

THE FROSTED PRINCE

JVC PARRY



DEAN BENDER

THE FROSTED PRINCE

RETURN TO CASTLE KRAG

Just over a century ago a great battle took place at Castle Krag. The place served as a Zhentarim stronghold, but was cleared out by adventurers. Now, strange things are occurring once again in the ruined castle. For miles around, the weather is unnaturally cold, and shrouded in an impenetrable mist. What could be causing these strange effects?

A 6-10 hour Dungeons & Dragons 5e adventure for 11th-16th level characters

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INTRODUCTION



He Frosted Prince is a one-shot D&D 5e adventure for a party of characters from 11th–16th level. It should take 6-10 hours to complete, depending on which elements you choose to use. It can easily be dropped into a campaign set in the *Forgotten Realms*, specifically the Dalelands, or placed into the

Rise of Tiamat campaign. It could also serve as a 'Christmas special'.

TIPS FOR THE DM

As with any adventure, *The Frosted Prince* should be adapted to work for your group. If you don't like the way an element works, please feel free to change it. If encounters are too difficult for your players, remove monsters or replace them with an easier, but fitting foe.

Similarly, if you would like to adapt *The Frosted Prince* for your world, you can easily substitute appropriate plot hooks, NPCs and items.

In order to deliver an optimum experience for your players, it would probably be best to read the adventure, in full, before attempting to run it. There are traps and puzzles that you need to understand fully in advance.

In my opinion, players may need to level up during this adventure, but do so at the DM's discretion. They may not have achieved all the necessary xp from combat, but I would suggest rewarding players xp for solving puzzles to make up the difference. Alternatively, you can use the popular Milestone Levelling system.

Text to be read aloud to the players is in grey boxes. Feel free to tinker with this text to fit your roleplaying needs, but try to keep the original message clear as they may contain important information.

Try to have fun running this adventure! It was highly enjoyable to create and play with my own group, and I hope that you can share in that experience!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Before 1375 DR, Castle Krag was a hotspot for Zhentarim activity. Castle Krag housed a portal to Zhentil Keep, through which agents of the Black Network could make their way into the Dalelands to corrupt the courts of the Lords and Ladies. One such court was that of Shadowdale, the home of Elminster, which suffered greatly at the hands of Zhentarim agents.

During that year, a group of adventurers set out to Castle Krag, to find that it had been occupied by worshippers of Bane in alliance with the Zhentarim. They also discovered the portal and closed it. For almost a century after, the ruins were untouched. In the winter of 1490 DR, a strange presence took up host in the castle. No one has yet uncovered the truth, but the effects of its occupancy are evident. Over the following months, a thick, frigid fog descended over the surrounding area, stretching into the Dalelands. Freezing showers of precipitation which whip up into blizzards cut through the Cormanthor Forest.

Over time, unsavory types began taking up residence in the Dalelands. Shadowdale soon became overrun with Banites. The unknown ruler of Castle Krag is Ghaulinthara, a white dragon corrupted by Bane. Her egg was stored in the dungeon beneath the castle centuries ago, but was never discovered. With only the presence of Bane to guide her, Ghaulinthara became an avatar of the god, drawing in cultists from afar. They hope to reconstruct the shrine that once stood here, and release Ghaulinthara, the Winterwyrn, from her underground lair.

HOOKS

Hook 1: Cultists of Bane

Lady Sulwood of Shadowdale is worried. Her lands have always been contentious, attacked over the years by drow and zhents. Now it appears the Dalelands are threatened by Banites, who have openly attacked travelers on the North Ride. Lady Sulwood has sent out a call for adventurers to come to Shadowdale and seek out the cultists.

Hook 2: A Missing Ancestor

A wealthy noble has sought out the party for an obscure reason. He believes that he, Darvin Maneson, is the last descendent of Mane, a hero of old who lived in Shadowdale. Darvin has done research and believes that after failing to establish a citadel east of the Moonsea, Mane returned to Shadowdale to consult with Elminster. He has family crest which could be matched up with that of Mane, should the heroes track down his ancestry in Shadowdale. If it can be proved, then Mane would be Prince of his Kingdom.

Hook 3: Inhabitants of Castle Krag

Whilst travelling through the Dalelands, the characters stumble into an area of uncharacteristically cold weather. The boughs of trees are laden with snow, and the ground crystalized with hoarfrost. The emanating fridity seems to have its origin somewhere along the North Ride, to the northeast of Shadowdale.

OPENING

The adventure starts once the party have made their way to Shadowdale.

Travelling along the North Ride, you feel the temperature begin to drop. Patches of hoarfrost crunch beneath your feet as you approach the town of Shadowdale. Soon, the looming promontory of white granite known as The Old Skull comes into sight, bleached white by snow. Spiraling up from the base of the mound is a twisted tower, its coils slickened with ice.

Shadowdale is a broad tract of land peppered with rolling hills and scattered forest. Between these wild areas are wide swathes of farmland. In the centre of town characters can find the Twisted Tower of Ashaba, where Lady Sulwood resides, shrines to various deities, the ruins of Elminster's tower and a variety of taverns, inns and feshalls to suit all needs.



PART 1: SHADOWDALE

The town of Shadowdale is relatively small, comprised of half a dozen wealthy households, several taverns and shrines, and a few unique buildings, such as the Twisted Tower of Ashaba. The folk of Shadowdale are used to the sight of adventurers, having played host to many groups over the years, and being the birthplace of Elminster himself. They are distrustful of those who will not pull together for the good of the community, and especially despise worshippers of Bane and members of the Zhentarim. Despite this, several Zhentarim agents still make a living in the town as infiltrators and informants.

Depending on their interests, the characters may wish to spend as little as a few hours, or as much as several days exploring Shadowdale and conversing with its inhabitants. The following locations are areas in which characters may find themselves.

Whilst the characters are in town, several events will occur, which are detailed in the Events in Shadowdale section.

More information about Shadowdale and its history can be found in *Shadowdale – The Scouring of the Land* (1375 DR) and *Web of the Spider Queen* (1479 DR).

LOCATIONS IN SHADOWDALE

Shadowdale is a broad tract of land peppered with rolling hills and scattered forest. Between these wild areas are wide swathes of farmland. In the centre of town characters can find the Twisted Tower of Ashaba, where Lady Sulwood resides, shrines to various deities, the ruins of Elminster's tower and a variety of taverns, inns and festhalls to suit all needs.

OLD SKULL INN

The Old Skull Inn was once notorious for its nightly brawls and Zhentarim occupation, but in recent years has come back into favour. It belongs to the Silvermane family, and has been renovated in the last decade by its current owner, Ghessla Silvermane (LG female Chondathan human **commoner**). If the characters have played through *Web of the Spider Queen*, they may have already met Ghessla, and earned themselves free bed and board for a lifetime.

The Old Skull Inn is a bustling tavern, filled with a wide variety of travellers and locals. Drinks and meals are being served, and a roaring fire warms the room from a wide hearth. Stood behind the bar is a grey-haired woman with a broad smile.

"Welcome to the Old Skull Inn", she shouts above the chatter of the patrons "Finest food and drink in the Dalelands!"

Sat around in the tavern are several groups of people. One long table is taken up by local farmers, laughing heartily and enjoying their ales. By the fire, several guardsmen and women are playing cards. Toward the back corner is a group of dishevelled travellers, whose sombre mood seems out of place in the heart-warming inn.

Characters can procure themselves a modest room in the inn for 5sp. They can also buy ale (1sp a pitcher), elven wine (7gp a bottle), waterskins (2sp), rations (5sp) and modest meals of roast pork, boiled potatoes and cormanor mushrooms (3sp). If the characters are looking for more adventuring gear, Ghessla points them to the General Store.

GHESSLA SILVERMANE

Ghessla knows a lot of the local news and rumours, and is the perfect person for the characters to talk to about Shadowdale.

Banites. Over the past few months, some strange folk have begun appearing in town. Rumour has it that they've been attacking travellers on the North Ride to the northeast of Shadowdale. She recommends that the party talk to a mercenary caravan sat in the far corner of the tavern.

If the characters have already fought off a group of Banites, they might mention the holy symbol (black hand) or the black gauntlets that the clerics of Bane wear. If they do, Ghessla takes a step back and gazes into the distance for a moment.

"Now that you mention it, I do have a vague memory of something like this occurring before. My grandmother, Jhaele Silvermane, who used to run the tavern, once spoke of strange clerics who tried to convert Castle Krag over yonder into a shrine to Bane. I remember vividly her description of Dark Doom Malathon – a half-orc who wore shining black plate and wielded a vicious Morningstar. All that was a long time ago though, I was but a child!"

Castle Krag & the Weather. To the northeast of here lies a ruin called Castle Krag. It's seen some troubles over the years, drow attacks, zhentarim takeovers and the like. The whole area around those ruins is currently frozen solid, something odd's occurring, but that's nothing new to Shadowdale!

Drow. The Dark Elves of the Underdark built Shadowdale! They used to keep humans and other folk here as their slaves. They've attacked Shadowdale and the surrounding areas plenty of times over the years, including when Ghessla was younger. The drow invaded the Skull Inn through an entrance to the Underdark in the tavern's basement (which is now sealed shut) and took her captive (see *Web of the Spider Queen*).

Elminster. Known as the Sage of Shadowdale, Elminster has been living here for as long as anyone can remember. In more recent years he's taken to wandering afar, only returning home to his windmill a few times in a year. He's not here at the moment, something about giants or dragons or demons or the like.

Mane the Adventurer. Mane's Band were a famous group of adventurers, but they're ancient history! Mane was running around when Elminster was young, so he must have been dead for over a century by this point. There's a manor house just down the road named after him, it used to be owned by Mother Tara, but she died about a decade ago.

Zhentarim. Zhentil Keep's not far away, and the Black Network have always had puppets and informants in Shadowdale. No doubt some folk in town still work for the zhents, but nothing much has been heard of them in the past decade or so and rumour has it that Zhentil Keep is in disrepair.

FARMERS

A dozen or so farmers (LG Chondathan human **commoners**) from the local holdings are having a good knees-up at a long feast table in the centre of the inn. They're welcoming folk, and will happily chat and share an ale with anyone eager to join them. Through conversation with the locals, characters can learn that the crops have been starting to fail. This freakishly cold weather has stunted their plants, so they've been sending tribute to the House of Plenty and praying for better weather soon. The Silverhand Farm has been hit worst.

Seram Silverhand is the current owner of the Silverhand Farm, the most easterly farm in Shadowdale. Because of its proximate location to Castle Krag, it has suffered worst from the unseasonably cold weather. Seram claims that he's heard the howling of wolves and other beasts in the woods nearby, but the other farmers dismiss these tales. If the characters go out to investigate, the Blizzard event occurs as they reach the farm (see Events in Shadowdale).

GUARDS

The three **guards** (LG Chondathan humans) are courteous to any character who approaches them, but won't make room for anyone at their table unless they have a military background of some sort, or can convince the guards to let them join the game with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The check can be made with advantage if the character is proficient in Three-Dragon Ante.

Characters who get in on the game must place a bet of 5sp to play. They must then make a DC 12 Intelligence or Charisma check, adding their proficiency bonus if applicable. On a success, they win and acquire 15sp plus their initial 5sp. On a failure, they lose their 5sp. After playing three rounds, the guards start to loosen up a little, and chat with the character(s) about the goings on in town.

Banites. Apparently some folk have been attacked on the North Ride to the northeast of here, Lady Sulwood has recruited a few more town guard to deal with the problem. Tomorrow morning they intend to head out along the road to see what's occurring.

Castle Krag & the Weather. As far as they know, the castle is just some ruin. If asked about the weather, they note that it's unseasonably cold, and they aren't much looking forward to walking the road tomorrow (see Walking the Road).

TRAVELLING COMPANY

At a table to themselves sit a group of four travellers (two **commoners** and two **thugs**). They're in a sorry mood, and look like they've taken a beating. The travellers don't properly respond to any questions asked of them, telling the characters to mind their own business or ask someone else. If offered a meal or a few pitchers of ale, the travellers cheer up a little and are willing to talk, but are still far from happy.

The travellers set out from Hillsfar a few days ago, and were headed for Arabel with a caravan of foodstuffs. Around ten days after leaving, as they were coming into Shadowdale from the east, they were attacked by a group of bandits. They were brutish fighters, and managed to steal near enough everything before making off into the hills. At a loss, they came here and reported it all to Lady Khara Sulwood. They'll head on to Arabel with what's left of their goods in a few days.

One of the travellers introduces herself as Kerri Amblewood (LN female Chondathan human **thug**), she managed to grab one of the attackers and give him a beating with her mace before he escaped. He was a tall half-orc with a cracked tusk. As he fled, she tried to grab him by the collar but grasped an amulet he was wearing instead. She gave the amulet to Lady Sulwood, but claims it was a Black Hand, the like of which she's seen on folk from Mulmaster. Characters can recognise this as a symbol of Bane with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check. In the scuffle Kerri seems to have lost a dagger with a jewelled pommel that is dear to her, although it's worth much more (250gp), she offers the characters 50gp to return it to her.

HOUSE OF PLENTY

The House of Plenty is a temple of Chauntea built on the eastern entrance to the town.

Built in the curved shape of a natural amphitheatre, the House of Plenty is a beautiful sight to behold. Columned porticoes connect the three buildings that make up the temple, and the whole structure is surrounded by gardens abounding with wildlife. Despite the lush growth of the gardens here, you can see that only a few hundred feet to the northeast frost lies upon the ground.

Numerous members of the faith are housed in the temple, although there are rarely more than a dozen in residence at any one time. The current High Harvestmistress is Trym Finefrond (LG female Strongheart halfling **priest**, capable of casting 5th level cleric spells) is a cheerful and honest woman, with long blonde sideburns plaited into braids. She is more than happy to administer healing to any injured characters (for a donation to the church), and can consult with them on various topics.

Banites. If the characters are seeking out someone with religious knowledge, the High Harvestmistress is a great source of knowledge. She can recognise any holy symbol the characters bring before her, and give them information about any deity in the Forgotten Realms (See the *Sword Coast Adventurers Guide*). With regard to the followers of Bane, she warns that they are thuggish types who pray for the strength to take from others, and gain power by force. Their holy symbol is a black hand or gauntlet, and they often wear armour displaying this. Although she is relatively new to the area, she has heard that the Zhentarim and Banites were once in league with each other, and tried to establish a temple in the ruins of Castle Krag.

Castle Krag & the Weather. As well as her limited knowledge about the followers of Bane in the ruins around a century ago, she has no knowledge of Castle Krag. What she can say is that the unpleasant weather seems to be emanating from that area. Several farmers have come to her for help, and she has blessed their fields, but fears that some evil is lurking in the ruins and causing the plight. Thankfully the blessings of Chauntea have kept the frosts off the temple for now.

GENERAL STORE

Characters who want to purchase more adventuring equipment can do so from the General Store, run by Maragund the Trader (CN male Chondathan human **spy**).

The General Store is one of the larger buildings in Shadowdale. It sits right in the centre of town, and is often rather busy as farmers and traders come here to pick up the tools they require for their craft. The shop is run by a brother and sister with slick black hair and thick Chondathan accents.

Any item listed on the Adventuring Gear or Tools tables in the *Player's Handbook* is available here, as are any weapons or armour worth less than 100gp.

Like his now deceased father, and his father before him, Maragund is a Zhentarim informant, keeping the Black Network updated on any goings on in Shadowdale. If any of the characters are Zhentarim or speak thieves' cant, they notice the subtle gestures he makes with his hands whilst talking, asking them to meet him tomorrow night at Mother Tara's Festhall. Maragund knows that the Zhentarim are funding the worshippers of Bane in Castle Krag, and is expecting a zhent operative to come and take some goods from him to the banites. Maragund is a greedy man, and is more than happy to carry out the deeds to earn a cut.

MOTHER TARA'S FESTHALL

Although Mother Tara died many years ago, the festhall that she ran still holds her name. Although the establishment went through patches of poor favour amongst the folk of Shadowdale, Mother Tara always held up a reputation herself as a fine woman. The current madam of the establishment is Rashida Qahtan (LN female Bedine human **gladiator**).

On the western side of the Shadowdale trail is a two-story hall from which hangs a sign reading 'Mother Tara's Festhall'. The sounds of merrymaking can be heard from within, although the place seems somewhat unkempt. Peeking inside, you see a tall, dark-skinned woman wearing a keffiyeh handing out drinks to the scruffy looking patrons.

Characters who wish to spend the evening at the festhall must spend 10gp, which entitles them to a night of fine dining, good wine, dancing, singing and expert company.

Rashida is an immigrant from southern Anauroch, who works for the Zhentarim. Much of the profits of the festhall are sent to the Zhentarim, who use the funds to support the clerics of Bane who have taken up home in Castle Krag. The festhall is being used as a front to store goods sourced by Maragund that will be transported to the banites. Rashida is ambitious, and will do almost anything to please her superiors.

Rashida still has some old stuff that Mother Tara left here when she died, this includes the deed to Mane's Manor (which Rashida has little interest in, and will sell for 250gp) and a ring of keys which don't fit anything in the festhall. These keys open the dresser in Mane's Manor which contains clues to the whereabouts of Mane.

ZHENTARIM MEET

The night after characters arrive in town, the Zhentarim operatives in Shadowdale are scheduled to have a meeting in Mother Tara's Festhall. Madam Rashida will not accept a booking that night for any money except from Black Network agents. The characters may have found out about the meeting from Maragund the Trader (see General Store).

A convoy of six zhentarim **bandit captains** led by a **mage** were due to arrive, but have been delayed on their travel through the Cormanthor Forest. If one or more of the characters are agents of the Zhentarim, or have got into the meeting another way, Maragund and Rashida assume that they are the agents.

"Finally, you're here. We've not had word from you in days." The madam of thee festhall calls out as you enter. "All of the supplies are here, hopefully once they've been stocked up those ignorant Banites will keep off the North Ride."

"Don't keep us waiting" snaps a scrawny man with a thick Chondathan accent "I don't want to be here any longer than I have to. I've got a cover to maintain!"

"Come through here" the woman gestures behind the bar "There are only a few sacks. They need taking straight to Castle Krag before the night is out."

If the characters do not attend the meeting, the agents turn up the following night (see Zhentarim Agents). If the party are unlucky, they may encounter the Zhentarim whilst inside Castle Krag.

MANE'S MANOR

Mane's Manor once belonged to the fabled adventurer Mane, it was left to Mother Tara in Mane's will but since she has died no one has yet taken it on. Because of this, the house is in a state of disrepair.

This once lavish house is somewhat of an eyesore on the otherwise pleasant town. The windows are boarded up, and the door hangs ajar. A sign above the door reads 'Mane's Manor', but it's clear that no one has lived in this place for several years.

Characters can walk into the manor without fear of repercussion. Inside, the furniture is mouldering and broken. Any goods that were once in the house have been removed or stolen, and only the bare bones remain. Many of the wooden beams have been damaged by damp, and the whole place smells somewhat musty.

MOTHER TARA'S NOTES

If characters take the time to search through the house, they discover a locked dresser in one of the upstairs bedrooms, it is one of the only pieces of furniture that is in good shape. The keys to the dresser are in Madam Rashida's possession (See Mother Tara's Festhall). Rashida is keen to open up the dresser, and will only allow the characters to do so if she can come along and take whatever she wants from inside. She is visibly upset when the contents is little more than parchment, and storms out in a huff mumbling about wasted time. The dresser can also be opened with a DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or broken open with a DC 16 Strength check. The noise of breaking open the dresser draws in Madam Rashida from over the road, who demands that the party pay 25gp for the damage caused on her property.

The parchment within the dresser is covered with scrawled notes which pertain to Mane. They have been written by Mother Tara, who was a close friend of the fighter. Between emotional recounts of the time the two spent together, Mother Tara talks about Mane travelling to Castle Krag after returning from across the Moonsea. He refused to tell her why he went, and never returned. After that, everyone presumed him dead.

TWISTED TOWER OF ASHABA

Home of the Lady of Shadowdale Khara Sulwood, the Twisted Tower of Ashaba is of drow origin, but has been used by the lords and ladies of Shadowdale for centuries. It backs onto the river Ashaba, where a small dock extends from the tower. Around a century ago, the tower was taken over by the Zhentilar (see *Shadowdale – The Scouring of the Land*), but it has since been restored to its rightful owners.

Spiralling up into the sky on the edge of town is the Twisted Tower, a centuries old structure that marks the seat of power in Shadowdale. At its base, the structure is not dissimilar to many other castles of the realms, but the spire which spirals from its top is of a most unique design. The tower is patrolled by several guardsmen.

If the characters introduce themselves as adventurers, they are quickly ushered inside the by guard, who claim that Lady Sulwood is currently in desperate need of adventurous types to help defend the town. They are rapidly rushed through the grand entry hall and forecourt, and into the audience chamber where Lady Sulwood sits atop her throne.

You are hurriedly ushered through into an audience chamber where Lady Sulwood sits atop an oaken throne. She fixes you with a broad smile and says;

"I can already see that you are the type of folk I seek, pray lend me your assistance, for I fear Shadowdale is once again in danger!"

Although she is of noble standing, Lady Sulwood wears a battered chain shirt and has a longsword strapped to her waist. Her brown eyes are analytical and inquisitive, and she seems to be weighing you up for the task ahead.

Stood to one side of her throne is an elf with flowing green hair, he bears numerous scars on his face and arms, but seems glad to see you.

Lady Khara Sulwood (LG female Chondathan human **knight**) and her elven bodyguard Tharinell (NG wood elf **scout**) can enlighten the characters on numerous issues facing Shadowdale.

Banites. Troubled by the recent reports of ambushes and assaults on the North Ride, Lady Sulwood has employed several new guards and mercenaries to help guard the important route through Shadowdale. Khara is fairly confident that the aggressors are cultists of Bane thanks to the holy symbol given to her by Kerri Amblewood (see Old Skull Inn). Tomorrow, they are headed northeast along the trail to try and dissuade further attacks. An important shipment of coal is due to travel through Shadowdale and onto Hillsfar, and will be passing through the area where travellers have been attacked. Lady Sulwood requests that the party meet her at sunrise tomorrow to head out together (see Walking the Road). She will reward the characters with 100gp each for their assistance.

Castle Krag. Located not far from the site of the attacks on the North Ride, Castle Krag has a notorious history of drow, Banite and Zhentarim occupation. Lady Sulwood feared that the ruins may be housing the thugs, and sent Tharinell to scout it out. He tells the party that whilst he saw no one, there were plenty of fresh tracks in the snow. It is also clear that whatever menace is causing the freezing weather is located within the castle. As to what that could be, he has no idea.

Drow. Although the town has a history with drow, there's no evidence of their involvement with any current events. Both Khara and Tharinell have a bad history with the dark elves (see *Web of the Spider Queen*) and are loathe to waste their breath talking about them. As they do, Tharinell rubs the scars on his face.

Elminster. Khara looks to Elminster as a close friend and admirer, the two have fought together in the past, and he supported her when she became Lady of Shadowdale. She has sent word to Elminster about recent events, but is yet to hear back. She doubts that he will show up, as he's typically deeply involved in foreign matters of high import.

Mane the Adventurer. Both Khara and Tharinell have heard of Mane. Khara specifically, remembers Elminster telling her that he sent Mane on a quest from which he never returned, something to do with slaying a dragon, but he didn't mention a location.

Zhentarim. Lady Sulwood is not foolish enough to think that the Zhentarim have completely left Shadowdale after their occupation of the town around a century ago. She strongly believes that the Black Network have agents in the town, but hopes that there are none in her court.

If the characters have evidence that Maragund the Trader and Madam Rashida Qahtan (see Zhentarim Meet) she will reward them with 500gp, and pledge to oust the traitors from the town. Depending on when this occurs, the zhents that arrive in town to meet with Maragund and Rashida may have to leave emptyhanded, or find themselves in a scuffle with local law enforcement (see Zhentarim Agents).

EVENTS IN SHADOWDALE

The following events occur in Shadowdale whilst the characters are there. Whether or not the characters are involved in the events is irrelevant, as some events will have later consequences for the characters to take part in.

WALKING THE ROAD

When. The morning after the characters arrive in Shadowdale.

Who. Lady Sulwood (**knight**) and Tharinell (**scout**) lead a group of three mercenaries known as the Battleaxe Brothers (Baern, Gorick and Ulfor; NG male gold dwarf **veterans**) and six **guards** along the North Ride toward the northeast. They are accompanying a caravan of nine **commoners** from Arabel led by Tamitha Throckmine (LG female Chondathan human **commoner**).

Where. Along the North Ride, to the northeast of Shadowdale, directly beneath Castle Krag.

What. Lady Sulwood leads the caravan guard along the North Ride with the hope of deterring any attacks from the Banites that she knows are lurking to the north of the trail in the ruins of Castle Krag. Unfortunately, the presence of the guard is not enough, and the cultists of Bane attack, attempting to steal the goods from the caravan. The group consists of six **banite berserkers** accompanied by three **winter wolves** and led by Mulgrith the Dark (NE female half-orc **blackguard**) atop her **warhorse skeleton**. Mulgrith the Dark has a *spell scroll of dimension door* and the following trait;

Indomitable Strength (Recharge 5–6).

As a reaction when this creature takes damage, it can roll a d10 and subtract the number rolled from the damage.

Outcomes. If the characters succeed in killing the attackers, they have enough information to determine that they are cultists of Bane. They should also be able to track their footprints back to Castle Krag. The party can collect their 100gp each reward from Lady Sulwood. If the party fail, the caravan is likely destroyed, and the goods stolen. Several of the commoners, or even Lady Sulwood or Tharinell, will be captured by the Banites. The characters should head to Castle Krag to retrieve them. If the tide of battle turns against him, Mulgrith the Dark will retreat to Castle Krag using his *spell scroll of dimension door* if necessary.

BLIZZARD

When. The afternoon that the characters arrive in Shadowdale.

Who. Two **ice trolls** (immune to cold damage, +3 (1d6) cold damage on Claw attacks, swim speed 30ft.) accompanied by a pack of five **winter wolves** attack the local farmers (**commoners**).

Where. The beasts arrive from the forest to the northeast of the Silverhand farm and make their way through the town.

What. The beasts storm out of the forest and begin to hunt for the local farmers. Realising quickly that they are in trouble, the farmers flee to the town centre and search for help. A group of six guards amass and usher everyone into the Old Skull Inn. If the farmers are already in the inn, Terrial, Seram Silverhand's daughter, comes running into town, screaming at the top of her lungs about the monsters from the woods. The beasts are accompanied by a vicious blizzard that sweeps the town, resulting in heavy precipitation.

Outcomes. Hopefully, the characters can save most of the locals. Try to set up scenes where they are forced take risks to save the lives of the farmers. If they fail, the townsfolk become cold toward them, and are less likely to offer help. Some of the locals may have been captured by the trolls and taken to Castle Krag. If they succeed, Lady Sulwood seeks them out to thank them for their help, and asks that they investigate the beasts' origin, which should lead them to Castle Krag.

ZHENTARIM AGENTS

When. The night after the characters arrive in Shadowdale.

Who. Six Zhentarim agents (NE male and female humans and drow **bandit captains**) led by Ilharess Jaerle (LE female **drow mage**) intend to meet Madam Rashida Qahtan (LN female Bedine human **gladiator**) and Maragund the Trader (CN male Chondathan human **spy**).

Where. Mother Tara's Feshall.

What. The Zhentarim, led by Ilharess, were delayed by one day whilst travelling through the Cormanthor Forest. They are due to collect some supplies, five sacks of food and building materials, which Maragund has sourced and stored in the feshall. These goods will be taken that same night to the allied Banite forces in Castle Krag.

If the supplies have already been taken by the party, Ilharess is outraged. She takes her band of zhents to Castle Krag to try and catch the imposters. If the party warned Lady Sulwood about the Zhentarim agents, twelve guards arrest Rashida and Maragund before the zhents arrive. When they find their contacts missing, they leave Shadowdale.

Outcomes. If the characters turn in Rashida and Maragund, Lady Sulwood rewards them with 500gp. If the Banites fail to collect their goods, they cannot proceed with their operations at Castle Krag. If the goods have been 'delivered' already, the party may encounter the zhentarim agents at Castle Krag.

CULTISTS OF BANE

Any creature prefaced by the word 'Banite' can be assumed to be a Cultist of the Black Hand from Mulmaster (NE Vaasan human). In addition to their normal equipment, they carry an amulet in the shape of a black hand or gauntlet, 2d6 gold pieces and wear cold weather gear (furs, gloves and the like) and a black glove or gauntlet on one hand.

In addition to their extra equipment, any cultist of Bane has the following traits;

Crushing Blow (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

As a bonus action, the creature gains a bonus to the damage roll of its next melee weapon attack. The bonus equals its Strength modifier (minimum of +1).

Dark Devotion.

The creature has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.





PART 2: CASTLE KRAG

Originally a drow outpost to the northeast of Shadowdale, Castle Krag has seen many uses over its lifetime. After the drow were removed, the place was claimed by an old ruler of Shadowdale, Jyordhan, who attempted to rebuild some elements of the place. Jyordhan was in cahoots with the Zhentarim, and eventually the people of Shadowdale, led by Mane's Band, rebelled and ousted him from power. Around a century ago, a temple of Bane was created in the lower levels of the castle by a cult of Bane and their Zhentarim allies. Since then, the ruins have been uninhabited, but in recent times something has rekindled the Banites desire to occupy the place.

At some point during the last century, Elminster sent Mane the adventurer into Castle Krag on a secret quest. Elminster had learnt that the egg of a white dragon had been stored in a dungeon beneath the castle, but had hatched and needed slaying. Unfortunately, Ghaulinthara the Winterwyrn was further along in her development than Elminster's reckoning, and she froze Mane into a statue of ice. Although she is powerful, Ghaulinthara is trapped beneath the ruins of Castle Krag. She has created a lair for herself, but cannot escape without the aid of others.

The presence of Bane still lingers in Castle Krag. This dark deity has corrupted the Winterwyrn, who now serves as his avatar on the Material Plane. This new prophet has drawn in Banites from Mulmaster, which was noticed by the Zhentarim. Seeking to take over Shadowdale once again, the zhents have been funding the reestablishment of the Banite temple in Castle Krag, oblivious to the danger which lies beneath.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

MULGRITH THE DARK

(NE female half-orc **blackguard** with **Indomitable Strength**)

Mulgrith the Dark is the head of the Banite cultists trying to reclaim Castle Krag. She is from Mulaster, where the Church of Bane is the primary religion, and has studied and fought for the Dark Lord for her whole life. Now that an avatar of Bane has awoken in the form of the Winterwyrn, she is going to prove her worth to her lord by freeing Ghaulinthara and assaulting Shadowdale.

Ideal. "Bane is the most powerful of the gods, and I will conquer in his name!"

Bond. "During my studies, I became inspired by Dark Doom Malathon, I aim to resurrect him, and together we will finish his temple of Bane."

Flaw. "If the tide of battle starts to turn, I look for more powerful allies. It's not cowardice, it's strategic."

DULNOTH WITHERHAND

(CE female Imaskari human **banite necromancer** with a *cloak of displacement*)

Dulnoth Witherhand was an apprentice to a fine wizard before an uprising in their homeland displaced her, and killed her mentor. Like her people had done thousands of years before, Dulnoth fled to the Underdark. She turned to Bane, the god of fear and tyranny in this dark time. Eventually, she met with Jaarlain and convinced him to convert to the Church of Bane. Hearing rumour through Zhentarim connections of a new avatar of Bane, the pair made their way to Castle Krag on the surface.

Ideal “The Black Hand helped me through my darkest hour, I will commit terrifying acts in his name.”

Bond “My greatest strength is my research, if my notes of spellbook were stolen, I’d fly into a tempestuous rage.”

Flaw “I’ll manipulate anyone to get what I want.”

JAARLAIN VALDRYN

(LE male banite **drow elite warrior** with a +2 *shortsword*)

For several hundred years, Jaarlain worked as a slaver in the Underdark beneath the matriarchs of his house. Then, on a fateful day, he came across a lone human wandering through his tunnels. She was different to the others, enigmatic and bizarre, and Jaarlain fell for her. She converted him to the Banite faith, and now he does what he does best at Castle Krag.

Ideal “Might makes right. I’m no leader, but I’ll happily be the right-hand man.”

Bond “Dulnoth helped me see the Dark Lord’s wonder. I am infatuated with her.”

Flaw “I’m a great slaver, but it’s a lot easier here than in the Underdark. I have a tendency to slack off.”

DARK DOOM MALATHON

(CE male **deathknight**)

Over a century ago, Dark Doom Malathon tried to convert the ruins of Castle Krag into a Banite temple and fortress. His efforts were thwarted by a band of adventurers and he was killed. Thankfully, the Dark Lord is giving him a second chance, and he will soon be reanimated as a death knight.

Ideal “Bane has seen it fit to give me a second chance, I will not disappoint him.”

Bond “Castle Krag is mine to command. What I could not achieve in life I will in death.”

Flaw “I’ve already died once. I don’t want it to happen again.”

MANE THE ADVENTURER

(CN male Chondathan human **champion**)

Mane is an adventurer who was middle-aged in the mid-14th century DR. He has travelled throughout the Dalelands, around the Moonsea and even to Thay. After failing to construct himself a stronghold and found a community, he returned to Shadowdale and sought out Elminster, with the hope of reliving his old life as an adventurer. Elminster sent him to Castle Krag to retrieve a dragon egg from its ruinous depths, but a miscalculation meant that Mane was face to face with a young white dragon, alone.

Ideal “In truth, I’d like to retire from adventuring and become a noble of my own citadel.”

Bond “I want a second shot at that blasted dragon!”

Flaw “I’ve been dead for over a century. The world has changed so much, and I don’t know where I fit in.”

GHAULINTHARA THE WINTERWYRM

(Appendix A)

When Ghaulinthara was but an egg, she was brought to the ruins of Castle Krag by the Cult of the Dragon. They stored her egg here, hoping that it would never be discovered in such a wayward location. Before they left, they gave her an ioun stone: sustenance so that she may grow healthy until they returned, but they never would. Throughout the storied history of Castle Krag, Ghaulinthara remained unnoticed, until Elminster caught word from a passing band of adventurers of a strange aura around the ruins. Thankfully, he had just been approached by Mane, looking to get back into adventuring. He sent Mane to deal with the issue, and promptly forgot about it. Centuries later, Ghaulinthara has become an adult, her only parent the twisted presence on Bane that lurks in Castle Krag. Forged by his black hand, she has become an avatar of the Dark Lord, and news of her coming has drawn in a cult of followers.

Ideal “I will become a tyrant who rules a vast kingdom, and by father has promised me.”

Bond “My shrine to Bane is sacred to me, any who desecrate it will feel my icy wrath.”

Flaw “I was raised by a god. I have no concept of my own mortality.”

OPENING

Eventually, the characters will find themselves at Castle Krag. They may be searching for the Cultists of Bane, seeking evidence of Mane or investigating the origin of the blizzards and winter beasts.

After traipsing uphill along the old trail through near ten inches of snow, you finally emerge at the base of the ruined castle. The undergrowth around the place is thick, covered with briar and gorse, and a freezing wind howls through the ruins. You can clearly see new footsteps in the snow leading toward a wooden stair which ascend the ridge on which Castle Krag is built.

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 11 or higher can hear the sounds of conversation above the frigid wind.

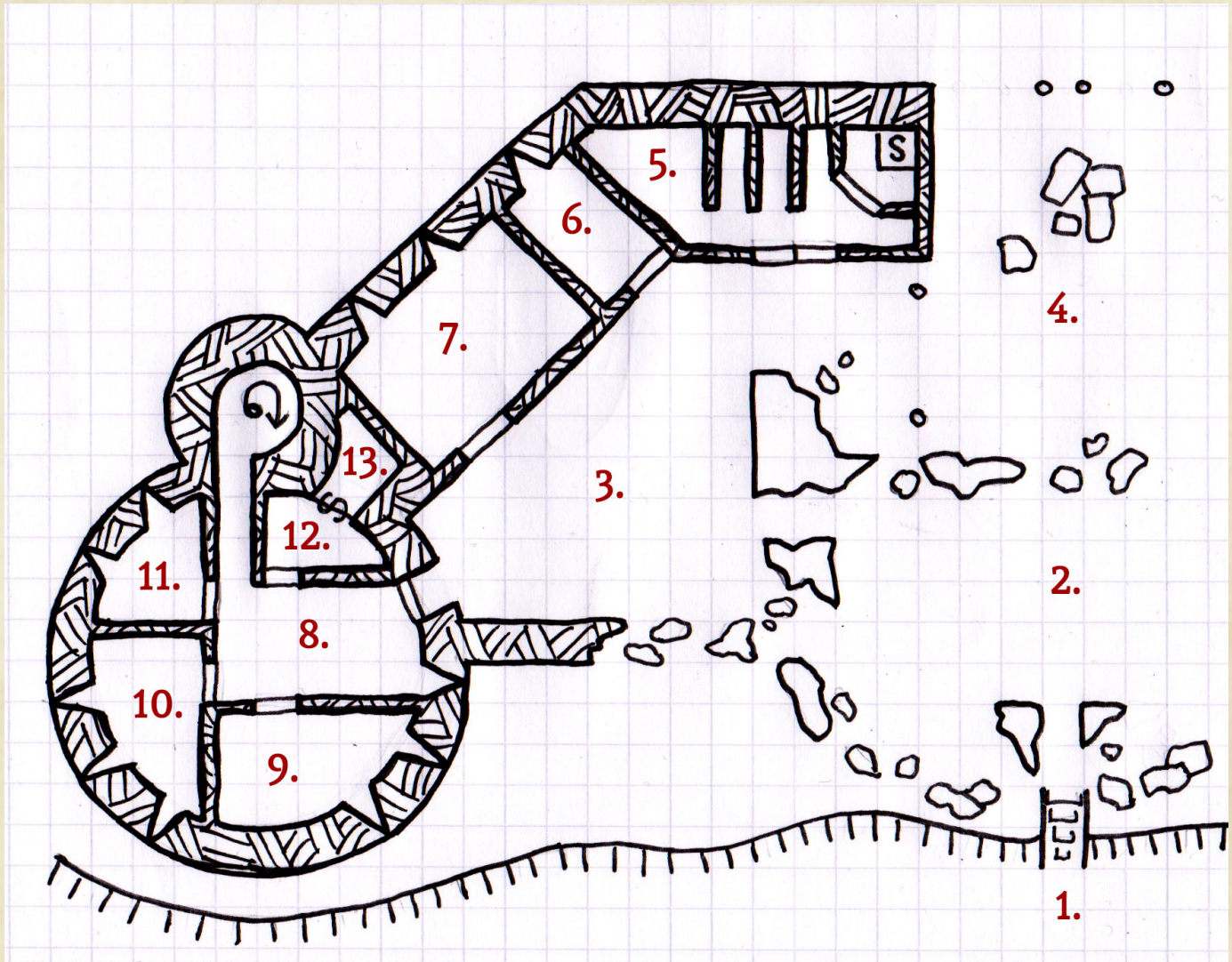
“There’s been trouble down on the road, there were warriors from Shadowdale waiting there. Mulgrith says they’re on their way here.”

“There’s no way they’ll breach the castle, not while The Black Hand’s blood runs through my veins!”

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 18 or higher can hear the dull sounds of blocks being dragged across snow, punctuated by the occasional clunk as they are dropped.

MAP - CASTLE KRAG RUINS

1 square = 5 feet



1. APPROACH AND ENTRANCE

In order to make their way into the grounds of Castle Krag, characters must either ascend the wooden stair, or attempt to climb the ridge. Ascending the stair may reveal their approach the two banite berserkers and three winter wolves in area 2. Climbing the ridge requires a climber's kit and a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

You make your way into the grounds of the ruined castle. Little remains of its former glory save a single, dilapidated tower to the west and a barracks come stable block to the north. To the east is a great mass of crumbled and broken stone, most of which is covered in a deep layer of snow.

Characters ascending the stair will find themselves in area 2, those climbing the ridge can choose more freely their next move.

2. BARBICAN

Walled in by ruinous stone barriers is a courtyard. The tracks of humanoids and wolves can be seen in the snow trailing off to a gap in the piles of rock to the left. Beyond this, the remnants of a round tower can be seen. To the east is a circular wooden fence, around twenty feet wide within which several people are digging.

Creatures. This courtyard is guarded by two **banite berserkers** and two **winter wolves**. If they are attacked, or intruders are spotted, the guards set their winter wolves upon the trespassers and climb through the rubble to area 4, where they alert the trolls. At night, the wolves are not present. There is a 50% chance that Jaarlain Valdryn (LE male **drow elite warrior** with a +2 *shortsword*) is watching over the slaves by the quarry.

Gaining Entry. Characters who can display a symbol of Bane or the Zhentarim can succeed on a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to be permitted access to the ruins. If they have with them the Zhentarim supplies, they are told to report to Mulgrith the Dark in area 7.

Quarry. To the east of this area is a wooden fence which encloses what appears to be a quarry. Slaves captured from Shadowdale or caravans on the North Ride are forced to dig through the snow, frozen earthsoil and stone here. The intention of this digging is to free the Winterwyrn from her subterranean lair (see area 23c). If characters arrive at Castle Krag more than a day after the Zhentarim supplies have been delivered, the quarry is already around twenty-feet-deep and could be broken through by Ghaulinthara. Any slaves captured previously in the adventure can be found here.

3. COURTYARD

This courtyard is empty save for a handful of gorse bushes sprinkled with snow and a large pile covered with an ice encrusted canvas.

Treasure. Beneath the canvas is a pile of stone blocks and three sets of mason's tools.

GENERAL FEATURES: CASTLE KRAG RUINS

The following features are common throughout the ruins of Castle Krag.

Walls. The original castle walls are formed from loosely joined roughhewn stone, with arrow slits 4 feet tall and 6 inches wide. The newer ones seem to be formed of smooth stone, reinforced with flying buttresses. The walls range in height from ten to fifty feet. They can be climbed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Light. The entirety of the interior is well lit by torches in scones or by fires burning in hearths.

Patrol. If characters wish to infiltrate the ruins without being noticed, they must succeed on a DC 15 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. On a failure, they are noticed and attacked by a patrol of three banite berserkers and two winter wolves.

Resting. Characters cannot take a Long Rest in Castle Krag whilst the banites still occupy it. They can attempt a Short Rest anywhere. If they do, roll a d20. On a 10 or higher they are found the the patrol.

Rubble. The exterior areas of Castle Krag are strewn with rubble. Walking through these areas counts as difficult terrain.

4. CASTLE EXPANSION

Clearly, work has been attempted here several times in the past. Rotted wooden poles jut like broken bones from the skin of snow. Several large stone blocks have been gathered together in the centre of the place. Two hulking beasts with mottled white skin and claws like shortwords are stacking the huge bricks atop each other to form the foundations of a wall.

Creatures. There are two **ice trolls** (immune to cold damage, +3 (1d6) cold damage on Claw attacks, swim speed 30ft.) in this area. They are using the stone blocks to create foundations for an expansion along the northern edge of the area. Whilst working, their passive Wisdom (Perception) is reduced to 6. The guards from area 2 may come and collect the trolls to fight off intruders.

Building. If characters take several days to make their way to Castle Krag, the building work will have progressed. The old timbers will have been replaced and the foundations fully laid for the expansion. The two trolls will join the guards in area 2.

5. STABLE

Two horses and the animated skeleton of a third occupy the stalls on the far side of this room. The smell of horse manure permeates throughout, and the straw underfoot muffles your footsteps. In the north-eastern corner of the room is a small wooden enclosure.

Creatures. This room contains two **riding horses** used by the cultists and a **warhorse skeleton** belonging to Mulgrith. The two riding horses can be ridden away with ease, but the skeletal mount will not cooperate unless the rider can succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.



Tack Room. The wooden door in the corner open out into a tack room that smells strongly of leather and saddle soap. The room is filled with saddles, bits and bridles as well as numerous blankets and other tack. Most of the tack is cracking and stiff through lack of use, and a pile of mouldering blankets is stacked in the corner. Characters that succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notice the edge of a trapdoor beneath the blanket pile.

The trapdoor leads to a narrow shaft, three feet on a side with iron rungs set into one wall. It descends 25 feet to an equally narrow tunnel heading south. This tunnel connects to a secret door behind the statue labelled 'c' in area 20. The new cultists do not know of its existence.

Treasure. Despite the state of most of the tack, there are two leather riding saddles (10gp each), one black leather exotic saddle for the skeletal horse (60gp), four bits and bridles (2gp each) and two sets of saddlebags (4gp each).

6. KENNEL

The door to this cramped room hangs ajar from which wafts the smell of wet dog. Inside, the floor is littered with torn up rags and mounds of snow, illuminated by light from an arrow slit on the far wall.

This chamber is used to house the five winter wolves that belong to the banite cultists.

Creatures. During the day this room is empty but at night it contains three **winter wolves**.

7. BARRACKS

Bedrolls fill nearly all the available floorspace in this chamber, save for glowing braziers in each corner and a single wooden chest. The smell inside is musty and sweaty. Despite this, the warmth of the fires is appealing.

This chamber is being used to house the ten banite cultists who have come to rebuild the temple.

Creatures. During the day this chamber is empty, as the cultists are out searching for slaves or food. At night, seven **banite berserkers** sleep here, taking it in turns to do guard duty in area 2.

Resting. Characters can rest in this area relatively safely, as it receives little traffic during the day. Any Short Rests taken here are guaranteed to be uninterrupted by the patrol (see General Features sidebar).

Treasure. The chest is not locked, and contains assorted coinage equal to 74gp. It also contains a wealth of stolen goods, including a Kerri's dagger (see The Old Skull Inn, 250gp), a large gold bracelet (250gp), a copper chalice with silver filigree (25gp) and a brass mug with jade inlay (250gp). If the cultists managed to steal from Tamitha's caravan (see Walking the Road), there are six sacks of coal in here too (5sp each). It also contains five potions of healing.



8. MAIN HALL

The hall ahead is bare save for a few wooden crates and barrels. Several doorways open onto other chambers, and the corridor turns northward to a spiral staircase. The high roof above has fallen through in some areas, and icicles shoot droplets of frigid water down to the cold flagstones below.

Treasure. The crates and barrels contain various preserved foodstuffs, winter clothing and furs. If the characters can find a way to take it, the whole lot is worth 100gp.

9. SLAVEMASTER'S QUARTERS

These quarters have been lavishly decorated with black web-like mesh draped from the ceiling and across the walls. Woven mats cover the floor, and the wooden bedframe is covered with purple and black pillows. Hanging on the far wall is an ornamental black enamelled gauntlet engraved with web motifs beneath which is a side table.

Creatures. There is a 50% chance that Jaarlain Valdryn (LE male **drow elite warrior** with a +2 *shortsword*) is in here working at his desk. He considers himself a superior duellist to anyone he has met, and will challenge individual party members to one-on-one combat should they attack.

Treasure. Although obviously associated with Bane, the enamelled gauntlet is worth 250gp. Atop the side table is a flask of *drow poison*. Jaarlain uses this to poison his +2 *shortsword* if given the opportunity. The poison flask is ornately designed, and is one of a pair (25gp each).

10. MULGRITH'S QUARTERS

A strangely oversized bed has been shoved against the far, curved wall of this chamber, and takes up most of the room within it. On the left-hand side of the room is a weapon stand filled with a variety of vicious looking arms. The whole place is lit by a smouldering brazier in the centre.

Creatures. There is a 50% chance that Mulgrith the Dark (NE female half-orc **blackguard** with **Indomitable Strength**) is in this room polishing her weapon collection or resting on the bed. If the characters have fought Mulgrith before, she is in area 20. Hidden beneath the bed is a **shadow mastiff alpha**, a dear pet of Mulgrith. If the creature senses intruders, it uses its Terrifying Howl to notify any creatures in areas 2-15 of their presence.

Treasure. Also beneath the bed is an iron box which contains Mulgrith's possessions. It is smeared with *oil of taggit* which can be noticed with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check before being picked up and scraped off with a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Failure results in the character touching the poison. Inside the box is an onyx holy symbol of Bane (50gp), a *sending stone* connected to her patron in Mulmaster, a jar of *keoghtom's ointment* and assorted coins totalling 143gp. Characters who touch the sending stone instantly receive a message;

"Greetings from the Church of the Black Hand, Mulgrith. Has the avatar of Bane been freed?"

11. DULNOTH'S QUARTERS

The door to this room is locked. The key is in the pockets of Dulnoth's robes (area 20). It can be opened with a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or broken down with a DC 14 Strength check. Breaking down the door will alert the trolls in area 4 who come to investigate.

Pale, greyish light pours into the chamber from arrow slits on the far wall. It illuminates the living quarters of a single individual including a low bed covered in assorted furs, a battered wooden trunk, and a small desk beside the door. Atop the desk are dozens of sheets of parchment in a disorganised pile. Hanging on strings from the chambers ceiling are withered and desiccated humanoid hands.

This room belongs to Dulnoth, a banite necromancer working to restore the temple of Bane and resurrect one of his most loyal servants.

Trunk. The large wooden trunk at the foot of the bed is locked with a solid iron padlock. The keys are in Dulnoth's robes (area 20). The trunk can be opened with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools but is too strong to break. The chest is also protected by a magical enchantment which can be removed with a casting of *dispel magic*. If the chest is opened before the words 'Open by the Black Hand' are uttered, it triggers the trap.

Initially, a pulse of necrotic energy bursts out from the chest. Each creature within twenty feet of the chest must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. After this, a number of the withered hands hanging from the ceiling animate as **crawling claws** and attack. The number equals the total damage taken divided by 5 (rounded up).

Inside the trunk are several sets of black and grey robes, embroidered with a black hand. Beneath these are Dulnoth's spellbook (which contains the spells *animate dead*, *blight*, and *create undead*), a black velvet pouch holding eight onyx stones (150gp each) and 267gp in assorted coins, a component pouch, and a sketch of Castle Krag with the date 1375 DR scrawled on it (Appendix A).

Desk. The parchment on the desk seems to be on a whole range of topics and is impossible to sort through before succeeding on a DC 14 Intelligence check. After this, it becomes clear that the research falls into three main categories.

The first are the litanies of Bane. They describe various rituals pertaining to the Lord of Darkness, and provide some history about him and the Church of Bane, whose head is the House of the Black Lord in Mulmaster. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check allows a character to locate some important information; the Church of Bane sent these cultists here to find the body of Dark Doom Malathon and 'return him to the faith'. It also talks of an avatar of Bane beneath the ruins of Castle Krag.

The second are papers documenting the history of Castle Krag, specifically the attempted building of a temple of Bane in the ruins. The names Dark Doom Malathon, Kurn Blackrage, Tolar and Nazrym appears throughout. Apparently, their attempts to claim Castle Krag were thwarted. There are also notes regarding the 'new avatar of Bane; the Winterwurm who resides beneath the ruins'. There are letters to and from the Church of Bane regarding the freeing of the avatar.

The final lot are arcane documents that cannot be made any sense of without a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, the character understands that whoever collected these scrolls intends to resurrect the corpse of a long dead humanoid with a manipulated version of the animate dead spell.

12. GARDEROBE

A wooden bench lines the back wall of this room, and has several holes cut into it. Otherwise the room is featureless.

This is the castle's privy.

Secret Door. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 20 or higher notice that a few of the stones that form the highest portion of the curved wall jut out far enough to form a ladder of sorts. These could be reached by someone standing on the bench. At the top of this disguised ladder sits a secret door, detectable with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, which can be opened by shifting one stone to the right. Beyond is a narrow crawlspace leading to area 13.

13. SECRET STORAGE

The crawlspace leads to a low-ceilinged chamber hardly tall enough to stand in. Shoved against the back wall are three wooden chests that are covered in a good inch of dust and cobwebs.

Creatures. One of the chests in this room is a **mimic**.

Treasure. Two of these chests were put here over a century ago by Dark Doom Malathon and his followers. They remained unfound when he was killed, and sat here ever since. The chests are unlocked. The first contains eight bags filled with 1,000gp each and a pouch of ten aquamarines (500gp each). The second holds a scrollcase with two *spell scrolls of wall of stone*, two of *stone shape* and two of *creation*. It also contains a *lyre of building* (Appendix A).

14. SECRET ROOM

Finding the entrance to this room requires a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check, which reveals a thin outline of the doorframe. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the door pivots horizontally on a central point.

This room is completely empty save for a few smashed lamps and some impressively large cobwebs. Dust covers everything, including the few piles of mouldered fibrous material against the far wall.

Hundreds of years ago this room contained treasures belonging to Jyordhan, one of the first owners of the Castle. Since that time, the treasures have been looted.

Creatures. Any character that enters this room triggers the wrath of the spirit of Jyordhan which manifests as a **wraith**.

GENERAL FEATURES: CASTLE KRAG DUNGEONS

The following features are common throughout the dungeons of Castle Krag.

Ceilings and Walls. The walls of the dungeon are cut into the earth and covered by stone bricks. The ceilings are arched and reach a height of fifteen feet.

Extreme Cold. The aura of winter emanating from Ghaulinthara's lair is overpowering. At the end of each hour, creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on this saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear or those naturally adapted to cold climates.

15. ANTECHAMBER

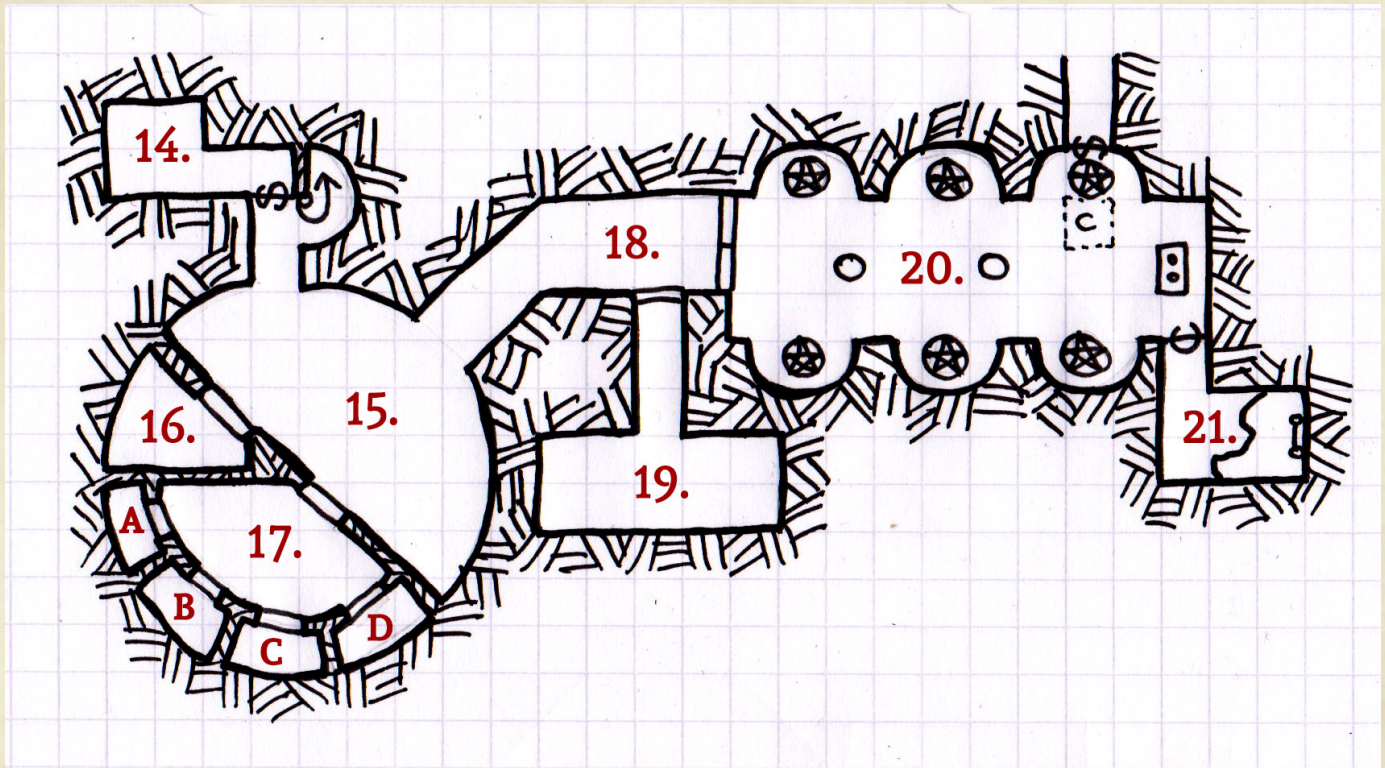
Torches gutter in sconces around the edges of this room, illuminating long tapestries depicting huge black hands that cover the walls. In the centre of the room is a towering creature, its skin bleached white and drawn tight over its bones save its right hand, which is black. It has a gruesomely stretched humanoid head and a scorpion-like tail.

Creatures. This room allows access to the rest of the dungeon level of Castle Krag, and is thus defended by one of the castle's most powerful inhabitants, a **bone devil** sent to the Material Plane by Bane himself. Combat in this room garners attention of the creatures in area 16 and 17.



MAP - CASTLE KRAG DUNGEONS

1 square = 5 feet



16. WELL ROOM

A waist-high stone wall surrounds a well in the centre of this chamber. An iron ring set into the floor by the low wall is attached by rope to a bucket which sits atop the structure.

The well is forty-feet-deep to the surface of the water, which is extremely cold and a further fifteen-feet-deep. The walls inside are slick with slime and require a DC 15 check to climb unaided.

17. DUNGEON

This room is guarded by two sinister looking cultists of Bane, one of whom wears a robe with a black gauntlet upon it. The pair are sat at a table on the northern wall examining a dusty old tome whilst washing their hands in a bowl of steaming water. Hanging from the walls are implements of torture, some of which are rusting away.

Creatures. There room contains a **banite gladiator** and **banite cult fanatic** who are in charge of guarding, and occasionally 'motivating' the slaves captured by the cult.

17A

Lying on the floor of this room is a dead slave, he has clearly had his heart cut out. Blood congeals on the floor and the instruments of torture lie scattered about.

17B

This room is empty save for a pile of shackles and manacles. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 25 or higher notice the name 'Alazar Falconhand' scratched into one of the flagstones.

17C & D

These cells hold the slaves captured from Shadowdale and the North Ride during the night. During the day, they are hard at work in the quarry (area 2).

18. HALLWAY

Beyond the antechamber beneath the tower's dungeon is a wide hallway lit by torches in sconces on the walls. Despite the fires, the temperature has dropped significantly and you can see your breath before your faces. On the southern wall of the hallway is a single door. The far end is blocked by a pair of wooden doors exquisitely carved with images of war – a menacing figure in black armour in a swirling cloak with a symbol upon his breastplate smites foes with a gauntleted fist.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check whilst within five feet of the doors at the far end of the hallway allows a character to notice the sounds of chanting and incantation coming from beyond.

Cursed Doors. An ancient curse laid by Malathon lies upon these doors. He cast a symbol (pain) (spell save DC 19) upon the doors which afflicts any who do not follow the Church of Bane that see the doors while within 60 feet of them (on this side). Any character afflicted by the spell hears the voice of Dark Doom Malathon in their heads bellowing “Trespass not in the Church of the Dark Lord”

19. MALATHON’S CRYPT

Lit by hanging lanterns enchanted with magical green flames, this room is clearly a crypt of some variety. Against the eastern wall is a stone coffin decorated with masterful stonemasonry depicting scenes of torture and human sacrifice. The lid has been removed, and leans against an adjacent wall. The rest of the wall space is covered with a variety of ancient-looking tapestries woven in black, green and cream. A stone desk sits at the western end of the room, atop of which are a selection of instruments, both religious and scientific.

This room was once Dark Doom Malathon’s bedchamber, but after his death the surviving Banites of Castle Krag recovered his body and entombed him here. In the past months Dulnoth Witherhand, under the command of Mulgrith the Dark, has been working on reanimating Malathon’s corpse.

Coffin. The body of Malathon has been removed (to area 20). Surrounding where his corpse once lay are numerous treasures. Any creature with a funerary object (see Treasure) in their possession becomes the target of a vile curse; Banite creatures (see Cultists of Bane sidebar and Important Characters) have advantage on attacks rolls against them. Narrate this to the players thusly;

The strikes of the cultists of Bane seem to be guided by some supernatural hatred. With each swing black smoke streams from their weapons, each strike leaving a searing black scar upon your armour.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check allows the characters to realise they must have done something to mark themselves as enemies of Bane, if the check succeeds by 5 or more, they know it is because they have a funerary object in their possession.

Desk. Atop the stone desk are a whole host of strange scientific equipment and religious tomes, symbols and tinctures. Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check can sort through the mess and discover a small, leather-bound notebook which reads;

Finally, I believe I have mastered the new ritual. My alteration of the animate dead spell seems to be working on ever more powerful creatures thanks to the power of The Black Hand. Tomorrow, we shall attempt to resurrect Dark Doom Malathon as a death knight. My only reservation is the time it takes to perform the ritual, if I am interrupted, the potency of the spell will surely be compromised.

Treasure. From the desk, the characters can plunder three tomes of religious, arcane and scientific knowledge (25gp each), a set of alchemist’s supplies (50gp), a component pouch (25gp) and a holy symbol – reliquary containing some of Dark Doom Malathon’s hair (5gp to most, 200gp to a Banite). The following funerary objects can be stolen from Malathon’s casket amulet of proof against petrification (Appendix A), thirteen obsidian stones (10gp each), six bloodstones (50gp each), a holy symbol - emblem of Bane in the shape of a black gauntlet (5gp), +2 *morningstar* and a *ring of counterspells* (*magic missile*) (Appendix A).

20. TEMPLE OF BANE

Beyond the double doors stretches an alcoved chamber lit by floating candles which cast a flickering virescent light. Statues stand in each alcove depicting warriors and cultists, each with black right hands. At the far end, motheaten tapestries showing gory images of a bare-chested warrior cover the walls. Short steps lead to a black altar. Lying atop this is a corpse, bound in blood red bandages and covered with a panoply of arcane items. Chanting in a low, menacing tone is a pale woman clad in black robes with strange tentacles hanging from them, in one hand she holds a human heart. As you watch, she performs esoteric gestures above the corpse, and it begins to twitch. Suddenly, a figure clad in black plate leaps from the shadows and charges you with a glaive.

This room has long been used as a temple of Bane, constructed, destroyed and reconstructed numerous times over the past few centuries. The statues depict various cultists of Bane that have worshipped him over the years, including one of Jyordhan (in the southeast corner) which has been recently repaired.

Creatures. When the characters enter, they are charged by Mulgrith the Dark (NE male half-orc **blackguard** with **Indomitable Strength**). Behind the altar, Dulnoth Witherhand (CE female Imaskari human **banite necromancer** with a *cloak of displacement*) is casting a ritual to animate the body of Dark Doom Malathon. She is concentrating on the ritual (as if on a spell) which finishes at the end of her third turn. Once her ritual finishes (either by choice or broken concentration) the body of Malathon animates as a **death knight**. Malathon has 60 hit points for each turn the ritual lasted (maximum of 180). If any of the characters have funerary objects in their possession, Malathon attacks them first, and tries to take back his +2 *morningstar* if they have it.

Secret Door. Behind the statue in the northeast alcove is a secret door, which leads to a passageway that ends in area 5. The door can be noticed with a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. To open it, the characters must twist the black hand of the statue, they can determine this with a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Concealed Door. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check in the rear end of the chamber allows the characters to notice that the tapestry on the southern wall shimmers slightly in the green light. Touching the tapestry reveals that it is frozen solid and covered with millions of tiny ice crystals. The tapestry can be removed from the wall with a DC 15 Strength check or thawed off by using an open flame (which takes one minute). Behind the tapestry is a door which leads to area 21.

Development. If Mulgrith and Dulnoth are at risk, both know that Ghaulinthara will protect them. Unfortunately, due to the frozen tapestry, escape is difficult and the characters may kill them first. If Mulgrith still has her *spell scroll of dimension door*, she uses it to flee to area 10, grab her things and leave. Malathon does not know about the Winterwurm, but does know of the secret door, and will try to escape that way and round up some allies (berserkers, ice trolls etc.).

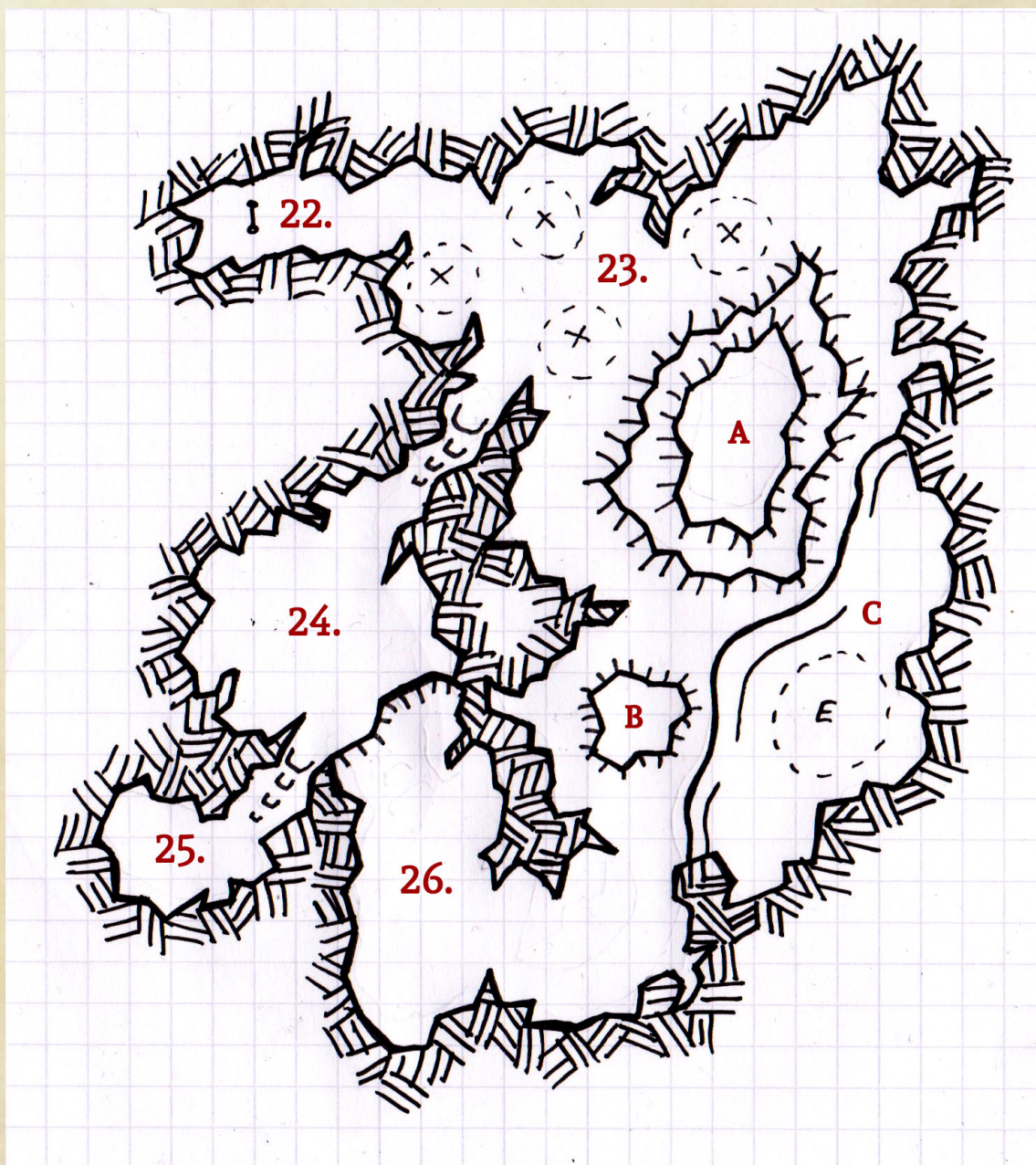
21. EMPTY CHAMBER

This room is entirely encased in ice and you can feel your digits start to numb as you stand within. The floor of the room has fallen through, leaving a gaping hole from which a frigid wind blows. A rope ladder has been nailed into the far wall with iron spikes, allowing you to descend into the cavern beneath.

Characters who descend the ladder must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to do so without losing their grip on the frozen rungs. If they do, each creature beneath them must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked off to. Any creature that loses their grip falls down into area 22, which is fifty feet below.

MAP - LAIR OF THE WINTERWYRM

1 square = 5 feet



22. ICE CAVE ENTRANCE

You descend into a small cavern entirely coated with pale blue ice. To the east the chamber opens up beyond a rudimentary archway. Behind the rope ladder is an iron brazier filled with unlit torches.

Although cold, the torches can still be lit if the characters desire a lightsource.

23. GHAULINTHARA'S LAIR

Stretching out before you is an enormous cavern, crudely sculpted out of the stone of the earth and covered with a glistening layer of slick ice. The entire cave is around a hundred feet long, and half as wide. Shadows pool in small fissures in the ice-covered walls, a few of which seem to lead deeper down into as yet unexplored caverns. As you survey the scene, you notice something move. Clambering up a mound of compacted ice and snow (area 23a) is a terrifying dragon at least fifteen feet tall. As it ascends the mound, it stretches out its wings, which graze the far walls and ceiling sending down sheets of ice. The creature's front right hand is as black as coal, and bears a fistful of rings.

If the Zhentarim supplies arrived, and the quarry has been dug;

Thin shafts of light pierce the far end of the cavern through a couple of thin cracks in the ceiling at the far end of the cavern.

This dragon is **Ghaulinthara the Winterwyrn** (Appendix A). She is far from pleased that the adventures have invaded her lair, and presumably desecrated the shrine to Bane above it. She attacks instantly, wasting no time in showing her displeasure. Throughout combat, Ghaulinthara glorifies the Dark Lord Bane, calling out to him for the strength to destroy the heathens.

GENERAL FEATURES: LAIR OF THE WINTERWYRM

The following features are common throughout the Lair of the Winterwyrn beneath Castle Krag.

Darkness. The entirety of the lair is unlit, Ghaulinthara uses her darkvision to see.

Extreme Cold. The aura of winter emanating from Ghaulinthara's lair is overpowering. At the end of each hour, creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on this saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear or those naturally adapted to cold climates.

Stairs. The stairways in the lair have been created by Ghaulinthara and are covered in slippery ice. When a creature moves onto slippery ice for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

Thin Ice. Some areas of the floor in the lair are constructed of thin ice over pits of filled with spikes of ice (marked on the map by an 'x'). Ghaulinthara and the cultists know where these are, and avoid stepping on them. Whenever one Medium (or two Small) creatures step on an area of thin ice, it breaks. All creatures on broken ice fall down into a thirty foot deep pit taking 11 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 11 (2d10) piercing damage from the ice spears. The walls of the pits are slick with ice, and require a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to climb.

Walls and Ceiling. The walls of the lair are covered in slick ice. They cannot be climbed without appropriate gear (climber's kit, grappling hook etc.). Characters must succeed on a DC 15 Athletics check to climb the walls even with equipment. The ceilings are twenty-five feet high.

23A. GHAULINTHARA'S THRONE

This mound of compacted ice and snow is around ten feet tall. Climbing it is only possible with a successful DC 14 Athletics check. Ghaulinthara prefers to sit atop this icy throne whenever possible.

23B. SHRINE TO BANE

A smaller plinth of ice houses a variety of artefacts holy to the Dark Lord. Sunk into the ice is a black marble sculpture of a gauntlet that is six-feet-tall. Scattered around this are various offerings including assorted coinage equal to 3,638gp, twenty-three obsidian stones (50gp each), six frozen shortwords (10gp each) and an assortment of battered and broken armour.

23C. ICE LAKE

At the far end of the chamber is a frozen lake, above which is the quarry (area 2).

Escape. If the Zhentarim supplies have been delivered, and the quarry dug, Ghaulinthara can use an action on her turn to smash the remaining ceiling through, and escape her lair.

Slippery Ice. The surface of the lake is covered in slippery ice and counts as difficult terrain. When a creature (except Ghaulinthara) moves onto slippery ice for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. Each 10-foot-square of the ice has AC 13; 5hp and can be broken by reducing it to 0hp. Any creature standing on the ice when it is broken falls into the water beneath.

Frigid Water. Beneath the surface of the ice is a lake of frigid water. A creature that falls into the water for the first time on a turn takes 11 (2d10) cold damage and must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. The effect occurs again if a creature starts its turn in the water. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures that are naturally adapted to living in cold water.

24. TREASURE HOARD

A sloping stairway leads down to a near-circular cave looked down upon by a cliff of ice to the southeast. Frozen into the floor of the cavern are numerous bodies of those who have displeased the Winterwyrms. Flitting above your heads are dozens of imp-like creatures of pure ice.

Creatures. Guarding the Winterwyrms treasure hoard are twenty **ice mephits**. They attack any intruders with glee, but scatter into area 25 if Ghaulinthara follows the characters (through area 26 to here). They never dare to enter area 23. As the mephits attack they screech;

"You'll be froze like the rest of 'em! The Winterwyrms loves to freeze 'em!"

Treasure. Frozen beneath the ice are numerous adventurers who have tried to slay the Winterwyrms in the past. Many of them still have magic equipment on their persons. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check can quickly identify which items might be useful. There is an elf ranger clutching a +2 *shortsword* and wearing *bracers of defence*, a human wizard with a *wand of fireballs* wearing *wings of flying* and a dwarf cleric frozen with a *bag of holding* (which contains three *potions of superior healing*, one *potion of growth*, one *potion of fire breath* and a *potion of invulnerability*).

Characters can thaw an individual item out from the ice with an open flame in one minute. Alternatively, they deal 22 (6d6) magical fire damage to the ice above a corpse to retrieve all of the possessions.



25. MANE'S MAUSOLEUM

Deeper still into the lair of the Winterwyrn is a tiny, cramped cavern barely more than a crack in the ice. You notice a hunched figure, frozen in ice. The corpse is of a human fighter with a great black beard, straining to get deeper into the fissure. He clutches one mangled arm to his chest, and is dragging an impressively large greatsword along with the other.

This is the final resting place of Mane the Adventurer (CN male Chondathan human **champion**). Upon his tunic is a crest that matches exactly that of the noble in hook 2. Although the mephits can get into this cavern, Ghaulinthara cannot, and thus Mane has remained relatively safe (although dead for over a century). If characters thaw out Mane (see area 24) his limp body falls to the ground. As he drops, his mangled arm flies open, revealing a strange stone clutched in the bloody mess of what was his hand. This is a *stone of true resurrection* (Appendix A).

26. GALLERY

This forty foot tall cliff of ice hangs over the frozen treasure hoard below. There are scratch marks on the edge of the cliff, the origin of which you'd prefer not to contemplate.

Ghaulinthara delights in pushing intruders back up against the cliff face, causing them to plummet down to their death. If the fall doesn't kill them, a blast of her icy breath soon finishes the job and conveniently adds them to her frozen hoard.



OUTCOMES

Depending on the circumstances of the characters' arrival at Shadowdale and Castle Krag, they may have achieved any number of the following:

- Prevented the caravan of merchants from being enslaved and earning a reward from Lady Sulwood (see Walking the Road).
- Exposed the Zhentarim agents within Shadowdale (see Zhentarim Agents), and prevented their operations from furthering the Cult of Bane's nefarious plans within Castle Krag.
- Saved the lives of the local farmers and their families from attacking ice trolls and winter wolves (see Blizzard).
- Earned the respect and reward from Lady Sulwood for routing the Banites from the ruins of Castle Krag (see Hook 1).
- Investigated, tracked down, found and possibly resurrected Mane the Adventurer, alerted his ancestor and told him of his new nobility (see Hook 2).
- Slain Ghaulinthara the Winterwyrn and freed the lands of Shadowdale from her freezing aura (see Hook 3).
- Defeated the main proponents of the Cult of Bane, including Mulgrith the Dark, Dulnoth Witherhand, Jaarlain Valdryn and Dark Doom Malathon.
- Returned the bejeweled dagger to Kerri Amblewood and collected a reward (see Old Skull Inn).
- Accumulated a vast quantity of treasure from the Banites and their various allies.

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APPENDIX A

This appendix contains the additional creatures and magic items required to run this adventure.

GHAULINTHARA THE WINTERWYRM

Huge dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (*ring of protection*)

Hit Points 200 (16d12 + 96)

Speed 40ft., burrow 30ft., fly 80ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +6, Con +12, Int +0, Wis +7, Cha +7 (*ring of protection*)

Skills Perception +11, Religion +4, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities cold

Senses blindsight 60ft., darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Dark Devotion. Ghaulinthara has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Ice Walk. Ghaulinthara can move across and climb icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice or snow doesn't cost extra movement.

Indomitable Strength (Recharge 5–6). As a reaction when Ghaulinthara takes damage, it can roll a d10 and subtract the number rolled from the damage.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ghaulinthara fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Special Equipment. Ghaulinthara is attuned to an *ioun stone: sustenance*, and wears a *ring of protection*.

Spellcasting. Ghaulinthara is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *resistance*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *warding bond*

3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*

Actions

Multiattack. Ghaulinthara can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) cold damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Ghaulinthara's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of her must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Ghaulinthara's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5-6). Ghaulinthara exhales an icy blast in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

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

Detect. Ghaulinthara makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Sacred Flame. Ghaulinthara casts *sacred flame*.

Tail Attack. Ghaulinthara makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Ghaulinthara beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of Ghaulinthara must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The Ghaulinthara then fly up to half her flying speed.

LYRE OF BUILDING

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This magical lyre is made of gold inlaid with a variety of gemstones, it is strung with pegasus gut strings. Five times per day, a character attuned to the lyre can use a reaction to play a specific sequence of chords that negates one attack against an inanimate object, including attacks from siege weapons, the effects of a horn of blasting or a disintegrate spell.

The lyre can also be used to build structures. Once a week, a character can attempt a DC 20 Charisma (Performance) check to play the lyre for thirty minutes, producing arcane chords that magically construct buildings, mines, tunnels, ditches, etc. This effect is equal to the work of 100 humans labouring for three days.

AMULET OF PROOF AGAINST PETRIFICATION

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This amulet depicts a blindfolded medusa upon its highly-polished surface. While wearing this amulet, if you fail a saving throw that would turn you to stone, you are instead incapacitated for 1d6 rounds. If a spell or effect would turn you to stone without allowing a saving throw, you are instead incapacitated for 1 minute. These abilities do not function while the wearer is incapacitated.

RING OF COUNTERSPELLS

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This ring initially appears similar to a ring of spell storing. The ring can store one spell of up to 6th level at a time, but this spell cannot be cast from the ring. Instead, should that spell ever be cast upon the wearer, the spell is immediately countered (as with counterspell) without requiring the wearer's reaction or knowledge. Once used in this way, the spell cast within the ring is gone. A new spell (or the same one as before) may be cast into it again.

STONE OF TRUE RESURRECTION

Wondrous item, legendary

This polished yellow stone seems to glow with a golden light which pulsates when in the hands of a living being. The stone holds enough magic for one casting of true resurrection, after which its magic fades and it becomes a mundane polished rock. The only requirement is that you speak the target's true name.

PLAYER MAP OF CASTLE KRAG

