

ICE ROAD TRACKERS

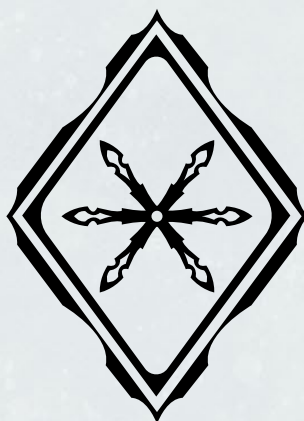
A Rime of the Frostmaiden Adventure

A trek toward Icewind Dale turns deadly when an avalanche blocks the heroes' passage through the Spine of the World.

Rescued by a menagerie of strange creatures, the heroes are asked to return the favor in exchange for answers about what's happening in the cold and frozen North.

An introductory adventure comprising four 1-hour episodes.

Optimized for 1st-level characters.



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

This adventure is designed for three to seven characters, levels 1 and 2, and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. Characters outside this level range can't participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in Icewind Dale, north of the Spine of the World.

BACKGROUND

ICEWIND DALE has been subsumed in permanent darkness, and the citizens of TEN-TOWNS struggle to survive what they're calling the EVERLASTING RIME. This curse, leveled by the goddess AURIL, brings even greater hardship than usual to the denizens of the frozen lands of the North.



An awakened walrus called MOTHER TUSK has brought a group of animals to the safety of the SPINE OF THE WORLD, hoping to protect them from being used by an evil druid to wreak further havoc on the civilized areas of Icewind Dale. Mother Tusk fights against civilization, nature, and otherworldly forces to keep her family safe, and she requests the heroes' help to stem the threats against everyone.

OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over six parts: a prologue, four 1-hour episodes, and a conclusion. Played individually, each episode should be playable in an hour, and the entire adventure should be playable in approximately 4 hours.

Characters who haven't yet completed an episode begin with the prologue. Characters who've completed all the episodes, or characters who don't plan to play any more episodes, experience the conclusion at the end of the episode they're playing.

Prologue—Avalanche. An avalanche threatens the characters, but they're led to safety by an odd muskrat. They then meet Mother Tusk who briefs them on four tasks she'd like them to undertake in return for saving their lives during the avalanche.

Unsure Footing. Mother Tusk asks the characters to rescue one of her children, an awakened otter named Spritzel, who's been spying on Easthaven. The characters quickly find Spritzel, and some of his otter friends, fleeing from a pack of wolves.

Cold Welcome. A group of Reghed Wolf Tribe nomads have moved into the forest near Dougan's Hole, causing trouble for Mother Tusk's family. Seeking a peaceful resolution, Mother Tusk asks the characters to navigate the trapped territory of these nomads and parley with them.

Chilled Drinks. A nearby hot spring provides Mother Tusk's family with access to food and potable water. It's inexplicably frozen over, and Mother Tusk asks the characters to investigate. The hot spring was clogged and corrupted by the body of an explorer carrying pieces of chardalyn. A wandering clan of gnolls found the body and the chardalyn, and quickly fell prey to its powers.

Warm Bodies. A cave system south of Bryn Shander, which Mother Tusk's family uses as a shelter, has been emitting terrifying noises, and she asks the characters to investigate. The characters must navigate the passages of an ancient orcish burial site, where the frozen dead have been awakened.

Conclusion—Into the Blizzard. When the adventurers are ready to move on, they're free to travel into Icewind Dale proper to continue their adventures.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Adventure Hook 1. The characters are traveling from the Sword Coast into Icewind Dale seeking treasure and adventure.

Adventure Hook 2. The characters each have a secret they're hiding from the world and each other, one which drives them into the frozen North.

PROLOGUE—AVALANCHE

Estimated Duration: 5 minutes

IN THIS INTRODUCTION, THE CHARACTERS' PATH INTO Icewind Dale is blocked by an avalanche as they navigate a pass through the Spine of the World. They're rescued by a curious animal, which leads to a meeting with Mother Tusk, leader of a strange menagerie of creatures.

When you're ready to begin, read:

As snow and rocks crash down the mountainsides either side of you, you can't help but wonder if this is how everything ends for you. What brought you here, navigating this dangerous mountain pass, heading north into the frozen lands of Icewind Dale? An opportunity for wealth and power? A dark secret you're trying to escape? A fresh start? An old connection?

Whatever brought you here, it seems the rumors might be true. Strange, weather-related phenomena are shutting down travel through the Spine of the World mountain range. Several passes have been blocked, and you thought this one might be clear. And it was, until now.

As certain death descends swiftly toward you, movement at the corner of your eye draws your attention. A snowy-white muskrat gestures frantically, its clawed paws beckoning you to follow. It slides into a fissure in the ground that was hidden under snow and ice.

Assuming the characters follow the muskrat, they plummet down the fissure just as the avalanche crushes everything in the pass. The characters fall down a vertical tunnel, which turns into a slide. The passage levels out, depositing them in an icy cavern beneath the mountains.

The icy slide dumps you unceremoniously into a cold cavern. The muskrat stares you in the eye, then wiggles a bit, as if happy to see you survived the close call.

A voice from deeper in the cavern echoes toward you, its Common marked by a slobbery rasp. "Muskie found you in time. Good fortune!"

The voice comes from a ten-foot-long walrus resting in the shadows. A walrus calf rests at her side. It starts to wriggle its way toward you, but she pulls it back with one of her long tusks.

Other creatures then move out of the shadows to examine you. This menagerie includes a variety of animals, everything from snow foxes to wolf pups to avian creatures to reptiles. A few seem to converse with each other as they eye you warily.

"Excuse my children," says the walrus. "They're suspicious by nature. Their lives often depend on it. My children call me Mother Tusk, and you may as well. I saved your lives for a reason."

Use the following bullet points to guide the conversation. (Keep an eye on the time if you're running the episode in an hour or less):

- Mother Tusk was awakened by a goliath druid from the North. The druid died, and Mother Tusk took over stewardship of the animals in the druid's care. (This is only partially true. The druid was corrupted and is still alive, and Mother Tusk fled from him with as many creatures as she could recruit. She feared he'd use the animals in a bloodthirsty animal army. She doesn't wish to discuss this with the characters at this time.)
- A terrible curse has befallen the lands north of the Spine of the World: the sun refuses to rise. Survival, never easy here, has been made more difficult by this curse.
- Mother Tusk offers the characters passage beneath the Spine of the World if they agree to perform a task for her once they emerge on the other side, in Icewind Dale.

The tasks she needs them to perform are as follows. (Each task comprises one of the episodes detailed in this adventure):

- Search for a scout in Mother Tusk's family named Spritzel. The young otter may have run afoul of trouble. (Unsure Footing.)
- Speak to the Reghed nomads who recently moved into Mother Tusk's area and convince them not to hunt her children. (Cold Welcome.)
- Investigate what caused a hot spring her family uses to freeze over. (Chilled Drinks.)
- Explore a nearby cave that's emitting terrifying noises. (Warm Bodies.)

SHALL WE JUST CRACK ON?

If they agree to perform at least one task, Mother Tusk and her family lead the characters through the tunnels until they reach the open air. She then leads them to a cave, where the Redrun river meets the Redwaters lake. This is her current base of operations.

Once the characters have chosen a task, proceed to the corresponding episode and continue.

LIGHTING IN ICEWIND DALE

Unless otherwise noted in the adventure, daytime hours provide dim light outdoors, while the nighttime hours are dark. The permanent dusk of Auril's curse makes the promise of sunlight seem a teasing possibility, but the sun never breaks the horizon.

UNSURE FOOTING

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

IN THIS EPISODE, MOTHER TUSK ASKS THE CHARACTERS to rescue one of her children, an awakened otter named Spritzel, who was spying on the town of Easthaven.

The characters quickly find Spritzel, and some of his otter friends, fleeing from a pack of wolves. The otters take shelter in a cave with ice slides, the wolves in close pursuit. The characters must navigate the ice slides to save the otters before the wolves kill them. Then the characters must survive the cold trip back to Mother Tusk. When the characters choose this task, read:

Mother Tusk explains what she needs you to do, "I sent one of my children, a young otter called Spritzel, on a scouting mission to watch the happenings in one of the Ten-Towns where the two-leggers dwell. He isn't back yet. He often gets himself into trouble and I need you to go look for him and make sure he isn't in danger. We've spotted wolves in the area, that could be dangerous for Spritzel."

Give the characters the chance to ask questions. Below are Mother Tusk's answers to the most common questions the characters may ask:

What Does Spritzel Look Like? "He's a white-furred otter with a brown patch above his right eye, and he wears a pearl earring."

Who Was He Spying On? "He was watching the happenings in the town of Easthaven. A contact in one of the other towns asked me for a favor. But that isn't important right now."

What Will You Give Us for Doing This? "I can only offer you my thanks, as well as the gift of your lives that I already saved once."

How Far Away Is Easthaven? "From here, it's more than ten miles. But I expect Spritzel's closer than that. Look for tracks as you travel northeast along the shore of Redwaters."

TRACKING

When the players head off on the task, read:

Travel is incredibly difficult in the deep snow. A bitter wind cuts through your clothing, and ice crystals riding the strong breeze sting your eyes.

Assuming the characters follow directions, it doesn't take them long to find tracks:

After you've traveled about two miles from Mother Tusk's shelter, you notice something on the ground. Although the wind pushes snow around, easily spotted animal tracks mar the fresh dusting.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the deeper tracks were made by wolves, while the smaller tracks on top of the snow were made by otters.

At this point, call for a DC 10 group Wisdom (Survival) check. Give advantage to characters with backgrounds that would give them a lifetime of experience tracking things or surviving in harsh winter conditions.

If the group succeeds, they easily follow the tracks. Go immediately to "Sliding" below. (If all characters succeeded on the check, they all have advantage on saving throws in the "Freezing" section below.)

If the group fails, they lose the tracks several times and take longer to find the wolves and otters. The cold begins to take its toll. In the "Freezing" section of this episode, the characters have disadvantage on their saving throws. Continue to "Sliding" below.

SLIDING

When the characters reach the end of the trail they're following, read:

Ahead of you, through the blowing snow, a pack of wolves chase a romp of a dozen otters, which weave through and around snow mounds and ice formations.

As the wolves close in, the sneaky otters zip through holes in the snow-packed earth. The wolves hesitate, but then the lead wolf barks a command, and the wolves leap into the holes as well, baying as they go.

If the players ask if one of the otters was Spritzel, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check confirms that one had a brown patch above its eye and a pearl earring.

Further, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check reveals that the lead wolf was acting strangely, as if it was more intelligent than a normal wolf. (This is because the wolf is awakened, and if the party is Very Strong, it's a dire wolf.)



THE SLIDES

The characters can quickly reach the holes in the earth, which are large enough for Medium creatures to enter without issue. They hear the growls of wolves and the squeaking of otters echoing up from the depths.

If the characters jump into the holes, they find themselves on a series of ice slides leading down. Traversing these slides requires a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The results of the check for each character determine what happens when they reach the bottom:

Check	Result
5 or lower	The character lands in a heap at the bottom. They take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and start combat prone.
6–10	The character takes no damage but starts combat prone.
11–16	The character navigates the slide successfully and lands on their feet at the bottom of the slides.
17+	The character lands in perfect fighting position and has advantage on their initiative roll.

Inspiration. Ask the players to narrate and describe their characters' trips down the ice slides. Award inspiration to players who do so with enthusiasm and storytelling skill.

When all the characters have landed at the bottom of the slides, continue to "Fighting."

FIGHTING

When you're ready to continue, read:

The ice slides end in a chamber flooded with a foot of frigid water. The otters swim adeptly at the far side of the cavern, avoiding the wolves' snapping jaws. The icy bite of the water seeps up your wet clothes.

At the back of the cavern, a low, ice-covered shelf rises out of the water.

For a view of the area, refer to Map A: The Ice Slides.

Wolves. Four **wolves** are attacking the otters but are having trouble catching the slippery creatures. The leader of the wolf pack is Vundrel, an awakened wolf sent by her druid master to hunt Mother Tusk and her family.

When the characters arrive, Vundrel growls at them in deep, snarling Common, "This is our hunt. Find your own food." That's all the talking Vundrel does before ordering her packmates to attack the characters.

Otters. The otters use the Dodge action until the characters intervene. On the third round of combat, once it's obvious the characters are here to assist them, Spritzel calls on his otter friends to help the characters:

"Let's get 'em, mates! What ho!" squeaks Spritzel in Common. The otters don't have stats, but they work as a team. Each round, they swarm the closest wolf, and the next attack roll against that wolf has advantage.

Alternately, if one of the characters is in trouble, the otters instead help that character, and the next attack roll against that character has disadvantage.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **wolves**.
- **Weak:** Remove one **wolf**.
- **Strong:** Add one **wolf**.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **dire wolf**.

SAVING SPRITZEL

If the characters defeat the wolves, Spritzel's overjoyed. He addresses the characters in a high, squeaky voice humming with overwrought energy:

"Thank you! We were returning from the town, and we saw a vicious owlbear with black feathers and we ran away, but then we saw the wolves, so we ran from them, but they saw us and chased us and we couldn't lose them, but we found these tunnels, but they followed us down, but you rescued us—" He stops abruptly. "Wow, you look cold!"

Treasure. The frozen body of an explorer who died here months ago rests on the back shelf of the cave. The only thing of note on the body are its boots, which are *boots of false tracks* embroidered with gaudy, but worthless, gems. Continue with "Freezing."

FREEZING

When the combat ends and the characters (and the otters) are out of immediate danger, a new danger presents itself:

Dripping wet in the freezing water, the cold of the North seeps into your bones. This frigid water could kill you unless you find a way to get warm and to dry your clothes, but the chamber is flooded with water and there's nothing to burn. What are you going to do?

Anyone proficient in Survival or who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check knows the following:

- Being drenched in cold water then moving through air this cold is most likely fatal in three hours or less.
- It's at least a three-hour walk back to Mother Tusk's location, and that's only true if someone isn't slowed from exhaustion. Even an hour in the cold could easily lead to serious exhaustion.
- Creating a heat source to dry off and warm up is vital to survival at this point. Unfortunately, there isn't much to burn in a watery cavern.

Remember, if the party failed their checks to track the animals earlier, their Constitution saving throws to avoid freezing (see below) are made with disadvantage. (If all the characters succeeded on their checks, they have advantage on these saving throws.) The characters have a few choices to make if they want to survive:

A Cold, Wet Trek. If they just climb out of the tunnels and start back to Mother Tusk's location, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of

exhaustion for each 30 minutes of travel during the 3-hour trek. (That means 6 checks.) If any character gains 2 levels of exhaustion, they then move at half speed. Strong characters might carry exhausted characters, but it's still a huge risk.

Burning Wolves. The characters can attempt to set the dead wolves ablaze to make heat. This could be done on the ice shelf in the cavern, but the smoke could be dangerous. This allows the characters to dry their clothes and get warm, but they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion from the smoke.

Climbing the ice slides with the wolves' bodies is possible but takes effort. Each attempt takes 30 minutes, and the characters must succeed on a DC 12 group skill check. Allow each character to use an ability and skill that makes sense to the overall success of the endeavor. This lets them get the wolves out, where they can burn them without worrying about fumes.

Wherever they decide to start the fire, they must have the means to start it. Fire magic, dry tinderboxes, or a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to light a fire without the proper tools are three options.

Finding Wood or Other Fuel. If the characters attempt to get to the surface without dragging the wolves, it takes 30 minutes to climb out, no check needed. From there, the characters can collect enough fuel with a successful DC 10 group skill check. Allow each character to use an ability and skill that makes sense to the overall success of the endeavor. Then they must have a means to start the fire, such as fire magic, dry tinderboxes, or a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to light a fire without proper tools.

Otter Assistance. The romp of otters can assist in small ways, but they must do so as a group. For example, they can assist one character in their assigned task. Or alternatively, the otters can huddle around one character to provide them with enough warmth to automatically succeed on their next Constitution saving throw against the cold.

Magic. Spellcasters will inevitably try to fix the entire problem with cantrips like *prestidigitation*, *druidcraft*, or **control flames**. Allow ingenious uses of this magic to help the cause without completely overcoming the entire challenge. For example, allow 30 minutes of casting one of these spells every round to dry one person's clothes, giving them advantage on their saving throws to resist the cold.

Of course, a character on cantrip duty can't contribute to a task like moving wolves or searching for fuel.

CONCLUSION

If the characters get back to Mother Tusk's encampment, she starts a fire to warm them up. Spritzel excitedly recounts the harrowing fight with the wolves and the journey back, and he offers them his earring as a thank you, as well as other small gems and trinkets he's hidden away in the area. Mother Tusk rewards the characters with two *spell scrolls of cure wounds*. They can also take a long rest in her care.

At the end of this episode, if a character has completed two episodes, they may choose to gain a level—or they can decline the level. However, once they reach level 3, they may not play any more episodes in this adventure.

Another Episode? If the characters plan to continue with this adventure, move on to a new episode.

Done? Any characters who've completed all the episodes or who don't plan to complete any more episodes can be read **Conclusion—Into the Blizzard**.

COLD WELCOME

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

IN THIS EPISODE, MOTHER TUSK TELLS THE characters that a group of nomads has moved into the forest near the town of Dougan's Hole, causing trouble for Mother Tusk's family. Seeking a peaceful resolution, Mother Tusk asks the characters to parley with these nomads.

In order to gain the respect of the Wolf Tribe's leader, Shaktal, the characters must first prove themselves worthy of that respect. If they succeed, they can convince the Wolf Tribe lieutenant to stop hunting Mother Tusk and her family. Failure means the characters didn't convince the Wolf Tribe to relent, although they can pledge their services as a last-ditch effort to gain Shaktal's favor. When the characters choose this task, read:

Mother Tusk points a flipper to the north, "Yonder is a forest we use for hunting and shelter. A group of two-leggers moved there not long ago, and now they hunt us. You must talk to them on our behalf, for they only see us as prey. Convince them to leave us in peace, or drive them away."

Give the characters the chance to ask questions. Below are Mother Tusk's answers to the most common ones the characters may ask:

How Many Are They and What Do They Look Like?

"They are many: Mostly human but some goblins as well. They dress like the nomads who come down from the Reghed Glacier to trade, hunt, and forage. They aren't savages, but they are survivors."

What Do You Know About Them? "We know little. They seem to be honorable people. They respect strength over pretty words."

How Far Away Is the Forest? "Only three hours on your two feet if you stay on the trails."

What Will You Give Us for Doing This? "I can only offer you my thanks, as well as the gift of your lives that I already saved once."

TRAPS EVERYWHERE

The trip to the forest, north of the Ten-Town known as Dougan's Hole, is uneventful.

The oak and pine trees here grow tall and healthy. Newly hewn stumps evidence recent, though not extensive, lumbering activity. A well-trodden footpath provides easy progress deeper into the forest.

When the players arrive at the edge of the forest, read: As the characters move deeper, they see many animal tracks, as well as a few places where animal tracks intersect with human-sized prints.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check indicates that a group of three or four adult human-sized people and a smaller person felled a large reindeer and dragged it away. It's easy to follow those tracks to the northeast, once found.

THE FIRST TRAP

As the characters move along, either following the path or the hunting party's tracks, they come upon a trap. Read:

Ahead of you, a boot sticks out of a mound of snow. The boot twitches every few moments.

An **owlbear trap** has been set 10 feet in front of the boot. The boot twitches because the nomads who set the trap put a chwinga inside to make it look like it's worn by a living creature. A character who approaches the boot risks stepping into the trap.

Frahbu the Chwinga. If a character frees the chwinga and treats it well, the little elemental bestows a supernatural charm upon the character who freed it. That character can cast *bless* at will as a bonus action. The charm becomes inactive at the end of this episode. (Spells granted by charms don't require spell slots or spellcasting components.)

After bestowing its blessing, the chwinga disappears into the snow with a wave of its tiny, frost-tinged hand.

OWLBEAR TRAP

Simple trap (level 1–4, dangerous threat)

Part One. The warriors under Shaktal's leadership placed this trap here to guard against the owlbear they've seen lurking in the area. The owlbear trap features a set of iron jaws that spring shut on a creature's leg when stepped on. The trap is spiked into the ground, leaving the victim immobilized.

Trigger. A character steps on the trapped area.

Effect. The trap makes an attack against the triggering creature with a +8 bonus to hit. On a hit, the target takes 5 (1d10) piercing damage and is restrained. A creature can free itself or an adjacent creature by using an action and succeeding on a DC 15 Strength check.

Countermeasures. The trap can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or DC 10 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check disables it.

Part Two. Two rounds after the trap is sprung or deactivated, sharp icicles fall from the pine branches above the trapped area (a 15-foot-square area with the trapped square in the center). All creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) piercing damage from the falling icicles.

ADJUSTING THE FIRST TRAP

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Reduce the owlbear trap's attack bonus to +5, and reduce the DC of the Dexterity saving to avoid the icicles to DC 10.
- **Weak:** No change.
- **Strong and Very Strong:** The owlbear trap deals 9 (2d8) damage on a successful attack, and the icicles deal 10 (3d6) damage on a failed save.

THE SECOND TRAP

As the characters continue along the trail, they see an enormous hollowed tree. Read:

The path you're following runs directly through the center of an enormous oak that's been felled and its trunk hollowed to form a tunnel. The tree, 80 feet long and 5 feet in diameter, bridges a 60-foot-wide ravine. The ravine is at least 20 feet deep with steep sides that look difficult to climb. Walking around the ravine doesn't look like it'd be easy, adding hours to your journey.

The nomads created this bridge, and also the hollowed log trap within it.

HOLLOWED LOG TRAP

Simple trap (level 1–4, moderate threat)

A 10-foot-long section at the center of the tree bridge has been weakened. Anyone stepping on this section causes the log to split at its center, dumping anyone inside or atop the log tunnel into the ravine.

Trigger. Anyone steps into the center area inside the log.

Effect. Anyone inside or atop the log must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature escapes to nearest side of the ravine. On a failed save, the creature falls into the ravine and takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the weakened area's lack of structural integrity. A creature can jump the weakened area or reinforce the log so it won't split with a successful DC 15 Intelligence check using Nature or woodcarver's tools.



Creatures can also walk atop the hollow log rather than through it. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is needed to walk across the top of the icy trunk without falling.

The Ravine. A character who falls into the ravine must climb out, which requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Each check takes 30 minutes, and each failed check gives a character 1 level of exhaustion. A character can gain no more than 3 levels of exhaustion this way.

ADJUSTING THE SECOND TRAP

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** The fall deals 3 (1d6) damage, and characters can gain no more than 1 level of exhaustion from climbing.
- **Weak:** Characters can gain no more than 2 levels of exhaustion from climbing.
- **Strong and Very Strong:** The fall deals 10 (3d6) damage, and increase the DCs for the Dexterity (Acrobatics) check and Dexterity saving throw to DC 12.

If characters need to cross the ravine without using the current log bridge, they can spend one hour chopping down a tree and positioning it across the ravine. They still must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid falling into the ravine.

After the characters deal with the traps, they can follow the trail to the temporary home of the Reghed nomads of the Wolf Tribe.

THE WOLF TRIBE

After following the trail to the center of the forest, the characters see their goal, the camp of the Wolf Tribe nomads. Read:

Through the boughs of the pines, you see a crackling campfire. A score of humans, as well as a smattering of goblins, feast on the charred remains of a reindeer. The meal smells delicious.

Unless the characters succeed on a DC 20 group Dexterity (Stealth) check, the Wolf Tribe scouts perched in trees watching for intruders spot them. Either way, as soon as the Reghed nomads know of the characters' presence, their leader calls in greeting:

A woman dressed in white wolf furs addresses you in Common. She pulls back her hood, revealing a dark face framed with white hair. She smiles as she speaks.

"You've done well to find us, and you're persistent. What brings you here among the Wolf Tribe?"

The woman is Shaktal, a revered leader in the Wolf Tribe. She serves her chieftain Aluka, who sent her here with scouts to search for sources of food and willing recruits. The current situation has left the tribe weak, to the point where they'll accept goblins into their ranks. The goblins aren't evil and have become valued members of the tribe.

The Wolf Tribe is the weakest of the Reghed tribes. A civil war is underway between its evil leader Isarr (who styles himself the “Wolf King”), and those who recognize his destructive nature. Shaktal (and her mentor Aluka) hope to band all Wolf Tribe members to fight Isarr and free their people from his tyranny (but that’s a story for another day!).

If the characters pass along Mother Tusk’s request that the Wolf Tribe refrain from hunting her and her family, Shaktal finds the request curious. She questions how her people are supposed to survive unless they can hunt the animals of the region. The fact that some of the animals are awakened impresses Shaktal, but she insists her people still need to eat.

If the characters propose a treaty or partnership between the Wolf Tribe and Mother Tusk’s family, Shaktal listens skeptically. She wonders aloud how animals—other than wolves, of course—could offer the tribe any strength. She asks the characters if they can prove their own prowess, which would make her more amenable to listen to their opinions.

SOLUTIONS

There are three ways the characters can convince Shaktal and her Wolf Tribe followers that they’re worthy of a partnership:

Persuade. The characters can attempt to make a persuasive argument that this area isn’t where the Wolf Tribe should be hunting and living. This starts as a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The DC can be reduced by 5 cumulatively for any of the following reasons:

- If the characters show no damage or exhaustion from their trip so far.
- If the characters didn’t spend more than 30 extra minutes while moving through the forest. For example, if they didn’t take a short rest and didn’t have to spend more than 30 minutes climbing out of the ravine or building their own bridge, they’ve impressed Shaktal.
- If they showed strength of character in their interactions with Shaktal without being cruel, fawning, or obsequious.

Show Superior Force. If the characters can prove their prowess in martial combat, they can convince Shaktal they’re worth heeding. This is a fight with one **goblin** per character. The goblins only use their melee weapons and don’t strike to kill. If the characters use anything other than nonlethal blows, they automatically fail in Shaktal’s estimation. Magic is permitted if it doesn’t harm or kill a goblin. For example, *sleep* would be allowed, while *magic missile* wouldn’t. Make this clear to the players, so they aren’t surprised if Shaktal refuses them after lethal damage is used.

Provide Food. Shaktal insists the characters provide everyone with a meal at least as wonderful as the reindeer they currently feast on. The characters have two hours to bring back food. A successful DC 10 group Wisdom (Survival) check allows them to quickly find the tracks of an arctic **tiger**. Allow two attempts to succeed on the Survival check to track. If the characters succeed on the check, run a combat to defeat the prey. If the characters succeed, Shaktal’s impressed and accepts the offer of mutual aid.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

If their attempts fail, give the characters a second chance to succeed using an alternative method.

FAILURE

If the characters fail to impress Shaktal, she tells the characters the survival of her tribe hinges on her ability to find food and to gain new members. The Wolf Tribe will not leave the area. However, if the characters pledge their lives to assist the Wolf Tribe if called upon, Shaktal agrees to consider not hunting Mother Tusk’s family.

SUCCESS

If the characters succeed in impressing Shaktal, she bows to them and tells them she recognizes their prowess. However, she makes them promise that in return for the Wolf Tribe’s cooperation, the characters agree to assist Shaktal, and her chief Aluka, if they’re ever called upon to do so.

END TOO QUICKLY?

If the characters navigated the dangers of the forest trek easily and were persuasive enough to convince Shaktal without much fuss, this mission may end quickly. To add some play time to the mission, Shaktal can ask the characters to hunt the arctic tiger for her as a show of good faith between the characters and her tribe.

REWARDS

If the characters agree, Shaktal gives them a special acorn that, if eaten as an action, acts as a *potion of healing*. Additionally, if a character doesn’t have cold weather clothing yet, the Wolf Tribe can provide them with it at half price. Finally, if they leave her in good standing, Shaktal gifts the characters with an *unbreakable arrow* as a show of good faith. This arrow proves to Wolf Tribe members loyal to Aluka that the bearer is a friend and ally.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Reduce the starting DC of the Charisma (Persuasion) check to DC 15, remove one goblin, and the tiger only has 25 hit points.
- **Strong:** No change.
- **Very Strong:** Add one goblin, and the tiger has 60 hit points.

Whether the characters succeed or fail, Shaktal warns them that a particularly ferocious owlbear has been ravaging the area. She’s already lost three tribe members to it, and now they stay away from it.

CONCLUSION

When the characters return to Mother Tusk, she’s relieved if the characters succeeded, and very worried if they failed. However, she understands that dealing with the denizens of Icewind Dale is never a sure thing. They can also take a long rest in her care.

At the end of this episode, if the character has completed two episodes, they may choose to gain a level—or they can decline the level. However, once they reach level 3, they may not play any more episodes in this adventure.

Another Episode? If the characters plan to continue with this adventure, move on to a new episode.

Done? Any characters who’ve completed all the episodes or who don’t plan to complete any more episodes can be read **Conclusion—Into the Blizzard**.

CHILLED DRINKS

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

IN THIS EPISODE, MOTHER TUSK ASKS THE CHARACTERS to investigate a nearby hot spring that provides Mother Tusk's family with access to fresh food and water. This spring has frozen for an unknown reason.

The hot spring was blocked when an adventurer carrying pieces of chardalyn was mauled to death by the owlbear. The combination of his mangled body and the chardalyn blocked the spring's flow. The chardalyn also affected a nearby group of gnolls, who worship it as a gift from their god Yeenoghu. The characters must deal with the gnolls, and then dislodge the body and the chardalyn, in order to restore the spring.

When the characters choose this task, read:

Mother Tusk nurses her calf and listens to her family chitter around her. She turns a whiskered glance in your direction. "Not far from here is a hot spring that keeps part of Redwaters from freezing over. There we get fresh water and access food from the lake. The spring has stopped flowing into the lake, and we're suffering for it. I've sent a scout to investigate, but she hasn't returned. Find out why, please."

Give the characters the chance to ask questions. Below are Mother Tusk's answers to the most common questions the characters may ask:

- **How Far Away Is the Spring?** "No more than an hour or two, just south of the town called Dougan's Hole. The spring flows from a hole in the ground, then about 300 feet downhill into Redwaters."
- **Who Did You Send?** "I sent one of my snow fox children, a rather angry vixen called Wiskette. But that was days ago, and she's failed to return."
- **What Will You Give Us for Doing This?** "I can only offer you my thanks, as well as the gift of your lives that I already saved once."

HYENA TROUBLE

As the characters move toward the hot spring described by Mother Tusk, they learn the fate of the snow fox vixen.

When the players set off on their task, read:

No more than 30 minutes have passed since you left Mother Tusk's refuge, and 100 feet ahead of you, at the top of a snowy incline near the lake known as Redwaters, you see a pair of white-furred hyenas toying with a snow fox. The fox is injured, and the hyenas look ready to move in for the kill. "Just get it over with!" the fox shouts angrily in Common.

The two **hyenas** have trapped Wiskette the snow fox between them, and she's injured and exhausted, unable to run or defend herself.

TACTICS

The hyenas and Wiskette start 120 feet from the characters. If the characters can do anything at all to interrupt the hyenas' attack, the pair flee down the other side of the hill. For example, targeting a hyena with a long-range spell or weapon attack does the trick. Alternatively, if a character shouts at the hyenas and succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check, it also forces the hyenas to flee.

Sleds. On the far side of the hill, a steep slope travels down 600 feet. The snow is deep here, counting as difficult terrain. Five sleds, each capable of carrying two Medium creatures, rest at the top of the hill.

A creature riding a sled can use its movement to travel 60 feet down the hill. It can then use an action to either travel an extra 60 feet automatically (for a total of 120 feet) or to attempt a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to push their sled to the limit. On a success, the sled travels an extra 120 feet that turn (for a total of 180 feet). On a failure, the creature instead falls prone, ending its turn after just 60 feet of movement.

The hyenas attempt to flee using the sleds. If they can get to the bottom of the hill and the characters are forced to pursue by trudging through the deep snow at half speed, then the characters can only watch them flee over the next rise and out of sight. The characters must face them later if they escape.

TALKING TO WISKETTE

If the characters manage to drive the hyenas away, Wiskette shouts at the characters to catch them before they can warn the gnolls of their presence and location.

Once the chase is over, or if the characters fail to give chase, Wiskette studies the characters skeptically, but nods and says, "Thanks." Use the bullet points to guide conversation. She can barely contain her rage at the hyena infestation.



- Wiskette traveled to the hot spring, but someone had put a tent over it. The smell of blood was strong in the area.
- A pack of hyenas spotted her and she fled, but they pursued. Someone or something in the tent whistled, calling many of the hyenas back, but these two continued.
- The sleds at the top of the hills have been left in other locations as well. Obviously, the hyenas couldn't have left them there, so someone else must be in the area. Whoever left the sleds around also trained the hyenas to use them.

Wiskette can show the characters to the spring, but she's in no condition or frame of mind to get involved in combat. She's too old for that . . .

ADJUSTING THE CHASE

Depending on the makeup of the party and their level of ingenuity, the chase might be over very quickly or might never happen at all. Here are some suggestions for changing the chase to make it more interesting:

- The hyenas can flee before the characters get a chance to act, thereby ensuring that the chase takes place before the characters defeat the hyenas at range. The hyenas might even knock Wiskette unconscious and take her with them on the sled to lure the characters after them.
- You might allow the hyenas to push their sled, just as the characters can. This gives the hyenas a better chance of escaping, but it also gives them a chance to slow themselves and allow the characters to catch up.
- If characters attempt to use actions to attack the hyenas during the chase scene, you can have all attack be made with disadvantage because of the situation, force spellcasters to make concentration checks, and give the hyenas half-cover from the sleds they ride.
- You can place obstacles on the hillside that the characters must avoid. Successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Wisdom (Perception) checks could be called for to avoid overturning the sled during the chase. Or place an ice ramp at the bottom of the hill, launching sleds 10 feet in the air with ability checks needed to land safely at the bottom.

THE FROZEN SPRING

As the characters move along the shore of Redwaters, they finally come to the place where the hot spring has frozen. Read:

As you crest the final hill, you see a large tent made of cured hides. It rests about 300 feet from the edge of Redwaters. The slick, frozen trail leading from the tent to the lake makes it clear this must be location of the hot spring Mother Tusk sent you to investigate.

Outside the tent, frozen animal carcasses, picked clean of meat, litter the ground. Smoke wafts from two holes in the top of the tent.

As you watch, two gnolls move from around the other side of the tent, dragging a struggling man dressed in furs. They shove him through the opening and take up positions flanking the entrance.

For a view of the area, refer to **Map B: The Tent**. It's 50 feet wide and 60 feet long, with a 10-foot-wide opening in the center of the eastern face.

The tent is well-built, and it can't be knocked down without a massive effort that alerts everyone inside to the attack, giving them time to respond before it falls.

The characters can create a 5-foot-square hole in the cured leather (AC 10) by dealing 20 points of slashing, fire, or force damage to it.

OUTSIDE THE TENT

The two **gnoll** guards outside the tent aren't particularly attentive, so characters attempting to sneak up on them can do so with a successful DC 5 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. However, if either hyena from the previous encounter escaped, the DC increases to 15.

Ice Trail. The ice trail is extremely slippery, making it difficult terrain. A creature that steps onto the trail or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. (The same is true of the ice trail inside the tent.) Use the *grease* spell as a guide for adjudicating the ice.

Tactics. The gnolls outside the tent don't shout for help if attacked, they've been instructed by their master not to disturb her for any reason while she experiments with the chardalyn. However, if they hear fighting inside the tent, they rush to investigate.

INSIDE THE TENT

When the characters can see inside the tent, much is happening there.

Creatures. A **gnoll flesh gnawer** named Ghuldra stands at the edge of a hole encrusted with ice. This is where the hot spring emerged from before it was plugged and frozen. She's attended by four **hyenas**. Any hyenas who escaped from the characters in the previous encounter are here as well.

Ghuldra uses small shards of a hard, dark, ice-cold substance (chardalyn) to pierce the skin of the man who was tossed into the tent earlier. She chants in Gnoll while

she does this, and an odorless smoke rises from her as she does so (from her *smoldering armor*). Those who can understand Gnoll realize she's imploring Yeenoghu to bless her with the "power of the inner voice."

The human Ghuldra's experimenting on is Judd Dougan, a citizen of Dougan's Hole. He regularly fishes in Redwaters where the hot spring enters the lake, and he was captured by the gnolls as he came to fish.

In the corner of the tent, another gnoll lies dead from many cuts. (This was the gnolls' previous leader, who heard a voice when he handled the chardalyn, but Ghuldra killed him in a jealous rage, wanting to hear the voice herself.)

Campfires. Two campfires warm the place. A creature that enters or starts their turn in the campfire takes 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Ice Trail. The ice trail is extremely slippery, making it difficult terrain. A creature that steps onto the trail or starts its turn there, must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. Use the *grease* spell as a guide for adjudicating the ice.

BATTLE

The gnoll and her pet hyenas fight to the death.

The Characters Are Captured. Wiskette slips away as they're bound and forced to witness Judd succumb to the piercing, although at the end he claims to hear voices calling to him from beyond the colors in the sky. Soon after, Mother Tusk's family descends on the tent, rescuing the characters.

The Characters Win the Fight. Judd insists they leave immediately, as more gnolls are in the area, and they could return from their patrols at any time.

Treasure. Ghuldra wears *smoldering studded leather armor*, which the characters can take if they defeat the gnolls.

THE SPRING

If the characters investigate the spring, they first see that it's been dug out recently. Ten feet down the hole rests the frozen corpse of a human still wearing cold weather gear. It's been ripped apart as if by a bear. (It was the owlbear the characters have learned about elsewhere). He holds in his frozen grip a spear tipped with the same chardalyn Ghuldra was using on Judd.

If the body is removed and thawed, it carries much of this substance in tiny pieces, as well as two dagger-sized pieces. Moving the body unblocks the hot spring. The body also carries some coins and two vials of alchemist's fire.

RESCUING JUDD

If the characters rescue Judd, he tells them he's from Dougan's Hole, one of the Ten-Towns of Icewind Dale. While he's relieved at the rescue, he's brusque to the point of xenophobia and attempts to leave as soon as he can. (He isn't doing it to hide anything; he just doesn't trust or like strangers.)

If questioned about what happened as his skin was pierced by the strange, black material, he claims it just hurt a lot. He's lying, which a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals. If pressed with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, he reveals he heard a voice talking to him while it happened, but it was in a strange language he didn't recognize.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Remove two hyenas.
- **Strong:** Add two hyenas.
- **Very Strong:** Add one gnoll inside the tent.

CONCLUSION

If the characters return having successfully cleared the hot spring of its blockage, Mother Tusk's overjoyed, although she's worried about gnolls being so close, as well as the strange things the gnolls were doing at the hot spring. They can also take a long rest in her care.

At the end of this episode, if the character has completed two episodes, they may choose to gain a level—or they can decline the level. However, once they reach level 3, they may not play any more episodes in this adventure.

Another Episode? If the characters plan to continue with this adventure, move on to a new episode.

Done? Any characters who've completed all the episodes or who don't plan to complete any more episodes can be read **Conclusion—Into the Blizzard**.



WARM BODIES

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

A CAVE SYSTEM SOUTH OF BRYN SHANDER, WHICH Mother Tusk's family uses as shelter, has been emitting terrifying noises, and she asks the characters to investigate. Unknown to anyone, some chambers in the cave system are part of an ancient orc tribe's burial site.

The dead here have been disturbed by an archaeologist from Bryn Shander named Marville DuCoot, who's secretly working for the Arcane Brotherhood. The characters must navigate the passages to the ancient burial chamber, where they witness the injured archaeologist trying to escape, while the undead orcs slowly claw their way out of their frozen crypts. It becomes a race against the clock to fight the undead while at the same time restoring the magic (disturbed by the archaeologist) that keeps the dead at rest. When the characters choose this task, read:

Mother Tusk finishes chatting with some of the menagerie she leads, dragging herself across the floor of the sheltered cave to speak with you, "I lead my family from one shelter to another in the area, wherever food and safety are most available. Our northernmost shelter has been off-limits because the terrible sounds coming from there scare my children too much. It's time we go back. Can you explore the deeper caverns and see if they're safe? Ollie can lead you there."

Ollie is a snowy owl. When she glides into the room, the smaller rodents scatter, many hiding behind Mother Tusk's massive form. "Oh please," says the owl in a haughty squawk. "Like I'd stoop to consuming any of you mangy vermin."

Give the characters the chance to ask questions. Below are Mother Tusk's answers to the most common ones the characters may ask:

- **How Far Away Are the Caves?** "Further than the other tasks I require. At least six miles away, which is a full day's travel through this cursed darkness. It's halfway between here and the larger town the two-leggers call Bryn Shander."
- **Can You Describe the Caves?** "We only used the ones closest to the entrance. There are more caverns deeper, but we avoid them as they stink of death."
- **What Will You Give Us for Doing This?** "I can only offer you my thanks, as well as the gift of your lives that I already saved once."

OUTSIDE THE CAVES

The trip from Mother Tusk's shelter to the northern caves is difficult and cold but uneventful. Ollie guides them, but she refuses to enter the caves. Ollie has a wry, witty sense of humor, making as many "who?" puns as she can during the trip.

When the characters arrive at the caves, read:

Two forms lie in a pool of blood that stains the snow red. Both men are dead, their arms missing and their furs shredded. "Well, that seemed to go poorly for them," quips Ollie.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals they were killed at least a day ago, by a large creature with both sharp claws and a wicked beak. And whatever it was had to be strong and ferocious enough to dismember a man. Likely, it was an owlbear.

These men were assistants hired by DuCoot to guide him to the caves and back. The bodies still carry some coins, cold weather gear (ruined), four shortwords, two shortbows, and forty arrows in two quivers. One also carries a book of translated Orc words and phrases, which might prove useful in the trials to come. When the characters enter the caves, read:

A series of small caves show signs of habitation in the past, including small bones, mollusk shells, animal waste, rotting vegetation, and countless tracks.

Toward the back of the caves, human-sized prints can be seen more clearly among the older animal prints. The human prints come up to a wall but then stop.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the faint etching of a phrase in Orc. If the phrase is touched and spoken ("The dead pass not"), a secret door opens, leading to deeper chambers. Anyone fluent in Orc can read this, or the characters can use magic or the Orc phrasebook to translate.

Given time, the characters find the secret door and open it even if they fail to notice the inscription and then translate and speak the incantation. However, if they do this quickly, such as finding the inscription without multiple searches, and figure out how to open it without resorting to multiple attempts, give them advantage on their initiative checks when trying to defeat the undead and save DuCoot.



EXPLORING

The characters step through the secret door into a stone corridor that's seen little use. There's no light, and only one set of human-sized prints has moved back and forth. Near the door are several sacks.

Most of the sacks contain odd trinkets of carved stone, jade, scrimshaw, and other materials found in the North. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recognizes these as primitive, orcish artifacts and religious icons.

The last sack contains three square pieces of slate inlaid with copper decorations. Each is different:

- The first is decorated with a stylized eye symbol. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals this is a symbol of the orc god Gruumsh.
- The second shows a representation of a decorated cave opening. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals this is a symbol of the orc goddess Luthic.
- The third depicts a sword dripping with blood. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals this is a symbol of the orc god Ilneval.

These slate squares are needed to seal off the undead in the burial chamber. Characters may foolishly try to break these items. If they study them, a character proficient in Arcana can tell they are magical and have abjuration-like properties. You can also make them impervious to damage from normal weapons. Or you can let them smash them and suffer the consequences later...

The first time a character attempts to hold any of these stones, they must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw. On a success, the character has no problem holding the stones. On a failed save, the character takes 2 (1d4) psychic damage per character level, and they must drop the stone. They can attempt to pick one up again but must repeat the saving throw. Orcs and half-orcs have advantage on this saving throw.

After finding these goods, the characters can continue into the inner cave, which is an ancient orc burial chamber DuCoot's accidentally disturbed.

INSIDE THE CAVE

Map C: The Inner Cave depicts the inner cave burial chamber. When the characters approach it, read:

The footprints lead down a passage, which splits to the right and left. Ahead in both directions, dim light plays within a large chamber. A soft whimper echoes toward you, followed by a yelp of pain and hysterical screaming.

The split passage leads to the same chamber, entering in different places. When the characters move forward to view the chamber, continue:

Several lit torches are spaced throughout this partially worked cavern. Three stone pillars, carved to resemble fierce orcs in battle poses, hold up the ceiling. All around the chamber, niches are carved into the walls. The ice-filled niches hold the upright bodies of orcs.

Against the wall opposite where you entered, a man lies on the floor. He tries to get away, but a hand grasps his ankle. The hand pokes out of one of the niches, its arm free of the ice. As you enter, four of the iced niches shatter, and the orcs held in each stagger out.

The man on the floor shrieks in terror. "The stone plates," he screams at you. "I removed them. They were wards." He points to another in the center of the room. "That's the last one. The others I've already taken. Put them back in their rightful places." The hand grasping his leg gives a gruesome twist, you hear a pop, and the man faints from the pain.

This encounter is moderately complex, so you'll likely want to read through and prepare the following encounter carefully.

Monsters. The four orc bodies are **zombies**, which move to attack the characters, pursuing them all the way into the open air if they flee. At the start of every round after the first, another zombie frees itself from a niche and moves to attack.

The Last Stone Plate. The last piece of decorated slate, in the center of the floor, has a copper engraving of a skull on a crescent moon. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals this is a symbol of the orc god Shargaas.

The Wards. At four locations around the walls (marked by the four rubble piles on the map) are four small niches where the slate squares can be placed. Each niche holds a phrase written in Orc. (Characters can use the phrase book to translate if needed.) To stop more zombies from escaping, the plates must be returned to their rightful spots. This takes an action. This is the correct placement for the stones, based on the phrases in the niches:

- Niche 1 says "He Who Watches": This requires the slate dedicated to Gruumsh.
- Niche 2 says "The Cave Mother": This requires the slate dedicated to Luthic.
- Niche 3 says "The Night Lord": This requires the slate dedicated to Shargaas.
- Niche 4 says "The War Maker": This requires the slate dedicated to Ilneval.

Remember, holding a stone without taking damage first requires a character to succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, but once a character's succeeded on the saving throw, they can pick up any stone.

To play up the tension, describe the room getting warmer and warmer as the niches that make up the ward grow hotter and hotter, melting the ice holding the orc zombies. Describe them moving closer and closer to freedom as the seconds pass. Each niche holds several orc bodies, so there are an overwhelming number of potential zombies if the characters don't succeed.

SO MANY ZOMBIES!

Obviously, this encounter is won not by killing the most zombies, but by returning the slate wards to their proper place. Some players may need a hint or two to understand what's happening. Some players, even with several hints, treat every encounter as something that can be solved by hitting it hard enough with a sword or spell.

If you end up with more than a dozen zombies in the battle before the characters figure out the means to stop the threat, the combat may go on for a long time. Here are some suggestions for speeding up the combat if it is going long:

- Zombies that are active when the final ward is correctly placed lose their undead fortitude trait.
- Zombies that are active when the final ward is correctly placed must immediately make an undead fortitude saving throw or turn to dust.
- Zombies that are active when the final ward is correctly placed automatically turn to dust.
- If the characters destroyed the wards and cannot stop the zombie horde from coming, bring all the zombies out at once without playing it out round by round. Give the players an opportunity to collapse the cave entrance or otherwise trap the zombies when it's obvious there are too many to kill.

SUCCESS?

If the characters fail to replace the stone seals, over a hundred orc zombies escape and move off into the freezing cold. The characters can outrun them, but they may become a hazard for others in Icewind Dale.

If the characters succeed at returning the wards to the correct positions, the chamber quickly cools and locks the bodies in their niches, returning the orc dead to their slumber. The ones already out must still be defeated, however.

If the characters succeed, they can revive DuCoot, who introduces himself as an archaeologist. He has a broken leg but is otherwise unharmed. He admits curiosity got the better of him here, and he should've let sleeping orcs lie.

The grateful DuCoot shares some of his loot with the characters, as well as offering them a *potion of poison resistance* and an *oil of slipperiness* for their troubles. He also provides the characters with an *ersatz eye*, which he found in the tomb. If a character ever uses the eye, it looks oversized and orcish, and also gives the character the ability to read and understand Orc, but not speak it.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove one **zombie**. More zombies don't emerge until the start of the third round.
- **Weak:** More zombies don't emerge until the start of the third round.
- **Strong:** Add one **zombie**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **zombies**. Two zombies emerge each round instead of one.

CONCLUSION

When the characters return to Mother Tusk, she celebrates if the characters succeeded in sealing up the orc dead. The characters can take a long rest in her care.

At the end of this episode, if the character has completed two episodes, they may choose to gain a level—or they can decline the level. However, once they reach level 3, they may not play any more episodes in this adventure.

Another Episode? If the characters plan to continue with this adventure, move on to a new episode.

Done? Any characters who've completed all the episodes or who don't plan to complete any more episodes can be read **Conclusion—Into the Blizzard**.

CONCLUSION—INTO THE BLIZZARD

Estimated Duration: 5 minutes

If a character completes all the quests, or if a character decides they won't be playing any more of these episodes, read them the conclusion:

With an enthusiastic nod, Mother Tusk motions toward the north, indicating all of Icewind Dale. "Be firm in your resolve, two-legger. It's more than wolves or owlbears or wild humans who threaten you here. The very weather itself seeks your demise in the North. Greater powers than you or me war here. Go with my thanks and my blessing. May we meet again under better and brighter skies."

As if the weather itself was eavesdropping on your conversation, clouds roll in, a biting wind cuts across your face, and snow falls like a veil being drawn across the world.

CAN WE KEEP THE ANIMALS AS PETS?

The awakened animals in this adventure are sentient creatures with their own desires, motivations, and goals. Just as characters can't keep the NPC bartender as a pet in other adventures, they can't keep Spritzel, Wiskette, Ollie, Mother Tusk, or any of the other animals as pets. These NPCs will be returning in future adventures, so they should be kept alive and in good health. Although they might agree to keep the characters as pets if the characters ask nicely!

REWARDS

At the end of the session, everyone receives rewards based upon their accomplishments.

CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards:

ADVANCEMENT

Upon successfully completing two episodes of this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

GOLD

Award each character 20 gp for each episode played. The maximum gold you can award a character for playing this adventure is 80 gp.

MAGIC ITEMS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in Appendix C:

- *Boots of False Tracks*
- *Ersatz Eye*
- *Smoldering Armor*
- *Unbreakable Arrow*

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, one of your characters gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

Tier	GP Earned
1	80 gp
2	240 gp
3	1,600 gp
4	6,000 gp

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

MOTHER TUSK

Mother Tusk was awakened by a powerful goliath druid to act as a companion and confidant. The druid became corrupted, and Mother Tusk saw what he was doing to do to the animals in her care. She led the animals to safety, and she's been trying to protect them for the last several months.

What They Want. To keep her charges safe.

Caring, but Ruthless. Mother Tusk cares more for her animals than for humans, and she'll happily put humans at risk for her family.

SPRITZEL (SPRIT-ZELL)

The awakened otter likes to wear jewelry and generally make a spectacle of himself.

What They Want. To brave danger and find shiny things.

Irrepressible. As an awakened animal, Spritzel knows he's going to die. He doesn't want to die any time soon, but he wants to die spectacularly and for a good cause.

SHAKTAL (SHACK-TALL)

The leader of a band of Reghed Wolf Tribe nomads, she serves the upstart chief Aluka.

What They Want. Aluka asked Shaktal to find safe havens for her people and to recruit members to fight against Isarr, and that's what she plans to do.

Friendly and Wise. Shaktal knows both the carrot and the stick are great motivators, and she prides herself on knowing exactly when, and to what degree, to use each.

WISKETTE (WHISS-KET)

The awakened snow fox is one of the cagiest creatures in Mother Tusk's family. She's getting weary of the world and just wants life to go back to the way it was before the curse befell Icewind Dale.

What They Want. To drive the dangerous creatures away so she can return to her den and get warm.

Angry as a Fox. She's angry and flies into expletive-laced rants at the slightest provocation.

MARVILLE DUCOOT (MAR-VIL DUE-COOT)

DuCoot's a cad and an explorer. He's recently seen the power to be had revering Auril, and he also does work for the Arcane Brotherhood when the price is right.

What They Want. To learn the secrets of this land in order to bring Auril's majesty to fruition.

Bumbling Appearance Hides a Clever Fellow. He plays the hapless, incompetent ne'er-do-well, but he's cagier than he acts.

OLLIE (AHL-EE)

The awakened snowy owl acts as a scout and guide for Mother Tusk. She tries to find the humor in this life that's been given to her.

What They Want. To protect Mother Tusk and her family.

Says Who? Getting others to laugh is what keeps Ollie going. She's a constant source of puns, especially on the words "who" and "owl." For example, she'll tell the knock-knock joke to get the characters to say "Who who?" She replies, "Now you're speaking my language."

GHULDRA (GHULE-DRA)

Tired of playing bodyguard to the former chief, she seized her opportunity to become leader of her small clan and is making the most of it.

What They Want. To learn the secret of the chardalyn fragments, which she believes will allow Yeenoghu to speak to her directly.

Violent, Even for a Gnoll. She doesn't hesitate to slaughter anyone in the way of her wishes.

JUDD DOUGAN (DOO-GUN)

Judd's a lesser-regarded member of a family that already gets very little regard. He's small and dull and clumsy.

What They Want. To earn the respect of not just his family, but everyone in the Ten-Towns.

He's Heard the Call. Now he's heard the voice from beyond the aurora in the sky, he'll do anything it says. What that is remains to be seen.



APPENDIX A: CREATURES

The following creatures appear in this adventure.

DIRE WOLF

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

GNOLL

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spearg. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

GNOLL FLESH GNAWER

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gnoll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its shortsword.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Sudden Rush. Until the end of the turn, the gnoll's speed increases by 60 feet and it doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

GOBLIN

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

HYENA

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (–4)	12 (+1)	5 (–3)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

TIGER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Smell. The tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the tiger moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tiger can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (–2)	16 (+3)	3 (–4)	6 (–2)	5 (–3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

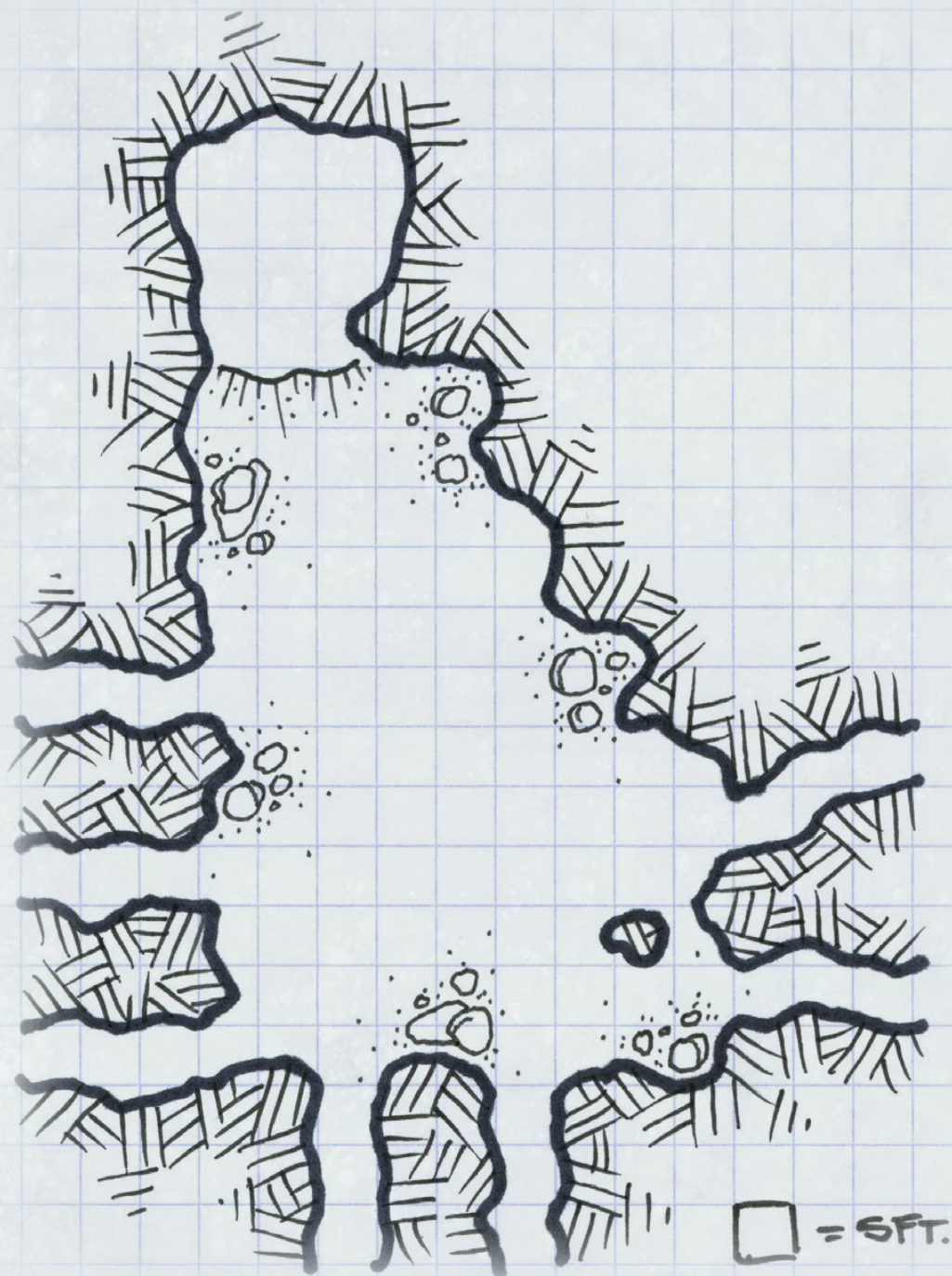
Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

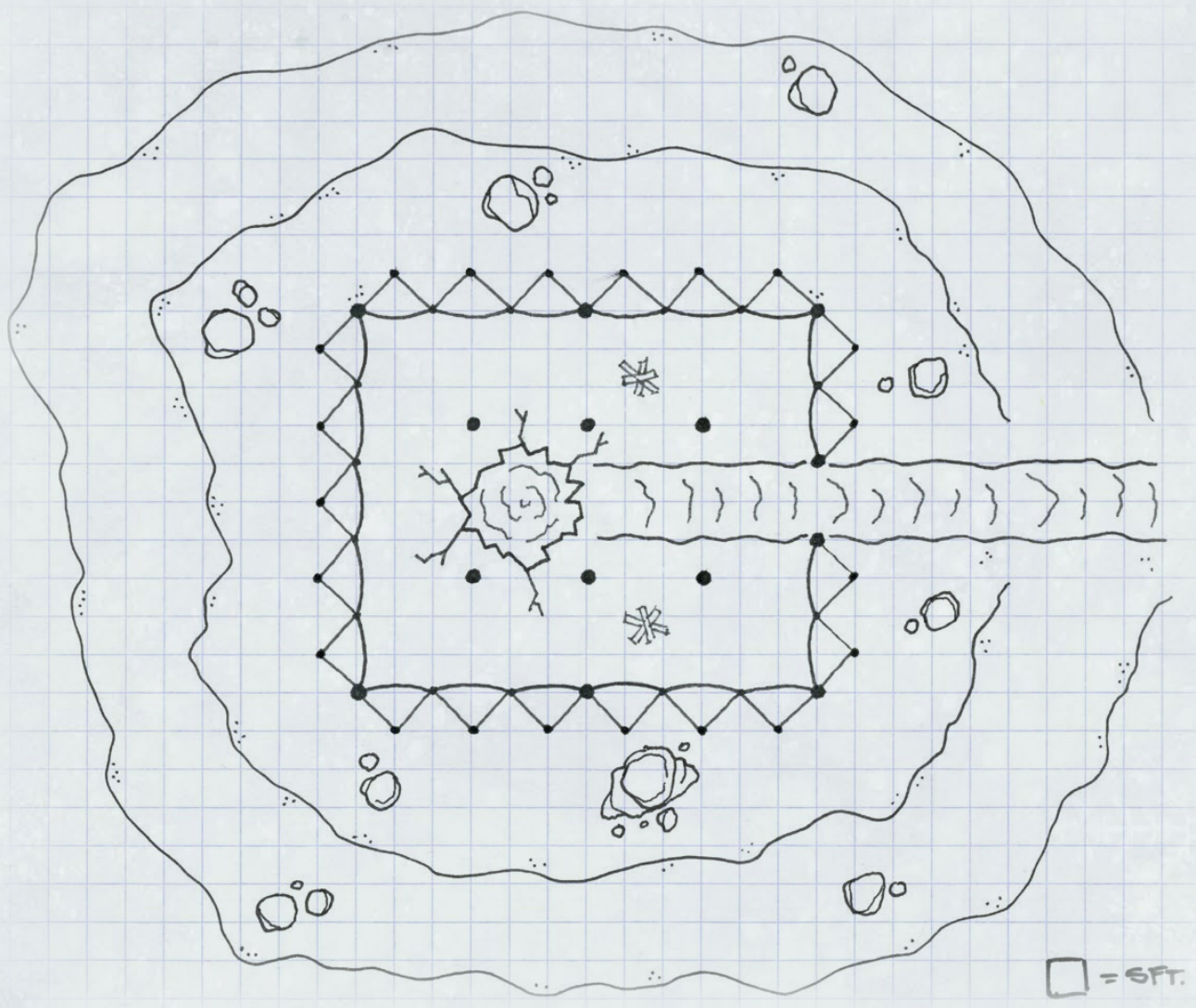
APPENDIX B: MAPS

MAP A. THE ICE SLIDES



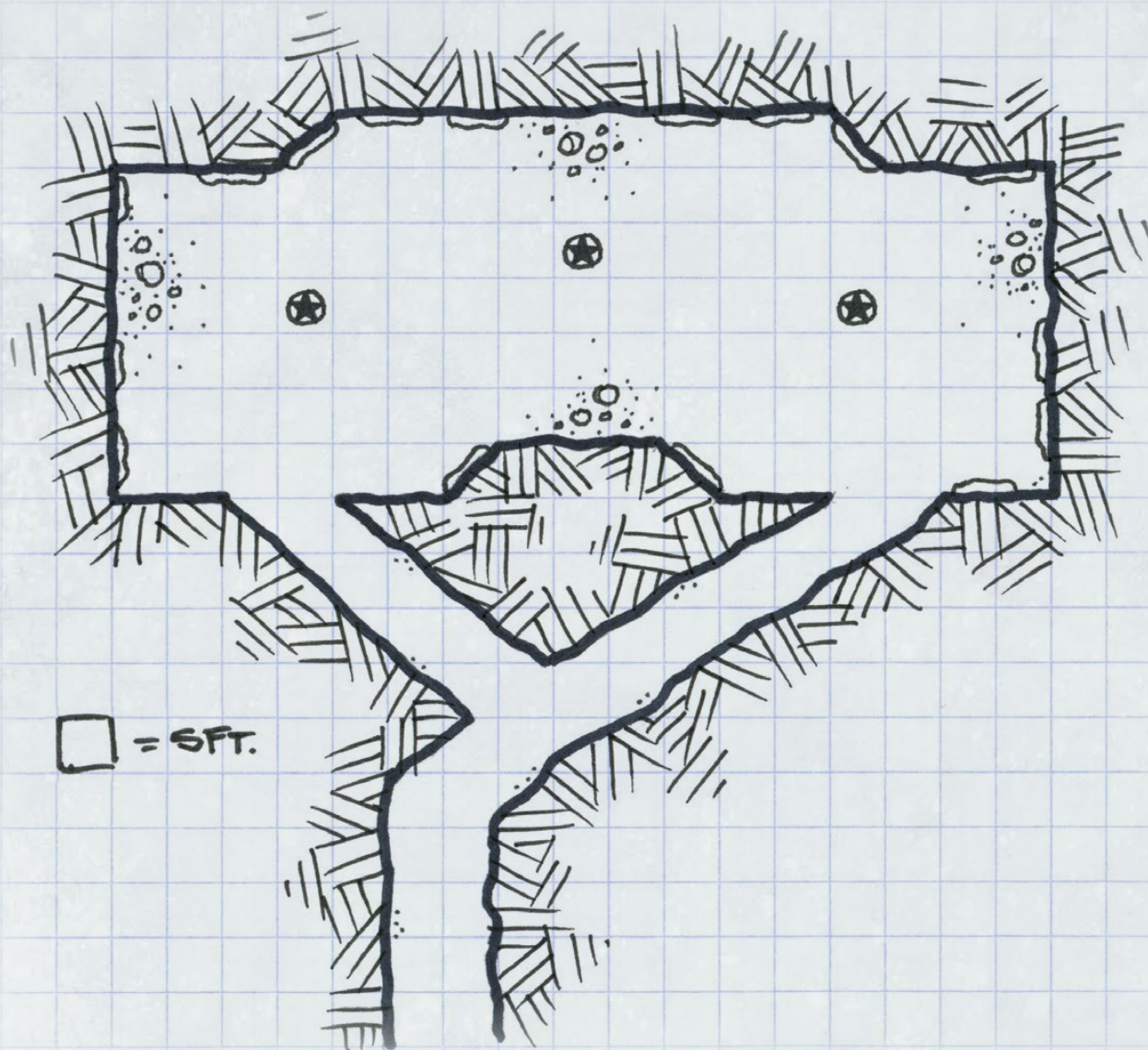
THE ICE SLIDES

MAP B. THE TENT



THE TENT

MAP C. THE INNER CAVE



THE INNER CAVE

APPENDIX C: MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items appear in this adventure.

BOOTS OF FALSE TRACKS

Wondrous item, common

These comfortable, fur-lined boots are embroidered with gaudy, but worthless, gems.

Only humanoids can wear these boots. While wearing the boots, you can choose to have them leave tracks like those of another kind of humanoid of your size.

Xanathar's Guide to Everything, p. 136

ERSATZ EYE

Wondrous item, common (requires attunement)

This particular eye was recovered from an ancient orc burial site and it appears oversized and orcish while embedded in your eye socket.

This artificial eye replaces a real one that was lost or removed. While the *ersatz eye* is embedded in your eye socket, it can't be removed by anyone other than you, and you can see through the tiny orb as though it were a normal eye.

While you're attuned to the *ersatz eye*, you can read and understand, but not speak Orc.

Xanathar's Guide to Everything, p. 137

SMOLDERING ARMOR

Armor (studded leather), common

This leather armor smells of blood and gnoll sweat, and the stench can't be removed.

Wisps of harmless, odorless smoke rise from this armor while it is worn.

Xanathar's Guide to Everything, p. 139

UNBREAKABLE ARROW

Weapon (arrow), common

Gifted to you by Shaktal of the Reghed Wolf Tribe, this arrow proves to Wolf Tribe members loyal to Aluka that the bearer is a friend and ally.

This arrow can't be broken, except when it is within an *antimagic field*.

Xanathar's Guide to Everything, p. 139

APPENDIX D:

DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you must have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a hardcover adventure may continue to play too, but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they can't return to the first if they level beyond its level range.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

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

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you've time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Players Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

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

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

PARTY COMPOSITION	PARTY STRENGTH
3–4 characters, APL less than	Very Weak
3–4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3–4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6–7 characters, APL less than	Average
6–7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6–7 characters, APL greater than	Very Strong