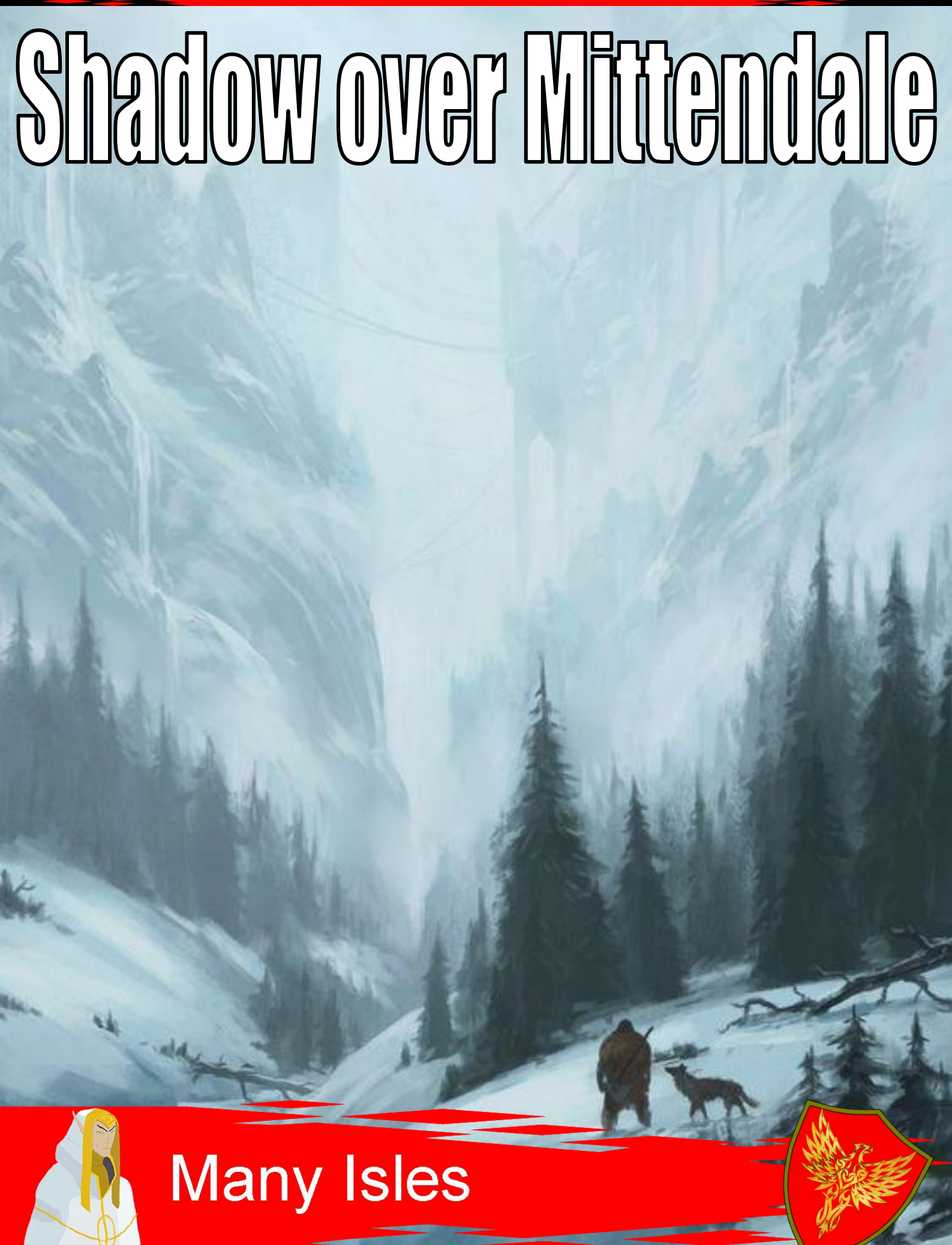
Adventure

Shadow over Mittendale



Many Isles

Shadow over Mittendale

Beyond the frozen mire of Walmoor, nestled among bare hills and the huge cliffs of Thar, lies the small settlement of Mittendale. It's widely known that a tribe of mighty frost giant resides near Mittendale. Many have traveled the Vercy pass into the Thar Kingdom, but few have ever seen the great giants, which are seen as eternal and masters of great magic. Those who make it to the highest peak might gain the giants' trust and learn some great magic.

However, the winds grow colder, and the giants have been seen ever more rarely, while sights of a white dragon are rumored ever stronger, and no news has come from the small village of Mittendale has the villagers of Maerdooth worried. They seek adventurers to brave the paths of the Vercy pass in the midst of winter to check on Mittendale, ensure the safety of the dying giants, and possibly chase away the dragon to reassure the people of Maerdooth.

Besides the offer of a reward, the lure of ancient artifacts and long-forgotten treasures might make anyone jump at the prospect of traveling to Mitten Peak.

Stat Blocks

Monsters are presented in **bold**. Refer to the end of this document for their stats, or look in the Monster Manual.

Characters

This adventure is designed to take three to four sessions and is adapted for about 2-4 characters of level 6.

You can use standard 5e races and classes, if you wish. Or you can use Many Isle races and classes. Make sure you read the Background first, however.

Appendix

The appendix contains multiple useful things for the running of this adventure. Here's a short index of what's in there, find it at the bottom of this document.

Appendix A - Name Glossary
Appendix B - Magic Items
Appendix C - Monster Statblocks
Appendix D - Maps

5eS
This module uses the 5eS system. For more information, see the Adventurer's Guide to Combat or explore our website, manyisles.ch.

Background

This adventure plays in 3'213 MG (1'394 b. OW) in the cold and rough lands of the Mruggenrykz. A few human settlements, such as Maerdooth and Mittendale, struggle for survival in these wild lands: next to stray goblinoid and orcish bands, the ferocious mruggen - small but ferocious humanoid aberrations - pose great danger to any traveler. The party's goal will be to travel from Maerdooth across the Methflow through the windy plains of Midterra, into the orc-infested woods of Vercy and through the Vercy Pass into the Thar mountains, where treacherous terrain and suspicious dwarves from the Thar Kingdom might finish off the adventurers.

The Characters

Due to the wild and rugged nature of the Mruggenrykz, the party likely won't come from very far. Brave human settlers from Maerdooth, or ones hailing from western coastal settlements, are the most likely option for an adventurer.

Possibly, a character is a gnome from one of the Quivering Forest's forest gnome tribes, or a rock gnome from the Maerwatch or the Adder Hills, on for some adventure. Maerdooth is the downtown of a quite large area, and any tough explorers eventually find their way to this hub.

Dwarven kingdoms are also quite common in the region, although this race doesn't usually move too far. A character could be a dwarf from one of the multitude, exiled or wandering of their own choice. The Galena Kingdom, in the far southeast, stands under the rule of a single king in Frondor Halls and thrives mainly on mushroom farming. Their colors are orange, green and silver. To their northeast lies the powerful Glondir Kingdom, magic-users that are at war with the Thar Kingdom. These dwarves possess a large scientific know-how, keep lumber yards and fields, use mainly axes and crossbow and rally under a blue-silver-gold banner. Most likely, the character is from Thar. To the southwest, the Lugsrr Enclaves, an assortment of cut-off family holds living in colourless spaces, with a wide knowledge of magic and warpick fighting, which occasionally buy, occasionally steal food from the surrounding farmers.

Elves are present, especially secluded and fierce forest elves in Elanthor, but are unlikely to have any members in a human settlement such as Maerdooth at this time.

Location Overview

This couple-shot plays in the Mruggenrykz, a wild and rough northern continent with large amounts of dangerous monsters roaming the lands. You can find a map of them in the Appendix.

Maerdooth

This small settlement surrounded by a wooden palisade stands at the shore of a small lake set in the Methflow. It thrives mainly on fishing and small fields. It's populated by about 200 happy and tough inhabitants, but they are worried about the recent sightings of a white dragon and the lack of news from Mittendale.

It features a number of fish and fur merchants, a small altar of Tyr staffed by a human woman offering healing, and a small trader selling weapons, armor and tools from dwarven enclaves.

Mittendale Pass

Beyond the mruggen-infested plains and orc-prowling Vercy Wood, the road through this rugged pass across the southern end of Thar is extremely difficult and infested with dangerous mountain beasts.

Mittendale

A small village nestled in the southern end of Thar, overlooking the treacherous Walmoor and Rogg-Vaasa beyond.

Kalder Ein

The frost giant home, located to the east of Mittendale; a fortress fitting nearly 150 giants. Great walls of ice and a few scores of huge stone and ice houses constitute this settlement, nestled on a large slope rising from the Tharmounts.

Dauder Tombs

Located at the end of the Tharmount valley in which Mittendale and Kalder Ein were built, the Dauder Tombs are visible as a stylized ice wall-front built at the end of a steep slope and at the start of a massive cliff. It is where the Kalder Ein frost giants, lovers of life, bury their honored dead.

The Story

A long time ago, when the Elvish Empire still ruled the lands, a clan of frost giants from the Frostfell settled in the southern reaches of Thar, building a great citadel named Kalder Ein with the aid of elven mages. The giants thrived and lived happily in unison with the elves, becoming experts in the arts of magic.

However, when the empire fell and the elves left the country, things started turning sour for the clan. Their leader Gyralos died, buried by his son Vyralos in a great tomb of pure ice and stone. Vyralos buried his father's great magical artifacts of truly divine power in that same tomb, for he did not feel worthy of them. He then took up leadership of the tribe.

However, the giants noticed that the elven pantheon no longer granted them any power, having abandoned them as soon as the elves had left. The giant gods, as Vyralos turned to the All-Father, refused to grant them powers, for they had abandoned them before in their allegiance to the elves. So, the giants turned to Auril, a mainly human deity of winter and fertility, and he granted them the powers they seeked. However, some of the tribe left for the Frostfell, disgusted at this grovelling for a lesser god.

As time wound on, humans spread across the wild lands now called Mruggenrykz, building settlements such as Maerdooth in the greater plains. Only dwarves, such as the Thar Kingdom, went to the mountains, and the Thar dwarves left the giants alone.

But eventually, some humans noticed the great power these giants held, and traveled to Thar to be taught by these great entities. They built the village of Mittendale and pilgrimaged regularly to the place, gleaning what they could from the great giants.

One day, the evil white dragon Zaragora came, aiming for the divine power of dead Gyralos' artifacts. She sent hordes of minions against the giants, which fought back with grand might, but her numbers were too great.

So the giants called out to the All-Father, calling for his aid in these difficult times. Their call was answered, swearing to kill their enemies if they offered that which they valued most, life.

The minions of Zaragora succumbed to a horrible disease, but the giant's victory came at the promised cost. Augury by Mittendale's priests revealed that the true god that had aided the giants was Zorl, the evil god of death. Upon learning this, half the tribe left Kalder Ein, returning to the distant Frostfell away from this foul place. The remaining frost giant's might faltered, and their numbers dwindled ever more.

Zaragora rebuilt her horde, calling upon new troops of foul creatures to ready an assault on the frost giants from her great lair of Dauder Tomb. Vyralos, in a last attempt at regaining his tribe's honor and vitality, mounted an assault against the tomb.

But at that time, the orcish tribe of Black-Bone moved into Mittendale, with ambitions of claiming the great treasures of Dauder Tomb. To this effect, they demanded knowledge and skills from the frost giants - but those were disgusted at the orc's allegiance to Zorl, perverting life itself. So discord spread between Zaragora's enemies, and the situation devolved into a tense position.

This situation is the one in which the party will find Mittendale - once they reach it. At the beginning of the campaign, they are likely around a week before this moment, when the Black-Bone tribe is still making its way through the treacherous Mittendale Pass.

1 - Maerdooth

The town of Maerdooth is a quaint little fishing village that lies along the Methflow, about 5 days' travel from Mittendale Pass. They mainly use the gently flowing but large Methflow to fish great amounts of food, as well as entertaining small fields of cattle and crops. Although on a direct route from the growing settlement of Rogor in the east and the western coastal settlements, the village doesn't often see travelers, as few dare take the difficult route and most camp far to the south of the city, on the edge of the forest.

The people here are generally happy, as it's a smaller village that doesn't receive very many travelers. The trade with dwarves from the Thar Kingdom is good, and for the most part, they're left alone by the rest of the world.

This pleasant little village is governed by a council of respected villagers, which is organized by an elder that also cares for smaller affairs that aren't handled individually or through the harsh ways of the priest of Tempus. The current elder is Karman Gensman, a pleasant man with a large belly and a larger moustache. He also owns the only inn in Maerdooth called the "Home n' Hearth" and can be found there relaxing by the fireplace most nights. When the characters first meet him, he's having a conversation with his wife about not having heard any news from Mittendale in some time.

When asked about it, he mentions that pilgrims of Mittendale come down to Maerdooth occasionally to trade goods with Feldor, and resupply on perishables at the general store. The main source of news from them comes from trading dwarves.

He knows of the frost giants of Mittendale, of course. Unfortunately, he's never made the climb to speak with them, but Dame Kjermohan of the church would have more information.

Home n' Hearth Inn

Karman Gensman's wife Novell Gensman is the primary cook and runs the establishment. She's a sweet woman who makes sure everyone has had plenty to eat and drink before providing them with a nice quiet place to rest.

Their two kids mostly spend time out-doors within the settlement's palisade playing. They're both younger boys, aged 6 and 8, and can always be found together. Aside from general amenities, Home n' Hearth also acts as a general store. Adventurers are able to buy rations and general goods from either Novell or Karman for a fair price.

Feldor's Fur Lines

Aside from the Home n' Hearth, there's a trader and local hunter called Feldor Venatio. He owns and runs the small shop called, "Feldor's Fur Lines" where people can go to purchase quality leather goods as well as fur-lined equipment to keep warm when traveling the Mittendale Pass.

Feldor is a kind man providing fairly prized outdoor goods, as seen in the equipment section of the wilderness guide. He offers quality information on the surrounding lands and some dangers the party may face there. From the standard array of encounters that could populate the dangerous climb in the first place, he tells of the more stand-outish creatures they may face like saber-tooth tigers, white wolves rumored to be blessed by Auril, and polar bears. He also mentions not to anger or startle the mammoths. More interestingly, he found unique tracks that seemed almost bug-like in nature and was unsure of what it could be. They were roughly the size of elk prints. (These are young remorhazes)

Church of Tempus

This small hut is built out of gray stone and tough wood, with no other materials to speak of. Through a low archway with no door, one can enter the chapel. A single wooden leaf painted orange stands on the opposite wall, with random clerical items, along with barbed crowns and whips, are placed at its feet. A cubby behind this wall leads into the tiny and nearly bare room where Dame Kjermohan, priest of Tempus, resides.

She is a beautiful but tough woman that prizes the tenets of Tempus. She fights valiantly for Maerdooth, aiding it with her divine powers, but also demanding the price for the aid of the god of War and Suffering: processions of whipped and barb-crowned villagers before the church are regularly held to remain in good favor with Tempus, and sacrifices of clothes in winter or armor in battle are regularly made.

Kjermohan is ready to heal party members or even bless them for their impending journey, as she likes the brave pilgrims of Mittendale that suffer for their frost giant ideals.

Gutham's Trading Post

Lying in a thick lumber hut on the northern outskirts of the town, the trading post is owned by Bardon and Bradon Gutham, two tough mountain dwarves. They often haggle, but they serve as the main post where dwarves from Thar bring weapons, armor, and tools in exchange for foodstuffs and other natural goods.

Their products are worth about their normal price in storable food, or good currency that will allow them to buy such food.

2 - Travel

Soon after getting into their roles and introducing each other, the party of brave adventurers should get ready to set out from Maerdooth. The winter is drawing near, but it hasn't completely closed in yet, and Mittendale Pass might still be traversable for another week or so.

The adventurers, thanks to their great knowledge of their homeland, are well aware that they won't be able to head back down from Mittendale until the thaw of spring, and that they will likely spend the winter there.

The voyage to Mittendale will be done in three steps; first, the flat grasslands of Rogg-Vaasa and Midterra, then the dark Vercy Woods, and finally the difficult Mittendale Pass across the Thar Mountains to Mittendale.

As rules for this travel, use part 2 of the Adventurer's Guide to the Wilderness, "Travel". The season is early winter, and the distances and terrain involved are explained in each section of this part.

You can choose to which depth you wish to take this voyage. If your players like the wilderness and such non-combat survival, feel free to allow them to build camps, and maybe even use the navigation system in Vercy Wood.

Plains

The first part of the party's voyage will take them around the south of the dangerous Walmoor, in an approximately 4-day voyage.

Three options are open for the adventurers to choose: taking the conventional route across the Methflow twice and remaining on flat grasslands circumventing Walmoor, going down the Methflow and walking north after the Walmoor, or attempting to cross the Walmoor directly.

Plains Path

It should be rather easy in the early morning to find a fisherman willing to shuttle the party over the wide but calm Methlflow.

From then on, the walk across the cold and hard plain of Rogg-Vaasa should be an easy trek along Plains, easy terrain, for 40 miles.

Along the way, roll on the Plains Encounters table at the end of this section once every morning and afternoon.

Second Crossing

After having passed the breadth of the Walmoor, the adventurers reach a "bridge" that was erected to help travelers, but it was regularly destroyed by monsters, and not many people truly felt responsibility for building it up again.

As of now, a broken assortment of half-submerged trunks and planks crosses the gentle Methflow. It should be possible to traverse this on foot.

The bridge is 40 feet long, and for every 10 feet traversed on it, a creature must succeed on a DC 7 Acrobatics check not to fall in the water. Feel free to adjust this DC depending on the creature and their burden.

A creature that falls in the water risks severe undercooling or even frostbite, and may also drown.

Midterra

After crossing Methflow's "bridge", the final stretch in the plains along Walmoor's western edge shouldn't take much more than a day's travel. Roll for encounters as before.

Sailing Down

Alternatively to walking along the Methflow's southern bank, the party could find a boat willing to take them down along it until the western edge of Walmoor, in Midterra.

The small down holds two dozen small fishing canoes that don't fit more than two people and a couple fish. Only two larger vessels exist: those of Jack Reindeer and Burd Kopheim. Both have low but large wooden vessels that can carry about 6 people. The price to keep them away from the river for two days is high, about 12 ration's worth. Feel free to use these social combat rules to make the haggling interesting.

The voyage downriver takes about 8 hours, the captain dropping the party off at the northern tip of the wrecked bridge. He asks the adventurers to camp here with him, as security before he goes back to Maerdooth the next day.

For further travel along Midterra on the Walmoor's western edge, use "Midterra" under "Plains Path" above.

Through the Swamp

This is an absolutely horrid idea. Make sure the players understand this, as their characters would be well aware that crossing a half-frozen boggy swamp over 30 miles wide is not the greatest idea.

If they do, treat the terrain as Swamp, and feel free to drop the most horrid diseases and colds on the party. At the other end of the moor lies Midterra; see "Midterra" under "Plains Path" above for this final stretch of the voyage.

Random Encounters

In their trek along the central reaches of the Mruggenrykz, the party will likely encounter some of the hostile fauna that so marks the region.

Plains Encounters Table

d12	Encounter
1-4	Mruggen Herd
5	Male Mruggen
6-7	Badeep herd
8	Goblin hunters
9-12	-

Mruggen Herd. In late autumn and winter, female mruggen find together in herds just as the rutting season ends. In such groups, they forage the lands for food, extremely aggressive in their need for nutrition.

3d12 **mruggen** assault the party. They should be visible from far away, ravenously rushing towards the party across the white plains.

Male Mruggen. Usually in winter, male **mruggen** hibernate. However, this one was a bit late, and hasn't yet ended its rut. Although much more dangerous than a herd, this strong individual will rush any humanoids most similar to a mruggen, grabbing at it and fiercely attempting to copulate whilst biting and clawing.

Badeep herd. A group of about two dozen badeep, large furry cattle, pass by in the search of brubber trees. They ignore the party. There is a 25% chance that a group of **orcs** riding badeep are pursuing the herd in search of food.

Goblin hunters. A group of 3d4 stealthy **goblins** tracks rabbit and other small rodents across the plains. They go out of the way of adventurers.

Vercy Wood

The second part of the party's travel, after having circumvented the great Walmoor, leads them through the dark Vercy Wood to the great valley that leads up to Mittendale Pass.

Although only about 25 miles long, this passage will likely take the adventurers nearly 2 days to cross. Feel free to use the guide's part 3 on navigation for this part, the checks being relatively easy as the huge mountains are a good waypoint.

The route takes the party across "Plains, high grass" ground. There are occasionally small tracks to follow, but no actual road leads them through the dark trees. Roll for an encounter once every morning and afternoon on the Woods Encounters table below.

The Base of Thar

Before the great cleft in the massive mountains of Thar that leads up to Mittendale Pass, a large area was cleared. Three dozen dwarven lumbermen usually work here, preparing rough logs for further transport over Mittendale Pass and to the Thar Kingdom.

These dwarves built a small grouping of lumber huts and are tough people, always clad in cloth and steel armor and ready for battle. They happily guide wanderers on, but won't spare any effort for them if not evenly traded.

Forest Encounters Table

d12	Encounter
1-2	Mruggen Herd
3-5	Minor Orc group
6	Major Orc group
9-12	-

Mruggen Herd. In late autumn and winter, female mruggen find together in herds just as the rutting season ends. In such groups, they forage the lands for food, extremely aggressive in their need for nutrition.

3d12 **mruggen** assault the party. They should sneak up out of nowhere on the party, encircling them and crashing into their ranks.

Minor Orc group. These woods are thickly populated with hunter-gatherer forest orcs. A hunting group of 2d4 **orcs**, all of them archers, comes across the party's way. They're unlikely to be aggressive.

Major Orc group. A forest orc tribe on migration, or similar movement of a large orcish mass. It consists of 4d8 **orcs**, along with two **eyes of Grak'Uruk**. They are likely to attack the party, if the reward seems worth the risk.

Mittendale Pass

After passing by the Thar Kingdom's lumber yards, the party's path goes up a steep and barely grown valley to a completely white pass beyond. Dark streaks show the great dangers of this torn land from afar, but the start is easy: a looping but even road made of securely interlocked cobblestone leads through the meager grass grounds and up the valley.

About a third of the way up, all grass is gone, and littered boulders are strewn all across the way. One or two dwarven groups labor here, pushing fallen rocks off the road and repairing damaged sections. They aren't unfriendly to the party, and can tell them of a group of orcs that passed by recently. Neither side wanted a fight, and so the orcs passed and went further, likely to Mittendale. These dwarves don't care much of the events "over yonder".

Two thirds of the way up, snow lies heavily all around the road, and it runs straight for a while before disappearing under a mighty stone archway. To the flank's side, a small track continues upward where the road left off. Four dwarven guards, clad in battle plate and wielding axes, point the party away from this passage leading to a corridor that heads for the heart of Thar Kingdom.

3 - Mittendale Pass

Travel across the pass, after the four hours spent on the dwarven road, should take 12 hours in normal times. However, with the onslaught of winter and heavy snows that have already fallen, along with the many dangers that cropped up with the weakening of giant presence, may well elongate this travel to a few days.

Off the Road

As soon as the adventurers step off the road, they miss the sturdy stability of the dwarven road. Their boots drag heavily in the knee-deep snow, and the constant winds pick up large clouds of snow that continuously whip into the group's frozen faces.

Soon after leaving the haven of the road, the party should walk across a small encounter. You can roll for it on the "Pass Encounters Table" below.

After the battle, the adventurers should already feel the strain of this tough travel across Mittendale Pass. Before them, the sloping edges of looming mountains seems to continue forever, with the small "u" in the distance denoting the top of the pass seeming incredibly far away.

Along the steep flanks of Thar, small rock outcroppings on which enormous masses of snow packed can serve as a base for setting up camp with tents the party brought. However, no warmth seems to ever reach their bodies, as their soaked clothes and the dangerously flapping fabric of their tent seems to freeze them in place. Suspicious eyes seem to peek at them from beyond thick flurries of snow in the darkness, enough to keep the toughest characters on edge. Feel free to lower the Comfort level of this camp, if you are using the "Making Camp" rules of the wilderness guide's part 4.

The Depths of the Pass

The party rises the next morning in an eternal swath of white, with no visibility beyond 30 feet and only misty light visible from above.

As the adventurers set out through the blinding snows, immediately realizing what a stupid idea this enterprise was, a dark shadow flits over them, a deafening roar shaking the ground. Any character familiar with dragons knows this as the call of a true dragon. As the shadow flits away, a second rumble grows, the ground trembling ever more as a wall of snow seems to detach itself from the mountain flank on the group's left.

Dag'Rutha Watches
At your discretion, you can allow some adventurers to make perception checks, spotting ice mephits observing them in the distance before scurrying away. They are the spies of Dag'Rutha.

Avalanche

From the moment the group notices the oncoming wall of ice and snow, they have 3 rounds to prepare. They are in difficult terrain, and two outcroppings fitting 2 Medium creatures each are within 30 feet of their location.

Alternatively, as an action, a character may attempt a check using an ability of their choice against a DC set by the DM to prepare for the onslaught of the avalanche, or cast some sort of helpful spell to remain out of harm's way. Once the three rounds are over, the DM determines who has cover, who has half cover, and who's exposed.

Effect. All creatures that aren't protected from the avalanche must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw with disadvantage due to the difficult terrain: ones half-covered roll normally, and those with cover have advantage. At the DM's discretion, other abilities may be used depending on the way that the avalanche is escaped.

On a failed throw, a character is entombed under 15 feet of snow, and their movement speed is reduced to 5 feet of movement needing to be expended for every foot moved. Additionally, while a character is entombed, they are suffocating and must make an Athletics check when attempting to move.



Soon after the avalanche, two **perytons** land on the new fluff, searching for easy rescapees to pluck off and eat in their high nests. Their main interest is easy food, and will flee if damaged more than superficially.

As the party decides to continue up the gorge, their path is none easier, with the unending winds continuing to keep up and blinding them whilst the even deeper snow poses great problems to their advancing.

For another few hours (and likely another camp set in the howling winds), the travel shouldn't be too difficult. Feel free to insert a random encounter if the avalanche was too easy a challenge, or to continue hollowing the party out if it wasn't. This is a difficult passage, after all, and many unwary travelers go lost.

Broken Bridge

About four hours of travel after the earlier avalanche, the adventurers near the highest point of the pass, beyond which the mountains open up into the lower and more easily navigable highlands of Thar, called Tharmounts.

However, only a mile or so from that highest point, a treacherous gash tears the valley apart, tearing even into the flanking mountains on either side. A great bridge, once built Mittendale's people with the help of the giants, crossed this gorge, but the wooden structure is long gone. Only two massive pillars, styled in the curving but sharp style of frost giants, remain on either side of the ravine.

The Remains

On both pillars, giant runes describe the procedure to summon the magical bridge between the pillars. A giant-speaker can translate these instructions to a spellcaster. To summon the bridge, the words in giant must be called and a 1st-level slot expended, upon which a shimmering blue bridge of frost appears. It cracks and falls an hour later.

An Investigation or Perception skill check can tell a character that each pillar can hold about 250 pounds of weight. If the magical way fails, they can always attempt mechanical works, or even jumping. The gap is a good 10 feet wide, though, and such a jump would be very difficult - and likely fatal.

Developments. After a short hour of further trekking along the deep snows of Mittendale Pass, and possibly an other small encounter, the party reaches the top of Mittendale Pass.

Beyond the Pass

The pass itself is deceptively smooth and small, nothing like the arduous ascent from the dwarven lumber works far below. A gentle slope from two rounded mountains on either side flanks the party on either side as they trod across the perfectly even blanket of white winter. Beyond, three huge valleys open up, each flanked by immense walls of grey rock with gentle flat white grounds adorned with pines and small hills. These are the Tharmounts, and the one straight ahead leads east, to the settlement of Mittendale.

But first, the party must get down again from the deceptively calm pass. Indeed, only a short way beyond, it drops of steeply, jagged rock outcroppings ready to smite those falling and fierce winds of sharp shards of ice threatening to swipe off anyone foolish enough to venture there.

Descent

The path downwards is impossibly steep, with no clear trail and occasional sheer walls of ice or jagged rock hiding beneath piles of snow and blinding flurries of wind to snare the adventurers. Adapt this descent's difficulty as you wish, depending on their exhaustion, but feel free to top it off and allow some skidding falls with great damage awaiting at the end. The stretch after Mittendale Pass is in no way a relief.

Once the bottom is reached, the party can gladly leave the steep slope of blasting winds into the relatively calm, wide, smooth and flat bottom so typical of the Tharmounts. The remainder of the trip will surely be a goodie.

Tharmounts

Generally, the characters can easily find their way along open swaths of beautiful white land, occasional pine trees dotting the area. They can find their way easily enough, and Mittendale isn't much more than a day's march east of Mittendale Pass.

Insert an encounter along the way, so that the dangers of Thar may not be forgotten, and also recount these beautiful events to the group as they wander:

> You walk along the enjoyably smooth ground of the Tharmounts, looking upon the towering mountains to either side and the flat, almost riverlike aspect of your valley floor with enchantment at this wintry display of nature. A beautiful home for the frost giants.

Then, as their travel nears its end, read:

> Finally, the flat ground rises up before you to form a mound hugging the left-hand flank of a mighty but gentle mountain. Along the crest of this hillock stands a tough wooden palisade, with beckoning rooves rising beyond. Before a mighty giant-style stone archway stand two dark shadows, observing you from afar.

Finally, the party has arrived at Mittendale, home of brave pilgrims and adorers of the frost giants. The party's journey seems at an end - they will rest and recuperate here over the winter, then return to Maerdooth with the tale that all is well here.

Pass Encounters

In their travel along Mittendale Pass, the party may well come across stray monsters, planned by this module or by the mischievous DM.

Mitendale Pass Encounters Table

d12	Encounter
1	Remorhaz
2-3	Abominable Yeti
4-5	2 Yetis
6-9	2d4 Sabre-Toothed Tigers
10	Polar Bear
11-12	1d8 Winter Wolves

4 - Mittendale

As the party approaches Mittendale, which seems peaceful and unchanged to any adventurers that visited it previously, they spot two white silhouettes that scurry towards them. These are two **ice mephits**, which huddle in the snow about 30 feet from the group and spy on them discreetly before scurrying off through the gate.

The archway is a massive stone construction, with intricate frost giant carvings showing runes of protection - both from the giant gods and from Auril, human god of winter. On either side stands an orc clad in heavy furs and wielding a hefty poleaxe. Their command of common is poor, and they point to Dag'Rutha for asking questions.

Hostility against Orcs
Although the orcs of the Black-Bone tribe pay the adventurers only cursory heed, problems of aggression might develop. In such a case, many orcs and ice mephits quickly appear, and the party is knocked unconscious and brought to the chieftain. Skip to "Dialogue" below.

Flanking the main road on either side stand large stone pillars, upon which the story of the rise of the frost giants, their help to Mittendale, and the fall of Gyralos are described, the story ending on the town square, which directly faces a cliff face. This square, originally built to fit three or so giants, is now home to a score and more of heavy orcish tents, with a great number of the creatures walking around. A few are warming themselves in braziers, and mephits are running around. Still, the tents leave a clear path for the road to continue on through the square and towards a great building carved from the rock face, with huge double doors depicting frost giants - the town hall.

People of Mittendale

A few humans can be seen walking off the main road, but they hush on away from the adventurers and keep their heads low. "Talk to Dag'Rutha", they may say, pointing to the town hall. Some might also point to Auril's chapel (see "Auril's Chapel", below).

If the party does a bit too much of a ruckus, a group of orcs will approach them and show them to the town hall, saying the great Radj asks their presence.

Only half or so of the village's population remains: the other half disappeared into the town hall when the orcs first came. They are being imprisoned there, although most people believe they are dead.

The Orcs in Mittendale

A few days ago, the Black-Bone tribe led by Radj Dag'Rutha entered the community-ruled Mittendale, taking it over and forming a government based in the town hall. This is where the party finds Dag'Rutha.

Dialogue

As the adventurers enter through the great double doors into the town hall, they discover a large hall carved from the stone itself, with a massive firepit granting the place its comfortable warmth, which after the constant chill from outside feels burning hot.

Beyond the fire lies a great black throne recently erected, upon which sits a powerful orc. A skull, with its eyes glowing a faint blue, rests on his left pauldron. Along the walls on either side are more common orcs, other ones with eyes glowing a similar eerie blue, and still others clad in black robes and wielding staves. This is the court of Black-Bone.

The orcish leader knows of the party's approach: his mephits have been reporting to him since they reached the giant's bridge, beyond Mittendale Pass.

Something's Wrong
Even though the radj comes off as friendly, players might get suspicious. Arcana, perception and other checks can reveal necromantic magic, or that the ones with blue eyes aren't breathing. Something foul is in the air.

As a good politician, he talks warmly with them and offers them great food and drink, as well as a promised home in Mittendale to recuperate from the journey.

Of course, he wants something in return.

'Recently, I went to the frost giants, offering them the help of my noble tribe in defeating the foul white dragon in their holy tomb', proclaims the powerful orc. 'But they turned me down! They shamed me, when I offered them a helpful hand in their darkest hour! But it will not stay at that, and you will help me.'

Dag'Rutha wants three things from the party:

- The frost giants must be eradicated. He wants their knowledge, which he will pry from their souls, and their weapons and armor, which he will take from their dead bodies.
- Zaragora must die, because from the tomb she occupies, even greater knowledge can be gained.

To enter the tomb, a key must be taken from the frost giants, and such a frontal assault would weaken his tribe before the frost giants. If the party aids him, he offers them a fair share of the loot in the tomb, after helping them in defeating the dragon - if the giant threat is no more. He can pay in occult secrets, as well.

Additionally, he offers a place for the party to rest, and to grant them food and drink supplies. They can also take some of the Black-Bone's gear - for a price, of course.

Killing Dag'Rutha

A crazy party may attempt assaulting the orcish leader. Besides himself, there are 6 **orcs**, 6 **Dead Guards**, Shagra the Wise, and 3 **Black-Bone Necromancers**. If the party manages killing Dag'Rutha, the Dead Guards fall dead. In such a case, the remaining orcs acknowledge the party's power, and the whole tribe sets off into the Tharmounts, likely to descend again into Vercy Wood come thaw.

Black-Bone Tribe

There are a few factions within the Black-Bones, which are elucidated here.

The Dead Guard

The greatest Black-Bone warriors, which is already a mighty tribe, are resurrected by the mighty shamans of Darag'Aas, using dark secrets few know. These undead are called Dead Guard, and don't speak or breathe, their shallow blue eyes being the only sign of life they emanate. Most of this force is camping near Kalder Ein, and only dead leaders now protect the current radj here.

Shagra the Wise

As a lieutenant of the radj, Shagra is the chief "logistics officer" (Mrag-Ka, in orcish) of the tribe. She's an **orog**. She can offer standard items and gear, most of which is slightly oversized, as well as a few magic items of low power tied to the power of Gruum'Uruk, the orcish pantheon. She stands with her radj, and finds the party an useful tool.

Muurduk the Strong

The second lieutenant of Dag'Rutha is Muurduk, leader of the main troops and the finest strategе of the tribe. As a **Blade of Urg'Neval** (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*), he believes in Urg'Neval's tents, and leads the orcish force wisely, also serving as advisor to the radj.

Raaza the Clever

The third and final lieutenant, Raaza is a **Black-Bone Necromancer** that leads the undead wing of the tribe, as the most accomplished of the necromancers. Usually Dag'Rutha's consort, she is currently out in the Dead Guard encampment.

The People

Although Mittendale isn't a large settlement, its predominantly human population held a few people of notice.

The Prisoners

Most important people were imprisoned beneath the town hall, "to cut the head off the snake".

Kairden

A middle-aged human, he was the most powerful wizard using the giant's frost magic, and served as the primary contact with the giants of Kalder Ein. He is bound and kept in a cell separate from the others.

Teranil

A wood elf far from her home of Elanthor, she is the best fighter with the spear in all of Mittendale, and served the town guard well before the orcs came.

Nadun

Although he was a monk of Tyr, Nadun traveled to Mittendale a few months ago to see if the giant's magic couldn't enrich the joyful life of his peers in Rogor. He has visited Kalder Ein twice, and has started growing friends with Vyralos.

Auril's Chapel

Off in the western corner of Mittendale, hugging the mountain's slope, sits an ice construction containing only an icy altar. Sitting next to it, clad in only light garments when one would need heavy furs to resist the cold, is Lotin, the village's priest of Auril.

Lotin

As the last influential person not imprisoned, likely because her tie to Auril scared the orcs, Lotin has become a leader to the free people of Mittendale. She has learned to weave some frost giant magic with her holy spells, and has become truly accomplished in her art, immune to the cold. She sees no hope beyond cooperation with the orcs for now, though, and guides the party to Dag'Rutha if they come to her. She'd love to see the prisoners freed, of course.

5 - Kalder Ein

As the great city of the honored frost giants, Kalder Ein is a powerful ice fortress built on the flank of a mountain, an hour's march above the flat Tharmounts.

Travel to Kalder Ein

Once the party has met and talked with the orcs and learned of their intentions, they'll likely move on from Mittendale towards the legendary frost giant city.

> You leave Mittendale, walking along the gentle Tharmounts. The wind seems to have eased, and only gentle flurries brush your legs.
> As you advance, occasional clusters of black blood, with orcish corpses lying around a dead polar bear or ice golem. These grim signs come again and again, until you arrive at the base of Kalder Ein's mountain. Formations of Dead Guard stand next to a dark camp to your left, whilst tall shapes seem to look down on you from far above.

The Dead Guard ignores the party, and doesn't bother with them at all. They were informed of the alliance by ice mephits, and won't hinder the adventurers, either.

The characters already have a good two hours of marching behind them, and have another hour before until they reach the frost giant city. From above, the three frost giant sentries look on impassively, neither hostile nor friendly.

The Frost Giants

Since the fell actions of Zorl and the new rise of Zaragora, giant population has dwindled to only 30 hardy souls, ready to defend their lives, ideals and ancestry with all they have left.

Meeting the Sentries

As the party approaches Kalder Ein, read:

> On a huge ice wall, as tall as a mighty citadel's towers, stand three frost giants, looking down at you impassively, huge bows ready to send destructive bolts raining down upon you. Then, a mighty hidden door opens, and a proud frost giant clad in shimmering crystal armor and heavy furs around his shoulders.

The chief of the sentries is Kulgar Wind-Watcher (a **frost giant**), who has fought with Vyralos since their earliest childhood. He asks the party what their business is, and follows up by asking whether they've had contact with the Black-Bone tribe, and what plans the orcs might be making. If his questions are answered satisfyingly, he offers to take the party to Vyralos.

If asked about the dragon, he is visibly frustrated, sad at the disgrace of having a dragon residing in the tomb of the honored dead.

His opinions on the Black-Bones are purely defensive, although he does mention their foul magic that is a disgrace to life.

> **Kalder Ein**
> The city's mighty ice domes shine in a hundred lights under the brilliant sun. Although not many giants walk the streets, a certain joy of life permeates everything, polar bears and sabre-toothed tigers tolling around happily.

Vyralos

Kulgar leads the party to a great ice palace, hewn into the rock very similarly to Mittendale's town hall. Beyond a pair of great doors lies a massive circular chamber. Around a granite circle worked into the ice ground, nine giants sit. Most are clad in heavy furs with large hoods, only white or blue beards protruding. On a throne directly opposite the entrance sits a huge and lean giant clad in the most regal armor: Vyralos, chief of the frost giants.

> 'Greetings, travelers, to Kalder Ein! Long have I not seen a brave traveler. Sadly, I cannot offer you gifts of knowledge or power, as the times are difficult. What business do you have here?'

Kulgar introduces the party and steps to the side.

Discussion with Vyralos

Overall, the frost giant leader is calm and composed, a wise chieftain for a wise tribe. He becomes disgusted if the party mentions the Black-Bones. If asked about the war, he states it is simply a minor struggle keeping his people from the greater cause of protecting the tomb from its desecration, and that his people would crush the orcs were they not so weak and the orcs so numerous.

If Vyralos is comfortable with the party, if Kulgar was happy, if they speak giant, or if similar disgust towards necromancy is expressed, he may tell the adventurers a bit more about his people's dark fate, explaining that the curse levied by Zorl on them can only be removed through the spilling of blood, which the giants aren't fond of.

Slaughtering the undead of the Black-Bones might aid to reduce the curse for a few years, but the giants don't have a sufficient force to defeat the powerful Dead Guard without massive losses that would allow Zaragora to pluck them easily.

If the party agrees to help the giants, he can offer them magical items and ancient teaching, as well as a bit of treasure from the Dauder Tombs. He can also bless the adventurers, protecting them against a white dragon's frost breath.

6 - War

Once the leader of the frost giants has been met, the ways for the party are open. They can choose to side with one of the forces, do their own thing, or even attack both.

Go Alone

Of course, the party may decide to ignore the ongoing conflict between orcs and frost giants and simply travel to Dauder Tombs alone. If they do so, they'll be faced by the full force of the mighty ice dragon, and without the support of either party, this can be difficult. They will have to face scores of Zaragora's followers, challenge ancient wards, and battle a dragon head-on - no easy task.

If the group attempts allying with the dragon, she laughs and attempts to consume them. Their lives may be saved with the payment of wealth or magic items.

Against Both
If the adventurers decides to destroy all parties involved, they will have to face very powerful foes. However, the artifacts gleaned in an (unlikely) victory may well prove useful in the final battle against Zaragora.

Black-Bones

Impressed by the might of this orc tribe, the party may decide to side with them. In this case, a variety of outcomes depending on how the adventurers choose to play out this alliance may occur.

Frontal Attack

If the group decides to finish off the enemies then and there, they can attempt attacking the council directly. In that case, they will face Vyralos (a **Wise One** with 122 hit points), along with 7 **Wise Ones** and a **frost giant** (Kulgar). If the group somehow manages to defeat these mightiest of the frost giants, the others woe in grief and leave, ashamed forever and losing themselves in the eternal swaths of snow.

Assemble an Army

Alternatively, the party may leave Kalder Ein and head for the Dead Guard camp, about an hour's march down the slope. There, they can request an audience with Raaza the Cleaver, chief of the Dead Guard. She is in high standing with Dag-Rutha, and has a force of 50 **Dead Guard** under her command, as well as 3 other **Black-Bone Necromancers**. If told of the party's aspirations of attacking Kalder Ein, she will accept, drawing her whole force up the slope.

The idea of such a battle would be to have the orcish troops serve as fodder in a frontal assault whilst the party makes their way in to attack Vyralos from behind.

Going for Dag'Rutha

The adventurers may ask from Raaza to call further reinforcements from the orcish troops in Mittendale, assembling a larger army. She will send out an ice mephit, which will draw a force of 40 **orcs** to the camp in 5 hours. In this case, the entry of the party into the fort should be even easier.

Dag'Rutha does not send the whole tribe, because fresh warriors will be needed for an assault on Dauder Tomb, a mightier challenge than Kalder Ein.

Giant Forces

In the case that the party sides wit the orcs, the giants remain entrenched in Kalder Ein, fighting a defensive war as they know their weakness.

The frost giant force consists of 16 **frost giants**, 7 **Wise Ones**, and Vyralos (a **Wise One** with 122 hit points). This force is supported by a dozen **Polar Bears** and **Sabre-Toothed Tigers** each, along with 4 **Snow Golems**.

The golems only attack creatures physically threatening the city, or ones designated by a Wise One or Vyralos.

In case of an onslaught, Vyralos and a Wise One remain behind while the battle is led. The party can engage these two whilst the other defenses are occupied.

End of the Frost Giants

When Vyralos dies, all other giants quickly succumb to the powerful orcish blade. If Dag'Rutha is present (Raaza otherwise), he stalks along the battlefield, mercilessly slaughtering any surviving or dying giants. He then walks up to the central citadel, calling Vyralos' soul from the dead and gleaning great secrets from his dead corpse.

He keeps all the treasures, including the key to Dauder Tomb and Vyralos' axe, for himself. He offers the adventurers some magic items of minor significance, happy that he has gleaned such powerful knowledge from the dead giant.

March on Zaragora

After a victory over the giants, the Black-Bone's focus shifts to Dauder Tomb. Along the same Tharmount valley as Mittendale and Kalder Ein, this great construction is built into the stone about a day's march further east, near the ice rivers and mighty Vaasa.

Raaza insists on calling Dag'Rutha, and the entire tribe (except for a guard force) marches on the tomb. A hundred warriors and nearly as many Dead Guard take

Zaragora's minions head-on, while the party can sneak around and start their way through the tombs.

Once the tomb wards are solved, Dag'Rutha enters and blesses the adventurers with an unholy spell, granting them a number of temporary HP equal to their HP maximum and enchanting their blades to deal an additional base 1d6 necrotic damage for the first round of combat.

Frost Giants

More good-oriented adventurers might well decide to join the frost giants in their plight, aiming at restoring their lost grandeur and defeating the foul orcs.

What Vyralos counsels is first to free the poor people of Mittendale, hopefully driving the orcs out. As the orc leader is in a rout, he offers to assault the Dead Guard.

Attacking the Orcs

If the party manages assassinating Raaza in her camp, and possibly also most of the other necromancers, the giants will have a field day destroying undead.

In an assault against Mittendale, it will likely be better for the adventurers to enter as allies of the orcs, visit Dag'Rutha, and attempt assassinating him as the giants advance from the front, splitting the orcish force.

Although no people of Mittendale are in shape to help the battle, Lotin is more than eager for battle and can join the party as an 8th-level winter domain cleric.

Freeing the Prisoners

In a dark corridor beneath the town hall proper, 4 **Dead Guard** and a **Black-Bone Necromancer** guard the prisoners. Beyond an iron bar door, tied to a wooden post with D'Mert-Ium (antimagic metal worth a lot) shackles, lies Kairden. Beyond a wooden door on the other side, similarly bound to stakes on the ground, are Teranil and Nadun. Beyond a thick iron door, free to move around, are two dozen **commoners**. The three liberated leaders will gladly fight; the commoners won't. Kairden and the others will want to find Lotin and join her in battle.

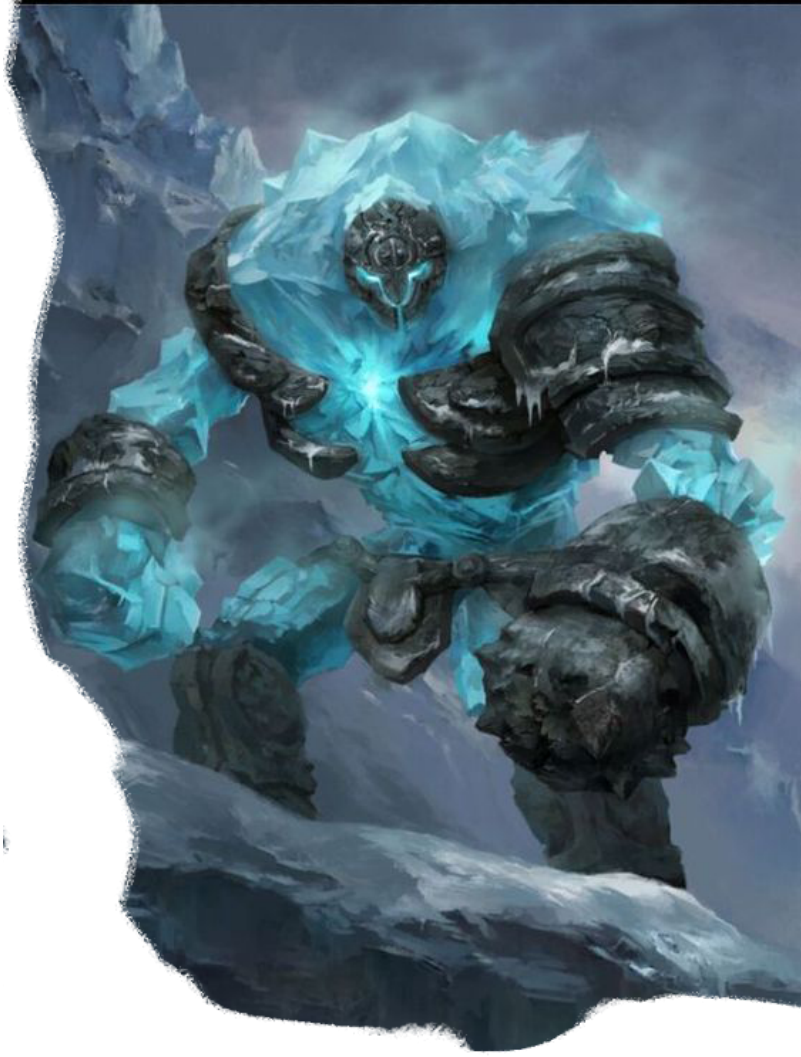
Orcish Forces

The orcs are spread over two locations.

Kalder Camp. This assault position, led by Raaza the Cleaver, counts 50 **Dead Guard** along with 4 **Black-Bone Necromancers**.

Mittendale. Under Dag'Rutha's command, Mittendale counts around 110 **orcs**, 10 **Dead Guard**, and 3 **Black-Bone Necromancers** as well as Dag-Rutha himself.

Additionally, around 30 ice mephits serve the orcs, but they don't participate in battles.



End of the Orcs

Most likely, if Kalder Camp falls, an ice mephit will get away to warn Dag'Rutha. In any case, when Dag'Rutha falls, all Dead Guard similarly crumple to the ground, while all necromancers are paralyzed for a short moment. Quite quickly, the orcs will lay down arms and attempt to flee; Raaza, Shagra and Muurduk may all plead for mercy befor the people, reorganize their tribe, and march off, ready to cross Mittendale Pass come next thaw.

The giants will fiercely cut down any necromancers they find, possibly sparing normal orcs.

Once the tribe gone, as some of the frost giants assemble in the town square and hall and the others line the palisade, Lotin and some other priests call Auril, revoking Zorl's curse and lifting the burden from the giant's shoulders. Finally, the tribe is freed - but Dauder Tomb is not.

March on Zaragora

After seeing the general ecstasy of the townsfolk and Auril's removal of Zorl's curse, the giants are much happier and more powerful than before. They walk lightly, and their skins now shine bright blue where they were a light blue before.

As they arrive before the Dauder Tombs, they easily sweep across the Zaragorian minions, throwing them off the cliff face gleefully. They then bless the party with

cold resistance and wish them the best of luck in the holiest of sanctums.

7 - Dauder Tomb

The final piece of this adventure, Dauder Tomb is the place where the frost giant's honored dead are placed.

> At the end of this Tharmount valley, a steep slope leads up for an hour's walk to an incredibly steep and shining grey cliff. On its front, amid large swathes of snow, lies a beautifully carved ice face, with a brilliant blue door. This is Dauder Tomb, place of resting spirits and mighty secrets.

Likely, hordes of Zaragorian minions are waiting for the party's approach towards the bottom of the slope. The group's allies, be they orcs or frost giants, will lead a great battle against these forces whilst the adventurers sneak up and open the doors with the key they somehow gleaned from the frost giants (Zaragora knows the spell that opens them). Beyond the great doors lies a hall of splendid ice with thick stone pillars.

You can find a map of the tomb in the Appendix.

The Tomb

As the adventurers advance down these sacred halls, use the locations below.

> **How Tough are these Fights?**
> The exploration of a mystical frost giant tomb, paired with mighty draconic magic, shouldn't make for too easy of an exploration. Feel free to adapt the number and power of the forces here.

1 - Entry Hall

> Grand stories carved in intricate detail along the hall's ice walls depict the frost giant's long history here. A large door ahead, and two further openings on either side, lead further into the dark tomb. The rough sounds of draconic echo through the otherwise silent place.

The two passages on either side are dark but otherwise open. On either side of the massive central doors, however, lie two large stone columns carved in the style of shields. They produce a light blue shimmering barrier that blocks off the doors (it's considered a 7th level spell), which can only be opened with keys inserted in the keyholes present on either column. If destroyed magically, the barrier reappears after 1 minute.

After a minute, or if the party makes too much of a ruckus, 2 **Zaragorian Soldiers** and 4 **Zaragorian Spwans** enter the room. They are products of draconic frost magic melded with giant golem-magic, causing moving masses of ice and snow with leering draconic faces.

2 - Altar to the All-Father

If the Zaragorian forces of **1** haven't headed to the entry hall already, they're found here.

> This room, with walls of perfectly smooth and mirroring ice, is thick with fog and especially cold. On a massive six-foot slab of ice opposite the entrance stands a singular statue of a strong giant, and hovering above the air in the center of the room is a transparent icy sphere.

DC 18 Religion checks reveal the nature of both altars: the giant serves as a prayer to the All-Father, that he may accept and protect the giants passing to him, and the orb is a symbol of Auril, thanking him for the gifts brought to the giants in life.

The sphere is held up by a 3rd-level spell. Shattering the sphere causes the blasphemer to suffer from a cold-caused illness for a long time.

3 - Meditation Room

Usually a bare room that just about fits a giant that came to meditate about a lost one.

> The perfectly bare room is occupied only by draconic aberrations that lurge and shriek wildly.

These monsters are 2 **Zaragorian Soldiers**.

4 - Commander's Quarters

A previously unused room.

> A single desk stands in this room's center, with a white-skinned dragon-kin leaning over a table full of odd writing. It is talking with two of the magical aberrations. Beyond it lies a nice furry bed, the only sign of comfort you've seen as yet.

The two aberrations are **Zaragorian Soldiers**, whilst the humanoid is a female stone nigfodsel that was permeated by ice magic, transforming her into a **Zaragorian Commander** fiercely loyal to Zaragora, but with its earlier intelligence kept intact. If battle breaks out, the soldiers from **5** rapidly join the fray.

On the desk, among the jumble of draconic magic runes, lies a crystal key - it unlocks one of the magical columns.

5 - Barracks

The use of this room before Zaragora can't be discerned. It is completely bare.

3 **Zaragorian Soldiers** "rest" here: they stand still shaking occasionally in odd magical convulsions. They may already have gone as reinforcements to **4**.

6 - Storeroom

An old storeroom for Kalder Ein visitors.

> Among heaps of old crates and barrels of salted fish and frozen water, a number of the odd elementals

rummage, throwing bits of wood and food everywhere. This operation is overseen by a stronger one.

The searchers here are 6 **Zaragorian Spawns** and 1 **Zaragorian Soldier**. Bits of food can be found spread across the room, as well as huge furs.

7 - Long Hall

Although no encounters or traps are planned here, the Zaragorians may unexpectedly have set up tripwires and falling snow. Add those at your discretion.

A long hallway stretches from the entry hall onward. Glitters of light shine in, refracted from the wall outside to the roof here. It is eerily quiet.

8 - Embalming Chamber

Before Zaragora, frost giants would be prepared here for their final journey. It has the same feeling of omnipotent divine power as the altar has.

A cold mist enshrouds the ground. Three of the weak aberrations work on chiseling a large ice cube on the far wall out, beyond which lies the corpse of a frost giant wearing a gold necklace. A white dragon-kin oversees this work.

These are 3 **Zaragorian Spawns** and 1 **Zaragorian Commander**. She is the twin sister of the commander in **4**.

9 - Tombs

One of the corridors along which alcoves for coffins were dug. The walls are mostly stone.

Along the corridor, a row of huge alcoves fit large coffins of ice, through which the shapes of frost giants can be seen. At the nearer end of the corridor, a group of the dragon-spawn work on chiseling out the corpses to loot their grave-gifts.

8 **Zaragorian Spawn** work on this desecrating task.

10 - Old Tomb Chamber

The Zaragorians are also digging into coffins in this room.

The room you enter is lined similarly by grave alcoves, while its centerpiece is three huge ice spires rising to a thick ice ceiling. More aberrations labor on the coffins.

6 **Zaragorian Spawn** and a **Zaragorian Commander** work here. This commander is a human turned by draconic frost magic. He holds a key to one of the stone columns that open the main doors.

11 - Ancient Hallway

Once the magical barrier has been removed with the use of two keys, the party can enter this long hallway of ice with giant frescoes decorating its sides. Grand ice doors mark the end of the corridor.

As the party enters this area, their ally (Dag'Rutha or Vyralos) comes in, fresh from the battle. They grant their respective boost (temporary HP and damage for Dag'Rutha, resistance to cold damage for Vyralos), then move back off to fend off any reinforcements.

The great ice doors open at the slightest touch.

12 - Tomb of Gyralos (Zaragora's Chamber)

Zaragora the White Death (an **ancient white dragon**) makes her nest in this grandest of rooms.

A massive hexagon room opens up before you, with six tall columns of brilliant ice illuminating the huge ice sarcophagus on the opposite wall, in which a majestic Gyralos is frozen. At his feet lies a large horde of gold and magic items, while at his head is a large hole dug out of the rock and ice. A huge form swoops down from above.

The hole in the roof leads to a near-invisible crack in the rock wall of the mountain some 500 feet above the tomb's entrance.

Zaragora likes to play with her food. She talks with the party, encouraging them to become involved and grouped before suddenly hitting all of them with her ice breath.

Ending

The battle ends when Zaragora is very damaged, or earlier if the party counts spellcasters or such that might hinder her escape. She escapes through the hole in the roof, flying off to leave Thar after her second and final defeat.

You can choose the loot found yourself; some magic items and a fair amount of gold (generally useless in the Mruggenrykz) should be the main thing.

Continue with "Aftermath" below.

Siding with Zaragora
Players sometimes do stupid things, and might decide to ally with Zaragora. This is not a very wise choice: they will slowly be corrupted by draconic frost magic, receive no treasure or other payment, and be put to work constantly.

Aftermath

Peace! Be it in the restoration of the Kalder Ein frost giants and the returning of the place in the calm and wise place it once was, or their eradication and the new Black-Bone rule, or perhaps a different ending, the adventure has drawn to a closure with the defeat of Zaragora.

Kalder Ein Ending

After the defeat of Zaragora, the overjoyed frost giants regain their powers in full, and promise to protect Mittendale and labor well to safeguard life evermore.

Vyralos gifts the party with assortments of electrum, gold, and a magic item of great power (see Magic Items in the Appendix below).

If the party has looted anything from the tomb, the frost giants demand it back so they can return them to the respective sarcophagi when they put Dauder Tombs back in order.

The party may spend the rest of winter (Mittendale Pass is decidedly blocked, and heavy colds start approaching even in the protected Tharmounts) in Kalder Ein, where the Wise Ones are ready to teach the adventurers in ancient secrets (a great flavor for a level up).

Black-Bone Ending

As the adventurers exit Dauder Tombs, they see the whole Black-Bone tribe (minus about 30 warriors) in ranks before the tomb, with Dag'Rutha and his three lieutenants standing directly before the door.

Dag'Rutha demands to be taken to the dragon's corpse, if it is present. They then perform an occult ritual, consuming the dragon's remains and absorbing any remaining draconic power.

The orc leader thanks the party, offering them a large amount of gold, silver, magic items previously looted, as well as Gyralos' magic items.

The party can spend the winter either in the new Dead Guard camp (erected towards the entrance of Mittendale Pass to serve as a taxing spot once thaw comes) or Mittendale, where many houses remain empty. The adventurers can serve as mercenaries of the Black-Bones, or just leave after winter.

A - Name Glossary

You might come across a number of odd names, or simply forget something or other that comes up. Unfamiliar names more specific to this adventure are listed here below.

Auril. The deity of winter and fertility, usually venerated by humans. The patron deity of many wintry settlements, including those of the Mruggenrykz.

Black-Bone. An orcish tribe dabbling in necromantic arts that recently crossed Mittendale Pass and took over Mittendale. Possible patrons for the party.

Dag'Rutha. The leader of the Black-Bones, a powerful orc with the blade and with necromancy.

Dauder Tombs. A resting place for the frost giant's honored dead, built into the slope at the end of Mittendale's Tharmount valley.

Dead Guard. The undead soldiers serving the Black-Bones.

Gyralos. The original leader of the frost giants and father of Vyralos. He is buried in the Dauder Tombs.

Kairden. A powerful wizard in the wintry arts. He served as main messenger with the frost giants and was recognized as a leader of Mittendale.

Kalder Ein. The frost giant home, a great settlement surrounded by walls of ice located above the Mittendale valley.

Lotin. A human female cleric of Auril, last leader of Mittendale's people.

Maerdooth. A large fishing settlement located on the Methflow, about a week's march from Mittendale.

Many Isles. A D&D setting and awesome community, with tons of homebrews like this one as well as all possible kinds of resources. Find it always under manyisles.ch.

Methflow. A large river crossing nearly the entirety of the Mruggenrykz, going from Rogor to the southern coast.

Midterra. A stretch of plains to the west of the Methflow.

Mittendale. A small settlement in the Tharmounts (southern Thar) built predominantly by pilgrims that came for the frost giants.

Mittendale Pass. A treacherous pass, and the only way to reach Mittendale from the south.

Mruggen. Feral dwarf-like monsters hungry for blood, common throughout the Mruggenrykz.

Mruggenrykz. The general area of Intralu after the fall of the Elvish Empire and until the end of the Orc Wars, named after the fierce mruggen. Pronounced *mroohken-RAIKS*.

Muurduk. Lieutenant of Dag'Rutha and leader of the common orcish troops of the Black-Bones.

Nigfodsel. A race of dragon-kin acting as the Many Isles' dragonborn. Corrupted stone nigfodsel serve as Zaragora's commanders.

Oshmondu. The material plane of the Many Isles, in which the Mruggenrykz are located.

Raaza. The Clever, lieutenant of Dag'Rutha and commander of the Dead Guard.

Rogg-Vaasa. A stretch of plains to the east of Midterra, in which Maerdooth is located.

Shagra. The Wise, lieutenant of Dag'Rutha and Mrag-Ka ("logistics officer") of the Black-Bone tribe.

Thar. A massive mountain range in the Mruggenrykz, in which the Tharmounts and most of this adventure is located.

Thar Kingdom. A dwarven kingdom with a large number of enclaves, mainly present underground in central Thar.

Tharmounts. Flat valleys high in the massive mountains of southern Thar.

Vercy Wood. A large wood in the Mruggenrykz to the north of Midterra, generally infested with orcs.

Vyralos. Current leader of the frost giants, and son of Gyralos.

Walmoor. A cold swamp located between Thar and Maerdooth.

Zaragora. A white dragon that elected residence in the sacred Dauder Tombs, spawning aberrations of draconic and golem magic that protect her.

B - Magic Items

These custom-made magic items can be inserted at any point in the adventure, and should be correctly balanced for use in this adventure. Whenever loot or gifts are granted to the party, you can quickly look through these and see if one or the other could be granted to the party.

Spells
Some of these magic items grant the ability to cast spells. You can find those in the Many Isles, in the Spell Index.

Black-Bone Blade

Weapon (any sword), rare (requires attunement)

Wielded by Dag'Rutha, this huge black scimitar has a white ivory handle, a stark contrast to the glimmering dark metal.

You gain a +2 bonus to hAttack and damage rolls made with this weapon; additionally, whenever you hit on an attack, you can choose to expend a hit die to deal an additional 2d6 necrotic damage. You cannot use this ability more than once per turn.

Bone-Binder Staff

Staff, rare (requires attunement)

In Raaza the Clever's possession, it is made out of bone with a dark leather wrapping around the center. A crimson red orb floats above its tip.

You gain a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls. Additionally, the staff has 5 charges, and regains 1d4+1 charges daily at dawn. You can expend the given number of charges to cast any of these spells, without expending a spell slot:

Wound, 3rd level (2 charges)
Banshee's Wail, 3rd level (2 charges)
Cause Disease, 3rd level (2 charges)
Itch, 4th level (3 charges)

Claws of the Tundra Stalker

Wondrous Item (amulet), uncommon (requires attunement)

Decorated tusks hand on a thing blue string imbued with frost giant magic. You deal an additional 1d6 cold damage with your unarmed strikes; additionally, if you are a druid, when you Wild Shape, any claw attacks you make deal an additional 2d6 cold damage. Any animal you wild shape in gains a tinge of the cold lands, and has blue or grey eyes.

Crystalline Cape

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

Crystal scales reflect the sun off in a myriad of colors; however, whenever the wielder wills it, they meld into a brilliant pattern that camouflages with the eternal snows.

While wearing this cape, you have a +5 bonus to Stealth rolls made in white or crystalline environments. Additionally, you have advantage on saving throws against cold effects.

Frost's Edge

Weapon (any blade), rare (requires attunement)

This blade's metal seems to be made of pure ice. You gain a +2 bonus to hAttack and damage rolls made with this weapon. Additionally, you can will the powers of the frost to come forth, dealing an additional 2d6 cold damage on your next three hits. Once you've used this ability twice, you can't do so again until you take a short or long rest.

Kalder Shot Bow

Weapon (any bow), rare

An ancient willow serving as the bow's wood, intricate giant runes are carved throughout the hilt; the weapon resonates with frost giant magic. Its string is a thin blue line that glows softly.

You gain a +2 bonus to hAttack and damage rolls. Additionally, the bow has 10 charges, and regains 2d6 charges daily at dawn. You can expend a charge when you make an attack roll, summoning an arrow of ice and firing it. This arrow deals an additional 1d8 cold damage, then shatters into shards.

Necromancer's Ring

Ring, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Cracked shards of obsidian held together by a tough band of crimson red metal, this ring is worn by a few of the Black-Bones' more powerful casters.

This ring has 3 charges. As an action, you can expend 1 charge to cast *Wound* as a 2nd-level spell, or 2 charges to cast *Vampiric Touch* as a 3rd-level spell. The ring regains all expended charges daily at dusk.

C - Monster Statblocks

Most monsters featured in this adventure can be found in the *Monster Manual*, along with some from *Volo's Guide to Monsters*. Any special kind are listed here.

Mruggen

These savage dwarf-like creatures roam the Mruggenrykz in search of food, killing prey through devastating hit-and-run assaults from a place of hiding.

Mruggen
Medium humanoid, chaotic evil
Armor Class 7, 14
Hit Points 17 2d12+5
Speed 20ft

STR	DEX	CON
13 +1	13 +1	15 +2
INT	**WIS**	**CHA**
10 0	10 0	8 -1

Saving Throws Constitution +4
Skills Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities Fire
Damage Resistances Cold
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Dwarvish, Elvish, Mruggen
Challenge 1

Bloodthirsty. If the mruggen can see an enemy within 15 feet of it, it can use its action to move up to the creature and make a bite attack.

Swift Escape. As a bonus action, the mruggen can Dash or Hide.

Actions

Bite. +3/5 to attack, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8+1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its HP maximum reduced by 6 and be unable to use reactions until the end of the target's next turn. The creature can regain its lost HP maximum by completing a short or long rest.



Black-Bone Tribe

These savage monsters have invaded Mittendale, in the hope of acquiring Dauder Tomb's great treasures.

Dead Guard
Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class h14 d12
Hit Points 80 (11d8 + 31)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	HON
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills. Perception +3, Intimidation +2
Senses. darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages. Understands orcish but can't speak
Challenge. 5 (1'800)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the dead guard can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Inflict Wounds (1/Day). As an action, the dead guard can innately cast *Wound* as a 3rd-level spell.

Actions

Sickened Blade. Melee Weapon Attack: h+8 d+4, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 10 (1d12 + 6) slashing damage, plus 2d6 necrotic damage.

Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: h+5 d+3, reach 5ft or 20/60 feet thrown, one target. *Hit* 12 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage, plus an additional 2d6 necrotic damage.

Black-Bone Necromancer

Medium humanoid (orc), lawful evil

Armor Class h12 d9
Hit Points62 (8d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws. Wis +4
Senses. darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages. Orcish, Common
Challenge. 6 (2'300)

Spellcasting. The orc is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *drain, licking flames, mage hand*
1st (4 slots): *dark capture, ice shards, witch bolt*
2nd (3 slots): *darkness, hold person, scorching ray*
3rd (2 slots): *animate dead, cold end, counterspell, rahsaad's ruinous insight*

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: h+7 d+3, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, plus 4d6 necrotic damage.



Dag'Rutha

Medium humanoid (orc), lawful evil

Armor Class h16 d12
Hit Points 120 (12d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws. Str +8, Con +7, Hon +6
Skills. Intimidation +6
Senses. darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages. Orcish, Common
Challenge. 9 (5'000)

Spellcasting. Dag'Rutha is an 8th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *drain, licking flames, mage hand*
1st (4 slots): *dark capture, rage of the bear, witch bolt*
2nd (3 slots): *darkness, hold person, scorching ray*
3rd (3 slots): *animate dead, cold end, counterspell, rahsaad's ruinous insight*
4th (2 slots): *blight, wall of fire*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the orc fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Dag'Rutha makes 2 attacks with his Black-Bone Blade.

Black-Bone Blade. Melee Weapon Attack: h+8 d+4, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage, plus 2d6 necrotic damage.

Legendary Actions

Attack. Dag'Rutha makes a melee attack.
Cast a Spell. He casts a spell of 2nd level or lower.
Ethereal Regeneration. He regains 2d8 hit points as he calls upon the power of orcish spectres.

Kalder Ein Forces

The legendary frost giant home of Kalder Ein is led by cunning and strong Wise Ones, while magically summoned Snow Golems protect the settlement's walls from any enemies.

Wise One

Huge giant, neutral good

Armor Class h12 d4
Hit Points 82 (8d12+30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	HON
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws. Con +8, Wis +7
Skills. Arcana +6, Perception +7
Senses. darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Damage Immunities. cold
Languages. Giant, Common
Challenge. 7 (2'900)

Innate Spellcasting. The giant's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *buffeting blast, detect magic, endurance*
3/day each: *ice knife, faerie fire*
2/day each: *frostbound blade, propel*
1/day each: *cold end, snowstorm*

Actions

Mulitattack. The giant makes 2 melee attacks.

Greatspear. Melee Weapon Attack: h+11 d+2, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit* 17 (2d12 + 4) piercing damage

Snow Golem

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class h16 d0
Hit Points 96 (12d10 + 30)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	HON
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Vulnerabilities. bludgeoning, fire
Damage Resistances. Physical damage from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities. cold, poison
Condition Immunities. Exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious
Senses. darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., pp 10
Languages Giant, Terran, Aquan
Challenge. 5 (1'800 xp)

Ice Glide. The elemental can move through ice and snow. While doing so, it does not disturb the material it moves through.

Actions

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: h+10 d-1, 1 target, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage

Zaragora's Legions

The powerful white dragon Zaragora's emanations of draconic magic wrought deadly followers from the ice, led by two ruthless humanoids unquestioningly serving their mistress.

Zaragorian Spawn and Soldiers

These small elementals are wrought from the ice and snow by Zaragora's draconic magic clashing and melding with the tomb's elemental power.

Zaragoran Spawn are weak results of this intermingling. They use kobold stats, with an added immunity to cold damage as well as vulnerability to fire.

Zaragoran Soldiers resulted from more powerful giant's golem magic being shaped by draconic force. They use kobold dragonshield (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*) stats, with added immunity to cold damage as well as vulnerability to fire.



Zaragorian Commander

These two stone nigfodsel were caught by Zaragora's charm and mutated by icy draconic magic, transforming them into unquestioning and highly skilled servants of their mistress.

Commander

Medium humanoid (nigfodsel), lawful evil

Armor Class h18 d12
Hit Points 75 (10d8+20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	HON
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws. Str +6, Con +5
Skills. Athletics +6, Perception +3
Senses. darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 15ft., passive Perception 13
Damage Resistances. cold
Languages. Draconic, Common
Challenge. 6 (2'300)

Actions

Mulitattack. The nigfodsel makes 2 longsword attacks.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: h+6 d+3, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage, or 12 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Frost Breath (Recharge 5-6). The nigfodsel exhales icy air in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 31 (9d6) cold damage on a fail, or half as much on a success.

Reactions

Parry. If the nigfodsel is wielding its longsword, it can add 2 to its dAC, or 5 if it is wielding the blade two-handed, against a melee attack. It must be able to see its attacker.

D - Maps

