

HEROIC

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FORGOTTEN REALMS

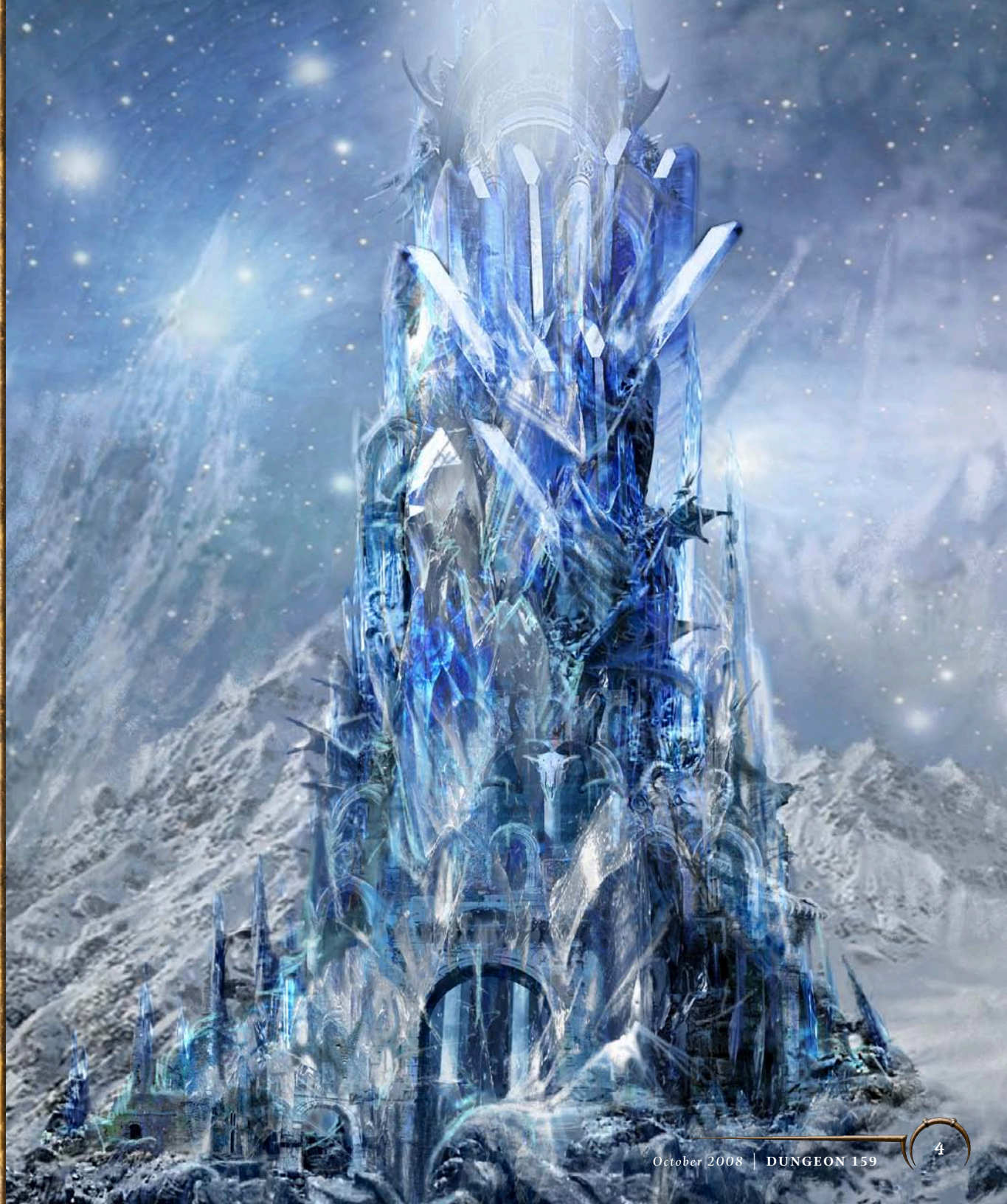
MENACE OF THE ICY SPIRE

“MENACE OF THE ICY SPIRE” is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure for five characters of 2nd level. The adventure is set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting near the town of Loudwater in the Gray Vale. This adventure is designed to work well with the sample adventures found in Chapter 1 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*. In particular, this adventure makes an excellent sequel to *Barrow of the Ogre King*, which introduces Loudwater and the surrounding area along with several NPCs who would make ideal patrons for sending the PCs on this adventure. However, it is not necessary for the characters to have visited Loudwater previously.

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BACKGROUND

About 30 years ago, a dwarf warlock named Draigdurroch came to the Gray Vale. Draigdurroch was part of a cabal of warlocks, and his particular research dealt with the creation of new types of eldritch pacts. He believed that the Dire Wood contained a particularly potent source of untapped energy—the remains of a failed deity. Thousands of years before the Spellplague, a Netherese city called Karse stood in the area, and the demigod Karsus was its patron. Karsus tried and failed to ascend to full godhood, dying in the process, and his city (along with the rest of the ancient Empire of Netheril) fell not long thereafter. Draigdurroch's research suggested that the petrified remains of Karsus yet lie beneath the forest's heart. Draigdurroch hoped that he could tap into the latent energy that Karsus had accumulated and use it to power his new pact. The dwarf warlock built a tower about a mile outside the Dire Wood and began his experiments in earnest.

Draigdurroch's hunch turned out to be correct. A powerful nexus of magical energy is beneath the heart of the Dire Wood. However, the fey spirits who dwell within the Dire Wood have long been aware of how dangerous the remnants of Karsus could be if the demigod's power fell into the wrong hands. They have appointed themselves as guardians to ensure that no one tampers with the failed deity's resting place. When Draigdurroch's efforts began to bear fruit and the dwarf warlock drew upon the latent echoes of Karsus's power to form a dark pact, the fey approached him and warned him to cease his meddling. The warlock was confident in his powers and ignored the warning. For his temerity, the fey punished him. Draigdurroch was imprisoned within the

Feywild and his tower was sealed in a block of magic ice as a warning to others. The fey set a powerful gemstone holding a spirit of winter to act as the keystone holding the icy barrier.

The ritual enacted by the fey was designed to have a limited area of effect—Draigdurroch's tower was encased in ice, but the surrounding lands were not supposed to be affected. Unfortunately, such a powerful spell cannot go unnoticed forever. Draigdurroch's tower contains several small rifts to the Elemental Chaos that he had created as part of his arcane research. Recently, a group of ice warriors discovered one of these rifts when they were drawn by the strength of the cold energy emanating from the gemstone. They have taken up residence in Draigdurroch's tower, finding it a most hospitable environment thanks to the perpetual layer of ice. The warriors have begun to modify the ritual that the fey created, increasing its power and spreading the effects of the magical frost over a larger area. If they are not stopped, a permanent winter will come to the entire Gray Vale.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure occurs after Midsummer but before the end of Highsun. Over the last several weeks, temperatures in the Gray Vale have been dropping to levels that would not normally occur until after Highharvesttide. Things have not become too dangerous for travelers yet, but to all indications, winter is coming several months early. If that occurs, the crops will freeze and die before they are ready to be harvested, putting the entire area's food supply at risk.

The PCs can find precious little information in Loudwater. However, some local woodfolk report

that the cold temperatures appear to be more pronounced in the area of the Dire Wood. Rumors even tell of blizzards in broad daylight! Some claim it is the work of evil faeries, but the town's leaders believe that a more likely source of the problem is Draigdurroch Tower. No one has seen or heard from Draigdurroch in 30 years, and the tower's cursed history is well known. The PCs can find a reasonably detailed map of the area and set out to investigate the tower.

The adventurers' first challenge is the magically altered weather. The ice warriors have manipulated the magic of the fey gemstone and have created a powerful snowstorm to shroud the area around the tower. The PCs must overcome a skill challenge to navigate the treacherous wintry hazards. Their success or failure on this challenge determines whether they are in a favorable position when they are ambushed by goblins during a break in the storm. These goblins have been frost-touched by the corrupted fey magic, giving them some unusual characteristics.

After defeating the frost goblins and overcoming the storm, the PCs arrive at the tower, which is a three-story structure carved with images of demons and devils (in honor of Draigdurroch's original infernal pact). The cocoon of ice is still intact, so the PCs need to find a way to break through before they can enter the tower. When they do, however, they trigger some of the tower's original defenses, since some of the carvings and statues animate and attack.

Inside the tower, the PCs discover that everything is perfectly preserved, as if the warlock had just stepped out an hour ago. Frost covers every surface, but the furnishings and contents of the tower are intact. The ice warriors attack from all sides in a running battle that spans two floors of the tower.

The PCs must deal not only with the main group of warriors inside the tower, but also with reinforcements who are coming from the Elemental Chaos through small rifts in the fireplaces.

Once the warriors have been dealt with, the PCs can ascend to Draigdurroch's study, where they find his research notes and rituals, along with a few traps that he left to protect his belongings from intruders. Here they discover the truth about the warlock's efforts to tap into the power of the failed deity Karsus. This provides a way for you to introduce the dark pact warlock (from the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide*) to your campaign if you are so inclined. The PCs can also learn that Draigdurroch was part of a larger cabal of warlocks, so his research might not have ended when the fey cursed him and sealed the tower.

At the top of the tower, the PCs discover the true source of the unnatural weather. The ritual of winter is feeding on itself and growing more powerful by the day. The only way to stop it is to destroy the gemstone that acts as the focus for the ritual. However, when the adventurers attempt to interfere with the gemstone, its guardian creature emerges and attacks.

On their way back to Loudwater, the PCs encounter weak chillborn zombies, recently animated by the corrupted winter magic. This is an optional encounter that allows you to introduce another adventure location of your own devising for follow-up adventures. It can safely be omitted, or you could move it to the first part of the adventure—either before or after the goblin ambush.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure assumes that the PCs are either based in Loudwater or have come to the town for some reason. The primary hook is that the PCs are asked to investigate the unnatural weather before it becomes

a serious problem. The PCs might already be known to some or all the prominent citizens of Loudwater, but even if this is their first visit to the town, they are still the obvious choice to investigate the early onset of winter. For more information about Loudwater, see Chapter One of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*.

The local farmers are petitioning Lady Moonfire, the civic leader of Loudwater, and Brother Griffon, the head of the temple of Silvanus, to find out what's going on. Suspicion naturally fell upon evil magic, as it usually does in these sorts of cases, which led to the involvement of Curuvar the Brazen, Loudwater's resident wizard. Any or all these three could ask or hire the PCs to help.

Lady Moonfire: As Loudwater's civic leader, the half-elf Lady Moonfire is responsible for the town's protection. She has been getting an earful from the local farmers, who are concerned about the early onset of winter. If the harvest fails, then the entire Gray Vale will have a lean winter.

Read the following:

"We would be in your debt if you find the source of this unnatural winter," says Lady Moonfire. "If things continue as they have, the crops will die in the fields and Loudwater's next Deadwinter Day will be a lot more than symbolic. I suggest you start by investigating Draigdurroch Tower, near the Dire Wood. Considering the tower's history, I can't imagine it's just a coincidence. I'm sure that Curuvar can tell you more. Honestly, 30 years is far too long to wait—someone should explore that tower anyway. I'm sure it will be a grand adventure!"

As a warlock, Lady Moonfire has long been interested in Draigdurroch Tower for her own purposes. She

knows everything in the Adventure Background up to the point where Draigdurroch disappeared. She did not know the dwarf personally, but he was reputed to own quite a collection of magic tomes. Thus, in addition to hiring the PCs to determine if the tower is indeed the source of the early winter, Lady Moonfire also asks them to bring her any ritual books or other magic tomes that they discover.

Curuvar the Brazen: Loudwater's resident wizard is a middle-aged human who is normally suspicious of strangers. However, Curuvar is under a lot of pressure to do something about the change in the weather, since it is "obviously" being caused by evil magic. He is not the adventuring type, and his own efforts to discover the source of the problem from afar have borne little fruit. Despite that, he has ascertained that a powerful magical aura definitely emanates from the area near the Dire Wood. Like Lady Moonfire, Curuvar is interested in Draigdurroch Tower and asks the PCs to bring him anything they discover that might pertain to the warlock's arcane research.

"By Mystra's lost spell, I'm certain that the tower must be connected to this somehow. Nobody knows what that dwarf Draigdurroch was researching or what triggered the calamity that encased his tower in magic ice, but any time powerful magic is involved, these things have a way of spiraling out of control. It appears the Dire Wood is drawing a lot of attention these days. Even if the tower isn't the source of the problem, perhaps you can find a clue among the warlock's notes or possessions. It's high time someone investigated all the ancient secrets in this area."

Brother Griffon: The head of the local temple of Silvanus, Brother Griffon is a stout human of Uthgardt descent. Although winter is a natural part of the cycle of the seasons and therefore not a bad thing in and of itself, its early arrival is clearly a perversion of the natural order and as such it is of grave concern to the Forest Father. The balance between the seasons must be preserved. Brother Griffon can introduce the PCs to either Lady Moonfire or Curuvar the Brazen if necessary.

Rumors and Stories: The PCs could get involved in Loudwater's troubles through any of the various local residents who have encountered the effects of the unnatural weather. An evening spent in the Green Tankard yields all sorts of rumors and wild speculation. Farmers are worried about their crops, which might freeze in the fields before the harvest comes in; woodfolk tell stories of freak snowstorms occurring in the middle of the day and then vanishing as if they were never there; hunters spread tales of strange blue-skinned goblins lurking around the outskirts of the Dire Wood. Everyone has a pet theory about what or who is behind the problems, but mainly, the common folk are just worried.

Travel Interrupted: If the PCs have no ties to Loudwater and you just want to use the tower as a stand-alone adventure site, you could consider starting the adventure with the PCs traveling through the Gray Vale on unrelated business, when suddenly they are struck by the powerful magical blizzard. Because of the corrupted fey magic, every attempt that the PCs make to free themselves of the storm leads them around in circles, back toward Draigdurroch Tower. The only way for the PCs to escape the trap they are caught in is to make their way to the tower and find out what is causing the unnatural weather.

JOURNEY TO THE TOWER

Although nobody currently living in town has ever been to the tower, many have a good idea of its approximate location about a mile east of the edge of the Dire Wood. It's less than a day's travel to reach the tower from Loudwater, so the PCs should not need to make camp along the way. However, given the situation, they might want to prepare for cold weather. Loudwater has a general store and an apothecary who can supply all the basics. The PCs might also think to cast the Endure Elements ritual on themselves, or ask either Lady Moonfire or Curuvar the Brazen to cast it for them.

JI. THE BLIZZARD

As the PCs depart Loudwater, read the following:

The Gray Vale is beautiful in the late summer, although a pronounced chill in the air even during what should be the hottest part of the day indicates that something is definitely amiss with the weather. The first few hours of your journey pass uneventfully, but as you travel through the High Forest, the temperature drops steadily and a sharp wind carries with it the promise of winter, even though the leaves have not even begun their annual autumn change.

More time passes, until finally the sight of the stark white wood of the albino trees that mark the boundary of the Dire Wood informs you that Draigdurroch Tower should be within a few miles of here. However, none of the landmarks indicated on your map are visible for reference. The horizon is shrouded by a blanket of solid white. A cold fog appears to issue from the very heart of the dark forest and snowflakes begin to fall from the steel-gray sky. The way ahead is quickly obscured, as is the way you have just come.

THE QUESTS

While on this adventure, the PCs can try to fulfill two quests. The minor one could be accomplished as the PCs seek to fulfill the major one regarding the weather issue.

Major Quest—Fix the Weather

Discover the source of the unnatural early onset of winter and remove it so that the seasons return to normal. Lady Moonfire rewards the PCs 500 gp on behalf of the grateful citizens of Loudwater for completing this quest.

Reward: 625 XP and 500 gp.

Minor Quest—Find Draigdurroch's Research

Bring Draigdurroch's ritual books and his research notes to either Lady Moonfire or Curuvar the Brazen. Either NPC is willing to pay up to 100 gp for these items.

Reward: 125 XP per character, plus 100 gp per item retrieved.

The storm's intensity continues to rise minute by minute until the PCs are caught in the middle of a full-on blizzard. To find their way through the driving snow, they must succeed on a skill challenge.

The PCs must survive the harsh conditions while staying on the right path to reach Draigdurroch Tower. They use their skills and knowledge to choose the right direction and protect themselves against the storm's hazards.

Because the storm is in some sense attacking the characters as they travel, this challenge proceeds in hours. Each PC must attempt an Endurance check every hour, and each PC can also attempt one other check during each hour. The challenge ends when the PCs achieve either 8 successes or 3 failures.

The Blizzard
Skill Challenge

Level 2
XP 375

The snow comes at you so fast that it both blocks sight and somehow threatens to mesmerize you with its chaotic patterns. A deep chill pervades the area, as well. Can you find your way through this storm to your destination?

Complexity 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, History, Insight, Nature, Perception.

Other Skill Endurance, Heal.

Victory If the PCs succeed, they find their way through the storm, losing no additional healing surges, and they emerge in a favorable position before the goblin ambush.

Defeat If the PCs fail, they still survive the storm, but each character loses 2 healing surges to represent the beating they take from the blizzard, and they are in an unfavorable position when the goblins attack.

Acrobatics DC 10 (1 success, no maximum). A failure with this skill costs the character 1 healing surge. The PC helps guide the party over hazards such as icy patches of ground and through sudden gusts of wind that would otherwise knock party members off their feet.

Arcana DC 15 (1 success, no maximum). The first time a character earns a success with this skill, he or she also recognizes the fey nature of the magic, which opens up the use of the Insight skill (see below). The PC senses the direction from which the arcane energy powering the storm flow and can work backward from the flows of magic to get a sense of the tower's location.

Athletics DC 10 (1 success, no maximum). A failure with this skill costs the character 1 healing surge. The PC helps force a way through the storm using brute strength—breaking a path through a snow drift, moving fallen trees or jumping over them, and so forth.

History DC 10 (1 success maximum). The PC recalls a specific detail about the location of Draigdurroch Tower or discovers a unique landmark that helps orient the group to its location and guides them along the right track.

Insight DC 10 (1 success, no maximum). This skill cannot be used until it has been unlocked by a successful Arcana check. Because this storm is partially the result of fey magic, some of its effects are illusory. A PC who succeeds on an Insight check recognizes some of these illusions and can help the group avoid traveling in circles, prevent them from choosing paths that look safe but are dangerous, and so forth.

Nature DC 5 (1 success, no maximum). The PC relies on knowledge of the area, an ability to study terrain, an innate sense of direction, and wilderness survival skills to help lead the group through the blizzard.

Perception DC 15 (1 success, no maximum). The PC relies on keen senses to look for safe paths, avoid hazards, spot gaps in the swirling storm, and otherwise help guide the group through the storm.

Endurance DC 10 (0 successes, all characters must attempt). Every character must attempt an Endurance check every turn (representing 1 hour of exposure to the storm) to resist the chill winds and other hazards of the blizzard. Failure means the character loses a healing surge, but it does not count as a failure on the overall challenge. Characters who are protected by the Endure Elements ritual or who have innate cold resistance gain a +5 bonus to these checks (they are not immune, because some of the cold is magical). The PC tolerates the weather conditions.

Heal DC 10 (0 successes, but can restore a healing surge). A character who has not attempted to use another skill (other than Endurance) during a turn can attempt a Heal check if another character fails a skill check that would cause the loss of a healing surge. If the Heal check is successful, the other character does not lose a healing surge, but that character's failure still counts against the overall skill challenge. The Heal check does not count as either a success or a failure against the challenge. The PC helps another deal with the extreme weather conditions.

and each storm's intensity is greater than the last one, increasing the DCs of all the skill checks by 1.)

FROST GOBLIN AMBUSH

Although the ice warriors have manipulated the original ritual, the fundamental magic creating these unnatural snowstorms is still that of the Feywild, and as such it works in unexpected and mysterious ways. A few days ago, a tribe of local goblins was caught in one of the sudden blizzards. Although many of the goblins died, those who survived the storm were subtly altered, becoming frost-touched. Their skin gained a bluish tint and they found themselves well adapted to their new environment.

As the PCs draw nearer to the tower, they reach an area where several hills come together with dangerous ice between them. This is an ideal spot for an ambush, and the frost goblins are waiting.

Tactical Encounter: "Frost Goblin Ambush," page 9.

DEVELOPMENT

As the unnatural blizzard subsides, the PCs can see that the area surrounding the tower for several miles is covered with ice and snow, a preview of the fate that awaits the rest of the Gray Vale. Visibility is limited, but they can make out a stark gray silhouette on the horizon some distance away. They still have a few hours of daylight left, and even if they lost healing surges to the blizzard and make camp, it's clear that doing so is risky, since another, stronger storm could come along at any moment. The best course of action is to proceed to the tower. (If they turn back to Loudwater at any point, they have to overcome another blizzard the next time they try to retrace their steps to the tower,

FROST GOBLIN AMBUSH

Encounter Level 3 (975 XP)

SETUP

A group of frost-touched goblins has set up an ambush in this location. Depending on how they fared in the skill challenge, the PCs come into the area in a more or less favorable position. If the PCs succeeded on the challenge, they set up in the area marked “A” on the map. If the PCs failed the challenge, they set up in the area marked “B” instead.

In addition, this encounter also includes an area of treacherous ice.

The goblins are positioned at a higher elevation, as shown on the map. Ramps of packed snow lead up the hills in a few places, but the terrain favors the goblins. If none of the PCs succeeds on a Perception check, the goblins gain a surprise round. The goblins are all crouching down and have the advantage of elevation.

- 3 frost goblin sharpshooters (S)
- 8 frost goblin cutters (C)
- 1 frost goblin hexer (H)

Perception Check

DC varies: (Active or passive, as appropriate; opposed by a goblin’s Stealth check, and it has a +5 bonus.) *A goblin is crouching down above you.*

Nature Check (Trained Only) DC 16: These goblins appear different from normal. Their blue skin is highly unusual, and the fact that they are not dressed for the cold weather indicates that they have somehow adapted to the unnatural winter. They are probably resistant to cold.

When the goblins attack, read:

A mass of goblins leap up from the hills on both sides of you. Most of them brandish javelins and crude short swords, but a few of them wear better armor and carry crossbows. From the highest vantage point, another goblin clad in robes waves a rod and makes arcane gestures.

Treacherous Ice Level 1 Obstacle
Hazard XP 100

A slick sheet of ice creates a hazardous obstacle.

Hazard: This sheet of ice fills 20 contiguous squares, turning them into difficult terrain.

Perception

No check is necessary to notice the ice.

Additional Skill: Nature

◆ DC 15: The character identifies the squares of treacherous ice.

Trigger

The ice attacks when a creature enters or begins its turn in a square of treacherous ice. It also attacks when a creature stands up from prone in a square of treacherous ice.

Attack

Opportunity Action Melee

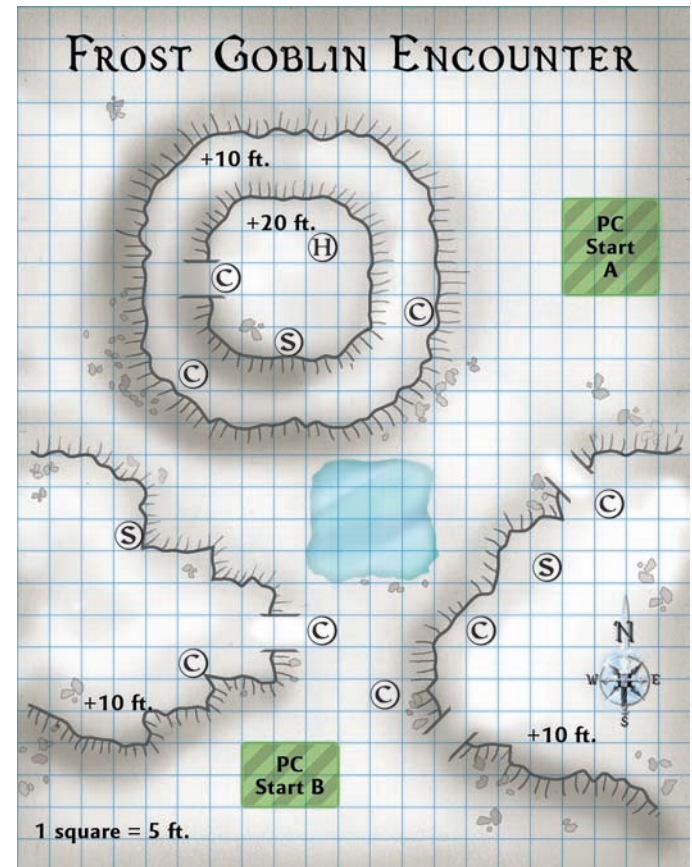
Target: Creature on the ice

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 damage and fall prone. If the creature is already prone, no damage but its turn ends immediately.

Countermeasures

- ◆ With a DC 10 Acrobatics check and a move action, a character can move into 1 square of treacherous ice without risk of falling. If the check fails or the character moves more than 1 square, the ice attacks.
- ◆ With a DC 15 Acrobatics check and a move action, a character can move at its normal speed across treacherous ice without risk of falling. (The ice is still considered difficult terrain.) If the check fails or the character attempts to run or charge through treacherous ice, the ice attacks.
- ◆ With a DC 15 Acrobatics check, a character can run (move action) or charge (standard action) across treacherous ice without risk of falling. (The ice is still considered difficult terrain.) If the check fails, the ice attacks.



TACTICS

The terrain favors ranged combat and the frost goblin cutters start out by tossing javelins rather than rushing into melee. They engage anybody who tries to climb up the sides of the hills, allowing the sharpshooters to remain free. The hexer uses its *freezing cloud* to create a patch of difficult terrain, hopefully slowing some of the PCs down so that they are exposed to more ranged attacks. The goblins’ ice walk ability allows them to ignore the effect. The hexer uses its *freezing hex* and *icebound hex* to slow down any

PCs who appear to be leading the attack. It tries to keep at least one cutter near it so that it can use its *lead from the rear* ability if anyone targets it with a ranged attack.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The light varies based on the time of day.

Hills: The hills are at +10 foot and +20 foot elevation as indicated on the map. Ramps of packed snow lead up the sides of the hills in a few places; these are considered normal terrain. A character can also try to climb the sides of the hills, which are icy and slippery. A successful DC 10 Athletics check allows a character to climb at half speed (so it would cost 4 squares of movement to climb up the side of a 10-foot tall hill).

Ice Slick: The 4-by-5 square area indicated on the map is hindering terrain. Characters moving through this area are subjected to attacks by the treacherous ice (see its statistics block for details). The goblins all have the ice walk ability and can ignore the treacherous ice.

Treasure: The goblins have a total of 50 gp among them, along with two *potions of healing*. The hexer carries a +1 *rod of reaving*.

3 Frost Goblin Sharpshooters (S)	Level 2 Artillery
Small natural humanoid (cold)	XP 125 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 31; Bloodied 15	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 11	
Resist 5 cold	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
⬇ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.
⤵ Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.
Sniper	When a frost goblin sharpshooter makes a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.
Combat Advantage	The frost goblin sharpshooter deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction; when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	The frost goblin shifts 1 square.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment	leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow with 20 bolts

8 Frost Goblin Cutters (C)	Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid (cold)	XP 25 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 11	
Resist 5 cold	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
⬇ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+5 vs. AC; 4 damage (5 damage if the frost goblin cutter has combat advantage against the target).
⤵ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 4 damage.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3) Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1) Cha 8 (-1)
Equipment	leather armor, short sword, 5 javelins in sheaf

Frost Goblin Hexer (H)	Level 3 Elite Controller (Leader)
Small natural humanoid (cold)	XP 300
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 92; Bloodied 46	
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 17; see also <i>body of ice</i>	
Resist 5 cold	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6 (ice walk); see also <i>goblin tactics</i>	
Action Points 1	
⬇ Hexer Rod (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.
⤵ Freezing Hex (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold	Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
⤵ Icebound Hex (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ♦ Cold	Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 cold damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).
✳ Freezing Cloud (standard; sustain minor; encounter)	♦ Cold, Zone Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all squares within the zone are treated as difficult terrain (creatures with the ice walk ability can ignore this effect). The zone grants concealment to the frost goblin hexer and its allies. The frost goblin hexer can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.
⤵ Incite Bravery (immediate reaction, when an ally uses <i>goblin tactics</i> ; at-will)	Ranged 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 additional squares and make an attack.
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction; when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	The frost goblin hexer shifts 1 square.
Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt; when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)	The frost goblin hexer can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of its level or lower.
Body of Ice	Any creature that hits the frost goblin hexer with a melee attack is slowed until the end of that creature's next turn.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 9 (+0) Cha 18 (+5)
Equipment	leather robes, hexer rod

DRAIGDURROCH TOWER

Once they have dealt with the frost goblins, the PCs can reach Draigdurroch Tower without further incident. Show the players the illustration of the tower on (below) and read the following:

Draigdurroch Tower is encased from top to bottom in a shimmering cocoon of pure ice. The sunlight is reflected in all directions by the angled planes of the frozen barrier, which climbs to a single peak in the air at the top of the tower and widens as it plunges to ground level. A palpable sensation of bitter cold emanates from the tower and its icy prison.

Through the imperfect mirror formed by the ice, you can see that the exterior stone of the tower has been carved into a massive series of sculptures and reliefs depicting various devils in flight. It is as if a huge swirling column of fiends had

erupted from deep within the earth and was being pulled into the heavens. Their mouths are open, though whether they are laughing or screaming is hard to tell.

A circular stone walkway winds around the tower's base, and squat statues of leering devils of all sorts line both sides of this path. The cobblestones are frozen over and look slippery. The tower's only obvious entrance is a single door at its base, but a foot-thick sheet of solid ice stands in your way.

Several things happen in this encounter. First, the PCs must come up with a way to breach the ice so that they can reach the door. (They can search around the tower in hopes of finding another entrance, but there is none.) The PCs have a number of ways they can break through the ice. They can use brute force, they can use various powers (those with the fire keyword could be especially effective), and perhaps they

can even use their skills (such as making Perception checks to look for weak points in the ice). The ice is intended as a thematic barrier, not a meaningful obstacle. The 10-foot section in front of the door has an AC and Reflex defense of 4, a Fortitude defense of 12, immunity to effects that target Will, and 40 hit points with resist 20 cold and vulnerable 10 fire. Chopping out this portion of the ice does not cause the rest of the cocoon to collapse.

In the process of clearing their way to the door, the PCs also break the ice away from several sections of the carved exterior of the tower. This is important because as soon as the PCs touch the tower in any fashion (most likely to open the door), the guardians animate and attack.

The door is locked with the Arcane Lock ritual, requiring a successful DC 16 Thievery or Strength

WARLOCK'S TOWER INTERIOR



1 square = 5 ft.



check, or the successful application of the Knock ritual, to open. The Arcane Lock is keyed only to Draigdurroch, and he's not around to open the door for visitors. Of course, the various uninvited guests (first the fey and now the ice warriors) have had their own ways of getting into the tower and have not needed to make use of the door.

Tactical Encounter: "Tower Guardians," page 16.

FEATURES OF THE TOWER

Unless noted otherwise, areas in the tower have the following features.

Illumination: The tower is filled with magic light sources that are often placed in disturbing locations (such as the eyes or other parts of devil statues). The ice that coats every surface reflects and amplifies this ambient light, so the entire interior of the tower is brightly illuminated.

Ceilings: Ceilings are 12 feet high. The center atrium that spans the first and second floors is 24 feet high from top to bottom.

Doors: The first floor of the tower has lightweight wooden interior doors that open easily (break DC 10) and do not have locks. Other doors are stronger (break DC 15) and have locks (DC 19 Thievery to open).

Floors: The tower is made of stone throughout it. Every surface is coated with a thin layer of frost, but this does not impede movement.

Walls: All the tower's walls are made of stone that is about a foot thick. They have a break DC of 35. The icy surface outside the tower is nearly impossible to climb (DC 30) and deals 1d6 cold damage per round to anyone touching it with bare skin.

Windows: The tower has dozens of cunningly created "windows," but they don't let any light into

the building. Rather, they serve as a way for those inside the tower to observe the outside. Throughout the tower, statues of devils stand and squat against the walls in various places. Many of these statues have eyes that appear to gleam ever so slightly (DC 15 Perception to notice). The gleam comes from small glass lenses that are placed in the eye sockets. These sockets open onto thin stone tubes containing a cunning system of mirrors. These tubes lead to the open mouths of some of the carvings on the outside of the tower. In essence, anyone who is adjacent to an exterior-facing interior wall can find an opening to peer through to see the outside of the tower on the same side, as if the wall is not there. This grants line of sight, but not line of effect, from the inside of the tower to the outside the tower to any character looking through these periscopelike openings.

INSIDE THE TOWER: FIRST FLOOR

Once the PCs enter the tower, they find that the conditions inside are not much better than those outside, except that the howling wind and driving snow mercifully cease. The temperature remains below freezing, and a thin layer of frost covers every surface inside the tower. (This rime is not thick enough to cause the floors to become slippery, however, so the PCs can walk around inside the tower without having to make Acrobatics checks.)

Everything is perfectly preserved, other than being frozen solid. The magic ice has so thoroughly pervaded every object in the tower that most things are extremely fragile (as if they had been dipped in liquid nitrogen). Wood and stone are largely unharmed, but cloth and metal have become so brittle that they shatter with any sort of rough handling.

When the fey came for Draigdurroch, he was completely unprepared and the struggle was over quickly. The ice warriors have no care for the mundane furnishings of the tower and so have left them undisturbed. The overall effect is that the tower appears lived-in, as if it were suspended in a single moment of time. Even the fireplaces still have frozen blue flames within them (these are important, because they act as portals to the Elemental Chaos, as explained in the tactical encounter).

Tactical Encounter: "Ice Warriors," page 18.

T1. FOYER

Draigdurroch was not terribly creative when it came to his decorating scheme. The interior of the tower continues the theme established by the carvings and statues outside. Doorways lead to the banquet hall and sitting room, while an open two-story atrium with staircases on either side opens out directly in front of the foyer.

T2. ATRIUM / STAIRWAY

Three closed doors lead from the atrium to the back half of the tower. Reversed staircases lead up from this area to the second floor. When the PCs move into this area, they might draw the attention of the ice warriors, triggering the tactical encounter. However, if the PCs choose to explore the entire ground floor before they go up the stairs, the warriors hold their attack, hoping to catch the PCs when they have split up a bit and some of them are in different rooms.

T3. BANQUET HALL

Draigdurroch rarely had guests, but he did occasionally entertain other members of his cabal. The banquet hall runs the length of the tower, with fire-

places on either end. The main table is large enough to seat ten comfortably. The place settings are utilitarian and are of no particular value.

The two fireplaces in this room are filled with frozen blue flames; ice warriors can use both of them to enter from the Elemental Chaos.

T4. SITTING ROOM

This is a small sitting room with a low table and several comfortable chairs. Long bookshelves line the walls. They are filled with treatises on the Nine Hells and the various devil lords who dwell within, with a particular focus on Asmodeus. A number of books also cover the history of ancient Netheril (the original empire, not its current incarnation). Like everything else in the tower, the books are frozen, but the pages can be turned carefully. If a character takes the time to study these books, a successful DC 20 History check reveals that Draigdurroch had a particular interest in one specific Netherese city named Karse. The location of Karse appears to have been somewhere in the current area that is covered by the Dire Wood.

The fireplace in this room is filled with frozen blue flames and the ice warriors can use it to enter from the Elemental Chaos.

Treasure: On one of the bookshelves is a delicate sculpture made of crystal depicting Asmodeus. To the right collector, this item is worth 260 gold pieces. However, the PCs must be careful to handle the item so that it does not shatter.

T5. SERVANTS' ROOM

Draigdurroch hated to interrupt his work to focus on the mundane details of life, so he had a pair of live-in servants. When the warlock was dragged off to the

Feywild, nobody noticed the two elderly humans hiding fearfully in their beds. When the ritual of ice was enacted and the tower froze solid, the two servants were killed instantly and their preserved corpses remain in this room, hiding under the sheets with terrified looks on their faces. They died 30 years ago, so they are long past the reach of the Raise Dead ritual, although the PCs could use the Speak with Dead ritual to interrogate the corpses (but they would have to thaw the bodies out first—their jaws are frozen shut).

The fireplace in this room is filled with frozen blue flames, and the ice warriors can use them to enter from the Elemental Chaos.

T6. KITCHEN

The kitchen is basic, but it contains all the implements that one would expect to find. Draigdurroch had a taste for pickled eels. Several glass jars of frozen eels are sitting on the counter. The PCs might be distracted by these bizarre delicacies for a moment, thinking they are perhaps some sort of preserved devil-spawn or mind flayer tadpoles, but they are just mundane eels.

T7. LARDER

The larder is well stocked and contains enough food to feed three people for several months. Everything has a 30-year case of freezer burn, however, so it would be inedible even if it were somehow thawed out.

INSIDE THE TOWER: SECOND FLOOR

If the PCs have not already drawn the ice warriors' notice while exploring the first floor of the tower, they encounter the elemental creatures once they ascend to the second floor. The entire level is taken up by a huge laboratory. No interior walls are on this level, although tall bookcases do block off an area on one side. Along the other walls one can find an alchemical workbench, a table covered with bits and pieces of warlock implements and infernal carvings, and some crates and barrels containing various magic and alchemical supplies. Carved into the floor on the northern side is a large summoning circle inlaid with silver. A successful DC 20 Arcana check can determine that the runes and sigils are attuned to the Nine Hells.

The staircases run up and down between the first and second floors of the tower. The atrium spans both levels, with a decorative railing around its edge on the second floor to prevent people from falling over. However, the railing is not sturdy; any character who is bull rushed or pushed over the edge receives a +2 bonus to his saving throw to avoid the fall, but the railing breaks free if the character fails the saving throw and falls.

Although the tower is clearly three stories high when observed from the outside, there is no obvious way to reach the third floor from the second floor. The trick is that there is a section of floor in the southeast corner (shown on the map) that acts like a Tenser's Floating Disk. A character who stands on any of the appropriate squares feels the palpable plane of force beneath his or her feet. A successful DC 15 Arcana check allows a character to realize the nature of this

disk and how to command it. Unlike a regular Tenser's Floating Disk, this platform can be commanded to move up and down only, and it moves only along its prescribed path. It requires a move action to command the disk to ascend or descend, and the disk takes a full 6 seconds to complete its movement (an additional safeguard that Draigdurroch included in case anyone was ever pursuing him through his own tower).

Treasure: Among the few unspoiled alchemical components, the PCs can discover three vials of alchemist's frost (see the *Adventurer's Vault* supplement for details). If you don't have that book or don't want to give out that specific item, then the PCs find 210 gold pieces worth of miscellaneous alchemical and ritual components that they can sell or keep for their own use.

INSIDE THE TOWER: THIRD FLOOR

The third floor of the tower houses Draigdurroch's research library, personal study, and living quarters. It also contains a few traps that he placed in the event that anyone ever attempted to ransack his belongings. The ice warriors have no interest in Draigdurroch's possessions, so they use this floor only as a means to venture back and forth to the roof of the tower, where they have been modifying the gemstone that controls the magical ritual.

T8. LIBRARY

This is where Draigdurroch kept his collection of ritual books and the notes from his magical research. The bookshelves are all magically warded and the books have been protected from the effects of the

frost that permeates nearly everything else in the tower. A great many books fill the shelves, and it should take some time for someone to study them all.

The details on Draigdurroch's contact with the remaining fragments of the failed deity Karsus indicate that he was working on forging a new type of pact that would draw upon the echoes of the demigod's lingering spite and rage to create effects of dark magic. A warlock character who spends several months studying these notes and attempting to recreate Draigdurroch's research can, if you allow it, change an eldritch pact to the dark pact described in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide*.

Draigdurroch did not leave his library completely defenseless, however. The reading desk has two light fixtures that hold small jets of everburning flame. Whenever anyone other than Draigdurroch touches any of the books in the library, the trap activates and attacks, shooting jets of fire at intruders.

T9. MASTER'S QUARTERS

Draigdurroch's personal living space continues the devilish theme that has been established elsewhere in the tower. Unlike the furnishings found on the lower floors, everything in this room is of the highest quality. Unfortunately, the fine silks and other expensive materials have been damaged by 30 years of endless frost. Tapestries hang from the walls. Their flowing folds are stiff and brittle; if a character handles them too roughly, they crack and fall apart.

Behind one of the tapestries is a secret door (DC 21 Perception to notice) that leads into the study. This door was once sealed with the Arcane Lock ritual, but the ice warriors have broken that ward and the door now opens easily once it is discovered.

T10. STUDY

Draigdurroch's study is surprisingly free of ornamentation. A heavy wooden desk dominates the room, with a single chair. There are no obvious exits.

The desk is warded, and this magic protects its contents from the everpresent frost. The magic also wards the desk against outside interference, and the glyph activates and attacks if the PCs disturb it without first detecting and disabling the trap.

Inside the desk, the PCs find Draigdurroch's journal. The entries begin with his arrival in the area, the construction of his tower in honor of Asmodeus, his theory that the ruins of the Netherese city of Karselie lie beneath the Dire Wood, his early contact with the scattered fragments of the dead god Karsus, and his efforts to forge an eldritch pact with Karsus. He makes a passing note that the "ridiculous faeries" who live in the Dire Wood sent an emissary with a warning not to tamper with the demigod. Draigdurroch's response was to blast the emissary to cinders. "*Let them feel the fire of Asmodeus, and soon the fury of Karsus as well,*" he writes in the final entry of his journal, with obviously misplaced self-satisfaction. "*They claim that they will punish me for my actions if I do not heed their warnings. THEY will punish ME? How laughable!*"

Another levitation platform, identical to the one between the second floor and the third floor, operates between this room and the roof of the tower.

**Glyph of Warding
Trap**

Level 2 Warlock
XP 125

An explosion erupts from the desk in a burst of silver-tinged green light.

Trap: A magical glyph wards the warlock's desk, ready to explode with arcane fury when the trap is triggered.

Perception

◆ DC 15: The character notices the glyph.

Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 15: The character spots the glyph and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable it.

Trigger

When a creature tries to open the desk drawer (which would include searching the desk in general without first checking for traps), the glyph explodes. The papers in the warlock's desk are destroyed if the trap is triggered.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Close burst 3**

Targets: All creatures in burst.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d6 + 3 fire damage and ongoing 2 fire damage (save ends).

Countermeasures

◆ An adjacent character can disable the glyph with a DC 15 Thievery check.

TOP OF THE TOWER: WINTER'S HEART

Read the following:

The top of the tower presents a bizarre scene that is strangely beautiful in its own way. The view of the surrounding area is refracted and twisted in spectacular fashion, as if you are standing inside a gigantic prism looking out. Floating several feet above the exact center point of the tower, forming the keystone at the apex of the icy cocoon, is a perfect sapphire, easily the size of a man's clenched fist.

Above the gemstone, the ice that sheathes the tower draws together into a single point about 20 feet in the air.

All around this jutting finger, the air appears to harden into ice and snow, swirling away in all directions as it is propelled by a vicious wind. The clouds above the tower appear to draw energy from the gem, filling them with the pure essence of a winter storm.

The wind whips across the roof of the tower on the inside as well, with each chilling gust accompanied by a pulse of energy that erupts from the sapphire's heart. The gem's otherwise flawless surface appears to have been marred by scratches or runes that glow with their own white energy.

Investigation reveals that these scratches are in the Barazhad script of the Primordial language and it can be surmised with a successful DC 15 Arcana check that they were made by the ice warriors to corrupt the gem's power. This gem is undoubtedly the source of the unnatural weather phenomena.

Tactical Encounter: "Winter's Heart," page 21.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Word of the PCs' success precedes their return to Loudwater, since the change in the weather and the rising temperatures are noticed immediately by everyone in the area. The local farmers are extremely grateful and the PCs never again have to buy their own drinks at the Green Tankard. Lady Moonfire throws a huge party in their honor, and Brother Griffon offers them the blessings of Silvanus as well.

Curuvar the Brazen wants to pick their brains about everything they learned—in particular, he asks if the PCs found Draigdurroch's body at the tower. Upon learning that they did not, he speculates that the warlock might have been taken into the Feywild. Regardless, Curuvar warns the PCs that although

they have done Loudwater a great service, the fey of the Dire Wood have a different view of the world than mortals do, and they are not likely to be pleased by the PCs' having undone their handiwork, even though it was for a good cause. The PCs might well receive a visit from the fey, asking them to justify their actions or face the same punishment as Draigdurroch did.

A number of seeds for future adventures suggest themselves here. The PCs might have to perform some tasks to placate the fey of the Dire Wood, or perhaps they might travel to the ruins of Karse in an attempt to learn whether Draigdurroch made contact with a dead god from ancient Netheril. The cabal of warlocks of which Draigdurroch was a member is still active in the world, and they might serve as allies or enemies of the PCs in the future. Certainly they would be interested in continuing Draigdurroch's research if they have the opportunity, and the only way to stop them might be for the PCs to find a way to destroy the remains of Karsus. The consequences of this adventure don't all need to be revealed immediately; for example, when the PCs reach the paragon tier, the cabal might try to hire or trick them into entering the Feywild in an attempt to rescue Draigdurroch from his imprisonment.

If you are planning to run these characters through the FORGOTTEN REALMS mega-adventure *Scepter Tower of Spellgard*, you could set that up by putting some information and rumors about Lady Saharel among Draigdurroch's research notes. Perhaps the warlock was thinking about trying to find Lady Saharel himself, or perhaps he learned about her in the course of his studies of the ancient Netherese Empire, since she was alive during those days.

TOWER GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

SETUP

The tower's guardians do not attack until the PCs interact directly with the tower (their instructions are to guard the tower, and the icy cocoon is not part of the tower). The most likely trigger is after the PCs have cleared the ice away from the front door and attempt to open (or break down) the door.

A character who suspects that some of the statues are guardians and studies them closely can try to identify the iron defenders before combat starts. If the characters attack the guardians directly, they activate even if the PCs have not interfered with the tower. However, if PCs have not broken the ice, then the clay guardian cannot reach them because it is initially on the inside of the frozen barrier.

1 tower clay scout (C)

4 tower iron defenders (I)

Perception Check

DC 21: *Not all these statues are merely statues!*

When the guardians attack, read:

One of the devils carved into the side of the tower suddenly turns its head toward you. Ice breaks from its stone wings as it takes flight. Several of the squat toadlike statues along the sides of the path also shudder and shake off the frost that coats them.

TACTICS

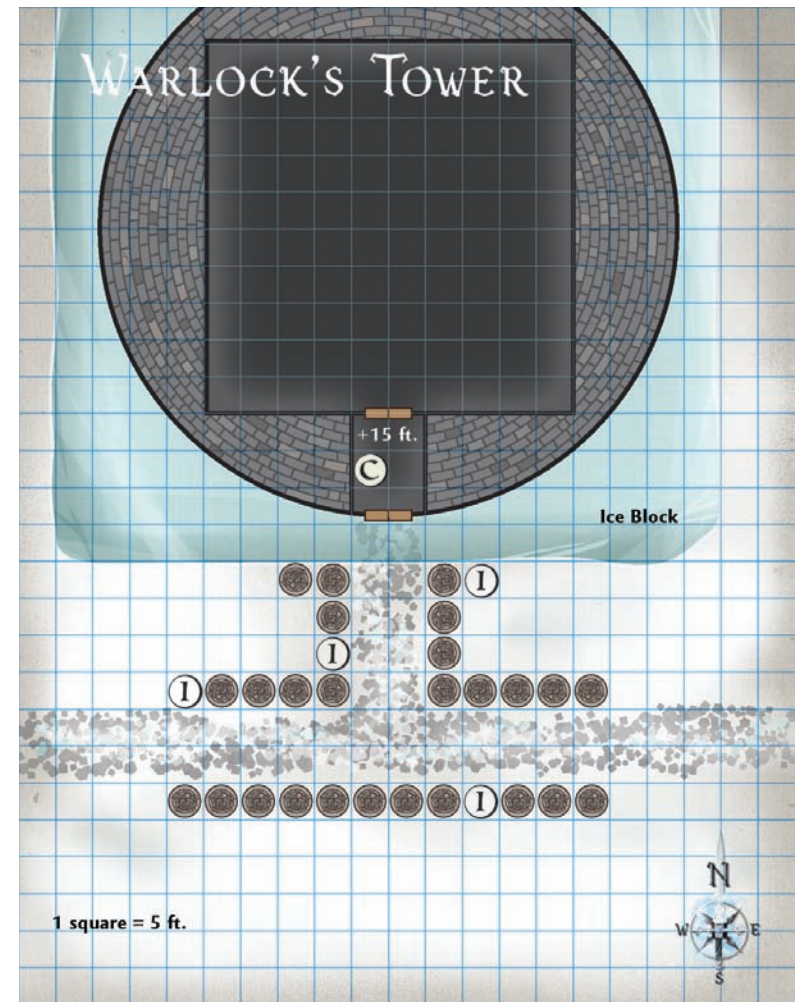
All the homunculi have the *guard area* ability and the area they are guarding is the tower. This gives the tower clay scout a bonus to attack rolls, and the tower iron defenders a bonus to all defenses, within 5 squares of the tower. However, they are not limited to engaging creatures only within that radius. The tower clay scout is reasonably intelligent and attempts to engage ranged attackers, relying on its *mind touch* and *limited invisibility* to protect it from reprisals. The tower iron defenders are less intelligent and go after the nearest enemy.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The light varies based on the time of day.

Path: The frozen cobblestones are slippery. Squares on the path are treated as difficult terrain. A creature that attempts to run or charge across these squares must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone, ending its move action.

Statues: The statues that do not animate are normal stone statues. They are depictions of squat, toadlike devils, about 4 feet high. Squares containing statues are treated as difficult terrain, and the statues can provide cover to a Medium or smaller creature that crouches or falls prone behind them.



Tower Clay Scout (C)	Level 2 Lurker
Small natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 125
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6; darkvision
HP 31; Bloodied 15	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 6, fly 3 (clumsy)	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
+3 vs. AC; 1d6 damage, and the homunculus makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +2 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). See also <i>guard area</i> .	
⊗ Mind Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends); see also <i>guard area</i> .	
Guard Area	
The tower clay scout gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against targets within 5 squares of the tower.	
Limited Invisibility ♦ Illusion	
The tower clay scout is invisible to dazed creatures.	
Redirect (immediate interrupt; when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack; at-will)	
The tower clay scout makes an attack against the attacker; +4 vs. Will; the triggering attack targets a creature adjacent to the tower clay scout instead (as chosen by the clay scout).	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 16 (+4)

4 Tower Iron Defenders (I)	Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 125 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6; darkvision
HP 39; Bloodied 19	
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12; see also <i>guard area</i>	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 6	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
Guard Area	
The tower iron defender gains a +1 bonus to all defenses (not included above) when it is within 5 squares of the tower. However, it does not hesitate to pursue foes who step beyond this area. The tower iron defender does not pursue creatures that flee the area entirely, since its focus is on guarding the tower.	
Pursue and Attack	
When the tower iron defender makes an opportunity attack, it shifts 1 square before or after the attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 5 (-2) Cha 8 (+0)



ICE WARRIORS

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

SETUP

This encounter can span multiple locations, with combatants on both the first and second floors of the tower. The positions indicated on the map show where the ice warriors are located when the PCs first enter the tower. However, the warriors might engage the PCs from different positions depending on how the situation unfolds.

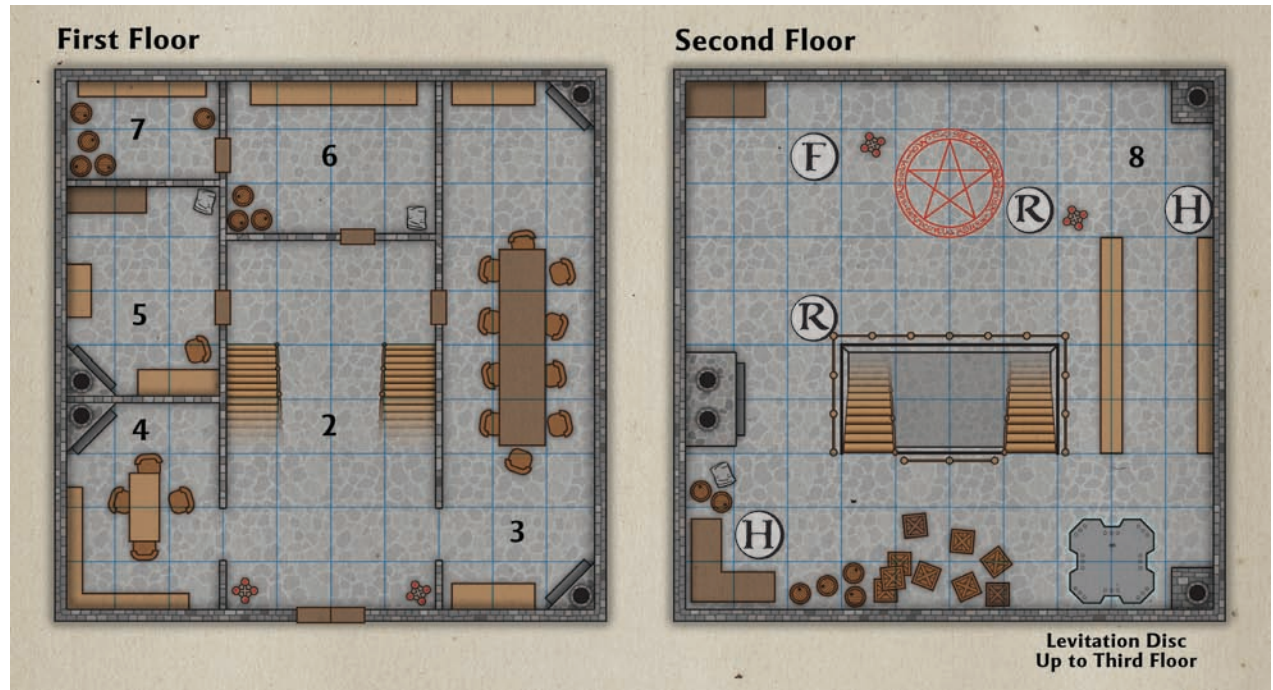
The four fireplaces on the first floor of the tower are conduits to the Elemental Chaos, and additional ice warrior reinforcements come through these portals until the PCs disable or destroy them.

In addition, any number of ice warrior shardlings (minions) can enter the battlefield through the four fireplace portals, beginning in the second round of combat. (The XP budget for this encounter assumes that the PCs have to fight at least 8 shardlings.) There are none in the tower when the PCs first arrive, so they are not shown on the map.

- 1 ice warrior frostling (F)
- 2 ice warrior icicle hurlers (H)
- 2 ice warrior raiders (R)

When the warriors attack, read:

A featureless creature made entirely of translucent blue ice stomps forward. It wears heavy armor and carries a huge maul-shaped chunk of frozen ice. Behind it, a more slender version of the same creature creates long, sharp missiles of ice, ready to throw. Yet another version of the same basic creature, this one wielding a wicked blade of glistening ice, glides across the floor, jagged shards of ice crystallizing out of thin air all around it.



2 Ice Warrior Icicle Hurlers (H)		Level 2 Artillery
Medium elemental animate (cold)		XP 125 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +8	
HP 32; Bloodied 16		
AC 15; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 14		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold		
Speed 6 (ice walk)		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
+7 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage plus 1d4 cold damage.		
⊕ Flying Icicle (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage plus 1d6 cold damage.		
❄ Icicle Storm (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ♦ Cold		
Area burst 3 within 20; +7 vs. AC; 1d10+1 cold damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 11 (+1)	Cha 11 (+1)

2 Ice Warrior Raiders (R)		Level 2 Soldier
Medium elemental animate (cold)		XP 125 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +1	
HP 42; Bloodied 21		
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 13		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold		
Speed 6 (ice walk)		
⊕ Maul (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). Against a slowed target, +1d6 cold damage.		
⊕ Ice Embrace (minor; at-will) ♦ Cold		
+7 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized by ice (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 11 (+1)	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment maul		

Ice Warrior Frostling (F) Level 4 Controller (Leader)		
Medium elemental animate (cold)		XP 200
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +8	
Icy Aura (Cold) aura 5 (not active while bloodied); cold creatures in the area gain regeneration 2. Enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain.		
HP 54; Bloodied 27		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 16		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold		
Speed 6 (ice walk)		
⊕ Ice Shard (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 cold damage.		
↘ Freezing Shot (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
Ranged 10; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 cold damage, the target is slowed until the end of the binder's next turn, and one ally within 3 squares of the target can shift 3 to a space adjacent to the target.		
❄ Icy Burst (standard; recharge 2/3/4) ♦ Cold		
Area burst 1 within 5; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 cold damage and the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Saving Throw:</i> The target is immobilized (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial	
Skills Intimidate +13		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 12 (+3)	Cha 18 (+6)

Arcana Check (Trained Only) DC 16: These creatures are ice warriors, denizens of the Elemental Chaos who seek to turn the world into a frigid wasteland. They must have been drawn here by the icy tomb of Draigdurroch Tower.

TACTICS

This encounter can be overwhelming if all the ice warriors engage the PCs at the same time. A better way to run this encounter is as a series of waves, splitting the warriors up into two or more smaller groups.

The warriors are initially on the second floor, so the PCs probably cannot perceive them. If a PC

Ice Warrior Shardlings		Level 1 Minion
Medium elemental humanoid (cold)		XP 25 each
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +1	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 11		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 cold		
Speed 6 (ice walk)		
⊕ Ice Shard (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 4 cold damage.		
↻ Ice Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +4 vs. AC; 4 cold damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 17 (+3)	Dex 14 (+2)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 11 (+0)	Cha 8 (-1)

They must have been drawn here by the icy tomb of Draigdurroch Tower.

comes up the stairs, then the warriors attack, which most likely leads that PC to retreat, and the warriors come forward. The raiders and the frostlings descend the stairs, while the hurlers take advantage of the open atrium to launch ranged attacks at any character they can see. Meanwhile, the shardlings begin coming out of the fireplace portals.

If the frostling has the element of surprise or if it can catch a group of PCs together, it uses its *icy burst*. It is equally effective as a ranged or melee combatant so it adjusts its position and tactics to try to give its allies the maximum benefit of its icy aura.

The raiders try to focus on a single PC so that they can receive the benefit of their extra cold damage (the first maul hit slows the PC, allowing subsequent hits to benefit from the extra damage).

The icicle hurlers are extremely dangerous because of their *double attack* ability. They can choose the size of their *hail storm* attack, so they do not hesitate to use it whenever it is recharged.

The ice warriors pursue the PCs anywhere within the tower. They break off their attack only if all the PCs leave the tower. Given enough time (at least a day) they can draw reinforcements from the Elemental Chaos to replenish their numbers.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Portals: The PCs can recognize the frozen flames in each fireplace as being magically active with a successful DC 15 Arcana check. A DC 20 check result recognizes that the fireplaces are small portals to the Elemental Chaos. The rifts are large enough for Medium creatures to pass through (although if the PCs go through, they will die, since they are probably completely unprepared to survive in the Elemental Chaos). Even if the PCs don't recognize what the portals can do beforehand, they can figure it out once the ice warrior shardlings start coming through it.

During the first round of combat, four shardlings enter the first floor, one through each portal. Each portal has a recharge of 5-6. At the start of each new round of combat, roll a d6 for every active portal (the same way you would roll to see if a creature's powers recharge). Those portals that recharge trigger the arrival of another shardling from that portal. When the PCs close a portal, it does not change the recharge frequency of the other portals. However, if there are ever 8 shardlings on the map at the start of a round, none of the portals recharge that round.

the magical auras that keep the gate open) or Thievery checks (treating the portals as magic traps). Only a character who is trained in the skill can attempt these checks. It requires a total of 4 successes with either Arcana or Thievery to close a portal. A DC 11 check result counts as one success and also suppresses the portal for 1 round (meaning that portal definitely does not recharge on the next round). For every 5 points by which the character's check result exceeds 11, he or she scores an additional success (meaning that a check result of 26 can close a portal in a single round).

Tables: There are various tables and other similar pieces of furniture indicated on the map (most notably in the banquet room). With a successful DC 10 Athletics check, a creature can hop up on a table as part of normal movement; otherwise it takes an extra square of movement to clamber up. A creature standing atop a table has combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller. However, because everything in the tower is coated with a thin layer of ice, the creature must succeed on a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid slipping and falling off. If the check fails, that creature lands prone

creature can push over a bookshelf with a successful DC 25 Strength check. A fallen shelf covers an area 2 squares on a side. Any creature in a square the shelf falls in is subject to a melee attack: +7 vs. Reflex; 3d6 damage, and the target is grabbed until escape (DC 15). A fallen shelf creates difficult terrain in the squares it covers.

Summoning Circle: A character standing within the summoning circle on the second floor can feel a powerful eldritch force. Any attacks made using powers that have the arcane keyword gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls while the attacker is standing in the circle. The warriors cannot benefit from this effect.

Treasure: When the ice warriors are defeated, their equipment melts away (since it is made of ice). However, one of the mauls carried by the raiders is an actual weapon, and the PCs can claim this +1 *frost maul*.

A character standing within the summoning circle on the second floor can feel a powerful eldritch force.

To close a portal, the PCs can destroy it by brute force (each portal has AC and Reflex defenses of 5, Fortitude defense 10, immunity to attacks that target Will, resist 5 all, and 30 hit points). They can also close a portal by means of Arcana checks (attacking

in a randomly determined square adjacent to the table—even one occupied by another creature.

Bookshelves: These are 10 feet high and crammed with books. They block movement, line of effect, and line of sight. As a standard action, a

WINTER'S HEART

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

This encounter takes place when the PCs first interact with the gemstone at the top of the tower. The spirit of winter contained within comes forth from the gemstone to defend it. Show the players the illustration on page 22 depicting the gem and its guardian.

Spirit of Winter (W)

When the PCs trigger the gemstone, read:

The gemstone pulses with blue light and a wave of energy knocks you back. A thin stream of white mist issues forth from the center of the sapphire, coalescing into the form of a massive, thickly muscled, white-furred monster. Thick mist rolls off the creature's hide, congealing the air into heavy frost that clings to everything nearby. The creature roars, and in its howl you can hear the pure elemental fury at the heart of a raging blizzard. The sapphire continues to crackle with energy, the blue light pulsing rhythmically, as if it were the beating of the very heart of winter.

TACTICS

The spirit of winter focuses its attacks on whoever is closest to (or dealing the most damage to) it. Perhaps the most dangerous tactic available to the spirit of winter is to try and position itself so that its *freezing burst* includes one or more characters who are within 2 squares of the tower's edge. A fall from the top of the tower deals 3d10 damage.

Spirit of Winter (W) Large fey humanoid (cold)	Level 3 Solo Brute XP 750
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +7; darkvision
Choke Frost Aura (Cold) aura 2 (not active while bloodied); creatures that start their turns or enter the area of the aura are slowed (save ends).	
HP 250; Bloodied 125 (see also <i>bloodied burst</i>)	
AC 18; Fortitude 19, Reflex 15, Will 16	
Resist 15 cold	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
Action Points 2	
⬇ Slam (standard; at-will) ⬆ Cold Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 plus 1d6 cold damage (plus an extra 1d6 cold damage against a creature that is under the effects of <i>choke frost</i>).	
⬇ Frost Fury (standard; at-will) ⬆ Cold The spirit of winter makes two slam attacks.	
↘ Blast of Cold (minor; at-will) ⬆ Cold Ranged 10 from frost gem; two targets; +4 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 1 cold damage. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
⬅ Freezing Burst (standard; recharge 1/1) ⬆ Cold Close burst 3; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 cold damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. <i>Miss</i> : The target is pushed 1 square and not knocked prone.	
⬅ Bloodied Burst (when first bloodied; encounter) ⬆ Cold The spirit of winter's <i>freezing burst</i> recharges, and the spirit of winter uses it immediately.	
Gem Bound The spirit of winter is bound to the frost gem. Attacking either damages the spirit of winter, and when the spirit of winter reaches 0 hit points or fewer, the gem is also destroyed. The gem's defenses are identical to the spirit of winter's, and the gem has resist 5 all.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages telepathy 20
Skills Athletics +15	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 8 (+0)



The spirit of winter does not pursue PCs who use the levitation platform to retreat back into the tower. However, if the PCs completely disengage, the spirit of winter goes back inside the gemstone, where it gains regeneration 10, meaning that it needs only 2 minutes to become fully healed. (The spirit of winter cannot use this tactic as long as there are PC combatants on the roof of the tower.)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Rubble: The indicated squares on the map are filled with broken shards of ice and stone. These squares are treated as difficult terrain.

Choke Frost: This light, white mist congeals into thick ice as creatures or other sources of heat move through it. Each time a creature enters a square of

choke frost, it takes a -1 penalty to speed. As a move action, a creature can negate this penalty. Creatures that have the cold keyword are immune to this effect. (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 67)



DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs have defeated the spirit of winter, the magical prison of ice shatters and collapses.

Read the following:

The spirit of winter clutches at its chest and howls in agony. A spiderweb of tiny cracks spreads across the sapphire's surface. Moments later, the next pulse of blue energy surges forward from the gemstone, but its structure is no longer able to contain the elemental forces. The sapphire explodes, tiny shards scattering in all directions. The spirit of winter's form wavers and blurs and then it collapses into itself in a cloud of white mist.

The icy walls that surround Draigdurroch Tower begin to shudder and tremble. With a great roar, like the sound of a gigantic waterfall made of glass, huge chunks of ice begin breaking apart from the frozen cocoon and falling to the ground below, where they shatter. Within a few seconds, the entire barrier has splintered and collapsed.

The sky above the tower begins to grow lighter as the gray clouds scatter and disperse. The swirling snow stops falling and the howling of the chill wind falls silent for the first time since you set foot in the Dire Wood. The world appears suddenly peaceful, as if nature recognizes that its proper course has been restored.

After they have destroyed the gemstone and broken the fey curse, the PCs can rest in the tower if they wish, although it takes many days before the frozen surfaces return to a normal

temperature, so sleeping inside the tower feels like sleeping inside a meat locker.

The bitter wind and raging storms outside cease immediately when the gem is destroyed, and the outside temperature returns to normal within a few days. Of course, it takes some time for all the accumulated snow and ice that has built up in the region near the tower to melt, and as that happens, the area remains dangerous. ✕

About the Author

Over the last five years, **Sean Molley** has done a lot of RPG writing (both d20 and non-d20) for Paradigm Concepts and directed the *Living Arcanis* organized-play campaign. Sean currently serves as a Global Administrator for the RPGA's *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign. In his day job, Sean works on large-scale databases, which is a lot less exciting than working on large-scale D&D games. Sean lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his very understanding wife (who is fortunately also a gamer). This is his first appearance in *Dungeon* magazine.