



CREEPING COLD

presented by Silver Bulette



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Silver Bulette would like to thank the “Nameless Soul” playtesters. You are not forgotten in the Creeping Cold.

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INTRODUCTION

This module is atypical. It isn't filled with combat - in many ways, it is a murder mystery. It takes place primarily in one location. The main antagonist is the frozen storm raging around the heroes. Different can be great fun. Through it all though, the heroes are still heroes.

To this end, the authors suggest becoming familiar with the NPCs within this book. We have given them traits and personalities, you must give them life! Giving life to a character is hard work. Giving life to over a dozen? That's a worthy challenge.

Throughout this adventure, the heroes face social challenges while scouring for clues about what's happening; they need to find a murderer. As these things happen, a great blizzard rages around them, covering clues and making the outdoors dangerous.

This module is written to be played with parties from **level 3 to level 5**. The play does not change for higher level characters, but the challenges increase. Encounters are more challenging and more frequent. Every gaming group has their own unique brand of fun, and with a little effort, this module satisfies all of them! Lesser hoarfrost werespiders are used in the default module. For higher level characters, it is suggested to use greater hoarfrost werespiders instead.

This adventure is comprised of the following sections:

- Optional cold effects rules
- NPC descriptions
- Caravanserai description and adventure time line
- Day 1 - arrival at the caravanserai
- Day 2 - blizzard worsens and animals mauled
- Day 3 - more snow and more bodies
- Day 4 - missing girl
- Appendix: new monsters
- Appendix: NPC stats, new spells and magic items
- Appendix: player handouts

Using these sections as written creates a fun and satisfying adventure. But, the players at your table may make a particular event impossible to complete. In these instances, we suggest having the werespider attack and kill a favorite NPC.

In some playtests, Bjorn was a favorite NPC and would have been a prime candidate for a werespider attack. In others, Jade could be a favorite interaction to remove. If you need to change the path of the adventure, make sure it is unexpected, fun and impactful.



The following cold effects are optional rules but are encouraged to prevent the players from venturing into the cold without any ill effects. The storm is meant to be cold, deadly, and unforgiving.

COLD EFFECTS

This module pits deadly cold temperatures against the group. This section lists some of the real-world problems associated with exposure to cold. As the group fights the cold, they need to make successful Saving Throws at -2 each half-hour. In addition to the chart below, reward creative play with bonuses.

Mitigating Effect	Bonus or Penalty
Cold weather gear	+2, Ignore 1st check
Wearing metal armor	-1 Cumulative
Creative use of spell	+1
Holding a metal shield or weapon	-1

The first three checks do not cause penalties. For each failed save beyond the third check, negative effects harm the characters, as seen on this chart.

Number of Failed Saves	Primary Penalty	Secondary Penalty
1	Loss of 1 hp	None
2	Loss of 1 hp	Rapid Heat Loss: Mild
3	Rapid Heat Loss: Moderate	Loss of 1 hp
4	Rapid Heat Loss: Severe	Frostbite: Mild
5	Loss of 1 hp	Frostbite: Moderate
6	Loss of 1 hp	Hypothermia

For characters above 4th level, replace the primary penalty for failing save #5 with hypothermia, and failing save #6 with severe frostbite. The secondary penalty for 4th level and above characters is 2d6 hp of damage.

FROSTBITE

Frostbite is damage to local parts of the body due to cold exposure. At the beginning frostbite tingles at the infected area. As exposure continues, frostbite makes the skin red and cold to the touch. As it progresses the skin becomes hard and pale. Finally, the skin dies and turns black.

Frostbite has four stages: mild, moderate, severe and dead tissue. It is recommended that characters below 4th level do not deal with severe or dead tissue frostbite. A character that contracts frostbite rolls on the following table:

Die Roll (d10)	Location Affected
1-2	Right Hand
3-4	Right Foot
5-6	Left Hand
7-8	Left Foot
9-10	Face (Nose or Ears)

MILD EFFECTS OF FROSTBITE

The cold bites at your skin, causing your fingers to numb. The color and warmth drain out of them. Finding shelter is an immediate concern.

If a creature's hands are mildly affected by frostbite, they have a -1 penalty to all attack rolls.
If a creature's feet are mildly affected by frostbite, their movement rate is reduced by 5 feet.
If a creature's face is mildly affected by frostbite, all NPCs act leery around them.

MODERATE EFFECTS OF FROSTBITE

The unrelenting cold made your hands unwilling to respond to your thoughts. If you can get them to move at all, it is slow. If you could feel anything, it probably would be painful.

Spell-casting while under the effects of frostbite is difficult. When a character has moderate or severe frostbite, roll 1d6. On a 1-2, the spell fails.

If a creature's hands are moderately affected by frostbite, they have a -2 penalty to all attack rolls. The character cannot use 2-handed weapons, shields or an off-hand weapon.

If a creature's feet are moderately affected by frostbite, their movement rate is reduced to 3/4 normal.

SEVERE EFFECTS OF FROSTBITE

Your inability to find shelter in time has jeopardized your extremities. Your hands no longer move at all. They have turned blue, and no heat can be felt from them.

All spell-casting while under the effects of severe frostbite require a Saving Throw at -2 to be successful.

If a creature's hands are severely affected by frostbite, they cannot attack.

If a creature's feet are severely affected by frostbite, their movement rate is halved.

DEAD TISSUE DUE TO FROSTBITE

The cold affects everything you do. You feel a second slower in your thoughts. Your body shivers uncontrollably.

The dead area of tissue must be amputated to prevent the spread of gangrene. Proper spells can recover the lost area. Dead tissue only sets in 24 hours after the onset of frostbite.



RAPID HEAT LOSS

Rapid heat loss happens when a body is not properly protected from cold environs. Hypothermia is the end result of rapid heat loss.

Mild Heat Loss: All attack rolls and saving throws are made at -1.

Moderate Heat Loss: All attack rolls and saving throws at -2.

Severe Heat Loss: Character can make the following actions: make a ranged or melee attack, move, or use an item.

Hypothermia: A player may only move.

is suffering from hypothermia, severe frostbite or dead-tissue frostbite, the recovery is longer.

In these cases, a character has to rest for 1d4+1 days to recover from each level of frostbite or rapid heat loss. For example, a character with hypothermia would be required to rest for 4d4+4 days.



RECOVERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF COLD

Most of the time, recovering from cold temperatures is fairly quick. All that is needed for most low-level effects is someplace warm, time and food. Sleeping a full night removes all effects from heat loss. If a character

NPC QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Name	Race/Sex	Description	Personality Traits	Reason for being here
Bjorn the Blade	Human, Male	Scarred and grizzled, lean with sinuous muscles, wearing chain shirt, short-cropped hair	Self assured, cocky, rude	Protection from the storm outside
Ferrex	Human, Male, late teenager	Tall, sandy-blond hair, awkward	Eager, shy, awkward, friendly	Employee of caravanserai; orphan
Kirshell	Human, Male	Greasy haired, weathered	Loud, gruff, socially inept	Protection from the storm outside
Lalor McKenzie	Human, Male	Long haired, average build, bearded	Soft spoken, experienced, calm	Employee of caravanserai; friend of the family
Alon Felkan	Human, Male	Slightly heavy, well dressed, piercing dark eyes, balding, large rounded nose	Loud, boisterous, well-spoken	Merchant, married to Brieghan, employs Shen Liu and Marena Soitha
Brieghan Felkan	Human, Female	Red haired, tall, medium build, soft melodic voice	Shy, laughs easily, chatty with familiar people	Married to Alon, close to Marena
Marena Soitha	Human, Female	Dark black hair, dark eyes, thin lips, sober countenance	Vigilant, serious, steely, acerbic	Guard of Alon and Brieghan
Shen Liu	Human, Male	Thin mustache, bronzed skin, hard dark almond-shaped eyes	Quiet, serious, dry sense of humor, witty	Guard of Alon and Brieghan
Alina	Half-Elf, Female	Light blond hair, blue eyes	Soft spoken, serious	Owner of caravanserai
Jadwiga (aka Jade)	Half-Elf, Female	Brunette, smooth-skinned, melodious voice, piercing eyes	Flighty, inquisitive, quick to laugh	Sister of Alina, Zyta, and Rasine
Rasine	Half-Elf, Female	Red-haired, muted elven features pale skin, dark eyes	Deliberate, thoughtful	Sister of Alina, Zyta, and Jade
Zyta	Half-Elf, Female	Brunette, rich and loud voiced, soft dark eyes, often smirking	Witty, clever, sharp tongued, amiable	Sister of Alina, Jade, and Rasine
Jak Ronalis	Human, Male	Thin, bulbous nose, dark hair, dirty, shabby clothes	Friendly, open, protective of family	Returning from selling crops to large city
Tabatha Ronalis	Human, Female	Thin, dirty, long brown hair, shabby clothes	Quiet, protective of family, often seems "spacey"	Wife of Jak, mother of Threya and Tamar
Threya Ronalis	Human, Female, Child	Long brown hair, cleaner than her family, mended clothes, thin, about 13 years old	Excitable, quick-witted, inquisitive	Daughter of Jak and Tabatha, sister of Tamar
Tamar Ronalis	Human, Male, Child	Short dark hair, thin, worn but well cared for clothes, around 9 years old	Quiet, reserved, observant, noncommittal	Brother of Threya, son of Jak and Tabatha

NPC DESCRIPTIONS

BJORN THE BLADE



Bjorn, the Blade is a common visitor to the caravansera. Currently, he is heading south, following rumors of hobgoblins massing and the opportunity for work. Bjorn is in his early 40s, and a veteran of several wars and numerous border skirmishes. The signs of his trade can be read in the scars on his hands and arms. He keeps his hair loose-cropped and his long beard braided.

Bjorn is superstitious, believing in spirits and demons influencing battles and events. He often talks about demons, influencing weather in particular.

Bjorn speaks in a rough and crass manner, cutting straight to the heart of things. Many of his profanities are unique amalgamations of creatures and bodily functions. Bjorn displays few or no manners, except to Jade who he makes awkward attempts at proper manners.

Bjorn secretly loves Jade, although Alina and Zyta know this and it is obvious to a casual observer.

Bjorn wants to find a mythical gem, the *Algid Cerulean*. He believes it holds magical properties to keep a person warm regardless of the weather around them.

FERREX

Ferrex is a 17-year old boy - 'man' according to him - with sandy blond hair and the build of a teenage boy who is about to grow into an adult. Although he is tall, he has not quite filled out and is still slightly awkward in his 'new' body.



He has lived and worked at the caravansera since his father, a coachman, abandoned him here after his mother's death. His father promised to return but that was five years ago. Ferrex has made himself useful and is eager to prove his worth to the sisters who run the tavern. They treat him like a little brother. Ferrex is courageous and hardworking and although he feels like a part of the family, he knows that he will eventually have to leave, perhaps to find his father.

Ferrex is excited that Threya and her family are visiting the tavern and hopes they stay for a long time. He is working to convince Alina to hire Jak Ronalis because he has developed a crush on Threya. He is awkward and shy around her, but stays near her as often as possible. He is currently working on carving her a wooden stag and spends his free time in the common room whittling.

KIRSHELL



Kirshell is a grizzled man of middle-to-late 40s, although it is difficult to determine his age because of the years spent struggling through a hard life alone in the woods. He has dark eyes, and his hair begins to gray.

His body stays strong and lithe because of the profession he follows.

He counts himself lucky to have survived the storm and blames his exposure to the excessive cold for his ill health. He is gruff and blunt in conversation and it is clear he spends limited time with people and dealing

with social interactions. He had been checking his trap lines nearby when the blizzard struck and only his tenacity and experience brought him safely to shelter.

LALOR MCKENZIE



Lalor has been at the caravansera since Alina and her sisters were very young. His hair was once a deep reddish-brown, but time has peppered it with gray. He wears it long and keeps a well-trimmed beard.

His face shows the marks of the seasons, but he always serves the guests with a pleasant attitude and eye for detail. Lalor isn't high-born and is nearly illiterate. He talks easily, and often sees things other people miss. Lalor is known to share experiences with friends and guests over a bottle of libation.

ALON FELKAN



Alon is a human male, in his early 30s. He wears his hair short, hoping to disguise his balding. Alon has a large rounded nose and dark piercing eyes. His body carries extra weight and a layer of softness, an obvious sign of his wealth. Alon always dresses well, often in fine silks and furs. He wears little jewelry, only a plain ring on his left hand.

Being a merchant brings much wealth to Alon, at the cost of constant travel. He enjoys the life and through it he met his second wife, Brieghan.

His first wife, Elleth, took ill and clerics could not find a remedy. She died two years ago.

Alon found a cure for Elleth a month after her death. He holds a map to a dungeon called the Shrine of the Hoarfrost Jarl some distance north from the caravansera. Alon believes something within can cure nearly any disease.

BRIEGHAN FELKAN



Brieghan Felkan recently married Alon. Her village far to the north sees more snow than sunshine. For the first time, she travels with her new husband and is glad to be away from never-ending winter (although it seems to have followed her). She acts a bit

shy early in conversations with new people, but warms up quickly. She speaks softly, with a very melodic voice. Brieghan has full, flowing auburn hair and often dresses in earthy tones to compliment it. Her pale eyes glitter in the light of the common room. Brieghan's body is of average build, and she is slightly taller than most of the other women around. She stands as tall as Alon.

Brieghan has terrible nightmares of an "icy spider spinning a web from the ceiling toward her face." She has been having this nightmare for over a week. She feels silly for being afraid of a dream.

Brieghan knows that creatures made of ice weaken in warm environments.

MARENA SOITHA

Marena is a guard in the employ of Breighan Felkan. Both Marena and Alon are very specific about this. Alon feels it is important that Breighan has a confidante on the road and expects Marena to fill this role as well as her guard duties. She takes both duties seriously, often seeing danger where none exists.

Marena's brilliant red hair contrasts against her milky-white skin. Her green eyes betray a bit of wildness in her soul. Marena rarely leaves her quarters without her breastplate and sword.

Marena talks in a deeper voice than one would expect from a woman. That, paired with her no-nonsense attitude and gruff manner often make people unfamiliar with her re-evaluate how dangerous a petite woman can be.



SHEN LIU



Shen Liu has been guarding Alon and his goods for almost a year now. Shen had been a foreigner in a strange land, unable to speak the local language. Alon, through the language of business, befriended and

hired Shen as a bodyguard. Shen has quickly picked up the common tongue of this area, but still speaks with a heavy accent and often misunderstands metaphors. This makes Shen seem humorless.

Shen is a bronze skinned man with a weathered face and high brow. He wears a thin well trimmed mustache as dark as his eyes. Shen has begun attempting to court Marena, but his intentions have gone unnoticed, largely due to the language barrier.

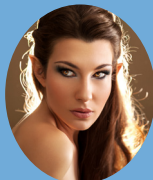
ALINA RANNEAU

Alina is a half-elven woman, and the oldest of four sisters. Her mother and human parent, died 4 winters ago and left the caravanserai to the daughters. Alina is a lithe woman, and her work ethic shows through her body style. She appears to be in her mid-twenties, with blonde hair so light it appears white. Her blue eyes carry the piercing stare of her elven heritage. With elven blood in her veins, Alina has little need of sleep, often retiring for only 4-5 hours a night. Alina loves the caravanserai. She sees it as the birthright and blessing of her and her sisters. All the Ranneau women were born within its walls, and all protect it with their lives.

Alina knows her father is an elven warlock, but cannot remember the man. She remembers hair that changed colors with the seasons and little else. Alina knows of the megalith in the woods.



JADWINGA "JADE" RANNEAU



Jade is the youngest sister of the family. She knows of her fathers past and feels like she could also become a master of the arcane. She attempts to be mysterious but is too flighty to pull this off effectively.

She laughs quickly and is easy to distract. She is an avid reader though, imagining herself in far away lands, having adventures, and wielding magical powers only a novelist could create. Although she wants to have adventures and become an arcane caster of high renown, she is too timid and easily distracted to actually pursue any of these goals or leave her family. She probes new guests for books they may have to share or trade.

RASINE RANNEAU



Rasine is the second oldest of the sisters that run the caravanserai. She has little interest in the dead-end wagon stop though. She stays because her sisters are here. Her real passion is alchemy.

Rasine is self-taught and smart. But, without a teacher her potential is limited. She has perfected a poultice with local ingredients that soothes wounds (1d4 hp of healing). Racine sells up to four of these poultices to people she likes for 15 gold each.

Rasine is a beautiful woman, with red-orange hair and stunning amber colored eyes. She usually dresses in vibrant blues, with muted highlight colors. Rasine speaks eloquently, pronouncing every syllable distinctly.

ZYTA RANNEAU



Zyta is the third-born of the sisters that run the caravanserai. She is quick to smile, clever, and witty. Zyta often tends the bar and despite her quick smile, she's known to knock a head when her temper is up. She never backs down from a fight but is difficult to provoke. Zyta is quick with numbers and enjoys telling and hearing a good story.

Away from her duties, Zyta likes privacy. When she is not needed for the chores of the caravanserai, Zyta often shutters herself away in her room. Her sisters believe that Zyta is writing letters to a man who frequents the establishment in the summertime, but actually Zyta is teaching herself to paint.

JAK RONALIS



Jak is a fit man in is late 30s. He is a sturdy man whose hands are calloused from many hours of work. His family farmed and raised sheep and a several horses. Before the illness spread through his village, his family was doing well. His wife's parents

lived with them and they had a strong flock and several promising foals. The army confiscated his herd and all of his horses except the two sturdy draft horses he used to work the fields. Then he watched the village burn from a distance. After loading his best leather working and carpentry tools, as well as some household goods. His family has a cache of 113 gp, 94 sp, and 213 cp in a chest of clothes he built a false bottom into. He also has his fathers old longsword, although he is not too familiar with its use. He is happy that his family has escaped the illness but unsure of what they will do to survive. He is a

hardworking man who does whatever it takes to protect his family and insure their livelihood. Jak does not know that Threya is concerned about being sick, and Threya and Tabatha actively hide this fact. They don't want him to worry.

TABATHA RONALIS

Tabatha is a woman in her mid-thirties with rosy cheeks and a nose that has clearly been broken in the past. She is tired, world weary, and concerned for her family's safety.



She and her husband, Jak, recently fled their farm and left most of their worldly possessions behind. They have a small savings, a cart of what goods they could quickly pack, and a desire to find a safe area to make a new home. The village nearest to them was devastated by an illness that spread quickly through the area. She was concerned that her daughter might have been afflicted, but Threya seems to be improving. Her parents were overcome by the illness that destroyed their village and they watched the army in the area burn their whole village to the ground; as the Ronalis family escaped with some clothes, her husband's tools, and limited household goods.

TAMAR RONALIS



Tamar is a 9-year-old boy with a mop of unkempt brown hair. He has aspirations to become a hero and is excited by the opportunity to travel with his family. He has not quite realized or understood the reason the family left the village although he recalls his friends becoming sick and losing his grandparents. He knows that sometimes Threya sneaks out at night to explore but he won't tell on her.

THREYA RONALIS

Threya is a striking girl with pale features and dark hair. She is 13 years old and on the verge of becoming a woman, or so her mother tells her. She knows that she will experience some changes as she gets older but did not expect the exhaustion and terrible nightmares that she has been suffering. Unknown to the Ronalis family, Threya has become a hoarfrost werespider.



She has been sleeping late and appears weakened and exhausted each morning. She has spoken to her mother about the changes but is concerned that she may have caught the same illness that decimated her home village and the villages in the area her family has just fled from.

Hoarfrost Werespider

When in arachnid form, a hoarfrost werespider is a man-sized or larger, white and nearly translucent spider-creature. The creature exudes cold and striking it is like hitting several feet of ice. It is incredibly quiet and difficult to spot despite its size. The Hoarfrost werespider is a creature of dual creation. They are made when a Hoarfrost Werespider bites but does not drain its victim, which is a rare occurrence. They are also created when the infection is gained from contact with an idol, symbol of power, or rune dedicated to the Creeper in the Cold, or the Ice Mother.

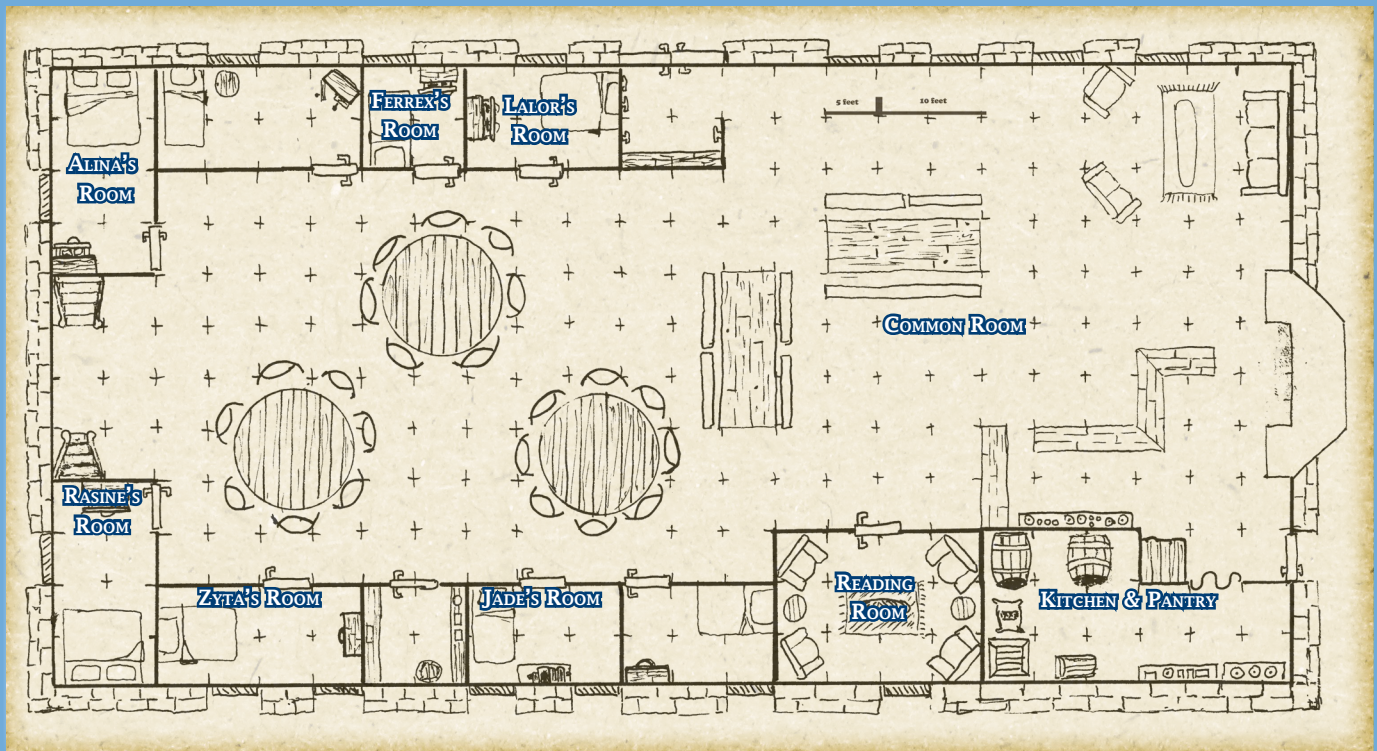
The practice of becoming a Hoarfrost Werespider is seen as a holy journey to secure and strengthen a liminal connection between the profane and the elder powers worshiped by ancient tribes.

Unlike traditional lycanthropes, this curse cannot be removed with simple divine or arcane magical spells like *restoration* or *remove curse*. Instead, the old magic of long forgotten deities and elder powers must be used. It requires the creation of a poultice using a ritual and ingredients outlined in any number of areas on petroglyphs.

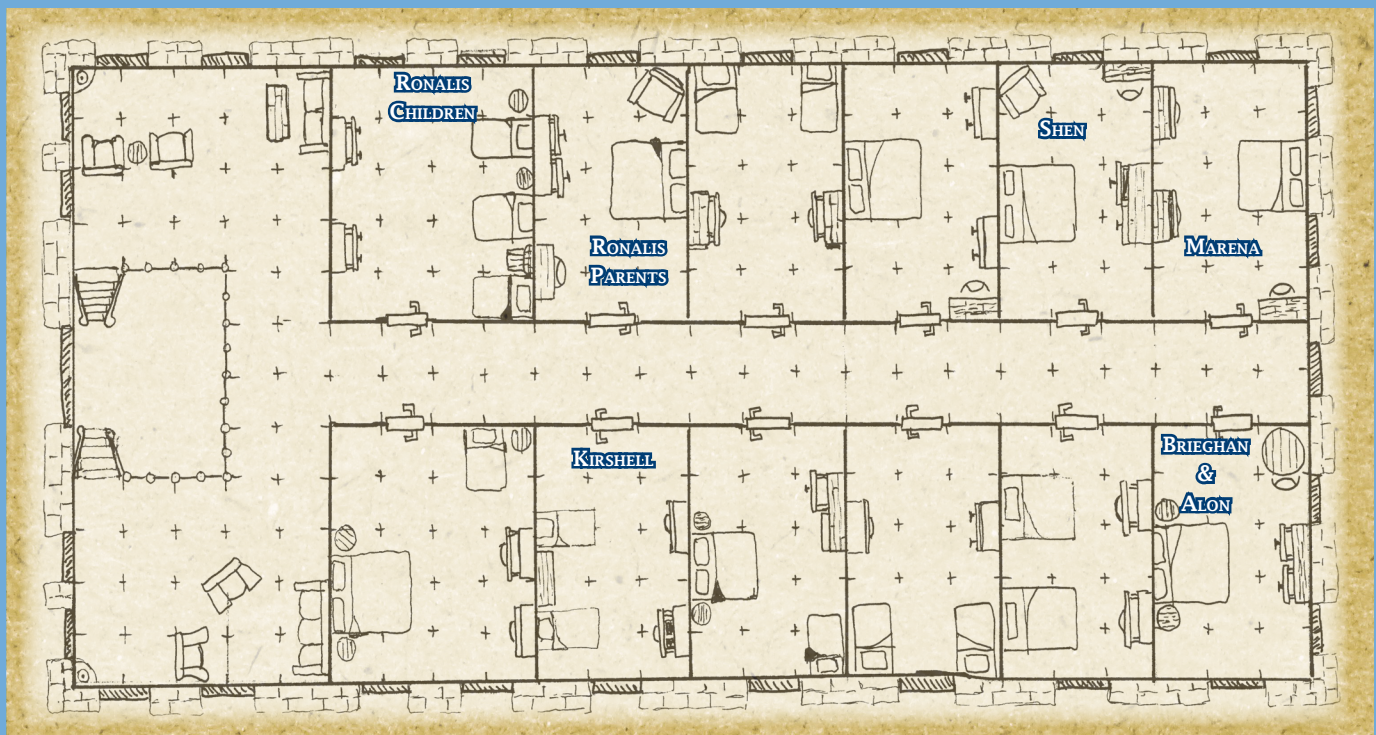


CARAVANSARAI INTERIOR MAPS

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



MAIN FLOOR

Common Room: The main room is spacious with 12' ceilings crossed with darkened wooden beams. The daub covering the walls is a creamy warm yellow color. In several areas, the daub is worn and the mortared stone can be seen between the wooden frames of the wall. The smells of baking bread and the aroma of meat permeates the air. A comfortable sitting space with a couch and leather arm chairs surrounds the fire. Several books can be seen resting near the side tables. The bar is a polished reddish wood that is immaculately clean. Three large tables with sturdy and heavy wooden chairs fill the middle of the room and two longer heavy plank tables with benches sit in the middle. The tables show signs of wear, dings and scratches, but tasteful center pieces of fragrant herbs and pine boughs decorate and scent each table. Several landscape paintings are on the walls. They depict scenes of the forest in all of its seasons. Several paintings depict the same scene in different seasons. The floor is sturdy worn planks with large iron nails and signs of its age can be discovered in the occasional section that creaks in protest. Oil lamps attached to sconces are spread through the room to provide a warm welcoming light. The ceiling seems to swallow noise and though the murmur of conversation can be heard, it is a dull wash of background noise. A piece of slate leans against the side of the large 8' wide fireplace. It lists the daily kitchen offerings. The stones of the large fireplace radiate heat. The kitchen can be seen in the corner and is a tidy and organized workspace. A second exit can be seen in the kitchen, providing easier access to the well. Bunches of dried herbs can be seen hanging from nails in the beams of the ceiling throughout the kitchen. Several handmade rugs are placed throughout the common room. Two sets of stairs lead up in the far wall opposite the hearth and fireplace. Heavy wooden doors line the walls of this downstairs room.

Ferrex's Room: This room contains a bed and a dresser. There are small wooden carvings and smooth planks with charcoal sketches. Ferrex has 27 cp and 13 sp in a small sack under his mattress.

Alina's Room: This room has a dresser and a large bed that is immaculately made. There is a painting on the wall of 4 young girls, an attractive human woman with brown hair a quiet smile that shows no teeth, and an elven man with platinum colored hair, and sharp aquiline features. A loose plank near the bed contains a fur wrapped metal chest that contains 3784 gp, 1244 sp, and 11 emeralds worth 250 gp each. There are several books of elven poetry beside her bed.

Rasine's Room: The first thing someone experiences in this room is the rich and pungent aroma of drying herbs which can be seen hanging from the ceiling from numerous spots in the room. The dresser has several mortars and pestles and a variety of containers. There are several texts on alchemy and alchemical procedures. Rasine's bed is carefully made.

Zyta's Room: This room holds a wooden easel and stool as a center piece located directly between two windows. She has clay pots of paint and jars of horsehair brushes spread around the room. There are paintings, both finished and unfinished around the room. Zyta's bed is made in a haphazard fashion.

Jade's Room: Jade has small jars with various spell components on the shelves. Her bed is unkempt and unmade. Jade has a bookshelf with several books, stacks of papers with drawings, diagrams, and sequences of arcane symbols. Her current collection of books includes:

Places of Power and Eldritch Strength: this is a text written several hundred years ago by a man who claimed to be a powerful wizard. Although much of his description is vague and provides hints that could apply to any number of random locations found in any land, he does have a few fairly accurate descriptions of ancient cairns and monoliths as well as his claimed translations of petroglyphs he has encountered (see handouts 1-3).

A Pupil's Primer of Basic Alchemick and Magyck: this is a basic magic text. It covers the use of components, memorization, and technique. It also contains the spells: *Ice Slick*, *Sand*, and *Magic Missile*.

Tybalt's Eldritch Vengeance: this is a romance novel about an orphaned half elven man who finds adventure, romance with a princess named Lynora, and his legacy as a king who rules over an enchanted isle of magical elves and creatures.

The Winter of the Hart: this is a romance novel about a princess who nurses an injured hart through a desolate and difficult winter. The hart is actually a cursed prince who changes back in the spring and goes on to marry the princess and live happily ever after.

Lalor's Room: This room is decorated in an austere fashion. It is tidy with a made bed and folded clothes and laundry. He has several small personal items on a bedside table including: a smooth black and gray oval river stone, a small wooden carving of a fish, and a folded handkerchief with the monogrammed initials RL.

Reading Room: This room is filled with overstuffed leather chairs, pillows, and throw blankets with warm colors. Several shelves hold a large collection of 26 books. The curtains across the windows of this room are thick and seem to absorb noise. A heavy rug covers the floor in robust gold and red colors.

Kitchen and Pantry: This kitchen is a well used workspace. Everything is tidily placed and neatly arranged, utensils lined along a counter. Towels hang in just the space your hand would levitate towards in a time of need. Dried herbs hang from the rafters above. Even the metal box grills used along the counters here are clean, although still warm when not in use.

UPPER FLOOR

All of the upstairs rooms have windows that can be

opened but they are currently held firmly shut with a layer of ice. A successful Open Doors roll will force the windows open. The continually falling ice and snow make it difficult to determine if a window has been opened recently.

Kirshell's Room: This room is well used. The bed is unmade and a cozy nest has been made in the center of it using the pillows and blankets. Several strings of pelts hang from the curtain rod and single larger pelts are scattered across the furniture. Several recently sharpened hunting knives, a hand axe, and a short sword are all arranged carefully on the floor.

Jak and Tabatha's Room: This room is tidy but unpacked. A large chest sits at the end is locked with a sturdy steel pad lock. This chest contains clothes, several books, valuable home items (dishes, a fine lantern, silverware), and has false bottom which rests upon a wooden rim. The false bottom contains the life savings of the Ronalis family totaling 113 gp, 94 sp, and 213 cp.

Ronalis Children's Room: This room is a stark dichotomy. One half is quite tidy and organized, while the other has clothes tossed about, pieces of interesting firewood and some sticks, and a pile of rocks. One bed is made while the other is tossed with the blanket hanging half off, there is a piece of charcoal under the pillow of that bed. The organized side has a bag with folded

clothes inside, 2 gp, and a silver necklace with a moon pendant.

Shen's Room: It is difficult to tell someone has been staying here. The only evidence of a guest is the spear leaning in the corner with a bow and quiver of arrows. The bed is made and a backpack is ready for travel, sitting near the door. The backpack contains mostly mundane travel and adventuring equipment and a small jade beetle statue the size of a man's hand wrapped carefully in cloth in a wooden box.

Marena's Room: This room has weapons arranged around the room including a spear, a short sword, a crossbow, and several daggers. A packed backpack contains rations and gear needed to survive a long journey (flint and steel, waterskins, a bedroll, torches, rope, hammer and spikes, etc.). The bed is made in a haphazard fashion and a book lays open and face down on the pillow, the book is a title covering the spear fighting techniques of the elves of the Alyrian Satrapy.

Brieghan and Alon's Room: This room is tidy and organized. Several pairs of women's shoes are lined neatly at the end of the bed. Clothes have been carefully hung in the armoire. A book of poetry sits on a bedstand. There is a leather sheaf of papers on the desk that detail business transactions and pricing of goods. A well made short sword rests against the wall near the bed and the notches in the blade are evidence of its previous use.

TIMELINE

DAY 1

The morning brings a clear, cold day. Shortly after daybreak, clouds begin approaching from the West. As noon arrives, the temperature plummets and snow blinds travelers stuck on the roads.

MIDDAY: While traveling, a blizzard engulfs the group.

1:30 PM: Following the road through the storm, the group encounters the Ronalis family.

3:00 PM: Traveling further leads the group to the caravansary.

7:00 PM: Kirshell arrives at the caravansary.

DAY 2

The blizzard dumped a foot of snow overnight. Another foot accumulates before midnight.

BEFORE DAWN: A pig is killed in the stable.

DAWN: The pig is discovered by Lalor McKenzie. It has two puncture marks and has been drained of blood. As the group is discussing what to do about the pig, a verglas troll attacks.

DAY 3

The relentless storm piles another six inches of snow between midnight and dawn. Between dawn and

midnight another foot of snow accumulates.

BEFORE DAWN: Bjorn's horse is killed in the stable in the same manner as the pig from the day before.

BREAKFAST: Quiet morning, with Threya still sleeping and Kirshell looking well.

9:00 AM: Bjorn's horse is found dead. It too was desiccated and drained. (Discoverer depends on party's actions with Lalor from day before.)

DAY 4

The blizzard has become a snowstorm, dropping 3 inches of snow between midnight and the discovery of Marena. The snow continues to fall. It lets up just as the heroes discover the monolith.

2 Hours Before Dawn: A scream awakens the caravanserai. Marena is found nearly dead. Tracks are found leading away from the warmth of the main building. The Ronalis family reports Threya is missing. Her coat is still in her room. Kirshell is also discovered to be missing. The group must track Threya and Kirshell. They headed north, through the woodlands.

Around 9 AM: A confrontation takes place at a megalith in the forest.



DAY 1

THE STORM ARRIVES

The blizzard comes with wrath. The wispy clouds of the early afternoon form into a white skyline and your nostrils begin detecting a lack of other scents which is rapidly replaced by the warm moist redolence of impending snow.

Tiny tight flakes began stinging your faces as you steadfastly plodded along the road. Tales tell of a caravanserai several miles forward along the road. With stout walls and a solid roof, this place will allow you to ride out the looming storm.

A storm engulfs the group around mid-day. The heroes are several days travel from the nearest known town or city. As the snow falls the heroes make increasingly difficult Survival checks to stay on the road. The effects of deadly cold wears on the characters.

As the group fights the cold, they will need to make Saving Throws each half-hour. Pages 3-4 have all rules for cold used in this module.

After an hour and a half (3 saving throws), the adventurers come across a family also on the road in these abysmal conditions.

WAYWARD TRAVELERS

While traveling toward the caravanserai the heroes overtake a donkey-lead cart on the road. Two children huddle under a moth-eaten blanket in the back of the cart between bales of hay. A woman sits beside a man, both clinging to each other. The man urges the donkey forward, but the stubborn animal plods slowly, at its own pace.

The man introduces himself as **Jak Ronalis**. His wife, **Tabatha** smiles weakly as he chatters out her name. The children, **Tamar** and **Threya**, appear to be in the beginning stages of succumbing to the weather.

The wooden palisades of the caravanserai beckon you from a distance. The warm glow of lantern and candle light seeps from the windows of the second story of a building peaking over the walls. The howling wind drives you onward. You reach the gates and hear the muffled voices of men struggling with animals on the other side. A horse spooks and rushes the gate, knocking it open directly in front of you.

ARRIVING AT THE CARAVANSERAI

The animal can be calmed and recaptured with a successfully. The men, **Lalor** and **Ferrex**, were finishing stabling the horses from a carriage that is being unloaded just outside the stables. They welcome the help from able bodied heroes and manage to quickly close the stable doors and escape the increasingly heavy snow. If the characters do not help Lalor and Ferrex, all social interaction rolls with them are at disadvantage.

INSIDE THE CARAVANSERAI

The interior of the inn invites the heroes to partake in the warmth and comradery inside. Over a dozen people already pack the common room. Waxed wooden walls reflect the soft glow of the candles and lanterns within.

Scanning the room, a well-dressed man and an equally dressed woman sit in a corner of the room, toasting and cheering each other. Two guards stand near them, eying the other people within.

A grizzled veteran sits near the taps, holding an empty mug impatiently. His sword, notched and worn from use, leans against his stool, within easy reach of his hand. His boots still drip melting snow from the storm outside.

The bartender, a lithe half-elven woman, flits behind the bar filling mugs and shouting orders to other servers. Three other half-elven women with similar features snap to her orders, two hustling food from the kitchen, and the third pours hot water into cups. After eating, the small crowd begins settling into quiet chatter and relieved introductions.

Alon and **Breighan Felkan** occupy the sitting area corner, with **Shen** and **Marena** close to them. Bjorn drinks near the bar. The **Ranneau sisters** work quickly to help get everyone warmed and comfortable. The **Ronalis** family enters behind the heroes and takes the nearest rectangular table. They are clearly uncomfortable being here, but do their best to hide this. Over several drinks and plentiful fresh bread and stew, the players can learn information from the travelers and staff. As the evening wears on, the distinct groups slowly intermingle. Nobody within the caravanserai becomes aggravated or raise their voices unless the heroes do something untoward.

Any character who makes an attempt to eavesdrop or interact with NPCs can learn the following information in conversation.

Character	Information Given
Bjorn the Blade	Headed South looking for work
Alina	Winter has never come here before so fiercely
Alon & Breighan Felkan	The weather to the north had been cold, but sunny
Lalor & Ferrex	Snow has never piled up so quickly within the walls
Threya	Her name carries the blessings of a goddess
Jak & Tabatha Ronalis	Left their village to flee an illness
Jade	Recently cast an ice spell correctly
Shen Liu	Has a bad feeling about this

As the evening falls into night, a gruff, bearded man stumbles through the door. He wears several pelts with many animals represented in the skins. Over his shoulder, a stick holds several furs hanging limply behind him. His lips are blued, and his fingers fight his will to set down the bundle. His ashen skin and labored breathing, tell more may be wrong than just weather exposure. Regardless, the women running the inn welcome him, and usher him to a seat. Jade brings him a hot cup of tea.

As he drinks hot tea, his color returns to his lips and extremities. Although still gruff, the man's appearance softens considerably.

Chatting with the stranger or eavesdropping on him will reveal the following information.

- The man's name is Kirshell
- He is a local trapper. The storm drove him to the caravanserai.
- He is suffering from frostbite on his hands and face.

DAY 2

As the people in the inn begin rousing, the snow shows no sign of slowing. The stable hands begin bundling themselves in winter gear as one of the half-elven women begins stoking the coals of the fire and feeding more wood as the flames crackle with new life. The sound of pots and pans and the clamor of a waking kitchen rise over the bar.

Over the next several minutes, the Ronalis family pull themselves from their rooms and Tamar, their 9-year-old boy, appears unphased by the rigors of the previous day and is filled with exuberant youthful energy. The parents and Threya, the teenage girl, still show signs of exhaustion from the previous afternoon's struggle against the blizzard. The furrier follows behind them shortly after and

appears to have recovered from his own arduous journey through the night to the safety of the caravanserai. His face is filled with color and a slight smile peeks from his cracked lips as he sits down for a morning meal.

Shortly after you have all settled for breakfast, the door blows open and one of the stable hands materializes out of the cloud of whipping snow that attempts to gain access to the common room. His face is pale and his beard is coated in a thin layer of icicles. He stomps a layer of hoar from his body and quickly moves towards Alina and speaks quietly with her. A scowl of surprise appears on her face but quickly disappears. The stable hand once again throws the door open and enters the snowy maelstrom. Then Alina sighs and turns to the assembled group:

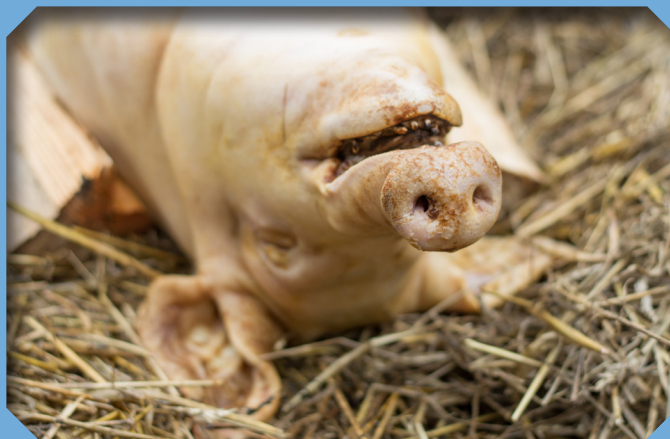
"Something appears to have broken into the barn last night. The caravanserai walls still seem secure and the barn doors closed, but a pig was found dead in its stall this morning."

The inn is quiet as the group processes the information. Tamar is in the firewood, searching for a serviceable club for a 9-year-old.

Lalor and Ferrex, the stable hands, tossed the carcass into a growing berm of snow between the barn and the palisade wall.

Ferrex brings the players to the stall where the pig was slain. The players can explore the barn interior and the scene of the pig's death to learn the following:

- Careful examination of the floor will reveal several deep, pointed gouges.
- The hay is strewn in a manner to suggest that the pig struggled for a short time.
- Very few drops of blood can be found in the sty.
- The pig has two rough puncture wounds in its neck near the carotid artery. Dried froth and saliva covers the mouth of the pig and its flesh appears sunken
- The pig shows signs of having been lifted and the blood in the wound on its neck has not completely coagulated and is still wet.
- A few wispy strands of sticky web can be spotted on the ceiling rafters.
- Some sticky hairs, the length of a man's index finger, are embedded in the stall walls and posts.
- The deep and drifted snow surrounding the



building makes it impossible to discern any meaningful tracks but several deep indentations can be discovered and the creature appears to have a gait of 5-10 feet

- An assassin, cleric, druid, or ranger can determine that there was a venom present but the meat is still safe to eat

- No signs of anything forcing the door are apparent but a single long, firm, sticky black hair can be found along the wood near the upper portion of the door. The 'demon' is a Verglas Troll, most likely traveling within the coldest parts of this storm and wreaking havoc wherever it can.

As the party concludes its deliberation over the pig, the following happens:

Bjorn plods heavily down the stairs from his room with a surly expression stuck upon his face. He walks straight to the bar and calls for an ale. After a moment he appears to finally notice the uncomfortable silence in the inn. "What happened?" Bjorn growls. The other guests relate the story to Bjorn. He strides to the bar and fills a mug himself, "I've heard of ice demons drawn out in the depths of a storm. They are drawn to the lust, greed, and rich emotions that we all experience. A village near the one where I was raised was plagued by such a creature for a whole season. It started quietly, an animal disappears or is found dead, then someone old or weak is 'lost' in the cold. Before they knew what was happening, they were decimated and only a few strong folks survived by fleeing. They fled to a neighboring settlement and the ice demon followed them. It drained the life of many in that village before the springs thawed the heavy snows and freed the people from its grasp. Perhaps one of us has been marked by a demon." Just as Bjorn finishes relating his story, the door is thrown open and Ferrex cries, "The demon! HELP!" He turns back to the cold with a pitchfork in his hands.

- 1 troll for level 3; 2 trolls for level 4; 3 trolls for 5th+

Verglas Troll

Hit Dice: 6+3

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Attacks: 2 claws (1d4), 1 bite (1d8)

Save: 11

Special: Regenerate (3 hp/rd) if in cold environment, deals 2 cold damage/rd to all adjacent to troll

Move: 12

Alignment: Chaos

Challenge Level/XP: 8/800

Special: Does not regenerate from acid or fire

- Bjorn helps to fight the creatures and coaches characters saying things like "these ice devils cower at fire" and "these creatures are living cold, stay back unless you can handle the cold-burn."

- After 6 rounds, Shen Liu and Marena Soitha enter the battle from the main doors. Shen Liu favors a short bow while Marena uses a spear.

- Lighting oil, flaming brands, torches, etc is extremely difficult in the wind and thick snow of the blizzard. We suggest a couple of possible methods to make this a greater challenge for the players:

1. Use 4d6 and have a player attempt to roll under their Dexterity to light a fire and have this take a complete round of action. Creativity of the players can be rewarded by decreasing the number of d6 used.

2. Make the winds and snow prevent any lighting of fire outdoors. Have the players retreat to the entrance to light anything or cajole NPCs into assisting them. Lalor and Ferrex will both help if directly instructed to do so.

The remainder of the day drags as the snow continues. Bjorn spends the remainder of the day sharpening his weapons and preparing his equipment. The characters may help the stable hands brave the weather to keep the doors and gate clear, feed and water the animals, and retrieve more firewood for the several fireplaces that heat the rooms and fuel the stoves of the inn. Their help is appreciated and be sure to emphasize the dangers of the weather. The other guests nervously engage in chatting, card games, knitting, and other activities to keep themselves busy. The furrier's health appears to diminish as the day grows into night.



GM Note: Traveling outside in this weather requires a Saving Throws at -2 after only 30 minutes outside. The full rules for cold exposure are listed on pages 3-4. Allow the players to investigate as much as they'd like. There are no tracks outside the walls or around the complex. If they check the palisade walls on either side, they may notice scratches in the wood.

If the heroes set watches at night or convince the other guests to, they will not see anything from inside of the inn. Characters staying in the barn or the stables will struggle to gain a night's rest and spell casters will not recover spells. They will also have to make a Saving Throw every hour (8 for the whole night) to ward off the effects of the extreme cold. The weather outdoors is too hazardous to attempt remaining in there for the night. If guards are placed, the murderer still manages to attack. It sucks the life out of Bjorn's horse, Steady.

DAY 3

The morning begins as the day before. The staff again settle into the routine of stoking the fires and starting breakfast preparations. The guests begin rousing shortly after with the Ronalis family arriving first, except for Threya who is still asleep. Kirshell arrives shortly after and the color appears to have returned to his face and his strength increased. The merchant and his wife enter the common room together and their guards shortly after.

The breakfast routine continues as before and the stable hands brave the ever-building snow to feed the animals and to retrieve firewood.



Overnight, something attacked and drained Bjorn's horse (named Steady) of blood. Ferrex finds the poor creature, and again dutifully informs Alina.

Bjorn reacts with rage and sorrow. He wants to fight, and argues with everyone who talks to him.

Ferrex and Lalor will escort the players to the stables. The other horses appear to be nervous and spooked. Examining the area can reveal:

- Speaking with the horses will reveal that they saw nothing but are quite frightened they will be killed next.
- There are deep pointed tracks in the dirt of the stall.
- The horse did not appear to be spooked or rear up.
- Careful examination will reveal only a few drops of

wet blood on the ground in the stall.

- Light drag marks in the packed dirt floor can be seen near the door.

- Thin patches of webbing can be perceived in the rafters on the ceiling but are difficult to detect at a glance.

- Sticky hairs can be found embedded in the stall walls and the rafters. They are reminiscent of spider hairs but much larger than typical.



The Ronalis family attempts to keep the news from the children.

Alon and Breighan argue quietly in the corner. Breighan speaks rapidly to her husbands and wrings her hands while nervously glancing about the room. Jade locks herself in her room, refusing to leave. If any player listens at her door they can hear chanting that sounds arcane coming from inside. Jade is attempting to cast Protection from Evil 10' radius from a scroll her father had left and she had been studying.

Outside, the blizzard rages on and the mournful wail of the wind can be heard at steady intervals. At times, the whole building shudders, seeming to attempt to shake off the snow and the cold.

DAY 4

Before dawn on the fourth morning, a scream awakens the inn. The front door hangs ajar and a drift of snow has gathered several feet into the common room. The body of Marena, one of the Felkan's guards leans against a nearby interior wall, a rictus of pain upon her face and her eyes wide in terror. There are bloody puncture marks upon one arm and her cheeks appear sallow and indented.

THE KIDNAPPING

Marena lies paralyzed in the doorway due to the affects of a toxin. An assassin or cleric can tell that the poison isn't fatal and that she will be alright in 3 to 6 hours (1d4+2). Shortly after examining Marena, Jak Ronalis rush into the common room to alert the group that Threya, his daughter, is missing. The guests quickly search the caravanserai and determine that Kirshell is also missing and Bjorn is still passed out drunk in bed sobbing about his horse, Steady. Any ranger or druid can quickly examine the area outside and determine that two to three figures left not more than 2 hours ago and crossed the snow over the palisades.

The tracks lead deeper into the pine forest as the snowfall begins to taper off in the bright morning sun. Shen Liu steps into line without a word and joins the party. He is armored and armed with a grim look set upon his face. As the players travel in the woods, they will have to complete three encounters/hazards as they move several hours through the deep snow into the creaking forest.

Roll	Encounter
1	Rime Spider(s)
2	Frozen Corpse
3	Snow Squall
4	Thin Ice
5	Fir Treant
6	Wolves

The forest is filled with a heavy quiet as the snow consumes the sounds around. Occasionally, the creak of the branches is punctuated by the snap and dull thud of heavy pillows of snow crashing to the ground. The heavy cold snow crunches beneath your feet as the hems of your pants gather snow melt and ice.

1. RIME SPIDERS

The glinting of light draws the characters' eyes towards a clearing which breaks the trees ahead. Several ice-coated stumps and branches are coated in a glossy sheet of ice. Below them, on the ground, are a dozen diamond like crystals that refract the light in a scintillating pattern that draws your eye. The crystals vary in size from an apple to a few melon sized beautiful stones resting in the snow.



GM Notes:

- The crystals are meant to draw prey into the Rime Spiders' trap. A ranger will be difficult to surprise in this instance and the player should privately determine whether the group has been surprised. If the group is cautious and probe, prepare, or use their creativity for this trap, you should allow them to avoid being surprised.
- There are 3 Rime Spiders hidden here. If your players are 5th level, add a fourth spider.

Rime Spider

Hit Dice: 3
 Armor Class: 4 [15]
 Attacks: Bite (1d6 plus poison)
 Save: 13
 Special: poison
 Move: 12/16 (climb)
 Alignment:
 Challenge/XP: 4/120

2. FROZEN CORPSE

The forest is quiet, except for the crunch of wet snow beneath the players' feet. Ahead, a snow covered hand clutches helplessly at a tree and disappears into snow below. If it is dug out they find the frozen body of a man who did not make it to shelter before he succumbed to the dangers of the weather. His frosted face is unshaven and he wears thick clothes and furs. He has a large notched axe tied to his back and the worn but well-crafted handle is marked with an intricate knotted design. The axe is a *Woodsman's Axe*, +1 Cold Iron Battle Axe.



3. SNOW SQUALL

Without warning, you are blinded by a wind blowing snow and sleet cutting into your faces. You cannot see more than a few feet in front of you.

All who do not seek shelter, takes 1d6 damage for every 10 minutes they spend in the squall. A saving throw at -2 halves the cold damage. The squall lasts (1d6 x 10)

minutes.

4. THIN ICE

Crossing the flat area ahead requires a Saving Throw or the player will fall into the ice cold stream. Falling into the water is treated as if they immediately fail a Saving

The quiet gurgling of a stream can be heard in the midst of the trees. Ahead of you lies a wide open span of snow that stretches off to your left and right. This swathe of snow sits lower than the area around it.

Throw versus cold effects (they take 1 point of damage) and they will be at a further -4 to these Saving Throws unless they can dry off and warm up.

Allow the players to creatively cross the stream and reward their innovativeness. Examples include:

- probing ahead with a pole
- sending heavy equipment across with ropes
- tossing the dwarf!

5. FIR TREANT



The trees creak in the forest and are occasionally punctuated by the snap of branches collapsing under the weight of the snow. A large creak and moan sounds nearby and large heavy clumps of snow plummet to the ground nearby with a heavy wet thud. A ranger or druid will spot the face in the bark of a large fir tree nearby. Other players can all roll as if spotting a secret door to see the face in the tree.

The **fir treant** does not bother the players unless they damage living trees. If the fir treant is provoked to attack, it allows the group to surrender if they agree to forfeit all axes and fire-making items.

If the fir treant is addressed it speaks with them. It may reveal the following information:

- An evil presence passed by recently. The treant does not experience the time the same way as people, but knows it was after the storm had decreased in strength.

- There are stones of great power nearby. The treant can direct the players towards the clearing.

- The forest has many dangerous creatures like spiders and wolves.

- The storm was a natural occurrence. The fir treant felt no malice nor magic from it.

- If the characters are friendly, the fir treant will offer to use its healing sap for them. It will give 3 doses that each heal 2d6 hp to 1 character. This sap cannot be placed in a container.

Treant, Fir

Hit Dice: 7 HD

Armor Class: 2 [17]

Attacks: 2 Strikes (2d6, 3d6 or 4d6)

Save: 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, or 3

Special: Control trees, healing sap

Move: 12

Alignment: Neutral

Challenge Level/XP: 7 HD (7/600)

6. WOLVES



A pack of **wolves** emerged from their den with the breaking of the storm. The pack has caught the heroes' scent and hunts them down. For parties level 1-2, 1 wolf for each person emerges and attacks, 2 wolves each for levels 3-4 and 3 wolves per member for levels 5+.

Wolf

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 7 [12]

Attacks: Bite (1d4+1)

Save: 16

Special: none

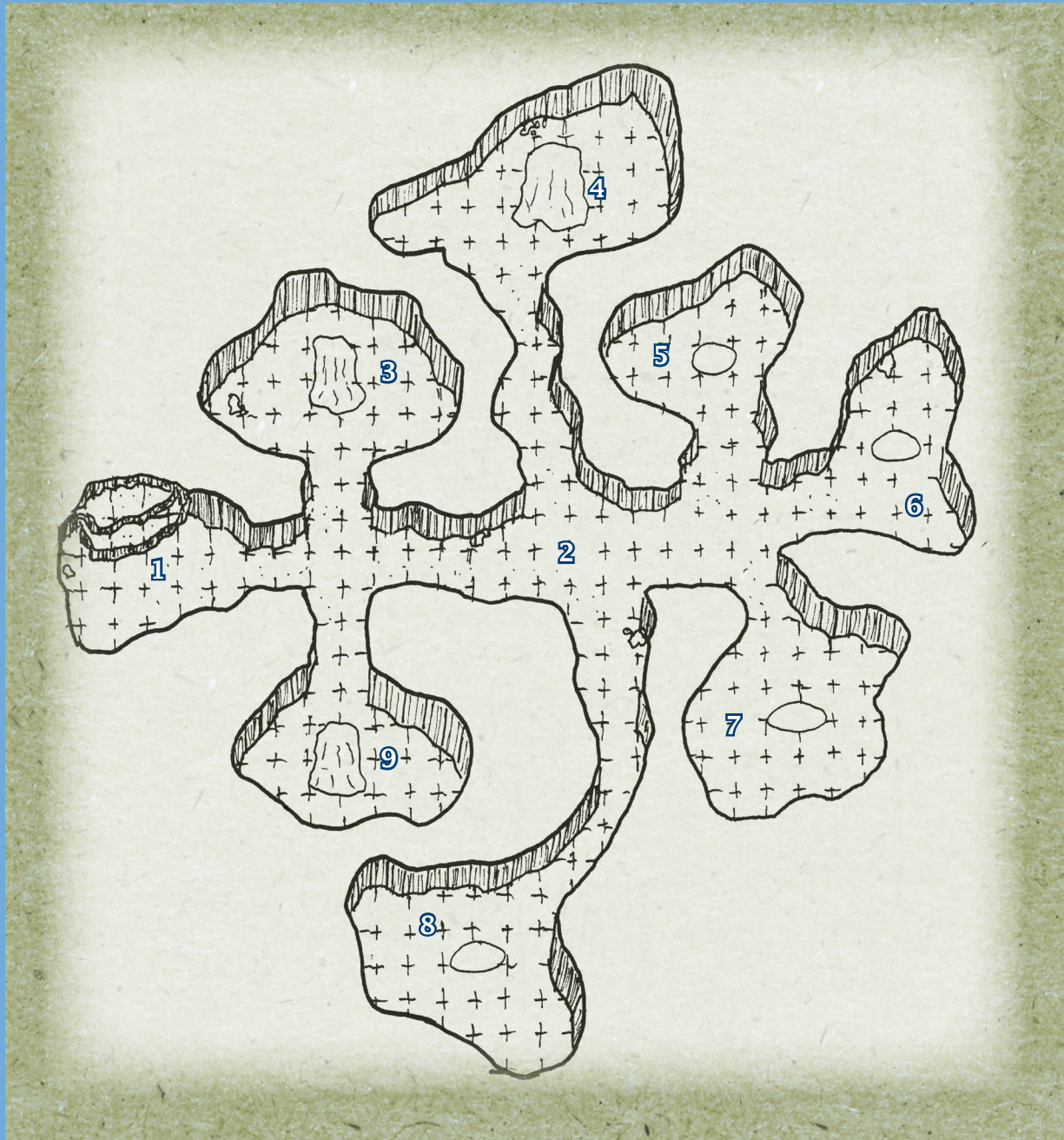
Move: 18

Alignment: Neutral

Challenge Level/XP: 2/30

INSIDE THE MEGALITH

MAP OF MEGALITH CAVERNS



THE STONE STRUCTURE



After struggling through the deep snow and forest, the land suddenly opens into a large clearing in an irregular circle. Large organized but unadorned carved stones rise from the surrounding snow forming a primitive structure.

A few paces outside the mouth of the monolith, Kirshell stands bleeding from his shoulder. He still retains the strength to aim his crossbow at Threya, who cowers inside the opening. Her hands cover her face and her body moves with the uncontrollable rhythm of someone sobbing.

Occasionally the girl reaches her hand toward the opening in the stones. The opening responds with a low “whump” noise, and the entrance appears as a slick of oil on water for a moment.

Kirshell has no wish to fight the heroes. As they approach, he drops to his knees. His voice cracks as if he is on the edge of crying. “I watched it. I watched HER! What kind of god curses a child with such a thing!” He gulps air and continues. “She bit Morena. Then changed right in front of me! From a hell-spawned spider back to an innocent girl!”

Anyone approaching the entrance can immediately feel the eldritch and arcane energy coursing through the stones and making the hair on their arms rise. The carvings limn the inside of the entrance (See Player Handout 4). A *Read Magic* spell will identify the carvings as some sort of ward against lycanthropes.

The characters can enter the rough arch into the stone interior but Threya cannot leave. If anyone enters the structure, 1d6+4 rounds later Threya’s skin begins shifting as she cries in pain and runs deeper into the caverns.

The interior of the stone structure is exceedingly cold and anyone entering suffers Cold Effects (see pages 3-4). Saving Throws must be rolled every 10 minutes while inside the monolith except in rooms with a frozen cylinder (rooms 5, 6, 7, 8).

1.

The cavern is noticeably colder than outdoors. The party’s breath creates thick clouds. Smooth glass-like ice covers the cavern walls. The flicker of light from the entrance above (or torchlight) gives the impression of movement beneath the ice. A single exit goes deeper into the cave structure ahead. The light seems to suffuse and distribute itself amongst the walls.

2.

Sound travels strangely in this hallway, both echoed and dampened in strange and unpredictable manners. The occasional cracking and settling of ice can be heard. A faint glow emanates from the chambers that intersect the passage.

The icy floors are slick and difficult to cross with speed. All players move at half speed through this area. The Rime Spiders are hidden in the tunnel and wait until they have surrounded the players to spring their trap. At 3rd and 4th level, the players face two spiders which attack from the back and front at the same time and at 5th level, they face three spiders. A character can slip past the spiders with a successful *Move Silently* if they have the ability.

Rime Spider

Hit Dice: 3

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Attacks: Bite (1d6 plus poison)

Save: 13

Special: lethal poison

Move: 12/16 (climb)

Alignment:

Challenge/XP: 4/120

3.

Crystalline ice encases the body of a man screaming with his eyes open. Blood stains his face and his features are perfectly preserved. As you enter the room, his eyes seem to track you. The pillar of ice he is encased in travels twelve feet from the ceiling to the floor in an irregular cylinder. This room is noticeably warmer than the halls. A well-crafted longsword is visible in a sheath at the man's hip. The hand that grips it is adorned with a thick platinum ring set with an emerald.

A thick layer of glass like ice covers the body. The ice can be removed by smashing through it. It has an AC 9 [10] and 60 HP. The ice takes double damage from fire and cold damage will 'heal' the ice by the amount of damage dealt. If the ice is shattered:

With a loud crack the ice falls away and a man's scream fills the air. He immediately begins clutching his head as his flesh begins to roil and move. His head expands and large chelicerae burst from his mouth as coarse hairs burst from his body.

This man is in the midst of a transformation into a Lesser Hoarfrost Werespider. His magical ring shift with him and remain on him while his magical sword clatters to the ground. He is limited to only a single attack per round until he completes his transformation which takes 3 rounds.

Hoarfrost Werespider, Lesser

Hit Dice: 4

Armor Class: 3 [16]

Attacks: 2 leg stabs (1d6+1), Chelicera bite (1 + poison)

Special: lethal poison (save at +2)

Move: 18

Save: 13

Alignment: chaos

Challenge/XP: 6/400

He carries a belt pouch with a large topaz (75 gp), a sapphire (200 gp), 144 pp and 376 gp. The sword is Vandal's Dirge (pg 25) and the ring is a Ring of Warmth.

4.

An icy cylinder dominates this room. A withered humanoid body darkens the ice. Its skin has blackened, wrinkled and become leathery from the time within, making it look much like a raisin. The remnants of tattered robes hang across the diminished frame of the body. A black leather belt appears pristine around the waist of the body and a hard leather belt pouch and several cylinders of bone hang from it. This room is noticeably warmer than the passage.

The ice can be removed by smashing through it. It has an AC 9 [10] and 60 HP. The ice takes double damage from fire and cold damage will 'heal' the ice by the amount of

damage dealt.

If the ice is shattered:

The leathery body shifts and moves towards you with its arms reaching out . . . and collapses into a heap on the ground.

The body is deceased, and something appears to have gone awry in the initial stasis freezing. The belt pouch contains 173 gp, a broken wooden wand, and various spoiled spell components. The bone scroll cases contain scrolls of *mirror image*, *pyrotechnics*, and *sand* (see page 24). Remnants of the wizard's spell book can be found but the ice and cold destroyed the pages.

5.

As you enter the room, a rune-encrusted stone ring with a small mound of ice in its center, draws your attention. The stone ring has crude runes carved into it. This room is colder than the passageway and you feel your fingers numbing, even at the entrance.

A magic-user, druid, or cleric can examine the runes for 1d4+1 rounds to determine that they appear to pull the energy of spells cast on it and they can then be 'released' by the caster. A first level spell cast with the runes as the target will 'charge' the runes and allow the caster to 'activate' the stasis effect as if they were casting a spell.

6.

A familiar stone ring rests in the center of this room. The hair on your arms stand up as palpable energy fills the chamber. A rune on the ring appears to glow faintly.

The runes here are like those of the other rooms, carved into the stone with cruder tools. If they are watched for a short time, the occasional crackle of energy can be seen playing across its surface. The trigger for this trap is an increase in heat in this room. If more than one player character enters the room, the trap will be set off. The rune explodes with an icy blast that freezes what little water remains in the air, sending shards of ice through the entire room and dealing 6d6 damage. This trap can be disarmed with a dispel magic to drain off the energy or a successful Delicate Tasks roll.

7.

As you enter the room, a rune-encrusted stone ring with a small mound of ice in its center, draws your attention. The stone ring has crude runes carved into it. This room is colder than the passageway and you feel your fingers numbing, even at the entrance.

The runes carved into the stone near the center of this room are the same that were seen at the entrance. Given time, a cleric or wizard can determine that they are imbued with energy from a spell. A successful Read Languages roll or Comprehend Languages spell can

assist in determining that a spell must be cast at the runes to charge them. The caster may then release the power as if casting a spell. This will cause whoever is standing in the circle to immediately become frozen in the stasis of a pillar of ice.

8.

A torn boot sized for a child lays on the floor of the hallway leading up to this chamber. The shadows ahead hint at movement but no sound accompanies it. As you near the mouth of this cave opening, you see the other boot laying on the floor. Just as you reach the opening, a massive spider, with a body the size of a dwarf drops from the ceiling.

When the players see Threya, she is just completing her transformation into a Lesser Hoarfrost Werespider in the far corner of the chamber. The heroes have her cornered and she cannot retreat.

Threya pursues the players if they retreat. While in the caverns, Threya regenerates 5 hp per round. Threya cannot leave the cavern network.

Between her and the characters is another ring of runes that consists of the same symbols that were seen at the entrance and can be found in various rooms in these caverns. Given enough time, a cleric or wizard can determine that they are imbued with energy from a spell. A successful Read Languages roll or Comprehend Languages spell can assist in determining that a spell must be cast at the runes to charge them. The caster may then release the power as if casting a spell. This will cause whoever is standing in the circle to immediately become frozen in the stasis of a pillar of ice (with no saving throw).



Threya: Hoarfrost Werespider

Hit Dice: 4 (23 hp)

Armor Class: 3 [16]

Attacks: 2 leg stabs (1d6+1), Chelicerae bite (1+ poison)

Special: lethal poison (save at +2), regenerate 5 hp/rd

Move: 18

Save: 13

Alignment: chaos

Challenge/XP: 7/600

9.

The remains of an irregular ice cylinder rests in the center of this room. The torso of a humanoid is still encased in the ice, but with a horrid spider's face. Frost-coated chelicerae burst from the surrounding ice, sprouting irregularly from some human-spider hybrid body.

This creature is dead and was in the midst of transforming when something either released it or prevented it from being frozen into stasis. If the ice is chipped away, nothing useful is readily apparent but a false heel in one of the boots contains a bluish metal rectangle with a rune. It is cool to the touch. When examined, the head and upper shoulder appear 'thawed' and malleable while the rest is still frozen solid.

CONCLUSION

- Alon rewards the heroes with 300 gp, claiming "this is the best money I have ever spent on guards!" If Threya was frozen, Alon also offers his map to the Shrine of the Hoarfrost Jarl and talks about rumors of something within being able to cure her illness.

- If Threya was killed, the Ronalis family is heartbroken and ask for assistance recovering her body. They are upset, but understand that her death was necessary. They leave and hope to find a new place to restart their lives.

- If the Ronalises are asked how Threya may have been infected, they tell a story about her claiming to be bit by a huge spider. Threya's parents looked her over, but could not find a bite on her. They believed her imagination was getting the best of her, and never considered a curse could be involved.

- The half-elves running the caravanserai thank the group for their help and extend a permanent invitation to return.



Hoarfrost Werespider, Lesser

Hit Dice: 4

Armor Class: 3 [16]

Attacks: 2 leg stabs (1d6+1), Chelicerae bite (1+ poison)

Special: lethal poison (save at +2) or paralysis

Move: 18

Save: 13

Alignment: chaos

Challenge/XP: 6/400

Challenge/XP: 9/1100

Hoarfrost Werespider, Greater

Hit Dice: 12

Armor Class: 2 [17]

Attacks: Chelicerae Bite (2d6 plus poison), 4 leg slashes (1d6+1)

Special: lethal poison (save at -1) or paralysis

Move: 18/24 (climbing)

Save: 8

Alignment: chaos

Challenge/XP: 11/1700

Night Stalkers. A hoarfrost werespider enjoys the taste of terror in its victims and seeks to ambush and toy with them if possible.

Dual Life. Although a hoarfrost werespider eventually becomes aware of its nighttime proclivities, the first months or even years with the affliction seem to be an experience of vivid nightmarish dreams. They will see scenes of horror from eight slightly different views stitched into a confusing maelstrom of horror each night they transform.

Rime Spider

Hit Dice: 3

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Attacks: Bite (1d6 plus poison)

Special: lethal poison

Save: 13

Move: 12/16 (climb)

Alignment:

Challenge/XP: 4/120

The rime spider is a hunter that waits stealthily for its prey. It's pale white body blends perfectly with the snow and ice in its home biome. They often work in small packs and it is not unheard of to find even larger colonies of these spiders. The rime spider uses stealth and surprise to hunt any creatures unlucky enough to encounter them. They make lures from ice and snow which look like sparkling crystals and diamonds. When the light refracts off these crystals, the prey often becomes distracted and misses the trap they are walking into.

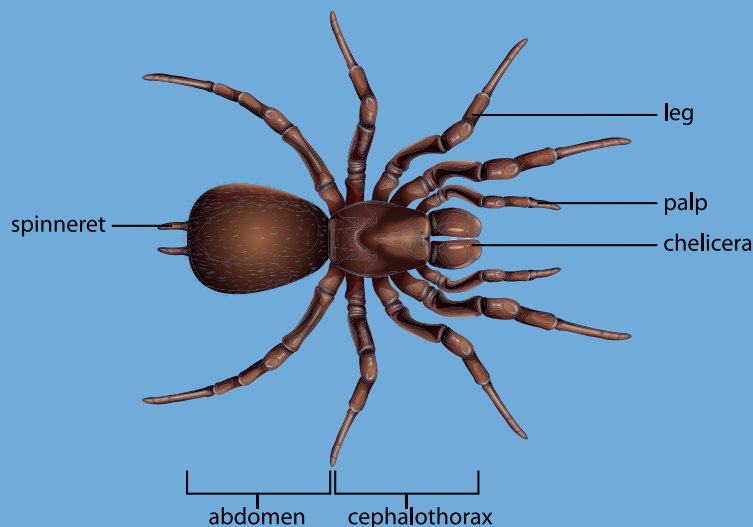
The most prized part of a rime spider is the pedicel, the piece that connects the cephalothorax and the abdomen. This glass-like connective tissue is extremely durable and cold. It can be harvested from a rime spider with a successful Delicate Tasks roll. The part can be used to create Alchemical Ice, the counterpoint to Alchemist's Fire. This pedicel also is used to keep items cool and is often placed in a sealed wooden cask as a means of providing refrigeration for delicate food stuffs. It has a value of 250 gp and each piece may be used to create 10 Alchemical Ice crystals.

Alchemical Ice (crystal):

Cost: 50 gp

This cool smooth crystal releases a gas that freezes anything it touches. As an action, it can be thrown up to 20 feet to break upon a target. Make a ranged attack using the alchemical ice as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target takes 1d4 cold damage at the start of each of its turns for 1d6+2 turns.

Spider Anatomy



Verglas Troll

Hit Dice: 6+3

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Attacks: 2 claws (1d4), 1 bite (1d8)

Save: 11

Special: Regenerate (3 hp/rd) if in cold environment, deals 2 cold damage/rd to all adjacent to troll

Move: 12

Alignment: Chaos

Challenge Level/XP: 8/800

Special: Does not regenerate from acid or fire

The verglas troll is a creature of cold and ice. It appears almost translucent and its hardened skin looks like the purest frozen water. The Verglas Troll has long arms reaching almost to the ground and ice coated claws. Their facial features are sharp and crystalline. They are vicious, ambushing and rampaging settlements during the heaviest blizzards and deepest colds. Though the Verglas troll often travels in packs, it is not unheard of to encounter a lone creature terrorizing small farms and villages in the dead of winter.

Verglas trolls are seasonal creatures and hibernate when the temperature rises over 30°. Verglas trolls usually keep to the areas of the world where permafrost keeps the soil iced over. During especially cold winters they travel hundreds of miles looking for food.

A single verglas troll can consume 500 lbs of flesh a day. Their appetites are unquenchable. Once they have found prey, they attack relentlessly until everything other than trolls is dead.

Verglas trolls fight amongst themselves while eating. Every verglas troll believes itself to be the strongest of the pack. This infighting causes no damage to the pack, as all of the verglas trolls regenerate the wounds quickly.



NPC STAT BLOCKS

Bjorn the Blade

Hit Points: 37 (HD 5)
Armor Class: 1 [18]
Attacks: Shortsword +2 to hit (THACO 17) 1d6+1
Special: +1 shield (+1 to AC)
Move: 9
Save: 10
Alignment: Law



Shen Liu

Hit Points: 18 (HD 3)
Armor Class: 2 [17]
Attacks: Short Bow (2 per round) 1d6+1, katana 1d8
Move: 9
Save: 12
Alignment: Law



Marena

Hit Points: 23 (HD 3)
Armor Class: 2 [17]
Attacks: Guisarme (pole-arm) 1d8+1, longsword 1d8, javelins (spear) 1d6
Move: 9
Save: 12
Alignment: Law



NEW SPELLS

ICE SLICK

Spell Level: Magic-User, 1st Level
Range: 60 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

You create a 10 foot square of slick ice which causes any target moving across it to require a Saving Throw or they will lose balance and fall to the ground. Success allows the target to move at half speed through the area. A character must make a Saving Throw each time the ice is crossed. It requires an action to rise from the ice.

SAND

Spell Level: Magic-User, 1st Level
Range: 30 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

You create up to 2 cubic feet of sand. This can appear in a container or falling from the sky. If it falls from the sky, choose a location within range of the spell. Everything within 20 feet of the chosen location gets sand on it, extinguishing torches and covering ice and other mundane hazards.

Vandal's Dirge, +1 Silvered Longsword

This magical sword is silvered and marked with intricate swirls and runes which run along its length and the pommel has an ancient form of the common dialect which reads Vandal's Dirge. The +1 Silvered Longsword heals the wielder 1d4 hp when a killing blow is struck.

This sword is said to be the sword used by the famed duelist Viktor the Vandal. It is rumored that he was cursed to kill four people in combat each month or his soul would be lost forever. After each duel he would sing a mournful dirge:

*Tread softly into the night,
Your journey nears its end.
You have fallen in this fight,
Your weak flesh I did rend.*

*I drink deep of your soul,
And trod my grisly task.
The boatman crosses the river whole,
And I pay the toll he asks.*

*With each swing,
I end a life.
Waiting for my own king,
To let fall the killing knife.
Chewed its ashes
And his flesh did become sinewy and strong
As this hero ventured on*



Woodsmen's Axe, +1 Cold Iron Battleaxe

This +1 Cold Iron Battleaxe has the following powers:

-hold plant (per spell) 1x/day on a successful hit
-locate plant (per spell) 3x/day

The Woodsmen's Axe is said to be the very axe wielded by Angus of the Black Wood. He battled a cursed army of corrupted woodland fey using this very axe and it ran with the sticky sap of blighted trees and dark eldritch ichor.

*The Axe of Angus
Before the dark and wildling forest
Angus prayed for strength
The eldritch tentacles of blighted tree
Did he force to bend the knee
With might he struck the darkest oak
and sap stained his hands and brow
With three great blows the heart of darkness
Faced the sun
And through the withered forest
Green sap did run
Leaves and blooms greeted Angus
As he drew the darkness from the forest
He burned the heart
Chewed its ashes
And his flesh did become sinewy and strong
As this hero ventured on*



Ring of Warmth

This magical ring reduces the effects of cold on the wearer. It will prevent any cold effects and will cause the wearer to take half damage from any cold damage.

There is an engraving on the inside of the ring that reads:

"To V- May this keep you as warm as you make my heart. -L"



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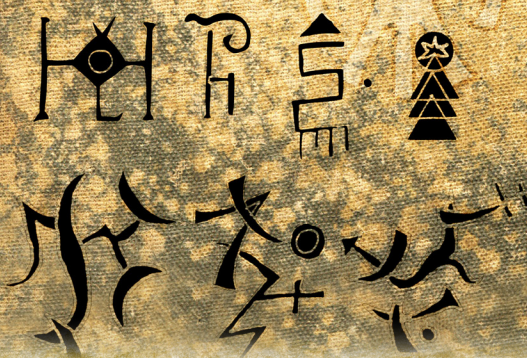
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PLACES OF POWER AND ELDRITCH STRENGTH
EXCERPT



Handwritten text in a stylized, ancient script, arranged in a central column. The text is written in a dark, ink-like color on a textured, parchment-like background.



PLACES OF POWER AND ELDRITCH STRENGTH
EXCERPT



Treasure Demon



Trunked Trash-Eater



Araneae Theridiidae

Sleppery Slop



Angry Rock



PLACES OF POWER AND ELDRITCH STRENGTH
EXCERPT

I have made progress in deciphering the iconography found on the petroglyphs. I believe the symbols of import to be these I have sketched below. My suspicions are that they allow for the deflection of powers in some way.

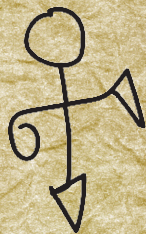


*Shield?
Deflect?*



*Focus?
Transmit?*

After several failed experiments and the exploration of several more sites, I have managed to discern that the rune sequence is activated by absorbing arcane powers and then releasing it. I am sure that the rune is not a deflection but a type of gate incantation that opens a portal into a different dimension.



Transfer of energy? Life?

My understanding of the rune sequence is becoming more refined. There are actually two vital runes. One is used to 'deflect' or 'shield' but it has been used in a mirrored fashion in both the book page I managed to copy and a warded cave barrier I discovered. The other rune is used to activate a type of interdimensional stairs.



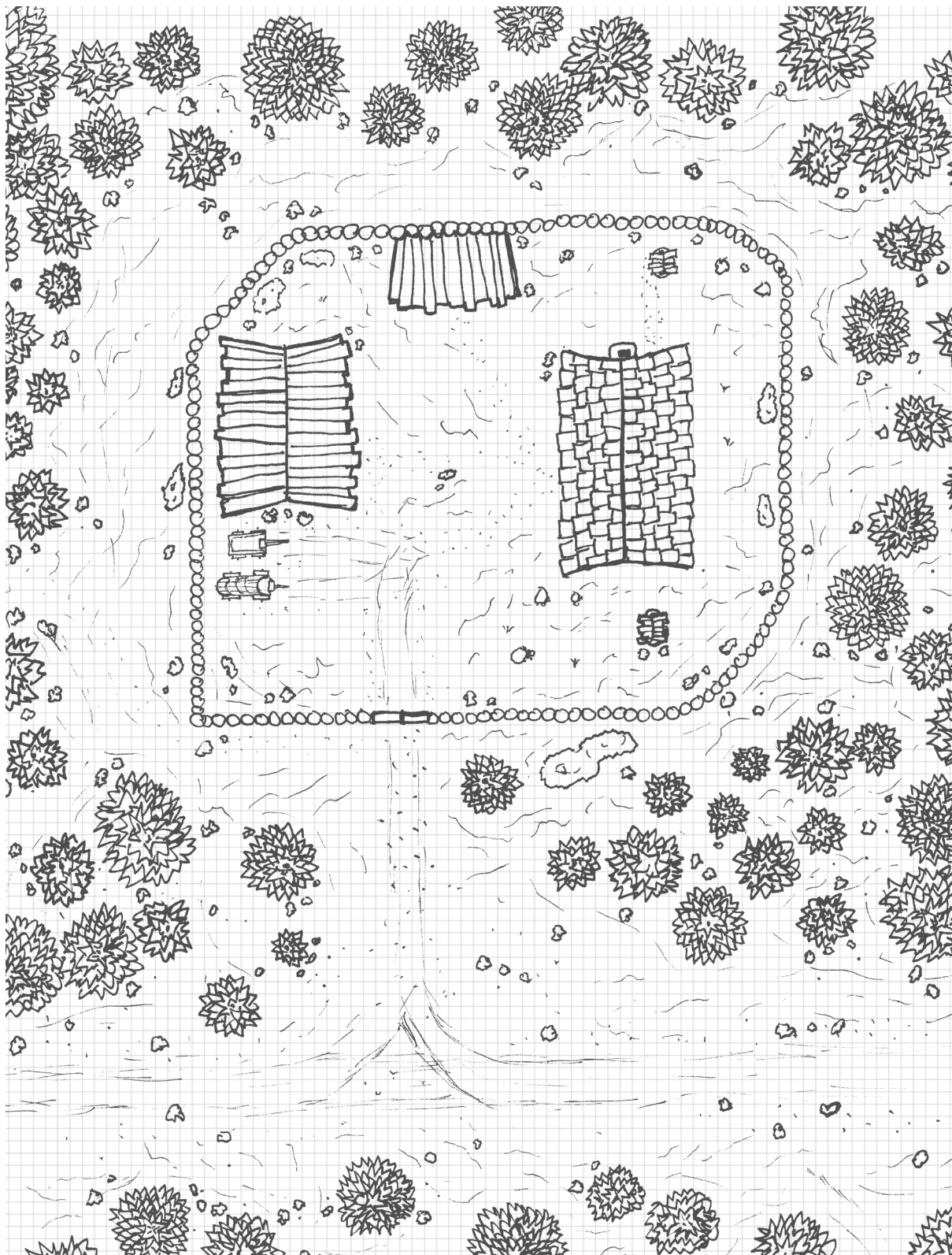
Warding Rune!!



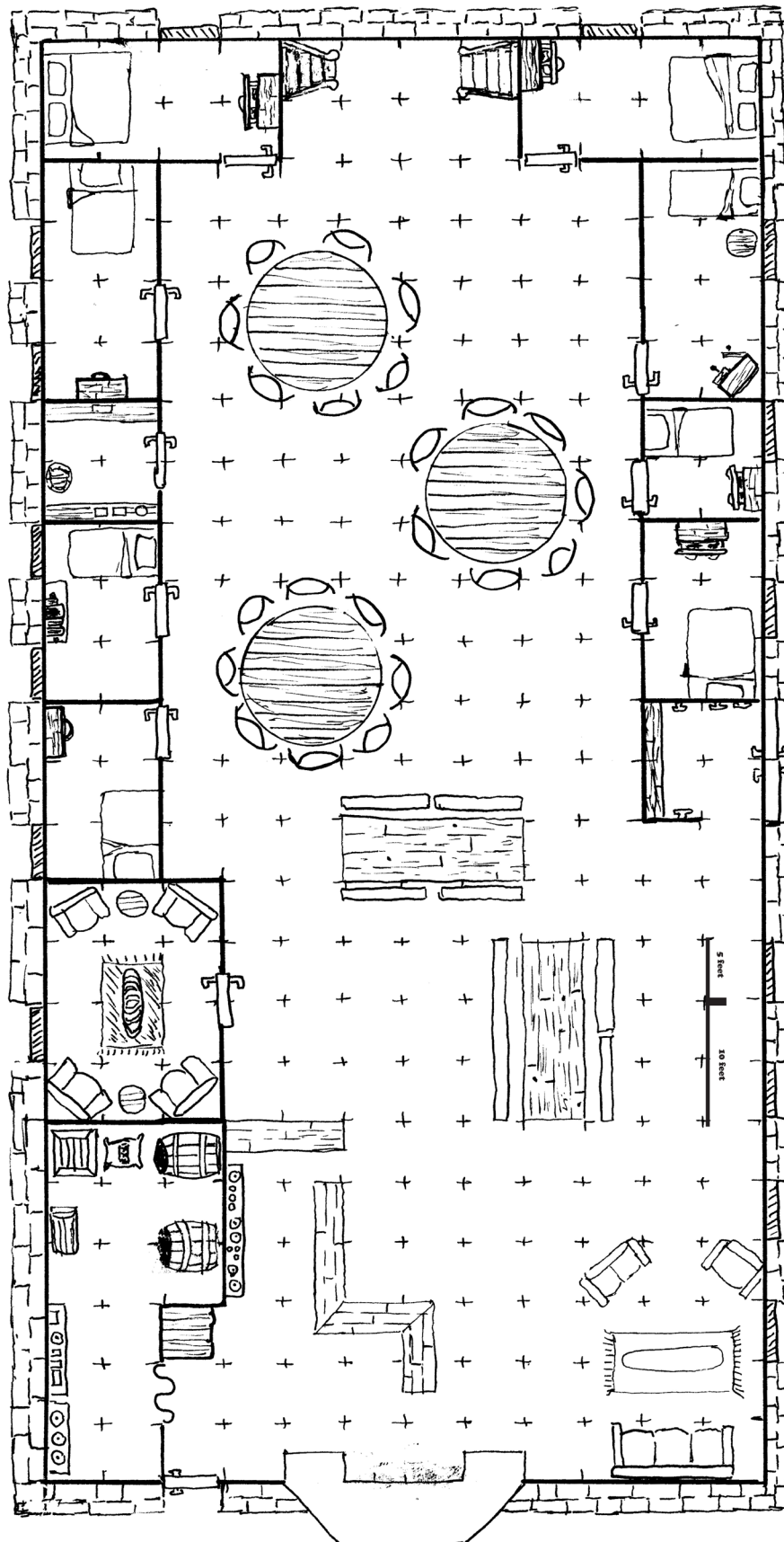
*Empowered this will
activate the rune
sequence*



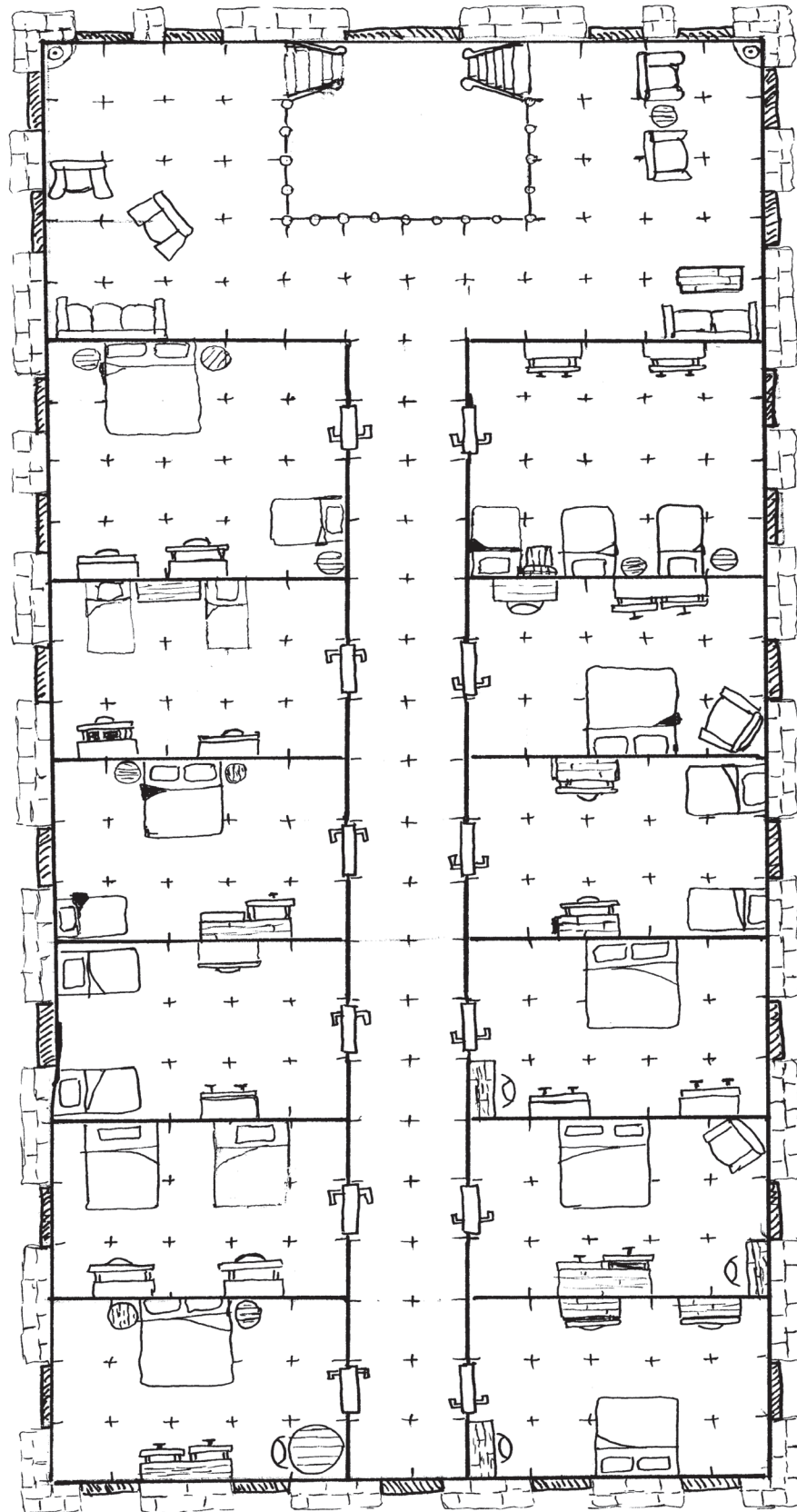
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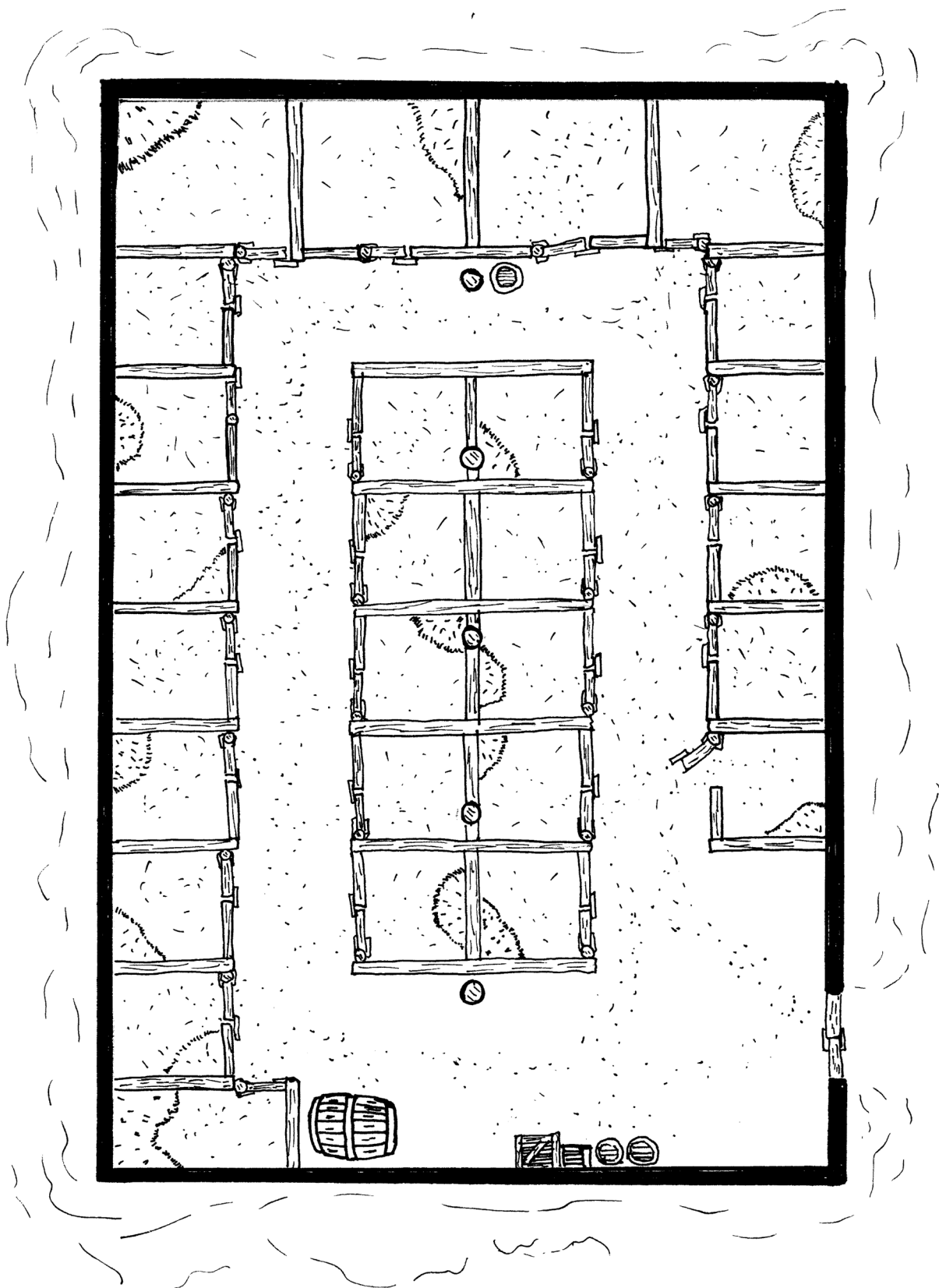
CARVANSERAI DOWNSTAIRS



CARVANSERAI UPSTAIRS



BARN MAP



STABLE MAP

