



A DISH BEST SERVED COLD

Stagwick's long-standing peace with giant-kind is threatened as a patrol of Blood Riders spark a feud with a local tribe of giants. With word of strange activity coming from the Ice Spires, Good King Hartwick can't be too careful. Can you quench the giants' thirst for revenge?

A Two-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *A Dish Best Served Cold*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, Part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Storm King's Thunder* storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th through 10th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 8th-level characters**.

The adventure begins outside Stagwick and takes adventurers to the Cold Woods; a forest on the far side of the Ice Spire Mountains.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself 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.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number (if they have one). In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time or see the need to do so, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that 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 cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's 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. Alternatively, 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.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used exclusively for combat encounters. These adjustments are not required, nor are you bound to the suggestions made by the adventure—they are recommendations provided for guidance and convenience.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 8th level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters.
- Divide the total by the number of characters.
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

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

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

You Are Empowered. You get to make decisions about how the group interacts with the NPCs and environment within this adventure. It is okay to make considerable changes or engage in improvisation, so long as you maintain the original spirit of what's written.

Challenge Your Players. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience level of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Mind the Time. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. The Dungeon Master's Guide has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp
<i>Resurrection</i> *	3,000 gp
<i>True Resurrection</i> *	50,000 gp

*These spells require an additional expenditure of downtime days (150 for *resurrection* and 350 for *true resurrection*). This cost can be reduced by 50 days for each faction rank above 1 that the character possesses. This downtime is spent in community service for the church that provided the spell in question. The Acolyte Background feature does NOT reduce the gp or downtime cost for either of these spells.

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Acolytes can call upon spellcasting services in and around the three towns as follows:

Parnast (Tier 1). Mielikki

Stagwick (Tier 2). Chauntea

Beregost (Tier 3). Lathander, Waukeen

DEATH AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DEATH

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead*

spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Blood Riders haven't killed a giant in centuries. Cathica Lygia wants that to change. The group's second-in-command yearns for war.

The bloodthirsty woman led a group of the Blood Rider's most zealous into the Ice Spires and knowingly invaded the territory of the Gorik Vater frost giants. These rogue riders abducted Burleigh Thurfirst, a young frost giant, and returned to their main camp in the Cold Woods with their captive.

Cathica and her crew told the rest of the Blood Riders they were on a routine patrol in the Cold Woods when Burleigh and other giants attacked them, breaking the unspoken peace between the frost giants and the people of Hartsvale. In an effort to bring all of the Blood Riders on her side, Cathica called for Scarn Mikel, the leader of the riders, to execute Burleigh as a show of strength to the region's giant tribes. Other riders want to keep Burleigh alive as a bargaining chip should the giants attack them in full force. Scarn struggles to decide the frost giant's fate.

Meanwhile, Scövja Thurfirst, Burleigh's mother, is desperate to find her son. She knows he was taken by a group of riders from Hartsvale, but fears going out to find him herself could ignite a war. Scövja approached Wum Burdun, leader of Hartsvale's Frontier Scouts for aid. The scoutmaster knows many will die in Hartsvale if Burleigh is not returned to Gorik Vater and puts out the call for help to the characters.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure is divided into four parts.

Part 1. The characters answer the summons of Scoutmaster Wum Burdun outside Stagwick, a small village in Hartsvale. He introduces Scövja Thurfurst. The giant shares her son's predicament. Wum hires the characters to convince (or force) the Blood Riders to release Burleigh. The characters have a choice between taking slower, safer path, or a hazardous shortcut to get to the scene of Burleigh's abduction.

Part 2. At the scene of Burleigh's abduction, the characters investigate the area and find the Blood Riders's trail.

Part 3. On the trail of the Blood Riders in the Cold Woods, the characters experience a random encounter near an enchanted river that could aid them in their quest to save Burleigh.

Part 4. The adventurers arrive at the Blood Rider camp. If the characters cannot convince Scarn Mikel to let the frost giant go, they must find another way to free Burleigh or kill Scarn. If Scarn agrees to let Burleigh go, Cathica and her band of zealots ambush the characters on their way back to Stagwick.

UNEXPECTED MAGIC

Spells like *Speak with Dead*, *Detect Thoughts*, and *Scrying* could give the players easier access to clues about what really happened. That's great! Reward good ideas like these with direction information about the adventure's background. In the end, the characters still need to find a way to free Burleigh if they want to avoid war.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters begin in Stagwick. One morning they wake up at the Weary Giant Inn and find a note has been left for them. Give the players **Player Handout 1**. Each character may have received this note for different reasons. This handout leads them to the Ice Spires west of Stagwick and the beginning of Part 1.

Braggarts Get Jobs. During the characters' stay at the inn, bored locals beg them for tales of previous adventures. Have each character share a story of past heroics during introductions. Word quickly spreads that accomplished heroes are in town.

Looking for Work. Rumors of increased giant activity near Hartsvale draw money-minded and thrill-seeking adventurers to the area. Word spreads that they are looking for mercenary work.

Faction Assignment (Order of the Gauntlet or Lords' Alliance). The Blood Riders act in direct opposition of Hartsvale's crown, but King Hartwick lacks the resources to deal with the problem. The

Order of the Gauntlet and the Lords' Alliance send characters aid to Hartsvale so that order can be restored and war can be avoided.

Faction Assignment (Zhentarim). The Zhentarim have slowly been making inroads with King Hartwick to establish greater influence in Hartsvale. The Blood Riders could cause a war and threaten the crown's authority in the process, which would be bad for business. Zhentarim characters are sent to aid the Frontier Scouts and receive an additional assignment. If any characters are members of the Zhentarim faction, give them **Player Handout 2**.

COLD WEATHER CLOTHING

Before heading out to meet Wum, the characters can buy supplies in Stagwick. In addition to the normal items for sale in the *Player's Handbook*, inform the characters that cold weather outfits are available for 4 gp each (twice the cost of normal traveler's clothing).

PART 1. A MOTHER'S PLEA

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

The adventure begins at the edge of the Ice Spires west of Stagwick.

TO PREVENT A WAR

Read or paraphrase:

The wind tears your face, howling in cold defiance of early autumn. Before you, snow-blasted mountains rise high into gray sky. A dusting of flakes that fell last night covers the ground. Against the mountainous backdrop of the Ice Spires stands a hulking figure with red hair and a shaggy beard whipping wildly. Wum Burdun raises a hand to signal hello.

As you near, the leader of Hartsvale's Frontier Scouts cries over the wind, "Thank you for joining us!"

Glances to either side reveal no one other than the scoutmaster before you. The unkempt firbolg whistles long and loud three times.

Boom! A tremendous rumble followed by snow and rock tumbling down the spires signals the approach of something massive. Wum holds up his hand, indicating there is no need to be alarmed. Boom! Boom! Boom! More rumbles as an enormous woman comes into view, climbing down from the mountains. She is nearly four times the height of a human! Blue skin covers her corded muscles. Stiff braids hold her white hair still in the winds. There can be no doubt. Before you is a mighty frost giant!

Wum nods to the woman and turns back to you. "Meet Scövja Thurfurst. You're going to save her son."

Scövja Thurfurst, a **frost giant** of the Görík Väter tribe, is heartbroken at the abduction of her son and only living family, Burleigh. She shares her story with the characters:

- Three days ago Burleigh and Scövja were hunting in the Ice Spires near the Cold Woods. Görík Väter's territory ends at the border of the Ice Spires and the Cold Woods.
- When Scövja returned to their camp, she found the scene of a battle. Human and horse corpses lay in the area, cut in half by her son's ax. The tracks of the horses headed off toward the Cold Woods, dragging something big behind them.
- Scövja's first instinct was to go after the riders who took her son, but better sense prevailed. She knew doing so would threaten the peace between the frost giants and people of Hartsvale.

- If Scövja brings her son's disappearance to the attention of the Jarl of Görík Vater, it will end no doubt in death for many giants and people of Hartsvale. She took matters into her own hands and sought out Wum Burdun who has promised to help find Burleigh.
- Scövja is giving the Frontier Scouts five days to find and return Burleigh before she tells her Jarl what happened to her son. The consequences of her doing so are war and death in Hartsvale.

ROLEPLAYING SCÖVJA THURFURST

Scövja is a great warrior and hunter devastated by the loss of Burleigh. The frustration of not knowing his fate weighs on her every moment. Her determination to see him returned keeps her from hysterics. With time running out for Burleigh, she is direct in her requests and honest in her promises.

Quote: "I put the desire for peace above my son's life - for five days. That's generous."

When Scövja finishes her tale, emotion overcomes her. Wum Burdun offers the giantess a moment of privacy and pulls the characters aside. He gives them the following information:

- He knows the Blood Riders, an order of giant-hating, self-appointed border guards that operate out of the Cold Woods. Wum is certain they took Burleigh.
- King Hartwick does not approve of the Blood Riders. Any violence against the giants in the region would break the truce and spell doom for Hartsvale. The riders have yet to kill any giants, but they refuse to disband.
- The Blood Riders keep their camp mobile.
- Wum asks the characters to find the Blood Riders and convince them to free Burleigh, if the young giant still lives, that is. If the riders cannot be convinced, Burleigh must be freed by any means necessary.
- If Burleigh is dead, then the characters should kill Scarn Mikel, leader of the riders. Bringing his head to the Jarl of Görík Vater may be the only way to avoid outright war at that point.
- The characters are the best choice for this mission. Unlike the untested Frontier Scouts, the adventurers have experience in battle and travel beyond Hartsvale.
- Avoiding war with the giants is King Hartwick's top priority. He offers a reward of 1,000 gp to the characters if they successfully complete this assignment.

ROLEPLAYING WUM BURDUN

Hartsvale's scoutmaster seldom ventures into Stagwick; he prefers the valleys and forests of the Vale to the chairs and tables of the Inn. As such, Wum Burdun is unaccustomed to strangers and typically avoids engaging in conversation. When he does speak, Wum does so brusquely and without tact. In his domain, his words are orders; not requests.

Quote: "I've nothin' else to say, Outvaler."

With all the information in hand, the characters are free to continue talking with Scövja and Wum. The scoutmaster can tell them everything outlined in the "Blood Riders" sidebar.

If they want more details about what happened the day Burleigh was abducted, Scövja tells the characters she was hunting an abominable yeti to use its hide for a new cloak. The giants separated to find the beast, agreeing to meet back at the camp. Neither of them found the monster.

If the characters try to convince Scövja to give them more time to complete the quest, she does not budge on the deadline.

BLOOD RIDERS

If asked, Wum Burdun can give the characters more information about the Blood Riders:

- The Blood Riders are an ancient order of giant-killers originating in Hartsvale. They have formed anew in response to the increase in giant activity throughout the Sword Coast region.
- The Frontier Scouts and Blood Riders don't get along, since the riders now operate in opposition to the king. The complacent scouts are ill prepared to take on or even find the vigorously trained giant-killers.
- Scarn Mikel, a one-armed, one-eyed human male and veteran soldier, leads the Blood Riders. His hatred for all giantkind is infamous in Hartsvale. Twenty years ago, Scarn's entire family was killed by goblins in the attack that claimed his eye and arm. He suspects these goblins were pawns of a rogue giant tribe.

GETTING TO THE ABANDONED CAMP

Read or paraphrase:

Hartsvale's scoutmaster grunts over the wind, "If you're going to find the Blood Riders, your best option is to follow the path they made through the woods after taking Burleigh. That means getting back to the place where he was abducted. You have two options. Cut through the Ice Spires, shorter and more dangerous, or go around the spires, which will take more time."

"If you go through the Ice Spires, I can guide you to our camp," Scövja says. "If you go around the Spires, following them west then north and you will find our camp. Even with me guiding you, the Ice Spires are hazardous. They are colder than any autumn weather in Hartsvale."

Wum stares hard at you. "The choice is yours. Be quick. And don't forget to search the scene of the abduction for clues about what happened."

OPTION 1. THROUGH THE ICE SPIRES

If the characters choose to go through the Ice Spires, they must travel at a normal or fast pace to make it to the Cold Woods in time to free Burleigh. Thanks to Scövja traveling most of the way with them, the monsters that call the mountains home stay away. Scövja leaves the characters once the abandoned camp is in sight because of the sorrow it brings her and because no trace of her presence should be found in the event that negotiations with the Blood Riders turns to violence.

The 100-mile journey is arduous and freezing for the adventurers. Just as in Hartsvale, the weather in the Ice Spires is unseasonably cold. Tough climbs, biting winds, and bitter temperatures are all part of this option. When the characters reach the abandoned camp, each must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. Characters who fail this saving throw by 5 or more suffer two levels of exhaustion. These levels of exhaustion can only be removed by taking a long rest in a warm, dry environment. Characters wearing clothing appropriate to extreme cold weather or those who are otherwise resistant to cold damage make this check with advantage. The characters who take this path have disadvantage on this saving throw if they traveled at a fast pace.

Normal Pace. Characters who travel at a normal pace have 12 hours to find the Blood Riders and can take only a short rest and still meet Scövja's deadline.

Fast Pace. Traveling at a fast pace means the characters reach the camp with a day and a half to find the Blood Riders. They can take a long or a short rest at any point before finding the Blood Riders and still make Scövja's deadline.

Ranger. If one of the characters has the arctic of mountain Favored Terrain of arctic or mountains, the rest of the characters make the Constitution saving throw with advantage when they reach the abandoned camp.

OPTION 2. AROUND THE ICE SPIRES

If the characters choose to go around the spires, the journey is longer, but easier. The weather is still bad, but more tolerable as they travel south of the mountains and no dangerous creatures get in their way.

To make the 140-mile journey to the abandoned camp with enough time left to look for the Blood Riders, the characters must travel at a fast pace. When the characters reach the abandoned camp, each must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. Characters who fail this saving throw by 5 or more suffer two levels of exhaustion. These levels of exhaustion can only be removed by taking a long rest in a warm, dry environment. Characters wearing clothing appropriate to extreme cold weather or those who are otherwise resistant to cold damage make this check with advantage.

Even at a fast pace the characters have no time for a rest of any kind before finding the Blood Riders if they choose this option.

OPTION 3. ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL

The characters may have some faster method of travel such as the *teleport* spell. If they can speed up the journey to the abandoned camp in some way, allow them to do so.

MAKING THE CONSEQUENCES CLEAR

Feel free to spell out the mechanics of the choices to the players if you think it will help them make a decision. Option 1 means more time for a rest, but a greater possibility of exhaustion. Option 2 means less risk of exhaustion, but also no time to rest on the way to the Blood Rider camp.

PART 2. ABANDONED CAMP

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

The characters make their way to the abandoned camp where Burleigh was captured by the Blood Riders. The young frost giant clearly didn't go down without a fight.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

GENERAL FEATURES

The following general features pertain to the abandoned camp:

Light. The sun or moon fills the area with bright light depending on the time of day.

Smells and Sounds. The wind screams relentlessly carrying the faint smell of decaying bodies.

Walking into this wrecked giant camp makes you suddenly understand how mice must feel. Charred tree trunks covered in snow sit at the center of the camp, the remains of Scövja and Burleigh's campfire. Next to an enormous snowdrift, a single tent pole the size of an old oak holds up half of a torn tent canvas.

Despite the enormity of the camp, the bodies are easily found. Two corpses in ring mail, each cleaved in half by some enormous blade, lie next to the fire pit. A decapitated horse lies on the other side of the pit, its rump covered in snow. The corpses are frosted with ice and snow—and frozen solid.

Leading west out of the camp you can see the tree line of the Cold Woods and an easily followed swath of destruction. Even with the fresh coat of snow, you can tell a large group of people dragged something enormous out of the camp and into the forest.

If the characters take the time to investigate the abandoned camp, they can find clues about what happened here and ultimately use that evidence in their argument when they speak to Scarn Mikel in Part 4.

Corpses. Characters who search the human corpses find both wearing ruined ring mail and spurs. Each corpse has a brand on their right arm—the giant rune for “death”. Blood riders that have killed a giant wear the brand on their sword arm.

One of the corpses is that of a tan-skinned human woman with raven-colored hair. This is Valejek



Nörswath, a patrol captain in the Blood Riders. Cathica Lygia knew she would need more than one squad to capture a giant. She chose Valejek as an accomplice since they were of similar mind about the giants.

Valejek wears a wood-carved insignia around her neck. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals the insignia indicates a sort of military rank (characters with the soldier background automatically know this).

A character investigating her remains that succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden pocket inside of her shirt that conceals a crudely drawn map of the surrounding area (**Player Handout 3**), a letter to Valejek from Cathica, and a *potion of healing*.

The map has an X marking the area of the abandoned camp where the characters currently are (easily discernable). The words “Valejek's Route” and “Cathica's Route,” are written in one set of handwriting (belonging to Scarn Mikel) and the words “MEET HERE” are written in another set (that of Cathica herself). Scarn creates the maps depicting patrol routes and then relies on Cathica to give them to the patrol captains.

Cathica wrote the letter (**Player Handout 4**) to Valejek when she gave her the map.

Signet Ring. If the characters search around the wrecked tent, they find Burleigh's enormous axe buried in the snow. While they cannot wield so large an axe, a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a severed human index finger with a signet ring frozen to the blade. The ring bears the Lygia family name and crest. Cathica lost the finger to Burleigh's axe during the battle.

Tracks. With the snow falling so quickly in the area, and the chaos of the recent battle, it can be difficult to tell exactly what happened here. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check made by a character looking for tracks determines that two giants were staying in this camp, though only one did battle with more than ten humanoids on horseback. The giant who fought came to the camp from deeper Gorik Vater territory to the east. The riders came from the Cold Woods to the west.

XP AWARDS

If the characters find the map, letter, and signet ring, award each 100 XP.

TREASURE

Valejek Nörswath's corpse holds *potion of healing*.

PART 3. DARKWATER RUN

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

After the characters investigate the abandoned camp, they have a clear path through the Cold Woods to the Blood Riders. Along the way a small river, Darkwater Run, crosses their path.

TIME CRUNCH

The interaction scenes in this adventure make it difficult to judge how much time a particular group of players spend on any one aspect of the adventure. If you're short on time when the characters arrive at Darkwater Run, consider using a weaker combat encounter (using the Adjusting the Encounters sidebars) in this section to speed up play.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following general features pertain to the Darkwater Run:

Terrain. Two inches of snow cover the ground.

Climate and Weather. While the Cold Woods are true to their name, the area is not as freezing as the Ice Spires. Snowfall here is light and wind is mild.

Light. The sun or moon fills the area with bright light.

Sounds. The babbling of Darkwater Run fills the air and possibly the sounds of a random encounter.

Water. Thanks to a pixie colony that lives near the mouth of the river, Darkwater Run is infused with pixie dust—causing the water to sparkle in unusual ways. Creatures who touch the water in the 5-foot-deep river are subject to a random effect, determined by rolling on the Darkwater Run Effects table below.

Darkwater Run Effects

d4 Effect

- 1 You become invisible until the end of your next turn. This effect ends if you attack or cast a spell.
- 2 You gain a fly speed of 30 feet until the end of your next turn.
- 3 You must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious until you take damage, someone uses an action to shake you awake, or the end of your next turn (whichever comes first.)
- 4 Make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. If you fail, you are transformed into a random challenge rating 0 beast of the DM's choice per the *polymorph* spell. This effect last until the end of your next turn.

Read or paraphrase:

Lighter snowfall and calmer winds ease your mind as you follow the Blood Rider's trail through the Cold Woods. Trampled grass, broken trees, and flattened ground indicate Burleigh was not treated well after the battle, likely dragged for miles through the forest.

After a few hours of following this destruction, you can hear a pleasant bubbling ahead. A river of dark, glittering water 10-feet across lies directly in your path.

BODY IN THE RIVER

The body of Eligos Tognög, an eighteen-year-old male Blood Rider, is at the bottom of the river. The nigh-opaque waters make his form hard to spot. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the body, otherwise the characters may be clued to its presence by creatures encountered here (see Random Encounters, below). The corpse is armored and thoroughly waterlogged, so a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check made as an action is required to pull it from the river. Elios has the tell-tale Blood Rider brand on his right arm. He was killed by being stabbed through the heart—a precise wound made by a human-sized weapon.

Elios had second thoughts about Cathica Lygia's plan on the way back to camp. He argued that they should let Burleigh go and threatened to tell Scarn Mikel what really happened if she didn't comply. Cathica stabbed Eligos—killing him—and threw his body in the river as an example to those who might betray her.

Treasure. Around the neck of the body is a gold amulet encrusted with small moonstones and emblazoned with the initials "E.T." worth 200 gp.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Once the characters reach Darkwater Run, a random encounter occurs. Roll or choose the table below to determine what creatures the characters encounter near Darkwater Run. All of the creatures in these encounters know about the effects of the river and use it to their advantage in combat.

Darkwater Random Encounters

d4 Encounter

- 1 Treant Vengeance
- 2 Hag Coven
- 3 Ettin Love
- 4 Orc Ambush

1. TREANT VENGEANCE

Read or paraphrase:

Amid the swath of destruction, two ancient pine trees remain untouched on the opposite bank of the river.

Bramblebush and Oakheart, two **treants**, wait for the characters to come to the opposite shore of the river before they reveal themselves by attacking. The creatures are furious at the recent damage inflicted upon the Cold Woods by the Blood Riders' capture of Burleigh. Not only did the riders create a path of destruction through the forest, they cut down ancient trees close to awakening to cage the giant once they returned to their camp. The treants can't take the giant-killers all on at once, so they wait for smaller groups of them to pass by and attack.

Bramblebush and Oakheart have very few interactions with humanoids that aren't Blood Riders or orcs. They assume the characters are Blood Riders and scream about vengeance for the destruction of the forest as they attack. A successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check made as an action convinces the treants the characters are not Blood Riders. Otherwise the treants fight until one of them falls and then the other flees.

Development. If the characters convince Bramblebush and Oakheart they are not Blood Riders, the ancient plants apologize and explain the confusion. The treants know about the body in the river. Nearby trees saw the argument between Cathica and Eligos, the subsequent murder, and the woman bury the dagger she used in the woods nearby. The trees told the treants, who can point out the burial spot of the dagger and explain the argument to the characters. The hilt of the dagger bears the Lygia family crest and name, just like Cathica's signet ring.

XP Awards. Award each character 100 XP if they are able to recover Eligos Tognög's body.

Treasure. Eligos Tognög's body wears a gold amulet on worth 200 gp.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one **treant**.
- **Weak party:** The **treants** can't use their Awaken Trees ability
- **Strong or very strong party:** The **treants** have 162 hit points

2. HAG COVEN

Read or paraphrase:

On the opposite side of the shore, three beautiful women with pale skin and red hair are bundled in fur parkas. They hunch over the ground, picking up sticks for firewood. One woman is in her early forties, while the other two, the spitting image of the first, are in their twenties.

Mother Rotmouth and her twin daughters, Fetid Gertrude and Darla the Rancid, are a coven of **green hags** pretending to be Elena Artwitch and her daughters Gertrude and Darla. The trio recently captured a **pixie**, Sari Brightleaf, from whom they plan to harvest pixie dust. The hags were bringing their prize home when they heard the characters about to cross their paths and activated their Illusionary Appearances. They plan to trick the characters, kill them, and harvest their organs for spell components, experiments, food, and most importantly—fun.

The hags attempt to look innocent and playful. They ask the characters for help carrying firewood. Their hope: get the adventurers in a tight group so they can cast their best spells at one time to maximum effect. The hags flee when one of them dies and their coven is broken.

Sari's tiny bone cage is hidden behind a tree just off the trail. It can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the characters defeat the hags, the pixie calls out to them, asking for freedom. Her cage is latched from the outside.

Development. The grateful Sari asks the characters what they were doing in the Cold Woods. If they mention the Blood Riders, she tells them that there is a dead member of the group in Darkwater Run. She saw Cathica argue with and murder Eligos then watched the woman bury the dagger she used in the woods nearby. Sari can bring the characters to the burial spot and explain the nature of the argument. The hilt of the dagger bears the Lygia family crest and name, just like Cathica's signet ring.

XP Awards. Award each character 100 XP if they are able to recover Eligos Tognög's body.

Treasure. Eligos Tognög's body wears a gold amulet on worth 200 gp.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** The **green hags** are not a coven
- **Weak party:** Only one **green hag** (Rotmouth) has the coven ability
- **Strong party:** Add a pet **winter wolf**
- **Very strong party:** Add a pet **young remorhaz**

3. ETTIN LOVE

Read or paraphrase:

A loud ruckus draws your attention as a grotesque, two-headed being 10-feet tall and naked except for a loin cloth crashes through the woods. "Help Groganbosh!" one head cries. "Stop the ladies and Groganbosh help you!" the other head bellows as he cowers behind a tree.

Just then four more stinky two-headed giants crash through the woods. All are clearly female. They stare for a moment and then one declares, "Whoever kill the most little folk gets Groganbosh!"

These four female **ettins** are chasing a male, Groganbosh, who hides while the characters fight. Normally solitary creatures, female ettins subdue males in a show of dominance when they choose a mate. Even so, four females fighting over one male is a unique sight.

Groganbosh is young and has yet to mate. After being passed over for years, he told every ettin he came across in the Cold Woods that he was blessed by Demogorgon to sire a demonic champion. The lie spread and now he has multiple females chasing him. The inexperienced Groganbosh is terrified.

A female ettin flees when reduced to 40 hit points.

Development. If the characters intervene and take on the female ettins, Groganbosh is grateful. Grogan, his more humorous head, and Bosh, his more serious head, speak with the characters to discover how he can repay them. If the characters mention the Blood Riders, he is agitated. Groganbosh knows the giant-killers well since they practice giant slaying techniques on ettins. He knows there is a dead rider at the bottom of Darkwater Run and is willing to fish out the body for the characters, despite the water's danger, since they risked their life for him.

While Groganbosh hid in the woods during the fight, his curling toes dug into the ground and found a well-made, bloodstained dagger with the Lygia family crest and name on the hilt, just like Cathica's signet ring. He offers this to the characters as well as a show of appreciation.

XP Awards. Award each character 100 XP if they are able to recover Eligos Tognög's body.

Treasure. Eligos Tognög's body wears a gold amulet on worth 200 gp.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one **ettin**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **ettin**
- **Strong party:** Increase the hit points of each **ettin** to 100
- **Very strong party:** Add one **ettin**

4. ORC AMBUSH

Darkwater Run is a popular ambush spot for the Longnail orcs. This tribe grows their fingernails particularly long, filing them to points. An **orc war chief**, an **orc eye of Gruumsh**, and six **orogs** wait in the bushes off to the side of the trail the characters follow. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the orcs before they are able to ambush the characters

When the characters pass, or if they spot the orcs, the monsters attack. They fight until four of their band fall and the rest flee.

Development. If the characters corner an orc, the creature does anything to save its life. First the creature offers its gear and if that doesn't work, the next offer is a dagger with the Lygia family crest and name on the hilt, just like Cathica's signet ring. The orcs were watching this spot for ambush victims when the Blood Riders came through. They saw Eligos argue with Cathica, the subsequent murder, and watched the woman bury the weapon in the woods. The Longnails didn't attack the Blood Riders since they had just clearly bested a frost giant, but they recovered the dagger and can explain the argument and murder.

XP Awards. Award each character 100 XP if they are able to recover Eligos Tognög's body.

Treasure. Eligos Tognög's body wears a gold amulet on worth 200 gp.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove the **orc eye of Gruumsh**
- **Weak party:** Remove one **orog**
- **Strong party:** Add one **orog**
- **Very strong party:** Add one **orc war chief** and one **orogs**

PART 4. BLOOD RIDER CAMP

Expected Duration: 45 minutes

After Darkwater Run the characters find the Blood Rider's camp in a large clearing and see Burleigh is still alive... for now!

GENERAL FEATURES

The following general features pertain to the Blood Rider's camp:

Terrain. Two inches of snow cover the ground.

Climate and Weather. Snowfall here is light and the wind is mild.

Light. The sun or moon fills the area with bright light and campfires provide more light.

Smells and Sounds. Small fires roast rabbits, pheasants, and other small game. The delicious scents intermingle with the smell of manure. The Blood Riders talk with one another in low voices as they go about their chores.

Surrounding Activity. The Blood Riders cook, care for horses, train for battle, and maintain their weapons and armor.

The Blood Riders' path of destruction opens into a huge clearing. An odd mixture of manure and meat creeps into the back of your nose. A dozen men and women armed to the teeth walk about the camp, sparring, sharpening, cooking, and caring for their many horses. Eight open-air tents sit in a circle at the center of the clearing.

Behind the tents is a 20-foot-high cage of thick logs. Inside sits a bruised and gagged frost giant. You can feel his trembling rage across the clearing as if it were a small earthquake.

When the characters enter the camp, read or paraphrase:

"Who enters this camp?" A one-eyed, one-armed human approaches you, his longsword drawn but not raised. Beside him is a strikingly beautiful woman, despite the fact that the right side of her face appears to have been badly burned long ago. Her left hand is bandaged. The other members of the camp take note, grab weapons, and walk up behind their leaders to greet you.

Scarn Mikel, the one-eyed man, one-armed man, and Cathica Lygia, the burned woman, are both **Blood Rider captains**. Cathica Lygia wears a *cloak of displacement* (described in **Player Handout 5**). The ten other people in the camp are **Blood Riders**. At

least two riders are actively patrolling the camp on horseback making Wisdom (Perception) checks at any given time. More Blood Riders exist, but they are out on patrol elsewhere in the Cold Woods. There are also a dozen **warhorses** in the camp. The **frost giant** in the cage is Burleigh Thurfurst.

The Blood Riders do not attack the characters without being attacked at first. The situation can escalate as outlined in *Convincing Scarn*. If battle does break out, the zealous riders fight until death.

All the Blood Riders have the group's signature brand on their right arms.

Cage. The strong cage holding Burleigh Thurfurst is a 20-foot on a side and just as tall. A character can climb the cage with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

Burleigh is chained to the back bars of cage with two locked chains. The cage's door is held shut with a single locked chain. Each chain can be unlocked with a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Each chain has an AC 19 and 27 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

If released from his cage by the characters, Burleigh stays and fights with them or flees as directed. He does not have his greataxe, but he can find rocks to throw and his unarmed attack deals 13 (3d4 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Campfires. A creature that starts its turn in or enters a campfire takes 2 (1d4) fire damage.

DEVELOPMENT

At this point the characters have three options. They can fight the Blood Riders outright (a deadly encounter), try to use stealth to free the giant, or talk with Scarn and try to convince the Blood Rider to free Burleigh.

ROLEPLAYING SCARN MIKEL

Scarn hates giants, but he is also a pragmatist. The only reason he hasn't killed Burleigh yet is because he might be able to use the giant as a bargaining chip to save his riders someday. The leader of the Blood Riders is tough, blunt, and speaks only when his mind is made up. He lets Cathica handle most of the talking.

Quote: "I won't rest until the Vale has been rid of the giant bastards for good. And I won't rest well until the firbolgs are gone with 'em."

CONVINCING SCARN

If the characters tell Scarn Mikel they have come to negotiate the release of Burleigh, the leader of the Blood Riders is willing to talk, but insists that his

number two, Cathica Lygia, be by his side during these negotiations. Scarn mentions he was not at the battle with Burleigh and that Cathica led the riders.

The Blood Rider leader has not considered releasing Burleigh, but he hasn't killed the giant. Scarn is currently saving Burleigh as a bargaining chip should Gorik Vater attack again. Meanwhile, Cathica has been trying to convince Scarn to kill the frost giant as a sign of strength and intimidation to Gorik Vater.

In order for the characters to convince Scarn to free Burleigh, they must make a series of contest ability checks against Cathica as outlined below. Keep track of each success in Cathica's favor and each success in the adventurers' favor. If the characters present evidence to support their arguments (such as the map and note found in the abandoned camp, Cathica's signet ring, the body of Eligos Tognög, or the dagger used to kill him), they gain advantage on the check they make when presenting the evidence.

Ability checks can be made in the following ways. If the players come up with other arguments to convince Scarn, run the opposed check with Cathica on the fly, using the examples below as a guideline.

- **Appeal for Peace.** A character points out that killing Burleigh will ignite a war with Gorik Vater and possibly other giant tribes in the region while Cathica argues the giants already declared war by attacking first. The character makes a Charisma (Persuasion) check opposed by Cathica's Charisma (Deception) check.
- **Expose a Murder.** A character argues Cathica can't be trusted because she murdered Eligos Tognög while she insists Burleigh killed Eligos during the battle. The character makes a Charisma (Persuasion) check opposed by Cathica's Charisma (Deception) check.
- **Expose the Plan.** A character argues Scövja and Burleigh were in Gorik Vater territory when the Blood Rider's attacked them while Cathica insists the giants started the attack in the Cold Woods. The character makes a Charisma (Persuasion) check opposed by Cathica's Charisma (Deception) check.
- **Personal Appeal.** A character argues that igniting a war with the giants could mean more people lose their families the way Scarn lost his while Cathica argues the giants are already attacking and the only defense left is striking back. The character and Cathica make opposed Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

- **Threaten.** A character threatens Scarn with violence if he does not comply while Cathica argues the Blood Riders could easily win that fight. The character makes a Charisma (Intimidation) check opposed by Cathica's Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Characters with low Charisma scores can still participate in the negotiation. They can use other abilities like Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) to grant advantage to the next character who makes a Charisma ability check (or in place of a Charisma ability check if you think their justification makes sense). Characters can also take the Aid action during negotiations to grant advantage to other characters.

ROLEPLAYING CATHICA LYGIA

Cathica Lygia covets a war with the giants. She's willing to lie and murder to make that happen. Her father was a member of the Frontier Scouts who was crushed by an errant boulder when he got too close to some frost giants playing a game. The scouts believed the death was an accident, but Cathica has never accepted the truth.

In her mind, Scarn Mikel must be the one who gives the order to kill Burleigh, since it will unite the riders in their war against the giants. She is cunning, cold, and has no love for the characters trying to free Burleigh.

Quote: "I'll burn the whole world to the ground if it means every last creature with a drop of giant blood fries with us."

DEVELOPMENT

Once Cathica or the characters achieve three successes, look at the results.

- **If Cathica wins and the characters have no successes,** Scarn becomes enraged. He orders Burleigh killed immediately while the characters are in the camp to teach them a lesson about what should happen to giants. Characters can only stop Burleigh's death with combat if this happens.
- **If Cathica wins and the characters have at least one success,** Scarn will not free Burleigh, but he doesn't order the giant killed either. It's now up to the characters if they want to attack the Blood Riders or find another way to free the giant.
- **If the characters win and Cathica has no successes,** Scarn frees Burleigh and bans Cathica and the riders who aided her behind his back from ever working with the group again.
- **If the characters win and Cathica has at least one success,** Scarn frees Burleigh, but Cathica and the rest of the riders who worked with her to capture the frost giant are allowed to remain

members, since Scarn isn't sure the allegations against her are true.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove four **Blood Riders** and **warhorses**
- **Weak party:** Remove two **Blood Riders** and **warhorses**
- **Strong party:** Add one **Blood Rider** and **warhorse**
- **Very strong party:** Add two **Blood Riders** and **warhorses**

THE ROAD TO STAGWICK

After dealing with the Blood Riders the characters can head home.

Burleigh is Freed. Before he runs off toward the Ice Spires, the frost giant gives the characters a blue tourmaline that managed to keep hidden from the Blood Riders (see Treasure, below).

Burleigh is Slain. The characters can find a blue tourmaline sewn inside his shirt with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check (see Treasure, below).

Cathica Lygia is Slain. The characters are free to return to Stagwick unmolested, and take the longer, safer way back to town around the Ice Spires.

Cathica Lygia Lives. The **Blood Rider captain** and six **blood riders** loyal to her mount their seven **warhorses**. When the characters reach Darkwater Run, the riders arrive and attack as vengeance for the adventurers ruining their plans. The riders fight until death.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **Blood Riders** and **warhorses**
- **Weak party:** Remove one **Blood Rider** and **warhorse**
- **Strong party:** Add one **Blood Rider** and **warhorse**
- **Very strong party:** Add two **Blood Riders** and **warhorses**

XP AWARDS

Award each character 400 XP if they convince Scarn to free Burleigh.

TREASURE

Burleigh gives the characters a blue tourmaline worth 200 gp if freed (or they can find it on his body). Cathica Lygia wears a *cloak of displacement* and carries a *potion of frost giant strength* that she keeps in case she must fight a giant alone.

CONCLUSION

If the characters return to Stagwick and Burleigh Thurfurst is dead or still imprisoned and they don't have Scarn Mikel's head, Wum Burdun thanks them for trying. The scoutmaster asks them to stick around Hartsvale, since the region now needs all the help it can get.

If the characters managed to peacefully free Burleigh, besides being paid for their efforts, they actually improve relations between the Blood Riders and the Frontier Scouts.

If they did not save Burleigh but brought back the head of Scarn Mikel, then they have prevented out right war with the giants. However, tensions between the remaining Blood Riders and the Frontier Scouts remain high.

TREASURE

The characters receive 1,000 gp from Wum Burdun if they free Burleigh Thurfurst or return with the head of Scarn Mikel.

REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Blood Rider	450
Blood Rider Captain	700
Ettin	1,100
Frost Giant	3,900
Green Hag	700
Green Hag (coven)	1,800
Orc Eye of Gruumsh	450
Orc War Chief	1,100
Orog	450
Pixie	50
Treant	5,000
Warhorse	100
Winter Wolf	700
Young Remorhaz	1,800

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Find map, note, and ring (Part 2)	100
Recover Eligos' body (Part 3)	100
Scarn frees Burleigh (Part 4)	400

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **2,250 experience** points.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **3,000 experience** points.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name/Location	GP Value
Gold Necklace (Part 3)	200
Blue Tourmaline (Part 4)	200
Gold Reward (Conclusion)	1,000

PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

CLOAK OF DISPLACEMENT

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This cloak is made of the pelt of a smooth, black-furred creature. A bone toggle fastens the cloak around its wearer's neck. Close examination of the gold-embroidered hem reveals a poem that reads (in Common): "Six men in pain; six men rent. Blood, it falls like rain; broken bodies bent. Six men plead; and six men cry; Tearing arm and leg, six men die." A description of this item can be found in **Player Handout 5**.

POTION OF FROST GIANT STRENGTH

Potion, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

A description of this item can be found in the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RENOWN

Each character receives **one point of renown**.

Zhentarim characters receive an extra **one point of renown** if they retrieve a sample of water from Darkwater Run and observe the effect the water has on at least one creature.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **10 downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

STORY AWARDS

Characters have the opportunity to earn the following story awards during this adventure.

Adventurer? More Like Bad-venturer! If Burleigh dies or is not freed within the time frame provided by Scövja, word spreads that the same adventurers who were telling tales of their heroic deeds at the Weary Giant Inn failed at some simple task and have put the region in danger. As long as you possess this story award, you have disadvantage on Charisma (Intimidation) and (Persuasion) checks made to influence any citizen of Hartsvale.

Frontier Friend. If the characters free Burleigh by convincing Scarn Mikel to let him go peacefully, the Blood Riders gain a new respect for the Frontier Scouts. As a result, the riders stop bullying the scouts and they stay out of one another's way. As long as you possess this story award, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) and (Persuasion) checks made to influence any member of the Frontier Scouts.

Scarn Slayer. Characters who kill Scarn Mikel have their names whispered on the lips of every citizen in Hartsvale. As long as you possess this story award, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks made to influence any citizen of Hartsvale, but any Blood Riders you come across immediately treat you as hostile.

STORY AWARD UPDATE

If a character possesses the A Giant Challenge story award from DDAL05-03 *Uninvited Guests* and helped to successfully free Burleigh in this adventure, the freed giant counts as a friend for the purposes of the story award.

DM REWARDS

For running this adventure, you **receive 750 XP, 375 gp, and ten downtime days.**

DM APPENDIX. NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs appear or are mentioned in this adventure.

Wum Burdun (WOOM burr-DOON). Male firbolg. Burdun is the son of Tavis Burdun— once a member of the Frontier Scouts, owner of the Weary Giant Inn, and before his death, the ruler of Hartsvale. Tavis hoped that Burden would assume the Alabaster Throne upon his death, but Wum would have none of it. Wum is aware of the increase in giant activity in the area, and he is worried.

Scövja Thurfurst (scove-YUH THUR-first). Female frost giant. Scövja is an accomplished warrior and hunter of the Gorik Vater tribe. She desires no trouble with the people of Hartsvale, but will do anything for her son Burleigh.

Burleigh Thurfurst (burr-LEE THUR-first). Male frost giant. The son of Scövja, Burleigh is also a great hunter and warrior. While angry with the Blood Riders, his main desire is to return home.

Scarn Mikel (SKARN MICK-uhl). Male human. Scarn's entire family was slain by a band of goblins a score of years ago. Scarn lost an arm and an eye in the attack, but survived. Since then, a hatred for giants—and those that associate them—burns white-hot in his heart. He leads the small, but growing number of Blood Riders.

Cathica Lygia (CATH-eh-CUH, LIE-gee-UH). Female human. Cathica's been taught to hate giants from the time she was a little girl. This hate was learned from and fostered by her family and a community of neighbors that feared the creatures. Her face is badly scarred from a barn fire she barely survived as a teen.

APPENDIX. NPC/MONSTER STATISTICS

BLOOD RIDER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (ring mail and shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Animal Handling +3, Athletics +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Mounted Defense. While mounted, the rider can force an attack that targets its mount to target the rider instead.

Mounted Evasion. While mounted, if the rider's mount is subject to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Blood Rider makes two attacks.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage. This attack is made disadvantage against targets within 5 feet and must be used with two hands if the Blood Rider is not mounted.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

BLOOD RIDER CAPTAIN CHANGES

Note the following adjustments for the **Blood Rider captains**:

- Skarn can't wear a shield; reduce his AC is 17.
- Cathica wears a *cloak of displacement*

BLOOD RIDER CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 19 (splint, shield)

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +4

Skills Animal Handling +3, Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Persuasion +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Mounted Defense. While mounted, the rider can force an attack that targets its mount to target the rider instead.

Mounted Evasion. While mounted, if the rider's mount is subject to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes two attacks.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage. This attack is made disadvantage against targets within 5 feet and must be used with two hands if the captain is not mounted.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the captain can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the captain. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the captain is incapacitated.

ETTIN

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Giant, Orc

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Two Heads. The ettin has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Wakeful. When one of the ettin's heads is asleep, its other head is awake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ettin makes two attacks: one with its battleaxe and one with its morningstar.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	21 (+5)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +3, Cha +4

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Giant

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

FROST GIANT

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor)

GREEN HAG

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The hag can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

Mimicry. The hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Illusory Appearance. The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies.

The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.

Invisible Passage. The hag magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.

HAG COVENS

When hags must work together, they form covens, in spite of their selfish natures. A coven is made up of hags of any type, all of whom are equals within the group. However, each of the hags continues to desire more personal power.

A coven consists of three hags so that any arguments between two hags can be settled by the third. If more than three hags ever come together, as might happen if two covens come into Conflict, the result is usually chaos.

Shared Spellcasting. While all three members of a hag coven are within 30 feet of one another, they can each cast the following spells from the wizard's spell list but must share the spell slots among themselves:

- 1st level (4 slots): *identify*, *ray of sickness*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *locate object*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *counterspell*, *lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *phantasmal killer*, *polymorph*
- 5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane*, *scrying*
- 6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*

For casting these spells, each hag is a 12th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability. The spell save DC is 12+the hag's Intelligence modifier, and the spell attack bonus is 4+the hag's Intelligence modifier.

Hag Eye. A hag coven can craft a magic item called a hag eye, which is made from a real eye coated in varnish and often fitted to a pendant or other wearable item. The hag eye is usually entrusted to a minion for safekeeping and transport. A hag in the coven can take an action to see what the hag eye sees if the hag eye is on the same plane of existence. A hag eye has AC 10, 1 hit point, and darkvision with a radius of 60 feet. If it is destroyed, each coven member takes 3d10 psychic damage and is blinded for 24 hours.

A hag coven can have only one hag eye at a time, and creating a new one requires all three members of the coven to perform a ritual. The ritual takes 1 hour, and the hags can't perform it while blinded. During the ritual, if the hags take any action other than performing the ritual, they must start over.

ORC EYE OF GRUMSH

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (ring mail, shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +3, Religion +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Groomsh's Fury. The orc deals an extra 4 (1d8) damage when it hits with a weapon attack (included in the attack).

Spellcasting. The orc is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The orc has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at-will): *guidance, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, command*

2nd level (2 slots): *augury, spiritual weapon* (spear)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d6 + 3 plus 1d8) piercing damage, or 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

ORC WAR CHIEF

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6, Wis +2

Skills Intimidation +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Groomsh's Fury. The orc deals an extra 4 (1d8) damage when it hits with a weapon attack (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orc makes two attacks with its greataxe or spear.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d12 + 4 plus 1d8) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6 + 4 plus 1d8) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Battle Cry (1/Day). Each creature of the orc's choice that is within 30 feet of it, can hear it, and not already affected by Battle Cry gain advantage on attack rolls until the start of the orc's next turn. The orc can then make one attack as a bonus action.

OROG

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 42 (5d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +5, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orog can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orog makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

PIXIE

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (–4)	20 (+5)	8 (–1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Sylvan

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

Innate Spellcasting. The pixie's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only its pixie dust as a component:

At will: *druidcraft*

1/day each: *confusion, dancing lights, detect evil and good, detect thoughts, dispel magic, entangle, fly, phantasmal force, polymorph, sleep*

ACTIONS

Superior Invisibility. The pixie magically turns invisible until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the pixie wears or carries is invisible with it.

TREANT

Huge plant, chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (–1)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

False Appearance. While the treant remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Siege Monster. The treant deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The treant makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Animate Trees (1/Day). The treant magically animates one or two trees it can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the same statistics as a treant, except they have Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Slam action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of the treant. The tree remains animate for 1 day or until it dies; until the treant dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until the treant takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The tree then takes root if possible.

WARHORSE

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the horse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

WARHORSES AS MOUNTS

To keep combat streamlined in this adventure the Blood Riders' warhorses take no action except on their turn except the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions while they are unmounted. While mounted, use the rules found in the Mounted Combat section of Chapter 9: "Combat" of the *Player's Handbook* and *D&D Player's Basic Rules*.

WINTER WOLF

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant, Winter Wolf

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Snow Camouflage. The wolf has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5–6). The wolf exhales a blast of freezing wind in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

Tales of your prowess precede you. You are the only folk in the region with a chance of stopping an act of war and saving a mother's son. I beg you meet me at the edge of the Ice Spires due west from Castle Hartwick. Come prepared to travel for at least 10 days and bring warm clothes. There is gold in it for you. Show this letter to none.

-Scoutmaster Wum Burdun

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

Friend,

Sounds like you are headed to the Cold Woods. If you come across any rivers with dark, glittering water get us a sample. If you have the opportunity, see what happens when someone drinks or bathes in the water. Try to get a person other than yourself to do it. We understand the water can be dangerous. We will find you in Stagwick when you return to gather your sample and report. As always, show this to no one who should not be in the know.

Thanks,

Z

PLAYER HANDOUT 4

V,

THIS IS THE PLAN. REMEMBER: NO
KILLING. WE NEED TO CONVINC
S
TO MAKE THE CALL. THAT BRINGS
EVERYONE ON OUR SIDE. THE
KILLING COMES LATER. PATIENCE.

-C

PLAYER HANDOUT 5. CLOAK OF DISPLACEMENT

CLOAK OF DISPLACEMENT

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

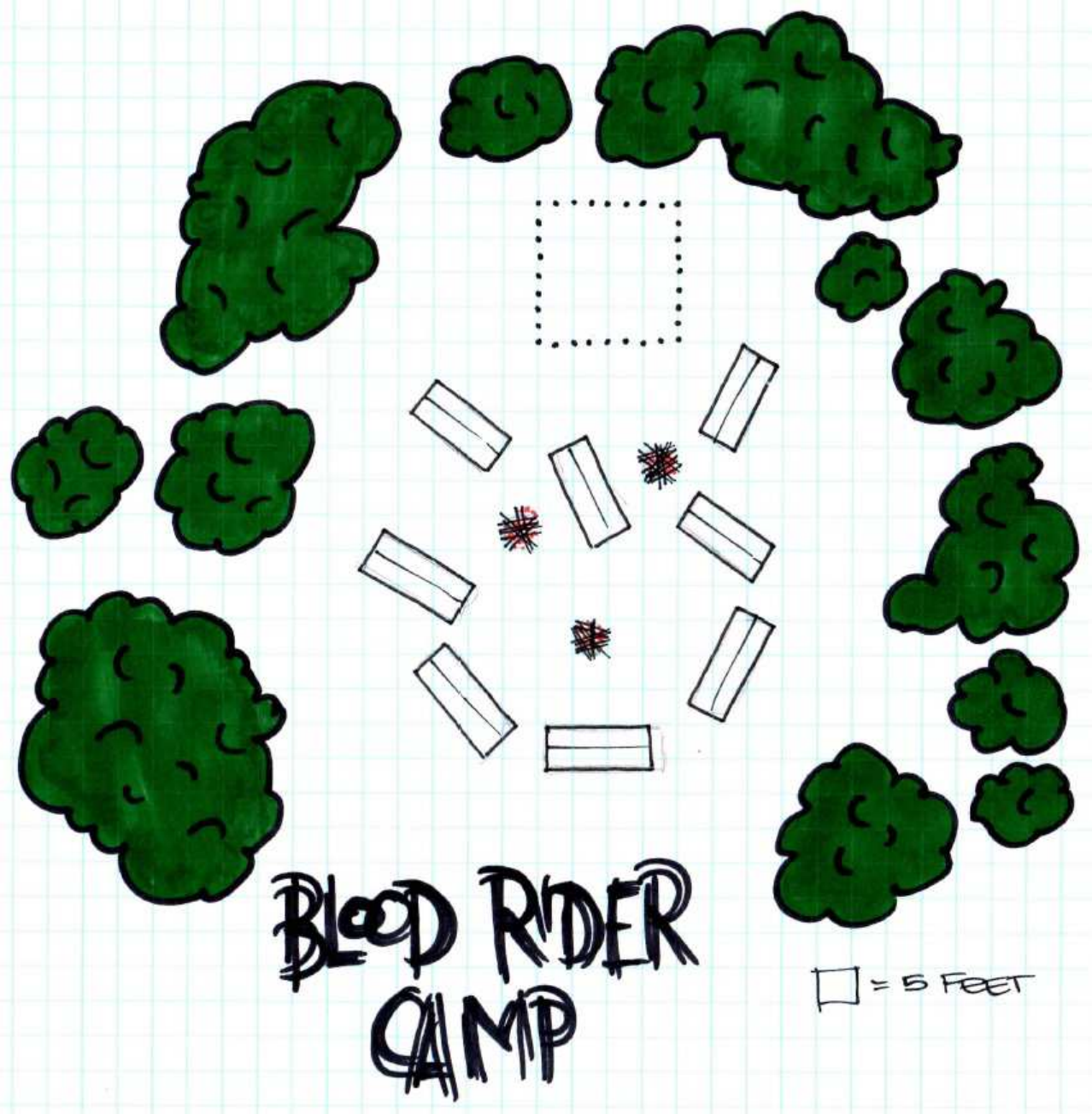
While you wear this cloak, it projects an illusion that makes you appear to be standing in a place near your actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls against you. If you take damage, the property ceases to function until the start of your next turn. This property is suppressed while you are incapacitated, restrained, or otherwise unable to move. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This cloak is made of the pelt of a smooth, black-furred creature. A bone toggle fastens the cloak around its wearer's neck. Close examination of the gold-embroidered hem reveals a poem that reads (in Common): *"Six men in pain; six men rent. Blood, it falls like rain; broken bodies bent. Six men plead; and six men cry; Tearing arm and leg, six men die."*

APPENDIX. DARKWATER RUN MAP



APPENDIX. BLOOD RIDER CAMP MAP



RESULTS CODE: OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of October - November 2016, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.

