantage on Constitution saving throws made against extreme cold. Additionally, while cursed, a creature with resistance to cold damage must make saving throws against extreme cold, as if it weren't resistant to cold damage.

Roleplaying Umbrage. The warlock has been trapped in ice for twelve years. He still hungers and thirsts, but it's been years since his needs have been quenched. That he hasn't gone mad in isolation and ceaseless torment is a testament to his strength of will. His voice, however, is hardly more than a whisper. Above all else, he is desperate; there is no promise he won't make if it gets him out of the ice.

Umbrage first feeds the adventurers a sob story: that he was trapped here by a "demon or faerie for reasons beyond [his] ken." If the party doesn't seem to believe his tale, Umbrage goes for broke: "I am a warlock of Levistus, archdevil and Lord of Stygia, punished for not fulfilling his dark will. If I ask for His mercy, I will be cursed to undeath; until then, I must remain in this wretched ice until someone else deigns to free me. I beg you... be that kind soul. Even a beast like me deserves better than this."

If the adventurers refuse to free him, Umbrage then appeals for death. Better to die than live in torment forevermore, or worse, to suffer as a corpse under the archdevil's control. If they leave Karl without killing him, he gives into despair and appeals to his patron for aid. Levistus snuffs out his life and raises him as a **deathlock**. Umbrage retains a degree of autonomy and is hellbent on revenge. He tracks the adventurers across the Arctic, determined to make them beg for the same mercy he did.

THE LAST WINDBENDER

Polar or Sea Encounter, Tier 1

As the adventurers pass by a glacier (or iceberg, if at sea), they find a young boy trapped in the ice. His skin is light blue and tattooed down his limbs and bald head. He can be identified as an air genasi with a successful DC 14 Arcana check; his people, like all genasi, are rare in the world.

Should a character approach the ice, the air genasi's eyes fling open, glowing with radiant power. The ice shatters in a sharp explosion of cold air and glacial shards. The genasi boy's eyes and tattoos lose their frightening glow as he falls forward.

The boy, who can hardly be older than twelve, awakens 1d6 hours later. His name is Eeng and he has spent the last century in accidental hibernation. While in the ice, his people have been slaughtered by tyrannical fire genasi. When he awakens, he asks the adventurers of his homeland, the air genasi nation of Windswept. With a successful DC 14 History check, a character can recall the bloody genocide that they suffered a century ago.

Eeng's Statistics. Eeng mastered elemental air at the young age of twelve. Even more impressive, his powers exceed the limitations of his people; he is able to control earth, water, and fire like genasi of other heritages. He has the statistics of a NG air genasi **martial arts adept** with the following changes:

- He can speak, read, and write both Common and Primordial.
- He can hold his breath indefinitely while not incapacitated.
- He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components (spell save DC 13); Wisdom is his spellcasting ability for these spells:

At will: *control flames, gust, mold earth, shape water*

2/Day: *absorb elements, gust of wind,*

1/Day: *fly (self only), erupting earth, levitate, zephyr strike*

Eeng recuperates with the adventurers for some time, but a hunting party of fire genasi soon find him, either on foot or on a sailing ship. Their captain, an exiled fire genasi prince named Suko, has been searching for this prodigy for three years and only by capturing Eeng can he redeem himself in the eyes of his father, Firelord Ozay.

Fire Genasi Statistics. The fire genasi crew consists of twenty **commoners**, 2d6+3 **bandits** and a **bandit captain** with the following racial changes:

- They can speak, read, and write both Common and Primordial.
- They have resistance to fire damage.
- They can each cast the *produce flame* cantrip; once per day they can cast *burning hands* as a 1st-level spell. Constitution is their spellcasting ability (+2, +3, and +4 to hit with spell attacks and DCs 10, 11, and 12 for commoners, bandits, and the bandit captain, respectively).

Everything changed when the fire genasi attacked...

GENASI AND AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER

This gratuitous homage to *Avatar: The Last Airbender* was first featured in *Daerdan's Tall Tales: 101 Seafaring Encounters*. It was considered too perfect for this sequel to not be included.

The *Elemental Evil Player's Companion* has lore for genasi characters. In short, they are born from the union of a mortal and a genie or exposure to an elemental rift. In most settings, they hardly number in the hundreds, so rare they are. For the purpose of this encounter, assume that genasi are populous enough to have tribes and small city-states. t

LIKE TONGUES TO ICE

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier 1

A steel pike pokes out of the snow; travelers use it as a landmark when frequenting these lands, but it has since been turned into an unassuming trap by the evil **archmage** Withrens Fyar. Using an empowered *antipathy/sympathy* spell (save DC 15), he enchanted the pike so that living humanoid that look upon it from within 60 feet are bewitched into remaining at its side and lick its cold steel, freezing their tongues to the pole. And just for good measure, Fyar desecrated this ground so that those who die here are risen as undead. See Appendix C for the effects of desecrated ground.

See the sidebar for the Sympathy effect of the *antipathy/sympathy* spell. Should an adventurer succumb to the spell, the party must come up with their own solution to freeing them. As described above, the spell also causes the victim to lick the pole. Doing so causes the victim's saliva to freeze their tongue to the metal, inflicting 1 cold damage. To free their tongue, they must either splash a liquid that is above its freezing point on their tongue, such as warm or even cold water, or rip away the flesh, which inflicts 1 slashing damage.

Past Victims. The pike has claimed the lives of 2d4+4 people. The oldest of them are **skeletons**, and the most recent ones are **zombies**. The undead are compelled to remain in this vicinity (under the snow, in a 20-foot-diameter circle centered on the pike) and not attack wildlife. Over time, the birds pick the corpses clean, turning the zombies into skeletons. A third of the undead are **skeletons**.

The undead wait until dusk to attack people who succumb to the *antipathy/sympathy* spell unless they are somehow freed from its influence, in which case, they immediately attack. A humanoid that dies in this area rises the next dusk as a **zombie**.

Characters that carefully observe the birds notice that they are not picking grubs or roots from the ground. With a successful DC 13 Investigation check, the character realizes the birds are actually picking flesh from bones that lie beneath the snow.

Similarly, a character that succeeds on a DC 15 Perception check notices that the snow covers vaguely humanoid shapes.

Current Victims. Those that fall prey to this fell magic cannot willingly move away from the pole until they can no longer see it. A cloudy night is dark enough for a victim to no longer see the pole—except during the winter months, when auroras light up the night sky.

Given these restraints, it's probable that only bystanders can save victims. As they can't willingly move away from the pole, any attempts to physically move them require a successful grapple check. Rendering them unconscious, through nonlethal damage or a *sleep* spell, is also effective.

At your discretion, another victim is already present when the adventurers pass by: a human **commoner** named Nikolaj. His tongue is still frozen to the pole and he's been here since this morning. He waves frantically at passerby and emits desperate, muffled shouts to get their attention.

ANTIPATHY/SYMPATHY: SYMPATHY EFFECT

Duration: 10 Days

This spell attracts or repels creatures of your choice. You target something within range, either a Huge or smaller object or creature or an area that is no larger than a 200-foot cube. Then specify a kind of intelligent creature, such as red dragons, goblins, or vampires. You invest the target with an aura that either attracts or repels the specified creatures for the duration. Choose antipathy or sympathy as the aura's effect.

Sympathy. The enchantment causes the specified creatures to feel an intense urge to approach the target while within 60 feet of it or able to see it. When such a creature can see the target or comes within 60 feet of it, the creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or use its movement on each of its turns to enter the area or move within reach of the target. When the creature has done so, it can't willingly move away from the target. If the target damages or otherwise harms an affected creature, the affected creature can make a Wisdom saving throw to end the effect, as described below.

Ending the Effect. If an affected creature ends its turn while not within 60 feet of the target or able to see it, the creature makes a Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is no longer affected by the target and recognizes the feeling of repugnance or attraction as magical. In addition, a creature affected by the spell is allowed another Wisdom saving throw every 24 hours while the spell persists.

A creature that successfully saves against this effect is immune to it for 1 minute, after which time it can be affected again.

DIRE WINTER

The wizard responsible for this merciless trap is none other than Withren Fyar, an **archmage** attempting to usher in the next ice age. He is described in the *Dire Winter* sample storyline.

LIVING BLIZZARD

Weather Encounter, Tier II

The forecast is as clear as the skies; it is with absolute certainty, that the adventurers can rest easy, knowing there will be no snowfall tonight. Yet as the sun dips below the horizon, they hear harsh winds on the rise. In the twilight, they fall prey to an animated blizzard—a storm manufactured by living spells.

Living Spells. Wrought by the cruel archmage Withren Fyar of the *Dire Winter* storyline, these animate spells have no other purpose than to torment the living until their creator marshals them as part of his scheme to trigger another ice age. The spells appear as floating, Medium-sized black icicles and consist of a **living ice storm** and 1d4+2 **living ice knives**, the statistics of which are described in Appendix B.

Cruel Beyond Reason. The living spells take great pleasure in tormenting travelers and trapping creatures inside cabins and caves. Sharing their creator's sadism, they prefer to drag things out. They only attack beings with the audacity to brave their weather. Otherwise, the spells are content to strafe travelers or linger on their flank to expose them to the bitter cold.

Acclimate Weather. A blizzard rages with a diameter of 300 feet, centered on the **living ice storm**. This area is subjected to strong winds and heavy precipitation. Together, these effects also impose disadvantage on Perception checks reliant on sight by whipping up the snow. The entire area is extremely cold. See Appendix C for these effects.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

As described above, the living spells plague travelers and snow in those sheltering in cabins or igloos. If you'd like to keep your adventurers inside a cabin for a few days—but still give them the chance to rid themselves of that merciless weather—you can run this encounter there instead of while the party's traveling.

MAMMOTH CORPSE

Tundra Encounter, Tier II-III

The scent of fresh blood is on the wind, and stark against the horizon is a massive mound of fur—a dead mammoth. This creature is a cornucopia of treasures crucial to survival in the unforgiving Arctic. Its fur, meat, and bones are more valuable than gold in these inhospitable lands. The death of a mammoth does not go unnoticed. Predators and scavengers, monsters and men alike, are on their way to feast... just as the dragon who dropped this beast from the sky anticipated.

Corpse. The mammoth's corpse is a Huge-sized object. To butcher the corpse completely will take 8d4+16 hours of hard labor and would yield nearly 2,000 pounds of edible meat.

Several bite marks mar the mammoth. With a successful DC 15 Nature check, a character can identify a mammoth's typical predators: rocs, remorhazes, and white dragons. A successful DC 17 Survival check identifies the bites as made by a massive reptile, suggesting a dragon—but where are the iconic marks of a white dragon's icy breath? Additionally, the mammoth's legs are clearly broken, suggesting it fell from the sky, ruling out terrestrial predators.

Beasts. When the adventurers first arrive, 1d4+6 **wolves** are feeding on the corpse. They defend it until four have been slain, after which they flee. Likewise, 1d4 **eagles** are picking at the mammoth's eyes; the birds flee if threatened. After 1d10 +5 minutes, a **polar bear** comes to feast. Only wary of monsters and greater creatures, the polar bear charges the party. If they do not flee, it fights until it's reduced to a quarter of its hit points.

Men. After 2d10+5 minutes, human hunters arrive to butcher the corpse. They consist of 1d6+2 **tribal warriors** and 2d6+3 **commoners**. Komgluk, a young braggart desperate for status and admiration, claims it was he who felled the beast. In truth, all he did was happen upon the corpse while hunting. His lie can be discerned with a successful DC 14 Insight check.

These humans are not selfish; if the adventurers help butcher the animal, or guard their flank, they promise 2d8+30 pounds of meat. However, they claim ownership over the fur and bones, as such materials are vital to their way of life.

Drake. The mammoth's killer is clever. 1d4+1 hours later, the white dragon returns, having waited for enough scavengers to gather around the corpse. With its clutch of eggs almost ready to hatch, the dragon requires preserved meat for its young. The dragon (a **young white dragon** just old enough to reproduce or **adult white dragon**) returns to freeze its prey in ice and deliver them to its lair far to the north.

THE MAMMOTH MERCHANT

Character Encounter, Tier I-II

Known far and wide across the Arctic, the so-called Mammoth Merchant travels between settlements to hawk his wares. His true name is unknown, and, to hear it from his own lips, it's better left that way. This retired tiefling wizard would rather pawn off his goods in the relative comfort of anonymity than invite his old nemeses for a visit. Through a *hat of disguise*, the wizard manages to masquerade as a human.

The Mammoth Merchant rides atop a saddled **mammoth** that pulls a sled of goods. The beast is always surrounded by an entourage of hired guards.

Statistics. The Merchant is a N tiefling **abjurer** wearing a *hat of disguise* (DMG pg. 173). He has the following changes to his statistics:

- He speaks Common, Infernal, Dwarvish, and Elvish.
- He can cast *thaumaturgy*. He can also cast both *hellish rebuke* (DC 11) as a 2nd-level spell and *darkness* once per long rest.
- He has resistance to fire damage.
- He has a +6 bonus to Deception checks.

Roleplaying the Merchant. The Merchant is a cheerful yet paranoid wizard wearing more years than he's truly aged. He appears to be in his seventies but is actually only forty-five. Sometimes he fails to pretend to be old and walks with a young man's stride. He also really hams up his "arthritis" by pretending to be in pain. The wizard always smiles, no matter his mood.

You can voice the Merchant with the following dialogue:

- (If asked why he goes by "the Merchant" or what his true name is) "My otherwise destitute and insignificant father thought we could share the same legacy if we also shared a name. Well, I didn't feel like living my life out as 'Eugene.'"
- "One man's mayonnaise is another man's grease."
- "That ain't a *thunderwave* you hear, that's *business*."
- "Trade is the lifeblood of the Arctic, don't you doubt it. News, goods. We have no roads, only routes, and it's this fragile web that keeps honest men true and insular settlements open. No trade, no dialogue, no vigilance."

Gear. The Merchant is armed with a *dagger of warning* and a *rope of entanglement*. Along with his *hat of disguise*, he wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location*. See pgs. 213, 197, 173, and 150 of the DMG, respectively. He also carries a miniature, replica chest for the *Leomund's secret chest* spell.

Guards and Porters. The Merchant has hired 1d4+2 **tribal warriors**, two **scouts**, an **archer**, and a **gladiator** to guard him, his mammoth, and his four laborers (**commoners**). The bulk of his hired hands are human, but his bodyguard is a **half-red dragon veteran** named Vraxxis.

Treasure. The Merchant carries 900 gp on him in assorted currencies. Within his *secret chest* he has another 3,200 gp. He also carries a spellbook with all the spells in his statistics, plus *burning hands*, *disguise self*, *nondetection*, and *remove curse*.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The Merchant is almost always open for business, day or night. His camps are the exact opposite of subtle, and travelers often come seeking the warmth of his crew's great bonfires. Thanks to the Merchant's *alchemy jug*, he can always make a profit off wine or beer. Many a thirsty traveler is willing to trade venison for a cup of ale.

THE MAMMOTH MERCHANT

Goods	Price	Reference
<i>Eyes of the eagle</i>	50 gp	DMG 168
<i>Gloves of missile snaring</i>	40 gp	DMG 172
<i>Periapt of wound closure</i>	175 gp	DMG 184
<i>Potion of climbing</i>	25 gp	DMG 187
<i>Potion of healing</i>	15 gp	DMG 187
<i>Orb of detection</i>	15 gp	XGE 138
<i>Ring of warmth</i>	750 gp	DMG 193
<i>Ring of water walking</i>	250 gp	DMG 193
<i>Rope of mending</i>	50 gp	XGE 138
Spell scroll (1st-level, wizard)	25 gp	DMG 200
Spell scroll (cantrip, wizard)	10 gp	DMG 199
<i>Top hat of awakening*</i>	100 gp	*
<i>Wand of pyrotechnics</i>	15 gp	XGE 140
<i>Wand of web</i>	30 gp	DMG 212
Acid (8 oz)	15 gp	N/A
Poison (1/2 oz)	15 gp	N/A
Beer (1 gallon)	10 sp	N/A
Honey (1 quart)	5 sp	N/A
Mayonnaise (1 quart)	8 cp	N/A
Oil (1 quart)	3 sp	N/A
Vinegar (1 quart)	2 sp	N/A
Water, fresh (1 gallon)	15 cp	N/A
Water, salt (1 gallon)	15 cp	N/A
Wine (1 quart)	10 sp	N/A

* see *Frosty the Snowman* encounter

Storage. The Merchant keeps his greatest wares safe through a *Leomund's secret chest* spell. All other goods are strapped to his mammoth, pulled in the sled, or carried by his porters.

Mundane Goods. The Merchant sells just about any item from the Adventuring Gear table in chapter 5 of the *PHB*, and, to his credit, at the same price they're worth. He also sells furs, venison, mostly accurate maps of the region, and all the liquids that can be produced from his *alchemy jug* (see the table above).

Magical Goods. The Merchant always has 1d4+1 magical items for sale, as detailed on the Mammoth Merchant Goods table. With exception to his potions and spell scrolls, assume the Merchant has only one of each magic item in stock.

Haggling. The Merchant isn't married to his prices; this entire enterprise is just a means of keeping busy in retirement. With a successful DC 15 Persuasion check, he reduces the price of an item by 25%.



MAN OVERBOARD!

Sea Encounter, Tier I

This encounter can be combined with any Sea encounter and it serves as a template for whenever a character falls overboard. When running this encounter, consider the following:

Frigid Water. An arctic sea can kill a man with its icy touch. Characters that dive or fall into the sea are exposed to frigid water, the effects of which are described in Appendix C.

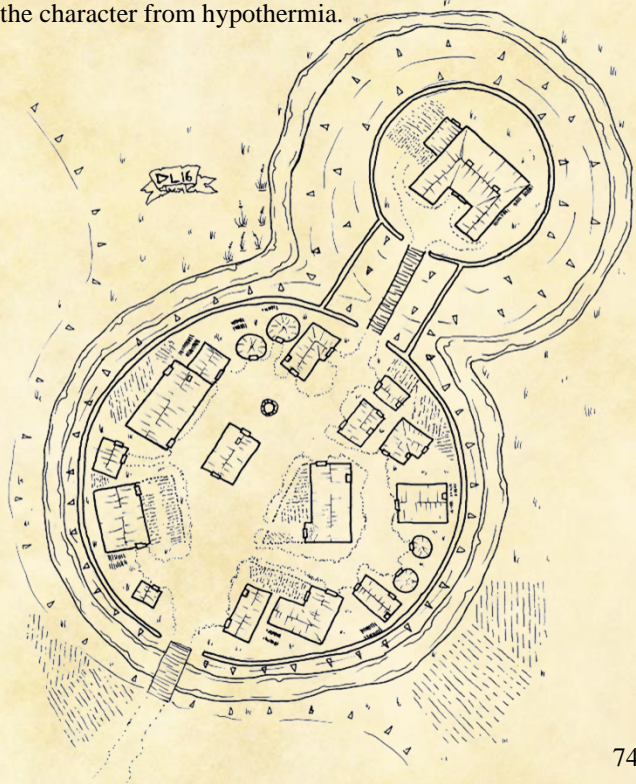
Identity. If the sailor that fell overboard isn't an adventurer, determine that sailor's identity with a d6. They might be vital to the crew's wellbeing or to the adventurers' quest. Good-aligned characters are sure to rescue even the most inconsequential characters whereas neutral or evil characters might only be motivated by what that person can do or has done for them.

Cause. If the cause is not related to another encounter, you can determine the cause with a d6.

Complications. Unless this encounter is already paired with another, roll a d6 to determine any complications in rescuing the sailor.

Rescue. Saving the crewmate is no easy task. The waters are choppy, rough, and the wind howls. Run this as an Easy Skill Challenge. The party must succeed on three ability checks to win the challenge. You can suggest or call for any of the following ability checks (DCs 10-14).

- As the wind howls and the waters tug at the sailor, a Perception check can be made to find him.
- Sharks, dolphins, or other marine animals can be staved off with an Animal Handling check or Intimidation check.
- An Athletics check allows a character to navigate the rough waters, bear the sailor's weight, or both.
- If the sailor drowns, a Medicine check can resuscitate him.
- A Sleight of Hand check can be made to accurately toss a life-line or secure one to the deck (Dexterity for the former and Intelligence for the latter).
- A Survival or Nature check recalls that the sailor has to shed their wet clothes and warm up within half an hour, or they will suffer bodily shut down.
- A *protection from energy* spell, choosing cold damage, can shield the character from hypothermia.



SAILOR'S IDENTITY		CAUSE	
d6	Identity	d6	Cause
1	Captain	1	Rough water
2	First Mate	2	Intoxication
3	Navigational Officer	3	Pushed!
4	Important passenger	4	Madness
5	Keeper of a secret	5	Compelled by magic
6	Rival or friend	6	<i>Deadliest Catch</i> encounter

COMPLICATIONS

d6	Purpose
1	An otherworldly being—a kraken, morkoth, or even the archdevil of Stygia, Levistus—reaches out and promises to save the sailor. In the case of the latter, the sailor strikes a deal with a literal devil. For the others, the sailor is later drawn to the sea, doomed to become a deep scion even if the adventurers rescue him.
2	A killer whale begins circling the sailor. The sailor's clothing is too heavy when soaked and he plunges 20 ft. below the surface. Wisdom (Perception) checks made to locate him are made with disadvantage.
3	A nearby polar bear dives into the sea to attack the sailor or moves to intercept them on another ice block. The sailor does not know how to swim. Any Strength (Athletics) checks for him to swim or another to bear his weight are made with disadvantage. He is also frightened until calmed with a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This check can count for a Skill Challenge.
4	An opportunistic penguinwere (see <i>The Penguinwere</i> for the special statistics of this jackalwere) attacks while in its penguin form.
5	
6	

MANAVIK UNDER FIRE

Urban Encounter, Tier II

The fortified village of Manavik has long resisted the vile snow elves—and the day has come to put its fortifications to the test. Its people have abandoned their farms and homes to seek refuge inside its wooden walls while the elves march onward, torching or freezing whatever is in their path.

This encounter can be run with the adventurers defending the outpost from within or without.

The Elven Host. The elves, usually satiated by tribute, have come to torch Manavik and make clear to the rest of the Arctic that resistance is a fool's errand indeed. They have brought a small army of 4d10+20 **guards**, 1d6+4 **veterans**, two **mag**s, 1d4+1 **knights**, a LE **evoker**, and 1d4+1 **apprentice wizards** that are about to get their first taste of war. Each soldier rides upon an armored reindeer (a barded **elk** with AC 17).

The elves are led by Torsatra, the evoker. A cruel veteran, she has honed her craft over countless skirmishes. Like many of the snow elves, she has been raised to believe that the Arctic *must* be brought under heel for her people to have any chance at a safe and prosperous future. She settles for nothing more than Manavik's destruction and the execution Jarl, Vilhem Vidik.

The snow elves have the following changes to their statistics:

- Many are lawful evil or neutral evil.
- They have darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- They have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put them to sleep.

- They have advantage on Stealth checks to remain hidden in snowy terrain.
- They each know three transmutation spells on the wizard spell list: one cantrip, a 1st-level spell and a 2nd-level spell. They can cast the latter two spells once per day. Typically, a snow elf knows *gust*, *shape water*, *catapult* or *jump*.

Map. Refer to the map above. Its fortifications are wooden. Each 10-foot-section has AC 15 and 27 hit points. The village is surrounded by a frozen mote, making it slippery ice (see App. C). The motte is considered difficult terrain.

Defenders. Manavik normally has a population of sixty, with a few hundred more swearing fealty to its jarl from outside its walls in the surrounding countryside. Jarl Vilhem has rallied sixty **commoners** to join his garrison of 2d10+30 **guards** and 1d10+10 **scouts**. Vilhem himself is a **knight**.

Invaders. The elves are familiar with Manavik and aware of its fortifications. Torsatra splits her forces into three platoons. The largest platoon, led by Torsatra herself, storms the bridge with half of all **guards**, **veterans**, and **knights** after she has *fireballed* the defenders there.

The other two platoons are each led by a **mage**, who intends to breach Manavik's western and eastern walls with *fireball* spells, after which their soldiers (who consist of a quarter of all remaining forces) will storm the village.

Once the village is taken, Torsatra will level the keep on the hill, cooking the civilians inside.

MANAVIK SAVED

If Manavik prevails against the elven aggressors, Jarl Vilhem recognizes its bravest defenders with gold, glory, or 1d4+1 acres of land. The adventurers, if they prove themselves in battle, are rewarded with 40 gp each.



MARCH OF THE DAMNED

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier II

A chorus of ghoulish moans echo out across the region as a thousand corpses shamble through the snow. The worst has happened: the dead have risen, but for what purpose? What insidious call have they answered? To whom do they flock?

This encounter is a precursor to the *Army of the Damned* storyline and demonstrates the growing threat of her return.

The army measures over a hundred corpses, some skeletal, some half-thawed, some fresh. Along the flanks, **wights** astride **warhorse skeletons** herd undead that would otherwise stray away whenever they sensed a living creature to devour. With a DC 15 Perception check, a character can make out living individuals wading through the dead, clad in robes embroidered with sigils and symbols of death—**necromancers**. These dark magi are guiding the dead in one direction.

Weather. When the adventurers encounter the undead, heavy snowfall lightly obscures the area and the creatures therein. As they linger, the snow peters out—allowing the undead to see the adventurers more clearly, provoking some to pursue them.

Corpsewatcher. Collecting intelligence on this undead army is crucial to the Arctic's survival. Yesbella Pineheart, a wood elf **scout**, is observing the dead from a safe distance. She may choose to reveal herself to the adventurers if she's convinced they aren't collaborators. She can share any of the following information:

- The undead are referred to as "the Swarm" by settlements and folks aware of the threat, and "utter fables" by those that doubt the dead's existence.
- Similar congregations of undead have been sighted across the Arctic; this is one of the largest seen so far.
- Mortal necromancers have thrown their lot in with the with undead, forming a cult known as the "Newly Dead."

Interrogating the Dead. The undead, no matter how mindless they are, can be questioned with a *speak with dead* spell. Any corpse can and will explain that they have answered the call of the Flayed Queen, a **death knight** imprisoned in a glacier eons ago. "In due time," one corpse adds, "all will serve the Queen." The corpse does not know exactly where the Queen is trapped but is drawn to her will.

HAMMER AND ANVIL

Unfortunately for Yesbella and the adventurers, a new gaggle of undead are on en route to join the Swarm. In 1d6+2 rounds, two **ghouls** and a **wight** astride **warhorse skeleton** arrive with 2d10+15 **zombies** in tow; the nearest six **zombies** reach the adventurers on the third turn of combat, with the remainder reaching them on the sixth. Worse yet, the swarm dispatches five **skeletons** and another **warhorse skeleton-mounted wight** in a pincer attack made against the living. The skeletons pepper the living with arrows from 40 feet away. A **necromancer** comes later on to raise any of the dead.

The adventurers must cut their way through the dead before being overwhelmed. As they flee, Yesbella is struck with a *hold person* spell cast by a human **necromancer** from 60 feet away. 1d4+1 **ghouls** come bounding across the snow, reaching her at the start of the next round. The adventurers must decide whether to save Yesbella or flee. While paralyzed, she's dead weight and requires a DC 13 Athletics check to carry.

If the undead don't reach the adventurers in two rounds, the necromancers call back their minions to continue their march.

THE MIMIGLOO

Polar Encounter, Tier I

As the snow worsens and the day darkens, the adventurers sight an igloo in the distance. Little do they know that this igloo is a highly evolved **mimic** in disguise. This extraordinary predator has adapted to the frozen wastes in the most ingenious way. The desperate and cold march right into that white abattoir, hoping to find warmth and shelter from the merciless cold outside.

The mimic is so advanced, it can suppress its Adhesive trait so that creatures prostrate themselves in the belly of the beast. The entire igloo counts as its body, even the floor and the tunnel leading inside. As an action, the mimic can close the entrance by moving its malleable flesh over the opening; to a creature that doesn't succeed on a DC 15 Investigation check, it appears as if a mound of snow has fallen over the entrance.

If the mimic is slain, its disguise falters. Creatures inside the igloo must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to dart outside before the mimic's body crashes down upon them. On a failure, a creature takes 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. They can then crawl out of the deflated entrance to the "igloo."

Grim Truth. The igloo's true nature can be sussed out by a keen-minded individual. The exterior features the iconic lines between snow bricks that make up an igloo, but the interior is completely smooth. "Wind" also rattles throughout the igloo, but an observant character will realize that it fits the pattern of a breathing creature. With a successful DC 13 Investigation check made as an action, a character can intuit they are inside a creature masked by illusion or twisted by transmutation magic.

Statistics. The **mimic** has the following changes to its usual statistics:

- It is a size of Huge with 76 (9d12+18) hit points.
- It is a CR 5 creature (1,800 XP)
- It has the following Attack options:

Multiattack. The mimic makes two pseudopod attacks and one Bite attack.

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. **Hit:** 12 (2d8+3) bludgeoning damage. If the mimic is in object form, the target is subjected to its Adhesive trait.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Undead Accomplice. A sadistic **will-o'-wisp** has developed a symbiotic relationship with the mimic. This wicked spirit takes immense pleasure in luring in travelers with its false light. The wisp, once a washed-up halfling rogue unburdened by scruples, speaks Common, Dwarvish, Halfling, and Elvish. Using these languages, it whispers to lost travelers, warning that they'll surely die outside in the cold.

Since the wisp's arrival, the mimic has fed greedily. The spirit knows the trails and roads he once traveled in life and guides the otherwise dull mimic towards more frequented areas. It's a win-win situation; the mimic feeds on flesh and the wisp on the suffering of its victims.

If you include the wisp in this encounter, it shines its light in the colors of a torch or lantern. When close enough to be heard, it whispers, "Night falls and the cold creeps in! There's shelter nearby, if you so wish to join me!" It then immediately darts into the igloo and utilizes its Variable Illumination trait to make it seem as if a campfire has been lit up inside the igloo, causing it to shine as a beacon in a sea of darkness.

...without a doubt one of my most ridiculous episodes in the Arctic. And it is with great shame that I admit I fell for the creature's ruse more than once. Once it knew the jig was up, it would turn into—I kid you not—a wheel and roll away, faster than we could give chase.

MIRAGE ARCANE

Polar or Tundra Encounter, Tier I

The wicked **archmage** Withrens Fyar has lain yet another trap for the denizens of the Arctic: a frozen lake disguised by a spell of *mirage arcane*. Those that look upon this frigid abattoir see nothing more than a copse of pines... and firewood is as gold is in greener lands. Only characters with truesight can see this place for what it truly is; all others are fooled by the spell.

Creatures that enter the copse of trees, perhaps to forage or shelter from the cold, risk breaking through the lake's thin ice (see Appendix C for this hazard). Whenever a creature moves into a new 10-foot-square area, roll a d20. On a result of 6 or lower, they enter a patch of thin ice.

Into the Water. Should the ice break beneath a creature, they fall into frigid water (see Appendix C). To clamber back onto the ice is an arduous task. The character must be able to get their arms (or forelimbs) onto the ice, then make a mighty kick (requiring a successful DC 18 Athletics check). Another character can use their action to pull them out of the water, making a DC 15 Athletics check. Thereafter, they must contend with the usual effects of extreme cold.

The Beasts Know Better. It's impossible to know whether Withrens Fyar—that prick—cares if animals also fall prey to his mirage. Several bears, wolves, and reindeer have already crashed through the ice and drowned, fooled by the tactile and olfactory elements of the *mirage arcane* spell. Local beasts now know to avoid the area. A character that can communicate with beasts, through a spell of *speaking with animals* or similar magic, might learn that the pine grove is dangerous.

Past Victims. Withrens Fyar cast his wicked spell four days ago and it has already claimed the lives of eight people. If the adventurers can somehow survive the frozen depths, they might find the following corpses:

- A human woman dressed in furs, wearing an explorer's pack and a silver locket worth 25 gp.
- A gnoll whose untimely, but deserved, death has spared many from unprovoked carnage.
- An orc wearing a pair of *boots of false tracks* (XGE, pg. 136).
- A mountain dwarf clutching his greataxe as if it were the key to him reaching the afterlife.
- A wood elf druid with two goodberries (as in the *goodberry* spell (PHB, pg. 246)) in her pocket.
- A firbolg and goliath; their proximity together suggests they were traveling companions or enemies locked in battle.
- A centaur with a quiver on his belt with 2d4+4 arrows.

MIRAGE ARCANE

You make terrain in an area up to 1 mile square look, sound, smell, and even feel like some other sort of terrain. The terrain's general shape remains the same, however. Open fields or a road could be made to resemble a swamp, hill, crevasse, or some other difficult or impassable terrain. A pond can be made to seem like a grassy meadow, a precipice like a gentle slope, or a rock-strewn gully like a wide and smooth road.

Similarly, you can alter the appearance of structures, or add them where none are present. The spell doesn't disguise, conceal, or add creatures.

The illusion includes audible, visual, tactile, and olfactory elements, so it can turn clear ground into difficult terrain (or vice versa) or otherwise impede movement through the area. Any piece of the illusory terrain (such as a rock or stick) that is removed from the spell's area disappears immediately.

Creatures with truesight can see through the illusion to the terrain's true form; however, all other elements of the illusion remain, so while the creature is aware of the illusion's presence, the creature can still physically interact with the illusion.

Rage Beyond Death. At your discretion, a **poltergeist**—the spirit of one of the eight victims above—emerges from below to attack passerby. It can't, however, use its Telekinetic Thrust to destroy ice. The enraged spirit is unable to pass onto the afterlife; destroying it is actually a mercy, even if it does not know it. Until destroyed, ravaging the living is its only solace.

The poltergeist is bound to the lake; it remains here even after the *mirage arcane* spell elapses. If Withrens Fyar is slain, the poltergeist finds the rest it so deserves.

DIRE WINTER

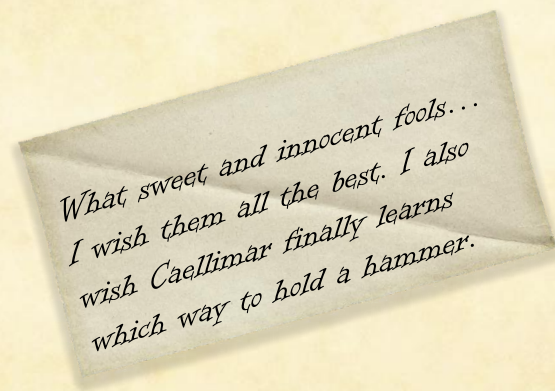
This encounter is related to Withrens Fyar, the antagonist of the *Dire Winter* storyline described at the start of this supplement. This is but one of the many traps he has left around the Arctic, seemingly for other reason than to sow terror and misery.

NEW MENZOBERRANZAN

Mountain or Taiga Encounter, Tier 1

Desperate to escape the yoke of their totalitarian, matriarchal society, a host of drow men have escaped to the surface, where they can at last be free. The Arctic is a cold and inhospitable place, but even its brightest months are a softer discomfort than that of the Underdark. After days of roaming the surface, they found three empty cabins—waystations for travelers, already furnished with beds, tools, and ale. The drow intend to make a settlement of their own.

The drow busy themselves with building additional walls and other amenities. Alas, these elves have never worked with wood and are way in over their heads. More ambitious projects like the sauna, theater, and atelier must be abandoned until the walls have been completed, but their leader, Caellimar Xiltinn, won't see reason. He is obsessed with recreating—and surpassing—the grandeur of Menzoberranzan, the drow city of his birth. Caellimar's chief critic is the no-nonsense pragmatist Jelaern Taratar. Jelaern has little influence amongst his peers, however, for the elves still follow the aristocracy they were born into. Caellimar rules only because he was the consort of a prominent drow matriarch. Caellimar's an utter buffoon, but the elves are too polite, timid, and acclimated to his rule to challenge him.



Elves. The elves consist of 3d4+10 **drow**. Having all been raised in the draconian drow society, they are all a shade of evil, but nonviolent. Their chief concern is establishing a settlement safe from monsters and starvation. Once exposed to surface folk and other settlements, they're sure to realize how unnecessarily evil drow society is. Given time, the elves can become better people—that is if their stubbornness and incompetence don't kill them first. The drow speak broken and heavily accented Common and are delighted to see outsiders.

The Settlement. A timber wall snakes around a quarter of the grounds. Poorly cut lumber is heaped up in a pile that threatens to collapse under a harsh wind. Several half-built projects can be seen: an extra outhouse, a ditch lined with stones (the sauna), and a stage for the future theater. Smoke rises from one cabin, where shouting can be heard: Caellimar berates his underlings for not being "committed" to "New Menzoberranzan." The elf continues, "I will not compromise my vision for your laziness, do you understand?"

Third Contact. The elves have encountered other surface-dwellers twice before. To their credit, the drow only *briefly* discussed enslaving these outsiders. Ultimately, they decided that establishing trade relations was a better option than having to feed extra mouths. By when the adventurers encounter the drow, they are willing to shelter any travelers in return for brief stints of labor. This exchange of services has been lauded as a legendary, economical and libertarian breakthrough. "It's like slavery," the drow say, "but without the coercion!"

The drow must be taught the ways of tanning, carpentry, and fishing. They have the tools but lack the know-how and the humility to admit their ignorance. So far, they've been surviving off hunting, but the elk are disappearing. They petition the party to teach them such trades; a character with proficiency in such professions is bribed with venison.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This encounter can be a humorous respite from your plot. The adventurers might also encounter two **drow** hunting **elk** in the forest or running from a **polar bear**.

NIGHTFALL

Polar Night Encounter, Tier IV

As the world tilts away from the sun, polar night unfurls across the Arctic, allowing dark-dwelling creatures to run amok on the surface. Now, thanks to mysterious forces, a new creature stalks the darkness: a **nightwalker**. This entity is anathema to all life; its very presence causes nearby plants to wither, snow to gray, and creatures to convulse as the life is siphoned from their very bodies. The nightwalker leaves a path of destruction as it wades through the Arctic; where it walks, the snow thins and dries into a gray residue. The entity is attracted to life and actively seeks it out, sparing no passing creature or plant.

Unless the adventurers intervene, the nightwalker will reap countless lives. They may encounter it in the following ways:

- In the wilderness, siphoning the life from a **mammoth** (or the **archdruid** Sylberos, described in *The Poacher's Nightmare*).
- In a settlement, as the entity wades in to reap a cornucopia of crisp, vibrant life.
- As it enters the Material Plane (see *Origins* below).

Origins. No creature, no matter how insane, willingly bids a nightwalker into this world; the entity is summoned when a living creature enters the Negative Plane and does not succumb to its lethal atmosphere. The accidental conjurer is trapped there until the nightwalker is destroyed. It may owe its origin to:

- The Forsworn's efforts to enshroud the Arctic in a permanent polar night; their leader, Yasne Illiwan, was catapulted into the Negative Plane when she linked the Shadowfell and the Material Plane. See the *Eternal Night* storyline and the *At World's End* encounter for details.
- A **lich** that fell into the Negative Plane while researching the most arcane of necromantic secrets.
- A **nagpa** attempting to plunder the ruins of a long-dead city that was drawn into the Shadowfell. A magical catastrophe caused the ruins to slip into the Negative Plane.
- A **vampire** (of the Spellcaster variant) that sought the counsel of the infamous **skull lords** and was banished to the Negative Plane for his impudence.

By slaying the nightwalker, the adventurers release another enemy into this world. At your discretion, this person later visits the adventurers to express their gratitude—by eliminating such mighty heroes.

We heard the mammoths' cries before we saw it. Sigris rushed first into the dark, axe drawn, the light of the campfire on his back. That was the last we heard of him. I will never forget it—looking up from the ankle I mistook for a torso and seeing that titan of death looming over me, Sig's life force being drained into its forefinger. It smiled and I ran. Gods forgive me, but I ran.



OBELISK-BOUND COUATL

Polar or Polar Night Encounter, Tier I-II

A black obelisk etched in arcane runes floats above the ground; it radiates light and warmth—enough warmth to melt even the snow and ice within 20 feet of it, revealing the soil and rock beneath. Despite its hospitable properties, this obelisk is a prison for a **couatl** whose time in this world is almost over.

Properties. The obelisk radiates bright light in a radius of 30 feet and dim light for another 30 feet. Within the bright light, the temperature is 70 degrees Fahrenheit, which is reduced to 40 degrees within the dim light.

The obelisk hovers a foot above the ground and spins slowly on its axis. It can't be moved by any force, be it magical or mundane. A *dispel evil and good* spell cast upon the obelisk frees the couatl, who then appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the obelisk. If the couatl is freed, the obelisk crashes to the ground and ceases to emit light and warmth.

Divine Prisoner. The couatl, a divine agent created when the world was young, can telepathically speak to creatures within 30 feet of the obelisk. Her name is Tzua-toca, and she has been bound within this obelisk for centuries. The divine mandates of her creator have all passed, leaving her with one purpose: to serve Irhemana, the **gynosphinx** jailor of the Flayed Queen, the undead tyrant described in the *Army of the Damned* storyline. The queen's agents abducted and bound the couatl to an obelisk.

ON THE EVE OF DIRE WINTER

Mountain Encounter, Tier IV

Roleplaying Tzua-toca. The couatl has a telepathic voice as sweet as honey and soft as a breeze; it slips into one's mind not through the brain, but the heart, filling the creature with gentle warmth. She begins this contact with, "Do not be alarmed. I am but a servant of a forgotten god, bound before mortal men, and it is my light that shines upon you. You may call me Tzua-toca, mortal. What name shall I call you?"

As a couatl, Tzua-toca cannot tell a lie, but she will withhold information to preserve her identity. If she believes the party is just and right, she confides in them, explaining she was bound by a lich long ago. "And it seems I will be here until I wilt," she adds. All couatl can sense their demise up to a century beforehand, and Tzua-toca knows she has less than a year before she dies. Her only solace is providing light and warmth to weary mortals; her last hope is to be freed in time to find her long-lost lover, the couatl Cua-huia, who was similarly bound centuries ago. She can sense his presence; he is within 100 miles of her obelisk. If the two can be freed, they may bear a child to carry on their legacy and serve the lonely Irhemana.

The Flayed Queen. Tzua-toca and her mate are forbidden to reveal the Flayed Queen's secrets while bound in the obelisk. At most, she can mention the Queen's name and elaborate on her own relationship with the tyrant. She cannot reveal where her prison is or shed further light on the Queen's agents.

OBELISK-BOUND LOVER

Tier II

An identical obelisk can be found 4d20+12 miles from Tzua-toca's prison. It contains Cua-huia, her long-lost lover. Like her, Cua-huia can sense his timely demise. Regardless if he is freed from his prison, the couatl has only a year left to live; he knows not how he will perish. His only recourse now is to mate with Tzua-toca so their children can continue to safeguard the world.

The adventurers may find the obelisk deeper in the Arctic—but encounter others who are basking in the obelisk's warmth. Choose one of the following:

- The Brass Adventists, the adventuring party described in the encounter of the same name.
- A warband of hostile orcs, consisting of 2d6+2 **orcs**, an **orog**, and an **orc claw of Luthic** who commands two **cave bears**
- An **oni** masquerading as a weary hill dwarf traveler named Merryll Maulhands (named so after her mighty fists).
- A gaggle of **commoners** and 2d4+2 **tribal warriors** that are building a ring of igloos around the obelisk, just outside the light. They intend to make this warmth-emitting curio the heart and engine of their new home.
- A **young remorhaz** hiding below the ice.

THE LOVERS UNITED

If the couatl are both freed, they quickly perform their mating dance, which is a dazzling display of magic and light. The ritual takes less than an hour, after which Cua-huia bears a sapphire-encrusted egg. Within minutes, a new couatl hatches. Creatures that watch this amazing event each gain an Inspiration die that they must use within the next seven days.

ARMY OF THE DAMNED

If the Flayed Queen's return is imminent, Tzua-toca seeks out her master, the sphinx Irhemana (see *The Glacial Prison*), leaving Cua-huia to watch over their hatchling.

Withrens Fyar, the wicked **archmage**, has at last located the prison of his deity's daughter, Beldara. The wizard is a faithful, deranged hierophant of Auril, an evil goddess of winter whose disastrous favor can change history. Freeing Auril's daughter is at the heart of Fyar's plan to freeze the world in a premature ice age he lovingly calls "dire winter."

For her crimes committed millennia ago, the NE **empyrean** languishes in her mountaintop prison, bound by the Midnight Sun, a deity of light also known as Amaunator in the Forgotten Realms setting. She is watched over by three **storm giants** that were guided here by mysterious visions. Beldara has gone mad in her isolation—and it's that very madness that Withrens Fyar intends to use to channel his calamitous *dire winter* spell. Only a *wish* spell can restore her mind and teach her how to perform Fyar's calamitous ritual.

Jailors. Beldara's jailors have disappeared or perished over the years. The three storm giants that guard her now do so not out of obligation to the Midnight Sun, but the world itself. Their own deity, Annam the All-Father, cannot return if the world is destroyed. They, like other storm giants, obsess over omens that hint at their deity's glorious return. The giants did not come to Beldara's prison together; each were led here independently by omens that they perceived over the years. There is only one thing the giants have in common: all have once been met by Withrens Fyar himself.

The giants began their exodus here thirty years ago, following omens—omens crafted by Fyar himself through *dream* spells. Through that spell, the archmage was able to masquerade as a storm giant matriarch that bid the giants to find "the prison of Winter's daughter." The giants obeyed, rooting through ancient lore inaccessible to Fyar. As they ventured into the Arctic, the wizard followed through *scrying* spells.

Through numerous *dream* spells, Fyar implanted a command in the giants' minds that would turn them to his cause. When he utters "let winter reign" in their presence, the giants must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or become charmed by him for 1 hour. While charmed, a giant regards Fyar as its master and throws itself against his enemies. A *dispel magic* spell (DC 17) ends this enchantment.

Prisoner of Light. Beldara is suspended by glowing chains attached to four black obelisks. The chains are forged from the golden light of Amaunator himself and shed bright light out to 10 feet. While suspended, Beldara is stunned by divine power. Each chain has 100 hit points, 15 AC, and immunity to cold, poison, and psychic damage. If two chains are destroyed, Beldara is restrained, instead of stunned. Once all four are destroyed, she regains control of herself and wades into the fray.

Map. Beldara's prison is a mountaintop plateau dotted with four obelisks, at the center of Beldara is suspended 10 feet off the ground. Refer to *Stony Hill*. "S" marks the starting positions of the giants, whereas "X" marks an obelisk and "B" marks the position of Beldara. Except for the path winding downward, the plateau is sat upon nearly sheer cliffs. A creature that falls off the edge crashes into the ground 130 feet below, taking up to 13d10 bludgeoning damage.

Weather. Beldara's prison is a place of extreme cold battered by strong winds (see Appendix C).



WINTER'S DAUGHTER

The Frostmaiden is an exacting mother who cannot be so easily impressed, and Beldara has labored under that cold nature for millennia. After her first century imprisoned, Beldara accepted her mother's contempt and indifference towards her.

Roleplaying Beldara. Imprisonment has done little for Beldara's sanity. Once a force of relentless fury, hopelessness and isolation has reduced her to an incoherent mess. Given time, she may recover—but Fyar hasn't the time to wait for that; he will restore her mind with a *wish* spell. Thereafter, she becomes a melancholy and wrathful titan obsessed only with suffering and death—just like her mother.

WINTER'S CHAMPION

The faithful are rewarded, indeed. Years of effort and research have finally paid off; Withrens Fyar is at the site of his destiny and he is *exalting*. After Beldara is freed, he immediately casts *wish* to impart his *dire winter* spell upon her; even if he dies before she can start the ice age, he has fulfilled his purpose.

Fyar's Entourage. The wizard did not come alone; Fyar has brought his **shield guardian** (which can unleash a *banishment* spell) and a contracted **nycaloth** Fyar has already paid. He also has the aasimar **war priest** Masra at his side (see *Temple of the Frostmaiden*).

Fyar's Gear. The wizard wears a pair of *bracers of defense* and a *cloak of protection* (DMG pg. 157 & 159), increasing his AC to 18. He also wields a *circlet of blasting* (DMG pg. 158) that he has specially chosen to combat storm giants.

Fyar's Spells. The wizard has prepared a unique spell list:

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*, *shield*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image**, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*, *hypnotic pattern*

4th level (3 slots): *fire shield**, *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *geas*, *globe of invulnerability*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*

7th level (1 slot): *prismatic spray*

8th level (1 slot): *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*^{XGE}

9th level (1 slot): *wish*

* *already cast upon self*

Fyar must reserve his *wish* spell to grant Beldara the power to channel his *dire winter* spell. Beldara must be alive and free to perform the ritual; therefore, he cannot risk her dying.

Fyar's Precautions. The wizard has warded himself with a number of spells:

- A *mind blank* spell cast before the wizard's last long rest, ten hours ago.
- A *contingency* spell that triggers an *investiture of ice* spell when Fyar is struck with cold or fire damage.
- A *nondetection* spell cast four hours ago, costing him a 3rd-level spell slot.

BATTLE BENEATH FRIGID SKIES

The fate of the world is on the line as Withrens Fyar prepares himself for his destiny. You (or your players) must determine when the adventurers arrive on the scene. If they come mid-combat, play out a few rounds beforehand with Fyar and his allies versus any non-chaunted giants and the chains, with Fyar on the winning end. Alternatively, you can start with one chain destroyed and another at 47 hit points remaining; the **nycaloth** is at 99 hit points, one giant is hurling thunderbolts at Fyar and Masra, while one charmed giant has wrestled its colleague to the ground.

Tactics. Fyar and his minions use the following tactics:

- Fyar is expecting at least one storm giant to succeed on its Intelligence saving throw against his command; hence, he has prepared *fireball* and *wall of force* and stored a *banishment* spell in his shield guardian. Fyar is *not* expecting adventurers to meddle in his plot. On his first turn, he utters "let winter reign" to charm the giants (no action required). After Beldara is freed, he uses his next turn to cast *wish*.
- Fyar is aware that storm giants have resistance to cold damage and immunity to lightning and thunder damage. He targets them with fire, necrotic, or force damage.
- Masra's priority is freeing her deity's daughter; Withrens Fyar's apocalyptic ambitions come second. She is fearless, knowing that dying in the service of her deity is the ultimate honor. She is warded by *guardian of faith*, cast before she and Fyar arrived. On her first turn, she protects Fyar with a *shield of faith* spell. On her second, she casts *sacred flame* and *spiritual weapon*. She targets an ornery giant with a *hold monster* spell.
- The **nycaloth** focuses on breaking Beldara's chains, as do any giants charmed by Fyar.
- Once freed, the nigh-insane **empyrean** recognizes only Masra as an ally. She hurls Bolts at random targets until her sanity is restored by Fyar's *wish* spell.

Divine Intervention. The gods themselves take an interest in this battle. Auril spares enough of her influence to assist in the liberation of her disappointment of a daughter. The Frostmaiden is, however, checked by Amaunator himself. Once each round, at initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), a deity causes one of the divine effects described below, alternating between Auril and Amaunator. A character affected by a *protection from evil and good* spell has advantage on any saving throw imposed by these effects.

- A character of the deity's choice regains 1d10 hit points.
- A *gust of wind* spell (DC 15) blows across the mountaintop, targeting a character of the deity's choice. The spell ends at the start of the next round.
- A character of the deity's choice gains a +2 bonus to their AC that lasts until the start of their next turn.
- A character of the deity's choice is targeted with a *blindness/deafness* spell (DC 15).
- A character of the deity's choice is affected by a spell of *lesser restoration*.

A DIRE, NEW AGE

If Beldara and Withrens Fyar defeat the adventurers, the world is soon plunged into an ice age; the empyrean channels Fyar's disastrous spell, which would reduce any mortal spellcaster to ash. The global temperature initially decreases by about five degrees Fahrenheit, causing famines that rock nations around the world. The global temperature continues to plunge at a rate of 5 degrees a week until it reaches -100 Fahrenheit. Countless innocents die in the chaos, forcing those that survived to flee towards the equator. As the world continues to grow colder, all hope for a warmer tomorrow is extinguished. In the aftermath, heroes arise to battle the chaos while clerics entreat the gods to restore balance to the world.

Inevitably, dire winter is halted and even reversed by the intervention of powerful mortals, beings, and deities—but the damage is done, and Withrens Fyar, whether he lives or dies, is welcomed to Auril's wintry afterlife by the goddess herself. The archmage's part in engineering this disaster is discovered by numerous divination spells cast by the world's most foremost spellcasters, who subsequently give Fyar the fame he always hungered for. Withrens Fyar goes down as one of history's most reviled villains.



THE PENGUINWERE

Character Encounter, Tier I-II

It is a creature the world has rarely had the misfortune of dealing with; a monstrosity undiscovered by scholars and wizards alike, but one they would groan over for years; a corrupted beast given sapience and a dark mission—the penguinwere.

The penguinwere comes from humble beginnings: it was but an ordinary penguin until an otherworldly menace corrupted it into a sapient creature. Much like a werebeast, it can transform into a human, a penguin-human abomination, or back into its true form.

The adventurers might encounter the creature in a settlement, along the coast, or at their campfire. If they're at sea, it may clamber up into their boat.

Statistics. The penguinwere has the statistics of a **jackalwere** with the following changes:

- It has a swimming speed of 30 feet and it can hold its breath for up to 30 minutes at a time.
- It has resistance to cold damage.

Servant of the Hag. The penguinwere was corrupted by none other than Greatmother Winter, a **bheur hag** that lairs in the frozen wastes. The beldam has tasked the penguinwere with kidnapping travelers and bringing them to her lair—the festive stronghold of Greatfather Winter, the mad Yuletide fanatic.

Persona. Greatmother Winter was too busy to help the beast craft a persona as a human. All she did was give it a name ("Sly Clyde" and teach it how to eat with utensils. It has since had to piece together its knowledge by observing and interacting with other humans, all of whom regard "Sly Clyde" as a simpleton or a paranoid fugitive.

You can voice the penguinwere with the dialogue below:

- "How do you do, fellow person?" (if preserving the beast's cover is of little concern)
- "Spare some warmth for a freezing traveler?"
- "Boy, that blizzard, right?"
- "Shiny rocks are the key to a woman's heart."
- "The economy's in brambles, everyone says so." (The word it is looking for is "shambles.")

Tactics. The penguinwere sticks to coastlines, hiding among other penguins (who only just tolerate its presence), storing its human clothes on the beach. It wanders into settlements to pick up new vocabulary and practice its odd mannerisms. It preys upon travelers, wandering up to their campfires, appealing to their mercy. When they lower their guard, the creature attacks. Defenders soon realize that their weapons glance off it, much like a lycanthrope.

A ROOKERY OF PENGUINWERES

Given time, Greatmother Winter will be inclined to create more servants, gaining between 1d4+4 and 2d6+6 penguinweres to fulfill her dark desires. These twisted minions can then be found all across the Arctic, acting as messengers, spies, saboteurs, and collectors of artifacts.

As Tier II encounter, the adventurers encounter a rookery of 1d4+2 penguinweres. If they've earned Greatmother Winter's enmity, the creatures hide among a flock of penguins, using that cover to launch an attack on the party. The penguins seem uneasy; a successful DC 14 Insight check reveals that they're keeping a wide berth from the disguised penguinweres.

THE POACHER'S NIGHTMARE

Character Encounter, Tier III

A merciless **archdruid** has unofficially declared a vast swathe of land off limits to poachers and even the most harmless of travelers—a territory that the adventurers have already entered.

Foreshadowing. If you intend to run this encounter, it should be foreshadowed through any or all of these events:

- The adventurers find dead men armed with bows (or firearms). Most have been crushed underfoot, as if by a mammoth.
- The adventurers see a giant eagle drop someone from a great height. Notably, it doesn't swoop down to pick at the remains.
- The adventurers hear the crack of thunder on a stormless day.

The Druid. For centuries, the wood elf Sylberos has done his best to protect wildlife. In his youth, he would lay traps for any poachers that dared hunt in his woods. Later, he would discover his gifts as a fledgling druid, which he considered to be implicit approval from Nature itself, or perhaps even deities of the wild. As his powers grew, so did his callousness towards sapient life. Towns that constructed dams risked his fury; careless miners were punished cruelly for raping the earth; trappers were made into grim warnings. Sylberos is personally responsible for the cratering of the beaver fur trade in a distant corner of the Arctic.

Manic and insatiable, Sylberos was formally exiled from his kin two centuries ago. He cared nothing for their decree; it was only after adventurers were hired to root him out from the wild that the druid was forced to migrate to the Arctic.

Statistics. Sylberos is a CE **archdruid** with these changes:

- He can read, write, and speak Common and Elvish.
- He has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic cannot put him to sleep.
- He has darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- He has a movement speed of 35 feet.
- He can attempt to hide when only lightly obscured by foliage, mist, heavy rain, falling snow, and other natural phenomena.
- He can use his Change Shape ability thrice a day and can use it as a bonus action.

Treasure. Sylberos also carries a *staff of the woodlands* (see DMG pg. 204).

SYLBEROS'S GAMBITS

The archdruid is a menace like no other, using subterfuge just as often as he does shock and awe. He employs the following gambits to ward off or ambush poachers and passerby alike:

Among the Herd. The druid takes the form of a **mammoth** and hides among the herd, waiting for poachers to dare hurl a spear at one of the beasts. 1d3 **mammoths** join him in battle, savaging enemies of his choice.

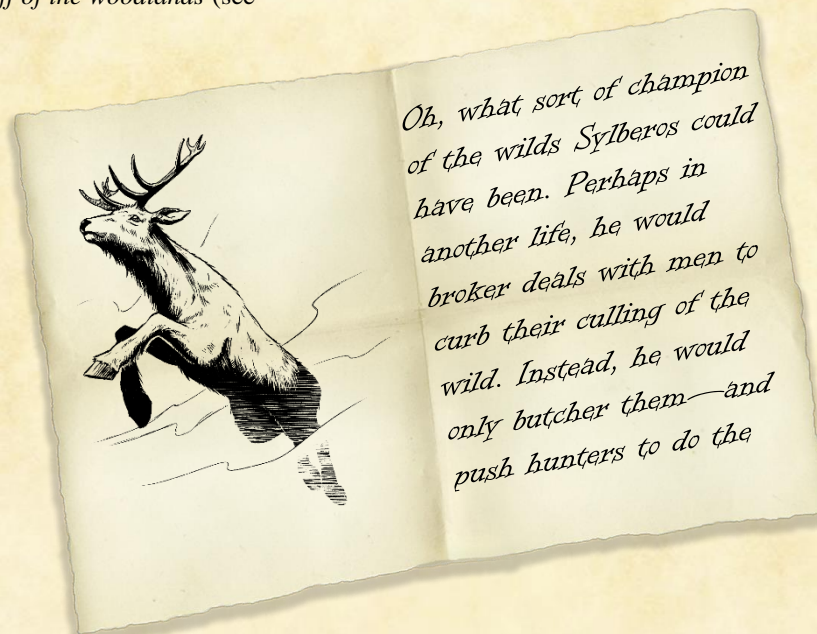
From Above. An eagle's scream is the party's only warning as Sylberos dives down from the skies in the form of a **giant eagle**. He is joined by two more **giant eagles** conjured by his *conjure animals* spell. If he is rebuffed, he soars back up to the sky and, like a petulant child, casts *fire storm*.

In Plain Sight. Sylberos stalks the wilderness on foot, hiding in plain sight. Through this gambit, he employs these tactics:

- Sylberos cloaks himself in a *pass without trace* spell to study his prey up close. If in a forest, he traverses the woods with a *tree stride* spell.
- Sylberos opens up first with a *fire storm* spell to rain hell on his prey; he of course chooses to spare plant life from the fire.
- Sylberos cuts off his prey's retreat with a *wall of thorns* spell, cast via his *staff of the woodlands*.

The Ivory Elk. Throughout history, the glimpse of a giant, white elk in the woods has heralded the birth of kings and other omens. To kill such a majestic creature, the legends say, is to provoke great upheaval. Invoking this omen, Sylberos assumes the form of a white **giant elk**—and he takes great pleasure in delivering destruction on whatever hunter is foolish enough to attack such a "mythic" creature.

Whalers Beware. When Sylberos is in the mood to swim, he visits the frigid seas to ravage whalers. He assumes the form of a blue whale (use **giant shark** statistics) and prepares the *tidal wave* spell to pull sailors to their frigid demise.



Oh, what sort of champion of the wilds Sylberos could have been. Perhaps in another life, he would broker deals with men to curb their culling of the wild. Instead, he would only butcher them—and push hunters to do the

PRESERVED FOREVERMORE

Polar or Sea Encounter, Tier I-IV

A creature lies perfectly preserved in ice, be it a beast, a person or a monster. If the adventurers are at sea, the creature is trapped within an iceberg; if they are not, it's frozen within a glacier. Select your desired tier and roll a d20 to determine the creature.

This encounter is repeatable. At your discretion, the frozen creature is still alive (which isn't far-fetched if it's a supernatural being) and might burst from the ice. If the creature is instead feeble, imprisoned, or dead, then it serves an oddity found while traveling through the Arctic, in which case you can roll upon higher tier tables.

Telepathy. Many creatures featured in the tables below have telepathy, making them social opportunities with beings that would otherwise annihilate the adventurers.

PRESERVED FOREVERMORE: TIER I

d20	Creature
1	An allosaurus
2-3	An anklyosaurus
4	1d3 brontosaurus es and 1d4 calves
5-6	A deinonychus
6-7	1d6+4 hadrosaurus es and 2d4+2 calves
8-10	A CN Neanderthal berserker with a spear with a nearby saber-toothed tiger . It is unclear whether the barbarian was fighting the beast or if the two had formed a bond.
11-12	A mammoth with six sets of tusks
13	A beholder zombie
14	A winged dragonborn berserker , suggesting that modern dragonborn lost their wings over the eons.
15	2d4+3 primitive, Medium-sized kobolds , which suggesting that modern kobolds evolved to be <i>smaller</i> than they are now.
16-17	2d4+1 skeletons and 1d6+2 zombies
18	1d4+2 urochs and 1d3 calves
19	A giant mosquito (a giant wasp)
20	An adventurer with an uncommon magic item

PRESERVED FOREVERMORE: TIER II

d20	Creature
1-3	A tyrannosaurus rex
4-6	A triceratops
7-8	1d3 umber hulks
9-11	A human assassin sent to slay Withrens Fyar, the archmage featured in the <i>Dire Winter</i> storyline. He failed to get the jump on the wizard.
12-13	1d4+1 girallons
14	A giant ape and 1d4+1 apes
15-16	A CN elven conjurer that made a fatal mistake as to where she was teleporting.
17	1d4+1 stegosaurus es with 1d4 calves
18	A chasme ; if alive, it can use its Drone feature from within the ice.
19-20	An adventure with a rare magic item



PRESERVED FOREVERMORE: TIER III

d20	Creature
1	A beholder
2-4	A roc
5-6	A behir
7	An alhoon
8-9	A narzugon that disappointed Levistus, the arch-devil. For his failures, he is condemned to the ice for ten centuries. His nightmare is alongside him, its ghostly flames still flickering in the ice. When a creature enters within 5 feet of the narzugon, it makes attempts a DC 25 Charisma saving throw. On a success, the ice is shattered; the hell knight celebrates his freedom by sending the souls of his liberators to the Nine Hells.
10	A brass lamp containing a bound efreeti
11-15	An adult white dragon and a clutch of eggs
16	A mage and its shield guardian
17	An orthon bounty hunter whose quarry got the better of it
18-19	A death slaad whose control gem is just out of reach. If a creature touches the gem, the slaad attempts a DC 20 Charisma saving throw to free itself from the ice.
20	An adventurer with a very rare magic item

PRESERVED FOREVERMORE: TIER IV

d20	Creature
1	A tarrasque
2-8	A dormant ancient white dragon
9-11	A LE solar imprisoned on the Material Plane by its patron deity
12-15	A pit fiend veteran of an ancient infernal invasion of this world.
16	A kraken
17	A dragon turtle
18	A steel predator that makes a DC 25 Strength saving throw once a week, freeing itself from the ice on a success. Thereafter, it continues to hunt down its quarry.
19	A mummy lord and 1d6+2 mummies
20	An adventure with a legendary magic item

RUDOLPH THE RED-BLOODED

Polar, Taiga, or Tundra Encounter, Tier I

The party encounters two awakened reindeer, one wounded and desperate, the other hellbent on murdering him. This frenzied reindeer is none other than Rudolph the Red-Blooded; his name invokes terror amongst awakened reindeer all over the Arctic. Abused all his life for his glowing tumor of a nose, Rudolph recently struck an accord with Lone Miyareth, a predatory bheur hag. Now armed with greater strength and magic, Rudolph intends to revenge himself on his abusers. His body count is already in the double digits, and still there are more childhood bullies and negligent elders to visit.

It quickly becomes apparent that Rudolph is a magical beast. If his glowing, hideous nose doesn't give it away, his armor and spells do. If they interfere in his revenge, Rudolph adds the adventurers to his list of foes. Otherwise, he is content to leave witnesses to this murder.

Location. If this encounter occurs in a taiga, Rudolph's victim bursts out of the brush or bounds over a ridge with his aggressor in hot pursuit. If it occurs in the tundra or polar region, Rudolph has already caught up, and the two have locked antlers.

Statistics. Rudolph's victim has the statistics of an **elk** with an Intelligence score of 10 and the ability to speak Sylvan. He, like Rudolph, was granted sapience by the *awaken* spell, cast by Greatfather Winter, a feylord described in the *Greatfather Winter's Fiefdom* encounter.

Rudolph has the statistics of a **giant elk** with the following changes:

- He is Large, not Huge and is a CR 4 (1,100 XP) creature.
- His nose sheds bright light out to a range of 30 feet and dim light for an additional 20 feet.
- He has an Intelligence score of 10 and can speak Sylvan.
- He wears splint armor barding, which raises his AC to 17.
- He can see in both magical and nonmagical darkness, out to a distance of 120 feet.
- He has the following traits:

Spellcasting. Rudolph is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Charisma is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 10, +2 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *blade ward*

1st-2nd level (1 2nd-level slot): *armor of Agathys*, *darkness*, *expeditious retreat*, *hellish rebuke*

Fey Presence (1/Rest). As an action, Rudolph projects terror into all creatures within a 10-foot-cube centered on him. Each creature must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail are frightened of him until the end of his next turn.

Servant of the Hag. Although Rudolph owes his awakened mind to Greatfather Winter, he has been patronized by the bheur hag, Lone Miyareth. Between his revenge killings, he does her bidding. See *Traveler's Respite* for details on the hag.



IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

If your adventurers become entangled with Lone Miyareth, they are sure to incur the wrath of Rudolph. If you run the *Dark Sisterhood* storyline, he becomes a thorn in their side.

At Higher Levels. As Lone Miyareth grows in power, so too can Rudolph. As the *Dark Sisterhood* storyline progresses, the reindeer gains the following traits from the **warlock of the archfey** statblock:

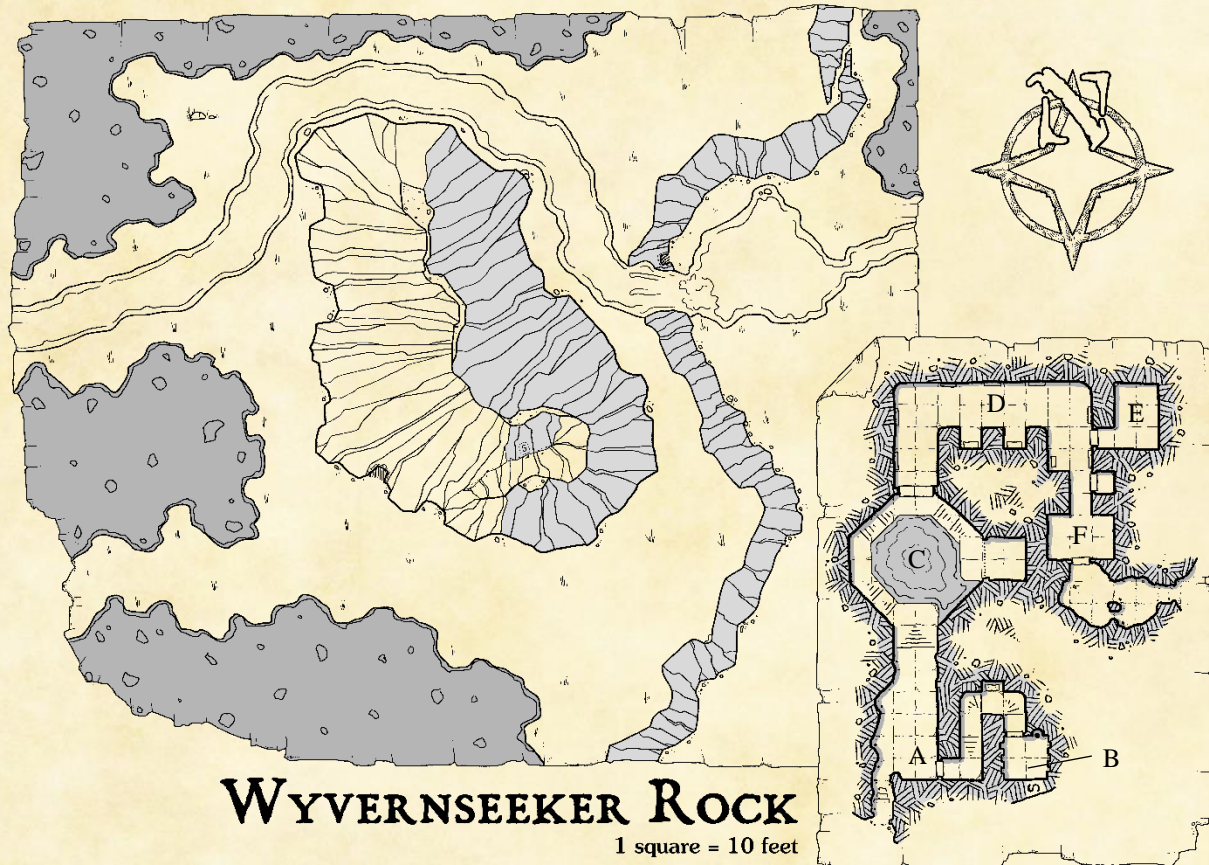
- His Charisma score increases to 18 (+4).
- He gains the warlock's immunity to the charmed condition, plus its saving throw proficiencies.
- He gains its Innate Spellcasting and Spellcasting traits.
- He gains the warlock's Misty Escape reaction.

SACRIFICE FOR THE STORM

Mountain Encounter, Tier III

To summon the **elder tempest** they so desperately crave, the Cult of the Black Earth and the Cult of the Howling Hatred must sacrifice a creature that embodies the most violent aspects of elemental air—a **storm giant quintessent**... and they know just where to find one.

A perpetual storm has raged around Wyvernseeker Rock for eight years now, becoming an icon of the region and subject of discussion. If one were to believe the wizard Homer Erendalias, the storm is centered on the lair of a transcended storm giant. "Best to just leave Wyvernseeker Rock to her," he has advised patrons at the Crystalline Tavern and hikers out in the wild. "She has not left the peak since she came; there is no reason to trouble that which will not trouble you." This advice can be recalled by a character that has caroused with patrons across Arctic taverns with a successful DC 13 History check. With a DC 18 Arcana check, a character recalls the lore surrounding a "transcendent" storm giant, known by magi as a quintessent. To escape death, these titans become semiconscious storms.



WYVERNSEEKER ROCK

1 square = 10 feet

Wyvernseeker Rock. This lonely mountain has been the lair of many cults or criminal organizations over the centuries, and, true to its name, was the nest of wyverns that have since found a better place to roost ever since the giant's arrival. A dungeon, frequented by these former tenants, is carved beneath the mountain, accessible by a cave on its southwest side.

The Ceaseless Storm. The giantess Udtha has dedicated her life to divining the return of Annam the All-Father, the distant deity of all giantkind. As she neared the end of her natural life, Udtha interpreted an omen claiming that, without her, Annam may never return. Whether her interpretation was true or just a delusion of grandeur, Udtha committed herself into becoming a storm giant quintessent. Now haunting Wyvernseeker Rock, she has no goals other than divining the omens and passing her wisdom onto other storm giants, who visit the mountain from time to time.

As described in her statistics, Udtha's presence causes the following regional effects:

- High wind blows within 1 mile of the mountain, making it impossible to light a fire unless the location where it is lit is protected from the wind.
- Snow constantly falls around Wyvernseeker Rock, forming deep snowdrifts and disadvantaging Perception checks that rely on sight.
- Flashes of lightning and peals of thunder crack throughout the day and night.

Elemental Evil. A week ago, the ceaseless storm dispersed—and the region has gone wild with rumors and speculation. All over this corner of the Arctic, madmen and sages share their ludicrous theories as to why the storm abated. Some have suggested that the giant has moved onto more desolate pastures or simply passed away; others think something foul is afoot, but no one is brave enough to investigate Wyvernseeker Rock.

Cultists of Elemental Evil invaded the mountain and bound Udtha with an *imprisonment* spell and, through further magic, contained her elemental power. Just for good measure, she was also struck with a *feblemind* spell. Now the cultists work tirelessly towards a ritual that will see Udtha sacrificed to the archomental Yan-C-Bin, their evil patron.

Map. See *Wyvernseeker Rock* above. Its dungeon has the following features:

- An *alarm* spell has been cast in the cave in Area A and F; cultists of the Black Earth and Howling Hatred don't trigger the spell. No such spell has been laid on the waterfall in Area C...
- Area B is the abode of Torrik, leader of the Black Earth cult. A tunnel lies behind the southern wall, which is fragile and can be broken after dealing 40 points of bludgeoning or force damage to it. The tunnel leads to a cave 1d4+3 miles away. No one is aware of this tunnel, but its existence can be learned from a *legend lore* spell concerning Wyvernseeker Rock.
- Area E is abode of El'ophr, the leader of the Howling Hatred cult. An **air elemental** habitually guards this chamber.
- The alcoves of Area D contain a *stone of controlling earth elementals* and *censer of controlling air elementals*.
- A 25-foot patch of yellow mold infests the northwest corner of Area F; the cultists understandably avoid this area. See the sidebar for the effects of Yellow Mold.
- Udtha is chained in Area C by an *imprisonment* spell. She has also been stunned by the power of Yan-C-Bin, the Prince of Evil Air whom the Howling Hatred cultists worship. A 9th-level *dispel magic* spell breaks her bonds and restores her mind. If she is freed from these foul spells, she crushes her jailors.

YELLOW MOLD

Hazard

Yellow mold grows in dark places, and one patch covers a 5-foot square. If touched, the mold ejects a cloud of spores that fills a 10-foot cube originating from the mold. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the creature takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a successful save.

Sunlight or any amount of fire damage instantly destroys one patch of yellow mold.

THE CULT OF THE HOWLING HATRED

The Cult of the Howling Hatred revere the most violent aspects of elemental air, seeking to spread destruction through cyclones and storms. Here at Wyvernseeker Rock, they are on edge—for if they pull off the ritual, they will reduce the Arctic to a graveyard and elevate themselves to legends. If they fail... El'opthr has ordered them not to speak of failure, for Yan-C-Bin himself has ordained this quest and will not tolerate doubt.

Leadership. This chapter of the Howling Hatred is led by the **nagpa** El'opthr, an avian outcast that has found in the Howling Hatred the chance to stand tall over all the world. Unlike other Howling Hatred leaders, he has no enmity towards the Black Earth cult, and had no qualms in offering them an opportunity to forever change the world.

El'opthr is a 17th-level spellcaster; in addition to his usual spells, he has *imprisonment* and *mirror image* prepared.

Members. The Howling Hatred are few in number; many fell prey to hypothermia or doubt. Their ranks include six **howling hatred initiates**, 1d6+4 **howling hatred priests**, 1d3+1 **air elementals**, an **air elemental myrmidon** and two **hurricanes**. When these priests aren't busy preparing for the ritual, they patrol the mountain and its outlying territories using *gaseous form* spells.

THE CULT OF THE BLACK EARTH

The Cult of the Black Earth is at home here in Wyvernseeker Rock, for anywhere free from the sky is their domain. They are an austere force fond of brutal assaults, not the deceitful tactics their Howling Hatred colleagues employ. Torrik, their leader, keeps them sharp and vigilant. Their role is to patrol the summit and outlying territories while the Howling Hatred prepares to sacrifice the storm giant.

Leadership. The **duergar despot** Torrik Steelshadow leads this chapter of the Black Earth cult. Torrik is eighteenth-in-line for the throne of Gracklstugh, a duergar city-state. He has little hope of ascending to the throne and must forge a kingdom of his own—a kingdom of Elemental Evil lorded over by cultists.

Should Torrik be alerted of interlopers, he heads out to meet them head-on. Therefore, he may be slain prematurely.

Members. The Cult of the Black Earth is stretched across the Arctic, bunkered below the earth. After the tempest ravages the surface, these cultists will spring up to rule over the bones of civilization. Only Torrik's most trusted servants have gathered at Wyvernseeker Rock, just to ensure the Howling Hatred does not betray their word. The cultists consist of 1d6+5 **black earth guards** and 1d4+3 **black earth priests**. They are also served by 1d3 **earth elementals**. Torrik is always accompanied by a priest and a guard.

THE RITUAL OF SACRIFICE

Udtha's death draws near; bound in her true, corporeal form, she has been anointed in the oils and painted with ink that depicts just where the cultists must cut her to exsanguinate her. The ritual occurs in Area C, where Udtha is chained. Their forces consist of El'opthr, Torrik (if he wasn't drawn elsewhere and slain), three **howling hatred priests**, two **hurricanes**, and an **air elemental myrmidon**.

The cultists plunge anointed daggers into Udtha at the start of the ritual. Roll initiative for the giant; she loses 40 hit points at the start of each of her turns. Udtha can be healed through spells but only a *regenerate* spell can stop her from losing these hit points and close her wounds.

When Udtha's reduced to 0 hit points, the ritual is complete. She releases one last titanic breath that cracks with thunder so fierce that all creatures within 100 feet of her must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) thunder damage and be deafened for the next 5d10+10 minutes. A creature takes half as much on a success and is not deafened. Creatures that are already deaf automatically succeed and take no damage.

If El'opthr is alive and within 90 feet of Udtha when she dies, he can use his reaction to shape her dying breath into an **elder tempest**, which flies out through the waterfall. Proceed to the *Storm of the Century* encounter.

Throughout the battle, other cultists may storm the chamber. Draw upon the remaining forces present at Wyvernseeker Rock. No more than 1d4 characters can arrive in a single turn.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Ceaseless Storm's sudden abatement is meant to alert the adventurers to the cultists' plot. Rather than directly issuing a quest from a nonplayer character, have it mentioned by several characters in the days since the cultists invaded. If they fail to investigate Wyvernseeker Rock themselves, so be it. They will have the chance to redeem themselves through the *Storm of the Century* encounter.

THE SCORCH BATHS

Volcanic Encounter, Tier II

An enterprising firenewt clan has managed to turn hot springs and geysers into a resort frequented by the Arctic's wealthy—or rather, they did before a **frost salamander** invaded the hot springs. The monster has stolen their home, and, in turn, their livelihood, to soak in the Scorch Baths.

The firenewts are flimsy worshippers of Imix, the Elemental Prince of Evil Fire, who delivered them to the Arctic from their original home in the tropics. Their faith has waned since they became wealthy; pursuing status and treasure is more fun than kneeling atop hot coals, after all. Those still faithful to Imix have declared this frost salamander divine justice—that Imix himself invited a creature from the Plane of Ice to wreak havoc on his apostates.

A frost salamander is a fearsome creature; six warriors have already been torn to shreds by the beast. The clan has no choice but to turn to outsiders to expel the invader. They offer 100 gp or ten "full packages" (see below), which can be redeemed within the next year, for whomever slays the beast.

Populace. The clan consists of twelve **firenewt warriors** and twenty-two firenewt commoners (**firenewt warriors** without any weapons, the Spit Fire ability, and 5 hit points each). They also have ten **giant striders**, which they use as beasts of burden.

Imix's Brood. A **firenewt warlock of Imix** has splintered off from the clan with another six **firenewt warriors** and seven **giant striders**. While the warlock has not severed ties with his kin, he publicly condemns their avarice and treachery "towards the One who delivered us!" He and his ilk normally protest outside the hot springs each day, denouncing their brethren.

The clan has appealed to the warlock, Tethky, to use his great powers to battle the frost salamander, but he has refused, citing this as "divine reckoning." Only a DC 22 Persuasion check can convince him otherwise or assuage his critical judgment.

As the days stretch into weeks, Tethky's followers increase until he has full control of the clan. He reinstates worship of Imix and dedicates the Scorch Baths to funding their master's dark agenda on the Material Plane—specifically the endeavors of the Cult of the Eternal Flame, who are conspiring to melt the polar icecaps in the *Global Warming* storyline. The clan will also shelter these cultists and their allies.

The Scorch Baths. Renowned around the Arctic, a day at the Scorched Baths costs 25 gp per person. For an additional 25 gp, a customer also gets the "full package:" a scrub, massage, manicure, and pedicure. Resting at the resort grants a character Inspiration, which must be used within the next seven days. Additionally, for every half hour a character rests in the hot springs, they regain a spent hit die.

SEA ELF VIKINGS

Sea Encounter, Tier II-III

A horn sounds off in the distance and the wind carries Elvish jeers. The infamous sea elf vikings that call these frigid lands their home have come for what they're owed: everything. These fearsome raiders pillage coastlines without mercy, and honor combat above all else.

Ship. The elves sail a drakkar—a longship. See *DMG* pg. 119 for the ship's statistics.

Crew. The longship is oared by forty sea elf **commoners**. Its combatants consist of:

- Shieldmaiden Sigrunn Hlodvir, a CN **gladiator**. She carries a *silver horn of Valhalla* (see the sidebar) and captains the ship.
- Ærin Trudsson, an CN **enchanter** with *counterspell* prepared instead of *stoneskin*.
- Hallbjorn Ornlolfsson, a CN **bard** working on his epic.
- Orn Iorundsson, a **priest** of Deep Sashelas (CG), Umberlee (NE) or Valkur (LE), if not a deity from the Norse pantheon.
- Svinulf Bretakollrsson, a **swashbuckler** with a Strength score of 18 and Dexterity score of 12 armed with handaxes (+6 to hit, 1d6+4 slashing damage, 20/60 ft.) and an AC of 14. He can make up to three handaxe attacks per turn.
- 1d6+2 **veterans**, 2d6+4 **bandits** and two **archers**
- 2d4+2 **berserkers** (summoned only by the *horn of Valhalla*)

SEA ELF VIKINGS: REPRINT

This encounter first appeared in *Daerdan's Tall Tales: 101 Seafaring Encounters*. Its themes—vikings, sea leviathans—were deemed too iconic to not include in this supplement. If you have already ran this encounter in your campaign, consider changing the names of the warriors involved, use it as a callback, or showcase the aftermath of the vikings' last encounter with the party.

SILVER HORN OF VALHALLA

Wondrous Item, Rare

You can use an action to blow this horn. In response, warrior spirits from the plane of Ysgard appear within 60 feet of you. These spirits use the **berserker** statistics. They return to Ysgard after 1 hour or when they drop to 0 hit points. Once you use the horn, it can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

The silver horn summons 2d4+2 **berserkers**. The berserkers are friendly to you and your companions and follow your commands.

Statistics. All sea elves have the following racial traits:

- They have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic cannot put them to sleep.
- They have darkvision out to a range of 60 ft.
- They speak, read, and write Aquan.
- They have a swimming speed of 30 ft. and can breathe both air and water.

Living Figurehead. The drakkar's figurehead is carved as a horned dragon. On her turn, the captain can animate the figurehead as an action so long as she's aboard the ship. On that turn, the dragon exhales a 60-foot-cone of fire. All creatures in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 24 (7d6) fire damage, or half as much on a success. This fire ignites flammable objects not being worn or carried. Once the figurehead has exhaled its fiery breath, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Cargo. Fresh from pillaging, the elves have amassed 4d100 +1,200 gp, 2,600 sp, and 5,400 cp as well as 6d8+4 **goats**, 2d12+28 casks of mead (worth 25 gp a cask) and 1d8+4 crates of rare textiles (worth 50 gp a crate). 1d4 +1 *potions of healing*, a *cloak of the manta ray*, and a *spell scroll of sending* can also be found.

When it comes time to deliver their spoils back to their homestead, the vikings simply pitch them overboard while above their underwater settlement.

LEVIATHAN HUNTING

Tier III

Under this variant, the adventurers aren't the target of the sea elves—a sea serpent of old is. The crew has been tracking this leviathan for weeks and have finally engaged the beast. The party's ship happens across this feverish battle and might be compelled to join the fray. They'll have little choice if the serpent attacks their ship as well.

Statistics. The sea serpent has the statistics of a **purple worm** with the following changes:

- It has a swimming speed of 50 ft. and lacks a burrowing speed.
- It lacks its Tunneler feature.
- It can breathe air and water.

Aftermath. If the leviathan is slain, Sigrunn Hlodvir shows her gratitude by sparing the party's vessel. The skald, Hallbjorn Ornlolfsson, promises to immortalize the adventurers in his recount of this battle. Sure enough, 1d4 years later, *Hallbjorn's Epic* hits the press, but two adventurers have been forgotten and the others' names are misspelled—and their exploits are stolen by Hallbjorn, who paints them as lambs cornered by a wolf.

SHRINE OF VAPRAK

Mountain or Tundra Encounter, Tier I-II

Tucked away into an ice cave is a grisly shrine devoted to the most reviled god of the giant pantheon and patron deity of trolls and ogres: Vaprak the Destroyer. This effigy is composed of the mutilated remains of both beasts and men. The cave itself has been carved with Giant runes. The shrine is tended to by an ogre shaman whose devotion to the Destroyer is rewarded with elk and elf meat by visiting trolls.

Runes. Most giants eschew literacy, especially frost giants. They prefer simple pictographs that tell an easily gleaned story. The runes carved into the ice cave's interior are no exception. They depict Annam the All-Father, the patron deity of giants, presiding over a council of other giant gods—but below them is a dark maw rimmed in fangs ready to swallow them whole. This creature is Vaprak the Destroyer.

Another pictograph depicts the Ritual of the Everlasting One. When a frost giant, whose social position is determined by sheer strength alone, knows it cannot compete against its betters, it may seek the patronage of Vaprak. The Destroyer sends a troll, guided by a vision quest, to that giant to be devoured. The giant inherits the strength, rage, and regenerative abilities of a troll. Alas, such deceit is punishable by exile or death in frost giant society, should it ever be discovered. The pictographs depict a troll pilgrim trekking across the Arctic and marching straight into the belly of an emaciated frost giant. In the next image, the giant has swollen to immense proportions and challenged the jarl, the frost giant leader, to a duel.

A creature that views these pictographs can understand the story well enough. With a successful DC 15 Arcana check, the character relates it to Vaprak and the giant pantheon. They also recall that, should the giant fail to honor Vaprak after this ritual, it is likely to suffer grotesque mutations, such as an extra head, warts, or tumors.

Shaman. Drareg, an ogre, tends the shrine. He is a calm but devious cannibal that embodies all of Vaprak's horrid ideals. He has the statistics of an **ogre** but with the following changes:

- He has a Wisdom score of 15 (+2).
- He is a CR 4 (1,100 XP) creature.
- He wears a holy symbol of Vaprak: the rotting remains of a snow elf's skull anointed in blood; thin bones poke out of its empty eye sockets.
- He has the Spellcasting trait, detailed below:

Spellcasting. Drareg is a 5th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, sacred flame*
1st level (4 slots): *bane, bless, ceremony*^{XGE}, *cure wounds, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *augury*

3rd level (2 slots): *create food and water*

Treasure. The ogre has amassed little wealth in his years, as he gives away any non-essentials to traveling ogres and trolls. By when the adventurers arrive, he has twenty-three pounds of food and twelve gallons of water leftover from his last *create food and water* spell.

VAPRAK'S PILGRIM

Tier II

Deep within the Arctic, a frost giant of the infamous stronghold, Skoldheim, has prayed to the Destroyer for strength. This giant, Rowthor, hungers to rule Skoldheim, but lacks the fortitude to take Jarl Grisbos on in single combat. Vaprak has answered this giant's prayers and is sending a troll for Rowthor to devour. The **troll** may cross paths with the adventurers (elevating *Shrine of Vaprak* to a Tier II encounter) before, after, or while it visits this shrine.

To the Shrine. Knowing that it is about to embark on a sacred mission, the troll avoids conflict on its way to Vaprak's shrine. If it discovers the adventurers, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, otherwise the troll's temper and hunger get the better of it. If the adventurers instead surprise the troll, it fights until an opportunity to escape presents itself, which it does in the form of a frigid stream or frozen lake. It might even hurl itself off a cliff, instinctively trusting in Vaprak to deliver it from harm or relying on its regenerative traits to survive. The troll can be tracked to Vaprak's shrine with a successful DC 13 Survival check made over the course of an hour.

At the Shrine. If the troll is present when the adventurers find the shrine, it is being anointed by Drareg. Believing this to be the first of Vaprak's many trials, the two immediately attack the adventurers.

To Skoldheim. If the troll is encountered after it has begun its fatal pilgrimage to Skoldheim, it is under the Dedication effect of Drareg's *ceremony* spell. For the next 2d12 hours, whenever the troll makes a saving throw, it can roll a d4 and add the result to the save. See *XGE* pg. 151 for further details on the spell.

Should the troll make it to Skoldheim, it presents itself to Rowthor, who devours it, leading to the *Forer-Slag* encounter. See the *The Ordning of Might* sample storyline for details.



SICK RANGER

Tundra Encounter, Tier I

The adventurers sight a saddled **mammoth** roaming the tundra. A rope ladder trails down to the mammoth's side. To spot the mammoth's rider from this distance requires a DC 16 Perception check or a spyglass. On a success, the character spots a halfling strewn across the mammoth's massive saddle. This halfling, the mammoth's beloved master, is dying. Without intervention, the sickness ravaging the halfling will triumph.

The mammoth is acclimated to people. She steers towards the party if they approach, even trumpeting to get their attention. With her trunk, she gestures upwards to her rider.

Ranger. Kaylin Tosscombe ventured to the Arctic two years ago, where she found kinship with an orphaned mammoth calf that she named Bigfoot. The ranger communicates with her companion with frequent *Speak with Animals* spells.

A week ago, Kaylin was bitten by a diseased bat in her sleep. Despite her remarkable luck and fortitude as a Stout halfling, she has come down with a vicious but untransmissible disease. She is currently afflicted with four levels of exhaustion. The fifth level is due to occur in 1d4 hours; in 2d12 hours, the sickness will kill her.

Kaylin's malady can be diagnosed with a DC 14 Intelligence (Medicine) check. The illness is called Wicked Crumbling and it is pervasive in warmer regions of the tundra where insects and disease have not yet frozen. The remedy requires the boiling of a particular type of lichen that can be collected from the tundra with an herbalism kit. Finding the lichen requires 1d4 hours and a successful DC 12 Nature check; a character that fails wastes that time and must repeat the check. The disease can also be cured with a *lesser restoration* spell.

The Ranger Saved. If the ranger is saved, she is eternally grateful. She offers to stick around with the adventurers unless they prove to be evil. Shortly later, she becomes a 5th-level spellcaster and chooses to learn the *lesser restoration* spell so that she and her friends won't have to suffer such a wretched illness ever again.

The Ranger Dead. If Kaylin dies, Bigfoot is inconsolable. In her grief, she makes a single attack against a creature that dares approach her, but then backs off. Later, a character can placate the mammoth with a DC 14 Animal Handling check. They can effectively adopt the mammoth with a DC 18 Animal Handling check, attaining Bigfoot as a companion. However, she will not allow others to ride her until 2d6+3 days have passed.

Statistics. Kaylin is a NG halfling **scout** with the following changes:

- She has a Wisdom score of 15 (+2).
- She reads, writes, and speaks Common and Halfling.
- She is a size of Small with a speed of 25 feet.
- She has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- When Kaylin rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, she can reroll the die, but she must use the new roll.
- She has resistance to poison damage and advantage on saving throws against poison.
- She has the Spellcasting trait, detailed below:

Spellcasting. Kaylin is a 4th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She knows the following ranger spells:

1st level (3 slots): *hail of thorns*, *hunter's mark*, *Speak with Animals*

SKOLDHEIM

Mountain Encounter, Tier III

From their bastion of Skoldheim, the frost giants ravage the Arctic. Its location is no secret, but no matter how wide a berth travelers give it, the giants still manage to collect their due. These raiders are not interested in tribute, only glory—for only strength matters to the *isejotun*.

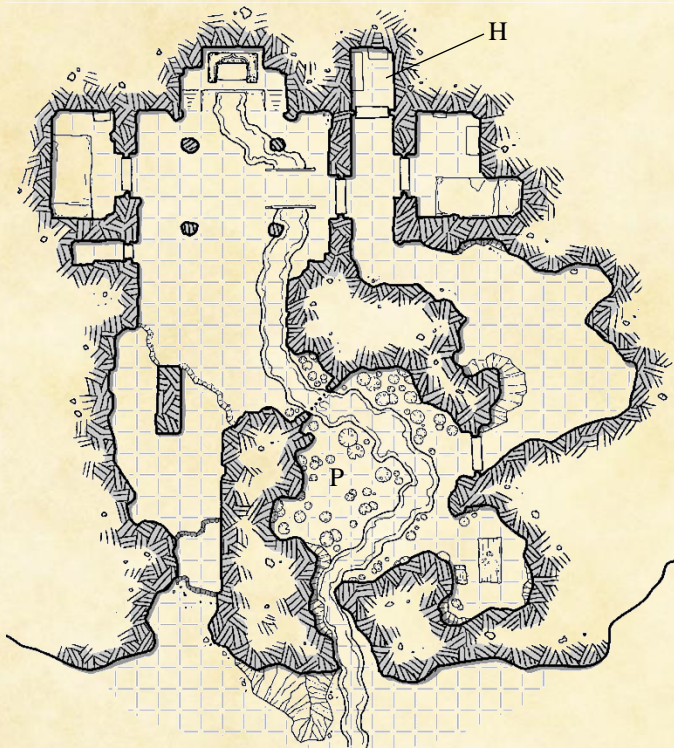
Skoldheim was not founded by the *isejotun*, who are absent of masons and even the desire to build. True to their rapacious nature, the *isejotun* stole Skoldheim from the peaceful stone giants that dwelled within the mountain. That these two clans were distant kin mattered little to the frost giants, who know only how to take. To the *isejotun* of Skoldheim, the massacre is a distant memory celebrated once every ten years—and as it just so happens, the festival, a revelry in the shape of a massive raid, is only a few days away.

Anatomy of Skoldheim. Skoldheim is little more than an encampment butting up against the mountainside, ringed with boulders and absent of structures. To understand Skoldheim, one must first understand the life of a frost giant. Consider the following:

- Frost giants are immune to the cold, so they are unbothered by even the worst of the Arctic's weather. They have no need for shelter, but their slaves and livestock do.
- The giants can't tolerate anything warmer than the blood of a freshly slain elk. They would abstain from fire if they didn't need it for light; therefore, they only light bonfires sparingly and give them a wide berth—a fact invaders can use to hide from or inhibit the giants.
- Skoldheim's defenses are nothing more than stacked boulders packed with snow and ice. These "walls" are 15-foot-high, as the frost giants, who average 21 feet in height, prefer to look out over the walls. Creatures can climb over the walls with DC 12 Athletics checks; with a climber's kit or a grappling hook, a Medium-sized character can easily scale the walls.
- The only crafting frost giants partake in are leatherworking and bone carving; they have no beds or homes, as they don't need to shelter from the elements. Most giants simply lay down on the ground to sleep. Mightier giants may have their own ice caves, which they use to store belongings and the trophies of past battles. Skoldheim features vast expanses for the giants to sleep and rest in.
- The giants use the caves to house their slaves and beasts, who lack their immunity to harsh weather. Most of their treasures, such as ale, steel, and gems, are also placed here. The giants only shelter here from airborne enemies they cannot meet in battle, such as rocs and dragons.

Population. Skoldheim is inhabited by twenty-three **frost giants**, thirty-one frost giant juveniles (**ogres** with immunity to cold damage) and fourteen frost giant toddlers (Medium-sized **half-ogres** with immunity to cold damage that are not trained to wield weapons). Jarl Grisbos rules Skoldheim, unless he has been deposed by Rowthor (see *The Ordning of Might* below).

Beasts. The frost giants maintain a stable of 2d6+3 **winter wolves** (which hunt outside Skoldheim). They also have 1d4+2 **young remorhazes**. Unlike the wolves, the remorhazes are not permitted to leave Skoldheim without a beastmaster, lest they slip away into the ice forevermore. Additionally, a **manticore** known as Lasmus scouts for the giants in return for food.



Map. See the map above; every square is equal to 5 feet. This cavern houses the frost giants' slaves and cattle, who would otherwise perish in the cold outside.

ON THE OUTSKIRTS

As the adventurers near Skoldheim, any of the events below may occur:

- The adventurers are attacked by 1d4+2 **winter wolves** who flee if reduced to 25 hit points. The survivors later betray these trespassers' presence to their giant masters.
- Three **frost giants** are practicing their boulder-hurling near the perimeter; one of these rocks sail towards the adventurers (+9 to hit, range 60/240 ft., 28 (4d10+6) bludgeoning dmg.).
- An attentive sentry that detects the adventurers hurls a boulder (see above) and sounds a horn to alert Skoldheim of potential intruders.
- A **frost giant** accompanied by two frost giant juveniles (see *Population* above) embarks on a patrol. If the adventurers are discovered, the giants attempt to enslave them. The juveniles are eager to prove themselves in battle and attack with wild abandon.
- As a blizzard roils across the region, Skoldheim launches 1d3 raids. Alternatively, a raid is returning home. If Rowthor is the jarl, 1d4+2 raids are launched. See *Frost Giant Raiders*.

THE CAVES OF SKOLDHEIM

Skoldheim was carved by stone giants whose bones have long been trampled into the dust. These masons took an ordinary cave and turned it into a home, full of delicate art and beautiful mosaics. In the three hundred years since their death, the frost giants have managed to scar, mar, or destroy every piece of art the giants left behind.

Slaves. The frost giants house their stable of slaves here, who number twenty-two. Sickness regularly takes slaves to an early grave; before they even have the chance to grieve, the giants return with another captive. Corpses are thrown to the beasts. Many of Skoldheim's captives believe that the giants *prefer* the high mortality rate so that they can keep the beasts fed.

The slaves are led by Hrondyr, a **duergar** plucked eight years ago while he and his kin were enjoying the annual polar night. Recognizing that he could improve his own conditions by working with his cruel overlords, Hrondyr challenged the strongest captives to *forer-slags* of his own. The giants, reverent only of strength, rewarded his might with a warmer bed and better food. Now Hrondyr is consulted on the worth of any and all treasures or materials brought into Skoldheim. The duergar speaks fluent Giant and is on a first-name basis with the giants.

The other captives mainly consist of glacier dwarves, snow elves, and humans, all of them **commoners**. Most have been broken by despair and abuse; the adventurers' arrival is viewed only as another opportunity for false hope.

The slaves are put to work tending livestock (cows, pigs, and sheep stolen from settlements) and brewing beer. Unbeknownst to all of Skoldheim, one slave, a human named Kaulder, sweeps the cave with a *broom of flying* (DMG pg. 156).

Treasure. The giants have little in the means of conventional wealth. They prize steel, alcohol, and large gems, and scorn currency they can hardly pick up. They prefer *rod* ("red," which refers to livestock and slaves). Their meager hoard is marked with an "H" on the map and contains:

- Six fist-sized rubies worth 500 gp apiece, as well as a diamond worth 300 gp.
- An *elemental gem (emerald)* (see DMG pg. 167)
- Twelve pigs, four cows, and nine sheep, which are kept in the area marked "P" on the map.
- A *brazier of commanding fire elementals* (DMG pg. 156)

THE ORDNING OF MIGHT

If the *Forer-Slag!* encounter has occurred in your campaign, on screen or off, Rowthor, a **frost giant everlasting one**, has taken control of Skoldheim. His draconian regime has seen countless detractors exiled and vicious raids launched.

Characters that succeed on a DC 15 Arcana check can recall that the giants respect only might, and to ignore a challenge is to bring great dishonor upon oneself. Should Jarl Rowthor be challenged publicly, he will have no choice but to answer; his clan already disdains him and he cannot risk falling out of favor. If he refuses to battle such lowly creatures, *another* giant will surely challenge him to a *forer-slag*.

Duels are highly ritualized in *isejotum* society. Spectators are forbidden to intervene, and duels must have an equal number of combatants on each side. No giant, however, is willing to fight beside Rowthor. With a successful DC 17 Persuasion check, the adventurers can convince the giants to allow them to outnumber the jarl. After all, such a giant—and a *jarl* no less—would not need help against such frail and tiny creatures, right?

Once Rowthor has been reduced to 94 hit points or less, his Regeneration trait begins to visibly heal his wounds. His blood coagulates and dries, his gait improves, and blows against him strike shallower than before. If he is reduced to 0 hit points and still regenerates, he grows a second head. There can be no hiding his pact with Vaprak the Destroyer now; if even a single giant is around to witness this, they condemn Rowthor to death. The call is taken up by the clan and Rowthor is publicly stoned as he attempts to flee.

Aftermath. The frost giants wouldn't normally not allow such strong and useful slaves to walk free from Skoldheim, but they are grateful that Rowthor's treachery was exposed. An elderly, respected giant named Grondyval approaches the adventurers; in Dwarvish (if none of them speak Giant), the elder says, "That Rowthor's sins were brought to light will be celebrated for years to come. We are grateful, small ones, but you must leave now. A moot must be called, and a new jarl must be crowned. Leave us to our ways, lest others wonder why you have not been added to the stable."

Rowthor's death marks the end of the *Ordning of Might* storyline. The Arctic can rest easy knowing his vicious raids are a thing of the past—but not too easy, for soon the *isejotun* will return to their rapacious ways.

SNOW BULETTE

Mountain Encounter, Tier II

Bulettes are a terror known only in warmer lands, but Evolution is a cruel mistress. A rare breed of these predators have claimed the Arctic as their territory, with a single one patrolling a range of up to thirty miles. As the adventurers trek across the snowy landscape, this fierce creature is alerted to their presence.

Sensing new prey, the **bulette** bursts from the snow, its jaws snapping at the nearest character.

Trees. Among pines and firs is a mighty oak tree that can be climbed. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Arcana check recalls that bulettes are excellent leapers, but poor climbers. The lowest branches are six feet above the ground, requiring a high jump to reach. To pull oneself up onto the branches requires a DC 12 Athletics check. Afterwards, the character can continue to climb. The oak tree is forty-six feet tall.

If the character takes 10 points of damage in a single round, they must make a DC 13 Acrobatics check to maintain their balance. On a failure, they fall out of the tree.

Per its Standing Leap trait, the bulette can jump up to 15 feet with or without a running start, allowing it to continue ravaging creatures in the lower branches. It does not give up on its prey that easily, but if the adventurers hurl missiles and spells from out of its reach, the beast dives into the ground and flees.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This encounter is better implemented as a twist in the story; add it to whatever encounter the adventurers are already embroiled in. For example, should they be making a getaway from bandits or about to ambush cultists, the bulette emerges to foil those plans. The monster takes no sides and victimizes both the party and their foes indiscriminately.

At first, I wondered what sort of idiot could sail his ship into a continent... but after the wizard cast his divinations, we learned the truth—truth that no scholar or tavern patron has ever believed. They, the small-minded, dismissed the very idea that there could be life on other worlds than this... Surely, in this wondrous world of ours, such a thing is possible!

HIGH JUMPS

When you make a high jump, you leap into the air a number of feet equal to 3 + your Strength modifier (minimum of 0 feet) if you move at least 10 feet on foot immediately before the jump. When you make a standing high jump, you can jump only half that distance. Either way, each foot you clear on the jump costs a foot of movement. In some circumstances, your DM might allow you to make a Strength (Athletics) check to jump higher than you normally can.

You can extend your arms half your height above yourself during the jump. Thus, you can reach above you a distance equal to the height of the jump plus 1½ times your height

SPELLJAMMER DERELICT

Polar Encounter, Tier II

Alone on the otherwise flat and empty ice plains, over a dozen leagues from the nearest coast, is a shipwrecked sailing ship. Its sails are tattered, but its masts are still intact. The ship is slanted at a thirty-degree angle, its bow buried in the ice, as if it fell from the sky—which it did. This ship is a spelljamming vessel, a magical ship that can cruise through the air, space, and even underwater. The spacefarers that crewed this vessel are all dead; the corpses have been preserved by the deadly cold. Most died upon impact when the vessel crashed from outer space.

This spelljamming vessel model was designed to infiltrate worlds not yet involved in spaceflight. It looks like an ordinary sailing ship, except for its beholder figurehead and the strange runes on its hull. The runes are of a language known by no one on this planet, except for perhaps aliens themselves. A spell of *comprehend languages* reveals the ship's name in its unknown, native language: *Drifter*.

Living Figurehead. When creatures approach within 60 feet of *Drifter's* bow, the beholder figurehead's eyestalks animate, shooting a 5th-level *scorching ray* spell at creatures within 120 feet of the figurehead (six rays, +8 to hit, 7 (2d6) fire damage on a hit). The figurehead's eyestalks can twist and turn, allowing them to fire at targets anywhere on the ship except behind the stern. A spell of *dispel magic* renders the figurehead inert for one hour.

Above and Below Deck. The ship's exterior is coated in frost and snow. Fourteen **orog** corpses can be found throughout the ship. In the Forgotten Realms setting, these orogs were born on H'catha, the furthest planet from Toril's sun. H'catha is a wheel-shaped world dominated by beholders. A *legend lore* spell cast on a corpse reveals this. A dead beholder's corpse can be found on the aftercastle; two of its eyestalks have been severed and a harpoon is impaled into its side.

Sole Survivor. *Drifter* was captained by a grim beholder by the name of Renght, who died in the crash. Its second mate, a **gauth** named Oplvaus can be found in the captain's cabin. The aberration has been marooned on this planet for the last eight years and has survived by feeding on *Drifter's* residual magic. Oplvaus is beyond insane; in its twisted mind, it believes that the ship is in port and the crew left with Captain Renght to take care of some discreet business, leaving Oplvaus in command. Should it see the adventurers, it considers them new recruits and barks commands at them in Deep Speech.

Roleplaying Oplvaus. The gauth can only be communicated with in Deep Speech or through magic (such as a *tongues* spell) as the dialect of Undercommon it speaks is not of this world. It expresses frustration and confusion if the adventurers inquire about the ship's otherworldly origins, asking, "Have you never strayed off-world, sailor?"

The gauth orders its new crewmates to scrub the deck free of frost, raise the sails ("It isn't as if we even need them; they're a bloody eyesore now, even," says Oplvaus) and prepare the ship for the captain's return. Any insubordination is punished with deadly force; it wouldn't be the first time Oplvaus disintegrated a troublesome sailor, and it has no qualms with it now.

If a *greater restoration* spell is cast upon it, Oplvaus becomes lucid enough to explain the ship's doom: as *Drifter* entered the world's atmosphere, the orogs launched a mutiny. In the chaos, Renght was forced off the helm and the landing was botched. *Drifter* missed the seas and sailed across the ice; Renght took control of the helm but was killed before it could land *Drifter*. The ship slammed bow-first into the ice, sparing the area from a newly formed crater.

Treasure. Casks of ale, water, and lime juice can be found in the cargo hold, along with, curiously enough, manufactured beehives. A chest in the captain's cabin (warded by an *arcane lock* spell) contains 900 pp in strange, alien currencies as well as a diamond worth 500 gp.

Captain's Log. The captain's log and the ship's manifesto are written in a strange language that can only be read by someone under a *comprehend languages* spell. The log describes the trip from H'catha to the asteroid belt and Selûne, Toril's moon. The ship's manifesto details the ship's primary import: honeybees.

Broken Helm. An ordinary helm stands on the ship's after-castle, but it does nothing to steer the ship (as revealed by a DC 17 Investigation check). The spacefaring vessel's true helm is a magical, high-backed ornate chair within the captain's cabin—a *spelljamming helm* (see the sidebar).

The *spelljamming helm* was cracked in the crash and Oplvaus has drained it of its magic. Its properties are betrayed by an *identify* spell. With 10,000 gp's worth of extremely exotic gems and materials, an experienced artificer or another mage can repair the helm through forty manhours of labor, restoring the vessel's spacefaring capabilities.

SPELLJAMMING HELM

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This ornate chair is designed to propel and maneuver a ship through space.

Passive Properties. The following properties of the helm come into play even when no creature is attuned to it:

- When placed aboard a vessel weighing between 1 and 100 tons, the helm generates an envelope of fresh air around the ship while it is in the void of space (but not underwater). This envelope extends out from the edges of the hull in all directions for a distance equal in length to the vessel's beam, so that creatures aboard and near the ship can breathe normally in space. The temperature within the air envelope is 70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- When placed aboard a vessel weighing between 1 and 100 tons, the helm generates an artificial gravity field while the ship is in the void of space, so that creatures can walk on the ship's decks as they normally would. Creatures and objects that fall overboard bob in a gravity plane that extends out from the main deck for a distance equal in length to the vessel's beam.

Active Properties. The sensation of being attuned to the helm is akin to being immersed in warm water. While attuned to the helm, you gain the following abilities while you sit in it:

- You can use the helm to propel the vessel across or through water and other liquids at a maximum speed in miles per hour equal to your highest-level unexpended spell slot.
- You can use the helm to propel the vessel through air or space at a maximum speed in miles per hour equal to your highest-level unexpended spell slot $\times 10$.
- Provided you have at least one unexpended spell slot, you can steer the vessel, albeit in a somewhat clumsy fashion, in much the same way that oars or a rudder can maneuver a seafaring ship.
- Whenever you like, you can see what's happening on and around the vessel as though you were standing in a location of your choice aboard it.

Drawback. While attuned to the helm, you cannot expend your own spell slots.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

It goes without saying that this may be an encounter *non grata* if your setting does not or should not feature spacefaring. If you still intend to use this encounter, simply convert it from a spacefaring vessel to a flying sailing ship empowered by magic.



SPRING WEIRD

Volcanic Encounter, Tier I

The scent of sulfur and clouds of steam shout the presence of an active hot spring. Its natural warmth makes it an appealing spot for travelers and a crucial locale for a tribe to defend—so why is that no beasts or men rest there?

The hot springs are haunted by a corrupted NE **water weird** that has failed its sacred purpose. Once a guardian tasked with keeping this spring free and open for all passerby, it has since murdered all those who dare enter the springs. If purified, the springs once again become a welcome source of warmth and respite in the Arctic.

Statistics. In addition to its normal statistics, the **water weird** has resistance to cold damage and its Constrict attack also deals 1d6 fire damage.

Befouled Waters. The hot springs and its guardian have been tainted by an otherworldly influence. Choose from the options below:

- The corpse of a barghest, tanarukk, or gnoll fang of Yeenoghu. See *VGM* pg. 123, 186, and *MM* pg. 163 for the respective lore on these demonic creatures.
- A *dark shard amulet* (*XGE* pg. 137) forged in the Nine Hells.
- The bheur hag Lone Miyareth cursed the waters with her foul magic. A *dispel magic* spell cast upon the hot springs rids it off the corruption. See *Traveler's Respite* for more details on this hag.

Cleansing the Pool. The water weird is restored to its original neutral good alignment if any of the following events occur:

- A character casts *purify food and drink* on the springs while they are half-submerged in its waters.
- All 1d8+3 corpses and the source of corruption are removed from the hot springs.

Tactics. The water weird only attacks once a creature enters the hot springs. Because it's invisible while submerged, it has advantage on Stealth checks; it is likely to surprise the party. Once a creature has been grappled by its Constrict attack, the water weird dives into the water.

When reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, the water weird takes the Disengage action to flee into an underwater crevice where the adventurers cannot harm it.

Resting. The spring's reinvigorating warmth and sulfur does wonders for the body and spirit. Characters that spend thirty minutes in the water gain the effects of a short rest and regain one spent hit die.

TREASURE

There is little treasure to be found underwater; most victims had already undressed before being drowned by the water weird. Any belongings they left behind were already scavenged. One corpse wears an emerald ring carved in the shape of a green dragon worth 50 gp.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Reclaiming the spring or purifying its corrupted guardian is an excellent quest for 1st-4th level adventurers. They might hear of this "haunted" or "corrupted" spring from other travelers; or they might be tasked by a local druid or settlement. Enough travelers have seen the water weird's victims or survived its attack to warn others of this dangerous locale.

STORM OF THE CENTURY

Weather Encounter, Tier IV

Cultists of Elemental Evil—those reckless fools—have doomed the Arctic to a sentient and sadistic blizzard that will rage ceaselessly against the bonds of the world: an **elder tempest**. This elemental is a force of chaos on its home plane; on the Material Plane, it may just be a death knell for the region.

This encounter represents the culmination of the *Storm of the Century* storyline. The cultists responsible for summoning this elder elemental have perished to the tempest's cataclysmic entry into the mortal world. Some considered it a great honor, others a sick irony. Only the **nagpa** El'ophr survived, but he has no interest in protecting the storm. With no master of its own, the elder tempest is free to chart its own path of destruction across the world.

The Storm. Per the tempest's Living Storm trait, it is always at the center of a storm 1d6+4 miles in diameter. Characters caught in its storm must contend with these conditions:

- The area is lightly obscured by thick snowfall, disadvantaging Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
- Strong winds impose disadvantage on Perception checks that rely on hearing and on ranged attack rolls. These fearsome winds also make nonmagical flight almost impossible. Flying creatures must land at the end of their turns or fall.

Characters that analyze the storm, out of sight of the tempest, can make a DC 15 Nature check to confirm that it is unnatural.

1. INTO THE SENTIENT STORM

Reaching the tempest's true form is no trivial matter; the party must brave the blizzard's perils. Alas, the tempest's entrance has torn at the borders between this world and the next, allowing elementals to seep in from the Elemental Plane of Ice. While traveling, the adventurers are harangued by the creatures below; the encounters are spaced 2d10+5 minutes apart and grow in severity the closer one gets to the elder tempest. The encounters assume the party travels by land, not air; adjust accordingly.

- 2d4+1 **ice mephits** strafe the adventurers, each unleashing a Frost Breath before fleeing; if they are not slain, they later accost the party during the battle with the tempest.
- 1d3+1 **galeb duhrs** formed of ice drop from the sky like hail; they benefit from their Rolling Charge trait while falling. If the adventurers are flying, the elementals attempt to land on their vehicle, if one exists; if not, they make attacks as they fall past the party.
- 1d3+1 **air elementals** assail the adventurers; on the second round of combat, a bolt of lightning strikes the area. Creatures within a 5-foot-radius sphere must make a DC 15 Dexterity save, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.
- When the party is within a mile to the tempest, they are subjected once to its Screaming Gale legendary action; the tempest aimed it at other structures and the adventurers are just caught in its blast.
- A **water elemental myrmidon** forms before the adventurers; it has a flying speed of 30 feet and can hover.

You can combine this trek with *Into the Blizzard*, running it as either a Hard or Insane level Skill Challenge.

2. EYE OF THE STORM

After braving the storm of the century, the adventurers face the **elder tempest**; proud and insatiable, the elder elemental cannot ignore a challenge or audacity. It knows only destruction and will share that gift with the world.

Living Spells. With a thunderous cry, the tempest imbues the hail and snow with a fragment of its power. Several living spells manifest on the rim of a 30-foot-radius circle centered laterally on the tempest. 1d6+4 **living ice knives**, one **living ice storm**, and 1d4+2 **living snowball swarms** harass the adventurers. If the tempest is slain, these spells, which appear as glowing orbs of ice, are destroyed.

Tactics. Consider these tactics for the battle:

- The tempest doesn't provoke opportunity attacks; like the very wind it embodies, it slips through the adventurers' ranks. It can gain altitude without worry.
- Ranged attacks within 1d6+4 miles of the storm perpetually suffer disadvantage.
- The tempest only descends to the ground while its Lightning Storm is recharging, or when it can't use its Lightning Strike legendary action.
- The living spells are the tempest's mythic will made manifest. They have no concern for their own preservation and only exist to defend their creator.

SURVIVORS' CACHE

Character Encounter, Tier I-III

Arctic samaritans regularly leave behind caches of supplies to help travelers survive the brutal wilderness. These caches may be wrapped bundles marked by an orange flag, or they may be a crate at the foot of a tree. Some are stocked while others are empty, for not all who find these supplies are selfless enough to take only what they need. Even worse, some beasts and monsters have learned that these caches, especially the more noticeable ones, bring in weak and distracted prey.

Encounter Type. This encounter is categorized as a character encounter, even if it has no actual characters present, as it can be used in any arctic environment.

VARIANTS

This encounter has several variants. Refer to the *Survivors' Cache Contents* table for the possible items found in a cache, the appearance of which is up to you. Additionally, choose one of the templates below.

Stocked. The cache is almost fully stocked; clearly past visitors were selfless and mindful enough to take only what they needed. Roll 5d12 to determine the contents, rerolling duplicate numbers.

Raided. The cache has only a quarter or less of its contents. Roll a d12 to determine the last item, which may be broken.

Occupied. By when the adventurers near the cache, other individuals are already combing through it. Roll a d6 to determine whether the survivors are hostile (1-2), neutral (3-4), or friendly (5-6).

Trapped. Someone, perhaps even those that left the cache, have rigged it with a simple trap. Roll a d6 to determine the trap, either placing it in the cache itself or nearby. To notice the trap requires a DC 10 + 1d6 Perception check or a passive Perception score of the same value. See Appendix C for the trap's full effects. Additionally, the cache has been raided.



Inhabited. The area is inhabited by clever beasts and monsters. Roll a d20 to determine the creature(s).

There may be signs of the creature's passage or past attacks, which can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Perception check, if they aren't covered by fresh snow. To track the creature back to its den requires a successful DC 13 Survival check (provided tracks exist or other signs can be found, such as bent bushes or broken twigs, etc.).

Additionally, there is a 20% chance the cache is still stocked (see *Stocked* above), otherwise it has been raided.

SURVIVORS' CACHE: CONTENTS

d12	Creature
1	A whistle made from bone
2	1d4 bundles of firewood
3	1d4 pairs of wool gloves
5	1d4+2 torches
6	Cobbler's tools
7	Cook's utensils
8	1d3 daggers
9	A tent with five pegs
10	Three empty sacks
11	Climber's kit
12	Healer's kit

SURVIVORS' CACHE: OCCUPIED

d6	Characters
1	1d4+2 bandits with an apprentice wizard (who may have cast <i>alarm</i> on the cache).
2	A warlock of the fiend and its imp minion
3	The Brass Adventists, described in the encounter of the same name.
4	A mastiff and 2d4 commoners led by a scout
5	A druid leaving 1d10 <i>goodberries</i> into the cache
6	A doppelganger

SURVIVORS' CACHE: TRAPPED

d6	Trap
1	Bear trap (+8 to hit, 1d10 piercing damage)*
2	Crossbow trap hidden in a nearby tree or branch, triggered by a trip wire (+8 to hit, 1d10 piercing)
3	A <i>snare</i> spell (spell save DC 13, XGE pg. 165)
4	An <i>alarm</i> spell (PHB pg. 211) A tripwire that pulls the cork from a fastened flask of alchemist's fire, causing an explosion (DC 10 Dex. save, radius 5-feet, 1d4 fire dmg. on failure).
5	A pit trap (10-feet deep, 10-feet-wide) dug near the cache and covered with a snow-covered tarp weighted with rocks.
6	

* further pertinent details in Appendix C

SURVIVORS' CACHE: INHABITED

d20	Creature
1-4	An opportunistic black bear that can be scared off with a DC 13 Animal Handling check. It's more interested in the contents of the cache than people.
5-6	A ferocious brown bear fooled into believing a survivor is dead with a DC 13 Deception check. It only attacks creatures it perceives to be alive.
7	A polar bear that can be scared off with a DC 21 Animal Handling check.
8-10	A pack of 1d4+3 wolves (if Tier I) with a dire wolf alpha (if Tier II).
11	A snow leopard (a panther with advantage on Stealth checks while in snowy terrain).
12	1d3 giant wolf spiders hiding in a burrow.
15	A polar owlbear (it has advantage on Stealth checks while in snowy terrain).
16	1d4+1 worgs
17	A peryton (if Tier I) or manticore (if Tier II)
18	A troll (if Tier II) or dire troll (if Tier III)
19	A yeti (if Tier II) or abominable yeti (if Tier III)
20	A frost salamander (Tier II or above)

TEMPLE OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

Polar Encounter, Tier III

Stark against the pale sky and the flat, frozen wastes, where no mason could ever build, is a temple. Two pillars mark its open entrance. The temple has no fortifications, no battlements, not even a door, as if all it needs is the favor of whichever deity it is devoted to. That the structure is made from stone should come as a shock; so deep into the Arctic, such pursuits are nearly impossible without magic, as it was the case here, for the temple was created by a *temple of the gods* spell (see XGE pg. 167).

The temple's walls are decorated with six-pointed snowflake mosaics of blue, violet, and white. A character can identify this as the iconography of Auril, the merciless goddess of winter, with a successful DC 13 Religion check. Most who pay respects to the Frostmaiden do so out of fear. Her priests spend their time warning others to prepare for winter and divining how cruel that winter will be. Her truly devoted clergy are almost as evil as the Frostmaiden herself. Surely, this bastion in the frozen wastes must be inhabited by evil priests.

As the adventurers may learn, all visitors are welcome at the temple—but they can never be permitted to leave. The priestess responsible for creating this temple is two castings of *temple of the gods* away from making the structure permanent.

Map. Refer to the map below. Every square equals 5 feet.

Temple Properties. Created by the *temple of the gods* spell, the temple has the following magical properties:

- The temple's interior is brightly lit, warm, and perpetually smells of burning incense.
- The temple is warded against undead, fey, and fiends, who must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw to enter the temple. Those that succeed are still hindered; whenever they make an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check inside the temple, they suffer a d4 penalty.
- Creatures within the temple cannot be targeted by divination magic.
- Whenever a creature in the temple regains hit points from a spell of 1st level or higher, they gain an extra +3 hit points.
- Travel through the Ethereal Plane is blocked by the temple's walls. The temple cannot be dispelled by *dispel magic*, and *antimagic field* has no effect on it. However, it is destroyed instantly by a *disintegrate* spell.

Guards. Two **yetis**, cowed by Auril's will and reluctantly subservient to the clergy, prowl the temple's perimeter. They do not attack visitors but instead prevent fugitives from escaping. Most are returned unharmed.

INHABITANTS

The temple is inhabited by the following people:

Clergy. Auril's faithful consist of 2d6+4 **acolytes**, 2d4+2 **priests** (with *ice knife* prepared instead of *guiding bolt*) and 1d4+3 **veterans**. These humans are all neutral evil. The priests feed the temple through *create food and water* spells.

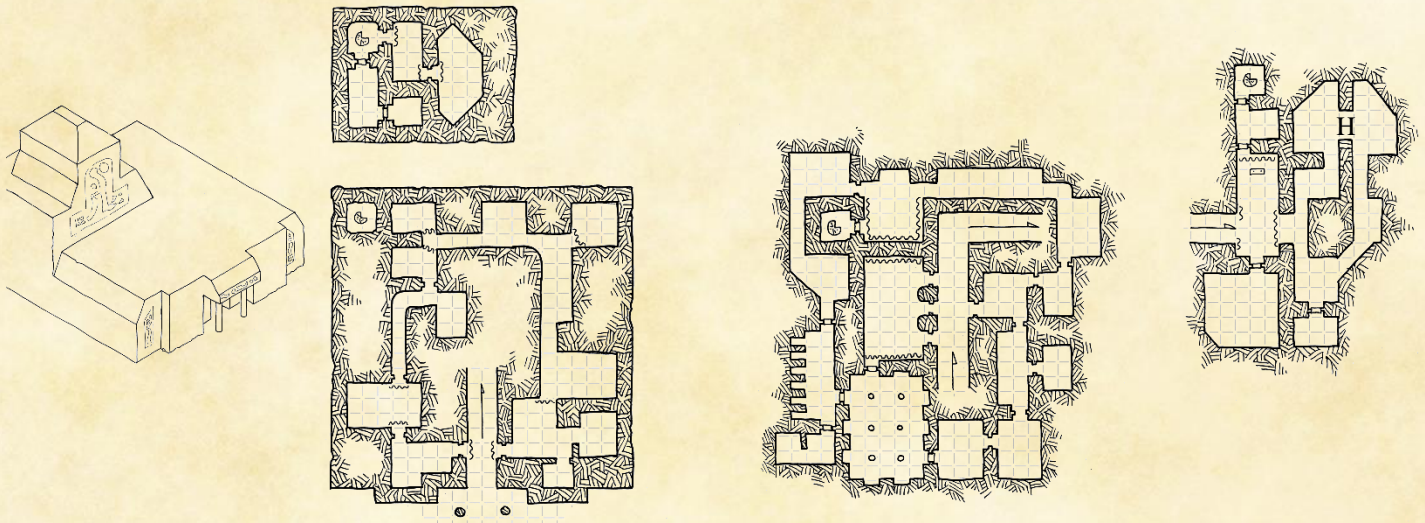
Laity. Those who visit the temple to escape the merciless cold are pressed into service and forced to worship the Frostmaiden. Dissidents are threatened with naked exile into the wastes. The "laity" consist of 1d8+4 NG **commoners** of assorted races and a LG human **scout** named Isaac, who approaches the party with his plot to escape. Isaac refuses to leave a single person behind.

Auril's Prophet. The aasimar Masra is the temple's leader and creator. She claims to be Auril's "final prophet," a title echoed by the clergy. She believes that there will soon come a titanic reckoning that will swallow the world and that Auril has chosen her to play an instrumental part in its design. Masra is an utter fanatic that believes her own lies. She considers her decisions and actions to be ordained by the goddess and therefore just. For now, her mission is only to prepare for the Reckoning by collecting more followers and captives. Until that fateful day comes, she is content with divining self-perceived omens from the Frostmaiden.

None can be allowed to leave the temple, Masra believes, for they are all soldiers or tools of Auril to be utilized one day.

Masra is an aasimar **war priest** with the following changes:

- Masra is CR 11 (7,200 XP)
- Masra is a 13th-level spellcaster with two 5th-level spell slots (instead of one), and one 6th- and 7th-level spell slot. She has the following additional spells prepared: *heal*, *heroes' feast*, *raise dead*, and *temple of the gods*.
- She has darkvision with a range of 60 feet, and has resistance to both necrotic and radiant damage.
- Once per long rest, Masra can touch a creature and restore 13 hit points to it.
- Once per long rest, Masra can unleash her divine energy. For the next minute, she has a flying speed of 30 feet; and once per turn, when she can deal 13 extra radiant to one target when she damages it with an attack or spell.



Auril's Champion. The prophet's will is enforced by Dia Vyl, a LE human **blackguard**. Years ago, this paladin was stranded in the Arctic after a blizzard separated her from her comrades. She considered it divine justice for her fall from grace—for tolerating evil amongst her companions. Slowly that rot took hold of her heart... but in the frozen wastes, she found not damnation, but acceptance by the Frostmaiden. She has been a fierce hierophant ever since.

TREASURE

The temple's hoard of treasures is marked as "H" on the map. As Masra could never believe she would be threatened or stolen from, the hoard is unguarded. It contains the following:

- 1,100 gp and 250 pp
- 1d3 diamonds worth 300 gp and a diamond worth 500 gp
- A *necklace of prayer beads* (DMG pg 182) with three beads: a bead of curing and two beads of favor.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Frostmaiden demands suffering and penance in the face of unrelenting winter. Sharing her penchant for sadism, the clergy may conspire with Withrens Fyar, the archmage attempting to induce an early ice age; or the elemental cults attempting to summon an **elder tempest** to blanket the Arctic in a cataclysmic blizzard. See the *Dire Winter* and *Storm of the Century* sample storylines for details.

The angel-born was as beautiful and crazed as the deity she served. We never could learn what titanic plans the Frostmaiden, or her chosen, had in store for the world, but I'm sure we'll all find out together one day.

THELGRYM'S WATCH

Tundra Tier I-II

Towering over the tundra is a fortress carved from ice. This outpost is manned by the glacier dwarves of Clan Aurora. The fort—Thelgrym's Watch—is replete with battlements, arrow slits, and iron doors whose frames are melded into the nigh-indestructible ice. The mere sight of this fortress astounds newcomers and veterans of the Arctic alike. With a successful DC 14 History check, a character normally unfamiliar with the glacier dwarves' handiwork can identify the fort as such.

The dwarves stationed here keep a vigil for gnolls, giants, and other threats to their homeland. Thelgrym's Watch also serves as a distinct landmark and waystation for travelers, who can camp safely outside the fort's walls and barter with its soldiers. By policing this corner of the Arctic, the dwarves ensure that trade and information flows unabated. Visitors are welcome to Thelgrym's Watch if they present themselves boldly and swear to an oath of nonaggression.

Map. See the map below; every square equals 5 feet.

Leadership. The Thelgrym that founded this fort is long dead, but his legacy lives on. Every commander of this fort is referred to as "Thelgrym" or "the Thelgrym" for the duration of their command. The current Thelgrym is Lord Soram, eighteenth in the life for the throne, who once famously said, "If seventeen of my betters could just go ahead and die, that'd be grand." Soram is a crass, callous noble loved by most of his soldiers. He has volunteered to man Thelgrym's Watch six times, four of which were under his command. He publicly tells others, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder and Lady Ketra could use one of those." His wife's sporadic visits prove to be a tough time for the dwarves, who oft lament, "I hate it when Mother and Father fight." The fort's glacial walls inhibit most sound but...

Garrison. Thelgrym's Watch maintains a minimum of twenty soldiers and a maximum of forty: 1d10+15 **guards**, one **priest**, 1d6+2 **scouts**, one **bard**, 1d3+1 **knights**, led by the Thelgrym, a **noble**. They maintain an aviary of messenger hawks. Most of these forces are LG or LN. As glacier dwarves, they have the following racial traits:

- They speak Dwarvish, in addition to Common, and have dark-vision to a range of 60 feet.
- They have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned and resistance to poison damage.
- They are naturally adapted for environments of extreme cold.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This encounter can be featured twice in your campaign. Perhaps the adventurers first cross the fortress and, in their absence, it falls to the elemental cult. The reverse can be true: should the party root out the cultists from their stolen roost, the rightful owners, the glacier dwarves of Clan Aurora, can return. When the adventurers next come by, they receive a hero's welcome.

THERE'S ALWAYS A BIGGER BIRD

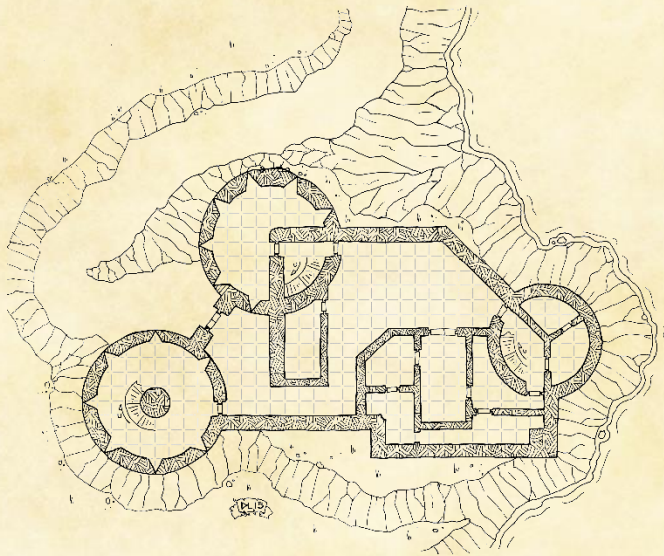
Tundra Encounter, Tier II

The adventurers sight a wounded mammoth calf (a Large-sized **elephant**) on the tundra. The poor creature was savaged by a clever **roc** that is hiding just over the horizon or behind a nearby peak. The bird has engineered a trap for its true prey: a **young white adult dragon**.

While the adventurers tend to the mammoth (if they even bother approaching it), the dragon drops from the sky. It looses its Cold Breath upon the calf, capturing a random number of adventurers in the blast. Determine where these characters stand; those that are opposite side of the mammoth gain three-quarters cover. Although the drake's Cold Breath imposes a Constitution saving throw, instead of Dexterity, grant these adventurers a +5 bonus to the check, as the mammoth's body shields much of the icy blast.

The dragon is 30 feet above the ground and manages to fly another 60 feet before the end of its turn. On its next turn, the dragon circles around and grapples the mammoth, lifting the screaming beast into the air. If the dragon takes 30 or more points of damage before the start of its next turn, it must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw to hold onto the mammoth. Once the dragon reaches an altitude of 100 feet, the **roc** emerges from the clouds to attack the drake. The drake drops the mammoth, which takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage. A random number of adventurers are beneath its fall; they must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage from the mammoth.

There's a 20% chance that the dragon escapes from the roc. The two soar off in the distance, out of the adventurers' reach. The party may later find the dragon's corpse—a valuable find for any scale-worker. A character can harvest enough of the dragon's scales for a set of *white dragon scale* (DMG pg. 165) if they succeed on a DC 20 Survival check. Harvesting the scales takes 1d4+2 hours of labor.



- They can each cast *ray of frost*. Once per day, they can cast both *ice knife* and *flame blade* (the blade is forged of ice and deals cold damage instead of fire damage). They require no material components for these spells and Intelligence is the spellcasting ability for these spells.

Treasure. Thelgrym's Watch frequently trades with travelers. They have a hoard of 3d100+200 gp, 6d100+250 sp, and 8d100 + 500 cp. They also have up to forty rations for each soldier officially assigned here, plus dozens of casks of mead and ale.

THELGRYM'S RUIN

It is a point of pride among Clan Aurora that no army has *ever* taken Thelgrym's Watch. That streak, however, is due to end. Insidious cultists of Elemental Evil later burrow beneath the fort and take it unawares. Much of the garrison is slaughtered, but a few brave dwarves fight their way to the aviary to send out one last messenger hawk to Clan Aurora, notifying them of this red takeover. Lord Soram's fate remains a mystery.

The cultists belong to chapters of the Cults of the Black Earth and the Howling Hatred, who are the main antagonists of the *Storm of the Century* storyline. The cult requires a foothold in the Arctic and no stronghold is better than Thelgrym's Watch. Using elemental magic, the Black Earth cultists burrow underneath the fortress and, with their allies, take it unawares.

Leadership. The skeletal garrison is led by the glacier dwarf Ketwyn, who was stationed here in her youth, before she sided against her people—and the world itself. She is a **howling hatred priest** with the same racial traits as the glacier dwarves (see above). She is familiar with Thelgrym Watch's every inch. As its new commander, she insists upon being referred to as "Thelgrym," an honor she never before achieved. The cultists obey, but, much to her chagrin, can't understand the importance of the title.

Garrison. Just as suddenly as they came, the cults have left. Eighteen agents were left behind to man the fortress. They consist of eight **cultists**, four **cult fanatics**, three **black earth guards**, two **hurricanes**, and an **air elemental myrmidon** conjured by Ketwyn.

Treasure. The cultists have little wealth they didn't steal from the dwarves. Notably, Ketwyn carries an *elemental gem* (*blue sapphire*) that she can use to summon an **air elemental**. See DMG pg. 167 for details on this magic item.

THE THING

Polar Encounter, Tier III

The adventurers encounter an alien terror previously frozen in stasis below the ice. Like the film of the same name that this encounter is inspired by, the alien originated beyond the stars. Its presence threatens the Arctic, if not the very world.

You have three variants to use for this encounter:

MIND FLAYER ASTRONAUTS

The mind flayers' galactic empire stretched across the Material Plane when this world was young. As the empire fell to the gith and other rebels, a nautiloid—a mind flayer spacefaring ship—sought refuge on this world but was attacked in the upper atmosphere. The nautiloid was destroyed, but several of its escape shuttles made it to the surface. Most were hunted down by the gith; some slipped away into the Underdark. One ship, however, crashed in the Arctic, where it was buried under an avalanche. Those that did not die on impact froze to death—but not the illithid tadpoles. There in the spawning pool, the tadpoles were frozen and preserved. An illithid tadpole turns a humanoid into a mind flayer by infiltrating the cranium and devouring the host's brain. See *Volo's Guide to Monsters* pages 71-81 for details on mind flayers.

Over the centuries, the shuttle—perhaps thanks to geological activity or strange directives that the otherwise dead machine still obeys—has inched towards the surface. By when the party encounters it, it has cracked the ice. Most of the shuttle is still buried, visible under the ice, but a small section leading to the shuttle's only hatch has been thawed away.

When running this variant, you must determine whether the adventurers are the first to find the craft, or if a group of scholars and magi did so already, in which case 1d4+2 wizards have become **mind flayers** who quickly devoured the brains of their former colleagues. They haunt the hills and caves nearby. The adventurers represent a chance to grow their budding colony; should they stun the adventurers, they are quick to insert a tadpole into their nostril or ear canal. Over the next week, these victims become mind flayers.

The Shuttle. The shuttle resembles a cuttlefish. Its interior is a 20-foot-long, 5-foot-radius cylinder whose walls are inscribed with Qualith, the strange script of the illithids. Four chairs with straps hold the rotted remains of illithids, whose decomposition was halted by the extreme cold until the craft was exposed. An enclosed fish tank once held 2d6+4 mind flayer tadpoles. Most are dead or still frozen.

*By dusk the next day,
none of could trust, each
other. Every friend I
had known may as well
been a shapechanger.
With no divinations to
aid us, we had to trust
our instincts—and
those instincts failed us.*



SLAAD SURVIVOR

Within the ice lies a seemingly dead **blue slaad** or **red slaad** (your choice, see below). Only its upper torso and arms are thawed, reducing its speed to 0 and imposing disadvantage on its Dexterity saving throws, as well as granting advantage on attack rolls against it. As an adventurer approaches to inspect the corpse, the slaad makes two Claw attacks in an attempt to infect its prey with either Chaos Phage or a tadpole egg—the horrific vehicles of slaadi reproduction.

The creature is identified as a slaad through a successful DC 15 Arcana check. The character recalls that these aberrations hail from the chaos of Limbo. With a result of 20 or higher, they recall that the blue and red slaadi reproduce through horrific methods: the former infecting its victim with a disease that turns them into a slaad outright, the latter inserting a miniscule egg that gestates over the course of three months before bursting from the host's chest.

Blue. The slaad's touch carries the infamous disease known as Chaos Phage. Once it takes root in a creature's flesh, it can only be purged through magic. A successful DC 16 Medicine check made after a twenty-minute examination confirms that the malady is magical in origin.

Red. The slaad's touch inserts a miniscule egg into its target's bloodstream. An infected character can, over the coming weeks and months, sense an alien presence growing within them with a DC 14 Insight check. The soonest a character can attempt this check is after 2d4+4 weeks. On the seventh day of the twelfth week, a **slaad tadpole** bursts from its host's chest, killing them instantly.

THE STAR SPAWN

Eons ago, a meteorite struck the world's crust, flung not from the depths of space but the Far Realm itself—a dimension of maddening darkness infested with *things* that should not be. The meteorite has been buried for countless years, but by dint of recent geological upheavals, the meteorite has been brought closer to the surface. Within the rock, a **star spawn larva mage** has used its psionic powers to slowly carve its way out from below. Should the thing escape to the surface, it will enthrall mortals and use them to build a portal to the Far Realm so that more of its foul ilk may enter this reality.

If the larva mage is slain, it becomes a **swarm of insects** and attempts to escape; if it isn't slain, the adventurers have merely postponed its dark schemes.

Additional Star Spawn. You can challenge your adventurers by adding more star spawn to the encounter: 1d4 **star spawn grues** and a single **star spawn mangler**, when combined with the larva mage, can ravage a party of Tier III adventurers.

Meteorite. The meteorite is composed not of stone but of a greasy, black material. A humanoid that touches the meteorite must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or succumb to a form of Short-Term Madness (see Appendix C). Even on a success, the person is cursed with horrid nightmares for 1d4+3 days; whenever the person sleeps, they must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they do not gain the benefits of a long rest.

A character proficient with jeweler's tools can create a **dark shard amulet** from the meteorite through 1d6+4 hours of labor. At the end of this period, the crafter must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or gain a form of Indefinite Madness (see Appendix C).

THIRTY DAYS OF NIGHT

Polar Night Encounter, Tier II

For one month out of the year, the settlement of Barrow Den experiences only twilight and darkness. While most settlements are founded far from the regions that suffer under polar nights, the people of Barrow Den consider it the cornerstone of their very culture. Each year, their "Thirty Days of Night" are kicked off with a celebration. In the inaugural darkness, people chase after "the Sun," a torchbearer whose goal is to make it from the end of town to the other without letting the fire go out, all while being pelted with snowballs. The event is a time of good cheer for everyone involved.

A month of darkness invites all manner of wicked behavior and evil creatures, but almost a decade has gone by without incident. As such, the Night Watch has grown lax—just as the **vampire** Claudia Orlei expected. As the citizenry celebrate the darkness, she and her harem infiltrate Barrow Den with the aim of turning the town into her own personal farm of cattle.

Chronology. When you run this encounter, you must decide just when the adventurers arrive: during the festival or in the aftermath of the vampire's attack. If the party is present for the festival, they might thwart the undead; if not, they've the chance to liberate the town from Claudia's grip.

Newcomers. Claudia and her ilk have been laying low since they arrived on the outskirts two weeks ago. They've holed up in an abandoned cabin while her bewitched servants infiltrate Barrow Den. As they came in clumps of three or five, they aroused very little suspicion from the citizenry. They quickly identified the town's most formidable defenders, their aviary of messenger hawks, and where the town keeps its steeds. Slowly, they've disabled the town, preparing it for their master's attack.

If the adventures carouse or speak with locals, they may hear any of the following news and rumors:

- About twenty newcomers have arrived in the last two weeks, claiming to be travelers or tourists. Their coin is good, but their attitudes are grim and strange.
- The aviary's messenger hawks have fallen ill. The aery master is doing his best to save the brood.
- Farmer Jenkins's horses got loose the other day; his son must have left the gate open again.

The adventurers can also confront the newcomers, who hang around the inn and tavern for most of the day. With a successful DC 18 Insight check, a character that spends a minute speaking to them leaves with the impression that they're charmed.

Creatures of the Night. Claudia Orlei is a cunning **vampire** with the spellcasting variant described in the *Monster Manual*. She is served by 1d3 **bandit captains** and twenty **bandits**; all have been charmed by the vampire. Claudia is also joined by her harem of **vampire spawn**:

- Iyana, a half-elf maiden held highest in Claudia's black heart. Obsessed with jewelry, she is adorned with six golden rings, a necklace, and two ankle bracelets (each worth 50 gp).
- Harley, a human whose envy of Iyana burns bright enough to fuel elaborate fantasies involving her murder, which would be framed on Kaiden Glade.
- Galphine, a rock gnome (with a size of Small and a movement speed of 25 ft.).
- Tryssa, a wood elf botanist with 1d4+1 *potions of poison* on her belt (*DMG* pg. 188). She has already used three to poison the town's messenger hawks.
- Kaiden Glade, a human and Claudia's sole male paramour, the longest—and lowest—of her spawn, to be commanded and abused by her other paramours.

DARKNESS FALLS

Without sunlight to inhibit her, Claudia and her brood wade into town, seemingly as participants of the festival. She arranges her forces in a ring around the town's central square, letting the festival's torchbearer lead the townsfolk closer. Once she gives the word, her **bandits** and **vampire spawn** attack; the former attacking with hidden daggers, the others with their fangs. The affair is short and bloody.

If the adventurers are present, half of them are attacked from behind by **bandits**; the others face a **vampire spawn**. Claudia herself may intervene for a round or two, lobbing a *gust of wind* or *blight* spell at the adventurers before busying herself with the town's greatest defenders.

In the first three rounds, the panicked crowd surge through the square, making it difficult terrain. Additionally, once per round, there is a 25% chance that an adventurer is trampled by the crowd or knocked over by a fleeing villager. In either case, the adventurer must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the character is knocked prone and takes 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

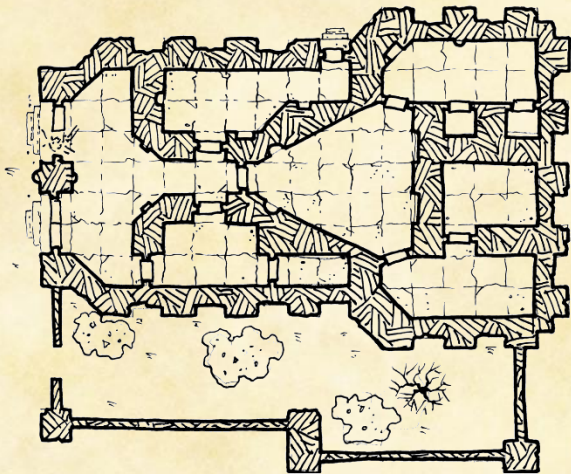
Aftermath. The attack leaves approximately fifty corpses in the town square; another sixty are rounded up by the undead to become living cattle. Many flee into the frozen wastes or make it into a home, where the undead cannot enter uninvited. Unless the adventurers strike the undead down now, Barrow Den is, essentially, destroyed. If they manage to kill Claudia, her spawn become free; Iyana, Harley, and Galphine fight to avenge her, whereas Tryssa and Kaiden leave to chart their own destinies.

LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

Several survivors have fled to Saint Anderial, a church devoted to a god of light. In the Forgotten Realms, this deity might be Amaunator, otherwise the god is known only as "The Midnight Sun." Regardless of the deity's true identity, the adventurers can identify his iconography with a DC 14 Religion check.

The villagers consist of twenty **commoners**, twelve children, six **guards**, two **acolytes**, and a LG **priest** named Father Denyk. In his panic, Denyk has barred the doors and extinguished all lights to better hide from the undead; therefore, the villagers are cowering in the dark. Alas, it is only a matter of time before the vampires and their servitors come knocking...

I should've known I would run into Claudia again. I should've known that the high seas would not be our last chapter together. Never did I expect to find her in the frozen north, crashing a torch-run... but as I look back on it, I can't say I'm surprised.



Hallowed Ground. Undead suffer disadvantage on saving throws while inside Saint Anderial or within 30 feet of its walls.

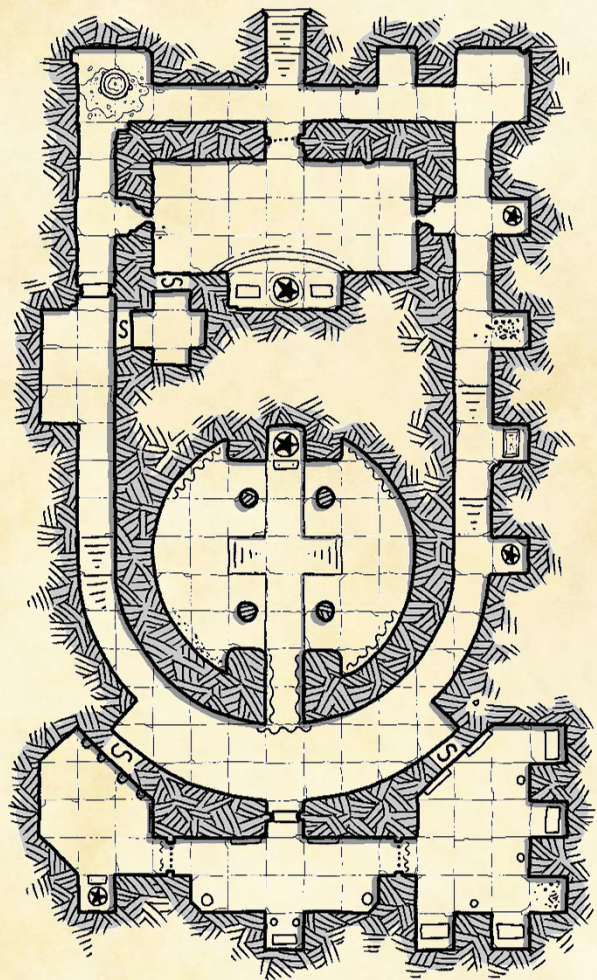
As the church is hallowed ground, the vampires cannot enter unbidden. This does not prevent their bewitched servants from breaking in. The vampires want to preserve as many lives as they can but can resort to arson to draw out the living. They at first wait out the survivors, but soon realize Denyk is keeping his flock fed through spells of *create food and water*. Claudia decides to focus on dragging villagers from their homes before siccing her servants on Saint Anderial. In the meantime, her servants leave corpses and macabre trophies within sight of the church to break the survivors' will.

Mad Priest. As the days go by, Father Denyk begins to lose both his faith and his mind, and with them, his ability to cast spells—namely *create food and water*. He begins to scorn his deity as sadistic or negligent. He can only be assuaged with a DC 17 Persuasion check; clerics, paladins, and other religious characters have advantage on the roll. On a failure, he loses his faith as well as his Divine Eminence and Spellcasting traits.

Dead Rising. Claudia begins to create a host of undead from slain villagers. With every passing day, she raises four **zombies** through an *animate dead* spell (*PHB* pg. 212), casting it at dawn to reassert control over the dead. If the adventurers take the fight to her after dawn, she has already used all her 3rd- and 4th-level spell slots on *animate dead* spells.

Inevitable Conflict. After 1d4+3 days, Claudia loses patience and orders her remaining **bandits** to storm Saint Anderial. To determine their numbers, subtract 2 plus the number of bandits slain by the adventurers. If the bandits are rebuffed, Claudia has sets fire to the church, driving the survivors out into the cold.

Map. Refer to the map above; every square is 5 feet. All outer doors have been barred shut from within, requiring a DC 22 Athletics check to break open. Windows are eight feet off the ground, inhibiting those that would break in that way.



TOMB OF THE MYTHIC SMITH

Tundra Encounter, Tier II

Dug into the permafrost is the final resting place of a legendary smith buried long ago. Its entrance is little more than a staircase leading underground with a portcullis to keep all but the tiniest beasts out. Within its darkened halls works a **necromancer**, whose blasphemous rituals have roused the dead.

The identity of the buried smith and tomb's architecture are determined by whichever of the two variants you choose. The map and most of its features remain the same.

Map. Refer to the map above; every square is 5 feet. The tomb has the following features:

- The portcullises leading to Areas A, E and F require a DC 15 Athletics check to lift.
- Secret doors (marked "S") can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Perception check.
- Area A can be accessed from the west and east through a Tiny-sized hole in the wall. The smith's stone coffin is marked by a star on the map and requires a successful DC 13 Athletics check to open.
- The alcoves of Area B sport a greatsword and plate armor, forged from steel or glacial ice, depending on the variant you choose below. The other two masterpieces were stolen or destroyed long ago.
- Area E and F contain the bones of the smith's most devoted apprentices.

Necromancer. The high elf Thelamyn plundered this tomb to practice his dark art in secret. The tomb had few traps, and his trusty *knock* spell has triumphed over the rusted portcullises. He was already discovered by other visitors to the tomb (described in the variants below), and he was forced to cast *circle of death*. During the battle, a warrior knocked the black pearl powder (the material component for *circle of death*) from Thelamyn's hand, scattering it across the chamber. He now lacks the component for *circle of death* and can't cast that spell in this encounter.

Thelamyn intends to raise these 1d4+2 visitors (dwarves or urskans) as **ghouls** once he masters the *create undead* spell.

As a high elf, Thelamyn has the following racial traits:

- He has darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- He has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic cannot put him to sleep.
- He knows the *friends* cantrip. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability for the spell (DC 15).

Treasure. Thelamyn carries a pouch of 2d10+45 gp, a spellbook containing all the spell's he's prepared, and a black glass orb that serves as his arcane focus, which is worth 50 gp.

TOMB OF THE FIRST MASTER

This tomb is devoted to the First Master, the urskan blacksmith that pioneered metallurgy among his people in ancient times. The urskans (an ursine folk described in *Urskan Pilgrim*) revere and even worship the First Master as a deity of the forge. Here he was buried in antiquity, honored by pilgrims each year. No priests maintain this tomb; the First Master specifically forbade it on his deathbed; in typical utilitarian urskan fashion, he cited the waste of manpower it would be to watch over a crypt.

Architecture. The tomb is fashioned from stone and banded with decorative strips of iron, which has rusted over. The walls are also decorated with the iconography associated with the religion surrounding the First Master. As an obscure deity, this iconography can be identified by non-urskans with a DC 17 Religion check.

The Dead. Areas E and F contain 2d4+6 urskan skeletons—the First Master's fabled apprentices. These corpses count as **minotaur skeletons** if animated by necromancy. By when the adventurers enter the tomb, Thelamyn has already raised half the corpses and set them to patrolling the halls.

The Shrine. Area C is a shrine to the First Master, decorated with rusted hammers, tongs, and other blacksmithing tools. The floor is lined with a great mosaic depicting an urskan working at the forge while warriors clad in his arms and armor hold off several enemies: a mantichore, a dragon, a yeti, and a snow elf. The shrine is soaked in subtle magic; an urskan character that prays here for 10 minutes can cast the *divination* spell without expending material components, putting them in contact with the First Master's divine spirit.

The shrine is hallowed ground (as in the *hallow* spell, *PHB* pg. 249), making it a safe place from the undead.



TOMB OF THE GLACIAL ARCHITECT

The tomb is dedicated to Hulnar Aurora, the glacier dwarves' most revered artificer and master of glacial magic. Six centuries ago, Hulnar was captured by the snow elves, who tortured him for twelve years. Not once did he give up the secrets of glacial magic, knowing that to do so was to condemn his kin to a life under an elven heel. Tragically, Hulnar died in captivity—and his death sparked a crusade so bloody, it set the elves back forty years. Surrendering Hulnar's bones was one of the key demands made by the dwarves. They soon built this tomb in his honor. A character can recall this tale with a successful DC 15 History check; glacier dwarves know it by heart.

Architecture. The tomb is carved from glacial ice that gives off a soft, azure light, which dimly lights the tomb. The walls can be destroyed; they have an AC of 15, immunity to poison, cold, and psychic damage, vulnerability to fire damage, and resistance to all other damage. A 10-foot-section of ice has 50 hit points. Doors and portcullises in the tomb have the same statistics.

The Dead. Hulnar was not the only frost mason captured by the snow elves; other artificer prisoners of war are buried here as well. In Areas E and F, their bones are stacked in alcoves or in coffins. There are enough skeletons here for a necromancer to raise 2d6+8 **skeletons**.

The Memorial. Area C is a memorial devoted to Hulnar and other artificers. Hulnar's frost mason tools (which consist of chisels and hammers carved in runes) are lain on the memorial, preserved under a layer of ice. The snow elves are willing to pay 500 gp for these tools, falsely believing they can be used to better research glacial magic.

ARMY OF THE DEAD

If you're running the *Army of the Damned* storyline, the elf is a member of the Cult of the Newly Dead, the necromancers and nihilists that have thrown their lot in with the Flayed Queen, the undead sovereign that seeks to unite this world in death.

TRAVELER'S RESPITE

Mountain Encounter, Tier II

Traveler's Respite is the region's oldest inn and the artery that keeps this corner of the Arctic warm and alive. Those cross this harrowing mountain range would surely die without *The Respite's* hospitality. The inn has weathered six generations and countless blizzards. Whenever it needs repairs or supplies, nearby settlements send men and food to repay the inn for the lives it once saved—lives that went on instead to sire children and grandchildren that are still alive today. Ownership changes every few years; the inn is isolated and taxing on the spirit. Little do regional authorities know that *Traveler's Respite* has been taken over by a disguised **bheur hag**.

The hag can sense when travelers come near the inn. With her fey magic, she worsens the weather to force the adventurers to stay at the inn. She charges them a pittance for room and board, explaining that *Traveler's Respite* is about saving lives, not turning a profit. She charges 2 sp every night they stay—and she can expect them to stay at least 1d4+1 days if they heed the threat of her spellwrought blizzard.

Map. Refer to the map to the right for this encounter. Every square equals 5 feet.

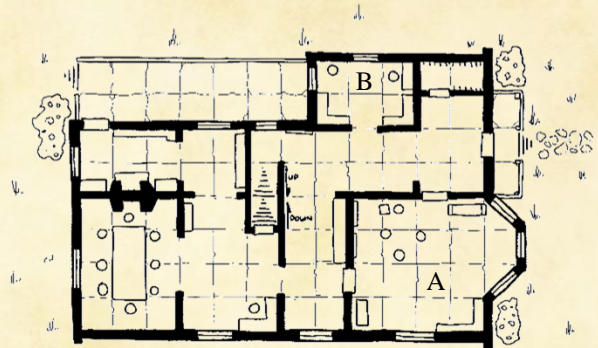
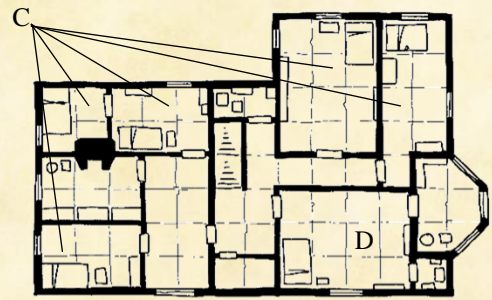
LONE MIYARETH

This **bheur hag** has manned *Traveler's Respite* for the last year. So great is her magic that she can cast *disguise self* at will. Only through truesight or by catching her asleep can one see her true form: a pale and emaciated hag with rotten teeth and fingers as long as daggers. In her disguise, she presents herself as a frail, hunched-over old woman with but tufts of thin hair left to her head. No matter her form, Miyareth's breath reeks.

Miyareth's mask slips off slowly the longer the adventurers stay at the inn, for she *wants* them to discover her true nature. It begins with a mole on her cheek, the hairs of which creep outward like a toddler's curious fingers. Then her hair thins even further, and her hunch becomes less pronounced. Slowly, her skin takes on a blue tinge, as if she had been out in the cold for too long.

Roleplaying Miyareth. The hag kills with kindness; she has a knack for worming her way into others' hearts to avoid blame and suspicion. She enjoys knitting socks for guests (which she can use for future *scrying* or *locate object* spells), braiding hair, and serving tea. Although she has no oracular powers, or claims to, Miyareth makes up predictions just to unnerve her guests. Her first prediction is the blizzard she herself conjures. Other examples include:

- "A blizzard's due, I promise. You get to my age and you can feel bad weather in your very bones."
- "You remind me much of my niece: hair and smiles all... May you find all the peace she did..."
- "I was organizing your belongings; this coil of rope is frayed, my dear. Careful not to fall to your doom."
- "The last scoundrel I met was hanged for theft. Couldn't keep his fingers off my pastries either."



THE INN

Traveler's Respite is a spacious cabin with two floors and a small cellar (not featured on the map). Notable locations are marked and briefly detailed below:

A. This living room is decorated in an assortment of trinkets. Roll on the Trinkets table on pg. 159 of the *PHB* whenever a character takes a closer look at the cabinet. One notable trinket is a sealed, empty jar; if opened, the person nearest to the jar recalls the gruesome deaths of all Miyareth's victims.

B. Miyareth spends much of her time in this kitchen, baking pastries and venison meatpies (which she knows adventurers will suspect of poison; she adds humanoid meat after she has gained their trust) and preparing tea, which she refrains from poisoning.

C. These guest rooms are furnished with wool duvets. Most sheets are clean, but all have yellowed with age; Miyareth goes to great pains to wash out any spilled blood. She has, however, missed one sheet stained with a small smattering of old blood. The character sleeping in this bed must succeed on a DC 18 Perception check to notice the blood. If confronted, Miyareth makes up an excuse—a menstruating guest, a wounded hunter, et cetera. Contest her Deception check against the party's Insight check. If she fails, the opposing character can tell that the woman's faking concern over this discovery, as if it doesn't bother her.

D. The master bedroom belongs to Miyareth. She has warded it with an *alarm* spell that mentally alerts her when someone other than herself or Thamul cross the door's threshold. A **rug of smothering** is spread before the door; it attacks intruders that attempt to leave the room, but only if the closet was opened. Inside the closet is a black box containing multiple effigies of yarn, wood, and either clipped fingernails, a lock of hair, or red-stained wool. While holding one of these effigies, Miyareth can cast *bestow curse* (DC 14) once per seven days, targeting the person the effigy is modeled after, so long as they're on the same plane of existence as her. With every passing night, there is an aggregate 25% chance that she has created an effigy of a party member, incorporating their hair, nails, or blood. If these are found, Miyareth sheds her disguise and all pretense to turn on her guests.

Cellar. The cellar is accessible from outside. Casks of beer and mead line the walls, each weighing 50 pounds. Behind one cask is a freshly mortared wall whose distinction can be noticed with a passive Perception score of 14 or higher. Behind this wall are the half-devoured corpses of Miyareth's previous victims, numbering eight in all. So decayed, one cannot determine the race or gender of the corpses. To gain access behind the wall requires smashing it open with a blunt implement or a pickaxe.

THE BLIZZARD

Miyareth conjures a blizzard with *control weather* to trap her guests at the inn—solely to see what sort of people they become when faced with starvation and isolation. When her magic has run its course, or when she has grown tired of this experiment, the blizzard ceases. Guests that resorted to evil, or showed just how ugly they truly are inside, are spared. Those that remained good and true earn the hag's scorn; as they rest one final night at the inn, she attacks.

As the days go by, Miyareth stages accidents—a sudden fire, scalding someone with spilled tea—and grim discoveries, such as rats (which she summoned herself) devouring the last of the food. She wants only to nudge guests to their breaking point.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

You can be certain that your players will be instantly suspicious of a lone old woman, assuming her to be a hag or other monster. Miyareth must lay low for a number of days to earn their trust before she begins to screw with the party. She might call upon other minions to ravage, such as the yeti, to shift attention from herself.

TUNDRA HALFLING TRAVELERS

Taiga or Tundra Encounter, Tier I

The tundra halflings are full of wanderlust, and to embark on a trip around the Arctic is considered a rite of passage. Each year, typically during the summer months, a village announces a "Journey" in which volunteers from neighboring villages gather to form a pseudo-tribe that will tour the region. The tribe camps under the light of the aurora, drinks in the sights, and shares a truly unique experience. Following a well-established route, the tribe stops at other tundra halfling villages to trade their labor for lodgings and to stock up on provisions.

The entire event is one of good cheer—but the halflings are not fools. They know that the world is a dangerous place, but to stand boldly before the shadow is at the heart of their culture. While the youth enjoy the journey, veterans guard the tribe's flanks and elders handle internal disputes.

The adventurers come upon the tribe—a train of halflings arranged into two columns with guards roaming the flanks. This particular tribe consists of twenty-two **commoners**, 2d6+4 **guards**, 1d4+4 **veterans** mounted on **mastiffs**, and three elders (**nobles** bereft of arms and armor (AC 11)). They also have six **mules** saddled with their most important gear.

The tundra halflings have the following racial traits:

- They are Small, have a speed of 25 feet, and can move through the space of any creature larger than them.
- Whenever a halfling rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, they can reroll the die, must use the new roll.
- A halfling has advantage on all saving throws made against being frightened.
- They read, write, and speak Common and Halfling.
- A tundra halfling can cast *prestidigitation* and *create bonfire*.

The non-**commoners** can cast *pyrotechnics* once per day as well. Wisdom is their spellcasting ability for these spells.

Variants. When you run this encounter, determine the mood and wellbeing of the tribe.

GOOD CHEER AND BETTER WARMTH

The halflings are in good spirits; either they have only recently embarked, or they have proven resilient in the face of adversity. Perhaps they've not even met a challenge at all yet, thanks to their people's otherworldly luck.

In this variant, the halflings welcome the adventurers to their camp, sharing mead and mirth. They're rabid for gallant stories or accounts describing distant lands. They're due to reach the next halfling village, Snowhollow, in 2d4+2 days if the weather remains civil. Should the adventurers wish to accompany them to the village, all the better.

While traveling with the halflings, the adventurers only need to consume half their usual rate of rations; the halflings are more than happy to share their food. Each night is spent with dazzling fireworks and warm drinks (thanks to *prestidigitation* and *pyrotechnics* spells). By when the adventurers part ways with the tribe, they each gain Inspiration, which must be used within the next week.

ON HARD TIMES

The tribe has suffered hard times as of late. The halflings are sullen, marching quietly to their next destination. The cause of their misery may be:

- 1d4+3 **quicklings** are terrorizing the tribe; their antics have graduated from mischief to debilitating theft. Maps have been stolen, casks drained, and mules let loose. The fey strike so fast that the guards have little time to react.
- 1d6+2 **darklings** and a **darkling elder** have been visiting the tribe in the dead of night, stealing curios, trinkets, and works of art. The fey murdered three **guards** after being discovered one night. The meager funeral is scheduled for today.
- A pack of 2d4+4 **wolves** and a **dire wolf** have been following the tribe, picking off scouts and wandering into the camp at night. Until they are slain, the tribe can find no peace.
- A **doppelganger** murdered and replaced Amelia Brighthouse. The creature was cursed with an aggressive cancer—thanks to a hag's hex—that grows whenever it fails to bring misery and suffering to others. It fled to the tundra after a warband of glacier dwarves discovered its secret, wherein it found the halflings. It has been sabotaging the tribe for weeks now by breaking hearts (in the guise of one's lover), spoiling meals, and murdering pets. Elder Osborn suspects the presence of a saboteur, and Amelia's lover, Perrin, suspects something off about "Amelia."
- Thanks to mismanagement and general greed, the rations have been depleted. Scouts were sent to forage and hunt but have yet to return. The slashed corpse of one scout can be found 2d4 miles back. Analyzing the corpse reveals that his heart has been ripped out; with a successful DC 14 Arcana check, a character recalls that this is a **peryton's modus operandi**. The peryton's nest can be found on a cliffside cave overlooking the sea or on a distant peak 3d10+15 miles away. The nest is too high up for the other three **scouts** to climb down or jump from. Rescuing them raises the tribe's spirits; writing them off as dead gives them the closure they need to continue traveling on meager rations.

Halflings are brave and resilient folk, and this pseudo-tribe of wanderers is no different. Should the tribe's crisis be solved, the halflings will bounce back—for adversity is the very stuff of adventure, and it is adventure that the halflings signed on for.

*Few things in this
world can break a
halfling's spirit.*



ULDRA CATTLE RUSTLER

Mountain or Urban Encounter, Tier I

Uldras are the bane of farmers across the Arctic, where a sheep's wool can mean the difference between life and death. These diminutive, blue-skinned arctic fey are fervent defenders of the natural world. They consider few crimes as terrible as "animal slavery" and will go to great lengths to "liberate" livestock.

An **uldra** known as Icecap has recently freed a flock of sheep from their vile prison, a farm outside Manavik, a small human settlement described in *Manavik Under Fire*. Without the sheep, the village will either freeze or starve in the depths of winter. News of the raid spreads quickly and the jarl puts out a bounty of 50 gp for whomever returns the flock or brings the cattle rustler to justice.

The flock can be tracked through a successful DC 13 Survival check, which takes an hour. The trail leads to an expanse of hills the sheep are stubbornly trying to find grass in. Frolicking at the heart of the flock is Icecap, who considers the sheep his kin and kith. He bitterly opposes any attempts to return them and is willing to die on that hill.

Roleplaying Icecap. The fey creature is a well-intentioned thief who considers animals the greatest jewels of the natural world. Like all uldras, he is able to fly into a terrible rage in one moment and become perfectly calm in the next. Most mortals consider this lunacy; the fey consider it a normal trait.

You can voice Icecap with the sample dialogue below:

- "The name's Icecap; I chose it as a wee boy when I first laid eyes on a glacier. It was my third name, after Wolfbrother and Aurora. What names have you garnered?"
- "Respect Nature or be trampled by it."
- "You're nothing more than executioners! Criminals! Or worse, bystanders! How can you be so indifferent to the suffering of the innocent, you sickening—"

When Icecap sees the adventurers, he offers them a hearty greeting, speaking in perfect Common. If confronted over the "liberation," he flies into a rage and snarls, "These simple folk don't deserve to live in bondage or die in an abattoir!" Unless he is calmed down with a DC 18 Persuasion check, he attacks. To his credit, he fights to the bitter end, and, with his dying breath, condemns the adventurers as "murderers most foul."

The only peaceful solution Icecap will agree to is sparing the sheep's execution until they reach old age. He can tolerate their captivity, if their conditions are improved, and he can tolerate shearing their wool. To convince him of this requires a DC 15 Persuasion check.

URSKAN PILGRIM

Character Encounter, Tier I

The urskans are an ursine folk that dwell deep within the Arctic. Metallurgy is at the heart of their religion and culture, and their works can rival even the dwarves'. The craft is so entwined with their day-to-day lives that every urskan youth is expected to apprentice under a blacksmith for a year. No figure is more revered in urskan culture than the First Master, who pioneered metallurgy among his people and later ascended to divinity. Each year, urskan pilgrims pay their respects at the Tomb of the First Master (see *Tomb of the Mythic Smith*). A character can recall this with a successful DC 16 History check.

Rel'bha Vi'ckagha'la is one of these pilgrims and he has been on his own for nearly three weeks now. He was separated from his peers by a sentient blizzard (see *Living Blizzard*). Trusting that they would continue trekking towards the tomb, Rel'bha has decided to soldier on by his lonesome.

Statistics. Rel'bha is a **priest** with the following changes:

- He has a Strength of 16 (3+), raising his Mace attack to +5 to hit and 8 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.
- His unarmed strikes deal 5 (1d4+3) slashing damage on a hit.
- He counts as one size larger when determining his carrying capacity and the weight he can push, drag, or lift.
- He is adapted for areas of extreme cold.
- He has advantage on Stealth checks to remain hidden while in snowy terrain.
- He can read, write, and speak Urskan, a language composed of syllables and growls (indicated by an apostrophe or dash when written in another language's script).
- He wears chain mail and a shield, both of which he himself forged, raising his AC to 18.
- He has the following extra spells prepared: *elemental weapon*, *heat metal*, *identify*, *magic weapon*, *protection from energy*, and *searing smite*.

Meeting the Pilgrim. When the adventurers encounter the urskan, he is busy battling against a **yeti** with 43 hit points left. Rel'bha himself is at 20 hit points. A successful DC 14 Arcana check identifies him as an urskan. As the adventurers watch, the priest's mace becomes wreathed in fire, causing the yeti to howl in fear (Rel'bha casts *searing smite* on his turn).

In the aftermath of the battle, Rel'bha greets the adventurers curtly and displays suspicion. A successful DC 14 Insight check grants the following insight: he is not spoiling for a fight but is ready to oblige the fool that dares try him.

Treasure. Rel'bha wears a holy symbol made of iron worth 25 gp, as well as 1d4+2 pieces of bronze or iron jewelry each worth 10 gp. He also has an explorer's pack with 1d4+5 rations.

Roleplaying Rel'bha. Like most urskans, Rel'bha is a grim-faced utilitarianism with a deep appreciation for metallurgy. He has been raised to always consider the needs of the many before the needs of the few (hence why he did not try to reunite with his companions), as exemplified by the urskan adage, "If the tribe is well..."

In rolling Common marked by high- and low-pitched growls, Rel'bha explains, "I am on my way to pay respects to the First Master, deity and patron of my people. If you appreciate the forge and hammer, or wish to gain an appreciation for it, I bid you to join me." A character recalls the First Master with a DC 16 Religion check.

If the adventurers agree, Rel'bha leads them on a journey that takes 1d4+1 days. Thereafter, run *Tomb of the Mythic Smith*.

WORG SLEDS

Polar Encounter, Tier 1

Since their discovery of the dog sled, the Arctic's goblinoids have entered a golden age of travel and pillaging. Using **worgs**, they can speed across the snow faster than any dog sled. You have two variants for this encounter:

RAIDERS OF THE FROZEN WASTES

A chorus of devilish shrieks echo out across the snow; over the hill bounds a pair of **worgs**—nay, *three* pairs of worgs, each slavering and encrusted with fresh snow. Upon the sled that the beasts pull are goblinoids: a **bugbear** and 1d4+2 **goblins**, all howling and brandishing shortbows, javelins, and crude lances. At your discretion, this sled is just one of 1d4 and one bugbear is a **bugbear chief**.

Tactics. The goblinoids and their worgs employ these tactics:

- The **worgs** pull the sled at a speed of 40 feet; they use the Dodge action while in combat or the Dash action if they need to close the gap on prey or flee. The sled can only go as fast as the slowest worg.
- One **goblin** must use their action to guide the sled, acting as the musher. The remaining goblins pepper their foes with arrows and slings.
- The bugbear wields a lance (+4 to hit, 9 (1d12+2) piercing damage on a hit; has disadvantage if the target is within 5 ft.) that it uses when within 10 feet; otherwise, it throws one of its 1d4+6 javelins.

Treasure. The goblinoids have already pillaged today, but the pickings were meager. Every sled has 2d10+15 gp, 3d8+11 sp, and 4d12+22 cp; 2d4+2 rations, and 1d3 random adventurer packs (see *PHB* pg. 151). One has also taken a set of *cast-off splint armor* (*XGE* pg. 136) from a slain adventurer.

FERRY OF THE FROZEN WASTES

An innovative band of goblinoids have learned that rather than raid the Arctic, they can make an easy profit ferrying across it. Signs across the region point towards this "Ferry of the Frozen Wastes" in Goblin, Common, and crude Dwarvish runes.

The enterprise is headed by Sarg Penguin-snatcher, a **goblin boss** who can always be found with a wax tablet, upon which invoices are spread. On his belt is a coinpurse with 4d6+6 gp, 12d8+16 sp, and 4d6+24 cp, all clanging together. He charges 25 gp per sled per day, but can be convinced to lower his price to 15 gp with a successful DC 14 Persuasion check.

Sarg's enterprise is protected by four **bugbears** and up to six **goblins** (who account for his mushers). The goblinoids shelter from the cold in a spacious cabin that they've been renovating these last four months. Sarg offers a 5 gp discount to carpenters who lend their expertise and tools to help the goblinoids better their new home.

Sarg has six sleds, each with four **worgs** and a **goblin** apiece. Stronger than hounds, a single team can pull a combined weight of 480 pounds; the sled accounts for 250 pounds; the goblin averages 70 pounds when clad in heavy furs. A single sled can cover ten miles a day.

Roleplaying Worgs. These sapient monsters speak Goblin, as well as a language of their own. Evil is in their very nature, but the promise of profits has convinced them from pouncing on customers. They bemoan their working conditions, the weather, and their passengers; the goblinoid musher controlling them can understand much of what they say, even when they're snarling in Worg. The musher often answers, "Yeah, yeah, see where unionizing gets you..."

WOUNDED SLED DOGS

Polar Encounter, Tier 1

The wind shifts, carrying canine whimpers. An adventurer that succeeds on a DC 13 Perception check can hear the frightened beasts, which are huddled beneath a snowdrift two hundred feet away. The scene is grim: six **mastiffs** are lashed to a shattered dog sled, with another two dead hounds nearby, their intestines draped across the snow. Tracks and red smears lead to the east.

A person that approaches within 5 feet of a hound is snapped at (+3 to hit, 1d6+1 piercing dmg.). A successful DC 15 Animal Handling check calms the hounds down, allowing characters to safely undo their harnesses and inspect their wounds. The dogs' pelts are coated in light frost; some have been scraped by claws and one has been bitten, but the wound is shallow. A character can bind the wound with a DC 11 Medicine check; on a failure, the hound lashes out in pain.

Fresh snow is already beginning to fall, giving the party little time to analyze or inspect the tracks. With a successful DC 14 Nature check, a character can confirm they aren't bear or wolf tracks but reptilian in nature. With a DC 14 Survival check, one can follow the tracks to a nearby ice cave where a **white dragon wyrmling** is feasting on a dead elf.

The wyrmling is missing a wing, which was severed from an adventurer last year. Robbed of its birthright, the wyrmling has taken to trotting across the frozen wastes, ambushing prey from inside snowdrifts or burrowing up from below.

The cave is littered with six, half-eaten corpses: a halfling, three humans, and two dwarves. The wyrmling has piled their valuables into one single heap and buried it in snow. To find this meager hoard requires a DC 14 Investigation check.

Treasure. The wyrmling's hoard consists of 2d10+16 gp, 3d8 + 12 sp, and 4d12+21 cp, as well as a holy symbol devoted to Lathander, a whistle whittled from a gold-colored wood, and a *driftglobe* (*DMG* pg. 166).

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APPENDIX B: BESTIARY

This supplement introduces several new creatures, the statistics of which are detailed below.

ADULT WHITE DRACOLICH

A white dracolich retains its Regional Effects as well as its Lair Actions in undeath.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the dragon can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Freezing fog fills a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the dragon can see within 120 feet of it. The fog spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. Each creature in the fog when it appears must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that ends its turn in the fog takes 10 (3d6) cold damage. A wind of at least 20 miles per hour disperses the fog. The fog otherwise lasts until the dragon uses this lair action again or until the dragon dies.

- Jagged ice shards fall from the ceiling, striking up to three creatures underneath that the dragon can see within 120 feet of it. The dragon makes one ranged attack roll (+7 to hit) against each target. On a hit, the target takes 10 (3d6) piercing damage.
- The dragon creates an opaque wall of ice on a solid surface it can see within 120 feet of it. The wall can be up to 30 feet long, 30 feet high, and 1 foot thick. When the wall appears, each creature within its area is pushed 5 feet out of the wall's space; appearing on whichever side of the wall it wants. Each 10-foot section of the wall has AC 5, 30 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to acid, cold, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage. The wall disappears when the dragon uses this lair action again or when the dragon dies.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a legendary white dragon's lair is warped by the dragon's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- Chilly fog lightly obscures the land within 6 miles of the dragon's lair.

- Freezing precipitation falls within 6 miles of the dragon's lair, sometimes forming blizzard conditions when the dragon is at rest.

- Icy walls block off areas in the dragon's lair. Each wall is 6 inches thick, and a 10-foot section has AC 5, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to acid, cold, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage.

- If the dragon wishes to move through a wall, it can do so without slowing down. The portion of the wall the dragon moves through is destroyed, however.

If the dragon dies, the fog and precipitation fade within 1 day. The ice walls melt over the course of 1d10 days.

ADULT WHITE DRACOLICH

Huge undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 200 (16d12 + 96)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +11, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Perception +11, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 14 (11500 XP)

Ice Walk. The dragon can move across and climb icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice or snow doesn't cost it extra movement.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The dracolich has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) cold damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales an icy blast in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The adult white dracolich can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The adult white dracolich regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The dracolich makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. The dracolich makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The dracolich beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dracolich must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dracolich can then fly up to half its flying speed.

CULTISTS OF ELEMENTAL EVIL

Featured in *Princes of the Apocalypse*, these cultists are devoted to the Princes of Elemental Evil. Their statistics have been reprinted for this supplement and their lore summarized below.

Cult of the Black Earth. Devoted to Ogrémoch, the cultists of the Black Earth are unyielding in their principles, decisions, and tactics. They are grave foes of the Howling Hatred cult. Their unique members are **black earth guards** and **black earth priests**.

Cult of the Crushing Wave. Dedicated to Olhydra, the Crushing Wave cult haunts the seas, coastlines, and lakes. They see water not as the foundation of life, but its rightful reaper. Their ranks consist of **crushing wave priests**, **crushing wave reavers**, and **dark tide knights**.

Cult of the Eternal Flame. Adherents to Imix the ravenous, these cultists favor aggressive tactics and ascetic lifestyles to prove one's devotion. They are fierce enemies of the Crushing Wave cult. Their members consist of **eternal flame guardians**, **eternal flame priests**, and **flamewraths**.

Cult of the Howling Hatred. As cunning as their inscrutable master, Yan-C-Bin, the Howling Hatred cultists favor subtlety and misdirection. Their members consist of **howling hatred initiates**, **howling hatred priests**, and **hurricanes**.

BLACK EARTH GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Intimidation +1, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Unyielding. When the guard is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

BLACK EARTH PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (splint armor)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *blade ward*, *light*, *mending*, *mold earth*

1st level (4 slots): *earth tremor*, *expeditious retreat*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *shatter*, *spider climb*

3rd level (2 slots): *slow*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The priest makes two melee attacks.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Unyielding. When the priest is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

CRUSHING WAVE PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +5, Religion +2, Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat*, *ice knife*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *hold person*

3rd level (2 slots): *sleet storm*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

CRUSHING WAVE REAVER

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Sharktoothed Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands. Against a target is wearing no armor, the reaver deals an extra die of damage with this sword.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

DARK TIDE KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Bonded Knight. The knight is magically bound to a beast with an innate swimming speed trained to serve as its mount. While mounted on this beast, the knight gains the beast's senses and ability to breathe underwater. The bonded mount obeys the knight's commands. If its mount dies, the knight can train a new beast to serve as its bonded mount, a process requiring a month.

Sneak Attack. The knight deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the knight that isn't incapacitated and the knight doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the knight can see hits it with an attack, the knight can halve the damage against it.

ETERNAL FLAME GUARDIAN

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, shield)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Flaming Weapon (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the guard can wreath one melee weapon it is wielding in flame. The guard is unharmed by this fire, which lasts until the end of the guard's next turn. While wreathed in flame, the weapon deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage on a hit.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

ETERNAL FLAME PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Religion +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, create bonfire, fire bolt, light, minor illusion*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, expeditious retreat, mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur, scorching ray*

3rd level (2 slots): *fireball*

FLAMEWRATH

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +3, Religion +3

Damage Immunities fire

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 6 (2300 XP)

Spellcasting. The flamewrath is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, fire bolt, friends, light, minor illusion*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, color spray, mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *scorching ray, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, hypnotic pattern*

4th level (1 slot): *fire shield* (see *Wreathed in Flame*)

Wreathed In Flame. For the flamewrath, the warm version of the *fire shield* spell has a duration of "until dispelled." The fire shield bums for 10 minutes after the flamewrath dies, consuming its body.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

HOWLING HATRED INITIATE

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Guiding Wind (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the initiate gains advantage on the next ranged attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

Hold Breath. The initiate can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

HOWLING HATRED PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Auran, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hold Breath. The priest can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward, gust, light, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall, shield, witch bolt*

2nd level (3 slots): *dust devil, gust of wind*

3rd level (2 slots): *gaseous form*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The priest makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

HURRICANE

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Auran, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The hurricane is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward, gust, light, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall, jump, thunderwave*

2nd level (2 slots): *gust of wind*

Unarmored Defense. While the hurricane is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While the hurricane is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 15 feet (included in its speed).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hurricane makes two melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. When the hurricane is hit by a ranged weapon attack, it reduces the damage from the attack by 1d10 + 9. If the damage is reduced to 0, the hurricane can catch the missile if it is small enough to hold in one hand and the hurricane has at least one hand free.

LIVING SPELLS

Magic itself can be granted a semblance of life by powerful or resourceful spellcasters (often wizards and sorcerers). A living spell typically adopts the same alignment as its creator, unless they specifically shape it not to.

Not all living spells are created by spellcasters; areas soaked in powerful or wild magic can give rise to sentient spells who have no other course to chart in this world but destruction.

LIVING ICE KNIFE

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities cold

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Magical Strike. *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) cold damage

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5-6). The living spell flings a shard of ice at one target within 60 feet of it, making a ranged spell attack (+5 to hit), dealing 5 (1d10) piercing damage on a hit. The shard then explodes; the target and all creatures within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 cold damage.

LIVING ICE STORM

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 57 (6d10 + 24)

Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities cold

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

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

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The living spell makes two Magical Strike attacks.

Magical Strike. *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (5d6 + 4) cold damage.

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5-6). The living spell unleashes a hail of ice in a 20-foot-radius, 40-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within 300 feet. Each creature in the cylinder must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and 14 (4d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Until the start of the living spell's next turn, the cylinder into is difficult terrain.

LIVING SNOWBALL SWARM

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 25 ft., fly 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities cold

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Magic Resistance. The living spell has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Magical Strike. *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) cold damage

Spell Mimicry (Recharge 5-6). The living spell causes a flurry of snowballs to erupt from a point it chooses within 90 feet. Each creature in a 5-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

ULDRA

Uldras are diminutive, blue-skinned arctic fey that come into frequent contact with mortal settlements. They, like all fey, experience emotions differently than mortals; uldras are prone to wild mood swings. An uldra can fly into a rage at a moment's notice and be calm the next. Mortals tend to regard them as insane, but uldras consider these mood swings natural and logical; it's the rest of the world that bottles up their emotions, they say.

Uldras are fierce protectors of the natural world. They have a fierce bond with animals and many take it upon themselves to defend nature and its creatures. Many an uldra has sown terror among mortals in the name of the natural world.

ULDRA

Small fey, chaotic good

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 31 (7d6 + 7)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Animal Handling +7, Nature +5, Perception +5

Damage Resistances cold

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Sylvan and any other two languages

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Magic Resistance. The uldra has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Touch Of Frost. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage.

WERESEAL

Living often only in legends, the wereseal is the Arctic's most misunderstood lycanthrope. It is the boogeyman of many a tale, an accusation hurled in frigid seaside villages, and a creature that mortal men eradicate on sight. Unlike werewolves, wereseals are not inherently malicious and prefer to remain among walruses and seals, protecting them from natural predators. They are more akin to the peaceful, distant werebears.

Alas, no two wereseals are alike; they may be evil, good, or somewhere in between. Generally, they despise ordinary folk and live among the ice floes or along forbidding coasts. Some are welcomed by darfellan villages after partaking in skirmishes against the sahuagin.

Characters as Wereseals. The *Monster Manual* has rules for characters afflicted with lycanthropy. The text below applies to wereseal characters specifically.

The Strength of a character cursed with wereseal lycanthropy becomes 15 if it wasn't already higher. Attack and damage rolls for the wereseal's bite are based on the character's Strength. The character also gains a +1 bonus to its AC while in seal or hybrid form (from natural armor).

WERESEAL

Medium humanoid (any race, shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 11 (12 in seal or hybrid form)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft., swim 40 ft. in seal form; 30 ft., swim 40 ft. in hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages One language (can't speak in seal form)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The wereseal can use its action to polymorph into a seal-humanoid hybrid or into a seal, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Frostborn. The wereseal is naturally adapted for environments of extreme cold. Additionally, it can swim in frigid water without suffering any ill effects.

Hold Breath. The wereseal can hold its breath for up to two hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wereseal makes two attacks: two with its spear (humanoid form) or two with its bite.

Bite (Seal Or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wereseal lycanthropy.

Spear (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

APPENDIX C: EFFECTS

The many effects referenced in this supplement are detailed in this appendix. For details, see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

BEAR TRAP

Simple Trap

A bear trap resembles a set of iron jaws that springs shut when stepped on, clamping down on a creature's leg. The trap is spiked in the ground, leaving the victim immobilized.

Trigger. A creature that steps on the bear trap triggers it.

Effect. *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, triggering creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage. This attack can't gain advantage or disadvantage. A creature hit by the trap has its speed reduced to 0. It can't move until it breaks free of the trap, which requires a successful DC 15 Strength check by the creature or another creature adjacent to the trap.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the trap. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables it.

DESECRATED GROUND

Wilderness Hazard

Some cemeteries and catacombs are imbued with the unseen traces of ancient evil. An area of desecrated ground can be any size, and a detect evil and good spell cast within range reveals its presence.

Undead standing on desecrated ground have advantage on all saving throws.

A vial of holy water purifies a 10-foot-square area of desecrated ground when sprinkled on it, and a *hallow* spell purifies desecrated ground within its area.

EXTREME COLD

Weather

Whenever the temperature is at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, a creature exposed to the cold must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear (thick coats, gloves, and the like) and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates.

EXTREME HEAT

Weather

When the temperature is at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, a creature exposed to the heat and without access to drinkable water must succeed on a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. The DC is 5 for the first hour and increases by 1 for each additional hour.

Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor, or who are clad in heavy clothing, have disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures naturally adapted to hot climates.

FRIGID WATER

Wilderness Hazard

A creature can be immersed in frigid water for a number of minutes equal to its Constitution score before suffering any ill effects. Each additional minute spent in frigid water requires the creature to succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures that are naturally adapted to living in ice-cold water.

HEAVY PRECIPITATION

Weather

Everything within an area of heavy rain or heavy snowfall is lightly obscured, and creatures in the area have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. Heavy rain also extinguishes open flames and imposes disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

HIGH ALTITUDE

Wilderness Hazard

Traveling at altitudes of 10,000 feet or higher above sea level is taxing for a creature that needs to breathe, because of the reduced amount of oxygen in the air. Each hour such a creature spends traveling at high altitude counts as 2 hours for the purpose of determining how long that creature can travel.

Breathing creatures can become acclimated to a high altitude by spending 30 days or more at this elevation. Breathing creatures can't become acclimated to elevations above 20,000 feet unless they are native to such environments.

MADNESS

Madness can occur in one of three forms:

- A character afflicted with **short-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Short-Term Madness table for 1d10 minutes.
- A character afflicted with **long-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Long-Term Madness table for 1d10 × 10 hours.
- A character afflicted with **indefinite madness** gains a new character flaw from the Indefinite Madness table that lasts until cured.

Curing Madness. A *calm emotions* spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a *lesser restoration* spell can rid a character of a short-term or long-term madness. Depending on the source of the madness, *remove curse* or *dispel evil and good* might also prove effective. A *greater restoration* spell or more powerful magic is required to rid a character of indefinite madness.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS

d100	Effects (lasts 1d10 minutes)
1-20	The character retreats into his or her mind and becomes paralyzed. The effect ends if the character takes any damage.
21-30	The character becomes incapacitated and spends the duration screaming, laughing, or weeping.
31-40	The character becomes frightened and must use his or her action and movement each round to flee from the source of the fear.
41-50	The character begins babbling and is incapable of normal speech or spellcasting.
51-60	The character must use his or her action each round to attack the nearest creature.
61-70	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
71-75	The character does whatever anyone tells him or her to do that isn't obviously self-destructive.
76-80	The character experiences an overpowering urge to eat something strange such as dirt, slime, or offal.
81-90	The character is stunned.
91-100	The character falls unconscious.

LONG-TERM MADNESS

d100	Effects (lasts 1d10 x 10 hours)
1-10	The character feels compelled to repeat a specific activity over and over, such as washing hands, touching things, praying, or counting coins.
11-20	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
21-30	The character suffers extreme paranoia. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks.
31-40	The character regards something (usually the source of madness) with intense revulsion, as if affected by the antipathy effect of the <i>antipathy/sympathy</i> spell.
41-45	The character experiences a powerful delusion. Choose a potion. The character imagines that they're under its effects.
46-55	The character becomes attached to a "lucky charm," such as a person or an object, and has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws while more than 30 feet from it.
56-65	The character is blinded (25%) or deafened (75%).
66-75	The character experiences uncontrollable tremors or tics, which impose disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws that involve Strength or Dexterity.
76-85	The character suffers from partial amnesia. The character knows who he or she is and retains racial traits and class features, but doesn't recognize other people or remember anything that happened before the madness took effect.
86-90	Whenever the character takes damage, he or she must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as though he or she failed a saving throw against the confusion spell. The confusion effect lasts for 1 minute.
91-95	The character loses the ability to speak.
96-100	The character falls unconscious. No amount of jostling or damage can wake the character.

INDEFINITE MADNESS

d100	Flaw (lasts until cured)
1-15	"Being drunk keeps me sane."
16-25	"I keep whatever I find." "I try to become more like someone else I know—
26-30	adopting his or her style of dress, mannerisms, and name."
31-35	"I must bend the truth, exaggerate, or outright lie to be interesting to other people."
36-45	"Achieving my goal is the only thing of interest to me, and I'll ignore everything else to pursue it."
46-50	"I find it hard to care about anything that goes on around me."
51-55	"I don't like the way people judge me all the time."
56-70	"I am the smartest, wisest, strongest, fastest, and most beautiful person I know." "I am convinced that powerful enemies are hunting
71-80	me, and their agents are everywhere I go. I am sure they're watching me all the time."
81-85	"There's only one person I can trust. And only I can see this special friend."
86-95	"I can't take anything seriously. The more serious the situation, the funnier I find it."
96-100	"I've discovered that I really like killing people."

SLIPPERY ICE

Wilderness Hazard

Slippery ice is difficult terrain. When a creature moves onto slippery ice for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

STRONG WIND

Weather

A strong wind imposes disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. A strong wind also extinguishes open flames, disperses fog, and makes flying by nonmagical means nearly impossible. A flying creature in a strong wind must land at the end of its turn or fall.

A strong wind in a desert can create a sandstorm that imposes disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

THIN ICE

Wilderness Hazard

Thin ice has a weight tolerance of 3d10 × 10 pounds per 10-foot-square area. Whenever the total weight on an area of thin ice exceeds its tolerance, the ice in that area breaks. All creatures on broken ice fall through.

WEBS

Giant spiders weave thick, sticky webs across passages and at the bottom of pits to snare prey. These web-filled areas are difficult terrain. Moreover, a creature entering a webbed area for the first time on a turn or starting its turn there must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by the webs. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing so with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Each 10-foot cube of giant webs has AC 10, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage.

EXPLORE THE FROZEN WASTES

The Arctic is a place rich with peril and glory. Its people, disparate and often desperate, face threats in every snowdrift. Despite its many dangers, life still persists so far from the warmth of greener lands. Heroes and villains roam the wastes and tundras in search of secrets, glory, and power, all while ordinary folk struggle to stay alive.

This supplement contains over one-hundred Arctic-themed encounters, all fleshed out with further variants, making it perfect for any campaign set in the frozen north, in frigid mountain ranges, or countries painted white by winter. Explore tombs of forgotten magi, invade the iceberg-lair of a dracolich, face the Mimigloo, and more in this tome by one of the Guild's bestselling authors.

