

**ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN**

# **SUNBLIGHT & LIGHT'S DESTRUCTION**



DM's resources for Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden  
Chapter 3: Sunblight & Chapter 4: Light's Destruction

# ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

# SUNBLIGHT &

# LIGHT'S DESTRUCTION



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## INTRODUCTION

**I**CEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN IS A chilly campaign that will take your characters from 1st to beyond 10th level, as they face frosty foes, deeply buried dangers, and dark deities, while reshaping the fate of Icewind Dale – and perhaps the entire Sword Coast along with it!

This campaign has an evocative setting with a multitude of interesting locations and awesome quests that will have your players engaged – and maybe even a bit nervous – as they are haunted and harrowed by all the magnificent evils Icewind Dale has to offer.

This download, which covers Chapter 3 and 4 of the campaign book, provides you with tools and thoughts that will help you make *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* an exciting experience for your players – and much more manageable for you. The two chapters have been combined into one document because they overlap in places and aren't necessarily run in the order they are presented in.

It is strongly recommended that you read through the campaign book before using these resources. And always remember, the advice and ideas given here are options – you know best what works at your table.

This download contains:

**Starting Chapter 3.** Advice on when and how to start Chapter 3, including an overview of how the characters can be lead organically to Xardorok's fortress, and how Chapter 3 and 4 fits into the rest of the book's chapters.

**Running Chapter 3.** A walkthrough of the content in Chapter 3, including an alternate way to set up the character's chase of the chardalyn dragon and the introduction of Vellynne, as well as a guide to running Grandolpha, placing Xardorok in the fortress, and running the various locations of the fortress.

**Dragon Scourge.** Adjusted travel rules that actually give the characters a chance to catch up with the dragon before it destroys all of Ten-Towns, as well as a complete overview of the dragons' path of destruction and a map of Ten-Towns with distances measured out to help you plan out and prepare for Chapter 4.

**Showdown!** A step-by-step walkthrough of the characters' inevitable showdown with the dragon, including suggestions on various adjustments that will help you make the confrontation as exciting as possible.

**Vellynne's Quest.** An in-depth look at Vellynne as a quest-giver and various changes you can make to ensure that the characters are hooked properly into the later chapters of the book and remain motivated throughout.

**Full-Color, VTT-ready Encounter Maps.** Three encounter maps showing the ruins of Ten-Towns, which you can use to run encounters during the showdown with the chardalyn dragon.

### FOLLOW ALONG FOR MORE

These DM's resources are the third in a series of resources for *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. **Sign up to our mailing list here** to receive notifications and special discounts when new DM's resources are released. Also **follow us on Twitter** for more D&D-related fun, give-aways, and free content.

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## CHAPTER 3: SUNBLIGHT

**I**N CHAPTER 3: SUNBLIGHT, THE CHARACTERS DELVE into a mountain fortress and face off with duergar, quaggoth and other denizens of the Underdark in an attempt to prevent a crazed duergar despot from destroying all of Ten-Towns!

On the following pages, we will go over the material presented in Chapter 3 of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, as well as parts of material presented in Chapter 4: Destruction's Light, as these chapters are linked closely together. The focus is on providing overview, structure, troubleshooting, and generally making Xardorok's fortress more exciting for your players – and easier for you to run.

It's strongly recommended that you read through Chapter 3 and 4 of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* before reading the following pages. And always remember, the advice and ideas given here are options – you know best what works at your table.

### OVERVIEW

The devious plot of Xardorok Sunblight to unleash the chardalyn dragon to destroy Ten-Towns is an incredibly interesting concept that should provide several sessions of intense and harrowing gameplay.

The event, as presented in the campaign book, is quite simple. Having run into various duergar in Ten-Towns – or been told about them by a town's speaker – the characters head out toward Xardorok's fortress in the mountains. Once they're there, the chardalyn dragon sets off toward Ten-Towns, forcing them to make a difficult decision about what to do first: infiltrate the fortress or chase after the dragon?

Chapter 3 sets up a cool premise, but there is some room for improvement. On the following pages, you will find a discussion on how to start Chapter 3, various adjustments you can make to better setup the dragon's destruction of Ten-Towns, and in-depth advice on running an infiltration of Xardorok's fortress.

### STARTING CHAPTER 3

In this section, we will discuss when and how to start Chapter 3 – and, in extension, Chapter 4. In quick summary, the book provides two ways to get the party moving towards Xardorok's Fortress:

- **Clues in Ten-Towns.** The characters run into duergar in Ten-Towns, and are either told the location of Xardorok's fortress, or find a map that shows the way.
- **Speaker's Quest.** The characters are given a quest to infiltrate Xardorok's fortress and stop his evil plans by one of Ten-Town's speakers (pg. 171).

Each hook presents some challenges, which are examined in more detail below.

### CLUES IN TEN-TOWNS

Finding out about the duergar's evil plans on their own is by far the most rewarding way the characters can shamble their way into Chapter 3. As presented in the book, the most 'natural' way for this to happen is:

- **Caer-Konig.** The characters undertake 'The Unseen'-quest in Caer-Konig and discover Durth Sunblight's letter to his brother Nildar Sunblight (pg. 51), which tells them that Durth is on the ferry in Easthaven.
- **Easthaven.** The characters confront Durth Sunblight on the Easthaven Ferry and discover a map (pg. 60), showing the way to Xardorok's Fortress.
- **Caer-Dineval (optional).** The characters may at some point also learn more about Xardorok and his evil plans from Hethyl Arkorran in Caer-Dineval (pg. 43).

Allowing the characters to find and follow these clues and thus leading them to Xardorok's fortress organically is strongly recommended. This doesn't mean that you have to railroad the characters toward Caer-Konig and Easthaven, just that you try to give the characters enough rumors and information that they are likely to go there of their own volition. However, you may want to be careful of the timing when you do so.

## TIMING & CHARACTER LEVEL

If you want the characters to find Xardorok's fortress by following clues in Ten-Towns, it's important to note that Xardorok's fortress is incredibly dangerous for 4th-level characters, and will require a lot of rewriting to make appropriate for 2nd- or 3rd-level characters. To avoid sending the characters to an early grave, you may want to make sure that they don't find the clues in Caer-Konig and Easthaven too soon.

If you go by the book, the characters need to have finished three quests to reach 3rd level and five quests in Chapter 1 to reach 4th level. If the characters start in Caer-Konig, find Durth's letter, and then head directly to Easthaven and find the map, they could potentially reach Xardorok's fortress before they have reached 3rd level.

There's a few ways you can avoid this:

- Start the characters in a town far away from Caer-Konig (i.e. Bryn Shander), and steer them toward other towns before leading them to Caer-Konig, so they don't get the map before having the opportunity to finish five quests and reach 4th level.
- Don't present 'The Unseen'-quest in Caer-Konig before the characters are 3rd level, even if they pass through the town before that.
- Don't have Durth leave behind a map, and have interrogated duergar be unable to find its location without one, so the party can't find the fortress before they get a map. You can then have a speaker provide the map when the characters have reached a high enough level (see 'Speaker's Quest' on this page).

## TIMING & CHAPTER 2

Another potential issue is that if the characters learn about Xardorok's plans while handling quests in Chapter 1, they may head directly to the fortress – and never get to experience any of the fun locations in Chapter 2.

This is mostly an issue of perception, however. It seems clear that while Xardorok's fortress is given its own chapter in the book, it was initially written as just another location in Chapter 2. It makes sense to continue to think of it that way. Likewise, Chapter 1 and 2 can also overlap a lot more than the book seems to suggest.

This means that you can start introducing locations from chapter 2 as soon as the characters are 2nd or 3rd level. You can also continue to steer the characters toward locations in Icedwind Dale *after* they have dealt with Xardorok and his dragon.

There's an example of how you can do this under 'Example: Fitting in Chapter 3' on the next page. Also check out **the DM's resources for Chapter 2: Icedwind Dale**, which provides a detailed look at the difficulty of each of the locations in Chapter 2, as well as a guide on how to tie some of the locations into Vellynne's quest, making it easier to run locations in Icedwind Dale after the characters finish Chapters 3 and 4.

### Note: Character Level

The campaign book suggests that Chapter 3: Sunblight starts when the characters are 4th or 5th level, and that Chapter 4: Destruction's Light begins when the characters are 6th level. However, if you run the chapters as written, the characters get to choose which they want to do first – try to save Ten-Towns or defeat Xardorok – which means that both chapters are supposed to start at around 4th to 6th level.

Our recommendation is that the characters are level 5 upon their arrival to the fortress. Being at least 5th level greatly increases the characters' chance of success, and the reduces the need for the DM to make on-the-fly adjustments to encounter difficulty.

## SPEAKER'S QUEST

The book suggests that if the characters don't learn about Xardorok's fortress in Ten-Towns (or learn about it, but ignore it), a speaker from one of the towns invite the characters to a meeting. Here, the speaker makes the mission plain: duergar are building a chardalyn dragon in the mountains to destroy Ten-Towns, and the characters are asked to go deal with the problem. There's a two primary issues with the 'Speaker's Quest' as written – exposition and motivation – each of which is briefly discussed below.

### EXPOSITION OVERLOAD

While the quest presented by the speaker is serviceable and very much to the point, it is not very interesting. The characters are basically told everything all at once, and are then asked to deal with it. It's a lot of exposition that ends up not feeling very deserved.

**Get them to Caer-Konig.** As described under 'Clues in Ten-Towns' on the previous pages, the way to Xardorok's fortress feels a lot more organic if the characters discover the duergar's plot by running into Xardorok's sons in Caer-Konig and Easthaven. If the characters haven't already done so, you can have the speaker that reaches out to the party (Danneth Waylen from Easthaven or Du vessa Shane from Bryn Shander are fitting candidates) instead voice concern over 'duergar activity' around Lac Dinneshere, and ask them to investigate. This investigation will eventually lead to Caer-Konig, where they can pick up 'The Unseen'-quest. This leads them to Nildar Sunblight in the Duergar Outpost, and from there to Easthaven, where they can confront Durth and find the map to Xardorok's fortress. When the Speaker learns this information, they can then put forth their quest to stop Xardorok and the dragon.

**Convincing the Adventurers.** If the characters have found clues about the duergar threat, but have chosen not to act on the information – or never acquired the map – you can have the speaker approach the characters to express concern about 'duergar activity'. If the characters tell the speaker that they have encountered duergar threatening the destruction of Ten-Towns, and have a map to the fortress, the speaker then asks them to resolve the issue, much as the 'Speaker's Quest' suggest. If the characters have all the information, but lack only the map, this can be the missing piece the speaker provides: a map confiscated from a captured duergar!

### A MATTER OF REWARD

The book states that the speaker who presents the quest offers no reward – in fact, if the characters ask for one, the speaker is insulted and leaves the characters be. This seems a bit weird. In Chapter 2: Icedwind Dale, both speakers and various prominent townfolk offer hundreds of gold pieces for killing a goblin, fetching gnoll heads, or speaking with a prisoner, but somehow the Council of Speakers can't muster any reward to save Ten-Towns from certain destruction?

If you use the 'Speaker's Quest', you can have the speaker provide the characters with everything they need – dogsleds, snowshoes, provisions, etc. The speaker also offers a potential reward of 1,800 gp if they save Ten-Towns, with 100 gp coming from each of the six smaller towns, and 300 gp each from the four largest towns (Bryn Shander, Easthaven, Targos, and Termalaine). They only receive a town's reward if they prevent the destruction of that town – so it's unlikely they will get the full amount, though they don't know that yet.

## EXAMPLE: FITTING IN CHAPTER 3

Below is an example of how Chapters 1–5 can be woven more tightly together, while setting the characters on a course toward Xardorok's fortress. This is, of course, just one way things can unfold, and is only meant to demonstrate how you can make a loose structure for the first half of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

- **1st level.** The characters start in Bryn Shander, where they complete the 'Foaming Mugs'-quest, and get the 'Cold-Hearted Killer'-quest.
- **2nd level.** The characters follow Torg's caravan through Targos to Bremen, where they complete the 'Lake Monster'-quest. Heading back to Targos, they get the 'Mountain Climb'-quest, which they complete to learn that Torg's caravan is in Caer-Konig.
- **3rd level.** The characters catch up with Torg's caravan in Caer-Konig and kill Sephek Kaltro. They head straight back to Bryn Shander for their reward, where they learn about 'Black Cabin' from Copper and hear about 'Karkolohk' from Speaker Duessa Shane. The characters decide to visit the 'Black Cabin', stopping by Termalaine on the way to complete the 'A Beautiful Mine'-quest and find the *psi crystal*.
- **4th level.** The characters survive (in a manner of speaking) the 'Black Cabin' and head back to Ten-Towns, where they are met with rumors about unseen thieves in Caer-Konig. They now have information steering them toward 'Karkolohk', 'Id Ascendant', and 'The Unseen'. They decide to go with 'Karkolohk', quickly resolving that matter before returning to Ten-Towns to complete 'The Unseen'-quest in Caer-Konig, and find Durth's letter. They head to Easthaven, completing the 'Toil and Trouble'-quest, defeating Durth, and finding his map aboard the ferry.
- **5th level.** Armed with all the necessary information, the characters head to Xardorok's fortress. They stop by 'Id Ascendant' on the way, before defeating both the duergar and the dragon.
- **6th–8th level.** The characters get Vellynne's quest, which has them visiting 'Jarlmoor' to figure out where *the Codicil of White* is. After obtaining the codicil in Chapter 5, the characters learn where the entrance to Ythryn is at the 'Lost Spire of Netheril'.

In summary, the characters in this example have completed the following quests in Chapter 1:

- **Starter Quest: Cold-Hearted Killer.**
- **Bryn Shander: Foaming Mugs.**
- **Bremen: Lake Monster.**
- **Targos: Mountain Climb.**
- **Termalaine: A Beautiful Mine.**
- **Caer-Konig: The Unseen.**
- **Easthaven: Toil and Trouble.**

And have visited the following locations in Chapter 2:

- **Black Cabin.**
- **Karkolohk.**
- **Id Ascendant.**
- **Jarlmoor.**
- **Lost Spire of Netheril.**

While, of course, also dealing with Xardorok's fortress and the chardalyn dragon. This isn't all the content in the book, of course, but it is a sizable portion of it, and certainly enough to get them to 8th level before they venture into the depths of the Caves of Hunger.

## RUNNING CHAPTER 3

In this section we will take a closer look at Chapter 3: Sunblight, giving advice on how to run the chapter. We start by going over how to implement the 'Difficult Decision' – stop the dragon or infiltrate the fortress – before giving advice on where to put Xardorok, how to handle 'The Muzgardt Conspiracy', and troubleshooting various plans of infiltration and locations in the fortress.

### DIFFICULT DECISION

Right as the characters arrive at Xardorok's fortress, the chardalyn dragon is unleashed on Ten-Towns. This is meant to force the characters to make a tough decision about whether or not to deal with Xardorok first, or head back to Ten-Towns to stop the dragon scourge.

This is a cool idea, but the timing is somewhat convenient and actually also cheapens the difficult choice the characters must make. Because the characters don't know the dragon's route, how fast it can travel, or perhaps even what it intends to do, they may not even realize that they have a choice – or what the potential consequences of that choice is.

### CHANGING THE TIMING

Instead of having the chardalyn dragon fly up from the fortress as the characters approach, you can have the dragon remain on the assembly platform in the forge (area X25). The dragon isn't unleashed toward Ten-Towns before it becomes apparent to Xardorok – or one of his underlings – that the fortress is under assault. Ideally, this happens during an epic showdown with Xardorok and his minions. The choice now isn't whether to head back or not, but whether or not the characters should take a long rest and spend time looting the fortress before setting off in pursuit of the dragon.

### INTRODUCING VELLYNNE

Although Vellynne isn't described until Chapter 4, her introduction is addressed here because it coincides with the dragon's release. As written (pg. 187), Vellynne shows up as the characters start back toward Ten-Towns, which, once again, is very convenient timing.

If you move the dragon's release so it happens during a showdown with Xardorok in the fortress' forge, you also get an opportunity to introduce Vellynne in a more natural way: Vellynne is a prisoner in the duergar's dungeon, which is right next to the forge. Once the battle is over, she calls to the characters from her cell, asking them to set her free and offering her aid. More details about this scenario is provided under 'X28. Dungeon' on page 10 of this document.

If the characters don't take the time to find Vellynne in the fortress, you can always have them run into her as they leave the duergar fortress, as described in the book.

### WHAT THIS ACCOMPLISHES

By moving the dragon's release so it happens during an epic battle, and then having them find Vellynne in the dungeon shortly after, we accomplish the following:

- The release of the chardalyn dragon doesn't seem like a suspicious coincidence, but makes logical sense.
- Vellynne no longer shows up out of the blue, but actually has a reason for being where she is.
- The difficult decision isn't whether or not they should handle the fortress or the dragon first, but whether or not they should rest before chasing after the dragon – which is discussed in detail later in this document.

## THE MUZGARDT CONSPIRACY

Part of what makes the fortress both more interesting and more survivable for the characters, is the inclusion of the treacherous Grandolpha Muzgardt, who leads a faction of duergar seeking to overthrow Xardorok.

As written, the characters can meet Grandolpha in 'X8. Private Dining Hall' on the Command Level, which means that they should have time to plot with her before going below to take on Xardorok in the Forge Level.

### SETTING UP THE MEETING

The infiltration of Sunblight is most interesting if the characters get the chance to speak with Grandolpha. As written in the book, this will only happen if the characters barge into 'X8. Private Dining Hall', however.

You can help facilitate the meeting by having one of the duergar from 'X3. Upper Barracks' run toward 'X6. Guard Post' to raise the alarm and get reinforcements when the characters enter the fortress – only to have one of the duergar loyal to Grandolpha (either one of her bodyguards or the duergar Dreck from 'X6. Guard Post') bash the alarmist duergar unconscious (in full view of the characters, if possible). You can also have the five duergar on the Command Level loyal to Grandolpha give direct aid to the characters during a fight with the nine duergar in 'X3. Upper Barracks' – which also helps make the encounter less deadly for lower level characters.

Having Grandolpha's duergar intervene directly in this manner should let the characters know that this new duergar is a potential ally – making a peaceful conversation with Grandolpha much more likely.

### WHAT GRANDOLPHA WANTS

The book describes in detail who Grandolpha is and that she wants to depose Xardorok, but doesn't actually specify *why* Grandolpha wants to get rid of Xardorok – beyond Xardorok being a crazed despot, of course.

It would seem congruous with Grandolpha's aid to the characters – and especially her decision to let them go after they have killed Xardorok – to have her motivation be gold. Specifically, the gold she can earn if a trade relationship is established between Ten-Towns and Clan Muzgardt, opening up a whole new market for Darklake Stout and other exports from Gracklstugh.

With this as her motivation, it not only makes sense that Grandolpha wants to overthrow Xardorok (to take possession of his fortress and put an end to his lunacy), save Ten-Towns (so there's something to trade with), and let the characters go (to let Ten-Towns know her peaceful intentions and act as her goodwill-ambassadors).

### WHAT GRANDOLPHA KNOWS

Under 'X8. Private Dining Hall' (pg. 176), the book provides pieces of information that Grandolpha will share with the party, but none of them actively aid the characters in defeating Xardorok. If you want to give the characters a bit more aid – which is advisable if they're lower level – you can have Grandolpha also provide one or more of the following pieces of information:

- In addition to the information about Xardorok's plans listed in the book, Grandolpha emphasizes that Xardorok intends to release the dragon soon (if it hasn't already been released), and explains that the dragon will be released through ice doors in the top level, which are manned by duergar loyal to Xardorok.
- While she doesn't know exactly where Xardorok is right now, she can explain to the characters that the western elevator leads to Xardorok's throne room and the eastern elevator leads to the temple – and that the shaft behind 'X9. Portcullis' leads into the forge.
- Grandolpha can let the party know where there's duergar loyal to her: two guards in 'X21. Treacherous Guards', four in the guard towers in 'X24–X26. Forge', and ten in 'X33. Lower Barracks'.
- Grandolpha can tell the characters that yelling "Darklake Stout!" in Dwarvish or Undercommon will let her followers know that the characters are allies.

### WHAT GRANDOLPHA CAN DO

If the characters are lower level, or just think to ask, there's also several ways Grandolpha can aid them directly, at your discretion:

- Grandolpha can send out a duergar to find out where Xardorok is in the fortress, making it easier for the characters to head there directly.
- Grandolpha can send a duergar to Xardorok and ask him to meet her alone in 'X29. Deep Duerra's Temple', where the characters can then ambush him.
- Grandolpha can send some or all of the five duergar with the characters, making a confrontation with Xardorok in 'X19. Chardalyn Throne' or 'X24–X26. Forge' more survivable for lower level characters.

### HANDLING GRANDOLPHA'S DUERGAR

What help Grandolpha's duergar can provide ranges from simply letting the characters pass through an area without trouble to actively fighting duergar loyal to Xardorok. There's a few places where the characters may end up fighting alongside Grandolpha's duergar:

- If you have Grandolpha send some or her duergar with the characters (see 'What Grandolpha Can Do' above).
- The party faces Xardorok in 'X19. Throne Room', where the two duergar at 'X21. Treacherous Guards' may come to their aid.
- The party faces Xardorok in 'X24–X26. Forge', where four of the twelve duergar in the towers are Grandolpha's followers,

In these scenarios, you may want to consider letting the players control Grandolpha's duergar. This both takes some of the work off your plate and gives your players more to do in the combat. Duergar are quite simple combatants, so it shouldn't be too overwhelming.

Having Grandolpha's duergar present during combat provides an additional benefit, as it gives you more control over the encounter's difficulty. If the characters are in trouble, you can focus their enemies' attacks against the treacherous duergar instead of the characters, giving the party time to regroup or escape.



## WHERE IS XARDOROK

The book provides you with a table to help determine where Xardorok is in his fortress when the characters arrive (pg. 173). Randomness is fun, but where you place Xardorok will have a big impact on how difficult the characters' confrontation with him will be, as well as how the chardalyn dragon is released, if you use the changes to 'Difficult Decision' suggested earlier.

Each of the four options for Xardorok's location provided by the book are examined in detail below, with comments on how it affects the encounter's difficulty.

### ON HIS THRONE

If Xardorok is in 'X19. Chardalyn Throne', he is encountered together with a **quaggoth thonot**, 4 **quaggoth**, 4 **quaggoth spore servants**, and 4 **duergar** – but with 2 **duergar** loyal to Grandolpha close by to potentially aid the characters.

While the characters can get at Xardorok directly by taking the western elevator (X6 to X22), facing Xardorok by his throne still makes for a very tough encounter, and also places Xardorok quite far away from the forge, which is an issue if you want the dragon to be released from there. In addition, the battleground here – a big square chamber – isn't very interesting.

### IN THE FORGE

If Xardorok is in 'X24–X26. Forge', he is encountered alongside a **duergar** and 6 **quaggoths** – but with another 12 **duergar** looking on from surrounding guard towers and 3 **duergar hammerers** arriving as reinforcements.

The characters' easiest ways to the forge are either by flying or climbing down 'X26. Vertical Shaft', or through 'X30. Eastern Elevator', where they will encounter only a single **duergar hammerer** on the way. Either way, the encounter in the forge is an enormous battle in a cool location. It is, however, extremely difficult because of the many enemies – but if the characters have managed to secure the aid of Grandolpha, four of the **duergar** in the guard towers will betray their compatriots to aid them.

### IN THE TEMPLE

The characters can also encounter Xardorok alone in 'X29. Deep Duerra's Temple', which may draw the **barbed devil** from 'X31. Devil in Disguise' and the **duergar hammerer** from 'X30. Eastern Elevator'.

The characters can get directly here by taking the elevator down from X12. Training Room, encountering only the **duergar hammerer** on the way. All told, this location makes for a relatively easy encounter with Xardorok – but only if the characters prevent him from getting reinforcements from the forge, which is close by.

## IN THE TORTURE CHAMBER

If Xardorok is in 'X34. Torture Chamber', he is accompanied by 2 **duergar mind masters**. He can get help from 'X31. Devil in Disguise' or 'X33. Lower Barracks', but both of these locations are quite far away.

The characters can get to this area easiest by taking the elevator down to 'X30. Eastern Elevator', dealing with the **duergar hammerer** there, and then cutting through the secret door in 'X29. Deep Duerra's Temple' (which they could have been told about by Grandolpha). This makes for a rather easy encounter with Xardorok, but the battleground is bland. It also puts Xardorok far away from the chardalyn dragon, if you want him to be able to call for its release.

## OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

In quick summary, the four options are:

- **X19. Chardalyn Throne.** Tough encounter, bland battleground.
- **X24–X26. Forge.** Tough encounter, interesting battleground.
- **X29. Deep Duerra's Temple.** Potentially easy encounter, interesting battleground.
- **X34. Torture Chamber.** Easy encounter, bland battleground.

While you can certainly leave Xardorok's location up to a die roll, you can also take control of the situation and the fortress' difficulty by placing Xardorok where it makes most sense for you.

If you want the chardalyn dragon to be unleashed while the characters are having a pitched battle with Xardorok, it makes most sense that the characters encounter him in either the forge or in the temple just next to it, where he can quickly get to the forge and call for the dragon to be released. Which you choose should depend on the party's strength, and the aid you give them. If the characters are 6th or 7th level and/or have the aid of Grandolpha's **duergar**, they should be able to contend with Xardorok in his forge, while characters of 4th or 5th level are more likely to survive an encounter with Xardorok in his temple.

If the chardalyn dragon has already been released, or you don't care if it happens during the characters' encounter with Xardorok, you can also have him be by his throne or in the torture chamber. Again, which of these works best probably depends on the characters' level – if they are stronger, they have a better chance of dealing with Xardorok in the throne room, and if not, sneaking in to take on Xardorok in the torture chamber is doable for 4th or 5th-level characters.





## LOCATIONS IN THE FORTRESS

In this section we will go over the areas in Xardorok's fortress, troubleshooting various areas and encounters, and offering advice on how to adjust or run them. Only areas where additional insight is provided are listed.

### X2. VESTIBULE

The book dictates that one duergar in X3 watches this room, and that she calls to arms if 'she sees or hears intruders inside the fortress', but doesn't provide any specifics beyond that. It's unclear whether or not the characters have a chance of noticing her before she notices them, and if simply opening the gate – which the characters have to do – alerts her to their presence.

In the end, it's up to you to decide. If you are feeling benevolent, or just think the characters will have a hard time against the nine duergar in X3, you can decide that the arrow slit gives only a limited view of the vestibule. This means that the duergar in X3 is not alerted by the door opening (if it's done quietly), and that the characters just need to succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) group check to pass through unnoticed (by crawling below the field of vision provided by the arrow slit).

### X4. XARDOROK'S WAR ROOM

This room is instrumental if the characters are to know the dragon's flight plan. Even if they do know the flight plan, however, they don't know the timeline of the dragon's attacks. If you want them to have this information – and thus allow them to make more informed decisions when they set out to chase it down – you can outfit the table with a timeline that counts from 1 to 50 hours. This timeline shows, precisely, how long it takes the chardalyn dragon to fly to each town, and how long it remains in each town destroying it up until it reaches Bryn Shander, where it's programmed to remain until it sustains too much damage, or the city is completely destroyed, at your discretion (see 'Dragon's Behavior' on pg. 16 of this document).

### X19. CHARDALYN THRONE

The book doesn't mention what the myconid sovereign in this room does during combat, but does describe it as 'uncooperative' toward the duergar. If you think the party could use the help, you can have the myconid sovereign fight on their side if battle breaks out in this chamber.

## Xardorok's Fortress Roster

Area	Creatures	Notes
X3. Upper Barracks	9 duergar	The duergar here watch X2. Vestibule and attack if they spot the characters.
X6. Guard Post	1 duergar	This duergar is loyal to Grandolpha and hides from characters
X8. Private Dining Hall	Grandolpha Muzgardt, 3 duergar, 1 chardalyn pseudodragon	Grandolpha and her followers are not immediately hostile
X10. Durth's Quarters	Durth (duergar mind master)	Durth is only here if he abandoned Easthaven Ferry or managed to steal chardalyn from the Easthaven Town Hall
X11. Nildar's Quarters	Nildar (duergar), ogre zombie	Nildar is here if he abandoned his outpost
X12. Training Room	4 animated armor	The armors animate only if touched
X13. Western Gear Room	2 duergar, 2 duergar hammerers	All attack non-duergar on sight
X14. Workshop	2 duergar	Try to hide and fight only in self-defense
X15. Eastern Gear Room	1 duergar	Grows to Large size before entering combat.
X16. Northwest Cavern	4 duergar, 1 umber hulk	Duergar unleash umber hulk and only attack when its dead.
X17. Duergar Mines	3 rust monsters	Rust monsters attack anyone wearing metal gear
X18. Guarded Corridor	4 duergar	The duergar have heavy crossbows (+2 to hit, 1d10 piercing damage)
X19. Chardalyn Throne	1 Myconid sovereign, 1 quaggoth thotot, 4 quaggoth spore servants	The myconid sovereign isn't hostile to the characters. Battle here draws reinforcements from X18 and X20.
X20. Quaggoth Den	4 quaggoths	Run to X19 if they hear combat there
X21. Treacherous Guards	2 duergar	Both duergar are loyal to Grandolpha, will allow characters to pass by
X24-X26. Forge	Thontara (duergar), 12 duergar, 6 quaggoths	One duergar in each of the four towers are loyal to Grandolpha. Battle here draws reinforcements from X28.
X27. Giant Lizard Pens	6 giant lizards	Are hostile toward non-duergar, but can't attack through gates.
X28. Dungeon	3 duergar hammerer, 1 doppelganger, 1 goliath warrior	The duergar hammerers run to X24–26 if battle erupts there.
X29. Deep Duerra's Temple	F'yorl (mind flayer)	The mind flayer has no psionic powers or armor, and only 9 hp
X30. Eastern Elevator	1 duergar hammerer	Attacks on sight
X31. Devil in Disguise	Klondorn (barbed devil)	Klondorn is disguised as a duergar priest
X33. Lower Barracks	15 duergar	Ten duergar are loyal to Grandolpha
X34. Torture Chamber	Nefrun (duergar), 2 duergar mind masters	Nefrun is being tortured by the mind masters, but will attack the characters if released.
X36. Duergar Hammerers	2 duergar hammerers	Attacks on sight.

## X24–X26. FORGE

If you intend for the chardalyn dragon to be released from here (as described under ‘Difficult Decision’ on page 6 of this document), describe the chardalyn dragon on top of the platform when the characters enter:

Atop the platform is a huge dragon made entirely of dark ice. It sits immobile, surrounded by cranes and held to the platform by heavy iron clamps.

While the dragon could certainly aid the duergar against the characters, its movements are limited by the ceiling, and its ‘Radiant Breath’ is likely to cause lots of collateral damage. Most importantly, the insane Xardorok is compelled by the will of Asmodeus to prioritize the destruction of Ten-Towns over the preservation of his own life. Thus, as soon as Xardorok spots intruders, he calls for the chardalyn dragon to be released, so it can embark on its destructive journey.

**Release the Dragon!** Thontara’s horn is the signal that wakes the dragon up and sets it on its predetermined course – and lets the duergar in Ice Gate Level know that they should open the ice gate. When she blows it as an action, you can read:

The dragons’ eyes glow with a bright golden light as it lets out a terrible roar, tearing itself free from the massive clamps that hold it. The dragon then hurls itself into the air, heading south and upward toward a shaft in the ceiling.

Roll initiative for the dragon, which mindlessly flies toward ‘X29. Vertical Shaft’ on its turn. The characters are unlikely to stop it from leaving, but may take the chance to get a few attacks in before it flies off.

**Closed Ice Gate.** If the character have taken care of the duergar on the Ice Gate Level, or taken other measures that prevent the ice gate from being opened, the chardalyn dragon barges through the massive gates, taking 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage (which is halved because of its damage resistances) as it does so. This also causes heavy chunks of ice to rain down the shaft. Any creature right under the shaft must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, and half as much on a success.

**Plan B.** If Xardorok isn’t around to give the command, Thontara can decide to release the dragon on her own. You can also outfit the dragon with a “dead man’s switch”: the dragon is magically attuned to Xardorok, and can sense when the duergar dies – which causes it to set out upon its path of destruction!

## X28. DUNGEON

If you want to introduce Vellynne here, the necromancer is imprisoned in one of the cells, her hands encased in tightly locked iron gauntlets, which prevent her from casting spells with somatic and material components. After the dragon has been released and the characters have defeated the duergar loyal to Xardorok, they hear Vellynne call: “Get me out – I can help you stop the dragon before its too late!”

**Vellynne’s Story.** Once released from her cell, the necromancer explains that she was captured by duergar out on the tundra. She knows of Xardorok’s plans for Ten-Towns, if the characters haven’t already heard them, and informs the characters that they will have to hurry if they want to prevent Ten-Towns from being destroyed. Luckily, Vellynne can help the party catch up to the chardalyn dragon by providing them with fresh sled dogs or the use of her *animate dead* spell, as described under ‘Vellynne’s Aid’ on pg. 15 of this document.

**Vellynne’s Allies & Equipment.** If Vellynne still has her kobolds – zombified or otherwise – and her sled dogs, these sit imprisoned in other cells in the dungeon. All Vellynne’s equipment (her spellbook, dogsleds, *bracers of defense*, and *wand of magic missiles*) is stashed in the Northwest and Northeast rooms described under ‘X29. Deep Duerra’s Temple’ in the book.

**Vellynne as Backup.** If the characters are fairing poorly during an encounter in the forge, you can also have Vellynne show up with her kobolds (and potentially her other cellmates) to lend a helping hand – having taken advantage of the party’s diversion to break free.

## X30. EASTERN ELEVATOR

The book has an error here, stating that the elevator leads to areas X6 and X13, though it clearly leads to areas X12 and X15.

## AFTERMATH

If the characters allied with Grandolpha, you can have her show up to put an end to hostilities when Xardorok is dead, quickly convincing any surviving duergar that they are better off laying down their arms and following her. You can do this as soon as you want to – in order to stop combat before it begins to drag on, or even to help the characters survive if they are in deep trouble.

Once the battle is over, Grandolpha does her best to inure herself to the party, lending them whatever resources they need to go after the dragon, showing them the dragon’s flight plan if they missed it, and allowing them to take prisoners with them. If the characters are suspicious, you can have her explain her dreams of a trade alliance to the characters.

If Vellynne is also present, you can have her act as described above, and offer her aid to the party (see ‘Vellynne’s Aid’ on pg. 15 of this document).

## ADJUSTING DIFFICULTY

The overall difficulty of Xardorok’s fortress depends on the characters’ actions, as well as where they encounter Xardorok. This makes determining the precise difficulty of the entire fortress hard. Luckily, you have some dials you can turn in the fortress, which allow you to increase or decrease difficulty on the fly:

- **Placing Xardorok.** As described under ‘Where is Xardorok’, putting the duergar leader in the more secluded locations (X29 or X34) makes an encounter with him much easier, especially if the characters know where he is and how to get there directly.
- **Adjusting the number of Enemies.** The easiest way to decrease difficulty is by reducing or increasing the number of enemies in various locations, most notably areas X3, X19, and X24–X26. Often this can be done by simply deciding whether or not reinforcements from other areas show up or not.
- **Grandolpha’s Aid.** As described under ‘The Muzgardt Conspiracy’, there are many ways Grandolpha can lend aid to the party, including sending some of her duergar with the party to fight alongside them. She and her duergar can also come to the characters’ aid during the first battle in area X3, or in a ‘final battle’ with Xardorok, if the characters get in over their heads.

Note that if you place the dragon in the forge, it is perfectly okay if the characters aren’t pushed to their limits by the encounter with Xardorok. Having a little left in the tank makes the decision to rest or not even more difficult (see ‘The Journey to Ten-Towns’ on pg. 14).

## EXAMPLES: XARDOROK'S FORTRESS

There's a lot of information to take in for both for you and the players once they arrive at Xardorok's fortress. To make it easier for you to visualize how the party's infiltration could go, two examples are given below.

### EXAMPLE 1: THE PERFECT PLAN

Below is an example of how the assault on the fortress could go if the characters are clever about it.

- The characters get into the fortress quietly (using *knock* or with the aid of the duergar in 'X6. Guard Post'), and use *invisibility* to surprise and ambush the 9 **duergar** guards in 'X3. Upper Barracks'.
- Dreck (from X6) approaches the characters on behalf of Grandolpha and leads them to her in 'X8. Private Dining Room', where they learn all her information, and concoct a plan to ambush Xardorok in 'X29. Deep Duerra's Temple'.
- Before heading off to ambush Xardorok, they depose of the duergar on the Ice Gate Level in an attempt to keep the dragon from being unleashed.
- After taking the elevator down from X12, they quietly ambush and kill the **duergar hammerer** in 'X30. Eastern Elevator'.
- In 'X29. Deep Duerra's Temple', the characters ambush **Xardorok**, who is quickly aided by the **barbed devil** in 'X31. Devil in Disguise'.
- Xardorok escapes to X24–X26. Forge, where he orders the **duergar** Thontara to use her horn to release the chardalyn dragon, while the six **quaggoths** attack the characters.
- The dragon departs the forge – sustaining heavy damage as it crashes through the closed ice gate – and a big battle ensues, but with the aid of the treacherous duergar in the guard towers, the characters are able to win the day. As soon as Xardorok dies, Grandolpha arrives with her loyal duergar and ends the fight.

In this scenario, the characters seize every opportunity given to them, which makes for a smooth and hassle-free infiltration of the fortress. Even though the chardalyn dragon is still unleashed, the characters have hurt it already, and are fresh enough to head directly after it.

### EXAMPLE 2: A PLAN OF CHAOS

Below is an example of how the assault on the fortress could go if the characters take a more 'direct' approach.

- The characters are led into the fortress by the duergar in 'X6. Guard Post', but are immediately spotted and attacked by the 9 **duergar** in 'X3. Upper Barracks'.
- Grandolpha and her 4 loyal **duergar** comes to the characters' aid, but diplomacy fails, and the characters end up taking out Grandolpha without learning much.
- Heading down the first route they stumble across, the characters take the elevator down from X6, arriving in 'X21. Treacherous Guards', where they are allowed to pass through by two **duergar** guards – whom the characters kill anyway, "just to make sure".
- They don't find Xardorok in 'X19. Chardalyn Throne', but end up fighting 1 **quaggoth thonot**, 4 **quaggoth spore servants**, 4 **quaggoths**, and 4 **duergar** here.
- They proceed out through 'X16. Northwest Cavern', where they bump into 4 **duergar** and an **umber hulk**.
- The characters manage to get past 'X23. Outer Gate', but not without drawing the attention of the 3 **duergar** in the nearest guard tower. A pitched battle erupts in the forge room, but once again Xardorok isn't here. During the battle, Thontara uses her horn and releases the chardalyn dragon.
- After dealing with the forces in the forge the characters proceed through the gates to either 'X29. Deep Duerra's Temple' and then 'X31. Devil Disguise', where they deal with the **barbed devil**.
- The characters backtrack to go through 'X32. Trapped Hall' and then into 'X33. Lower Barracks', where they deal with 15 **duergar** (taking advantage of the duergar's infighting) before they finally find **Xardorok** alongside 2 **duergar mindmasters**, which they kill in a pitched battle.
- Pressing on, the characters eventually find themselves in 'X37. Treasure Vault', which they take the time to loot before finding a secure place to rest.

In this scenario, which is only really possible if the characters are higher level, the characters make certain to run headfirst into nearly encounter the fortress has to offer – and is not given much aid by the DM. This example makes it almost certain that the characters will need a long rest before heading back out, and thus makes it very difficult for them to catch up with the dragon before it destroys most of Ten-Towns.





## CHAPTER 4: LIGHT'S DESTRUCTION

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characters must race back to Ten-Towns to catch up with the chardalyn dragon and attempt to prevent its destruction of Ten-Towns – a journey littered with high stakes, difficult choices, and incredible danger!

While this premise is awesome and cool – get to Ten-Towns as fast as possible, to save as many people as possible! – the execution of it is less than perfect. The description of the dragon's path of destruction could use a good summary and the rules for overland travel in the book are confusing at best – and nearly useless at worst! – making the scenario challenging to run for the DM.

On the following pages, you will find revised travel rules to help make the characters' pursuit of the dragon both more exciting for the players and easier for you to run, an expanded 'Dragon Overview' table that helps keep track of the dragon's movements, as well as an elaborate walkthrough of the characters journey to Ten-Towns and their inevitable showdown with the dragon.

### DRAGON SCOURGE

Chapter 4 revolves around the characters' pursuit of the chardalyn dragon. It's meant to be a harrowing chase that forces the characters to make tough choices along the way, while hundreds of innocent lives hang in the balance. Do they clean out the fortress, or chase down the dragon immediately? Do they take a long rest or push ahead? Which town do they make their final stand in?

In reality, however, there's not many meaningful choices to be made. If you use the speeds provided in the 'Overland Travel' and 'Mountain Travel'-sections (ID:RotF, pg. 11–13), the characters can barely make it back in time to take on the dragon in Bryn Shander, and that's only if we assume that they have a dogsled, and that neither the characters nor the dogs need a long rest.

On the following pages, we will offer adjustments to the book's travel rules and additional advice on how to handle the characters' pursuit of the dragon.

### RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RULES

Below are the travel rules that we recommend you use while playing *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, and during chapter 4 in particular.

**Double Speed.** As suggested in **the resources for Chapter 1: Ten-Towns**, doubling the speeds listed under 'Overland Travel' and 'Mountain Travel' (ID:RotF, pg. 11–13) sets a more realistic pace of 2 mph in deep snow for dogsleds and 1 mph for characters with snowshoes.

**Travel Between Towns.** Instead of flipping back and forth between pages to use the confusing and often inconsistent travel times listed under each town, the roads' lengths in miles are measured out (see the map on the next page), and travel on the snowy roads has a fixed pace of 3 mph for dogsleds and 1.5 mph on foot.

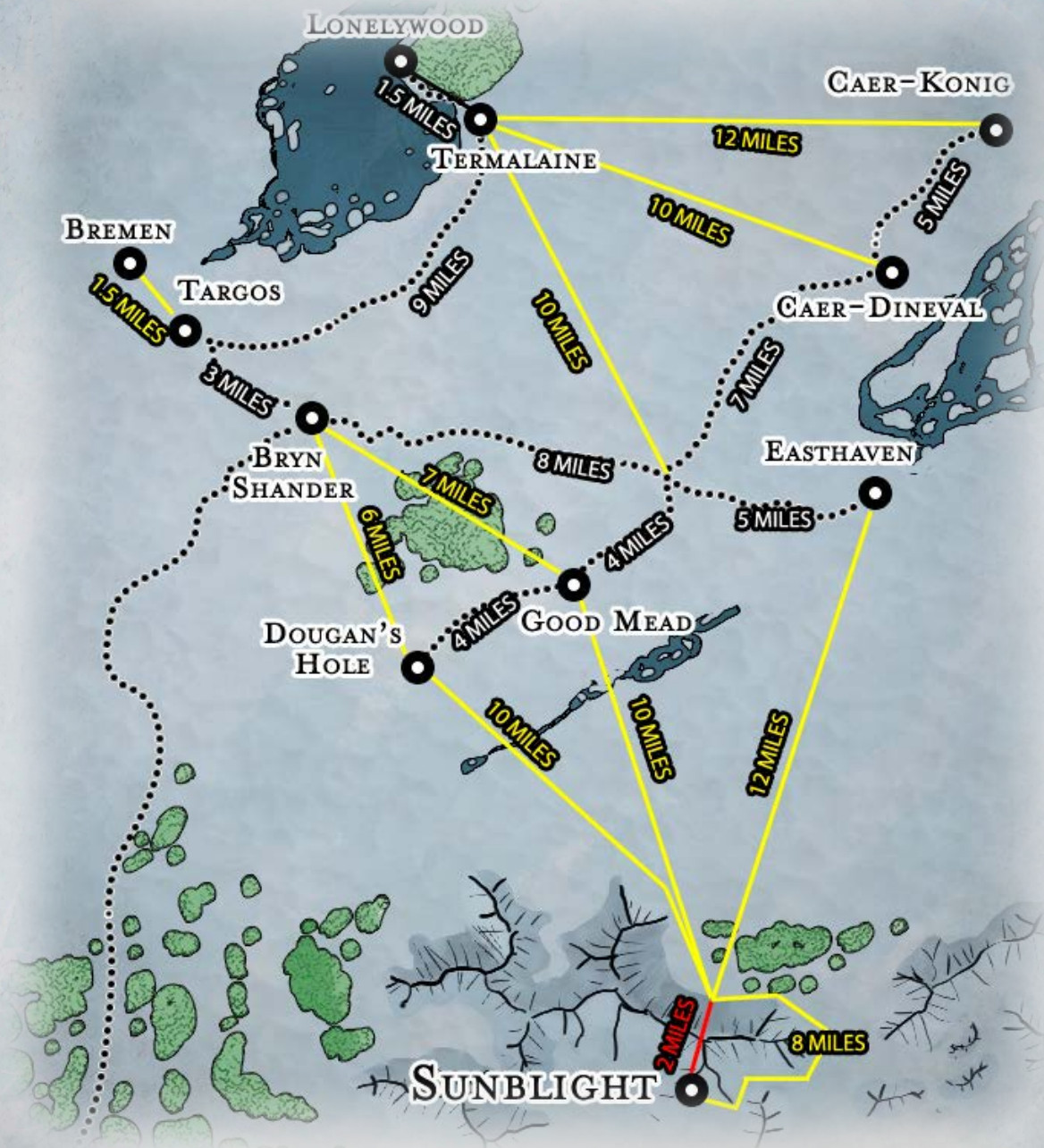
**Travel per Day.** As it is also the way overland travel works in the *Player's Handbook* (pg. 182), we can assume that characters can effectively travel only 8 hours/day and must spend the remaining 16 hours at rest or risk exhaustion. Sled dogs, however, can keep their travel pace for 12 hours/day. This is both realistic and also follows the intention of the rules for sled dogs laid out in the book (ID:RotF, pg. 20), which determines that a sled dog must rest for 1 hour after each hour of travel. The only change is that we allow for the dogs to travel for 12 hours and then rest 12 hours, instead of constantly switching between travel and rest.

**No Rest on a Sled.** Because riding on a sled is uncomfortable and involves frequent stops (getting off to carry the sled across ravines, etc.) characters can't get the benefit of a long rest while traveling on a sled. They can take short rests and get enough sleep to avoid exhaustion, but must stop for 8 hours to get the full benefits of a long rest.

**Summary.** These rules are summarized in the 'Travel in Icewind Dale'-table on the next page, which also features a map with the distances of routes the characters are likely to travel during Chapter 4, and a complete 'Dragon Overview'-table.

## Travel in Icewind Dale

Method of Travel	Distance per Hour			Distance per Day		
	Mountain	Snow	Road	Mountain	Snow	Road
Dogsled	1 mile	2 miles	3 miles	12 miles	24 miles	36 miles
On foot, with snowshoes	1/2 mile	1 mile	1.5 mile	4 miles	8 miles	12 miles
On foot, without snowshoes	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	1.5 mile	2 miles	4 miles	12 miles



## Dragon Overview

Location	Flight Time	Arrival (total time elapsed)	Destruction Time	Departure (total time elapsed)	Damage Taken (HP on departure)	Casualties (% of population)
Dougan's Hole	2 hours	2 hours	1/2 hour	2 1/2 hours	0 (147 HP)	25 people (50%)
Good Mead	1/2 hour	3 hours	1 hour	4 hours	0 (147 HP)	25 people (25%)
Easthaven	1 1/2 hours	5 1/2 hours	8 hours	13 1/2 hours	-10 (137 HP)	250 people (33%)
Caer-Dineval	1 hour	14 1/2 hours	1 hour	15 1/2 hours	0 (137 HP)	≈ 100 people (99%)
Caer-Konig	1 hour	16 1/2 hours	1 1/2 hours	18 hours	0 (137 HP)	100 people (66%)
Termalaine	2 hours	20 hours	6 hours	26 hours	-5 (132 HP)	100 people (16%)
Lonelywood	1/2 hour	26 1/2 hours	2 hours	28 1/2 hours	0 (132 HP)	0 people (0%)
Bremen	1 1/2 hours	30 hours	2 hours	32 hours	-5 (127 HP)	100 people (66%)
Targos	1/2 hour	32 1/2 hours	8 hours	40 1/2 hours	-15 (112 HP)	500 people (50%)
Bryn Shander	1/2 hour	41 hours	12 hours	53 hours	-40 (72 HP)	2,400 people (200%)
Sunblight	3 1/2 hours	56 1/2 hours	—	—	+1d6 HP/hour	<b>TOTAL: 3600/4200 (85%)</b>

## THE JOURNEY TO TEN-TOWNS

Once the characters realize that the dragon is heading to Ten-Towns – whether that’s before they enter Xardorok’s fortress or after they have already cleaned it out – they will need to journey back and try to stop the dragon. This chase should be an interesting and harrowing journey, full of tough choices. Below we will go over what this journey entails and how you can make it more exciting for the players, assuming you use the recommended rules for travel detailed on the previous pages.

### OVERVIEW

The characters journey to Ten-Towns can be divided into four stages, each of which will require tough choices:

- **1. Starting the Journey.** The characters must decide whether to rest and how they will travel to Ten-Towns.
- **2. Get Off the Mountain.** Travel 2 miles through the mountains, or circumvent the mountains by traveling 8 miles through snowy canyons.
- **3. Across the Tundra.** Travel 10 miles across the snowy tundra to either Dougan’s Hole or Good Mead, or 12 miles through the snow to Easthaven.
- **4. Travel in Ten-Towns.** Travel on roads to the town where they want to make a stand against the dragon.

Below we will go over each in turn, looking at the various choices the characters must make at each stage, and the potential consequences of those choices.

### 1. STARTING THE JOURNEY

The first choice the characters must make is whether or not they want to take a long rest before pursuing the dragon. Next, they will also have to decide *how* they want to travel. There’s likely several choices available to them:

- **On Foot with Snowshoes.** This option should be the bare minimum, as they are likely to either have their own snowshoes, or can retrieve them from area X29.
- **On a Dogsled.** If the characters arrived by dogsled, they may choose to leave the same way. Vellynne may also have provided the characters with dogsleds.
- **On a Zombiesled.** If the characters have spoken to Vellynne, she may have provided them with an alternative to sled dogs: zombies! These can either be reanimated sled dogs, duergar, or quaggoths, as described under ‘Vellynne’s Aid’ on the next page.

These choices are very significant. Delaying for 8 hours or more to rest may very well come at the cost of hundreds of lives, but if they don’t have fresh sled dogs, the characters may have no choice but to rest – unless they’re willing to accept Vellynne’s distasteful aid.

### 2. GET OFF THE MOUNTAIN

Standing at the top of the mountain near Xardorok’s fortress, the characters may be able to see the dragon streaking towards Dougan’s Hole in the distance. They now face another choice: travel 2 miles across the mountain to reach its foot at the northern end, at the risk of getting lost or even setting off an avalanche (see the ‘Mountain Travel’-rules), or head down the mountain to the south and trek 8 miles around the mountains.

**Mountain Travel.** If the characters fail just two of the DC 15 Survival checks required to get off the mountain, they might as well have gone around it instead. And if they fail by 5 or more and trigger an avalanche, they could end up suffering exhaustion or even lose both their dogs and their sleds. Make sure the characters understand these risks and the timelines involved, so they can make an informed choice about how to proceed.

### 3. ACROSS THE TUNDRA

The next leg of the journey is across the deep snow of the open tundra. If the skies are clear and it hasn’t been too long since the dragon was released, they should be able to see the dragon either laying waste to Dougan’s Hole (<2½ hours), Good Mead (3–4 hours), or Easthaven (5½–13½ hours) in the distance. There’s 10 miles to Dougan’s Hole and Good Mead, and 12 miles to Easthaven. So which one to aim for?

If they decide for Dougan’s Hole or Good Mead, they will arrive too late to stop the dragon there. And while the journey is 2 miles shorter across the snow, they will now have to travel up to 12 miles on the road to get to Easthaven, which may make them miss the dragon there as well, if they ever had the chance. On the other hand, characters that head straight for Good Mead and from there to Bryn Shander have a shorter route than characters going through Easthaven. Tough choices!

**Blizzard.** This is the perfect time to introduce a blizzard, if the characters are making good time and you want to make things a bit more exciting! As the characters are halfway across the tundra, a 4-hour blizzard blows over them. If the heroes haven’t done so yet, they may take this opportunity to hunker down for a long rest. If not, they can travel on at the risk of getting lost and wasting even more time. If they decide to press on, but are either tied together or on dog sleds, you can decide that a failure by 5 or more (which would normally mean that a character becomes separated from the party) results in a Wilderness Encounter instead.

### 4. TRAVEL IN TEN-TOWNS

If the characters are making record speed in a dogsled, they can arrive in Easthaven after just 8 hours – in the middle of the dragon’s attack! Conversely, if they rested or got lost along the way, they may arrive to see the dragon laying waste to Caer-Dineval, Caer-Konig, or flying across the Dwarven Valley toward Termalaine. While Easthaven is lost in this case, they may still be able to catch up to the dragon in Termalaine or mount a defense in Bryn Shander, Targos, or Bremen. Remember, even if the characters manage to catch up with the dragon early, dealing 30 damage to it may cause it to fly toward its next target (see ‘Dragon’s Behaviour’ on pg. 16 of this document), and the chase continues.

**Finding Sled Dogs.** If the characters’ sled dogs are in need of a break once they reach Ten-Towns – or they never had any dogs at all! – they may want to search for fresh dogs. You can allow a character that spends 1 hour looking for sled dogs in a destroyed town find 1d6 fresh sled dogs with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation), DC 15 Wisdom (Perception), or DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) skill check. Multiple characters can perform this check simultaneously. In a town that hasn’t been destroyed yet, the characters should be able to procure fresh dogs in ½ hour without the need for a check – but must pay 50 gp for each, unless they can convince the dogs’ owner that the need is dire with a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

**Town in Chaos.** The book provides a table of events (pg. 192) to occupy the characters during the dragon’s attack. You can also use these encounters when the characters arrive in a ruined town, as a way to put even more tough choices in front of them. Dealing with a ‘Building Collapse’, ‘Malevolent Townsfolk’, or ‘Thieves’ may cost the characters a ½ hour (a potentially meaningful amount of time) and valuable resources they will miss sorely when they encounter the dragon later.

## VELLYNNE'S AID

In the book, Vellynne arrives just as the characters head back toward Ten-Towns, offering them a lift on her three dogsleds. While it is suggested that you change the timing of this to be less suspiciously convenient (as discussed under 'Introducing Vellynne' on page 6 of this document), the idea that Vellynne arrives to offer her aid can provide for some interesting choices and even moral quandaries. Below we will go over various forms of aid you can have Vellynne offer the party.

### SLEDS AND FRESH SLED DOGS

As written in the book, Vellynne has sleds and fresh sled dogs she will let the characters borrow. This is a good option if the characters don't have their own dogs and you want to at least give them a chance of stopping the dragon in Easthaven.

### SLEDS AND ZOMBIFIED SLED DOGS

Vellynne has used magic to reanimate her sled dogs as zombies. These sled dogs are just as fast as their living counterparts, but have no need for rest, enabling them to travel for 24 hours in a day (covering twice as many miles per day as a regular sled dog). This option works well if you want to make sure that the characters don't just take Vellynne's dogsleds and leave her in the snow, as the zombie dogs will only follow her commands – which means they have to bring her along.

### USING ANIMATE DEAD

Another option, and one that may force the characters to make a tough moral choice, is that Vellynne offers to cast *animate dead* for the party. With two 4th-level spell slots and three 3rd-level spell slots, she can make up to 9 zombies, which can be either sled dogs or humanoids.

**Sled Dogs.** While the spell *animate dead* can technically only target humanoids, you can choose to make an exception for Vellynne. This option works especially well if the characters have sled dogs, but can't use them because they are exhausted from their travel to Xardorok's fortress. Will they kill their own dogs and let Vellynne reanimate them so they can make it to Ten-Towns in time?

**Humanoids.** Vellynne can also use *animate dead* to bring back dead duergar or quaggoths from Xardorok's fortress, who can drag the characters on sleds. While these zombies don't travel any faster than characters wearing snowshoes, they don't tire out and can even aid the characters in combat. But can the characters stomach the thought of being surrounded by zombies under an unknown necromancer's control?



## PLANNING THE PURSUIT

When starting this chapter, you may want to think about what your preferred outcome is. Do you want the characters to be able to intercept the dragon as early as Easthaven, or are you fine with their options being limited to saving only one or two towns?

When you know which outcome you prefer, you can then take steps to ensure that the characters have the resources and means of transportation available to them that will allow them to obtain that outcome – if they're lucky and make the right choices, of course. This also allows you to make informed choices about the potential challenges you want to put in front of the characters – blizzards, wilderness encounters, etc. – so you force them to make tough decisions that are actually meaningful, which is half the fun of a scenario like this.

Below we will go over three of the most likely outcomes, describing what the characters must do to accomplish each, if you are using the recommended rules for travel described on pg. 12 of this document.

### BEST CASE SCENARIO

Unless they happen on a *scroll of teleportation* or a *carpet of flying*, the characters won't be able to catch up to the dragon before it destroys Dougan's Hole and Good Mead. They can, however, catch up with the dragon in Easthaven, but only if they make haste and get there before 13½ hours has passed. To do this, they must have at least partially fresh sled dogs or zombified sled dogs available to them at Xardorok's fortress.

This scenario is interesting, because the characters' choices will have a significant impact on how many towns they can save. If they take a long rest before heading out, but otherwise make perfect time, they will just miss the dragon in Easthaven, but can still catch up with it in Termalaine. At worst, the characters should be able to save at least Bryn Shander, Bremen, and Targos – if they choose to do so, of course.

### MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

If the characters start out with exhausted sled dogs (that can travel for 3 hours or less) and/or zombified humanoids to pull them on a sled, they won't be able to reach Easthaven in time to intercept the dragon. They may, however, be able to catch up the dragon in Termalaine, but only if they push themselves, and find fresh sled dogs along the way.

This scenario is also interesting because it offers the characters a chance of saving half of Ten-Towns, but only if they're smart enough to see it – deducing it from the dragon's flight path as shown in the fortress – and if they put themselves through an exhausting 20+-hour journey. Even if they are unlucky or make poor decisions, the characters should at least be able to make it to Bryn Shander or Targos before the dragon.

### WORST CASE SCENARIO

If the characters don't have sleds available and must walk (with snowshoes) back to Ten-Towns, they have a small chance of making it in time to save Targos or Bremen, but will most likely only arrive just in time to make a stand in Bryn Shander.

This scenario is a bleak one, and because the characters are so far off to begin with, the various choices they make along the way actually have less significance, making the minutia a bit less interesting. An extra hour or two of delay won't make much of a difference if they are already 40 hours behind!

## SHOWDOWN!

In this section we will go over the characters' inevitable showdown with the dragon, discussing how this battle could look and offering various suggestions on how to run it in a way that makes it as entertaining as possible.

### DRAGON'S BEHAVIOR

In the book, we're told that if the characters deal 30 damage or more to the dragon without destroying it, the dragon flies on to the next town – unless it happens in Bryn Shander, in which case the dragon flies back to Xardorok's fortress for repairs.

This behavior can make for an entertaining scenario, where the characters catch up with the dragon in, let's say, Easthaven, and send it scurrying toward Caer-Dineval. Making haste, they can catch up with it again in Termalaine, deal another 30+ damage to it (bringing it to less than 70 HP), and continue harrowing it as it flies on to Lonelywood, Bremen, and Targos. This both makes the encounters with the dragon more survivable for lower level characters and also continuously forces them to make tough choices about where to go next and how approach the showdown with the dragon.

Where this behavior can become an issue, is in Bryn Shander. Having the characters chase the dragon all around Ten-Towns only for it to retreat to Xardorok's fortress before they can destroy it can end up feeling a bit anti-climactic. In addition, if the forge is still operational, they are likely to find the dragon fully replenished once they catch up with it again in the fortress. And if the forge isn't operational, the dragon's retreat only prolongs its inevitable destruction by dividing up the final showdown into two, less tense, battles.

### CHANGING THE DRAGON'S BEHAVIOR

If you want the character's stand against the dragon in Bryn Shander (or elsewhere) to be final, you can decide that the dragon remains in the town as long as it can easily find living targets. In Bryn Shander, it runs out of living targets after 12 hours have passed (because the remaining 300 survivors manage to hide from it), but if the characters show up and don't run off and hide, the dragon remains in Bryn Shander until the party has destroyed it – or it has killed the characters!

### WEATHER CONDITIONS

The book dictates that a storm descends on Ten-Towns after the dragon leaves Termalaine, meaning that the characters will have to fight it under strong wind and heavy snowfall if they face it in Lonelywood, Bremen, Targos, or Bryn Shander.

It seems like the bad weather is used in the book to make up for the damage the dragon has taken at this point, since it will affect only the characters by giving them disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and ranged weapon attacks. This isn't a bad idea, and makes for a pretty cool visual, but if the characters are already underdogs – low level, running low on resources, exhausted – you probably don't need to make things even harder for them.

### NPC SUPPORT

The book's idea to let helpful Ten-Towners aid the characters is a good idea. You can make such aid have a bigger impact by using NPCs the characters have met before – the innkeeper they spoke with in their starting town, the Speaker of that town they helped, and so on – facilitate the aid, and possibly die in the process.

### WHAT CAN VELLYNNE DO?

If Vellynne is with the party, the book describes how she can fight alongside the characters, but tries to stay out of trouble, using her *wand of magic missile* against the dragon and *vampiric touch* to stay alive. Another way to use Vellynne without putting her directly in harm's way is to have her use *animate dead* (if she hasn't already) to return dead townsfolk as zombies and use them to distract the dragon. Some characters may take issue with her tactics, which can make for an entertaining roleplaying moment before, during, or after the battle.

**If Vellynne Dies.** The campaign book would have you keep Vellynne alive at all cost, since she's pivotal to the plot moving forward. Of course, since you decide who and how the dragon attacks, this shouldn't be too difficult to accomplish. Still, if Vellynne ends up dying – or otherwise can't continue on with the party, for any reason – she isn't irreplaceable. This is covered in depth under 'Replacing Vellynne' on pg. 20 of this document.

### SETTING UP DEFENSES

The book mentions that characters may want to make it to a town ahead of the dragon and set up a defense there, but doesn't provide much guidance about how that looks.

### SIEGE WEAPONS

The book tells us that Targos has siege weapons, but doesn't mention which other towns have them or how they can be used. If you want to, you can decide that the four biggest towns all have ballista available:

- Bryn Shander has 6 ballista.
- Easthaven has 3 ballista.
- Targos has 4 ballista.
- Termalaine has 1 ballista.

The dragon targets siege weapons first, so if the characters arrive in a town after the dragon, they are unlikely to find an operable ballista. In addition, duergar saboteurs try to destroy them 10 minutes before the dragon arrives, and successfully take out 1d4 ballista in each town unless the characters intervene (making for a nice little prelude to the big showdown with the dragon).

**Using Siege Weapons.** A description of the ballista can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 255). In summary, three characters working in concert can make a ranged weapon attack (+6 to hit, range 120/480 ft, 3d10 piercing damage) with the ballista each round. You can keep this as it is, making it a worthwhile option for characters that lack strong ranged attacks of their own – or allow the character aiming the ballista to use their own attack bonus and add their Dexterity modifier to the attack's damage on a successful hit, making it a more enticing weapon against the dragon.

### EVACUATION

Besides protecting and manning the ballista, the characters' time is best spend evacuating the town's citizens. What this means precisely up to you, but it seems reasonable that a timely evacuation will reduce the casualties in that particular town by as much as 75%.



## RUNNING THE SHOWDOWN

While you can't know for certain exactly where the characters will face off with the dragon, it is likely to in one of the ten towns. Below is a blueprint to running an encounter with the dragon in one of the Ten-Towns, following these three steps:

- 1. Aerial Assault
- 2. Town in Chaos
- 3. Dragon Landing

### 1. AERIAL ASSAULT

The dragon begins its assault by flying over the town and strafing it with its 'Radiant Breath', which has a 120 ft. range. You can describe how the dragon does this a few times in areas too far away from the characters to do anything about it (+600 ft.), before it eventually strafes the town within range of the characters – without directly targeting them, unless they are manning a ballista or otherwise drawing attention to themselves. This gives them one round of ranged attacks against it when it is within a range of 90 ft. of them, and another round of ranged attacks at 270 ft. range as it flies away.

#### Encounter Maps

This download provides a Ruined Street Map, a Ruined Harbor Map, and a Ruined Wall Map, which can be used as the scene of the characters' showdown with the dragon.

### 2. TOWN IN CHAOS

After the dragon has made an aerial assault, it flies away to replenish its breath weapon. You can run one of the 'Town in Chaos'-encounters listed in the book (pg. 192), to fill out the waiting time between attacks. Encounters such as 'Building Collapse' or 'Malevolent Townsfolk' make especially good sense given the dragon's recent destruction. If the characters arrive more than halfway into the dragon's destruction of a town, you can also skip step 1 entirely, and start the battle with a 'Town in Chaos'-encounter.

### 3. DRAGON LANDING

If the characters managed to hit the dragon with their ranged attacks, it returns to attack them directly, aiming its 'Radiant Breath' in a line to hit as many of them as possible. If the characters can see it coming, you can allow them the opportunity to prepare an action to either take cover or make a ranged attack against it, as it closes the distance. If the characters still haven't dealt enough damage to the dragon to make it head for the next town, or you have decided that it remains in the town until destroyed, the dragon lands near the characters and begins attacking them with melee attacks.

When the dragon is in direct combat with the characters, keep a close eye on its and the characters hit points and resources. If the characters are near death, you can have NPCs intervene and send the dragon flying off to the next town. If combat is going well and feels tense and challenging, you can always choose that the dragon stays and fights until the bitter end!



## AFTERMATH

While you get a complete walkthrough of the dragon's path of destruction in the book, it doesn't actually tell us much about what happens after the dragon's attack. Below we will go over a few of the most likely scenarios, as well as discuss how the story continues from here.

### HEROES OF ICEWIND DALE

If the characters made record speed and managed to defeat the dragon in Easthaven – it didn't or couldn't get away before being destroyed – less than 300 townsfolk will have perished. Even if the characters only send the dragon fleeing from Easthaven before catching up with it again in Termalaine, Bremen, or Targos, they will still probably have saved more than 3,000 lives.

As witness accounts of their courageous stand reach the surviving settlements, the characters are likely hailed as heroes in all of Ten-Towns (or at least the towns that weren't destroyed) – giving them a lifetime supply of free food, drinks, and lodging in most of Ten-Towns. If they were offered a reward (see 'Speaker's Quest' on pg. 6 of this document) before embarking on their mission to Xardorok's fortress, they receive 300 gp from each large town (Easthaven, Termalaine, Targos, and Bryn Shander) they managed to save, as well as 100 gp from each of the smaller towns that weren't destroyed.

### CHAMPIONS IN THE RUBBLE

If the characters were late in their efforts to save Ten-Towns and only caught up to the dragon in Bryn Shander or Targos, they may still have saved the lives of hundreds – or even thousands – of people. Looking over the smoldering ruins of nearly all of Ten-Towns, however, it doesn't feel like much of a victory.

While the characters will receive gratitude for the effort they did put in, many townsfolk – survivors from ruined settlements especially – will find it hard to call them heroes or saviors. If the characters were promised a reward, they may find that it is not so forthcoming – the speaker arguing that every piece of gold is needed to rebuild the destroyed towns and provide for the many refugees. Characters who insist on receiving whatever payment they're entitled to may find that the people of Ten-Towns become embittered against them.

### COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

If the characters somehow failed completely, allowing the dragon to destroy all of Ten-Towns, Bryn Shander included, about 600 Ten-Towners survive – and six times as many don't. Half of the survivors are in Bryn Shander, while the rest are scattered in the other nine towns.

In this scenario, there's no cause for celebration at all. Ten-Towns is decimated, and its future is uncertain. Unless something is done to aid them, more of the survivors are likely to perish in the coming days, succumbing to hunger and exposure. The smaller towns are likely to be abandoned entirely, with only Bryn Shander, Easthaven, and Targos retaining any population worthy of note.

While sad and unsatisfying, this event does provide you with an opportunity to motivate the characters with a chance to undo it all, as described under 'Going Back in Time' on pg. 20 of this document.

## EXAMPLES: DRAGON SCOURGE

The scenario in Chapter 4 is complex and can be hard to get a good handle on, even with the aid provided on the previous pages. To help you get a sense of the chapter, two complete examples of how the chapter can go are provided below.

### EXAMPLE 1: HEROES OF ICEWIND DALE

In this example, the characters are given a chance to be the heroes of Icewind Dale – and seize on it!

- **Starting the Journey.** Having been clever in taking out Xardorok, the party is not in dire need of a rest before heading out to catch the dragon. Vellynne offers them the use of her zombified sled dogs, which they accept.
- **Get off the Mountain.** Heading straight across the mountains and rolling well, the characters spend only 2 hours getting to the foot of the mountains.
- **Across the Tundra.** Knowing the dragon's travel path, they realize they have a chance to catch it in Easthaven and head directly there. They run into a blizzard, but only lose 1 hour while doing so.
- **Easthaven.** Arriving in Easthaven after 9 hours, the characters fight a quick battle with the dragon, before sending it scurrying away toward Caer-Dineval.
- **Rest.** The characters are tired and spent now. Realizing they won't catch the dragon before Easthaven anyway, they decide to take a long rest.
- **Across the Dwarven Valley.** After their rest, the characters travel across the Dwarven Valley toward Termalaine, facing a pair of yeti on the way.
- **Termalaine.** The characters face off with the dragon in Termalaine, once again sending it scurrying away.
- **Lonelywood.** The characters chase the dragon to Lonelywood, where it once more is sent packing.
- **Targos.** The characters aren't fast enough to catch the dragon in Bremen, but make it to Targos, getting a short rest along the way. They deal with duergar saboteurs before the dragon's arrival, and bring ballista to bear against the dragon. In a pitched battle, the characters manage to finally destroy the chardalyn dragon and become heroes of Icewind Dale!

### EXAMPLE 2: PYRRHIC VICTORY

In this example, the characters are dealt poor cards, but try to make the best of them.

- **Starting the Journey.** Having fought pitched battles in Xardorok's fortress, the party decides that both they and their dogs need a long rest before heading out.
- **Get off the Mountain.** Using regular sled dogs, the characters brave the mountains, but lose one hour doing so, getting down after 11 hours has passed.
- **Across the Tundra.** The characters cross the tundra toward Good Mead, but run into a blizzard. They travel through it, but lose an additional 3 hours doing so – and run into a coldlight walker on the way!
- **Good Mead.** Arriving in Good Mead after a total of 19 hours have passed, the characters spend an additional hour finding fresh sled dogs and aiding survivors before heading north.
- **Targos.** Passing through Bryn Shander on the way, the characters arrive in Targos after 25 hours and decide to make a stand here. In a pitched battle, they send the dragon scurrying toward Bryn Shander.
- **Bryn Shander.** The characters face the dragon again in Bryn Shander, where they manage to defeat it with the help of the militia, but most of Ten-Towns' other settlements have been destroyed.

## VELLYNNE'S QUEST

At the end of Chapter 4, the parameters of Vellynne's quest – the quest that will steer the characters toward Chapters 5–7 – is described. There's a few potential issues with this quest and the way it is given to the party, which has to do with its reliance on exposition, using Vellynne as a quest-giver, and the characters motivation.

### VELLYNNE'S INFORMATION

One of the issues you may have with Vellynne's quest is the information she presents. As written, her quest is linear – go here, then here – and relies heavily on exposition, with Vellynne telling the characters exactly where they need to go and what they need to do.

In the DM's resources for Chapter 2: *Icewind Dale*, we presented a way to alter the way Vellynne presents her quest so it includes more of the locations in Chapter 2: *Icewind Dale* and is less reliant on exposition to get the characters moving. In quick summary, Vellynne doesn't know exactly where the entrance to Ythryn is, or where *the Codicil of White*, which is needed to open it, can be found. She does have some suggestions, however, which can send the characters toward locations such as 'Jarlmoot', *'Dark Duchess'*, 'Revel's End', 'Lost Spire of Netheril', and the goliath tribes, to learn first where *the Codicil of White* is – and then to find Ythryn's entrance.

### VELLYNNE AS QUEST-GIVER

As the linchpin that ties the entire campaign together, Vellynne Harpell is given a very prominent role in *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. Vellynne, however, isn't a character that is necessarily universally likable or even particularly trustworthy. While agreeable and resourceful, she is still a necromancer and part of the Arcane Brotherhood, an organization with a dubious reputation. It is not impossible to imagine how some characters may be wary of trusting her, or even downright refuse to follow her. Luckily, there are ways you can make Vellynne more trustworthy – or even replace her as quest-giver, if you feel you need to.

### MAKING VELLYNNE MORE TRUSTWORTHY

There's various ways you can improve the chances that the characters will trust Vellynne and accept her quest.

**Demeanor.** Instead of emphasizing how 'cold and dispassionate' Vellynne is, you can put an emphasis on how lovingly she treats her sled dogs and her kobolds and how genuinely concerned she seems for the safety of the townsfolk of Ten-Towns – while still having her be coldly pragmatic when it comes down the pivotal moments, as she has no qualms about reanimating the dead or causing collateral damage if she has to.

**Actions.** If the characters have Vellynne along for the ride as they chase down and confront the dragon, Vellynne should have plenty of opportunities to show herself as both resourceful and trustworthy. Have her put herself at risk to help a character during one of the dragon's attacks, follow commands without hesitation, and generally be as helpful as possible.

**Other NPCs.** You can also give Vellynne the backing of NPCs the characters already trust. Speaker Duessa Shane or another such NPC may speak on her behalf, expressing their trust in her. You can even have the NPC be present when Vellynne presents her quest to the party, urging the characters to accept because they believe that Vellynne is right about Ythryn potentially offering a chance to revert Auril's Everlasting Rime.



## REPLACING VELLYNNE

While the adventure presents Vellynne as near-irreplaceable, this isn't truly the case. At no point does Vellynne do anything that other NPCs couldn't do, if you change things around a little. Below are some ideas for possible replacements for Vellynne, if she dies during Chapter 4, or the characters for some reason take a strong disliking to her.

**Dzaan or Nass Lantomir.** The wizard Dzaan (or his simulacrum) or Nass Lantomir (who would, in this case, still be alive) can easily serve as replacements for Vellynne. Either can have the same exact backstory and the same ties to the *professor orb* as she would, and are likely just as trustworthy as Vellynne would have been.

**Council of Speakers.** You can also have the Council of Speakers act as quest-givers instead of Vellynne. Wishing to put an end to Auril's Everlasting Rime, they call the characters – heroes who helped stop the dragon's destruction of Ten-Towns! – to a meeting, where they beseech them to find the fabled city of Ythryn and help put an end to the endless winter. While they may be acting on information provided by Vellynne (or another wizard from the Arcane Brotherhood) and may ask that the characters take the wizard along on the journey, the quest still comes from them – and not from Vellynne.

**Oyaminartok.** The fabled goliath werebear Oyaminartok is mentioned often and described in detail in the book (pg. 293), but is never really given anything to do. If you have foreshadowed Oyaminartok, or you just want a replacement for Vellynne that is more trustworthy, the legendary goliath werebear can be the one who seeks out the party to tell them about Ythryn. Having heard of their heroics against the dragon, she sees fit to tell them about Ythryn, a long-lost and legendary city that presumably holds powerful magic that could aid Icewind Dale. This knowledge doesn't come from dusty books, but from oratory myths passed down from goliath to goliath for millenia – but Oyaminartok is nonetheless convinced that they are true.

**Professor Skant.** If you can't or won't include Vellynne, but still want the characters to have her *professor orb* with them, you can just have them find the orb in exactly the same place as they normally would. You can also use Professor Skant as the quest-giver, if you let the characters find the orb earlier – in Xardorok's fortress (stolen by the duergar), in the 'Dark Duchess' (stolen by Nass Lantomir), or in the 'Lost Spire of Netheril' (stolen by Dzaan). It can be Professor Skant – an object likely to be far more trustworthy than Vellynne – who offers up information about Ythryn and informs the characters that finding the lost city may be the key to ending Auril's Everlasting Rime.

## MOTIVATING THE CHARACTERS

In the book, the motivation to find Ythryn provided to the characters by Vellynne essentially boils down to "it holds magic beyond our wildest dreams" and "we might even find something there to end this hateful winter".

If the characters are adventurous and greedy – most characters are – they may not need much more motivation than this. But if the characters are more motivated by aiding Ten-Towns, you may want to emphasize how finding Ythryn will benefit the people of Icewind Dale – and how not finding it could harm them!

## ENDING AURIL'S EVERLASTING RIME

The promise of ending Auril's Everlasting Rime is a good hook, as this is likely what both players and characters believe they are supposed to do in a campaign called *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

**Making the Hook Stronger.** As the book describes (pg. 194), Vellynne can tell the characters about the *mythallar*, which she believes *might* be able to revert Auril's Everlasting Rime. You can make this hook a bit stronger by having her be certain that it is still intact and can indeed be used to end Auril's Everlasting Rime.

**Retaining Motivation.** A potential issue with this hook is that the characters may be able to end Auril's Everlasting Rime before they even find Ythryn, which invalidates the whole premise. If you want to avoid this, you will have to make some changes when you run Chapter 5. The easiest way to do it is by not letting the characters face off with Auril in Chapter 5 and/or by deciding that defeating Auril on the Island of Solstice prevents her from making the winter worse – but doesn't undo the spell she has already cast on Icewind Dale.

## GOING BACK IN TIME

The *mythallar* and its ability to control the weather doesn't have to be all Ythryn has to offer, however. If the dragon's attack on Icewind Dale has left most of Ten-Towns destroyed and thousands dead, you can have Vellynne offer an enticing lure: Ythryn may hold magic that can turn back time and undo it all!

While the information is sparse, ancient records and rumors tell of magic that can be used to turn back time, designed exactly to mitigate destructive events such as the one that has just befallen Icewind Dale. If the characters can help her discover such magic, Vellynne believes that she may be able to undo the dragon's destruction! Whether or not you allow the obelisk in Ythryn (ID:RotF, pg. 255) to actually accomplish this feat and how that would look is up to you – and is something that is discussed in more detail in the DM's resources covering Chapter 7: Doom of Ythryn.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION

If the characters are wary of trusting Vellynne, or don't bite immediately on her suggestion that they may find something to end Auril's Everlasting Rime in Ythryn, she has another ace up her sleeve: she isn't the only one looking for the Netherese necropolis.

While the characters may not trust Vellynne, they can at least make sure to be with her when she explores Ythryn, and help ensure that she gets there first – before her rivals, wizards with even darker motives than her own, get their hands on the powerful magic Ythryn contains. In other words, not helping Vellynne find Ythryn doesn't just mean missing an opportunity to end Auril's Everlasting Rime – it may actually make matters in Icewind Dale even worse!



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