



VOLATILE THOUGHTS

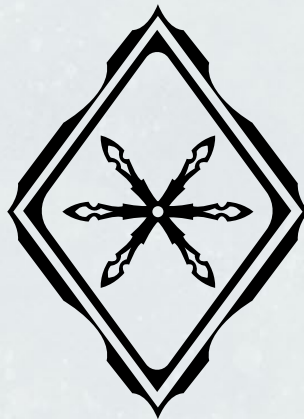
A Plague of Ancients Adventure

Just when you thought Realspace-faring slavers were the worst thing that could cross your path, it quickly became apparent you were wrong—terrible things lurk in the depths of the long-dead Abeiran city of Xorvintroth. And when faced with countless, unfathomable horrors infesting an ancient city of a long-dead civilization from another world there's only one solution . . . explosives.

Part Eight of the *Plague of Ancients* Series of Adventures.

A Four-Hour Adventure for 5th through 10th-Level Characters

Optimized for APL 9.



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

My god! It's full of stars!

—Arthur C. Clarke, 2001: A Space Odyssey

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th- to 10th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 9**. Characters outside this level range can't participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in southern Icewind Dale among the treacherous peaks of the Spine of the World: from the goliath stronghold of Wyrmdoom Crag to the crash site of a spacefaring vessel to the ruins of a long-dead city.

BACKGROUND

The fallen star witnessed by the **THUUNLAKALAGA GOLIATHS** isn't what it appeared to be: it's a **NAUTILOID** piloted by gnomish **CEREMORPHS** chased into one of Auril the Frostmaiden's great blizzards, and now lies earthbound.

To make matters worse, the neogi masters of the **DEATHSPIDER** pursuing the nautiloid have arrived. Slavers, the **NEOGI** have capitalized on the havoc sown by the Everlasting Rime—capturing and enslaving whomever they can find. One such captive—a **GIFF** named **LIEUTENANT PROOK**—has managed to escape.

Upon returning to **WYRMDOOM CRAG**, the characters discover that the last of the clan's hunters have been captured by the neogi and must hatch a plan to rescue them from within the ancient **ABEIRAN** city of **XORVINTROTH**. Once there however, the characters quickly learn neogi are the least of their concerns—the city is festering with **ABERRATIONS** from the **FAR REALM**; long-dormant terrors that threaten the entirety of **ICEWIND DALE**.

OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **four parts** and takes approximately **4 hours** to play:

Call to Action: An Unusual Request (10 mins). While speaking with Olgai and Lieutenant Prook, Grakal the characters of a strange message.

Part 1: To the Fallen Star . . . Again! (60 mins). The characters strike out to find the fallen star once and for all. As they draw closer, they happen upon creatures escaped from the wrecked *Id Ascendant*. This is **Story Objective A**.

Part 2: Star Search (60 mins). A terrible blizzard befalls the characters—they must navigate the deadly weather, encountering malevolent haunts from the ancient city of Xorvintroth along the way. This is **Story Objective B**.

Part 3: The Id Ascendant (45 mins). The characters meet the gnome ceremorphs—captains of the disabled ship, the *Id Ascendant*. The characters must persuade the gnomes to let Lieutenant Prook use the ship's workshop and allow him to siphon energy from their vessel's magical helm in order to power his makeshift explosives. This is **Story Objective C**.

Part 4: Viscous Cargo (75 mins). The characters seek out the missing squiddlings in a nearby cave. The characters quickly learn they've stumbled into the upper reaches of an ancient Xorvintrothian ruin. This is **Story Objective D**.



STORY AWARDS

At points in the adventure, this glyph, along with an entry, describes how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore it if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters just earned, it provides information for you and the players.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure follows directly on from DDAL10-07 *Into Darkness*, but if your players are new to the campaign, the following hooks are potential ways to involve them in this scenario:

Swords for Hire. While the characters are gathered somewhere in Ten-Towns, they're approached by a giff mercenary—Lieutenant Prook—who seeks heroic souls to help him avenge the death of his murdered comrades.

Star Seekers. Characters with the acolyte, hermit, or sage backgrounds search for the “fallen star” in pursuit of knowledge. Seeking shelter in Wyrmdoom Crag, they meet Lieutenant Prook and the Thuunlakalaga goliaths, and learn of their plight.

Guardians of the Wilds. Characters with the folk hero or outlander backgrounds have heard tell that Thuunlakalaga goliaths have been going missing, and so travel to Wyrmdoom Crag to offer help.

Gnome Ceremorphs Return. Characters who've already encountered the gnome ceremorphs in *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* have stopped at Wyrmdoom Crag to seek shelter and resupply. While there, they discover the nautiloid is back in the frozen north, and determine to find out why.

XORVINTROTH, THAT WHICH SURVIVES

Derived from Xorvintaal, the ancient “game” by which dragons wage war and determine power among themselves, this ancient Abeiran city was one of many ruled by dragonborn. It was once a place of learning and enlightenment, but a sect of dragonborn wizards dabbled with sources of magic best left undisturbed. Pulling back the veil of the stars and gazing into the madness of the Far Realm drove the wizards to open portals to the Far Realm. For thousands of years, the cities—and the horrors they housed—lay dormant until the Spellplague in 1385 DR when they were expelled from Abeir like a festering infection and transposed into the depths beneath the Spine of the World.

CALL TO ACTION: AN UNUSUAL REQUEST

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

The characters have returned to Wyrmdoom Crag after narrowly escaping a ruined city infested with horrors from the Far Realm. The group found no survivors among the missing goliath hunters they were searching for. However, Lieutenant Prook has a new plan: blow the crater surrounding the ancient, alien-infested city to smithereens and bury it forever.

CALL TO ACTION

The characters must escort Lieutenant Prook to the fallen star and find a way to power his planned explosive device.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each character a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and their reasons for embarking on this quest. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to the characters.

Award **inspiration** (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) once everyone's had a turn.

LIEUTENANT PROOK (LEF-TEN-ANT PR-OOK)

Lawful neutral giff interstellar mercenary

Lieutenant Prook (he pronounces lieutenant as "leftenant" and prefers to be addressed as such) once commanded a brigade of hippopotamus-headed giff mercenaries, but his entire unit was captured by neogi slavers. Of them, he's the sole survivor. The neogi ship recently crashed in Icedale while pursuing the *Id Ascendant*—an illithid nautiloid piloted by gnomish ceremorphs. In the chaos, Lieutenant Prook managed to escape, but underestimated the cold.

What They Want. While Lieutenant Prook's immediate goals are survival and recovery. Once out of the woods, he plans to find a way to exact his revenge on the neogi who enslaved him and killed his unit.

Gruff and No-Nonsense. Lieutenant Prook doesn't waste time on pomp and circumstance; he focuses on his goals with laser precision and those who question his orders (yes, orders) or methods are quick to earn a scathing admonishment. To that end, however, he's loyal and honorable without apology. He would throw down his life to save those he considers allies.



STORY AWARD: LIEUTENANT PROOK

If any of the characters have this story award, the giff mercenary is present and accompanies the characters in the search for the fallen star. One of the players who has this story award (chosen at random if more than one has the story award and the players can't agree) can control Lieutenant Prook as a sidekick during this adventure. **Give that player handout 1.**

A MEETING OF MINDS

The characters and Lieutenant Prook meet with Ogolai Orcsplitter ("Old Goat"), chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths, and the goliath bard Grakal Dawnbearer, in Wyrmdoom Crag's main hall. If Lieutenant Prook isn't with the group, see "No Lieutenant Present" for guidance on how to initiate the search for the fallen star. Give the characters a chance to briefly explain what happened during their mission to the crater and the ruins therein, then read the following:

A fire crackles in the center of the great hall where the goliath chieftain, Old Goat, leans on her greataxe. She stares into the flames, her brow furrowed, taking in the grave news that her hunters have been slain. Her comrade, the bard Grakal Dawnbearer, paces the room as Lieutenant Prook, the hippopotamus-headed mercenary, speaks:

"We entered those ruins to rescue a unit of goliath hunters and to put pay to their captors, the neogi. The same neogi who wiped out my entire crew. We were overrun there by monstrosities the likes of which I've never seen. It is strikingly apparent our troubles now exceed the plight of the goliaths of this hall."

Upon hearing this, Old Goat's frown deepens and her muscles tense. Allow the characters to add to the conversation if they wish before reading the following:

"Neither is it a matter of avenging the death of my crew," continues the lieutenant, "For the witless neogi have awakened something beneath the ice, something alien and terrible that poses a clear and present threat to life as we know it. The solution is obvious: we must blow that horror-infested hellhole to smithereens!"

Lieutenant Prook strokes his chin, "A set of arcane explosives should do the trick... Now all I need is a workshop to create the devices... That and a magical power source to charge them with..."

HATCHING A PLAN

While Lieutenant Prook ruminates on his plan, Grakal nervously tells Old Goat that they've been experiencing strange voices in their head since Nararhak Tree-Eye's disappearance. Over and over, the voice in their mind repeats:

"Nautiloid down. Emergency protocols enabled. Crew safe, but vessel imperiled. Psi crystal needed. Come at once."

Grakal has no idea what any of this means, but Lieutenant Prook identifies a nautiloid as a type of ship: a powerful, spacefaring vessel which travels between worlds. He claims that if the ship has any functionality, it's bound to have a workshop where he can craft explosives, and if he could siphon energy from the magical helm that powers the vessel, he could easily charge the devices. Old Goat reasons that the nautiloid and the fallen star spotted in the skies over Icewind Dale by her clan could be one and the same thing. With this revelation, the giff hurriedly begins packing for the long journey ahead, encouraging the characters to do the same. Old Goat provides the group with enough provisions to complete their trip to the site of the fallen star.



OVERLAPPING ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

Characters who've encountered the *Id Ascendant's* crew before not only know what Grakal is referring to, but also where it is and who crews it.

NO LIEUTENANT PRESENT

If Lieutenant Prook isn't with the group, Old Goat suggests the characters seek out the fallen star to see if the answers to their problems can be found there—she insists it'll likely play a role in the events to come.

OGOLAI (OH-GO-LIE) ORCSPLITTER "OLD GOAT" THUUNLAKALAGA

Lawful neutral goliath warrior

The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

What They Want. Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh. Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

GRAKAL (GRAH-KUHL) DAWNBEARER THUUNLAKALAGA

Lawful good goliath bard

So named due to the colors of their hides and clothes, worn to look like a sunrise, with a personality to match. Grakal is softly spoken despite their extremely loud appearance. However, Grakal is easily the funniest and most joyous of Souljoined. (The other two members of Souljoined are Nararhak Tree-Eye and Thugeo Goatchaser.) Their ability to respond with snide remarks is unparalleled, but it's generally only heard by the other two resulting in "random" fits of laughter.

Grakal's prize possession is a large blanket with different tales of the goliaths' culture woven into a beautiful pictography. Throughout, trinkets and baubles from other cultures are woven in. Grakal often tries to incorporate their love of goliath cultures, other cultures, and color into their outward appearance. Some see it as ostentatious; Grakal knows it allows others to lower their guard around them so they can teach with less resistance.

What They Want. To never lose the family unit they're in.

Grakal would give their life for the other two Souljoined and can't imagine a world without them.

Not Enough Flair. Grakal loves going to Good Mead and interacting with Ten-Towns. Grakal has a weak spot for food and flashy items from other cultures.

TO THE FALLEN STAR...AGAIN!

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

THE SEARCH BEGINS

Themes: Exploration, survival.

The characters strike out to find the fallen star once and for all. As they draw closer, they happen upon creatures escaped from the wrecked *Id Ascendant*.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Finding the *Id Ascendant* is **Story Objective A**.

Snow falls in light flurries as the characters head west through the mountains from Wyrmdoom Crag. Lieutenant Prook, if present, is emboldened by his plan to reduce Xorvintroth to rubble, offering words of encouragement as the group travels: “Let’s look lively! This den of alien madness won’t explode itself you know!”

The site of the fallen star is roughly 50 miles away from Wyrmdoom Crag. Traveling this distance is beyond the scope of this adventure’s timeframe. If time isn’t an issue, you can roleplay the journey using the “Mountain Travel” rules in the opening section of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, adding encounters as you see fit from the “Wilderness Encounters” section in chapter 2 of the book. Otherwise, the characters come across the location described below after 40 miles of travel, which takes 10 days with a dogsled or 20 days on foot, wearing snowshoes (if the group travels for 8 hours per day). You don’t need to describe in detail what happens each day, and the group can survive on the rations Old Goat provided.

CREATURE CAVE

After many days’ travel, the air is pierced by shrill, monstrous screeching and guttural roars echoing from a rise up ahead. Three **young remorhazes** surround two **carrion crawlers** inside a cavern, and the creatures are locked in combat. Large boulders provide plenty of cover, allowing the characters to approach the cave stealthily to better view the scene:

A cave mouth gapes in the mountainside before you: large icicles hang from its roof like rows of teeth, giving the place the appearance of a dreadful, open maw. A heat haze emanates from three serpentine monstrosities which snake around the cavern on countless legs. They snap at two, large, wormlike creatures which recoil from the heat—curiously, these creatures are wearing harnesses.

The carrion crawlers entered the cave to consume the remains of an axe beak mount and its long-dead rider (see “Treasure”), when they were beset upon by the young remorhazes. The latter group have the upper hand, they’ve surrounded the carrion crawlers and are closing in for the kill (see “Creature Information”). The presence of harnesses indicates that the carrion crawlers may be domesticated and the character with the highest passive (Wisdom) Perception score notices a stoppered vial strapped to one of the harnesses (see “Treasure”). The carrion crawlers wear caparisons embroidered with a strange looking vessel—a shell-like hull with protruding tentacles. If Lieutenant Prook is with the group, he recognizes the design as a depiction of a nautilus. Characters playing through *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* may recognize the carrion crawlers from previous dealings with the *Id Ascendant*’s crew—see the “Overlapping *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*” sidebar for guidance.

AREA INFORMATION

The cave has the following features:

Dimensions and Terrain. A boulder-strewn mountain pass leads to a 40-foot-by-50-foot natural cavern. The ceiling is 40 feet high at its apex and hangs thick with **icicles**.

Weather and Temperature. Below freezing with light snowfall and a chill breeze. A storm is developing to the west. The temperature becomes uncomfortably warm when in close proximity to the remorhazes.

Lighting. By day, the Dale’s eternal dusk offers dim light. By night, an aurora billows overhead providing fragments of dim light in otherwise pitch darkness.

Sounds and Smells. Whistling wind, monstrous screeching like nails on a chalkboard, and the scuttling of insectoid legs on ice.



Icicles. Every inch of the cavern's roof is covered in icicles which range between 1 and 7 feet in length. Combat in the cavern, coupled with the remorhazes' heat, has weakened the icicle formations, causing them to fall and impale those below them. At the end of every round during which combat occurs in the cave, an icicle falls and strikes one creature at random, including the remorhazes and carrion crawlers. The targeted creature must make a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

CREATURE INFORMATION

This encounter features the following creatures:

Young Remorhazes. These creatures relentlessly pursue the carrion crawlers, toying with them and wearing them down with their Heated Body trait. If a remorhaz takes damage from any of the characters, it snaps its attention to the attacker and their allies.

Carrion Crawlers. These creatures are the domesticated pets of the gnome ceremorph, Vorryn. They were drawn to the cavern—some distance from the *Id Ascendant*—by the scent of carrion (see “Treasure”). They both have several bite wounds and burns down their flanks due to the remorhazes' ambush, and each have **21 hit points remaining** when the characters arrive at the scene. Their harnesses are made of tough leather fastened with iron links. Each harness has the carrion crawler's name written in Qualith (a braille-like script illithids read with their tentacles) along one of the straps. Their names are Igneer and Zukkul. Characters who learn their names have advantage on any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made when dealing with the carrion crawlers.

COMBAT CONSEQUENCES

A couple of options are open to the characters, and the encounter plays out differently depending on how they react to the situation:

Do Nothing. If the characters remain hidden while the monsters fight it out, the remorhazes defeat the carrion crawlers in **three** rounds then burrow away with their prey—including their harnesses—leaving the cavern bereft of life.

Join the Fight. If the characters join the fray and target the remorhazes, the carrion crawlers hang back and attempt to flee when they can. They only attack a character in self-defense. The carrion crawlers head straight for home—the *Id Ascendant*—which greatly assists the characters in their continuing quest for the vessel across the tundra in “Part 2: Star Search.”

OVERLAPPING ICEWIND DALE:

RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

If your group is playing through *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, there's a chance they've encountered these carrion crawlers before. If the group defeat the remorhazes, and assuming the characters treated the carrion crawlers agreeably at their last meeting, the creatures wriggle and squirm against those characters affectionately. The carrion crawlers nudge them toward the cave's exit before scuttling off, homeward bound.

TREASURE

Characters can find treasure by searching through the following:

Carrion Crawler Harness. Strapped to the side of one of the harnesses is a vial of gray liquid—an *oil of ethereality*.

Dead Explorer. A human and his axe beak mount lie at the rear of the cave; they've been dead for a while. Their bodies bear large puncture wounds, and shards of ice lie scattered around them, indicating they were crushed beneath a falling icicle. Fresh bite marks reveal the carrion crawlers were feasting on the axe beak carcass. The man's skin is adorned with tattoos of constellations, and he wears a frost giant toe pendant (a trinket) around his neck—locally believed to be a good luck charm. A leather knapsack lies half-buried in the snow nearby. Inside the knapsack is an ornate telescope. Its lenses are broken, but the tube is embossed with a mountain range beneath a star-filled sky. There's also a sketchbook containing skillfully rendered ink drawings of the skies over Ten-Towns.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

Very Weak: Remove one **young remorhaz**. Each **carrion crawler** has 36 hit points remaining.

Weak: Each **carrion crawler** has 36 hit points remaining.

Strong: Add one **young remorhaz**.

Very Strong: Add two **young remorhazes**.

A SENSE OF URGENCY

Once the cavern's threats are cleared and any treasure is found, the characters should feel compelled to be on their way quickly. If they put an end to the young remorhazes, the distant scream of an adult remorhaz reverberates through the peaks. While the group won't fight this monster, the prospect of it turning up should hurry them along. If the remorhazes escaped, the cavern's icy ceiling creaks and groans, as if more icicles could fall at any minute. Once the group sets off, proceed to part 2.

STAR SEARCH

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

WORSENING WEATHER

Themes: Fear, hysteria, exploration.

A terrible blizzard befalls the characters—they must navigate the deadly weather, encountering malevolent haunts from the ancient city of Xorvintroth along the way.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Finding the *Id Ascendant* is **Story Objective B**.

As the characters journey on, the storm which threatened during part 1 rolls in, enveloping the group in a blizzard. The howling wind limits hearing to a range of 100 feet and imposes disadvantage on ranged attack rolls. It also imposes disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks which rely on hearing. Torches are extinguished and visibility is reduced to 30 feet. Creatures without goggles or other eye protection have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks which rely on sight. More detailed rules for blizzards can be found in “Wilderness Survival” in the opening section of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

After an hour traveling in these conditions, the group unwittingly traverse a haunted crevasse, which lies underfoot. Before running this encounter refamiliarize yourself with the “Xorvintroth, That Which Survives” sidebar in the Adventure Primer.

PRIMORDIAL CREVASSE

The ice over the crevasse breaks when more than 300 lb. is placed on it—roughly the weight of one heavily armored warrior, and easily exceeded by either of the **carrion crawlers**. See “The Crevasse Calls Out” for guidance if the characters don’t trigger this event—for example if they’re airborne or particularly light on their feet. Otherwise, read the following aloud:

A deep and dreadful noise grinds underfoot as the ice fractures like shattered glass. It falls away in great chunks, threatening to plunge you into darkness below!

The packed ice falls away tearing a 30-foot-by-100-foot rend in the ground. Those on foot in the affected area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, leaping to safety on

a success. On a failure, they plunge 50 feet to the bottom of the crevasse, taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage and landing prone. Falling creatures can make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to reduce this damage by half, angling their bodies to land on a pile of snow.

AREA INFORMATION

The cave has the following features:

Dimensions and Terrain. The chasm is 30 feet wide, 50 feet deep, and 100 feet long. The **slippery walls** are formed of thick, undulating, ancient ice, appearing in parts like frosted glass receding into darkness.

Weather and Temperature. The blizzard howls overhead, but the chasm offers some relief from the biting cold of the storm.





Lighting. The bottom of the chasm is in total darkness.

Sounds. The walls creak and reverberate as the ice fractures and resettles, the wind rushes over the opening above, filling the crevasse with an eerie wail, and the chasm amplifies and echoes any voices or footsteps within it.

Slippery Walls. Climbing the chasm's walls requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics), but the slick ice imposes disadvantage on any check made to climb them.

FALLING DOWN

Give characters who've fallen into the chasm just a few seconds to take in their surroundings before reading the following aloud:

Footfalls echo from the farthest reaches of the chasm. Two figures hurtle toward you—dragonborn swathed in robes, their faces etched in terror. Seeing you, one of them screams:
“Draak! DRAAAK!”

These figures are spirits trapped in time (see “Spirits” in “Creature Information”). Characters fluent in Draconic hear them shouting “Run!” Any character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence check determines what the figures are shouting by their tone and gestures.

THE CREVASSE CALLS OUT

Characters who don't trigger the crevasse's collapse hear panicked screams over the howling wind as they travel. If the characters investigate, they find the crevasse open with two dragonborn inside, beseeching them for help. Read the following aloud:

You peer into the depths of an enormous crevasse. Two figures, swathed in robes, struggle desperately below: one has their leg trapped in a fissure in the ice, and the other strains to pull their companion free. Both seem utterly terrified, glancing over their shoulders into the dark reaches of the chasm. The trapped dragonborn looks up and, seeing you, screams:

“Lek udoka! *Petranas!*”

These figures are spirits trapped in time (see “Spirits” in “Creature Information”). Characters fluent in Draconic hear them shouting “Help us! *Please!*” Any character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence check determines what the figures are shouting by their tone and gestures.

Characters can rappel down the walls with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, but unless they use a climber's kit, this check is made with disadvantage due to the slippery walls (see “Area Information”). The trapped dragonborn can be pulled free of the ice with a successful DC 10 Strength check.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The crevasse is haunted by restless dragonborn spirits from the ancient Abeiran city of Xorvintroth. For centuries, a terrible moment in time has played out repeatedly in the chasm's depths: two dragonborn, desperately fleeing Xorvintroth and its wicked cabal, were chased by three dragonborn wizards who thwarted their attempts to scale the city's walls and escape—the wizards transformed their quarries' ropes into tentacles, plunging them to their doom.

Spirits. The two panic-stricken dragonborn spirits, Eskash and Zharinax, pose no threat to the characters. Use the **ghost** stat block if you need statistics for these spirits, but they have none of the ghost's traits or actions, their speed is 30 feet, and they can't fly. They're completely corporeal, so characters shouldn't assume they're dead straight away. Even the dragonborn themselves are unaware that they're dead—they're locked in an infinite loop of actions, just desperate to outrun their pursuers. They wear long robes from a bygone era and speak an archaic form of Draconic. Characters who make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check discern that these dragonborn may be centuries old. If the group helps them escape the crevasse, the dragonborn spirits are laid to rest (see “Escaping the Crevasse”).

Malevolent Ghosts. Three **ghosts** relentlessly stalk the fleeing dragonborn and punish any who help them. They're gaunt, dragonborn wizards wearing tattered robes embroidered with constellations and arcane symbols, and they have brightly burning stars in place of eyes. In life, they belonged to the cabal of wizards who built a bridge from Xorvintroth to the Far Realm. In death, they wish only to torment the souls of those who tried to escape them. While these ghosts can fly to the height of the crevasse, they're bound to it and can't leave.

MEETING THE DRAGONBORN SPIRITS

The dragonborn briefly explain their plight to the characters (see “Creature Information”), though their voices stammer, their tone is desperate, and they continually look behind them into the shadows. If none of the characters speak Draconic, the dragonborn use gestures and simple wording to communicate. Characters who make a successful DC 12 Intelligence check figure out what’s being said. Once a character succeeds on this check, they don’t need to make it again. The dragonborn repeat phrases such as:

- “Lek udoka!” (Help us!)
- “Yth teph ekess geth, *jaka!*” (We have to go, *now!*)
- “Petranas qeelak!” (Please hurry!)
- “Astahii re krull!” (They are coming!)

As they speak, they uncoil lengths of ropes from their backpacks, making hasty preparations to climb out the chasm.

Ropes to Tentacles. If the dragonborn spirits use their own ropes to escape the crevasse, their ropes always turn into tentacles as they near the top of their climb as long as at least one of the malevolent ghosts is present. If their ropes turn to tentacles and they fall to the ground, they instantly perish (see “The Fate of the Spirits,” below).

GHOSTS IN THE WALLS

At an opportune moment, perhaps as the group discusses how to escape the crevasse, the ghosts of the dragonborn wizards make their presence known. Read the following aloud:

The temperature plunges. The walls of the crevasse pulse with a pale, green light, and far away, within the ancient layers of rime, the smudged architecture of a cyclopean city forms. Its streets teem with worms, and gargantuan tentacles writhe up its many towers. Three pairs of stars appear within the ice and move through the walls toward you. Staring at the stars, one of the dragonborn whispers: Astahii re veklar . . .” *They are here . . .*

The stars are the eyes of the three ghosts, who approach like flickering mirages through the chasm’s walls. They enter the crevasse after 1d3 rounds and can’t be targeted or harmed while in the walls. Similarly, the ghosts can’t target creatures until they enter the crevasse. Their silent, steady approach fills the dragonborn spirits with panic.

Visions of Xorvintroth. The city which manifests deep within the ice is an echo of Xorvintroth as it became overrun with horrors from the Far Realm. The architectural visions persist as long as at least one dragonborn ghost is present, either in the ice walls or in the crevasse itself. Creatures with an Intelligence score of 4 or higher that witness the manifestation must roll a d10 at the start of each of their turns as their mind comes to terms with the unspeakable fate of Xorvintroth and its denizens. On a 1, that creature gains a short-term madness until they escape the crevasse (roll on the Short-Term Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*). Once a creature gains a short-term madness, they no longer need to roll at the start of their turn.

ESCAPING THE CREVASSE

Characters can devise any number of ways to escape the crevasse. Two possible options are detailed here:

Climb Out. The crevasse walls can be scaled with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, made with disadvantage due to the slippery walls (see “Area Information”). Characters who use a climber’s kit negate this disadvantage. Unless a creature has a climbing speed, each foot of movement costs one extra foot when climbing.

Hold Off the Ghosts. If the characters choose to fight the ghosts in the crevasse, the dragonborn spirits attempt to escape during the fray. If all three ghosts are destroyed, the manifestations in the ice disappear (see “Visions of Xorvintroth”), and the spirits’ ropes don’t turn into tentacles (see “Ropes to Tentacles”).

THE FATE OF THE SPIRITS

The fate of the dragonborn spirits depends on the characters’ actions:

History Repeats Itself. If the spirits perish in the crevasse, they reappear in 1d3 rounds from the depths of the chasm, running for their lives just as they were when the characters first encountered them at the beginning of part 2 (see “Primordial Crevasse”).

Laid to Rest. If the characters help the spirits escape the crevasse, they tearfully thank the characters: “Vin xa . . .” They turn and vanish in a spectral whirl of vapor. If the spirits are laid to rest, they return later in the adventure to aid the characters in the “Chamber of Stars” during part 3.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren’t cumulative:

Very Weak or Weak: Remove one ghost.

Strong or Very Strong: Add one ghost.

TREASURE

Characters who search the area around the crevasse or who make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a dragonborn corpse, frozen while attempting to claw its way over the lip of the chasm. The corpse has a gaping wound in its back and the surrounding tissue is covered in spidery black veins. This is the corpse of one of the spirits, blasted by necrotic magic as they tried to escape their pursuers. Searching the corpse uncovers a leather pouch containing several ancient, star-shaped coins. There are also two trinkets (roll twice on the Icewind Dale Trinkets table in appendix A of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*), and a *clockwork amulet* of a silver dragon’s head encircled by a copper ring studded with ten tiny diamonds that twinkle like stars when the amulet is activated.

CROSSING THE TUNDRA

Soon after the characters leave the crevasse, the snowstorm subsides. To reach the *Id Ascendant*, they must cross a frozen wasteland by making **two** successful DC 14 **group** Wisdom (Survival) checks. These checks are made with advantage if they're traveling with at least one of the carrion crawlers from part 1. On a failed group check, each character gains a level of exhaustion, as those who succeeded the check must spend extra effort to aid their flagging companions. This exhaustion can only be removed by completing a long rest somewhere warm and dry.

ECHOES OF XORVINTROTH

Events designed to instill a sense of fear and unease may occur on this last leg of the journey; either the characters are shaken by their experiences in the crevasse, or the malignancy of Xorvintroth is corrupting the landscape in which it lies. Roll on the Mind-Numbing Manifestations table after each group Wisdom (Survival) check is made. The resulting occurrence happens to one character at random, no one else in the group witnesses it. After you describe the occurrence, the character must make a successful DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or gain a flaw which lasts until they complete a long rest somewhere safe (such as Wyrmdoom Crag). Don't forget to award **inspiration** to characters who roleplay their flaw well.

Once the group have successfully crossed the tundra, proceed to part 3.

MIND-NUMBING MANIFESTATIONS TABLE

d6	Occurrence	Flaw Gained
1	Ancient Passenger. You traverse a patch of slick ice and deep beneath the rime, the frozen corpse of a dragonborn drifts slowly toward the surface. Its eyes are open, and stars burn brightly within the sunken sockets. The corpse stares up at you, blinks, then vanishes.	<i>"Whenever you look at your reflection, you see an emaciated dragonborn figure standing behind you, continually whispering in your ear, making you fluent in Draconic. You occasionally speak in Draconic when you mean to speak in another language."</i>
2	Arctic Mirage. Flickering on the horizon you see a bridge arcing skyward adjoined to a leaning tower. No matter where you look, the vision coalesces where the sky meets the land. The structure's odd angles fill you with a sickening fear.	<i>"I will not step foot into Xorvintroth, that city of nameless horrors."</i>
3	Footsteps. You hear footsteps crunch behind you in the snow, but when you turn around there are no other tracks besides yours and your comrades'.	<i>"I have to keep moving—someone or something is following me."</i>
4	Alien Skies. The sky seems alive with wormlike entities, squirming at the very edge of your perception.	<i>"The stars are wrong—I fear the sky."</i>
5	Abeiran Spirits. The spirits of dragonborn travelers sigh into being around you. They're formed of cold vapor, like exhaled breath, and trudge alongside your group: no one else can see them but you.	<i>"I talk to the spirits of the dead, who are everywhere."</i>
6	No complication.	



THE ID ASCENDANT

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

APPROACHING THE FALLEN STAR

Themes: Social interaction, exploration.

The characters meet the gnome ceremorphs—captains of the disabled ship, the *Id Ascendant*. The characters must persuade the gnomes to let Lieutenant Prook use the ship's workshop and allow him to siphon energy from their vessel's magical helm in order to power his makeshift explosives.

STORY OBJECTIVE C

Convincing the gnome ceremorphs to help is **Story Objective C**.

As the characters near the *Id Ascendant*, read:

As you trudge deeper into a mountain valley, an eerie glow betrays the monstrous outline of something stupendous and ominous. It looks like a cephalopod with slimy, ropy tentacles as thick as tree trunks tried and failed to bury its immense bulk in the snow.

A complete description of the *Id Ascendant* isn't provided here. For a more comprehensive description, refer to chapter 2 of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

THE SHIP'S CAPTAINS

As the characters approach the ship, they're hailed by two **gnome ceremorphs** which stand on its upper deck. See the "Vorryn and Dredavex" sidebar for guidance on how to roleplay this pair of gnomish mind flayers. Refer also to "*Id Ascendant*" in chapter 2 of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* for further details on these creatures' descriptions, motivations, and mannerisms. If the two **carriion crawlers** are with the characters, they galumph toward the vessel, clearly happy to have made it home. In this instance, the characters have advantage on any Charisma (Persuasion) checks made when dealing with the ship's captains—Vorryn in particular is delighted that the pets have returned safely.

OVERLAPPING ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

If the ceremorphs previously left Icewind Dale after being given a *psi crystal*, they explain to these characters that shortly after doing so, they returned after learning that the squidlings had escaped from the ship before take-off.

MUTUAL REQUESTS FOR HELP

The ceremorphs are curious about the characters' reasons for seeking out their vessel, while also eager to share a problem of their own (see "Missing Squidlings," below). Lieutenant Prook—who's momentarily baffled by the ship's bizarre captains—finally manages to explain his plan to create explosive devices. He asks if they'd grant him access to a workshop or maintenance deck for a couple of hours so he can build the devices. He also asks them if the ship's helm functions (which it does), would they be willing to part with a little its power so he might charge his explosives. After telepathically conversing between themselves, the ceremorphs agree, provided the characters are willing to find their missing squidlings and return them to the ship. If Lieutenant Prook isn't with the group, the ceremorphs suggest the use of explosives to destroy the ancient city within the crater; they offer to build the devices in return for finding their missing squidlings.

Throughout the entire conversation, Dredavex carefully consumes a frozen brain (see "Repulsive Snack," below), and both gnomes ask the characters more than once if they happen to have a *psi crystal* to hand—an item they need to jump-start their ship's propulsion system.

Missing Squidlings. The ceremorphs explain that they have three squidlings under their care (see "*Id Ascendant*" in chapter 2 of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* for details on these creatures). Yesterday, the captains and their squidlings were scouting the surrounding area when they happened upon an abandoned cave. They explored for a while and discovered some ruins, but decided to turn back due to the freezing temperature. The squidlings mewled and protested as they wanted to investigate further. Soon after the crew returned to their vessel, the squidlings vanished and then the storm hit; the gnomes fear the squidlings have defiantly returned to the caves alone.

Vorryn and Dredavex agree to let Lieutenant Prook use their ship's helm if the characters promise to bring their missing squidlings home. The captains need to stay aboard the ship to repair the damage it took during the recent storm. If the characters agree to help, Lieutenant Prook is shown to the maintenance chamber to begin his work

(area N5 of the *Id Ascendant* in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*) and the ceremorphs give the characters directions to the cave. Vorryn also gives one of the characters its glove to help them coax the squidlings into their care. The ceremorphs would like the characters to leave immediately, as they fear the squidlings will soon perish in the cold.

Repulsive Snack. As Dredavex communicates with the characters, it idly unscrews the lid from a frost-covered glass jar. The jar's casing is wrought from green metal and shaped like a dragon's claw. Inside the jar is a frozen brain suspended in a sludgy liquid. Characters who make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notice the word "Graoul" engraved on a plaque on the jar's base. Dredavex lifts the brain out with its tentacles and consumes half of it, before handing the other half to Vorryn. Dredavex then drains the jar of its slushy fluid, glugging it down like a pitcher of ale; this gives the ceremorph terrible hiccups.

If the characters ask about the brain, the ceremorphs explain that they found it frozen in the nearby caves they were exploring—the same caves they suspect their squidlings have returned to (see area 1 in part 4; Dredavex has just eaten a brain in a jar which was frozen in deep hibernation). The gnomes don't know if there are any more frozen brains in the caves, but they certainly hope so: "That brain was delicious! Such complex flavors and a decidedly mature vintage!"



Telepathic Distress Signal. If questioned about the message the goliath Grakal has been receiving in their head, the ceremorphs explain that they activated a distress signal soon after their ship crashed. The signal is only supposed to be heard by telepathic creatures, but there are a few glitches in the technology, so it's possible nontelepathic creatures have heard the message too. See "Telepathic Distress Signal" in the "*Id Ascendant*" section in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* for a more detailed description of how this distress signal works and who it affects.

VORRYN AND DREDAVEX (VORE-IN AND DRAY-DAH-VECKS)

Chaotic neutral gnome ceremorph spacefarers

These two stranded ceremorphs want to leave *Icwind Dale* very much after being forced to land during a blizzard while being chased by a neogi deathspider. For now, they bide their time in the hopes that they'll be able to repair their ship and leave before they freeze to death. These creatures are further described in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

What They Want. They're eager to find the *psi crystal* needed to jump-start their ship's propulsion system, but also to recover their crew—a trio of gnome squidlings named Rin, Rix, and Zglarrd.

An Unusual Combination. Unlike most mind flayers, these ceremorphs shun combat and prefer to speak aloud in Gnomish or Common (with an accent best described as "gooey"). Their natural gnomish curiosity is coupled with their newfound drive for control and experimentation.

EXPLORING THE SHIP

The ceremorphs aren't keen on the characters exploring their ship. If they insist on poking around, Vorryn follows them, offering brief descriptions of each room like an agitated tour guide. It impatiently drums its tentacles, insisting that time is of the essence in an attempt to hurry the characters along. Characters who explore the cargo hold (area N2 of the *Id Ascendant* in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*) find Dredavex's **flesh golem** lumbering around.

TREASURE

Characters who search the maintenance chamber (area N5 of the *Id Ascendant* in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*) without the ceremorphs noticing find a tiny, gelatinous figurine of a gnomish ceremorph. When the figure is stretched as an action it functions as a *potion of growth*.

ATTACKING THE GNOME CEREMORPHS?

In the event that the characters instigate violence against the gnomes, the gnomes attempt to reach the bridge and use the helm's self-destruct system. If both gnome ceremorphs touch the blue orbs, they can jointly activate the system. If they do so, a voice in Deep Speech counts down from 60 seconds. When the timer reaches 0, the ship disintegrates in an explosion bright enough to be seen from Ten-Towns. This timer can't be stopped once started. Any creature inside the ship or within 60 feet of it when this occurs takes 70 (20d6) force damage. This system also activates 24 hours after both ceremorphs die.

VISCOUS CARGO

Estimated Duration: 75 minutes

FOLLOW THE SILVERY TRAILS

Themes: Exploration, discovery, incomprehensible horror. Here, the characters seek out the missing squidlings in a nearby cave. The characters quickly learn they've stumbled into the upper reaches of an ancient Xorvintrothian ruin.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Returning the squidlings to the *Id Ascendant* is **Story Objective D**.

Having left Lieutenant Prook on the *Id Ascendant* to craft his explosives, the characters follow directions given to them by Vorryn and Dredavex, and after an hour or so of travel, find the entrance to a cave.

Wind howls past the ragged opening of a cavern in the mountainside. The boulders at the entrance are coated in a viscous goo which branches off into three silvery trails wending into the darkness.

The cave extends into a natural passageway of rime-frosted rock, roughly 60 feet long. The traces of goo here were made by the three gnome squidlings. These creatures rely on levitation to keep their bodies aloft whilst propelling themselves along with their oversized tentacles which secrete a viscous fluid much like the trail of a snail. The goo, which has a pickle-like odor, is harmless but incredibly sticky—it leaves skin feeling tacky until properly soaked and scrubbed.

The silvery trails meander and crisscross down the passageway. The passage ends in a wall set with a star-shaped window through which the squidlings have gone:

The passageway ends in a wall of deep, jade stone stippled with glistening, green flecks. A window, shaped like a nine-pointed star, is set into the wall, its frame rime-frosted and slick with goo as the silvery trails lead over it and into obscurity beyond.

Characters who've played DDAL10-07 *Into Darkness* recognize the masonry from their previous foray into Xorvintroth. The window aperture is roughly 5 feet square, and the area beyond is in total darkness. Above the window, beneath a thick layer of frost, is a word in old Draconic: *Osvithien*, meaning "Sanctuary." The character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score hears squeaking, grunting, and squelching noises emanating from somewhere beyond the window. If the characters climb through, they enter the ruins of Xorvintroth's Chamber of Stars.

XORVINTROTH RUINS

The ruins are preserved inside a glacial wall, protected for eons by the frozen climate of Icewind Dale. The following descriptions correspond to areas marked on the **Xorvintroth Ruins Map** in **appendix A**:

AREA INFORMATION

The ruins have the following common features:

Dimensions and Terrain. The ruins are hewn from a dark-green stone as smooth as glass and flecked with a crystalline green mineral. The entire chamber is dusted with thick, crisp rime. The architecture comprises no right angles, intersections are either oddly obtuse or awkwardly acute.

Weather and Temperature. This place seems to have its own air still sealed within, and the temperature is well below freezing.

Lighting. The ruins lie in complete darkness.

Sounds and Smells. Footfalls echoing on stone and the squidlings' occasional squelches resonate above an otherwise deafening silence. The air is filled with the tang of the squidlings' viscous, pickle-scented goo.

1. PASSAGE BEYOND THE WINDOW

When the characters climb through the window, read:

A corridor of smooth jade stretches away from you into darkness. Large sections of the masonry are fractured, bulging inward with the weight of packed ice filling the crevices. Shards of green, glassy rubble litter the floor, and the air is deathly still. A decrepit voice croaks from the gloom:

"Graoul? . . . Graoul?"

Characters who examined the brain container aboard the *Id Ascendant* recall the name “Graoul” from the engraved plaque on the container’s casing. After the characters proceed 20 feet or so down the corridor, they encounter three **brains in jars**. Read the following:

Three glass jars hover ahead, clustered around four jade statues of seated dragonborn. Each jar carries a pulsing brain suspended in fluid and is held in an outer casing of dragon claws wrought of spiked, green metal.

As you approach, the brains rotate toward you. The fluid in one jar begins to bubble and a voice wheezes into the air around it:

“Are you the Emissaries of the Nine Eyes?”

The question is asked in an ancient Draconic dialect. If none of the characters speak Draconic, the brain grumbles and repeats the question in an equally archaic form of Common.

Area Information. The ceiling here is 20 feet high. After 25 feet the corridor opens up into an area housing the **brain shrine** before narrowing off and descending toward area 2.

Brain Shrine. At the height of Xorvintroth’s power—through knowledge gained from the Far Realm—the city’s mages discovered a way to keep their wisest elders alive forever. They encased their brains in jars and imbued them with necromantic and psionic energy. Four of these chosen elders were situated here. There are four statues of dragonborn seated on thrones hewn from speckled green stone, and in Xorvintroth’s heyday the brains in jars sat atop each head like a crown. City nobles would visit the shrine seeking the elders’ wisdom.

Now, the shrine is covered in ancient ice. The ice above one of the statues has been chipped away and the cavity is empty—the gnome ceremorphs pilfered this part of the shrine and claimed the encased brain they found there. Roused from hibernation by this activity (see below), the other three elder brains now seek their missing cohort.

Brains in Jars. The brains (named Ukthet, Lirith, and Krektesh) have been encased in ice for centuries, wherein they entered a state of deep hibernation. Their stance is defensive, but not immediately hostile: in fact, they’re quite confused about their situation and surroundings. One brain does most of the talking and repeats the following questions:

- “Where is Graoul?”
- “Are you the Emissaries of the Nine Eyes?”
- “Did we summon the bridge of stars? Did we travel to the viridian sphere beyond the veil of night?”
- “How much time has passed? Why are we in icy ruins?”

Characters who parley with the brains are free to spin any tale they like, and if they make a successful DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check, the brains are inclined to believe them. The brains confer with each other after each given answer; one of the brains has lost its ability to project its voice and writes its thoughts out in the frost using a *mage hand* spell. If the brains become suspicious, at least

one of them casts a *zone of truth* and/or *detect thoughts* spell to allay or confirm their doubts. If they learn of the true fate of Graoul, they seek vengeance.

The brains in jars can relay the history of Xorvintroth, but they don’t know what happened when their wizards built the bridge to the Far Realm: they know nothing of their city’s devastation at the hands—or tentacles—of alien horrors. They also don’t know about the starstone golem in area 2, only that the chamber is a place of “wisdom and reflection.” They don’t assist the characters in any combat which takes place there.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren’t cumulative:

Very Weak or Weak: Remove one **brain in a jar**.

Strong or Very Strong: Add one **brain in a jar**.

2. THE CHAMBER OF STARS

The three **gnome squidlings** are here, slithering all over a large statue of a dragonborn: an inanimate **starstone golem**. When the characters approach the entrance, depending on your group’s light sources, read or paraphrase the following:

You stand at the edge of a vast, circular chamber with a domed ceiling that curves away into darkness. Three viscous trails have carved a path across the rimy floor. They lead to a towering jade statue in the center of the room: a robed dragonborn with outstretched arms. Three squid-like creatures squirm all over the statue’s surface. Their long tentacles are wrapped around its cranium, and the creatures tug and pull as though trying to prize the lid from a tightly sealed urn.

AREA INFORMATION

The main chamber’s domed ceiling is 60 feet high at its apex, and its smooth jade surface is engraved with countless constellations. Parts of the ceiling are cracked, indicating structural damage. Several stone **friezes** line the chamber’s walls, and stone benches with clawed dragon feet are placed in front of each carving.

Gnome Squidlings. The characters are safe to presume that the creatures on the statue are the squidlings, largely because they look exactly like something called a squidling should look. The squidlings are trying to access where they guess the statue’s brain is—it’s difficult for them to pass up a meal this big and they’re slobbering with excitement at the prospect. See the “Rin, Rix, and Zglaard” sidebar for more information on roleplaying these creatures. Coaxing the squidlings from the statue requires a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check, but do reward good roleplaying. If a character produces Vorryn’s glove however, the squidlings squelch hurriedly from the statue to nuzzle it. They stick by whoever carries the glove—quite literally. At any sign of danger, the squidlings retreat to one of the antechambers (area 3).

RIN, RIX, AND ZGLARRD (ZEH-GLERD)

Unaligned gnome squidlings

These creatures are the result of ceremorphosis gone awry—a deformed mind flayer with tiny limbs and comically oversized tentacles. They're constantly pestering those around them, tripping over one another, taking things that don't belong to them, getting lost, found, and then lost again, etc. These creatures are further described in chapter 2 of *Iceland Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

What They Want. The squidlings want very much to find their way back to the *Id Ascendant*. Also, if you could spare a brain or two, that'd be great. You have a brain, you sure you're using it?

Childlike and Horrible. Without Vorryn and Dredavex's care, the squidlings will surely perish—they're simply unable to take care of themselves. They're still dangerous, however: while they have the self-control and ability to rationalize of a toddler, they have the guile of bored housecats.

Friezes. Three-quarters of the walls bear a series of carvings depicting the rise of the Abeiran city of Xorvintroth, the might of its dragonborn denizens, and their discovery of the Far Realm:

- The first carving depicts hundreds of dragonborn workers toiling to construct towering buildings made of colossal slabs of stone.
- The second carving depicts grand telescopes erected atop the city's highest towers as citizens gaze at the stars above.
- The third carving depicts several robed dragonborn mages on high balconies addressing a crowd of thousands. The mages gesture to the sky, as stars open like eyes over the city's many minarets.
- The fourth carving depicts dragonborn citizens attempting to escape the city: they're torn apart by tentacles summoned by mages drawing their power from the sky. This should resonate with any characters who encountered the fleeing dragonborn in the crevasse in part 2.
- The final carving shows a group of dragonborn mages casting a grand ritual. A partially constructed bridge arcs skyward from the top of the city's tallest tower, the rest of the bridge is depicted as a constellation which twists and fades out of sight.

The carvings suddenly cease, and the remaining walls are blank. A set of frost-covered **stonemason's tools** lie on the ground by one of the untouched walls.

Stonemason's Tools. These ornate tools are embossed with scenes of dragonborn hammering away at masonry and the flat of the hammer is engraved with a nine-pointed star. The tools are cursed—the first time a character touches them, that character must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the curse vanishes from the tools forever; on a failure, that character is magically compelled to chisel likenesses of their companions into one of the chamber's blank walls. The character can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, banishing the curse from the tools forever on a success. While a character is under the compulsion of the cursed tools, allies who start their turn within 30 feet of them must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or their skin hardens into jade and they are restrained.



Restrained characters must repeat the saving throw at the end of their next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the character. On a failure, the character is petrified until freed by a *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

Starstone Golem. The statue in the center of the chamber is 15 feet tall and crafted from a single piece of strange, green stone struck through with flecks of opalescent crystal—the same stone used throughout the ruins. The sculpture is of a hooded dragonborn wearing long, billowing robes. It stares directly ahead, and both its outstretched palms are etched with a nine-pointed star with a central eye.

Anyone who investigates the statue notices a small, frost-coated brass panel at its base. The panel bears an inscription in Draconic:

“Xorvintroth. That Which Survives. As the Great Mothers and Fathers wile away the eons playing their Great Game, our city proves to be the most valuable playing piece. Ne'er shall it be used. Ne'er shall it be lost.”

Characters who further inspect the panel realize it conceals a cavity beneath. Removing the panel carefully requires a successful DC 14 Dexterity check, failing this check immediately activates the golem. Beneath the panel is a complex series of star-shaped cogs and brass levers. Interacting with the mechanism in any way activates the golem. If the characters decide to leave the panel well alone, have one of the curious squidlings drag a tentacle over the gears instead. When the golem activates, read the following aloud:

The statue shudders to life, shedding frost as it sweeps its arms toward the ceiling and lifts its head, gazing upward. Incandescent light beams project from its eyes, creating a star field which fills the upper reaches of the chamber. The stars grow larger and flit by as if the entire room were hurtling through space. This movement stops suddenly, and through the stygian void, a planet of green stone hangs ominously, surrounded by nine stars. One by one, the stars resolve into unblinking eyes.

The golem lowers its head and speaks in a voice like grinding stone:

“Ne'er shall we be used. Ne'er shall we be lost.”

The **starstone golem** (with the **lair actions** listed below) speaks in archaic forms of either Common or Draconic, and attacks with deadly intent. The gnome squiddlings quickly retreat to one of the antechambers (area 3). The illusory star field remains in the chamber's domed roof throughout the encounter: whenever a section of ceiling dislodges due to the golem's lair actions, it appears like a comet falling through space. The golem can't be reasoned with, but is prone to reciting various proclamations about the might of Xorvintroth:

- *“Shed your mortal skin and join the Great Game at the edge of time.”*
- *“The Great Mothers and Fathers await. It is futile to resist.”*
- *“The Unblinking Eyes see all. There is nowhere to hide.”*
- *“Xorvintroth survives. Xorvintroth survives. Xorvintroth survives.”*

This is a challenging encounter, gauge the ability of your group and use the golem's lair actions at your discretion. If the characters laid the dragonborn spirits to rest by helping them escape the crevasse in part 2, their vaporous forms swirl through the chamber at an opportune moment of your choosing during combat, granting one character advantage on a saving throw—this event occurs only once.

STARSTONE GOLEM LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the golem can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects, but can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A chunk of the ceiling dislodges and falls on a creature of the golem's choice. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and restrained (escape DC 17). While restrained in this way, the target can't breathe.
- A creature of the golem's choice feels the incomprehensible gaze of the stars above and must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened. While frightened in this way, the creature is incapacitated. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- The illusory stars wink out and the room is plunged into magical darkness until initiative count 20 (losing ties) of the following round. If any area of magical darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

Treasure. The stonemason's tools—once uncursed—are valuable antiques (see “Stonemason's Tools,” above). Additionally, the starstone golem has two adamantine nine-pointed stars embedded in its hands which can be gathered from its rubble once defeated.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative:

Very Weak: Remove the **starstone golem's** lair actions.

Weak or Strong: No changes.

Very Strong: The **starstone golem** has 249 hit points.

3. CRUMBLING ANTECHAMBERS

These antechambers are ruined in places, crushed under the weight of the glacial wall in which they lie.

Area Information. The domed ceilings of these smaller chambers are 20 feet high at their apex.

Treasure. Each chamber contains one trinket lying buried in the rubble (roll on the Icewind Dale Trinkets table in appendix A of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

4. VAULT

The jade stone door to this room is embossed with a dragonborn head encircled by nine stars. The door is riven and can be pushed open with a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

Area Information. This domed vault is roughly 8 feet in diameter and is carved with odd curves and folds. Characters who make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check realize the room is carved to resemble the inside of a brain. Its undulating surfaces are intricately carved with constellations and the trajectories of various astronomical objects. Stone shelves around the center of the room hold four urns: jade busts of dragonborn with stoppers in their craniums. Inside each urn is a mummified dragonborn head with the brain removed from the skull, these are the heads of the dragonborn elders from the brain shrine in area 1.

Treasure. The eye sockets of each head each contain an emerald, and an ancient star-shaped coin is lodged inside each dusty mouth. The heads are wrapped in silk bandages, embroidered with constellations and studded with tiny precious gems for stars.

WRAP-UP: A GOOEY REUNION

Upon returning to the *Id Ascendant*, the ceremorphs are overjoyed to have the squiddlings back and thank the characters profusely. They allow Lieutenant Prook to complete his work, and within a few hours the giff has crafted his explosives' containment vessel. With a bit of tinkering, he and the gnomes imbue it with power from the ship's helm and the characters depart.

Treasure. As a token of their gratitude, the ceremorphs gift the characters with a pair of *boots of levitation*, presented in an airtight brass capsule. These hard leather boots are festooned with switches, wiring, and transparent crystal conduits filled with glowing, green liquid. Tiny jets of blue flame emit from ports on the boots' soles when activated.

REWARDS

At the **end of the session**, everyone receives rewards based upon their accomplishments:

PLAYER REWARDS

The players gain the following rewards:

ADVANCEMENT

A character who successfully completes this adventure gains one level.

OPTIONAL: DECLINING ADVANCEMENT

Each player can decline advancement if they so choose; this has its benefits. It's possible for a character to advance beyond an adventure's level range, meaning they'd be unable to play an adventure as planned. Similarly, advancing too quickly means a character won't earn as much gold as their peers.

Conversely, remind players that the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited; characters declining advancement might reach a point where they no longer earn gold.

GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

MAGIC ITEMS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items, described in **handout 2**:

- *Boots of levitation*
- *Clockwork amulet*
- *Oil of etherealness*
- *Potion of growth*

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, you earn a DM Reward. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

GRAKAL (GRACK-UHL) DAWNBEARER THUUNLAKALAGA

So named due to the colors of their hides and clothes, worn to look like a sunrise, with a personality to match. Grakal is softly spoken despite their extremely loud appearance. However, Grakal is easily the funniest and most joyous of Souljoined. (The other two members of Souljoined are Nararhak Tree-Eye and Thugeo Goatchaser.) Their ability to respond with snide remarks is unparalleled, but it's generally only heard by the other two resulting in "random" fits of laughter.

Grakal's prize possession is a large blanket with different tales of the goliaths' culture woven into a beautiful pictography. Throughout, trinkets and baubles from other cultures are woven in. Grakal often tries to incorporate their love of goliath cultures, other cultures, and color into their outward appearance. Some see it as ostentatious; Grakal knows it allows others to lower their guard around them so they can teach with less resistance.

What They Want. To never lose the family unit they're in.

Grakal would give their life for the other two Souljoined and can't imagine a world without them.

Not Enough Flair. Grakal loves going to Good Mead and interacting with Ten-Towns. Grakal has a weak spot for food and flashy items from other cultures.

OGOLAI (OH-GOH-LIE) ORCSPLITTER "OLD GOAT" THUUNLAKALAGA

The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

What They Want. Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh. Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

LIEUTENANT PROOK (LEF-TEN-ANT PR-OOK)

Lieutenant Prook (he pronounces lieutenant as "leftenant" and prefers to be addressed as such) once commanded a

brigade of hippopotamus-headed giff mercenaries, but his entire unit was captured by neogi slavers. Of them, he's the sole survivor. The neogi ship recently crashed in Icwind Dale while pursuing the *Id Ascendant*—an illithid nautiloid piloted by gnomish ceremorphs. In the chaos, Lieutenant Prook managed to escape, but underestimated the cold.

What They Want. While Lieutenant Prook's immediate goals are survival and recovery. Once out of the woods, he plans to find a way to exact his revenge on the neogi who enslaved him and killed his unit.

Gruff and No-Nonsense. Lieutenant Prook doesn't waste time on pomp and circumstance; he focuses on his goals with laser precision and those who question his orders (yes, orders) or methods are quick to earn a scathing admonishment. To that end, however, he's loyal and honorable without apology. He would throw down his life to save those he considers allies.

RIN, RIX, AND ZGLARRD (ZEH-GLERD)

Unaligned gnome squidlings

These creatures are the result of ceremorphosis gone awry—a deformed mind flayer with tiny limbs and comically oversized tentacles. They're constantly pestering those around them, tripping over one another, taking things that don't belong to them, getting lost, found, and then lost again, etc. These creatures are further described in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

What They Want. The squidlings want very much to find their way back to the *Id Ascendant*. Also, if you could spare a brain or two, that'd be great. You have a brain, you sure you're using it?

Childlike and Horrible. Without Vorryn and Dredavex's care, the squidlings will surely perish—they're simply unable to take care of themselves. They're still dangerous, however: while they have the self-control and ability to rationalize of a toddler, they have the guile of bored housecats.

VORRYN AND DREDAVEX (VORE-IN AND DRAY-DAH-VECKS)

Chaotic neutral gnome ceremorph spacefarers

These two stranded ceremorphs want to leave Icwind Dale very much after being forced to land during a blizzard while being chased by a neogi deathspider. For now, they bide their time in the hopes that they'll be able to repair their ship and leave before they freeze to death. These creatures are further described in chapter 2 of *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

What They Want. They're eager to find the *psi crystal* needed to jump-start their ship's propulsion system, but also to recover their crew—a trio of gnome squidlings named Rin, Rix, and Zglarrd.

An Unusual Combination. Unlike most mind flayers, these ceremorphs shun combat and prefer to speak aloud in Gnomish or Common (with an accent best described as "goeey"). Their natural gnomish curiosity is coupled with their newfound drive for control and experimentation.

CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure:

BRAIN IN A JAR

Small undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d6 + 20)

Speed 0 ft., fly 10 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +6, Cha +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive

Perception 10; see also “Detect Sentience” below

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Detect Sentience. The brain can sense the presence and location of any creature within 300 feet of it that has an Intelligence of 3 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a *mind blank* spell.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The brain’s innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *chill touch* (see “Actions” below), *detect thoughts*, *mage hand*, *zone of truth*

3/day each: *charm person*, *hold person*

1/day each: *compulsion*, *hold monster*, *sleep* (3rd-level version), *Tasha’s hideous laughter*

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Unusual Nature. The brain doesn’t require air, food, drink, or sleep.

ACTIONS

Chill Touch (Cantrip). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) necrotic damage, and the target can’t regain hit points until the start of the brain’s next turn. If the target is undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the brain until the end of the brain’s next turn.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The brain magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw or take 17 (3d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

CARRION CRAWLER

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The carrion crawler has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Spider Climb. The carrion crawler can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The carrion crawler makes two attacks: one with its tentacles and one with its bite.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. Until this poison ends, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poison on itself on a success.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

FLESH GOLEM

Medium construct, neutral

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 40 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

The golem's creator, if within 60 feet of the berserk golem, can try to calm it by speaking firmly and persuasively. The golem must be able to hear its creator, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the golem ceases being berserk. If it takes damage while still at 40 hit points or fewer, the golem might go berserk again.

Fear of Fire. If the golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

GHOST

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

STARSTONE GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 199 (19d10 + 95)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks, each of which it can replace with a gaze of the beyond attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Gaze of the Beyond. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) radiant damage.

Slow (Recharge 5–6). The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, a target can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its turn. In addition, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. These effects last for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Attack. The golem makes one slam or gaze of the beyond attack.

Radiant Beam (Costs 2 Actions). A 30-foot-long, 5-foot-wide line of radiant energy emits from the golem's starry eyes. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) radiant damage and be blinded for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Thunderous Stomp (Costs 3 Actions). The golem stomps the ground, creating a shockwave. Each creature within 30 feet of the golem must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) thunder damage and be knocked prone.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the golem can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects, but can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A chunk of the ceiling dislodges and falls on a creature of the golem's choice. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and restrained (escape DC 17). While restrained in this way, the target can't breathe.
- A creature of the golem's choice feels the incomprehensible gaze of the stars above and must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened. While frightened in this way, the creature is incapacitated. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- The illusory stars wink out and the room is plunged into magical darkness until initiative count 20 (losing ties) the following round. If any area of magical darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

YOUNG REMORHAZ

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Damage Immunities cold, fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Heated Body. A creature that touches the remorhaz or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

HANDOUT 1: SIDEKICK STATISTICS

LIEUTENANT PROOK (WARRIOR SIDEKICK)

Medium humanoid (giff), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (hide armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Attacker. Lieutenant Prook gains a +2 bonus to all attack rolls (already included).

Battle Readiness. Lieutenant Prook has advantage on initiative rolls.

Extra Attack. Lieutenant Prook can attack twice, instead of once, whenever he takes the Attack action.

Firearms Knowledge. Lieutenant Prook's mastery of his weapons enables him to ignore the loading property of muskets and pistols.

Headfirst Charge. Lieutenant Prook can try to knock a creature over; if he moves at least 20 feet in a straight line that ends within 5 feet of a Large or smaller creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Improved Critical. Lieutenant Prook's attack rolls score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Fragmentation Grenade (1/Day). Lieutenant Prook throws a grenade up to 60 feet. Each creature within 20 feet of the grenade's detonation must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

BONUS ACTION

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Lieutenant Prook regains 1d10 + 9 hit points.

HANDOUT 2: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters may earn the following rewards in this adventure:

BOOTS OF LEVITATION

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These hard leather boots are festooned with switches, wiring, and transparent crystal conduits filled with glowing, green liquid. Tiny jets of blue flame emit from ports on the boots' soles when activated.

While you wear these boots, you can use an action to cast the *levitate* spell on yourself at will.

CLOCKWORK AMULET

Wondrous item, common

This amulet is a silver dragon's head encircled by a brass ring studded with ten tiny diamonds that twinkle like stars when the amulet is activated.

This copper amulet contains tiny interlocking gears and is powered by magic from Mechanus, a plane of clockwork predictability. A creature that puts an ear to the amulet can hear faint ticking and whirring noises coming from within.

When you make an attack roll while wearing the amulet, you can forgo rolling the d20 to get a 10 on the die. Once used, this property can't be used again until the next dawn.

OIL OF ETHEREALNESS

Potion, rare

Beads of this cloudy gray oil form on the outside of its container and quickly evaporate. The oil can cover a Medium or smaller creature, along with the equipment it's wearing and carrying (one additional vial is required for each size category above Medium). Applying the oil takes 10 minutes. The affected creature then gains the effect of the *etherealness* spell for 1 hour.

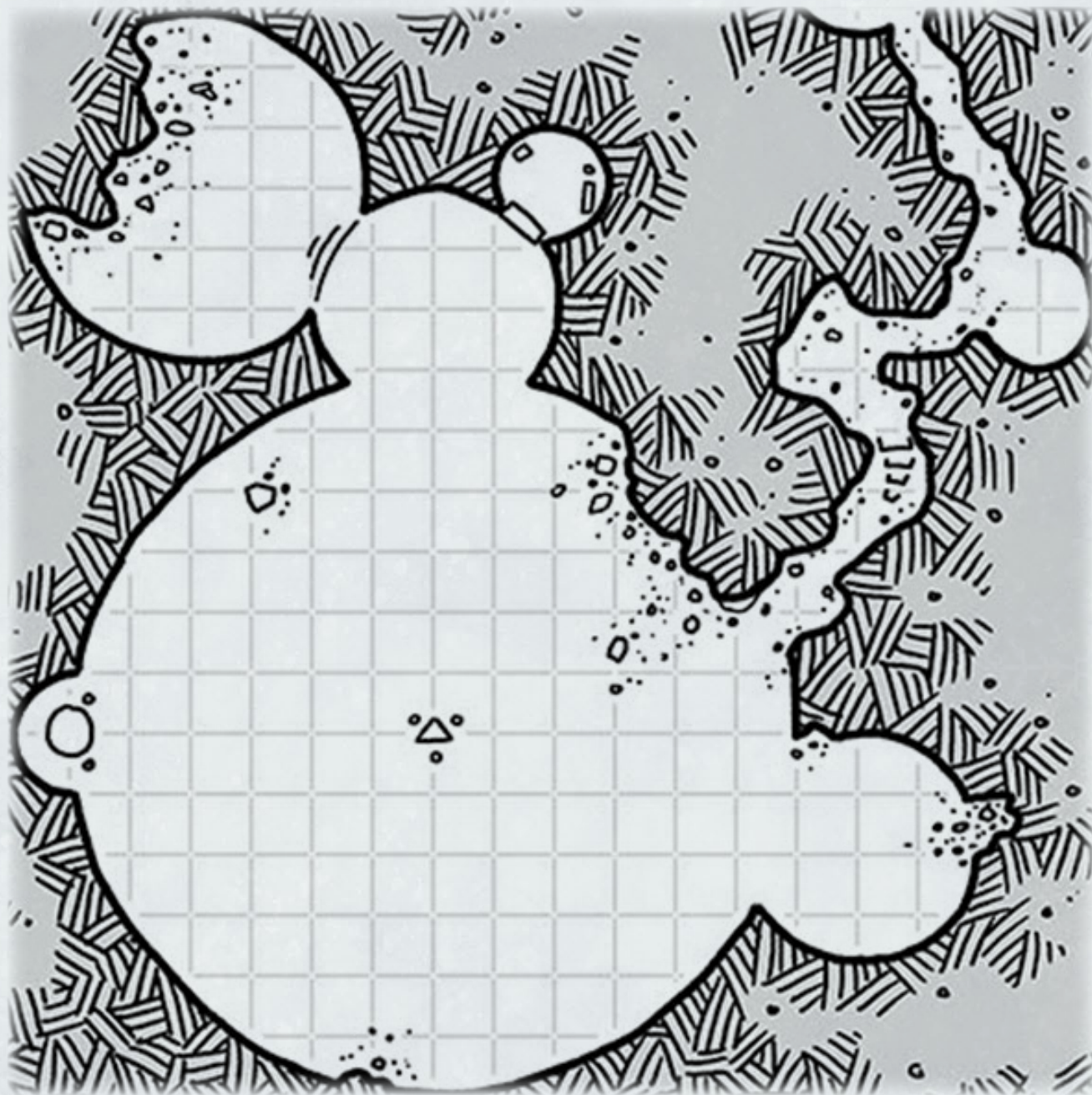
POTION OF GROWTH

Potion, uncommon

This item is in the form of a tiny, gelatinous figurine of a gnomish ceremorph. Stretching the figurine as an action activates its spell effect.

When you activate this figurine, you gain the "enlarge" effect of the *enlarge/reduce* spell for 1d4 hours (no concentration required). The red in the figurine continuously expands from a tiny bead to color the clear material around it and then contracts. Shaking or squashing the figurine fails to interrupt this process.

APPENDIX A: XORVINTROTH RUINS MAP



APPENDIX B:

DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you must have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure’s level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a hardcover adventure may continue to play too, but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they can’t return to the first if they level beyond its level range.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score, and anything the adventures specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, and flaws).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or DM, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold, and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they can’t, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Players Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one it’s possible you may have players new to D&D, or just new to fifth edition. It’s up to you as the DM to ensure they a) have fun with the game and b) learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you’ll notice they quickly follow suit.

If you’re a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. This adventure includes sidebars like this one that explain of some rules used as the adventure progresses!

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the characters’ levels and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3–4 characters, APL less than	Very Weak
3–4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3–4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6–7 characters, APL less than	Average
6–7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6–7 characters, APL greater than	Very Strong

SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools ensure that players aren’t pushed beyond their comfort levels. They let your players know you want them to have a positive experience.

A broad range of safety tools are available for you and your players online, but for more information reach out to your Event Organizer or to community@dndadventurersleague.org