



# THE FROZEN NORTH

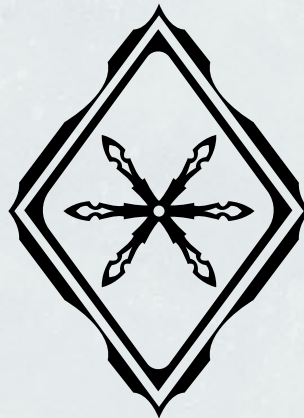
## *A Plague of Ancients Adventure*

An avalanche strands you and your allies in the treacherous Spine of the World, and a relentless blizzard is quickly blowing away all hope of survival. Gather the surviving members of your caravan and strike out for shelter. Strike out for life!

Part One of the *Plague of Ancients* Series of Adventures.

*A Four-Hour Adventure for 1st- and 2nd-Level Characters*

Optimized for APL 1.



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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*I dunno what the hell's in there, but it's weird and pissed off, whatever it is.*

—Bill Lancaster, *The Thing* (1982)

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st- or 2nd-level characters** 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 takes place north of Luskan, somewhere along the “Ten Trail” caravan route through the Spine of the World toward Icewind Dale. See **appendix E** for a map of the region.

## BACKGROUND

**ICEWIND DALE**, the frigid expanse north of the **SPINE OF THE WORLD**, is deep in the grip of the **EVERLASTING RIME**—a name bestowed upon the wrath of **AURIL THE FROSTMAIDEN**. Denied the sun's warmth, the people of **TEN-TOWNS**, the **GOLIATH CLANS**, and the **REGHED NOMADS** in the surrounding wilds, huddle near their fires to drive away the cold, hoping they'll be able to endure the chill until the sun rises once more.

Unbeknownst to them however, the cold is the least of their concerns. Among the **THUUNLAKALAGA** clan—the goliaths of **WYRMDOOM CRAG**—the druid **FERAL-TONGUE** has gone missing, and in his absence, beasts infused with **CHARDALYN** are driving away prey and fomenting madness in the minds of the people they encounter.

All is not yet lost; **OLD GOAT**, the leader of the Thuunlakalaga clan anticipates a sign. Salvation will be heralded by a **FALLING STAR** on the distant horizon, an ember of hope to melt away the icy grip of doubt in her heart.

## OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **four parts**, each taking approximately **1 hour** to play:

**Part 1: The Survivors (60 mins).** The heroes are caught in a terrible avalanche and must rally the survivors and take stock of their supplies before the weather grows worse. This is **Story Objective A**.

**Part 2: The Blizzard (60 mins).** A blizzard with unusual manifestations befalls the heroes and other survivors, who must seek out shelter. One of the survivors disappears under disturbing circumstances. This is **Story Objective B**.

**Part 3: The Cave (60 mins).** The survivors find a cave to shelter from the blizzard in and find sinister ancient ruins within. The entrance to the ruins is hidden by a trapped puzzle that claims the life of another survivor. This is **Story Objective C**.

**Part 4: The Thing (60 mins).** As they explore the ruins, the heroes learn of the long-forgotten wizards who once lived here. The lurking menace reveals itself as a snowy owlbear, who slays the final survivor before vanishing into the snow. A goliath hunter, Suuk One-Feather Thuunlakalaga, offers shelter to the weary travelers. This is **Story Objective D**.



## STORY AWARDS

At points in the adventure, this glyph along with an entry describes how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore it if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters just earned, it provides information for you and the players.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

In addition to the characters' individual backgrounds, the following hooks are possible ways to involve them in this scenario:

**Caravan Guard.** This is a dangerous area of the world and the caravan master offered good pay for guards, scouts, outriders, war mages, healers, and even a minstrel to keep people entertained.

**Local Connections.** The heroes are heading home to visit family or friends, or are conducting business in the area.

**Dire Portents.** Characters with ties to the divine or arcane may have received visions of unusual goings-on in Icewind Dale, which is deep within the grasp of an unusually long and deep winter called the Everlasting Rime.

**The Great Hunt.** Characters who prefer the wilder parts of the world have heard rumors of unusually cunning beasts wandering the wilds of Icewind Dale and may be seeking them out for a challenge or to investigate them.

### NARRATING FROSTCLAW, THE HUNTER

Though they don't face her directly until **part 4**, the characters are constantly hunted by the awakened owlbear as the adventure progresses. To ensure you instill the appropriate sense of paranoia and dread this villain deserves, leave signs of her passing for the characters to encounter. Some examples of what the characters might encounter include:

- A large, white feather stained with blood.
- The mutilated carcass of a beast or a missing goliath hunter.
- Large footprints that're quickly blown away by wind and snow.
- A dead tree with huge claw marks gouged into the trunk.
- Growls and roars; their source obscured by howling wind.
- A circular pattern of deliberately arranged body parts.



# THE SURVIVORS

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE SPINE OF THE WORLD

**Themes.** Fear, isolation, shock.

This episode introduces the sidekicks: the Expert, the Warrior, and the Spellcaster (see **handout 1**).

### STORY OBJECTIVE A

Rescuing the other survivors and surviving the night is **Story Objective A**.

## CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each character a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason why they're with the caravan. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to them.

Award **inspiration** (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) once everyone's had a turn.

### INSPIRATION

Inspiration can be awarded by the DM for roleplaying, clever thinking, contributing to the fun, or for any other reason. If a player has inspiration, they can state that they're using it **before** rolling an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check to get advantage on that roll. Advantage means that you roll two d20s (or one d20 twice) and take the higher roll.

Players can earn inspiration once and can't earn it again until they've used it or given it away to another player who doesn't have inspiration. What does this mean? The more you award inspiration, the more players will try to earn it!

## AREA INFORMATION

This section represents a desperate search for survivors and gear before the blizzard grows to full force. The heroes should slowly realize they're in deep trouble.

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The pass winds through rocky peaks, narrow paths, and wide saddles, but is made far more treacherous by the snow and ice driven by the constantly howling winds. It's quite possibly the deepest winter this part of the world has seen in living memory.

**Temperature.** Snow gets into people's clothes from being tumbled by the avalanche and melts making them wet and cold. The temperature is starting to drop.

**Light.** The nights in Icewind Dale are long (especially during the grip of the Everlasting Rime) and the utter darkness is broken only by a few hours of dim twilight—usually between late morning and early evening—and the auroras that streak across the sky.

### LIGHTING IN ICEWIND DALE

Unless otherwise noted in the adventure, daytime hours provide dim light outdoors, while 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.

**Weather.** A blizzard is coming. The sky turns steel gray and the wind picks up, blowing snow everywhere. The light snow hangs in the air as a white mist, lightly **obscuring** the area beyond 15 feet, and heavily obscuring anything beyond 30 feet. The mist leaves a thin coat of ice on surfaces it comes into contact with.

### OBSCUREMENT

Vision is important in adventuring—whether it's needed to see a hidden foe, to target a spell, or to find clues. Some effects obscure a creature's vision, complicating these tasks.

**Lightly Obscured.** These areas can be caused by fog, dim light, and moderate foliage. Creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when trying to see something that's lightly obscured.

**Heavily Obscured.** These areas are caused by darkness, opaque fog, and dense foliage and block vision entirely. A creature is blinded when trying to see something in that area. Blinded creatures automatically fail Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, have disadvantage on attack rolls, and grant advantage to attackers that they can't see.

**Sounds.** Settling snow shifting. The wind's rising whine. The wounded's weak cries as they suffocate or succumb to their injuries. Given the background noise, Wisdom checks relying on hearing are made with disadvantage.



## A. THE AVALANCHE

Unfortunately, things are about to get a whole lot worse for our intrepid band of heroes and do-gooders!

### TO BOXED TEXT OR NOT TO BOXED TEXT

You can read this box text dramatically to your players, or you can ignore it and describe the avalanche yourself. Don't use more than a few sentences and don't describe the characters' actions; tell the players what their characters sense and let them decide what their characters do. As a DM, you get to portray the entire world; let the players focus on their own characters.

A shockingly loud roar, like all the thunder in the world, sounds from hundreds of feet up the mountain followed by the cracking of evergreen trees as a huge wave of ice, snow, and debris crashes down to engulf the tiny caravan like a nightmare of white dragon breath.

Give the players a few seconds each to describe what their characters do before the avalanche engulfs them!

As the grinding roar of the avalanche subsides into the cracks and groans of snow settling, weak cries for help and wails of pain penetrate the snowpack. Dusting the snow off yourselves, you see the caravan is gone; only felled trees, tumbled boulders, and mounds of snow remain.

Just as the heroes take stock of the avalanche damage, the weather starts to turn bad; a blizzard is clearly coming. Remind the players that they have inspiration—they may need it! Inspiration is used to gain **advantage** on a d20 roll—the most important die in the game.

### ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

Sometimes your character enjoys or suffers an effect that grants **advantage** or imposes **disadvantage** on a d20 roll—such as an ability check, an attack roll, or a saving throw. While the two mechanics operate very similarly, they're polar opposites. In both cases, instead of rolling one d20, you roll two. If you've got advantage on a roll, you choose the higher result of the two dice. If you've got disadvantage, you choose the lower roll.

If multiple effects grant advantage or impose disadvantage on a roll, you don't roll more than one additional d20. If an effect causes a roll to have both advantage and disadvantage (for instance, an NPC is helping but the hero has a level of exhaustion), you're considered to have neither; you roll one d20 as normal. This is true even if multiple circumstances impose disadvantage and only one grants advantage or vice versa. In such a situation, you have neither advantage nor disadvantage.

Ask the characters what they're doing in response to the debacle they've suddenly found themselves in. Consider a short introduction to ability checks here.

### ABILITY CHECKS

An **ability check** tests a creature's (characters and monsters are both creatures) innate talent and training in an effort to overcome a challenge. You call for an ability check when a creature attempts an action (other than an attack) that has a chance of failure. When the outcome is uncertain, the die determines the results. The adventure usually suggests which ability to use as well as the difficulty class (DC) of the check, though you can change that.

An ability check consists of a d20 roll plus the ability score modifier for the ability used for the check. If the ability check calls for using a skill, a creature proficient in that skill also adds their proficiency modifier. If the roll plus all the modifiers equals or exceeds the DC, the creature succeeds; otherwise they fail.

## STORY OBJECTIVE A

Once the characters are ready to move on, they see and hear signs of other survivors:

- A shivering **Expert** partially buried in the snow.
- A **Warrior** threatened by hungry wolves, trying to quickly don their armor.
- Shouts of terror can be heard from a **Spellcaster** stuck beneath an overturned wagon: "Help!"

The characters must decide how to rescue as many survivors as possible. Given the gravity of the situation, they must split up if they're to rescue them all.



## B. RESCUE

The characters must rescue the surviving caravan members—and with the weather worsening by the moment, they'll need to split up to do so.

Once each character has decided who they're going to save, have everyone roll **initiative**. Track the following encounters in this order and monitor how many rounds pass. Emphasize that their situations are most dire; a survivor who isn't saved within **four** rounds dies! Feel free to adjust this up or down for particularly small or large groups as you see fit.

### INITIATIVE

An initiative check is a Dexterity ability check. It isn't a skill, so proficiency bonuses aren't typically added. This check determines the order in which the actors in a given encounter take their turns. The creature with the highest initiative check goes first at the beginning of a round, with others following in descending order until the last creature takes their turn. Once everyone's taken their turn, the round ends and the next round begins.

## B1. THE EXPERT

The **Expert** is buried up to their waist in the snow and is unable to escape. Worse yet, their precious flask is gone!

### THE EXPERT

*Chaotic good expert sidekick*

This clever soul is the firstborn of a highly regarded smith. After their father died in a suspicious accident, and suspecting a competitor was to blame, they self-exiled rather than tend to the business themselves. The Expert is brash and boisterous.

**What They Want.** Having left their ancestral home behind, they seek to begin life anew in the frozen, unexplored reaches of Icewind Dale. They've heard rumors of long-forgotten ruins with ancient treasures ripe for plunder.

**Nagging Guilt.** They seldom speak of their past, and they shield themselves from the guilt of leaving their home with jokes and self-deprecating anecdotes. But those who push them on it find it's a surefire way to anger them.

Freeing the Expert requires a successful DC 9 Strength (Athletics) check, but once freed, they immediately begin searching for a flask—a gift from someone very dear to them. In order to rescue the Expert, the characters must find it among the snow and wreckage.

Finding the flask requires a successful DC 11 **group** check—meaning that each character present makes the check, but if half or more of them succeed, the entire group does. This time, the type of check (Wisdom, Dexterity, etc.) is determined by the player. Have each player describe what their character is doing to search. A character digging through the snow makes a Strength (Athletics) check, while a character who clambers atop a nearby vantage point, such as a ruined wagon, makes a Wisdom (Perception) check. A character might even try to deduce where the flask would've fallen—given the wind speed and the sidekick's fall trajectory—making an Intelligence (Investigation) check. Reward the players' creativity here.

### HELP

As an action, a creature can take the **Help** action to assist others with a task, provided that the check is something the creature could attempt alone—such as searching for something. However, a creature can only use the Help action with tasks that two or more people could perform productively. Some tasks, such as threading a needle, aren't easier with help.

Helping a creature gives them advantage on their next ability check to perform that task. Alternatively, a creature can aid a friendly creature in attacking a creature within 5 feet of them. They feint, distract the target, or in some other way team up to make their ally's attack more effective. If their ally attacks the target before the helping creature's next turn, the first attack roll is made with advantage.

**NOTE:** The Expert can Help others as a bonus action, so they should aid one of the characters in their efforts each round. Choose a character randomly or choose one played by a young or new player, or someone with anxieties about roleplaying. Remember, everyone should be able to shine.

If the characters aren't interested in searching for the flask, they can convince the Expert to give up the search instead with a successful DC 11 group check. As before, the characters describe what they're attempting, and you decide what sort of check they must make. A character who tries to convince the Expert of the immediate environmental dangers would make a Wisdom (Survival) check. Convincing them with a lie about having already found the flask would require a Charisma (Deception) check. Barring that, asking nicely (or not-so-nicely) calls for a Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check.

**Development.** The Expert is rescued once their flask is found or they're convinced to stop searching for it.

## B2. THE SPELLCASTER

The Spellcaster was sound asleep when the rushing snow overturned their wagon. They're trapped beneath it and risk suffocating unless they're saved!

### THE SPELLCASTER

*Neutral spellcaster sidekick*

Growing up on the streets of Waterdeep didn't stop this ruffian from teaching themselves how to read and obtaining work at Candlekeep. In pursuit of becoming a full-fledged member of the Avowed (the monks that maintain the great library), they've made the trek to Icewind Dale searching for ancient Netherese tomes and relics. The Spellcaster is gruff and terse.

**What They Want.** Ambitious to a fault, they're pursuing the ruins of an ancient Netherese keep they found referenced in a number of long-forgotten tomes.

**Something from Nothing.** They're no longer the street rat they once were, and by succeeding in their journey, they'll make a difference in the world. As a reminder, they carry the black robes of an Avowed acolyte folded neatly at the bottom of their pack, waiting patiently to be earned.

The Spellcaster is trapped beneath the wagon debris and snow and has one round left until they start **suffocating**. Once this happens, they hold out for one additional round before dropping to 0 hit points, at which point they begin dying (see below). Hearing the characters nearby, the Spellcaster calls out in fear and desperation.



### DROPPING TO 0 HIT POINTS

Upon being reduced to 0 hit points, a creature falls unconscious and is dying. At the beginning of each of their turns, a dying character makes a special saving throw—a death saving throw. A death saving throw is like any other saving throw except it isn't tied to an ability score and creatures aren't usually proficient in them. If the creature rolls a 10 or higher, they succeed; otherwise, they fail.

If the creature succeeds on three saving throws, they stabilize and even though they remain at 0 hit points, they're no longer at risk of dying; they don't continue to make saving throws. If they fail three times, they die. If a creature rolls a natural 20 on their death saving throw, they regain 1 hit point and can act on their turn. A natural 1 counts as two failures. A creature also suffers a failed death saving throw if they take damage while dying unless it's from a critical hit—which counts as two!

Dying creatures can also be stabilized if another creature uses an action to administer first aid and makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check, or automatically if they use a healer's kit.

The characters have little time to rescue the Spellcaster. Doing so requires hoisting the wagon off them with a successful DC 11 group Strength (Athletics) check. Due to the abundance of piled snow, however, these checks are made with disadvantage. If all the characters spend a round clearing the snow away, the group check is made normally.

### SUFFOCATING

A creature can hold its breath for a number of **minutes** equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). Once its breath runs out, it can survive for a number of **rounds** equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again.

### DEVELOPMENT

The Spellcaster is rescued once they're freed from the wagon wreckage.

## B3. THE WARRIOR

The Warrior was off duty when the avalanche struck. They managed to get to safety and sensing impending combat, began to don their armor. However, they've been set upon by two **wolves** before they've had the chance to finish!

### THE WARRIOR

*Lawful neutral warrior sidekick*

Once a temple guard, this brave veteran later fell into service with the Flaming Fist. They took a leave of absence when their sibling made the voyage into Icewind Dale and never returned after two years. The Warrior is manipulative and calculating.

**What They Want.** They've made the voyage to Icewind Dale in search of their sibling. They don't know where to begin their search, but figure Ten-Towns is a good place to start.

**Single-Minded Determination.** They're confident their sibling is still alive and will do whatever it takes to prove it, including throwing others into harm's way.





Deciding the Warrior is easy prey, the wolves begin circling them. The Warrior has donned their shield and spent the last seven rounds frantically donning their armor; their AC is currently 13. The Warrior finishes donning their armor after they use three actions to do so, raising their AC to 16. The characters must defend the Warrior until they're finished. The Warrior aids the characters if things look dire.

#### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

- **Weak:** The wolves use the mastiff stat block.
- **Strong:** Add one wolf.
- **Very Strong:** Add two wolves.

#### PLAYING THE PILLARS

Suggestions for this encounter:

**Combat.** If the heroes are outmatched, the wolves may probe the group for weaknesses by attacking individually.

**Exploration.** There might be patches of thick, wet snow in the area that count as difficult terrain. This may work to the characters' advantage; they could try to lure the wolves into the hazards. Alternatively, sudden gusts of wind carrying snow might obscure the area.

**Social.** Characters can convince a wolf to flee or stop attacking with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. If the wolf is charmed by an *animal friendship* spell or a character uses a *speak with animals* spell to communicate with it, the check is made with advantage.

#### DAMAGE

When a creature takes **damage**, its hit points are reduced by a like amount. When a creature's hit points are reduced to 0, it dies or is dying.

Damage is usually determined by a die roll and a damage type. DMs are usually also provided with an average number. Here, the wolf deals 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage on a hit. Using the average is convenient and fast, but you can choose to roll the damage instead. It's recommended you ask your players which method they'd prefer, and stick with the choice you make.

**Development.** The Warrior is rescued once the wolves are defeated.



#### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

The characters earn this story award if they rescue any of the survivors. Annotate which of the three survivors they rescued. Each sidekick is then controlled by one character. If the sidekick has the Magical Role or Martial Role trait, the controlling character (with the consideration of the other players) chooses which one to use. This choice can't be changed.

## SETTING UP CAMP

Night falls as the heroes find each other and the other three survivors and begin to search the wreckage. It's completely dark and while the characters may be up to it, the survivors are just too exhausted to continue. They suggest searching the area for supplies and making camp with what they find; they can decide on what to do next in the morning.

## SEARCHING THE WRECKAGE

If the characters take the time to search the area, they find the following:

**The Silver.** The characters spot the shiny brass fittings of a sturdy lockbox partially buried in the snow. The lockbox can be unlocked with a successful DC 11 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools, or a character can force it open with a successful DC 11 Strength check—though doing so ruins the nice box. The box contains a pouch of dark-blue velvet filled with silver from the city of Luskan to the south (see **Treasure**).

#### THIEVES' TOOLS

Thieves' tools aren't a skill, but rather a tool proficiency. A creature that's proficient with these tools adds their proficiency bonus to any ability checks they make with them—usually checks made to disarm traps or open locks.







**The Potion.** The corpse of a caravan member lies next to a potion box: both shattered by the force of the avalanche. Most of the vials within have broken and spilled onto the snow, creating a slick of faintly glowing liquid in an eye-searing rainbow. Only one vial remains intact. The vial contains a bead of red liquid that bobs lazily within, pulsing rhythmically—a *potion of growth* (see **Treasure**).

**The Special Delivery.** The character comes across the remains of a wagon and finds a sturdy wooden crate (see **Treasure**) about the size of a large shoebox, with a partial label indicating its intended recipient resides somewhere in Icewind Dale, but the name is gone. The sealed crate can be pried open with a successful DC 12 Strength check. Within is a knitted pink cap and mittens sized for an adult, a package of herbal cough drops, leather bootlaces, and a package of home-baked chocolate chip cookies. Placed with loving care atop it is a handwritten note (see **handout 2**).

#### DEVELOPMENT

Once the characters have prepared for the long, cold night ahead, they're safe to take a **long rest**.

#### LONG REST

A **long rest** is a period of extended downtime, at least 8 hours long, during which a character sleeps for at least 6 hours and performs no more than 2 hours of light activity, such as reading, talking, eating, or standing watch. If the rest is interrupted by a period of strenuous activity—at least 1 hour of walking, fighting, casting spells, or similar adventuring activity—the characters must begin the rest again to gain any benefit from it.

At the end of a long rest, a character regains all lost hit points. The character also regains spent Hit Dice, up to a number of dice equal to half the character's total number of them (minimum of one die). As the characters are likely first level and only have one Hit Die, this isn't much of an issue.

A character can't benefit from more than one long rest in a 24-hour period, and a character must have at least 1 hit point at the start of the rest to gain its benefits.

The night is long and cold. In the morning, each character must make a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw**. If you feel a particular character was descriptive and adequately roleplayed their preparations, consider allowing them to make the save with advantage. Characters who fail the save gain the **Frostbitten** story award.

By morning, the storm has abated, but the characters aren't out of trouble yet; they awake to find the tracks of a rather large creature circling their camp (see **handout 3**). Characters who make a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Nature) check identify the tracks as those of an owlbear—a big one.



#### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

Characters who fail the saving throw gain this story award. They gain a level of **exhaustion** that can't be removed until they complete a long rest with food and drink in a warm and dry location.

#### EXHAUSTION

Some special hazards, such as the long-term effects of freezing temperatures, can lead to a special condition called **exhaustion**. Exhaustion is measured in levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of exhaustion.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

Levels of exhaustion are cumulative, and a creature suffers the effect of its current level of exhaustion as well as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering level 2 exhaustion has its speed halved and has disadvantage on ability checks.

Finishing a long rest reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1, provided the creature has also ingested some food and drink.

Some effects that cause exhaustion might impose other conditions for their removal. In this case, the **Frostbitten** story award requires a long rest somewhere warm and dry.

#### TREASURE

Provided they scavenged for supplies, the characters find:

- A dark-blue velvet pouch of silver coins from Luskan.
- A *potion of growth* (see **handout 7**).
- A parcel containing a delivery of homemade goods to persons unknown. The crate and its contents count as a single trinket—one person among the group can keep them. While the individual items aren't really useful, if the characters can figure out who they were intended for, the recipient may be incredibly happy to have them.



# THE BLIZZARD

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE BLIZZARD

**Themes.** Fear, isolation, helplessness.

This part of the adventure continues to pit the characters against the environment and strains their relationship with the sidekicks. It ends with the discovery that one of them has been slain by the unseen creature stalking the group.

### STORY OBJECTIVE B

Finding shelter from the storm in the caves is **Story Objective B**.

If playing this adventure across multiple sessions, consider having players reintroduce their characters.

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each player a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason why they're with the caravan. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to the characters.

Award inspiration (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) to players who entertain the table with their introductions!

## AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The pass winds through rocky peaks, narrow paths, and wide saddles, but is made far more treacherous by the snow and ice driven by the constantly howling winds. It's quite possibly the deepest winter this part of the world has seen in living memory.

**Temperature.** The temperature is still dropping, and the wind causes exposed skin to ice over. It's uncomfortably, dangerously cold. If someone stops moving, they feel sharp pain from freezing extremities and know death is coming if they stay still for long.

**Light.** The nights in Icewind Dale are long (especially during the grip of the Everlasting Rime) and the utter darkness is broken only by a few hours of dim twilight—usually between late morning and early evening—and the auroras that streak across the sky.

### LIGHTING IN ICEWIND DALE

Unless otherwise noted in the adventure, daytime hours provide dim light outdoors, while 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.

**Weather.** An unnaturally strong blizzard. Snow pours from the sky, angry thunder rumbles overhead, and violent lightning sears the landscape. A creature that makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) suspects the blizzard will arrive within a few hours and is likely to last several days. There's no doubt that if the group doesn't find shelter soon, they'll freeze to death. The whiteout conditions and strong winds lightly obscure anything beyond 15 feet and heavily obscure anything beyond 30 feet.

**Sounds.** Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing are made with disadvantage due to the incessant thunder and wind.



### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

Characters with this story award begin this part with one or more levels of exhaustion that can't be removed until they complete a long rest in a warm and dry location. Remind the players that the

Expert is keen to use the Help action to offset disadvantage.



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

If any of the characters have this story award, the group begins this part with each sidekick the characters annotated in their story award. The players decide who'll control each sidekick

(choosing randomly if they can't agree).

## A. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The area destroyed by the avalanche is nearly a quarter mile across; it extends down one mountain, across the valley floor, and a quarter of the way up the mountain on the opposite side of the valley. The remains of the caravan are scattered over a large area.

Thunder rattles overhead as snow, sky, and land blend in whiteout conditions. Lightning in the clouds overhead cause irregular bursts of light that make seeing harder still. In the distance, you can make out the dark shape of a mountain peak looming overhead. Perhaps you'll be able to find shelter there.



Spend a few moments with each player in turn, asking what their character wants to do as they prepare to strike out for the mountain. Once they're all ready, they depart.

The journey toward the mountain is arduous. It's also rife with dangerous weather and terrain. After an hour, the party come across such a hazard. Roll a d4 to see what they encounter (or choose one yourself); once the characters successfully traverse the hazard, proceed to **B. Snow Birds**.

d4	Event
1	Quicksnow
2	Crevasse
3	Blood Sleet
4	Razor Snow

## A1. QUICKSNOW

Quicksnow occurs in areas of light, powdery snow atop heavy, slushy snow. A quicksnow field covers the ground in an area roughly 10 feet square and 10 feet deep. A creature that makes a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the quicksnow. Once detected, it's easily avoided.

When a creature enters the area, it sinks  $1d4 + 1$  feet into the quicksnow and is **restrained**. At the start of each of the creature's turns, it sinks another 1d4 feet. As long as the creature isn't completely submerged in quicksnow, it can escape by using its action and succeeding on a Strength (Athletics) check. The DC is 10 plus the number of feet the creature has sunk into the quicksnow.

### RESTRAINED

While **restrained**:

- A restrained creature's speed becomes 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed.
- Attack rolls against the creature have advantage, and the creature's attack rolls have disadvantage.
- The creature has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.

A creature that starts its turn restrained by quicksnow takes 2 (1d4) cold damage. A creature can pull another creature out of the quicksnow as an action with a successful Strength check. The DC equals 5 plus the number of feet the target has sunk into the quicksnow.

## A2. CREVASSE

A crevasse is a long deep crack in the snowpack hidden by a thin crust of ice and snow. A creature that makes a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the crevasse. Once detected, it's easily avoided. Otherwise, a creature that steps here breaks through the ice and must make a successful DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the 10-foot-deep crevasse, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. Climbing out of the crevasse requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) roll. A character who fails this check falls back down, taking another 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, and must attempt their escape anew.

## A3. BLOOD SLEET

The whirling snow becomes stinging pellets of coppery, dark-red sleet. The sleet blows into eyes, noses, and mouths and threatens to freeze solid everything in its path.

Off in the distance, the storm looks . . . odd; the snow is a dark crimson color.





Any creature that starts its turn in blood sleet must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) cold damage and find themselves coated in a rime of blood-red ice. A creature that starts its turn encrusted in ice takes 3 (1d6) cold damage. Clearing the rime from a creature requires an action.

The sleet lasts for 3 rounds before dissipating.

## A4. RAZOR SNOW

The wind abates, something that'd normally be a good thing. Moments later, sparkling snowflakes the size of dinner plates lazily drift down from the storm above. While beautiful, they're razor sharp—something that becomes immediately apparent as the wind picks back up and sends the snowflakes whizzing around the area cutting limbs off the evergreen trees.

On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the snowflakes whiz toward a random creature in the area and attack it: +3 to hit, dealing 2 (1d4) slashing damage on a hit.

The snow lasts for 3 rounds before dissipating.

## B. SNOW BIRDS

After another hour of travel, the blizzard calms slightly; the swirling snow around the characters moves in odd patterns before opening into lambent, yellow-orange eyes burning with malice.

### CREATURE INFORMATION

Feral-Tongue has used dark magic to conjure four snowy **giant owls** made of frost, ice, and hate.

#### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

- **Weak:** Remove one **giant owl**.
- **Strong:** Add three **giant owls**.
- **Very Strong:** The **giant owls** use the **giant wasp** stat block.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check reveals that these aren't natural creations, but rather elementals conjured from the evil magic suffusing the area. They hate all life.

These elemental manifestations mimic real owls and fear only one thing: bigger owls—something a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check reveals. Clever and resourceful characters may look to exploit these fears. If they do so, any somewhat realistic image or sound—such as from the *minor illusion* cantrip or mimicking a “hoot” with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Nature) check—may **frighten** the creatures for a few rounds or even drive them away; giving the heroes time to escape if they choose.

#### FRIGHTENED

A frightened creature:

- Has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while the source of its fear is within line of sight.
- Can't willingly move closer to the source of its fear.

Once the owls are defeated, the characters happen upon the frozen remains of another caravan member—and perhaps other victims of the owls. By the look of it, she froze solid while preparing to drink a potion—evident from the vial clutched in her hand. She's also wearing a platinum ring set with a large sapphire that looks valuable.

**Treasure.** A *potion of healing* and a platinum ring set with a large sapphire, if the characters prize them from the frozen woman's hand.

## SHELTER AT LAST!

The tattered heroes make it to the mountains on the far side of the valley and must search for shelter. A successful DC 12 **group** Wisdom (Survival) check allows them to find a suitable cave quickly. Remember to award inspiration often for roleplaying and clever thinking! If the characters fail, the search takes a few hours in the numbing cold. Each character gains the **Frostbitten** story award.

Upon entering the cave, the characters find it spacious and warm, even the wind seems unable to ruin it. At the back of the cave, a tiny stream flows from a crack in the wall and collects into a pool, which is safe to drink.

In either case, the characters are free to take a long rest if they choose, the cave is safe (and warm if they start a fire using some of the goods they scavenged from the caravan).



### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

If the characters fail the group Wisdom (Survival) check to find the cave, each character gains a level of exhaustion. Respite is to be found in the cave, however. The characters can take a long rest in the cave, reducing their exhaustion level by 1 upon completing it. If a character's exhaustion level is reduced to 0, instruct the player to remove this story award from their character.



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

If the Warrior sidekick is present, one of the other sidekicks (or the characters, if no other sidekicks are present) notices that the Warrior is missing as the group enters the cave mouth. On cue, a scream is heard above the wind. If the characters investigate, read (or paraphrase):

Retracing your steps, you find what's left of the Warrior. For lack of a better description, they've been torn limb from limb and their component parts arranged in an unusual geometric pattern in the snow.

The only indications of what happened are the tracks of a large creature, a bear perhaps, quickly being erased by the wind-driven snow.

A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the tracks as those of an owlbear—a big one. The tracks lead into the snowy wastes and disappear after 50 feet.

Instruct each player to remove the Warrior from their character's story awards.



# THE CAVE

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE DOOR IN THE CAVE

**Themes.** Ancient, unknowable ruins, fear, paranoia. In this episode, the characters finally find shelter from the Spine of the World's brutal wind and cold in the form of a shallow cave that's also an entrance to a Netherese ruin.

### STORY OBJECTIVE C

Discovering how to open the door is **Story Objective C**.

If playing this adventure across multiple sessions, consider having players reintroduce their characters.

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each character a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason why they're with the caravan. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to the characters.

Award inspiration (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) to players who entertain the table with their introductions!

## AREA INFORMATION

The cave has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The naturally formed cave the heroes have found contains a number of tunnels and small chambers. The most curious is a short tunnel leading from the opening chamber, which transitions to worked stone.

**Light.** The cave is completely dark.

**Temperature.** Pleasantly warm compared to outside.

**Sounds.** Occasional drips of water, weird echoes.



### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

Characters with this story award begin this part with one or more levels of exhaustion that can't be removed until they complete a long rest in a warm and dry location—like this cave.



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

If any of the characters have this story award, the group begins this part with each sidekick the characters annotated in their story award.

The players decide who'll control each sidekick (choosing randomly if they can't agree).

**The Warrior.** If any of the characters have the Warrior listed in their story awards, they awake to find one of the other sidekicks obviously distraught and pointing outside the cave. If the characters investigate, read or paraphrase:

Just outside the cave's mouth, you find what's left of the Warrior. For lack of a better description, they've been torn limb from limb and their component parts arranged in an unusual geometric pattern in the snow.

The only indications of what happened are the tracks of a large creature, a bear perhaps, quickly being erased by the wind-driven snow.

If no other sidekicks are present, the characters find bloody drag marks leading outside the cave to the grim discovery. The tracks lead into the snowy wastes and disappear after 50 feet. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the tracks as owlbear tracks—a big one.

Instruct each player to remove the Warrior from their character's story awards.

## A. THE DOOR

After exploring the cave, the characters find a chamber of worked stone—different than the natural stone they've seen elsewhere.

## AREA INFORMATION

The chamber has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** A short tunnel branching from the first chamber transitions from unworked stone to a corridor of hewn stone ending in a grand chamber 30 feet across with an ornate ceiling 40 feet overhead. The walls are covered in detailed bas-relief **carvings**. An ice-covered **door** is set in the far wall with the long-cold remnants of a **camp** nestled by it. Two tunnels lead into darkness.

**Carvings.** These carvings depict numerous wizards casting spells that alter entire landscapes, floating cities as grand as Neverwinter or Waterdeep, and ancient gods who are somewhat familiar, yet distinctly different from the ones revered today.



**Door.** The door is made of white marble with streaks of gray and blue. It bears **writing** in Draconic letters, as well as diagrams, and small holes, described in **handout 4**.

**Camp.** Beside the door, the characters find the remnants of an incredibly old camp. The camp has a firepit along with a bundle of old, but dry, firewood, various camping supplies, and a backpack covered by a paper-thin layer of limestone—deposited by years of water dripping from above. The backpack contains a tattered journal and a leather pouch containing pebbles painted in various colors of sparkly paint (see **handout 5**). A character who makes a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) check wagers the camp has been abandoned for at least a century, maybe two.

**Ice.** The ice makes it impossible to discern the door's engravings. The door can be cleared of ice by spending a couple hours chipping it away. Alternatively, the characters can build a fire to warm the chamber and **melt** the ice in an hour. The writing is legible once cleared of ice.

**Writing.** The writing uses Draconic letters but is in a language the characters are unlikely to understand without magical assistance: Netherese. If the characters can't translate it, perhaps their sidekicks can. Once translated, the passage reads:

"Protection of the Leadership leads to Mastery but Reserve your Intellect for Self-Preservation. Your Fortitude is due to your Regeneration and Absorption of Sustenance. Awareness of Insight leads to Supreme Intellect."



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

The sidekicks can help the characters—depending on if they ask for help or appear to need it. Let the characters be the focus of the story; their sidekicks shouldn't constantly chime in!

**The Spellcaster.** If present, they're able to translate the Netherese to Common, if needed. They're also quite helpful in interpreting the images in the carvings. They aid a character who consults with them, granting advantage on the check made to discern what the carvings depict.

**The Expert.** If the characters lack the ability to translate the writing **and** if the Spellcaster isn't present to do so, the Expert (if present) grudgingly assists and draws out a vial full of a clear liquid with soot swirling in it—a *potion of comprehension* (see **handout 7**)—and hands it to the nearest character with annoyance.

### THE PUZZLE

There's an inscription on the door in Netherese (see **handout 4**). There are depictions of stones around the outside of the door, and a chute under the text in the middle of the door. Dropping the pebbles into the central chute in the order hinted at in the text opens the door.

However, there are two pebbles still unidentified by the missing archaeologist, and four stones total are missing. The heroes must solve the puzzle to figure out what they look like and then explore the caves to find the missing pebbles (see **B. The Missing Stones**).

A character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the diagrams on the door as *Ioun stones*; magic stones named after their creator, Congenio Ioun, one of the Netheril Empire's greatest wizards. His stones would be familiar to most spellcasters in the empire; identifying them would pose an easily solvable puzzle for a wizard of that era.

### THE CARVINGS

Any character who inspects the bas-relief carvings can make an Intelligence (Arcana or History) check, learning one or more pieces of information based on the result of their check. These results are cumulative; if a character gets 14 on their roll, for example, they learn all the information for the lower DCs as well.

**DC 10:** These old gods are no longer worshipped. For instance, the goddess of magic referenced is Mysteryl, not Mystra.

**DC 12:** The floating cities were unique to the Netheril empire. And it's been gone a thousand years now.

**DC 14:** The pictograms identify this particular ruin as a school or research group that studied necromancy.

**DC 16:** These ruins date from the Second Age of Netheril, the Nether Age, when the *Nether Scrolls* that allowed the empire's magical might to flourish were found. That was about 4,000 to 5,000 years before the present age.

### TREASURE

In addition to the journal and the pebbles, the backpack also contains a *potion of comprehension*, a slender silver needle (an *illuminator's tattoo*), and a silver trade ingot.

## B. THE MISSING STONES

The heroes must search the caves for the last four stones. The heroes can also search for the stones before they solve the puzzle if they choose—encountering the creatures below along the way.





As the heroes search for the stones, the Expert gets jumpier and jumpier—stress their increasing unease, though they dismiss any inquiries about it.

## SELF-PRESERVATION/INTELLECT

Two of the stones have been claimed by a gaggle of gazers. Down one passageway (see appendix B for the map), two **gazers** float about near the 20-foot-high ceiling. The gazers have gone a bit feral without a beholder to keep an eye on them.

The gazers tussle over “the eyes” and aggressively attack intruders—all the while insisting that the characters are unworthy of the eyes and childishly mocking anything they say in retort.

### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

- **Weak:** Remove one **gazer**.
- **Strong:** Add one **gazer**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **gazers**.

## PLAYING THE PILLARS

Suggestions for this encounter:

**Combat.** The gazers like to float outside melee reach. If the party retreats back to the entrance, strong winds knock the gazers to the ground. They rush back toward their lair in a panic on their next turn—provoking opportunity attacks as they flee.

**Exploration.** The gazers are busy tussling and arguing with each other as the characters approach. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check can slip by them, grab the stones, and escape before the gazers are any the wiser.

**Social.** The gazers enjoy terrorizing anything they can find. If the characters manage to strike up a conversation with them, they relate that it's been a long time ago since they've had good visitors; the last one had a staff made of old, dark magic, so they stayed away from him. The ones before that “stole things from them” and were “no fun.”

## TREASURE

The gazers generally hold the stones of Self-Preservation and Intellect in their mouths when they aren't squabbling over them.

## AWARENESS/MASTERY

A breeding colony of piercers clings to the 20-foot-high ceiling. Only two **piercers** are awake at the moment. A skeleton in the middle the floor clutches two sparkly pebbles. **Appendix C** contains the map for this encounter.

### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

- **Weak:** Remove one **piercer**.
- **Strong:** Add one **piercer**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **piercers**.

The piercers are enjoying a lazy afternoon, but they'd still enjoy a warm meal. They haven't eaten in a long time.

**Treasure.** The skeleton clutches the stones of Awareness and Mastery in its hand.

## BREACHING THE DOOR

Once the heroes have all the stones, they must drop them into the central chute in the order noted in the door's riddle. If they get the order wrong, the internal channels in the door reroute the stones back to their respective slots so the heroes can try again.

The heroes can take another long rest in relative warmth and safety in the cave.



### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

If the characters take a long rest at the end of this part, reducing their exhaustion level by 1 upon completing it. If a character's exhaustion level is reduced to 0, the player removes this story award from their character.



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

If the Expert sidekick is present, they insist on checking the door for traps and “other nasties” that the door might hide. Shoving the characters aside, they push it open. Read (or paraphrase):

The door slides open with the grinding of stone. The grand entry room is covered with faded frescoes of life and magic in the Netheril Empire. A heartbeat later, there's a pulse of arcane energy and the Expert's name appears on the far wall, written in sticky blood.

The Expert shrieks in terror and runs out of the ruins toward the cave entrance in a desperate panic.

The Expert runs to the cave entrance as fast as they can, refusing to stop until they're outside. If the characters follow, read (or paraphrase):

The Expert stands in the blowing snow just outside the cave, hands on their knees and panting breathlessly. “Did you see . . .” The words barely escape their lips as a hulking, white-and-crimson form careens out of the snow, grabs them in a huge, taloned claw, and disappears from sight.

Whether the heroes move to save the Expert or save their own skins and flee, they hear the Expert's dying screams. Adventurers willing to venture 100 feet away from the cave mouth catch a glimpse of a large creature standing over the Expert's mangled body, but the creature disappears into the blizzard with disconcerting speed and grace.

Instruct each player to remove the Expert from their character's story awards.

## THE SPELLCASTER

They're clearly disturbed if they see the Expert's death, and with trembling breath, suggest that the characters are next.



# THE THING

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE COLLOQUIUM OF IMMORTALITY

**Themes.** Fear of the unknown, death, discovery.

In this episode, the characters enter the winding halls of the Netherese ruins. As the characters explore, the awakened owlbear hunting the group finally reveals herself.

### STORY OBJECTIVE D

Discovering the secrets of the Colloquium of Immortality and surviving Frostclaw's attack is **Story Objective D**.

If playing this adventure across multiple sessions, consider having players reintroduce their characters.

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each character a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason why they're with the caravan. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to them.

Award inspiration (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) to players who entertain the table with their introductions!

## AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Light.** The ruins are in darkness.

**Temperature.** Pleasantly warm compared to outside.

**Atmosphere.** Weird echoes, the faint smell of carrion. Ancient ruins undisturbed for thousands of years.



### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

Characters with this story award begin this part with one or more levels of exhaustion that can't be removed until they complete a long rest in a warm and dry location.



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

If any of the characters have this story award, the group begins this part with each sidekick the characters annotated in their story award.

The players decide who'll control each sidekick (choosing randomly if they can't agree).

**The Warrior and the Expert.** If any of the characters still have the Expert or the Warrior listed in their story awards, they awake to find them missing. If the characters investigate, they find bloody drag marks leading to the cave's mouth. There, they find the sidekicks' mutilated remains arranged in a macabre pattern, surrounded by the tracks of a large creature, a bear perhaps. The tracks lead into the snowy wastes and disappear after 50 feet. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the tracks as owlbear tracks—a big one.

Instruct each player to remove the Warrior and the Expert from their character's story awards.

## A. PIT OF SACRIFICE

An elegant stone bridge worked to resemble bones crosses a dark pit in this room. There's something at bottom of the pit, and it's definitely moving. The stone bridge leads to **B. Chamber of Slumbering Crystal**.

## AREA INFORMATION

The chamber has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The room is 75 feet wide and 55 feet long with a 30-foot-high ceiling. The entirety of the floor is a 30-foot-deep **pit** partly filled with a thin fog. An elegant 10-foot-wide stone bridge worked to resemble bones spans the pit. The walls are decorated with detailed **frescoes** depicting students in pursuit of profane knowledge.

**Light.** The chamber is in darkness.

**Frescoes.** The faded frescoes depict the following:

- Powerful mages surrounded by scores of seated students taking notes and skeletal attendants cleaning, making deliveries, and bringing food.
- Under the watchful supervision of a mage, a student coaxes a spirit from the body of a recently deceased human.
- Several students conducting a ritual in a graveyard that calls the dead from their graves while nearby townsfolk run away screaming.
- Students vivisectioning a screaming gnome while others take careful notes about the poor creature's anatomy.
- The final fresco depicts two elder mages standing over a kneeling apprentice cutting off her own right hand.

Characters who inspect the frescoes and have a **passive** Intelligence (Investigation) score of 12 or higher, or who make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, notice that all the senior mages depicted in the frescoes are missing their right hands.





### PASSIVE CHECKS

A passive check is a special kind of ability check that doesn't involve any die rolls. A passive check is usually used when the DM wants to secretly determine whether the characters succeed at something without rolling dice, such as noticing a hidden monster.

A creature's passive score is 10 plus all modifiers to a given skill check (ability score modifier plus their proficiency modifier, if proficient). If the creature has advantage on the check, add 5 to their passive score. If they have disadvantage, subtract 5.

If the creature's passive score equals or exceeds the DC of the check, the creature succeeds.

**Crawling Claws.** While it's easy to see something is moving at the bottom of the 30-foot-deep pit, the light fog makes it difficult to discern exactly what it is. A creature that makes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check realizes the pit is filled with moving, severed hands—innumerable crawling claws. The claws consist only of right hands—those cut off by their owners in pursuit of the colloquium's necromantic mysteries. The claws become agitated in response to light and sound—scrabbling at the walls and filling the chamber with an absolutely horrifying scratching, skittering noise.

**The Pit.** Falling into the pit comes with good news and bad news. The good news is that their fall is cushioned and they take no damage. The bad news is that their fall was cushioned by a mass of undead severed hands, which are very excited to meet them.

A creature that starts their turn in the pit finds the little creatures crawling all over the bodies and takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Climbing out the pit requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, though it's made with disadvantage due to the sheer abundance of clinging and grasping hands.

## B. CHAMBER OF SLUMBERING CRYSTAL

The chamber (**see appendix D for the map**) has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** While numerous collapsed chambers are spread throughout the ancient complex, the only open ones lead to a large, 75-foot-wide rectangular room. The **floor** in the center of the chamber is broken open and chunks of ice lay strewn about. **Pictograms** depicting a staff made of stone or ice—perhaps chardalyn—line the walls.

**Temperature.** This chamber is frigid compared to the rest of the colloquium; it seems even colder than the blizzard outside. The partially collapsed rear of the chamber leads to an icy tunnel that slopes upward—perhaps toward the surface. The ice is free of dust and seems new.

**Floor.** Chunks of ice lay strewn about the floor, concentrated around a depression 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep that's been rent in the center of the chamber; it's plain to see something broke free from its icy prison.

**Pictograms.** Complex pictograms line the walls and text is carved under them in several different languages including Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, and Elvish. Their contents are detailed for the players in **handout 6**.

### THE THING

Having had a chance to inspect the pictograms, the creature that's been hunting the group bursts into the chamber from the icy tunnel, collapsing the hallway characters used to reach the chamber.

The chamber shudders as an immense creature crashes into the room—filling it with a shower of snow and ice!



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

If the Spellcaster sidekick is present, they're crushed by falling rubble as Frostclaw arrives. Read (or paraphrase):

A huge chunk of ice detaches from the ceiling with an earsplitting crack and crashes to the ground with immeasurable force.

The only thing where the Spellcaster once stood is a pile of shattered ice and a slowly growing pool of dark-red blood.

Instruct each player to remove the Spellcaster from their character's story awards.

### CREATURE INFORMATION

Frostclaw, Feral-Tongue's closest ally, has finally revealed herself to the characters!





As the snow and powdered ice settles, a snowy owlbear with shards of blood frozen into its fur and feathers comes into view. She stands the better part of fourteen feet tall and her black beak and claws are viciously sharp.

Callous intent burning in her crystalline blue eyes, she stares intently at you, lets loose an ear-piercing shriek, and charges!

### FROSTCLAW

#### *Chaotic evil awakened owlbear*

Frostclaw was the first creature Feral-Tongue awakened following his discovery of the corrupted chardalyn staff. Frostclaw is a murderous creature whose lust for blood is made all the more terrifying by her intellect. She resembles other snowy owlbears, but her beak and claws have been transformed into corrupted chardalyn—a manifestation of the evil magic in Feral-Tongue's staff. Crystals of frozen blood cling to her fur and feathers—tinkling and chiming eerily as she moves.

**What They Want.** Frostclaw lives to drive terror into the hearts of her prey; their screams are almost as sweet to her as their meat.

**Thrill of the Hunt.** Her skill at hunting is matched by her thirst for instilling terror in her victims.

Frostclaw is as smart as an average hero and was charged by Feral-Tongue with securing the pass from the start of part 1—the heroes are the only remaining detail to take care of. Once she's dealt with them, she can return to her lair.

Frostclaw uses the **brown bear** stat block but the chunks of frozen blood in her fur increases her AC by 2. She has an

Intelligence of 10 and is proficient in Giant. In addition to this, she has the Legendary Resistance trait and Legendary Actions listed below:

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Frostclaw fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Legendary Actions.** Frostclaw can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Frostclaw regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Move.** Frostclaw moves up to her speed.

**Shove.** Frostclaw attempts to shove a creature. (See the “Making an Attack” section of chapter 9 in the *Player's Handbook* for more details.)

**Fearsome Roar (Costs 2 Actions).** Frostclaw roars loudly. Any creature within 30 feet that can see and hear Frostclaw must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Frostclaw until the end of their next turn.

**Icy Breath (Costs 3 Actions).** Frostclaw exhales a breath of frigid air in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 4 (1d8) cold damage and be restrained by freezing ice (escape DC 13). A creature that succeeds on its saving throw takes only half damage and isn't restrained.

### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

- **Weak:** Use the **black bear** stat block modified as above.
- **Strong:** Use the **polar bear** stat block modified as above.
- **Very Strong:** Use the **owlbear** stat block modified as above.



## PLAYING THE PILLARS

Suggestions for this encounter:

**Combat.** Frostclaw fights **dirty**. She's happy to suffer an opportunity attack if it means going after lightly armored prey. If a character is close to the depression in the center of the chamber, Frostclaw might gleefully trade one of her claw attacks to Shove them into the hole so she can focus on dismantling the heroes one at a time.

**Exploration.** While rough and uneven, the depression's walls are slick. Climbing them requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. A creature climbing a rope held by another character or secured by a grappling hook makes this check with advantage.

**Social.** Frostclaw is beyond redemption and reason. She's toyed with the characters just long enough to make their flesh succulent and satisfying. While she still becomes friendly if successfully charmed, she can't be compelled to abandon Feral-Tongue without more powerful magic. She still flees if defeated, regardless of magical influences.

## DIE ANOTHER DAY

When Frostclaw is reduced to 0 hit points (or when you feel the characters are in real peril of dying to her), she doesn't die; instead she flees through the icy cave, which crumbles behind her. This is unavoidable; she shrugs off **any** effects that'd prevent her escape. Read or paraphrase:

The owlbear roars in frustration and outrage. Rearing on her hind legs, she turns to flee the chamber, shrugging off your attacks as she barrels away.

She slips on the blood-slick floor by the Spellcaster's body and slams into the wall by the tunnel, causing another collapse that both seals the tunnel behind her and reveals an intact, older passage toward the surface, exposing the bodies of a group of archaeologists—all frozen solid.

Frostclaw's escape tunnel collapses in her wake; any creature that starts their turn within it takes 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage from falling stones and ice and must make a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and be restrained (escape DC 13).

The remains belong to an expedition that'd almost reached the Chamber of Slumbering Crystal. A character who inspects the bodies and makes a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check discerns that they tore each other apart in a frenzy before becoming frozen for all eternity.

## TREASURE

A pair of *goggles of night* with black crystal lenses with brass and black leather frames hangs around one corpse's neck.

## WRAP UP: BACK TO THE SURFACE

The characters can take a long or short rest if they wish; there's nothing in the colloquium that can harm them now Frostclaw has fled. When they're ready, the characters can use the newly revealed archaeologists' tunnel to return to the surface.

The tunnel exits on the opposite side of the mountain. Below, the characters can see the expanse of Icewind Dale. The wind has calmed, but it's still snowing.

## A FEATHER ON THE WIND

A hulking shape emerges from the snow and resolves into a goliath in heavy furs with an immense bow in their hand: Suuk One-Feather Thuunlakalaga. The goliath heard and felt the collapses and was investigating it when they found the characters. They offer the party salted meat, water, and shelter in nearby Wyrmdoom Crag. The goliath is curious and asks the heroes questions as they travel. If they mention the owlbear, Suuk acknowledges seeing the great beast and is awestruck by the characters' description; Old Goat, the Thuunlakalaga chieftain, will no doubt be interested in hearing their story.

### SUUK ONE-FEATHER THUUNLAKALAGA

*Neutral goliath hunter*

One of the more gifted hunters among the Thuunlakalaga goliaths of Wyrmdoom Crag, Suuk keeps mostly to himself—often ranging the wilds of Icewind Dale for months at a time. Old Goat recognizes their wisdom and skill; the chieftain one day hopes the hunter will succeed her as the tribe's chieftain—something she's requested of them on more than one occasion. However, deep down, Old Goat knows Suuk has no interest in doing so.

**What They Want.** Suuk is content to provide for their tribe, and thankful that Old Goat allows them to do so in the manner they choose. Each journey is further, each peak taller, and each beast larger and fiercer than the one before it. Their accomplishments are their own, however; their kin seldom witness them.

**Unwanted Pressures.** Suuk knows full well what Old Goat's plans are—to have them replace her as chieftain and spend the rest of their days providing counsel and making decisions that'd impact the entirety of their tribe. But they've given their answer a dozen times already: no.



### STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

Each character removes this story award.



### STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

Each character removes this story award.



## REWARDS

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

### CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards:

#### ADVANCEMENT

A character that successfully completes this adventure gains one level.

**D&D Celebration.** If you played this adventure during the D&D Celebration event in September of 2020, your character gained a level upon completing each part of this adventure. This was a special exception to the normal rules.

#### OPTIONAL: DECLINING ADVANCEMENT

Each player can decline advancement if they so choose; this has its benefits. It's possible for a character to advance beyond an adventure's level range, meaning they'd be unable to play an adventure as planned. Similarly, advancing too quickly means a character won't earn as much gold as their peers.

Conversely, remind them that the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited; characters declining advancement might reach a point where they no longer earn gold.

#### GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

#### MAGIC ITEMS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items, described in **handout 7**:

- *Illuminator's tattoo*
- *Potion of growth*
- *Potion of healing*
- *Potion of comprehension*
- *Goggles of night*

#### STORY AWARDS

The characters may earn one or more of the following story awards, described in **handout 7**:

**Rescuers.** You've rescued other members of the caravan, only to have them slain by an awakened snowy owlbear.

**Frostbitten.** Remove this story award upon successfully completing this story award.

### DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, you earn a DM Reward. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.





## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

### THE EXPERT

*Chaotic good expert sidekick*

This clever soul is the firstborn of a highly regarded smith. After their father died in a suspicious accident, and suspecting a competitor was to blame, they self-exiled rather than tend to the business themselves. The Expert is brash and boisterous.

**What They Want.** Having left their ancestral home behind, they seek to begin life anew in the frozen, unexplored reaches of Icewind Dale. They've heard rumors of long-forgotten ruins with ancient treasures ripe for plunder.

**Nagging Guilt.** They seldom speak of their past, and they shield themselves from the guilt of leaving their home with jokes and self-deprecating anecdotes. But those who push them on it find it's sure to anger them.

### THE SPELLCASTER

*Neutral spellcaster sidekick*

Growing up on the streets of Waterdeep didn't stop the spellcaster from teaching themselves how to read and obtaining work at Candlekeep. In pursuit of becoming a full-fledged member of the Avowed, they've made the trek to Icewind Dale searching for ancient Netherese tomes and relics. The Spellcaster is gruff and terse.

**What They Want.** Ambitious to a fault, they're pursuing the ruins of an ancient Netherese keep they found referenced in a number of long-forgotten tomes.

**Something from Nothing.** They're no longer the street rat they once were, and by succeeding in their journey, they'll make a difference in the world. As a reminder, they carry the black robes of an Avowed acolyte folded neatly at the bottom of their pack, waiting patiently to be earned.

### THE WARRIOR

*Lawful neutral warrior sidekick*

Once a temple guard, the warrior later fell into service with the Flaming Fist. They took a leave of absence when their sibling made the voyage into Icewind Dale and never returned after two years. The Warrior is manipulative and calculating.

**What They Want.** They've made the voyage to Icewind Dale in search of their sibling. They don't know where to begin their search, but figure Ten-Towns is a good place to start.

**Single-Minded Determination.** They're confident their sibling is still alive and will do whatever it takes to prove it, including throwing others into harm's way.

### SUUK ONE-FEATHER THUUNLAKALAGA

*Neutral goliath hunter*

One of the more gifted hunters among the Thuunlakalaga goliaths of Wyrmdoom Crag, Suuk keeps mostly to themselves—often ranging the wilds of Icewind Dale for months at a time. Old Goat recognizes their wisdom and skill; the chieftain one day hopes the hunter will succeed her as the tribe's chieftain—something she's requested of them on more than one occasion. However, deep down, Old Goat knows Suuk has no interest in doing so.

**What They Want.** Suuk is content to provide for their tribe, and thankful that Old Goat allows them to do so in the manner they choose. Each journey is further, each peak taller, and each beast larger and fiercer than the one before it. Their accomplishments are their own, however; their kin seldom witness them.

**Unwanted Pressures.** Suuk knows full well what Old Goat's plans are—to have them replace her as chieftain and spend the rest of their days providing counsel and making decisions that'd impact the entirety of their tribe. But they've given their answer a dozen times already: no.





## CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure:

### BLACK BEAR

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 19 (3d8 + 6)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (–4)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

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

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

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

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

### BROWN BEAR

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 34 (4d10 + 12)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (–4)	13 (+1)	7 (–2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

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

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

### GAZER

*Tiny aberration, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 13 (3d4 + 6)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (–4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (–4)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

**Saving Throws** Wis +2

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5

**Condition Immunities** prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the gazer can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

**Mimicry.** The gazer can mimic simple sounds of speech it has heard, in any language. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

#### ACTIONS

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

**Eye Rays.** The gazer shoots two of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one or two targets it can see within 60 feet of it:

1. **Dazing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the start of the gazer's next turn. While the target is charmed in this way, its speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls.

2. **Fear Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of the gazer's next turn.

3. **Frost Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) cold damage.

4. **Telekinetic Ray.** If the target is a creature that is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be moved up to 30 feet directly away from the gazer.

If the target is an object weighing 10 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, the gazer moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. The gazer can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a container.



## GIANT OWL

Large beast, neutral

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 19 (3d10 + 3)

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Giant Owl, understands Common, Elvish, and Sylvan but can't speak them

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Flyby.** The owl doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### ACTIONS

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 1) slashing damage.

## GIANT WASP

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 13 (3d8)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Sting.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

## MASTIFF

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 5 (1d8 + 1)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

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

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## OWLBEAR

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Keen Sight and Smell.** The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.



## PIERCER

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the piercer remains motionless on the ceiling, it is indistinguishable from a normal stalactite.

**Spider Climb.** The piercer can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### ACTIONS

**Drop.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, one creature directly underneath the piercer. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage per 10 feet fallen, up to 21 (6d6). *Miss:* The piercer takes half the normal falling damage for the distance fallen.

## POLAR BEAR

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 42 (5d10 + 15)

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

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

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing 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 attack rolls 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.



# HANDOUT 1: THE SIDEKICKS

Provide each sidekick with a name and other details. If they're a race other than human, add the associated racial traits:

**Dwarf.** Darkvision 60 ft., resistant to poison damage, and has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

**Elf.** Darkvision 60 ft., +5 feet to speed, +2 bonus to Wisdom (Perception) checks.

**Halfling.** Small, if they roll a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, reroll the die and use the new result.

## THE EXPERT

*Chaotic good expert sidekick*

This clever soul is the firstborn of a highly regarded smith. After their father died in a suspicious accident, and suspecting a competitor was to blame, they self-exiled rather than tend to the business themselves. The Expert is brash and boisterous.

**What They Want.** Having left their ancestral home behind, they seek to begin life anew in the frozen, unexplored reaches of Icewind Dale. They've heard rumors of long-forgotten ruins with ancient treasures ripe for plunder.

**Nagging Guilt.** They seldom speak of their past, and they shield themselves from the guilt of leaving their home with jokes and self-deprecating anecdotes. But those who push them on it find it's sure to anger them.

## THE EXPERT

*Medium humanoid, chaotic good*

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +4

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Performance +4, Persuasion +4, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, language associated with their race

**Helpful.** The Expert can use a bonus action to take the Help action.

**Tools.** The Expert has thieves' tools and a lute.

## ACTIONS

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

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

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



## THE SPELLCASTER

### Neutral spellcaster sidekick

Growing up on the streets of Waterdeep didn't stop the spellcaster from teaching himself how to read and obtaining work at Candlekeep. In pursuit of becoming a full-fledged member of the Avowed, they've made the trek to Icewind Dale searching for ancient Netherese tomes and relics. The Spellcaster is gruff and terse.

**What They Want.** Ambitious to a fault, they're pursuing the ruins of an ancient Netherese keep they found referenced in a number of long-forgotten tomes.

**Something from Nothing.** They're no longer the street rat they once were, and by succeeding in their journey, they'll make a difference in the world. As a reminder, they carry the black robes of an Avowed acolyte folded neatly at the bottom of their pack, waiting to be earned.

## THE SPELLCASTER

Medium humanoid, neutral

**Armor Class** 12 (leather)

**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +4, Investigation +4, Nature +4, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, language associated with their race

**Magical Role.** The spellcaster has one of the following traits:

❑ **Spellcasting (Healer).** The spellcaster's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The spellcaster has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, sacred flame*

1st level (❑❑): *cure wounds*

❑ **Spellcasting (Mage).** The spellcaster's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The spellcaster has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light*

1st level (❑❑): *sleep*

### ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

## THE WARRIOR

### Lawful neutral warrior sidekick

Once a temple guard, the warrior later fell into service with the Flaming Fist. They took a leave of absence when their sibling made the voyage into Icewind Dale and never returned after two years. The Warrior is manipulative and calculating.

**What They Want.** They've made the voyage to Icewind Dale in search of their sibling. They don't know where to begin their search, but figure Ten-Towns is a good place to start.

**Single-Minded Determination.** They're confident their sibling is still alive and will do whatever it takes to prove it, including throwing others into harm's way.

## THE WARRIOR

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Con +4

**Skills** Athletics +4, Perception +3, Survival +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, language associated with their race

**Martial Role.** The warrior has one of the following traits:

❑ **Attacker.** The warrior gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

❑ **Defender.** The warrior gains the Protection reaction, below.

### ACTIONS

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

### REACTION

**Protection (Defender Only).** When an attacker the warrior can see makes an attack roll against a creature within 5 feet of the warrior, the warrior can impose disadvantage on the attack roll.



## HANDOUT 2: LETTER FROM MOM

Jordan,

I've heard things are getting worse in Icewind Dale. I'm so worried about you and want you to come home until this blows over. I know you're a big adventurer now, but I hope these help if you decide to stay.

I love and miss you,

Mom



## HANDOUT 3: STRANGE TRACKS





# HANDOUT 4: DOOR DIAGRAM





# HANDOUT 5: THE TATTERED JOURNAL

The journal of an archaeologist who's growing more demented by the day.

- Studying Netherese ruins
  - Abandoned for a thousand years or more
  - Center of great magical power
  - "The Staff," some sort of artifact
  - Diagrams of severed hands
  - Frequent references to "Congenio's Pebbles"
- Nine weird, marble-sized rocks. They're painted with still-sparkling paint, but it's chipped in places and plain, gray rock shows through. These are IDed in the journal.

Stone of Protection—dusty-rose prism  
Stone of Fortitude—pink rhomboid  
Stone of Regeneration—pearly-white spindle  
Stone of Leadership—marbled pink-and-green sphere  
Stone of Supreme Intellect—faceted clear sphere  
Stone of Reserve—vibrant purple prism  
Stone of Insight—incandescent blue sphere  
Stone of Absorption—pale-lavender ellipsoid  
Stone of Sustenance—clear spindle



The notes indicate that the stones of Self-Preservation, Intellect, Awareness, and Mastery must be elsewhere in the caves, but the archaeologist didn't figure out what they look like.

The two-color stone is a sphere.  
The stone of Awareness isn't pale green.  
Self-Preservation is a gem, I'm sure of it.  
The stone of Awareness is a rhomboid.  
The prism is pale green.  
The stone of Self-Preservation is silvery.  
I know the stone of Intellect is a mixture of two colors.  
The stone of Mastery isn't dark blue.

	pale green	dark blue	marbled scarlet and blue	silvery	prism	gem	rhomboid	sphere
Awareness								
Intellect								
Self Preservation								
Mastery								
prism								
gem								
rhomboid								
sphere								



## HANDOUT 6: PICTOGRAM TEXT

The pictograms in the central chamber are accompanied by text in Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Giant, and Netherese.

CRENSHINIBON, ALSO CALLED THE CRYSTAL SHARD OR THE CRYSTAL TOWER (CRYSHAL-TIRITH IN ELVISH), WAS A UNIQUE, EVIL ARTIFACT CREATED BY SEVEN LICHES. IT WAS A GREEN CRYSTAL THE SIZE OF A HAND AND DREW ENERGY FROM SUNLIGHT. IT WAS SENTIENT AND SOUGHT OUT CORRUPTIBLE MAGIC USERS, AMPLIFIED THEIR MAGICAL POWERS, AND TURNED THEM INTO TYRANTS SEEKING ONLY GLORY, POWER, AND CONQUEST. THE CRYSTAL SHARD TRAVELED FROM THE DESERTS OF ZAKHARA FAR TO THE SOUTH TO THE FROZENFAR OF NORTHWEST FAERÛN LEAVING MISERY AND DESTRUCTION IN ITS WAKE.

EVIL UNDEAD SOUGHT TO HARNESS ITS POWER AND TRANSFORMED IT INTO ITS CRYSHAL-TIRITH FORM OF A MONOLITHIC TOWER. WHILE VARIOUS HEROES ACHIEVED THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CRYSHAL-TIRITH, IT HAD FOREVER TRANSFORMED THE ICE BENEATH AND AROUND IT, INFUSING IT WITH POWERFUL MAGICAL ENERGY AND DARKENING ITS COLOR. THIS SUBSTANCE—CHARDALYN—BECAME HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER AS A NIGH UNBREAKABLE MAGICAL MATERIAL.

WE'VE FOUND A SMALL TROVE OF IT AND DECIDED TO INFUSE IT WITH THE IMMORTAL AND UNSTOPPABLE POWER OF NECROMANCY. WE'VE CREATED A STAFF OF CHARDALYN AND SACRIFICED SEVEN OF OUR MOST ILLUSTRIOUS ELDERS TO IT, FOREVER BINDING NECROMANCY INTO IT, JUST AS THE CRYSTAL SHARD ITSELF WAS CREATED. WE INTER IT HERE IN ICE SO THAT ONLY ONE SUFFICIENTLY POWERFUL MAY TAKE IT.



# HANDOUT 7: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters may earn the following rewards in this adventure:

## GOGGLES OF NIGHT

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

These goggles consist of thin sheets of translucent black crystal set into brass and leather framers.

While wearing these dark lenses, you have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, wearing the goggles increases its range by 60 feet.

## ILLUMINATOR'S TATTOO

*Wondrous item (tattoo), common (requires attunement)*

Produced by a special needle, this magic tattoo features beautiful calligraphy, images of writing implements, and the like.

**Tattoo Attunement.** To attune to this item, you hold the needle to your skin where you want the tattoo to appear, pressing the needle there throughout the attunement process. When the attunement is complete, the needle turns into the ink that becomes the tattoo, which appears on the skin.

If your attunement to the tattoo ends, the tattoo vanishes, and the needle reappears in your space.

**Magical Scribing.** While this tattoo is on your skin, you can write with your fingertip as if it were an ink pen that never runs out of ink.

As an action, you can touch a piece of writing up to one page in length and speak a creature's name. The writing becomes invisible to everyone other than you and the named creature for the next 24 hours. Either of you can dismiss the invisibility by touching the script (no action required). Once used, this action can't be used again until the next dawn.

## POTION OF COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

*Potion, uncommon*

When you drink this potion, you gain the effect of a *comprehend languages* spell for 1 hour. This liquid is a clear concoction with bits of salt and soot swirling in it.

## POTION OF GROWTH

*Potion, uncommon*

When you drink this potion, you gain the "enlarge" effect of the *enlarge/reduce* spell for 1d4 hours (no concentration required). The red in the potion's liquid continuously expands from a tiny bead to color the clear liquid around it and then contracts. Shaking the bottle fails to interrupt this process.

## POTION OF HEALING

*Potion, common*

You regain 2d4 + 2 hit points when you drink this potion. The potion's red liquid glimmers when agitated.

## STORY AWARD: FROSTBITTEN

You've gained levels of exhaustion. This story award is removed at the end of the adventure.

- Exhaustion Levels: ☐☐☐☐

## STORY AWARD: RESCUERS

You rescued (and lost) the following sidekicks:

- |                    |                                 |                                |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • The Expert:      | Alive: <input type="checkbox"/> | Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • The Spellcaster: | Alive: <input type="checkbox"/> | Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • The Warrior:     | Alive: <input type="checkbox"/> | Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> |

The two-color stone is a sphere.



# APPENDIX A:

## DOOR PUZZLE SOLUTION

The stone of Awareness isn't pale green.  
 Self-Preservation is a gem, I'm sure of it.  
 The stone of Awareness is a rhomboid.  
 The prism is pale green.  
 The stone of Self-Preservation is silvery.  
 I know the stone of Intellect is a mixture of two colors.  
 The stone of Mastery isn't dark blue.

- From the starting information, we know the stone of Self-Preservation is a silvery gem and the stone of Intellect is a marbled, scarlet-and-blue sphere.
- The stones of Mastery and Awareness are either pale green or dark blue.
- The stones of Mastery and Awareness are either prisms or rhomboids.
- We the stone of Awareness can't be pale green and must be a rhomboid. Therefore, it must be a dark-blue rhomboid.
- If the stone of Awareness is a dark-blue rhomboid, then the stone of Mastery must be a pale-green prism.
- The heroes might start cross-referencing stones with the images on the door, that's fine too.

	pale green	dark blue	marbled scarlet and blue	silvery	prism	gem	rhomboid	sphere
Awareness	X						O	
Intellect			O					
Self Preservation				O		O		
Mastery		X						
prism	O							
gem								
rhomboid								
sphere			O					

The heroes need to drop the painted stones into the central chute in the right order according to the writing on the door:  
 "Protection of the Leadership leads to Mastery but Reserve your Intellect for Self-Preservation.  
 Your Fortitude is due to your Regeneration and Absorption of Sustenance.  
 Awareness of Insight leads to Supreme Intellect."

- Protection
- Leadership
- Mastery
- Reserve
- Intellect
- Self-Preservation
- Fortitude
- Regeneration
- Absorption
- Sustenance
- Awareness
- Insight
- Supreme Intellect

If they get the order wrong, the door reroutes the stones to the pockets under each stone's diagram so they can try again.

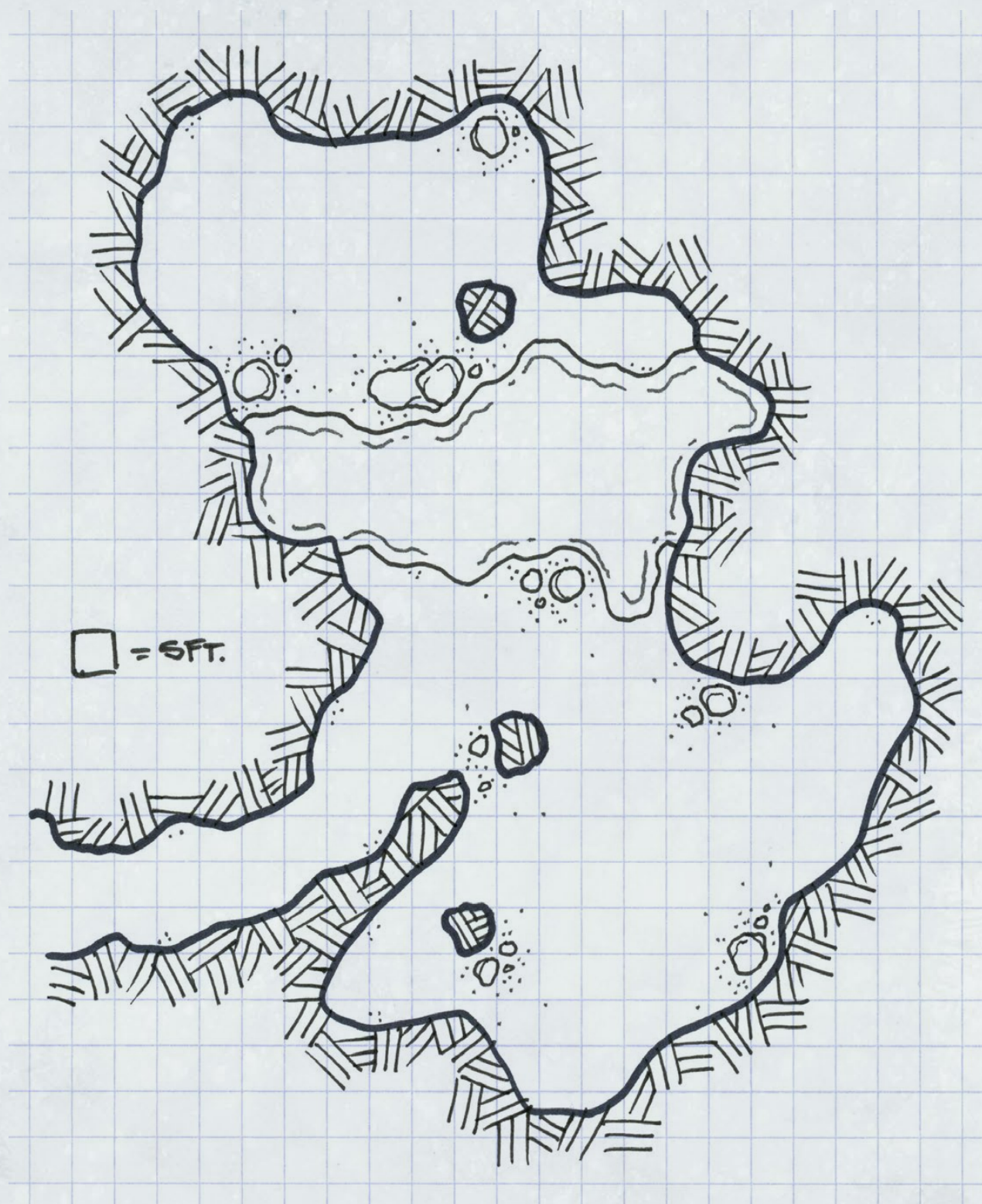


# APPENDIX B: GAZER FIGHT MAP



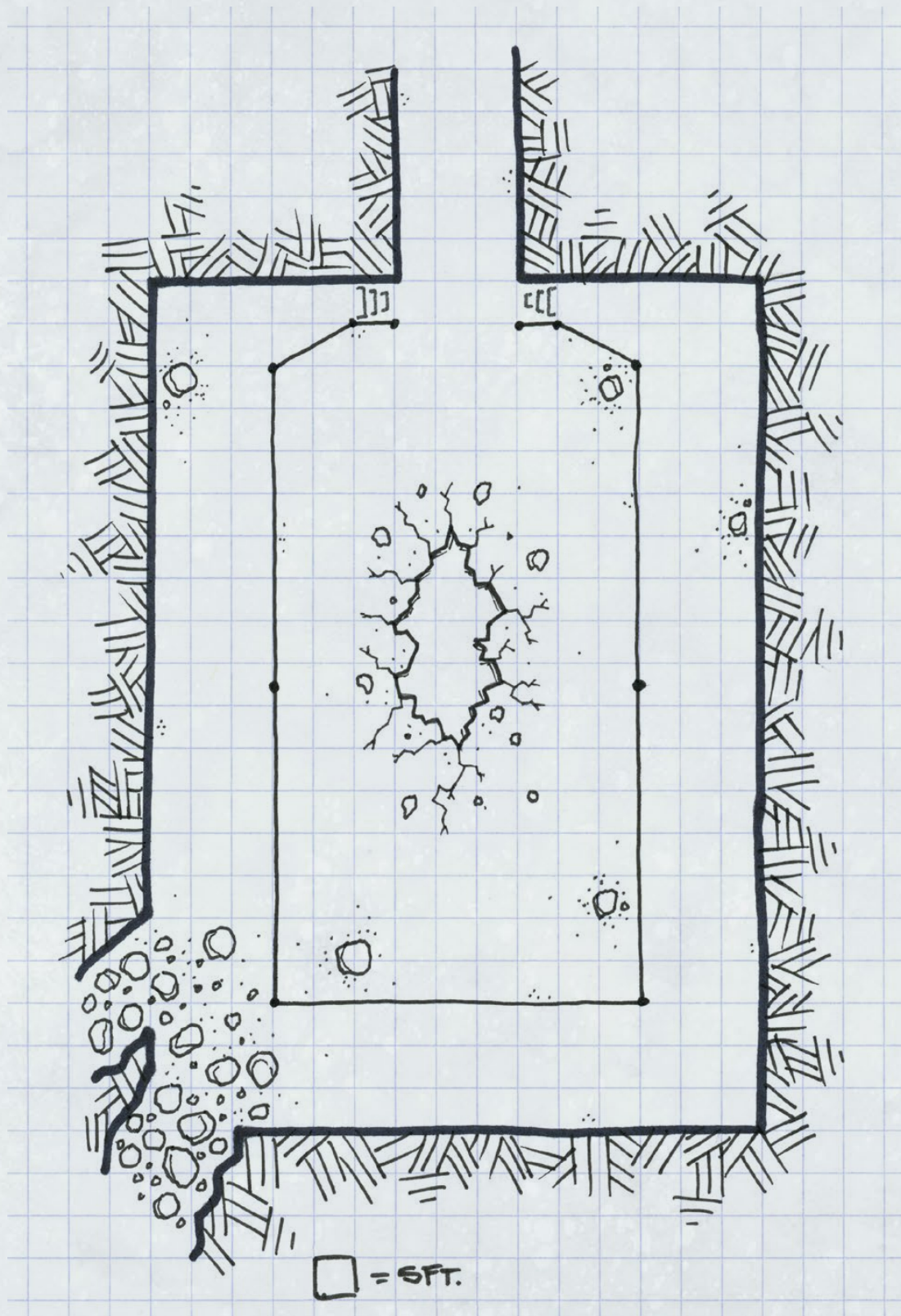


# APPENDIX C: PIERCER FIGHT MAP





# APPENDIX D: CHAMBER OF SLUMBERING CRYSTALS MAP





# APPENDIX E:

## MAP OF ICEWIND DALE



ICEWIND DALE  
(NOTE: PLEASE IGNORE CHAPTER REFERENCES)



# APPENDIX F:

## 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.

### NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

[https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal\\_general](https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general)

### NEW TO THE ANNUAL STORYLINE?

<https://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/rime-of-the-frostmaiden/>

### 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 DM, 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 have 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 can't, 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.

### NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one it's possible you may have players new to D&D, or just new to fifth edition. It's up to you as the DM to ensure they a) have fun with the game and b) learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you'll notice they quickly follow suit.

If you're a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. This adventure includes sidebars like this one that explain of some rules used as the adventure progresses!

### ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the characters' levels and divide the total 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

### SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools ensure that players aren't pushed beyond their comfort levels. They let your players know you want them to have a positive experience.

A broad range of safety tools are available for you and your players online, but for more information reach out to your Event Organizer or to [community@dndadventurersleague.org](mailto:community@dndadventurersleague.org)