ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN AURIL'S ABODDE



DM's resources for Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden Chapter 5: Auril's Abode

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ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN AURIL'S ABODE



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INTRODUCTION

CEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN IS A chilly campaign that will take your characters from 1st to beyond 10th level, as they face frosty foes, deeply buried dangers, and dark deities, while reshaping the fate of Icewind Dale – and perhaps the entire Sword Coast along with it!

This campaign has an evocative setting with a multitude of interesting locations and awesome quests that will have your players engaged – and maybe even a bit nervous – as they are haunted and harrowed by all the magnificent evils Icewind Dale has to offer.

This download, which covers Chapter 5 of the campaign book, provides you with tools and thoughts that will help you make *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* an exciting experience for your players – and much more manageable for you. It is strongly recommended that you read through the campaign book before using these resources. And always remember, the advice and ideas given here are options – you know best what works at your table.

This download contains:

Auril's Role. Advice on how to handle Auril's role in the chapter without disjointing the larger story – including an option to replacing Auril with a fearsome frost giant druid!

Getting to the Island. Suggestions on how to make the characters' journey to the island a bit more exciting.

Pacing Chapter 5. An in-depth discussion of the chapter's pacing and a method for structuring the chapter so it remains tense and exciting.

Island of Solstice and Grimskalle. A closer look at each of the locations featured in Chapter 5 and advice on how to run them, including adjustments to Auril's tests to make them more fun for both you and the players.

4 Full-color, VTT-ready Encounter Maps. Run encounters in 'Underwater Shipwrecks', the 'Garden of Death', or by the 'Ice Statues'.

Nass Lantomir Handout. A handout for any player who's character becomes possessed by Nass Lantomir.

Encounter Sheets. Most of the creatures from the chapter arranged neatly together on sheets so you don't have to flip through multiple books at the table!

Follow Along for More

These DM's resources are the fourth in a series of resources for *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. **Sign up to our mailing list here** to receive notifications and special discounts when new DM's resources are released. Also **follow us on Twitter** for more D&D-related fun, give-aways, and free content.

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Chapter 5: Auril's Abode

N CHAPTER 5: AURIL'S ABODE, THE ADVENTURERS embark on their quest to end Auril's Everlasting Rime, beginning with a journey to the frigid and isolated Island of Solstice in the Sea of Moving Ice, where they must battle fearsome foes and undergo dangerous trials to find *the Codicil of White*.

While the characters' trip to Island of Solstice may seem as just a simple stepping-stone to get to the lost Netherese necropolis of Ythryn, it could end up being the most dangerous step of their journey, as they can potentially face off with Auril herself! This also makes the Island of Solstice a difficult location for the DM to run – how do you navigate the deadly environs of the island, Auril's tests, and a potential run-in with a deity?

OVERVIEW

The structure of Chapter 5: Auril's Abode is quite straight-forward, although it is not entirely linear. In this chapter, the characters are meant to:

- Travel to the Island of Solstice.
- Explore the island and find Professor Skant.
- Battle foes inside Grimskalle.
- Pass Auril's tests and acquire the Codicil of White.

As a location-based chapter, Chapter 5: Auril's Abode shouldn't be too difficult to run – but appearances can be deceiving. The chapter presents a few major challenges to the DM, which are addressed on the following pages:

- How to handle Auril's role in the chapter without disjointing the story or how to replace her entirely.
- How to handle the characters' journey to the island, so it doesn't become linear or boring.
- How to handle the pacing of the chapter, so the characters' stay on the island is tense and exciting.
- How to run the various locations on the island, including Auril's tests in the dungeon of Grimskalle.

AURIL'S ROLE

As the adventure is written, Auril herself is present on the Island of Solstice, which means that it is possible for the characters to encounter and even defeat her!

Defeating a deity is an interesting prospect, but if the characters' main motivation for finding the lost city of Ythryn is to end Auril's Everlasting Rime, they are robbed of that motivation if they defeat Auril on the Island of Solstice. If that happens, the adventure has, in essence, concluded two chapters too early and the excursion to Ythryn ends up being little more than an afterthought, rather than the climax of an epic adventure. From a story-telling perspective, this can make the adventure feel a bit disjointed.

However, while the potential to defeat Auril and end her Everlasting Rime midway through the adventure is something the writers have emphasized in interviews and which the book also takes care to mention regularly, it doesn't actually seem like it is necessarily the way events are intended or expected to unfold. It is, at the very least, not something that needs to happen – in fact, the adventure may work better if it doesn't. Below are some suggestions for how you can avoid that a meeting with Auril derails the adventure and disjoints the story.

AVOIDING AURIL

On page 203, we're told that when Auril casts her spell each night, she "is gone for several hours, during which time the characters can explore Grimskalle without fear of running into her". This seems like a sound suggestion – and is a good way to avoid that the adventure is disrupted by Auril's defeat on the island. To help you steer the party toward avoiding Auril instead of fighting her, you can have NPCs with the party recognize Auril's presence and urge the characters to wait until she's gone before delving into Grimskalle:

- Vellynne can suggest that: "I can sense Auril's presence. I think we can explore the isle, but let's steer clear of the fortress until she leaves."
- **Professor Skant** can inform the party that: "Auril herself resides on this island, but she leaves each night to weave her spell. I don't think she will bother with us, as long as we are careful not to disturb her."
- Nass Lantomir's ghost can also tell the party that: "Auril lives in that fortress, but leaves each night to cast her spell of darkness. Only a fool would break into a goddess' home while she's there to defend it!"

It's recommended that you have Auril be away for around 8 hours, as it can help set a good pace for the adventure, which is something that is explained in more detail under 'Pacing Chapter 5' later in this document.

ENCOUNTER WITH AURIL

If the characters choose to ignore these warnings and end up encountering Auril anyway, it isn't too difficult to ensure that the goddess doesn't die. As the book suggests (pg. 206), you can just have teleport to her roc and make a stand there or even flee on the back of the huge beast, if she needs to. Even so, allowing the characters to encounter Auril can create two additional issues: if she is nearly defeated, it makes her a lot less scary – and what happens if she defeats the party?

DEFEATING AURIL

If the characters defeat Auril and send her fleeing, you should make clear to the party what the book makes clear to the DM several times: Auril is weakened because she devotes much of her power to continually casting her spell of darkness. If the characters send the goddess fleeing, Vellynne, Professor Skant, or another NPC can let the characters know that:

"It is your luck that you face her in such a weakened state. Keeping the spell of darkness over Icewind Dale must take a heavy toll on her. Make no mistake – had she not been weakened so, there would have been nothing left of you but shard of ice and frozen statues!"

If no NPCs are with the party, you can have any character with a decent Intelligence score or proficiency in Arcana or Religion realize as much on their own.

Defeated by Auril

If the characters face off with Auril but are defeated, Auril will let them flee to discourage others from visiting her island. Still, adventurers being adventurers, they may not decide to flee before it is too late. You can encourage them to do so by:

- Making it clear how superior Auril is during the fight she smirks slightly after being hit, disdainfully reduces a character to 0 hit points with a wave of her finger, etc.
- Having Auril hold back once the outcome of the fight is secure, not acting on her turn, but smiling cruelly and using Legendary Actions to punish any character that continues to fight against her.
- Having friendly NPCs such as Professor Skant or Vellynne urge the characters to flee while they can.

If all else fails, you can have Auril reduce the characters to 0 hit points either with nonlethal damage, or stabilizing them afterward, and have the characters awake in 'I6. Garden of Death', saved from freezing to death by one of the NPCs that helped them get to the isle, a friendly awakened walrus, or a similar creature. While humiliated and defeated, the characters can still explore Grimskalle – although they have better wait until Auril leaves the island this time around.

THE RIME IS EVERLASTING

If you like the idea of the characters potentially defeating Auril, but want to keep the characters' motivation intact, you can decide that Auril's spell is permanent. In this case, Auril isn't setting off from Grimskalle each night to cast her spell to uphold it, but to strengthen it. The changes her spell has made to Icewind Dale's climate will not reverse on their own, but Auril isn't satisfied yet, so she recasts the spell each night, making the spell stronger - the climate colder, the snowfall heavier, the blizzards more frequent - with each casting. If you haven't begun running the adventure yet, you can let the characters know this from the start - explaining how the weather is getting gradually worse - or you can just decide that this process will take centuries, making it so slow as to be imperceptible to a mortal, but little more than the blink of an eye for a goddess.

By making this simple change, Auril's defeat is merely a delay for the goddess, who can continue her work as she returns on the next winter solstice. To actually end her spell, the characters will have to find the *mythallar* in Ythryn. Professor Skant or Vellynne can tell the party this, or a character with a decent Intelligence score or proficiency in Arcana may realize it on their own.



Replacing Auril

If you want to keep Auril mysterious and ominous, you can also remove her from the island entirely, and instead replace her with the frost giant druid **Geluvicken**.

AURIL'S SERVANT

Geluvicken is the daughter of the frost giant Queen Vassavicken, who lays entombed underneath Grimskalle, and is one of Auril's most zealous followers. In this scenario, it is Geluvicken who takes off from Grimskalle each night to strengthen Auril's spell. Geluvicken is also the hidden hand behind the frost druid activity in Icewind Dale – it was she, who sent Ravisin and her sister to ravage Ten-Towns (pg. 85) and/or Yselm to lure the characters into a trap (pg. 103).

RUNNING GELUVICKEN

Like her goddess, Geluvicken is arrogant and aloof, but she also possesses a great fury and an unyielding devotion to her goddess. She will attack at any perceived slight to Auril and will never accept defeat, fighting on to the bitter end. Read more about running an encounter with her under 'Encounter with Geluvicken' later in this document.

Geluvicken's Defeat

Using Geluvicken instead of Auril also serves another purpose: her defeat allows you to introduce Auril as the adventure's main villain in a more ominous way. When Geluvicken is nearly defeated, or the characters are close to escaping from her with *the Codicil of White* in hand, read or paraphrase:

The frost giant roars in anger as specks of snow and shards of ice whirl around her, slowly lifting her until she hovers several feet of the ground. Turning her face to the skies, the giant yells: "Frostmaiden, I have failed you! Accept my final offering - this pitiful mortal coil and my eternal soul - so that you may deliver your cold judgement to those who have wronged you. Auril, I beseech you, use me as your vessel!" While the giant speaks, rime spreads across her body, until she is completely covered in a thick layer of ice, just as the last words cross her lips. The giant's body stills then, as does the whirlwind of ice and snow, as if time itself has stopped. Creaking loudly, the giant's head turns toward you, eyes glowing with a fierce, blue light. She looks straight at you – through you, almost, her gaze as cold and sharp as icicles - and says in a voice that is simultaneously as soft as a whisper and as deafening as thunder: "I see you." With those words, the giant's frozen body and all her belongings explode into millions of small, icy shards that come clashing to the ground underneath it, until there's nothing left of the giant but scattered piles of ice and snow - and the echo of an eerie voice on the wind: "I see you..."

Geluvicken's sacrifice has brought Auril – or at least an aspect of her divinity – to the Material Plane. The goddess has come to finish the work that has been started – and to get vengeance on the adventurers, and prevent them from undoing her spell. Luckily, Auril is yet too weak to manifest in a physical form, and must bide her time. This gives you a chance to introduce Auril in her various forms later in the adventure, as she stalks the party through the snow, before eventually bringing her full strength to bear against them in Ythryn. The DM's resources for Chapter 6 and 7 cover this in detail.

SUMMARY

You can avoid Auril's presence on the island causing problems by:

- · Encouraging the characters to avoid her.
- Having Auril flee instead of dying or allowing the characters to escape her with their lives.
- Having Auril's Everlasting Rime remain in effect even if the goddess is killed.
- Replace Auril with the frost giant Geluvicken.

Geluvicken

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor) Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75) Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws STR +10, CON +9, WIS +9, CHA +5 Skills Athletics +10, Nature +5, Perception +9, Survival +9 Damage Immunities Cold Senses Passive Perception 19 Languages Common, Druidic, Giant Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Geluvicken fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Geluvicken is a 15th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): druidcraft, frostbite, produce flame, resistance
- 1st level (4 slots): fog cloud, ice knife, thunderwave
- 2nd level (3 slots): hold person, moonbeam, spike growth
- 3rd level (3 slots): dispel magic, sleet storm, slow, wind wall
- 4th level (3 slots): freedom of movement, ice storm
- 5th level (2 slots): commune with nature, cone of cold
- 6th level (1 slot): bones of the earth, investiture of ice
- 7th level (1 slot): whirlwind
- 8th level (1 slot): control weather

Actions

Multiattack. Geluvicken makes two attacks with her staff.

Staff of Auril. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 25 (3d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) cold damage and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target is restrained as ice forms around its legs. As an action, a restrained creature can attempt to free itself or another creature within its reach from the ice, doing so with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check.

Stomp. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Frostbite. A creature within 60 ft. Geluvicken can see must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target takes 10 (3d6) cold damage and has disadvantage on the next weapon attack it makes before the ends of its next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Geluvicken can take 3 legendary actions. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Geluvicken regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Cast Cantrip. Geluvicken casts a cantrip.

Stomp. Geluvicken makes one Stomp attack.

Staff of Auril (Costs 2 Actions). Geluvicken makes one attack with her staff.

Getting to the Island

Before the chapter can being in earnest, the characters have to get to the Island of Solstice. This means that they need to learn *where* the codicil is and *how* they can get to it. In the book, both questions are answered by Vellynne Harpell, who tells the characters that *the Codicil of White* is on the Island of Solstice and that the sperm whale Angajuk can take them there – which is very convenient, but may also feel a bit too easy.

In the DM's resources for Chapter 2: Icewind Dale, you can find advice on how you can make Vellynne's quest a bit less linear, so the characters have to figure out that they can fin *the Codicil of White* on the Island of Solstice from various locations in Icewind Dale, such as 'Jarlmoot' or the '*Dark Duchess*'. Below is advice on how you expand on this, by making the characters active participants in deciding on *how* to get to the island.

How to get to the Island

When the characters learn about the Island of Solstice – whether from Vellynne or another source – you can have characters local to Icewind Dale know that:

- The Sea of Moving Ice is hard to navigate. Securing a ship that will sail there is likely to be both difficult and expensive. The closest port where such a ship *could* be is the prison 'Revel's End'.
- The awakened sperm whale Angajuk, who resides near the coast of the Sea of Moving Ice, has reportedly offered rides to humanoids in the past.
- The goliaths living in the Spine of the World are often seen riding on the backs of griffons, who can fly fast and far across Icewind Dale.

If none of the characters are local, or you just want them to work a little more for the information, you can have Vellynne suggest that they ask around in Ten-Towns. There they shouldn't have a hard time learning more – perhaps from an old human fisherman named Darlan 'Four-fingers', who's lost most of his fingers to frostbite:

"You's looking to get onto the Sea of Moving Ice? Eh, blasted waters those – and cold as Stygia too! There's a few brave ship captains who travel there, taking goods and no-gooders to and from Revel's End up north. Oh yeah, and then there's Angajuk, the ol' talkin' whale. Once hauled my cousin's friend out 'em waters – saved her life, most likely. I's heard it sometimes takes on passengers!"

If the party speaks with Darlan in a tavern, you can have Rosie Ogord, a diminutive halfling trapper, chime in:

"If you're not looking to fish, but just want to get there – and get there quick – maybe you should ask the goliaths living down by the Spine of the World. I see them flying by on griffons from time-to-time – now, that's traveling in style!"

Armed with this information, the characters should be allowed to make a decision about how to proceed on their own. The book provides ways for the characters to acquire each method of transportation – befriending Angajuk, paying Sharlasta Stormsword, or persuading the goliath tribes – which are all serviceable ways to proceed. If the characters end up heading toward the goliaths, you may want to take a look at the excellent adventure **Wyrmdoom Hunt** by Dan Kahn, which expands on the quest to end the goliath feud.

On the Way to the Island

Figuring out how to get to the island is one thing, actually getting there is another. In quick summary, the book says that:

- Angajuk travels there on a leisurely, picturesque journey that takes three days.
- The *Ravenous*, Sharlasta Stormsword's ship, gets to the island in five days.
- The book doesn't say how long it takes to get there on griffons, but if we assume a pace similar to previous publications and the chardalyn dragon, they should make the journey in about 12–18 hours.

If you want to keep control of the pacing (see the next page), it makes sense to have the characters arrive in the middle of the day, so they have time to explore the island before Auril/Geluvicken departs for her nightly trip.

A ROC ON THE ROAD

If you want to spice the journey up a bit, you can also have the characters run into Auril/Geluvicken and her roc along the way, which also allows you to foreshadow her presence on the Island of Solstice. Regardless of their method of travel, the characters may run into the roc and its passenger as they get closer to the island:

- If traveling aboard Angajuk, the Sperm Whale must come up for air every 90 minutes. On one of these occasions, it – and the characters – senses the giant roc fly by overhead. Fierce and hungry, the roc dives down toward the sperm whale, which panics and quickly begins to dive under the surface.
- If traveling on the *Ravenous*, the characters are awakened – if they are sleeping below – by a loud, bird-like cawing and a terrified shriek, as the roc dives down to snatch one of the *Ravenous*' sailors off the deck. Characters who are on the deck or who get there quickly can see the enormous bird flying away, its victim's shrieks slowly becoming less audible.
- If traveling by griffon, the sound of the roc's huge, flapping wings precede it, causing the griffons to panic and try to hide. Have the players roll a DC 14 group Dexterity (Stealth) check for the griffons (+2). On a success, the griffons quickly dive away, allowing the characters to see the roc as it flies swiftly past above. On a failure, the roc attacks one of the griffons that failed the check, before quickly being ordered away by its rider (see below).

In all cases, Auril/Geluvicken wants to waste no time with the roc's escapades and commands it to fly away even if attacked or provoked. With a speed of 120 ft., it is highly unlikely that the characters can catch up with it, but you can allow them to gain a glimpse of its rider – either a horned, owl-like humanoid (Auril's first form), or a fearsome-looking frost giant dressed in winter clothes.

SUMMARY

You can expand upon the characters' journey to the island by making these changes:

- The characters know about all three methods of travel or learn about them from locals, and can choose which method they wish to pursue.
- To allow you to control the chapter's pace, have the characters arrive in the middle of the day.
- Have the characters briefly encounter Auril/Geluvicken and her roc while en route to the island.

PACING CHAPTER 5

Assuming the character faces every possible challenge in Chapter 5 – which they could, if they wanted to – they will have to contend with:

- Ice mephit (I1)
- Frost giant skeleton (I2)
- 20 ghouls (I2)
- 2 giant sharks (I2)
- 5 merrow (I2)
- 3 sea hags (I2)
- Nass Lantomir's ghost (I3)
- 7 yetis (I5)
- Abominable yeti (I5)
- Ice troll (I6)
- Frost giant (G3)
- 6 ice mephits (G6)
- 7 piercers
- Auril or Geluvicken (G8)
- Roc (G9)
- 2 frost giant skeletons (G12)
- 6 giant vultures and Isarr Kronenstrom (G19)

In addition to these challenges, the characters may also run into various other hazards, minor traps, and possibly suffer exhaustion due to extreme cold and Auril's tests.

Looking down this list, a group of 7th-level characters will be hard-pressed to survive all these encounters within a single day of adventuring. But, if the characters are allowed unlimited rests, many of the challenges in the chapter become negligible. Complicating pacing even further, the chapter's toughest fight – a showdown with Auril or her powerful druid follower – can possibly happen in the middle of the chapter.

Generally, you want a pace that ensures that each day of adventuring – the period between long rests – is tense and exciting, without being too lethal for the characters. To do this, we must create opportunities for a long rest when it is needed, while also making sure that the characters can't abuse long rests to the point where encounters never become dangerous. Below are some of the ways we can accomplish this in chapter 5.

Setting a Deadline

The easiest way to ensure that the characters don't 'spam' long rests is by setting a deadline for their time on the island. If the characters have been transported here by one of the means provided in the book (pg. 197), this is rather easy. The sperm whale Angajuk, the ship from Revel's End, and the griffons from Skytower Shelter, won't remain at the island for more than 24 hours because of the island's incredible cold and dangerous inhabitants. This deadline allows the characters, at most, two long rests, if even that.

Note that using a 24-hour deadline will require you to make changes to some of Auril's tests. See 'Test of Endurance' and 'Test of Isolation' later in this document.

Restricting the Long Rest

Another way we can control the pacing of the chapter is to control *when* the characters can take a long rest. We can do this by changing the regional effects described in the book (pg. 198), which says that creatures without resistance or immunity to cold damage only regain hit points equal to their Constitution modifier when expending a Hit Die during a short rest.

This is already a bit of a weird effect, because it heavily incentivizes that the characters take long rests instead

of short rests. Usually, you would want the characters to take short rests while at a dangerous adventure location, so that they can get a little – but not everything – back before each encounter. By making short rests worse, you're making the characters take more long rests, which can really mess up the chapter's pacing. You can fix this by changing the rule to:

• Creatures that lack resistance or immunity to cold damage can't gain the benefit of a long rest while within 1 mile of the island.

There's one caveat here: this regional effect is only in place while Auril/Geluvicken is on the island. This means that the characters can actually take a long rest, just not whenever they want to. You can use this to control *when* the characters take a long rest.

TIMING THE LONG REST

Assuming that all characters don't have resistance to cold damage, they will have to do without a long rest while they make their initial exploration of the Island of Solstice – during which they may face the various encounters on the shipwrecks, the yetis, the ice troll, and Nass Lantomir's ghost. This should be doable for a 7th-level party in a single day of adventuring, assuming that they are just a bit clever about it.

However, once they find Professor Skant, they are told that this effect is only in place while Auril/Geluvicken is on the island. Conveniently, Auril/Geluvicken is usually away for most of the night, perhaps even as much as 8–10 hours. The characters now have a difficult choice to make: will they use this time to take a long rest, and then head into the fortress knowing that Auril/Geluvicken may get back soon after, or will they forego the long rest and take advantage of Auril/Geluvicken's departure to investigate the fortress without fear of running into her?

If the characters have taken care of business on the island itself before going into Grimskalle, they can potentially encounter an elderly frost giant, ice mephits, piercers, frost giant skeletons, a Reghed tribe leader and giant vultures, and Auril's other tests. Once again, this makes for a decent day of adventuring for a party of 7th-level characters.

Whether or not they will have to contend with Auril/ Geluvicken is up to you. If they take a long rest before heading in, you can have them run into her somewhere inside the fortress, or as they're trying to leave with *the Codicil of White* (see 'Encounter with Geluvicken' later in this document). If they press on without a rest, the challenges inside the fortress may be difficult enough to handle even without Auril/Geluvicken showing up, and you can allow the characters to slip away just before she returns to the fortress.

SUMMARY

To maintain a good pace in Chapter 5, you may want to:

- Set a deadline of 24 hours for the characters' stay on the island, by having Angajuk, Sharlasta, or the griffons insist that they will only stay for that long.
- Change the regional effect so that characters without cold resistance or immunity can't take a long rest while Auril/Geluvicken is on the island.
- Give the characters the opportunity to take a long rest as Auril/Geluvicken leaves the island on her nightly flight to cast her spell of cold and darkness.

RUNNING CHAPTER 5

On the following pages you will find advice on how to run the various encounters and locations on the Island of Solstice and inside the fortress of Grimskalle.

Island of Solstice

The Island of Solstice is an interesting location that presents several challenges of varying difficulty to the party. Below is a closer look at some of the locations on the island, including advice on how to run them. Only locations where advice is offered are listed.

II. RUINED DOCK

If they arrive by ship or on the back of Angajuk, the characters' first 'challenge' is the ruined dock.

Climbing the Dock. An Athletics check is required to climb up the docks, but there's no consequences to failure, which makes the check pointless. You can either decide that no check is required, or that a character who fails the check falls 20 feet into the frigid water, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage and potentially suffering exhaustion from the cold water.

Söpo the Ice Mephit. An ice mephit waits for the characters here, ready to act as a 'helpful' guide. It only speaks Aquan or Auran, however, making it very unlikely that characters can communicate with it. You may want to have Söpo speak broken common, so it can welcome the characters as they arrive atop the stairs:

A small, winged creature of ice sits perched at the top of the stairs, its eyes lighting up as it sees you. "Welcome, welcome, to the Island of Solstice. So pleasant it is to have visitors. Söpo, am I – at your service," rasps the creature, shaking snow off its wings before continuing: "It is your first time here, yes – Söpo has not seen you before, no, never. Let Söpo show you the beautiful island, yes. Any questions you have, Söpo shall answer!"

If the characters haven't acquired the *professor orb* yet, and you want to make certain that they do so, you can have Söpo mention that:

"Söpo has had no visitors for a long time. And the last to come was alone and wet, and very cold, oh so very cold. The Frostmaiden's cold touch took her before Söpo could talk much with her. Nothing poor Söpo could do to warm her, no," the creature says apologetically, shrugging his icy shoulders. "She lies not far from here, no, not far at all."

I2. Shipwrecks

The various shipwrecks around the isle hold different challenges. These are, in essence, mini-encounters the characters can take on at their own leisure – but only if they can withstand the cold of the frigid water and by diving down to each shipwreck, if they have no other means of breathing underwater. While none of the encounters pose a particularly difficult challenge to 7th-level characters, the characters may get themselves into trouble if they decide to thoroughly search through every ship without taking a long rest.

The Hags and the Professor. If having Professor Skant just lying about the isle seems a bit too easy, or you just want the characters to explore some of the shipwrecks, you can have the orb still be on Nass Lantomir's wrecked ship – coincidentally also the ship where three sea hags have made their lair. The hags – Ellin, Marlin, and Atrunia – have no great need for the *professor orb*, although they enjoy the polite and intelligent conversation Skant provides. They will trade Professor Skant for an ice troll heart and can point the characters toward 'I6. Garden of Death', if the characters haven't already defeated the troll there.

The characters can, of course, also just choose to kill the sea hags and take the orb and their other treasures. In either case, Professor Skant is relieved to be freed from the sea hags, whom it describes as "passionate, but also quite exhausting, conversation partners."

Replacing the Trident. A +2 trident is a strong weapon, but also not very interesting. If you want to, you can replace it with a *freezing trident of the ocean* (made using **Nybor's Tome of Enchanted Weapons**).

Maps. This download provides maps of two Sunken Shipwrecks, which you can use to run encounters in or around the sunken shipwrecks.

Freezing Trident of the Ocean

Weapon (trident), very rare (requires attunement) This trident seems to be made entirely of azure ice.

Freezing. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d6 cold damage and its speed is reduced by 10 feet (to a minimum of 10 feet) until the start of your next turn.

Ocean. This weapon has 3 charges. While you carry it, you can use an action and expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells (save DC 15): *water breathing* (1 charge), *dominate beast* (1 charge, can only target a beast that has an innate swimming speed), or *control water* (2 charges). The weapon regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

I3. NASS LANTOMIR'S GHOST

This is where the characters – very conveniently – find Nass Lantomir and the *professor orb*. There's a few potential issues with this location.

Finding the Corpse. Nass Lantomir's corpse is a bit out of the way, so unless the characters make a point out of investigating the entire island, there's no guarantee that they will find it on their own – which is a problem, if you want them to have the orb. You can make discovery of the corpse more likely by having Söpo tell them about Nass' corpse when they arrive (as described under '11. Ruined Dock' on the previous page), or by pointing out the corpse ('there seems to be a humanoid shape buried underneath a layer of snow') to the characters if they arrive on the back of griffons.

The Convenient Orb. It is very convenient that Nass is still holding on to the *professor orb* when the characters find her. If you want the characters to put a bit more effort into finding the orb, you can have the orb be in the sea hags' possession (as suggested under '12. Shipwrecks' on the previous page) or even have it be stolen by murderous sahuagin, as detailed in **the adventure Temple of the Four Gods by Dan Kahn**. In either case, Nass Lantomir's ghost – if the characters have an opportunity to speak with her – lets the characters know that she didn't have time to grab the orb before swimming to shore, which means it likely went down with the ship.

Nass Lantomir's Ghost. The book describes how the ghost tries to possess any character that disturbs Nass' remains, but otherwise doesn't elaborate much on how the DM should handle this scenario. Here are some suggestions:

- When Nass' remains are disturbed, the ghost immediately tries to take control of the character. You can have the player roll a DC 14 Charisma saving throw, or you can make the saving throw for them, without letting anyone know what you're rolling (make sure to note the characters' Charisma saving throws before the session). On a failure, the ghost possesses the character without anyone else noticing.
- Discreetly let the player controlling that character know that they have been possessed by a ghost (you can give them the 'Nass Lantomir Handout' that came with this download). They can roleplay their character much as they would anyway, except that some of their statistics change, and they have a strong dislike toward Vellynne, and will take advantage of any opportunity to convince the other characters to either send her away or kill her, or even purposefully try to harm her in an inconspicuous way (such as 'accidentally' including her in their spells' areas of effect during combat).
- If the player seems annoyed or perturbed by this development, you can let them know that this change won't last forever. If the character is ever reduced to 0 hit points, is affected by Turn Undead, or is targeted by *dispel evil and good*, the possession ends. It also ends when the character acquires *the Codicil of White*.

If the character avoids possession or the ghost is expelled from its host at any point, Nass' ghost becomes clearly visible to the party. Upon seeing Nass, Vellynne (if she is with the party) reacts with cold scorn:

"I see that you have gotten much what you deserve, Nass. Were you too inept to foresee your own demise, or just arrogant enough to believe you would be able to avoid it?"

For her part, Nass wastes no time on Vellynne, instead turning her ghostly form toward the characters:

"This old hag is a second-rate wizard at best, and a necromancer at that. She is useless! I, on the other hand, am an accomplished diviner and could be of great aid. You seek the Codicil of White, I presume? Help me possess this windbag's decrepit form, and I shall help you find it!"

Nass wants the characters to stand down while she attempts to possess Vellynne, intervening only to keep the wizard from casting spells. Nass isn't lying – if she takes possession of Vellynne, she will help the characters find *the Codicil of White*, as it is the only way she can find her eternal rest. Vellynne will vehemently argue against allowing the ghost to possess her, instead urging the party to destroy the spirit and get on with it. If the characters help Nass' ghost possess Vellynne, the necromancer will hold a grudge against them once the possession is over and she regains control of her body – perhaps even causing her to betray them once they have reached Ythryn in chapter 7.

I4. ICE STATUES

This scenario is pretty cool – the Frostmaiden materializing in a snowy form to curse a character that touches one of her statues. If you want it to be more likely to happen, you can decide that just touching a statue is enough to provoke the goddess.

Map. This download comes with an 'Ice Statues' map, which shows some of the ice statues at the foot of the mountain in the middle of the island, which you can use to run an encounter here.

I6. GARDEN OF DEATH

Allow a character with proficiency in Arcana or Nature to know the properties of an ice troll heart, providing a good reward for completing this encounter.

Map. This download comes with a 'Garden of Death' map, which can be used to run an encounter here.

SUMMARY

You can make some or all of the following changes to locations on the Island of Solstice:

- **I1. Ruined Dock.** Skip the check to climb the dock or introduce a consequence for failure, and allow Söpo to speak Common so it can communicate with the party.
- **I2. Shipwrecks.** Have the sea hags be in possession of Professor Skant and ask for a troll heart in trade, and replace the +2 trident with a freezing trident of the ocean.
- **I3. Nass Lantomir's Ghost.** Use the 'Nass Lantomir Handout' to handle Nass' ghost's possession of a character.
- **I4. Ice Statues.** Have Auril show up to curse a character that just touches one of her statues.
- **I6. Garden of Death.** Allow a character proficient in Arcana or Nature to know what a troll heart does.

GRIMSKALLE

Below is a closer look at some of the locations inside Grimskalle, including advice on how to run them.

G3. FROST GIANT WARDEN

The book describes Ertgard as deaf, but also says that the characters can interrogate him. If none of the characters can speak sign language, you can have Ertgard instead be nearly deaf, which causes him to shout and ask the characters to repeat their questions.

Deception. Instead of having Ertgard immediately attack, you can have the aging giant exclaim (in giant): "Who goes there? My queen, is it you?" as the characters open the door to his room (briefly forgetting that Queen Vassavicken is long dead). This gives the characters a chance to impersonate the queen if they know Giant and succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check, potentially getting information from him without having to fight him first. Each time a character speaks, it must repeat this check. On a failure, or if Ertgard ever gets within 20 ft. of the characters, Ertgard realizes he has been deceived and attacks.

Replacing Auril. If you have replaced Auril with Geluvicken, replace any mentions of Auril or the Frostmaiden in Ertgard's information with Geluvicken.

G8. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER

If you have replaced Auril with Geluvicken, the frost giant is here if she hasn't departed on her nightly journey to bolster Auril's Everlasting Rime. She rests on a giant, broken bed in the room to the west – her mother's old bedroom – and hears the party coming if they are attacked by the piercers in G7, or if they fail on a group DC 19 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If she notices the characters or the characters attack her, she exclaims in giant: "Intruders! Sacrilege!" before attacking. See 'Encounter with Geluvicken' later in this document for advice on how to handle this encounter.

G15. Tests of the Frostmaiden

This is where the fortress gets complicated. In order to get to *the Codicil of White*, the characters must succeed on four tests. The process is as follows:

- A test begins when the characters opens one of the doors in areas G16–G19.
- When the test begins, the characters are teleported to a location in the frozen tundra of Icewind Dale.
- While undergoing the test, the characters have the Frostmaiden's symbol floating above their head, which Reghed tribe members recognize and fear.
- To enter Auril's vault, each test has to be passed by at least one party member.

In short summary, the four tests are:

- **Test of Cruelty.** The characters must slay defenseless elderly, or at least abandon them to their fate.
- **Test of Endurance.** The characters must make a long trek through the tundra without becoming too exhausted or dying.
- **Test of Isolation.** The characters must watch over a tribal camp for six days, and pass the test by becoming isolated from the rest of the party.
- **Test of Preservation.** The characters must protect a child from a murderous Reghed chieftain.

The idea here is cool, but it can present some issues. Under each of locations G16–19, there's advice on how to run and possible alter each of these tests.

G16. Test of Cruelty

For some parties, this test will be the most difficult – and most difficult for the DM to handle. Assuming that the characters aren't evil, it is hard to imagine that they will allow Gunvald to slaughter and eat the elderly – and much less that they will aid him in doing so. Of course, that is also the point – have the characters face a tough moral choice. But, in this case, it seems very unlikely to work. Not only is the action very reprehensible, the characters may not even be sure that allowing the elders to be eaten is what they need to do to pass the test.

Using NPCs. To make sure the characters understand their options, you can have Vellynne (or another NPC with the party) help them out. She can offer to do the deed, explaining that she believes only one of them has to pass the test. If the characters balk at this, she can also explain that simply walking away and leaving the elders to their fate is probably good enough.

An Alternative Solution. If the characters are hesitant, you can also allow for another solution to the test: killing Gunvald, even though he pleads for mercy. If the characters attack him to prevent him from killing the elderly, he will drop to his knees once he drops to 0 hit points and beg: "Let me live, I beg you! Do not be cruel – I do only what I do to save the tribe!". If the characters hesitate, the tribe's evil shaman chimes in: "You must kill him. As the frostmaiden says: 'Let cruelty be the knife that keeps your enemies at bay!'" While this doesn't guarantee that the party passes the test, it does make it much more likely.

G17. Test of Endurance

In this test, the characters must endure a hard trek through the frozen tundra.

Starting the Test. The first potential issue with this test is how it starts. The characters arrive, but are immediately asked to leave by the King of the Elk Tribe, who will only give them an opportunity to make the journey with the tribe if they first assure him that they mean no harm. If the characters allow King Jarund to shoo them away, or simply don't understand that they're supposed to make the trek alongside the elk tribe, they automatically fail the test. To make it more likely that this doesn't happen, you can have them instead arrive after the march has already begun, and have Jarund call out: "Auril's emissaries have come! Come, warriors of the Elk, let us show the Frostmaiden that we can endure more than even her chosen servants!"

Time Frame. During this test, the characters can potentially rack up to four levels of exhaustion over 14 hours. There's two issues with this – first, if the characters have a ride waiting near the island (such as the griffons), 14 hours is a long time to spend on this test. Second, four levels of exhaustion will take days to recover from, potentially making any encounters after this test exceedingly difficult. If you want to, you can instead set the following parameters for the test:

- The trek is a three-hour jog through a heavy blizzard.
- Each character must make a Constitution saving throw after each hour, gaining a level of exhaustion on a failure. The DC is 10 + 3 for each hour after the first.
- A character with two levels of exhaustion becomes too slow to continue and is left behind by the tribe (but will still be teleported back when the test is over).
- Any party member who completes the journey with two or fewer levels of exhaustion passes the test.

The test is still roughly as difficult as before, but is far less punishing, and can be completed in less time.

G18. Test of Isolation

In this test, the characters are tasked with watching over an empty camp for six days.

This test is a bit weird. The characters just have to sit around and wait, making a group DC 10–20 Wisdom (Survival) check each day, losing one party member with each failure. Characters can only lose if they die or stop Bjornhild from performing her raid – which means that the only purpose of the rolls were to figure out who has to make another DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer indefinite madness. In addition, the test takes 6 days to complete, which means that any ride the characters had to the Island of Solstice is probably long gone and that they will have plenty of time to take long rests, making any subsequent encounters much easier.

Changing the Test. If you want a shorter test that is perhaps also more exciting and makes a bit more sense, you can change the test as described below:

- The test takes only 3 hours, but is intensified eldritch whispers and faceless horrors scream from the dark around the camp, tearing at the characters' sanity.
- Each character must make a Wisdom saving throw at the end of each hour. The DC is 10 + 3 for each hour after the first. On the first failure, a character suffers a long-term madness (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, pg. 260).
- On the second failure, or if a character rolls a natural 1, a character also becomes hostile toward the other characters and will try their best to kill them. You can allow the player to determine themselves how their character attempts to do this and have the scenario play out much as you would an ordinary combat encounter. Whenever a deranged character takes damage, it can repeat the Wisdom saving throw. On a success, it still suffers long-term madness, but is no longer hostile towards the other party members (unless it fails another saving throw at the end of the next hour).
- All party members who complete the waiting period without failing more than one saving throw passes the Test of Isolation.

With these changes, the test both takes a more reasonable amount of time and becomes a great deal more challenging, as the characters may have to face each other in combat to pass the test.

G19. Test of Preservation

In this test, the characters must protect a young boy from the chieftain Isarr Kronenstrom.

This test is fairly straight forward and both what they are required to do and how they can accomplish it, should be pretty clear to the characters. As a minor change, you can make it just a bit easier to speak with Aerix. Since *calm emotions* is a rather rare spell, and having Aerix account of events will help give some context to what is going on, you may want to allow a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check to do the trick instead.

G20. Entrance to the Vault

The one big issue with Auril's tests and this room is that if the characters fail just one test, they won't be able o enter this room. The book provides a solution to this problem by having three frost druids show up to lead the characters into the room. This seems suspiciously convenient. In addition, because the party must complete all quests to gain entrance, as soon as all characters fail to pass a test (such as refusing to let the elders be eaten during the 'Test of Cruelty'), there's no reason to attempt the other tests at all.

Changing the Requirements. You can avoid the need for convenient visitors and keep the characters motivated to undertake all the tests by changing what the disembodied voice in the room says (pg. 212) to:

"This way is shut to all but those who undertake the tests of cruelty, endurance, isolation, and preservation."

By requiring only that the characters undertake the quests, and not necessarily pass them, you ensure that the characters will have to take each test, while also enabling them to enter even if they all failed one or more of the tests.

Consequences of Failure. However, while the door will open if all the tests weren't passed, failure isn't without consequences. If all characters failed one or more of Auril's tests, the two bas-reliefs of frost giants on either side of the door breathe a blast of cold at the party as the door opens. Each creature in the room must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage for each test none of the characters passed on a failure, and half as much on a success.

G21. Hall of the Four Winds

After passing Auril's tests, the characters gain entrance to this chamber, where they can read some helpful information about Auril's tenets, but little else. This is good information, but it comes a bit late. You can allow the characters to read the tenets of Auril's faith *before* they are expected to adhere to them during the tests, by simply by having 'G20. Entrance to the Vault' be on the other side of this room (the door to 'G22. Chamber of the Codicil') instead.

SUMMARY

You can make some or all of the following changes to locations inside Grimskalle:

- G3. Frost Giant Warden. Ertgard is only nearly deaf.
- **G16. Test of Cruelty.** Killing the evil Gunvald as he begs for mercy is also enough to pass the test.
- **G17. Test of Endurance.** Jarun doesn't try to shoo the characters away, and the test takes only 3 hours, during which the characters must make DC 10, 13, and 16 Constitution saving throws, suffering exhaustion on each failure. Characters that complete the journey with two levels of exhaustion or less, pass.
- **G18. Test of Isolation.** The test takes only three hours, during which the characters must make DC 10, 13, and 16 Wisdom saving throws, gaining long-term madness on the first failure, and attacking their allies on the second failure. Characters that complete the test without failing twice passes the test.
- **G19. Test of Preservation.** Allow a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check to calm Aerix.
- **G20.** Entrance to the Vault. The door opens when the characters have undertaken all four quests, but have them be hit with a blast of cold if they all failed one or more tests, dealing 18 (4d8) cold damage for each test they all failed (DC 15 Constitution save halves).
- **G21. Hall of the Four Winds.** Help the characters understand what's expected of them by moving this room to be just before 'G20. Entrance to the Vault'.

Encounter with Geluvicken

Part of the reason you may want to use Geluvicken instead of Auril is that having the characters encounter her creates fewer issues – in fact, you probably want the characters to encounter her, so you can use her death (or anger at the characters' escape) to foreshadow Auril. Below we will take a closer look at where this encounter can happen and how to run it.

IN THE BEDCHAMBER

If the characters infiltrate the fortress while Geluvicken is home and head into her bedchamber, the frost giant immediately attacks. Two **snow golems** manifest from piles of snow near the staircase and attack alongside her.

Outside the Chamber of the Codicil

If Geluvicken was home when the characters entered the fortress, or has returned while the characters underwent Auril's tests, she is alerted to their presence as soon as the door to 'G22. Chamber of the Codicil' is opened. She hurries down to confront the characters in 'G10. Ice Rink', where she commands the reluctant **giant walrus** Ukuma to fight alongside her.

As the Characters are Leaving the Island

If Geluvicken is only just returning home as the characters are leaving, or is slow to react to the theft of *the Codicil of White*, she pursues them on her **roc**:

- If the characters are leaving on the back of Angajuk, Geluvicken and her roc show up as they are 120 ft. from '11. Ruined Dock'. Once all characters are atop Angajuk, the whale dives under the surface, preventing Geluvicken from continuing the chase.
- If the characters are leaving on the *Ravenous*, Geluvicken and her roc show up shortly after the ship sets off from the island. The characters have little chance of escaping the swift roc, but are aided by the ship's two ballista (+6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., 3d10 piercing damage), which are manned by six sailors.
- If the characters are leaving on griffons, the roc catches up to them in the air shortly after they depart the island. The characters are unlikely to escape on the slower griffons, but the griffons can aid them in combat against Geluvicken and her mount.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

Regardless of where the characters encounter Geluvicken, she meets them in much the same manner: by cursing them as "Intruders!" and "Defilers!" and swearing that they will become "offerings to the Frostmaiden!". Her tactics in combat are simple:

- Geluvicken focuses her attacks on any character who has the codicil.
- If she has had time to prepare, she has *freedom of movement* cast upon herself.
- Her strongest spell (*control weather*) is of little use in combat, so she relies on spells like *whirlwind*, *cone of cold*, and *ice storm* to deal with the characters.

Geluvicken fights on until the better end, fanatical in her resolve to slay the characters. As described under 'Replacing Auril' earlier in this document, the characters' victory against, or escape from, Geluvicken will prompt her to summon Auril, who manifests – slowly – on the material plane, and will continue to haunt the characters as they search for Ythryn and a way to end her Everlasting Rime.

Adjusting Difficulty

If the characters are on their last leg and very low on resources, you can make an encounter with Geluvicken easier by employing some or all of the following changes:

- Geluvicken has two levels of exhaustion (due to her efforts to bolster Auril's Everlasting Rime).
- Geluvicken's 8th-level spell slot has been expended casting *control weather* during her nightly journey.
- If the fight happens in 'G8. Queen's Bedchamber', have only one or no **snow golems** be present.
- If the fight happens in 'G10. Ice Rink', the **giant walrus** Ukuma turns against Geluvicken and aids the party.
- If the fight happens as the characters are leaving the island, have the roc focus its attacks on Angajuk or the sailors on the *Ravenous*, or spend all its movement keeping Geluvicken in range of the party if they are on the backs of griffons.

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