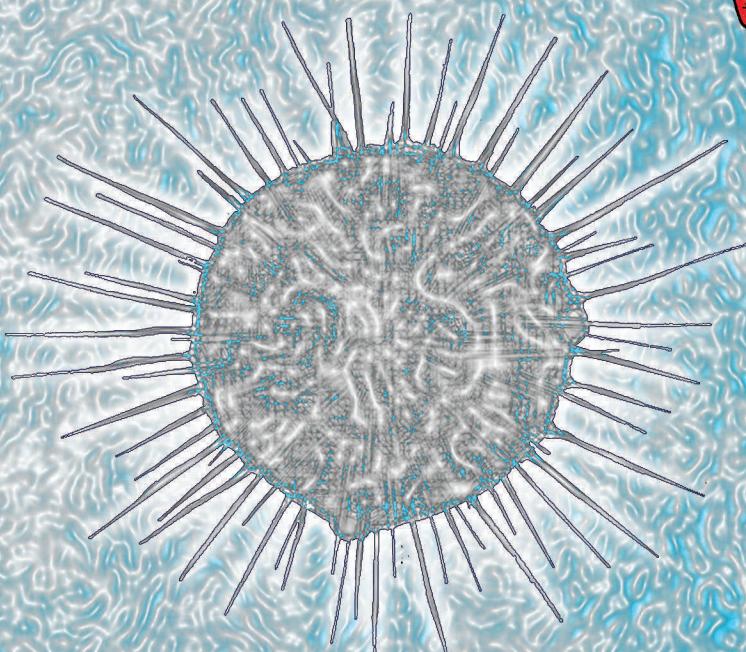


Frank Mentzer's ENT11004 Quondam Fount

A generic fantasy adventure for three or more characters of minimal to moderate experience for use with most fantasy role playing games.



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**“I hear tell that you adventurer types are fond o’ gems.
An’ I got one to sell.
Interested?**

**The farmer’s son had found an oddity indeed...
a rare Ice Gem, of mysterious origin.
It came from the old well on the farm,
the Quondam Fount.**

Something might be Down There.

**And since you’re famous adventurers,
he wants you to check it out.**

**This stand-alone adventure will easily drop into your existing game.
This product contains full details on the Ice Chambers and the denizens of the realm,
as well as an easy system for tracking environmental damage from the bitter cold.**

**Characters should have Power of 20-35% (4-7) and standard equipment.
Magical weapons are not required, but magical curing may prove critical.
Water-breathing can also be helpful.**

**Quondam Fount uses a generic language
compatible with any set of Fantasy Roleplaying rules.**

This adventure and many more are available at EldritchEnt.com



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Fatality Rating: 30%

Quondam Fount

by Frank Mentzer

A short FRP adventure
for 3-6 characters of average power

Cover

Dave Peterson &
Christopher Clark

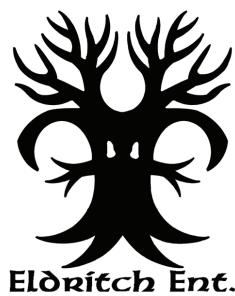
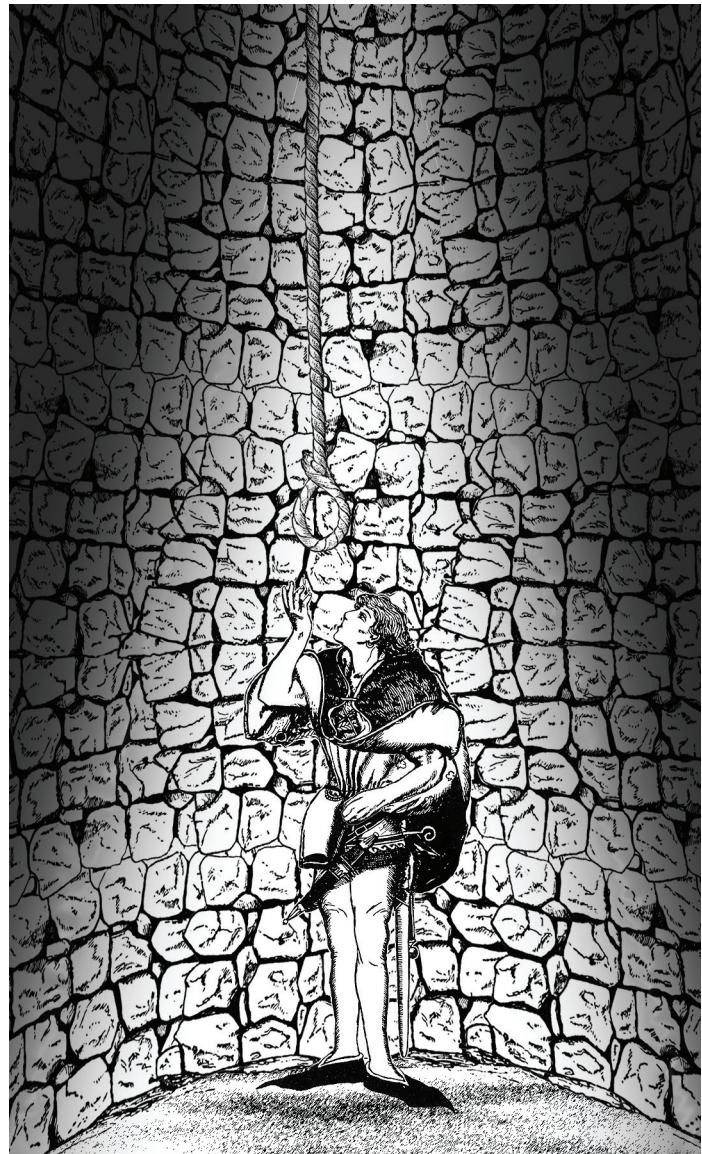
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Quondam Fount

Standard Terminology

“You” refers to the Game Master, the presumed reader of this work. Some text may be read aloud to players, it then being designated by **boldface type**.

The usual abbreviations for feet and inches—’ and ” respectively (e.g. 5’ 6”)—are used throughout. These English units are used in this American edition, while Metric is used in those customized for most of the world.

A reference to 10’y indicates a distance of 10 feet if indoors or 10 yards if outdoors, a common feature of some of the wargame rules whence role-playing derived.

Percentile statistics are used in some game systems. When divided by five, each percentile rating also applies to systems designed for a 1-20 range. Both figures are given here. Example: Power 30% (6).

Creature information appears in the following order. **AH** indicates a rating that applies to an **Average Human** (a typical non-combatant), a baseline for comparison.

Appearance is the first impression when a creature is encountered. It may be incomplete (lacking hidden items, for example) but will be sufficient, including general height, garb (if any), and immediately noticeable features.

Demeanor describes the general attitude (and often intelligence) of a creature, which is often helpful in determining its first actions when encountered.

Power is an overall rating describing the comparative degree of challenge a creature presents. A creature with Power 25% (5) presents about 5 times the challenge as one with Power 5% (1). AH Power is 1-5%.

Defense is a measure of the difficulty of damaging a creature. In most systems, a die roll equal to or greater than the Defense stat indicates that an attack is successful and inflicts Damage. AH defense is 1-5%. In some game systems, a defense rating starts at zero (unarmored) and rises. In others, it starts at a positive number and decreases. If your defense system decreases, subtract the Defense rating given here from the starting number.

Common **non-human** races are the **olve**, **dwur**, **hobniz**, and **noniz** (older terms, occasionally referenced in Mentzer works only).

In most game systems, the **abilities** of player characters in roleplaying games are usually specified in ranges of either 1-100 or 1-20. Common ‘personal’ stats include the traits of Strength, Agility (Dexterity), Attractiveness, and Mental ability. ‘Tests’ of such traits are commonly used in variable situations, and each will specify a percentage followed by the 1-20 equivalent. Example: cumulative Strength to open: 110% (22)

For a **Ranged weapon**, the range (in yards or meters) is subdivided into Short/Medium/Long categories, given after the Damage. Example: orc spear 1d6 (2/3 $\frac{1}{2}$ /5).

Health indicates the amount of damage a creature can withstand before dying. Normally this is 1-2 per point of Power. AH health is 1-4.

Move is how far the creature moves per second, measured in feet. AH is 6-12.

Init (short for Initiative) is a bonus or penalty that may determine the sequence of events in a combat ‘round’ or other segment of time. In extreme cases Init may be listed as an absolute: “always first” or “always last”. AH Init is zero (no bonus or penalty).

Damage is the amount deducted from an opponent’s Health score if an attack roll indicates success when compared to Defense (above). Each attack form is followed by the dice used to determine the damage. Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple attacks of one type. Example: “Claw 1d4 (x2)” indicates two claw attacks, each inflicting 1d4 damage. AH (unarmed) Damage is usually 1 or 1-2.

Special is a brief listing of any abilities not explained previously. AH has none.

Other provides all details not fully specified above. Certain Special abilities may be here described in greater detail.

Quondam Fount: General Information

Most of this story takes place underground, in a realm sheathed in ice. Much of this adventure is a battle with the environment itself. It is very cold down there, so frigid that characters may be regularly damaged by it. Torches or lanterns can quickly ruin the air quality and possibly affect visibility. The denizens of this 'dungeon' are not numerous or overly fearsome, but in

combination with the hostile environment, they will present a real challenge to adventurers of moderate power.

Characters should have Power of 20-35% (4-7) and standard equipment. Magical weapons are not required, but magical curing may prove critical. Water-breathing can also be helpful.

Background Notes

IMPORTANT: Review and Prepare Before you Start!

- I. The Ice Chambers
- II. Denizens of the Realm
- III. Damage from Cold

I. The Ice Chambers

The adventure takes place in subterranean areas reached by way of an old well, the 'forgotten fountain' (*Quondam Fount*). About 7 months ago, some powerful adventurers summoned a Water Elemental in a woodland location near this well. Although those adventurers did not realize it, some creatures from the Elemental Plane of Water—the *ice trolls* herein—also traversed that interplanar gateway, and remain here still.

Over the last six months the ice trolls have diligently carved out their abode deep in the earth below a farm. As water-based beings, one of their first actions was to secure a water source (the subterranean spring), and the well dried up soon after. Desiring privacy, the ice creatures created a huge rotating block of ice along one side of the well. This ingenious device both masks and restricts access to their realm.

The ice trolls have not as yet found it necessary to use the old well to escape their chambers. If your party of adventurers does well here, that portal will prove to be their undoing.

Scope (refer to the map, page 26)

This small 'realm' consists of two primary chambers (areas 4 and 9) and six ancillary ones, the whole spread across two horizontal areas, only the uppermost being at the depth of the terminus of the well (#3). A steep tunnel (#7) connects the primaries. An underground spring runs through the place, and is encountered in areas # 8 and 9.

A notable feature of this adventure is the lack of portals of any sort. Even the tunnels between chambers are sealed by ice 3" thick. The party's progress will thus be less than rapid.

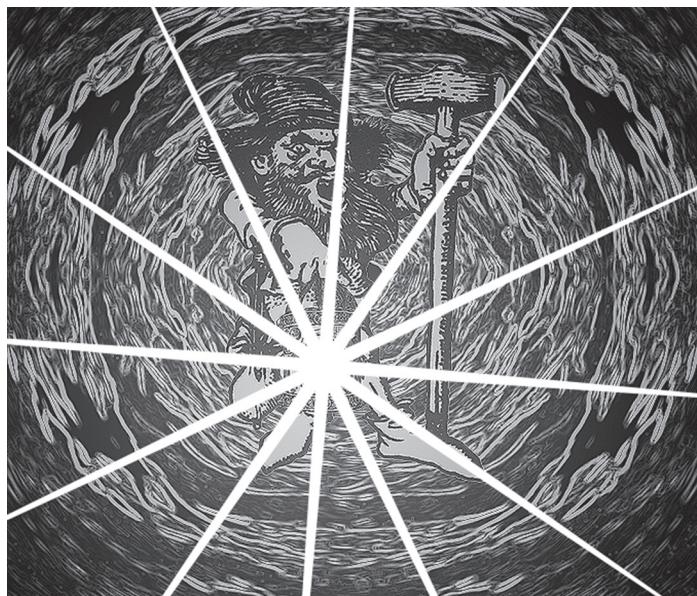
Connections: The west end of the complex connects to the old well. In addition, an irregular tunnel leads from the east end of chamber #9 to **some other area not described in this publication**, connecting to an outdoor location quite near a pond, the tunnel's end characteristically blocked by a wall of ice. Any and all details thereof are left for your development, to connect this small complex with the rest of your game world.

Quondam Fount: Environment

Fundamentals

Ice is, of course, the common theme of the entire realm. The chambers themselves are natural primary formations within the metamorphic rock. (The area contains few sedimentary rocks, such as limestone, which would be far more susceptible to water-based erosion, save a single vein that once fed the well.) The residents have sheathed *every* chamber and passage in ice to a thickness of 6 inches (the default if unspecified) or more, freezing normal water to accomplish this. (Exception: Passages are sealed by ice that is only 3" thick.) The environment is thus uniformly cold, barely above the freezing temperature of water. Characters can be damaged by continuous exposure to this harsh environment (see *Insulation Rating*, page 8, for details).

Damage to Weapons: If a character uses a non-magical bladed weapon to chip away at the ice found in the realm, that will have a deleterious effect, dulling its edge. For each 15 minutes spent in such activity (the time required to remove the 3" thick ice blocking a passage), apply a -1 penalty to each and every damage roll made thereafter with respect to that weapon. Inform the player of this after one such use (to avoid handling excess bookkeeping yourself). The effects are cumulative, and a normal dagger used therefor may soon become nearly useless as a weapon. However, no such penalty applies if the weapon is magical.



Atmospheric Hazards

The existence of oxygen and related elements is a matter for Science; in this Fantasy game environment, a far different methodology (Elementalism) is used.

Air-breathers can function normally within the chambers, within reason. Fire can be quite hazardous (see below), consuming the available air and adding smoke and other hazards to the mix. (An optimal solution is the *Gem of Light* offered in the beginning adventure sequence.) Assuming minimal fire use (such as mere lanterns and/or torches), the air will support a typical adventuring group for up to 12 hours. Air circulation is poor, however, and flames may render one chamber uninhabitable while not affecting other areas for some time.

When any chamber is first entered, the air is "*Lively*" (or for the scientific, it contains excess oxygen). For purposes of this adventure, either ignore or mention only in passing the physiological effects common to *hyperoxia*: slight dizziness, lip twitching, and prickly skin (*paresthesia*). The abundance of Lively air will, however, have an immediate and notable effect on fire sources. *Optional:* Those who use verbal elements in the casting of magic spells may have a 10% chance of failure (regardless of the spell or its power) when doing so in Lively air, due to the lip-twitching.

Fire: If any torch or lantern is lit at the time a new chamber is entered, it will suddenly flare up and burn much brighter and hotter. This produces light to double normal range, but of course consumes the fuel twice as quickly. Note that any magical fire is presumed to be Elemental in nature and is unaffected, since elements exist independent of one another, and similarly does not decrease the Lively nature of the air.

Smoke: Emissions from a non-magical fire source within any small chamber will sharply reduce visibility within 5 minutes, partially filling the area with visible smoke, thereby causing breathing to become somewhat more difficult (*cough-cough*). Within another 10 minutes the area will be completely filled with smoke that reduces visibility and becomes unbreathable except for very short periods. In a larger Primary chamber (areas 4 or 9), similar effects are produced in 20 and 45 minutes (instead of 5 or 10).

Quondam Fount: Denizens

II. Denizens of the Realm

In Elementalism, everything is made of the four elements in some combination: Water, Fire, Air, and Earth. Each element has a degree of control over one of the others: water quenches fire, fire consumes air, air disperses earth, and earth absorbs water. The converse applies: water submits to earth, earth submits to air, air submits to fire, fire submits to water. Those pairs of elements having no interaction—water and air, or fire and earth—are ‘in balance.’ These relationships are general principles, not absolutes, but are a reasonable guide to resolving interactions of elements. The elemental factors which most affect this adventure are those involving Water: in balance with air, quenching fire, submitting to earth.

Most denizens of the Elemental Plane of Water are composed of exactly that: fluid water. Less common forms are made of steam or ice, both ‘states’ of water produced by mere changes of temperature. The creatures encountered in this adventure are ice beings, uncommon forms of elemental water creatures, commonly (though incorrectly) called ‘ice trolls’ by most. Their methods of breathing and eating (and their social life on their home plane) are irrelevant to this adventure, and are thus not detailed herein.

Ice “Trolls”

Ice beings are found in many forms and sizes and with a range of intelligence and emotion approximating humans. They may appear similar to small insects, or larger creatures the size of rats or dogs, or even man-sized (or larger). Many forms are spidery, with long, thin appendages and very little mass in the main body. Most have a small internal sac containing liquid water, which can be squirted for various reasons.

Several forms appear in this adventure, and their statistics (Power, Defense, Damage, *etc.*) are all given on a case-by-case basis. Those few who are even aware of this class of beings often call them ‘**ice trolls**,’ though this is an obvious misnomer; they are not related to trolls in any way.

This species is unaffected by fire, whether normal or magical, except for its potential to (harmlessly) Liquefy them (see hereafter). They actually enjoy



demonstrating fire’s elemental subservience to their water, and may extinguish flames (by using liquid water) for the sheer pleasure of the act, and to no other purpose.

Magical attacks using earth (generally an uncommon type of magic) have double normal effect (including damage). Air-based attacks have normal effect, as does water-based magic—though the last may be minimally effective if contingent on water’s liquid form.

Physical blows directed at ice trolls can be problematic. *Only magic applies!* Blows can send icy shards flying, but the life essence is unaffected by such ‘successful’ strikes. Ignore standard weapon damage, as well as bonuses from strength.

Enchanted weapons, *i.e.*, bearing +5% (+1) or greater magic, **inflict the magical damage (only)** when used to successfully strike.

Although most living or undead opponents will fail in attempts to damage ice trolls, large and powerful sorts may do so: creatures with Power of 45% (9) or greater can penetrate its resistance, and inflict normal damage with their innate attack forms (bite, claw, *etc.*). Any separate weapons used by such higher Power opponents are subject to the rules given above.

Quondam Fount: Denizens

Liquefy

At will, an ice troll of any sort can Liquefy itself, taking one combat round to assume a form composed of liquid water (plus trace substances). This does not harm the creature at all, but it has certain disadvantages (it cannot strike anything forcefully, for example). In water form the normal movement rate (3) applies unless it is heading downhill, in that case assisted by gravity and moving at a speed of up to 24.

An ice troll in liquefied form has better defenses than usual. If struck by an enchanted weapon, its life essence is affected only a third of the time (have the player roll damage normally while you roll 1d6; apply the damage only if your result is 1-2). Magical effects are normal (see notes regarding the four elements).

If a liquefied ice troll observes characters' communications and/or respiration, it can deduce the vulnerability of the face. In that case it can aim an attack at the victim's nose or mouth. Although there is another potential entry point (the victim's posterior), the creature has no knowledge of this orifice. It may try the eyes or ears, but has insufficient penetration energy to break through those cavities.

When attacking the nose or mouth, the Liquefied ice troll has a 60% chance of hitting (9 or higher on 1d20), but gains a +25% (+5) bonus if the target is reaching toward it (the water). A helmet or visor will be of little help, as it can flow around such protections. The victim's reaction must be **immediate** to have any beneficial effect:

- If the victim physically holds both his nose **and** mouth closed, the attack fails to penetrate. The ice troll's life essence remains outside the victim, who suffers only from the intake of a small amount of water (no actual Health damage but possible delays from coughing, sputtering, or vomiting).
- If the target merely holds his breath, the attacker is channeled to the stomach instead of the lungs.

Note that the impact of such an attack inflicts no damage; the attacker is only water, and its velocity is moderate. Results of penetration are as given at right. A liquefied ice troll inhaled or consumed by another individual is relatively unchanged, though of course constrained by its new environment.

- Lungs: unconsciousness (from asphyxiation) occurs within 3 minutes, and death 2 minutes later. (At your discretion this may be modified slightly by the victim's vitality/constitution.) Simultaneously, the creature squeezes the lungs and nearby interior organs (no attack roll needed), inflicting $1d4+1$ points of damage per combat round.
- Stomach (and beyond): the invader squeezes whatever body parts it finds ($1d4+1$ damage per combat round as above). The process is thus prolonged and more painful. Extreme internal pain begins within a minute, and abdominal bloating is quickly obvious to all. Internal compression causes unconsciousness (from asphyxiation) within 10 minutes, and death 5 minutes later.

Magical Remedies: If a magical curative (such as a spell) is externally applied to the victim during the above scuffle, it applies only to the victim (ally), not the monster. However, if ingested curing (such as a potion) is used, divide the effects equally between the monster and the imbiber.

Attacking the Victim: If anyone targets the locus of the pain (lungs or stomach) and stabs the suffering victim in that location using an enchanted weapon, roll normally for the attack, **ignoring the usual 2/3 chance of error.** A successful hit on the Liquefied ice troll inflicts damage upon it... but on the victim (ally) as well, of course. If the liquefied ice troll succeeds in slaying its victim, it exits the corpse soon thereafter (taking at least 2 minutes to do so) and will seek to return to its normal ice form soon after, to recuperate for 10 minutes or longer.

Ice Troll Death

The life essence of an ice troll is native to its Elemental plane of existence. As a direct corollary, when reduced to zero Health (or less of course) it becomes a free spiritual being with no corporeal form, unable to affect its environment in any way. It thus proceeds to the nearest detectable gateway or portal to its home plane, returns, and recreates a physical form over time. In practice, the 'death' of an ice troll produces the same result as when any monster is slain: it falls over and 'dies,' having no further active role in this adventure. In truth, it lives on, and may return months or years later, **with revenge on its mind...**

Quondam Fount: Denizens

Ice “Troll”

Appearance: A being made of ice; various forms from small insectoid to man-sized or larger

Demeanor: Variable by type and situation

Power: 5 to 60% (1 to 12) see below

Defense: 5 to 50% (1 to 10) see below

Health: 1d6 per 5% Power

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (up to 24 in liquefied form)

Init: -5% to -10% (-1 or -2) penalty

Damage: By size and attack form

Special: Liquefy ability (faster move and polymorphic form), weapon immunity (affected only by enchanted weapons)

Power: The smallest ice troll has Power of 5% (1). The largest encountered on the normal (“Prime”) plane have maximum Power of 60% (12), though such behemoths are not encountered herein. Other forms can have any level of Power between these boundaries. (Their level of Power is essentially unlimited on their home plane.)

Defense: Most smaller forms have little defense against blows, 5-10% (1-2). The largest forms (only) develop an outer layer more resistant to damage, in that case having a Defense value of up to 50% (10). Larger ice trolls are often immune to attacks from mundane creatures and most adventurers, as their forms can only be damaged by the magic, either spell effects or the enchantment on magical weaponry. However, certain special magical weapons (such as the two daggers provided in chamber 3) are an exception; these can damage all ice trolls but have little or no other enchantment.

Health: This datum is always 1d6 per 5% Power. Fragile individuals generally have 1-2 points per die, while the more sturdy have 5-6.

Move: All ice trolls move slowly except when sliding on a liquid water coating that can form atop the icy surfaces of their domain. By *liquefying* their forms (a special ability) they can become entirely liquid water, then moving as fast as water can. In this special instance the speed can be as high as 24 feet per second, but is only 3 when creeping uphill.

Init: Ice trolls are slower than humanoids, and incur a penalty to their initiative.

Ice Diamonds

When not on their home plane, ice trolls modify their environment to simulate it, using normal water to create walls and floors of ice. This process creates Lively air (*q.v.*), an unintentional side-effect which, in scientific terms, increases the oxygen content through interactions with proximate materials, primarily carbon and nitrogen. A secondary effect of this process is the crystallization of rare gems within the ice, commonly called “ice diamonds.”

An ice diamond is occasionally created deep within the ice of a wall, floor, or ceiling, always adjacent to rock. It is of entirely normal nature, not magical. A careful search can find its hallmark: a cluster of ice-layer rings less than a foot wide, with the gem at the center. (A magical spell or device that can *See Invisible Objects or Find Gems* will certainly locate it, as usual.) The gem must then be carefully excavated from the ice, a process that takes 15 minutes’ time due to the requisite delicacy of the procedure. A hastier dig is possible but 50% likely to break the gem in half (producing two gems, one about 1/3 the original size, the other about 60%, some 7% thus lost as powder).

Excepting their clear appearance, ice diamonds have physical characteristics very similar to carborundum (*e.g.*, ruby or sapphire). Elementally they are simply a variety of Earth, while scientifically they are aluminum oxide with trace elements.

The base price of an ice diamond (in gold piece value) is the *square* of the weight in carats. A farmer’s large sample revealed at the start of the adventure is 125 carats (25 grams), worth:

15,625 gp (*i.e.*, base value) to an expert in Rare Gems or Elementalism (round off to 15,500)

1/2 in the open market (rounded 7,500)

1/3 in a quick ‘no-questions’ sale (rounded 5,000)

Sadly, experts of any school often lack the necessary liquidity for such a purchase, and may require a month or more to raise fifteen thousand gp. As Game Master, you can, of course, freely change the value to fit your campaign. You can also easily control the cash flow by limiting the availability of buyers.

Quondam Fount: Cold Damage

III. Damage from Cold

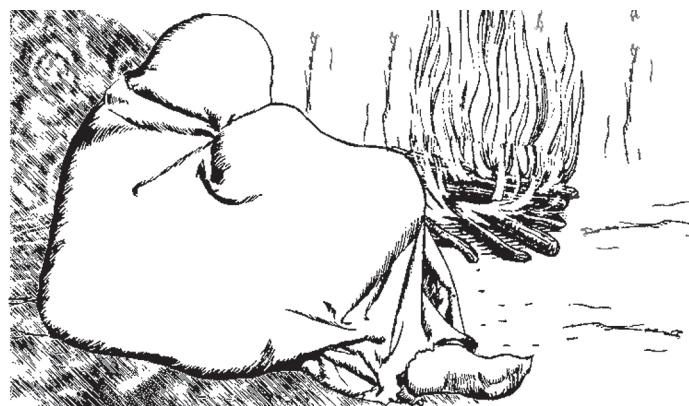
Use the following system (or any equivalent system provided by your game system of choice) to determine damage resulting from the cold environment. You will find this quite easy to use.

The harsh environment of this icy realm will damage those accustomed to warmer climes. The normal temperature throughout is only slightly above freezing (34° F, 1° C). Any magical protection from cold will negate all adverse effects for the duration of the magic. Excepting such, damage from the cold will affect characters as follows, based on an Insulation Rating (IR). It will be easy to keep a record of the current IR for each character.

Step 1. Find each character's Insulation Rating

Before the action begins, simply ask the players what armor and garb their characters are wearing. Secretly calculate each character's current Insulation Rating (IR) on that basis. Although some characters may jettison or stash some armor after they discover the narrow entrance to the adventuring area, the IR is unaffected if a lighter armor is substituted. Once clothing and armor are resolved, a character's IR remains constant much of the time.

The base IR for any character is zero. A negative number indicates notable vulnerability; conversely, a positive number represents resistance to cold. The factors are as simple as ABCDE: Armor, Body, Clothing, Damage, and Exertion. Only D and E will vary during the adventure.



Armor: Add 1 if armor of any sort is worn, including leather or chain. Head and hand protections are always assumed to be included with the armor. Disregard magical 'equivalents' of armor (such as flimsy but enchanted garb functioning as if it were heavy armor for defense purposes). Magical armor is usually designed for protection from blows, not from the environment, and so any related bonuses should not apply here.

Body features: Outstanding physical endurance (sometimes termed constitution or vitality) can provide extra protection from cold. Additionally, certain physiques (such as a dwur's) involve extra body mass, another natural protection. Cumulatively award +1 IR for each such characteristic (e.g., a dwur with outstanding vitality might thus merit IR 2). Conversely, unusually poor vitality (aka very low constitution) may incur a like penalty.

Clothing: Add 1 if cold-weather clothing is worn (parka, heavy pants, etc.). Head and hand protection may be assumed. Such garb cannot normally be combined with armor—both are bulky and generally mutually exclusive—but such is technically possible with adequate preparation.

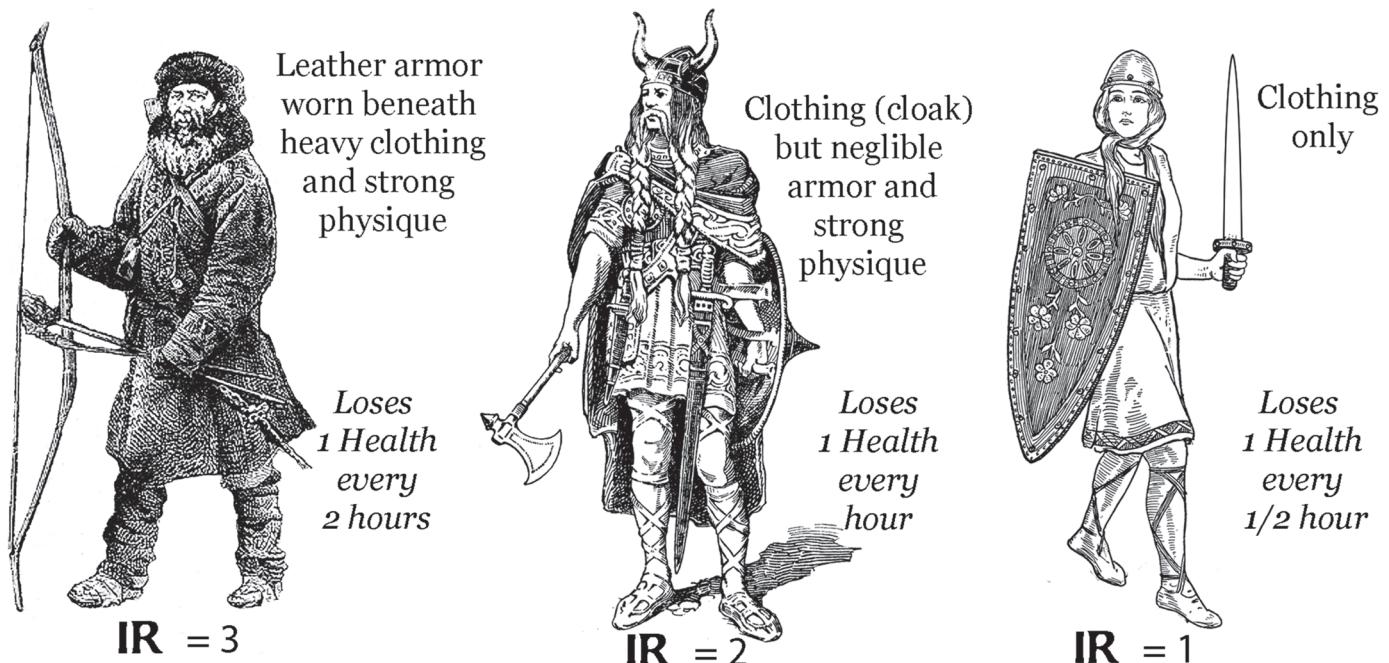
Damage (variable): Anyone who is substantially wounded by any means (whether from combat, cold, or other) incurs a penalty to IR as given below. Apply the current health condition in all cases. Magical healing may thus reduce the effect, and time counts (see below) should be 'restarted' at the instant such magic is applied.

Compared to the character's full normal health, current Health is...

75% normal	-1 penalty to IR
50% normal	-2 penalty
25% normal	-3 penalty

Exertion (variable): A character in combat or any other form of remarkably strenuous activity gains a temporary +1 bonus to IR. This lasts as long as the activity, plus 10 minutes (a 'cool-down' period).

Quondam Fount: Cold Damage



Step 2. Apply damage based on IR

The cold environment inflicts 1 point of damage per time unit as given on the table below. *The time units are the only variable, not the damage.* This does thus require some timekeeping on the part of the GM. Note that the effects are not sudden; the victim obviously knows of the harsh chill, and has adequate warning of the impending damage. You can fairly tell the player "your character knows that he will soon be taking damage from the cold" well in advance of the application of the damage.

Character takes 1 point of health damage after...

IR -3	2 minutes	IR 1	1/2 hour
IR -2	5 minutes	IR 2	1 hour
IR -1	10 minutes	IR 3	2 hours
IR 0	15 minutes	IR 4	3 hours

Resume the time count from zero each time that you announce such damage. Recalculate immediately if a change occurs (most often due to either damage or magical curing). Extremes: A character with IR -4 or less takes continuous damage (and cannot concentrate on other matters, such as spellcasting) but the actual rate of damage is the same (1 health per 2 minutes).

A character with IR +5 or greater is nearly unaffected by the cold, taking at most 1 point of damage per 4 hours' exposure.

Hand protection is often easily removable for digital manipulation of objects, and this action incurs no penalties to IR as long as it is remedied with sufficient speed. Failure to use hand protection will bring a -1 penalty to IR after 10 minutes, but this penalty vanishes 5 minutes after that protection is resumed. Ordinary hand protection typically interferes with spellcasting and bow use, but otherwise does not normally affect most other activities.

Example: A human character with average stamina and 8 health is wearing chain mail armor (IR 1). He takes 1 point of cold damage after a half an hour of exploration. He is then wounded in battle for 5 points, thus reduced to 2 health. Having lost 3/4 of his normal health, he now incurs a -3 penalty (net IR -2), and feels much colder. If not promptly fixed, he will take another point of health damage in 5 minutes and will reach zero health (death in most game systems) 5 minutes later.

Preamble

Insert the following situation into your game in any way appropriate. Since a valuable gem is involved, the scene occurs within a town, and in the vicinity of law enforcement officials.

A local farmer approaches you respectfully.
“H’ya. I hear tell that folks like you—you adventurer types—are fond o’ gems. An’ I got one to sell. Interested?”

Upon receiving any positive response, he produces a small crumpled kerchief of dirty linen, and opens it to reveal a massive uncut diamond! The rounded rock is more than 100 carats in size, more than an inch across, and about half the weight of a gold coin (25 grams, 7/8 of an ounce). He refuses to hand it to anyone, but will hold it carefully while others examine it as closely as they wish.

“I’m Nevil Farmer and that’s what I do; got a farm near here. They say it ain’t a diamond though,” he continues. “The goldsmith never seen the like. Says it ain’t some junk mineral but ain’t a known gemstone neither; sumthin’ new. So whatcha think? Worth anythin’ to ya? Say, couple o’ thousand?”



Nevil is unskilled at bargaining, is unaccustomed to adventurers, and knows nothing about the ‘underworld’ trades (such as a Thieves’ Guild, purveyors of ‘undocumented’ goods, and so forth). The goldsmith actually offered a thousand gp, though Nevil will of course not reveal this. He will sell the bauble to the adventurers for as little as 1500 gold coins. (Its actual resale value is at least 5,000 gp; see page 7.)

If the chat continues, Nevil reveals other details:

“My kid, Maxie, found it. He plays down the ol’ well, dried up about six months back. Never been no problems... and now this treasure shows up! But I heared tell that sometimes them deep holes got monsters, so now it’s a tad worrysome. We don’t want no monsters ‘round here. If y’all wanna check it out, an’ if ya find more o’ these, we’ll split the loot, okay?”

Any sort of ‘split’ would be quite satisfactory, as Nevil has no plans to explore the old well, and no means of enforcing any division of treasure.

Nevil’s farm is a short distance from town. He agrees to meet the characters there on a day of their choosing, though a suitable time must be early in the day, as Nevil spends most of his hours tending his farm.

Game Master’s Notes on the Gem (confidential): As revealed by the town goldsmith, this is no diamond... yet neither is it a flashy but cheap mineral (such as quartz). It is of course non-magical. An expert in either Rare Gems or Elementalism (certainly neither specialty to be found in the local town nearest to Nevil Farmer) might recall this substance, simply called “Ice Diamond.” It is formed by certain very rare underground conditions involving ice, rock, and great pressure. This specimen is a whopping 125 carats (base value 15,625 gp).

The Site

1. The Well

The old dried-up well is located 40 yards from the main farmhouse, isolated from trees and buildings (such as the barn and outhouse). Its location is easily found, as it has a sturdy metal tripod over it. The shaft of the well is only 2 feet in diameter, its walls lined with small stones (2-8 inches across) and mortared simply. The construction is not professional but adequate, and although it was dug about 25 years earlier, it shows no signs of disintegration. The bottom of the well, 200' below, is of course not visible in the quondam.

The top of the old well was uncovered by the 11-year-old boy Max. His father Nevil has rigged a thick knotted rope for the youth's easy descent, which is securely tied to a sturdy tripod straddling the shaft. The apparatus will support up to 200 pounds (90 kg) as it stands. If the party adds additional supports (timbers or metal available from Nevil), the capacity can be increased to 400 pounds or more. No more ropes are immediately available, though of course the characters might be able to purchase some in town.

Nevil will not permit an excavation, so there is no practical way to increase the diameter of the well. No man-sized or dwurven humanoid can wear plate mail while descending; the shaft is simply too narrow (dwur are more portly than most). Chain mail and other less bulky armors may be worn by anyone. Large characters may have problems in this limited space, but small or slender ones (including but not limited to olve and all 'niz) will encounter no such problems.

The distance from the surface to the bottom of the well is 200 feet. If asked about the bottom (terminus), young Max explains:

"It's lots wider, taller than I am... really neat. It's my secret room; don't you go messin' it up! Oh yeah, it's kinda cold... an' it's dark, takes a while for your eyes to adjust."

The chill ought not be surprising, as caves often have a constant temperature of 50-60° F. In summer the terminus is cooler than the warm farmland, but is conversely warmer than the surface in winter.

With the revelation of the narrowness of the shaft, the party may choose to return to the well at another time, and this is quite acceptable. Before they depart, Nevil will surely comment that:

"Showed this new gem to two other groups, y'know. They sure seemed interested; could be back any time."

Special note: If the players reject this opportunity for adventure, they may receive a second chance later. See notes on Søren Rikkanil, page 14.

Lighting: All area descriptions presume that adequate light is available; modify accordingly. Normal fire, such as torch- or lantern-light, may render the air in the subterranean chambers quickly unbreathable. Farmer's *Gem of Light* (below) is thus an important benison, and the party should have either it or an equivalent to facilitate exploration.

Services Offered by Nevil Farmer

1. He can provide additional metal poles or wooden beams (all kept in the barn) if the party wishes to reinforce the well-rope for their climb.
2. If the party wishes, Nevil will store excess equipment (including bulky armor) in either his home (if the items are not too dirty) or his barn, at no charge. The farm receives few visitors and no interest from passers-by, so items will be unmolested for the duration of the characters' jaunt. Max might examine some of the equipment in fascination, but that is the extent of any disturbance, and no pilferage will occur.
3. Nevil offers to rent (for 1/2 gp per day) one precious item the family uses regularly: a magical *Gem of Light*. This is a cheap quartz stone (value less than 1 gp) upon which a common magical spell has been cast (by a church cleric), causing it to perpetually emanate light to 25' radius. The effect lasts until magically dispelled or until the stone is broken. Nevil insists that his magical *Gem* must be returned by sundown, as it is integral to the family's after-dark activities. (Its presence is due to a community-benefits program conducted by the church.)

Quondam Fount

2. Descent

The shaft of the well is 2' wide and 200' deep. When using the knotted rope already in place, anyone descending can easily brace themselves on the sides of the shaft. The climb down is thus quite easy, and produces no surprises. Exceedingly rough treatment might dislodge one or two of the mortared stones, but most will withstand the process.

Note that characters will descend one at a time, and that the capacity of the rope (200 pounds initially) limits the number who can use the rope at any given time. (Very small characters—such as hobniz and noniz—may be exceptions here, two able to descend at once.)

Ask the first to descend whether they have any light sources. If they have rented Nevil's *Gem of Light* or have some other magical method of their own, all is well... but visibility is still limited within the shaft's 200' depth. If no magic is used, those descending into blackness may wish to juggle a lantern or torch as they climb down (not an ideal situation and even more limited). The details are left for you to handle, but you (and they) should remain aware of the lighting problem.



3. Terminus

The lowest part of the shaft broadens, forming a uneven but generally circular floor 9' wide, lined and floored with similar stones in old mortar. The walls of this chamber are intact, and they taper as they rise, reaching the shaft's 2' width about 10' above the floor. Up to 7 man-sized individuals can cram into the conical space (or more with vertical planning).

Objects immediately visible herein are a 3" cubic wooden box, a small lumpy sack, a ball and jacks, 5 sticks of chalk—1 red and 4 white, 2 child-made tools, and a small, dirty, torn pillow, feathers protruding.

- **The sack** contains assorted fruits (some fresh but some starting to rot).
- **The tools** are a variant hammer and a miniature saw, both actually usable, and the hammer has an elongated peen, more like a tiny miner's pick.
- One face of **the crude box** slides open to reveal a boy's treasures... a broken pocket knife, an old rusty key, a length of string, 4 small scraps of parchment (bearing childish stick-figures in chalk), and 2 crudely carved figurines. Nothing is of any value, other than to Max.
- Should anyone search the boy's **old pillow**, another tiny Ice Diamond—appearing very similar to a real 2-carat raw diamond—is found within a small cloth bag, hidden amongst the feathers.

Even the most inept search of the area will discover that several of the stones in the east wall are loose. Some of the old mortar around them is entirely missing. These and other removable stones can be easily extracted, and then the true wall behind them is revealed:

It's a wall of solid ice. It has been abused; many holes have been chipped into the face, the three deepest and widest measuring nearly 8" across and 5-6" deep. The ice has melted just a bit; you see wet streaks leading down to the stone floor, and some very tiny puddles formerly hidden under the stones now removed.

Quondam Fount: Terminus

No gems are visible in the ice, nor anything else of interest. It is very solid, and several feet thick. Industrious excavation, even with full-sized mining tools, can remove only 5 cubic feet per hour (less in cramped quarters, should 4 or more people be present). Should such attempts occur, the futility quickly becomes obvious.

Note that the removable rocks in the East wall of chamber 3 protect the terminus of the well from the chill of the ice: the user's Insulation Rating (see page 8) gains a +4 bonus herein. Once the rocks are removed, however, the bonus is halved, so anyone unprotected will start taking damage in 1 hour.

There is no effective way to proceed at this point unless someone tries to move the ice wall. Other activities will probably occur before this is discovered. Be neutral; solemnly announce the negative results, and wait until this is tried. (Certain powerful magical spells used to disintegrate or otherwise negate the wall may be employed. This scenario is designed for characters lacking such extremes, but if this applies, the entire ice wall can in fact be removed or negated. Hasty application of such may, however, result in the failure to acquire the objects detailed hereafter. This text continues under simpler assumptions.)

The three large holes noted may inspire someone to use them as grips, in an attempt to move the ice. Should this occur, it does indeed move, though only with notable effort (far beyond the strength of the boy Max). A brief experiment will reveal that it can only slide upward at this point. (After this maneuver it can be slid downward.)

even found 2 dgrs
wll leav hre.
Scrll is th last,
found 1 finally,
wl rtrn 4 dys with.
AT LAST
can thn banish
these dmn ice trls to

A Scrap of Parchment

impedio
pervagor

A full-sized copy of this note is on the last page of this booklet, for use by players.

Ice Moves Up

The wall of ice seems to pivot on something deep within. The face of the wall moves upward, revealing a small rectangular chamber still half below the level of the floor. The opening revealed by your action is only a foot wide and tall, but the space is nearly 2' deep. But that space contains an irregular layer of loose dirt, and nothing more.

The ice will not move upward any further. The loose, rich topsoil is 6" deep. It conceals one miner's pick (nearly full-sized), two long daggers, and a small wooden tube (1" diameter 4" long, with very thin sides).

All the objects are held by chains which are anchored in the ice below with long spikes. One small padlock secures the chains; its removal frees all, and it can be easily picked by a professional locksmith (+25% [+5] bonus). Furthermore, the chain itself is not a serious impediment, and can be broken by the combined effort of two strong people (25 total Strength points).

The daggers and tube are magical, though they do not glow. The pick is nonmagical. (The cash values of all items are left for the GM's determination.)

- The **mining pick** is completely normal and quite well made, though slightly smaller than the norm.
- The **wooden tube** opens easily, and within is a 3" square scrap of parchment, its edges ragged, both sides inscribed as depicted at left. On the exterior of the curled scrap, the words "AT LAST" are obvious, and most of the rest is in the Common language or abbreviations thereof.

The interior of the curled parchment is marked with a pair of arcane words. Anyone who speaks these words aloud while holding the magical wooden tube immediately becomes impervious to water for one hour. The duration is fixed, and the tube's presence or contents are irrelevant to the effect. This protection can be invoked once per hour at most, and can be used a maximum of 3 times per day and 3 times per night (defined as the time between sunrise and sunset or vice versa). This protection enables the recipient (and all equipment carried, but no other beings) to remain

Quondam Fount: Terminus

completely dry while in water (see the spring, areas 8 and 9). It also prevents penetration by any creature in liquid form (which may prove very convenient). Note that the hand-made wooden tube is somewhat fragile; adjudicate damage thereto accordingly.

- The **daggers** are a pair, their designs mirroring one another. Each is long (18 inches) and of typical make and excellent quality, adorned by dozens of engraved and painted runes on both the blade and hilt. Neither dagger has a sheath. The runes are of an extremely obscure type, not translatable by mundane means, known only to certain Elemental specialists. Appropriate magical divinations (such as *Read* spells) *will* reveal the nature of the items: these magical daggers are specifically for use against Water Elementals.

That is the extent of the information for players about the daggers. They inflict double damage (2d4) to water elementals, including ice trolls. They function as normal daggers in all other respects (dmg 1d4), having no magical function against any other type of creature. Special: When used against any water elemental, if the player rolls doubles, roll 1d6 in response. If the result is odd, the elemental creature vanishes—dislocated from its surroundings and transported back to its native plane! Do not reveal this aspect in advance, of course. This is a transient effect and does not actually open a gateway to the elemental plane.

Background: the Cache

These objects were collected and stashed here by one Søren Rikkanil, a rare multi-talented individual proficient in both Elementalism and exploration (half-olven fighter and mage). He (rather obviously) intended to return here and tackle the problem of the ‘ice trolls’. His fate is undetermined as of this writing; he may return for his items within a week, or may be deceased or lost, having fallen prey to the dangers inherent in his professions. The former case may provide a second option for the GM, should the party retreat from or even decline this adventure opportunity. Søren could, for example, find the characters and offer them some remuneration for their assistance in ‘cleaning out’ the chambers below.

Ice Moves Down

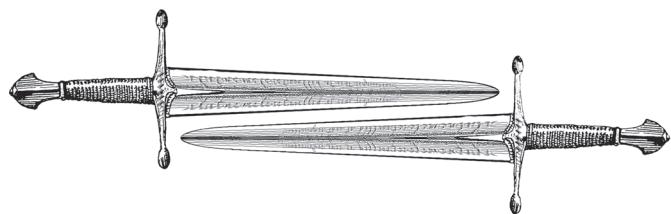
Note that this operation will simply not function (the ice is stuck) until the block has first been rotated upward (notes previous).

The ice again seems to pivot, very slowly, on something deep within the wall. The face of the wall moves downward, and as the chipped holes in the ice slide pass below the floor level, a wedge-shaped area above is slowly revealed. You can grasp its ragged front edge to continue the downward movement of the ice. The new hole is 4' tall and 3' wide, and extends a full 10' into the ice, its initial height dwindling as it tapers to... a ‘dead end.’

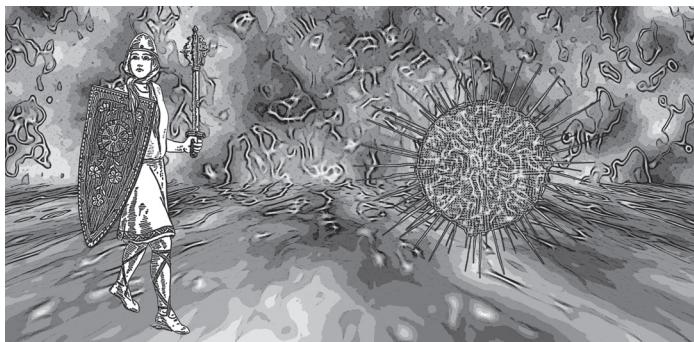
A careful inspection may find slight scrape-marks on the ice walls to either side, confirming the rotational movement of the huge ice block. If the block is rotated very slightly upward, the space can be made 8 inches tall throughout, difficult to pass but affording a limited view of the upper regions of the chamber beyond, that being 20' long and sheathed in ice.

If someone crawls into this wedge space, the weight will cause the block to start slowly rotating once again, the chipped face of the ice rising to again become a wall. As this rotation occurs, the west end of the wedge (closest to the chamber 3 entrance) becomes very small, too small even for one’s booted feet. The explorer must advance into an ever-widening space (eastern end, closest to chamber 4) as the western portion shrinks from the rotation.

This should not be difficult. If you find it necessary, some crushing damage may result. More specific effects (such as to toes, fingers, *et al.*), are left to the Game Master’s fair and (perhaps) merciful adjudication. Extremely high Strength may be able to slow the rotation and crush (at your discretion).



Quondam Fount: Entering



The rotation of the block effectively reverses the wedge-shaped space, providing a view of (and access to) chamber 4.

Expanding the top: Characters may try to widen the space atop the rotating block, to facilitate access to chamber 4. This is a very slow process but is feasible. Denizens herein will not change their positions during such a procedure. The following paragraph assumes that little or no such activity occurs.

Speed of Entry: Action will commence soon after someone enters the next chamber, and the exact time required for entry may soon become a matter of pressing urgency. After the initial character has descended into chamber 4, the rotating ice block can be pulled downward with relative ease, its mechanism now loosened by use. Each subsequent half-rotation of the ice block (the ride from area 3 to chamber 4) takes 30 seconds. Thus, one more character can arrive in chamber 4 each minute, but no faster unless artificial measures are employed. Spikes may be driven into the central part of the ice wall to facilitate movement, but can be neither too high or too low (potentially knocked loose as the block rotates above the ceiling or below the floor). And driving spikes into ice takes time. But by this or a similar procedure, several hands can grasp the spikes to pull (instead of trying to push the slippery ice), and the rotation period is then reduced by half (15 seconds in either direction). Alternate methods may prove successful, at your option.

This is the entrance to the ice chambers.
Be sure you are familiar with
the environment and the creatures
before continuing!
(See pages 3-9.)

4. Upper Primary Chamber

Note that adventurers will probably arrive one at a time. The upper surface of the wedge-shaped compartment is level with the ceiling, and the floor is a mere 6' below. Anyone may fall, jump, or slide down the icy wall and will incur no damage thereby, though an awkward landing (partially prone or supine) is probable.

After the huge ice block rotates, the traveler is high in the West wall of chamber 4, and sees the following.

This square area is 20' long and wide, 10' tall, and very cold. All surfaces are sheathed in ice, and no exits are apparent. One 4' tall statue of carved ice is immediately visible in the center of the chamber, depicting a weirdly abstract star-like thing, its many spiky projections protruding from a central node.

Reminder: This is a newly accessed chamber, so the air here is Lively. (See page 4 for details.)

The observed 'sculpture' is an ice troll, and it is poised for action, having noticed the rotation of the ice block. If an invader enters the chamber (exiting the wall and thus freeing the rotating block to accept another), the monster's spikes immediately start to hinge, becoming legs, and it advances toward the intruder. To fight it effectively, that person must have one of the daggers provided, or any enchanted weapon. (Despite its readiness, the urchin still incurs a penalty to initiative, as noted.)

This could be a tough fight for a single adventurer able to inflict only 2d4 damage per successful hit. Remember that one reinforcement may arrive 1 minute later, with others following. Whatever the situation, two additional tiny ice trolls (heretofore undetected) are lurking along the edges of the nearby floor. They are effectively invisible until they attack, appearing much like icy shards, part of the uneven ice layer of the floor. They arrive to attack the initial target (only) 1 combat round after the Urchin begins the fray.

Quondam Fount: Chamber 4

Ice Urchin

Appearance: A giant icy version of a marine urchin, 4' in diameter

Demeanor: Hostile guardian of the portal; will attack intruders immediately

Power: 25% (5)

Defense: 10% (2) and affected only by magic

Health: 22

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: -5% (-1) penalty

Damage: Spike 1d6 (x2)

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form),

Affected only by magic

Ice "Worms" (2)

Appearance: Tiny 3" long 'worms' made of ice

Demeanor: Hostile, will assist the Guardian (above)

Power: 5% (1)

Defense: 5% (1) and affected only by magic

Health: 4 each

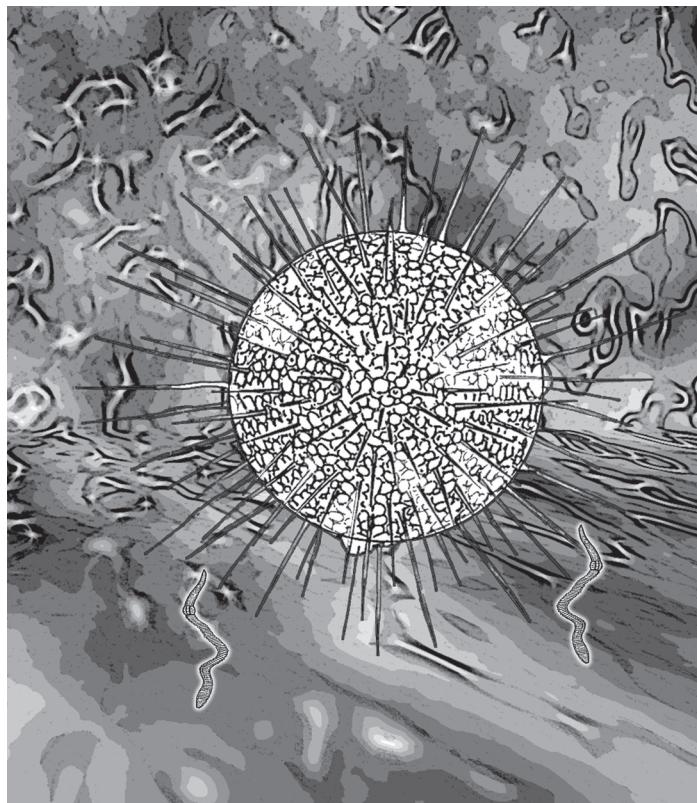
Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: -10% (-2) penalty

Damage: Spike-jab 1d2

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form),

Affected only by magic



Continue?

As previously noted, there are no obvious exits from this chamber. However, careful tapping (presumably after the battle) and/or an ability to *Find Hidden/Concealed Doors* will soon produce results. No less than 3 separate places, 2 in walls and one in the floor, seem to be made of thinner ice than the rest. (*Reveal all three locations if the party conducts a reasonable search of the whole area, but handle subsequent activities singly.*) If characters use the miner's pick, the child's home-made pick, or weapons (*in extremis*), they may chip away the ice in these spots, revealing the possible exits:

3' wide 3' tall area in the middle of the North wall, which leads to chamber 5

4' wide 5' tall area in the middle of the East wall, which leads to chamber 6

5' diameter circular area almost directly below the 'entrance' (Well, area 3), which leads to a sharply descending tunnel (area 7)

Removal of the relatively thin ice takes 10 minutes per site. If the floor section is chipped away, refer to the tunnel details (area 7). The lateral passages (to areas 5 and 6) are on the horizontal level of chamber 3, and may be more easily entered. The northern is the smallest, and some explorers may be forced to crawl therein.

Reminder: The ice is 3" thick at the noted locations, and can be chipped away fairly quickly. The rest of the ice is 6" thick, behind which is solid metamorphic rock (slow going even for professionals with mining equipment). Most of the western wall, however, is the massive rotating ice block, which is 20' thick. All such work takes time, and it's quite cold here, so keep track of your IR effects (durations and damage).

The use of fire in this encounter may also have produced smoke, and/or made the air hard to breathe. (GM's discretion in all such matters, as usual.)

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5. North Chamber (Upper Level)

This area consists of a small passage leading to a bulbous chamber 20' long (North-South), 12' wide, and 6' tall. (*If characters haven't been here yet, the air is Lively.*)

The small passage, only 3' tall and wide, is straight and icy, and proceeds 10' north. At that point (ahead of you) it opens into a larger space, also icy, extending both upwards and further north.

In a tactical dilemma similar to that presented by the rotating block, one character (only) will be in the lead through this passage. The denizens of the chamber are foot-long ice trolls who closely resemble crystalline spiders. Two are noticed while the first intruder is in the passage; two more are to the southern sides of the chamber, near the passage but not in line-of-sight.

At the far end of the chamber ahead, you see two crystalline spiders on the floor, each a foot long, about 8 feet apart. They aren't moving. Are they statues?

The first person to enter the chamber will probably (70%) be surprised by the two other ice spiders, which flank the passage. Apply your normal game mechanics for Surprise (or alternatively, have the player roll 1d10, surprise indicated by a result of 7 or less). Astute players may avoid this, of course. If they gain surprise, the two nearby monsters each get 1d4 free attacks before the victim can react. After the special Surprise situation, the spiders' initiative is subject to a -5% (-1) penalty, as usual.

Ice Spiders (4)

Appearance: Foot-long spider made of ice

Demeanor: Two on guard (hostile), two evasive (afraid)

Power: 10% (2)

Defense: 5% (1) and affected only by magic

Health: 8 each

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: -5% (-1) penalty

Damage: Bite 1d4 and Stab (leg) 1d2

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form),

Affected only by magic

Only the two ice spiders nearest the chamber's entrance will attack intruders. The two remaining spiders merely cower, hoping to avoid trouble. They Liquefy when first struck (*q.v.*, and which may startle the characters) and thereafter do a superb imitation of 'puddles', reintegrating only after characters depart. If this sequence occurs, however, they will take the positions formerly occupied by their fellows, eschewing their former pacifism and attacking by surprise if the chamber is reentered by intruders.

Treasure: Any careful search of the room finds the distinctive rippling-rings effect indicating that an ice diamond is embedded deep within the ice in the middle of the East wall of the chamber, one foot above the floor. This ice diamond weighs 35 carats (base value 1225 gp). Safe recovery requires 15 minutes of ice-digging.

6. East Chamber (Upper Level)

This area consists of a passage leading to an irregular chamber about 8' tall and 20' long and wide. (*If characters haven't been here yet, the air is Lively.*)

The ice-lined passage, 4' tall and 5' wide, goes straight for 20-25' before opening into an irregular chamber which is partially ahead and partially to the north, around a bend. The icy path ahead seems glistening wet; water is draining into this area from somewhere to the left, still moving slowly. This seems to be a recent event.

Add the following if appropriate:

You splash through the shallow water at the entrance, taking care not to slip on the icy floor, and see that the northern part of the room is higher by a few inches, the left side of which is glistening with a watery sheen.

There is but one creature here, and no treasure. As the characters chipped away the ice to gain entrance to this area, the ice troll herein realized the situation: *alien intruders!* It considered the situation and then Liquefied, forming a large, shallow pool of water. It has already flowed down the slope and is mostly within the 25' long tunnel entryway, leaving traces of normal

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water (from the icy floor) behind it. Its objective is to destroy invaders from within, entering their forms one at a time. If any character actively touches the water (rather than simply walking through it), this task will be made all the easier. (Remember that in liquefied form, even spells and enchanted weapons affect the creature only a third of the time.)

Liquefied Ice Troll

Appearance: Water (about 2 gallons)

Demeanor: Lethally hostile defender of its realm

Power: 20% (4)

Defense: 5% (1) and affected only by magic, and 2/3 chance of no damage (see notes)

Health: 16

Move: 24

Init: -5% (-1) penalty (if applicable, but often not in this situation)

Damage: Special (as water form)

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form), Affected only by magic

The creature wants to take a position at the exit (just three feet from chamber 4) and then to attack the nearest character, preferably the last one into the passage. It will change plans quickly if anyone touches it (the water). It ignores anyone who may still be in chamber 4.

For the attack:

Suddenly, the water attacks you! The water itself seems to be a hostile creature of some sort. It somehow moves like a snake, hurtling toward your face.

And if it hits:

The water-tentacle strikes, and immediately flows into your nose and mouth. You feel the pressure within your head as more and more water flows in. What do you do? Immediate actions, any?

If the victim immediately holds his breath, the attacker is stymied, forced to enter the gastrointestinal tract instead of the respiratory. In any event, the water continues to flow into the victim unless *both* the nose and mouth are held shut. (See page 6 for more details.)

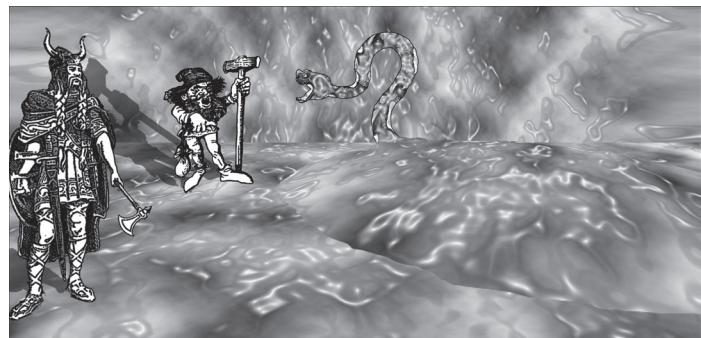
The creature may flow uphill (to the north part of chamber 6) if that gains tactical advantage, and effective ranged attacks (such as from chamber 4) will certainly produce such results. It will not enter chamber 4, and if the party flees it may assume a threatening semi-erect position (as if a snake made of water) and guard the entrance to its own area.

7. Tunnel Down

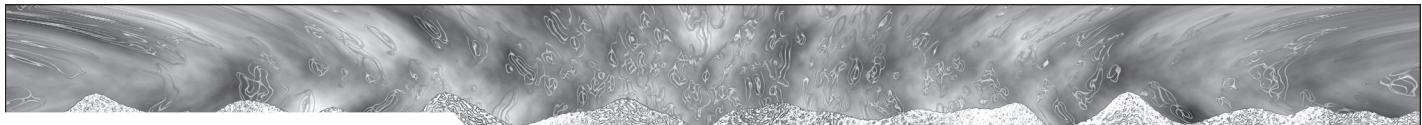
As characters chip away the ice covering this chute, the shards fall downward, clattering and sliding. Careful listening will detect splashes as the ice chips land in the water 45' below (area 8). (*If characters haven't been here yet, the air is Lively.*)

This tunnel is sheathed in 6" thick ice as usual. It is a narrow tube only 3' across, initially descending 10 feet at a 45-degree angle east, then becoming a sheer 35' drop (at a point directly below the East end of chamber 4). At that point it again angles downward 5' and reaches the icy water of the underground spring (see map), which continues 30' eastward. Rising out of the water (again at a 45° angle), the tunnel rises 10' and levels off for the last 10', ending in an ice wall 3 inches thick... the entry to chamber 9.

Anyone who attempts the initial 10' of the icy angled passage is quite likely to slip. The factors are extremely variable (by equipment, abilities, magic, and so forth) and this matter is thus left for you to handle appropriately. To descend this and the subsequent 35' drop, characters may secure and lower ropes (quite possible if appropriate materials are carried), use magic (such as flight or levitation), or simply slide and fall. In the latter event, only minimal damage will occur (1d4 if one hits the angled ice wall below at full force), but they will certainly land in the spring.



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8. Underground Spring

A strong subterranean flow of fresh water here moves West to East, toward chamber 9, at a speed of 1 cubic foot per second (*i.e.*, a 4th magnitude spring). It has a slightly elevated mineral content but no notable impurities. The depth is 57 inches, just short of 5 feet. At its entrance (West side, first encountered) it exits a natural tunnel 2' across but with rocky protrusions limiting that space. The water froths somewhat upon reaching this air, and almost fills this larger 5' passage, leaving only 3 inches of air above its surface. The water exits at a point 30' east of its arrival, by means of another irregular channel 2' across, while the larger ice-lined passage rises upward, maintaining its 5' diameter.

Any open flame currently used to produce light will very probably be extinguished here. Farmer's magical *Gem of Light* will prove quite useful in this situation.

Denizens: The notable flow and initial turbulence mask the presence of any creatures. (*Encourage the players' paranoia in this regard.*) In actuality, nothing dwells herein.

Cold: Anyone who gets soaking wet in this icy spring water will incur added potential for cold damage. As there is only 3" of headroom, this is nearly unavoidable. Apply a -2 penalty to the IR of any character who becomes thoroughly wet. Partial wetness (uncommon but possible in certain instances) incurs a -1 penalty to IR.

The uppermost portion of the walls of the water tunnel are lined with ice, ending approximately at the level of the water, and the ceiling is icily lined as normal (6" thick). The passage upward resumes the full ice sheathing, and the water tunnel continuing East (leading to chamber 9) is not icy. The flow is insufficient to drag anyone into the exit tunnel, but floating objects and other detritus can be sucked out.

Exits: Neither water-passage is passable by normal means. If magic is used to facilitate such exploration

(such as a character becoming very small, or shape-shifting into an piscine form), the notable flow will be an impediment, but should not prove excessively hazardous. *Should such an attempt be viable, note that chamber 9 is only 25' east of tunnel area 8. Remember the cold (the water is barely above freezing, as is the air), and adjudicate matters appropriately.*

As with the descent to this area, the ice-lined upslope to reach chamber #9 may be a tricky climb. Lacking special aids, anyone attempting such will slide back down into the spring. Once again, these matters are so variable as to mandate your independent adjudication.

The notable difficulty in simply reaching the lower chambers foreshadows the greater danger therein.

Special Notes before you Continue

a. Previous encounters offered detailed notes on the behavior of the ice trolls. In contrast, from this point onward (areas 9-13) you are free to use either physical mode (ice or water) for any of the denizens. This increase in tactical options may make these lower level areas somewhat dangerous.

b. If invaders go West and down from chamber 9 (*i.e.*, toward the nursery or nest), they may face considerable resistance when they try to depart. Whatever their exit route—back to the well (3) or via the tunnel eastward from chamber 9—almost all the remaining ice trolls will pursue and attack, excepting only the Mother, her guardians, and noncombatants ('eggs' and 'ice balls'). Infuriated at the invasion (and probably the loss of several of their kind), they unite in this assault, and all gain a +20% (+4) bonus to their attack rolls (though no bonus to damage). However, each will retreat to the nest (13) when damaged for 75% or more of their maximum Health, and none will exit the complex. They may take the combat into the base of the well (3) but will not ascend. See page 25 for a summary of their number and individual stats.

Quondam Fount: Lower Level

9. Primary Chamber (Lower Level)

(When characters first arrive, the air is Lively.)

The ice-sheathed tunnel rises at a 45° angle to a point 15' above the water (8), then leveling off for an ample 10 feet before it ends. In accordance with previous experience, a 3-inch layer of ice blocks the passage at this point. It can again be chipped away with relative ease, given appropriate tools. Chamber 9 cannot be seen until at least some ice is removed. A cautious approach may be popular, since encounters have occurred...yet any light source will be seen (more precisely, a circle of illuminated ice high on the wall) by creatures herein, so the only way for characters to avoid forewarning the denizens is to be in pitch blackness during the approach.

Whatever type of opening is created in the ice blocking access to chamber 9, the following applies. (Modify accordingly if minimal light is used.)

You're looking down into the largest chamber that you've seen down here, more than 30' long and 20' wide. You're at the top, at the West end and near the northwest corner. No floor is visible, only water down below—its surface about 12' below the ceiling—and it seems to be slowly flowing away from you, eastward. You can see one large tunnel exit 6' across in the middle of the far wall, just above the water, and it appears to be free of ice... for a change. There are no other features here, and no creatures can be seen.

The water in the chamber is only 3' deep. Its speed is much lessened by the greater width, though overall the flow continues at 1 cubic foot per second. Beneath the water level on the East end of the chamber is an outflow 2' across (again with rocky protrusions impeding easy passage). This underground flow continues for a long distance, maintaining the same approximate dimensions and encountering no other chambers, eventually emerging from the base of a hillside, a welcome outdoor spring of cold, clear water.

The visible large tunnel is indeed completely free of ice. This is the 'back door', an emergency exit of sorts (*not detailed here*) heading East, winding about through the rock (the size varying from 4' to 6' diameter) and emerging quite a distance beyond, near a surface pond.

The water herein contains two ice trolls lurking in the water of chamber 9. One of these is in a crab-like ice form, but the other is already Liquefied. Precise placement of the creatures at the time the party enters is probably not crucial, and is left to you in any event.

If the chamber is invaded, the liquid creature will attack anyone in or near the water. The crab-like being is far more timid, and retreats immediately, moving to the northeast corner (near the access to chamber 10). It is nearly invisible, and will not be noticed unless someone reaches the eastern end and peers most carefully into the water.

Liquefied Ice Troll

Appearance: Water (about 2 gallons)

Demeanor: Lethally hostile defender of its realm

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 5% (1) and affected only by magic, and 2/3 chance of no damage (see notes)

Health: 12

Move: 24

Init: -5% (-1) penalty (if applicable, but often not in this situation)

Damage: Special (as water form)

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form),
Affected only by magic

The 'ice crab' evades intruders as much as possible, relying on its fluid ally to handle the invaders. If cornered or otherwise forced to defend itself, it then engages in combat quite forcibly, but otherwise awaits the results of the efforts of its ally. Should that creature be slain, the ice crab will then become enraged, specifically seeking revenge on whoever slew its compatriot. (Note that it too will liquefy if seriously threatened, though it generally prefers this form.)

Quondam Fount: Lower Level

Ice Crab

Appearance: 3' diameter crab made of ice
Demeanor: Initially hesitant & evasive (see notes previous)
Power: 30% (6)
Defense: 10% (2) and affected only by magic
Health: 23
Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)
Init: -5% (-1) penalty
Damage: Claw 1d3 (x2) or Stab 1d4 (x4)
Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form), Affected only by magic
Other (tactical): If the ice crab hits a target with both claws, it hangs on, swinging its body toward the target. Thereafter the claws do no further damage, but it can instead attack using its legs as daggers, thus gaining 4 attacks per combat round, each having a +20% (+4) bonus to hit.

One large ice diamond is in the center of chamber 9, unfortunately at the very bottom (i.e., under 3 feet of icy water). It weighs 70 carats (base value 4900 gp). Another smaller gem (35 carats, base 1225 gp) is in the East wall, again underwater but only by a few inches, and just a few inches north of the outflow channel. The sucking effect thereof may hinder anyone trying to extract the gem, but even if an appendage is thus entrapped, it can be pulled free with relative ease unless the victim is notably weak. The adjudication of such matters is again left to the Game Master.

Continue?

Although there are 3 additional chambers connected to this one, the passages thereto may go undetected if characters do not devise some means of reaching their height, for all are near the ceiling (as is the entrance to this chamber), 12' above the water's surface (15' above the ice of the floor). If the areas can be examined carefully—with the usual tapping to find the thinnest ice—they can be easily found. Each is 4' in diameter. One is at the West end near the South corner. The other two are near the East end corners, one North and one South.

10. North Chamber, Lower Level

(If characters haven't been here yet, the air is Lively.) One of the smaller chambers in this realm, area 10 is reached by a curving 4' diameter tunnel about 10' long in all, which opens into a taller, rounded but irregular area 9' in diameter. Herein are a dozen small ice-balls, most of them clustered in a northern niche but 3 are separated from the rest by a few inches.

These are viable young of the ice trolls. They have grown enough to be separated from the nursery (area 12). All are still small and weak, and cannot function as well as fully-grown specimens. They do not as yet know how to Liquefy. If attacked, some may feebly strike back with their small icy spikes, but are more likely to slowly flee—though they know not where.

Young Ice Troll (12)

Appearance: 2" diameter ball of ice with tiny spikes (1/4" to 1/2" long)
Demeanor: Infantile, reclusive, not inquisitive
Power: 5% (1)
Defense: 5% (1) and affected only by magic
Health: 4 each
Move: 1
Init: -10% (-2) penalty
Damage: Stab 1
Special: Affected only by magic

11. South Chamber, Lower Level

(Is this area newly accessed? If so, the air here is Lively.) The 4' diameter tunnel proceeds 10' south and immediately broadens to form a 10' diameter rounded chamber of the same 4' height. Within are two ice trolls of moderate size, appearing much like a pair of skis—long flat items laying on the icy floor, very close to one another.

These odd creatures have been surprised by the party, despite the noise and activity that may have preceded the characters' arrival. They were immersed in each others' minds during this time, communing and comingling their thoughts (a pastime of this species). Once characters arrive, they start to split lengthwise, each forming an "X" shape, thereby gaining both

Quondam Fount: Lower Level

movement and attack capability. If these creatures are ambushed in their flat, dormant form, the party may gain multiple attacks (in accordance with your game system's rules for surprise) before they can develop appendages. If possible they will attack the intruders, even if they have not yet been attacked themselves, and may pursue as far as the upper level (chamber 3).

Note: To move, these "X"-types rotate vertically ("pinwheel"), alternating their appendages as legs. In this maneuver they can attack with surprising speed, each attack made by a separate appendage, thrice per combat round in all.

"X" type Ice Trolls (2)

Appearance: 6' long strips of ice 1" thick (or after mobilizing, "X" shapes with 3' long appendages)

Demeanor: Upset at the interruption but soon ready to fight or defend

Power: 20% (4)

Defense: 10% (2) and affected only by magic

Health: 15, 17

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: Automatically surprised initially; thereafter -5% (-1) penalty

Damage: Crushing blow 1d8 (x3) using up to 3 appendages per combat round

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form), Affected only by magic

One modest ice diamond is in the ceiling ice at the southeast wall of this area. It weighs 30 carats (base value 900 gp).

West Passage

(If characters haven't been here yet, the air is Lively.)

This 4' diameter tunnel proceeds 15' southwest, curving slightly as it descends sharply at a 45° angle. Another passage West is soon apparent, notably larger (6' diameter), while the tunnel continues South and opens into a chamber, most of which is to the left (East).

If characters proceed South, refer to chamber 12. If West, see area 13.

12. Nursery: Southwest Chamber, Lower Level

(If characters haven't been here yet, the air is Lively.)

Note: If anyone enters this area, the guards from chamber 13 will arrive shortly. Any and all attacks by them in this area (and any other ice trolls who may arrive later) gain a +5% (+1) initiative bonus as well as a +20% (+4) bonus to their attack rolls, due to ferocity. No modifications apply to damage.

This chamber is slightly more than 20' long (East-West), 10' wide, and 6' tall. Within, the icy floor seems to have a geometric pattern of some sort, beginning 2' or so from the broadening of the passage.

Closer inspection will quickly reveal the presence of hundreds of small hexagons made of ice, each only about 1 inch wide and 1/4 inch thick, filling almost the entire floor of the chamber. None overlap one another; each hexagon is discrete.

These are the equivalent of eggs, placed here by the 'mother' ice troll (chamber 13). They have no capacity to move or attack, as they are yet unborn. Each does have the equivalent of 1 Health, so destroying all of them with blows can take a large amount of time (such a process left to the GM). Note that stomping may succeed (one stomp per 'egg').

Treasure: Three small ice diamonds are located herein, within the ice walls as usual (6" deep). Their exact placement is left for the GM, but all are in the South or East walls (over the 'eggs'). Each has a weight of 20-30 carats (base value 400-900 gp).

Fully half of these eggs will fail to hatch at all, and of the rest, 75% will die in infancy. If undisturbed, only 30-35 viable ice trolls will come from this lair. Then they must grow, reaching 'ice ball' stage (chamber 10) in weeks, and taking months to reach Power levels of 10% (2) or more. What if they are left alone, and what will they do? Nobody knows... and that matter is also left for you to resolve. Perhaps they will find a way home, back to the Elemental Plane of Water... or perhaps they will find a nice, cold place in a nearby dungeon somewhere down the eastern tunnel exit, to appear in a separate adventure of your devising.

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13. Nest

The 6' diameter passage proceeds 10' northwest and opens into a chamber 15' across and 8' tall (A). The side walls curve away sharply, and those looking in from the main tunnel may realize that there could be things there on the flanks, unseen as yet.

13 A. Northern Node

Two large ice trolls here stand guard, both assisting and protecting the Mother in the southern node (B). One is initially located around the corner to the right (East wall northern node), the other at the entrance to the southern node (B). Neither is visible from the viewpoint of the passage to chamber 12.

If characters bypass this area and head for the nursery (12), these guards will quickly emerge, behind the party if possible, and attack with ferocity. One may Liquefy to add variety to their tactics, and will almost certainly do so if the characters prove capable of serious damage (e.g., using either the special daggers or powerful magical effects).

Either Guardian will flee if its Health drops to 15 or less. Their primary duty is to safeguard the Mother, not the nursery, so in this event they flee to the southern node to join her.

Ice Guardian (2)

Appearance: 5' ice-humanoid with 4 arms and 2 legs, no clothing

Demeanor: Aggressive and vengeful, irate at the invasion

Power: 35% (7)

Defense: 20% (4) and affected only by magic

Health: 30 each

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: +5% (+1) bonus in this area; elsewhere the usual -5% (-1) penalty

Damage: Blow or stab 1d8+1 (x4) and 1 squirt

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form), Affected only by magic

Other: The four 'arms' can be used to strike as a club or stab like an epee, either mode inflicting 1d8+1 damage. The "Squirt" shoots water filled with ice crystals (ranges 1/2/3) which will blind one eye unless the victim successfully dodges (roll to avoid as if a breath weapon, such as a dragon's); partially blinded victim incurs -10% (-2) penalty to attacks, or fully blinded -20% (-4) or worse

13 B. Southern Node

The Mother ice troll dwells herein, regularly assisted and protected by her two Guardians (above). Note that if the Guardians flee (at 15 or fewer Health) they are also found here.

Within the East and West walls near the southernmost part of the Mother's chamber are two large ice diamonds. Each weighs 90-100 carats (base values 8,100 to 10,000 gp; select or determine randomly).

Ice Mother

Appearance: 7' tall, a bizarre combination of humanoid, spiky urchin, and spider

Demeanor: Lethally hostile to any non-ice being; intolerant of ice beings of size (except her Guardians); loving mother to the ice balls and 'eggs'

Power: 45% (9)

Defense: 40% (8) and affected only by magic

Health: 40

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: +10% (+2) bonus in this area; elsewhere the usual -5% (-1) penalty

Damage: Arms 1d10+2 (x6) and Spears 1d6+1 (x2) and Squirt; *see notes*

Special: Liquefy ability (polymorphic form), Affected only by magic

Attack form details

Arms: Mother can use up to 6 humanoid arms to club or stab (as the Guardians); damage 1d10+2 (x6).

Spears

Up to 2 urchin-like spikes can be hurled each combat round (Damage 1d6+1, ranges 2/4/6). Note that there are only 12 available, and will be used sparingly if appropriate.

Squirt: Shoots water filled with ice crystals (ranges 1/2/3) which will blind one eye unless the victim successfully dodges (roll to avoid as if a breath weapon, such as a dragon's); partially blinded victim incurs -10% (-2) penalty to attacks, or fully blinded -20% (-4) or worse

Bestiary

Ice Being (aka “Ice Troll”)

Appearance: A being made of ice; various forms from small insectoid to man-sized or larger

Demeanor: Variable by type and situation

Power: 5 to 60% (1 to 12)

Defense: 5 to 50% (1 to 10) and see below

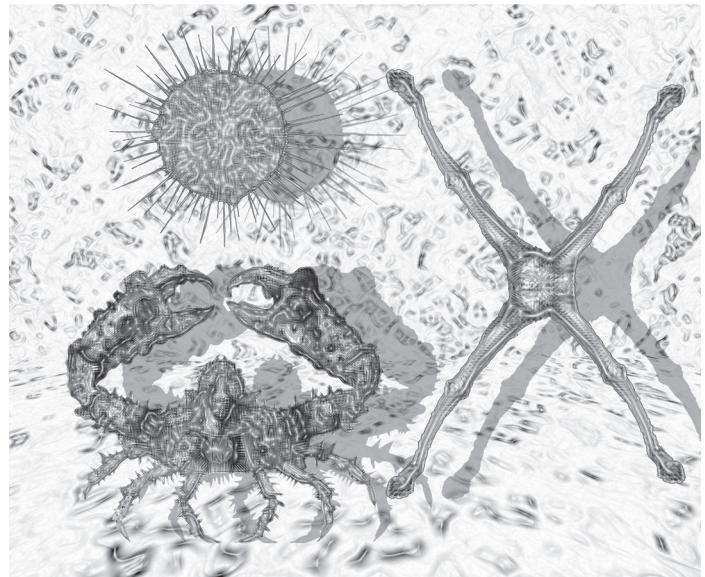
Health: 1d6 per 5% Power

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (up to 24" in liquefied form)

Init: -5% to -10% penalty (-1 or -2)

Damage: By size and attack form

Special: Defense (affected only by doubly-enchanted weapons), Liquefy ability (faster move and polymorphic form).



Additional Notes

Power: The smallest ice troll has Power of 5% (1). The largest encountered on the normal (“Prime”) plane have maximum Power of 60% (12), though such behemoths are not encountered herein. Other forms can have any level of Power between these boundaries. (Their level of Power is essentially unlimited on their home plane.)

Defense: Most smaller forms have little defense against blows, 5-10% (1-2). The largest forms (only) develop an outer layer more resistant to damage, in that case having a Defense value of up to 50% (10). All ice trolls are immune to attacks from mundane creatures and most adventurers, as their forms can only be damaged by magic (including that upon weaponry). However, a certain special magical weapon (such as the two daggers provided in chamber 3) is an exception; it can damage all ice trolls, though it has little or no other enchantment.

Health: This datum is always 1d6 per 5% Power. Fragile individuals generally have 1-2 points per die, while the more sturdy have 5-6.

Move: All ice trolls move slowly except when sliding on a liquid water coating that can form atop the icy surfaces of their domain. By liquefying their bodies (a special ability) they can become entirely

liquid water, then moving as fast as water can. In this special instance the speed can be as high as 24 feet per second, but is only 3 when creeping uphill.

Init: Ice trolls are slower than humanoids, and incur a penalty to their initiative.

Possible Attack Modes (as appropriate to form):

Attach (crab form): If the ice crab hits a target with both claws, it hangs on, swinging its body toward the target. Thereafter the claws do no further damage, but it can instead attack using its legs as daggers, thus gaining 4 attacks per combat round, each having a +20% (+4) bonus to hit.

Stab (common): Jab with icy spike for 1d2, 1d4, 1d6, or more; may have multiple stabs per combat round

Crushing blow (certain bulky forms): 1d8, 1d8+1, 1d10, or 1d10+1 per appendage (possibly several)

Squirt (large forms): shoots water filled with ice crystals (1/2/3) which will blind one eye unless the victim successfully dodges (roll to avoid as if a breath weapon); a partially blinded victim incurs -10% (-2) penalty to attacks, or if fully blinded -20% (-4) or worse. A target wearing head gear may merit a bonus to the avoidance roll.

Quondam Fount

Starting Population

Use this checklist when the characters attempt to exit the complex. A dozen combatants (first two columns) may, if not earlier dispatched, unite to attack and pursue the invaders. However, they do not proceed beyond areas 3-13.

Urchin (1)	Spiders (5)*	Young 'ice balls' (12)
Worms (2)	Crabs (2)*	Eggs (hundreds)
	X-forms (2)	Guardians (2)
		Mother

* Spider & Crab: 1 (each) initially liquid

Stats of Pursuers

Ice Urchin Location: Chamber 4

Appearance: A giant icy version of a marine urchin, 4' in diameter

Power: 25% (5)

Defense: 10% (2) and immune to most weapons

Health: 22

Damage: Spike 1d6 (x2)

Ice Worms (2) Location: Chamber 4

Note: Up to 50 more lurking throughout the caverns

Appearance: Tiny 3" long 'worm' made of ice

Power: 5% (1)

Defense: 5% (1) and immune to most weapons

Health: 4

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: -10% (-2) penalty

Damage: Spike-jab 1d2

Ice Spiders (4) Location: Chamber 5

Appearance: Foot-long spider made of ice

Power: 10% (2)

Defense: 5% (1) and immune to most weapons

Health: 8

Move: 3 (6 sliding) or Special (24 in liquid form)

Init: -5% (-1) penalty

Damage: Bite 1d4 and Stab (leg) 1d2

Liquefied Ice Being Location: Chamber 6

Ice form: As larger ice spider

Appearance: Water (about 2 gallons)

Power: 20% (4)

Defense: 5% (1)

Health: 16

Liquefied Ice Being Location: Chamber 9

Ice form: As a half-sized ice crab (below)

Appearance: Water (about 2 gallons)

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 5% (1)

Health: 12

Ice Crab Location: Chamber 9

Appearance: 3' diameter crab made of ice

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 10% (2)

Health: 23

Damage: Claw 1d3 (x2) or Stab 1d4 (x4)

Other (tactical): If the ice crab hits a target with both claws, it grasps. The claws do no further damage, but it can then attack using its legs as daggers, thus gaining 4 attacks per combat round, each having a +20% (+4) bonus to hit.

"X" form Ice Beings (2) Location: Chamber 11

Appearance: 6' long strips of ice 4" wide, 1" thick (or after mobilizing, "X" shapes with 2' long appendages)

Power: 20% (4)

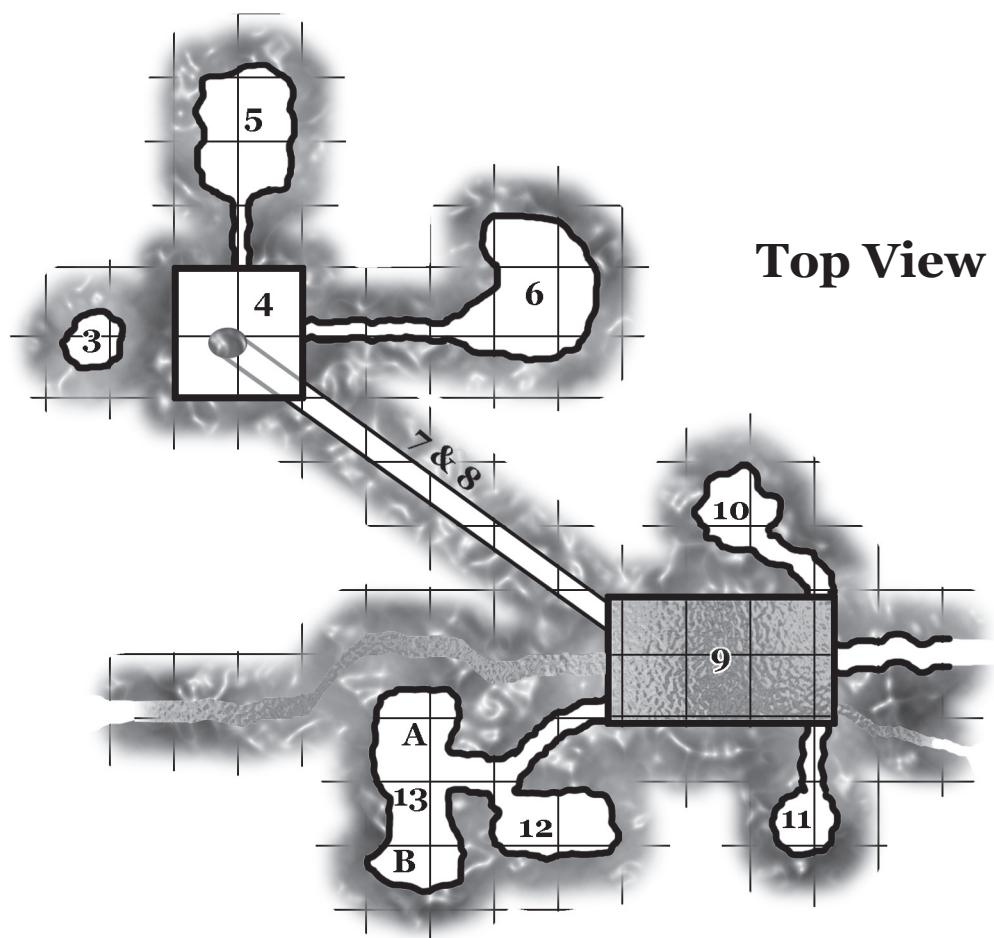
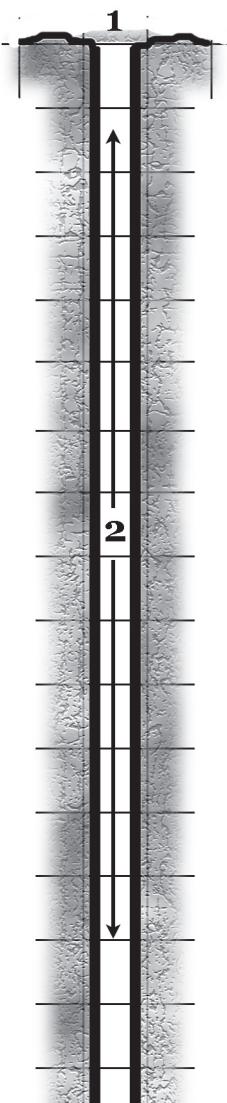
Defense: 10% (2)

Health: 15, 17

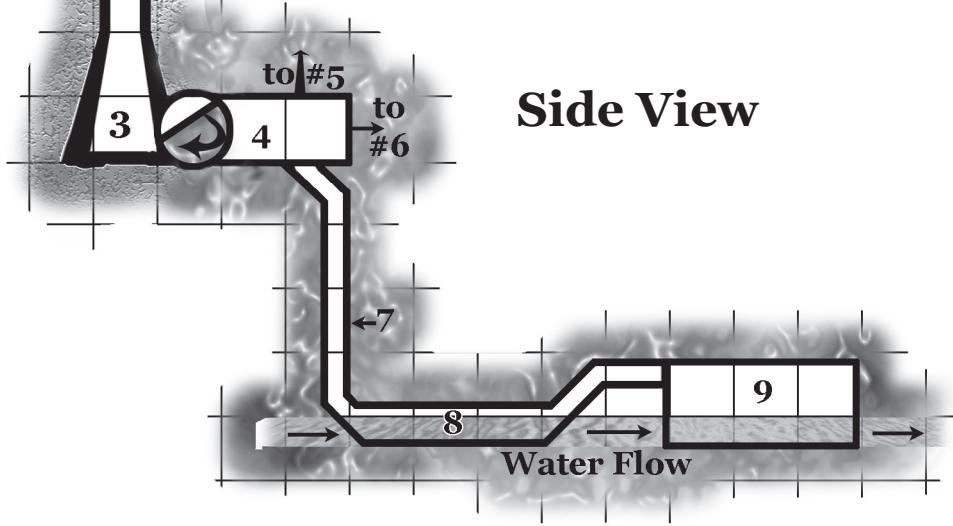
Damage: Crushing blow 1d8 (x3) using up to 3 appendages per combat round

Quondam Fount

Maps for the Game Master



1 map square = 10'



Side View



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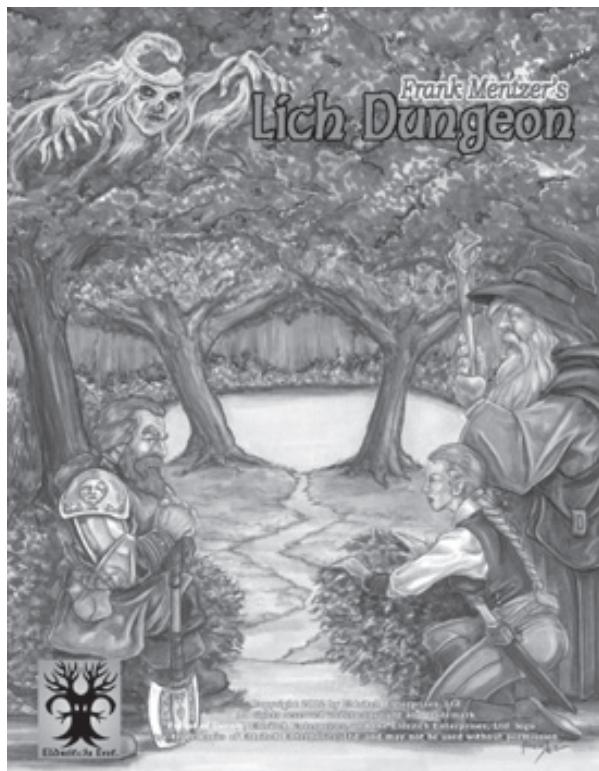
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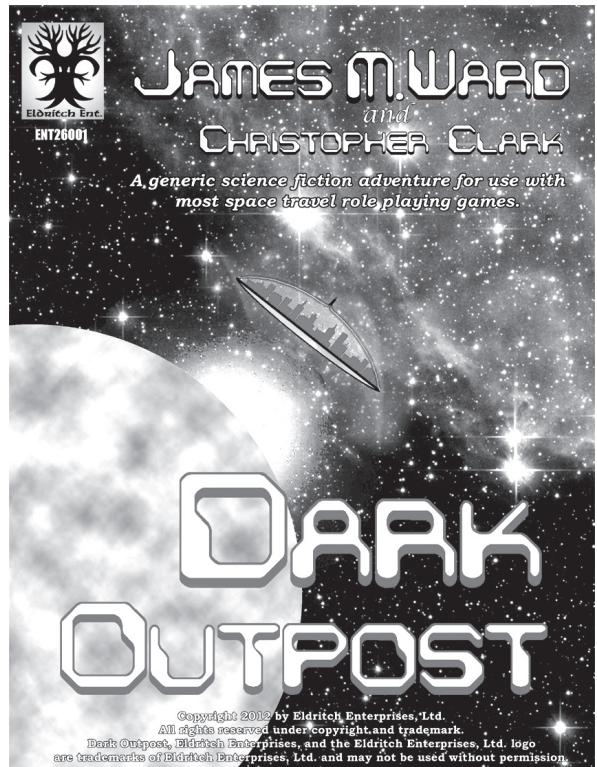
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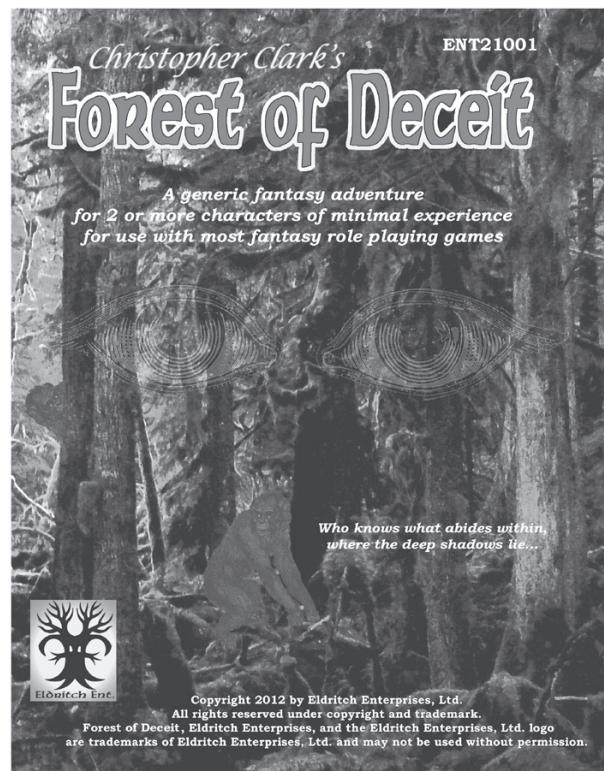
Frank Mentzer's Lich Dungeon Level One



James M. Ward's Dark Outpost



Christopher Clark's Forest of Deceit



A Scrap of Parchment

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Scrl is th last,
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