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Neverthawes: Bullet Point History

For those who dread reading background text, or who seek a quick history refresher before running the adventure, the following chronologically-ordered bullet points cover the most important locations, people, and history of the village underneath Dagon's floating castle.

- At one time, the region was inhabited by a kindly wizard named Dagon and a tribe of dwarves known as the Ardokk Clan. The Ardokk dwarves discovered the rich gold veins beneath the Frost Fang Mountains.
- In time, the village of Neverthawes was formed, growing out of a few cobbledtogether buildings constructed along the trade route to the Ardokk Mines. Within a generation, the village had grown to impressive proportions.
- The wizard Dagon grew more reclusive as his experiments in the arcane began to take their toll upon his mind and body. Exacerbated by the encroachment of the village, he took drastic measures to regain his privacy by forming a pact with the Carrion Crow Goddess Malotoch to suspend his castle high above prying eyes.
- As Dagon's 'earth mote' tore free and ascended to the sky, the resulting earthquake freed a captive medusa deep within the mountain. Immediately she unleashed her fury against the Ardokk dwarves, laying waste to nearly the entire clan as she turned them to stone. A small number of dwarves survived and fled their mountain home, holding the great wizard Dagon in contempt for his carelessness.
- With the flow of Ardokk gold suspended, the surrounding regions suffered a dramatic reduction in trade and commerce. The once-thriving village of Neverthawes soon dwindled, becoming a shadow of its former self. Only the most hardy, and those too old or poor to move on, remained.
- The earthquake also freed a tribe of creatures known as 'ugnoids' who had been trapped for many years in the depths of the mountain. The species resulted from a mixing of dwarves and goblins forced together for many generations. Once freed, they moved to the peaks of Frost Fang, and defend their new home against all comers!
- A generation after the fall of the mines, as Dagon's castle lights continued to illuminate the night time sky above them, a halfling named Egad Greenthicket proclaimed that the old wizard had appeared to him in a dream. In this vision, he claimed that Dagon had told him how to rid the mines of the evil medusa. The next day, Egad took his cow and disappeared into the mines, never to be heard from again.

- A few years after Egad vanished, a band of villagers ascended to the top of the mountain to construct a rope bridge to reach the floating earth mote. The bridge can still be seen, but the builders never returned. Nor did any who went to rescue them.
- Of late, the castle lights have begun to flicker and grow dim. Soon after, pebbles began to rain down from the castle at intervals. As time went on, whole chunks of earth began to break off from the earth mote and fall. It is feared that the magic that holds the castle aloft may be beginning to fade.
- An expedition is being formed by local cleric Levi Fangred to investigate the matter. He claims that the old wizard contacted him through an amulet that fell through the roof of his temple, affixed with a note requesting several ingredients necessary to complete a spell. In the message, he admits that the mote is indeed in danger of falling. The expedition must leave immediately.
- The last known heir of the Ardokk Dwarves, Gruin Ardokk has demanded to join the expedition. It seems unlikely that his motive is to save the old wizard, but to finally exact a measure of revenge in the name of his forefathers.

Judge Tips for Frost Fang's Final Encounter

How good are you at juggling?

Well, it doesn't need to feel *that* challenging when your players finally reached Dagon's floating castle in the sky. The PCs have overcome incredible challenges to reach the final encounter, crossing the treacherous bridge before coming face-to-face with the outsized and corrupted wizard. And now they find they have to complete some spell ritual? *Whaaaaaaat*?

Don't worry, this quick guide is here to help. Regardless of whether your players have been paying attention to your hints along the way or not, there is great fun to be had as the party encounters Dagon.

Ways the PCs could have learned about the ritual

- The ritual is mentioned in Dagon's scribbled note (page 10).
- The PCs have received visions that reveal much about the ritual throughout the adventure (see Appendix C on page 62). This table is perhaps the judge's greatest tool in foreshadowing the upcoming ritual.
- There is a ritual scroll found in the Ugnoid Encampment (page 42).

Alas, some groups will miss the forest for the trees as they are hacking up ugnoids and evergrinks, so just in case your PCs have arrived at Dagon's castle unprepared to perform a ritual, we suggest the following:

- At the judge's discretion, any elf, mage or cleric may (on a successful INT check) discern that the stone wizard's circle in the courtyard is tied to Dagon's unholy pact with a dark goddess (Great check? They know it is Malotoch), and that the circle is alive with magic energy.
- Whoever possesses the ritual components might notice that each item has begun to glow. The closer the items are to the circle, the greater the light.
- The NPCs Gruin Ardokk or Levi Fangred can offer subtle clues that the ritual must be completed to keep the castle aloft. In case the PCs are perplexed as they wonder, "is the ritual to save Dagon or to destroy him?" The answer should lie in the fact that Dagon will attempt to hinder the ritual's completion and that he is trying to kill the PCs.

- The voice of Malotoch may be heard in the skies above, whispering "Complete the ritual and deliver to me the corrupted wizard..."
- Judges might give their players flexibility in the order the ritual must be performed. As long as they include all three items in the ritual, kindly judges might give them credit for trying. (But be sure each takes a full round to add to the suspense of the encounter!)
- Finally, if your group habitually ignore clues and story-lines, be prepared to resolve the encounter and adventure in a way that fits with your play style. That might include sending them all to a crushing death as the earth-mote plummets to the ground! Or perhaps their impressive feats of martial and eldritch derring-do might so impress Malotoch that she spontaneously spares the village as she seeks the service of these new dynamic followers.

In case things don't go as planned, role-play opportunities abound as new infernal pacts may be offered and unholy alliances are formed, all in order to save the castle and the village below. It's really up to the judge and the PCs how things will be resolved. The precarious end-scenario will no doubt be different for every group. Will mighty deeds prevail? Will sacrifice save the day? Will the future be altered forever when souls are dealt? Not even Malotoch, Dagon, or the judge knows how this story will end!

The Frost Fang Expedition: Convention Play

While the Frost Fang Expedition is filled with opportunities for high adventure, it is possible to run the entire adventuer in a time-restricted setting such as a four-hour window at a gaming convention. Here are some tips to help you expedite matters if the clock is a factor at your table.

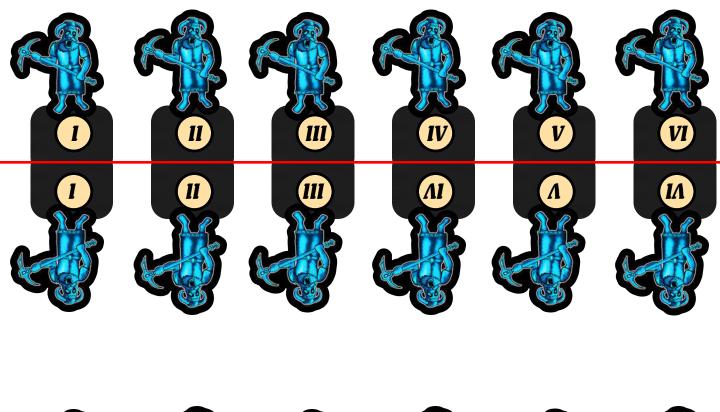
- The path to the top of Frost Fang Mountain has a few separate paths. This means that not every scenario will be encountered. For every choice the PCs make, another area of the map will be passed by and will likely go unvisited.
- The Ardokk Mines will consume more time than the encounter at Boulder Bridge. Likewise, the encounter at the windmill will take longer than the encounter on the Devil's Stairs. Judges should keep this in mind and keep things moving in these areas at the first lull in the action.
- Each game session is different, as groups can approach the adventure in a myriad of ways. If your players are lingering in an area because they are enjoying a bit of extended role-play or exploration, let them have fun where the fun is found! You can always find other areas down the adventure path to trim if that becomes necessary.
- Since you likely won't know if time is an issue until late in the adventure, these tips will focus mostly on the later encounters. That being said, if your players begin to "lollygag" in Neverthawes or the bowels of the Ardokk Mines early in the adventure, it makes sense move them along, knowing that much more adventure awaits.
- Once the PCs reach the Ugnoid encampment at the top of the mountain, a good (though not hard-and-fast) estimate would be that it should take about an hour and a half to tackle the meeting with the Ungnoids, the bridge, the Evergrink tree, and the final confrontation with Dagon (and Malotoch) to wrap up the adventure.
- If a lot of time is spent in role-playing the encounter with the Ugnoids, however, consider trimming the bridge challenge and/or the Evergrink encounter, or skipping them altogether. (Though you'll likely still want the party to discover the dead adventures and his pack found in the Evergrink encounter!) It is more important to have ample time on the actual earth mote with Dagon, and the possible meeting with Malotoch (where patron bonds might be formed.)

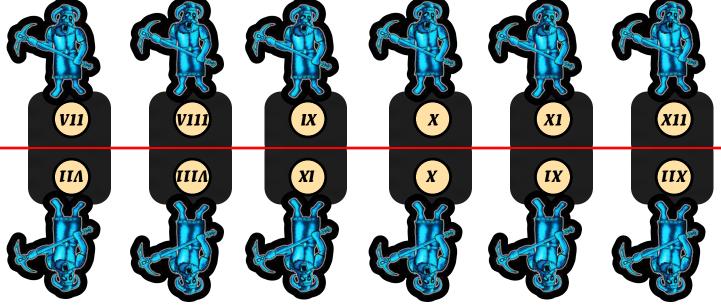
- One advantage of theatre-of-the-mind type role-play is that scenes can play out very quickly. While it's important to everyone that the story is resolved, having fun throughout is even more important! There are ample opportunities to engage the players in the text of this adventure, but feel free to move fast and loose throughout the narrative to allow your players the freedom to show you where the fun is for them. When a scenario has played out, move quickly to the next. It's better to have more time than you need than to have it run out!
- Lastly, if you actually do run out of time at your convention game, use it to your narrative advantage! This adventure is, after all, essentially a race to keep the castle from falling, so feel free to remind your players of this fact! If the PCs have spent too much time in other areas before reaching the goal, there is no reason that they shouldn't witness the fall of the earth mote and the destruction of Neverthawes below. "You see the final light flicker and die in the castle's window. The birds hush their singing and in one silent moment, you witness the great earth mote tilt at first to one side, and then plummets with increasing speed down to Neverthawes. The village is crushed in an explosion of rock, rubble and earth. Your expedition has arrived too late to save the villagers who had pinned their hopes upon your ability to overcome the mountain's challenges. Neverthawes is no more. But you still live to seek other adventures, or perhaps, as you stare at the rubble below, revenge!"

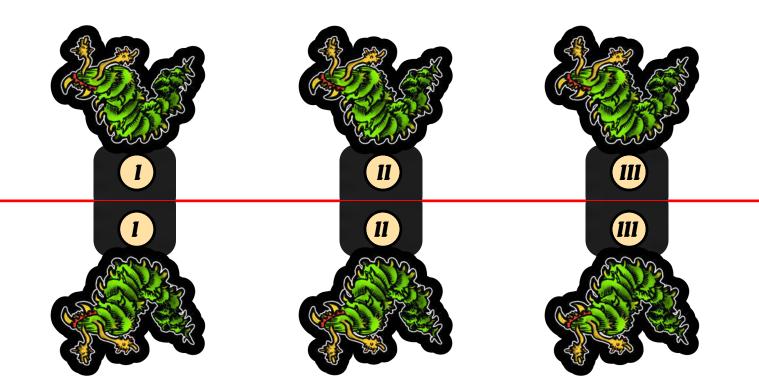


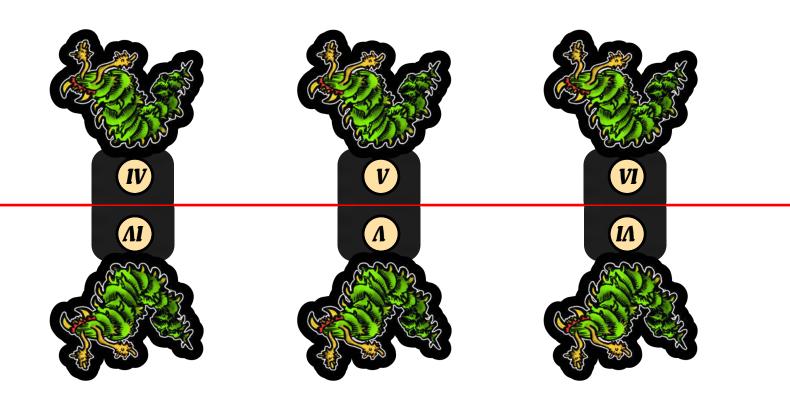
Frost Fang Expedition Paper Miniatures

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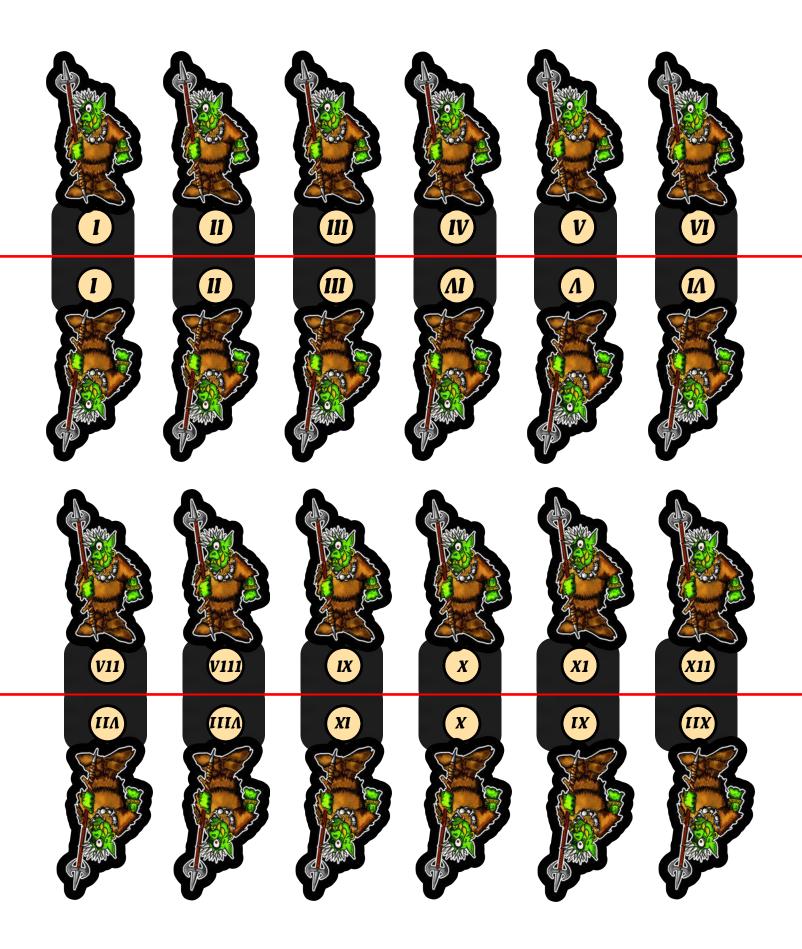


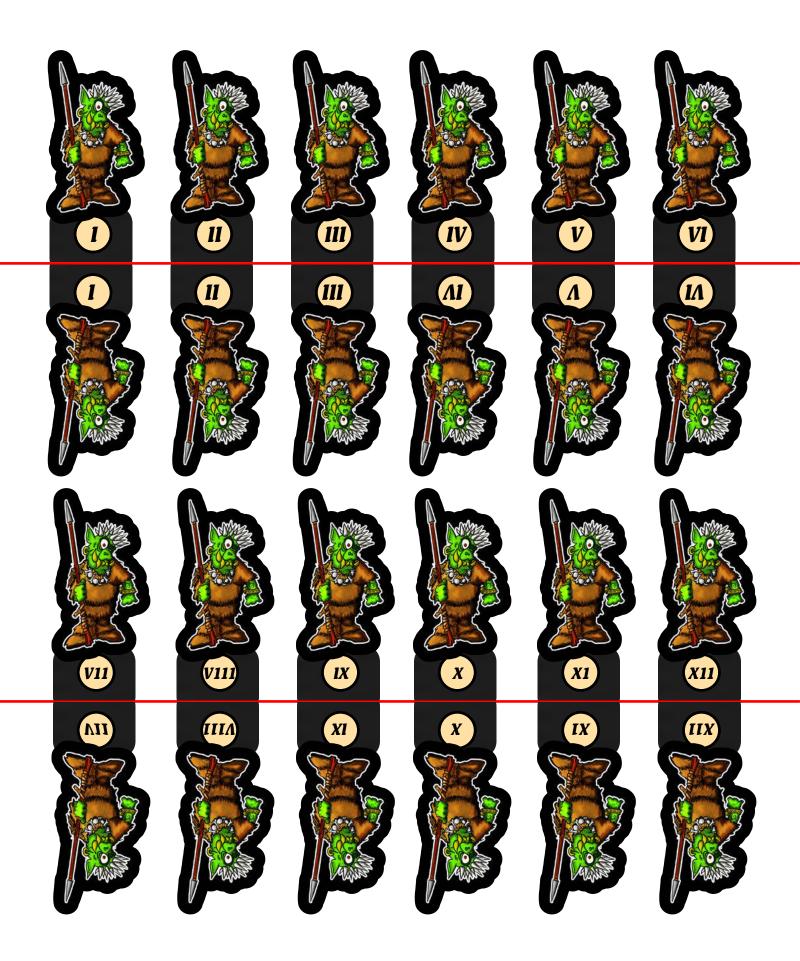


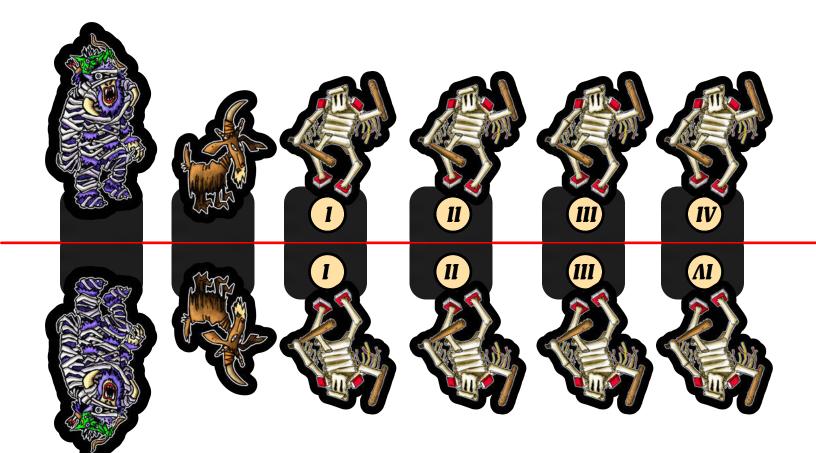


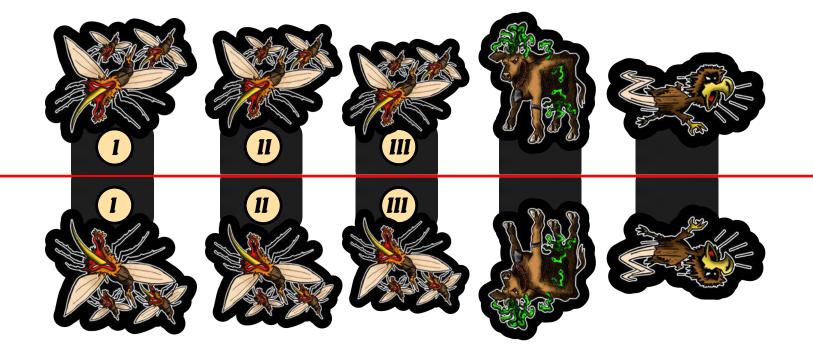


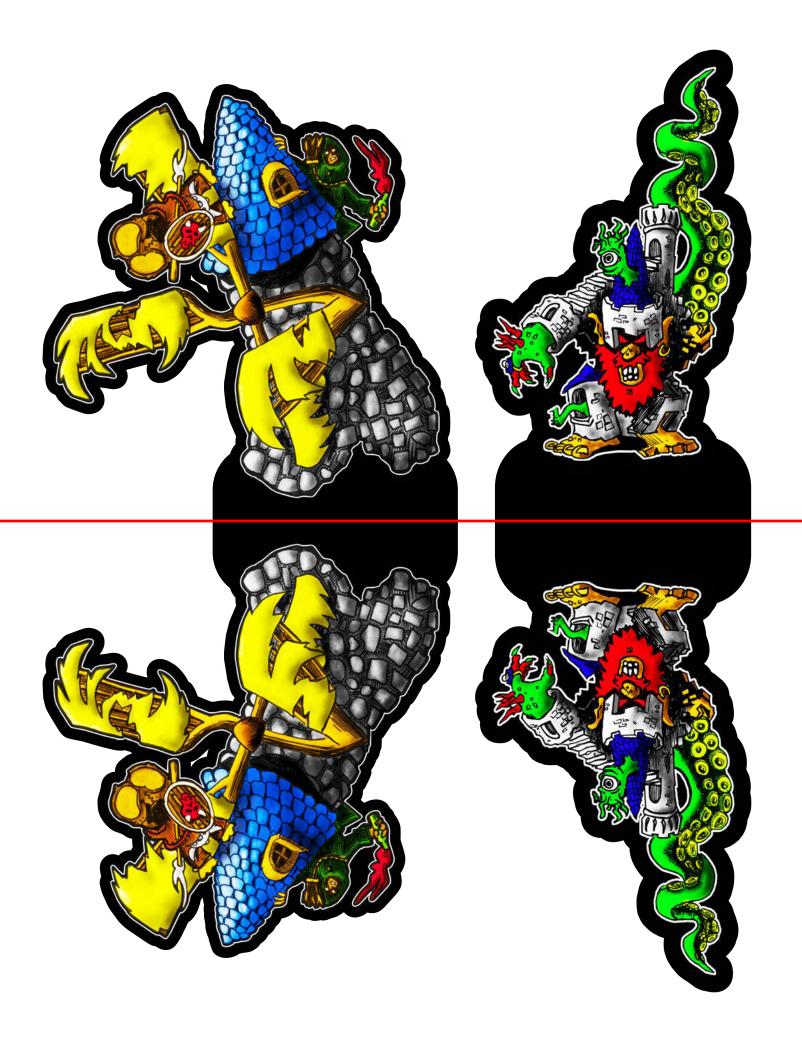


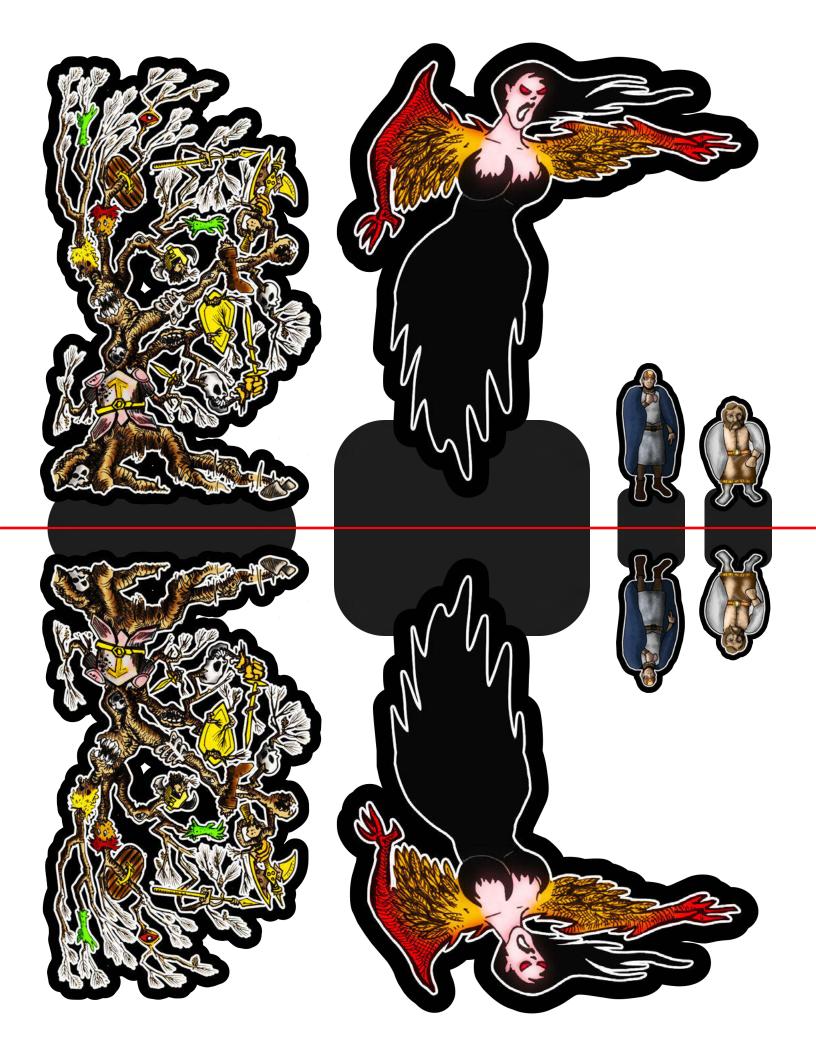












Malotoch Mother of Crows

The goddess Malotoch is the lord over ruin, delighting in the aftermath of war, famine and disaster. Much as the carrion crow pecks at the eyeballs of the dead, Malotoch scours the various planes, looking for the wretched consequences of man's evil against man, basking in the aroma of spilled blood and fetid flesh. To garner patron favor from the carrion crow goddess is to make a deal with a chaotic scavenger who is aloof and subject to whim. She demands from her servants a lifetime of devotion to her unholy tenants: show no mercy to the weak, never bury the dead, taste the blood of your foes so that she may savor its flavor, and to never, ever, receive healing from a disciple of Justicia, whom she loathes. Malotoch forms a patron bond with mortals only in the knowledge that she will one day feast upon the flesh of the soul who served her in life.

Patron Taint

Since Malotoch appropriates spell knowledge from those she devours, the goddess favors her followers with arcane knowledge pecked from the dead brains of fallen sorcerers. Patron taint (and any other effects) occurs whenever a natural 1 is rolled on a spell check. Roll 1D6 on the table below. Whenever a caster has acquired all six taints and all effects, there is no longer a need to roll.

1: The first time this taint appears, a murder of crows will follow the caster for 1d4 days, keeping their distance but always in shouting distance. The second time they appear, they will flock around the caster, pecking around his feet and perching on their shoulder for 1d10 days. The third time, the crows will accompany the caster the remainder of his days.

2: The caster will lose his appetite for anything other than meat. If rolled a second time, the caster will only be able to consume raw meat, which he always craves. A third time and the caster must consume some part of his victims or suffer Malotoch's disfavor in the form of a -5 to all spell checks for 1d4 days.

3: The caster begins to sprout feathers on his back and arms, making tight clothing uncomfortable. On the second taint, the casters nose will elongate, taking on the characteristics of a beak. On the third, the caster will sprout black feathers over the entire body, along with short, deformed wings upon their back. These will not enable flight but will make the wearing of any shirt or armor nearly impossible.

4: Seeing your spell attempt and failure as a sign of weakness, Malotoch will curse you with the stench of death for 1d4 days. On the second taint, the stench will return and your skin will be covered with boils and puss for 1d6 days (-2AC). A third time will result in the stench proving unbearable for all in a 30' radius for 1d6 days, causing everyone's eyes to water (-3 to all attacks inside radius).

5: Frustrated by your failure, the Carrion Crow Goddess resurrects the nearest corpse to follow you around for 1d3 days, commanding it to whisper "I am you, by and by". On the second taint, 1d6 corpses will follow the caster for 1d4 days, whispering the same. On the third taint, the caster will cause corpses to rise and follow him every time he passes a cemetery, barrow, or battlefield.

6: The caster immediately falls asleep, drawn into a dream where he or she will converse with Malotoch herself. She will toy with the caster's mind, revealing the secrets of the universe, though the knowledge wreaks havoc on the caster's brain. This sadistic exercise delights Malotoch to no end. The caster awakens in 1d4 rounds with a permanent -1 to personality, +1 to intelligence. This result can be duplicated two more times.

SpellBarn

1: The caster must carve the mark of the crow's talon into his own forehead (expressed as Stamina, Strength or Agility loss). The spell is cast when the blood reaches the caster's eyes (blind for 1 round).

2: Malotoch craves the taste of flesh. The caster can expend spell burn without feeling the effects of the drain if he or she consumes two pounds of flesh from any human or humanoid creature before the next sunrise. It must be raw and offered up to Malotoch in tribute and veneration in an hour long ritual. If the ritual is not offered up before the next sunrise, Malotoch will exact the point amount (abilities at judge's discretion) +1d4 additional points.

3: A murder of crows begins to swirl above the caster. For every ability point spent, a crow lands upon the caster, pecking at any exposed skin, cawing and drawing blood (expressed as Stamina, Strength or Agility loss). If the caster is able to succeed at a DC14 Fort Save, he or she will regain the burned points at twice the normal speed.

4: A pack of hyenas form a circle around the spellburner. An ally may join the caster in the circle and also expend ability points at a rate of two for one, chanting "Take what is thine oh Malotoch!" The burner(s)lose five pounds for every point sacrificed, growing gaunt and weak (expressed as Stamina, Strength and Agility loss). The caster also gains a +4 boon to all spell checks until the next sunrise.

Invoke Patron

Level: 1 Range: Self Duration: Varies Casting Time: 1 round; limited x per bond. Save: None

In order to learn this spell, the caster must first cast patron bond. The particulars of this spell vary according to the terms of the patron. In casting this spell, the wizard invokes the name of a supernatural patron to request aid. This spell requires at least 1 point of spellburn. The patron responds by sending aid according to the nature of its followers; the judge will provide specifics. Note that continued casting of this spell may taint the wizard spiritually and physically.

Corruption: Roll 1d8: (1-4) minor; (5-7) major; (8) greater.

Spell Results

1: Lost, failure, and worse! Roll 1d6 modified by Luck: (3 or less) corruption + patron taint; (4-5) corruption; (6+) patron taint.

2-11: Failure. Unlike other spells, invoke patron may not be lost for the day. Depending on the results of patron bond, the wizard may still be able to cast it.

12-13: Malotoch is engaged at some distant battlefield, feasting upon the carcasses of the fallen. She prefers to not disengage, but your petition finds favor as she shares the life force she dines upon. You receive 6 additional HP for the rest of the day.

14-17: A murder of crows arrives to swirl around you, an impediment to all foes. All attacks against you take a -4 penalty for the next 1d6 rounds.

18-19: Your pleas have awakened the sleeping goddess. She spitefully morphs your body to that of a large crow for the next 1d4 rounds, but in so doing, your vision improves (+2 to attacks), your agility improves (+3 to AC and initiative), and you have the ability to fly 50' per round until the spell ends.

20-23: Malotoch hears your voice and sends 1d6 vultures to do your bidding. Vultures act on your initiative; Atk bite +4 melee (dmg 1d4); AC 8; HP 1; MV 10', fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0; Ref +2; Will +0; AL C. They remain with the caster for 1d4 days, following basic commands.

24-27: The ground around your opponents erupts with the rotting carcasses of the dead who attempt to drag 1d6 foes underground. Each foe must succeed a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 2d8 rending damage. Regardless, targets are immobilized for 1d4 rounds.

28-29: Malotoch sends an enormous raven in 1d4 rounds. The bird is large enough to be ridden as a mount. It acts on your initiative; Atk bite and claw +6 melee (dmg 1d10); AC 14; HD3d8; HP18; MV 20', fly 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3; Ref +4; Will +0; AL C.

30-31: The same as 28-29 results, but 1d6 ravens to do your bidding.

32+: Malotoch recognizes your rising power and grants you and each ally +5 to all attacks, saving throws, spell checks, and damage rolls for 1d8+CL rounds. The caster and all allies also automatically succeed on any Recovering the Body checks made before the next sunrise.

Feather Fall

Level: 1 Range: 25' Duration: 1 round per caster level or until landing Casting Time: instantaneous Save: Will to avoid

The caster impedes his own or another person's rate of descent when falling. This allows the target to avoid injury or death or to glide upon the breeze. Note that this spell can be cast instantaneously, out of initiative order, if the caster or a target within range is falling.

Spell Results

1: Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11: Lost. Failure.

12-13: Caster reduces the speed at which he falls. With a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1 for each 10' fallen), he takes no damage. On a failed save, he suffers only half damage.

14-17: Caster falls at a graceful rate of 50' per round and takes no damage if he lands before the spell expires. Otherwise, he suffers half damage and is allowed a Fort save (DC 10 + 1 for each 20' fallen) to avoid all damage.

18-19: Caster and three additional creatures within range fall at a rate of 50' round. They take no damage if they land before the spell expires. Otherwise, they suffer half damage and are allowed a Fort save (DC 10 + 1 for each 20' fallen) to avoid all damage.

20-23: Caster and six additional creatures fall at a rate of 50' round. They take no damage if they land before the spell expires. Otherwise they suffer half damage and are allowed a Fort save (DC 10 + 1 for each 20' fallen) to avoid all damage.

24-27: Caster gains the ability to glide on the air by leaping from a height 30' or more above the ground. The caster soars on the breeze, drifting back to earth at a vertical rate of 10' per round, arriving on the ground when he reaches the maximum distance he can glide. His movement rate is 60' per round while gliding, and if he fails to reach solid ground before the spell expires, he falls and suffers normal damage upon impact.

28-29: Caster and up to three additional creatures can glide on the winds. They soar on the breeze, drifting back to earth at a vertical rate of 10' per round, arriving on the ground when reaching the maximum distance they can glide. Their movement rate is 60' per round while gliding, and if they fail to reach solid ground before the spell expires, they fall and suffer normal damage upon impact.

30-31: Caster and up to six additional creatures can glide on the winds. They soar on the breeze, drifting back to earth at a vertical rate of 10' per round, arriving on the ground when reaching the maximum distance they can glide. Their movement rate is 60' per round while gliding, and if they fail to reach solid ground before the spell expires, they fall and suffer normal damage upon impact.

32+: Caster can fall any distance regardless of height or duration of fall without taking damage. Additionally, the caster is immune to any related hazards, such as thin atmosphere, intense cold, or even high temperatures generated by re-entry into an atmosphere from a vacuum.

Scare

Level: 2 Range: 30' or more Duration: 1 round or longer Casting Time: 1 round Save: Will save vs. spell check DC

This spell causes its victim to experience abject terror, potentially fleeing the scene or cowering in fright. The spell does not affect automatons, golems, mindless un-dead (such as zombies or skeletons), and other creatures that do not feel fear.

Spell Results

1: Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11: Lost. Failure.

12-13: Failure, but spell is not lost.

14-15: The caster can target one creature within 30' and line of sight. That creature receives a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates it experiences a moment of fright. It immediately flees the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts only one round; on the round following the failed save, the creature recovers its wits.

16-19: The caster can target one creature within 30' and line of sight. That creature receives a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates it experiences a moment of fright. It immediately flees the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 1d4+1 rounds.

20-21: The caster can target two creatures within 60' and line of sight. Those creatures receive a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates they experience a moment of fright. They immediately flee the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 1d6+1 rounds.

22-25: The caster can frighten three enemies within 60'. They receive a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates they experience a moment of fright. They immediately flee the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 1d6+1 rounds.

26-29: The caster can frighten all enemies within 60'. Creatures of 1 HD or less are automatically frightened; others receive a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates they experience a moment of fright. They immediately flee the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 1d6+1 rounds.

30-31: The caster can frighten all enemies within 60'. Creatures of 2 HD or less are automatically frightened; others receive a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates they experience a moment of fright. The fright is so painful they take 1d4 points of damage (potentially dropping dead from fear!), and then immediately flee the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 2d6+1 rounds.

32-33: The caster can frighten all enemies within 90'. Creatures of 2 HD or less are automatically frightened; others receive a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates they experience a moment of fright. The fright is so painful they take 1d8 points of damage (potentially dropping dead from fear!), and then immediately flee the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 3d6+1 rounds.

34+: The caster can frighten all enemies within 120'. Creatures of 3 HD or less are automatically frightened; others receive a Will save to resist the effect. Failure indicates they experience a moment of fright. The fright is so painful they take 2d8 points of damage (potentially dropping dead from fear!), and then immediately flee the area at maximum speed. The scare lasts 3d6+1 rounds.

Level: 3 Range: Self or touch Duration: 1 turn or more Casting Time: 1 round Save: N/A

The caster grants flying ability to himself or another creature. The speed and duration vary according to the check result. The speed is halved when ascending and doubled when in a vertical dive. Heavily encumbered creatures fly at half the given speed. Maneuverability is generally good, equivalent to a large bird (such as an eagle or hawk). The duration is always rolled in secret by the judge, and the subject does not know when his flight will end until he falls to the ground.

Spell Results

1: Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11: Lost. Failure.

12-15: Failure, but spell is not lost.

16-17: The target flies at a speed of 30'. The flying ability lasts for 1 turn.

18-21: The target flies at a speed of 60'. The flying ability lasts for 1d6+1 turns.

22-23: The target flies at a speed of 90'. The flying ability lasts for 1d6+4 hours.

24-26: The caster can grant flight to up to two man-sized creatures (himself plus one other, or two others) or one creature twice the size of a man (such as an ogre). He must be touching the targets. The caster flies at 90' while others fly at 60'. The spell's duration is 1d6+8 hours.

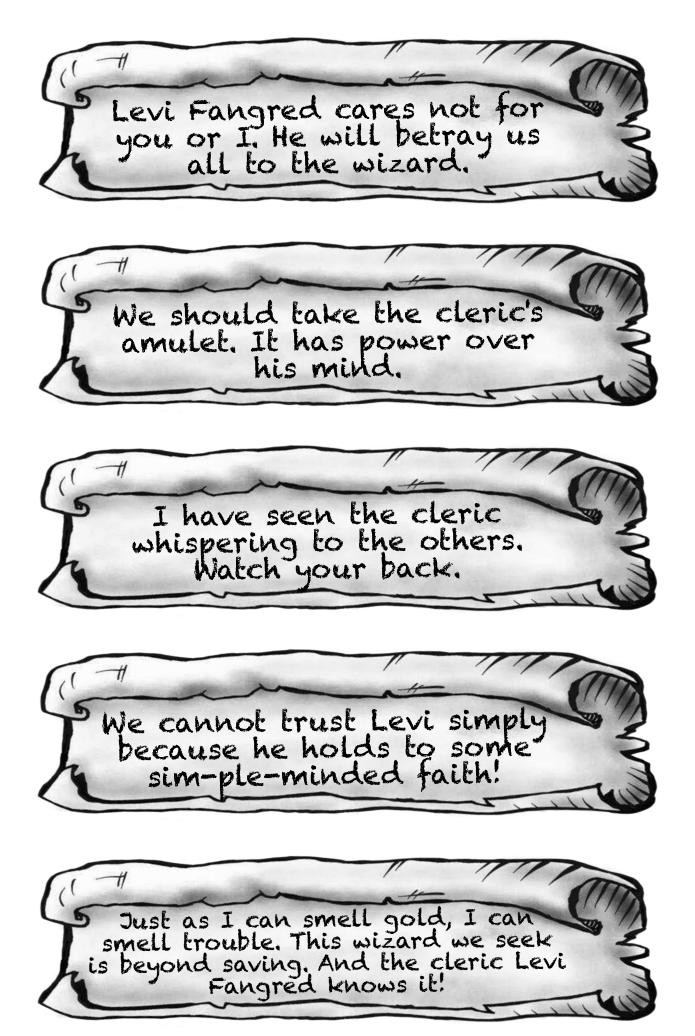
27-31: The caster can grant flight to up to four man-sized creatures (himself plus three others, or four others) or one creature up to four times the size of a man (such as a giant). The targets must be within 10' of the caster. The caster flies at 90' while other creatures fly at 30'. The spell's duration is one day. The flying creatures can each carry up to twice a normal man's load.

32-33: The caster draws a magic circle on the ground, and all creatures within that circle are granted flight. For each round spent drawing, the caster can render a circle up to 10' in diameter. For example, if he spends 4 rounds drawing a magic circle, it will be 40' in diameter. The magic circle can be a maximum of 100' in diameter, and the spell is cast at the end of the round the caster finishes drawing it; e.g., if he spends 6 rounds drawing a 60'-diameter magic circle, the spell is cast on the end of the sixth round. All creatures within the circle, including the caster, are granted flight regardless of their size (e.g., even giants are granted flight if they are within the circle). The flight speed is 90' for the caster and 60' for all others. The duration is one day. The flying creatures can each carry up to twice a normal man's load.

34-35: The caster raises his arms and grants flight to an entire army! All creatures within 300' of the caster, up to giant-sized, are granted flight. Their speed is 30' and they may fly for 1d4+1 turns. The caster himself can fly at 90' for one day, and any creatures he directly touches can fly at 60' for one day. (Typically, a maximum of 8 human-sized creatures can crowd around the caster and touch him during the casting.) All flying creatures can each carry up to twice a normal man's load.

36+: At this extraordinary level of casting, the caster can grant flight to geographical objects. Castles, mountains, towns, and lakes can be sent into the air. Additionally, when cast on a human target (including the caster), the spell can be rendered permanent. When targeting geographic objects or large groups of people, the caster can effectively grant flight in a manner that would normally be called "miraculous." The target can fly at a speed of 20' (for a mountain), 30' (for a giant), 60' (for a man-sized creature), and 90' (for the caster), for durations of up to a day. The caster can lift hundreds or even thousands of targets into the air at once or send them into the air in the city or castle they occupy. If aimed at a single target, a casting of this power level grants flight ability of great duration. The caster must expend a minimum of 1 point of spellburn. The duration starts at 1 week for 1 point of spellburn, and increases with every subsequent expenditure as follows: $2 = a \mod 4$. $3 = six \mod 4$, 4 = a = 3, 5 = five years, 6 = a = a = 3, 7 = twenty = 3, 8 = forty = 3, 9 = sixty = 3, and 10 = permanent





The Frost Fang Expedition Printable Maps and Adventure Images



