



# A BLIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

## *A Plague of Ancients Adventure*

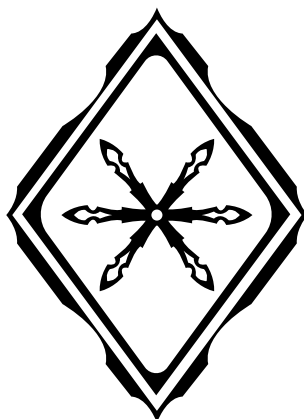
The wicked owlbear Frostclaw was nearly defeated. Now it's time to finish the deed and destroy her and her master once and for all. But first, you must find them.

Track them down and save Ten-Towns!

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

*A Four-Hour Adventure for 5th through 10th-Level Characters*

Optimized for APL 6.



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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*I am not going home. I am not lost enough. I forge on into darkness until even the stars disappear.*

— Peter Watts, *The Things*

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th- to 10th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 6**. Characters outside this level range can't participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in and around Wyrmdoom Crag near the Icewind Dale region of northwest Faerûn.

## 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** that take approximately **4 hours** to play:

**Call to Action: Find the Monster (20 mins).** Old Goat gathers the characters and implores them to put a stop to Feral-Tongue's destructive campaign. She believes tracking his wounded lieutenant, Frostclaw, will reveal his location.

**Part 1: Little Victories (60 mins).** The characters, along with Kaskur and his goliath hunters, follow Frostclaw's trail to the ruins of an ancient Netherese outpost. There, the heroes will finally be able to put a stop to the monster. This is **Story Objective A**.

**Part 2: Sealed Corruption (40 mins).** The group deduces the location of Feral-Tongue: deep within what remains of the outpost. However, the only entrance is sealed shut, leaving the group to figure out how to open the ancient door. This is **Story Objective B**.

**Part 3: Delving into the Past (60 mins).** The characters make their way further into the ruins and must contend with the dangers within. They must persevere through traps set by the ancient Netherese, as well as confront the outpost's newer denizens. This is **Story Objective C**.

**Part 4: Mouth of Madness (60 mins).** Finally, the characters find and do battle with Feral-Tongue and his corrupted animal minions. This is **Story Objective D**.



## STORY AWARDS

At certain points in the adventure, you'll see this glyph along with an entry describing how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore the entry 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

If the characters haven't played earlier *Plague of Ancients* adventures, the players may be unsure how they came to Wyrmdoom Crag or why Old Goat is seeking their help. Players can draw on their characters' existing backstories or you may suggest one or more of the following scenarios to guide them:

**Best Served Cold.** Vengeance motivates many adventurers. Frostclaw, Feral-Tongue, or the chardalyn-corrupted animals plaguing the area have harmed these characters or someone they cherish. This is the perfect opportunity for revenge.

**The Great Hunt.** Rumors of unusually strong and intelligent animals have drawn glory seekers from far and wide to Icewind Dale. The head of Frostclaw herself would make an excellent trophy.

**Nature's Servant.** Druids, rangers, and other characters who share a bond with the natural world may be especially disturbed by the warped wildlife infesting the region.

**Scholar of Netherese Lore.** Characters with the Sage background, or those with a particular interest in history or the arcane, may have come to the area in search of the nearby Netherese outpost.

### NARRATING FROSTCLAW, THE HUNTER

Though they only directly encounter her twice, the characters are constantly hunted by the awakened owlbear as the story arc develops. To ensure you instill the appropriate sense of paranoia and dread this villain deserves, leave signs of her passage for the characters to encounter as they adventure beyond the safety of Wyrmdoom Crag. Examples include:

- A large, white feather, stained with blood.
- The mutilated carcass of a beast or a missing goliath hunter.
- Large paw prints that're quickly erased by the wind and snow.
- A dead tree with huge claw marks gouged into the trunk.
- Growls and roars; their source obscured by blowing snow.
- A circular pattern of deliberately arranged body parts.
- A character's name whispered on the wind.

# FIND THE MONSTER

**Estimated Duration:** 20 minutes

## WYRMDOOM CRAG

**Themes:** Determination, frustration, inevitability.

Old Goat calls the characters to the main hall to speak with her. She has a plan to find Feral-Tongue and sends the party after him.

## CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each player a few minutes to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason they came to the Dale. Encourage the characters to develop bonds by asking them to describe one positive interaction or event that occurred between their character and one other at the table. Character introductions provide a solid foundation for roleplaying opportunities and give you, the DM, hints as to which game elements will be most attractive to your players.

Award **inspiration** once everyone's had a turn.

### THE STORY SO FAR

If some players haven't played through the previous four *Plague of Ancients* adventures, you may wish to summarize these key points:

- Feral-Tongue, a druid formerly of the Thuunlakalaga clan, has fallen under the corrupting influence of a powerful magical staff made of chardalyn.
- Feral-Tongue has used the chardalyn staff to empower and awaken an army of beasts, including the fearsome snowy owlbear Frostclaw. These chardalyn-infused monsters have sown death and destruction within Wyrmdoom Crag and the surrounding area.
- Old Goat sent the characters to seek aid from the chwingas, tiny elemental spirits. How successful this mission was depends on which story awards from DDAL10-04 *Cold Benevolence* the characters have.
- Frostclaw was seriously injured—possibly by members of the current party—but managed to escape into a fierce storm.

## AREA INFORMATION

Wyrmdoom Crag's main hall has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The Thuunlakalaga goliaths have made this large natural cave their home. The main hall is a roughly circular cavern 50 feet across with a 30-foot-high ceiling.

**Temperature.** A small fire burns in the southern half of the chamber, but the air more than a few feet away is frigid. Between the raging blizzard and Feral-Tongue's attacks, the clan's supplies have dwindled to dangerous lows.

**Light.** Although midday, most of the light comes from the warm glow of the hall's small fire, casting dramatic shadows on the stone walls.

**A Place of Honor.** A 10-foot-high stone shelf takes up most of the southern half of the main hall where Old Goat holds court. Roughly hewn stone steps lead the way from the floor of the cave to the natural platform.

## CREATURE INFORMATION

The great hall is home to dozens of goliaths, ranging from children to elders. Characters who've spent time in Wyrmdoom Crag may notice fewer clan members gathered here than is typical. Some have made desperate attempts to brave the blizzard and escape the threat of Feral-Tongue's bestial hordes.

**Ogolai Orcsplitter** ("Old Goat"), a formidable, aged goliath, sits near the fire in a heated debate with an agitated, young goliath warrior named **Kaskur Spearsong**.

### OGOLAI (OH-GO-LIE) ORCSPLITTER "OLD GOAT" THUUNLAKALAGA

*Lawful neutral goliath warrior*

The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

**What They Want.** Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

**Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh.** Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

### **KASKUR (KASS-KERR) SPEARSONG THUUNLAKALAGA**

*Neutral goliath warrior*

This headstrong and impetuous goliath leads the clan's hunters. He's grown angry and frustrated at the lack of game in the area, and he resents Old Goat's "poor leadership" for a lack of solutions. He wields a longbow taller than most humans and claims he once felled an elk from a half mile away. He wears little in the way of clothing, even in the driving wind—a feat that's earned him the respect of his fellow hunters.

**What They Want.** Kaskur has grown tired of Old Goat's personal fears preventing an alliance with the goliaths of Skytower Shelter. He views her as weak and her ideas as outdated, especially when Kugan Windwhisper (Feral-Tongue)—who Kaskur views as even weaker than Old Goat—is involved. He wants to usurp control of the clan for himself.

**Words Are Wasted Wind.** Kaskur doesn't have a negotiator's tongue; he's terse and speaks his mind without hesitation. Despite this, he's experienced and knows the area better than any of his peers.

When the characters arrive, Old Goat and Kaskur have come to a rare agreement: Feral-Tongue must be stopped and now is the time to strike. However, finding this elusive figure has proven to be difficult. Old Goat reasons that the gravely wounded Frostclaw will likely return to her master, as she knows her own lair has been discovered.

Kaskur eagerly volunteers to help the characters track Frostclaw, as he's both determined to face Feral-Tongue and uncertain of the characters' hunting abilities.

Before they depart, Old Goat cautions the characters about their upcoming confrontation with Feral-Tongue. The chieftain knew him as Kugan Windwhisper, a meek eccentric and a dear friend. She fears that whatever wicked supernatural influence brought him to his current state could very well be contagious.

### **DEVELOPMENT**

Kaskur and his hunters (three **goliath warriors**) lead the characters out of Wyrmdoom Crag, past the bleached bones of the long-dead dragon after which their home is named.

# LITTLE VICTORIES

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE RUINED COURTYARD

**Themes:** Dread, confusion, elation.

The characters leave Wyrmdoom Crag and cross the bridge over the chasm where Frostclaw made her last attack. There, they pick up the trail of blood and broken owlbear feathers she's left behind.

### STORY OBJECTIVE A

Finding Frostclaw is **Story Objective A**.

## AREA INFORMATION

The ruined courtyard has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** Located within the Spine of the World mountain range, the terrain is rocky and treacherous. The chasm where the last encounter with Frostclaw took place is 20 feet wide and 20 feet deep.

**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—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.

**Temperature.** With only a dim, clouded sun for warmth, the mountains are dangerously cold.

**Sounds.** The travelers must shout to hear each other over the roaring winds. However, characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 17 or higher notice a strange, haunting tune that occasionally fills the air.

**Outpost Courtyard.** Bordered by snow drifts and half-buried bits of destroyed stonework, sits the open courtyard of an ancient Netherese outpost (see **appendix A**).

### NETHER-WHAT?

The courtyard and outpost were built by the Netherese thousands of years ago. This human empire was ruled by powerful arcanists from grand floating cities—cities that'd eventually come crashing down in a magical disaster of their own making. At its height, Netheril's influence spanned most of northern Faerûn, leaving behind countless ruins and hazards that adventurers continue to discover.

## FINDING THE RUINS

Kaskur may be an accomplished tracker, but he isn't the only one. Give the characters an opportunity to outshine the skilled NPC: a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) check is enough to find Frostclaw's path. If the characters don't attempt this check, or fail it spectacularly, Kaskur locates the trail on his own—pointing out the way with a confident smirk on his face.

If a check succeeds by 5 or more, the character also notes that the amount of blood Frostclaw has left behind suggests she's mortally wounded—she won't last much longer and shouldn't put up much of a fight if they do find her alive.

As the group follows Frostclaw's trail ever higher into the mountains, the three goliath hunters grow increasingly wary of the area. They eventually elect to stay behind, which Kaskur reacts to with disgust.

## CREATURE INFORMATION

The massive snowy owlbear **Frostclaw** waits for the characters at the far end of the courtyard, near the outpost's main door. As the characters watch, the chardalyn spreads from her beak and claws, giving her an unsettling patchwork appearance.

### FROSTCLAW

*Chaotic evil awakened owlbear*

Frostclaw was the first creature Feral-Tongue awakened following his discovery of the 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 transformed into 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.

After the characters enter the ruined courtyard, read or paraphrase the following:

As she roars in agony, the glossy chardalyn comprising Frostclaw's beak and claws expands, covering the owlbear in a grotesque mockery of plate armor and sealing her wounds. As Frostclaw wordlessly approaches your group, unsettling shapes can be seen writhing under patches of bare skin.

Frostclaw attacks the characters immediately and without mercy. As she closes the distance with the party, she begins a bestial screech with gurgling undertones. Characters fluent in Giant recognize the occasional hateful word in her screams, but she's unintelligible in her current state.

Kaskur stands at the back of the formation, firing at Frostclaw with his immense longbow. You may choose to narrate his actions and even give him a place in the initiative for a sense of realism, but he isn't an active participant in the fight. (The enemies ignore him to focus on the party, and don't record any damage he deals.)

#### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

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

**Very Weak:** Remove Frostclaw's legendary actions.

**Weak:** Remove the necrotic damage from Frostclaw's attacks.

**Strong:** Add two **chardalyn growths** that break off from Frostclaw's back, forming into tentacled horrors under her control.

**Very Strong:** Add four **chardalyn growths** that break off from Frostclaw's back, forming into tentacled horrors under her control.

When Frostclaw is defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

As Frostclaw breathes her last, the chardalyn that fueled her rampage begins to drip onto the bloodstained snow. Her body shudders and melts, leaving behind a messy pile of feathers and meat.

#### TREASURE

Characters who sift through Frostclaw's steaming remains are rewarded with surprisingly valuable detritus. Embedded in Frostclaw's tattered skin are several silvered arrowheads and blade tips that, while no longer useful in a fight, could certainly be sold to smelters. Provided they rummage around in Frostclaw's stomach, the characters also find a partially digested case containing an intact *spell scroll of spider climb* and a few stray coins, gems, and pieces of jewelry.

#### DEVELOPMENT

The characters are barely able to catch their breath before Kaskur impatiently reminds them of their mission: Feral-Tongue must be found. However, if the characters did particularly well in the fight against Frostclaw, the character with the highest passive Wisdom (Insight) score notices he seems a bit less contemptuous in his insistence—a subtle acknowledgement of the characters' abilities.

The character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score soon notices a large set of humanoid footprints leading to an enormous stone door embedded in the nearby mountainside.



# SEALED CORRUPTION

**Estimated Duration:** 40 minutes

## NETHERESE OUTPOST

**Themes:** Urgency, discovery, sacrifice.

After Frostclaw's defeat, the characters track Feral-Tongue to a great stone door that stands flush with the mountainside. The door is covered in ornate carvings with no obvious lock, handle, or means of opening.

### 01. OUTPOST ENTRANCE

#### STORY OBJECTIVE B

Getting through the outpost door is **Story Objective B**.

#### AREA INFORMATION

The outpost entrance has the same features as the courtyard with the following modifications:

**Weather.** The entrance is positioned on a section of mountainside angled in such a way that the few feet directly in front of the door is partially shielded from the prevailing, buffeting winds. Although not as frigid as the open courtyard, the area remains dangerously cold for characters without protection from the elements.

**The Door.** The door is 20 feet tall and 15 feet wide, able to accommodate the passage of Huge creatures with ease. It's also 6 feet thick, which prevents using the *stone shape* spell or similar magic to bypass it.

#### DOES ANYONE ELSE HEAR MUSIC?

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 17 or higher have noticed a simple, but eerie, melody in the air since first approaching the outpost courtyard. If they also have a passive Intelligence (Investigation) score of 15 or higher, they finally locate the source of the music: a series of stone sculptures lining the courtyard that "sing" as wind blows through them. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check identifies the objects as Netherese in origin. Characters who expressed an interest in the fallen empire of Netheril during character introductions make this check with advantage.

Once the characters approach the entrance, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals relatively little snow on the door, indicating recent use—and likely confirming suspicions that Feral-Tongue is inside.

#### BUILD-A-THALUUD

The stone door is covered in intricate carvings (see **handout 1**) of a thaluud, also called a "tomb tapper," and a phaerimm, the construct's greatest foe.

When the characters begin to investigate the door's appearance, read or paraphrase the following:

A vaguely humanoid figure holding a sledgehammer dominates the center of the door's relief. A featureless mound rests on the creature's shoulders, while its stomach opens into a gaping maw. It appears poised to crush the bizarre, funnel-shaped creature at its feet.

If the characters ask about these two main figures, certain successful skill checks (made with advantage by scholars of Netherese history) reveal the following information:

**DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana).** The character identifies the funnel-shaped creature as a phaerimm, an extinct aberration. Phaerimm were able to eat magic and sap moisture from both their surroundings and living creatures. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, they also identify the humanoid figure as a tomb tapper, a magical construct that burrows underground and hoards magical items. These creatures are able to extract iron and nutrients from the earth for sustenance (or from blood and bone, when available).

**DC 20 Intelligence (History).** The character recalls the common names of both creatures and that the Netherese created tomb tappers to hunt down and destroy phaerimms. The character also knows the Netherese called these constructs "Thaluud" meaning "the faceless" in Loross, the tongue of High Netheril.

#### TOMB TAPPERS AND THE ABERRATIONS THAT HATE THEM

When the ancient Netherese created the first tomb tapper, they didn't know what enemy their novel constructs would face, only that something was draining the magic from their lands. Therefore, the arcanists instilled in their creations the ability to hunt for magic, as well as a hatred of all nonhuman spellcasters. Although tomb tappers became a fearsome weapon against the phaerimm, heavy use of spellcasting by the aberrations eventually created a great desert of the once-fertile land at the heart of Netheril.

Largely immortal and able to create more of their kind, tomb tappers persist throughout the former Netherese Empire and beyond to this day. Tomb tappers continue to burrow through the earth in search of magic. Because many burial chambers throughout Faerûn contain magic items, thaluud have earned the name "tomb tapper" from encounters with modern adventurers.

## THE PUZZLE

A *detect magic* spell or similar ability reveals that abjuration magic lines the maws of both the phaerimm and the tomb tapper, but the bulk of the door is mechanical in nature.

**The Carvings.** Any character who investigates the door soon notices that many of the carvings can be slid along grooves that run to inside the tomb tapper's mouth. The movable carvings are:

- Four different elemental glyphs representing air, earth, fire, and water.
- Three different runes representing major types of magic: divine, arcane, and alchemical.
- Three different sets of human figures: an arcanist, a person with a crown, and a group of nine shoddily dressed peasants.
- Many seemingly miscellaneous items, including iron bars, piles of gemstones, vials full of liquid, and a forge.

The characters must determine which five carvings represent the tomb tapper's creation and place them inside the tomb tapper's mouth. These carvings are the glyph of elemental earth, the rune of arcane magic, the arcanist, the nine peasants, and the iron bars.

**Trial and Error.** If a character slides an incorrect stone piece into the tomb tapper's mouth, they take 13 (3d8) necrotic damage and the carving returns to its original position.

**Feed the Phaerimm?** A character can press down on the phaerimm's maw, though moisture is drawn from their body, dealing 13 (3d8) necrotic damage. If the character is a spellcaster, they intuit that expending spell slots with a combined level of 3 or higher will prevent this damage. In either case, one of the correct carvings slides into the tomb tapper's mouth after this action is performed.

After the phaerimm maw has been pressed at least once, a character can determine the following with a successful Intelligence check. The results are cumulative:

**DC 10:** If the party can't figure out which carvings belong in the tomb tapper's maw; they have the option of "feeding" the phaerimm life force or magical energy to open the door.

**DC 15:** Relying on this brute-force method alone will seriously strain their resources. Feral-Tongue, his beasts, and who-knows-what-else are still left to deal with in a limited amount of time.

### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

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

**Very Weak and Weak:** Hints and wrong guesses only deal 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. Spellcasters only need to expend two levels worth of spell slots to prevent damage from the phaerimm.

**Strong:** Hints and wrong guesses deal 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. Spellcasters must expend four levels worth of spell slots to prevent damage from the phaerimm.

**Very Strong:** Hints and wrong guesses deal 22 (5d8) necrotic damage. Spellcasters must expend five levels worth of spell slots to prevent damage from the phaerimm.

Once the puzzle is solved, the door slides inward and recedes into the outpost foyer's wall.

## O2. FORGOTTEN FOYER

A spacious entrance room awaits the characters. The chamber is 15 feet by 20 feet and its ceiling is 20 feet high. There are various stone benches, chairs, and tables, and the walls are lined with stone sconces, though the moldering torches within are unlit. Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) score of 13 or higher note that the finely sculpted stone furniture and fixtures were molded from the mountain rock, probably through magical means. An intricately carved archway leads further into darkness.

**Automatic Door.** A few minutes after the characters enter the outpost, they feel a slight rumble as the door slides back into place. However, they aren't trapped inside: Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 10 or higher notices a small onyx panel on the wall. The door can be easily reopened from the inside by pressing on this panel.

## O3. CRUMBLING CLOAKROOM

At the end of the passage beyond the archway, the characters find a small, 10-foot-square room. Its floor is littered with the long-decayed remnants of heavy cold weather clothing, some are austere and practical, while others are ostentatious and look out of place so close to such a harsh environment. All are in styles foreign to those unfamiliar with Netherese culture and fashion.

Characters curious about the mix of styles who make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recall that the powerful magic users of High Netheril ruled from the sky over the people of terrestrial Low Netheril, who were commoners possessing none-to-comparatively-low magical talents. The less practical gear was likely worn by mages who relied on spells to protect them from the elements, whereas the more mundane garb probably belonged to their assistants or servants.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to quickly sort through the scraps to find valuable ornamental bits that've survived the centuries.

### TREASURE

In the textile scrap pile, there are enough small gems and precious metal buttons to trade for a dozen new sets of cold weather clothes. Any character who picks through the debris also finds a *wand of pyrotechnics* with no check required, as it's the only pristine item in the room, making it easy to spot. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the wand, and any character with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) score of 11 or higher infers it was probably used as a flare.

### DEVELOPMENT

With no other leads, the characters must push further into the ruins to find their quarry.



# DELVING INTO THE PAST

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## INSIDE THE NETHERESE OUTPOST

**Themes:** Relief, curiosity, apprehension.

Feral-Tongue waits for his enemies in the outpost's basement cold room. Before they face him, the characters have a chance to explore the area, potentially uncovering secrets from Netheril's past.

### STORY OBJECTIVE C

Getting through the outpost in good enough condition to face off with Feral-Tongue is **Story Objective C**.

## AREA INFORMATION

The abandoned outpost has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** A single 15-foot-wide hallway winds through the outpost, ending in a door that leads to the basement where Feral-Tongue waits. The walls, floors, and even most of the furniture is made of the same rock as the mountain.

**Temperature.** Inside the outpost proper, skilled architecture and ancient enchantments both keep the halls and chambers comfortably warm.

**Light.** Unless otherwise noted, the outpost is completely dark.

### WARM RESPITE

Once the characters are inside the outpost proper, its warm, dry hallways provide them with the opportunity to finally take a short rest. This can be done at any point before they open the basement chamber door.

If anyone suggests a long rest, Kaskur strongly protests, as any delay much longer than an hour would give Feral-Tongue ample opportunity to gather his forces or flee through some as-yet-undiscovered exit.

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The lab consists of a 20-foot-by-60-foot chamber. Bubbling mud and slime covers the northeast quarter of the room's floor (see "Alchemical Sludge," below).

**Light.** A single candle at the center of a long, stone lab bench illuminates the room within 10 feet of it. The rest of the lab is in darkness.

**Smell.** Noxious chemical fumes permeate this room and can be detected from the hallway outside. Although the fumes smell foul, they have no negative effect on the characters.

## II. OOZE GOES WHERE?

This laboratory was built to conduct alchemical experiments. Currently, it's occupied by a group of elementals from the Swamp of Oblivion who are busy playing a game of cards.

### AREA INFORMATION

The laboratory has the following features:

### ALCHEMICAL SLUDGE

The northeast corner of this room is covered by a thick coat of green-brown muck. This congealed mass formed over the centuries as the alchemical reagents and waste stored in this room leaked from their containers.

Any creature that comes into contact with this sludge must make a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be temporarily mutated (roll a d12 and consult the table below). If a creature deliberately swallows the sludge, they automatically fail their saving throw. Creatures that are immune to the poisoned condition are unaffected by the sludge. The sludge's effects wear off at the end of the adventure, but can be removed earlier with a *lesser restoration* spell or similar effects that cure the poisoned condition.

d12	Effect
1	Your tongue melds to the floor of your mouth. You lose the ability to speak and can't cast spells that require verbal components.
2	Fine, silver fur sprouts all over your body.
3	Your pupils dilate to an impossible size, making your eyes appear solid black. You gain darkvision out to 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 60 feet. However, you also gain an aversion to light: you have disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks based on sight while you, the target of your attack, or whatever you're trying to perceive is in bright light.
4	Your feet float a few inches off the ground. This allows you to ignore difficult terrain, but you're also thrown off-balance, imposing disadvantage on your Strength (Athletics) checks and Strength saving throws.
5	You feel a stinging sensation inside your nose and mouth and quickly lose all sense of smell and taste.
6	A tingle passes through your body and you soon realize you can now intuit a creature's type by sight.
7	Your ears elongate and you feel a strange tickle in your throat. You are constantly under the effect of a <i>speak with animals</i> spell.
8	Your arms stretch and lengthen, adding 5 feet to your reach with melee attacks made on your turn.
9	A pair of enormous eyes erupts from your shoulders. As long as they're uncovered, you have advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks based on sight.
10	You grow a prehensile tail that grants you a second free interaction with an object on your turn.
11	Your skin turns a sickly green and becomes sticky to the touch. You have advantage on checks to grapple other creatures, but you have disadvantage on checks made to escape grapples yourself.
12	You start to glow with a soft light and gain resistance to necrotic damage.



### CREATURE INFORMATION

Clod (a **mud mephit** fluent in Common) is enjoying game night with his friends, a pair of **ooze elementals**, Large creatures that look like piles of living mud.

#### CLOD, "THE DRAGON KEEPER" (KLODD)

Like many of his ilk, Clod is more interested in comfort and possessions than combat. While he delights in many forms of torment, he prefers to separate his victims from their valuables. He's especially fond of showing off his great wealth and telling grandiose stories about his "treasures."

**What They Want.** Clod is a lazy, slovenly creature who cares little for anyone else's needs. He mocks and denigrates anyone he views as beneath him (which is virtually everyone) and flees from aggressors at the first sign of trouble.

**Blinded by Greed.** Though greedy, he isn't particularly smart and is quite gullible. He's inclined to believe most anything is valuable if it has an outlandish story to go with it—the grander the tale, the greater its worth, at least in his mind.



### STORY AWARD: ONE MAN'S JUNK

If one or more characters have this story award, Clod remembers them as a mark easily parted from their “valuables.” Clod stops the ooze elementals from immediately attacking the party and one ooze elemental burbles something to him in Primordial. Clod translates, daring the entire party (Kaskur included) to drink from the alchemical sludge. If they decline, the elementals attack.

Unless Clod intervenes on the characters' behalf, the ooze elementals attack the group. Clod flees at the first sign of a fight, but the ooze elementals fight to the death.

#### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

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

**Very Weak and Weak:** Remove one ooze elemental.

**Strong:** Add one ooze elemental.

**Very Strong:** Add two ooze elementals.

### TREASURE

If Clod flees or is incapacitated, he leaves behind a strange deck of playing cards and a *potion of acid resistance*. If all the characters drink from the alchemical sludge, he offers to trade these items (that he believes to be worthless) for one of the characters' “most valued possessions” (any mundane trinket will do).

The deck of steel cards is quite rare and can no doubt be sold to a collector. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (History) check reveals that various Netherese historical figures adorn the face cards, with the infamous arcanist Karsus as the jokers. If the characters search the room, they also find a sizable gold nugget.

#### AN EMPIRE'S FALL

The Netherese Empire's true decline began with the magical catastrophe known as Karsus's Folly in –339 DR. In a desperate attempt to defeat the phaerimm threat, the archmage Karsus briefly stole the divine power of Mystryl, the then goddess of magic. This caused significant damage to the Weave, which would've been completely destroyed if Mystryl hadn't sacrificed herself to repair it.

These events caused all magic on Toril to vanish for a short time. This was long enough for almost all the floating cities of High Netheril to come crashing down to the planet's surface. Considering Karsus's place in the deck of cards, this outpost was likely built (or continued to be in use) after this event.

## I2. MESS HALL

This modestly sized rectangular room was where the Netherese who worked at the outpost cooked and ate their meals. A long stone table dominates the center of the room, while a stone stove flanked by countertops stands to the side.

At the far end of the room, an unlocked door leads to a small larder. Unfortunately, an overzealous Netherese cook inscribed a *glyph of warding* on this door. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check is required to spot the glyph. If the door is opened, creatures within 20 feet of the door must make a DC 14 Dexterity save, taking 22 (5d8) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage

on a successful one. The blast can be heard throughout the complex and for characters fluent in Loross, sounds strangely like the ancient Netherese word for “thief.”

#### ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

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

**Very Weak:** Reduce the DC of the check to detect the glyph and the saving throw against its effects to DC 11. The glyph only deals 13 (3d8) lightning damage.

**Weak:** Reduce the DC of the check to detect the glyph and the saving throw against its effects to DC 11.

**Strong:** The glyph deals 31 (7d8) lightning damage.

**Very Strong:** Increase the DC of the check to detect the glyph and the saving throw against its effects to DC 17. The glyph deals 31 (7d8) lightning damage.

### TREASURE

Even with the ancient art of climate control, most of the food stored here has long since crumbled to dust. However, several large jars of honey remain edible after multiple millennia—something characters proficient with cook's utensils would already know. The honey is likely worth a hefty sum to a meadery in the nearby town of Good Mead. Any mead brewed with this ancient Netherese honey isn't guaranteed to be good—but it'd certainly be unique.

## I3. SLEEPING QUARTERS

Two rows of unremarkable bunk beds line the walls of this small room. Unlike in the cloakroom, there's no lavish counterpart to these humble beds. Any character with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) score of 12 or higher notices this discrepancy. A curious character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check correctly surmises that the powerful arcanists who oversaw this facility likely spent their off hours inside their own personal *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansions* or similar magical accommodations.

### TREASURE

On a bookshelf, a few tomes are still in good enough condition to fetch a high price from a collector of Netherese artifacts.

### DEVELOPMENT

The characters finally reach the end of their journey, certain that Feral-Tongue lurks just behind the basement's frosty cold room door.

# MOUTH OF MADNESS

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

**Themes:** Corruptibility, mortality, hope.

After exploring the Netherese outpost, the characters come to the last place Feral-Tongue may be hiding: a frigid basement chamber.

### STORY OBJECTIVE D

Defeating Feral-Tongue or otherwise putting a stop to his plans of terrorizing Icewind Dale is **Story Objective D**.

## AREA INFORMATION

The cellar (see **appendix B**) has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The ancient Netherese hollowed this 70-foot-by-90-foot chamber out of mountain rock. A similarly formed stone stairway leads 10 feet down from the hallway.

**Temperature.** Ancient enchantments keep this chamber freezing cold. The characters easily note the frost that's accumulated on the chamber door facing the hallway.

**Chardalyn Formations.** Human-sized pillars of shiny, black chardalyn dot the room, pulsing with evil magic. See the sidebar below for further information.

**Light.** Unlike in the rest of the outpost, the stone sconces lining the walls are lit, providing bright light throughout the room. However, the chardalyn formations still seem wreathed in shadow.

**Furnishings.** Scattered around the chamber are a number of long stone tables, roughly waist-high to the average human, that've been formed from the stone floor.

### CHARDALYN FORMATIONS

These sizeable chunks of chardalyn take up the same space as a Medium creature. Corrupting necromantic magic constantly radiates from these formations, which creates the following effects:

- Any creature within 30 feet of a chardalyn formation that casts a spell to restore hit points must make a DC 13 ability check using their spellcasting ability. On a failure, the target only regains half the hit points restored by the spell (rounded down), and Feral-Tongue regains the same amount of hit points.
- Any creature that starts or ends its turn within 10 feet of a chardalyn formation must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion that lasts until they complete a short or long rest—to a maximum of one level per round. Feral-Tongue and his minions are immune to this effect.

## CREATURE INFORMATION

**Feral-Tongue** has been waiting for the characters' arrival since learning of Frostclaw's demise with the power of his chardalyn staff. He sits patiently on one of the stone tables.

Two **polar bears** accompany Feral-Tongue. Although under Feral-Tongue's sway and charmed by the staff's magic, they're still ordinary animals, neither awakened nor corrupted to the same degree Frostclaw was.

## FERAL-TONGUE

*Neutral evil goliath druid*

Previously known as Kugan Windwhisper Thuunlakalaga, Feral-Tongue adopted his current name after the chardalyn staff brought about his descent into evil. He's responsible for the chardalyn-infused animals and monstrosities that roam Icewind Dale, leaving murder and famine in their wake. Before finding the staff, Feral-Tongue was a reserved eccentric who lived alone near Wyrmdoom Crag. Old Goat and Kugan were good friends, but as Feral-Tongue, his magnificent Frostclaw is the only living creature he cares for.

**What They Want.** Feral-Tongue's mission is to utterly destroy the goliath clans and the Ten-Towns of Icewind Dale with his army of chardalyn-infused animals, preferably led by his first creation and heir, Frostclaw. For what purpose, even he couldn't say.

**Who's In Control?** Since finding the staff, Feral-Tongue has constantly heard malevolent whispers and nothing he's tried has helped silence them. As he continued to use the staff's power, these whispers only grew worse, more insistent. These voices belong to the seven necromancers, members of the Colloquium of Immortality, who were sacrificed to create the staff. Their constant whispers, combined with Frostclaw's own desire for blood and conquest, set Feral-Tongue on a trajectory he's now resigned to.

After the characters open the chamber door, read or paraphrase the following:

A gaunt figure dressed in tattered rags raises a skeletal, antlered head to greet you. In a weary, flat voice he says, "You can't stop what's coming to the Dale. I can't stop it, either. But I can stop you."

After he finishes speaking, Feral-Tongue uses his Polar Bear Form to become a chardalyn-infused polar bear and immediately attacks the party. Before anyone else can act, Kaskur charges the villain, but Feral-Tongue shrugs off his attack. The druid viciously mauls his former clanmate, before throwing him in a crumpled heap at the base of one of the chardalyn pillars. Unless Kaskur is moved away from the chardalyn formation, he gains a level of exhaustion at initiative count 0 (losing ties) each round (and dies after gaining six levels of exhaustion).

**Man or Monstrosity?** Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher note that Feral-Tongue's skeletal "head" is nothing more than an ordinary stag skull he wears like a helmet. Although in poor condition, Feral-Tongue displays no obvious physical signs of corruption.

## ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

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

**Very Weak:** Remove two polar bears.

**Weak:** Replace two polar bears with one dire wolf.

**Strong:** The polar bears have chardalyn claws. Their claw attacks deal an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

**Very Strong:** The polar bears have chardalyn claws and teeth. Their bite and claw attacks deal an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.



## STORY AWARD: CHWINGA CHARMS!

Characters who obtained the chwingas' aid in DDAL10-04 *Cold Benevolence* gain a minor benefit during the encounter for each charm they obtained, as follows:

**Charm of Lor the Timid:** The character has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

**Charm of Sappa Ever-Watching:** The character can take the Help action as a bonus action. If the character could already do this, they can aid two creatures with the action instead of one.

**Charm of Singing Gir:** The character has advantage on ability checks and saving throws against the effects of the chardalyn pillars and on the Dexterity saving throw to avoid effects unknown when Feral-Tongue's chardalyn staff explodes.

If Feral-Tongue dies or is reduced to 0 hit points, the chardalyn staff explodes and showers the area with shards of chardalyn.

Conversely, in the unlikely event that Feral-Tongue is somehow persuaded to surrender, he destroys the chardalyn staff himself. The resulting blast reduces him to 0 hit points, but he's **stable**. In either case, creatures within 10 feet of the explosion must make a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid chardalyn shrapnel embedding itself in their flesh.



## STORY AWARD: CORRUPTING CHARDALYN INFUSION

Characters who fail their saving throw against the chardalyn staff's explosion earn this story award.



### WHAT ABOUT THE BEARS?

If the polar bears are still alive after the staff explodes, they continue attacking—without the chardalyn staff controlling them, they react the same way any wild animal would upon finding themselves in such a situation: with fear and anger.

### TREASURE

After Feral-Tongue is defeated or surrenders, the characters can take his *chardalyn breastplate*.

## WRAP-UP: BACK AT WYRMDOOM CRAG

When the characters return to Wyrmdoom Crag, they find Old Goat talking to Nararhak Tree-Eye about a falling star the young, disabled storyteller saw and believes to be an omen.

Old Goat is happy with the success of the characters' mission, but if Feral-Tongue or Kaskur were slain, she's deeply saddened by the clan's loss. If the characters spared Feral-Tongue, and Kaskur also survived the encounter, Kaskur fumes and swears vengeance on the characters.



### STORY AWARD: SING A SONG OF VENGEANCE

The characters earn this story award if they bring both Feral-Tongue and Kaskur back to Wyrmdoom Crag alive.



### STORY AWARD: THE SONG FALLS SILENT

The characters earn this story award if Kaskur dies during the adventure and isn't returned to life.

## REWARDS

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

### PLAYER REWARDS

The players gain the following rewards:

#### ADVANCEMENT

A character who successfully completes this adventure gains one level.

### 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 players 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 2**:

- *Chardalyn breastplate* (armor of necrotic resistance)
- *Potion of resistance* (acid)
- *Spell scroll* of *spider climb*
- *Wand of pyrotechnics*

### STORY AWARDS

The characters may earn one or more of the following story awards, described in **handout 2**:

- **Corrupting Chardalyn Infusion**
- **Sing a Song of Vengeance**
- **The Song Falls Silent**

### 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:

### CLOD (KLOD), “THE DRAGON KEEPER”

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Like many of his ilk, Clod is more interested in comfort and possessions than combat. While he delights in many forms of torment, he prefers to separate his victims from their valuables. He's especially fond of showing off his great wealth and telling grandiose stories about his “treasures.”

**What They Want.** Clod is a lazy, slovenly creature who cares little for anyone else's needs. He mocks and denigrates anyone he views as beneath him (which is virtually everyone) and flees from aggressors at the first sign of trouble.

**Blinded by Greed.** Though greedy, he isn't particularly smart and is quite gullible. He's inclined to believe most anything is valuable if it has an outlandish story to go with it—the grander the tale, the greater its worth, at least in his mind.

### FERAL-TONGUE

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*Neutral evil goliath druid*

Previously known as Kugan Windwhisper Thuunlakalaga, Feral-Tongue adopted his current name after the chardalyn staff brought about his descent into evil. He's responsible for the chardalyn-infused animals and monstrosities roaming Icewind Dale, leaving murder and famine in their wake. Before finding the staff, Feral-Tongue was a reserved eccentric who lived alone near Wyrmdoom Crag. Old Goat and Kugan were good friends, but, as Feral-Tongue, his magnificent Frostclaw is the only living creature he cares for.

**What They Want.** Feral-Tongue's mission is to utterly destroy the goliath clans and the Ten-Towns of Icewind Dale with his army of chardalyn-infused animals, preferably led by his first creation and heir, Frostclaw. For what purpose, even he couldn't say.

**Who's In Control?** Since finding the staff, Feral-Tongue has constantly heard malevolent whispers and nothing he's tried has helped silence them. As he continued to use the staff's power, these whispers only grew worse, more insistent. These voices belong to the seven necromancers, members of the Colloquium of Immortality, who were sacrificed to create the staff. Their constant whispers, combined with Frostclaw's own desire for blood and conquest, set Feral-Tongue on a trajectory he's now resigned to.

### KASKUR (KASS-KERR) SPEARSONG THUUNLAKALAGA

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This headstrong and impetuous goliath leads the clan's hunters. He's grown angry and frustrated at the lack of game in the area, and he resents Old Goat's “poor leadership” for a lack of solutions. He wields a longbow taller than most humans and claims he once felled an elk from a half mile away. He wears little in the way of clothing, even in the driving wind—a feat that's earned him the respect of his fellow hunters.

**What They Want.** Kaskur has grown tired of Old Goat's personal fears preventing an alliance with the goliaths of Skytower Shelter. He views her as weak and her ideas as outdated, especially when Kugan Windwhisper (Feral-Tongue)—who Kaskur views as being even weaker than Old Goat—is involved. He wants to usurp control of the clan for himself.

**Words Are Wasted Wind.** Kaskur doesn't have a negotiator's tongue; he's terse and speaks his mind without hesitation. Despite this, he's experienced and knows the area better than any of his peers.

### OGOLAI (OH-GOH-LIE) ORCSPLITTER “OLD GOAT” THUUNLAKALAGA

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The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

**What They Want.** Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

**Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh.** Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

## CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure:

### CHARDALYN GROWTH

*Small elemental, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 31 (7d6 + 7)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (−2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)	10 (+0)	8 (−1)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +2

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Fear Aura.** Any beast or humanoid that starts its turn within 10 feet of the chardalyn growth must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of the creature's next turn.

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, the chardalyn growth has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Shadow Teleport (Recharge 5–6).** As a bonus action, the chardalyn growth can teleport to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of it, provided that both the space it's teleporting from and its destination are in dim light or darkness. The destination need not be within line of sight.

### ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### DIRE WOLF

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 37 (5d10 + 10)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	13 (+1)	7 (−2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

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

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

### ACTIONS

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

## FERAL-TONGUE

Medium humanoid (goliath), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (*chardalyn breastplate*)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +4, Wis +7

**Damage Resistances** cold, necrotic

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +7, Stealth +5, Survival +7

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Giant

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Special Equipment.** Feral-Tongue wears a *chardalyn breastplate*.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Feral-Tongue fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Spellcasting.** Feral-Tongue is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *thorn whip*  
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *thunderwave*  
2nd level (3 slots): *flame blade*, *moonbeam*, *pass without trace*  
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning*, *dispel magic*, *plant growth*  
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *freedom of movement*, *guardian of nature*\*  
5th level (1 slot): *contagion*  
\* *Spell found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything*

### ACTIONS

**Chardalyn Staff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 9 (2d8) necrotic damage or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 9 (2d8) necrotic damage if wielded with two hands.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Polar Bear Shape (2/Day).** Feral-Tongue magically polymorphs into a polar bear and can remain in this form for up to 4 hours. Feral-Tongue's equipment melds with his new form. Feral-Tongue reverts to his true form if he dies or falls unconscious. He can also revert to his true form as a bonus action on his turn.

While in polar bear form, Feral-Tongue retains his game statistics, but his AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of a polar bear, and he gains the traits and actions of a polar bear.

In this form Feral-Tongue's melee attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks, and deal an extra 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

### REACTIONS

**Stone's Endurance (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** When Feral-Tongue takes damage, he reduces the damage taken by 8 (1d12 + 2).

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Feral-Tongue 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. Feral-Tongue regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Attack.** Feral-Tongue makes one weapon attack.

**Cantrip.** Feral-Tongue casts a cantrip.

**Change Shape (Costs 2 Actions).** Feral-Tongue uses his Polar Bear Shape or reverts to his true form.

**Chardalyn Burst (Costs 3 Actions).** Necromantic energy explodes from Feral-Tongue's staff, or if he's in polar bear form, his body. All creatures within 10 feet of Feral-Tongue must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and 18 (4d8) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## FROSTCLAW

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 157 (15d10 + 75)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +4

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

**Languages** Giant

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Chardalyn Weapons.** Frostclaw's weapon attacks and Icy Breath legendary action are magical.

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

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

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Frostclaw makes two attacks: one with her beak and one with her claws.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

## 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.

**Attack.** Frostclaw makes one claws attack.

**Fearsome Roar (Costs 2 Actions).** Frostclaw roars loudly. Any creature within 30 feet that can see and hear Frostclaw must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Frostclaw until the end of their next turn.

**Icy Breath (Costs 3 Actions).** Frostclaw exhales a blast of frigid air in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage and 18 (4d8) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## MUD MEPHIT

*Small elemental, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 27 (6d6 + 6)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	9 (–1)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

**Skills** Stealth +3

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Aquan, Terran

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

**Death Burst.** When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of sticky mud. Each Medium or smaller creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the end of the creature's next turn.

**False Appearance.** While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mound of mud.

### ACTIONS

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

**Mud Breath (Recharge 6).** The mephit belches viscid mud onto one creature within 5 feet of it. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## OOZE ELEMENTAL (WATER ELEMENTAL)

*Large elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 114 (12d10 + 48)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (–3)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)

**Damage Resistances** acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Aquan

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Water Form.** The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Freeze.** If the elemental takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Whelm (Recharge 4–6).** Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If it is Large or smaller, it is also grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the elemental's space.

The elemental can grapple one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at one time with this ability. At the start of each of the elemental's turns, each target grappled by it takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. As an action, a creature within 5 feet of the elemental can pull a creature or an object out of it by succeeding on a DC 14 Strength check.

## 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.



## A black and white line drawing of a stone tablet or altar set into a rocky wall. The central panel depicts a muscular, horned figure with a large, open mouth, holding a long staff or spear. The figure is surrounded by various symbols, including a large eye, a cross, and a group of people. The tablet is framed by a border of smaller, hexagonal symbols.

# HANDOUT 2: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters may earn the following rewards in this adventure:

## MAGIC ITEMS

### CHARDALYN BREASTPLATE (ARMOR OF NECROTIC RESISTANCE)

*Armor (breastplate), rare (requires attunement)*

This breastplate is made of chardalyn reinforced with hardened wood and boiled leather. While wearing it, you always feel bitterly cold.

You have resistance to necrotic damage while you wear this armor.

### POTION OF RESISTANCE (ACID)

*Potion, uncommon*

When you drink this potion, you gain resistance to acid damage for 1 hour.

### SPELL SCROLL OF SPIDER CLIMB

*Scroll, uncommon*

A *spell scroll* bears the words of a single spell, written in a mystical cipher. If the spell is on your class's spell list, you can read the scroll and cast its spell without providing any material components. Otherwise, the scroll is unintelligible. Casting the spell by reading the scroll requires the spell's normal casting time. Once the spell is cast, the words on the scroll fade, and it crumbles to dust. If the casting is interrupted, the scroll is not lost.

If the spell is on your class's spell list but of a higher level than you can normally cast, you must make an ability check using your spellcasting ability to determine whether you cast it successfully. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a failed check, the spell disappears from the scroll with no other effect.

### WAND OF PYROTECHNICS

*Wand, common*

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and create a harmless burst of multicolored light at a point you can see up to 60 feet away. The burst of light is accompanied by a crackling noise that can be heard up to 300 feet away. The light is as bright as a torch flame but lasts only a second.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand erupts in a harmless pyrotechnic display and is destroyed.

## STORY AWARDS

### CORRUPTING CHARDALYN INFUSION

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Characters who fail their saving throw against the exploding chardalyn staff earn this story award.

### SING A SONG OF VENGEANCE

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The characters earn this story award if they bring Feral-Tongue and Kaskur back to Wyrmdoom Crag alive.

### THE SONG FALLS SILENT

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The characters earn this story award if Kaskur dies during the adventure and isn't returned to life.

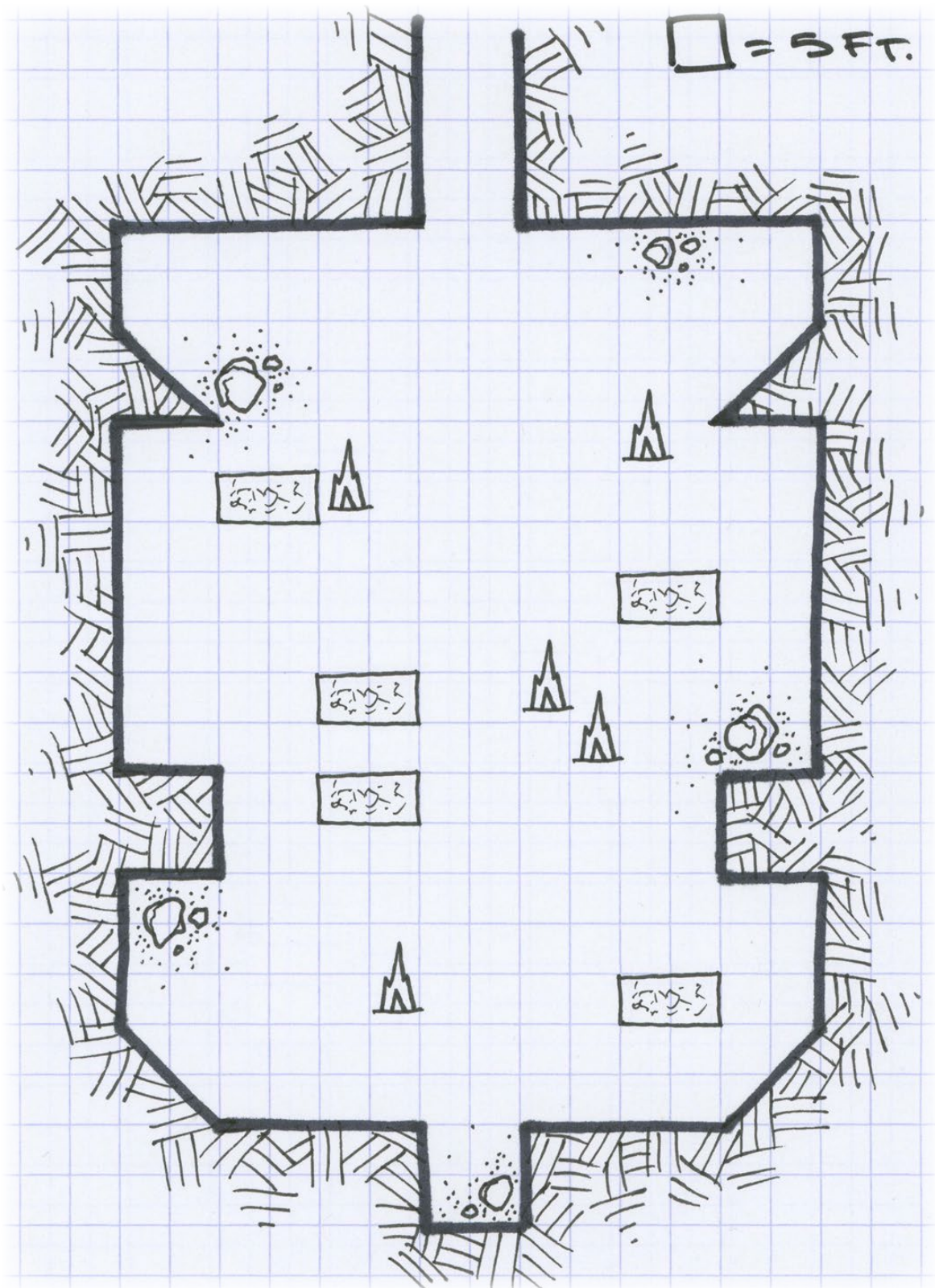
# APPENDIX A: RUINED COURTYARD MAP





# APPENDIX B:

## MOUTH OF MADNESS MAP



# APPENDIX C:

## 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)

### 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)