

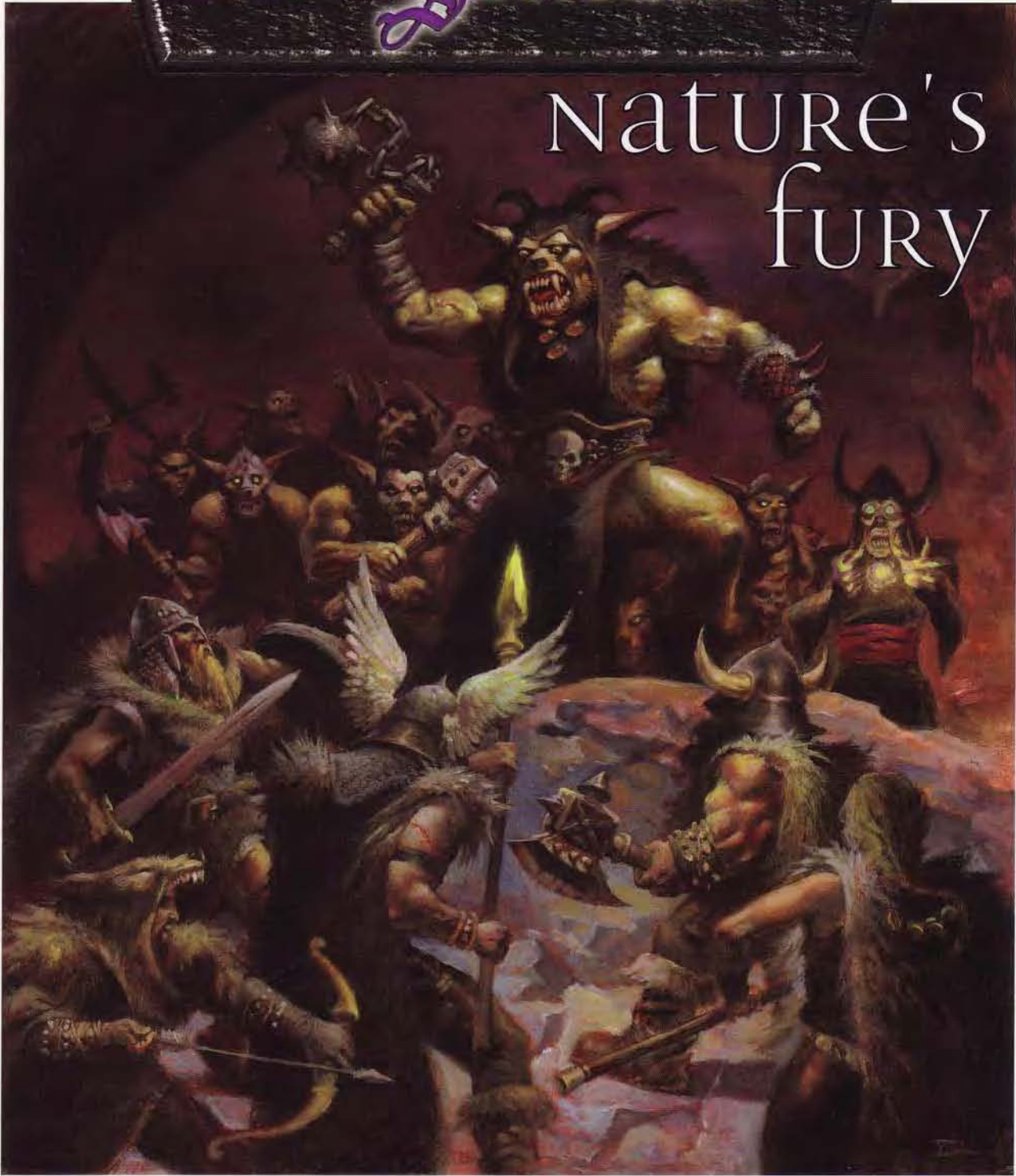


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SWORD & SORCERY

Nature's fury



A fully illustrated fantasy roleplaying adventure.

Mike Mearls and James Bell

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Challenge Table for Swords Through the Ice Gate

Encounter Location	Encounter Level	Challenge Rating	Challenge Statistics
3	4	4	Polar Bear: hp 68; Init +1; AC 15; Atk +13/+13(1d8+8 [x2])
4	7	7	Urgor: hp 56; Init +2; AC 17; Atk +7(1d8+2) or spells
6	Varies	Varies	Bugbears: hp 16 each; Init +1; AC 17; Atk +4(1d8+2) or +3(1d6+2)
7	9	5	Gorak: hp 60; Init +3; AC 19; Atk +11(1d8+5) or +8(1d6+4)
		4	Simtak: hp 26; Init +2; AC 17; Atk +4(1d8+2) or spells
9	6	2 (x8)	Bugbears: hp 16 each; Init +1; AC 17; Atk +4(1d8+2) or +3(1d6+2)
		2 (x6)	Bugbears: hp 16 each; Init +1; AC 17; Atk +4(1d8+2) or +3(1d6+2)
10	6	5	Water Elemental, Large: hp 68; Init +2; AC 20; Atk +10/+5(2d8+7)
		3	Water Elemental, Medium: hp 30; Init +1; AC 19; Atk +6(1d8+4)
11	5	5	Icy Water Trap
12	6	2 (x6)	Bugbears: hp 16 each; Init +1; AC 17; Atk +4(1d8+2) or +3(1d6+2)
13	8	6	Treffek: hp 50; Init +8; AC 20; Atk +8(1d8+3) or +9(1d6+4) or spells
		3 (x 2)	Ice Mephits: hp 13, 13; Init +7; AC 18; Atk +4/+4(1d3 and 2 [x2])
15	9	9	Siglacia: hp 189; Init +4; AC 26; Atk +23(2d6+6), +18(1d8+3), +18(1d8+3), +18(1d6+3), +18(1d6+3), +18(1d8+9) or breath weapon (6d6) or spells

Challenge Table for The Crystal Tower

Encounter Location	Encounter Level	Challenge Rating	Challenge Statistics
2	6	1 (x 8)	Gnolls: hp 16, 15, 14, 14, 12, 12, 11, 10; Init +0; AC 17; Atk +3(1d8+2)
9	4	4	Electrified Room Trap
12	4	4	Glyph of Warding: Feeblemind Trap
14	1	1	Scything Blade Trap
15	1	1	Teleporter Trap
16	5	5	Herod Vergos: hp 52; Init +2; AC 16; Atk +9(1d8+6)
20	1	1	Arrow Trap
23	8	8	Ilgen Jaspur: hp 50; Init +8; AC 21; Atk +8/+3(1d6+1) or +11/+6(1d6+1)
24	2	2	Spear Trap
34	1	1	Oil Trap
35	2	2	Fire Jet Trap
37	2	2	Ram Trap
37	7	7	Lannora Resmin: hp 42; Init + 8; AC 18; Atk +7/+7(1d6+1/1d6) or +9(1d6+1)
39	10	10	Crushing Wall Trap
40	1	1	Acid Fog Trap
43	5	3 (x 2)	Ice Mephits: hp 15, 15; Init +7; AC 18; Atk +4/+4(1d3 and 2 [x2])
43	2	2	Circle of Cold Trap
47	6	4 (x 2)	Gargoyles: hp 40, 38; Init +2; AC 16; Atk +6/+6/+4/+4(1d4/1d4/1d6/1d6)
51	1	1	Needle Trap

Tumbler Tracking Chart

	1st Floor	3rd Floor	4th Floor	5th Floor
Initial Setting	Star	Square	Triangle	Square
Current Setting				
CIRCLE	Safe: unlocks Area 32.	Low Alert: unlocks Areas 22, 23 and 25 but activates 2nd floor traps.	Safe: unlocks Area 11 and Lock "C" in Area 43.	High Alert: locks Area 8 and activates 4th floor traps.
TRIANGLE	High Alert: locks Area 32, activates 1st floor traps.	Safe: unlocks Areas 22, 23 and 25.	Low Alert: unlocks Area 11, but activates 3rd floor traps.	Safe+unlocks Area 8 and Lock "D" in Area 43.
SQUARE	Safe+: unlocks Area 32 and Lock "A" in Area 43.	High Alert: locks Areas 22, 23 and 25, activates 2nd floor traps.	Safe: unlocks Area 11.	Low Alert: unlocks Area 8, but activates 4th floor traps.
STAR	Low Alert: unlocks Area 32 but activates 1st floor traps.	Safe+: unlocks Areas 22, 23, 25 and Lock "B" in Area 43.	High Alert: locks Area 11 and activates 3rd floor traps.	Safe: unlocks Area 8.

Iceberg Structure Chart

Initial hp	Current hp
300	

* -40 hp per day due to the sun.

	Always Active	Must be Set
1st Floor Traps:	Area 51	Area 47
2nd Floor Traps:	Areas 40 and 43	Areas 34, 35, 37 and 39
3rd Floor Traps:	Area 29	Area 24
4th Floor Traps:	Area 12	Areas 14, 15 and 20
5th Floor Traps:	Area 9	None



Nature's Fury

Chilling adventures featuring an icy theme

Two Fantasy Roleplaying Adventures for the D20 System

Requires the use of the **Dungeons & Dragons**® 3rd Edition *Player's Handbook*, published by Wizards of the Coast®

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ADVENTURE 1: SWORDS THROUGH THE ICE GATE

INTRODUCTION

The hamlet of Owen's Point sits quietly under three inches of snow. The air has a sharp cold in it, the kind that penetrates even the thickest furs like frozen daggers driven by the howling winds. If today were early winter, those of Owen's Point would just shake their heads and comment that winters are nothing like they used to be, back in the day.

Yet today is but a week past midsummer, and the people of Owen's Point are no longer around to comment on the weather.

Swords Through the Ice Gate is a D20 adventure written for a party of four 6th-level characters. This module is designed to fit easily into a Game Master's (GM's) ongoing campaign, and wherever possible the GM is given options on modifying and replacing parts of the background with elements of his or her own game world.

PREPARATION

Before running this adventure, the GM should read it through carefully to gain a familiarity with its layout and various features. In addition, the GM should be familiar with the basic rules of play, particularly combat, skill checks, and environmental modifiers. The GM should take note of any characters with the Wilderness Lore skill, as this will provide an advantage for dealing with the harsh climate.

For best results, the adventurers should have between 22 and 26 total character levels, and include at least one ranger or character with knowledge of cold weather survival, as the adventure features a distant world covered in ice.

If you plan on playing a character in this adventure, STOP READING NOW! The following notes are for the Game Master only; reading them may spoil the secrets and fun found in *Swords Through the Ice Gate*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the untold eons before the rise of humanity, before the dwarven smiths perfected their mastery of steel, even before the elves mastered magic and claimed the forests as their own, dragonkind ruled the skies. Though dragons of that age knew well their strength, the wisest among them predicted that one day the lesser humanoid races would lay claim to the world. The humanoids already knew the secrets of magic. Soon, the dragons saw, their supremacy would be challenged.

Even in the ancient days, dragons lusted after gold. They mined it from the earth, shaped it with their magic, and forged trinkets and baubles that, by modern reckoning, would stand as mighty relics. In these ancient times, the majority of dragons died of old age, the bitter rivalries between them having yet to heat up as competition for space was not an issue. The humanoid kingdoms and cities existed only in embryonic form, leaving dragons free to lair where they wished. When a dragon reached the end of its life, it

gathered its horde and, aided by its friends and relatives, journeyed to a long since forgotten demi-plane to meet the end of its days in peace, surrounded by the grandeur it had wrought in life.

Of course, all good things, peace foremost among them, must come to an end. As humans, orcs, elves, and other races matured, conflicts between the younger races and dragons were inevitable. Dragonkind splintered into factions. Some favored wiping humanoids from the world, while others preached tolerance, urging their kin to retreat and to let the humanoids master the world. In the end, with encouragement whispered in their ears by their dark gods, the chromatic dragons rose against their metallic kin. Great battles, largely invisible to the developing kingdoms of humanity, raged in remote corners of the planet. One of these battles, perhaps the most important one of the brief but fierce struggle, occurred at the gateway to the ancient dragon graveyard. The gateway between planes, a small demi-plane itself connecting the world to the graveyard, was a revered hall carved from pure silver and adorned with some of the greatest riches of the dragons. On its final day, the once holy place became a battlefield where elite cadres of metallic and chromatic dragons met in conflict. At the height of the struggle, the chromatic dragons seemed on the verge of a great victory. With the graveyard in their hands, they could loot it with impunity and assure their victory and dominance of the world. With his dying gasp, a gold dragon wizard worked a spell to sunder the gate and sever all contact to the graveyard forever, casting it into the Astral void where no dragon, human, or other being could find it. The gateway bucked and twisted as the magic that held it together disintegrated. In a desperate bid for survival, the chromatic dragons attempted to repair the gold dragon's work. Instead, they joined the gateway to the long dead world of Gillidia, a plane locked in a curse of unending ice. As the gate stabilized, the icy magical essence of Gillidia surged into the gateway, trapping the dragons in a tomb of ice and blocking the gateway back to the world.

Now, that gate is open.

Gillidia

Gillidia is a world locked in ice. Countless eons past, the two great gods who vied for dominance of Gillidia met in face-to-face conflict. Hallorun, noble Lord of Fire, and Symfyl, dread Lady of the Winds, wrought terrible magic as they strove against each other. Meanwhile, their mortal armies clashed in epic conflicts on the world below. Both gods courted the aid of Naugus, uncaring Keeper of the Seas, and the earth mother Nollas, who suffered greatly in the gods' struggle as their followers razed forests and despoiled her beauty in their wars. Naugus, seeing that he could never match the power of either Hallorun or Symfyl, chose to play the two gods against each other. He swore oaths of fealty to both, leading the two to believe that each finally held a decisive edge for an all-out struggle. He also struck his own bargain with Nollas,





swearing to stand by her in the coming struggle. In the end, Naugus waited until both gods had worn themselves down to shadows of their former power. Then he unleashed his bid for dominance. Great sheets of ice marched forth from his watery domain, cloaking Nollas in a protective shell, crushing the followers of both Hallorun and Symfyl, and trapping the weakened gods forever in an icy tomb. Flush with the heady vapors of his success, Naugus turned against Nollas, whom he saw as his last remaining rival, and drove his great sheets of ice into the earth, shattering the entire world and locking the pieces into a tremendous sphere of ice.

Now, Naugus sleeps, content in his victory and spent from his great efforts. Hallorun, Symfyl, and Nollas linger on, imparting their influence on Gillidia where they can and preserving the few followers who remain.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

In this scenario, the characters must track the creatures responsible for the destruction of a small village back through a magical gate to a world of ice and snow. Once there, the party must negotiate the release of the captive villagers and defeat a fearsome white dragon.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTIONS

Text that appears in shaded boxes is descriptive, and should be read aloud or paraphrased to the players. Other text is for the GM's eyes only, and contains information on encounters, traps, puzzles, magic, treasure and instructions on running the adventure. Some encounters may have little read-aloud text, as the adventurers may contend with the area under a variety of circumstances, and the GM can simply describe the environment as appropriate in his or her own words.

Encounters with a monster list the basic information needed for the encounter: the creature encountered, number appearing, and individual hit points. For a full description of a monster's abilities, see Appendix I: Monster Descriptions.

SETTING THE STAGE

The current situation . . .

Of the dragons swallowed up by the terrible Gillidian ice, only one survives: the white dragon Siglacia. Her white dragon heritage and her magical items allowed her to survive her imprisonment in a sort of stasis, preserving her from the ravages of both time and the environment. Recently, a band of Naugus-worshipping bugbears moved into an icy valley quite close to Siglacia's resting-place. The tribal bard, Treffek, happened upon Siglacia's resting-place while exploring a deep fissure in the ice. Using her *ring of thought sending*, Siglacia contacted the bard and made him an offer. In exchange for her freedom, Siglacia would serve Treffek and see to it that he rose to a position of great power within his tribe. His heart filled with ambition, the bard returned to the tribe and recruited a band of followers to free the dragon. Over many months, and with the dragon's aid, they hollowed out two great

caverns in the ice to serve as her lair. In the meantime, Treffek used his connection to the dragon to displace the old tribal shaman, Urlgorz. Declaring himself a prophet of the dragon, Treffek gained the support of the chieftain, Gorak, and helped drive Urlgorz from the settlement. The shaman, however, stole a second *ring of thought sending* given by Siglacia to Treffek as a token of his chosen place as her prophet. This theft damaged the new cult's prestige and led many bugbears to abandon it. Only a few of the goblinoids continued to work at digging a passage wide enough to allow Siglacia to escape her icy prison.

Enraged at Treffek's loss of the ring, Siglacia spent many days contemplating a way to win back the tribe and expedite her escape. When all hope seemed lost to the dragon, though, the bugbears dug up an ancient artifact, a magical *stone of gating* that controlled access to the gates that once connected the Player Characters' world to the temple leading to the dragon graveyard. Siglacia dispatched the bugbears to discover the now dormant gate, and after several days of searching they discovered a small cave at the far end of the valley that matched Siglacia's description. The dragon could still recall the dimensions of the passage leading to the gate, and she correctly deduced that some vestige of that passage may remain within the valley. The bugbears reactivated the gate by using the command words taught to them by Siglacia. Unknown to Siglacia and Treffek, Urlgorz managed to overhear the words when he followed after the group assigned to open the gate and spied upon their work.

Siglacia dispatched the bugbears to journey through the gate and explore the world beyond. Siglacia hoped that the evil dragons had won the war and would reign supreme, but her scouts reported that this was not the case. Instead, they gathered a group of warriors from the village and launched a raid on Owen's Point, a move that enraged the dragon, as it could draw attention to the gate. She was somewhat mollified, however, when Treffek offered the human captives to her as slaves.

After the raid, life returned to normal for the bugbears. They found the world beyond the gate strange enough not to warrant any more visits, and after Treffek's embarrassment at the hands of the outcast Urlgorz, few bugbears outside of a core group of fanatics still work to free the dragon. Many of the bugbears are somewhat resentful that the humans they captured were set to work for the dragon. Gorak is wary of angering the dragon too much, should she come for revenge when she is freed. The captives still held in the village represent a kind of burden, but while the dragon's worship has faded, no one wants overtly to anger her and her followers by mistreating what is perceived as Siglacia's property.

Running Adventures in Gillidia

As a land carved of ice, Gillidia features intensely cold conditions. During the day, the temperature hovers around 12°F; at night, it dips below 0°F.

Cold and exposure deal **subdual damage** to the characters without sufficient cold weather gear such as heavy furs, snowshoes, and insulated boots. This subdual damage cannot be recovered until





the character gets out of the cold and warms up again. Once a character is rendered unconscious through the accumulation of subdual damage, the cold and exposure begin to deal normal damage at the same rate.

During the day, an unprotected character in cold weather must make a **Fortitude save** each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or sustain **1d6 points of subdual damage**. A character with the **Wilderness Lore** skill may receive a bonus to this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. With a successful **Wilderness Lore check** (DC 15) a character gains **+2 on all Fortitude saves** against Gillidia's severe weather while moving up to one-half the character's **overland speed**, or +4 if stationary. In addition, he may grant the same bonus to one other character for every **1 point by which the check result exceeds 15**.

During the Gillidian night, an unprotected character must make a **Fortitude save every 10 minutes** (DC 15, +1 per previous check), taking **1d6 points of subdual damage** on each failed save. A successful **Wilderness Lore** check allows for the same bonuses as described in the preceding paragraph. Characters wearing winter clothing only need check once per hour for cold and exposure damage at night; they need not check during the day.

A character who sustains any subdual damage from cold or exposure suffers from frostbite or hypothermia and is **fatigued**. These penalties end when the character recovers the subdual damage she took from the cold and exposure. Fatigued characters cannot run or charge and suffer a **-2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity**. A fatigued character becomes **exhausted** by doing any activity that would normally cause fatigue. After 8 hours of complete rest, fatigued characters are no longer fatigued.

Characters who are **exhausted** move at **half normal speed** and suffer a **-6 penalty to Strength and Dexterity**. After one hour of complete rest, exhausted characters become fatigued.

Using *Swords Through the Ice Gate* in a Campaign

Gillidia is easily replaced with an appropriately cold region in the GM's campaign world. Siglacia could have been imprisoned within the ice by an avalanche, a rival dragon, or even a human wizard. The main factor to consider is that Siglacia is currently trapped and needs to work with the bugbears to escape. She is also very much a sitting duck for the players, who can afford to wait before tackling her as she has no escape route.

Gillidia is included to allow the GM to set an arctic adventure anywhere in the campaign world. In addition, Gillidia adds a sense of wonder and weirdness to the adventure. As is explained further in the adventure, the GM has the option of forever closing the gate to Gillidia if he or she does not wish to use it in future games. In fact, the characters may want to do this anyway to prevent Naugus's curse from spilling over into their world and heralding an ice age.

Owen's Point is easily swapped out with any frontier village relatively close to a set of hills that might have caves. A city, town, or even large village is probably a bit too powerful for the bugbears to

tackle. Striking at night and with surprise, they could probably handle a town of about 100 people.

The background covering the dragon's graveyard serves to give a good explanation as to how the situation developed. In addition, the GM can easily include other hints at a tremendous treasure hoard floating somewhere in Astral space to fuel plot hooks or even a campaign-long story arc. If the history of your game world does not allow for the background presented here, changing the adventure background is relatively easy, as it only comes into play if the GM wants it to. If the GM wishes, the mystery of Siglacia's imprisonment can remain just that – a mystery.

Plot Hooks

The action in this adventure begins at an isolated frontier settlement, but that does not mean the characters must begin there. Included below are a variety of plot hooks for drawing the characters into this adventure.

- The characters are hired to deliver an item to the wizard-sage Bannuck, who lives in Owen's Point and was one of the people taken captive in the bugbear raid.

- The characters have a friend or relative who has fallen victim to a rare and deadly magical disease that has proven resistant to all magical cures. Only the sage Bannuck knows the combination of magic and herbs necessary to counteract the infection. The characters must track down his captors and rescue him if they want their friend to survive.

- One of the characters has a relative or childhood friend who settled in Owen's Point. The character either has reason to visit his friend (perhaps a marriage or other celebration) or hears news that Owen's Point has suffered a raid at the hands of evil humanoids.

- News of the freakishly cold weather caused by the gate's opening has reached civilized lands. The characters are hired by a group of druids, sages, or grain merchants to explore this phenomenon, find its source, and prevent it from causing any permanent damage to the land's crops and livestock.

- A cleric in the party receives a vision from her deity that a great, slumbering evil has awakened (Siglacia). The vision points the character in the direction of Owen's Point.

Hints and Tips for Running this Adventure

The primary device at work in *Swords Through the Ice Gate* is the environment. The initial scenes involve freezing cold weather and snowfall in the middle of summer, while the latter dungeon portions take place in a network of caverns carved from ice. The GM should emphasize these features to the players. Dwell on the cold conditions, and take the time to describe how uncomfortable their characters are, especially if they lack proper cold-weather clothing. Describe their characters' numb hands and the sheer harshness of the cold, especially in contrast to the warm summer weather the characters have enjoyed. Play up the contrast between the weather and the time of year. Describe the freshly tilled fields burgeoning with young crops that have long since been killed by the frost. Leafy trees still have their summer foliage, though it is cloaked in





snow. Birds especially suffer from the odd weather patterns, as many of those that typically migrate to avoid winter fall prey to the cold.

Once the characters are through the gate to Gillidia, emphasize the alien nature of their surroundings and the subtle differences that separate it from home. The stars at night are wholly unfamiliar, while the sun burns with a feeble, red light during the day. Perhaps the air smells slightly different and sounds have a slightly tinny quality to them.

KEYED ENCOUNTERS

Note: The exact location of Areas 1 and 2 – Owen's Point and the Ice Gate – are left to the GM's discretion.

AREA 1: Owen's Point and Environs.

The cold comes suddenly, almost as if an invisible wall separates the warm summer's day you were just walking through from the freezing cold you are in now. The land looks largely the same, save for a few birds frozen into rigid postures by the killing cold. In the distance, you can see the white glare of snow upon the ground.

The winter weather extends in roughly a ten-mile radius from the now open gate, but with each day that passes the cold region grows larger, threatening to engulf the entire area around Owen's Point should the gate remain open long enough. Aside from the cold, no other unnatural phenomenon is readily apparent. The region is very quiet, as most of the animals have fled to warmer areas. Many of the trees show signs of losing their leaves and other changes normally associated with winter. Aside from the stark contrast between the summer's warmth and the sudden cold, the border regions of the cold area simply appear as if they were hit by an early frost – if the characters did not know the time of year.

The GM should keep in mind the notes for cold weather listed

above in *Running Adventures in Gillidia*. The region around Owen's Point is roughly 28°F, which may cause problems for the characters if they lack cold-weather clothing.

As the characters progress deeper into the region, they begin to see obvious signs that something is amiss. After about a mile of walking, snow begins to accumulate on the ground, starting at first with a mere dusting but increasing to three inches deep at Owen's Point. The snow reaches its greatest depth at Area 2, where it is six inches deep.

When the characters reach Owen's Point, the GM can read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead of you is the small village of Owen's Point. A single stone tower, three stories tall, stands watch over the snow-covered settlement. Clustered about the tower are approximately a dozen dwellings, all of which show signs of violence: smashed-in doors, broken windows, and other damage. Wreaths of flowers hang from many of the homes, their blooms long since turned to a withered brown by the cold.

Owen's Point is currently a ghost town. When the characters enter the settlement, they see that the buildings show signs of damage, as if from an attack. Doors are battered down, windows smashed, and the front door to the tower bashed in. With a successful **Track/Wilderness Lore check (DC 15)**, the characters will notice many sets of tracks, both human and bugbear, trampled into the snow heading east toward the cave at Area 2. The tower, once the home of Bannuck Halfelven, is three stories tall with a basement. The first floor has a sitting room and kitchen, both of which were picked clean by the bugbear raiders. The second floor once held a library, but this too was emptied by the bugbears, who gathered the books together on Siglacia's orders. The third floor was Bannuck's laboratory, yet the bugbears smashed the glass beakers, tools, tables, and other implements once stored there. The basement holds a rather grim scene: here the bugbears disposed of both





the humans they killed in their raid and their own dead. Both human and bugbear corpses are stripped of all items, and all of the corpses show signs of a violent death.

The raid struck the village four days after the cold weather started. Searching the homes turns up nothing of value, though the characters can find warm clothes or cobble together warm outfits for oddly sized characters. Judging from the state of the houses, the inhabitants hastily gathered some of their possessions before leaving. In fact, the bugbears forced their captives to collect cold weather clothes, food, and tools before marching them to the east. The pantries and tool sheds throughout town are empty of anything of value and show signs of being thoroughly ransacked.

Following the tracks to Area 2 is trivially easy. Roughly 40 bugbears and 60 humans marched that way no more than five days ago. The bugbears were far too worried about encountering any strange monsters or other hostile strangers to cover their tracks. As strangers in a strange land, they were happy to find such easy pickings at Owen's Point and unwilling to press their luck.

AREA 2: Cave of the Gate.

Ahead of you, the tracks disappear into the gaping blackness of a cave that opens into the hillside. The cave mouth is roughly thirty feet wide and reaches a height of twenty feet.

When the characters approach the cave mouth, the GM should read the following:

As you approach, you feel a strong, steady, freezing cold breeze issue from the cave mouth. The ground before the cave is frozen solid, and occasionally a swirling cloud of snow flurries gushes forth from the cave.

The cave looks as if it is naturally formed. A character, though, with a **Knowledge** skill related to caves, mining, or geology – or a dwarf – can notice on a successful **Spot or Knowledge check (DC 25)** that the cave was originally carved from the rock many, many years ago.

The cave's interior is even larger than its entrance, sloping downward to the east and reaching 60 feet wide and 50 feet tall only 20 feet past the cave mouth. As the characters move into the cave, the cold becomes much more intense; the temperature quickly drops below freezing just inside the cave. The cave extends 80 feet to the east, where it ends in a blank, perfectly smooth black wall that reflects light much like polished obsidian. This black wall is the gate to Gillidia that the bugbears journeyed through in order to raid Owen's Point. Dirt tracked into the cave from outside indicates that a large group of humanoids recently moved through the cave. The trail of dirt and debris leads directly to the featureless black wall and ends at its base.

The gate is rather easy to use: the characters must simply walk through it. Anyone going through the gate experiences an intense feeling of cold, as if freezing from the inside out. For a few seconds

the character can see nothing but inky blackness before finding himself standing in the entry cave in Gillidia, described in Area 3 below.

The characters more than likely will attempt to experiment with the gate before moving through it. The gate feels solid yet yielding to the touch, much like a firm mattress. Hurlled objects pass through it with ease, and characters can stick their hands, weapons, or anything else through the gate and pull them back through. Yet, a character who tries to push just his head through in order to look at the other side sees only inky blackness. The freezing cold feels as if it originates from the gate, and a strong, cold breeze constantly blows from it. Items tossed through the gate arrive in Area 3 unharmed, though fragile objects may break when they hit the cave floor.

AREA 3: Cave to Gillidia.

This wide, tall cave appears to be almost an exact replica of the cave you were just in. As you adjust to your surroundings, a disquieting sense of wrongness comes over you. The air has a faint stench of rotting meat to it; the sunlight shining through the cave mouth ahead has a distinctly crimson tinge to it; and any sound you make has a slightly tinny quality to it, as if a faint background buzzing distorts everything you hear.

This cave bears the exact same qualities as the entrance cave back on the characters' homeland, including the chance for observers to note that the cave is the product of magic, mining, or digging rather than natural erosion. When the characters move to the cave entrance, the GM should read or paraphrase the following:

Before you stretches a long, deep valley covered in snow. The snow has a slightly scarlet tinge cast upon it by the small, red sun that hangs in a sky colored with the coppery hues of twilight, even though the sun rises high in the sky. The slight scent of rotting meat continues to hang in the air despite the cold breeze that blows across and past you toward the back of the cave, and any sound you make is still tainted by the slight background buzz. The valley stretches for one or two miles before you, its floor roughly one hundred feet below. A ten-foot wide ledge leads to your right from the cave mouth and downwards at a gentle slope, terminating at the valley floor roughly two hundred feet away from you. Three large boulders, each roughly ten feet high and encrusted with ice and snow, stand at the base of the path to the valley floor, roughly twenty-five feet from the base of the trail.

This valley is the home of the bugbear tribe dispatched by Siglacia to journey through the gate and explore the characters' world. With a **Spot check (DC 15)** the characters notice a cave mouth, similar to the one they stand in, about half a mile away to the northeast, and possibly **(DC 20)** what looks like a settlement rising from the snow at the far end of the valley, roughly 1 mile away





to the east. Climbing the icy valley wall is relatively easy (**Climb DC 10**), and the upper edge of the valley is a mere 200 feet above the cave mouth. Any character who climbs out of the valley can see little but unending tundra in all directions, unless the GM chooses to expand on Gillidia with encounters of his own.

The strange smell and sound are included to emphasize Gillidia's alien nature. A bugbear or other native of Gillidia would claim that the air and sounds in the characters' homeworld are similarly unusual.

Hiding among the boulders is a polar bear, the trained companion and bodyguard to Urlgorz, the bugbear shaman. The polar bear wears an iron collar studded with spikes. Make an opposed **Hide check** for the bear if any character attempts to **Spot** anything hidden among the boulders. When the characters reach the bottom of the trail, or if they climb down the valley wall, the polar bear emerges from hiding and approaches them slowly and cautiously. Urlgorz has ordered the bear to stop any non-bugbears who come from the cave and lead them to his own cave. The shaman is banking on someone from the characters' world noticing the missing villagers and coming through the gate to attempt a rescue. The polar bear regards the characters with curiosity and looks from them toward Urlgorz's cave (Area 4). If the characters have not yet noticed the cave, they may attempt to do so again (**Spot DC 10**) if they look in the same general area that the polar bear seems to indicate. Success indicates that the character can make out the cave entrance in the distance. The bear tries to insist gently that the characters follow it, gesturing toward the cave and perhaps even tugging lightly on a character's sleeve with its great mouth – but it makes no move to attack them. If attacked, the polar bear flees in the direction of Urlgorz's cave.

Polar Bear (1): hp 68.

For the purposes of experience points, grant the characters XP for the bear if they follow it to Urlgorz's lair. Award them nothing if they attack the bear or simply ignore it.

AREA 4: Urlgorz's Cave.

Ahead of you appears a cave closed off with furs draped over its mouth. Crudely worked stone steps rise from the valley floor to the cave opening, roughly twenty feet above you. The shifting light from a campfire spills from the cave. The smell of roasting meat and a steady stream of wispy smoke that trails out of the cave indicate that someone within is preparing a meal.

When the characters ascend the stairs and can see within the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

Standing within the cave is a seven-foot tall, hairy male goblinoid. A large firepit dominates the center of this forty-foot diameter round chamber. The goblinoid stands before a large cooking pot, carefully stirring the contents with a crude wooden spoon. An iron morningstar leans on the wall within

easy reach of the creature's gangly, overly long arms. The goblinoid wears several layers of furs, a few of which look much like wolf or bear pelts, but many of them are from creatures unfamiliar to you. The cave's stone walls are decorated with the skulls and bones of many humanoid, including orcs, humans, elves, dwarves, and others that you cannot identify.

(If appropriate, Urlgorz's polar bear stands behind him, regarding the characters with a watchful eye.)

This is Urlgorz, the one-time shaman and chieftain of his tribe. A cunning strategist, he suspects that the tribe's impromptu raid on the village will draw the attention of someone from beyond the gate. Thus, he ordered his pet to watch the gate and lead anyone who wandered through to his cave. Urlgorz dwells here carefully biding his time to return to the tribe and regain at least his old position as shaman, if not full leadership of the tribe. His plan is simple: he wishes to use whomever comes through the gate as the weapon to take down Gorak and Treffek. According to tribal tradition, a bugbear or his designated champions may challenge for leadership of the tribe at any time. The victor assumes leadership of the tribe.

Urlgorz knows that he can communicate with any strangers through his *ring of thought sending*, cutting Gorak and Treffek out of any chance to strike a deal with the characters and turn them against him. Urlgorz was once the tribe's shaman, serving under Gorak's father, Krell. A year ago, Krell became extremely sick, which Urlgorz saw as the perfect opportunity to arrange for Krell's death and seize control of the bugbear tribe. While the shaman claimed to work tirelessly to heal Krell, in reality he lay back and watched the only person who stood between him and the chieftainship waste away and die. Unfortunately for Urlgorz, he badly miscalculated his position. Many of the bugbears saw Urlgorz's "failure" as a sign that the gods did not favor the shaman, and





Gorak leveraged that mistrust to propel himself to the top of the tribal pecking order, though not before he eliminated a few challengers in ritual duels of leadership. Soon after, Treffek discovered Siglacia and the shaman found himself an outcast.

At his core, Urlgorz is a coward. He wants to lead, but he lacks the resolve to risk his life for it. What Urlgorz lacks in bravery, though, he more than compensates for with his wits. Urlgorz is a master of deflecting blame to others and creating an innocent façade. That few beside Gorak suspected him of killing Krell, despite the shaman's obvious motivation and opportunity, testifies to his cunning. Urlgorz prefers to tell people what they want to hear and then deal with any possible repercussions later on.

Urlgorz's plan is straightforward:

- First, Urlgorz wants to ensure that the characters cannot speak his language. As residents of a different plane of existence, the bugbears speak a language wholly alien to the characters' world. Urlgorz first tries to address the characters in his native tongue, both to see if they speak his language and to check if they have any magic that could translate his tongue. Urlgorz files this information away for later use, as his plan develops. If the characters cannot communicate with Urlgorz, he uses the *ring of thought sending* that he stole from Treffek to speak with the party.

- Urlgorz wants to gain the trust of anyone who comes through the portal. He assumes that any travelers through the gate at least have some interest in rescuing the villagers. If the characters carry weapons and look tough, Urlgorz attempts to flatter them, indicating to them that only such brave warriors as themselves could free the captives.

- Urlgorz hopes to use the party as unwitting pawns in his bid for power. According to tribal tradition, anyone who challenges for leadership of the tribe can elect a group of champions to fight in the ritual duel of leadership in his place. If the characters cannot communicate with the bugbears, Urlgorz lies outrageously to the characters, telling them that they can win the villagers' freedom if they defeat the current chief in a duel. Urlgorz simply plans on freeing the villagers once he's made chief.

- If the characters can speak with Urlgorz without him using the ring, through magical or other means, he lets them in on the nature of the duel, but casts it in as favorable a light as possible. He claims that the only way to free the villagers is to place him in charge, as the bugbears are simply too numerous to overcome.

- Many of the villagers are actually not held in the village, but instead work in the ice caves to free Siglacia. Urlgorz knows this, but feigns ignorance once the characters discover this fact.

For a full description of the trial-by-combat for leadership of the bugbear tribe, see Area 6. In addition, for notes on how Urlgorz's plans develop and how the tribe responds to them, see Area 5.

If attacked, Urlgorz begs for mercy, fleeing if the characters do not seem willing to spare him. The shaman leaves the valley if needed, retreating to the tundra for a few days before crawling back to his cave. In this case, he simply hopes the characters can kill Gorak themselves and leave a power vacuum that he can fill.

Urlgorz: hp 56.

AREA 5: The Ice Ravine.

As you travel through the frigid valley, you notice no signs of animal life or civilization. The bleak valley floor is mostly composed of ice and hard-packed snow, though in places rocky protrusions break through the bleak whiteness, providing at least some sort of landmark on the bleak landscape.

If the characters pass the point marked 5 on the map, allow them to make a **Spot check (DC 15 during the day, 20 at night)** to notice the smoke arising from the bugbear settlement at Area 6. The ground here is too hard and barren for any tracks, though an extremely skilled tracker may (**Wilderness Lore DC 30**) note some vague signs of a large group moving to the far end of the valley, away from the entrance cave, four or five days ago.

Travel through the valley is rather easy. The ground is hard-packed snow and ice and rather level, though rocky protrusions pierce the ice in many places, a legacy of the ancient war of the gods. Characters who wish to hunt may, at the GM's option, encounter a small herd of reindeer, caribou, or other arctic animals.

AREA 6: The Bugbear Settlement.

A small collection of buildings, perhaps three dozen in all, stands in a haphazard arrangement. The structures are crude and appear to be a mixture of stone, dirt, and ice. Surrounding them is a roughly eight-foot tall wall constructed largely from rock and dirt. A few trickles of black smoke rise from central holes piercing many of the structures' roofs. At the center of the settlement stands a stockade built in similar style to the outer wall. Within this stockade are several lean-tos and a few smaller, even cruder, versions of the dwellings that dot the village. Large, hairy goblinoids clad in furs and armed with javelins and morningstars stand watch at the walls, and a few smaller, human-sized forms move about within the inner stockade. Six of the goblinoids lounge around a hole punched in the outer wall that must serve as a gate.

A **Spot check (DC 15)** reveals that the guard rotation is haphazard at best. Climbing the wall unnoticed would not be much of a problem (**Hide check DC 10**). In addition, judging by the number of dwellings, the settlement looks under-inhabited. Perhaps two dozen guards in total, counting the six at the gate, stand watch over the community that should number in the hundreds. If the characters spend some time observing the inner stockade, they count perhaps a dozen different human-sized people moving about the area.

Unfortunately for the characters, they are not the only ones doing the watching. The bugbear guards are chosen for their keen eyes and attentiveness to duty, both rare qualities among the often lazy and bullying bugbears. The ground 300 feet in all directions from the bugbear settlement is devoid of all cover. When a charac-





ter moves within this area, there is a 35% chance that a bugbear guard scans his area (if the characters approach within line of sight of the gate, the guards automatically have a chance to notice them). Resolve an opposed **Spot versus Hide check** between the guard and the character. If the guard succeeds, he sounds a warning note on the signal horn that all guards carry, bringing forth 1d6 bugbear warriors per round from their dwellings, up to a maximum of 68 in addition to the guards on duty. For bugbear stats, see Appendix I: Monster Descriptions.

Settlement Notes: Most of the buildings are a poorly constructed mixture of cured animal hides, packed earth and snow and ice, and crudely quarried stone, with a small hole punched in the roof to allow smoke from cook and heating fires to escape. The doorways are typically no more than cured hides draped across the entrance and tied in place. Bashing down one of the walls requires a **Strength check (DC 20)**. The two largest buildings house the current shaman, Treffek, who is away at Siglacia's cave, and the chief, Gorak. While both of their dwellings are somewhat larger than the rest, they feature the same crude design. The bugbears are poor craftsmen who acquire their iron weapons and armor primarily through raids on nearby dwarf and human settlements or by trading the pelts and skins they harvest from animal herds to traders untroubled by dealing with such brutes.

Urlgorz's Plan

If the characters arrive at the settlement accompanied by Urlgorz, the shaman demands to serve as a chief negotiator and spokesman. He boldly leads the characters to the gate and demands an audience with Gorak in order to challenge his leadership of the tribe. The guards quickly comply, all the while giving the party hateful looks. After a few minutes, Gorak arrives to set forth the terms of the challenge.

If the party cannot talk to the bugbears:

Urlgorz issues his challenge to the jeers and catcalls of the bugbears who come forth to watch the proceedings. He describes the characters as avenging angels sent forth by Naugus to punish the tribe for banishing him. Urlgorz asks the party to make some show of force, such as casting a spell or demonstrating their weapon skill. The GM should have all the players describe what they do, if anything. Make a **Charisma check (DC 15)** for each character, adding **+2 bonus** for each spell level, or **+1 bonus** if a warrior character describes some particularly impressive feat. For each successful check, Gorak has one less bugbear warrior on his side during the duel at Area 7; for each result over 20, two bugbears abandon the chief: the bugbears lose faith in their leader and choose not to side with him. Once the displays are over, the groups immediately head to Area 7 to begin the fight.

If the party can communicate with the bugbears:

In this case, Urlgorz has a much more difficult task ahead of him. He dare not lie in front of the characters, and he also risks losing their support. Before the meeting with Gorak, he tells the party

that Gorak personally ordered the raid on the village and describes the chieftain as an amoral murderer. He relates the story of how Gorak turned against the tribesmen who supported his bid for power, murdering them rather than live in their debt. Basically, Urlgorz lies profusely to paint as bad a picture of Gorak as possible, playing on the characters' prejudices (real or perceived) in order to make his lies as effective as possible.

Gorak

Though young for a chieftain, Gorak has already proven his worth several times on the field of battle. Cruel and given to bouts of murderous rage, he tends to attack social situations with the same direct methods he uses in battle. Gorak stands a head above the other bugbears and wears layer upon layer of polar bear furs. His fangs are much larger than the average bugbear's, and he tends to bellow rather than speak.

Urlgorz asks the characters to make the same displays as described above, and if three or more bugbears are persuaded to abandon the chief, Gorak directly offers the characters whatever they want if they kill Urlgorz on the spot. If they actually take him up on his offer, he remains true to his word. He is willing to let the villagers go, seeing this even more as being rid of a nuisance than actually losing something of value; he even gives the PCs directions to Siglacia's ice cave. In Gorak's eyes, destroying Siglacia helps keep his life simple, as he feels deep down inside that eventually he must square off against the dragon or learn to serve her, should she ever break free of her tomb.

Brute Force Method

If the characters choose to sneak into the settlement and rescue the captives, they face several problems. First, they must sneak into the compound unnoticed, unless they want to face roughly 80 bugbear warriors at once. Second, once within the compound there is a 20% chance per round that a random bugbear passes by the characters, requiring an opposed **Hide versus Spot check** for a character to remain hidden. Once at the central stockade, the characters face an even more troubling problem: only 30 captives, mainly women and children, are held in the village. The men, including Bannuck the sage, were marched out of the village four days ago. If the characters question any of the captives, they learn little except that the men left several days ago, and the captives have no idea where the men were taken. The bugbears have made sparse contact with the captives over the past few days, only entering the stockade to distribute food and water.

Only Gorak and Treffek know that the men were taken to Area 8. A captive or charmed bugbear reveals that the tribe recently converted to the worship of the great ice serpent, Siglacia. The new goddess was the one who foretold of the gate and the strange world beyond, and the tribe attempted to curry her favor by bringing slaves back to her. The bugbears assume that Treffek, Siglacia's chief priest, brought the strange humans to their new goddess as a sacrifice. Of course, the characters must somehow manage to communicate with the bugbears, who speak a wholly alien language, in





order to gain this information.

Each building houses 2d6 bugbears, half of whom can fight. The shaman's home is currently empty, as Treffek moved his home to Sigglacia's cave, while the inhabitants of Gorak's dwelling are outlined in Area 7. For bugbear statistics, see Appendix I: Monster Descriptions.

If the characters somehow manage to defeat the bugbears and loot the settlement, they find a total of 2,000 gp worth of hides, raw gold nuggets, unfinished gems, weapons, armor, and other goods that would require a wagon to transport back to their home.

AREA 7: The Place of Testing.

You see ahead of you a shallow depression in the valley floor nestled between a deep alcove within the valley walls. The air here is somewhat warmer, and as you approach you can see what looks like a partially melted pool of water. Chunks of ice float in the pool, which is roughly one hundred feet wide.

Show the players Handout 1: Testing Place

This small pond is fed by a magical hot spring that opened beneath the valley many years ago, during the gods' war. The sudden influx of Naugus's magic caused many microportals to the elemental planes – including one to the plane of water – to open up across Gillidia. The bugbears use this pool for fresh water, for religious ceremonies to Naugus, and to hold their trials by combat. If Urlgorz is with the characters, he gives them a brief outline of the festivities:

- Each side's chosen champions take up positions on opposite shores of the spring.
- The contest begins with the sounding of an alarm horn. At this point, the side with the last champion standing is the victor.
- Combat largely takes place on the ice chunks that float in the spring. Most of the time, challengers leap from ice floe to ice floe, closing to attack one another. A common tactic in the challenge is to push opponents into the water, where they sometimes drown due to the weight of their armor or are overcome by the heat that radiates from the spring.
- Magic is completely legal, though primarily because no bugbear in the tribe can work wizard or sorcerer spells. Those who can use magic are often looked upon as favored by Naugus, for the bugbears make no distinction between divine or arcane spells. (Incidentally, this explains why the bugbears readily accept Treffek, a bard, as a shaman.)

The characters must face (EL 9):

Gorak: hp 60.

Simtak: hp 26.

Bugbears (8): hp 16 each.

All of the bugbears are armed with studded leather armor, morningstars, and four javelins. For full descriptions of Gorak and Simtak, see Appendix II: Ice Gate NPCs

Gorak and his entourage arrive with great fanfare, accompanied by many of the bugbear villagers who are eager to see a bloody battle. While careful not to antagonize either side (after all, the victor does go on to lead the tribe), racial pride spurs the bugbear spectators to cheer on Gorak. The crowd gathers around the edge of the water and watches on intently.

Gorak's Tactics

The chieftain has fought in several challenges before and has an acute feel for fighting in the ice field. He and his elite guards use the **aid another action** whenever they can, and whenever possible they attempt to push opponents into the water using the **bull rush action**. Simtak uses his spells to aid the warriors but prefers to avoid melee.

Environment

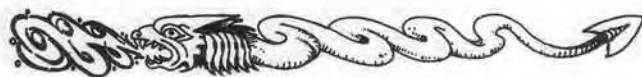
The ice floes are extremely slick, as they constantly fluctuate between melting in the warm water and freezing in the frigid air. Anyone walking on the ice suffers a **-2 penalty to skill checks** that involve physical activity (such as **Jump**) and to the **Concentration skill**, and a **-2 attack penalty**. In addition, anyone attempting the **charge, bull rush, or overrun actions** must make a **Dexterity check (DC 15)** to avoid slipping on the ice and tumbling five feet past their intended target. This inadvertent movement could send a character into the water.

Anyone who falls into the water must make a **Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 per previous round spent in the water)** each round or take **1d6 points of subdual damage**. In addition, the pool is roughly 15 feet deep, requiring characters to make **Swim checks** to avoid drowning.

Concluding the Challenge

Gorak and his minions fight to the death, as must the characters. No quarter is given, and none is expected. If a character does beg for mercy, the bugbear crowd laughs and jeers. If the characters defeat Gorak, the crowd swarms around Urlgorz, proclaiming him chieftain. The characters are regarded with wary respect, but the tribe considers them outsiders no matter their actions. So long as the characters stick to the terms of their agreement with Urlgorz, he does not betray them. His hold on the tribe is still too weak for him to risk it by eliminating his only real buffer against any potential rivals. In addition, he still has some unfinished business to attend to with both Sigglacia and Treffek.

Most likely, the characters will learn from the humans held at the village that many of the prisoners are missing. The GM can refer to Area 6 for a summary of what the captives and the bugbears know. If the characters wish to pursue and rescue the remaining captives, they must work out another deal with Urlgorz. The chieftain is eager to see Sigglacia destroyed, and he is impressed enough by the characters' success in the trial that he believes they can defeat the dragon. Urlgorz does indeed know the location of the dragon's cave, and he reveals it if:





- The characters agree to destroy the dragon and the bugbear bard Treffek, not simply rescue the hostages. Urlgorz demands proof of the deed; the dragon's head will do nicely.

- The characters must immediately leave the valley after dealing with the dragon. Urlgorz agrees to heal any injuries and provide furs, food, and other supplies in order to aid the characters in their journey. He does not want the characters hanging around and backing some other leader.

- If the characters demand any aid, he at first pleads weakness, claiming that one such as he could not offer aid to the party. If the characters grow insistent, he offers them the following: a +1 *flaming bastard sword*, a *javelin of lightning*, and 4 *potions of cure light wounds*. These items rightfully belong to the tribe as a whole, but Urlgorz has little use for them and is willing to barter them away to get the characters out of his hair. He first offers the potions, then the javelin, and finally the sword if the characters continue to badger him. He also uses the items to mollify the characters should they grow angry with him.

- Of course, if Urlgorz pushes the characters too far and they end up leveling a building a two in an effort to "persuade" the shaman, he buckles under, offers them the items listed above, and does everything in his power to expedite their return home.

If the characters are having fun dealing with Urlgorz, the GM may wish to immerse them in the politics of the village for a short time. Perhaps a rival to Urlgorz emerges from the bugbears and offers to aid the characters if they scorn Urlgorz and put their support behind him. Of course, this newcomer may know nothing about Siglacia and the location of the other captives, but that will not stop him from claiming otherwise.

AREA 8: Caves of the Ice Dragon.

Urlgorz provides the characters with a crude map to the dragon's lair, where many of the captive villagers toil to free Siglacia from her icy tomb. Finding the cave without a map is tricky. A character with the **Track feat** might discover signs of traffic between the bugbear village and the caves (**Wilderness Lore DC 30**), and characters who through dumb luck manage to search the cave's area find it with a successful **Spot check (DC 20)**. Also, Gorak and his minions know the cave's location, and a spell such as *Speak with Dead* or a *helm of telepathy* may extract that information from him after or before the trial by combat.

Siglacia's cave is hewn from the ice, unlike Urlgorz's cave and the cave of the gate, both of which were burrowed from the rock sides of the valley. Normally, characters in a cave or structure are not affected by Gillidia's cold environment. The ice caves, however, are extremely cold. Apply the rules for Gillidian weather at night to the characters while they are in the ice caves.

The cave passages are sized for bugbears, and thus feel a little large to human-size creatures. The ceilings are roughly eight feet high and the passages are five feet wide, unless otherwise noted. Light from torches, lanterns, or spells reflects off the ice, causing a weirdly subdued glow to guide the party's way. The floor and walls here are not slick, as it is cold enough to prevent the ice from par-

tially melting and becoming slippery.

AREA 9: Barracks and Storage.

The sound of harsh bugbear voices echoes down the corridor. You see ahead the faint light of a fire. Further along, the icy passage opens into a chamber where a group of bugbears stand guard over a group of humans huddled together for warmth.

The bugbears use this chamber to rest between shifts working to free Siglacia. In addition, they keep their food and water reserves stored here. Six bugbears stand guard over 20 human captives. The prisoners surge toward the party in relief and joy after they dispatch the bugbears, who attack the characters on sight.

Once the bugbears are dealt with, the slaves are more than happy to provide what little information they know about the ice caves:

- A great white dragon lives below, trapped within a large cavern. The bugbears have the slaves enlarging the tunnel so that the dragon can escape.

- A pair of living pools of water guards one chamber. The bugbear leader has thrown a few slaves into them to serve as a warning against any rebellions. They often hide in cracks in the ice and surge out to attack.

- Even more slaves are down below, working in the dragon's lair.

A number of reindeer carcasses hang from the ceiling here, and a few sacks of dried meat are tossed into one corner. Piles of furs are spread throughout the chamber for sleeping.

Bugbears (6): hp 16 each.

AREA 10: Chamber of the Vortex.

For many minutes, you follow the icy passage as it spirals downward. Finally, you stand in a large chamber at the base of the passage. The room before you is almost spherical in shape, with a ceiling that rises thirty feet above you. A set of crude steps hacked out of the ice lead down to the chamber's floor. A second set of steps across the room from you heads back up to a passage in the wall.

A pair of water elementals lie in wait at the bottom of the chamber, waiting to surge up out of the cracks in the floor to attack the characters. If the characters specifically scan the floor looking for cracks (perhaps warned by the slaves in Area 9), they notice them with a successful **Spot check (DC 20)**. When the characters have all moved down the stairs, the large water elemental surges out of the cracks and attacks. The medium water elemental flows through the cracks in the ice and pours into the passageway leading out of the chamber, ready to attack anything that moves near it. Note that the elementals are touching water (in ice form) at all times and thus gain their **water mastery bonus**. Also, while the large elemental is not in water, the room is small and deep enough that it can form its **vortex** solely out of the water that composes its form.





The large water elemental attempts to do this while the medium water elemental makes **bull rush** attacks against any characters that try to escape up the east staircase. The elementals retreat when they are reduced to single digit hit points. If one flees, the other remains until it also reaches less than 10 hit points.

Water Elemental, Large (1): hp 68.

Water Elemental, Medium (1): hp 30.

AREA 11: Flash Freeze Trap.

At the point in the corridor marked 11, the ice is perilously thin. The bugbears know enough to stick to the edge of the passageway and avoid the thin ice, but the characters may not notice it. Any character falling through the ice lands in a pool of freezing water.

Icy Water Trap (10 feet deep): CR 5; no attack roll necessary (1d6 subdual damage per round, plus drowning); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20).

A character who falls into the trap must make a **Spot check (DC 20)** to find the hole he fell through and escape the trap. Smashing the ice requires a **Strength check (DC 15)** to create a medium-sized hole or (DC 12) a small-sized one. A character who falls into the water must make a **Fortitude save (DC 15)** or take **one point of subdual damage per minute** until he dries off.

AREA 12: Work Area.

You can hear the sounds of shovels and picks attacking ice ahead. As you round the corner, you see a large, roughly hewn ice chamber. Four bugbears glare at over a dozen humans who feebly hack at the ice with picks, shovels, and other tools.

The bugbears here immediately attack any intruders, while the slaves raucously cheer on their would be liberators. The bugbears break and run to Area 13 as soon as half their number falls in combat.

The slaves here know little more than do their comrades at Area 9. They do know, however, that a few slaves, including Bannuck the sage, were taken deeper into the ice cave complex, for what purpose they do not know.

Bugbears (6): hp 16 each.

AREA 13: Treffek's Last Stand.

The corridor in this section of the caves is significantly wider and taller than earlier ones, reaching spans of up to fifteen feet high and wide. The corridor opens up into a slightly larger room ahead. Within the chamber, a bugbear clutching a large, iron horn grins at you as he prepares to sound a note on the horn. He stands atop a slightly raised platform, roughly forty feet from your location.

If any bugbears fled from Area 12, they are encountered here. The above description assumes that one of them managed to make it here and warn Treffek. If not, then the creatures here spend the first round of combat **surprised** by the party. They then proceed with the battle plan outlined below.

The bard Treffek knows that should any intruders fight past him to the dragon's lair, he could very well lose his spot as a chosen prophet of Siglacia. Thus, he has chosen to make his stand here along with a pair of ice mephits, Bizzle and Boddle, who have allied with the bard.





Tactics: Treffek orders any bugbears who fled here to guard him, keeping the characters off him while he uses his spells. The two ice mephits begin with their *chill metal* spells, either cast on heavily armored characters or, if no one wears metal armor, the two largest characters' weapons. They then follow up with *magic missile* and are careful to stay at range until after Treffek launches his attack. If they have the chance or if the fight goes poorly for them, the mephits attempt to summon more of their kind.

Treffek begins with his *horn of blasting*, hoping to collapse part of the room on the characters and crush them. In addition to the horn's normal effects, it causes ice to crumble down from the ceiling onto the characters. Everyone must make a **Reflex save (DC 15)** or take **2d4 points of damage** from the ice. Those who save dodge out of the way and take no damage. Treffek also uses his *shatter* spell to drop ice on a single character, doing **2d4 damage (Reflex save DC 15 for no damage)**.

Ice mephits (2): hp 13, 13.

Treffek: hp 50.

AREA 14: The Ice Garden.

The room before you holds a scene both breathtaking and ghastly. Figures of trees, goblinoids, humans, and even a dragon carved from ice dot the room. The workmanship of the figures is exquisite and easily rivals any sculpture you have seen in stone or any other material. Your sense of wonder, however, is shattered by the horrid figures: here and there, a human locked in a bizarre, painful stance is frozen within a thin shell of ice. Worse yet, some fiend has left breathing holes in the ice, allowing the pitiable figures to live on within the ice. Their anguished moans and whimpered pleas for aid echo through the cavern.

Siglacia, in an effort to alleviate her boredom and work out her hatred of all things bipedal, has chosen to incorporate some of the slaves into her works of art. A dozen of them are trapped here, of which six are still alive. Breaking the ice requires a **Strength check (DC 15)**, and anyone freed from the ice needs immediate healing. Each prisoner has but a single hit point left, and none of them have furs or other warm clothing.

Siglacia can move between this room and Area 15, but nowhere else in the caves is large enough to permit her bulk.

AREA 15: The Dragon's Lair.

A large, vaulted chamber opens before you. Across from you is a curious sight: a half-elf sits speaking with an large white dragon. The dragon immediately whips its head about to look at you, cold hatred reflected in its eyes.

Siglacia, in a further effort to alleviate her boredom, has chosen to engage the half-elf sage Bannuck as her personal partner in conversation. The dragon finds the sage's knowledge of history and the

modern world intensely fascinating, and she is quite happy to pass the otherwise dreary hours in conversation. Bannuck finds the dragon terrifying, but if parading his knowledge for her amusement keeps him from meeting an icy death, then so be it.

Development: Siglacia assumes that the characters are hostile and immediately makes a move to prepare her attacks. A quick thinking party, however, may attempt to talk with her. Siglacia is a spoiled, vain brat who is always eager to hear others praise her. Flattery (especially for her work in Area 14) and news of the out-





side world draw the dragon's attention, possibly setting her up for a sneak attack or other ambush. Siglacia's vanity is only matched by her arrogance, and she refuses to consider mere humans as a threat to her power.

Tactics: The dragon first uses her breath weapon, hoping to take down the party in one fell swoop. If this does not destroy the characters, she uses her **icewalking** ability to scuttle up the ceiling, beyond the reach of any melee attacks. She then uses her **reduce** spells to limit the effectiveness of any warrior-types. If the party lacks the means to injure her, she casually waits from her perch and blasts them with her breath weapon until they flee. At her heart, Siglacia is quite a coward, and she does everything within her power to avoid melee. She would much rather depend on her abilities and spells to carry her through.

Siglacia: hp 189.

Treasure: Siglacia has amassed a rather nice hoard, most of which was pilfered from the bodies of the dragons that, unlike her, were killed when the dimensional gate collapsed and ice filled the passage to the graveyard. She wears a *ring of sustenance*, a *ring of thought sending*, and sleeps on a pile of gold and silver and platinum coins, artifacts, and items worth a total of 10,000 gp. In addition, an ancient text written in draconic describes the process by which the gate to Gillidia may be destroyed. The characters should recognize the gate from its description in the book. The book is worth 3,000 gp to any sage or wizard interested in researching magical gates. The gate can be rendered inoperable with but a few command words, though it can then be re-opened with a few other commands. At the GM's option, the command words can permanently destroy the gate.

ADVENTURE AFTERMATH

Epilogue and Further Advice on Running the Adventure

Swords Through the Ice Gate features two plot devices: an alien world and a villainous NPC with whom the characters must interact. Obviously, the characters can complete the adventure without Urlgorz's help, but their work becomes that much more difficult. Try to see the situation from the shaman's eyes: he wants to assume power, he is willing to use the characters to get it, but he does not want to put himself in a position where the characters can exert any influence over him; furthermore, Urlgorz is trapped between a rock and a hard place, with Siglacia on one side and the characters on the other. Should you run more adventures in Gillidia, Urlgorz provides the ideal villain. His past with the characters should help make any encounter with him that much more memorable, especially if the characters realize that, without their help, Urlgorz would not be in his current position of power.

The entire dilemma with the bugbear village presents many possibilities. The characters could plan a commando strike on the town. They could come back with an army and take it by force. They could sneak in and take Gorak hostage. Enough information has been provided on the bugbears to give the GM an outline from which to work, but when all's said and done, it is impossible to predict every outcome. Players are far too clever for that!

Feel free to accentuate the alien nature of the world. Gillidia should seem familiar enough that the weird and strange stands out in sharp contrast. The pervasive smell and the weird tinge to all noise is simply a fundamental difference between the worlds meant to highlight to the players that they are somewhere else. Feel free to expand upon this idea, especially if you plan on including more adventures in Gillidia. There should be some friendly settlements of humans, dwarves, and elves for the characters to visit. Especially considering the cataclysm that befell this world, their customs and traditions are likely radically different than those normally found in the typical fantasy world. You could even reverse roles, using orcs as your heroic good-guys who strive against evil dwarves, elves, and men.

Success

With Siglacia dead and the villagers liberated, the characters are free to return home in victory. Urlgorz is eager to see the characters off, and though he may provide them with short-term hospitality, he gently at first and later with vague threats encourages them to go home. If the GM wishes to end the encroachment of winter on Owen's Point and close off Gillidia for further adventures, Urlgorz explains to the party that the bugbears opened the gate by burying an iron sphere within the cave. The bugbear swears to dig it up and destroy it after the party leaves, collapsing the gate forever.

Alternatively, the GM may require the characters to engage in further adventures on Gillidia in an effort to close the gate and stop the unnatural advance of winter. Using the notes provided in *Swords Through the Ice Gate*, the GM should be able to craft a variety of arctic-themed adventures with a hint of otherworldly strangeness. The world of Gillidia is in the GM's hands!

Failure

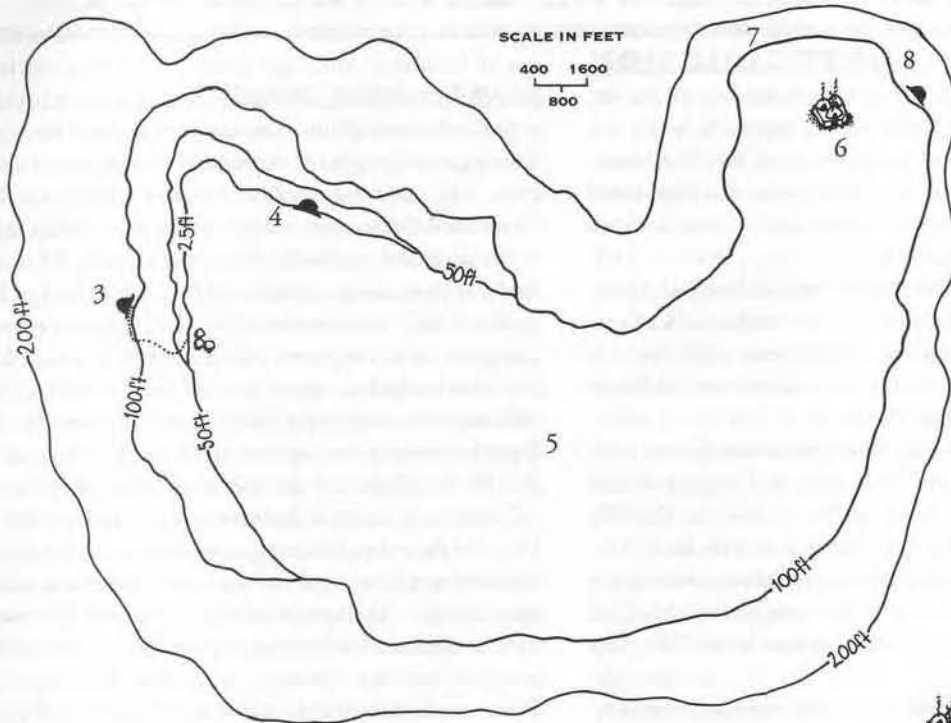
Should the characters be unable to win the bugbear challenge, or if they are defeated by Siglacia, the captives from Owen's Point will have no chance of escape and may well end up as frozen statues in Siglacia's garden. The curse of Naugus will continue to spread into the characters' world, altering the seasons and possibly having a disastrous effect on the environment. Siglacia, should she escape her icy imprisonment, will surely begin a reign of terror, persecuting those who will not bow before her. Her abilities will allow her to gain dominance on Gillidia, and she may be able to marshal an army and invade other worlds through the dimensional gate, spreading havoc and destruction across many lands and worlds.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE

The inside cover of this adventure features a Challenge Table, listing all encounters and their Challenge Rating and Encounter Level. Cross-reference these numbers with the average party level to determine experience gained from overcoming encounters. In addition, the GM may wish to grant story awards as he or she sees fit. Certainly, awards should be given for rescuing the villagers and negotiating with the bugbears and dragon.



VALLEY MAP



KEY



BUGBEAR SETTLEMENT



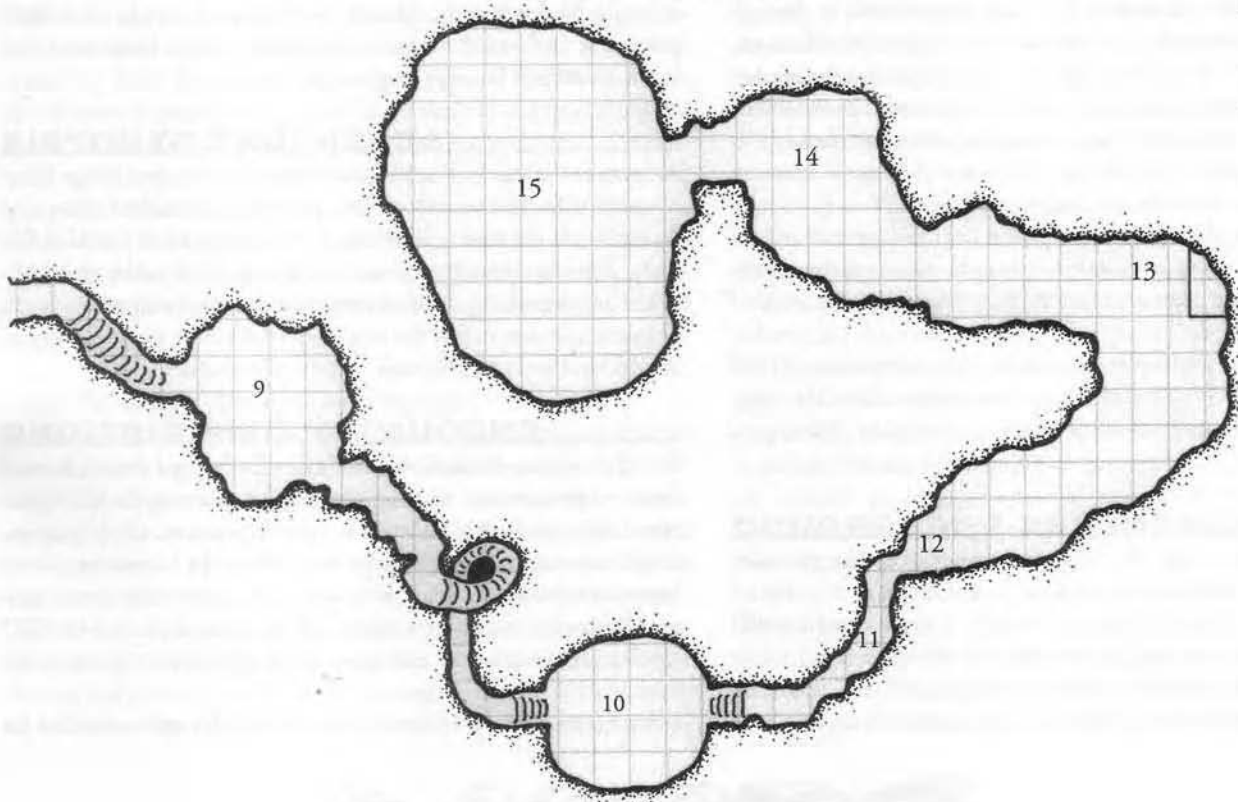
CAVE MOUTH



STAIRS

SIGLACIA'S LAIR

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)





ADVENTURE 2: THE CRYSTAL TOWER

INTRODUCTION

The spring comes early this year. After a bountiful harvest season, the winter was unusually short and warm, especially so in the coastal city of Varloon. The trading galleys from the Northlands now follow the warm winds down along the coast, their holds full of rich furs and pelts, rare ores, and other precious materials valued by the merchants and elite of Varloon.

Another item of value, rare and mysterious, has made the journey along the coast and now waits beyond the harbor of Varloon. Few know the truth about this item and fewer still own the resources to attain it. Who will be the ones to retrieve the *amulet of wizardly power* from the Crystal Tower?

The Crystal Tower is a fantasy roleplaying adventure for use with the d20 system and requires the *Dungeons & Dragons*® 3rd Edition *Player's Handbook*, published by Wizards of the Coast®. The adventure is tailored for a party of four 5th- to 7th-level characters, but can easily be modified to present a challenge to a larger group or more powerful characters. On average, four 5th-level characters will gain enough experience points to be well on their way to 6th level.

The adventure is designed to fit easily into any ongoing campaign, and, wherever possible, the Game Master (GM) is provided with options for modifying and replacing parts of the background with elements of his or her own game world. For further information, see *Using The Crystal Tower in Your Own Campaign*.

PREPARATION

Before running this adventure, the GM should read it through carefully to gain a familiarity with its layout and various features. In addition, the GM should be familiar with the basic rules of play, particularly combat, skill checks, and environmental modifiers. The GM should take note of any characters with weapons or spells that do fire- or cold-based damage, as these will have an effect on the conditions of the environment.

For best results, the adventurers should have between 22 and 26 total character levels, and include at least one rogue, as the adventure features several traps and devices that will need to be avoided or dismantled.

If you plan on playing a character in this adventure, STOP READING NOW! The following notes are for the GM only; reading them may spoil the secrets and fun found in *The Crystal Tower*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

More than a century ago, the mage Esias rebelled against the rules of his guild, the Academy of the Kathendas Enclaves. A powerful wizard's college, the society was governed by a series of ancient and strict edicts laid down by the founders of the school and a few other survivors of the Great Cataclysm. Among the rules were limitations and guidelines for allowed areas of study; there was also a

list of forbidden subjects. Esias' study of the ancient artifacts of power, arcane rituals of binding, and an unseemly thirst for knowledge forbidden resulted in his banishment from the Academy. Vowing revenge against those who denied him access to the dark texts, Esias traveled north to the very reaches of civilization and established a dominion within which to work his revenge.

In his tower, perched on a vast ice shelf, Esias studied minor spells of power-augmentation and summoning, but he could never replicate the feats written of in the Academy's forbidden texts. Frustrated at his apparent failure, Esias and some of the ogre minions that he had recruited traveled from his lair and attempted to infiltrate the Academy's libraries and liberate the desired tomes. Esias seriously overestimated his chances of success, however, and quickly found himself defeated and executed as a traitor.

Examining some of the mystical items that Esias brought with him, the Academy learned that he had stumbled upon some useful theories regarding spell enhancement – yet it could not replicate his research. An expedition set out to find his tower, but all the members succumbed to the harsh winter wasteland before discovering its location. In the winters that followed, the massive ice flow on which the tower was built changed and grew, eventually covering much of the tower itself. Yet each spring season changed the landscape as well, as huge icebergs broke off and floated out into the ocean.

Now, a century after Esias' tower was abandoned, the enormous block of ice encasing it has broken off in an iceberg of its own and traveled with the coastal waters to its current position, a few miles from the Varloon port. At least two groups knew of the tower's proximity, and both have initiated plans to recover Esias' work and learn secrets lost for over one hundred years.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

A member of the wizard's guild interested in retrieving Esias' research hires the characters. They must sail out to the iceberg and descend into the tower. Arriving at their destination just ahead of them, however, is another group of mercenaries hired by an underworld organization. The characters must penetrate the tower's defenses, avoid or defeat the rival raiders, discover the secret experiments, and return to the safe harbor of Varloon.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTIONS

Text that appears in shaded boxes is descriptive and should be read aloud or paraphrased to the players. Other text is for the GM's eyes only, containing information on encounters, traps, puzzles, magic, treasure, and instructions on running the adventure. Some encounters have little read-aloud text, as the adventurers may contend with the area under a variety of circumstances, and the GM can simply describe the environment as appropriate in his or her own words.

Encounters with a monster list the basic information needed for





the encounter: the creature encountered, number appearing, and individual hit points. For a full description of a monster's abilities, see Appendix I: Monster Descriptions.

SETTING THE STAGE

Kem Riflar, the Academy's representative in Varloon, learned of the floating tower less than a week ago. A magical message sent from the highest members of the Academy urged him to locate a particular iceberg and penetrate the frozen tower inside. While the guild was unsure of exactly what would be discovered, rumors circulated over the years told of an object known as the *amulet of wizardly power*, believed to be Esias' ultimate creation. The Academy also warned Kem of two further facts: first, the need for urgency was paramount, as the iceberg's ocean voyage had greatly reduced its size and the tower would soon sink under its own weight; second, raiding the tower would be sure to prove extremely dangerous, as Esias, though only a moderately accomplished wizard, displayed a twisted genius for mechanical traps and magical safeguards – thus, the tower was surely rigged for protection.

Kem Riflar immediately set out to find a group of hardy adventurers up to the task of breaching Esias' tower. His inquiries eventually led him to the characters, whom he will approach to see if they wish to discuss a business opportunity that has presented itself. The adventure begins as Kem meets with the characters to discuss the particulars of the assignment. The GM should feel free to roleplay the initial meeting between Kem and the characters, during which brief introductions and inquiries are made, and to elaborate further on the details of *The Prelude* (see page 18.)

Yet even as Kem Riflar and the Academy prepare to investigate the tower, another group has learned of its existence and initiated their own plans. The DelSardo family, an underworld organization based in nearby Kalendia, recently discovered some lore regarding Esias the mage and his experiments. The heads of the family have dispatched a group of three mercenaries to retrieve the rumored magical talisman, believing that it could serve as a tool with which to corrupt the Academy of the Kathendas Enclaves and give the DelSardos some control in the Academy's direction. While Kem Riflar briefs the characters for the mission, the three DelSardo mercenaries purchase a small boat and begin their plans to set out at first light, sure to arrive at the target destination before any rivals.

Using *The Crystal Tower* in Your Campaign

If the GM wishes to alter this adventure to fit more tightly into an ongoing campaign, a few considerations must be made. The history of the tower can be altered easily, as can the final treasure sought by the characters. The tower should be long-abandoned, and once owned by a defensive-minded madman (in an effort to explain the abundance of traps and lack of real combat scenarios). The adventure focuses upon specific environmental conditions, thus efforts should be made to keep the tower in its frozen state, though only minor modifications are required to fit the adventure in a new location. Removing the tower from the iceberg, howev-

er, will necessitate some revisions for the scenario.

The Iceberg: The iceberg serves to introduce a time limit to the exploration of the tower and to provide an unusual setting. Moving the abandoned tower to another frozen setting would effectively give the adventurers an unlimited amount of time to figure out puzzles and disarm or circumvent traps. In the adventure as written, the characters must make some bold decisions and do some quick thinking while the ice-entombed tower slowly floats beyond the reach of civilization, closer and closer to sliding into the sea. Perhaps the plot hook used to lure the characters into the adventure could impart a necessary time limit; perhaps the characters need to search the tower for an antidote that must be recovered within two days. Relocating the tower in another setting is possible, but the GM should try to keep the icy conditions and devise some logical reason for urgency, otherwise the characters may end up investigating the tower in an overly cautious manner and turning it into a series of "Take 20" search checks rather than a deadly mission.

The Mercenaries: As the adventure is currently constructed, the mercenaries are an ongoing obstacle for the characters to overcome in their exploration of the tower. To increase the dramatic tension, previously encountered campaign villains could be substituted, although the GM should consider the consequences of setting the characters against ongoing villains in an enclosed and isolated arena. Most likely, one group will eliminate the other, and the GM should ensure that the villains will not be needed for a previously planned plot development that they may not get to. The GM might introduce the three mercenaries into an earlier scenario, to familiarize the characters with them. Perhaps their leader, the elven ranger Lannora Resmin, has crossed paths with a character during a previous mission? The mercenaries are detailed in Appendix III: Ice Tower NPC's, and offer several possible plot points in their backgrounds.

The Goal: As written, the characters are questing for the *amulet of wizardly power*, but substituting another prize as the goal of the mission is quite simple. Altering the prize may require that the plot hook and introductory section be adjusted, as the Academy of the Kathendas Enclaves, for instance, might not hire the characters to recover the "rare extract of the cracklebush plant" or other goal.

Easy Substitutions: Several factors in this adventure are easily substituted for more campaign specific components. Varloon can be replaced by any coastal city, but should be of a reasonable climate in which passing icebergs present an extremely rare but not impossible occurrence. Kem Riflar and the Academy can be replaced with any NPC acting as an agent for a guild or group with an interest in magical artifacts and knowledge. Finally, the DelSardo crime family can be substituted with an established thieves guild or rival organization.

Plot Hooks

The basic scenario for this adventure is the most common one: the characters are hired by a group with an interest in the ice-embedded Crystal Tower and the possible treasure that awaits within.





The actual history of the tower or the motivations of the hiring party are not really necessary for the characters to understand. Following this course, as outlined, is simple and straightforward. Here, though, is a list of alternate plot hooks for embroiling the characters in this adventure:

- If one of the characters belongs to the Academy, then perhaps she gets assigned the task of recovering the works of Esias in his floating tower. This angle removes the "adventurer-for-hire" aspect of the scenario and gives the wizard character and her associates a more direct reason to proceed: duty.

- If the characters are treasure hunters by nature, they may have recently overheard a conversation concerning the tower and its possible contents, certain to be fabulous riches. A rogue character perhaps overheard Lannora debriefing Herod and Ilgen, her two companions, as they planned to sneak out to the iceberg and loot the tower before anyone else discovered its existence.

- A cleric in the party might receive a vision from her god, showing her the secret location of a religious artifact that once belonged to the church. Esias' *amulet* no longer represents the prize, replaced by a revered holy symbol stolen by a rival church long ago and locked away in an icy prison. The will of the cleric's god severed the ice shelf, and now the tower has been delivered for a religious quest.

- Maybe the characters have no interest in the tower itself and are just pursuing some mercenaries who eluded the king's justice or came to the characters' attention in another way. The iceberg just happens to be the destination of their prey.

Running this Adventure

The adventure itself is divided into three main sections. *The Prelude* deals with the set-up and includes the conversation with Kem Riflar in the city of Varloon. The city is not heavily detailed, as it functions merely as a backdrop for the characters to encounter Kem and purchase equipment. This section also outlines the effects that the freezing conditions may have on the characters. *The Crystal Tower* covers the keyed encounters that the characters will meet within the tower itself. Finally, the *Conclusion* outlines the results of the characters' success or failure.

PRELUDE: THE ASSIGNMENT

Spring has come early to the coastal city of Varloon. The merchants and guildmasters report a bustling business, in general spirits are high, and the overall atmosphere is hectic and joyous. Whether the characters are residents of the city or just travelers passing through, they will be approached late one afternoon by a curious man named Kem Riflar.

Kem is a local wizard and merchant, well liked though not well known. He is normally timid, preferring not to draw attention to himself and his work, as he lives a quiet existence creating magical potions for a local curio shop. In truth, he maintains a low profile to provide him with more opportunity to report on the state of Varloon's affairs to his masters in the Academy of the Kathendas Enclaves. Not actually a spy, Kem just prefers to keep his associa-

tion with the mysterious and powerful Academy known only to a few, avoiding any unnecessary politics.

The Academy has sent a message to Kem urging him to great haste in the matter of the floating tower. Lost for a century, the wizards are eager to recover its secrets before it slips from their grasp or claims the life of a curious fisherman. This second factor is Kem's primary motivation; the mysterious iceberg has drawn a few comments from the locals since it appeared in the area two days ago, and Kem fears that an innocent person full of curiosity may meet an untimely end in the reportedly trap-filled tower.

Kem's inquiries led him to the characters. He learned that they are respected (or notorious) enough to take on the mission, and they fulfill his primary criteria – they are in Varloon. He will approach them before the workday draws to a close:

The mysterious man stands before you, his eyes scanning the surroundings as if searching for listening ears. "My friends," he begins, "I cannot yet reveal the identities of my patrons, but I assure you, they act in good faith. They have need of a certain artifact that, even now as we speak, passes within our reach. This item is of great importance to my masters and they worry greatly over its retrieval. I am glad to have found you so quickly because time is of the essence. Your reputation precedes you, as my sources say that you would be more than capable of handling such a difficult task. I have been authorized to broker a deal to ensure your participation in this grave endeavor. So, what say you? What would it take to proceed any further?"

Kem cannot share more information regarding the Academy or the assignment until the characters offer some sort of commitment to the project. He can only tell them that it is a difficult task and that they must hurry. Kem's ability to pay the characters mainly reflects on the power and abilities of the Academy. Actual negotiations should be handled between the characters and GM (acting as Kem), but here is a list of possible rewards that the wizard can promise:

- 1,000 gp in material wealth (coins, gems, jewelry, goods), or
- any minor magic item or items less than 1,000 gp total value, or
- information relating to an ongoing campaign goal or subject, or
- training for any arcane spell users in the party, or
- the respect and support of the Academy, a powerful patron indeed.

In addition, Kem will pay for any reasonable provisions needed to complete the assignment, and the characters can keep their share of the treasure recovered that is of no interest to the Academy. When the negotiations conclude to everyone's satisfaction, Kem will continue:

"Comrades, I represent a prestigious guild of wizardry that is located far from here to the north. In its long history, it has done much good, but alas it has also made a few miscalculations that have allowed some of its more powerful teachings to





slip from its control. With your help, the guild aims to recover such secrets and prevent future harm to the innocent. Over a hundred years ago, one of its number scoffed at its strict code of conduct and broke from its ranks. Setting up his own base of operations, he continued the evil research that he started when he was with the guild. The guild fears that he may have actually produced some research of great power and is terribly worried about its nature. Luckily, the traitor was slain when he attempted to attack the guild directly, but his tower was never found. They knew that it was located on the ice plains of the north, but it escaped any kind of detection, magical or otherwise. Now, after all this time, it appears that they have found the tower. A small iceberg has been spotted off the coast of Varloon, and my masters believe that encrusted within its frozen mass is this lost stronghold. Although they do not know any details of the structure, it is quite clear that its magical signature is very familiar to them. The seasons have apparently pulled the iceberg clear from its northern flow and even now it floats but a few miles from the harbor of this city. It has been in plain view for some time now and my masters fear any attention that it may bring. As I've stressed, the contents of this stronghold are feared to be deadly, so any outside complications would just make matters worse.

"But, that is not all. As the iceberg has traveled through warmer climates, its size has melted away considerably. I fear that there isn't much time left before the sun frees the stronghold from its icy clasp and sends it to the bottom of the ocean. Although this may sound like a kind of solution, it is not one desired by my masters. The possibility of an environmental disaster exists, as no one knows what evil research was completely realized.

"My masters are old and weary, and very far from here. For reasons that have not fully been explained to me, they have placed themselves under quarantine. Years of magical research have exacted a toll on their beings. They have contacted me to be their envoy and to choose champions that are worthy of this cause. Their intentions have been endorsed by Lord LeBlanc, the mayor of Varloon, and we have the full co-operation of the city, though they desire to keep the dangerous citadel from public knowledge, for its own good."

Kem will then present a letter from the mayor giving Kem Riflar, as a representative of the Academy, his full support and co-operation in the matter of the ice-entombed tower. Any character with knowledge of Varloon's local government will recognize the seal as official and legitimate. Answering any further questions the characters may have to the best of his ability, Kem will inform them that, due to the urgent nature of the assignment, they must gather supplies with much haste and meet him by the docks at first light to set out for *Samir's Joy*, his hired ship that even now follows at a safe distance behind the iceberg.

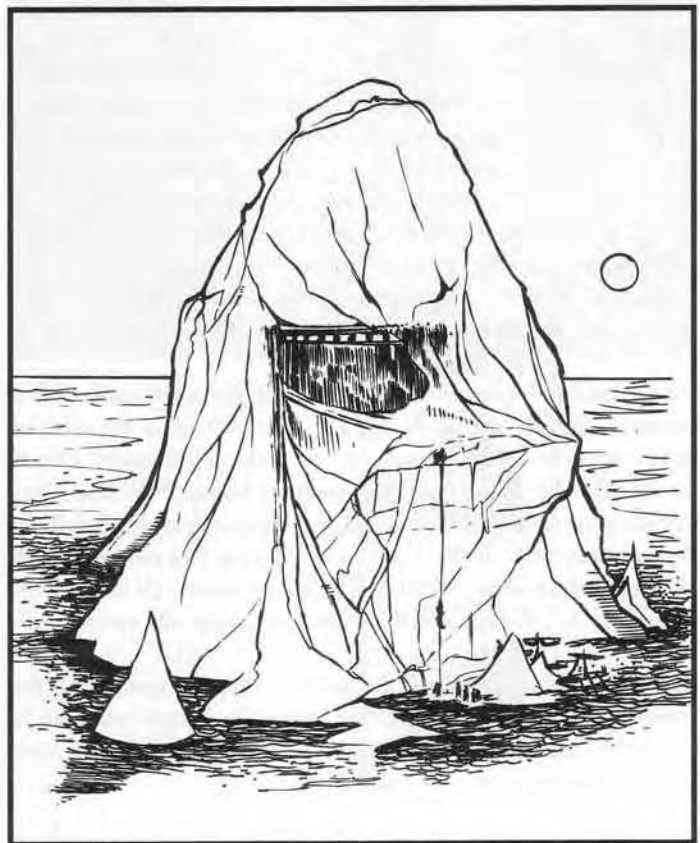
Characters should be able to purchase all standard equipment at average prices in the shops of Varloon. In fact, if they look for

warmer garments as Kem suggests, they will find them being sold at a discount due to the warm weather and subsequent decline in sales. Thick blankets can be had for 2 sp, complete cold weather garb for 4 gp, and firewood is almost given away for free.

Kem Riflar will be waiting for the characters at the docks the next day, along with a small boat and a crew of eight oarsmen. When the characters have boarded and stored their gear, the small boat will set off as Kem explains their plans:

"At first, I had planned to rendezvous with my ship, which tracks the iceberg as it makes its way south, but we must alter those plans. The floating tower is quite visible from the sea: it is dwindling quite rapidly and must become our first destination. I plan to assist you in scaling the ice wall to the summit, where the top of the tower is exposed and should provide entry. Then I and my companions will sail to *Samir's Joy*, where we will await the completion of your mission."

Within two hours of steady rowing and favorable tides, the group will begin approaching the floating iceberg. At some distance behind the mass of ice the ship *Samir's Joy* can be spotted, following at a safe pace. At this point, Kem will bring out a medium-sized duffel bag containing some extra gear for the adventure. Inside the bag are three 30-foot ropes and three steel grappling hooks, as well as complete cold weather gear for any character not already so equipped. Also inside are six sunrods and a *wand of flare* with six charges. Kem Riflar will explain the wand's usage:





"Take this wand. When you have completed your task, return to the summit of the tower, hold the wand upright, and speak the command word: *flagro!* This will launch a bright flare into the sky, which will be visible from my ship. When the signal is seen, this crew will again set out to come and retrieve you and your cargo. If we have not arrived within an hour, try the signal once again. It contains six such charges, but I do not think they will all be needed. I will be on the lookout for you!"

Moments later, the sheer face of the iceberg will be visible, illuminated by the sun reflecting on the ice and water. It rises about 35 feet above the water, and the dark shadow of the tower is visible within. The upper edge of the tower protrudes from the southern face of the iceberg. A small shape is barely visible (**Spot check DC 20**) near the waterline on the southern face. As the characters near the iceberg, they will notice that the shape is that of a small boat – similar to the one in which they are approaching the iceberg. Upon reaching the iceberg, the crew will row toward this point; all will see that the boat is empty but anchored to the ice wall with two sturdy ropes and iron spikes.

The air around the iceberg is cool but still pleasant. The water crashes against the iceberg, rocking the characters' boat and the empty boat moored to the ice. Kem Riflar will be curious about the other boat and nervous for what it portends:

Looking at the small fishing boat moored to the side of the iceberg, the mage exhales and says, "It is as I feared. Some curious fishing crew has taken it upon themselves to investigate this floating oddity. Please, my friends, I beg you: try to find these innocent citizens before they come to harm. Though I can offer no further reward to promote their safety, I tell you that the fisherfolk of Varloon are good people, if somewhat brash, and have no knowledge of the dangers that may await them within the frozen tower. My masters would say that recovering any arcane research or items is of primary concern on this assignment, but I ask you to keep an eye out for those who may be inside and possibly in distress."

The grappling hooks will anchor easily on the icy summit with a successful **ranged attack vs. AC 12**. To climb up to the exposed tower window, each character must make a successful **Climb check (DC 15)**. Add a **+2 circumstance bonus** if the characters use the grappling hooks and ropes. Any character that fails a check by 5 or more will fall into the icy water, taking **1d4 points of cold damage** before being fished out by an oarsman. Of course, the intelligent use of magical spells or items will make the ascent much easier.

Once the characters reach the summit, they can easily enter the tower through an exposed window, that leads directly into Area 1. After the characters enter the tower, Kem will have his eight rowers begin the journey back to his ship.

Running The Mercenaries

As written, the adventure features the mercenaries placed in static conditions throughout the tower; generally, they are part of keyed encounters and do not enter the story until confronted by the characters. Two reasons lie behind this situation: encounter balance and ease of play.

Having the mercenaries appear in different areas of the tower, at different points in the plot, creates balanced encounters for a party of four 5th-level characters. Individually, the Challenge Ratings and Encounter Levels for the mercenaries run from 5 to 8, and the encounters occur in areas that should allow the characters to employ strategy and group tactics.

Secondly, introducing the mercenary NPCs at their set locations allows the GM to focus on the characters' immediate surroundings and requires minimal preparation time. The set encounters with the mercenaries do provide tension and drama, as long as the GM understands the events leading up to their situation.

The mercenaries' actions thus far

The mercenaries hired by the DelSardo family arrive at the iceberg at about the same time that the characters board Kem Riflar's boat. They had disguised themselves and set out in a small fishing vessel at first light, hoping that any who saw them would assume that they were simply getting started on their day's work. Aboard the boat were the elven ranger, Lannora Resmin; the halfling sharpshooter, Ilgen Jaspas; the half-orc warrior, Herod Vergos; and eight of their gnoll hirelings. Anchoring their boat to the iceberg with iron stakes and a stout line, the group quickly ascended to the exposed summit of the tower and entered through the open window into Area 1.

At that point, the gnoll henchmen were left to act as a rearguard and to wait until the experienced mercenaries had penetrated deeper into the tower's trap-infested levels and made them safe. The gnolls were brought along primarily to act as muscle should there be a vast amount of treasure or an obstacle that only brute strength could overcome. Lannora decided that having the gnolls stumbling around the tower before she and Ilgen could discern the layout and discover any traps would be foolish and result in unwarranted casualties. So, the gnolls wait for Herod in Area 2, who will be sent to fetch them when they are needed.

As the gnolls searched their surroundings and prepared the area to defend against any intruders, the three hired treasure hunters worked quickly to discover a means of descending down into the tower. Driven by a need for haste, as the melting iceberg will provide only a limited amount of time to search the tower, Lannora Resmin decided that the wise course of action would be to begin the search at the lowest level and work their way up; she figured that if the search was prolonged and the iceberg became unstable, evacuation would be easier from an upper level.

Finding the ladder in Area 8, after a brief glance in Areas 5 and 6, the trio rapidly descended to the third floor, where two locked doors spoiled further progress. A quick examination of Area 24 showed it to be one of the deathtraps for which Esias was known,





so Lannora instructed Herod to retrace their steps and try to find a method of unlocking the doors on the fourth or top floor, and also to make sure that the gnolls were properly entrenched and alert. While Herod conducted his exploration of Areas 19 and 21, he was unaware that the tumbler mechanism controlled the locked door and set out to regroup with the gnolls. This is Herod's position when encountered by the characters in Area 16.

During Herod's absence, Ilgen picked the lock leading to the ladder down to the second floor, and, at Lannora's command, set to working on the other locked doorway that leads to the main areas of the third floor. Lannora had wanted a quick route to the main floor of the tower, yet the locked doors forced her to re-evaluate her plans. Knowing that the rumored traps in the tower would require Ilgen's skills to disarm, she wanted him to remove the barrier of the locked door before he potentially put his life on the line when disarming future traps. While Lannora respects and needs Ilgen's talents to help her navigate the tower, she intends on completing her mission and must plan for the possibility that she could be left on her own – if she later learned that the *amulet* must be hidden on the third floor, after Ilgen died disarming a deadly mechanism, she did not want to be prevented from exploring all areas on her own. The characters will encounter Ilgen as he continues his attempts to pick the lock in Area 23.

Wanting to ensure that no further impediments would hinder her progress, Lannora went down the ladder to the second floor. Finding all doors leading out of the hallway unlocked, and locating the stairs down to the main floor, she conducted a brief exploration of the immediate area around the stairs on both floors and then proceeded back up to fetch Ilgen. Before she could rejoin him on the third floor, she became aware of the characters traveling through the tower. Relying on her stealth, she slipped into the corridor on the third floor and will be encountered shortly thereafter by the characters in Area 37.

Other options for encounters with the mercenaries

Though requiring careful planning and execution, the mercenaries can be played in a more organic, less programmed fashion. Listed below are several possible alternatives to having the NPC mercenaries encountered as written:

- *Develop a time chart:* Possibly the most difficult option. Before the actual play of the adventure, the GM runs the NPCs through the tower, from top to bottom, exploring the tower and searching for the amulet and Esias' research. The GM should keep careful track of how much time is taken as the three NPCs pick locks, disarm traps, explore the floors, and figure out the tumbler system. Note each NPC's location, along with current conditions (i.e. hit points, spells used, equipment left, etc.) every ten minutes of game time, from the time they enter the tower to the time they exit the tower (or at least until they discover the amulet's location). Then, when playing with the characters, assume that the NPCs arrived twenty minutes before them and reference the developed timeline, noting where the NPCs are in relation to the characters, their condition, and how they have affected the tower thus far (i.e.

will the characters hear a scream from the floor below? will a blood trail be visible leading out of a trapped room?).

- *Deadly stalkers:* Save the NPCs for a climactic battle, arriving in Esias' workroom moments after the characters unlock the Column. Have the mercenaries follow the characters through the tower, tracking their progress and doing their best to avoid detection. Lannora plans to let the characters do all of the dirty work and then to rob them when the prize is revealed. Perform opposed **Spot versus Hide checks** to see if the characters notice Ilgen as he scouts their position on each floor. Perhaps the characters are being hunted, floor-by-floor, by the NPCs, who use hit-and-run tactics to eliminate one party member at a time.

- *Strange allies:* Rather than engaging in combat, the mercenaries disguise their true natures and attempt to form an alliance with the party, or pretend simply to be curious but well-armed fishermen exploring the floating oddity. The NPCs will unveil their true faces when the party is most vulnerable, after recovering the *amulet*. Perhaps they will wait until exiting the tower itself, hoping to throw the characters from the iceberg's summit.

- *Make the best story:* Have the NPCs appear when it works best for the drama of the story. After the cautious characters have discovered and disarmed three traps in a row, perhaps a near-miss from Ilgen's bow will get the party moving again – it may be the key to speeding up a too cautious party that takes hours testing every door for traps before entering. Herod could show up as the party's fighter is gloating about his ease in dispatching the gargoyles. Lannora may appear on the icy summit – a final obstacle as the characters make a mad dash to escape the rapidly sinking tower. The GM should not worry about which exact actions have led to the NPCs' current locations; instead, the guiding factor should be the dramatic possibilities inherent in introducing an unknown antagonist at a key moment in the adventure.

Even if using the written "static encounter" plan, the keyed encounters detail only the initial encounters with the individuals of the mercenary group, as well as their basic tactics and strategies for the encounter. While this is sufficient to run a quick encounter, the mercenaries may avoid the encounter or escape defeat, and can then re-appear in other areas of the tower, as the GM sees fit. To help with these situations, all of the mercenaries come with detailed personalities, goals, and characteristics that will guide the GM during encounters with the members of this group.

The Iceberg

As the adventure takes place in a tower frozen within an iceberg, several key rule considerations must be made.

Freezing Conditions: The environment in all areas of the tower, save the exposed sunny outcropping, is one of extreme cold. The tower is encased in a giant mass of solid arctic ice and has been for nearly a century. Any character not outfitted in proper cold weather garb (wool coat, linen shirt, wool cap, heavy or fur cloak, thick pants, boots, and gloves) must make a **Fortitude saving throw (DC 15)** each hour or sustain **1d6 hit points of subdual cold**





damage. A character with the **Wilderness Lore** skill may make a check (DC 15) to receive a +2 **circumstance bonus** to this saving throw and may apply this bonus to one other character **for every 1 point by which the check result exceeds 15**. Characters properly outfitted in cold weather garb must make a **Fortitude saving throw (DC 10)** once every twelve hours or sustain **1d6 points of subdual cold damage**. Characters who sustain subdual damage from the cold suffer from frostbite or hypothermia, cannot **run or charge**, and suffer a **-1 penalty Strength and Dexterity**. These penalties end when the character recovers the subdual damage taken from the cold.

Thawing Iceberg: Even as the freezing conditions affect the characters, the characters can affect the environment. Currently, the tower is frozen securely in the iceberg, but as the iceberg drifts south and spends more time under the springtime sun, the exterior ice begins to melt. Should the ice melt enough, the tower may break free from its icy grip and tumble into the ocean.

The ice holding the tower starts with **300 hit points**. For every point of damage inflicted on someone by a fire-based attack (i.e. a *fireball* spell, *flaming gauntlet*, or *flaming jet trap*), deduct the same amount from the ice's hit points. For every point of damage inflicted by a cold-based attack (i.e. *ice storm* spell, a mephit's icy breathweapon, or other means), add that amount back to the ice's hit points. In addition, each full day spent in the sun inflicts **40 points of heat damage** on the ice for game purposes. Carefully track the iceberg's remaining hit points on the Iceberg Structure Chart provided. When it reaches **100 hp or less**, the characters will hear the ice "moaning" in warning as it begins to break from the main mass. When it reaches **0 hp**, the area around the tower will be thawed enough for the tower to slip forward, falling freely into the water and swiftly sinking to the ocean's bottom. At that point, all characters must make a **Reflex save (DC 20)** to avoid taking **3d6 points of falling damage**, and then they must make a series of **Climb (DC 15)** and **Swim (DC 20)** checks to navigate the upside-down tower as it rapidly fills with water.

The Tower

Created from magical forces conjured by the half-mad wizard Esias over a century ago, the tower is a marvel of mechanical design and twisted paranoia. Esias designed the tower thinking mostly of his own protection within the harsh environment rather than comfortable living conditions. When Esias first arrived in the area that would become his arctic lair, he spent his time divided between constructing his tower and fending off probing attacks from a nearby frost giant clan. Eventually, he completed the tower and gathered a group of hardy ogres from the Dougrond tribe to serve as his bodyguards and servants.

The main force of ogres was stationed in a stone barracks that originally sat immediately to the west of the tower. Not having the inherent magical nature of the tower, the barracks were shredded as the ice crept over Esias' lair decades ago. Remnants of this ruined building can be seen embedded in the ice beside the tower.

A few more trusted (as far as Esias ever trusted anyone) ogres

served as the wizard's personal bodyguard and dwelt within the tower itself. When Esias led his small troupe against the Academy, one ogre lieutenant stayed behind to maintain the defenses and prepare the home for Esias' victorious return. Unfortunately, Esias never returned, and the ogre, a victim of his own low intelligence, accidentally triggered one of the tower's protective traps and died.

The tower is a maze of paranoid security features, both mechanical and magical in nature, with most controlled by a central mechanism called the Column. The Column is a five-foot wide magical metal pillar that extends up through all the tower's levels and serves as the backbone to the tower's design. Four of the five levels contain special dials or tumblers that can be used with the Column to activate or de-activate the traps in the building. Furthermore, dialing the correct "combination" into the Column allows access to a small alcove in the metal pillar, found in Esias' workroom on the second floor. Within this small closet, Esias kept his research notes and other valuable items. This is where the *amulet of wizardly power* is located.

All walls in the tower appear to be made of a solid gray stone, which is very polished, smooth, and quite resistant to damage. Dwarves who use their **stonecunning** ability, or accomplished masons, will note that the construction of the tower was magical and otherworldly in nature, though the materials used, while rare, are of this world. Sunlight penetrates the open windows of the top floor, but the remainder of the tower is lost in darkness, save certain rooms which have *continual flame* torches. Normal and low-light vision are useless in these areas, as no light exists in the tower at all. Several ladders climb or descend to various rooms in the tower. All of these ladders are made of steel and fastened to the floor and to the five-foot circular hole in the ceiling through which they extend. All of the doors to rooms are unlocked, unless otherwise noted. Each level has a main door, which is controlled by the setting of the tumbler on that level, and will be detailed in the encounter key.

All levels below the top floor are very cold; the characters will need the protection of warm garments or magic to avoid suffering subdual damage (see *The Iceberg*, above.)

THE CRYSTAL TOWER: KEYED ENCOUNTERS

AREA 1: The Observatory.

Three open windows lead into this triangular room, which appears fairly open and sparse. Two stone benches sit against the walls here, though they are half covered in snow and ice. The sun has turned much of the ice in this room to slush - and a trail of watery footprints lead to a weather-beaten wooden door in the northern wall.

This was Esias' observatory, where he would spend many nights studying the effects of the stars on his magical investigations.

Any character with the **Track** feat who investigates these tracks





will, on a **Wilderness Lore check (DC 13)**, note that perhaps eight or nine humanoids crossed this room quite recently. From the size of the strides, the successful tracker can determine that the majority of the travelers were approximately seven feet tall, while two others were definitely five feet tall or less.

Unless the characters have taken special, magical means to prevent any sound of their arrival from issuing forth, the gnolls waiting in Area 2 will be aware of them as they enter the windows and will prepare an ambush. If any of the characters make a **Listen check (DC 18)**, they will hear muffled, indistinct noises coming from behind the door ahead.

AREA 2: The Bedroom Ambush.

This dimly lit room appears to have once been a bedroom; however, it is now in a state of disarray. A large, four-post bed is turned on its side, and two large wardrobes are pulled away from the walls and placed in the center of the room. A long wooden bench stands upright on its side beside the doorway, while a thick blanket from the bed covers the window, allowing little light to enter.

The gnolls have put a blanket up across the window to eliminate the light that would spoil their ambush and to give them a slight advantage with their **darkvision**. Currently, the gnolls are hiding behind the overturned furniture, waiting for the characters fully to enter the darkened room. Any character who makes a successful **Spot check (DC 12)** notices the gnolls hiding and is not surprised; any characters with **low-light vision** or **darkvision** get a **+2 bonus** to their checks. All characters that fail their checks are **flat-footed** and unable to act during the resulting **surprise round** of combat.

The gnolls will immediately attack the party, gaining one surprise round against anyone failing a Spot check. One gnoll hides behind the bench beside the door, three hide behind the overturned bed, and two behind each of the wardrobes. Gnolls attacked in these hiding positions gain the benefits of **three-quarters cover (+7 cover AC bonus, +3 cover reflex save bonus.)**

Gnolls (8): hp 16, 15, 14, 14, 12, 12, 11, 10.

AREA 3: Privy.

A large cast-iron tub fills much of this room, which is illuminated through the single tall window looking out over the ocean. A chamber pot and two large buckets rest against the wall, amid the snow and slush that covers the floor of this room.

This was Esias' bathroom, where he would have his ogre minions bring up boiling water for his tub.

AREA 4: The Upper Hallway.

This hallway connects together all of the rooms on this floor and surrounds the chamber where the Column is located. On a suc-

cessful **Spot check (DC 18)** or **Wilderness Lore (Track) check (DC 15)**, the characters will notice three sets of humanoid footprints leading from Area 2 around the hallway to Area 10 and then to Area 8.

AREA 5: The Wizard's Kitchen.

A large table occupies the center of this room. Cupboards line two of the walls, and a large fireplace with an iron pot sits in an alcove off to the side.

Esias would take his meals here, away from the ogres that served him. The cupboards contain a few dishes, some cutlery, and a few mugs, though all items are unremarkable and of little value. The fireplace contains the bones of polar bears, caribou, and other northern game.

AREA 6: Chief Ogre's Room.

A large bed, easily twelve feet long, fills much of this room. A small trunk placed against one wall, near the window, is completely frozen over. A circular hole near the southern wall holds the top of a ladder, that leads to darkness below.

The leader of the ogres, and Esias' chief lieutenant, stayed in this room. When he left to lead the assault on the Academy, this room was taken over by Thromdar, the ogre who stayed behind to watch the tower.

The trunk contains an old fur cloak, which can be used as protection against the cold. Sitting under the cloak is a *flaming gauntlet*; it ignites when the command word "manus" is spoken, dealing an additional **1d6 points of fire damage** on a successful hit. The ogre left it behind, thinking it useless, as it was too small for him and he never learned the activating command word.

The ladder descends to Area 17.

AREA 7: Unused Entertainment Room.

A large table sits between two couches in this room. A fireplace is centered between two frozen windows, their icy coverings allowing dim light to pass into the room. The smell of mold and rot comes from the damp couches, which appear to be in quite a state of disrepair.

Esias had this room built in case he ever needed to entertain a fellow wizard or visitor to his frozen lair. As the need never arose, this room was never used. The elements have destroyed the couches and scarred the tables that serve as the sole furniture in this room.

AREA 8: Hallway and Door.

Note: If the tumbler in Area 10 is set to **CIRCLE**, then the door leading from Area 4 is locked. If the tumbler in Area 10 is set to **STAR, SQUARE, or TRIANGLE**, then this door is unlocked. See





Area 10 for further details.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

This dark hallway features a ladder point, which descends to a similar hallway on the fourth floor (Area 11).

AREA 9: Lightning.

Light streams in through the window, and the ice is melted to a slushy puddle that fills most of the room. The wall opposite the door bears a single blue star fashioned of a mysterious metal set into it.

One of Esias' traps, this was once a minor shocking device that would send an electrical current into anyone touching the star. Now, due to the accumulated moisture and water puddle, the charge will affect anyone standing in the room when the metal star is touched.

Electrified Room: CR 4; affects anyone standing in the room (3d10 electrical damage); Reflex save (DC 14) for half damage; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

AREA 10: Fifth Floor Tumbler.

In the center of this square room stands a five-foot wide metallic post that stretches from the floor to the ceiling. In the center of the post rests a large dial or wheel divided evenly into four sections, each marked with a simple symbol: circle, square, star, triangle. An arrow etched into the post points to the wheel.

Show the players Handout 2: Column Illustration

This tumbler is currently set to the SQUARE symbol.

Each floor in the tower has a room identical to this one. All but Esias' workroom on the second floor have an identical wheel, which controls the tumbler mechanism for each floor. Each symbol on the wheel represents one of the floors, signified by the number of sides (or points, in the case of the star). Turning the tumbler on a certain floor to its matching symbol opens the main door to the floor and sets the floor to "safe" mode. Other symbols create other effects, as listed in the *Tumbler Settings Chart* below. Esias programmed the Column and the traps so that he could retreat upwards from the main floor, activating the traps below him and sealing the doors as he went. Thus, as the characters descend through the tower, it is possible for a floor to be set on "safe mode" while the traps remain active as dictated by the tumbler above.

A **Strength check (DC 15)** is needed to spin the tumbler. Any changes to the setting of this tumbler should be noted on the *Tumbler Tracking Chart*, found on the inside front cover.

Fifth Floor Tumbler Settings:

STAR: Safe mode; unlocks the door to Area 8.

SQUARE: Low alert mode; unlocks door to Area 8, but acti-

vates mechanical traps on the fourth floor.

TRIANGLE: Safe mode, unlocks the door to Area 8 and opens Lock D of the secret door in Area 43.

CIRCLE: High alert mode; locks the door at Area 8 and activates mechanical traps on the fourth floor.

When the mercenaries discovered this tumbler room, it was already set to SQUARE; fearing that it was simply a trigger for a trap, they have left it alone and continued to the fourth floor.

Note: None of the floors below the fifth have open windows. All of these rooms are dark, and the characters may require a light source to see, unless otherwise noted.

AREA 11: Hallway and Door.

Note: If the tumbler in Area 21 is set to STAR, then the door leading to Area 16 is locked. If the tumbler in Area 21 is set to CIRCLE, SQUARE, or TRIANGLE, then this door is unlocked. See Area 21 for further details.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

This dark hallway features a ladder, that ascends to a similar hallway on the fifth floor (Area 8).

AREA 12: Esias' Greed Trap.

Cobwebs fill the corners of this dark room, which appears to have been deserted for some time. In the center of a blue square painted in the middle of the floor sits a shiny stone.

Examining the shiny object reveals it to be a small bloodstone. The square painted on the floor outlines the area affected by a *Nystul's undetectable aura*. Thus, any attempt at magical detection finds the gem and the square to be quite mundane. In truth, however, this is one of Esias' more insidious traps. The gem (worth 50 gp) is protected with a *glyph of warding*, which will unleash a *feeblemind* spell on any character picking up the gem.

Glyph of Warding: CR 4; feeblemind; Will save negates (DC 18); Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30). Spellcaster level of 12.

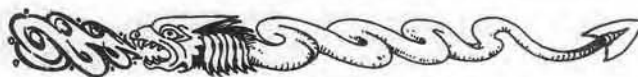
Esias enjoyed the thought of turning an invader's greed against him, while completely unaware of the irony that greed eventually led to his own destruction.

AREA 13: Ladder.

This dark hallway leads to a ladder descending through a five-foot circular hole into the third floor, Area 22.

AREA 14: Oil Drums.

Four large drums marked "OIL" sit in this room. A metal pipe leads from each drum to a central valve, then through a larger pipe into the floor. A thin groove runs around the perimeter of the wall, about four feet from the floor. Similar grooves are set into the floor and lead to a drainage grate.





These drums supply the oil trap in Area 34, as well as the flame trap in Area 35. Currently, the valve is turned all the way open. Shutting off the valve will eliminate the traps in Area 34 and 35, but requires a **Strength check (DC 25)** and also triggers the protective blade trap, which comes lashing out at all in the room from the groove in the wall. Note that the blade trap will not activate if the *fifth floor tumbler* in Area 10 is set to STAR or TRIANGLE.

Scything Blade Trap: CR 1; +8 **melee** (1d8/x3 **crit**); **Search** (DC 21); **Disable** (DC 20). **Note: the blade can only attack characters over four feet tall.**

The drainage grate in the floor leads nowhere and is purely ornamentation, designed to distract intruders from the blade groove in the wall. The drums are all nearly full, as Esias refilled them before his attack on the Academy.

Area 15: Teleport Trap.

Two flickering torches set into wall-sconces illuminate this sparsely furnished room. A large, red carpet covers a ten-foot square section in front of a set of bookshelves fastened to the far wall.

These torches are powered by *continual flame* spells and have been illuminating the room for quite some time. A third sconce is empty, its torch moved to Area 19. The 10-foot square area in front of the bookshelves, marked by the carpet, is a trap set by Esias.

If the *fifth floor tumbler* is set to either SQUARE or CIRCLE, anyone touching this carpet will be affected by a *teleport without error* spell, sending the victim to Area 25 on the third floor.

Teleport Trap: CR 1; **triggered by touching the 10-foot square carpet**; **Will Save** (DC 20) **negates**; **Search** (DC 30); **Disable Device** (DC 30).

If the *fifth floor tumbler* is set to either TRIANGLE or STAR, then the bookshelf can be approached, where the characters may notice on a successful **Search check (DC 20)** a single *arrow of distance*, which has double the range increment of a normal arrow.

Area 16: Murder Holes.

The western and northern walls of this dark hallway are home to several murder holes, evenly spaced one foot apart and running the entire length of the hallway. If the tower was attacked, the ogre lieutenant in Area 6 would descend his ladder into Area 17 to thwart any attempt to penetrate this floor further, or to access the fourth floor tumbler in Area 21.

Peering through the murder holes will reveal complete darkness.

Walking down this hallway, approaching the door to Area 11, is Herod Vergos, the half-orc mercenary sent by Lannora to check up on the gnolls. While proceeding from Area 13 to Area 11, the half-orc's curiosity got the best of him, and he ran down the hallway to examine Area 19 on his own. Satisfied with himself, he is now returning to the ladder in Area 11 to climb up to the top floor and make sure that the gnolls are behaving themselves.

Herod should be coming back around the corner as the characters enter the hallway. Unless the players specifically state that they paused to listen before opening the door, Herod should be as surprised as the characters, so neither gains a surprise advantage. If the players indicate that they listen before proceeding into the hallway, they will gain a **surprise round** if they succeed at a **Listen check (DC 10)**.

Herod (1): hp 52.

Herod will attempt to use his strength and power (using **charge** and **bull rush**) to push the characters back into Area 11, where he cannot be **flanked**. Should he be hurt badly, Herod will follow Lannora's last command, and foolishly try to regroup with the gnolls, unaware that the party will have already dealt with them.

AREA 17: Missile Command.

This dark hallway runs along Area 16 and provides a defense point in the event of an invasion on the tower. The ogre lieutenant from Area 6 could descend to this hallway, equip himself with the weapons from Area 18, and fire bolts through the murder holes at anyone trying to reach the tumbler at Area 21.

While engaging in combat with anyone in Area 16, a combatant receives **nine-tenths concealment** if using the murder holes, gaining a **+10 cover bonus to AC** and a **+4 cover bonus to Reflex saves**.

AREA 18: Weapon Store.

Two racks line the straight walls of this room. The racks are now empty, save for two heavy crossbows and two small wooden boxes.

The heavy crossbows are in decent condition, but have suffered from neglect over the decades. In their current state, they have a range increment of only 40 feet. They can be repaired, however, and returned to their normal range increment of 120 feet with a successful **Craft (weaponsmithing or bowmaking) check (DC 15)**. The wooden boxes each contain 10 metal crossbow bolts.

AREA 19: Ogre's Lounge.

A single flickering torch illuminates a portion of this oddly shaped room, which contains an assortment of items. Two large couches are pushed together here; a large iron cauldron, a small pile of firewood, a smashed keg, and a table also occupy the room. A huge pair of leather boots sits under the table.

The ogre left behind in the Academy raid, Thromdar, took over this area as his own personal recreation room. Eventually, the loneliness and hunger took its toll, and the ogre would come here and drink the remaining ale before stumbling barefoot around the tower.

Herod has just come from this room after double-checking for anything of value. If the characters **Search (DC 18)** the room,





they will find a *scroll of cat's grace* that Thromdar attempted to use as kindling under the cauldron. The parchment sports minor singe marks around the edges, but is perfectly intact.

AREA 20: Simple Arrow Trap.

If the *fifth floor tumbler* is set to either SQUARE or CIRCLE, any one opening this door will be the target of an arrow trap. Closing the door re-loads the trap, preparing it for the next person who attempts to enter.

Arrow Trap: CR 1; +10 ranged (1d6/x3 crit); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

If the *fifth floor tumbler* is set to TRIANGLE or STAR, then the characters can easily enter this room. The sole item of interest is a metal crate, which seems to be fastened to the opposite wall, just under the arrow-firing mechanism. Prying this crate from the wall (**Strength check DC 15 required**) will reveal 15 arrows, which automatically load when the trap is active and the door is closed. The trap cannot reload if the ammunition is removed.

AREA 21: Fourth Floor Tumbler.

In the center of this square room stands a five-foot wide metallic post that stretches from the floor to the ceiling. In the center of the post sits a large dial or wheel, divided evenly into four sections, each marked with a simple symbol: circle, square, star, triangle. An arrow etched into the post points to the wheel.

Show the players handout 2: Column Illustration

This room is identical to the tumbler room in Area 10. Turning the tumbler to a symbol has the effect listed on the chart below. A **Strength check (DC 15)** is needed to spin the tumbler. Any changes to the setting of this tumbler should be noted on the *Tumbler Tracking Chart*. The fourth floor tumbler is currently set to TRIANGLE.

Fourth Floor Tumbler Settings

SQUARE: Safe mode; unlocks the door to Area 11.

TRIANGLE: Low alert mode; unlocks door to Area 11 but activates mechanical traps on the third floor.

CIRCLE: Safe mode; unlocks the door to Area 11 and opens Lock C of the secret door in Area 43.

STAR: High alert mode; locks the door at Area 11 and activates mechanical traps on the third floor.

When the mercenaries discovered this tumbler room, the dial was already set to TRIANGLE. Since they were able to progress to the third floor, they left the tumbler untouched.

AREA 22: Stairs Up.

This small and narrow hallway features a ladder going up at the west end and a slightly opened door at the east end. A flickering light can be seen coming from behind the door.

When the mercenaries descended the ladder to this point, their progress was temporarily delayed by the locked door leading to Area 23, which was a result of the third floor tumbler being set to SQUARE. Ilgen, the halfling sharpshooter, quickly set to the task at hand and managed to pick the lock. Lannora has continued on to the second floor, hoping to discover the wizard's secret laboratory, while Ilgen works on the other locked door leading to Area 27. He has lit a candle to allow him to work. Unless the characters descend the ladder in utter silence, Ilgen will be aware of the party, hoping to unlock the door and proceed through to Area 27 before he is encountered. If the characters attempt to move about quietly, then the GM should perform an untrained **Listen check** for Ilgen (+1 for his **Wisdom bonus**) **opposed** by the characters' **Move Silently**. If he fails, then he is too engrossed in his attempt to pick the lock, and the characters may get a **surprise attack**.

If the characters proceed slowly toward Area 23, then roll each round for Ilgen's Open Lock attempt. On a roll of 15 or higher he is successful and can slip through the door to Area 23. If he cannot get the door opened, he will attempt to keep the characters from entering the room by using a **full-attack action** and attempting to make three attacks with his shortbow (at +10/+10/+5 to hit), using his **Point Blank Shot** and **Rapid Shot** feats. Characters that stand in the doorway receive **one-half cover** and a **+4 cover bonus to AC**. Should the characters enter the room, then Ilgen will engage in melee combat with his shortsword and attempt to **tumble** past them and descend the ladder to Area 32 below.

AREA 23: Hallway and Doors.

As detailed in Area 22, Ilgen Jaspur is here, desperately trying to pick the lock and enter Area 27. Should he succeed, as described above, he will use the hallway (Area 27) to provide cover and distance and attempt to pick the party off one-by-one with his arrows.

Ilgen Jaspur (1): hp 50.

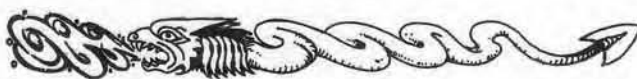
Note: If the tumbler in Area 31 is set to SQUARE, then the doors leading to Area 22 and 27 are locked. If the tumbler in Area 31 is set to CIRCLE, STAR, or TRIANGLE, then these doors are unlocked. Currently, the door to Area 27 is unlocked, as it was picked by Ilgen. See Areas 22 and 31 for further details.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

AREA 24: The Gauntlet.

Note: This area is pitch black. Characters without **darkvision** cannot see anything unless they provide a light source. If the characters can see, the GM should read the following text. Otherwise, the characters must investigate this scene and area by touch alone.

This narrow corridor extends twenty feet from the door before turning to the left. Standing before you at the corner is a large humanoid figure, nearly nine feet tall, holding a short spear in front of his chest with both hands. The spear is pointed directly at you, but the barefoot figure remains eerily silent.





This is Thromdar, the ogre who was left behind. Drunk and shoeless, he took a wrong turn and ended up in this maze-like area. Unfortunately, he had also set the tumbler on the fourth floor incorrectly and stumbled right into a spear trap. Although dead for nearly a century, Thromdas has been preserved by the extreme cold of the tower.

Upon closer investigation, the characters will see that the unmoving figure is partially decayed. The spear he holds actually extends from the wall behind him and protrudes through his chest. A long-extinguished torch lies on the ground to the right of the ogre. A terrible smell is evident when close to the body. Though barefoot, Thromdas is otherwise properly attired for the harsh climate, wearing a leather smock over a wool shirt and pants. The smock has one pocket. A **Search check (DC 15)** will reveal a small note, instructions written by Esias as he departed. The note reads: "Match the number of the floor for the safe zone. Dial down one for low alert. Dial up one for high alert. The remaining symbol is to be used only by myself. Do NOT lose this note!"

Give the players Handout 3: The wizard's note.

This maze was a defensive structure, designed to weaken invaders should they breach the third level. At every point marked "X" on the map is a spear trap similar to the one that killed Thromdar. Pressure points in the floor trigger mechanical spears that extend from a wall running parallel to the trigger point.

Spear Trap: CR 2; +12 **melee (1d8/x3 crit)**; **Search (DC 20)**; **Disable Device (DC 20)**.

AREA 25: Teleportation Destination.

Note: This area is pitch black. Characters without **darkvision** cannot see anything unless they provide a light source. If the characters can see, read the following text. Otherwise, the characters must investigate this area by touch alone.

This small hallway extends ten feet before turning a corner and heading right. A door is set in the left wall.

If the tumbler in Area 31 is set to **SQUARE**, then this door is locked. If the tumbler in Area 31 is set to **CIRCLE**, **STAR**, or **TRIANGLE**, then this door will be unlocked. See Area 31 for further details.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

If a character was teleported here by the trap in Area 15, then the only way out is to pick the lock, break the door, or run the gauntlet, avoiding the spear traps, and exit to Area 23. See Area 24 for details on the spear traps.

AREA 26: Door.

If the tumbler in Area 31 is set to **SQUARE**, then the door leading to Area 26 will be locked. If the tumbler in Area 31 is set to **CIRCLE**, **STAR**, or **TRIANGLE**, then this door will be unlocked. See Area 31 for further details.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

AREA 27: Hallway.

This hallway connects several rooms on this floor and runs around the third floor tumbler, located in Area 31. Beside the door to Area 23 is a large metal helmet, built for an ogre. Thromdar, the sole inhabitant of the tower for some time, had misplaced his key ring and used this helmet to hold the door to Area 23 open while he drunkenly altered the tumbler combination in Area 31. Returning from setting the security tumbler, he kicked this helmet out of the doorway, sealing himself to his final fate. The helmet is very large and has no special properties.

If Ilgen picked the lock from Area 23, he will use the twists and turns of this hallway to provide cover while he fires arrows at anyone in pursuit.

AREA 28: Ogres Briefing Room.

Sixteen flickering torches set into four-foot posts light this room, which holds a large, triangular table and thirty oversized wooden chairs. A fireplace is set into the center of the western wall, though it is full of ice that has traveled down the chimney. Fragments of a parchment are pinned up in the middle of the eastern wall.

The torches are lit with *continual flame* spells.

This room was used as the final ogre briefing room before they set out on their mission against the Academy. The fragments of parchment on the wall are from a sketched map that Esias put up, detailing the Academy's layout. This was the only time that many of the ogres had been allowed this far up into the tower, let alone within the premises at all. The chairs have suffered from the elements, but were certainly comfortable a century ago.

AREA 29: Esias' Strategy Room.

Two torches placed at opposite ends of a large table illuminate an elaborate wooden model in the middle of the table. Odd letters and symbols cover the wooden structure and appear to be written in some form of metallic ink. Three bookshelves rest against the northern wall, though only the middle one contains any books.

These are more *continual flame* torches. The model on the table is a replica of the Academy from Esias' days there. The odd writings covering the model are, in fact, *explosive runes*. The runes detonate when read, dealing **6d6 points of damage**. Anyone next to the *runes* (close enough to read them) takes this damage with no saving throw. Others within 10 feet of the *runes* take half damage if they succeed at **Reflex saving throws (DC 16)**. The exploding *runes* will completely destroy the table and the wooden model.

This room was to be Esias' library as he completed his various





research tomes and stored them in a proud collection. Unfortunately, Esias rarely finished a line of research, and the only books stored here were those that he took with him when he first left the Academy.

Seven textbooks here are all apparently preserved in decent, though fragile, shape. Four tomes found on the top shelf of the central bookcase include *Stizzil's Machine Werkes*, *Severin's Lingo Sorcery, Rituals & Relics*, and *Arcana Unearthed*. Three books on the middle shelf include *Kuru Sorcery, A Study on the Ancient Island of Atlantis*, and *The Magical Works of Hashladak the Vivid*. Each tome is worth approximately 30 gp to a sage if taken out with care to preserve their condition. If elaborate care is not taken, the books will be damaged and thereafter worth only 10 gp.

A **Search check (DC 20)** will unveil a loose section of the eastern wall that, when slid to the right, reveals a small metal lever. When pulled, this lever opens a secret door leading to Area 30.

AREA 30: Secret Room.

Two sets of metal shelves sit in this room, with a few small boxes on them. A trunk is also set against the wall, but apparently most of this room's contents were cleared out long ago.

Most of this room's contents were taken with Esias on his final raid. Four wooden boxes are in disrepair, and one trunk is pushed against the wall. The first box contains two decaying burlap sacks, which will fall apart if anything weighing more than 1 lb. is placed within. A second box contains 20 candles, three of which are still usable. The third box contains 13 bars of coarse soap, the repugnant smell of which escapes once the box is opened. The final box contains a single clay jug, which contains alchemist's fire. Exposing the contents to the air causes the substance to ignite, dealing **1d6 points of fire damage** to whoever is holding the jug. Six books in the trunk each deal with Esias' study in a specific school of magic. Each tome contains four spells from the school and rough notes on the properties and balance of the various schools. The tomes contain: Abjuration (*explosive runes, fire trap, nondetection, shield*); Conjunction (*mount, sleet storm, stinking cloud, unseen servant*); Enchantment (*charm monster, emotion, hold person, suggestion*); Evocation (*flaming sphere, lightning bolt, magic missile, shatter*); Illusion (*blur, change self, ghost sound, magic mouth*) and Transmutation (*dimension door, shocking grasp, slow, teleport*). Each book, due in part to its ancient language and notations, is worth 1,000 gp to an arcane scholar.

AREA 31: Third Floor Tumbler.

In the center of this square room stands a five-foot wide metallic post that stretches from the floor to the ceiling. In the center of the post rests a large dial or wheel divided evenly into four sections, each marked with a simple symbol: circle, square, star, triangle. An arrow etched into the post points to the wheel.

Show the players Handout 2: Column Illustration.

This tumbler is currently set to the SQUARE symbol.

This room is identical to the tumbler room in Area 10. Turning the tumbler to a symbol has the effect listed on the chart below. A **Strength check (DC 15)** is needed to spin the tumbler. Any changes to the setting of this tumbler should be noted on the *Tumbler Tracking Chart*.

Third Floor Tumbler Settings:

TRIANGLE: Safe mode; unlocks the doors to Area 22, 23, and 25.

CIRCLE: Low alert mode; unlocks doors to Area 22, 23, and 25, but activates mechanical traps on the second floor.

STAR: Safe mode; unlocks the door to Areas 22, 23, and 25, and opens Lock B in the secret door in Area 43.

SQUARE: High alert mode; locks the doors at Areas 22, 23, and 25, and activates mechanical traps on the second floor.

AREA 32: Hallway and Door.

This short hallway is dark and very similar to the entry hallway on the previous two floors. If the *first floor tumbler* is set to TRIANGLE, then the door to Area 36 will be locked.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

Currently, however, the tumbler is set to STAR, and this door has been left slightly open by Lannora Resmin, who will have passed this way only moments before the characters. Any character with the **Track** feat who investigates the corridor near the door may notice, on a successful **Wilderness Lore check (DC 20)**, a partial footprint of a medium-sized creature leading into the hallway. A second footprint can be seen two feet beyond the door, but no further tracks will be found.

AREA 33: Staircase.

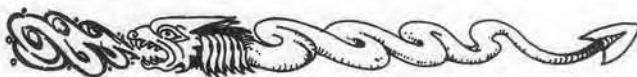
A large spiral staircase winds its way down to the main floor, Area 44. This room is dark, and the characters must carry their own light sources down to see.

AREA 34: Oil Jets.

This dark, L-shaped hallway has a series of high-pressure oil jets in the southwest corner. Oil from the drums in Area 14 will spray on any character that steps on the pressure plate that spans the hallway as it turns the corner.

Oil Spray Trap: CR 1; +10 melee (covered in oil); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20).

Any character successfully sprayed will be covered in oil for 2d20 minutes. Characters who engage in combat during this time must make a **Balance check (DC 15)** each round to avoid slipping and falling and remaining **prone** for the round. During the following round, the character can recover as a **move-equivalent action**. Any character covered in oil that attempts to climb a ladder must make a successful **Climb check (DC 15)** to make progress. Furthermore, any character covered in oil will likely suffer additional damage if exposed to the fire trap in Area 35.





Note that the oil spray trap will not function if the valve in Area 14 is shut off.

AREA 35: Fire Trap.

The door to this room is rigged with a tripwire. Anyone opening the door ignites a stream of oil that sprays toward the door from nozzles in the center of this room. The flame jet fills the entire length of the hallway.

Flame Jets: CR 2; 20-ft. long stream of flame (3d6); Reflex save (DC 13) avoids; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Any characters coated in oil from the trap in Area 34 will suffer a -2 circumstance modifier to their Reflex save and take an additional 2d6 points of fire damage if struck by the flame jets. The flame jet nozzles are set into the end of a metal pipe that descends seven feet from the ceiling. Avoiding the flames with a successful Reflex save indicates that the character ducked below the flames and avoided damage.



Other than the pipe fastened to the ceiling, this room is empty. Note that the fire trap will not function if the valve in Area 14 was shut.

AREA 36: Hallway and Flickering Torch.

A flickering light illuminates a T-junction ahead. The light appears to move rapidly down the left branch before pausing.

Lannora Resmin, the elven leader of the mercenaries, passed through this corridor to Area 37 mere moments ago. Aware that the characters were immediately behind her, she has thrown her *continual flame* torch (pilfered from a room on the first floor) in the opposite direction, where it has come to rest on the floor before the door to Area 39.

Any character who makes a successful Listen check (DC 10) will hear a loud grunt from ahead.

AREA 37: Lannora and the Ram Trap.

Lannora Resmin, the elven ranger, arrived here only moments before the characters. Throwing her torch to hide her location and provide a distraction (and possibly give advantage to her **low-light vision**), she quickly ran into Area 37 to contemplate an ambush. Unfortunately for her, she also triggered a ram trap set in this room.

Ram Trap: CR 2; +10 melee (3d6/x2 crit); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

A pressure plate in the doorway of this room triggers a massive log ram that projects outward five feet from the western wall. After activation, the ram immediately resets, ready to be triggered again.

Roll an attack roll for the trap; on an 8 or higher, Lannora will have been hit for 3d6 points of damage.

If injured badly, Lannora may take her *potion of cure moderate wounds* while recovering and monitoring the characters' actions. If engaged in combat, she will hold back, attempting to strike with a *magic missile* first and allowing the ram trap to weaken opponents who rush into the room, then finishing up with melee attacks. If the situation goes badly for her, she will attempt to *spider climb* the ceiling over the characters and make her way to the ladder in Area 32.

Lannora Resmin (1): hp 42.

AREA 38: Further Supplies.

This dark room is where Esias kept other, unusual supplies that he might need if the tower faced invasion and he needed to fight to reach his laboratory. As with most of the supplies in the tower, much of the former contents were taken for Esias' assault on the Academy, but sixteen small wooden boxes remain piled against a wall. All are empty except for the box on the bottom in the very center. A Search check (DC 20) will discover this box, which contains an overlooked and forgotten vial of purple liquid (a *potion of heroism*).





AREA 39: Compactor.

As with many of the rooms in the tower, there is no light source here. The GM can read the following if the characters have provided their own (possibly the diversionary torch left in front of the door to this room), or if they have **darkvision**.

This rectangular room has been worn smooth and is entirely featureless, save for the door in the northern wall.

Touching the false door in the northern wall will trigger the mechanical systems, which will shut and lock the door to the hallway (Area 36) and initiate the crushing wall trap.

Locked Wooden door (magically strengthened): Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 25; Open Lock DC 30.

Crushing Wall Trap: CR 10; no attack roll required (20d6); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25).

The entire twenty-foot eastern wall to this room is powered by a hydraulic system that allows it to crush anything within the room. The wall will advance at a rate of five feet per minute, taking four minutes in total to reach the western wall, when it will retract at the same rate and reset to ready status.

Though the wall fits almost perfectly within the room, there is a half-inch gap between the advancing wall and the surrounding floor and ceiling; any characters may momentarily halt the progress of the wall by jamming a sturdy item in this gap; however the wall will deal **20d6 points of crushing damage** per round to any item in its path. The same damage will be inflicted on any *wall* spells or other magical barriers raised.

The characters must either successfully pick or smash the locked door, or they can also escape by destroying the wall.

Mechanical Wall: 6 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 40.

AREA 40: Fog Trap.

The GM should read the following text to the characters if they have **darkvision** or a light source.

This room is bare except for a five-foot square section of the opposite wall, which is covered in metallic circles.

Pressing any single circle in this pattern releases an *acid fog* trap that lasts 8 rounds.

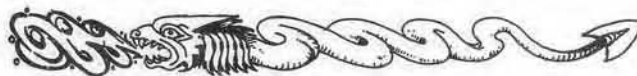
Acid Fog Trap: CR 1; entire room (2d6 points of acid damage per round); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 30).

Pressing any two of the circles at the same time slides the section of wall aside, revealing Area 41.

AREA 41: Secret Potion Cache.

A five-foot section of wall slides to the side to reveal a wooden shelf containing three vials. The first vial is full of a clear liquid, the second is full of a thick purple syrup, while the third contains a dark black fluid.

Even Esias' secret potion cache is not without its dangers. The clear fluid is, in fact, **arsenic** (Fort save DC 13; initial damage 1 Con; secondary damage 1d8 Con). The purple syrup is a *potion of gaseous form*, while the black fluid is actually crude oil. Contained within the oil is a *dark blue ioun stone*, granting **alertness**.





AREA 42: Component Storage.

Three sets of shelves line the walls of this ten-foot square room. The shelves are crammed full of vials, jars, stone containers, and clay pots.

Esias kept here many of the components for his experiments conducted across the hall. Found within the various containers are powdered animal hoof, iron filings, bull's dung, red sand, blue sand, a giant octopus tentacle, a hen's heart, bat guano, sulfur, hummingbird feathers, grasshopper hind legs, charcoal, white fleece, and a lodestone. Also, a wooden box contains three unused sunrods.

AREA 43: Laboratory.

Three metallic columns stand in this large, cold room; two stand five feet apart near the doorway, and the third is set in the center near the far wall. Large desks sit on either side of the third column, covered in papers, equipment, and odd paraphernalia.

This is Esias' laboratory, where most of his arcane research was conducted. Like the majority of his tower, security precautions have been left in place. The two metallic columns by the door are actually summoning chambers that will activate whenever the door to this area is opened. As the door opens, the spells in the alcoves trigger, summoning two ice mephits from their elemental sub-plane. Once the trap has been triggered, it cannot be reset. Characters may be able to bypass this trap with magical means; a *passwall* or *phasedoor* spell could allow access to the room without the door being opened and triggering the trap.

Ice Mephits (2): hp 15, 15.

Due to the cold conditions of the tower, the ice mephits can use their **fast healing** ability.

The papers on the desks are some notes from Esias' research and are extremely fragile and delicate. One of the papers, on top of the pile, clearly reads *Mystery of the Dragon's Graveyard* and has a rough sketch of the western mountains surrounding a small hamlet called Owen's Point. If physically handled in anyway, the papers will be destroyed on a roll of 1-18 on a d20. The only way completely to avoid damaging these papers is through spell use; for instance, perhaps they can be handled with a *levitate* spell and stored in a *bag of holding*. The notes can be studied by mage-chemists, or can be sold for 250 gp to the right person. The other assorted items on the table make up a complete alchemist's lab.

Also on one of the desks, under some papers and revealed with a successful **Search check (DC 15)**, is a set of four keys that can be used to open the doors locked by tumbler mechanisms within the tower. Each key opens the doors to a different level.

The third pillar in the room is, of course, the second floor extension of the Column. Unlike the other floors in the tower, however, there is no tumbler system here. The northern wall of the

column is actually a door that, when opened, allows access to Esias' most prized possessions. The door is sealed with four locks, one on each corner. Each lock (A, B, C, D) is controlled by a tumbler setting on one of the other floors in the tower. Trying to open the door by magical or physical means will prove impossible, if not dangerous. Anyone who attempts to pick the locks, use the keys, or use other, magical means will trigger the circle of cold trap.

Circle of Cold Trap: CR2; 5-ft. radius circle around the column (3d6); Reflex save (DC 15) avoids; Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 40).

Reference the *Tumbler Tracking Chart* to see which locks are already opened when describing the door to the players. Should they set all four tumblers so that the locks open, the door will slide up, revealing the following:

Within the now exposed alcove sits a single pedestal, upon which rests a thick tome. The book is closed, and the leather cover depicts a twisted face.

The most fascinating item in the laboratory – and the item that represents the definite prize for the mage's guild – is the tome placed on the pedestal. Rather, the prize lies inside the book, for it is a *tome of safe storing* that holds Esias' *amulet of wizardly power* and his notes on creating this rare magic item. For full details on these magic items, see Appendix IV: New Items.

The *tome* appears as a thick, solid book, about 16 inches long by 12 inches wide, and four inches deep. The cover depicts a twisted face with an odd keyhole set within its mouth. When handled, the face on the tome will animate and utter the following words: "*I'll give you this warning, this once for free; to open the tome, you must feed me the key. Until that time, I can only attack you. To find the key, search within the statue.*" The face will then count backwards from three. Anyone touching the *tome* after it reaches zero will take **1d8 points of electrical damage per round** as long as contact is maintained.

The only way to open this *tome* is to insert the proper key into the keyhole in the cover's mouth. The key is located inside one of the gargoyles from Area 47 and can be attained as described there.

Once unlocked, the cover opens to reveal that the *tome* is actually a small box, the false pages comprising three solid sides. Within this box lies the *amulet of wizardly power* and the notes on its creation. This is the true prize desired by the Academy – as well as the DelSardo family. Having retrieved it, the characters will probably consider their mission complete and head for home.

AREA 44: Ogre's Note and Stairs.

A spiral staircase here leads up to Area 33 on the second floor. This large room is empty; however, a **Search check (DC 20)** will reveal a fragment of parchment. This note was accidentally dropped by the ogre Thromdar during one of his final days: it is his personal attempt at figuring out the words of Esias and the tumbler settings.

Give the players Handout 4: Lost Note.





AREA 45: Weapon Check.

Two large tables fill this curved room. The tables are scarred and scratched, but are unburdened now.

Whenever Esias brought his ogre minions into the tower, he instructed them to place their weapons on the tables located here before proceeding further up the tower. The ogres, who tolerated Esias' treatment of them in exchange for shelter and promised power, made great shows of enthusiastically "placing" their weapons here – usually with the blades buried deep in the wood.

AREA 46: Unused Sitting Room.

A fireplace sits in an alcove, while four chairs – perhaps comfortable years ago – circle a small, low table.

Another room where Esias planned to converse with guests, this room was never used by the wizard. It says much about the madman's mind that, even with a room designed to be comfortable and inviting, he took great care to create an overly long entry hall to prevent flank attacks and minimize the effect of numerous opponents.

AREA 47: Statue Room.

Six stone statues stand in this rectangular room, each resembling a hideous creature with fangs, claws, and wings.

Two of the statues are actually gargoyles. One of the gargoyles holds, within its body, the key needed to open the *tome of safe storing* from Area 43. The only way to retrieve the key is to slay the gargoyle and make a successful **Search check** (DC 18).

Gargoyle (2): hp 40, 38.

The gargoyles will use their **freeze** ability to remain motionless to pass themselves off as statues and then strike when the characters are unsuspecting. Most likely, one of the gargoyles will attack, drawing attention away from the other, who can then attack from

behind or flank a character.

AREA 48: Entryway.

Two enormous double doors are forced from their hinges here, though each lies suspended upright in a massive ice outcropping within the doorway. A circular mosaic pattern of dark tiles fills the floor, and two doors opposite the ice lead out of the room.

This was the main foyer for the tower. The floor is well worn by ogre feet, but there is little of interest in this room.

AREA 49: Twisting Hallway.

Designed to force invaders to proceed single- or double-file, this twisting hallway is another of Esias' overcautious designs. A loose stone (**Search DC 25**) opposite the door to Area 49 opens a secret doorway to Area 50, allowing Esias' ogre warriors to pursue invaders into this hallway from the main foyer and then split up to attack from two points.

AREA 50: Flanking Hallway.

The secret door in Area 49 can only be opened from the external side; anyone entering this hallway from Area 53 will find only a dead end.

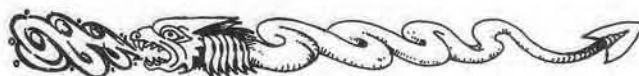
AREA 51: Needle Trap.

Opening the door to either of these two rooms activates a firing mechanism that launches a hail of needles at the doorway.

Needle Trap: CR 1; +20 ranged (2d4); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22).

AREA 52: Spare Water.

Two large kegs sit in this room. These were filled by water, melted from the ice and used by Esias in the event of a siege. Currently, the half-full kegs have frozen solid. Accidentally dropped within the water, and now frozen within the ice, is a pair of *goggles of minute seeing*. The ogre who dropped them had discovered them





with some of Esias' supplies used during the construction of the tower; the mage had returned to supervise before the ogre could retrieve them, so they were left and forgotten.

AREA 54: First Floor Tumbler.

In the center of this square room stands a five-foot wide metallic post that stretches from floor to ceiling. In the center of the post rests a large dial or wheel, divided evenly into four sections, each marked with a simple symbol: circle, square, star, triangle. An arrow etched into the post points to the wheel.

Show the players Handout 2: Column Illustration.

This tumbler is currently set to the STAR symbol.

This room is identical to the other tumbler rooms throughout the tower. Turning the tumbler to a symbol has the effect listed on the chart below. A **Strength check (DC 15)** is needed to spin the tumbler. Any changes to the setting of this tumbler should be noted on the *Tumbler Tracking Chart*.

First Floor Tumbler Settings

CIRCLE: Safe mode; unlocks the door in Area 32 on the second floor.

STAR: Low alert mode; unlocks the door in Area 32, but activates mechanical traps on the second floor.

SQUARE: Safe mode; unlocks the door in Area 32 and opens Lock A in the secret door in Area 43.

TRIANGLE: High alert mode; locks the door in Area 32 and activates mechanical traps on the second floor.

CONCLUSION

Once the characters recover the *amulet*, they must return to the top floor and exit through the exposed window. If not deactivated, most of the mechanical traps will still function, though the ice mephit summoning alcoves (Area 43) have been discharged. If the characters have not dealt with the mercenaries, Lannora and her crew will attempt to attack and murder the characters before they reach the exit. They will patiently wait until the circumstances are ripe for victory, possibly holding out until the characters can be pushed into the sea from the iceberg's slippery summit.

If the characters took more than three days, they will discover that the iceberg now sits very low in the water; the top of the tower is nearly at the waterline, and the city of Varloon is no longer visible on the horizon. The characters may end up firing their *flare wand* several times before a Kem's ship rescues them three hours later.

If the characters recovered the *amulet* within a three day period and successfully dealt with all obstacles presented, perhaps the final drama can be heightened by reducing the structure of the ice to **100 hit points** or fewer, causing the characters to race to the top even as the tower begins to slip from its place within the iceberg. Leaping at the last minute through the window in a narrow escape is surely the perfect ending to a bold adventure.

When the characters return to Varloon, they can easily exchange the *amulet* for their agreed upon reward.

ADVENTURE AFTERMATH

Failure

Several outcomes could be considered unsuccessful. The characters may never discover the secret laboratory or never learn of the combination to enter. The characters may think that the spellbooks in Area 29 are all that remain of Esias' notes and never recover the *amulet*. Alternatively, the mercenaries employed by the DelSardo family may recover the *amulet* instead of the characters. In this case, the notorious crime family would quickly gain the upper hand in their dealings with the Academy, and the DelSardo underworld organization would grow in size and power.

The characters may also be defeated by the odd environment that surrounds the tower. Certainly the characters can float away beyond rescue, but they also face the horrible threat of being trapped in the tower as it rapidly sinks to the bottom of the ocean.

Success

If the characters manage to deliver the *amulet* to Kem Riflar, then all members of the Academy will be most grateful. In addition to receiving the remainder of the agreed upon payment, the Academy may extend special privileges to the party – a wizard in the group may access rare texts and spells, another member may request magical help for a quest, a cleric may be granted certain lore that relates to a rare religious item. Success does have its price, however, and defeating the mercenaries hired by the DelSardo family will not go unnoticed. Earning the enmity of the powerful crime syndicate could result in several follow-up adventures.

Should the characters retrieve the *tome of safe storing* but fail to find the key that unlocks it, the tome will be safely delivered to the Academy's headquarters where the head sages are confident that it will eventually be opened.

If the characters find the *amulet* but refuse to turn it over to Kem Riflar and the Academy, then Kem will have no choice but to put out the word that the characters have double-crossed the powerful guild. Soon, the party will learn what it is like to have a large bounty placed on them, as every common cutthroat and expert bounty hunter tracks them relentlessly. Eventually, powerful wizards from the Academy itself will seek out the characters, attempting to recover the *amulet* and punish the characters for their betrayal.

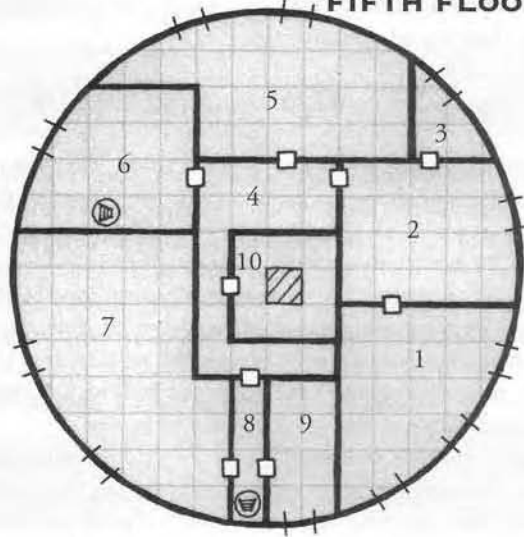
AWARDING EXPERIENCE

The inside cover of this adventure features a Challenge Table, listing all encounters and their Challenge Ratings and Encounter Levels. Cross-reference these numbers with the average party level to determine experience gained from overcoming encounters. In addition, the GM may wish to grant story awards as he or she sees fit. Certainly, awards should be given for solving the lock combination, or disarming or discovering any traps before they could be triggered.

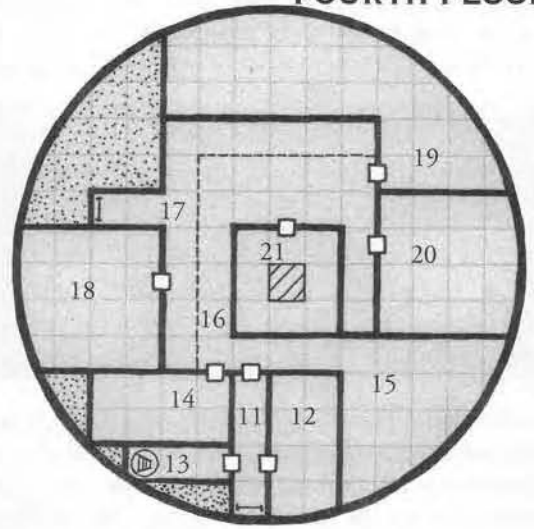


THE CRYSTAL TOWER

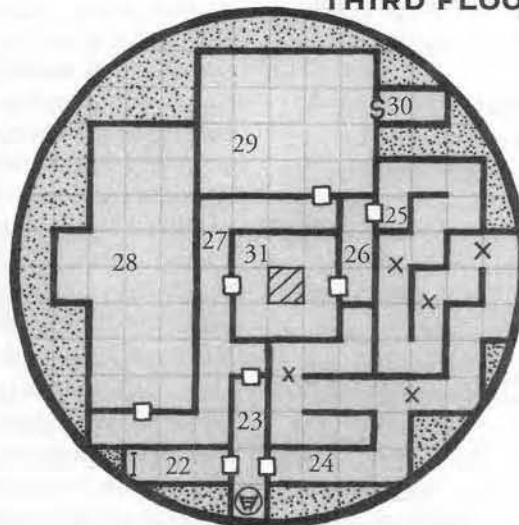
FIFTH FLOOR



FOURTH FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

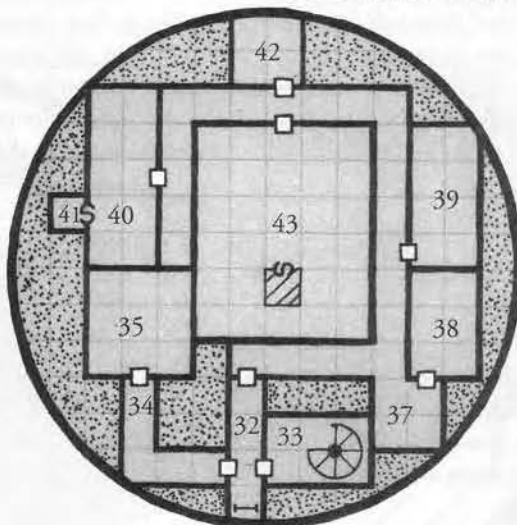


KEY

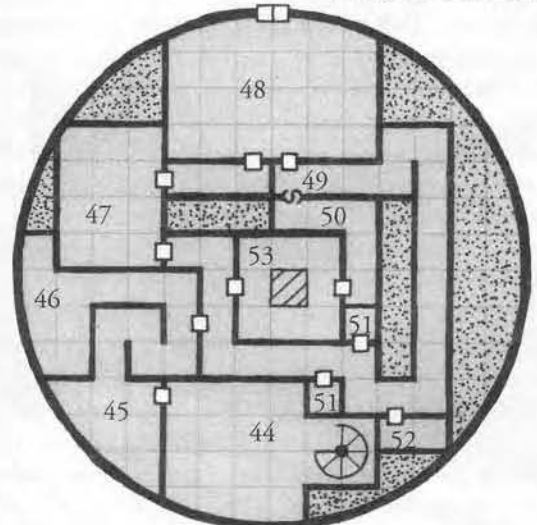
(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)

-  COLUMN
-  DOOR
-  LADDER DOWN
-  LADDER UP
-  SECRET DOOR
-  STAIRCASE
-  WINDOW

SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR





APPENDIX I: MONSTER DESCRIPTIONS

Bugbears

CR 2; Medium-Size Goblinoid (7 ft. tall); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, morningstar), +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3.

Feat: Alertness.

Possessions: studded leather armor, morningstar, 4 javelins.



Gargoyle

CR 4; Medium Magical Beast (Earth); HD 4d10+16; 38 hp; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 45 ft., fly 75 ft. (average); AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +6/+6/+4/+4 (1d4/1d4, claws; 1d6, bite; 1d6, gore); SQ Damage Reduction 15/+1, freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +9 (+17 if concealed against worked stone), Listen +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite, gore).

SQ-Freeze (Ex): A gargoyle can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. An observer must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice the gargoyle is really alive.



Gnoll

CR 1; Medium Humanoid (Gnoll); HD 2d8+2; 11 hp; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail); AC 17 (+1 natural, +4 scale, +2 large shield); Atk +3 melee (1d8+2, bartleaxe); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3.

Feat: Power Attack.

Possessions: Scale mail, large shield, bartleaxe.



Ice mephits

CR 3; Small Outsider (Air, Cold) (3 ft. tall); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18; Atk +4/+4 melee (1d3, claws; +2 cold); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, summon mephit; SQ Cold subtype, fast healing 2, damage reduction 5/+1; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +6, Hide +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

SA-Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of ice shards, 10 feet; damage 1d4, Reflex half DC 12. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by frostbitten skin and frozen eyes unless they are immune to or protected from cold. This imposes a -4 morale penalty to AC and a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls for 3 rounds.

SA-Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour-- *magic missile* as the spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer; 1/day-- *chill metal* as the spell cast by a 6th-level sorcerer.

SA-Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, all mephits can summon other mephits much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but they have only a 25% chance



of success to summon one mephit of the same type. Roll d%: on a failure, no creature answers the summons. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour.

SQ-Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity; double damage from fire except on a successful save.

SQ-Fast Healing (Ex): An ice mephit heals only if it is touching a piece of ice of at least Tiny size or if the ambient temperature is freezing or below.

Polar Bear

CR 4; Large Animal (8 ft. tall); HD 8d8+32; hp 68; Init +1; Spd 40 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +13/+13 melee (1d8+8, claws), +8 melee (2d8+4, bite); Face 5 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Improved grab; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide -2/+10 in snowy areas, Listen +4, Spot +7.



Water Elemental, Large

CR 5; Large Elemental (Water); HD 8d8+32; hp 68; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20; Atk +10/+5 melee (2d8+7, slam); SA Water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack.

SA-Water Mastery (Ex): A water elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and its opponent touch water. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

SA-Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as dispel magic cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

SA-Vortex (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed. The vortex is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 30 feet wide at the top, and 10 feet or more tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 feet.

SQ-Elemental (Ex): Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.



Water Elemental, Medium

CR 3; Medium-Size Elemental (Water); HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 19; Atk +6 melee (1d8+4, slam); SA Water mastery, drench, vortex. SQ Elemental; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7.

Feat: Power Attack.

SA-Water Mastery (Ex): A water elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and its opponent touch water. If the opponent or elemental is landbound,





the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

SA—Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as dispel magic cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

SA—Vortex (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed. The vortex is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 30 feet wide at the top, and 10 feet or more tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 feet.

SQ—Elemental (Ex): Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

APPENDIX II: ICE GATE NPCs

Gorak, male bugbear Br3

CR 5; Medium-Size Goblinoid (7 ft. tall); HD 3d12 + 3d8 + 18; hp 60; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5, morningstar), +8 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., rage, fast movement, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Move Silently +9, Wilderness Lore +1.

Feats: Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: studded leather armor, morningstar, 4 javelins.



Siglacia, female adult white dragon

CR 9; Large Adult Dragon (cold subtype); HD 18d12+72; hp 189; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; AC 26; Atk +23/+18/+18/+18/+18/+18 melee (2d6+6 bite, 1d8+3 claw, 1d8+3 claw, 1d6+3 wing, 1d6+3 wing, 1d8+9 tail slap); Face 5 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, spells; SQ Cold subtype, immunities, blindsight, keen senses, damage reduction 5/+1, icewalking, fog cloud, frightful presence, gust of wind, spell resistance 18; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +11; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Craft (ice sculptures) +18, Hide +18, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Listen +18, Move Silently +8, Spot +18, Search +18.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability.

Spells Known (5/3 per day): 0 — *dancing lights, detect magic, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st — *color spray, reduce*.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): Siglacia can breathe a cone of cold 40 feet long and 40 feet wide by 40 feet high that does 6d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 23 for half damage).

SQ—Icewalking (Ex): Siglacia can walk on ice walls or ceilings as if she constantly was under the effect of a spider climb spell.

SQ—Fog Cloud (Sp): Usable 3/day, as per the spell cast by a 6th-level sorcerer.

SQ—Frightful Presence (Ex): Creatures within a 180-ft. radius of Siglacia are affected by this ability if they have fewer than 18 HD. Make a Will save (DC 19): creatures with 4 or fewer HD who fail are panicked (must flee, -2 on saves, 50% drop held items) for 4d6 rounds, while those with 5 or more HD are shaken (-2 on



attacks, checks, saves) for 4d6 rounds.

SQ—Gust of Wind (Sp): Usable 3/day, as per spell cast by a 6th-level sorcerer.

SQ—Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity, double damage from fire except on a successful save.

SQ—Immunities (Ex): All dragons are immune to sleep and paralysis effects. Each variety of dragon is immune to one or two additional forms of attack no matter what its age, as listed in its description.

SQ—Blindsight (Ex): A dragon can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) with a range of 30 feet x the dragon's age category.

SQ—Keen Senses (Ex): A dragon sees four times as well a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision with a range of 100 feet multiplied by the dragon's age category.

Siglacia is an ancient white dragon, though her imprisonment has kept her from physically aging over the years. She is much smarter than the typical white dragon and lacks the ability to burrow through ice or dirt. Over time, white dragons became more and more feral as their larger cousins drove them to the least desirable, least inhabited regions of the world. Their average intelligence dropped, and they developed the ability to burrow. Ironically, a modern white dragon, though far less clever and refined than Siglacia, would find escaping from her prison a trivial task!

Simtak the Acolyte, male bugbear Clr1

CR 4; Medium-Size Goblinoid (7 ft. tall); HD 4d8+4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, morningstar); SA Turn undead; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., spells; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +4, Concentration +1, Diplomacy +1, Healing +2, Hide +4, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Skill Focus: Knowledge (religion).

Spells (3/2+1): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, light*; 1st — *bane, cause fear, obscuring mist*.

Domains: Chaos, Water.



Treffek, male bugbear Brd4

CR 6; Medium-Size Goblinoid (7 ft. tall); HD 3d8+4d6+14; hp 50; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3, morningstar), +9 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); SQ Bardic music, bardic knowledge, darkvision 60 ft., spells; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +5, Diplomacy +5, Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +10, Perform +9, Sense Motive +3, Spot +1, Tumble +7.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot.

Spells known (6/3/2): 0 — *dancing lights, daze, flare, ghost sound, mend, prestidigitator*; 1st — *charm person, cure light wounds, mage armor*; 2nd — *shatter, Tasha's hideous laughter*.

SQ—Bardic Music (Su): Inspire Confidence, Fascinate, Countersong, Inspire Courage, total of four times per day.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, morningstar, 3 javelins, *horn of blasting*.





Urlgorz, male bugbear Clr5

CR 7; Medium-Size Goblinoid (7 ft. tall); HD 8d8+8; hp 56; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, morningstar); SA Turn undead; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., spells; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +4, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +4, Healing +6, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Scry +6, Spot +4.

Feats: Alertness, Power Attack, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Scry).

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1): 0 – *cure minor wounds* (x2), *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*; 1st – *bane*, *cause fear*, *cure light wounds*, *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary*; 2nd – *bull's strength*, *fog cloud*, *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*; 3rd – *bestow curse*, *magic circle against law*, *summon monster III*.

Possessions: Morningstar, studded leather armor, dagger, ring of thought sending.

Domains: Chaos, Water.



APPENDIX III: CRYSTAL TOWER NPCs

Kem Riflar, male human, Rog2/Wiz4 (Transmuter)

CR 6; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in.); HD 2d6 + 4d4 + 6; 30 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +3 (1d6, club) or +3 (1d4, dagger); SQ Light armor proficiency, sneak attack +1d6, evasion, traps, scribe scrolls, spells; AL LG; Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Alchemy +13, Bluff +8, Concentration +5, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +11, Innuendo +4, Knowledge (Arcana) +6, Listen +4, Profession (Apothecary) +4, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +5.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Halfling.

Feats: Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus: Alchemy, Spell Penetration.

Spells (4+1/4+1/3+1 per day): 0 – *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*; 1st – *charm person* x2, *identify*, *message*, *sleep*; 2nd – *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *whispering wind*.

Possessions: club, dagger, *potion of charisma*, *potion of clairaudience*, *potion of detect thoughts*, *potion of glibness*, *potion of love*, *potion of neutralize poison*, *potion of sneaking*.

Background: Kem Riflar was a student of some talent at the prestigious Academy of the Kathendas Enclaves when he received his first assignment from the headmasters of the organization. After several months training, Kem was sent to the distant port city of Varloon, where he would act as the Academy's eyes and ears in the bustling city. Using his natural skill as an alchemist and potion brewer, Kem worked his way into a local apothecary and has earned a reputation as a skilled alchemist and fair merchant. While Kem enjoys his ties to the Academy and performs his duties for them to the best of his considerable abilities, he has grown to discover that his true love is actually working in his brew-room, creating potions and elixirs for customers and carving out a normal life for himself.

Goals: Though his instructions are to initiate the recovery of Esias' lost knowledge, including the rumored *amulet of wizardly power*, Kem's primary consideration is actually the safety of the residents of Varloon, the city that he has grown fond of. He is still loyal to his superiors at the Academy, but no longer truly considers him-



self a spy – he feels that he is more like a friendly chemist who gossips a bit too much and passes important information on to those who deal with larger, more important matters. So, while Kem is interested in pleasing the Academy and completing the assignment, he is motivated more by his desire to protect the community from the exposed madman's tower than by his loyalty to the powerful wizards.

Methods: Kem will use all of his magical means to gain the upper hand in negotiating with the characters. Before his initial conversation with them, he will consume *potions of charisma* and *glibness*, and possibly a *potion of detect thoughts*, allowing him to gain the confidence and co-operation of the characters. If his negotiations are proceeding poorly, he may discretely cast *charm person* to gain an ally in the party.

Mannerisms: Always smiling and earnest, Kem has a firm handshake and looks people square in the eye. His humor is self-deprecating, and he exhibits knowledge of and loyalty to his customers, neighbors and friends.

Lannora Resmin, female half-elf, Rgr4/Sor3

CR 7; Medium Humanoid (5 ft.); HD 4d10 + 3d4; 42 hp; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30ft.; AC 18 (+4 armor, +4 Dex); Atk +8/+8 (1d6+1/1d6, two masterwork short swords) or +10 (1d6+1, masterwork short sword); SQ Elf racial traits, Track, Favored Enemy, Two-weapon fighting, spells; AL NE; Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +3, Listen +13, Move Silently +15, Ride +6, Search +10, Spot +8, Wilderness Lore +4

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Track, Weapon Finesse (short sword).

SQ-Favored Enemy: Elves. +1 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Wilderness Lore check against elves, as well as a +1 bonus to damage against elves.

Spells known (6/6 per day): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *light*; 1st – *chill touch*, *magic missile*, *spider climb*.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor of cold resistance, ring of feather falling, *potion of heroism*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, twin masterwork short swords, cloak.

Background: Lannora was the daughter of an elven border-warden and a human herbalist living in the border town of Weston in western Kalendia. At a young age, she fell in with a bad crowd and followed along with the group's desire to claim power from the ruling Baron. When a kidnapping plot backfired, the group was forced to split up and flee the area. Lannora, using the wilderness skills taught to her by her father, hid for two years in the forest region of the West Wood. While in hiding, Lannora met a young thief named Koli, also on the run from the authorities, who told her about the DelSardo crime family and its illegal operations in Kalendia. She taught him much of her woodland lore, and in return Koli found her a place within the criminal organization. Lannora quickly earned herself a reputation for her abilities and has become a key operative for the DelSardo family.

Goals: Lannora desires only to complete her mission and collect her payment. She is loyal to the DelSardo family, as long as they continue to pay her, but her loyalty is to herself above all. Though she enjoys the company of her comrades, Ilgen and Herod are first and foremost tools to be used by her to complete her mission. She will sacrifice anything and anybody, except herself, to complete her mission and return to her employers.

Methods: Lannora prefers stealth to open combat and uses her spells to inflict as much damage and chaos upon an opponent before having to engage in melee. She is strategic, preferring to sneak attack, but when engaging hand-to-hand she





remains collected and focuses her attention completely on her targets. She is a graceful and deadly master of the shortsword and often uses her twin masterwork weapons with a devastating two-weapon attack. If things are going badly for her, she will retreat, regroup, and continue to weaken her opponents through sneak attacks and guerrilla tactics.

Mannerisms: Silent and calm, Lannora prefers to keep herself focused at all times. She rarely smiles, though often shares a jest at another's expense. She rarely blinks when engaged in conversation or combat, and always appears aware of every detail of her surroundings. She prefers the company of other half-breeds or outcasts, and especially detests elves, whom she considers weak and ill-focused.

Ilgen Jaspur, male halfling, Rog8

CR 8; Medium Humanoid (3 ft. 2in.); HD 8d6+16; 50 hp; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30ft.; AC 21 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size, +3 ring); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+1 [x2], masterwork shortsword) or +11/+6 ranged (1d6+1 [x2], composite shortbow); SQ halfling racial traits, sneak attack +4d6, evasion, uncanny dodge, traps; AL CN; Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills: Balance +15, Climb +12, Disable Device +13, Escape Artist +15, Hide +19, Move Silently +17, Open Lock +15, Search +13, Spot +12, Tumble +15.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: +3 ring of protection, stone salve (1 dose), potion of swimming, mighty composite shortbow (+1), masterwork shortsword, studded leather armor, cold weather clothes, fur cape.



Background: Ilgen was a troublemaker at a young age, growing up poor in the countryside of Tendaria. An adept thief, Ilgen found that he was able to live on stolen food and supplies, and traveled from town to town, liberating any items that struck his fancy. Working as a cutpurse in the city of Gault, Ilgen came to the attention of the heads of the criminal underworld there, who began hiring him to infiltrate warehouses and locked offices. Through his contacts, Ilgen met Lannora, who has since led him on many prosperous assignments.

Goals: While Ilgen shares Lannora's desire to complete the mission and collect their payment, he is motivated by the sheer joy of outwitting his opponent – in this case, a mad wizard dead for more than a century. Ilgen enjoys the challenge of the work, and is a thrill-seeker at heart.

Methods: The sharpshooter prefers to engage foes out of melee range, where he can use his expertise with his bow and avoid true physical harm. When pressed, he is competent with his shortsword, and will use sneak attacks and hit-and-run tactics as much as possible.

Mannerisms: Ilgen is never happier than when his life is in danger. He greets sword points with smiles and is quick with witty rejoinders and bravado. He is endlessly energetic, if a little hyperactive, and takes on all challenges.

Herod Vergos, male half-orc, Ftr5

CR 5; Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 5in.); HD 5d10+10; 52 hp; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30ft.; AC 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex); Atk +10 melee (1d8+8 +1d6 electricity, longsword); SQ orc blood; AL LE; Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 9.



Skills: Climb +7, jump +12.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus: Longsword, Weapon Specialization: Longsword.

Possessions: +2 longsword of shocking (+1d6 electricity damage), potion of cure serious wounds, ring of mind shielding, chain shirt, cold weather clothes, fur cape.

Background: Herod served as a scout in the Himrak army, an orcish military movement uniting several tribes of orcs under one banner. After learning the basics of warfare, Herod began to hire himself out as a mercenary, protecting caravans and guarding strongholds. Herod met Lannora and Ilgen when they attempted to infiltrate a rich merchant's cottage that he was guarding. Lannora offered to triple his rate if he helped them, and the half-orc agreed. His loyalty is to Lannora, as long as she always provides the biggest payoff.

Goals: Herod treats everything as a job; as long as he gets paid, he will continue to follow Lannora's instructions. Herod knows that he is involved primarily as muscle – he is not expecting any combat opportunities during this assignment, and therefore feels disappointed. He will be keen to fight, should the opportunity present itself.

Methods: Herod has always been the biggest and strongest, and his skill with a longsword allows him to dominate any melee encounter he enters. He prefers a straight fight, where he gives his all, hoping to overwhelm his opponents with his muscle and skill. His tactics range from "attack the biggest opponent" to "attack the second biggest opponent."

Mannerisms: Herod is humorless and gruff. He is motivated by greed and his desire to fight. He is a bully by nature, and tolerates Ilgen only because of his proven skill. In combat, Herod mutters constantly to his sword, as if it were alive.

APPENDIX IV: NEW ITEMS

Amulet of Wizardly Power

This arcane item allows a wizard to increase the power and effects of his or her arcane spells. When wearing the amulet, a wizard gains the feat Empower Spell as well as 10 bonus spell slots that can only be spent empowering spells already known; these bonus slots cannot be used to memorize further spells.

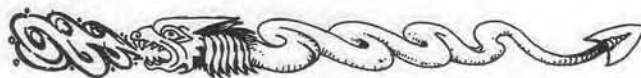
Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, 10th-level arcane spellcaster; **Market Price:** 11,000 gp; **Weight:** 1 lb.



Ring of Thought Sending

This ring allows the wearer to initiate a psychic conversation with one other person within his line of sight. The target must willingly accept the conversation. If he refuses, the ring has no effect. The user and the target both understand each other's thoughts, despite any language barriers that may exist between the two. The ring does not give the wearer the ability to read minds. The mental conversation works exactly like a spoken one, but neither party can read each other's thoughts or memories.

Caster Level: 12th; **Prerequisites:** Forge Ring, comprehend languages, Rary's telepathic bond; **Market Price:** 3,500 gp.





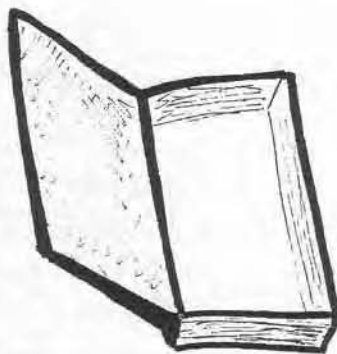
Tome of Safe Storing

The tome appears as a thick, solid book, about 16 inches high by 12 inches wide, and four inches deep. The cover depicts a twisted face, with an odd sort-of keyhole set within its mouth. The only way to open this tome is to insert the proper key into the keyhole in the cover's mouth; no other means, either magical or mechanical, can open the tome. Once unlocked, the cover opens to reveal that the tome is actually a small box; the false pages actually comprise three solid sides. Within this box, any item of less than 20 pounds is protected by its enchantments.

If someone tries to open the book without using the proper key, the face on the cover will animate, issuing a warning about the potential dangers of illicit tampering. If the attempt is continued, the tome will inflict 1d8 points of electrical damage per round as long as contact is maintained.

Esias, fearing that he would one day forget where he had stored his key, programmed his tome to recite a riddle that would guide him to it.

Caster Level: 5th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, arcane lock, magic mouth, shocking grasp; Market Price: 2,000 gp; Weight: 5 lb.



APPENDIX V: LEGAL TEXT

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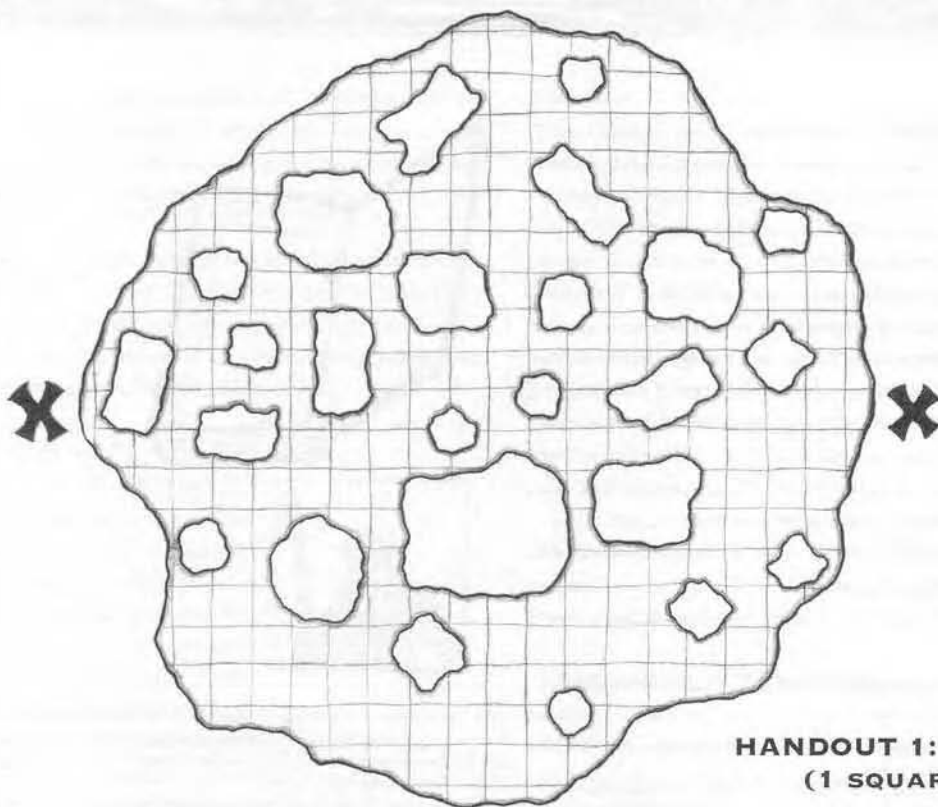
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PLAYER HANDOUTS



HANDOUT 1: TESTING PLACE
(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)

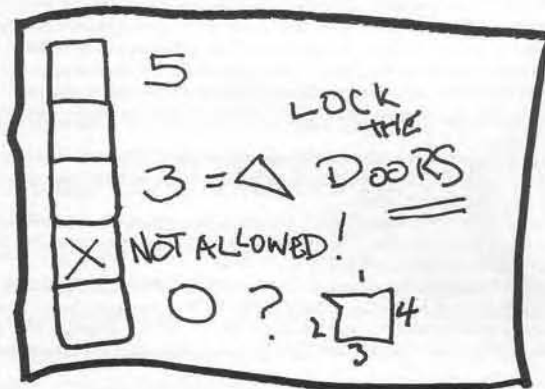
HANDOUT 2: COLUMN ILLUSTRATION



Match the number of the floor for the Safe Zone.
Dial down one for Low Alert.
Dial up one for High Alert.

The remaining symbol is to be used only by myself.
Do NOT lose this note!

HANDOUT 3: THE WIZARD'S NOTE



HANDOUT 4: LOST NOTE

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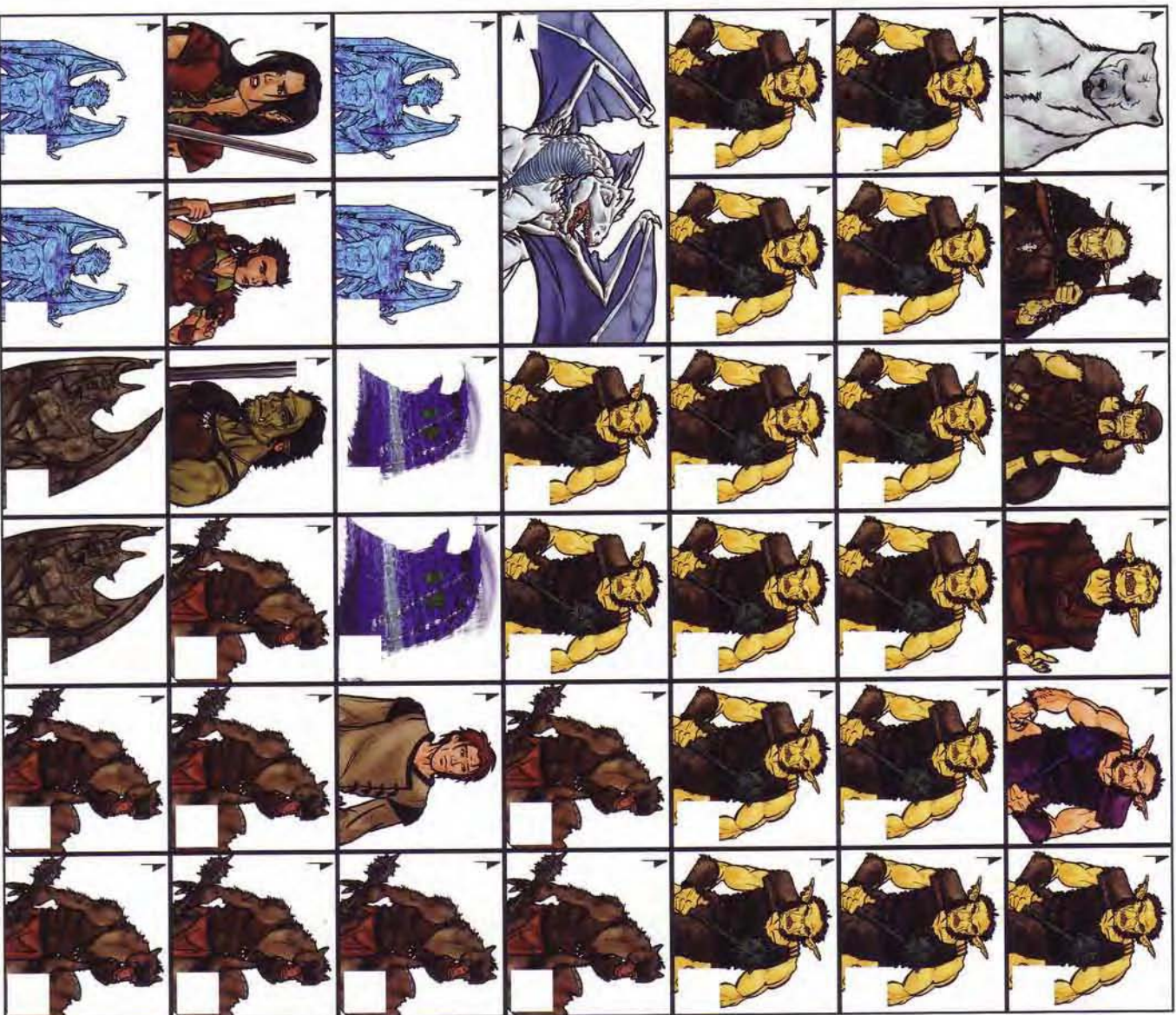
USING COUNTERS

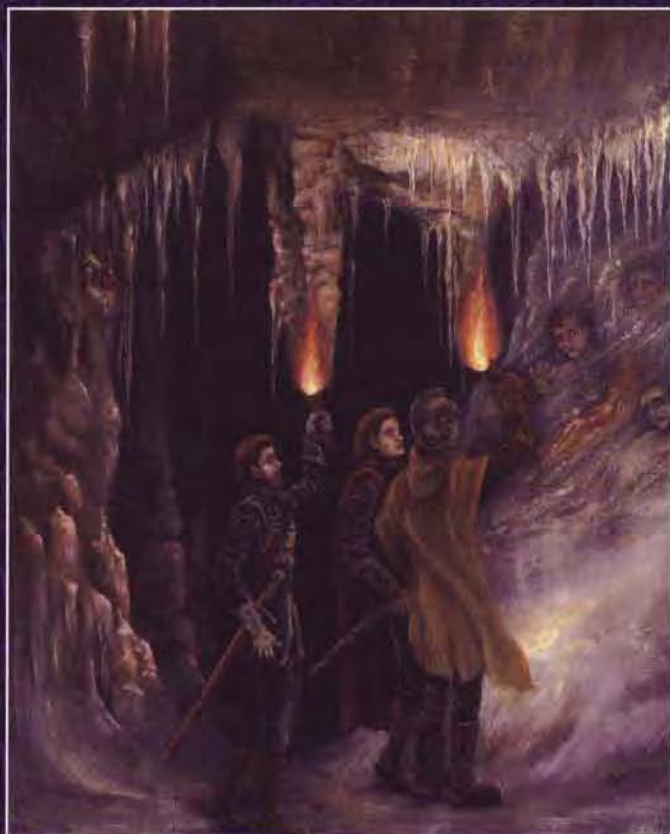
Nature's Fury comes with a set of colored counters to aid in tabletop conflict resolution. These counters are based on a 1-inch equals 5-foot scale. Therefore, medium-sized creatures occupy a standard one-inch square counter. Before beginning play, carefully remove this page and cut apart the counters with an x-acto knife or scissors.

The counters come in two types: characters and monsters. Character counters provide a blank space at the bottom for the character's name. For game purposes, the arrow in the top left corner indicates the direction that the character is facing. Monster counters have a small arrow in the top left corner indicating direction, as well as a blank square in the bottom right, allowing the GM to assign numbers to multiple monsters of the same type. For example, the party may encounter four bugbears, which would be numbered 1 to 4. The GM can then keep track of the individual hit points and actions according to which particular bugbear is involved in the resulting combat.

Monster counters are not labeled with monster type, as many characters may encounter creatures for the first time and out-of-character knowledge of the monster may prove to be an unfair advantage. The GM should use this to his or her advantage. For instance, rather than saying, "You encounter four bugbears," the GM might say, "You encounter four large goblinoids," then place the appropriate counters on your battle grid for the players to see the picture.

When you play with a Fiery Dragon adventure, you bring more to the table!





Nature's Fury

Cold winds and harsh climates can be just as deadly as swords and spells.

Nature's Fury contains two complete d20 adventure scenarios, each featuring an icy challenge for a party of four characters. These adventures are designed to fit easily into an ongoing campaign, and wherever possible the Game Master is given options on modifying and replacing parts of the background with elements of his or her own game world.

Nature's Fury contains full color cardstock counters fully compatible with the d20 system and each creature's size and facing stats.

Swords Through the Ice Gate by Mike Mearls. An adventure for four 6th-level characters.

The hamlet of Owen's Point sits quietly under three inches of snow. The air has a sharp cold in it, the kind that penetrates even the thickest furs like frozen daggers driven by the howling winds. If today were early winter, those of Owen's Point would just shake their heads and comment that winters are nothing like they used to be, back in the day.

Yet today is but a week past midsummer, and the people of Owen's Point are no longer around to comment on the weather.

The Crystal Tower by James Bell. An adventure for four 5th-level characters.

The spring comes early this year. After a bountiful harvest season, winter was unusually short and warm, especially so in the coastal city of Varloon. The trading galleys from the Northlands now follow the warm winds down along the coast, their holds full of rich furs and pelts, rare ores, and other precious materials valued by the merchants and elite of Varloon.

Another item of value, rare and mysterious, has made the journey along the coast and now waits beyond the harbor of Varloon. Few know the truth about this item and fewer still own the resources to attain it. Who will be the ones to retrieve the amulet of wizardly power from the Crystal Tower?

Both of these adventures feature full color cardstock counters by Claudio Pozas.

