



WINTER'S FLAME

This year's Midwinter holiday efforts have been met with unusual obstacles: small stockpiles rummaged through, foods spoiling, ale casks leaking, festive clothes torn up, and crucial pembelon fruits missing. With schedules and deadlines rigid, any bigger bumps in the road might result in disaster. Who would want to keep the people of Chult from celebrating this long-revered holiday?

A Two-Hour Adventure for 1st-4th Level Characters



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Winter's Flame*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system. Although the adventure is set in Chult, it is not explicitly part of the *Tomb of Annihilation* storyline season.

This adventure takes place entirely within the walls of **Port Nyanzaru**, a beautiful city at the edge of the Chultan Peninsula, full of exotic smells, sounds, sights, and architecture unlike that found anywhere else in Faerûn.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five 3rd level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure should take approximately two hours to complete. However, if the players are having a good time and you have the time to spare, let them explore all that this holiday can offer!

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party	Strength
3-4 characters,	APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters,	APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters,	APL greater than	Average
5 characters,	APL less than	Weak
5 characters,	APL equivalent	Average
5 characters,	APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters,	APL less than	Average
6-7 characters,	APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters,	APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or

appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

ADVENTURE PRIMER

One kind word can warm three winter months.

-- Japanese proverb

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In centuries past, the Midwinter Festival has, all over Faerun, been a somber affair of reflection and observation. At the peak of the harshest season, observers of Midwinter remember battles hard fought, incredible losses and travesties, all the lives lost to senseless wars and the evils that brought it all about. It's only in the last few decades that the usually depressive holiday has been a time of seasonal celebration. And for the small island of Chult, the news of Midwinter's new look has only recently arrived.

It's that time of year once again and the denizens of the Chultan settlements of Port Nyanzaru and Fort Beluarian are on the final day of their week-long road-reparative celebration of Reach. Long days of work and all-too short nights of partying have brought the road that connects the two cities back into pristine condition. With the transitional tradition of Middle only a few hours away, the city-joining merrymaking bash of Midwinter Festival has almost arrived, but this year efforts have been met with unusual obstacles: small stockpiles rummaged through, foods stolen, ale casks broken, festive clothes torn up, and crucial pembedon fruits missing. With schedules and deadlines rigid, any more bumps in the road might result in disaster. If the past month of ever-escalating theft and vandalism is any indication of what's to come, the Chultan revelers may be in danger. Or worse yet, the pembedons!

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

Port Nyanzaru bears the fitting moniker of "the Gateway to Chult." It is a beautiful, vibrant city full of exotic smells, sounds, sights, and architecture unlike that found anywhere else in Faerûn. Its beauty, however, belies the dangers that lurk within and beyond its walls.

Ouen Azemar (OH-en ah-ZEE-mahr). Lieutenant (Flame) in the Flaming Fists and captain of this year's Midwinter security force, the Snowmen. Capable combatant and uses enchanted gems to bolster his fire magic.

The Flaming Fist. Originally based in Baldur's Gate, the Flaming Fist now operates Fort Beluarian just outside of Port Nyanzaru.

The Snowmen. The newest recruits of the Flaming Fist (and sometimes including a few remedial personnel) are assigned to the Snowmen during the Midwinter Festival in Port Nyanzaru.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Winter's Flame consists of three parts.

Part 1. The characters arrive at Port Nyanzaru and are introduced to the festivities. There are decorations, food and drink, and, most importantly, Midwinter games! During the fun, a crowd gathers; Ouen Azemar and some of his festival security force, the Snowmen, are investigating another case of theft and vandalism.

Part 2. The countdown to the climactic 12-hour celebration is almost over, and after the characters make their way to the Middle, disaster strikes: a 15-foot galeb duhr named Slab has emerged from a cavern beneath the stage and is wreaking havoc.

Part 3. After fighting Slab without success and witnessing his little coal minions gathering pembedons from nearby merchant carts and stores, it becomes clear that something else is afoot. Looking in the hole that Slab climbed out of, the characters see the real reason for Slab's intrusion. As Slab breaks down into the elemental equivalent of tears, the characters find out that the galeb duhr is only there to help his friend and pet fire snake, Smoll - and that all he needs is some pembedons.

STORY BEAT: MIDWINTER FESTIVAL

The Chultan Midwinter Festival is a regionally-unique take on the traditionally somber but recently celebratory holiday in which the citizens of Fort Beluarian and Port Nyanzaru come together in a week-long, labor-intensive tradition. The first 4 days is a preparatory tradition known as "Stocking the Stores", wherein the two settlements pool efforts to gather all manner of supplies for the coming two day-long road-reparative celebration of Reach. Long days of work and all-too short nights of partying eventually peak just as the sun goes down in a short, 30-minute decompressive firework-laden racket called, and located at, the "Middle". Finally, everyone comes together on the tenth day for the 12-hour-long ally-joining bash of Midwinter Festival.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Listed below are several potential adventure hooks that you can use to get your players involved in the adventure. Alternately, you can create your own using the details from the Story Beat: Midwinter Festival sidebar or even drop this adventure into the middle of another session – such as when the characters return from the jungle to Port Nyanzaru so that they can restock.

Returning Visitors: After recent visits to the area during Tomb of Annihilation, the characters heard talks of Chult's unique approach to the Midwinter Festival, and wanted to see it for themselves. Chult's

natural isolation, "winter" season weather, and propensity for danger all add up to equal an unlikely destination point for tourists, especially for a celebration so focused on winter and all things cold.

Just in Case: Perhaps you have worked with them or for them in previous adventures, or perhaps they've just heard positive reviews of your prowess but the Flaming Fist has asked for a favor. You've been asked to attend the Midwinter Festival in Port Nyanzaru - just in case, of course. Some weird stuff has been going on and it would be best if there was a tested group of adventurers in the crowd.

Say "Hi" to the Family: One or more, of the characters has family either involved in or attending the Midwinter Festival. You've blown them off time and time again; if you don't check in and at least say "Hello", you won't hear the end of it.



PART 1. INTO THE FESTIVAL!

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

When the adventure opens, the characters find themselves at the docks of Port Nyanzaru. It's early afternoon and the bulk of the festival's partygoers are arriving. Ahead of them is a crowd gathering around a festively dressed man on a small stage. He's about to speak on the festival, detailing some of the history behind the Midwinter Festival and, specifically, Chult's take on it. Past him is the entrance to the festival grounds. If the players decide to stay and listen, read or paraphrase the following:

The man grumbles to himself and wipes at his shoulders, a scowl of irritability playing across on his face. As the snow is cast into the air, it vanishes.

He approaches the podium and clears his throat. "How's it going, folks. Listen up; I'm not going to say this again. Welcome to Port Nyanzaru and to the *Midwinter Festival*. I'm going to read off a bit of information about today's festivities. As you may or may not know, today is the final day of *Reach*. At sundown, we will transition to the, uh, climactic *Middle* blowout, and finally, we'll get into the *Midwinter Festival* celebration after sundown. My name is, uh, Ouen Azemar: Lieutenant of the Flaming Fist and Captain of the Snowmen. "

ROLEPLAYING OUEN AZEMAR

Ouen is cold and hardened, but dedicated to the job. He's efficient, forward, almost aggressively so, but the few closest to him know just how compassionate and young-at-heart he truly is. Ordered to lead the incompetent, inexperienced Snowmen, Ouen has taken up the mantle year after year despite the ridicule, and still wears his uniform with pride.

As a young eldritch knight, he is a capable combatant and bolsters his fire magic by channeling spells through gem stones socketed into his armor. He is a Lieutenant (Flame) in the Flaming Fists and Captain of the seasonally-assembled Midwinter security force, the Snowmen.

With a permanent glower and gruff demeanor, he's not an easy man to know, but anyone that knows him can easily express that he is a reputable and trustworthy soldier and friend – once his crusty exterior is pierced.

Quote: "Our job is to protect and serve, and if we've got to look festive doing it, so be it"

BY THE GODS, A HOLIDAY!

The characters can learn a bit more about the Midwinter holiday and its traditions by using some of their skills. Alternately, the characters may learn some or all of these points due to people talking excitedly about their heritage during the festival.

- **Intelligence (History) DC 8.** The Midwinter Festival in its celebratory form is a new tradition. Historically, Midwinter was a time of observance and remembrance - a time to reflect on the year and all the hardships you or your kin may have encountered in seasons past. Only in the past two centuries has it become a time of peace and community gathering.
- **Intelligence (History) DC 12.** Nearly 100 years ago at the end of the Spellplague, an evil wizard by the name of Yutun fie Ghelzir had established a stronghold of magical ice amidst the Peaks of Flame, far to the south in Chult. After some time of inaction, the wizard presumably died. With that, the people of Chult now celebrate their unity by utilizing some of the magics gleaned from the evil wizard to make their celebration more festive.
- **Intelligence (History) DC 14.** Yutun fie Ghelzir was as brilliant as he was cruel and unfeeling. His obsessions drove him to the Peaks of Flame where he studied and experimented with all things cold and frozen. Some say that his fortress still stands and that his vile, chilled essence permeates the coldest reaches of Chult – from the mountain tops to the underground caverns where even the dwarves fear to tread.
- **Intelligence (Nature) DC 8.** Pembelon, a fruit native to Chult that naturally has a heating effect on any creature that consumes it, can be changed by cold magic to have a pleasant chilling effect instead. The fruit is important to the people of Chult and worth a fair amount on the mainland.
- **Intelligence (Arcana) DC 14.** Much of Ghelzir's magic was channeled into a binding crystal of enormous size. With this crystal housing incredible amounts of cold magic, Ghelzir was able to influence and, in a small way, suppress the volcanic activity inside the Peak of Flames.

DEVELOPMENT

When the characters are ready to head to the festival grounds, proceed to the next section.

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

This section can be run in a fairly free-form fashion. Be aware of your available time, but encourage everyone to interact with the games and environment.

As the characters pass through the gates of a large, festively decorated obscuring wall, they enter a large area akin to a rounded courtyard. There are a few signs and directories spread around, what looks to be a crowded path that leads into the main festival itself, three large, identical booths side by side topped with signs reading "Token Exchange," a sizable cottage spilling over with lights, music, and countless guests. The billboard above it reads, "Prize Box." And off to the side are several glowing portals, a sign over head reads "To Fort Beluarian."

Depending on where the characters want to go, you can read or paraphrase the following information:

Signs and Directories. A wooden post, with arrows pointing in all different directions, stands near the edge of the festival grounds. In glittering gold calligraphy, the signs read: "To the Docks," "To the Reach," "Token Exchange," "Prize Box," "Portals." One arrow points straight down. It reads "You Are Here."

Token Exchange. Inside, the token exchange hut is loud and hot. The clinking of metal coins, laughter and conversation, along with the faintest hum of Midwinter music all mash together into a festive cacophony that borders on "too much." There are ten tellers dressed in colorful vests and light-up hats. In front of them, marked by velvet ropes, are 10 lines. When approached, a teller greets any visitor with "A Merry Midwinter Festival to you! How can I help you?"

Prize Box. Inside the pulsing cottage, it's like a madhouse. The walls are filled with stuffed animals, toy weapons, goofy hats, and candies galore; there's truly anything and everything imaginable. There are 20 tellers dressed in colorful vests and light-up hats. In front of them, marked by velvet ropes, are a mash of people faintly resembling separate lines.

Once the characters have had a few moments to familiarize themselves with these three elements, continue on to the festival grounds proper by reading or summarizing the following:

Lights: white and silver, brilliant, multicolored, twinkling and flickering strands wrap every tree, booth, store, and street sign in sight. Radiantly polished brass light posts line every edge, every path, and hold aloft enormous candles; their open flames quaver and twitch dripping hot wax onto red-berried vines wrapped about their base. Music swings through the air: melodies of plush strings and crystal horns woven into a well-worn quilt loomed by the comforting nostalgia of age-old holiday carols. At the jungle's edge, wrapping each lanky palm tree's trunk are silver and gold garlands; the tree's green, fan-like fronds bend like bows beneath hung, hollowed fruits and roots, each with a candle inside revealing with warm light a smiling face or awkward festive shape carved into the surface.

Pathways peppered with families, all wrapped in heavy fur coats, watch through windows as artisans fold pearlescent colored sugars into hard candies, bakers cut shapes from table-length sheets of dough, and chocolatiers pour steaming tawny silks into magnificent molds.

The sounds, the music: the same gentle hymns float in the background, but are now joined by the aural fullness of cooking foods, pouring pints, the jingle of tiny bells, the near and distant euphony of laughter, of happiness. The hiss of searing meats carried alongside its hunger-inducing aroma; the calls of merchants, of vendors offering piping hot corn cobs, freshly popping and popped popcorns, still-warm and soft caramels. You catch a glimpse of a passerby sipping the densest, overflowing cream-colored drink from a flagon so big she must carry it with two hands. There's so much here, so much to do, to eat, drink, enjoy, you're a bit overwhelmed and realize it's kind of hot outside. With all things winter, you forgot how tropical Chult really is.

IT'S GAME TIME!

Ouen Azemar is investigating another case of theft and vandalism. He is more than just the Master of Ceremonies for Midwinter Festival: this conversation introduces Ouen as an investigator and officer of the Flaming Fist, and also provides some context for what's going on. Read or paraphrase the following:

Something down an alleyway catches your eye as you travel the Port. Walking by, you overhear, "Let's keep moving, folks. Please don't crowd around. There's nothing to see." Another voice from the crowd calls out, "What happened? Is someone hurt?"

“No, sir. Everyone, listen. Please – for the love of...” The characters stop and peer over the heads of curious onlookers. A young man in a powder blue sweater with a felt snowman on the front steps back and says, “Sorry, boss” before falling in with a group of similarly dressed men and women.

“People, listen up.” A hardened, scowling man in the same kind of sweater says with his hands up.

“I’m going to say this once, so listen up,” he rumbles. The mass of people is silent. “My name is Ouen Azemar and I am Captain of the Snowmen, okay? There is nothing here worth your concern. End of story. Disperse or you will be removed from the festival grounds.” Silence. Everyone is frozen.

“Now!” He roars. His words booming like thunder, the group scatters.

Ouen can share the following information about the Snowmen, or the characters can use Charisma (Persuasion) checks (or another appropriate skill):

- **DC 8.** The *Snowmen* are comprised of the Flaming Fist’s greenest privates and corporals, some Flaming Fist-sanctioned members of Port Nyanzaru’s shipping and dock regulatory commission, and a few volunteers. All of them are inexperienced and generally more of a pain than they’re worth. Alongside a wide-spread knowledge of the Snowmen’s shortcomings is the hilarity of their “uniforms”: a light-blue wool sweater with a felt snowman sewn to the front, a simplified jester’s cap replete with bells, curl-toed boots, and a shining bronze star pinned to the chest that reads “Snowman”.
- **DC 10.** There have been 10 reported cases of theft and nearly 20 reported cases of vandalism already this year. The Snowmen are tasked with general security and investigate any disturbances or conflicts that arise during the Midwinter Festival, like theft and vandalism. The most recent theft saw the perpetrators make off with almost a dozen cases of pembedons, an exotic fruit that is central to the activities during the Festival.
- **DC 12.** The alley where the last theft took place was covered in sooty marks, as if tiny fires had been struck and quickly snuffed. A lingering scent of coal was quickly identified, and the men that witnessed the theft swear that the stones themselves stole the fruit. Upon investigation, no tracks were found to leave the alley.
- **DC 14.** Despite their overly festive attire, their spotty reputation, their significant lack of experience, and overall capabilities as authority

figures, the Snowmen have always been a part of the festival and have never once been considered unnecessary. Ouen takes this as a point of pride and believes that the Snowmen will be his lasting legacy for Port Nyanzaru and the Flaming Fist.

Ouen makes no effort to hide the array of glittering red gemstones that adorn his armor. If asked, he grunts in the affirmative and exclaims “Are you telling me that you have never seen fire gems before? Channel my magic through them. Easier than chanting or reading out of some book. Why do you ask? You got something to say? Should I keep an eye on them while you’re around?”

After a few moments of discussion, Ouen makes it abundantly clear that the investigation is ongoing. “My troops will handle it; you should just focus on enjoying the Festival. It only comes once a year!”

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

As this encounter is essentially a set of role-playing moments with some dice rolling built in, you are empowered and encouraged to make this section inviting (making sure to observe the treasure guidance indicated in the DM Appendix). If you have a combat-heavy group, you may wish to trim this section short and adjust the combat in the next section to compensate.

Excessively helpful groups may wish to assist in the ongoing investigation. Should this prove to be the case, Ouen will stress that if pembedons are the desired loot, dozens of crates are waiting inside the festival itself and could use another set of eyes to watch over them.

Give the characters ample time to explore the games of the Midwinter Festival once they part company with Ouen. Give them **Handout. Midwinter Games** and dive in to the festivities! Running the games should take the majority of the allotted time for this portion of the adventure.

TREASURE

Each of the games can reward gold, with a purse limit of 5 gp per character (the merchants and vendors just don’t have that much spare coin). Remember that every skill check a character wishes to try costs 1 ticket, and each ticket costs 1 sp.

DEVELOPMENT

As the countdown to sundown nears its end, the crowds begin to move toward the edges of the grounds where a dozen conjurers open portals to the Middle. When sundown occurs, or when the players indicate that they are ready to move on, proceed to the next section.

PART 2. STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

At sundown, regardless of if the characters have arrived at the Middle or not, the countdown completes and horns, poppers, confetti, lights, and a few fireworks go off.

As the characters move to join the other celebrants, they are immediately aware of the cheering and general positive feel of the crowd. After a few moments, read or paraphrase:

The woman's speech about community binding is suddenly interrupted by a tremendous explosion! Debris is scattered far and wide, and from a gaping hole where the stage once stood a monolithic living stone rises.

The ground quakes with each footfall, shaking the area so violently that decorations are falling off nearby trees and sending people careening into their neighbors. It lets out a ferocious, titanic roar as dozens of small, rotund creatures as black as coal scramble out from the hole and stream into the crowd.

Ouen Azemar and several other Snowmen exit the portals right beside the ruined stage. The burly man sees you standing there and bellows out "I'm going to need a little help here!"

As the characters enter the fray, Ouen and the Snowmen move to get the festival-goers to safety while the characters handle the galeb duhr.

Any character within 15 feet of the hole can see a faint orange glow coming from deep down inside of it. Should a character get to the edge of the hole, they can see a cage with a glowing fire snake inside. The cage is twenty feet down, and the glow seems unnaturally strong.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

The living stone is actually a **galeb duhr** named Slab that has developed a curious affection for a fire snake named Smoll. As combat progresses, Slab refers to itself in the 3rd person ("Slab smash you!", "No one stronger than Slab!", and so on), but endeavors to keep the characters away from the hole if at all possible.

There is no tactical map for this encounter. Instead, paint a vibrant picture with your words and use theater of the mind to keep the characters motivated and involved! Alternately, a quick sketch of a crowded festival space, a broken stage with a

hold underneath it, and 12-15 boxes of pembers scattered around the space (about 25 feet from the stage) should only take a brief moment.

The lumps of coal skitter across the ground and attempt to bring crates of pembers back to the hole. Prior to exploding from the ground, Slab had developed this plan so that the exotic fruits could be fed to the Smoll, who is currently quite ill and has been contained in a cage.

The **20 lumps of coal** are in fact animated stones. Their statistics can be found on the same page as Slab's combat statistics.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Consider the following guidance:

Asset Recovery. The lumps of coal seek to recover as many crates of pembers as they can. Once a lump slides underneath a crate, it will attempt to return to the hole where the stage used to be. This removes the lump and the crate from the combat.

Defend the Hole. If a character moves within ten feet of the hole, Slab takes immediate notice and bellows a challenge. If a character travels adjacent to the hole, Slab can use its reaction to move up to its speed and immediately shove the character away from the hole. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Mischief Managed. As there are more lumps of coal than crates of pembers, several of the lumps will attempt to get close to piles of debris and use their self-immolate action. This is intended to mislead the characters and allow for other lumps to successfully retrieve the crates.

Singularly Focused. Slab is intelligent but is entirely fixated on his plan of acquiring the crates. He is unlikely to engage in roleplaying with the characters at this time.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

This adventure is light on combat, but if your players are more combat-focused than roleplay-focused, consider using one or two of the following suggestions:

- Slab becomes enraged when it takes damage, and is automatically granted advantage when it makes its next melee weapon attack.
- Due to the freezing gem embedded in its torso, any creature that strikes Slab with a melee weapon attack immediately takes 5 (2d4) cold damage.
- Contrary to the statblock suggestion, Slab can still animate boulders. It might begin the encounter with them active if the party is very strong!

DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters have reduced Slab to 15 or fewer hit points, it immediately collapses to the ground, surrenders, and begins to wail.

Alternately, if the characters enter the hole before Slab surrenders, it shrieks in terror and surrenders. It begs the characters to leave its friend in the cage alone.

Finally, if ten or more crates of pembers are thrown into the hole, Slab roars in victory and attempts to retreat. It roars out “Smoll! Slab have fruits to help!” as it clammers into the pit.

Proceed to Part 3. Misunderstanding.



PART 3. WE NEED A MIDWINTER MIRACLE

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

Once combat ends, the galeb duhr collapses and any remaining lumps of coal drop whatever they're carrying or doing with a squeak of alarm and scamper back to the hole. As the billowing cloud of dust beings to settle, the characters hear an odd sound. Once the air clears, they see the monster on its backside, head dropped forward, face in its hands, sobbing.

STORY BEAT: ROLEPLAY OR COMBAT?

In the event that your players are focused on combat, this section may take a dramatic turn. If they insist on killing Slab, the galeb duhr will continue to beg for aid for Smoll and to profess his own innocence ("they're for Smoll! Smoll hurt bad!").

You could have the characters discover Smoll once Slab is killed, but it will be upon you to weave a positive ending to this story. Perhaps Ouen recognizes what is happening to the fire snake or one of the characters may have a moment of divine inspiration!

In short, combat does not and should prevent the characters from reaching a desirable ending for this adventure. Be flexible in your rulings and run the story that best fits your gamers!

Slab is intelligent and wants to communicate. If the characters attack, Slab will defend himself as best he can and will use the dodge action while sobbing uncontrollably. If the characters address him, he'll share basic information openly:

- His name is Slab. He attacked not because he wanted to hurt anyone or anything, but because he needed pembelons for his sick friend.
- His friend is Smoll, a tiny glowing fire snake inside a stone cage the pit.
- Smoll is struggling to generate heat, and Slab knows that unless the snake's situation can be resolved it will be unlikely to survive much longer.

Any other information might take a bit of coaxing, but the tests will be easy because Slab has been alone for decades. He wants for conversation and friendship.

ROLEPLAYING SLAB

A lonely and centuries-old galeb duhr, Slab is unique to his kind in that he's developed an empathetic and compassionate connection with a tiny, weak fire snake named Smoll. Slab speaks in the first-person and has no connection to pronouns, plural, or possessive words; he understands them fine, but speaks otherwise. He's intelligent, unusually kind, and is far gentler than others like him.

Quote: "Slab do anything for Smoll: move mountain? Easy!"

Once the characters have had a moment to engage Slab in discussion, the galeb duhr reaches down into the pit and retrieves a cage with narrow slits running the outside. Inside the cage can be seen an orange, wavering light. Slab opens the cage carefully and tell the characters to be quiet because "Smoll sleep."

Slab can communicate in Common, but its command of spoken language is halting at best. Allow the characters to engage it in some roleplaying or Charisma-based skill checks. Slab can communicate the following points:

- Slab was summoned by Master Yutun a long time ago. Master Yutun is dead now.
- Master Yutun became very mean when he aged. He was seeking a way to stop aging.
- The ice wizard experimented on many creatures including Slab (Slab points at the gem in its torso). He found some interesting results when fire snakes were subjected to cold magic and effects – those that did not die hatched, but without any aspect of fire about them. The hatchlings moved as if slowed in time and did not need to eat or drink.
- Five years after being subjected to cold magic, the few fire snakes that were still alive had barely grown or aged.

At this point, Slab is overcome with emotion and finds it difficult to continue. By this time, festival-goers are beginning to resurface. Some may be frightened by Slab and panic. Depending on how intense and dramatic the combat encounter with Slab was, you may have one or more festival-goers attempt to incite a panic. Decide the number of festival-goers based on the difficulty of the combat encounter, then roll Charisma (Performance), Charisma (Deception), or Charisma (Intimidation) against one or more of the characters to determine if the individual festival-goers are successful.

If the festival-goers successfully initiate combat or worse, a riot, Slab will attempt to retreat into the hole and be more difficult to coax out. If catastrophically successful, Slab will attempt to retreat and the characters will have to calm the crowd before things get out of control. If the characters cannot get the festival-goers calmed down within five rounds, Slab becomes enraged and emerges from the hole, ready to attack.

Once the crowd is placated or the issue is avoided all together, continue and read, or paraphrase the following:

“One day, when Master angry, Master try kill other one fire snake... Slab kill Master. It accident. Master old, weak. Slab push gentle, but Master fly far.”

The stony creature pauses and shudders.

“Slab only try push Master, but Slab hit Master. Master fly across cave. Slam into wall. Then Master get up, Slab think Master okay, but Master not see – not see!”

To keep this part moving and vibrant for the characters, feel free to include Ouen in the events. As a lieutenant of the Flaming Fist, he may seek to loudly object “to listening to a dumb brute!” – though if he does, Slab tosses several large stones in his direction and rumbles out “QUIET! Smoll sleeping!” Should this happen, Ouen quietly sits down on the ground, having been put in his place.

Slab continues, “Master get up, he okay, Slab thought. But Master not see - Master not see lava pit. Master walk into it. Burn up.”

Ouen slaps a hand over his mouth to seal the burst of laughter, a snort escapes, “Sorry, dust. The rock. Aller--allergies. Terrible thing, that. About the – the lava.”

“Yes. Sad. Master burn 100 year ago. Slab sad, but not very sad. Slab need fruit for last fire snake.

Fruits make warm and Smoll cold. Smoll small, only need little fruit, but fruit sour fast in cave, so Slab and Smoll need many fruit. But all fruit gone. Slab see people take it! Slab worry about Smoll. Slab sorry. Slab want help Smoll.”

When Slab touches Smoll, she squirms and squeals, as if in pain.

“Slab can’t touch Smoll, can’t hold Smoll.”

Through creative use of skills like Nature or Arcana (or even a *detect magic* spell), the characters can

determine that Slab is still infused with traces of cold magic – and that this energy is harming Smoll and because of the magical nature of the damage, the fire snake is unlikely to recover unless subjected to constant magical flame or effect.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check confirms that the blue gem in Slab’s torso is not only the source of the cold magic, but is also the thing that binds Slab to Faerun. If the blue gem is destroyed, Slab would likely return to the elemental planes and be forced to leave Smoll behind. If a character exceeded the Arcana check by 2 or more, or another character is successful with a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check, they can piece together that Ouen’s fire gem would not only purge the remaining cold magic, but would simultaneously bind Slab to Ouen as a loyal retainer and allow Slab to hold Smoll without hurting the snake.

Depending upon how involved the characters are in the roleplaying portion of this adventure, allow them to piece together a plan on how to change the gems out (rewarding creative thinking with a success), or consider having Ouen make the suggestion. The Flaming Fist would not need much convincing to recognize how useful a galeb duhr would be in their ranks as a sentry!

If the characters are unable to determine how to switch the gems out or are simply unwilling to do so, Slab attempts to leave while at once apologizing for the mess and thanking them for the fruit. How the characters and the Flaming Fist handle this is up to you.

However, if the characters choose to help Slab switch out its gems, allow them to use whatever plan they come up with – the crazier and more magic-infused, the better! Slab is willing to trust them in the hopes that this will also help Smoll recover.

Prying out the blue gemstone did not result in any immediate reaction, but the insertion of the fire gem certainly does. A blinding flash of light explodes from Slab’s body as the last lingering vestiges of cold magic are ejected outwards and into the air. The air around Slab shimmers and crackles as the cold magic coagulates into a visible shroud of snow and slush, then rockets skyward. A blaze of brilliant white erupts in the sky and quickly dims to a glowing red glare. From Slab’s chest ruptures orange flames that spiderweb all over its body like fissures.

After a few moments, Smoll's little head appears between Slab's fingers curled over the top of her cage. She wriggles out and scoots along Slab's arm. Eventually she makes her onto his shoulder, where she curls up. The flame of her tiny body glows yellow and strong.

Turning his head slowly, Slab opens his eyes and sees her. Turning back, he finds you and Ouen, and points excitedly to Smoll. "Smoll sleeping!"

In the sky above, clouds form in rapid swirls and thunder booms. Looking up, you see something odd.

"What's going on?" Voices in the crowd whisper to one another as the people in the crowd stop and many point upward. "What is that?!" the alarmed voices call out, but are quickly silenced by cries of "Snow! It's SNOW!"

A heartbeat later the entire sky overhead is blurry with falling snow: a wall of soft powder descends on Port Nyanzaru. Though the snow only lasts a few minutes, you know that this story will live forever in the hearts and minds of those that witnessed it.

DEVELOPMENT

This is a roleplay-focused encounter. If the characters choose to fight Slab, the galeb duhr no longer defends itself but begs for the snake to be saved.

TREASURE

If the characters participate in exceptional roleplaying and can discover a method by which to extract the gem from Slab without breaking it, it is worth 200 gp. If it is broken, the shards are still worth a combined 150 gp.

Regardless of the outcome, Ouen thanks the characters by granting each of them a shining bronze star that reads "Ally of the Snowmen", nearly identical to the badges that his troops use. These trinkets are always cold to the touch and are worth 20 gp if the characters decide to sell them. He also grants one of the characters his *Flurried Furs*.

If there is time remaining in your event, the characters can return to the Midwinter Festival games and earn their tokens. At your discretion, the vendors may be impressed with them (and thus lower the DCs of the checks)!

REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE (MIN/MAX XP: 450/600 EACH)

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Galeb duhr	2,300

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Each game token earned	20
Keeping Slab alive	20

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Game tokens (each)	1
Slab's unbroken gem	200
Slab's broken gem	150
Ouen's badge trinket	20

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

CHULTAN MIDWINTER CANDLE (CANDLE OF THE DEEP)

Wondrous item, common

A product of a pain-staking enchantment, the candle acts as an anchor for the delicate and fickle spark of an enchanted flame. As it burns it emits a slight citrus scent, not unlike that of a pembelon. It cannot be extinguished unless it is clipped from the wick and gives light and heat as a normal candle would. This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

FLURRIED FURS (SMOLDERING ARMOR)

Armor (any light or medium), common

As if from frigid clouds overhead, a light dusting of illusory snow perpetually sprinkles down over the wearer. This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

PLAYER REWARDS

For completing this mission, the characters earn downtime and renown as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG)*.

DM REWARD

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG)*.

APPENDIX. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

SLAB (GALEB DUHR)

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d8 + 45)

Speed 15 ft. (30 ft. when rolling, 60 ft. rolling downhill)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned, petrified

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Terran

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

False Appearance. While the galeb duhr remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal boulder.

Rolling Charge. If the galeb duhr rolls at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a slam attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Animate Boulders (1/Day). The galeb duhr magically animates up to two boulders it can see within 60 feet of it. A boulder has statistics like those of a galeb duhr, except it has Intelligence 1 and Charisma 1, it can't be charmed or frightened, and it lacks this action option. A boulder remains animated as long as the galeb duhr maintains concentration, up to 1 minute (as if concentrating on a spell).

CHANGES TO SLAB

Slab's experiences leading up to this adventure introduce some changes to its statistics. Please apply the following updates when you run this adventure:

- Slab cannot use its **Animate Boulders** ability. Instead, each day at dawn Slab creates up to 20 tiny animated lumps of coal; only 20 animated lumps of coal can exist at any given time.
- Slab will not intentionally harm an unconscious creature.

An animated **lump of coal** uses the following statistics:

- AC 12, HP 8, speed 20 ft.
- Size tiny.
- Vulnerability to fire.
- Ranged attacks made against the lumps of coal are made at disadvantage due to their size.
- An animated lump of coal cannot attack.
- As an action, the lump of coal can slide underneath a medium or smaller object. This allows the lump of coal to carry that object with no penalty to movement.
- As an action, the lump of coal can **self-immolate**. If it does, it is immediately destroyed and any flammable material within two feet of it catches fire.

APPENDIX. MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items are available in this adventure:

CHULTAN MIDWINTER CANDLE (CANDLE OF THE DEEP)

Wondrous item, common

A product of a pain-staking enchantment, the candle acts as an anchor for the delicate and fickle spark of an enchanted flame. As it burns it emits a slight citrus scent, not unlike that of a pembroon. It cannot be extinguished unless it is clipped from the wick and gives light and heat as a normal candle would. This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

FLURRIED FURS (SMOLDERING ARMOR)

Armor (any), common

As if from frigid clouds overhead, a light dusting of illusory snow perpetually sprinkles down over the wearer. This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

APPENDIX. MIDWINTER GAMES (DM)

The games offered during the Midwinter Festival are intended to be tests of raw skill and ability. Using magic items or spells (such as guidance) can be done – though a character that desires to do this should take great care, as cheaters are not allowed to participate in further games.

Characters that create inventive and fun solutions to these challenges are encouraged and should be rewarded!

- Tickets cost 1 sp each. 1 ticket = 1 skill check.
- Three successes in any given game rewards 1 token.
- Once a character has earned a token in a game, the DC for that game when played by the same character goes up by +2.
- Each game vendor has 5 tokens per day to use as rewards.
- Each time a token is earned, the character that earned it is rewarded with 20 xp.

<p>Swingin’ Bridges! <i>Key attribute.</i> Dexterity</p>	<p>Objective. Cross the bridge. Creating the DC. The rope bridge begins with a DC of 12 and increases by +1 for each time that a character succeeds, resetting on a failure. Player options. The Acrobatics skill is highly recommended.</p>
<p>Frozen DOOM! <i>Key attribute.</i> Dexterity</p>	<p>Objective. Cross the icy terrain without falling to the onslaught from the castle. Creating the DC. Icy projectiles launch from the evil wizard’s keep. Make an attack roll (+4) against the character’s Acrobatics check. Player options. A character can use Acrobatics to keep their standing on the icy terrain.</p>
<p>Castin’ Blastin’ Conjurers <i>Key attribute.</i> Intelligence</p>	<p>Objective. Create an illusory creature and defeat the opponent. Creating the DC. This is described below. Player options. The character and DM secretly choose bear, wolf, or snake (they can choose the same thing). An illusory version of that creature appears in the ring and combat commences. Each hit inflicts 1 point of damage. A character uses their Intelligence bonus or Arcana bonus (min. 0 for each) in place of their attack bonus. Destroying the opponent yields a reward token.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear. AC 12; hp 4; attack +6 • Wolf. AC 14; hp 3; attack +4 • Snake. AC 16; hp 2; attack +4
<p>Ring the Bell <i>Key attribute.</i> Strength</p>	<p>Objective. Smash the hammer and ring the bell. Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success, resetting on a failure. Player options. Athletics is the preferred skill here. The hammerhead is switched out for a lighter one each round (this is known to the character) until three successes are had or a single failure occurs.</p>
<p>Pembelon Smash <i>Key attribute.</i> Strength</p>	<p>Objective. Crush the pembelons using only your head Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success, resetting on a failure. Player options. Athletics is the preferred skill here. Once per character playing this game, if that character’s passive Wisdom (Insight) score is 12 or higher they realize that the final pembelon is not ripe yet and the DC is not increased in the last step as the melon is swapped.</p>

APPENDIX. MIDWINTER GAMES (DM, CONTINUED)

<p>Ring Toss Key attributes. Wisdom, Dexterity</p>	<p>Objective. Toss a ring around the dinosaur horn. Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success (as the rings become smaller), resetting on a failure. If one of the player rolls exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the game offers a challenge mode: for two tickets, the character can face a moving target. increase the DC of the next roll by +4. If the character is successful, receive one token immediately (in addition to any other prizes that they are eligible for). Player options. Rings are improvised ranged weapons. A character can make an attack roll against the DC listed above.</p>
<p>All the Pembelonde You Can Drink Key attribute. Constitution</p>	<p>Objective. Drink all three gallons of the pembelonde without falling ill. Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success, resetting on a success. If this character has also participated in the Spicy Meatballs game, these checks are made at disadvantage but the payout is two tokens instead of one. Player options. This game requires three successful Constitution saving throws from each participant. There is a limit of 7 attempts that a character can make in this game, and failing a Constitution saving throw in this game by 5 or more results in 1 level of exhaustion.</p>
<p>Spicy Meatballs Key attribute. Constitution</p>	<p>Objective. Finish the plate of meatballs before the other contestants. Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success, resetting on a success. If this character has also participated in the All the Pembelonde You Can Drink game, these checks are made at disadvantage but the payout is two tokens instead of one. Player options. This game requires three successful Constitution saving throws from each participant. There is a limit of 7 attempts that a character can make in this game, and failing a Constitution saving throw in this game by 5 or more results in 1 level of exhaustion.</p>
<p>Eye Spy Key attribute. Wisdom</p>	<p>Objective. Spot the key differences between two objects. Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success, resetting on a failure. Player options. Perception is the key skill for this game. The first check is to identify the differences between two pembelonde fruits. The second is to count the stripes on a zorbo as it shuffles between two bushes. The final challenge is to count the number of teeth that a Batiri goblin has as it is fed a meat pie.</p>
<p>Jingle Jangle Key attribute. Charisma</p>	<p>Objective. Successfully sing the Midwinter songs without the audience walking away. Creating the DC. The DC starts at 10 and increases by +2 for each success, resetting on a failure. Player options. This game only costs a single ticket. Performance is the key skill for this game. If a character succeeds on all 3 Performance checks by a margin of +5 or higher on each roll, they receive an extra token as payment. The Snowmen and vendors treasure the moments when a visitor brings their culture and customs to the Midwinter Festival, so if a player wants to ad-lib a holiday themed song and actually sing it during your game they should immediately receive a token.</p>

HANDOUT. MIDWINTER GAMES

The games offered during the Midwinter Festival are intended to be tests of raw skill and ability. Using magic items or spells (such as guidance) is strongly discouraged.

- Tickets cost 1 sp each. 1 ticket = 1 skill check.
- Three consecutive successful skill checks in any given game rewards 1 token.
- Each game vendor has a limited amount of rewards.
- The Festival has 1 *Chultan Midwinter Candle* available to purchase for the price of 10 tokens.

Game Name	The vendor yells the following phrase at you...
Swingin' Bridges!	A bridge made of vines and wooden planks hangs limply from a single post on each end. Can you keep your balance and traverse the full length?
Frozen DOOM!	Storm the castle! Can you dodge all the debris being thrown by its loyal defenders?
Castin' Blastin' Conjurors	Create an illusory creature and defeat the opponent. Choose from bear, wolf, or snake and let the battle commence! No magic required – we'll do the hard work!
Ring the Bell	Can you ring the bell using only this hammer?
Pembelon Smash	Teach these pembelons a lesson – with your head!
Ring Toss	It's a ring and a dinosaur horn. Even a child can do it!
All the Pembelonade You Can Drink	Surely a little pembelonade isn't going to slow down a mighty adventurer like you!
Spicy Meatballs	It's not questionable meat – it's <i>mystery</i> meat! But it's spicy, so wolf it down!
Eye Spy	Hey! You with the eagle eye! Can you tell me some specifics about these things?
Jingle Jangle	Successfully sing some Midwinter songs. Seriously. That's it.