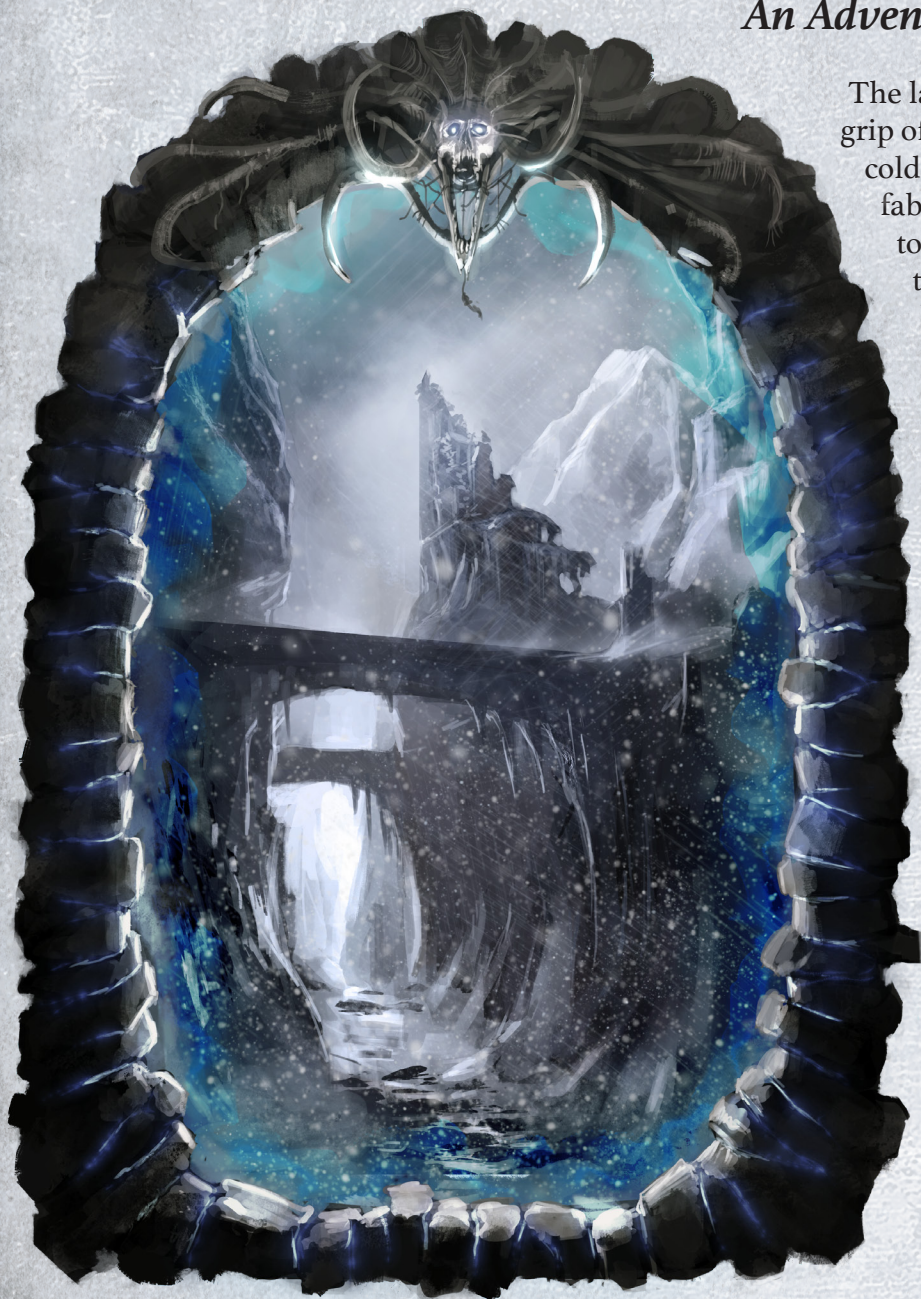


# heart of winter

## *An Adventure for Master Characters*



The lands of the Empire languish in the grip of false winter as screaming blasts of cold come pouring out from a tear in the fabric of reality, causing temperatures to plunge, violent storms to blanket the ground under ice and snow, and banks of chilling fog to creep and crawl across the landscape. With this strangeness comes monsters, hideous and cruel, eager to feast on the confused and terrified people suffering from the chaos created by the unnatural weather. These are dark times indeed, and the people demand answers from their lords and masters. What does this weird weather portend? Who or what is behind it? Is the end of all things truly at hand?

In this adventure, a group of master characters set out to answer these questions, venturing into the *Heart of Winter*, where they discover the source of the troubles and, with mettle, can confront it to restore the seasons to their proper order.

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shadow of the demon lord

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# THE STIRRINGS OF ANCIENT EVIL

An almost-forgotten demon known as Kushwuhk the Sin Weaver, cast down long ago, stirs from its centuries long slumber and casts a lurid eye on the world it once sought to conquer. Long ago, before the rise of the Empire, before, even, the dark reign of the Witch-King, a mighty demon crawled forth from the Void and declared itself god-king over the primitive peoples inhabiting the islands that would become the Kingdom of Sails. The murderous priests bent the population toward building an obscene temple to their “god” and offered the unfit and infirm as sacrifices on the demon’s bloodstained altars.

The darkness bleeding from the jungle-covered island drew attention from the mainland, and a great host descended on the corrupted people, putting the demon’s subjects to death by sword and spell. They burned the jungles, toppled the idols, and slaughtered the misshapen horrors born from the demon’s foul magic. As they made ready to sack the dark temple, the demon sundered the temple and scattered pieces of it across Rûl through tears it had opened in reality. In doing so, the demon also sundered itself, infusing the very stones of its monument with its essence so one day it might reconstitute itself and reclaim its place as god-king over mankind.

The largest piece of the temple smashed into the side of a mountain towering over the Blasted Lands. Much of the demon’s essence stained the stones, trapping it in a dreaming state, able only to drive mad and corrupt creatures that draw too close to the ruin. Snow and ice buried the ruins, and it might have been forgotten if not for the Demon Lord’s creeping shadow and the convergence of certain celestial bodies.

## THE DEMON STIRS

The stars have aligned, matching the same pattern as that in the night sky when Kushwuhk sundered its temple. Their alignment combined with the Demon Lord’s creeping shadow has thrown open a rift in reality, linking the warmer lands of the north to the frozen south. Through the fissure comes the howling winds and freezing temperatures of the Blasted Lands, causing all the weird weather to blight the region around the portal.

Worse, the demon’s essence has begun to stir, allowing it to control a gigantic **cold worm** that had burrowed too close to the ruins. The demon’s fractured essence prevents it from realizing its true nature so it has instead come to know itself as the Finger in the Void. Its thrashings drive the strange and corrupted monsters haunting the ruins through the portal and into lands far away.

## GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins shortly after the rift appears at a place somewhere within 30 miles of wherever the group happens to be. The characters might be drawn to investigate the false winter on their own, surmising the source of the trouble lies somewhere inside the afflicted region, or they might need a little coaxing. You can draw the characters into the plot using any of the following options:

**Sacred Lands:** The storms threaten an area sacred or otherwise important to the characters, their allies, or others with influence over the group. Who holds the land to be important, and what do they think needs to be done?

**Upheaval in the North:** A regional festival coincides with the adventure’s events. The false winter and creatures accompanying it threaten those traveling to the festival. Many people might already have disappeared, and any threat to the festival is a threat to local coffers. Who wants to end the scourge, and why might they turn to the characters to do so?

**Missing Heroes:** A band of mercenaries or would-be heroes set out to deal with the danger. They haven’t returned on schedule. The loss of such a strong force frightens the locals. Signs of these people might be found in the ruins, especially areas 4 and 5. How did these stalwarts know what to do, supposing they did? Are people important to the characters among the lost?

**The Stars are Right:** Sages versed in ancient history and astrology might have an idea of what’s going on. Such learned folk could approach the authorities or the characters, or both. What does this sage hope to gain by sharing this information? Does an erudite character know as much as any sage?

**Lost Relic:** Servants of the Old Faith might know of *Kanu’s Wand*, a relic important to the adventure and described under New Relics, at the end of the adventure. These servants seek its recovery. How do they know about it and what do they want with it?

**Foul Cultists:** The cult of the Sin Weaver might have survived the temple’s sundering and the destruction of their dark god. How is the cult involved? Do any of the previous hooks hide cult activity?



# FINDING WINTER'S DOOR

The adventure begins when the characters set out to find the source of the strange weather. Finding it requires the characters to trek across a countryside ravaged by snow, ice, and freezing fog and to contend with the strange monsters that have come through the rift.

## THE FALSE WINTER

The cold spewing out from the portal wreaks havoc on the weather. More than 20 miles from the portal, the effects are mild—cold temperatures, sleet, and fog. Within 20 miles of the rift, the temperature drops to freezing and grows colder the deeper the group travels into the affected region. Characters contend with enormous banks of swirling fog, snow, icy terrain, and exposure if not properly attired. Each hour the group travels through the region toward the portal, roll on the Weather table (“Exploration and Travel” section, *Shadow of the Demon Lord* chapter 9). Any change in weather occurs without warning and often in a weird way—sleet flies sideways under a cloudless sky, for example. Alternatively, all liquids suddenly freeze solid. “Unseasonable cold” threatens exposure in even those wearing cold weather clothing. “Unseasonable warmth” indicates a bizarre region of clear spring weather, encircled in thick, chilling mist.

## ENCOUNTERS

Many dangerous creatures haunt the zone of unusual weather surrounding the portal. Every 5 miles the characters travel, roll a d20 and find the result on the following table to discover what, if anything, they encounter. Descriptions of the entries follow the table.

### FALSE WINTER RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll	Encounter
19–20	Roll on the Weather table ( <i>Shadow</i> 187)
17–18	Nothing
13–16	The Lost
7–12	Brood of Zuswyl
3–6	Sin Spawn Swarms
1–2	Winter Drake

**The Lost.** The group comes across people lost in the false winter. They could be unfortunates in need of rescue, someone the characters are looking for, or potential allies or enemies, such as looters or cultists.

**Brood of Zuswyl.** A group of 1d3 + 1 shadow weavers, servants of Zuswyl (see area 4), hungrily search the wilderness for prey.

**Sin Spawn Swarms.** The Finger of the Void sheds spawn in appalling numbers. Swarms of these monstrous things scurry and scuttle across the ice in packs of 1d6 swarms.

Each resembles a glossy-black hybrid of a segmented worm and a spider with stunted legs and outsize fangs. They function as **tomb scarab swarms** with the following adjustments:

### SIN SPAWN SWARM

DIFFICULTY 25

#### Size 1 frightening monster

**Immune** damage from cold; charmed, dazed, deafened, frightened, grabbed, immobilized, prone, slowed, stunned

**Winter Drake.** One giant, blue-scaled drake feasts on anything it encounters. Several signs—frozen kills and scat—warn of its presence.

### WINTER DRAKE

DIFFICULTY 250

#### Size 3 frightening monster

**Perception** 17 (+7); darksight

**Defense** 18; **Health** 100

**Strength** 16 (+6), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)

**Speed** 12

**Immune** damage from cold, poison; frightened, poisoned

#### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Fangs** (melee) +6 with 1 boon (2d6 plus Chilling Poison)

**Chilling Poison** The target must roll a success on a Strength challenge with 1 bane or take 1d6 damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target is slowed. If the target is already poisoned or slowed, it instead takes 1d6 extra damage.

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Chilling Spittle** The cold drake spits venom in a 1-yard wide, 10-yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must roll a success on an Agility challenge with 1 bane or take 1d6 damage and be subject to Chilling Poison. Once the drake uses Chilling Spittle, it must wait 1 round before it can use it again.

#### END OF THE ROUND

**Epic Recovery** The winter drake removes one affliction from himself.

**Epic Adversary** Roll 1d3 + 1 to determine how many actions the winter drake can use during the next round. The winter drake can use these actions during any turn and can do so before its enemies act. Each time the winter drake uses an action, it can move up to his Speed before or after the action.

## THE RIFT

At the center of the region stands the rift, an undulating ribbon of blue white light through which the characters can see the ruins emerging from rock and ice on the slopes of a snow-covered mountain. On the front of the structure, a dark, corbelled arch can be seen. Light from the rift makes it visible through the blowing snow and gusting wind from about 100 yards away. Characters can move through the rift from either direction, though the portal blocks Divination and Telepathy magic from reaching through it.

The severe weather comes from the other side of the rift, so the group faces similar environmental conditions there.

Finally, if the characters have not yet encountered the winter drake, they do so here.



## THE WAND'S INFLUENCE

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A magical field spreads 100 yards out from the ruins, though it does not extend through the portal. Creatures with 1 Corruption or more in the area feel ill, experiencing intermittent pain along with an intense desire to leave. These sensations impose 1 bane on attack rolls and challenge rolls. If *Kanu's Wand* is taken from area 9, the field collapses.

## RUINS OF THE WEAVER

Two entrances grant access to the ruins' interior. Anyone coming through the rift can see the main entrance, area 1. Exploring characters might discover the tunnel marked as area 11.

The ruins are generally cold and dark. The walls are carved masonry and coated in ice in some places. The ceilings are 12-yard corbelled vaults.

When the characters enter the ruins, the sound of wind suddenly ceases. Crackling ice (or skittering), groans of the glacier on which the ruins rest (or of something else), and faint moaning (perhaps just moving air) can be heard in the sudden stillness. These sounds continue throughout the group's exploration of the ruins.

## SKULL'S INFLUENCE

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Profane energy permeates the ruins, which causes creatures with 0 Corruption to feel creeping dread that imposes 1 bane on challenge rolls made to avoid or stop being frightened. As well, whenever an affected character totals a 0 or less on any challenge roll, a moaning, mangled face or a warped and horrific humanoid form appears in an open space within short range of the triggering character. Anyone that sees it must make a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gain 1 Insanity. If *Vergul's Skull* is taken from area 8, the profane energy dissipates.

## ROAMING CREATURES

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Swarms of sin spawn infest the structure. Whenever the total of a player character's attack roll is 0 or less, a swarm boils out of the cracks inside the ruins and attacks the triggering character.

## TREASURE

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Aside from the relics described in this adventure, characters exploring the described locations have a 1-in-6 chance of finding something interesting in hidden places and among the debris. If so, roll a d6. On an odd number, the characters find coins, gems, and art objects worth a total of 1d6 × 10 gc. On an even number, the characters find an enchanted object.

## KEYED LOCATIONS

### 1. MAIN ENTRANCE

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The main entrance is a corbelled arch, leaning a little to the west. Slick ice covers the sloped ground just around the archway. A character moving over this ground without care might slip, fall prone, and slide into area 2 with a failure on an Agility challenge roll.

### 2. ENTRY HALL

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This intersection slopes down to the west and up to the east. A crack, 1 yard wide and 2 yards deep, sunders the floor to the east. Large chunks of rubble litter the ground beyond the crack, and a sheet of ice hangs from the ceiling above it.

Carved reliefs decorate all the walls. Where undamaged, they depict robed figures fighting and capturing various foes, engaging in rituals and blood sacrifice, and venerating a winged, humanoid demon with the body of a great spider in place of legs. Writing on the wall, in High Archaic, reads, "Come and Feed Kushwuhk. Add Your Sins to the Weave."

Numerous sin spawn hide in this area's nooks and crannies—they quickly form into 2 **sin spawn swarms**. In addition, a **shadow** lurks in the eastern crack. It babbles and cries while fighting, morphing between formlessness and vaguely humanoid or spider-like shapes. The creatures in areas 3 and 4 likely hear sounds of fighting and can join in if the characters are having an easy time.

### 3. CAVE IN

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Strange bones and crushed stone cover the room's floor. Mixed with the stone are pieces of a statue that depicted the demon shown in the wall carvings.

Rubble chokes the far side of the room. A character with the miner or a similar profession feels air moving from the rubble, as does any character with a Perception of 13 or higher. This breeze indicates an open area might be on the other side. It takes an hour of work for one character to clear the rubble, opening to the tunnel (see area 10). Each helping character reduces this time by 10 minutes.

Sin spawn hide in the rubble and gather to become 1 **sin spawn swarm**. Noise or activity here draws a shadow from area 8 by way of the crack to investigate.

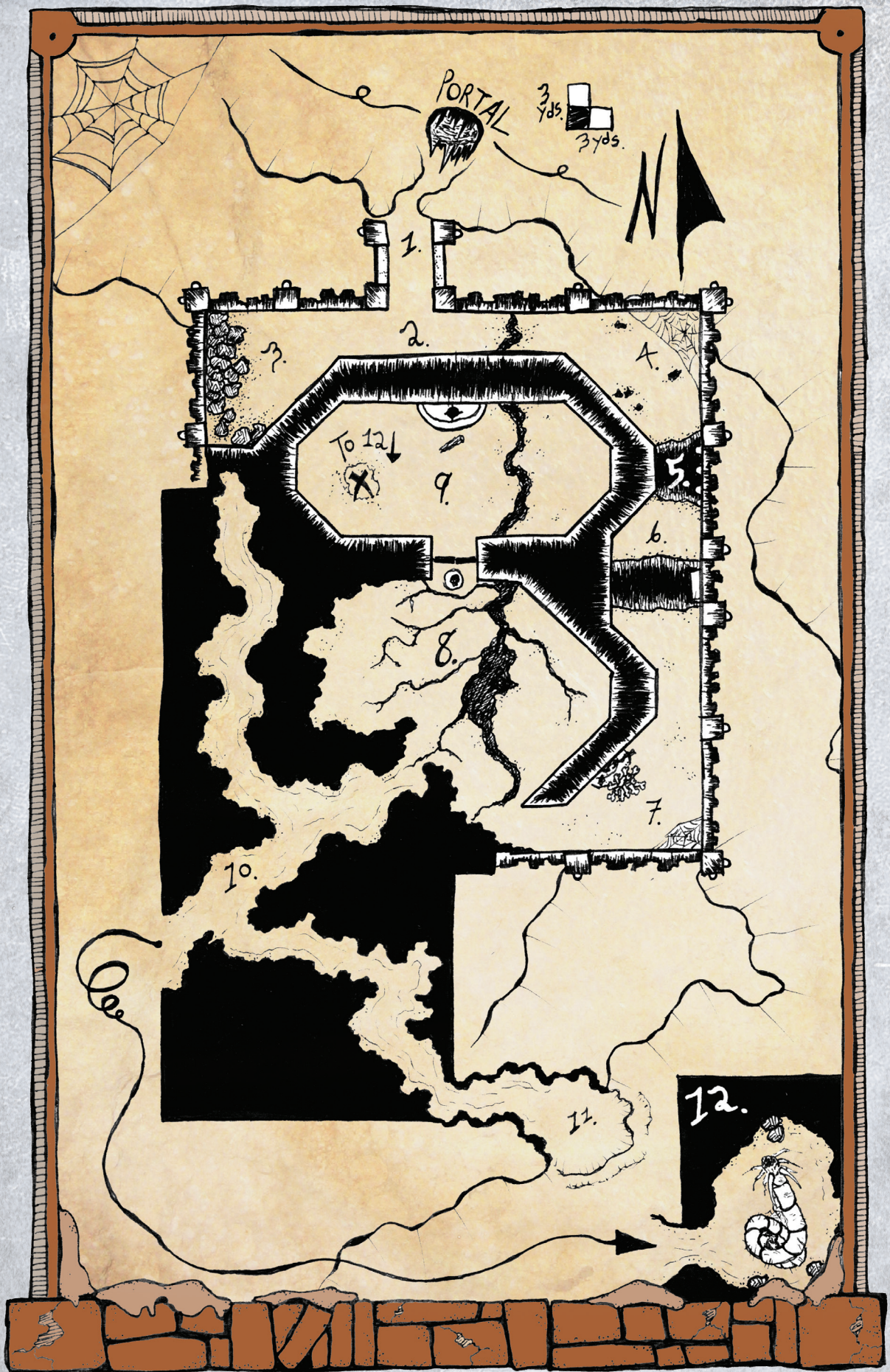
### 4. INITIATION CHAMBER

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Thick cobwebs choke this debris-strewn room. A web-shrouded statue depicting a robed human, frowning but with an open-armed gesture, stands in the corner, a pile of shattered stone at its feet. Wall carvings depict scenes of torture and blood rites. Sin spawn carcasses hang in webs and litter the floor.

A mad **shadow weaver** named Zuswyl lurks on the ceiling, the vault of which is heavily obscured by webs. Zuswyl has the following adjustments:







## ZUSWYL

DIFFICULTY 50

### Size 1 frightening monster

Health 60

**Immune** damage from cold; gaining Insanity; immobilized, slowed

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Fangs** (melee) +6 (2d6 plus Thrall Venom)

**Thrall Venom** The target must make a successful Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or take 2d6 damage, gain 1 Corruption, and become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned this way, the target is immobilized. If the target is already poisoned or immobilized, it takes 2d6 extra damage and becomes defenseless for 1 minute. When a creature under the effect of Corrupting Poison becomes incapacitated, it dies. At the end of the round, the dead creature becomes a compelled **barrow wight** until it's destroyed.

Zuswyl suspended 2 **barrow wights**, frozen and emaciated, in the webs enshrouding the ceiling. Zuswyl waits in hiding, whispering to frighten prey and drive them toward area 5. The wights can free themselves to attack on Zuswyl's command.

### 5. WEBBED PIT

Webs cover a wide pit in the floor of this area. The webs impose 2 banes on Perception challenge rolls made to spot the danger.

Along the east side of the pit, also hidden in the webs, are three semicircular ledges. Each is even with the floor and about half a yard wide, spaced evenly at 2 yards apart and the same distance from the pit lip on each side. The wall above them is graven with the images of cultists pouring bones into a void, as well as leaping over it.

In the pit are nine humanoid corpses, all desiccated and frozen, in various unnatural positions on top of frozen remains of other humanoids. Because of the frozen remains, the pit is only 2 yards deep. Among the corpses are 5 **animated corpses** that rise up to attack living creatures that enter the pit.

Sin spawn swarms move into the room from area 6 when they hear a commotion. They avoid Zuswyl's area and retreat if the weaver joins combat in the pit.

Mixed in with the corpses are numerous simple weapons, enough to arm ten people. As well, there's 20 yards of rope, a grappling hook, and any other gear explorers might carry as you decide. In addition, one enchanted object can be uncovered.

### 6. CELEBRATION CHAMBER

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this area are blackened, and ash piles unevenly on the floor, deeper at the edges and corners. Wisps of webbing dangle from various surfaces. Reliefs on the wall show slaves toiling to erect a ziggurat, while other people watch in celebratory poses. On the eastern wall is a long, ice-filled stone trough, and ice coats the walls in two channels that lead up to two open-mouthed stone demon heads. The basin contains bones, eight human skulls, and other debris.

Across the chamber is an open pit, about 3 yards across. Even with the floor above the pit, equidistant from the

northern and southern sides, is a ledge like the ones above the previous pit. However, the destruction of the temple weakened this ledge, which falls away if any significant pressure is put on it. Jagged, icy rock makes up the pit floor, 3 yards down.

Hiding in and around this area are 2 **sin spawn swarms**.

### 7. CONTEMPLATION CHAMBER

Bones form a pile at the center of the room near the base of a broken statue of the spider-demon depicted in wall carvings in area 2. Reliefs here show cultists using substances and eating flesh to enter dreamlike states.

The bones are humanoid. Tooth and blade marks on the remains indicate these creatures were eaten, likely by other humanoids. If disturbed, the bones rise into the air and swirl about, the room fills with keening and moaning, and black energy moves within this osseous whirlwind. Sometimes the dark energy forms faces or other humanoid features. This display has the same effect as seeing a horrifying creature but is otherwise harmless.

Any commotion here attracts 1 **shadow** from the entryway to area 8. It sneaks across the ward there to attack, but it retreats if injured as described in that area.

### 8. CHAMBER OF ADORATION

Monstrous sigils, carved and written over in blood, mar the wall reliefs in this room's easternmost entryway. Hidden among these glyphs are wards, created by Vergul, the high priest of Kushwuhk's cult, after the temple fell. Anyone capable of deciphering written languages can discern the danger and a method to bypass the ward.

A living creature crossing a ward without uttering Kushwuhk's name triggers a terrifying cacophony of screams and a vision of Kushwuhk himself. If the creature has Corruption 0, it must make a successful Will challenge roll with 1 bane or take 1d6 damage. If the total of the roll was 0 or less, the creature also becomes cursed. While cursed in this way, the creature is blinded. If this trap is instead undone with magic (the wards count as a rank 3 spell), several shadowy, humanoid apparitions coalesce and flit around the room for a moment, then disappear.

Lurking in the rubble just beyond the wards is 1 **shadow**. It attacks if it senses intruders, taking a vaguely apelike form. If injured, it retreats to the shadows near the northern double doors. Another **shadow** hides in a narrow exit formed in piled rubble to the western side of the room. This second shadow uses combat with the first as a distraction for a sneaky initial attack. It also retreats into the shadows if injured, awaiting the arrival of its hidden master.

Dust, rubble, and ice choke this area, its every surface damaged or broken. A huge crack splits the room in two, opening into a narrow pit a few yards from the entryway. The west side of the room tilts away from the fissure, and cracks there create three uneven surfaces. Across the room are thick stone double doors, which glow faintly. The floor just before them forms a perfect semicircle level with the eastern portion of the room. A dull hum issues from



beyond the doors, and just in front of them is a blackened human skull in a circle of sigils.

This rune-scribed skull belongs to Vergul (see “New Relics,” below). As soon as the characters pass the rift in the room’s center, Vergul’s **wraith** emerges from the skull, first appearing as flames in the skull’s eye sockets. Any remaining shadows

join the wraith in battle, as does  
**1 sin spawn** swarm that pours from the many crevices in the area. If the wraith is destroyed, it screams as the skull sucks it in like black smoke.

## 9. INNER SANCTUM

Magic (as a rank 4 spell) seals these double doors shut. Anyone touching the door touches the field, and if the one touching the door has 0 Corruption and lacks commitment to any demon, the door opens easily. A creature with 3 Corruption or less, also lacking any devotion to a demon, can push the door open with a success on a Strength challenge roll made with 3 banes.

When the door opens, warm sunlight floods out of the room beyond the doors. The room is clean and appears newly built but for a few signs of damage. A long fissure divides the room just to the east of the doorway to the northern wall. The floor to the northwest of the door is cracked and humped upward slightly, as if due to an impact from below. The floor there can support little weight, so any Size 1/2 or larger character moving into that area falls through and into a cold worm tunnel that leads to area 12.

A statue of Kushwuhk stands at the center of the north wall, and resting at its feet is a carved oaken rod that shines like the sun. The statue shields its eight eyes from this radiance and wall carvings show cultists ignoring various wretched practices to do the same. The rod is *Kanu’s Wand*, which is described under “New Relics.”

## 10. DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Kushwuhk took the mind of the cold worm that burrowed into this area long ago. The power of *Kanu’s Wand* binds the demon to the temple. It tried to use the worm to burrow away but could only dig in a descending spiral through the

glacier on which the temple sits and then succumbed to slumber once again.

Tunnels in the spiral are cut from ice and stone. They descend at a slight angle. Because it is ice, parts of the floor might be slick.

Skulking in the spiral are **3 sin spawn swarms**.

Characters descending the spiral encounter one swarm.

A second swarm joins the first on the second round, followed by the third on the third round.

## 11. BURROW ENTRANCE

Naturally seeking to avoid the area, the cold worm surfaced here before Kushwuhk’s consciousness forced it to burrow into the ruins. This entrance is more like a sloped sinkhole than the circular tunnels of the downward spiral.

## 12. FINGER OF THE VOID

The passage opens from rough tunnel into a wide, high, and uneven burrow with concave sides. In places, ice and stone has fallen away into jagged piles on the floor. The **cold worm**, possessed and made immortal by Kushwuhk’s semiconscious essence, lairs here. It looks like a massive serpent with blue-white scales and tufts of white fur. Glowing red eyes blink across the length of its body. The demonic influence has altered the creature’s appearance, giving it eight eyes, horns, and webbed spider legs jutting from around its head.

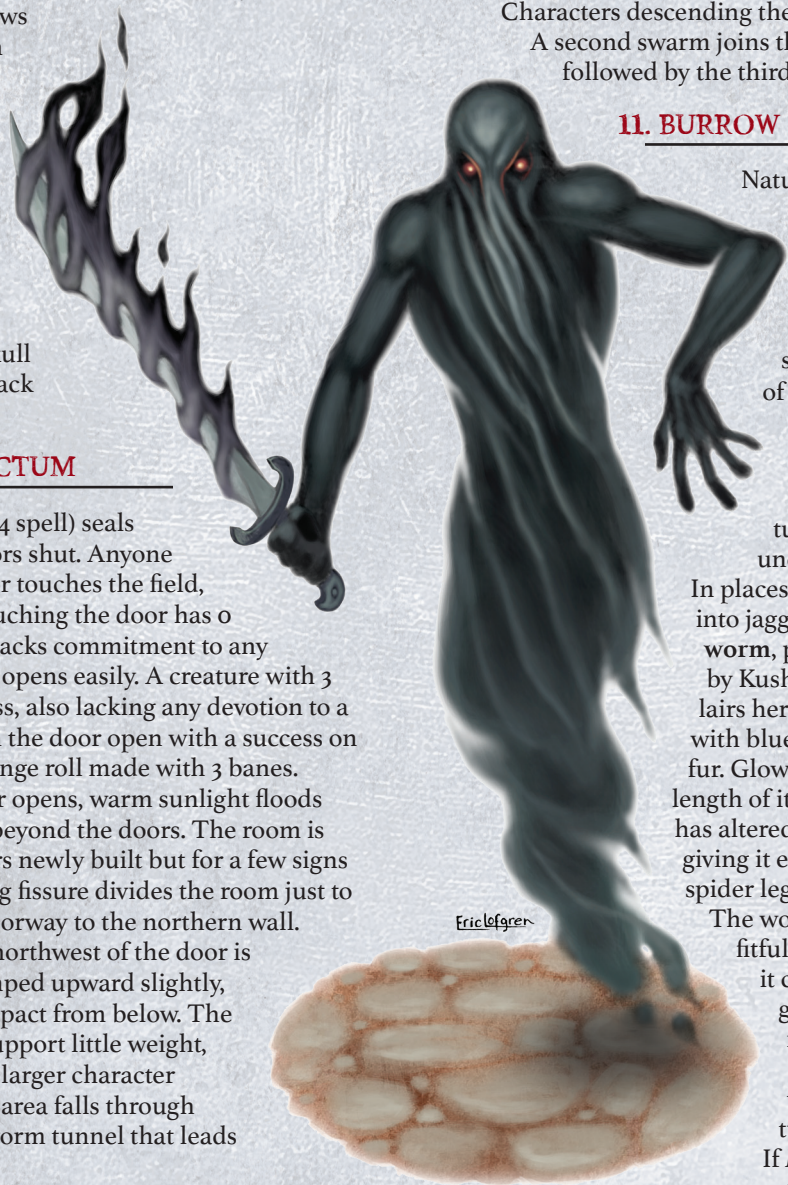
The worm mutters constantly, like a fitful sleeper. In coherent whispers, it calls itself the Finger of the Void, grasping at the world until its true mind reawakens.

The worm coils atop another tunnel, which drops 3 yards then turns east, to just under area 9.

If *Kanu’s Wand* was removed from area 9, the Finger of the Void can retreat there. Otherwise, the relic keeps the creature in this area.

In addition to the possessed worm, **2 sin spawn swarms** dwell with the Finger of the Void. At the end of the third round of combat, another **sin spawn swarm** joins the fight.

If the characters defeat the Finger of the Void, it shrieks and implodes as its body is sucked into the Void. Its eyes burn with white fire, and as it goes, it glares directly at the characters, saying, “I see you! I know you! I shall remember!” Although the implosion does not harm the characters, it does knock them down and pull them toward it unless a character gets a success on a Strength challenge roll.



Friclofaren



## COLD WORM

DIFFICULTY 250

### Size 4 horrifying monster

**Perception** 14 (+4); darksight

**Defense** 18; **Health** 120

**Strength** 19 (+9), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 6 (-4), **Will** 10 (+0)

**Speed** 12 (ice walker)

**Immune** damage from cold; gaining Insanity; frightened

**Ice Walker** A cold one ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain caused by ice or snow.

**Chilling Horror** When a creature gains Insanity from seeing a cold worm, it becomes slowed for as long as it remains frightened.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Teeth** (melee) +9 with 3 boons (7d6 plus Deep Freeze)

**Deep Freeze** A living target must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or become slowed for 1 round. While slowed in this way, the creature makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane. A target already slowed instead takes 3d6 extra damage.

### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Mass Attack** Each creature within a cube centered on a point the cold worm can reach must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or take 7d6 damage and be subject to Deep Freeze.

**Polar Vortex** The cold worm exhales a blast of lethal cold into a 12-yard-long cone originating from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. A creature takes 7d6 + 10 damage on a failure, or half the damage on a success. Once the cold worm uses Polar Vortex, it must wait 1 round before it can use it again.

### END OF THE ROUND

**Freezing Presence** All liquids, even those worn or carried by creatures, within short range freeze solid. As well, each creature within short range of the cold worm must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take 3d6 damage from the waves of lethal cold radiating from the monster's body.

## CONCLUSION

Ideally, the characters destroy the Finger of the Void. Doing so sends the demon back to the Void. Failing this, but if *Kanu's Wand* remains in place, the portal remains open for a season, with storms raging unabated and doing great harm until the portal closes.

*Kanu's Wand* is the only element keeping Kushwuhk semiconscious and near the ruins. So if the Finger of the Void remains and the relic is taken from area 9, Kushwuhk awakens, takes full control of the Finger of the Void, and fortifies the portal so it remains open. The demon moves to dominate the region near the ruins and the portal.

In any case, if the portal remains open, cultists who hear of the worm-demon come to serve it. Killing the cold worm after the demon has awoken releases a huge demon that resembles a massive spider.

In addition, there are three minor outcomes. First, defeating the Finger of the Void could shatter Kushwuhk's residual magic, closing the portal from the Blasted Lands and stranding the characters there. Second, members of the Old Faith might come seeking *Kanu's Wand*, likely to release any part of her soul back into the cycle of reincarnation. If that happens, the wand becomes an enchanted object that retains only the first part of the Kanu's Light ability. Third, sin spawn could remain in the world, and who knows what

they might grow to be, especially if someone unscrupulous notices them.

## NEW RELICS

This adventure introduces two new relics, *Vergul's Skull* and *Kanu's Wand*.

### VERGUL'S SKULL

Vergul's skull is a powerful and unholy relic. The runes covering the bones were carved while Vergul still lived and the relic occasionally puts the user in touch with its original owner's depraved intellect and magical skill. No one can use the skull for long without learning who Vergul was through dark whispers and darker dreams.

**Erratic Wisdom** Each time you cast a rank 1 or 2 spell while touching the skull, roll a d6. On a 1, you gain 1 Insanity.

On a 6, you regain the casting of the spell you cast.

**Corrupting Cold** While you carry the skull and have 1 Corruption or more, you take half damage from cold and don't become fatigued due to exposure to cold environments.

**Inner Magic** If you use the skull as an implement and have 1 Corruption or more, the relic grants you one casting of the *epiphany* Divination spell. The skull replenishes this casting once per day at midnight.

### KANU'S WAND

A relic of the Old Faith, this wand once belonged to its namesake, a woman named Kanu who faced Kushwuhk before the sundering of the demon's essence. She placed her wooden club at the feet of the demon-god's idol and used the last of her life to erect a ward against evil beings. When she did so, part of her became one with the rod, such that her fierce personality became embedded in the device. The wand fills its wielder with a passion to seek out and destroy unnatural creatures and objects.

**Corruption Intolerance** If you are in any way devoted to or possessed by a demon, you have to get a success on a Will challenge roll to use the wand. You make the roll with 1 bane for each point of Corruption you have. If the total of your roll is 0 or less, you also gain 1d6 Insanity.

**Enchanted Club** The wand functions as a club. While wielding it, you have a +2 bonus to Speed, and your attacks with it as a weapon deal 1d6 extra damage.

**Instrument of the Sun** When you use the wand to attack a creature that has a weakness or vulnerability to sunlight and you get a success, the target counts as if it was exposed to sunlight for 1 round.

**Kanu's Light** You can use an action to cause the wand to shed light twice as bright as a torch until you use an action to extinguish it.

Alternatively, you can use an action to command the wand to emit sunlight in a sphere with a 10-yard radius. This sphere is centered on and moves with the wand, lasting for 1 minute. You can use this function five times, replenishing expended uses after you complete a rest.

**Kanu's Vigilance** While carrying the wand, you make Perception challenge rolls with 2 boons. If you are charmed, compelled, frightened, surprised, or put to sleep by magic, Kanu's consciousness takes over unless you get a success on a Will challenge roll. You can choose to fail, but if you do, you must still roll because if the total of the roll is 0 or less, you gain 1 Insanity. While Kanu is in control, you act normally, but you are compelled to confront unnatural forces boldly and without mercy.

**Kanu's Whispers** If you carry the wand for a year and a day, and you can discover either the Celestial or Nature traditions. While holding the wand in hand, you are knowledgeable in matters related to the Old Faith.