

BEYOND THE VALE OF MADNESS

BY J.C. CONNORS



A harsh wind snapped Enfys' cloak and threatened to sweep her off her feet. She spit the snow and ice from her mouth and pulled her hood farther down on her face. She'd rather have her own cloak blind her than the freezing winds.

Coming alone to find the Castle of Madness was perhaps the worst mistake she'd ever made. Still, Enfys strongly believed that trekking through knee-deep snow in search of this lost, frozen keep would be the ultimate test of survival. If she could survive here, she could survive anywhere.

Fierce howls pierced through the moaning gales like a knife. Enfys slipped her gloved hand down to her worn sword. Just tundra wolves, she told herself. Wolves only attacked the weak – they'd have to find another meal today.

ABOUT THE ADVENTURE

The Castle of Madness is an introductory solo adventure for *Dungeons & Dragons 5E*. This adventure was originally written for the unpublished *RuneQuest: Slayers* roleplaying game, but has been adapted to *D&D*. While you need to have some passing knowledge of *D&D* to play this adventure, it is fairly beginner friendly. A *GURPS Fantasy* version is also available on www.1shotadventures.com

This adventure is best for 2nd level characters, though you can also play it with a 1st level character and a henchman ally. If you don't have your own character, two pregenerated characters to pick from are included at the end of the adventure.

If you've never played a "Choose Your Path" adventure before, it's easy. Just start with paragraph #1. Read it, and choose from one of the choices that the text gives you, and go to that numbered paragraph. Just don't read the entries in order! As you find any items you'd like to keep (which are **bold-faced**), jot that down on your character sheet.

#1

It was already a freezing morning when you set out for the legendary "Castle of Madness" – the mysterious castle that is said to emerge from blizzards once every seven winters. Now, as it grows dark, the mountains' glacial winds of this valley make the temperature seem hundreds of times colder. Both hands wrap your winter cloak tightly around your body, but somehow you can still feel the ice-sharped winds as if on bare skin.

You squint your eyes down at your weapon and wonder if it has become frozen to your belt. Nothing alive can possibly live in these temperatures, you reassure yourself, pushing back thoughts of the living dead you've heard emerge with the castle.

Soon, you can make out the faint ruined form of the castle up ahead. The old crone's rotting map was right! Your best guess tells you it's another hour's walk in the harsh cold. Before you have time to think about the longer walk, you spot a gaping black opening in the snow. It must be a cave. The crone told you that underground tunnels could also lead into the castle. Could this be one? Or is it the lair of some beast?

*If you decide to explore the cave, go to **12**.*

*If you decide to continue your cold trek to the castle, go to **19**.*

#2

Double-wrapping your hands to protect them from the cold, you dig under some broken statues. In a few minutes you've uncovered a beautiful **antique mace**, its metal head coated in an unusual blue lacquer.

Digging some more, you realize something – the weapon still has a frozen hand attached to it! A second later, your boot brushes aside the remains of the man's face! The blue skin is cracked and broken. Apparently, some warrior died wielding this mace.

Make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. If you succeed, you may pry the weapon loose. Otherwise, you have no stomach for such matters and decide to abandon your search.

(If you take this mace, it does 1d6 bludgeoning damage and weighs 4 lbs.)

If you go through the servant's door, go to 14.

If you go through the guardhouse door, go to 11.

#3

Snow crunching underfoot, you jog along the intact half of the castle. Just as you begin to tire, you spot a broken gateway, where once armored guards stood with tall halberds. The portal lies open and shattered and leads into the courtyard of the castle.

You swing under the broken gate and look around. Dozens of statues – most crumbled – litter the courtyard. You see two doors beyond the statue graveyard. The smaller one seems to be a servant's entrance; the other seems to be a guardhouse door.

If you search the courtyard, go to 43.

If you go through the servant's door, go to 14.

If you go through the guardhouse, go to 11.

#4

You see a woman, half-dressed, standing in the room. Her skin is icy pale. She picks up the remnants of her clothes and stares at you, her ice blue eyes burning into the back of your head. Before you can even wonder about the true nature of this delicate creature, she disappears in a flurry of fine ice. You shake your head and enter the room.

Go to 45.

#5

You manage to loop the grapple around the gargoyle's wing. Confident in your skill, you begin the treacherous climb.

CRACK! The gargoyle breaks away and you plummet to the snowy ground. The fall does 1d4 damage. Tending your sore arm from the fall, you decide to circle around the castle and look for another way in.

Go to 3.

#6

As you are about to leave, you spot a tarnished, silver ring on one of the skeletons. You pull it off and examine it. Apparently, it was the captain of the guard's **signet ring**. Pocketing it, you head out the door for the servant's entrance.

Go to 14.

#7

You stride forward with confidence and crack open the half-broken door but quickly realize that you can't see – it's too dark to make out anything but dim silhouettes. You fumble to get a torch lit as you hear a hissing cackle that chills your bones.

Make a DC 10 Dexterity check. If you succeed, go to 38.

If you fail, you can't get your torch lit on time. Write down the word DARKNESS and go to 38.

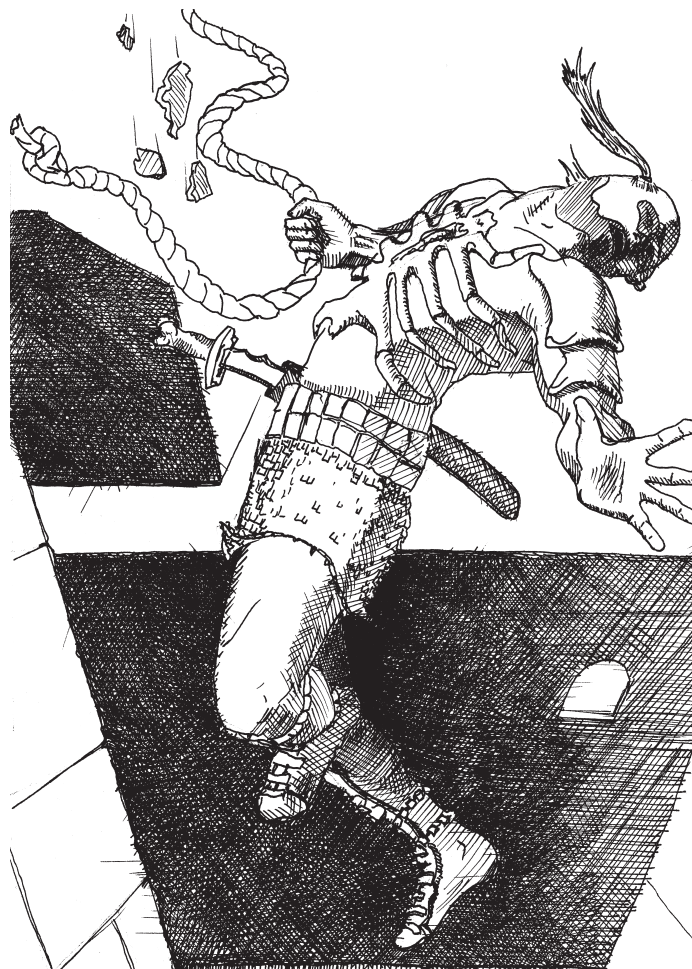
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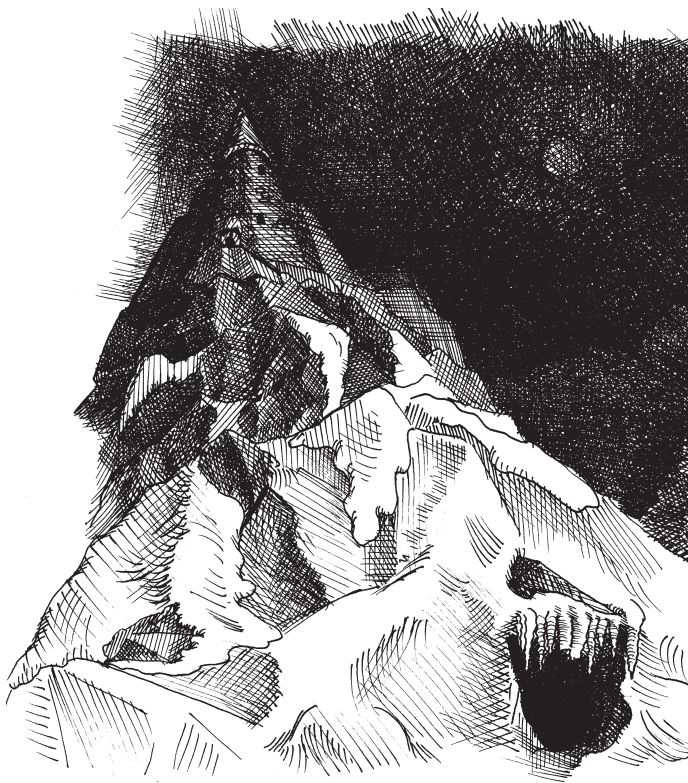
You're in luck – the strange monster is too busy with his meal to notice you. You glance around the icy room and notice that there is a small tunnel that continues past the creature. With any luck, you can get to it without him noticing you.

If you decide to sneak by, go to 44.

If you decide to turn around, go to 22.

Or, you can draw out your weapon and attack! Go to 17.





#9

As you quietly move along the dark tunnel, you hear a disgusting noise from up ahead. You hear pained squeals and horrible rending sounds about forty paces in front of you. Your skin crawls at the thought of what lies ahead.

If you turn around and go back the other way, go to 22.

If you quietly venture ahead, go to 31.

If you scream a battle cry and charge, go to 49.

#10

You dash past the creature into the smaller tunnel beyond him. You quickly jog down the cavern leaving the disgusting crunching noise behind you.

The tunnel winds its way for about twenty minutes until you can make out a bright white light from up ahead. When you come to this exit, you notice a thick layer of snow covering the cave opening. You pull out your weapon and start digging. Your heart is pounding. Make a DC 5 Constitution check. If you fail, you are exhausted and suffer disadvantage on your next roll.

Suddenly, from behind you, you hear the roar of the ice fiend. Dig faster! Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

If you succeed, go to 26.

If you fail, go to 20.

#11

You approach the guardhouse door and push on it. No luck. Apparently, the guardhouse door is either locked or frozen shut.

You can use your dagger to try prying the lock. Go to 18.

Or, you can try to force the door open. Go to 40.

#12

It feels warmer the moment you step into the cave, though the winds make an eerie whining sound throughout these dark tunnels. Fortunately, you had enough foresight to bring a torch. Stretching your numb fingers several times, you take out your tinderbox and light the torch. The heat seems to melt your very face.

Taking a deep breath, you walk down the winding tunnels making mental notes of its rock formations in case you get lost. It seems as if someone, or something, walked these tunnels in the recent weeks. In a few minutes, you see that the tunnel turns and branches.

If you head down the more trodden path, go to 9.

If you head down the icier path, go to 22.

If you trod down the warmer, rock path, go to 54.

#13

You spot something unusual – a small trap door in the side of the room. Smiling, and remembering that guardhouses often keep valuable weapons locked away, you head towards the door. Kneeling down, you pry it open easily – the lock has long since rusted away.

Inside the cubby hole is a pitted iron shortsword. It probably wouldn't last a single swing, so you toss it aside. Behind the blade, however, is a **steel-plated shield**. Painted on its face are three white bears. Though the paint is a little worn, it apparently protected the shield from the elements. You carefully take the shield out, brush off some ice, and strap it to your back.

Go to 6.

#14

You need to duck your head to get into the servant's entrance – the doorframe collapsed years ago. After your eyes adjust to the dim entranceway, you see that some great creature entered the castle here. Giant footprints have cracked through the wood of the floor here, and age-old blood has been spattered against the walls. It gives you a shiver to think of what kind of creature attacked the castle.

Digging through some old supplies, you uncover a skeleton of a dead servant. You're not sure if it was a man or woman, as only tattered cloth lies around its bones.

If you search the area around the corpse, go to 16.

If you continue onwards, go to 33.

ICE FIEND

Large humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (hide)

Speed 30 ft.

Hit Points 28 (3d10+9)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Immunities cold

Senses Darkvision 60', passive Perception 10

Languages Giant

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Berserk Fury. When at 5 hp or less, the fiend gains multiattack, making two claw attacks simultaneously.

Regeneration. The fiend regains 3 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes acid or fire damage, this trait does not function at the start of the fiend's next turn.



#15

The cliff isn't as steep as you imagined, and many of its hand and footholds aren't covered with ice. Make no mistake – this still isn't an easy climb, and you should be careful. Make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to climb up the sheer surface.

If you succeed, you carefully climb down the mountainside and approach the castle. Go to 36.

If you fail, you plummet down the rocky cliff! Take 1d6 damage. If you're still conscious, you limp towards the castle. Go to 36. Otherwise, your twisted and crumbled body is soon found by tundra wolves...

#16

As you rummage through the tattered remnants of the skeleton, your hand scrapes across something razor sharp! You raise your bloody hand to your mouth and probe the wound with your tongue. You take 1 hp of damage.

Kicking aside some torn cloth, you see a glass dagger half-embedded in the wood.

If you try to pry the sharp dagger out, go to 24.

If you decide to leave it alone, go to 33.

#17

You are in a battle with an *ice fiend*, a massive beast with a shark-toothed maw and claws the size of long knives. You've only seen one in your life – and that was a carcass a hunter brought back to your village when you were a child. This one seems twice the size of that one!

You can trade blows with the fiend, or jump into tactical combat using the battle map is provided at the end of the adventure. In this case, the ice fiend starts adjacent to the bone pile, and you start at the entrance to the lair on the right side of the map. However, if you've written AMBUSHED on your character sheet, you start the battle closer to the fiend (on the blood stained snow hex), and the ice fiend gets to move first.

The fiend's tactics are simple – he will rush towards you to attack. If the fiend drops to 5 hp or less, make a DC 12 Wisdom check for the fiend. If he fails, he retreats, attempting to escape to a tunnel exit. If he succeeds, he viciously fights to the end and goes berserk (see his ability, above).

If the ice fiend is defeated or retreats, go to 21.

If you died or fell unconscious, your adventure sadly ends here. Seven years from now, brave adventurers seeking the Castle of Madness discover the half-eaten remains of your frozen corpse...

#18

You kneel down in the snow and peer through the keyhole. Just as you suspected... the door is locked with an older type of lock. Several stone pegs keep the door in place. Your knife might be able to do the trick, but it's formidable.

Since the door uses an old stone lock, it is easier to defeat than a more modern, iron lock. To pry the lock, make a DC 12 Dexterity check (rogues may use their Thieves' Tools proficiency here too).

If you succeed, go to 30.

If you fail, you can try breaking the door down. Go to 40.

If you've already failed breaking the door down, or just want to try the servants' door, go to 14.

#19

You stumble another half-hour in the snow. The cave was probably the home to a pack of yetis, or ice fiends. It's a good thing you avoided it.

Unfortunately, the cold winds have begun to take their toll. Make a DC 8 Constitution (Survival) check. If you fail, you suffer 1 hp damage from hypothermia and are exhausted and suffer disadvantage on your next roll.

You stare up at the looming castle. Its stone has been covered with sheets of ice as thick as your body. With any luck, you won't have to climb up the walls to find an entrance.

If you decide to circle around the castle looking for an entrance, go to 3.

If you decide to use your pitons and rope to climb the wall to a window, go to 35.

#20

You can't dig fast enough. The ice fiend bounds up the cavern roaring in anger at your intrusion. You turn your weapon on to the foul beast!

Write the word AMBUSHED on your character sheet. Go to 17.

#21

You spit a curse at the defeated fiend. You quickly search the creature's lair but find nothing of interest other than some bloody bones and **fiend teeth**. You spend some time bandaging your wounds. This counts as a short rest. You can spend one or more Hit Dice, up to your maximum number of Hit Dice. For each Hit Die spent, roll die and add your Constitution modifier. You regain hit points equal to the total

Anxious to leave this chamber before the ice fiend finds the courage to come back, you push your way down a long twisting corridor. The end of the tunnel appears about twenty minutes later, but it's been completely frozen shut with ice and snow. You draw your weapon out and start pounding. Make a DC 7 Strength check. If you succeed, you break down the door quickly. If not, you are exhausted from the work and your next roll will be at disadvantage.

In a few minutes you manage to break through. You push your body out the hole you've made and feel something hard and stone-like in front of you.

Go to 47.

#22

Your body warms as you jog down the icy path. Though the walls of this tunnel are frozen solid, it is much warmer in here than in the

cold, biting winds. You glance down at the floor as you run, and are startled to see several large footprints walking in the direction you're going. You draw out your weapon to be on the safe side, and continue your journey down the dim hall.

Almost an hour later, you find the tunnel going uphill. You slow down your pace – no need to get tired before reaching the castle. Suddenly, bright sunlight hits your eyes. You've found an exit! You crawl out the small tunnel and find yourself looking over the edge of a tall cliff! Almost directly below you lies the Castle of Madness. Once you manage to get down the cliff, you'll be near the walls of the castle.

If you try climbing down the icy cliff, go to 15.

If you try walking around the wind-torn cliff, go to 52.

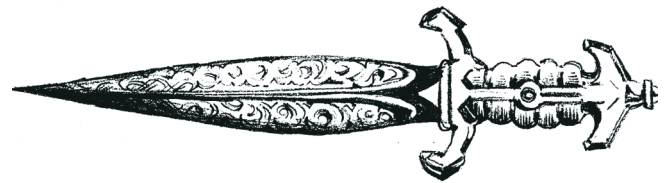
#23

Some of the tapestries are still together; others are torn and destroyed. Two, in particular, catch your eye. One tapestry shows a striking, blue-eyed maiden in ornate armor, the other shows a runed axe lying on a gilded table, being presented to a white-haired queen.

Make a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check to examine these old tapestries further.

If you succeed, go to 57.

If you fail, go to 51.



#24

Wrapping some cloth around your hand for protection, you try to wedge the glass dagger out. With any luck, this exotic dagger will be worth a lot of silvers. Or maybe you'll decide to keep it as a backup weapon.

Make a DC 10 Dexterity check. If you fail, the dagger slices through your gloves and deep into your hand. Take 1d4 damage. If you succeed, you carefully pry the glass-like dagger out without injury. This is a *very fine* dagger +1, enchanted to be shatterproof despite the fact that it looks to be made from glass.

You continue onwards. Go to 33.

#25

Deciding to head towards the main part of the castle, you skip the bedrooms and head down a long, winding hallway. Much to your surprise, the castle in this part looks sturdy and complete. Perhaps

it looked like this years ago when it was a newly built stronghold. You come to a stairway going downwards. The stairs are covered with a slick ice.

Make a DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If you succeed, you carefully make your way down into a large castle chamber. Go to 33.

If you fail, you slip down the steps and land hard on the hard stone. Take 1d4 damage. You curse your clumsiness and stand up. Go to 33.

#26

You barely make out the form of the ice fiend at the far end of the cavern tunnel, but you know he's coming fast! You slam your weapon again and again against the ice and snow. Suddenly, sunlight rushes out to blind you. You leap through the hole you've created and scramble out. Your head hits against something hard! You look up and see a crumbled statue of an armored warrior in front of you. You look around... you found a way into the courtyard of the Castle of Madness! You shake your head and look around. The creature's roar seems to have died off, so you're safe for now.

Dozens of statues – most broken – litter the courtyard. You see two doors beyond the statue graveyard. The smaller one looks to have been a servant's entrance; the other door, more reinforced, seems to be a guardhouse door.

If you search the courtyard, go to 43.

If you go through the servant's door, go to 14.

If you go through the guardhouse door, go to 11.

#27

You slowly pad into the icy maze, trying to remember the turns you take. Every once in a while you hear a soft moan from ahead of you. To track the creature, make a DC 7 Wisdom (Perception) check. Rangers of the mountains may double their proficiency bonus.

If you succeed, go to 37.

If you fail, you soon hear the moans die out. You return to the slushy path and decide to turn around, rather than risk getting lost in this cold maze. If you head down the more trodden path, go to 9. If you head down the icier path, go to 22.

#28

Unfortunately, most of the bedroom entries have collapsed and now lie blocked with rubble and debris. You go down the hall, pushing on doors until you find one that opens.

Peering into the room, you quickly discover that this was once a child's bedroom. Old wooden toys lie on the floor. Many are broken, others are still intact. You pick up a finely-carved wooden chariot toy. It seems to be holding figurine of a white-haired queen.

You take the **chariot toy** and figurine and place it gently into your sack. Your niece might like this one

The small bed in the room is still intact, but as you come closer, you notice an oily and rancid smell coming from the mattress.

If you return to the main corridor and go down it, go to 25.

If you draw your weapon and lift the mattress, go to 58.

#29

You carefully climb the steps, but suddenly some of the stone crumbles underfoot. Your chin hits against the marble railing hard as you slide down to the bottom of the steps. Make a DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or take 1d4 damage from the fall.

If you're still alive, you can try climbing the steps again. Go to 50.

Or, you can forget the cursed stairs and go down the main corridor. Go to 25.

#30

You push the door inwards and hear it slam against the wall sharply. Waiting for your eyes to adjust to the darkness, you look around the room. A dozen skeletons in tattered armor lie against the walls of the room. You swallow hard, and then quickly examine the skeletons. You see no injuries on them. Apparently, these men locked themselves in this room and died here.

You let out a small cry when you see a pale blue rat scurry across the floor. You've never heard of ice rats before, but you chide yourself for having been startled so easily.

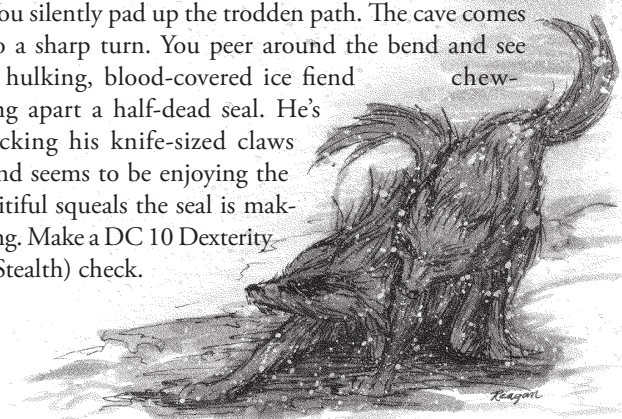
Searching the room, you find that most of the weapons and armor have rusted away a long time ago. Make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

If you succeed, go to 13.

If not, go to 6.

#31

You silently pad up the trodden path. The cave comes to a sharp turn. You peer around the bend and see a hulking, blood-covered ice fiend chew-
ing apart a half-dead seal. He's licking his knife-sized claws and seems to be enjoying the pitiful squeals the seal is making. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check.



If you succeed, go to 8.

If you fail, go to 41.

#32

The man's leg is broken, but perhaps you can keep him alive until you head back this way. The cave is warm enough to keep him alive, and there's enough water for him to live on.

"I will not live more than a few hours. My goddess visited me just a few minutes ago," he continues.

"Well, she'll make good company until I come back," you say as you bandage and splint his leg. "Listen, I won't be at the Castle of Madness for more than a day. When I come back, I'll bring you with me. I'd take you now, but unless you can offer me a king's treasure, I can't afford it."

The man nods gratefully, "I appreciate any effort you might make."

You finish bandaging him and leave him some food. "I'd make you a fire, but the creature you mentioned might come back. Wouldn't want you to lose another leg."

The man grasps your shoulder. "Let me warn you... the trodden path leads to the home of the creature. I went down the icier path at first, but found an impassable cliff. The creature attacked me and dragged me to his lair before I escaped."

The warrior closes his eyes to rest, and you decide it is better to leave him now. You head back to the slushy path and go back to the main cavern. Write down the word RESCUER on your character sheet.

If you head down the more trodden path, go to 9.

If you head down the icier path, go to 22.

Or, you can leave the cave and trek to the castle through the snow. Go to 19.

#33

You continue onwards, and find yourself in a banquet hall of sorts. Shattered plates and a broken banquet table lie in the middle of the room. Several tapestries hang from the walls, and there seems to be a large hole in the floor under a particularly tattered one.

If you examine the hole, go to 55.

If you examine the tapestries, go to 23.

#34

In the bravest voice you can muster, you shout your name and clan. You hear a soft whisper from the passage ahead. "Help me, please. My leg is broken."

You call out to the injured man, "Keep talking so I can find you."

Wisely, you tie a piece of long cord to a nearby stalagmite. You can follow the cord back to this tunnel branch in case you get lost.

Go to 37.

#35

You remove your rope and grapple and find a nice target – a broken gargoyle near an open window. To climb up the steep, icy castle wall, you'll need to make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

If you succeed, go to 42.

If you fail, go to 5.

#36

A little sore and tired, you stare up at the looming castle ruin. As the wind rushes through the broken turrets, you hear noises that sound like the screams of lunatics – no wonder they call this place the Castle of Madness.

The castle's stone walls have been covered with sheets of ice as thick as your body. With any luck, you won't have to climb up the walls to find an entrance.

If you decide to circle around the castle looking for an entrance, go to 3.

If you decide to use your pitons and rope to climb the wall to a window, go to 35.

#37

You find an injured hunter leaning against a cavern wall. He looks at you, his face ghastly and frostbitten. "How long have you been here?" you ask.

The wounded man swallows hard, "I don't know. Three days, perhaps? Got lost tracking the most magnificent elk you've ever seen. An unnatural creature ambushed me and snapped my leg like a dry branch. I crawled away as fast as I could, but now I'm lost and decided I have no stomach for running anymore."

You look down and see the man's leg twisted at an impossible angle. You grimace. This man will not make it out of these caves alive.

Make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. If you succeed, go to 32. If not, keep reading.

"I know," he answers, grinning as if he heard your thoughts. "I will not live more than a few hours. My god visited me just a few minutes ago and told me himself!"

"Let me warn you," he continues. "The trodden path leads to the home of the creature. I went down the icier path at first, but found an impassable cliff. The creature attacked me again there and dragged me to his lair before I escaped."

BLOOD MAN

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Speed 30 ft.

Hit Points 26 (3d10+9)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60', passive Perception 10

Languages Understands All Languages It Spoke In Life But Can't Speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Claw Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Seep Blood. Once a target is wounded, the blood man attempts to seep its corrosive blood into its target. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage and the target must make a DC 10 Con saving throw or be exhausted.



The man shudders. "Here, take this ring and give it to my the guard captain in Winterhaven. He will contact my family and tell them of my useless death. And if you see that great elk, hunt it down, roast it over a fire... and think of me."

He hands you an **amethyst ring** and you nod. The warrior starts shaking and shuddering, and you decide it is better to leave him now. You head back to the slushy path and go back to the main cavern.

If you head down the more trodden path, go to 9.

If you head down the icier path, go to 22.

Or, you can leave the cave and trek to the castle through the snow. Go to 19.

#38

You draw your weapon, expecting danger. The stench from this dark room is choking you. You stare across the litter-filled room and gasp when you see that the whole room is covered in a liquid that can only be blood. In the middle of the room, you can barely make out a skinny, man-like creature wearing practically nothing. You see that his eyes are bloodshot and his skin is a disgusting mottled-red. He lets out a half-hiss, half-cackle and stumbles towards you.

You're in mortal combat with this inhuman beast. This creature will not run from you... only one will remain after this fight. Because of his horrific nature, you must first make a DC 10 Wisdom save or become *frightened* for 1D4 rounds, suffering disadvantage on your attack rolls during that time.

You can trade blows with the blood man or jump into tactical combat using the battle map provided at the end of the adventure. In this case, make a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check. If you succeed, the blood man starts near the door and you can choose your starting position on the map. If you fail, you start adjacent to each other near the doorway.

If you've written down the word DARKNESS, you're in extra trouble. The blood-creature can see in the dark, but you get disadvantage to your attack rolls (unless you have a spell or ability to help cancel that penalty).

The blood man's tactics are to first wound its target with its claws, and then grapple them to use his bloody seep ability to begin to dissolve and absorb its victim.

If the creature is slain, go to 48.

If you died, your adventure ends here. Perhaps heroes more stalwart than yourself will return to the castle to defeat this gruesome creature.

#39

The ice and cold soon begins to numb your fingers, so you decide to give up your search. The snow is too deep now in the courtyard to find anything of value.

If you go through the servant's door, go to 14.

If you go through the guardhouse door, go to 11.

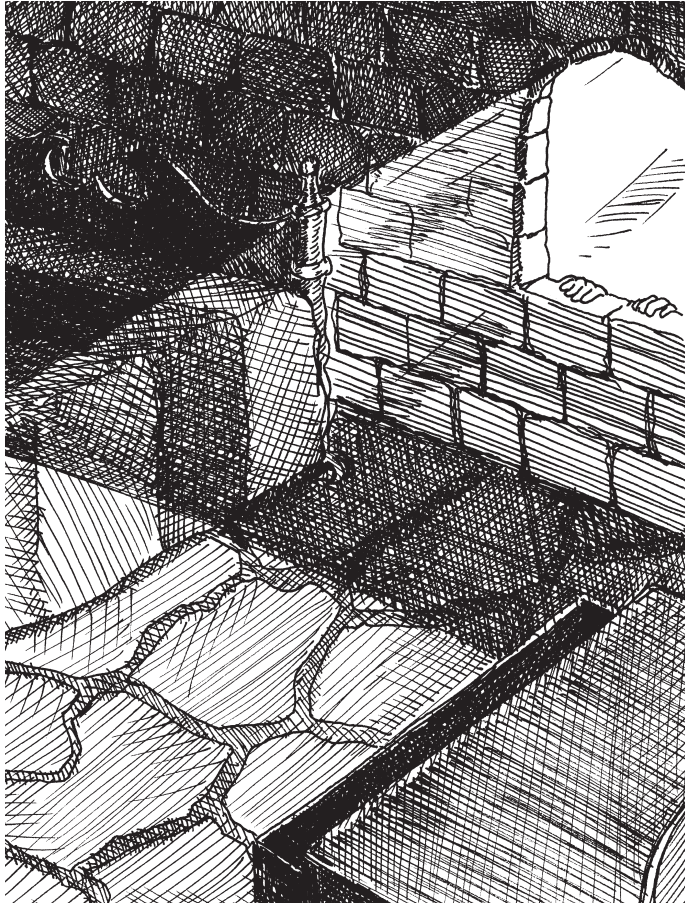
#40

The old door is heavy, and may even be locked, but you push with all your might. Make a DC 12 Strength check to break down the sturdy door.

If you succeed, go to 30.

If you fail, you can try prying the lock. Go to 18.

If you've already failed prying the lock, or just want to try the servant's door, go to 14.



#41

As the ice fiend is licking his claws clean, his beady black eyes falls on you. He lets out a roar from his wierd, circular mouth, tosses the mortally wounded seal against the side of the cave, and charges you!

Draw out your weapon and go to 17!

#42

You loop your grapple around the neck of the broken gargoyle. Testing the rope a few times, you hoist yourself and scramble up the thick rope. In a few seconds, you reach an icy window sill.

If you peer into the room first, go to 4.

If you quickly scramble in, go to 45.

#43

You dig around the bases of the various statues, looking for anything of value. Make a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

If you succeed, go to 2.

If you fail, go to 39.

#44

To sneak past the ice fiend, you must succeed at a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

If you succeed, go to 10.

If you fail, go to 41.

#45

You swing your body over the icy sill of the window and leap into the dim room. The white light shines through the window and illuminates the remnants of this old bedroom. A broken bed lies in the corner of the room, its decorative blanket still well preserved in the cold. A dresser with a shattered mirror sits opposite the bed, and you can almost feel the ghosts of the nobility who once slept here.

You look through some of the dressers, and find nothing but old clothes. No, wait. Underneath a fine blue chemise is a tarnished **silver tiara**. Smiling, you place the jewelry and the **blue chemise** in your sack. You walk to the door and peer out. Dark stairs lead upwards into a turret, and to the right, a corridor heads down to more abandoned bedrooms.

If you climb the stairs, go to 50.

If you head to another bedroom, go to 28.

If you skip the bedrooms and go down the corridor, go to 25.

#46

You carefully press your ear to the door, holding your breath to keep the stench from interrupting your concentration. Suddenly, you feel this horrible pain in your ear. You tear your ear from the door only to discover that you're bleeding from hundreds of pores on the side of your face. You gasp and draw out your weapon.

Take 1d4 damage from the wound. If you're still alive, you can either run from the castle and go to 53...

...or, you can bravely confront this dangerous menace behind the door. You relight your torch and angrily tear the half-broken door off its hinges. Go to 38.

#47

You look up and see a crumbled statue of an armored warrior in front of you. You look around... you found a way into the courtyard of the Castle of Madness! Beyond the graveyard of dozens of broken statues are two doors. The smaller one seems to be a servant's entrance; the other seems to be a guardhouse door.

If you search the courtyard, go to 43.

If you go through the servant's door, go to 14.

If you go through the guardhouse door, go to 11.

#48

With an unnatural gurgle, the gruesome thing falls to the ground, dead. Lighting a new torch to better see the room, you discover that this was once a servant's chamber. There is a framed picture on the wall of what seems to be the servant tending to a striking, white-haired queen. You're startled at the realization that the servant in the painting looks like the creature you just fought.

You rummage around the room looking for anything of value. Make a DC 10 Constitution check. If you succeed, go to 56.

If you fail, you do not have the stomach to rummage through the room's bloody contents. You decide to come back to the castle some other day — perhaps with friends — and discover its secrets in the safety of numbers. Go to 60.

#49

You race down the icy corridor, weapon clenched tightly in hand. Screaming a battle cry, you charge headlong into a gruesome sight. A blood-covered fiend has his teeth half-sunk into a squealing seal. He looks at you in surprise, throws the half-dead seal into the cavern wall, and roars his own battle challenge!

Go to 17.

#50

Holding on to a marble railing, you begin to climb up the long spiral stairs that surely leads up to one of the castle's turrets. As you make your way up, you notice that the steps are worn and icy from years of being exposed to the elements. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

If you succeed, go to 59.

If not, go to 29.

#51

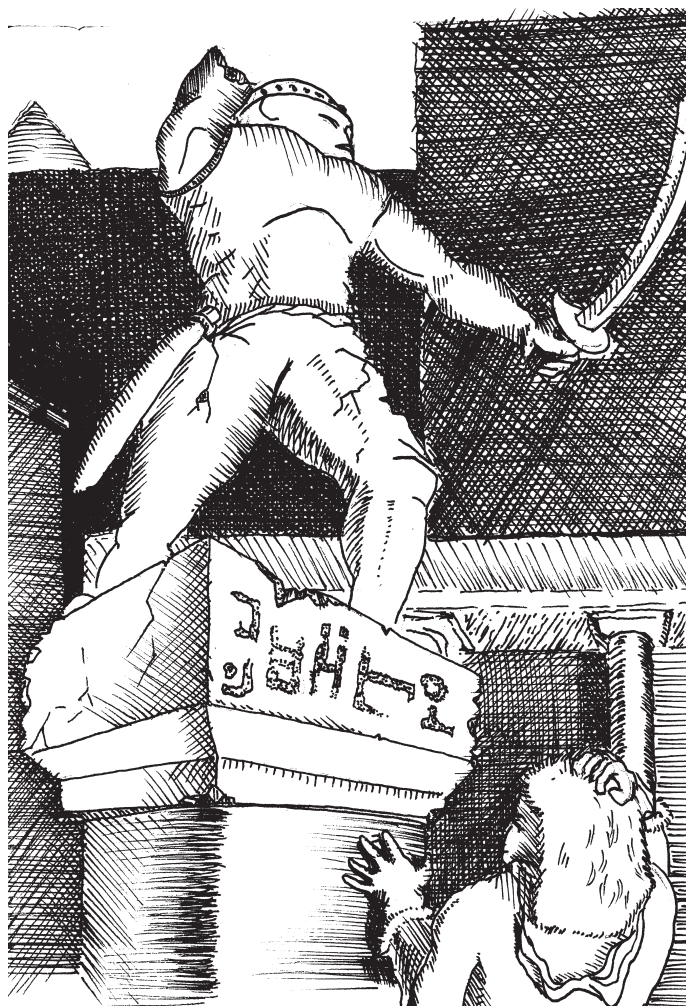
You try to stuff both **tapestries** into your bag, but they're just too heavy. Unless you succeed a DC 18 Strength check, you can only carry one of them. Choose now and write that down. You can take either the **maiden tapestry**, or the **axe tapestry**. When you've decided, you wander over to examine the hole in the floor.

Go to 55.

#52

The cliff is icier than expected. You grasp and claw your way around the cliff, the winds threatening to pick you up and toss you over. As you circle around the cliff, a powerful gust picks up and sends you hurling towards the edge! Make a DC 10 Dexterity check.

If you succeed, you catch on to the edge and manage to pull yourself to safety. Go to 36.



If you fail, you plummet down the cliffside! Take 1d6 damage. If you're still conscious, you plod towards the castle. Go to 36. Otherwise, your unconscious body is found by roaming grave ghouls and you are hungrily devoured alive...

#53

You run from the castle, glad that you have managed to find the few valuables that you did. Perhaps one day you will gather friends and return to the castle.

Go to 60.

#54

As you walk down the rock path, the ground beneath your boots turns to slush. Several minutes later, you find yourself walking through ankle-deep water. You fill up your waterskin from this source — it's better than eating snow. You light a torch, as most of the light from the cave entrance has faded away.

As you continue onwards, the ground becomes steadier and smoother. You kneel to examine it, and find a thick, half-frozen red liquid on the ground. You study it closer — blood!

Before you have time to think about your grisly discovery, you hear a moan from up ahead. You take a few steps forward, but see that

the passage you're in twists and turns in a dozen directions. An icy labyrinth lies ahead.

If you shout your name and make your presence known, go to 34.

If you calmly sneak up and try to see what's making the sound, go to 27.

#55

Careful of the crumbling floor, you peer down into the dark hole. A horrible reek hits you, and you involuntarily snap your hand over your nose. Even in this cold weather, something down the hole smells really bad.

You look down further into the pit and see that the ground is about ten feet below where you stand. You could jump down.

Make a DC 6 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If you fail, you twist your ankle for 1 hp damage.

Brushing yourself off, you look around the dimly lit chamber. You realize your torch is sputtering. Within seconds, the darkness in the chamber closes around you. You can barely make out a worn door, a few feet away, indecipherable writings slashed into its wood.

If you creep up to the door and listen, go to 46.

If you go forward bravely and push the door aside, go to 7.

#56

Gritting your teeth you pull up the bloody, torn mattress that lies on the floor. A silver sparkle catches your eye. You reach down and pick up a beautiful **silver and glass scepter**. Perhaps it belonged to the noble pictured in this room. Confident that you've found a great treasure, you throw your burning torch on the mattress and let the room ignite. You're determined to clean out the filth of the creature that lived here.

Dashing out of the smoky room, you leave the Castle of Madness behind. Surely more treasure and adventure lies within its walls, but you feel better returning with trusted friends. Perhaps with a party of adventurers, the yetis and blood men will not pose as much of a threat.

Go to 60.

#57

You're smart enough to know that it's not the design on the tapestry that is worth gold, but the fabric itself. Carefully examining both tapestries, you see that the runed axe one is cheaper and shoddier than the finely woven fabric of the armored maiden tapestry is.

Satisfied that you've made the right choice, you tuck the heavy maiden tapestry into your bag. You decide to examine the hole in the floor. Go to 55.

#58

Grasping your knife tightly – the space around the bed is too small to wield your main weapon – you kick over the mattress. You jump back in shock when you see a half-eaten, bloodless corpse staring up at you.

Turning away in revulsion, you stagger back before you steady yourself for a second look. The man has only been dead for a few weeks – he's dressed in a wind-torn cloak and has well-worn boots on the remains of his feet. Apparently, this man was exploring the castle like you. What ate him and stuffed his body in this bed, however, is beyond your imagination.

You leave the room and head down the corridor. Go to 25.

#59

Your foot slips up the stairs once, but your tight hold on the railing saves you from a nasty fall down the steps. You have to drag yourself up the last few steps, since the ice is about as thick as your fist.

Pulling your way onto a cold landing, where the wind whips through open windows and chills you to the bone, you glance around this ancient lookout tower. It seems all barren, except for a lone **crossbow** mounted on the wall. You pull it down and strap it to your back. You've never used a crossbow before, but it may come in handy later.

You kick the dirty snow beneath the crossbow and find what you were looking for – a single, rusty bolt. You'll have one shot with this crossbow. Happy that you found anything at all in this crumbling tower, you carefully make your way down the stairs.

You can go explore the bedrooms more. Go to 28.

Or, you can skip the bedrooms and go down the main corridor. Go to 25.

#60

You arrive back in the town of Winterhaven a little injured, but safe. You quickly head to the local merchant's bazaar to sell the wares that you found. The merchants are all very impressed – many of the goods you found were antiques and are quite valuable.

If you've written down the word **RESCUER**, you managed to drag the wounded warrior back to Winterhaven. You discover his name is Jrak Kul, a lieutenant in Winterhaven's town watch, and a member of the secretive "Martyrs of War" clan. The Martyrs reward you handsomely for his safe return – 200 gp – and invite you to join their ranks.

Congratulations – you have bested the Castle of Madness, and you have quite the tale to tell the folks at the tavern. For completing the adventure, gain 400 XP plus whatever XP you gained from slaying the castle's monsters. Furthermore, you can sell some of the items you gained from the castle, or keep them for a future adventure!

TREASURES OF THE CASTLE

Treasure	Value
Glass dagger +1	550 gp
Silver tiara	100 gp
Antique mace	10 gp
Blue chemise	20 gp
Ice fiend teeth	10 gp
Guard's signet ring	100 gp
Steel-plated shield	12 gp
Amethyst ring	120 gp
Maiden tapestry	100 gp
Axe tapestry	10 gp
Silver-glass scepter	150 gp
Chariot toy	10 gp
Crossbow	25 gp

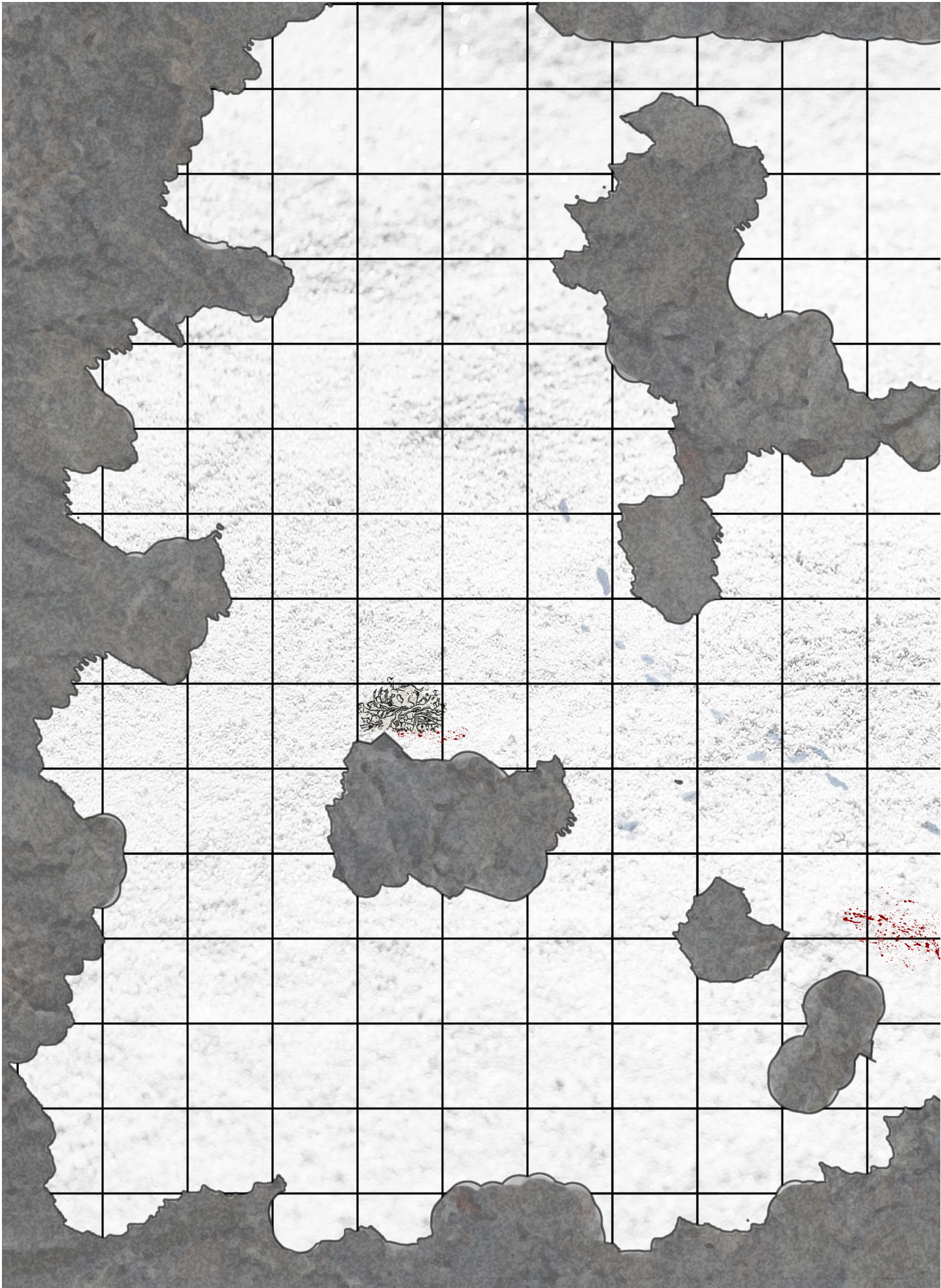
SPECIAL THANKS & CREDITS

Thanks to Jason Behnke and Steve Holmes for the art in this adventure (originally from the unpublished Avalon Hill RPG, *RuneQuest: Slayers*). Also, thanks to Liam Connors for the D&D characters and playtesting!

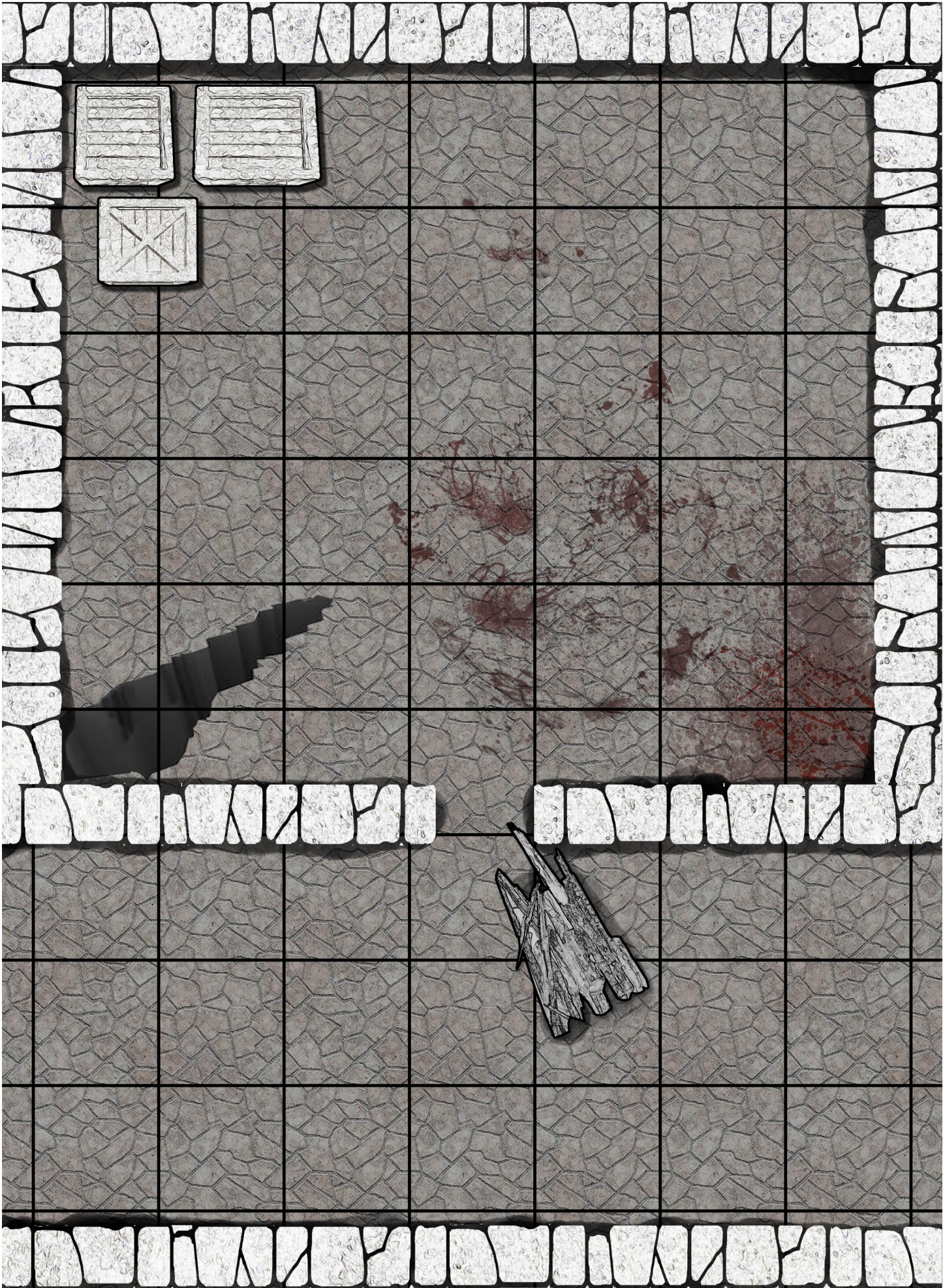
If you enjoyed this adventure, or ran it for a group, all the author asks is that you give a shout out and let me know how it went. Post a note on 1shotadventures.com or give a shoutout to @1shotjc.bsky.social on Bluesky.

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FIEND CAVES



Name: King Coppertong - a formidable dwarven merchant
 Player: _____ Age: 89
 Class: Fighter Race: Dwarf
 Level: 2 Alignment: Neutral good
 Speed: 25'

Inspiration



STR ● Athletics



DEX ○ Acrobatics
○ Sleight of Hand
○ Stealth



CON



INT ○ Arcana ○ Religion
● History
○ Investigation
○ Nature



WIS ○ Animals ○ Survival
○ Insight
○ Medicine
○ Perception



CHA ○ Deception
○ Intimidation
○ Performance
○ Persuasion



Abilities

Fighter Training: You are proficient in all armor and shields, and simple and martial weapons. You are also proficient in Strength and Constitution saves.

Fighting Style (1st): Duelling. When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

Second Wind (1st): On your turn, use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 2 hit points. You must rest before using it again.

Action Surge (2nd): You can push yourself beyond your normal limits for a moment. On your turn, you can take one additional action on top of your regular action and a possible bonus action. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Spell Save

Spell Attack



Passive Wisdom
(Perception)



Proficiency Bonus

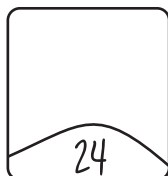


Initiative



Armor Class

Armor: 16
 Shield: +2
 Dexterity: +1



Hit Points (2d10)

Max: 24
 Con: +3 (+1)
 HD Used: _____
 Temp: _____



Main Weapons

Weapon	To-Hit	Damage	Type	Weight
Battleaxe	+4	1d8+4	slashing	3 lbs

Equipment

Item	Weight	Notes
Chain mail	55 lbs.	AC 16
Shield	6 lbs.	+2 AC
2 handaxes	2 lbs.	1d6 damage
Explorer's pack		
Fur cloak		
Ice wine elixir		Heals 1d4+1 damage

Weight Carried: lbs (5X Str is -10' Speed; 10X Str is -20' Speed and Disadvantage)

Gold & Gems

50



Background

One night, while drinking the new batch of Solginul ice wine, an old crone went into a long-winded tale about the Castle of Madness - the old keep that emerges from the mountains once every seven years. She swore she had an old map to its secrets, a map drawn by her father a generation ago. Promising the old woman free trinkets from your store, you copied her map and prepared for a short expedition. The journey was far less treacherous than you would have believed - just a day's walk through the White Canyon, past the abandoned goblin ringfort, and through the constant storm that protects the Sealed Vale...

Languages

Common, Dwarvish

Racial Traits: Hill Dwarf

Hardy and Slow: +2 Constitution, +1 Wisdom, 25' move

Dark Vision: Dwarves can see even in dim light within 60'.

Poison Resilience: Advantage on poison saving throws, resilience vs poison damage

Combat Training: Proficient in battleaxe, handaxe, hammer, and warhammer

Stonework: Double your Intelligence (History) proficiency bonus when studying stone

Tough: +1 hit point per level

Actions

ATTACK

Attack, shove, or grab (Athletics vs. Athletics/Dexterity)

MOVE

Dash to increase your Speed, or disengage to escape attacks of opportunity

HELP

One ally gets advantage on their next ability check. Or foe within 5' of your ally has disadvantage.

DODGE

All attacks against you have disadvantage

STABILIZE

DC 10 Medicine check

Experience

301

900
XP Needed

Resting

Short Rest (1 hour): Spend 1 or more HD (+Con bonus) to regain health.

Long Rest (8 hours): Regain all lost HP and spent HD equal to half the PC's total HD.

Attribute Modifiers

Attribute 4-5	-3
Attribute 6-7	-2
Attribute 8-9	-1
Attribute 12-13	+1
Attribute 14-15	+2
Attribute 16-17	+3
Attribute 18-19	+4

Name: Enfys Loom - a good-natured pyromancer

Player: _____ Age: 29

Class: Sorcerer Race: Human

Level: 2 Alignment: Neutral good

Speed: 30'

Inspiration



STR

☐ Athletics

9



save



DEX

☐ Acrobatics
☐ Sleight of Hand
☐ Stealth

14



save



CON

13



save



INT

☒ Arcana ☐ Religion
☐ History
☐ Investigation
☐ Nature

15



save



WIS

☐ Animals ☒ Survival
☐ Insight
☐ Medicine
☐ Perception

11



save



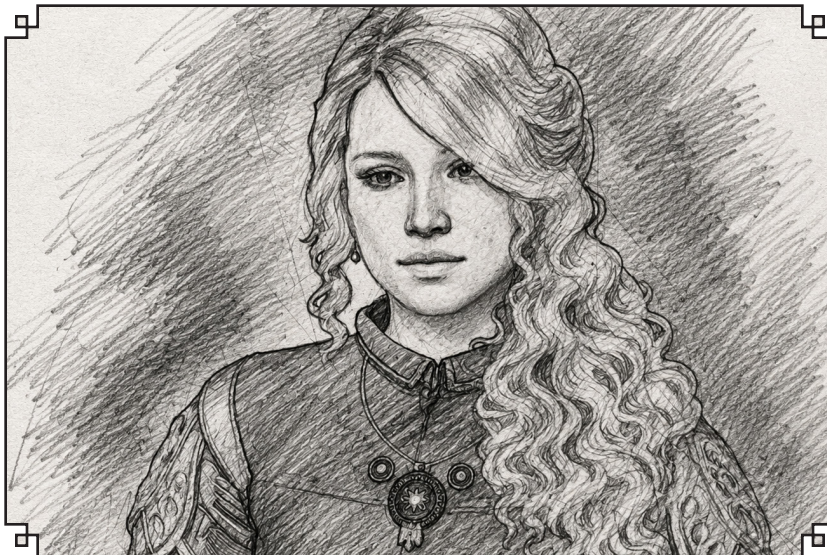
CHA

☐ Deception
☐ Intimidation
☐ Performance
☐ Persuasion

16



save



Abilities

Sorcerer Training: You are proficient in daggers, darts, slings, quarterstaves, and light crossbows. You are also proficient in Intelligence and Charisma saves.

Spellcasting (1st): You know four cantrips and two 1st level spells:

Green-Flame Blade (0) Fire Bolt (0)
Mage Hand (0) Blade Ward (0)
Feather Fall (1st) Burning Hands (1st)
False Life (1st)

You have 3 level one spell slots. You cast spells with Charisma.

Draconic Origin, Gold (1st): You get +1 hp maximum per level. When you aren't wearing armor, you get AC 13 + Dex modifier.

Font of Magic (2nd): You have 2 sorcery points. Spend a bonus action and 2 points to create a temporary 1st level spell slot; or, expend a slot to create sorcery points equal to that slot's level.

DC 13

Spell Save

+5

Spell Attack



Passive Wisdom
(Perception)



Proficiency Bonus

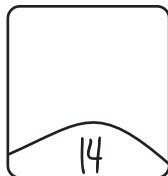


Initiative



Armor Class

Armor: 13
Shield: _____
Dexterity: +2



Hit Points (2d6)

Max: 14
Con: +1
HD Used: _____
Other: +1



Main Weapons

Weapon	To-Hit	Damage	Type	Weight
Quarterstaff	+1	1d6-1	bludgeoning	1 lb
Fire Bolt spell	+5	1d10	fire	
Burning Hands spell	auto	3d6	fire, Dex save for	
			half damage	

Equipment

Item Weight Notes

Explorer's pack

Arcane focus

2 daggers

1d4 damage

Fur cloak

Healing potion

Heals 2d4+2 damage

Weight Carried: lbs (5X Str is -10' Speed; 10X Str is -20' Speed and Disadvantage)

Gold & Gems

50



Background

You last saw your brother, Brynmor, two years ago. You don't know what happened to him. He was studying with that arrogant archmage Jacob Hermanity, and then one day, he just vanished from his house. No sign of him, except for a crumpled up wanted poster of a bandit and a torn journal page that mentioned the "Castle of Madness." You questioned Hermanity, but the wizard refused to answer your questions. Did your brother seek out the mysteries of the Castle, which only appears once every seven years? Determined to find an answer, you questioned the people of Solginul until you found an old crone who claimed to have an old map that would lead you to the legendary Castle...

Languages

Common

Draconic, Dwarven

Racial Traits

Attributes: Humans receive +1 to all attributes

Language: You know one bonus language.

Actions

ATTACK

Attack, shove, or grab (Athletics vs. Athletics/Dexterity)

MOVE

Dash to increase your Speed, or disengage to escape attacks of opportunity

HELP

One ally gets advantage on their next ability check. Or foe within 5' of your ally has disadvantage.

DODGE

All attacks against you have disadvantage

STABILIZE

DC 10 Medicine check

Experience

301

900

XP Needed

Resting

Short Rest (1 hour): Spend 1 or more HD (+Con bonus) to regain health.

Long Rest (8 hours): Regain all lost HP and spent HD equal to half the PC's total HD.

Attribute Modifiers

Attribute 2-3	-4
Attribute 4-5	-3
Attribute 6-7	-2
Attribute 8-9	-1
Attribute 12-13	+1
Attribute 14-15	+2
Attribute 16-17	+3
Attribute 18-19	+4

Henchman

Name <u>Caryen Kraye</u>		11 HP
Type <u>Professional tracker</u>		
Description <u>Loyal to his friends, but quiet</u>		

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
+1	+2	+1	+0	+0	+1
12	13	12	10	10	12

Notes Chaotic good Speaks Common Perception (+2) Survival (+2) Leather armor Backpack and supplies Hunting knife Passive Perception 12 	A armor Class 13 Move 30' Attack Longsword <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">To Hit</td> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Damage</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">+3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1d8+1 slashing</td> </tr> </table> Notes None	To Hit	Damage	+3	1d8+1 slashing
To Hit	Damage				
+3	1d8+1 slashing				

Use this henchman along with a 1st level character, or along with one of the 2nd level characters to ease the difficulty.