

River Of Frozen Souls

WINTERBLIGHT'S CHALLENGE™

PRESENTS

RIVER OF FROZEN SOULS

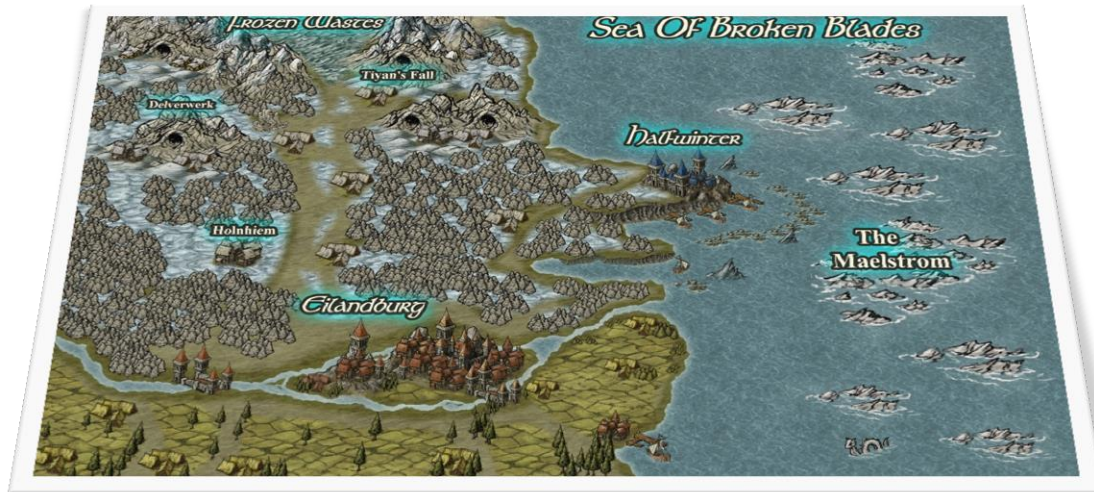
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Eilandburg

RIVER OF FROZEN SOULS
WRITTEN BY ALLEN FARR

WBCAM 03

IN THE FROZEN NORTH – THIS WINTER COULD BE YOUR LAST



The River Of Frozen Souls has shattered. As the remnants of this once mighty frozen fortress drifts south on the **Sea Of Broken Blades**, it carries with it the **Anvil of Ice**, a powerful artefact capable of bringing eternal winter to the world. Will this winter be your last?

The River Of Frozen Souls is a generic adventure set in the frozen north that can be used in almost any fantasy setting. This product includes the following:

- Adventure Background
- Plot Synopsis
- Three Chapters Detailing The Adventure
- Travel hazards And Encounter Tables
- 17 Dungeon Location Maps
- Dungeon Creation Rules
- Dungeon Dressing Tables



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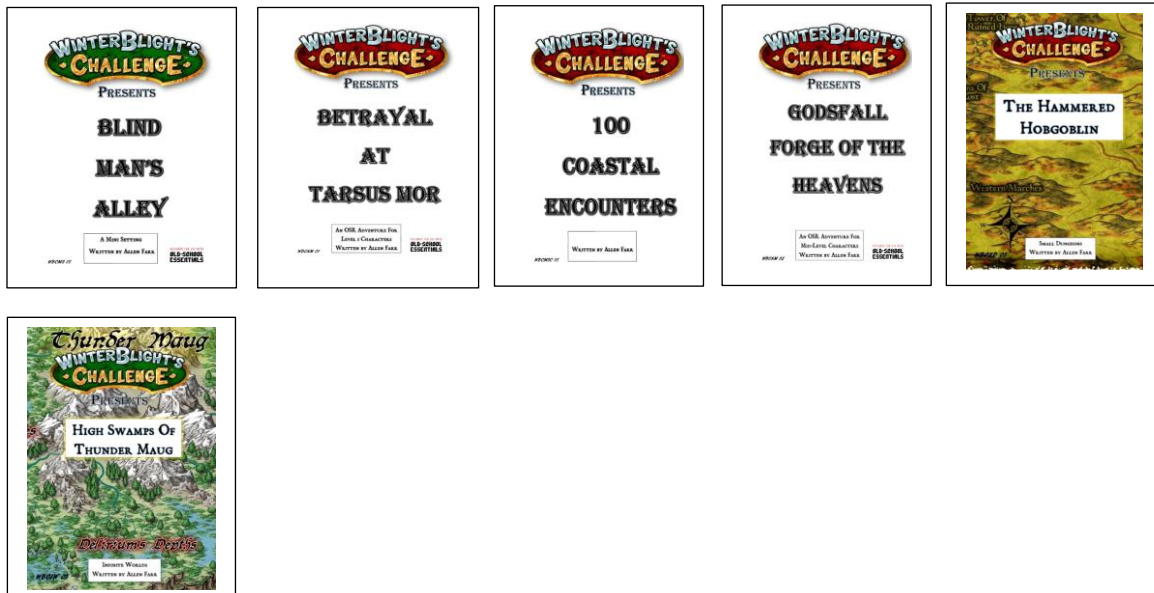
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RIVER OF FROZEN SOULS

I've got myself one of those bad feelings. I say that every year, but this year is different. My gut is telling me this winter will be our last.

*~ Guard Sargent
Eberhard Holzfaller~*

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE...

This section explains the structure of the adventure and what various game terms mean. This book uses the following terms: Game's Master (The person running the game), NPC (Non-Playing Character), PC (Player Character).

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND~ This section describes the people, places, and events that are responsible for the situation in which the PCs find themselves caught up.

PLOT SYNOPSIS~ This section describes the current situation and how the adventure plot evolves.

Each main encounter has the following subsections:

OVERVIEW~ This section gives a brief overview of the main encounter, which itself may consist of one or more smaller encounters.

SETUP~ This section contains any opening text to be read aloud to the players to set

the overall scene and if appropriate foreshadow later events.

ENCOUNTER THEMES~ This section describes any background themes the Game's Master should convey to the players as they run the encounter.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER~ This section provides Game's Master information required to run each encounter including background information and any text to be read aloud to the players.

SMOOTHING THE ROAD~ This section gives advice to the Game's Master about any potential pitfalls the encounter may present and suggests ways of avoiding or dealing with them.

At the end of the adventure, there are the following subsections:

LEGACY~ This section gives hints and tips on how to tie up any loose ends for the overall adventure and suggests some possible consequences for the characters' decisions and actions. Finally, this section gives the Game's Master hints and tips on how to use any fallout from the adventure to create further adventures.

APPENDIX~ The appendix has two subsections.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE~ Contains player handouts and maps if appropriate. These are props that can be copied/printed for use during the game and given to the players to enhance the story. Alternatively, these props can be described or read verbatim by the Game's Master.

ARCANUM~ This section provides details on major magical items, spells and new creatures.

ADVENTURE

BACKGROUND...

Far to the north in the Frozen Wastes, war rages eternal. Standing against the warped creatures that follow dark gods, is Hilivos Frostfang, a frost giant of unusual wisdom. The dark gods would see perpetual winter spread across the world, but despite his heritage, Hilivos understands that a world covered entirely in ice would be the end, even for his kind.

Blessed with strategic foresight, Hilivos recently delivered a blow to his enemies that have left them reeling. In desperation, they launched a counteroffensive, a diversion to disguise a strike on Frostfang's fortress located deep within the River of Frozen Souls, an ancient glacier that stretched far into the Sea of Broken Blades.

Although it cost them dearly, the raid on Frostfang's fortress was, for the most part, a success. Rather than capturing the fortress, however, the followers of the dark gods inadvertently shattered the glacier. Now breaking up, the River of Frozen Souls is migrating south on the ocean currents, carrying with it the remains of Frostfang's fortress. The remains of this ancient fortress not only carries a cargo of ancient and dangerous treasures but is now home to many of the warped creatures whose floating prison the fortress has become.

For those who live in the warmer climes to the south, they see little distinction between the frost giants and the myriad of other creatures that spew from the north each year to pillage and plunder. They fail to understand that it is Frostfang and his marauders that stand as a bulwark against the twisted creatures of the frozen wastes that would seek to destroy them.

Situated on a rocky crag, overlooking the Sea of Broken Blades is the town of Halfwinter. Once nothing more than an isolated watchtower, Halfwinter is now a bustling fishing port and a smuggler haven. Perilously close to the Frozen

Wastes, the people of Halfwinter are used to the annual incursions from the north, but this year is different.

PLOT SYNOPSIS...

Caught in one of the coldest winters in living memory, the residents of Halfwinter huddle in their homes, bracing for the annual incursion and praying to their gods that the walls of their cliff-top town are enough to see off any threat.

Trapped by the sudden onslaught of winter, the Rime Syndicate, a notoriously violent group of smugglers, has been forced to overwinter for the first time in the town, something that has not gone down well with the other syndicates.

After a series of mysterious thefts, and the brutal killing of Jonas Endlemann, the leader of the Rime Syndicate's greatest rival, the Silent Dirge, tensions soon overspill into a series of confrontations on the town's streets.

Unknown to all, the real threat lurks not in the tundra beyond the walls or the growing tension among the smuggling syndicates, but from the Sea of Broken Blades at their backs, from which there is little defence.

What no one realises is that the ice flow contains the shattered remains of Frostfang's fortress, massive icebergs, each one a floating dungeon filled with half-mad, starving creatures of the wastes that became trapped when it shattered into the Sea of Broken Blades. Jonas Endlemann died not at the hands of the Rime Syndicate, but by razor-sharp claws of a creature from the shattered fortress. The player characters enter the adventure in the town of Eilandburg where they are hired as town guards and given the responsibility of leading a wagon train of goods to Halfwinter. Arriving in the town just as a ferocious storm sets in, the player characters discover that not only are they trapped in the town, but they are the only thing resembling law and order.

WINTER BITES...

~**Overview**~ The adventure opens with the player characters arriving in the town of Eilandburg where they are hired as members of the town guard to escort a wagon train to the northern town of Halfwinter.

What the player characters don't know is that Guard Sergeant, Eberhard Holzfaller has a bad feeling, and instead of sending his men north, he's sending the player characters instead.

~**Setup**~ Read this to the player characters when they approach the town of Eilandburg:

"The town of Eilandburg lies before you, the first dusting of winter snow offering a picturesque façade that belies its reputation as a place of ill repute. Built on a rocky island that splits the river in two, Eilandburg rises above the surrounding land, offering a commanding view of the countryside."

~**Encounter Themes**~ Not only is winter a theme that runs throughout this adventure, but autumn has also been cut short. Winter has shown its hand early. The normally mild winds from the south bite instead from the north. Small villages lie abandoned, frozen as if preserved, their populations migrating south along with birds normally associated with the north. These themes foreshadow that the focus of the adventure is in the north.

~**Running The Encounter**~

EILANDBURG

The frontier town of Eilandburg has a well-deserved reputation as a tough place to live. The winters are harsh, and it's not unknown for the town to be cut off as marauders from the north pillage their way south until the winter snows recede, an annual event known as the Incursion. Eilandburg itself is rarely in direct danger, the deep, fast-flowing river enough to deter even the most savage foes from attempting a crossing and scaling the town's walls. The outlying villages, on the

other hand, fare less well and are often abandoned for shelter inside the town or elsewhere.

The wealth of Eilandburg is not dependant on the outlying villages, but on mining operations to the north during the summer months, and hefty grants provided by the rulers of the land to provide support to the north's farthest outpost, the town of Halfwinter. Eilandburg, however, is a place riddled with corruption, and each year less and less money filters down through the system to provide supplies and protection for Halfwinter.

For the last ten years, Guard Sergeant Eberhard Holzfaller has overwintered in Halfwinter with a contingent of Eilandburg's guard. Each year the bonus they get paid becomes less and less, something Holzfaller makes up for by reducing the contingent's size each year. This year the first snows are early, and Holzfaller has a bad feeling. It's a gut feeling he can't quite put his finger on, but he knows this winter is going to be as bitter as they come. Unsurprisingly, Holzfaller has little interest in traveling to Halfwinter with his ever diminishing contingent of guards and instead decides to send others in his stead.

Anyone passing through Eilandburg's gates that looks like they can handle themselves is brought to Holzfaller's attention. When the player characters arrive, Holzfaller realises they are exactly what he is looking for and puts his plan into action.

Holzfaller wants the player characters to think that he is impressed with their abilities. To that end, he strikes a deal with Bardel and Musker, two of the largest thugs currently in the town's dungeon, and offers them a deal – their freedom for working over the player characters. Before the confrontation gets far, Holzfaller intends to show up, giving the thugs a chance to escape, on the condition that they leave the town and never return.

Regardless of how the player characters handled themselves, Holzfaller appears impressed by their ability and offers them a well-paid job in the town guard.

The Job Offer

Holzfaller describes the job as tough but well paid. The player characters only have to sign up for a few months, to begin with. Not only does Holzfaller offer the player characters what appears to be a better than average wage with bonuses, but he also offers to fully equip them, provide lodgings, and even provide training.

Everything is legitimate up to a point, but what Holzfaller never lets the player characters know is that to be a qualified guardsman, each contract needs to be approved and stamped by the judiciary, something Holzfaller doesn't bother with as it takes too long and the corrupt officials always charge an extortionate fee. He wants to get the player characters out on the streets for a few days, before putting them on the road to Halfwinter.

The player characters have little time to rest. As soon as they agree to join up, they are taken to be measured up for their new uniforms, armour and weapons. Holzfaller spares no expense. He wants the player characters to feel they are valued. Once they have been measured up, the player characters are taken to the guard's training ground where Holzfaller himself puts them through their paces to ensure they at least know the basics.

Tailored To Fit

The player characters have access to something others rarely do, bespoke clothing, arms and armour. Exactly what weaponry is available should be the Game's Master's call depending on setting constraints. If the rules of the system don't already offer bonuses for fine quality made to measure equipment, the Game's Master should consider doing so, the player characters may need it later.

Eberhard Holzfaller

Holzfaller isn't exactly corrupt, he just has to be inventive to keep doing his job effectively, and of course, not get himself

killed. Close to retirement, Holzfaller has no intention of traveling to Halfwinter. Holzfaller might be getting old, but he travelled the world as a mercenary before settling in Eilandburg and despite knowing one end of a blade from the other, he knows his luck can only last so long.

On The Job

As soon as the player characters have their uniforms and have had a little training, they are taken out to patrol the streets of Eilandburg. Holzfaller intends to put their skills to good use until the mission to Halfwinter is announced, but at the same time, he doesn't want them to get killed, for finding replacements could prove difficult. It is for that reason they are accompanied by a veteran guardsman to show them the ropes.

The main focus of the adventure is on Halfwinter, but there is still some adventure and danger to be had in Eilandburg, should it be required. The below list suggests some events that might occur while the player characters are on patrol.

City Encounters

1. A young man flees from the candle maker's shop screaming for help, a swarm of angry bees pursuing him. Inside the shop is an ornate candle, its bright flame producing a heavy smoke that's coalescing into another swarm of bees or perhaps something worse.
2. A group of performers bursts enthusiastically from a row of barrels as the player characters pass, and begin their routine. After a few moments, they stop, confused looks on their face. Not only do they not speak the local language, but they have no idea where they are.
3. While on night shift the player characters are called to a tavern. The tavern keeper has awoken in the middle of the night to discover

several guests missing from their rooms. In the kitchen, the floor has collapsed revealing a set of dank stairs descending into the darkness. The innkeeper pleads with the player characters to investigate.

4. Rounding the corner, the player characters discover a burglar jammed tight in the window frame of a house.
5. A distraught woman begs the player characters for help. A ship is sailing out of the harbour and her son has stowed away on it.
6. A group of children challenges the player characters to a snowball fight.
7. A letter is delivered to the player characters by mistake and it contains something damning about someone important. The player characters may choose to do something about the information they hold, or worse, the sender might realise the mistake and try to retrieve it.
8. A dog runs through the street with an old bone in its mouth. In its wake is a mob of priests and acolytes. They claim the dog has run off with the last known bone of their god when she last walked the world several hundred years ago. The poor mutt has been sentenced to death.
9. It's been snowing heavily for days. As the player characters make their way up a steep incline, they see a giant snowball balanced precariously at the top of the street. Behind it, a dozen or more small children are using a large plank as a lever.
10. The merchant's guild has had a number of its members murdered and the player characters are asked to investigate. All the murders have

taken place in the Fortune's Favour, an exclusive members club, where the very rich can mingle, do business and relax in opulence. The murderer is not a person but a very expensive armchair, upholstered in very rare material. Prior to the murders, there was a séance, something the members regularly indulge in. This time, however, they have unintentionally summoned a demon who has possessed the armchair. The armchair is a favourite for those who like to read into the small hours of the night.

Once the player characters have been pounding the streets of Eilandburg for a few days, Holzfaller announces that they are to be sent to Halfwinter to bolster the garrison. He tells them to prepare for a week-long journey. They won't be on their own, however, for Holzfaller has several recruits lined up for the mission.

The mission to Halfwinter appears to be a big deal. There are ten large fully laden wagons, each with a civilian driver. In addition, there is a wainwright and a cook drawn from the ranks of the guard and four other guardsmen. This is of course way short of the numbers that normally travel to Halfwinter, but the player characters or the other guardsmen don't know that.

Holzfaller gives a small speech before the wagon train leaves Eilandburg. He tells everyone that they should not underestimate the importance of their mission and it is a guard tradition that harks back for over a century. At the last possible moment, Holzfaller asks the player characters to choose one among their number to be in command. It's only a temporary promotion and ends as soon as they arrive in Halfwinter and command handed over to Sergeant Astrid Stolz, who has overall command of Halfwinter's garrison.

~Smoothing The Road~ Winter Bites is a straightforward scenario were the player characters seemingly come to the

attention of the town guard and are offered a job.

The most likely thing that might go wrong is that the player characters don't want to join the town guard.

Holzfaller has some room to negotiate and can offer the player characters some other incentives for joining the guard. If this fails, the Game's Master needs a different way to entice the player characters north.

Perhaps they agree to sign on as civilian caravan guards. This means they have little authority, but it doesn't stop them from participating in the adventure. Alternatively, they hear rumours of strange events from refugees from Halfwinter and decide to check it out for themselves. Another angle is that they might discover an iceberg washed up, with something interesting frozen in it that leads them north.

THE COASTAL PATH...

~Overview~ The Coastal Path describes the short but dangerous journey to Halfwinter along the coast.

~Setup~ Shortly after the journey begins, read the following.

The morning sun rises above the Sea of Broken Blades, its light transforming it into a blaze of orange and yellow. The sun's caress is enough to begin a thaw, but any thaw is unlikely to last, for ahead the sky has a foreboding look.

Later, as the player characters are well into their journey, read the following.

As you travel north, small coves with beaches of shale and shell grow less frequent, replaced instead by rocky shores, bluffs and cliff-top crags. And soon enough the sun is hidden by murderous, snow-laden clouds.

~Encounter Themes~ The theme for this encounter is that something foreboding lies to the north. The Game's Master should describe the darkening skies and the promise of heavy snowfall.

The player characters should encounter things that suggest everything isn't right with the world. From migrating animals to abandoned nomadic camps to unusual items washed up along the shore, everything should point to the fact that something out of the ordinary has happened.

~Running The Encounter~ The first day of the journey is scenic, and the only problem the player characters are likely to face is keeping the wagons rolling along in an orderly fashion as everyone gets their bearings. On the second day, the snow begins. As was the case with Eilandburg, the Coastal Path is not the main focus of the adventure, but that's no reason not to have any.

The following encounters and events can be used not only to make the journey more exciting but can be used to foreshadow upcoming events or be used to sow the seeds for future adventures.

Coastal Encounters

1. Wooden cages lie scattered along the coast, some lie empty, shattered on the rocks, their broken debris bobbing in the sea. Others lie on the sand, the prisoners they hold, likely dead or exhausted. In a few cases, the cages have been broken open, footprints leading from them cross the sand.
2. A towering iceberg has grounded itself on the beach, its tallest peak visible from miles around. Occasionally there is a groan or ear-splitting crack as the gargantuan lump of ice settles or discards its outer layers. Through the exposed crystal blue ice there are various shapes visible. These could be artefacts or creatures from the lost fortress.
3. A ship's nameplate juts from the consuming sand, the incoming tide threatening to bury it. On closer inspection, it doesn't bear the

name of a ship, but that of one of the player characters.

4. A body wrapped in a soggy tapestry lies on the shore's edge. The body hasn't been in the water very long judging by its condition. On closer examination the player characters recognise the corpse, it's the King, right down to the signet ring, which is odd because as far as you know the King isn't missing. Is it the King, or have the player characters stumbled onto a nefarious plot using a body double or even a doppelganger?
5. What at first looks like a seaweed-covered boulder, turns out to be a crystal ball. Its surface is worn by the action of sea and sand. The crystal ball is part of a network of scrying devices used by foreign agents. The ball is damaged but every so often anyone looking at the device can see and hear things they shouldn't, such as a quick glimpse of a battle map, a private but damning conversation, or even the face of some terrible demon in surroundings the player characters recognise.
6. Scummy thick foul-smelling seafoam covers the coast for several miles inland. What has caused the foam is unknown, but at almost ten feet thick it makes navigation through it almost impossible. There are other things than lost travellers lurking in the foam and they are hungry.
7. They can be heard before they are seen. Hundreds of bottles of rum bob gently in the swell along the shore, many more lying broken on the beach, the scent of strong alcohol hanging on the breeze. Labels on the bottles suggest the liquor was bound for a foreign navy.
8. Dozens of barrels lie scattered among the rocks. The barrels are

extraordinarily well built, not one of them smashed by the jagged rocks. The barrels contain a small fortune in quality pipe tobacco but it didn't get here by accident. They were tossed overboard by smugglers knowing they would be washed into the bay where they could be collected later. The smugglers arrive to collect their booty just as the player characters discover it.

9. Floating in the tide is a wooden tankard. Carved on the bottom are the words '*Captured by pirates. Held on Ghostly Isle. Please save us. Stormshadow.*' The *Stormshadow* is a treasure ship last seen sailing from the Harbour of Perils, shipping bullion from the mines in the Hallowed Hills.
10. The frozen body of a frost giant lies among the pack ice recently washed ashore. A large scroll case in its belt contains the layout of some kind of fortress.

Wilderness Encounters

1. Tripping over a thick tuft of grass reveals a skull, a rusty helm, or perhaps the rim of a rotting shield. The uneven ground becomes much more interesting when the player characters realise they are in the middle of an ancient battlefield.
2. After passing through an abandoned village, the player characters see a sign that announces a 'Toll Bridge Ahead'. Unfortunately, the villagers can't read and write very well and it should read 'Troll Bridge Ahead'. Anyone on the bridge is on the menu.
3. A fur-clad trapper comes screaming out of the woods, clawing and beating at himself as if on fire. The trapper has set up his camp on the grounds of an ancient temple, and unfortunately, the

temple is dedicated to some evil deity. All his furs have become undead and are clawing, biting, and strangling him. In his camp are several rows of stretched furs, each trying to fight its way free. Several other freshly trapped animals are feasting on the corpse of another trapper.

4. Bounty hunters approach the player characters. They are looking for escaped prisoners from a wrecked ship and are offering a reward for any information that might lead them to their quarry.
5. Black smoke rises in the distance. Several hours later the first refugees appear and by the end of the day, there are dozens of them choking the road. Each carries a tale of woe, many begging the player characters for help.
6. A horse comes galloping toward the player characters. There is a dead body strapped to the saddle. Unless the player characters intercept the horse it continues to wherever it calls home. The horse carries saddlebags that carry important and perhaps damning information.

The closer the player characters get to Halfwinter, the harsher the weather conditions become and they find themselves struggling against swiftly dropping temperatures and blizzard conditions.

~Smoothing The Road~ The road in this encounter can be as smooth or as rough as the Game's Master desires. The real point of this encounter is that the player characters realise that the closer to the north they get, the dangerous it becomes and the further from help they are.

HALFWINTER...

~Overview~ Halfwinter is where the adventure really begins. This section describes the town and the consequences of winter's relentless grip. In addition, it details the various factions the player characters are likely to interact with and it presents a mysterious crime scene fully preserved in the freezing conditions – the clues from which should lead the player characters to realise the danger to the town lurks not within as everyone suspects but prowls the pack ice out in the Sea of Broken Blades.

~Setup~ Read this to the payer characters when they approach the town of Halfwinter:

“Just for a moment, the town of Halfwinter becomes visible. Moments later, it is obscured by the blizzard's fury. As the ferocity of the wind grows, the shifting snow transforms what little you can see into a featureless nothingness. The animals struggle to pull the wagons up the incline, and even the Sea of Broken Blades vanishes from view. Suddenly you are unsure of your next steps on the clifftop path.”

~Encounter Themes~ Halfwinter should feel like the last bastion of civilization at the end of the world for the player characters. The Game's Master should invoke a feeling of growing dread as the storm continues to rage with unnatural ferocity.

~Running The Encounter~ As the player characters and their beleaguered crew arrive at the gates of Halfwinter, a vicious storm has set in. The unusual fury and longevity of the storm is a direct consequence of the Anvil of Ice in such proximity to the town. The anvil is an ancient and powerful artefact, and without someone with the knowledge to control it, it is a danger to all.

Halfwinter is located on the eastern coast of the Sea of Broken Blades. Perched atop a clifftop crag, Halfwinter overlooks Brittle Bay, a natural harbour protected from the

sea by a reef of jagged rocks. The approach to the town from the land is precarious, the approach from the sea dangerous, making it the perfect hideaway for smugglers.

A town only by virtue of its walls, Halfwinter has a winter population of less than two hundred and fifty people, many of them elderly. In the spring the population expands with a transient population of miners and prospectors pushing north. This winter the population is a little higher, for the Rime Syndicate have been caught out by the unusually swift onslaught of winter and are now trapped in the town with their rivals.

HALFWINTER KEEP...

The town of Halfwinter is located on a large rocky crag that juts out into the Sea of Broken Blades. At the crag's highest point stands Halfwinter Keep. Cold and draughty, this forlorn fortification marks the furthest point of expansion for the lands to the south. Despite its dilapidated appearance, the keep still has an imposing presence. At the top of the keep is the old observatory, a rickety iron frame once enclosed by glass, now open to the elements. The top floor includes several guest rooms, including the quarters and office of the tower's commander, Sergeant Astrid Stolz.

The 2nd and 3rd floors contain dormitories for the rank and file guardsmen along with additional storage space, while the 1st-floor houses a guard station in the foyer, a kitchen, well and a dining hall, which doubles as an armoury.

Beneath the keep is a series of natural caverns that have been opened up to hold a small gaol and provide additional storage.

Sergeant Astrid Stolz

Astrid is a mean-looking piece of work. On eye is almost completely covered by a foggy yellow cataract and her face and arms are crisscrossed with horrendous scars that allow a glimpse into her violent past. Astrid's right foot is missing, replaced with an iron ball. Rumours

abound that the ball is the very piece of ballista ammunition that removed her foot.

Astrid is in an unusually foul mood when the player characters arrive, for not only is there an ongoing gang war in the small town, but what few guardsmen she had, have vanished. To add insult to injury, player characters have shown up instead of Eberhard Holzfaller and his usual contingent. Astrid immediately sets the player characters to work investigating the death of Jonas Endlemann in the hope that they can uncover his murderer and put an end to the killings.

THE TOWN...

Tightly packed housing divided by tight, winding alleys, Halfwinter boasts nothing that resembles a main thoroughfare. What little clear ground there is in Halfwinter surrounds the keep, an area that doubles as a training yard and town marketplace during the summer months. There are several steep and dangerous stairways and paths cut into the cliffs, giving access to Brittle Bay below, and even a few shacks built onto the face of the cliff itself. During the winter months, a number of the town's buildings are derelict, boarded up by their owners until they return the following spring.

THE WALLS OF ALDASOR...

Named after the ancient city that lies across the sea, the cliffs surrounding Halfwinter are known as the Walls of Aldasor. It is said that on the clearest of days if you look eastward across the Sea of Broken Blades, the faintest reflection from Aldasor's white walls can be seen. In addition to the many stairways and paths cut into the cliffs, there are numerous caves, many of which are submerged during high tide. At their highest point, the cliffs reach over six hundred feet in height.

At various points along the cliff edge are a series of cantilevered winch houses that grant a quick journey to Brittle Bay below. Ingenious in their construction, the winches are powered by large

counterweights which are constantly raised by the incoming and outgoing tide. The winch houses are locked up for the winter and dangerous to use without an experienced crew.

BRITTLE BAY...

This small, natural harbour huddles tight to the overhanging cliffs. Surrounded by a reef of jagged rocks, the entrance to Brittle Bay is both difficult and treacherous to navigate. At one end of the bay is a small sandy beach, much of which is covered with small upturned fishing skiffs. At the other end are a series of wharves and small warehouses. The beach and the wharf are separated by a large salient of rock jutting from the base of the cliff. It is here that most of the caves can be found.

SMUGGLERS CAVES...

The cave network is much more extensive than most are aware, and it's only the smuggling syndicates that have any real interest in them. Some of the caves go places that few would expect.

THE FACTIONS...

Halfwinter's official status is that of a border outpost, and as such, many of the finer points of the law don't stand. It is for this reason that Halfwinter has become a smuggler's haven. Indeed, much of Halfwinter's economy relies on the availability of smuggled goods. The smuggling syndicates of Halfwinter use the town's warehousing facilities, and as their goods have yet to be shipped south, they technically haven't been smuggled, yet.

There are three main syndicates in Halfwinter, and while their operations in towns such as Eilandburg often brings them into conflict with one another, it rarely spills over into animosity in Halfwinter. However, this year is different. Not only has the Rime Syndicate been caught out by the early onset of winter, but the leader of their greatest rivals has been slain, and all evidence points to them.

RIME SYNDICATE...

The Rime Syndicate is a product of the Syndicate Wars, a brutal conflict far to the south that almost destroyed the city of Ulfheim. It is said that from the ashes, the phoenix shall arise and that phoenix was the Rime Syndicate. With regards to Halfwinter, the Rime Syndicate is a relatively new arrival. Unfortunately, there is always history, and the Rime Syndicate's current leader in Halfwinter, Bastian Krug had a personal beef with the late Jonas Endlemann, leader of the Silent Dirge. Despite their violent reputation, and Krug's personal history with Endlemann, the Rime Syndicate wasn't responsible for Endlemann's death.

The Rime Syndicate has almost forty members trapped in Halfwinter, a stark increase in the three that normally remain to keep an eye on the syndicate's assets.

Bastian Krug

Appearances can be deceptive, and there are as few as deceptive as Bastian Krug. Immaculately presented and well-spoken, Bastian's persona is that of a socialite, easily passing as a member of the aristocracy. Everything about him smacks of the arrogance of the upper class, yet Bastian is gutter born and is little more than a violent thug with the smarts to appear otherwise. A master of deception, Bastian uses his skills not only to further his own goals but that of the syndicate. Unfortunately, his skill at deception is well known among his rivals, and it is for this reason that none of them believe he wasn't responsible for the murder of Jonas Endlemann.

Gretchen Blenner

Bastian's second in command, Gretchen Blenner runs the day to day operations of the syndicate in the north. Gretchen is a hardy woman that has intimate knowledge of the Sea of Broken Blades, having served her time first as a naval officer and then on the opposite side as a freebooter. With a reputation that precedes her, Gretchen has earned the respect of not only those members of her syndicate, but those of its rivals. Indeed, it is her influence that has

prevented all-out war among the syndicates.

Bardel & Musker

Unremarkable for anything other than their size, Bardel and Musker are typical of the enforcers employed by many of the syndicates. Muscle bound, with little in the way of intelligence, Bardel and Musker are the two thugs that attacked the player characters shortly after they arrived at Eilandburg.

Assuming they survived that encounter, they are now in Halfwinter. Fleeing Eilandburg, Bardel & Musker figured they would be punished for the failure that led to their arrest. Rather than returning south, they reckoned Halfwinter would give them time to gather some resources and flee across the sea in the spring. Unfortunately, they discovered too late that their boss, Bastion Krug was still in Halfwinter.

How Bardel & Musker fit into the plot is entirely up to the Game's Master. Perhaps they are now in hiding in Halfwinter, fearing for their lives should the Rime Syndicate discover them. They could become valuable allies for the player characters, possibly even alerting them to the fact that Eberhard Holzfaller has set them up. On the other hand, the Rime Syndicate may have viewed their return as an unexpected boon, for they are surrounded by enemies. It's even possible Bardel & Musker could have joined one of the other syndicates.

SILENT DIRGE...

The Rime Syndicate's greatest rivals, the Silent Dirge, have been left reeling at the death of their long-time leader Jonas Endlemann. They have already struck back at their rivals, and the only thing preventing all-out war is the harsh weather conditions and the efforts of Gretchen Blenner to negotiate a truce. Without Endlemann's leadership, the membership of the syndicate is fractured and small groups have already made plans to avenge their leader.

Jagermal Bulle

Second in command, Jagermal Bulle is struggling with the reins of power that have suddenly been thrust upon him. Not long promoted to the job, Jagermal has yet to earn the full respect of the syndicate's membership, and a few hardcore members are demanding a proper response to the murder of their former leader. Unknown to most, Jagermal was born to an upper-class family in Eilandburg and is all too aware of the consequences of a failed power struggle, for a power struggle between Eilandburg's ruling elite is the very reason his family ended up on the streets and into the clutches of the Silent Dirge.

Unusually tall and gaunt, Jagermal wears his hair with a long fringe that almost always covers his eyes. Rumour has it that he has some kind of terrible injury or even a mutation that he likes to keep hidden. Jagermal is the kind of person that easily stands out in a crowd.

THIRD TIDE...

Much smaller than the others, the Third Tide is by far the oldest of the syndicates operating out of Halfwinter. With little interests beyond Eilandburg, the Third Tide was spared being caught up in the syndicate wars. Until now they have seen little in the way of direct hostilities from the other syndicates, however, that has now changed and they have been left reeling. An ambush laid by a faction among the Silent Dirge recently killed two of their members and injured several more. The Third Tide now have their blood up, and the Silent Dirge have unintentionally created themselves another enemy, for they were expecting to ambush members of the Rime Syndicate. Both sides have been played by Bastion Krug in an attempt to take some of the heat off his crew.

Syndicate members of the Third Tide know Halfwinter and the surrounding land better than most. They know every bolt hole and they know where every other syndicate stores their contraband and holes up. They plan to use this information to get their revenge.

Naya Rotleich

An old woman by anyone's standards, Naya had been preparing to hand over leadership of the Third Tide to her second in command and move south. However, with the attack on the syndicate by the Silent Dirge, Naya has found herself suddenly invigorated, the gravity of the situation somehow casting the cold from her old bones. Knowing that any weakness displayed by the Third Tide could be their end, Naya is planning to show the Rime Syndicate and the Silent Dirge who runs Halfwinter.

However, the arrival of the player characters is an unexpected blow. One of the reasons the Third Tide can maintain such a hold over Halfwinter with such small numbers is due to Naya's special relationship with Eberhard Holzfaller. Naya knows many of Holzfaller's dirty little secrets and has a certain amount of leverage over him; just enough to have him look the other way or redirect a patrol that might uncover something damning about one of her rivals. With Holzfaller out of the picture, Naya knows the Third Tide has lost a distinct advantage.

Athren Fuchs

One of Naya's lieutenants, Athren has always been loyal to the syndicate. Yet with Naya's sudden resurgence of enthusiasm for leadership, Athren can't help feeling betrayed. Indeed, Athren has already been approached by Bastian Krug, something he has yet to mention to Naya. Athren was once a member of the guard back in Eilandburg and could be one of the few people that could figure out that the player characters, in reality, have no legal authority.

SYNDICATE WARS...

The growing conflict between the syndicates of Halfwinter is intended as a backdrop, a situation that continues to spiral out of control. While it's inevitable that the player characters interact with the syndicates, it's important that they don't get so distracted that the real threat goes unnoticed. Below is a list of ways the player characters might find themselves interacting with the various syndicates.

1. The player characters are likely to want to question the leaders of Rime Syndicate and the Silent Dirge.
2. In the execution of their duties, the player characters are likely to see members of the various syndicates shadowing one another, or preparing for a crime.
3. The player characters might have to break up a confrontation or even find themselves caught in the middle of an outbreak of violence.
4. The player characters are contacted by the various syndicates. Perhaps they have information to share or they are looking for information. They may try to buy the player character's loyalty.

THE STORM...

The Anvil of Ice is a powerful and ancient relic. It is the anvil that keeps huge swathes of the north frozen all year round. The power of the anvil is usually Hilvoss Frostfang's to command, but with his fortress shattered and beyond his reach, any control over the anvil is gone. Each day the power of the anvil goes unchecked, the worse the weather becomes.

The Game's Master can portray the deterioration of the weather as they see fit, but below are a few suggestions.

1. A growing number of Townsfolk are found frozen to death inside their own homes
2. There is no beer in the tavern, it is frozen in the barrels
3. Older, ramshackle buildings collapse under the weight of the snow
4. Grease ice forms along the shore of Brittle Bay, slowly thickening as the days pass
5. The swords of the player characters freeze in their scabbards
6. Creatures that thrive in the cold can be seen migrating south

Regardless if the player characters have discovered the shattered remains of Frostfang's Fortress, at some point it

becomes obvious to all within Halfwinter that the storm isn't natural and unless someone discovers the cause, it's unlikely anyone will live to see spring. It's unlikely there will be a Spring!

MURDER SCENE...

As soon as the player characters arrive, they find themselves on the job pounding the frozen alleyways of Halfwinter. Astrid explains the situation to them and asks them to start at the beginning. That beginning is a warehouse at the bottom of the cliff. Access is via a set of steep, treacherous stairs cut into the face of the cliff. Normally there is a rope, but some kind soul has removed it.

When the player characters arrive at the murder scene, read the following:

The warehouse doors are broken, swinging at odd angles in the wind. Their constant to and fro matched by the squeal of their tortured metal hinges. The entrance is remarkably clear of snow, the flapping doors continually sweeping it to one side. Further along, huge drifts slope up to the windows, and inside several contoured mounds of snow have gathered. One mound of snow is different from the rest, a frozen hand protruding from it, as if in protest.

The crime scene is exactly as it was found, the body of Jonas Endlemann frozen, now buried beneath the snow. The body was originally found by Aldus Holtzugen. Aldus has already given his statement to Astrid but is happy to talk to anyone in exchange for a beer or cord of firewood.

Aldus' statement is simple. He found it strange that the doors were hanging at odd angles. He entered the warehouse and discovered the frozen body of Jonas Endlemann. There were several obvious defensive wounds on his arms, and a fatal slash down one side of his face and neck. There were a lot of overturned crates and barrels. The contents of some appeared to be missing.

Members of the Silent Dirge back up Aldus' statement. There are a lot of

overturned crates and barrels and some of their contents are missing. Also, they claim Bastian Krug, along with other members of the Rime Syndicate were in the area in the early hours of the morning. This is something that can easily be verified. If questioned, Bastian simply acknowledges this and points out that he is often in the area during the early hours, as it is where his business is located. Bastian claims he was responding to a report of a break-in at one of his storage facilities. Everything he claims is true, for he played no part in the death of Jonas Endlemann. In fact, Jonas Endlemann was doing the exact thing Bastian was doing, checking out a report of an intruder.

The Clues

There are some clues the player characters might pick up on if they search the warehouse and ask follow up questions.

1. A window to the side of the warehouse has been smashed open
2. The warehouse doors have been broken open from the inside
3. There are several smashed barrels and crates, their contents are missing
4. Only barrels and crates containing foodstuffs are missing
5. Endlemann's corpse is frozen. It was frozen when it was discovered. It's frozen in position as if warding something off
6. There is a small sandy beach to the side of the warehouse. The sand is now frozen and covered in snow. Beneath the snow, frozen and preserved, are the marks associated with dragging a small boat ashore

Exactly What Happened

Beyond the natural harbour surrounding Brittle Bay is an area known as the Maelstrom. It is here that the remnants of Frostfang's Fortress drift in circular currents and back eddies. These large pieces of ice look like regular icebergs from the shore. They are riddled with tunnels and passageways, many of them containing mutated creatures that worship the dark gods. Trapped within the fortress

as it plunged into the Sea of Frozen Blades and shattered, these creatures are now starving. Unfortunately for Halfwinter, the creatures now see the town as a source of food and a means of escape. Carving canoes from ice, a small number of creatures raided the warehouses on the waterfront and stole significant amounts of supplies. They were caught in the act by Jonas Endlemann, and they killed him lest their presence is discovered. Once the creatures have fully regained their strength, they intend to attack Halfwinter in a flotilla of ice canoes, for the town is the only place to set ashore.

Even if the player characters don't pick up on all the clues, the creatures continue their pre-dawn raids, and eventually, it becomes obvious that there is more to the Maelstrom than a floating armada of icebergs.

Other Attacks

Throughout the investigation, the player characters receive reports of further break-ins. Should they investigate before the snow covers any evidence, they can see the drag marks of several small boats. Yet all the village boats are accounted for, lying upturned and buried under an ever-deepening layer of snow. It should eventually become clear that the player characters need to investigate the Maelstrom.

THE SEA OF BROKEN BLADES...

It is easy to see why this massive body of water is called the Sea of Broken Blades. All year round, colossal icebergs with broken, serrated edges can be seen drifting in its vast reaches, driven along by the prevailing northerly winds. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of Halfwinter's permanent population rely on the sea for their income, the town's small fleet of fishing skiffs constantly on the water during the summer months. The sea is also a vital route for the smuggling syndicates, much of their goods shipped directly from the city of Aldasor in the Eastern Realms.

THE MAELSTROM...

The Maelstrom is an overdramatic name for what is nothing more than an area of strong tidal currents and confused back eddies, albeit on a massive scale. Icebergs are a constant feature of life in Halfwinter at any time of the year, and many of them get caught in the Maelstrom. The Maelstrom is an exceptionally dangerous place, but one the experienced fishing boat captains navigate with great skill. It is not the strong currents that make it dangerous or the icebergs, but the combination of both. Inside the Maelstrom the icebergs move much faster than they do in the open sea, constantly changing course. The thunderous sound of these mountainous shards of ice colliding with one another is a regular occurrence in Halfwinter. Indeed, many a large ship has tried to pass through the Maelstrom only to emerge from the other side as nothing more than a slick of ground ice punctuated by pieces of flotsam.

~**Smoothing The Road**~ A lot is going on in Halfwinter and it could be easy for the player characters to miss the fact that an existential threat lurks just off the coast.

The Game's Master needs to balance the need for the player characters to keep Halfwinter from descending into a battleground and giving them time to investigate the murder. Over time, the raids become more brazen, and eventually, everyone should come to the realisation that the danger to Halfwinter lurks in the rapidly freezing waters of the Sea Of Broken Blades.



FORTRESS FROSTFANG...

~Overview~ This section describes the approach to the Maelstrom and the iceberg armada caught in its treacherous currents. More importantly, this section describes how the Game's Master can use the tables provided to create a random but constantly evolving dungeon. In addition, the subchapter **Dungeon Fragments** provides a selection of one room dungeons and their descriptions and **Dungeon Dressings** offers a series of random tables to add descriptive elements to your own dungeons.

~Setup~ Read aloud when the player characters reach the Maelstrom:

There is a subtle but noticeable change as your boat crosses the eddy line into the Maelstrom. Despite the image the name conjures, there is no swiftly spinning vortex of water. Instead, your boat slews gently sideways as the current takes hold, a constant battle with the tiller required to compensate. Lumps of ice scrape past the hull as the little craft rises and falls effortlessly on the soft upwelling water.

Read aloud when the player characters approach the iceberg armada:

Ahead, a thunderous roar announces the collision of two massive bergs, the smaller one shedding an avalanche of snow and ice from its summit before slowly pitching forward and rolling belly up. The displaced water rises so high it momentarily obscures everything from view, before returning to its point of equilibrium. As if in protest, pressurised air explodes with tremendous force, the resulting blast hurling large chunks of ice into the air. A little closer and your little boat could have been pulverised. You don't have time to think about that, however, for ahead a twenty-foot wave is rolling toward you.

~Encounter Themes~ At the mercy of the whims of nature sums up the themes for this encounter.

~Running The Encounter~ Fortress Frostfang is different from the typical underground dungeon or castle layout. Constructed entirely of ice, Fortress Frostfang is hewn from the interior of an ancient glacier that has, until now, endured for thousands of years.

Known as the River of Frozen Souls, the glacier has shattered into hundreds of pieces, many of which are truly immense. Stretching far into the Sea of Broken Blades, the fortress was a living entity. Like any glacier, it calved in summer spawning large icebergs and expanded in the winter consuming anything that got in its way, and any part of the fortress lost from the glacier to the sea was simply recreated at the other end. Fortress Frostfang was many miles in length until its destruction. Shattered, the pieces of the fortress drift southbound, and many of them have become trapped in the Maelstrom.

Not only is this dungeon comprised of random pieces of a shattered glacier, but its shattered parts are floating and moving with wind and tide. Those parts caught in the Maelstrom are moving much faster than if they were drifting on the open sea. Seemingly moving at random at the mercy of the Maelstrom's whim, these floating mountains of ice are continually colliding, fusing, calving and rolling.

Describing The Maelstrom

The Game's Master should describe the Maelstrom as an exceptionally dangerous, but awe-inspiring spectacle. The player characters should be under no illusion that the life could be crushed out of them at any moment should they fail to show the proper respect for the forces of nature that are at work around them.

Many of the icebergs are truly mountainous, some reaching heights above the water in excess of 150 feet. Calving icebergs release tremendous amounts of energy, often accompanied by a thunderous roar and followed by tsunami-like waves in their wake. Icebergs often roll when they become unbalanced,

normally announced by an avalanche of snow and ice and followed by an upwelling of water that can reach the height of the iceberg itself. Fissures in rolling icebergs can cause blasts of air and water of such force that they can easily capsize a small boat and throw out large chunks of ice at high velocity. Given the vast size of these icebergs, everything appears as if happening in slow motion, but if caught too close, there is rarely time to get out of the way.

Once inside the remains of Fortress Frostfang, the player characters should be continually reminded of the calamitous events occurring outside, for while they might not be able to see them, they are still vulnerable to them.

The concept behind Fortress Frostfang is to have an ever-changing, but randomly generated dungeon that makes sense within the scope of the adventure. The dungeon might grow as random sections of the fortress fuse together, or it might shrink as a section calves. Such events are violent by their very nature and should be portrayed as such. The random nature of the dungeon could leave the player characters split in different sections drifting in the Maelstrom, or it could result in them being entombed as a section of the fortress without an entrance as an ice wall fuses to the only exit.

How the Game's Master creates the dungeon from the remains of the River of Frozen Souls is a matter of taste. The constant forming and breaking up of the dungeon can be narrated, and the individual pieces simply chosen from the room descriptions, along with their corresponding maps if miniatures are being deployed. Alternatively, everything can be left entirely to chance.

Either way, to begin with, put three or four maps together for the first section of the dungeon the player characters are going to explore.

To create a randomly evolving dungeon, you should consider the following:

Random Interval: The random interval determines when a significant event occurs. A good method of determining the interval is the D6 Countdown.

The D6 Countdown

The D6 Countdown is a diminishing pool of D6's rolled each time the player characters act. The size of the dice pool can be determined by adding a die to the pool for each player character, plus one additional die.

Any time the pool is rolled and a die results in a six, remove that die from the pool. Once the pool is reduced to zero, roll on the **Event Table** to determine the exact nature of the event and any subevents, and then refresh the pool to its original number.

Example

The Game's Master decides to keep things simple and starts the group with a countdown pool of five dice. Having climbed into the cavernous interior of a large iceberg, the group begin their exploration. Two of the group sneak forward to check out what lies ahead. This is the first action and one of the players rolls the countdown pool. On the very first roll, two of the dice come up six. These are removed from the pool, leaving three dice. Each time a member of the group takes another significant action, the remaining pool is rolled again and any sixes removed. As it turns out, it takes another thirteen rolls before all of the dice are removed from the pool. With the countdown complete, the Game's Master rolls on the Event Table.

For a faster countdown, remove any die from the pool on a roll of 5-6. For a slower countdown add more dice or switch to a pool of D8.

Event Table

- 1-2 Violent Impact – A series of tremors rip through the dungeon as it collides with a much larger iceberg. Roll on the Impact Table.
- 3-4 Fused Ice – The crack of splintering ice announces another iceberg has fused itself to the

dungeon. Roll on the Fused Ice Table.

- 5-6 Calving Event – A strong tremor and a deafening roar announce the imminent breakup of the dungeon. Roll on the Calving Table.

Impact Table

1. Ice Collapse
2. Gradual Flooding
3. Upside Down
4. Opening Sealed
5. Opening Created
6. Salient Spear Pierces Dungeon

Fused Ice Table

1. An iceberg fuses to one of the dungeon's openings, sealing it tight.
 2. An iceberg fuses to one of the dungeon's openings – the openings of both are perfectly aligned forming a bridge between them.
 3. An iceberg fuses to one of the dungeon's openings – the openings of both are perfectly aligned, however, a large chasm lies between them that must be bridged
 4. An iceberg fuses to one of the dungeon's openings – the opening to the new section towers above and the iceberg must be scaled
- 5-6 An iceberg fuses to one of the dungeon's openings – the opening in the new section is at the bottom of a newly formed gorge

Calving Table

1. The dungeon splits into two roughly equal sections that slowly drift apart
2. The most recent piece to be added to the dungeon breaks off again
3. The oldest section of the dungeon breaks off
4. The dungeon breaks into a larger and a smaller piece – the smaller piece slowly pitches over and rolls belly up

DUNGEON FRAGMENTS...

The following subsection describes some of the various dungeon fragments that make up what was once the Fortress Frostfang. The Game's Master is encouraged to add as many additional fragments as required.

With a few exceptions, the main areas of the dungeon are devoid of traps. This is intentional. Before its destruction, the fortress was a busy place, and traps are dangerous things. Even without traps, the halls of Fortress Frostfang have become dangerous places and many hazards need to be overcome. Below is a list of traps and hazards should they be required to make the dungeon more dangerous.

TRAPS & HAZARDS

Traps

- ❖ Ice Slide
- ❖ Pure Water – Freezes instantly on being disturbed
- ❖ Collapsing Ice Bridge
- ❖ Ice Spiked Pit
- ❖ Sealing Doorways
- ❖ Breath of The Ice Dragon
- ❖ Freezing Rain
- ❖ Old Fishing Hole

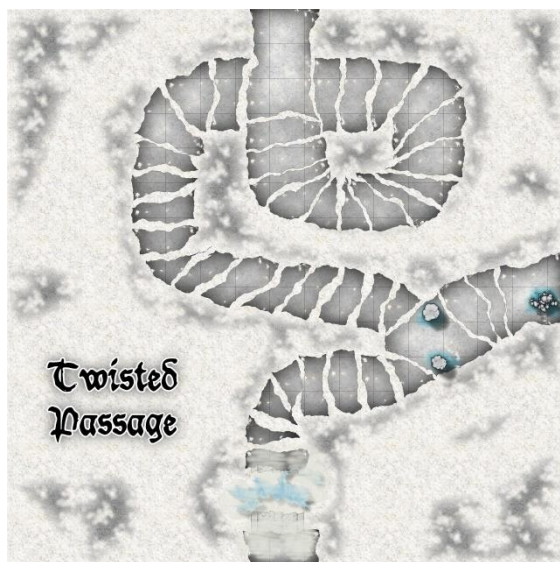
Hazards

- ❖ Gradual Flooding
- ❖ Freezing Fog
- ❖ Collapsing Ice or Chasm
- ❖ Slippery Slope
- ❖ Fishing holes (many dug by the new residents)
- ❖ Covered Crevasse
- ❖ Motion Sickness
- ❖ Upside Down

Some traps and hazards can be combined to make them more dangerous. For example, a room with a fishing hole could also be flooded, making the hole more difficult to detect, or a room full of debris from collapsing ice could turn upside down and begin flooding, burying unsuspecting characters under floating ice as they slowly drown.

PASSAGEWAYS

One of the most common dungeon pieces is passageways. Fortress Frostfang was many miles long, and much of this was made up of twisting passageways. Passageways don't have to be boring, however, and the dungeon dressing table at the end of this section can be used to generate some ideas on how to make them more interesting.



Sample Passageway

This long, unlit passageway spirals downward at a barely perceptible angle. The monotony of the ice walls are occasionally broken by protruding boulders, possibly picked up by the ice thousands of years ago on its relentless march to the sea.

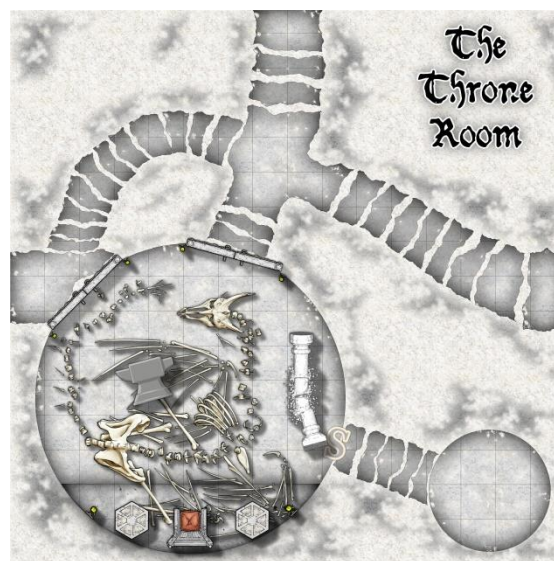
A layer of freezing rime fog obscures much of the floor. The fog isn't dangerous in itself, but what it conceals might be. Further into the passageway is a chasm twenty feet across. Already filled with fog, there is little sign the chasm exists.

The chasm is forty feet deep, the last ten filled with frigid water. Floating on the water's surface are several large shards of ice. Hidden by the fog, and hanging on both sides of the chasm, just below the ledge, is an old torn cargo net. Somewhere, much further down the passageway can be heard the sounds of screaming gulls and breaking waves.

THRONE ROOM

Without a doubt, this room boasts some of the most stunning architecture in the entire fortress. The high vaulted roof imbues the chamber with a sense of the sacred and divine. Carved from ice of the deepest blue, the room is lit by dozens of beautiful ice crystals, each used to bind a tiny elemental spirit whose eternal struggle to escape causes the ice to glow.

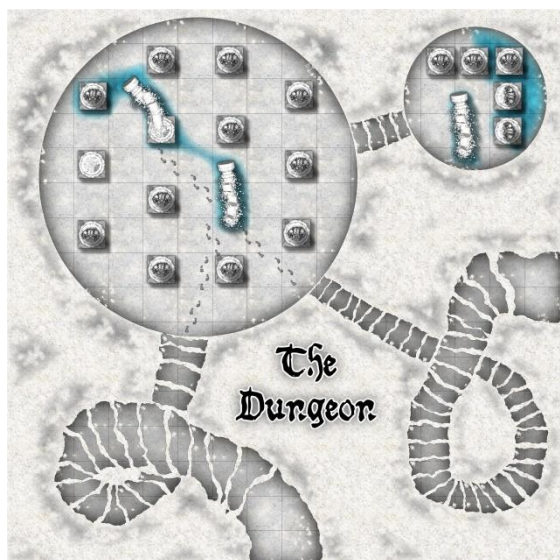
The entrance to this room is constructed from the open maw of Blizzard, an ancient dragon that pledged its services in death to the master of the fortress. The steps leading up to the entrance are large, designed to be climbed by a giant, the fang-filled maw of the dragon seamlessly melded with the ice forming the portal. From the entrance the room falls away, steps leading down into a bowl carved from the glacier.



At the far end of the room is an ancient throne entwined by the dragon's tail and bedecked by large luxurious furs. All, however, pales in comparison to the intricately carved plinth in the centre of the room, upon which sits an anvil of the whitest ice. The Anvil is the size of a pony and radiates an aura of extreme cold. For more details on the Anvil of Ice see **Arcanum**.

THE DUNGEON

One of the deepest parts of the fortress, this circular room is slowly flooding from cracks in the surrounding ice. There are two ways in, and out via a long winding stairwell.



Columns of ice fill this room, each one crystal clear and containing a prisoner, all of which appear perfectly preserved. There are a small number of shattered columns, suggesting that some of the prisoners have been recently taken, or perhaps escaped, for it unclear whether they are still alive.

If it serves the needs of the adventure the Game's Master can have the columns of ice in mid thaw, the prisoners still alive, bound by magic, which fails along with the ice. Some prisoners could make useful allies, but most of them are likely murderous marauders of the worst kind that have already pledged their dark souls to their foul gods.

KITCHEN LARDER

This series of rooms is just one of many identical food storage areas located throughout the fortress. The passageways leading into and out of this room are guarded by those lucky enough to have been trapped in this section of the fortress when the glacier broke apart.

It is clear that there has been a battle, and those guarding the larder are few and weary. There are hundreds of wooden

crates and large jars filling the centre of this room, the walls lined with alcoves, each filled with the hanging carcasses of butchered cattle. One of the alcoves is filled with the hanging corpses of those that sought to take the supplies for themselves.



It is up to the Game's Master if this room is occupied by the invading forces of the dark gods or a holdout of Hilivos' troops.

BATTELEMENTS

Many sections of the fortress may be nothing more than passageways and stairs that lead to a set of battlements. The battlements are no different than those of any other castle or fortress, other than they are carved from the ice and are much larger. Like passageways, battlements don't have to be boring. Battlements should offer a unique perspective. Rather than waiting for the dungeons to come to them, the player characters should use battlements to pinpoint other parts of the fortress to explore.

Sample Battlement

"The trudge up the icy stairs seems endless, but when the steps become indistinguishable from drifting snow, you know you are almost at the top. Outside, relentless, the wind howls. Despite the atrocious conditions, the scale of the Maelstrom is quite breathtaking from this vantage point."

Impressive by any standard, this set of battlements is not designed with humans in mind, for the crenulations are large enough to drive a wagon through. As if added as an afterthought, some of the merlons have smaller stairs rough cut into them. At either end, there is a cliff edge where this section of the fortress has sheared off. Like any mountain, this is not the top. Roughly in the centre of this section is a pinnacle of ice, a hazardous looking set of winding stairs carved into it leading to an observation post.

THE WHEELHOUSE

Perhaps one of the most intriguing rooms in the dungeon, this room contains the remains of an ancient sailing ship. Known as the Wheelhouse, this colossal room appears to be some kind of mead hall, complete with long tables and ash filled braziers.

Small columns of snow sift down from air vents above, leaving neat little piles throughout the room. It is clear from the different sizes of furniture that those of all ancestries drank together here, and judging by the pools of frozen blood on the floor, many of them died together. Exactly where the bodies are, however, isn't immediately clear.

A snow-filled fissure lies just alongside the largest table, and it is here, buried under the fine powdery snow, where the frozen bodies of the combatants can be found. Radiating from each end of the fissure is a spider-web of fine cracks, as if the ice had been subject to a great shock or impact, the walls of the hall split where they meet the cracks in the floor.

The nameplate on the ship declares it to the Warsprite, and it is of a design that none of the player characters are familiar with. The ship is partially encased in ice and appears to be a feature of the room, much like a proud homeowner might have a clock on their mantle. However, it appears to have been split open, along with the wall.



Around the bottom of the ship are mounds of broken ice. On investigation, it is clear that someone or something has tunneled into the ship. Should the player characters follow the tunnel they discover the corpse of an ancient dwarf, his hand outstretched as if holding something defensively. That something was the Rod of Thunderous Upheaval. It was the Rod of Thunderous Upheaval used in the heat of combat that shattered the River of Frozen Souls and Fortress Frostfang, see **Arcanum**.

GATEHOUSES

Some of the largest pieces of the dungeon are the fortress' gatehouses. In total there are four of these massive constructions.

Talon Maw

This colossal gatehouse once secured the northernmost reaches of the River of Frozen Souls. Built on a mountainous spur of uplifted ice, the gatehouse could be mistaken for a large cave surrounded by huge shards of ice. The entrance to the gatehouse is sealed with a block of ice so large it would make a respectable iceberg in its own right.

Just inside the gatehouse are two winch houses from which a series of thickly greased chains emerge, before vanishing into openings overhead. The winch houses are complete with a large set of gears and levers, the gears powered by a series of counterweights housed in hidden shafts in the ice wall. Access to the shafts is via trapdoors in the floor, which are currently concealed by drifting snow.



Drive Rooms

These rooms contain waterwheels that kept the counterweights hoisted. Underground meltwater was directed to the sluice above the wheels, before draining out of a hole in the ice. The water source is gone, leaving a series of smooth caves cut through the ice. The counterweights still have enough energy to open the gate, but doing so risks changing the centre of gravity of the now floating gatehouse and causing it to roll.

Guard Rooms

These rooms housed the gatehouse's defenders. Those that remain alive are mostly scattered throughout the fortress, many of them having responded to alarms that were raised in other areas. There are dozens of newly forged weapons on racks, most of them still wrapped in some unknown fabric soaked in whale oil.

Darkwater's Watch

Darkwater's Watch once guarded the fortress' seaward flank to the east, but like the others, its fate is tied to the circular currents of the Maelstrom. This fantastic construction is more than just a gatehouse, it's a harbour complete with wharves and storage bunkers. Several of the wharves have broken off, but remain trapped, blocking the harbour's entrance.



Choked with broken wood and other debris, the harbour is slowly beginning to freeze. Beneath the thin layer of ice, the remains of dozens of small wooden boats can be seen submerged, their prows still attached to the wharves by rope and chain.



The gatehouse itself is carved from a mountainous protrusion of ice with a series of towers marking waypoints on a path that spirals its way to the summit. The great block of ice that seals the entrance has stopped only a few feet from the ground. Inside is a scene of slaughter. It is clear that those guarding Darkwater's Watch were caught unawares, many of them cut down while trying to escape.



Just inside the gate, and ready to be launched, are two large watercraft carved from solid ice. The gatehouse is huge but has a similar layout to Talon Maw with winch houses and guardrooms.

Drive Rooms

The drive rooms are located exactly as they are in Talon Maw, the only difference is that the wheels powering the counterweights are tidal, and positioned under the ice. The drive shafts continue to turn as the gatehouse drifts in the Maelstrom. However, they have become detached from the gears above and thrash dangerously about, sending great spurts of water throughout the rooms. Much of this water has frozen, every surface dangerously slick and thick with a forest of giant icicles.

Guard Rooms

The guardrooms are the scene of a last stand, corpses lie frozen, three deep behind overturned tables used as barricades. Many of them appear to have frozen as they fell, their arms outstretched as if warding off some evil, much like the corpse of Jonas Endlemann.

Surailian's Demise

In partial ruins, this gatehouse guarded the southernmost reaches of the fortress and indeed the River of Frozen Souls. Close to fracturing from the glacier of its own accord, a replacement was being constructed elsewhere when the fortress

shattered. Any equipment has long been removed from this section of the fortress.



Siren's Reach

This submarine entrance was widely used when Hilivos counted the creatures of the deep among his allies, but like them, it has been long since forgotten. Indeed, it was considered secure due to its proximity to a colony of sirens, a place where few dared to approach. However, as the River of Frozen Souls grew, the ancient gatehouse was pushed beyond the colony's influence, something Hilivos' enemies used to their advantage. The gate at Siren's Reach is where Hilivos' enemies entered the fortress. One of the gatehouse's most notable features is its underwater entrance. There is no large, magnificent gate, but instead a guardian.



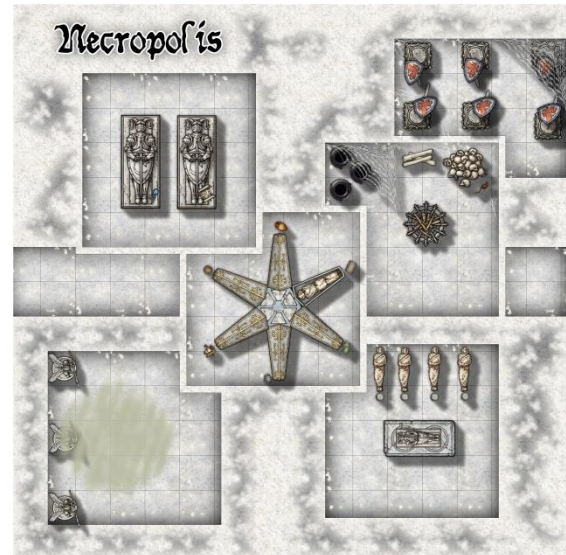
The Guardian

When Siren's Reach was abandoned, little thought was given to the gatekeeper, a monstrous beast from the depths of the ocean. The passageways were collapsed in the belief that the creature would leave via the underwater entrance, as it had arrived. Unfortunately, having grown fat on a rich diet of prisoners from the fortress' dungeons, the beast was unable to leave. In its attempts to escape it has cleared the very tunnels the fortress' engineers had collapsed. Now starving, and surviving on fish and the occasional over-curious seal, the gatekeeper eats any creature that comes within reach. Indeed, the invading forces paid heavily before the creature was sated.

NECROPOLIS

This extensive burial complex has broken into many different sections, several of which are caught in the Maelstrom. Carved out of the ice as a series of interlocking square chambers, the Necropolis is more than a grand burial chamber. It is a memorial to the glorious dead.

The walls of each room have been carved with recesses, each with an interred corpse frozen in a block of dyed ice. The dye produces the faintest glow, allowing each of the corpses to be viewed. Important figures have their sepulchres placed throughout the room, many with beautifully carved ice sculptures. Each sepulchre is different from the next, the only thing they have in common is a series of small holes cut into the ice blocks surrounding them. Most have little offerings or tokens placed in them and have been filled with water and allowed to freeze. Many of these trinkets are valuable.



GM Note: This is a good place to find minor magic items, discover the legendary corpses of some mythological figure, or discover something that can be used as a hook for future adventures.

THE BIG FRIEZE

Almost every section of the fortress' interior is covered in carvings depicting the eternal struggle against the dark gods and on occasion the struggle against expansion from the lands to the south.

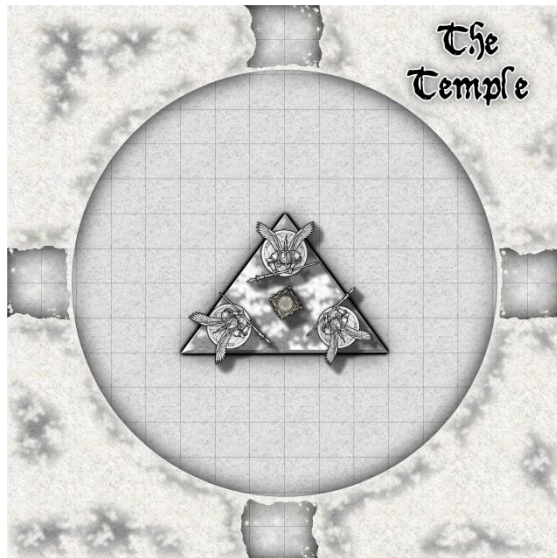
These carvings hold much of the history of Fortress Frostfang, and indeed, that of the frost giants. A frieze depicting frost giants slaughtering southerners might make the frost giants appear evil, yet another might depict the frost giants as heroic, holding ravaging hordes at bay while villagers flee to the south.

Should the player characters take the time to study the friezes, they should be able to understand that they are now exploring the remains of Fortress Frostfang in what was once the River of Frozen Souls. The Game's Master is encouraged to include their own details that could be used as hooks for future adventures.

TEMPLE

This structure was truly built with giants in mind. The Stairs in and out are hewn from giant blocks of ice, and the circular room is cut deep, well below the water level. The circumference of the rooms is

covered by a large frieze depicting what appears to be some divine figure bestowing a blessing on giant-kind. On a raised dais in the centre of the room are three statues so tall, they dwarf even the largest of frost giants. Who these figures are, isn't clear.



LIBRARY

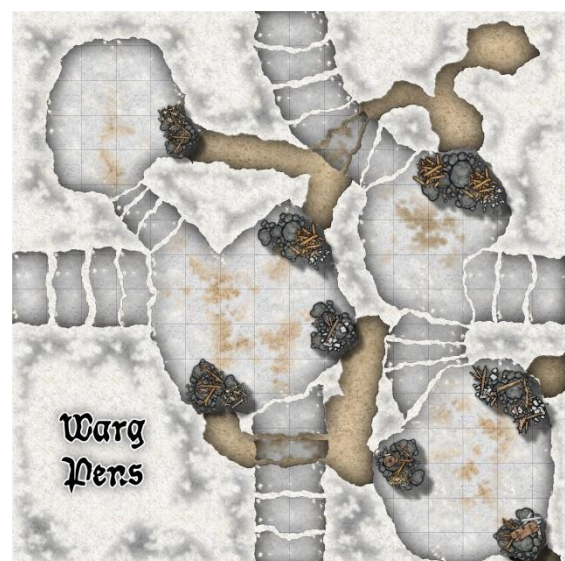
Other than the Throne Room, there is no other place in the fortress that exudes magic like the library. Filled with centuries-old documents and artefacts, this magnificent room is an academic's dream.

Beautiful cabinets constructed of ice as hard as rock hold ancient books and scrolls. Large tables are covered in items, both familiar and peculiar. The most notable feature, however, is the large pits along the library's walkways. These pits are known as the archives and are filled with thousands of ice slates, each one covered in text cut by a hot scribe and inked with coloured powder. At the bottom of one of these pits lies the frozen corpse of an ancient frost giant, the library's last archivist.



THE WARG PENS

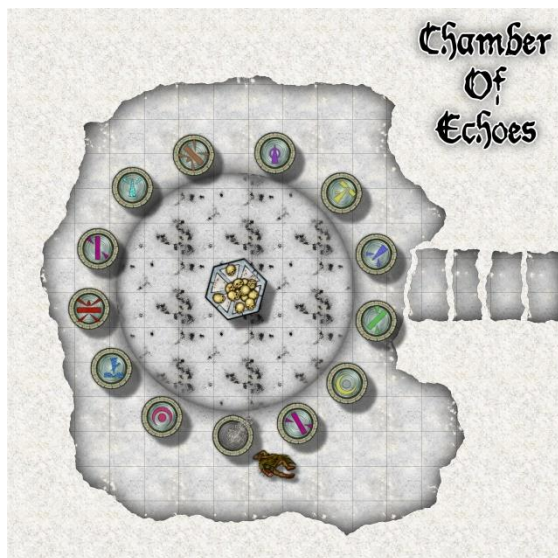
Trained to hunt down infiltrators, escaped prisoners and pull sleds, there were once hundreds of these monstrous creatures held in the fortress' pens. The warg pens have shattered into several pieces and there may be a number of them drifting in the Maelstrom. The wargs that survived are mad with hunger and are likely to attack any creature that ventures too close. Inside each pen are large mounds of debris, such as rock, wood and stone. This material is used to create artificial cave entrances to a series of dens. The floor of the dens is thick with bedding of rough-cut rocks and splintered wood, whereas outside the pen is ice and a mixture of frozen blood and excrement.



CHAMBER OF ECHOES

A place of mysticism, the Chamber of Echoes is a grotto with a series of thirteen pools, each one marked by an ancient rune of power. Once home to a cabal of mages, the Pool of Echoes was used to scry on Hilivos' enemies. In the centre of the room is a stone plinth. On top of the plinth are thirteen skulls, twelve of them marked with a rune corresponding to one of the pools, one of them charred and blackened.

There are several corpses scattered around one of the pools, a clear indication they are protected. The rune on this pool once corresponded to the charred skull but was destroyed when the trap was sprung. Should anyone look in the pools, they see something truly prophetic, however, once their vision ends, the pool's trap is sprung. Each of the pools is warded with a spell of summoning, which calls the pool's guardian. What that guardian is should be for the Game's Master to decide, but should be powerful enough to challenge the player characters. Unfortunately for the player characters, the guardian of the other pool still stalks the grotto and strikes at the most inopportune moment.



COLONY

The River of Frozen Souls stretched miles into the Sea of Broken Blades and was home to more than the forces of Fortress Frostfang. Many of the sections of ice, those containing fragments of the fortress and otherwise, are home to colonies of

wild animals and other creatures. Exactly what these creatures might be are up to the Game's Master to decide, but some suggestions are provided below.

- ❖ Walrus
- ❖ Sea Birds
- ❖ Polar Bear
- ❖ Yeti

HEIR TO THE THRONE

Perhaps one of the most important encounters in the Maelstrom is that with Sturnarl Frostfang, Hilivos' son. Trapped in the fortress when it shattered, Sturnarl has been trying to get to the throne room and the Anvil of Ice. Sturnarl knows the anvil is now beyond his father's reach and he also knows that should the anvil fall into the wrong hands or even drift further south, it could result in a permanent ice age.

This encounter can happen at any time of the Game's Master's choosing, in almost any of the locations. Sturnarl is badly injured, but not totally out of the fight. He instantly recognises that the player characters are not followers of the dark gods, or at least not the ones he is familiar with, and attempts to convince them to help him return the anvil to the north. Of course, the player characters might just see another frost giant that needs killing. When the player characters discover Sturnarl, he is slumped against a wall. He is bloodied and has made attempts to bandage his wounds. He is in a weakened state, but he is also surrounded by almost a dozen corpses of the same creatures that the player characters have been encountering.

Negotiating with Sturnarl should be an intense experience. Sturnarl is an imposing figure, even if he has taken a beating. His command of the common tongue is limited and he lets out violent hisses if he feels the player characters are trying to take advantage of his situation, or just not understanding the implications should they decide not to help. Sturnarl first appeals to their heroic sense of self. Should that fail, he tries to figure out what

it is that they want, and is willing to barter or even purchase their services if required. The Game's Master is the final arbiter of how far Sturgnarl is willing to go to get the player characters to help return the anvil north. The player characters may or may not have already encountered the anvil. Either way, they are going to have to find it and get Sturgnarl to it so that it can be safely moved.

FORTRESS FROSTFANG

The shattered fragments of Fortress Frostfang as described above represent only a small fraction of the possible rooms and places that the player characters might encounter in the Maelstrom. In addition to hundreds, if not thousands, of passageways that would exist in such a colossal complex, there would be numerous sections of defensive walls, outposts and small fortifications.

Many of the large icebergs in the Malestorm are just that, icebergs. These gargantuan lumps of ice are just as deadly and their collisions could result in the further breakup of the fortress, or indeed seal some of them like frozen tombs.

The Game's Master is encouraged to develop additional areas of the fortress that might be of interest to the group. Below is a list of suggested additional locations and lists of dungeon dressings and sounds that can be used to make each location unique.

Locations

- ❖ Parade Ground – Indoor or outdoor section for parading troops
- ❖ Observatory – A room filled with mystic trappings and a crystal clear dome of ice above
- ❖ Arena – Fighting pits to keep the troops entertained
- ❖ Steam Room – A very large sauna
- ❖ Dormitories – Large room for the troops to sleep
- ❖ Climbing Wall – Indoor or outdoor facility to train specialist climbers
- ❖ Hatchery – A large facility such as a fish farm

- ❖ Bubble – An observation room to look into the ocean beneath
- ❖ Latrines – Giant poo pots that contain gelatinous creatures, oozes and slimes
- ❖ Dry Dock – A naturally eroded slot or channel that has been used to repair boats
- ❖ Mortuary – Used to prepare the corpses for the Necropolis
- ❖ Quarry – The source of all the large ice blocks
- ❖ Natural Caves – carved out by underground rivers
- ❖ Treasury – Filled to the brim with the spoils of war
- ❖ Outposts – The River of Frozen Souls was dotted with these
- ❖ Giant Ice Ship – It might look like an iceberg, but it's a ship

DUNGEON DRESSINGS

Floors

1. Slick Ice
2. Slushy Track
3. Drifting Snow
4. Crushed Bone
5. Gravel
6. Duckboard

Walls

1. Tapestries
2. Friezes
3. Nets
4. Mirrors
5. Light – Living Ice Crystals
6. Sea Shells
7. Ropes
8. Colour Stained Ice

Rooms and Upholstery

1. Rugs
2. Furs
3. Trophies & Plunder
4. Skylights
5. Air vents
6. Brazier
7. Snow Shoes
8. Furniture
9. Storage Box
10. Hammock

Miscellaneous Features

1. Stairwell
2. Animal Hitching Posts
3. Floor Lighting – Living Ice Crystal
4. Bridges – In Various States Of Repair
5. Snow Drifts – Usually Found Near An Entrance
6. Scaffolding
7. Statues – Heroes And Gods
8. Stairwell Cover – Slab Of Ice
9. Distance Markers
10. Ice Pillars

Flotsam, Jetsam And Debris

1. Frozen Corpse
2. A Mound of Ice Scrapings
3. Splintered Wood
4. Frayed Rope
5. Old Nets
6. Midden
7. Bottle
8. Barrel

Natural Features

1. Melt Water
2. Freezing Fog
3. Rime Frost
4. Snow Drift
5. Structural Fracture
6. Crevasse
7. Grotto
8. Flooding

Evocative

1. Blood Stains
2. Drag Marks
3. Carved Graffiti
4. Blowing Snow
5. Grizzly Trophy
6. Claw Marks

Transport

1. Sled Large
2. Sled Personal
3. Sled Regal
4. Ice Canoes
5. Wagons
6. Skies

Sounds Made By Icebergs

1. Grinding
2. Loud Sharp Crack (fracturing Ice)
3. Creaking (settling Ice)

4. Groaning (expanding Ice)
5. Thunderous Roar (collapsing ice)
6. Dull Thud (gentle collision)

Miscellaneous Sounds

1. Something being dragged
2. Scraping
3. Screaming
4. Echoes
5. Running Water
6. Breaking Waves
7. Sea Birds
8. Barking
9. Roaring
10. Squealing

LEGACY...

Despite Halfwinter's remote location, the events of the adventure do not exist in isolation.

In a perfect world, the player characters will save the day, but the world is seldom perfect. If the player characters fail to find the Anvil of Ice and Sturgnarl Frostfang, the anvil is likely to continue to drift south, bringing permanent winter with it as the Sea Of Broken Blades freezes over.

Such dramatic events can lead to further adventure as the creatures that naturally dwell in the north migrate south and those in the south wanting to know what terrible magic is slowly consuming their land.

Perhaps the player characters do save the day and agree to help Sturgnarl Frostfang travel north with the anvil, having to protect the magical artefact from marauders and forces of the dark gods that wish to claim the Anvil of Ice for their own.

Then there are the more mundane aspects of the adventure. At some point, the player character might realise that although they were paid to travel north, they aren't the guardsmen they thought they were, and of course, they might have made some enemies among the crime syndicates.

APPENDIX...

ARCANUM...

The following section details the two major artefacts the player characters are likely to encounter – the **Anvil of Ice** and the **Rod of Thunderous Upheaval**.

THE ANVIL OF ICE AND THE FROST FORGE

Who or what created the Anvil of Ice is unknown, even among the frost giants. What is known is that the anvil holds great power. Exactly what the extent of that power is, is up to the Game's Master to decide.

From the perspective of Hilivos Frostfang, the power of the anvil held back untold numbers of elemental ice spirits corrupted by the dark gods in an attempt to bring eternal winter to the world.

The further south the anvil drifts, the less control Hilivos can exert his will on the anvil's powers, and the more spirits escape and the fiercer the winter storms become.

The Anvil of Ice is also a tool capable of creating magical items made from elemental ice. Indeed, each year Hilivos Frostfang travelled with the anvil to the Frost Forge, a hallowed location in the northern mountains, to create items with unique powers.

Today, many of these items can be found among the shattered remains of the fortress. Examples include the magical lights that still illuminate many of the fractured pieces of the fortress.

THE ROD OF THUNDEROUS UPHEAVAL

An ancient magical item believed to be nothing more than legend even among the long-lived dwarves, this magical rod is said to have the power to level cities.

Indeed, it was the accidental discharge of the rod's power that destroyed the River of Frozen Souls.

The exact details of the rod are left to the Game's Master, including the maximum number of charges and the number remaining.

Normal usage allows the user to shatter large items such as doors, statues and even small buildings or create large cracks in the earth.

However, when the rod is not in the hands of those whose use was intended, there is a 10% chance that the rod misfires and expends multiple charges.

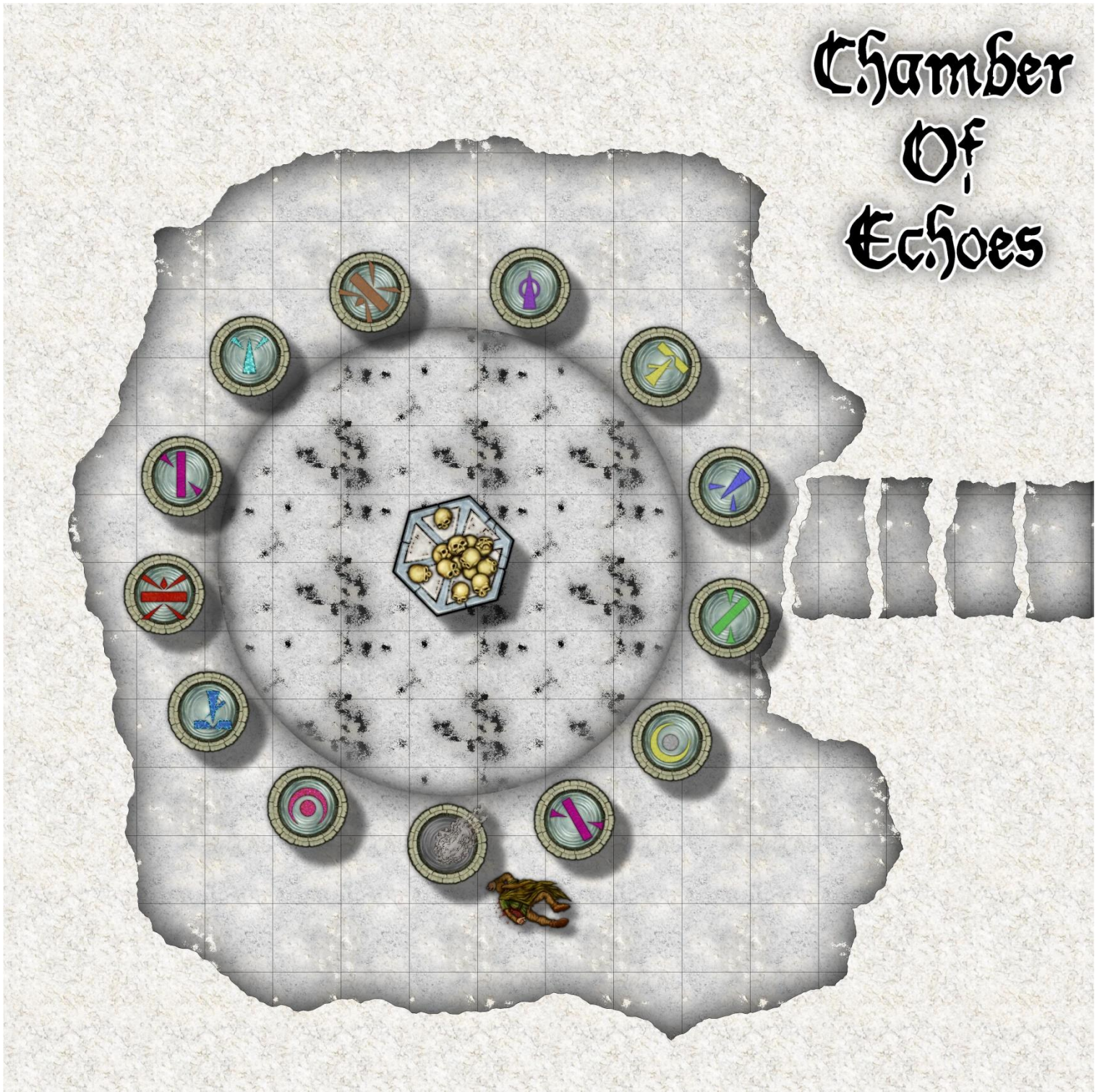
Should the rod misfire, the Game's Master should determine the total number of charges expended and the appropriate results.

The legends that speak of the rod's ability to level cities hold an element of truth. Using all its power, the rod can bring down a large section of a fortified wall, create landslides or even small tsunamis.

The rod can only be recharged by leaving it idle for millennia or returning it to the sacred dwarf temple in which it was created.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE...

Chamber Of Echoes



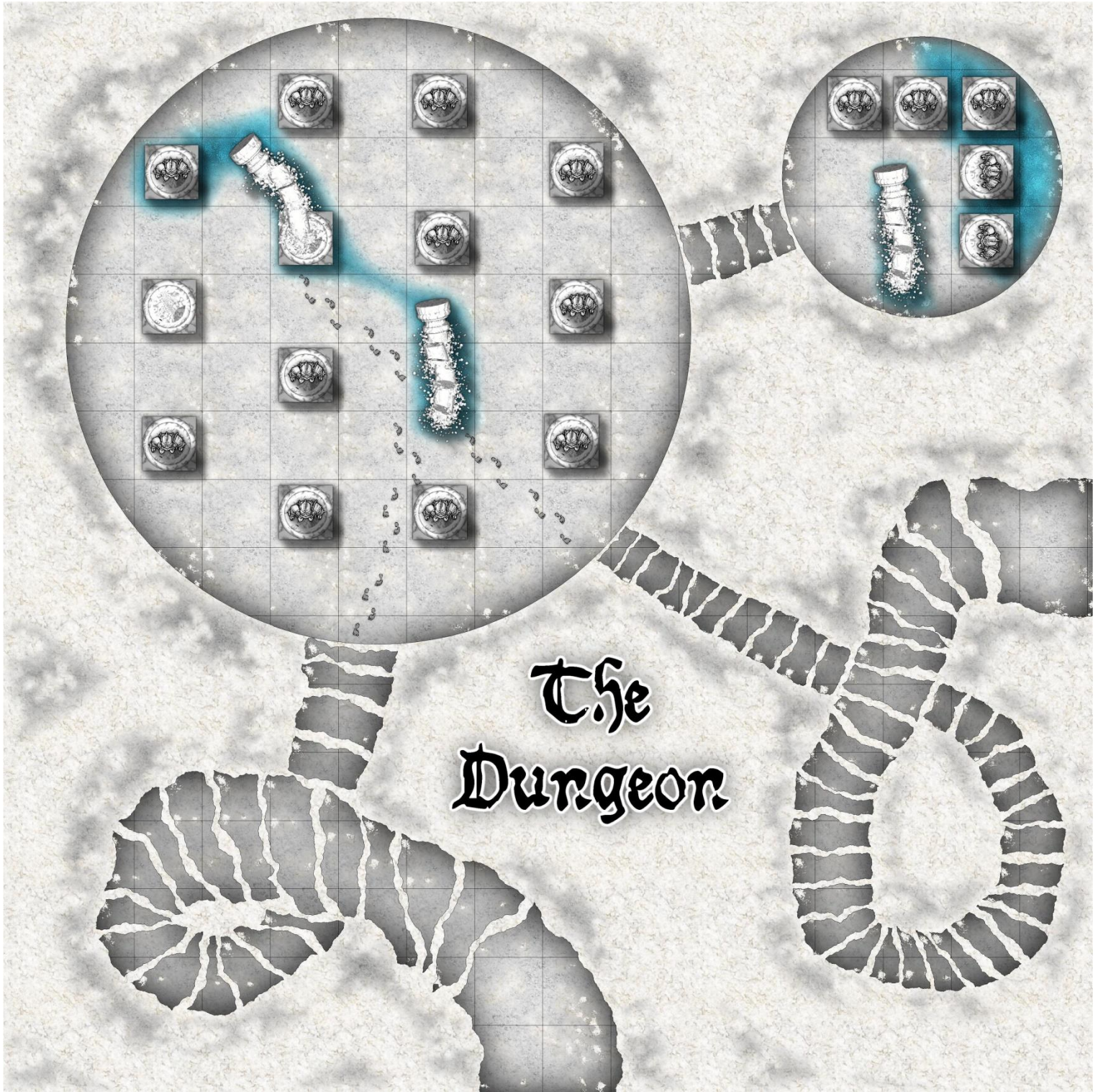


Darkwater's Watch

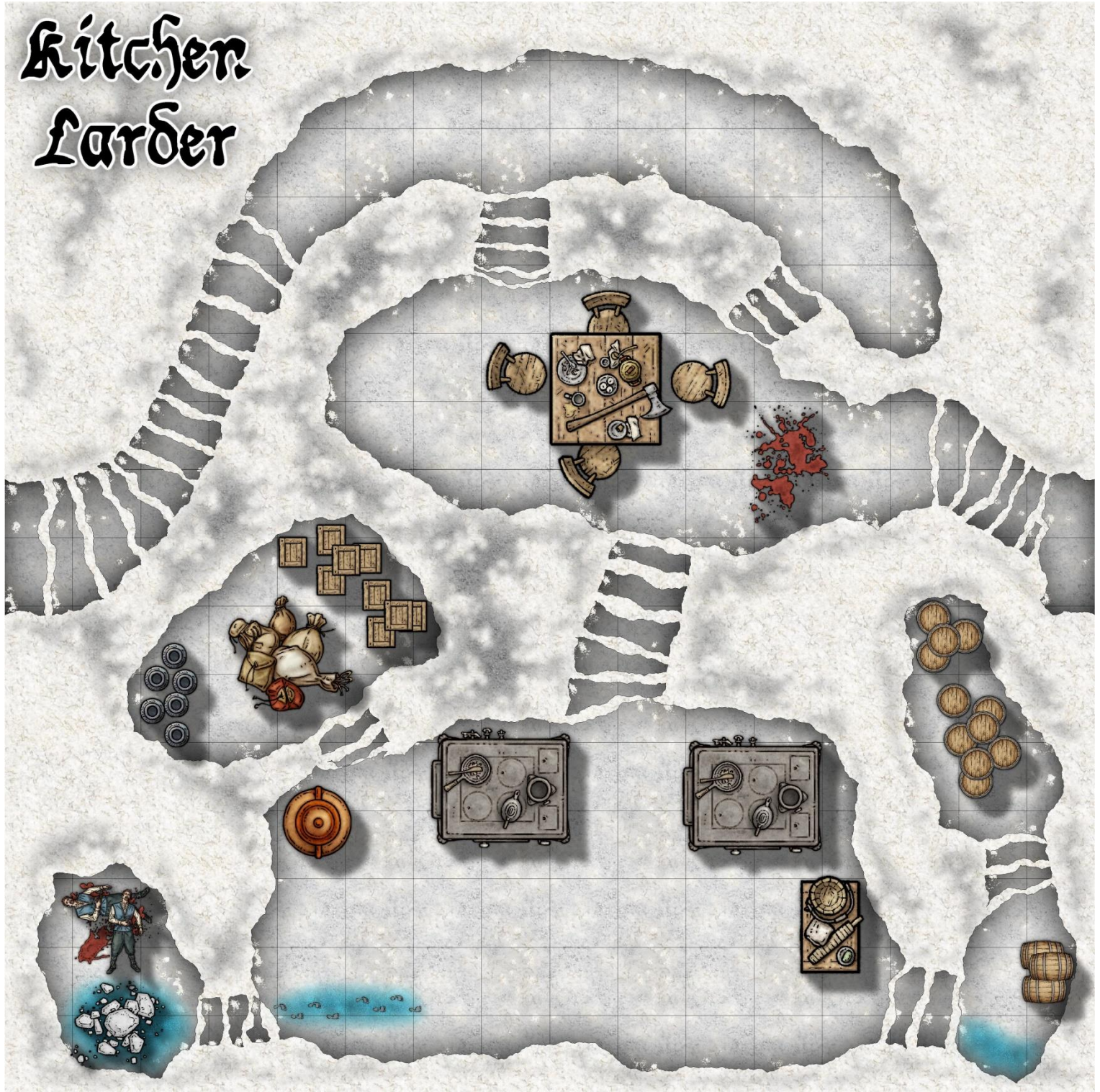


Darkwater Watchtower





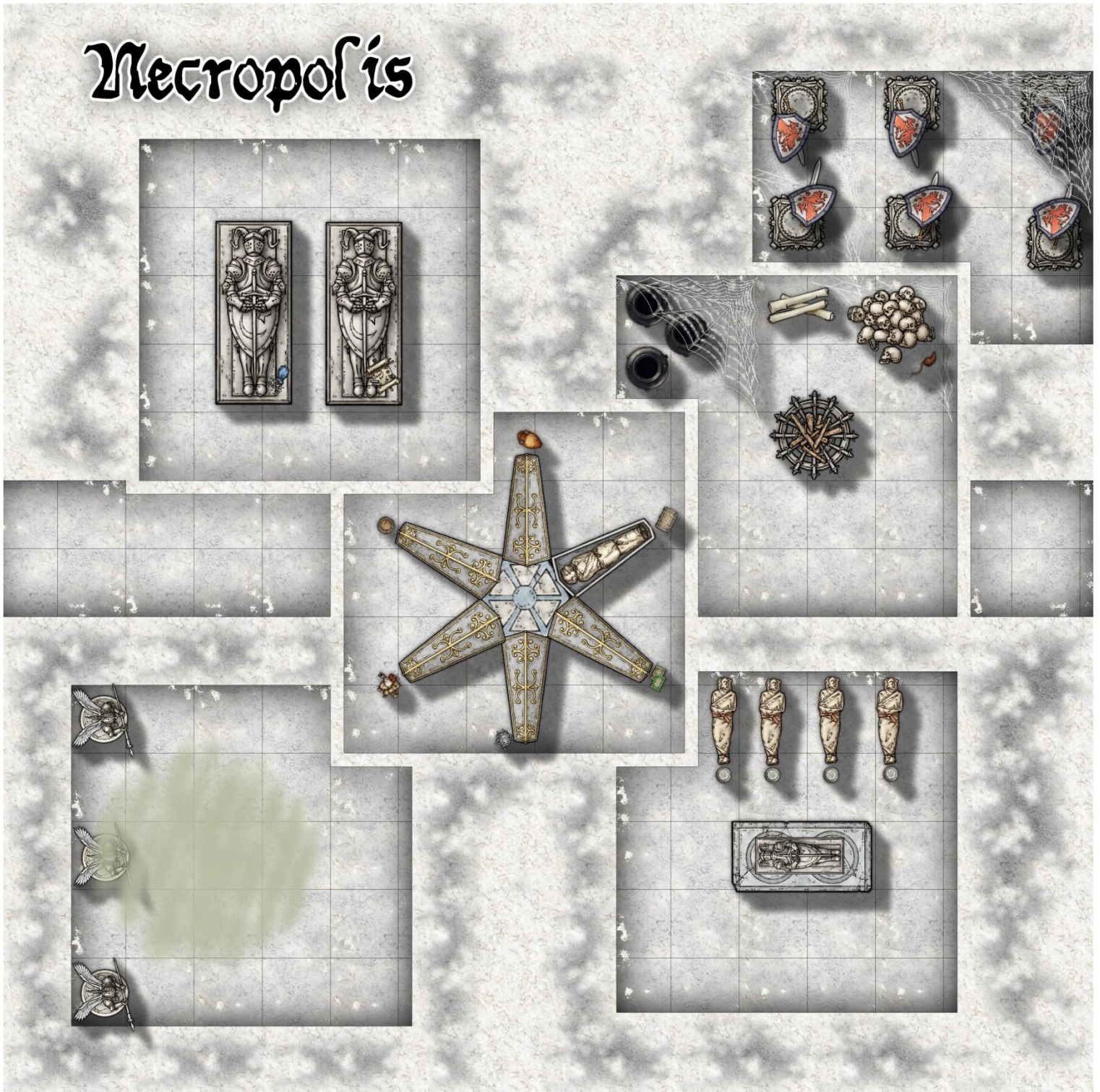
Kitchen Larder

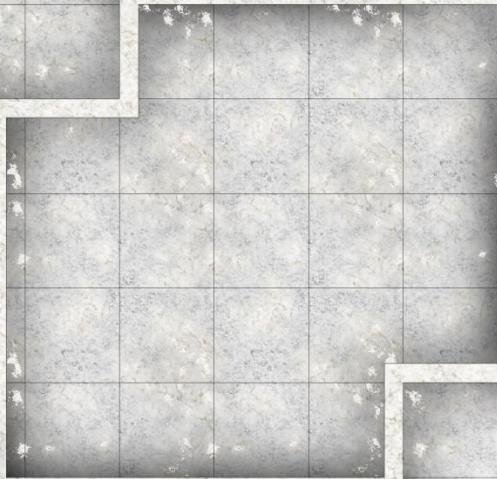
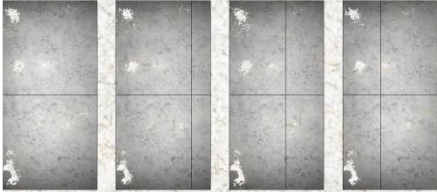


The Library

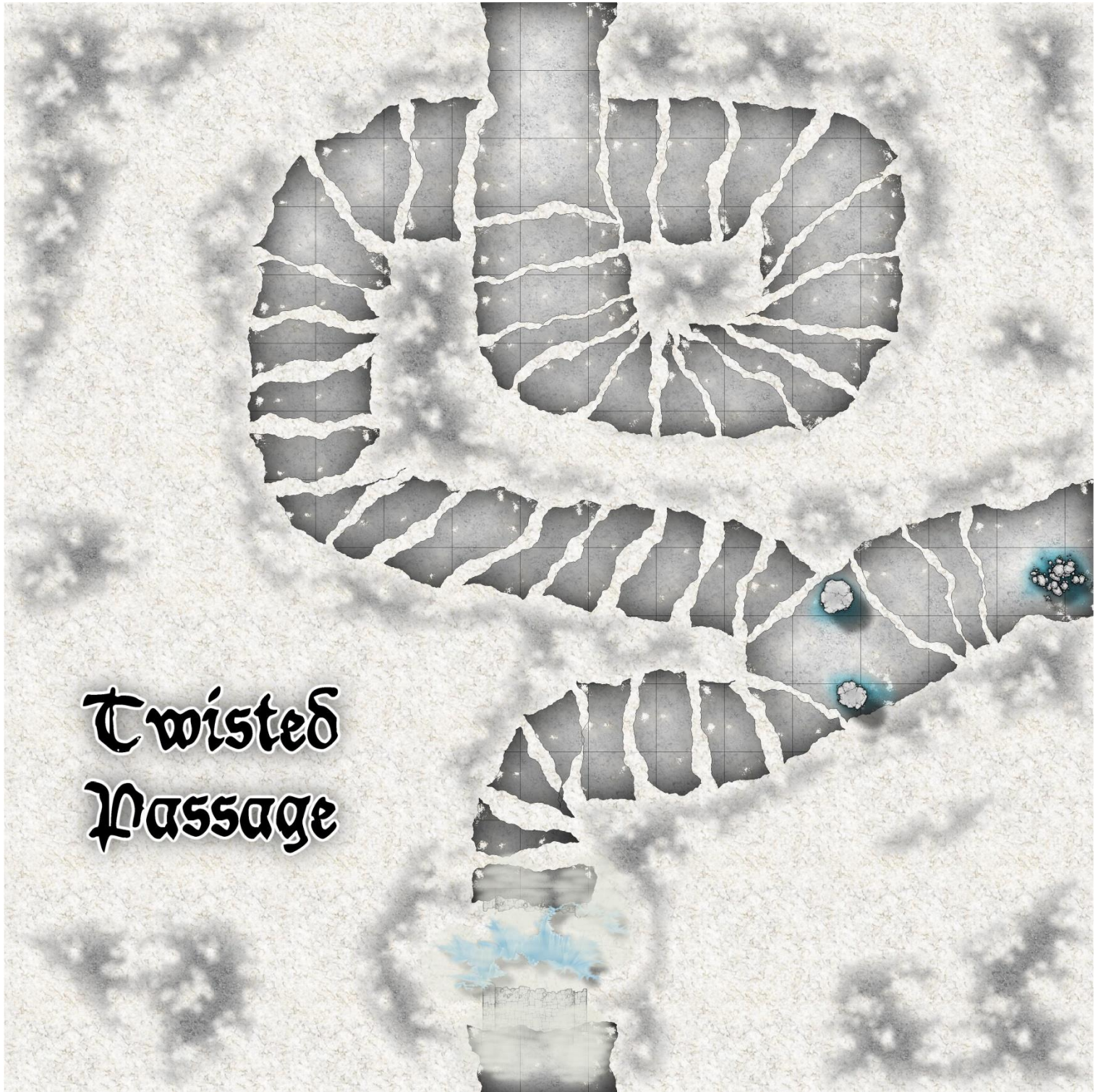


Necropolis





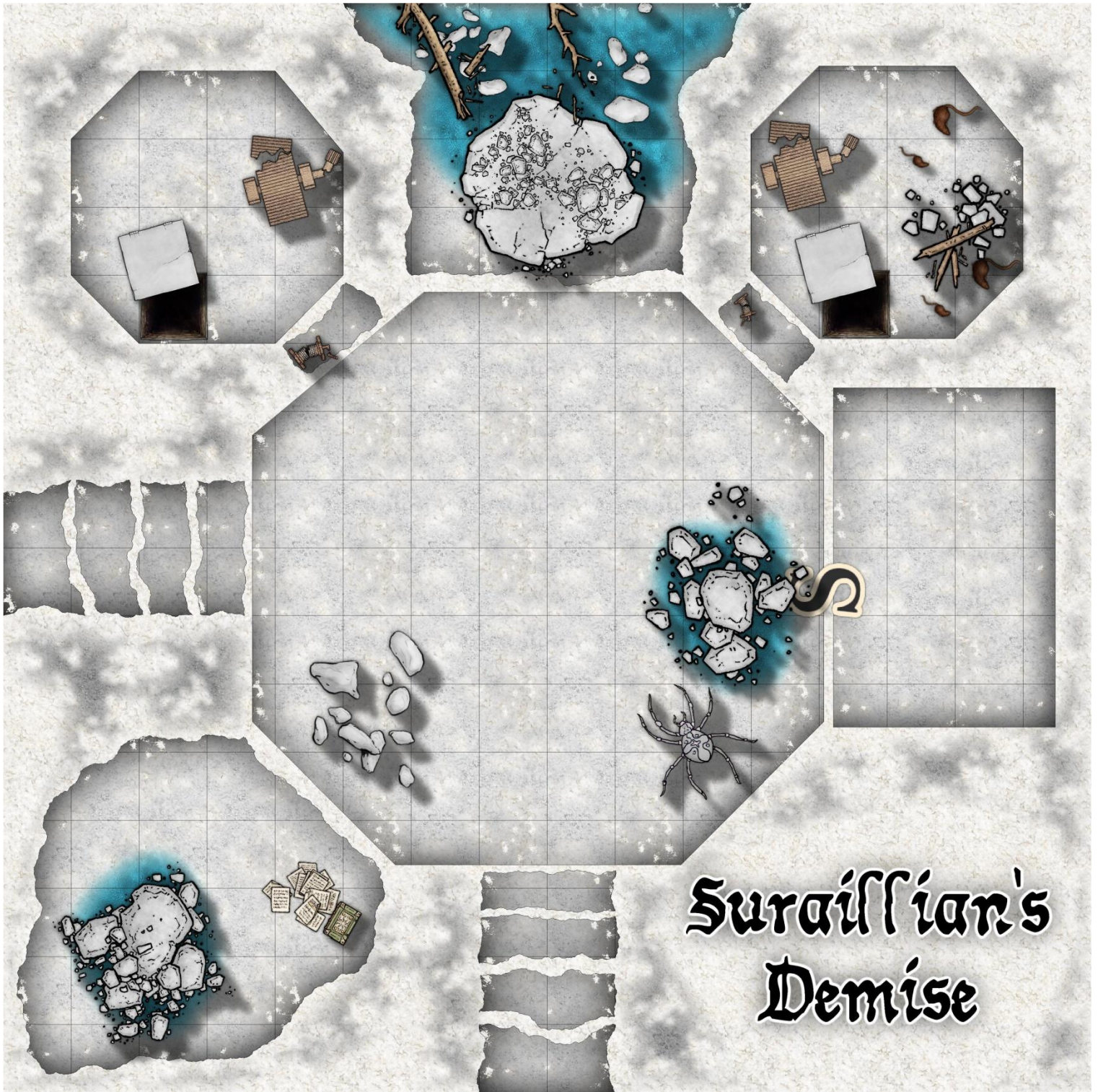
Necropolis II

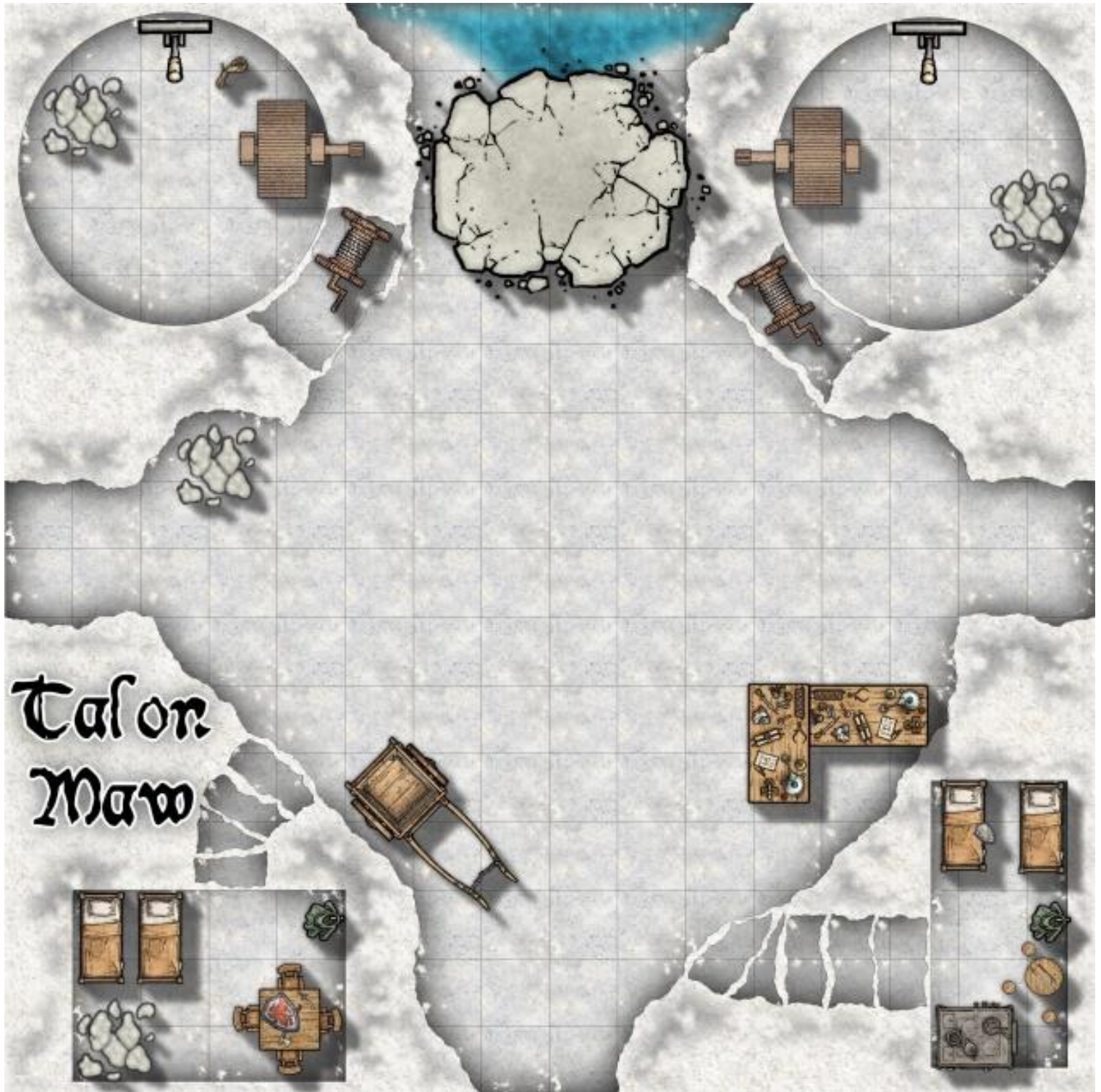


Twisted Massage



Siren's Reach

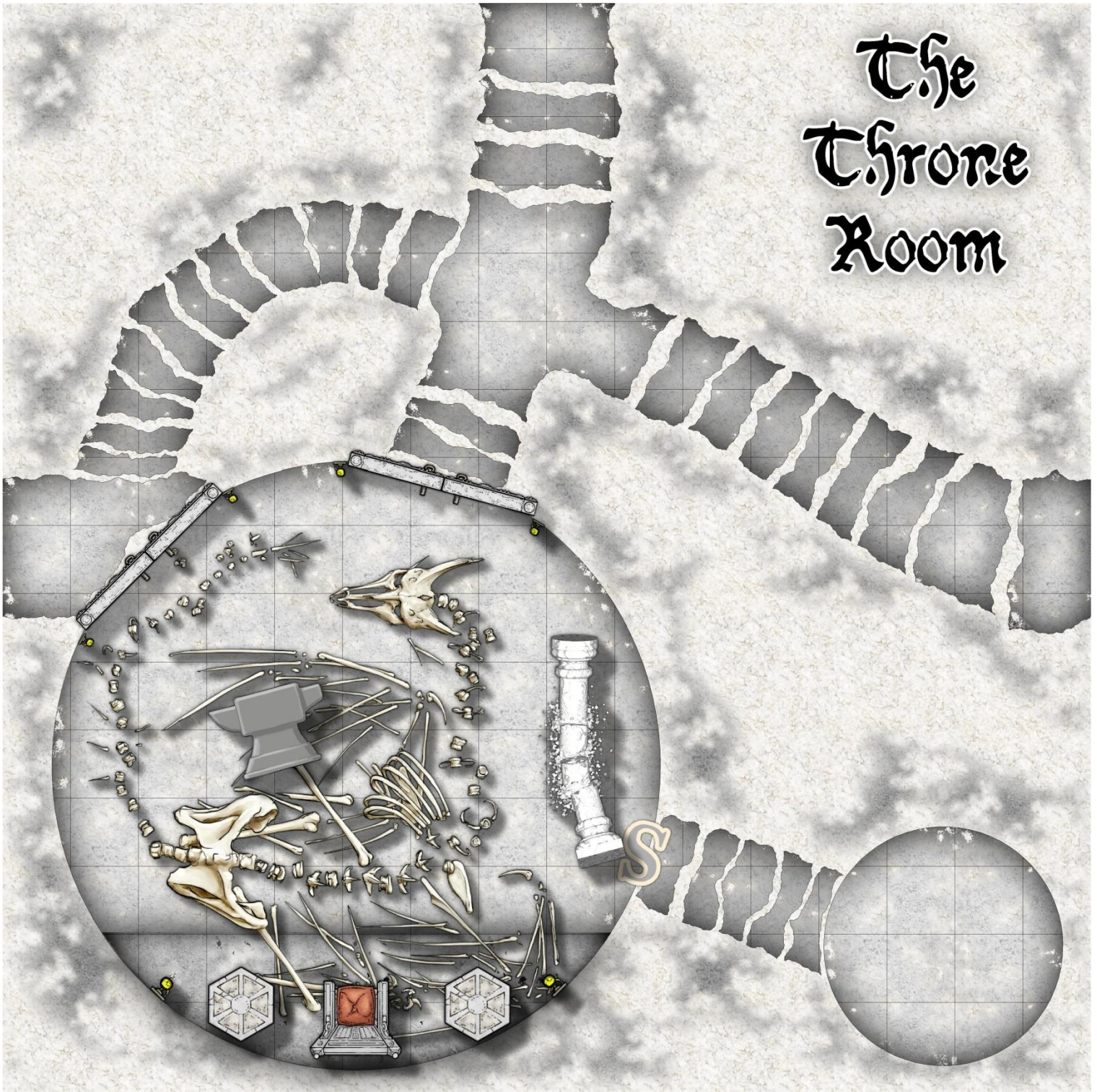




The Temple



The Throne Room





The Wheelhouse

