

V3
LVL14

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Best Served Cold



A fifth edition dungeon adventure to take
a party from 14th to 15th level.

Dungeons
ON DEMAND

Best Served Cold

Tips for the Game Master

- This is **your** dungeon adventure. If you don't like how something works, change it. If you think an item or NPC from your campaign world works better than an item or NPC presented here, make the switch. If a puzzle is too hard or an encounter is too easy, drop some hints or add some monsters - do whatever is best for your game. You're the master of your gaming world, this packet is just a guide to help you. It will present hints and opportunities for you to customize, but ultimately everything is up to *you*. You don't need permission to break the mold.
- The encounters listed within this packet were designed by the book - but by the book isn't always the most practical for every party of adventurers. You may need to give a monster fewer hit points, fudge some dice rolls, or just plain ignore some of the rules if you think an encounter is a risk of killing the entire party.
- This adventure will work best when you take the time to read through the packet first, so you're familiar with everything that's going on. Sometimes the monsters that lie in wait to ambush the party, traps that are hidden from sight, or the clues to a puzzle may be glossed over if you're not prepared.
- The goal of each adventure is to give the party enough experience points to advance one level. This depends on a lot of things however - the party needs to complete most of the encounters and be of the appropriate size and level for that to work out. Ultimately, you might want to go without experience points altogether, and simply allow the players to advance to the next level once they're finished the dungeon. This means a lot less record-keeping on you part!
- The ultimate goal is to have fun! If you're having fun while playing, then you're playing correctly.



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Dungeons On Demand are designed with Game Masters in mind, created to be instant adventure sites a GM can wholly customize to fit his or her campaign. Unlike lengthy, full scale published adventures, *Dungeons On Demand* can often be played in a single gaming session, requires little planning beforehand aside from reading the packet, and gives plenty of options to make the dungeon fit seamlessly within the owner's campaign. Each dungeon has enough encounters and challenges to advance the party playing through it by one level.

Best Served Cold is designed for a party of 4 to 5 14th-level adventurers. If your game has more or fewer players, you can adjust the number of monsters present in each encounter to fit the proper difficulty.

Dungeon Background & Information

In the most remote part of the world is a vast arctic stretch known as the *White Reach*. The Reach is a frozen wasteland filled with ice-covered lakes, fields of snow, and frigid caves and caverns. Even the closest humanoid civilizations are far removed from the White Reach and its cold clutches, and none trek through its domain with any regularity.

It is here, far removed from the last bastions of civilization, that the ley lines of magic that encircle the globe converge in a nexus. This focal point of magical energy circulates and redistributes the very stuff of magic the world over. Each spell that is cast, every magic item that is forged, every monster brought into being pulls upon one of its strings.

There's no visual indication of this magical circuitry at work in the White Reach, and no known manner of vision or spell can make the ley lines or nexus visible – these ley lines operate in another realm of being entirely. Their presence can certainly be *felt*, however. The nexus weakens the barrier that separates the physical realm from the magical one upon which the ley lines reside. Here spellcasters find their magic less stable – some find themselves flush with magical power or inexhaustible reserves one moment, and struggling to even cast a spell the next.

Left undisturbed, the nexus operates as it always has – routing magical power throughout the planet. Recently, however, something has disrupted the ebb and flow from the nexus, and the spellcasters of the world have noticed! Magic has all but stopped working, spellcasters strain to perform even the most menial task, and within time it's feared magic could fade entirely!

Upon investigation, these spellcasters have found their magic still works within the White Reach, although with the same unpredictable results associated with the area. The wisest scholars can speculate as to the source of the problem, but without magic to aid them, they turn to heroes to investigate and restore balance.

The following developments have occurred over the past several weeks, and should be kept secret from the players at this time.

Developments

Heart of Ice

After years of careful planning and manipulation of her pawns on the Material Plane, the ice devil known as *Chorth the Cold Soul* has successfully used the nexus point in the White Reach to travel there from the Nine Hells.

Chorth intends to operate the magic nexus through a demonic ritual, using it to concentrate the world's magical power in her, and her alone. With no magic to be wielded by those who would then challenge her, the devil would be able to conquer nations, leaving a path of blood and frost in her wake.

Huge Help

The process the ice devil uses to weave the ley lines requires blood, *dragon blood*, a key ingredient Chorth would have difficulty acquiring on her own. It was to her delight then that she happened upon a group of frost giants, easily manipulating them into her service.

The frost giants that now serve Chorth are members of the *Icemaull* tribe. The eldest, *Agnar (Appendix A)*, quickly took to the idea of assisting the devil, and his kin soon followed his lead. The first task given to them was to hunt down dragons with blood suitable enough for Chorth's needs, an endeavor the frost giants relished.

Agnar and his brethren did not disappoint. The frost giants hunted down and managed to slay a silver dragon that made her home in the mountain peaks, and captured one of her young as well.

The Frozen Core

With enough dragon blood to begin her task, Chorth took to the frozen core of the frost giants' lair and set to work. She sealed off entry to this area with thick barriers of ice, ice from the heart of the Hells itself, which cannot melt when exposed to normal flame.

The giants are well prepared to guard their lair while Chorth conducts her ritual. They've stored dozens of boulders to hurl at would be invaders, and have trained the monstrous denizens of the White Reach as their own guard dogs and protectors.

Among these creatures, the giants prefer their *roc* (a beast they call "Claw"), and a *remorhaz* (which they call "Worm"). They also keep mammoths and yeti, domesticating and breeding these creatures like livestock.

Best Served Cold

There is but one creature inside the frost giants' lair working against the ice devil, the young silver dragon *Zorich Diamondhide*. The young dragon has been beaten to within an inch of his life, and has already born witness to his mother's murder at the hands of the *Icemaull* giants.

Zorich's heart burns for revenge, but his body is battered and broken. The young silver dragon has been effectively penned in the giants' lair, walled up behind a cage of boulders as he awaits



his fate. Chorth is content to let the dragon live, unless she requires his blood to finish the ritual. If not, she plans to subjugate him into her personal vassal and weapon of destruction when her reign over the world begins.

Exploration

Magical Weapons

It's assumed the party has access to magical weapons for this adventure. One magical weapon can be found in the dungeon.

Structured Progression

Due to the recent weakening of magic, the party will have to travel to the White Reach without its aid. This module assumes the party will enter the frost giants' lair through its southeast entrance in Area A, making their way through its west wing before eventually returning through its east wing to challenge Chorth the Cold Soul. It's possible for the party to enter through the back entrance (Area H), although doing so will require scaling the crag the den is located within, or sailing the icy sea to its location.

Variable Light

The frost giants keep roaring bonfires in the locations within their cave that they frequent the most, which keeps most of the areas well lit. The boulder store (Area F) is dimly lit, and Chorth's location in the frozen core (Area K) is unlit.

Magic Detection

There are a few magic items within the frost giants' lair that the party can discover – treasure the giants have claimed, and which they favor over all others. Unless otherwise indicated, the stone that makes up their cavernous lair is thick enough to block a party member casting *detect magic* from detecting the presence of a magic item from anywhere other than the area it is in.

Extreme Cold

The White Reach is a frozen wasteland, hospitable only to creatures that thrive in the bitter cold climate. The average daily temperature here is about -57° F (-50° C), with icy winds that make it feel much colder. If the party is not equipped with cold weather gear, they'll be subject to the rules detailing *Extreme Cold* in the *DMG* (pg. 110).

Ice and Frigid Water

The sea borders the northwestern edge of the crag that hosts the giants' lair, feeding into a small lake at the cave's entrance. Area locations note if a body of water present has frozen over to the point where it can be traversed safely, and the difficulty of traveling across ice. If a creature is immersed in any body of water present in the White Reach, it is subject to the rules detailing *Frigid Water* in the *DMG* (pg. 110).

Frost Giant Movement

The caves that make up the Icemaull's lair are large enough to accommodate the frost giants; although the narrow entrances and exits between areas allow only one giant to pass through these spaces at a time.

Wavering Magic

Chorth's tampering with the magic ley lines has caused spellcasting and magic to become practically impossible anywhere outside of the White Reach. There's no defined range of where this limitation begins to occur – it's up to your discretion. In general, the party should be able to use their spells and magic items while within the mapped area of the adventure and the nearby region.

While the party is at the adventure site, you can choose to use the *Spellflux* option, described below:

[Optional] *Spellflux*

The current of magic that ebbs and flows from the nexus can affect spellcasting in different ways. Sometimes the pull is especially draining on a spellcaster, while in other cases it is a great aid to the process. At your option, you can implement the *spellflux* rule for spellcasters.

Each time a spellcaster casts a spell of 2nd level or higher, the player rolls 1d20:

- On the result of a 1, the casting expends 1 additional spell slot. This additional spell slot expended must be of the same level or higher as the one used to cast the spell. If such a spell slot cannot be expended, the spell simply fails, and the character's spell slot and action are wasted.
- On the result of a 20, the character casts the spell without expending the spell slot.

[**CUSTOMIZE**] You may choose for the magic ley lines and nexus to only affect certain kinds of spellcasters. For instance, clerics and druids may be unaffected by Chorth's tampering here, since they derive their magic from gods and nature.

Random Patrol

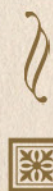
Although several frost giants are present in the lair when the party arrives, there are many more members of the Icemaull tribe that may return to the caves at any point in time.







In the event you need a random encounter anywhere, you can use the following creatures:

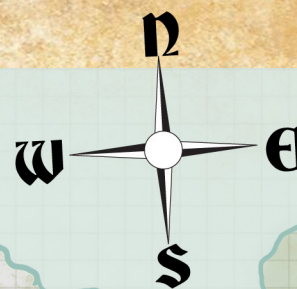
Random Encounter: frost giant herder ★★☆☆★

1 frost giant (*MM* pg. 155) 3,900 XP


2 mammoths (*MM* pg. 332) 4,600 XP



-  Hostile Creature(s)
-  Trap
-  Plot Driver
-  Treasure
-  NPC
-  Puzzle



1 square = 5 feet

 Indicates the location of a secret door.



Adding *Best Served Cold* to Your Campaign

If you're unable to come up with a reason why the party would be at the adventure site, consider using one or more of these hooks:

Hook 1: I Can't Do It! I Don't Have the Power!

The party's spellcasters experience the result of Chorth's machinations first hand. Over the course of a week, the spellcasters find it increasingly difficult casting their higher level spells, becoming exhausted by the effort, until finally they're unable to cast anything but cantrips. At this point, the entire party notices their magic items have lost nearly all effect! Either the party is aware of the nexus of ley lines at the White Reach, or they can seek guidance to point them there. They'll need to travel there immediately to regain their former power!

Hook 2: Oh, Brother

The party is stationed not too far from the White Reach, and is surprised when a young adult silver dragon lands before them. The dragon is badly hurt, seeking the help of the closest heroes nearby. The dragon bore witness to the frost giant's attacks, and its brother (Zorich) has been taken captive. If the party is strong enough to take the fight to the enemy and rescue Zorich, the silver dragon will reward them with a magic item of rare quality from its horde, as well as make a powerful ally in the future.

Hook 3: Icing on the Cake

The party is already en route to the White Reach, or nearby for another reason when the events begin to unfold; perhaps they are heading there for the final stages of creating a magic item, or seeking out a spell supposedly inscribed in ice. As they approach, they notice their magic wavering until they draw closer to the mapped area. If the party is to complete their goals in the White Reach, they'll need to root out the ice devil first.

❄️ Legend Lore ❄️

Though magic has all but ceased to work while Chorth is busy in the White Reach, the party may have access to the *legend lore* spell or similar divination (perhaps used from another plane of existence, or consulting the advice of an oracle whose powers are unaffected). You can reveal the following information regarding the White Reach and the magic nexus to the players in this instance:

The lifeblood of all magic pulses from within the frozen wastes at the edge of the world, maintaining equilibrium in its flow. Encased in ice, a cold soul weaves the veins of magic into a new net, choking casters of their spells. Hark! Before the blood of dragons freezes and magic ceases to be, melt the snows of malice with vengeful flame, and balance will be restored.

Zorich Diamondhide





Prelude: Beginning the Dungeon

It's likely the party experiences the effect of the ice devil's meddling well before they learn any information about the White Reach. This works best if the party has some downtime between adventures, but certainly could occur while they're traveling or in another adventure itself. If the party has one or more spellcasters, you can read the following aloud to them:

You've been noticing a strain recently when preparing and casting your most powerful spells to the point where the effort leaves you exhausted. It's hard to describe at first, like trying to breathe deeply through a reed. Over the course of the next several days, you find yourself unable to cast anything but the most basic cantrips, as if something has severed your tie to magic entirely! It's not just you; news of this has been spreading like wildfire, and communities of wizards are set to meet to discuss what is happening.

The amount of time between when the party members notice their magic is failing, and when they're unable to use magic entirely is purposefully ambiguous; it could be a couple of days to upwards of a week or so, whichever works best for your game.

The party can attend a gathering of wizards where they can be tasked with traveling to the White Reach to investigate, or perhaps a character in the party already is aware of the nexus there and can make his or her own assumptions (an Arcana or Insight check might be necessary here at your discretion; a DC of 20 to 25 would be appropriate).

Traveling to the White Reach

Traveling to the White Reach can take days or weeks – depending upon what you feel is appropriate and how far the party is from it when the adventure begins. You have an opportunity to impress upon the players how difficult the trip is, especially without the aid of magic. You can read the following aloud to the players:

The trek through the frozen wastelands is arduous, long, and cold. It's as if snow grew from the ground here instead of grass. Each trudging step you take is mired with it, leaving your feet numbed to the bone. A shrill wind plagues your trip constantly, freezing each fiber of your being and ringing in your ears without respite. The sun gives you no warmth or solace, only reflecting brightly off the icy hellscape and making it difficult to see where you're headed.

You might want to role-play a few days' worth of the cold trip, and maybe have a random encounter with one of the giants (or another appropriate arctic creature) to drive home the length of the trek. You can also use this description if the party is using the *Icing on the Cake* adventure hook, or you can introduce a silver dragon to inform them of the goings-on as described in the *Oh, Brother* adventure hook.

When it's appropriate, the party finally reaches the crag where the magic ley lines form a nexus. You can read the following aloud to the party:

The wearying trip has left you frozen and jaded, until at last you see a white crag jutting up from the horizon, and smell an icy sea beyond it. Even as you gaze upon it, those of you who can cast spells feel your energy returning, welling up inside of you, and

all of you sense your magical items beginning to pulse with their former power. Tracks in the snow lead to and from this place, bare humanoid foot and boot prints, each over 2 feet in length.

At this point, the party has access to their normal regiment of spells and magic items (if you're using the Spellflux option, it applies as well). As they approach the crag they enter in Area A, where you can begin the adventure proper.

[Optional] Roc Sighting

The frost giants have trained a roc, which normally is perched on the peaks of the crag their lair resides in on the northwestern side facing the cold sea. The party will eventually encounter the roc in the Icemaull's cove (Area H).

If you'd like to foreshadow the encounter with the Icemaull's roc, you can have it fly into view as the party approaches, although it should be too far away to interact with or target. It's only in sight briefly, but long enough to give the party an idea of what is out there. (If you're worried that the party may have access to spells or effects to attack the roc here, instead of its intended encounter location, you can skip this sighting).

If you want to run the roc sighting, you can read the following aloud to the players as they close the gap to the lair entrance:

The silhouette of a monstrously large bird circles the sky, weaving in and out of the icy peaks. It appears to be carrying a porpoise in its talons. Given your distance from it, the thing could be the size of an adult dragon, or larger. It disappears behind the crag almost as soon as you see it emerge, but you're sure what you saw isn't a trick your eyes are playing on you.



Area A: The Gates

The frost giants have constructed a crude wooden fence to secure the entrance to their lair. They keep the threshold to the cave itself blocked by an enormous boulder that they can easily move, although the task is difficult for most other creatures that lack their strength.

When the party first gets within site of the cave entrance, you can read the following aloud to the players:

A crudely constructed wooden fence, maybe twenty feet tall and made of timbers sharpened to spikes, creates a barrier in front of what you presume to be a cave entrance. A frozen lake peaks out from the western side of the crag; you can see turquoise water below a layer of ice and the latest dusting of snow. The snow drifts on the eastern side before the fence are dotted with blood, a red wash over the ubiquitous white present.

As an additional measure of security, the giants keep a gang of yeti nearby, feeding them what they fish from the sea so they remain near the entrance. The yetis are not domesticated, but remain in this location for the steady stream of food. Three yetis await the party and are noticed immediately; two abominable yetis are resting and blend in with the snowy terrain.

When the party first arrives in this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

As you approach, you first notice that the crisp air here reeks of chum and spoiled fish. In front of the gates are three hulking creatures, apelike and bipedal, with massive horns. Their white fur makes them nearly invisible against the snow.

The yetis are hostile and will attack the party as soon as they detect it.

Hostile creatures: yeti gang ★★★★★
2 abominable yetis* (MM pg. 306) 10,000 XP
3 yetis (MM pg. 305) 2,100 XP

*These creatures are laying down and not moving, and indistinguishable from the snowy landscape.

Frozen Lake

The lake in this area is covered with a sheet of slippery ice, approximately one inch thick. A creature moving across it must succeed on a DC18 Acrobatics check or slip and fall prone. If more than 300 lbs. of weight is placed in a 10-foot-square section of the ice, it breaks and creatures in the area are immersed in the freezing water. The water is 17 feet deep at its deepest.

Wooden Gate

A portion in the middle of the fence is primitively hinged with rope, creating a gate the giants use when entering or exiting the area. Though the giants have barred the gate, the fence posts are far enough apart that party members can attempt to squeeze through them, requiring a successful DC 13 Acrobatics check. If a party member fails the check by 8 or more, he or she become lodged in the gap between posts, and must be pulled free, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check.



Alternatively, the party can attempt to hack the fence or gate down. A 5-foot-square section of the fence has an AC of 10, 35 hit points, immunity to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage, and vulnerability to fire damage.



Combat

The active yetis meander in different areas outside of the gate, near the combat icon on the area map, including over the frozen lake (they're light enough so that just one of them won't break it).

The two abominable yetis here are hidden, resting with their backs to the party, and appear as mounds of snow. You can roll Stealth checks for each and compare the result to the party members' passive Perception scores (remember, the yetis have advantage on the roll thanks to their *snow camouflage* trait).

The party can surprise the yetis if they attack at range; otherwise the yetis smell the party as soon as one or more party members are within 30 feet of their location. As soon as the party is detected, the yetis howl, rousing the abominable yetis, and charge the party.

The yetis use their *multiattack* every round, each against a different party member. The much more formidable abominable yetis lumber over and use their *cold breath*, without care if the yetis are in the attack's area.

The yetis will attempt to flee if reduced to 15 or fewer hit points. The abominable yetis will fight until slain unless reduced to 40 or fewer hit points and take fire damage, which prompts them to howl in fear and flee.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- If any of the yetis flee, they'll eventually return to this area after a period of 24 hours (they're still accustomed to eating here). If the party happens to visit this area or rest here during that time, they'll encounter the returning yetis once more.



Heavy Boulder

The mouth of the cave is blocked by a huge boulder, about 6 feet in diameter, that the giants use as a makeshift door. The snow is compressed around the western edge inside the mouth of the cave where the giants have kicked it aside as they pass.

The opening is large enough that the giants can access it by ducking slightly as they enter; the boulder isn't large enough to cover the gap to the lip of the cave. If the party is capable of flight, they can simply fly over the boulder into Area B. Or, the boulder can be climbed with a successful DC 17 Athletics check.

The boulder can only be pushed inside the cave so far, although it can be maneuvered so that it rolls along the compressed snow. A party member with a Strength score of 23 or higher can use an action to do so. Party members without a Strength score of at least 23 must attempt a DC 23 Athletics check to move it. Up to two additional Medium sized creatures can use the Help action to aid a party member making the check; each assisting creature reduces the DC by 1 in addition to providing advantage. There's no penalty for failure, but each attempt takes 1 minute.



Area B: Captive's Nook

Immediately upon entering this area, the party will see three distinct paths they can take. The nook itself represents the closest adjoining room to the north, where the young silver dragon Zorich is held captive. If the party decides to explore the western or eastern passages first, they might skip this encounter for the time being.

When the party first enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

The boulder yields to reveal the inside of the cave, glistening with ice, the ceiling of which must rise forty feet. The path divides at a cross section immediately before you. Firelight flickers out from the western path, dimly lighting this area, and another pair of boulders are positioned in front of the path to the east. The path straight ahead leads to a dark, open area, with a ring of rocks piled nearly eight feet high against its far wall. A faint whimpering can be heard occasionally from beyond it.

The whimpering is Zorich, who is currently the frost giants' prisoner (see Zorich, Young Silver Dragon Captive).

Piled Stones

The giants have barricaded the silver dragon Zorich behind a piled ring of rocks and stones. They know the dragon is injured and unable to fly, and occasionally return here to check up on him and toss him whatever scraps of food that their beasts couldn't finish.

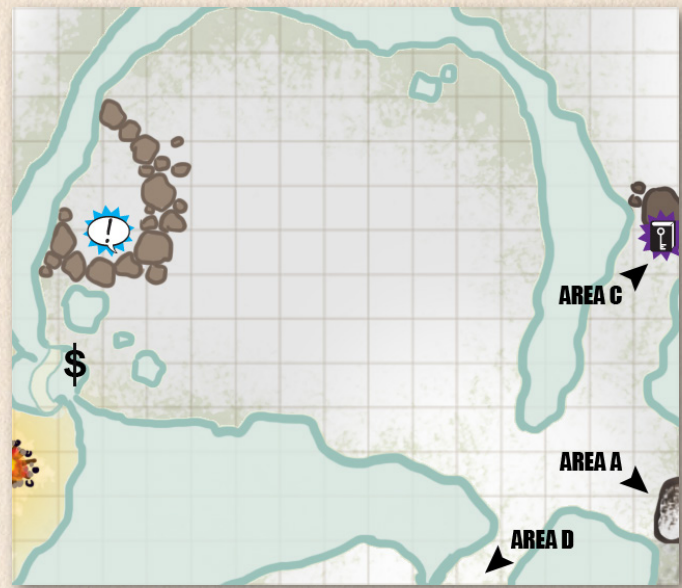
The stones are piled about 8 feet high, and are stable enough that they can be climbed by a party member without risking collapse. If a party member peers over the lip, you can read the following aloud to her:

Lying on its side behind the pile of stones is a young silver dragon; you can see one of its wings is broken and it bears the marks of recent injury. Its chest rises and falls slowly indicating that it's breathing, but it doesn't look in good shape. It gives a despondent sigh, tucking its snout under its foreleg and into the snow.

Spying on the Guard's Post

Two frost giants guards are currently posted in Area D, the western adjoining area, but they're not particularly vigilant. The party will be able to see them from this area, and can remain hidden from them if they're not particularly loud. If the party spies upon Area D from the corridor here, you can read the following aloud to the players:

A male and female giant are at the far end of this room, tearing into haunches of seared meat, and conversing in a strange language between bites. Their skin is pale blue and rough. Their hair is as white as snow, braided and decked with ursine skulls. They don't seem to have noticed you, more occupied with shoveling food down their gullets than peering in your direction.



If a party member spying upon the giants understands Giant, he can make out the names of the two; Runa (female) and Horg (male). The giants are talking about "the whelp," and wondering how it tastes, though it's clear they aren't allowed to eat it... yet. They seem to be in a good mood, and excited about "glory ahead."

The party can take the opportunity to surprise the giants. Or, if they're too loud while in this area, they'll draw the giants' attention and encounter them here. Refer to Area D for more information on the giants present here.



Blocked Entrance to the Worm Den

The passage to the east contains a clutch of remorhazes the frost giants have domesticated and occasionally breed. The boulders blocking entry are more to keep their mammoths out of the room than to keep the remorhazes in, and thus have been positioned haphazardly without concern. Party members can climb over the boulders into Area C with a successful DC 15 Athletics check.

A party member with a Strength score of 19 or higher can use an action to push one of the boulders aside so that the area is no longer blocked. Party members without a Strength score of at least 19 must attempt a DC 19 Athletics check to move it. Up to two additional Medium sized creatures can use the Help action to aid a party member making the check; each assisting creature reduces the DC by 1 in addition to providing advantage. There's no penalty for failure, but each attempt takes 1 minute.



**Zorich, Young Silver Dragon Captive**

Zorich won't notice the party if they creep up the stone barrier or approach stealthily, and even a modest amount of noise he'll assume is his giant captors. The party will need to make themselves known to the dragon to interact with him.

The giants keep the dragon in rough shape; he hasn't had a decent rest since his capture and is fed so meagerly he can barely stand. His right wing is broken, and he has a total of 17 hit points when the party encounters him.

If the party talks with Zorich, he'll implore the party members to heal his wounds if they can, or escort him from the giants' lair. A *greater restoration* spell or similar effect will repair the dragon's broken wing and cure him of his exhaustion. If the party does so, he can fly over the barrier and exit out the front.

If the party lacks the means of mending Zorich's broken wing, they'll have to dismantle enough of the piled stones so that he can limp out. The process doesn't require a check, but is time consuming, and threatens to attract the attention of the frost giants stationed in Area C. If the party chooses to do this, it requires 30 minutes' worth of work moving stones aside. If the party doesn't work quietly, the frost giants in Area C notice after 2d10 minutes and encounter the party here. If the party chooses to work quietly, the process instead takes 1 hour. You can compare the frost giants' passive Perception score to the party's average Stealth check every 20 minutes to see if the guards in Area C notice.

You can refer to the sidebar *Role-playing Zorich* for more information and dialogue you can use when the party interacts with the dragon.

Zorich Diamondhide ★★★★★

1 young silver dragon* (MM pg. 118) 200 XP

*Zorich has 17 hit points remaining and cannot fly. His XP value has been adjusted accordingly.

\$Camouflaged Passage

Though not truly a secret door, a crevice that runs along inside this wall is extremely well camouflaged, and easily missed. A party member with a passive Perception score of 20 or higher notices that the wall isn't sheer, but leads to a small passage. If a party member searches the nearby area he or she finds the camouflaged passage with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

It's only wide enough for a Medium or smaller sized creature to squeeze through, so the giants haven't given it much attention if they've noticed it at all. If party members access it, they can move through it to Area G.

— Role-Playing Zorich —

Zorich has all but lost hope, but encountering the party gives the silver dragon a new spark of fire that reignites his desire for revenge. He'll readily trust the party simply because they're not giants, and share the information he knows.

You can use the following lines of dialogue for Zorich when interacting with the party:

By the light, my senses must be failing me, I could hardly detect your approach. Forgive me, I'm... I feel so weak.

I am Zorich, youngest member of the Diamondhide line. My family was attacked on a night with a crescent moon by these giant monstrels; my mother and kin were butchered before my very eyes, and I know not if any other survived. Now I am here, the prisoner of my assailants, awaiting the day I am slaughtered to feed their beasts.

I know not what caused the giants' recent transgressions, only that they are driven by some other dark purpose. I heard them speaking of fel-flame after they brought me here. For all their strength, they lack the brains to know what such fire is capable of.

I beg of you – I feel as if a knife is driven under the haunch of my right wing. I know I can't fly... but I could try walking. Do you think you could clear a path for me to exit this cursed place? I will seek the other dragons that call this land home. I don't care if it takes decades, I won't rest until the head of every frost giant is spitted upon a pike.

If the party speaks of magical healing...

You know magic? Of course... no regular folk would venture out this far. I beseech you, if you can, heal my wounds; you hasten my path towards vengeance. I cannot impress upon you how valuable the favor of a dragon is, friends.

If the party asks of fel-flame...

Fel-flame? A fire of devil-make that sprawls the depths of Cania and the Nine Hells. It's no ordinary fire, as its flames are ice cold. It can melt hell-ice, and is used in all manner of devilish magic. If the frost giants have found a source of fel-flame, then they're handling powers not native to our world.



Area C: Worm Den

The frost giants keep a clutch of remorhazes within their lair, breeding and training the young from birth as guardians and hunting partners. Though the remorhazes could burrow to any part of the lair they wish, they instinctively keep to this area. They begin burrowed just beneath the surface, causing the ground to appear lumpy with vibrant snow. The heat the remorhazes generate causes the room to be filled with a mist.

When the party first enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

Billows of snow have accumulated in this large den, which is strangely filled with a mist that was not present in other areas. A series of mounds of snow clustered in the center area are particularly vibrant, almost incandescent, illuminating the cave with a dull glow. A wall of ice stretches across the north side of the room, and it's difficult to make out what is beyond it.

The remorhazes are fed whatever the giants hunt and fish, and the occasional mammoth that has wandered into the den to its death. They are currently nested near the combat icon on the area map.

The remorhazes detect the party with their tremorsense when it enters the room, and wait until one or more party members is within 10 feet of their location to burst from the ground and reveal themselves. At that point, you can read the following aloud to the players:

A spray of steam is accompanied by a piercing screech, as the earth splits and a monstrous creature, part insect and part worm, bursts from beneath the snow. Its body swells with heat, as snow melts rapidly in its wake, and the air is distorted around it. Its teeth chitter as it gives another shrill cry, and lunges at you!

Hostile creatures: remorhazes ★★★★★

1 remorhaz (MM pg. 258) 7,200 XP

3 young remorhaz (MM pg. 258) 5,400 XP

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a strong aura of evocation magic from the wall of hell-ice marked by the plot icon on the area map (this effect cannot be dispelled).

Snowy Terrain

The snow in this area is deeper than most others, enough to impede the movement of the party members. Medium-sized and smaller creatures treat the snow in this area as difficult terrain, except within 10 feet of a remorhaz. As a remorhaz moves, it melts the snow within 10 feet of it, leaving a slush of icy water the party can trod through. If left unattended, this water turns to thin ice after an hour.



Combat

The remorhazes are burrowed just under the surface of the ground, only some mounds of earth and snow protrude. If the party attacks these areas with ranged weapons, they can surprise the remorhazes. If a party member approaches within 10 feet of the remorhazes, they burst forth and surprise the party.

The young remorhazes skitter in different directions, each choosing a separate party member to attack. The remorhaz attacks the closest target with its *bite*, and then attempts to *swallow whole* if it's able to grapple its target.

The remorhaz will fight until slain. Once reduced to 40 hit points or fewer, it will call out a high pitched shriek to alert the giants in Area D.

The young remorhazes will fight until slain provided the remorhaz is alive. If the remorhaz is slain, the young remorhazes will burrow away if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- When the remorhazes die, their corpses continue to provide illumination to the area for 2d10 minutes per corpse.
- If the remorhaz is able to alert the frost giant guards in Area D, they arrive in the area a short time later (anywhere from 5 rounds to 5 minutes, at your discretion).
- If any of the young remorhazes escape, they attempt to burrow to any of the frost giants in the lair (Areas D, G, or J). You can add one or more surviving young remorhazes with the creatures in those areas.





Wall of Hell-Ice

A barrier of ice bars the way between Area C and Area I. The ice devil Chorth the Cold Soul has conjured *hell-ice* here to seal the path so she can do her work uninterrupted. If a party member inspects the ice, you can read the following aloud to the player:

A thick wall of ice seals the way from this location to the next. It runs from the ground to the top of the cavern perhaps 30 feet high, and might be 10 feet thick or more. There's something unnatural and unpleasant about it. It's particularly cold to the touch, and a moment's effort reveals it to be as hard as steel. Upon inspection, you see that tiny cracks and fissures run along its surface, forming eldritch runes and symbols that put you off ease.

The barrier is slightly opaque, so the party can see past it, but not clearly enough to see the area beyond it in detail.

The ice cannot be removed by ordinary means; it must be melted with the *fel-flame* the giants have available to them in the cove in the rear of their lair (Area H). If a party member attempts to break the ice with a weapon or melt it with any other heat source, his or her attempt fails. You can refer to the section *Fel-Flame* in that area description for more information.

The *hell-ice* also prevents magical travel beyond its location. If a party member attempts to *teleport* or *dimension door* beyond it, the spell delivers him or her to the center of Area C. It cannot be circumvented by spells like *move earth* or *passwall* either, though these effects will remove the earth and stone in the area, a similar barricade of ice remains present in its absence to prevent bypassing it.

Returning with Fel-Flame

When the party returns here with a source of *fel-flame* (from Area H), they can use the mysterious fire to melt the hell-ice and proceed to Area I. Doing so requires about 5 minutes of exposing the ice to the flame. You can read the following aloud to the players when they do so:

The odd fire licks away the ice, which pools into a silvery goop on the ground, and exposes a path toward the next area. A dark vapor carries the smell of brimstone as the ice melts.



Area D: Guard's Post

Two frost giants, *Runa* and *Horg*, are stationed in the far end of this open area, eating some food from their latest catch and discussing the future. The two converse in Giant, and unless the party can speak that language, they do not understand them (you can refer to *Spying upon the Guard's Post* in Area B for a description of what a party member might make out if they attempt to listen in unnoticed).

When the party first enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

The remains of a huge shark are spitted over a roaring bonfire in this den, and though the fire's warmth is a welcome reprieve, you're much more concerned with the two giants that stand on the other end of it, eating and talking in a strange language. Each must be 20 feet tall, their helmets nearly touching the icy ceiling of the cave.

If the giants were alerted to the party's presence (for instance, if they were alerted by the remorhaz's cry in Area C), they actively go looking for them. So it's possible the giants encounter the party in a different location. In that case, the party simply takes notice of the bonfire and the frozen stream (which would have been disrupted by the giants passing through it). You can read the following description instead:

The remains of a huge shark are spitted over a roaring bonfire in this den; its warmth is a welcome reprieve from the cold. You see a stream that feeds through this area, many bits of ice, sludge, and slush dot its surface as if something just crashed through here recently. It might be 15 feet across, and looks easy enough to pass, but certainly cold doing so.

Hostile creatures: frost giants Horg and Runa ★★☆☆☆
2 frost giants* (MM pg. 155) 9,600 XP

*When one giant is slain, the other gains the *reckless* trait. The XP value for the giants has been adjusted accordingly.

Frozen Stream

The stream here is currently frozen over with a thin layer of ice. A creature moving across it must succeed on a DC18 Acrobatics check or slip and fall prone. If more than 200 lbs. of weight is placed in a 10-foot-square section of the ice, it breaks, and creatures in the area are immersed in the freezing water. The water here is 8 feet deep at its deepest.

The frost giants and other creatures that inhabit the lair don't mind the icy water, and simply walk through it as they pass, causing the ice to shatter. If a section of the ice shatters, it re-freezes in 1d4 hours.



Combat

Both giants are currently stationed on the other side of the frozen stream, by the entrance to Area E (near the combat icon on the area map). The party can surprise the giants if they ambush them from Area B, but they'll need to approach stealthily in order to do so, or attack them with ranged attacks.



Once the giants notice the party, they attack. Runa will charge the party to attack in melee with her *multiattack*. Horg will stay back and throw rocks at party members for 3 rounds before joining the melee himself. Remember, if the giants move through the stream in this area they break right through the ice, though the cold does not affect them.

Once either Horg or Runa is slain, the other curses at the party and flies into a frenzy. The surviving giant gains the *reckless* trait, and at the start of its turn, the giant has advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against the giant have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Both of the giants fight until slain. Their bodies can be looted of sacks that contain seared fish meat, bear skulls, and large drinking horns made of mammoth bone. The drinking horns are valued at 25 gold pieces each. The sacks also contain 108 electrum pieces and 63 gold pieces.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- The giant corpses are *massive*. They might fall in such a way that prevents the party from advancing to the next area, or perhaps they fall in the frozen stream and provide an easy bridge for the party to traverse it. You can use such a scenario to provide a little drama or levity after the encounter. If a party member is creative with overcoming the problem of a giant corpse in a small space, you should award him or her Inspiration.



Area E: Mirrored Hollow

This small area is nothing more than an antechamber to the giants' boulder store and fishing post, although it's here that the ice devil *Chorth the Cold Soul* will make first contact with the party. Chorth uses her magic to cause her reflection to appear on the ice-laden walls of this hollow, and telepathically communicates with each party member.

When the party enters this area for the first time, you can read the following aloud to the party:

The cave leads you to an empty hollow with an exit leading towards the west. The walls here are glazed with pristine ice; your reflections shine in each one of its facets. As you enter the inner area, your reflections twist and distort before they are gone entirely, replaced by something much more sinister. Now the walls' reflections bear the image of some devil, bipedal and insectoid in appearance, with cold blue chitin and mandibles the size of short swords. The sound of beetles buzzing fills your ears, and words form in your heads.

"So, the flies have come to be swatted already? I threaten the very existence of your world's pathetic excuse for magic, and this is the best they send against me, Chorth the Cold Soul, Matron of Giants, and Dragon-Bane? Your frozen corpses will be the first within the pile I build my throne upon."

While Chorth introduces herself the same way to each party member, it's important to note this is where her conversation diverges. Chorth uses this opportunity to try to tempt one of the party members to work against the rest of the group (see *Dealing with the Devil*).

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a strong aura of illusion magic emanating from the room while Chorth appears in place of the party's reflection. This effect cannot be dispelled.



Dealing with the Devil

Chorth's telepathic contact is a one-way street; the party members cannot respond telepathically with the ice devil, although they may speak aloud or shout at the walls in an attempt to converse with her.

Split Conversations

Chorth delivers her own malignant brand of information to the party. She'll reveal her intention to drain the world of its magic so that she can conquer it unhindered, but she'll also attempt to sow distrust within the party's ranks. Chorth now continues her conversation with the party three different ways, as described below.

NOTE: At this point, you'll want to deliver the information to each party member separately, so that the players do not know who hears what from Chorth. One of the party members will be asked to betray the group; you will want to speak to this player last.

What One PC Hears

Chorth attempts to turn one of the party members against the rest of the group. Select a party member. Chorth says the following



to this party member, delivered secretly so that the other party members are not aware of it:

"The hour is nigh, and this world is all but drained. I could slaughter you for sport, but I would not turn down the service of a giant-slayer when my reign begins. This offer is extended to you and you alone, mortal. Let your trifling comrades plow their way to their deaths in these caves. You can even play along, for the time, even if it means killing more of my pawns. All you have to do is drive out the last breaths of the rest of these bumbling fools so that I can finish my task here, and I will elevate you to that of a god upon this world when I rule it!"

CAUTION: It's assumed the party members will shun such an evil offer, but you have to be prepared that a player might be tempted to literally backstab the rest of the party. Even if a player chooses to help Chorth, the offer is a fraud; the ice devil will simply attack and kill the PC once given the chance. Chorth's offer is more of an element to drive worry and mistrust within the party, than an actual device for the PCs to betray one another.

What Another PC Hears

Select a different party member than the one selected above. Chorth says the following to this party member, delivered secretly so that the other party members are not aware of it:

"I have no pity for the weakness of your kind. Even now one of your comrades, wise enough to submit to my rule, has pledged fealty to me. I can only hope when his/her blade is driven through your spine that you live long enough to see his/her smiling face, whilst your blood ices over and your last breath escapes you."



What All the Rest Hear

The rest of the party hears the following from the ice devil:

"Your world will soon be bereft of any magic, any power that could be wielded against me, and I alone will have dominion over it. I will sow the fields with the blood of your sovereigns, as every feeble inhabitant of this world freezes in my wake. What hope could you possibly have? You are already dead; you just don't know it yet."

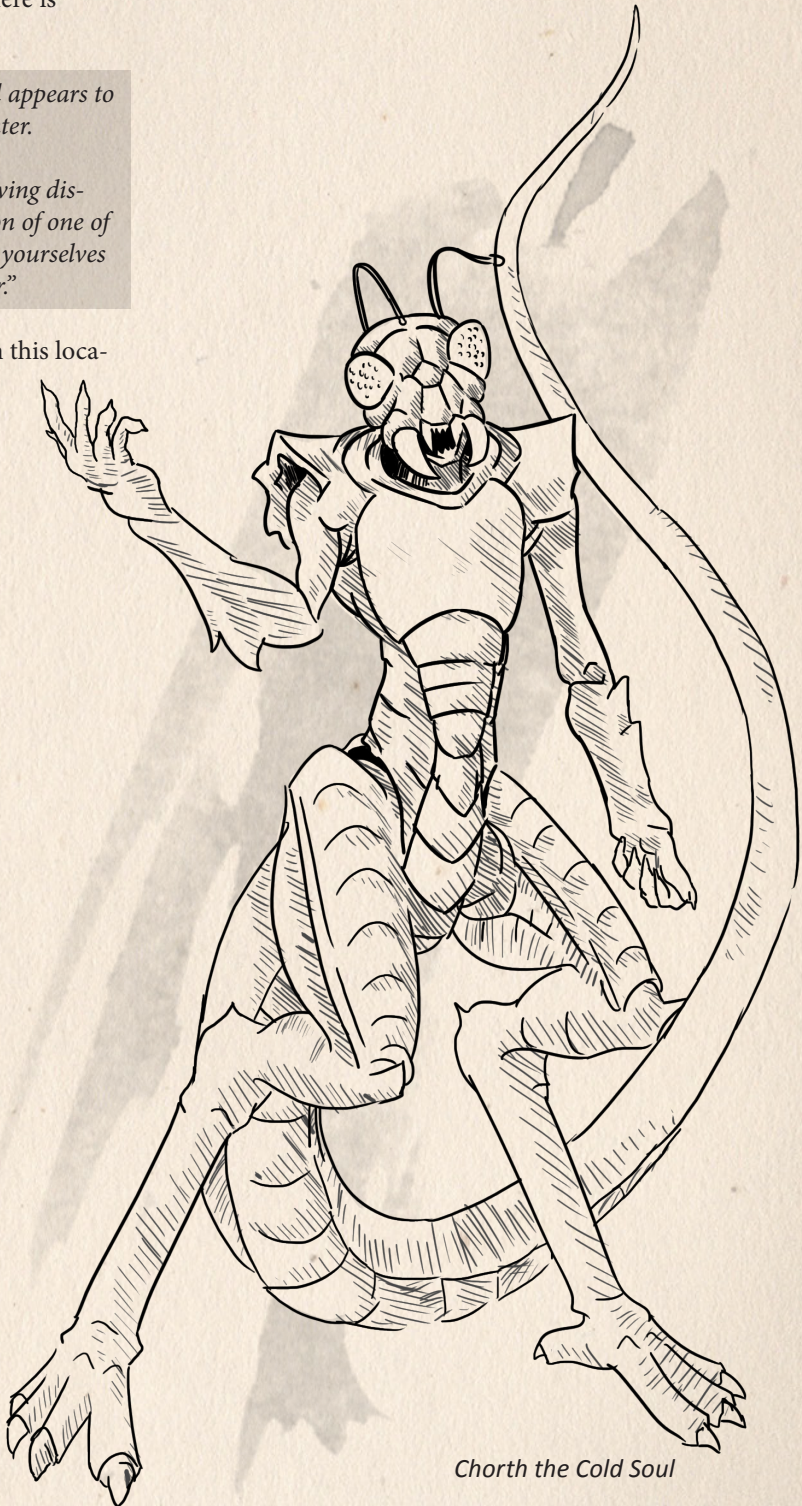
Shouting Back

If a party member shouts at Chorth's reflection while inside the mirrored hollow, there's a 50% chance he or she alerts the frost giant Sigrid at the fishing post (Area G). If the giant there is alerted, you can read the following aloud to the party:

Footsteps thunder from the northwest and the ice devil appears to heave with what you can only assume is devilish laughter.

"Well," you hear in your heads, her voice cold and growing distant, "it looks like your shouts have roused the attention of one of my pawns. Do yourselves a favor a die now, and spare yourselves the agony of watching me slaughter all you've held dear."

Sigrid arrives in 1 minute, and encounters the party in this location if they are still here.



Chorth the Cold Soul





Area F: Boulder Store

The Icemaul giants use this southwestern area of the caves to store large rocks and boulders, keeping a steady supply on hand for their use. The boulders are stored precariously; they're not particularly dangerous to the giants given their size, but they could prove to be dangerous to the party if they approach this area without caution.

When the party enters this area for the first time, you can read the following aloud to the players:

The path leads northward, and you can see another massive bonfire dancing at the end of the stretch, beyond the icy stream that extends through this area as well. Further westward you see a den with piles of frosted boulders stowed against its walls. You can just barely make out a red twinkle coming from within the dim light of that area, like crimson starlight at dusk.

This "twinkle" is the glint of the gems the giants have embedded in one of the earthen columns in the boulder store. If the party advances into the western area instead of going northward, you can read the following aloud to the players.

A massive earthen column runs floor to ceiling here. Six rubies, each perhaps the size of your fist, is embedded into the side of the column, maybe twenty feet from the ground. They sparkle like fire against the cold blue and white of the snowy den. They're arranged around a black, matte stone that is also embedded in the column, like the petals of a flower. The boulders in the area are lodged between the wall and column; you might be able to reach the gems if you climbed them.

The giants aren't much for decoration, but they understand the wealth of the rubies here. They've arranged them high enough so they can't be meddled with by smaller creatures. The boulders *do* reach high enough that a party member could climb them to reach the gems, although doing so runs the risk of the stones collapsing (see *Dangerous Boulder Piles*).

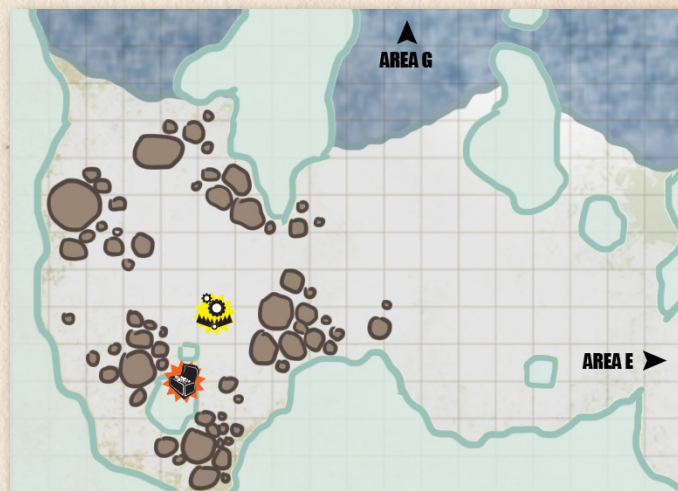
Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a small aura of transmutation magic emanating from the black stone in the center of the rubies.

Frozen Stream

The stream here is currently frozen over with a thin layer of ice. A creature moving across it must succeed on a DC18 Acrobatics check or slip and fall prone. If more than 200 lbs. of weight is placed in a 10-foot-square section of the ice, it breaks, and creatures in the area are immersed in the freezing water. The water here is 8 feet deep at its deepest.

The frost giants and other creatures that inhabit the lair don't mind the icy water, and simply walk through it as they pass, causing the ice to shatter. If a section of the ice shatters, it re-freezes in 1d4 hours.



Mammoths at the Fishing Post

The frost giant *Sigrif* is currently stationed out of view in the northern end of this section of the lair (Area G), but the mammoths that accompany her meander and are quite noisy. If the party spends some time here, they will hear their snorts echoing through the corridor. You can read the following aloud to the party at your discretion:

Elephantine snorts and heavy steps crunching through snow echo throughout the chamber, coming from the north.



Dangerous Boulder Piles

While not truly intended as a trap, the haphazardly placed boulders here can lead to a dangerous result if the party attempts to climb them to access the gemstones.

The boulder piles appear sturdy enough to support one or more party members should they wish to climb them; however, if a party member climbs such a pile you can allow him or her to attempt a DC 15 Insight check. On a success, you can give the following information:

The boulders shift with your weight, as if they're not truly settled into place, and the layer of frost upon them does you no favors. They'll support you, but you'd best be careful.

To climb the boulders, a party member must succeed on a DC 19 Athletics check. A failure of 5 or more indicates the party member slips and falls, and suffers 2d6 bludgeoning damage. The falling may be trivial to the party, but if any party member falls from the boulders there is a 60% chance the boulder pile collapses from the disturbance.

If a boulder pile collapses, all creatures in the boulder store (within 30 feet of the trap icon marked on the area map) must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw as the rocks tumble to the ground. Creatures in the area take 6d8 bludgeoning damage and are pinned by the boulders. Creatures that make their save take half as much damage and are not pinned. If a boulder pile collapses, the frost giant in Area G is alerted and moves to this area to encounter the party.



A creature pinned by the boulders can use an action to attempt a DC 19 Athletics check to free itself. Another creature can use its action to attempt to free an adjacent creature as well. Up to four Medium-sized creatures can use the Help action to aid a creature lifting a boulder; in this case each assisting creature reduces the DC by 1 in addition to providing advantage to the check.

If a party member loses his balance while standing on the boulders, he must succeed on a DC 19 Acrobatics check or fall as well, also risking the boulder pile collapsing.



Rubies Out of Reach

The black, matte stone embedded in the center of the six rubies is actually a *stone of good luck*. Each ruby is impressively large, 3 to 4 inches in diameter, and worth an average of 500 gold pieces each.

The stones are secured in the side of the earthen pillar (marked by the treasure icon on the area map), 20 feet from the ground. This distance is high enough up that the giants can look upon them and appreciate them at eye level, and are easily within their reach should they need to remove one.

A party member attempting to remove any one of the stones must succeed on a DC 17 Strength check. Each attempt requires one minute to pry the stone free from the cold earthen column it is set into.

If a party member is standing on a boulder pile adjacent to the column while attempting to remove a stone, and fails one of these attempts by 10 or more, the party member loses his or her balance and risks falling or worse (see *Dangerous Boulder Piles*, above).



Area G: Fishing Post

This section of the giants' lair is the fishing post, where the frost giants keep their fishing spears and catches, preserving the meat in the natural ice.

One of the Icemaul frost giants, *Sigrid*, spends her time here at the fishing post with the company of some of the giants' mammoths. The mammoths tend to keep to this area thanks to the abundance of food stores kept here; the giants keep stores of forbs and other plants here in addition to the fish they catch.

When the party arrives in this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

The smell of fish and saltwater wafts toward you as you enter this large open area. Large fish are piled against the far wall, some freshly speared, their blood staining the snow. Three mammoths have settled here, and are visibly irritated by your arrival; one's tusks appear barbed, with bony spikes protruding along its backbone.

It's possible that the party attracted Sigrid's attention in a previous area, such as by collapsing the boulder piles in Area F or shouting loudly in Area E. If Sigrid is present at the fishing post when the party arrives, you can add the following aloud:

A female frost giant is tending to the mammoths, and cocks one curious eye at you before speaking in a strange tongue. She drops a large sack to the ground after producing a large rock from it, and each mammoth snorts angrily.

If Sigrid is here and isn't surprised, she rouses the mammoths immediately to attack the party. If the party bested Sigrid earlier in the lair, then the mammoths are passive for a short time when the party arrives (see *Combat*).

Hostile creatures: frost giant Sigrid ★★★★★

1 frost giant (*MM* pg. 155) 3,900 XP

2 mammoths (*MM* pg. 332) 4,600 XP

1 dire mammoth (*Appendix A*) 5,000 XP

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects an aura of transmutation magic emanating from one of the mammoth figurines in Sigrid's sack (in the area marked by the treasure icon on the area map).



Combat

The party can surprise Sigrid if they approach stealthily without attracting attention to themselves in prior areas; the mammoths don't possess any special method of detecting the party. Otherwise neither side is surprised when the party wanders in.

Sigrid instructs her mammoths to use their *trampling charge*, if able, in order to put the party in melee combat, while she uses her first action to throw a rock at any party members standing back that could attack at range or cast spells. After this she closes in melee.

Once in melee range, the mammoths *stomp* each round. The dire mammoth attempts to benefit from its *pack tactics* every round it is able to, moving if necessary to position itself next to a target in the melee range of an ally.



Sigrid and the dire mammoth each fight until slain. If either mammoth is reduced to 40 or fewer hit points it will attempt to retreat.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- The mammoths are panicked when they flee, and choose the closest course of exit; this might mean a mammoth is backed into a corner in Area H, breaks the frozen stream heading towards Area F, or unwittingly triggers a boulder pile collapse in the boulder store. If a mammoth flees combat, you can decide where and how the party encounters it in other parts of the lair, if they do at all.



Sigrid's Sack

Sigrid carries a large burlap sack, lined with mammoth fur, which stores everything from her meals to her war trophies. It is near the fish in this area (marked by the treasure icon on the area map). Inside the sack are 102 electrum pieces, 47 gold pieces, and several mammoth tusks. The party can also find a recently seared hunk of fish and a spare boulder inside.

The sack also contains four statuettes of mammoths crudely carved from mammoth bone; each statuette is roughly 2 feet tall and is an art object worth 75 gold pieces. There is a fifth mammoth statuette that is much smaller than the others and appears to be made from blue marble, and is actually a *marble elephant* (figurine of wondrous power).



Camouflaged Passage

The other side of the camouflaged passage from Area B is accessible here. The party is able to enter that area directly from here if they wish. A party member with a passive Perception score of 20 or higher notices the entrance if he's otherwise unaware of it. If a party member searches the nearby area she finds the camouflaged passage with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

The passage is only wide enough for a Medium or smaller sized creature to squeeze through, so the giants haven't given it much attention, if they've noticed it at all. If party members access it, they can move through it to Area B.



Area H: Cove

The cove is a semi-open area in the rear of the Icemaul's lair, leading right up to the banks of the cold sea. The giants routinely fish from here to feed their beasts and themselves, although none of the frost giants are present when the party arrives.

This area develops in two distinct phases:

1. The party must adventure to the cove to discover the source of *fel-flame* present here, in order to melt the barriers of *hell-ice* that ward Chorth's domain. The *fel-flame* is on display atop a stone pillar on the northwestern side of the cove (marked by the puzzle icon on the area map). Interacting with this fire isn't as easy as it seems, and the first phase resolves when the party deduces a way to carry a source of *fel-flame* with them (see *Fel-Flame*).
2. Once the party solves the puzzle in this area, the frost giants' roc descends upon them. The roc drops the carcass of a small whale onto the area, which prompts the icy section near the coast to shatter into ice flumes. This causes a change in the terrain that the party must now contend with in addition to the combat encounter (see *Things Come Crashing Down and Combat*).

When the party first arrives to this area, there are no hostile creatures in sight and things are almost serene. You can read the following aloud to the players:

You've arrived at a large, open area, its western side exposed to the cold sea. Here, the salty air is mixed with a tinge of a sulfur smell. There's more snow here than inside the crag, but not so much that you can't muddle through it. At the far side, against the earthen wall, is a series of frosty steps circling up a stone pillar. Atop the pillar you see the tell-tale flicker of firelight, although the flames shift in color from turquoise to sea-green.

Surveying the Area

The party can investigate the mysterious fire uninterrupted, but you can provide a few clues to any party members searching the area.

If a party member inspects the ground within 50 feet of the shore, you can ask her to make a DC 14 Perception check. On a success, you can read the following aloud:

The ground here, it would seem, isn't ground at all, rather it is very thick ice leading up to the frigid sea water. A blanket of crunched snow gives you enough traction to cross it without worry, however, and if the giants can use it without concern, you're sure you can as well.

[Optional] Shadows of Things to Come

If you want to foreshadow the roc encounter again, you can read the following aloud to the party, as they make their way from the area entrance towards the *fel-flame*.

The sky goes dark for a moment, as a massive shadow streaks across the ground. In the instant you look up, gargantuan tail feathers are disappearing behind the top of the crag.



Area Map when first encountered

Hostile creatures: the roc ★★☆☆☆

1 roc* (*MM* pg. 260) 9,000 XP

*The roc appears as the party makes their return from the source of *fel-flame* back towards Area G. When it does so, it drops a whale carcass on the area which causes the ground to crack and separate into ice flumes (see the alternate area map). The XP for the encounter has been adjusted accordingly.



Fel-Flame

The *fel-flame* source is atop a stone pillar that ascends 15 feet, with a series of steps around it. Stored behind the pillar are dozens of wooden sticks of varying thickness. If a party member climbs the pillar to view the *fel-flame*, you can read the following aloud:

Upon the stone pillar is a demonic skull, pitch black and alight with the strange, cyan flame, though the fire does not seem to deteriorate the skull at all. There's no warmth from the fire, in fact you're undoubtedly colder the nearer you draw, as if it licked away all warmth around it.

If the party rescued Zorich at Area B, or discovered the *hell-ice* in Area C, they may already be aware that they need this mysterious fire to continue exploring the lair. Even if they are not, they will likely still attempt to interact with it, although the *fel-flame* does not operate like normal fire.

Handling the Fel-Flame

The *fel-flame* deals 1d8 cold damage and 1d8 necrotic damage to a creature each round it is exposed to it. It does not require oxygen to burn; if immersed in water, a steady ring of ice expands from the source, which resumes burning as it is pulled away. However, the flame can only exist in extremely cold environments; bringing a source of *fel-flame* into a temperature of 0° F (-17° C) or warmer causes it to extinguish in 1 minute.



Creating a Source

Unlike normal fire, *fel-flame* can only burn upon *bone*, it does not ignite what would otherwise be considered “flammable materials.” The wooden sticks behind the pillar are misdirection, if the party attempts to create a torch with the fire the attempt fails.

Since the fire permeates through bags and cloth, the party cannot wrap the skull up or deposit it in a sack to transport it; they’ll need to show a little ingenuity in creating a source of their own.

Sigrid’s sack (from Area G) contains mammoth tusks the party can use to fashion a *fel-flame* “torch.” You can allow a party member to attempt a DC 13 Insight check if they’re having problems finding bones to use and have discovered the sack in that area.

Since the fire ignites bone entirely, they’ll need to fashion a “handle” or something that will allow them to wield it safely. In this case, you may require the party to make Survival checks (or another appropriate skill, depending upon what the party does). You might want to use this role-playing to provide Inspiration.

It’s possible the party has the means to make a member immune to the cold and necrotic damage dealt each round by the fire. Keep in mind the damage is dealt every round (meaning the party member will likely be in contact with the *fel-flame* longer than most spells will ward such a player). It’s fine if the party is able to use their resources to mitigate the damage entirely however, as this should be their reward for good resource management.



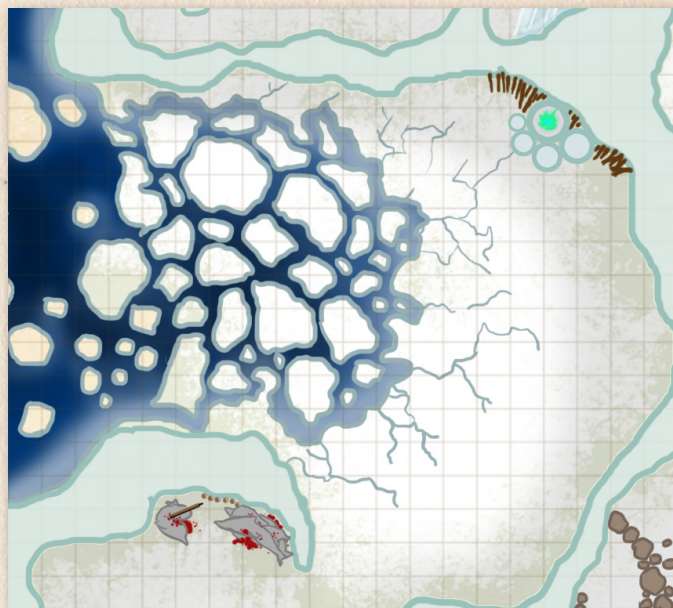
Things Come Crashing Down

When the party starts to make their return to Area G from the *fel-flame* (or, if the party attempts to rest or spends too much time in this area), the roc attacks them. It drops the remains of a whale, which the party avoids, but it disrupts the terrain of the area. You can read the following aloud to the players:

A screech rips through the open air, and the sun is blotted out by something flying above. A humongous object is falling rapidly onto the cove, you make it out to be the remains of an enormous whale just as you take cover. The ground heaves and the spray of chilled water jets across your face. As you take a moment to recover, you see the ground has divided into ice flumes, settling adrift among a slowly sinking whale corpse, and a titanic eagle is descending upon you, talons open wide!

This scene sets up the combat encounter in the cove, but it’s important to note the change in terrain (*refer to the alternate area map*).

Each party member must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone from the disruption. The ice flumes are awash with freezing water and are tricky to navigate, and a creature that uses its action to attack or cast a spell while standing on one must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone as well. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more must succeed on another DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the frigid water.



Alternate Area Map “Things Come Crashing Down”

Frigid Water

The water here is 30 feet at its shallowest point, getting deeper as it extends westward. A creature immersed in it is subject to the rules for *Frigid Water* (DMG, pg. 110).

Freezing Over

After 2d6 hours, the area of broken ice freezes enough to the point where it’s traversable by the party. It regains its former structural integrity after 24 hours.



Combat

Even if you foreshadowed the encounters, the party is surprised unless a party member dedicated him or herself to keeping watch over the skies.

The roc lands immediately. It uses its *multiattack* each round, keeping a target grappled in its talons if able. The roc flies to position itself over the floating flumes, forcing the party to navigate them to attack it in melee.

Once reduced to 150 or fewer hit points, the roc flies 40 feet in the air. On later turns, it swoops down to attack targets, returning to a height of 40 feet at the end of its turn. Party members without ranged attacks can ready attacks against it when it swoops in range, or use their reactions to make opportunity attacks if able.

If the roc grapples a target while swooping, it uses a bonus action to drop the target at the end of its turn. The falling target suffers 4d6 bludgeoning damage and lands prone (or 3d6 bludgeoning damage if dropped into the water).

The roc will attempt to flee if reduced to 35 or fewer hit points.

COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS

- If the roc flees, it returns to its nest above the crag. It is out of sight after 2 rounds of flight. If the roc escapes, it does not return again to attack the party.



Area I: Polished Hollow

Once the party is able to melt the *hell-ice* wall that bars entry from Area C, they are able to enter this part of the Icemaul lair.

The polished hollow has the majority of its walls completely glazed over in reflective ice, similar to Area E. Also like Area E, Chorth uses this opportunity to contact the party (this may or may not be the first time the ice devil does so, depending upon whether the party was able to bypass Area E by using the camouflaged passage between Area B and Area F).

When the party enters this area for the first time, you can read the following aloud to the players:

You've come upon a section of the cave with walls coated in polished, glossy ice. Your reflections greet you from upon all sides, save for one snow crusted wall in the area's northwest edge. In a moment, your reflections twist and bend, before they're replaced by the sinister visage of a blue, insectoid fiend. Her voice rings in your head, accompanied by the sounds of locusts.

"The futility of your effort is matched only by your insolence, maggots! Each moment you spend toiling your way past my pawns is another I draw closer to completion. Can you hear it? The death rattle of your world's magic? It flows to this place alone and to me. Enjoy what paltry feats you're still capable of, for when I drain the last drop of magic from this world's inhabitants, I will begin my reign by dissecting each of you, piece by piece."

Chorth remains visible in the walls in place of the party's reflection for a short time (see *A Cold Soul*, below). Much like the encounter in Area E, the party may unwittingly rouse the attention of the nearby frost giant, or Chorth may summon him herself to deal with the party.

Magic Detection

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a strong aura of illusion magic emanating from the room while Chorth appears in place of the party's reflection. This effect cannot be dispelled. An aura of magic (no associated school) emanates from the sword in the secret area, which can be perceived from opposite the secret door.



A Cold Soul

Chorth does her best to frustrate the party, belittle them, and taunt them. Like the encounter with her in Area E, her contact is through telepathy, and the characters are unable to respond to her by any means (although they may certainly try).

If Chorth Attempted to Turn a Party Member

If the ice devil tried to make a party member betray the party in Area E, she addresses that party member again. You may choose to deliver this information in secret:

"Here you are... the gallant hero. My offer for godhood was not enough to persuade you? Are you so averse to slipping a blade in the back of these other oafs, or is it perhaps that you could not fathom having to serve me in the new age I will bring? You still have time, end their lives and pledge your soul to me... and I may still enlist your service as my second in command."



Again, it's neither intended nor assumed that Chorth's meddling will lead to one party member attacking the others, but rather enforces the depths of the devil's depravity and evilness.

Alerting Agnar

The Icemaul patriarch, *Agnar*, is in the nearby area. If the party shouts in response to Chorth, Agnar hears them and moves here to encounter the party.

If the party ignores Chorth, or simply lets her speak without reacting to her, the ice devil becomes frustrated and alerts the giant herself. In this instance, you can read the following aloud to the players:

"Very well!" You hear, as the devil's expression knits in anger. "Perhaps I can find some pleasure in peeling your remains from the ground. Agnar! Obliterate them!"

With that, all the walls fissure and crack, sending ice spurting all around you. A deep voice echoes from the northern corridor.

"Who goes there?! The Icemaul will crush your bones!"



\$ Secret Door

This portion of the wall (marked by the secret door icon on the area map) isn't iced over; it's covered with frost instead and is completely matte. If the party investigates this area, you can allow party members to make a DC 20 Perception check. A party member that succeeds at the check finds the seam of a secret door in a 10-foot-square section of the wall.

A subsequent successful DC 15 Investigation check allows a party member to discover how the door operates, which is done simply by applying pressure to its left side. This causes the section of the wall to pivot 90° clockwise, granting access to the secret area beyond it and the treasure stored there (see *Cold Steel*).



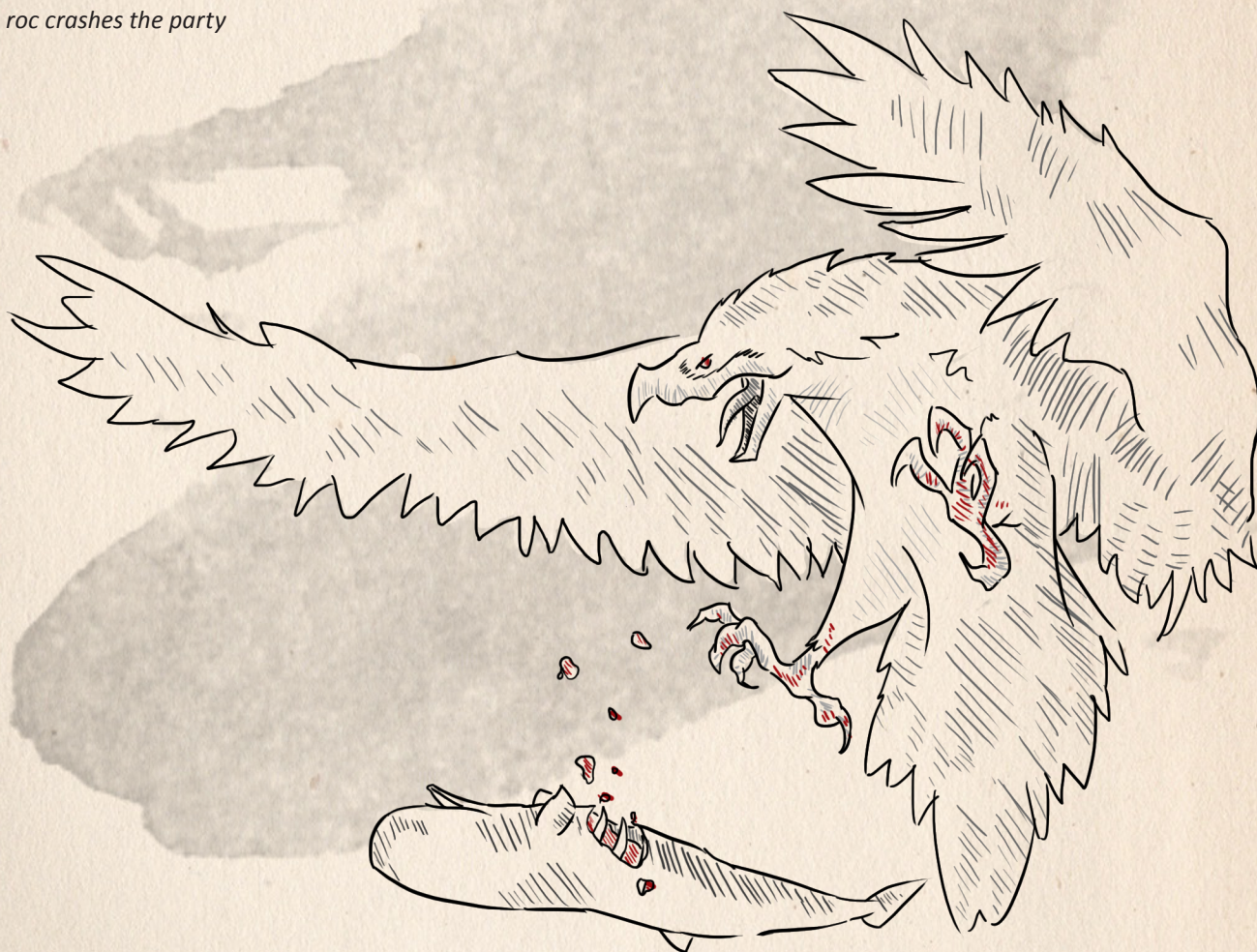
Cold Steel

The secret door in this area leads to a hidden area to the north. At the area's center, lodged in the ground, is a greatsword, surrounded by trunks filled with coins and gems. The secret door leading here is too small for the giants to use, and it's unlikely the Icemaul clan was even aware of this treasure under their noses.

The greatsword bears a hilt tufted with white fur, its pommel bearing an ice-blue sapphire. Along its blade is an intricate engraving of snow flakes, as well as the sword's name, *Whitetooth*, scribed in Draconic. The greatsword has the properties of a *frostbrand*, and any creature that is attuned to it can cast the spell *cone of cold* as a 5th level spell without the need for spell components. This property only functions while *Whitetooth* is being wielded by the character, and cannot be used again until the following dawn.

The trunks that surround the greatsword are filled with coins bearing the stamps of an old, unknown empire, perhaps prevalent in the White Reach during more hospitable times. They contain 302 platinum pieces, 2,948 gold pieces, and sixteen gems worth 50 gold pieces each (*DMG*, pg. 134).

The roc crashes the party



The penultimate area in the lair is a large cave just outside the frozen core, where Chorth is completing her work. The frost giant patriarch of the Icemaul clan, *Agnar*, has taken residence in this icy approach as the ice devil's personal guard. Chorth has barricaded herself inside Area K with another wall of *hell-ice*, and has supplied Agnar with another *fel-flame* should the giant require it.

This expanse is open and larger than most of the others in the caves, its southern walls divided by many fragmented, obstructive columns of stone. A bonfire roars from its southern end, and the eerie blue-green glow of fel-flame dances from the northern end. Before the bonfire stands a frost giant, older than the others you've encountered here so far, and clad in tribal vestments indicating he's some kind of leader among them. He hefts an axe over his shoulder with one hand and grasps a boulder in the other, as if waiting for your arrival.

Hostile creatures: Agnar, Icemaul Patriarch ★★★★★
Agnar, Icemaul Patriarch (**Appendix A**) 13,000 XP

A player who casts *detect magic* detects a strong aura of evocation magic from the wall of *hell-ice* marked by the plot icon on the area map (this effect cannot be dispelled).



Chorth alerts Agnar to the party's approach when they exit Area I, so the frost giant can't be surprised. He's clever, but much too big to attempt to surprise the party. Agnar isn't one for conversation, and will initiate combat as soon as he sees them.

Agnar uses his legendary actions mostly to attack and kick away party members that are dealing the most amount of damage to him. He'll spend all his legendary actions to kick or move if he becomes overwhelmed quickly.

The bloodied giant looses a cry that makes the hair on the back of your neck stand straight, a blood-curdling roar somewhere between pain and joy. He looks at you, his menacing eyes like a bear in frenzy, before screaming:



Chorth has provided another source of *fel-flame* here for Agnar to use if needed. The frost giant is adorned with many bones upon his tribal dress, trophies of the beasts he's killed in the arctic wasteland, and could easily fashion a torch with any of them if need be. The party can use the *fel-flame* here to clear a path to Area K if they discarded their previous one.



This particular wall is narrower, yet thicker, than the other one. It requires about 15 minutes' worth of exposure to the *fel-flame* in order to clear a path into Area K.

Area K: Frozen Core

The final encounter in the lair is against the ice devil Chorth the Cold Soul, to put an end to her meddling in the world's flow of magic. The party can enter this area after melting their way through the wall of *hell-ice* from Area J. They arrive to bear witness as Chorth attempts to finish the ritual, only for things to end catastrophically.

When the party enters this area, you can read the following aloud to the players:

Plowing through the demonic ice leads you to a dark, frozen core, decked in the gruesome, scaled remains of what was once a noble dragon. The insect-like devil that appeared to you in the ice earlier is here, her arms held above her as if lifting some terrible weight, her mandibles dripping with blood. The entire room is a chorus of clicks and chatters, as if it were the nest to a swarm of insects.

"You've arrived as scheduled, mortals! Now, watch as I leave this world a desiccated husk, empty of its magic, and I begin my unquestion-

Before the fiend can finish gloating, the ground tremors at length, tossing you from your feet. You mistakenly think this might be the foul doings of the devil before you, but you glimpse confusion in its bug eyes, and realize events are unraveling beyond its control.

For a moment everything becomes perfectly still and silent, one single second of calm before all hell breaks loose. In the next moment, a deafening roar rips through the crag, and a wash of light and sound knock all earthly sense from you. You find your eyes shut and your ears ringing before you know what's happened – an explosion, or at the very least, some unintended consequence of the devil's meddling – has sundered the top of the crag, leaving this area exposed to the open sky.

Ice and earth begin raining down in chunks, sounding "thuds" as they connect with the ground. The ice devil is finding a way to her feet just as you recover your senses!

Hostile creatures: Chorth the Cold Soul ★★★★★ +

1 ice devil* (**MM pg. 75**) 13,000 XP

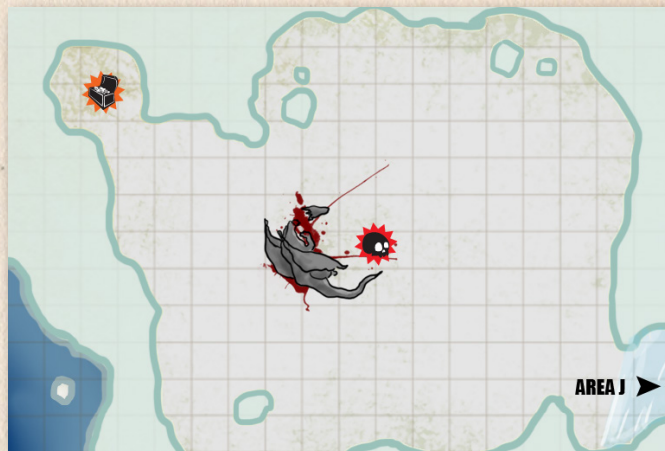
8+ ice mephits** (**MM pg. 215**) 800+ XP

*Use the *ice devil spear* variant for Chorth. The encounter here is made more difficult than normal due to the combat conditions. Chorth's XP value has been adjusted accordingly.

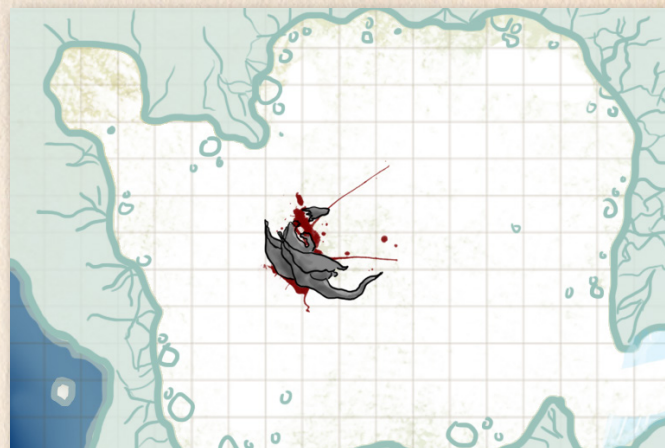
** The mephits arrive on the first round of combat on initiative count 10, flying through fissures in the ground. Each round, another 1d3 ice mephits appear in random locations in the area. Each additional ice mephit adds 100 XP to the encounter.

Magic Detection

Before the event described above (see *Blowing the Lid Off*), a player who casts *detect magic*, detects a swell of powerful auras of all schools of magic, pulsing from Chorth. It makes it impossible for the user to distinguish any distinct magical aura in the area, and the effect cannot be dispelled.



Area Map when first encountered



Alternate Area Map "Blowing the Lid Off"



Blowing the Lid Off

Chorth reaches too far, and her efforts are rewarded with a cataclysmic explosion that levels the top of the crag, exposing it to the open air (refer to the alternate area map).

The ice devil, the party, and any other creatures in the area fall prone (no saving throw), and are deafened for the next minute. At the end of each round, a deafened creature can make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to end the condition.

The ceiling section of the crag is obliterated; meaning creatures capable of flight can enter and exit the lair through the top of this section now.

Also for the next minute, chunks of ice and debris rain from the sky, a result of the explosion. At the end of every creature's turn (including the hostile creatures), the creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the raining debris.



Combat

Neither Chorth nor the party are surprised (or more accurately, *both* parties are surprised). Keep in mind, the creatures here all begin prone and deafened for the next minute.

Chorth gets to her feet and assaults the party, using her spear to slow the movements and actions of targets hit.

First Round - Initiative Count 10: Ice Mephits

On initiative count 10 of the first round, mist and steam jettison from the fissures in the ground, and 8 ice mephits fly into the area. Each round thereafter, 1d3 additional ice mephits fly into the area at random locations on initiative count 10 as well. These mephits can take their movement and action the same round they enter play.

The mephits likely will not pose a threat to the party, but can distract them from attacking Chorth. Each round, two mephits use their *frost breath* if able, while the rest simply attack with their claws.

Fourth Round - Initiative Count 20: Zorich Returns

If the party rescued the young silver dragon Zorich from Area B, he returns to aid the party, arriving on initiative count 20 of the fourth round of combat.

The young silver dragon has recovered all of his hit points, and his wing has been mended. Zorich attacks Chorth exclusively if able, using his *paralyzing breath* against her and then attacking with his *multiattack* until it recharges. If the devil eludes him, he spends his actions killing as many mephits a round as possible.

Both Zorich and Chorth fight until slain. Once the ice devil is killed, all the mephits die (prompting their death burst), and no more ice mephits pour through the fissures in the ground.



Stolen Hoard

A pile of gold, once presumably the hoard of the slain silver dragon, lies in this nook. It contains 458 platinum pieces and 8,264 gold pieces. Lost within the coins is a *ring of water walking*.

If the party slays Chorth with the assistance of Zorich, the young silver dragon will only ask for a single coin from the hoard to remember his mother by.

Defeating Chorth ends the narrative arc of *Best Served Cold*, but the party is free to explore any areas of the adventure site they may have missed.

Wrapping Up the Dungeon

As things are drawing to an end, refer to this information for anything left to wrap up in the dungeon:

Adventure Hooks

- Chorth fails in her attempt to drain the world of its magic, and the ability to cast spells and activate magical items slowly seeps back into the world over the next week.
- If the party was alerted by one of Zorich's surviving family members, you can role-play the epilogue of the adventure with the dragons. Zorich and any remaining silver dragons become allies to the party for their deeds in avenging his mother. If the party was offered a reward for doing this, it can be given to them now, or role-played as part of a later adventure.
- With Chorth slain, and magic slowly returning to the world's inhabitants, the party is free to pursue whatever endeavors may have originally led them to the White Reach in the first place.

Remaining Monsters

- If any of the yetis from Area A survived, they continue to return to this area over the course of the next couple of weeks, expecting food. When no food is given to them consistently, they stop returning.
- If any of the remorhazes from Area C survived, they stay near the area underground, hunting any remaining mammoths or beasts that may wander through. With the giants dead, and food limited, they burrow away to other regions of the White Reach after a couple of days.
- If the roc from Area H survived, it can still be seen flying in the skies overhead. It will need to relocate its nest after the explosion in the Icemaal lair. If the party stays around the region for some time, they may have another encounter with it!
- If any of the mammoths survived, they eat any available food in the lair and then move on, herding together.

Experience Points

- You can award each player 3,000 XP for successfully defeating Chorth the Cold Soul and completing their adventure hooks.
- You can award each player 1,500 XP if they rescued Zorich in Area B so that he was able to leave the frost giants' lair.
- You can award each player 1,500 XP if they overcame the precarious boulders to retrieve the treasure in Area F.
- You can award each player 1,000 XP for their interactions with the fel-flame, in finding a way to transport it and using it to access Areas I and K.
- You can award each player 500 XP if they discover the secret door in Area I and bypass it to find the treasure there.





Appendix A: New Monsters & NPCs

AGNAR, ICEMAUL PATRIARCH

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class: 16 (patchwork armor)

Hit Points: 230 (20d12 + 100)

Speed: 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws: Con +11, Wis +5, Cha +6

Skills: Athletics +11, Perception +5

Damage Immunities: cold

Senses: passive Perception 15

Languages: Common, Giant

Challenge: 15 (13,000 XP)

Wounded Fury. While Agnar has 50 hit points or fewer, he has advantage on attack rolls. In addition, he deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage to any target he hits with a melee attack.

Actions

Multiattack. Agnar makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Legendary Actions

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

Move. Agnar moves up to half his speed.

Kick. Agnar kicks away a Large or smaller creature within 10 feet. The creature is pushed up to 15 feet away from Agnar and must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or land prone. The creature stops this movement if it hits an obstruction or another creature in its path. If the pushed target is stopped because it would be pushed into another creature the same size or smaller, the other creature must also make the saving throw or be knocked prone.

Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Agnar makes one greataxe or rock attack.

DIRE MAMMOTH

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class: 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 150 (13d12 + 65)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	4 (-4)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances: cold; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Senses: passive Perception 10

Languages: -

Challenge: 9 (5,000 XP)

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

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

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

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