

# Tussle in the Tundra (WIP)

September 12, 2022



## Opening Tagline

Can you brave the icy tundra, unravel a sinister plot, and bring warmth back to a frozen village?

An adventure for 4–5 characters levels 11–16.

## Background & Synopsis

The party finds themselves in a remote arctic village, where a blizzard sets the stage for a harrowing adventure. The initial encounter challenges the party to navigate the blizzard's fury, after which they discover the disappearance of Ava, a blind baker from the village. As they track her, they uncover her transformation into a remorhaz and a sinister plot orchestrated by the blacksmith, Kaldur. The adventure includes encounters with frostbite spiders, rescuing wolves from an icy ooze, and the choice to assist or hinder ice trolls pursuing the remorhaz. Along the way, a dwarf barbarian and a dragonborn ranger offer unexpected aid. In the climactic showdown, the party faces the remorhaz controlled by Kaldur and his ice devil patron. The adventure concludes with a heartwarming homecoming in the village, offering closure and rewards for the party's heroic efforts.

# Content Trigger Warning

This adventure contains themes of sudden natural disasters, perilous weather conditions, missing persons, forced transformation, mind control, and combat encounters.

## Adventure Hooks

This adventure works as a side quest for larger adventures set in cold climates such as Rime of the Frostmaiden from Wizards of the Coast or chapter three of Empire of the Ghouls by Kobold Press. If you're using the Andovir campaign setting from Wyrmsworks Publishing, this adventure fits well in LOCATION PENDING. This may also serve as a catalyst to launch an arctic campaign or story arc. If not native to the region, adventurers may be present for many reasons, including:

The party may be traveling through the tundra on the way to another mission.

Someone has hired the party to rescue, escort, find, or deliver a person or object in the region.

The party has heard rumors of a powerful magic item's location.

A caster's spell misfires and accidentally teleports the party to the village, so they need to find their way home.

## Where are we?

This adventure takes place in a frozen region and can be adapted for arctic, tundra, or mountains.

# Dramatis Personae

## Ava the Baker

Medium humanoid (gnome), neutral good

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Gnomish

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Baker's Tools.** Ava is proficient with baker's tools and can use them to prepare delicious pastries and baked goods.

**Blindness [IE 4].** Ava's vision is absent completely, and she has learned to navigate the world with no reliance on her eyes, depending on other senses instead. Because she has grown accustomed to this condition a long time, she has a -4 on sight-related attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws including ranged combat beyond 10 ft. but a +4 bonus when using other senses to compensate, not because they've become stronger, but because she's learned to use them more effectively.

## Actions

**Baking Tools.** Ava can spend 1 hour and use her baker's tools to create a batch of pastries or baked goods. Consuming these treats grants temporary hit points equal to her proficiency bonus. These temporary hit points last for 1 hour.

**Distract (Recharge 5-6).** Ava can use a bonus action to throw flour into the air, creating a blinding cloud in a 10-foot radius centered on herself. Creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. A blinded creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

## Frostbite Spider

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Skills** Stealth +7

**Damage Immunities** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** –

## Challenge 2 (450 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### Actions

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking an extra 7 (2d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A target that fails its save becomes slowed (as per the slow spell) until the end of its next turn. Targets with resistance to cold damage have advantage on the saving throw.

**Frigid Fiber (Recharge 6).** The spider weaves a web of icy strands in a 20-foot radius sphere around itself. Creatures within the area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is restrained by the icy web and takes 3 (1d6) cold damage at the beginning of its turn until freed. As an action, a creature restrained by the web can make a DC 11 Strength check to break free. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 10; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, cold, piercing, poison, and psychic damage).

### Glacial Sludge

Large ooze, unaligned

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d10 + 30)

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Skills** Stealth +7

**Damage Vulnerabilities** thunder

**Damage Immunities** cold, lightning, piercing, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Amorphous.** The sludge can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**False Appearance.** While the sludge remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an icy field.

**Shattering Shards.** When the sludge takes bludgeoning or thunder damage, the damaged area explodes in a burst of crystalline shards. Each creature within 10 ft. of it must make a DC 12

Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Spider Climb.** The sludge can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The sludge makes two attacks.

**Icy Tendril.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 18 (4d8) cold damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the sludge can't constrict another target.

[Add Ice Devil stat block before publication]

## Ice Troll

Large giant, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 105 (10d10 + 50)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Damage Immunities** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Giant

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Regeneration.** The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

**Variant: Loathsome Limbs.** Whenever the troll takes at least 15 slashing damage at one time, roll a d20 to determine what else happens to it:

**1-10:** Nothing else happens.

**11-14:** One leg is severed from the troll if it has any legs left.

**15- 18:** One arm is severed from the troll if it has any arms left.

**19-20:** The troll is decapitated, but the troll dies only if it can't regenerate. If it dies, so does the severed head.

If the troll finishes a short or long rest without reattaching a severed limb or head, the part regrows. At that point, the severed part dies. Until then, a severed part acts on the troll's initiative and has its own action and movement. A severed part has AC 13, 10 hit points, and the troll's Regeneration trait.

A **severed leg** is unable to attack and has a speed of 5 feet.

A **severed arm** has a speed of 5 feet and can make one claw attack on its turn, with disadvantage on the attack roll unless the



troll can see the arm and its target. Each time the troll loses an arm, it loses a claw attack.

If its head is severed, the troll loses its bite attack and its body is blinded unless the head can see it. The **severed head** has a speed of 0 feet and the troll's Keen Smell trait. It can make a bite attack but only against a target in its space.

The troll's speed is halved if it's missing a leg. If it loses both legs, it falls prone. If it has both arms, it can crawl. With only one arm, it can still crawl, but its speed is halved. With no arms or legs, its speed is 0, and it can't benefit from bonuses to speed.

## **Actions**

**Multiattack.** The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claw.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

## **Bonus Actions**

**Snowstorm Aura (1/day).** The troll can unleash a burst of frigid energy in a 15-foot radius around itself. Creatures within the aura must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## **Kaldur Ironfist**

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Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral

**Armor Class** 16 (chain mail)

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Insight +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish, Infernal

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Dwarven Resilience.** The dwarf has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Kaldur's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 9, +1 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: Ray of Frost

3/day each: Fog Cloud, Gust of Wind

## **Actions**

**Multiattack.** Kaldur makes two attacks with his warhammer.

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

**Icy Blast (Recharge 5-6).** Kaldur can strike the ground with his hammer and release an icy blast in a 15-foot cone. Each creature

in that area must make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Kaldur Ironfist, a talented dwarf blacksmith, harbored a deep desire to craft a weapon of unparalleled power. Having spent too many days helping rebuild after white dragon and frost giant attacks, he was determined to protect his village from any threat. Fueled by this ambition, Kaldur made a pact with an ice devil. The devil's influence pushed Kaldur to seek a legendary forge hidden within the icy wilderness, where he believed he could create the ultimate weapon. Now, Kaldur's journey is marked by his relentless pursuit of power and the moral challenges he faces along the way. Though well-intentioned, his pact has changed him, and he must grapple with the consequences of his choices as he seeks to fulfill his destiny.

[Add Remorhaz stat block before publication]

## **The Rising Storm**

### **[SIDEBAR: The Frostfang Inn**

Gertrude "Gertie" Frostfang is a tough and resourceful halfling with a no-nonsense attitude and a heart of gold. She runs the Frostfang Inn, providing a warm and welcoming home for her family and a gathering place for the village. The inn is a sturdy wooden building with a cozy common room, where Gertie serves hearty meals and ale and other spirits. Gertie's family includes her two adolescent children, Willem and Selma, who help her run the inn.

Gertie is a beloved member of the village, known for her generosity and her determination to keep the community together. Her inn is known for its delicious food and in-house brewery.

The Frostfang Inn is an important hub of activity in the village, serving as a place for travelers to rest and for the villagers to gather and socialize. It is a warm and welcoming place, and Gertie is always happy to make new friends and share her stories with visitors.]

As the party arrives at the village of Frosthold and finds the inn, a sudden storm whips up, turning the air nearly opaque and biting into any exposed skin. The wooden building shakes, and the atmosphere seems to pull the inhabitants toward the roof. Gertie the innkeeper watches the window, pacing, and after a huge gust, says, "The walls won't hold. We need to get out."

Gertie tells the party to follow her. Through the gale, they hear something cracking and snapping. A nearby hut looks like it's about to fly away. A child's scream barely breaks through the howling wind. Gertie points into the darkness and yells that a stone building ahead will offer safety and continues toward the building regardless of what the party decides.

If the party investigates, the hut flies away shortly after they arrive. A young-looking half-elf father is trying to protect his children, an infant and a toddler. He shouts a plea for help to the party. (If the party doesn't investigate, they will find the family frozen to death after the storm.)

Finding the shelter requires a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check, but everyone who leaves the innkeeper for the hut must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or acquire hypothermia unless using protection from the elements beyond standard cold weather gear, acting as if affected by the Confusion spell. If the party doesn't provide additional protection to the father and children, the father experiences the Confusion effects, and the children become incapacitated with hypothermia.

Treat movement through the village as rough terrain. Every round

in the storm after the second, everyone takes 1 cold damage.

Once arriving at the shelter, **Brace**, the village cleric, immediately attempts to treat those suffering from hypothermia with healing spells and wool blankets that have been warmed near a central fire. The party may attempt to help Brace or treat others at the same time.

## The Tumult after the Storm

The storm ends as abruptly as it began. The residents gradually step outside to survey the damage. Some buildings, including the inn, remain standing with some broken windows, while others are replaced with collapsed timber or just a stone floor.

A voice shouts over the chatter of residents, "Ava! Where's Ava?"

**Ava**, the village baker, is missing. Her home still stands with relatively little damage, but nobody can find her in the village. The villagers describe her as a gnome with brown skin, black hair, and a tattoo on her neck depicting the faces of her husband and son, who died in a hunting trip many years ago. The ground near her home is icier than elsewhere in the village, and an investigation reveals a path of ice leading to the edge of the village.

Unknown to anyone, **Kaldur Ironfist**, the dwarven blacksmith, made a deal with an **ice devil** to improve his craft. The devil told him that the heat of a remorhaz is needed to forge the ultimate weapon in a mystical forge in a cave a day's travel from the village. The fiend gave him an amulet to summon the storm and an armband that transformed Ava into a remorhaz and allowed Kaldur to command her to go to the cave.

The ice near her house is the result of the remorhaz's heat

melting the snow and freezing after she left.

Kaldur, who claims to have remained in his stone house during the storm, offers to join the party to look for Ava. He knows the area, as he often travels to nearby caves to mine iron and other ore.

As much as everyone wants Ava back, the villagers suggest that the search party should set out in the morning.

## Optional Travel Encounters

D6	Encounter
1	<b>Frozen Stream Crossing:</b> The party comes across a frozen stream. Each must make a DC 12 Dexterity check to safely cross it. On a failure, they slip and fall, taking 1d4 cold damage.
2	<b>Lost Supplies:</b> The party discovers a partially buried dogsled with supplies. They can choose to investigate it and find a crate of preserved food and a bottle of warming brandy.
3	<b>Frozen Carcass:</b> The party stumbles upon a partially frozen carcass of a mammoth. They can choose to investigate or ignore it. If they investigate, they find nothing of value but notice that it has a large bite out of its side. The snow has no tracks around it.
4	<b>Ava's Cane:</b> The party discovers Ava's cane, which had caught on her during her transformation.
5	<b>Frozen Pond:</b> The party encounters a small frozen pond. They can choose to investigate or skate on it for fun. If they investigate, they find the frozen remains of a few fish.

<b>6</b>	<p><b>Impish Spy:</b> The party notices movement in the distance, something peeking over a snowbank. Anyone succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, either by sight or the faint smell of brimstone, recognizes a fiendish connection, and characters who can see it and know the Infernal language or succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognize it as an imp. It disappears as soon as the party discovers or moves toward it.</p>
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## Cold Feet

Around noon, the party arrives at a treacherous ice field and notices the ice cracking under their feet in some places. Six **frostbite spiders** emerge from the snow to attack them.

The fresh powder over hard ice conceals hidden thin patches of ice, which collapse into twenty-foot pits. Creatures who enter a space with thin ice must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall into the pit, landing prone and taking 2d6 damage. The frostbite spiders can move over the spaces without collapsing them, using their tremorsense to navigate around the thinnest parts.

Anyone who falls into or examines the pits will notice that they are not individual pits, but an irregular icy tunnel that has collapsed in some parts. The tunnel follows roughly the same course that the party is going. It's the path of the remorhaz, although it has collapsed in many parts, so the party can't follow it underground.

## A Pack of Trouble

The party sees a pack of eight **wolves** crossing the tundra one hundred feet ahead of them. As the wolves pass just beyond a

hill between them and the party, sudden barking reverberates across the landscape. When the party reaches the crest of the hill, they see the ground below the wolves splashing with icy sludge as one of the wolves goes under, and ice and water erupt from the large puddle. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the icy puddle itself is attacking the wolves.

The puddle is a **glacial sludge** intent on consuming the wolves and kills one per round unless the party intervenes.

At the end of the first round, more barking emerges from another hill, and a dog sled speeds over the crest and banks hard as a dwarven barbarian in a wheelchair, **Donna Nason** (she/her), launches from the sled, chains flinging a ram to the front of the chair, crashing into the sludge with a Wheelchair Ram attack. Donna is raging and will continue to attack with her ax in subsequent rounds as her partner, Michael (he/him, **veteran**), a tall light-skinned human with brown hair and gray insulated clothing, moves the sled out of the way to keep the dogs safe. Michael will only join in the fight if he believes Donna is in danger, as he'd rather let her have all the fun.

As the battle finishes, Michael brings the dogsled down the hill to Donna. Michael adjusts Donna's legs and helps her detach the ax from her gauntlets. Donna amorously thanks Michael as he wipes the remnants of the sludge from her wheelchair and gear. In an affectionate tone that contrasts the rage the party just witnessed from her, Donna introduces herself and Michael to the party and asks what brings them out to the snowy wilderness.

**GM Note:** Depending on the strength of the party, Donna and Michael may join them in their quest if they need an extra blade, but otherwise, they will continue on their way, as they're tracking frost giant marauders. If they part ways and the party gets into trouble, they can return to help, saying



they noticed the remorhaz trail and were wondering whether that was a clue to find the giants.

## **Run with the Remorhaz and Hunt with the Trolls**

Mid-afternoon, the party encounters two **ice trolls**, who have been tracking the remorhaz and are eager to capture it for its valuable hide and quantity of meat. One holds and sniffs Ava's cane, which caught in the remorhaz's carapace and fell off nearby. The trolls sniff it and notice an overlap with the smell of the remorhaz, which they find curious enough to discuss with each other, but it's nothing more than a curiosity to them.

The trolls' reaction to the party depends on the party's behavior. They flash their claws and fangs but don't immediately attack unless they feel threatened or see the party as an easy snack, instead pointing and ignoring the party while still aware of their location by smell. If the party demonstrates power without hostility, the trolls try to ignore the party, focusing on tracking the remorhaz. If the party attacks or interferes, the trolls attack.

Shortly after the party decides their course of action, they hear the sound of a sled approaching from the top of a nearby hill. A blue dragonborn ranger, **Rivaan Linxakasendalor**, comes into view, using javelins to propel herself down the slope on a sled. If the party is fighting the trolls, she joins in against the trolls. Rivaan is determined to find the remorhaz, as she believes it to be the one that killed her father years ago, and she will ally herself with anyone she believes will help her destroy the monster, which may include siding with the trolls if necessary.

Since the trolls and party are both heading in the same direction, confrontation is nearly inevitable, either by the party or the trolls' annoyance, although the trolls may decide to let the party kill the remorhaz and then take advantage of the weakened party.

## **Getting Warmer...**

Late in the evening, the party arrives at the cave. The floor is glare ice and slightly wet in spots. Rivaan has no problem navigating it on her sled, but anyone walking must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) saving throw at the beginning of their turn to avoid falling prone during any combat within the cave unless taking measures to stabilize themselves.

Once within the cave, Kaldur attempts to slip away from the party. He points them to a path that he claims he doesn't recognize and asks them to explore it. If caught, he tells them that he's too "rusty" to fight a remorhaz and only wants to find Ava, so he'll wait for them at the entrance to the cave.

## **Frozen Forge**

The party comes to a large chamber with a table, anvil, hammers, tongs, and other forge implements but no bellows, only a fifteen-foot cube cage and a large pile of chains.

The tools lie on a page of scorched and blood-stained parchment inscribed with a poem written in Infernal:

Through ice and fire, power shall rise,

A pact of darkness, a deadly prize.

To wield the forge, no flame's embrace,

The chosen one shall claim their place.

Let molten cold consume your will,

And frozen flames your soul distill,

Till power binds your blood with ore,

Inseparable forevermore.

With passion's fire and heart of ice,

Invoke the frost's infernal price,

Fulfill the pact, your power seize,

Ignite the world, and let it freeze.

In the corner of the room, a wooden wardrobe holds two pickaxes, two sets of crampons, and Braces of Frigid Flight.

### **Braces of Frigid Flight**

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The crystalline leg braces have icy wings extending from the sides and reduce leg-related mobility penalties by 1 while worn.

While you wear these braces, you have a flying speed equal to your walking speed. You can use the braces to fly for up to 1 hour, all at once or in several shorter flights, each one using a minimum of 1 minute from the duration. If you are flying when the duration expires, you descend at a rate of 30 feet per round until you land. When the duration expires, the braces melt and cannot be used again and are rendered non-magical.

## A Hot Mess

Warm fog fills the final chamber, and the remorhaz senses anyone walking on the floor while waiting in a hot pool in the back of the chamber, springing out once anyone walking approaches within thirty feet of the pool and attacking.

The remorhaz wears a black iron cuff on one of its legs, noticeable with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals an inscription in the neck of its carapace depicting two remorhaz heads, one larger than the other. If the party doesn't notice the inscription, Rivaan notices after a round of combat.

## Remorhaz Subjugator

Tiny construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 10 (4d4)

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Immutable Form.** The Subjugator is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

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

**Spider Climb.** The Subjugator can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

## **Actions**

**Anklet Attachment.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. Hit: 0 damage, and the Subjugator attaches to the target. While attached, the target cannot remove the Subjugator. Anyone else besides the wearer of the Shackler's Restraint attempting to remove the Subjugator must successfully grapple the remorhaz's leg (as attempting to grapple, but regardless of size differences). On a successful grapple, the grappler must succeed on a contested Strength check against the Subjugator removes it.

**Dominated Remorhaz.** When attached to a target, the Subjugator can use its action to polymorph the target into a **remorhaz**. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw to avoid the effect. Once polymorphed, the target is charmed by the wearer of the Shackler's Restraint as a Dominate Monster spell. The effect lasts as long as the Subjugator remains attached to the target.

The remorhaz subjugator is a tiny construct designed to resemble a remorhaz wrapped around a creature's leg, specifically crafted to be stealthy and discreet. Its primary purpose is to aid in the subjugation and control of creatures targeted by the corresponding Shackler's Restraint armband or anklet. The remorhaz subjugator can turn invisible to avoid detection until it's ready to use its Domination ability on a target, compelling them to follow the wielder's commands. However, with each use, it weakens the Shackler's Restraint wielder, eventually leading to exhaustion and rendering the Shackler's Restraint non-magical.

### **Shackler's Restraint**

Wondrous Item (armband), rare (requires attunement)

This black iron armband allows you to telepathically control a single **remorhaz subjugator** and thus the subjugator's dominated remorhaz. You can mentally command the figurine to crawl onto a target creature whose location is known to the wielder or subjugator. The dominated creature retains awareness but is compelled to obey the wielder's commands. You can command the dominated creature as the Dominate Monster spell, but with unlimited duration, no concentration required.

Removing either your armband or the subjugator ends the domination effect.

Each time the remorhaz subjugator attaches to a new target, you must make a DC 8 Wisdom saving throw, the DC increasing by 1 with each new target. On a failure, you are permanently polymorphed into a remorhaz.

If the subjugator is destroyed, you must succeed on an additional Wisdom saving throw with a DC as if it attached to a new target or 16, whichever is greater, or be permanently polymorphed into a remorhaz. On success, you instead take 4d6

psychic damage.

Kaldur hides in a corner of the chamber behind a boulder, watching the events unfold. If the remorhaz is killed or the subjugator removed from it, he controls it to climb onto another target. He intends to use it on another target as he needs the heat from a remorhaz to forge his weapon. If noticed, he claims to have come in looking for the remorhaz. He denies any connection unless a Detect Magic spell reveals the enchantment aura of the shackle under his coat.

The remorhaz is blind and can't detect anyone moving silently along the walls or ceiling or flying, but if it hears them, it can attack them with a -4 penalty to hit, attempting to knock them to the floor where its tremorsense can pinpoint their location.

If events turn against Kaldur, he shouts, "Unqon!" and an **ice devil** appears and attacks the party.

If the combat goes against the party, depending how they handled previous encounters, the ice trolls, Donna Nason, or even the wolves may appear and aid the party.

## **A Warm Welcome**

Night has fallen, and the cave offers shelter for a long rest. The next morning, Rivaan makes sure that the subjugator is destroyed and leaves in search of the remorhaz that killed her parents.

The GM may choose a random encounter from above or skip to the party's arrival back at the village. As they travel, they hear the howls of wolves in the distance.

The party arrives in the evening. Most of the village sit around

a central bonfire, resting after a hard day's work repairing storm damage. Their weary faces gain new energy as they see the party return with Ava, but they ask about Kaldur and respond to news of his betrayal with shock and sadness.

Brace eagerly offers the party mugs of hot mulled wine and bowls heaping with venison stew in a savory cheese sauce with berry cobbler for dessert, asking them how they're coping with the stresses of the adventure. "That must have been scary. I bet you're feeling a tangle of feelings right now." "Were there times you wondered how you'd succeed? How did you overcome?" "What's going through your mind now that it's all done?" He offers no advice, only empathy and appreciation.

Gertie offers her best bedding at the inn and asks whether they need anything else. The smell of roasted nuts fills the warm air, and the beds feel soft and welcoming.

The next morning, the aroma of Ava's bakery wafts through the village. She's been up all night baking, and she brings a cart full of sweet rolls and mincemeat pastries to the inn to greet the party. The flavors attract the rest of the village, and soon, the inn is bustling with joyful conversations and expressions of gratitude.

Brace reaches into his pocket and pulls out a package wrapped in string and brown paper and hands it to the party as an expression of the village's appreciation. The box, padded with cedar shavings, contains an Aurora Breeze Chime.

### **Aurora Breeze Chime**

Wondrous Item (windchime), common

The Aurora Breeze Chime is a beautiful windchime crafted from pure gold with intricately designed antler-shaped chimes. It has



one charge. When hung up in an area where even a slight breeze blows consistently for the duration of a short rest, it creates a magical resonance within a 30-foot radius. This resonance affects anyone using hit dice for healing during the short rest, granting them an additional hit point of healing. The chime regains its expended charge daily at dawn.

The tundra is cold and hard, but the warmth of hearth and joy of the community provide a welcome contrast.

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## The Search for Dread (WIP)

September 12, 2022



## The Search for Dread

### Can you find my mama?

A parent was lost. Can you reunite the family?

This adventure is designed for 3–4 characters, level 5–6, with a total of 18–20 levels.

## Background & Synopsis

Children at a playground are tormenting a tiefling child. Intentional, an adult tiefling, scares away the other children. The child, Sanctity, is new in town, having left the last one due to not being accepted with their parents. The mother (Dread) was lost along the way, kidnaped by bandits. Intentional and the child's father ask the party to find Dread.

As the party retraces the family's path, they encounter Moonmaeven, who welcomes the party and remembers seeing the father and child but never saw the mother. Moonmaeven offers them a sculpture that the same bandits dropped.

As the party travels, they enter an abandoned mine and encounter Lanark, who warns them of shoddy supports that led to the original owners' demise and the new residents (cultists) who know nothing about masonry and engineering. As they navigate the mine, in a chamber with an altar. The cultists attack, and by the end of the encounter, Dread is free, as may be some devils. At one point, they may find treasure, but a collapse leaves them trapped, rescued by Veritas. When they return, the cultists have kidnaped the child, intending to turn the child into a "key" sculpture instead. Dread helps stop the cultists.

Once the party returns to their family, the cultists have kidnaped Dread's son, Sanctity, and the party must rescue him as well.

## Content Trigger Warnings

This adventure includes racially-motivated bullying (against a tiefling child), violence, and kidnaping.

## Adventure Hooks

This adventure can serve as a side quest or as a connection or introduction to an ongoing cult-related villain.

## Where are we?

This adventure can occur in any population center larger than about 400 people, which would typically include a public park, within a day's travel of a forest.

## Opening Encounter

Read or paraphrase the following:

*As you travel through town, you pass by a park, which consists of trees, benches, a fountain with an iridescent dragon spraying a mist of water from its mouth that looks like a rainbow regardless of light sources or the viewer's angle, a round field marked for some kind of ball game, and a large sand pit. In the sand pit, two human children are tormenting a tiefling preteen child with taunts and physical aggression. An adult tiefling sitting on a nearby bench notices the encounter and chants a short melody. The sand at the edge of the sandbox bursts into flame and begins moving across the sand toward the children. The two humans see it, look at the tiefling, and run away in panic. The tiefling notices the flame and walks over to it, staring at it curiously, getting closer, and eventually stepping into it. The adult walks over to the child as the flames vanish, speaking words of comfort.*

As the party witnesses this and decides how to react, a middle-aged male human adult with long black hair in a ponytail and plain tunic comes running and hugs the boy, Sanctity, who bursts

into tears. The adult, clearly Sanctity's father from their overheard conversation, continues to comfort the child and thanks the adult tiefling. The tiefling approaches the party, welcomes them to town if they're new, and introduces himself as, Intentional, assuring the party that not everyone in town is so cruel to those different from them.

Sanctity (**commoner**) is a brave preteen tiefling boy with hair like his father's, crimson skin, and red antelope horns. He has experienced much persecution in his life to the point that, while it hurts him, he tries to hide it until he's with someone safe. He's kind to others but slow to trust anyone besides his parents, but he's also learned to trust Intentional.

During this conversation, the father approaches Intentional, attempting with little success to hide his stress, barely finding strength to speak above a whisper as he uses what little energy he has to hold back tears. "Thank-you, Intentional. We came here looking for a place to thrive, but it's been one struggle after another. First, my wife is taken during the trip, then we encounter this kind of hostility. I was really hoping we were done with this, but I guess that was naïve."

He turns to the party and introduces himself as Numer. When Numer realizes the party are adventurers, his face lights up and says, "I wonder whether people of your skills can help me." He explains that they recently moved from a small village, and while traveling, they were ambushed, and the bandits in red robes captured his wife, Dread.

He heard them say, "We need it alive," so he's confident that Dread is still alive somewhere. Even if the party can't rescue them, any information would be appreciated. Numer tells them that he and Dread had saved a little money to help them get started in their new home, and the party can have it all if they

can help rescue his wife. Intentional offers to chip in what he has if needed. If asked, Intentional won't go along – he's needed in town.

## Optional Travel Encounters

While traveling, the game master may want to include an extra encounter along the road. If so, choose or roll randomly from the following tables. (Use Forest Path Maps)

## Combat Encounters

D4	Encounter
1	A bandit party of 4 <b>goblins</b> and a <b>bugbear</b> leap out from behind trees and demand all the party's money
2	A party of 3 <b>centaurs</b> believe the party are cultists and fire darts with sleep poison at the party. ( <b>Sleep Dart</b> . Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage. On hit, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.) The centaurs attack any remaining party members the next round, calling them "cultists" and telling them to get out of their forest. If the party tells the centaurs they're not cultists, either through roleplay or with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the centaurs stop attacking. The centaurs don't wish to kill the party – they just want to capture them and remove them from the forest.

<b>3</b>	An elven beekeeper ( <b>commoner</b> ) comes running and screaming for help, pursued by 3 <b>giant wasps</b> . He acquired them in an attempt to create magic hybrid bees to produce large amounts of honey, but they escaped before he could finish.
<b>4</b>	A <b>ghast</b> & 3 <b>ghouls</b> hope to make a meal of the party.

## Non-Combat Encounters

D4	Encounter
<b>1</b>	An <b>imp</b> is spying on the party from a nearby tree and snaps a branch, which gets the attention of anyone in the party with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 8 or higher. If captured, it offers 10 gp for the sculpture (see below), and if the party refuses, it haggles up to 50 gp. If asked why it wants the sculpture, it is reluctant to answer, but if forced, it says that it belonged to its master but refuses to reveal more.
<b>2</b>	Arixi Wigglepocket, a gnome doctor ( <b>commoner</b> ) riding on the back of a rhinoceros has lost control of her mount, which charges toward the party. She's yelling, "Help me, but don't hurt Nosy!" She's traveling through the forest, and, "Some people in red robes were making a ruckus back there, which spooked my poor Nosy!"
<b>3</b>	A group of 4 <b>goblins</b> come from the opposite direction. They're arguing with each other over directions. They ask the party for directions to the town the party came from. After the party gives directions, one says to another, "See? Pay up!" The other reluctantly hands over a cp.
<b>4</b>	That party hears a loud screech coming from not far off the road. An <b>owlbear</b> crouches there. If the party backs off, it leaves them alone, as it only wants to protect its eggs.

# The Glassblower

Numer tells the party that he and his family came from Millview, eight days' journey away, but the attack where Dread was taken came just off the road about a day's journey from here. You can recognize the location by three boulders and two stumps in a clearing.

The road is a wide country path with wagon wheel ruts, first through a few miles of farms, then changing to woods. As the woods get thicker, the land rolls into gentle hills that get slightly steeper as they progress. In this woodland, they meet **Moonmaeven** and her massive dog, **Freckles**. Moonmaeven has set up camp near the road and is working over a fire to craft an intricate glass figurine that resembles Sanctity. When she sees them, she says, "Oh, there you are! Yes, that's who I was expecting! Here, have some soup! I'm just finishing! Your timing is perfect!"

In the edge of the fire, a pot of soup holds an aromatic herb and lentil soup, and she sets the figurine into a ceramic box on the other edge of the fire and opens a wooden case, revealing a collection of beautiful glass bowls, separated by straw. She pours soup for anyone interested, a bowl for the dog, and one for herself.

Moonmaeven is happy to answer the party's questions.

- She had a vision of the party arriving but forgot the details, only that someone was coming, so she prepared for their coming and remembered the vision once she saw them.
- That vision inspired the creation of the figurine she's working on.
- She remembers seeing Numer and Sanctity traveling through here but doesn't remember anyone with them, "But

that doesn't necessarily mean anything."

- She was attacked by a group of bandits sometime after seeing them, whom she chased away, but when they fled, they dropped a pouch with an odd sculpture, a box on a round base with horns sticking up from it. She shows it to them: it is small enough to fit in a human hand with horns the size of dagger blades, crimson in color, and made from an unknown material that could be metal, stone, or bone, hard and seemingly indestructible. Detect Magic reveals an aura of transmutation magic. A successful Wisdom (Religion) check reveals the following:
  - o 15: It's devilish in nature.
  - o 20: It's associated with the cult of Ganzul, a Pit Fiend.
  - o 25: It's a device used in a summoning ritual.
    - She offers them the sculpture in case it might help them.
    - She heard them say, "Something like mine or shrine or something like that, but I can't remember, and I can't make sense of it."

She tells them the glass figurine will be ready by tomorrow, so if she's still there when they come back, it's her gift for the little one.

## **The Mineshaft**

As the party travels on, they find the clearing just as Numer described. As the party investigates the area, the searcher with the highest Wisdom (Perception) sees a torn piece of red fabric on a trail that leads away from the road and clearing. The path leads to a mine entrance with a broken sign hanging from the top: Titan Trove Mine Map. Several rotting boards lay on the



ground around the entrance, and another piece of torn red fabric is snagged on the boards on the entrance. (Use Titan Trove Mine Maps)

The entrance to the mine has a rusted iron pulley wheel just inside that was once used for mining carts. The 7-foot wide limestone passage forms a 30-foot-long graded ramp with rusted rails, sloping downward at a 45 degree angle. Most wheelchairs for medium or small sized creatures can fit against the rails to navigate the slope. Those without such supports who attempt to walk down the ramp must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone and slide to the bottom, noisily hitting a pile of rubble at the bottom. Using a rope with the pulley gives advantage on the check.

1. Crashing into the pile of rubble or any other loud noise awakens a **Swarm of Bats** in Chamber One, which immediately attacks the party. Characters must succeed on a DC 8 Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid disturbing the bats. Loud noises in one of the adjacent chambers also awakens them, but they then fly outside, not toward the noise.

The chamber is a carved mineshaft, support timbers looking new and firmly attached. The ground is covered in bat guano, the air pungent with ammonia, and anyone with a typical sense of smell experiences Nausea and vomits if they fail a DC 8 + (IE) Constitution saving throw, which leaves them incapacitated for 1d4 rounds.

In the back of the chamber, a stone door blends into the wall. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the outline, and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the function of a spring mechanism to open it. Cultists use this door to sneak past Lanark into chamber 7.

2. The minecart track leads into and through this chamber. As the party nears this chamber, they hear an echoing bang

and an annoyed voice say, "What did they use for supports, balsa wood?" **Lanark** stands by a broken beam with new beams nearby on the ground. He's leaning on his ax, but when he sees the party, he says, "Ugh, more cultists! This is mine! You can't pick this one! Just get out, or you'll be in a tunnel trouble!"

Lanark heard about the abandoned mine a few months ago and decided to renovate it. Once he realizes the party aren't cultists, he's happy to answer questions.

1. If asked about his broken horn, he simply tells them that this is why solid engineering is important and won't say more about it.
2. The cultists showed up a few months ago. He complains that they know nothing about masonry and engineering and have no business down there. He chases them out at times, but he's too busy making repairs to deal with them most of the time.
3. He asks the party some questions about engineering that require a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Mining Tools Proficiency) check to answer accurately. If the party fails to answer accurately, he tells them they should leave before they hurt themselves. He won't stop them, but if they need his help, they have disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks with him. "You don't know an ax from an elbow joint!"
4. The cultists wear red robes and have been going deeper into the mine, but he hasn't been back that far lately to see what they're up to. "If they keep it up, the beams won't keep it up – the ceiling, I mean."
5. He hasn't paid attention to their conversations, but he did hear them say something about losing something and needing to find it. "Sounds like they're between a rock and a hard place."

6. Before the party moves on, he warns them to watch out for cave-ins. "I haven't worked my way back that far yet. A lot of people take this kind of work for granite, but when I'm done, you'll marble at it!"
7. As the party walks away, Lanark takes another chop at an old beam and grumbles, "I don't think they knew a tongue and groove from a mortise and tenon!"
8. This large open chamber, strewn with broken mining equipment, rubble, and bones, has a slightly damp floor, and by the footprints in the mud pooled in some spots during rain, it has seen a lot of recent foot traffic. Searching the rubble reveals 18 cp fallen from the pockets of the dead miners, but nothing else that hasn't been destroyed by time and moisture.
9. This alcove contains several stacks of lumber, a mining cart, and a flat cart in addition to a small chest and an ornately carved, minotaur-sized chair. Opening the chest immediately presents an aroma of thyme. It contains three large fresh round loaves of bread, two large sausages, and a variety of artisanal cheeses. The hinges on the chest have a ratchet that makes a loud clicking sound when opened and prevents shutting, which alerts Lanark that the party has opened his lunchbox. If the party investigates the box before opening, they see a lever on the back to release the ratchet and open it quietly or shut it. If Lanark catches the party with his lunch, he offers them some of the bread and a thick slice of griffon sausage. He appreciates compliments on his cooking, which makes him more likely to help if the party needs him later, giving them advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with him.
10. This chamber holds a black wooden altar at the center with large horns on the corners, curving inward. A pedestal in the center has an indentation that looks like a perfect fit for the small sculpture they received from Moonmaeven.

Magic detection reveals a fiendish aura.

11. When the party enters the chamber, four **Acolytes of Ganzul** attempt to ambush the party. Two have already cast Shield of Faith (+2 AC) and use Spiritual Weapon to attack apparent casters while two attempt to Hold Person on martial characters.
12. A **priest** protected by two **hellcats** stands away from the others, wearing a necklace with a red gem pendant (100 gp value). She holds the necklace to her eye and shouts, "They have the key! Get the key to the altar while I complete the incantation, but only while the incantation continues!" and begins chanting but not attacking the party unless the others die. The hellcats attack any of the party that approach the priest or attacks her.
13. The cultist party wants to put the object from Moonmaeven, the "key," into the altar pedestal, but only while one of them is chanting. If the cultists succeed, **Dread** (without their familiar) is released from within the key, but a portal opens, and three **bearded devils** come through and attack the party.
14. If the key is put in place without the chanting, it releases Dread but does not open the portal. If the priest's chanting stops, the cultists start yelling to each other to keep the key away from the altar until the incantation resumes.
15. Dread immediately attacks the nearest devil, being able to smell them and feel heat coming from them, and when the devils have been vanquished, Dread helps against any remaining cultists, who are loud and smell of sulfur and sweat.
16. When Dread is released, regardless of whether the portal is opened, the walls shake, and the passage where the party entered collapses with twenty feet of rubble.
17. Once the battle ends, Dread asks the party, "So, to whom

do I owe my thanks?" Dread taps around with their cane and listens to the party and the sounds in the room to get their bearings. They ask how many are in the party and for each to introduce themselves to get to know their voices.

18. If the party asks, Dread explains that the cultists kidnapped them and started chanting. Dread felt themselves being pulled into the key and remembers nothing after that until being pulled out. They have no sense of how much time has passed, like waking from sleep and having a sense that it wasn't instantaneous but with no clear sense of how long.
19. Dread wants to know how the release happened, and as soon as the party mentions Dread's family, Dread interrupts and only asks questions about her family, their welfare, and how long it takes to get back to them.
20. Dread joins in any additional combat encounters and is eager to return to their family.
21. This room is thick with cobwebs, thicker on the side away from the entrance, and when the party enters, three **swarms of spiders** and a **giant spider** attack the party.
22. Twelve **cultists** are organizing cases of candles, lanterns, chains, and a chalk-like substance. If Dread is with the party, the cultists attempt to grapple and restrain them with the chains. A stone door identical to the one in chamber 1 blends into the south wall.
23. This chamber has another pile of rubble from a cave-in; bones and mining tools covering the ground around the rubble, and a green mist covers the ground. If the party disturbs any of the bones, they animate, and five **skeletal miners** attack the party.
24. This entire chamber is filled with magical darkness, and in the center of the and in the center of the chamber, a twenty-foot diameter and thirty-foot-deep pit. The party hears many quick movements around their feet and flapping

above their heads. Any loud noise causes a **swarm of bats** and a **swarm of rats** to attack the party. If asked, Dread recognizes the sounds.

25. The hallway slopes downwards and gets wetter. Dark stagnant water covers the chamber's floor six inches deep on average. If the party steps into the water, a **black pudding** attacks.
26. This dripping chamber contains three lanterns, three flasks of oil, and a chest in the back embedded into a forming stalagmite with a rusty lock, which can be unlocked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using Thieves' Tools if first lubricated with oil, but the hinges are embedded into the wall, requiring 15 bludgeoning damage to remove. The chest contains 100 cp, 300 sp, 30 gp, and uncut 5 zircon stones (transparent pale blue-green) worth 25 gp each or 50 gp after a jeweler cuts them. If the party smashes the chest, the vibrations cause the entry to collapse, trapping the party inside. As they discuss how to get out, a tapping sound comes from above, and a hole breaks open in the ceiling, where **Veritas** breaks through and peeks into the room. When it sees the party, it asks who they are, and when convinced that they're friendly, it drops in via a rope and offers to help them out via an old air vent. Veritas wanted to explore the cave but was annoyed by the "grumpy minotaur" by the entrance and decided to use "the back door." The vent can lead them out of the cave, back to the forest, or drop into chamber #7. If they go to Chamber #7, Veritas helps against the cultists, who attempt to capture it, since it's also a tiefling.

## Out of the Shaft

Once the party is ready to leave, if they pass Lanark, he offers them a taste of his cheeses, including a spicy aged cheddar and chimera curds. If Veritas is with them, he refuses food to it and comments about its immature palate, to which Veritas rolls its eyes and comments about cranky minotaurs.

## Quickly, back to my family!

Dread is eager to return home but honors any requests to rest first. When arriving at Moonmaeven's camp, Moonmaeven is excited to see the party and is ecstatic that they rescued Dread. She offers Dread the figuring she created, and Dread takes some time feeling the intricate details of the tiny glass tiefling and begins to cry. They say, "This is my Sanctity, though more fragile than my strong child." Moonmaeven gives Dread a wooden box lined with feathers to protect it and says, "It may be glass, but you will find it quite resilient. May it always warm your heart."

Moonmaeven offers to prepare a meal for them, and as she digs through dishes and utensils, Dread asks whether she happens to have a brass brazier. Moonmaeven does, as she uses it in some of her glasswork. Dread politely borrows it, reaches into their coat pocket, and tells the party to eat when the food is ready, and that Dread themselves eats after finishing a ritual. (She's casting the Find Familiar spell.) An hour later, a raven flies out of the brazier and perches on Dread's horn, to which Dread says, "Welcome back, Void, old friend." They quickly eat and wash the utensils before moving on.

## Where's Sanctity?

When the party returns to town, Numer sees Dread from a distance and comes running, tears pouring down his face. Intentional follows at a slow pace, his head hanging low. When Numer gets close, Dread smiles, recognizing Numer's gait pattern and his welcoming shouts.

*Dread accepts Numer's embrace and says, "You didn't give up on me."*

*Numer hugs Dread harder. "Never, my dear. Never shall I ever."*

*Dread begins to cry. "You still love me?"*

*Numer cradles her head with his hands and kisses her tenderly. "Always and forever."*

*Dread hugs Numer tightly and says, "Where's Sanctity?"*

*By this point, Intentional has caught up to the party and says, "I'm so sorry. I couldn't stop them!"*

Numer and Intentional explain that some red-robed figures caught them by surprise in their house and took Sanctity. When they came into the house, Intentional was in the privy. They pinned Numer down with the couch and took Sanctity, dragging him into a cart and fleeing town. Intentional saw which way they went (a different road in the direction of the mine) but knew he couldn't catch them.

Dread's face combines fear and anger. "No! They will not use my Sanctity like they used me!" They ask Intentional to get enough horses for the party and them, and he runs off. They reach into their pocket, pulling out the box with the figurine, taking it



out, and holding it in their hand. "It's warmer," Dread says, returning it to its box.

Intentional returns, out of breath, with the horses. Dread mounts one and says, "Someone, please take my horse's rope to keep us with you, and don't slow down."

As the party heads out of town on the horses, Dread keeps reaching into their pocket, eventually extracting the figurine and holding it up. "We're getting warmer! Keep going!" After about an hour, of fast travel, Dread says, "Slow down. We're burning up." They explain that the figurine has been getting warmer, and they believe it's leading them to Sanctity. They must be close, and they need to be careful. She tells them to stop, and her raven, Void, flies on ahead, while Dread becomes still. "They're around the next curve in a clearing. They stopped to eat. My Sanctity is tied up next to one of them. They're five in number. Prepare yourselves." Dread casts Mage Armor. (Use Forest Clearing by Path Maps)

When the party arrives at the clearing, two **Acolytes of Ganzul** and three **cultists** all move toward Sanctity. The cultist closest holds her scimitar to Sanctity and says, "Not another step! We only need one of you alive, fiendfake!"

Sanctity stomps on the cultist's foot and tries to run, and the cultist slashes at Sanctity, leaving a narrow cut on his leg. As Sanctity falls to the ground, his finger points back at his attacker, and the attacker bursts into flames and falls to the ground. (He used his Hellish Rebuke.)

The remaining four attack the party. If the Acolytes of Ganzul begin to lose, one grabs Sanctity and holds him hostage, even threatening to use their Burn Out ability if necessary; although if they do, while the fire would hurt Sanctity, his fire resistance would keep him from dying, which the Acolyte may have

forgotten. In this case, Sanctity might even provoke the acolyte to do so.

## What's Next?

Once the cultists are defeated and the family reunited, Intentional offers everyone dinner and rest at his house. As the party celebrates, a wagon comes into town, driven by a minotaur. Lanark is coming to town to get building supplies. When he sees the party, he comes over and says, "I found some useless lumber in my mine. I don't see any good use for this stuff except as firewood." In the back of his cart, he has the dismantled altar.

# Bestiary

## Acolyte of Ganzul

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

### Armor Class

13 (leather armor)

### Hit Points

33 (6d8 + 6)

### Speed

30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

### Skills

Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

## Senses

passive Perception 11

## Languages

any one language (usually Common)

## Challenge

2 (450 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The cultist is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spell casting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

**Burn Out.** When the cultist dies, it explodes in a burst of fire. Each creature within 5 ft. of it must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Dark Devotion.** The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The cultist makes two melee attacks.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one

target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

# Hellcat

*Medium fiend, lawful evil*

## Armor Class

16 (natural armor)

## Hit Points

45 (7d8 + 14)

## Speed

50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

## Skills

Perception +5

## Damage Immunities

fire

## Senses

darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

## Languages

understands Infernal but can't speak it

## Challenge

3 (700 XP)

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

### **Actions**

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6).** The cat exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Pounce.** If the cat moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the cat can make another bite attack against it as a bonus action.

These infernal minions appear as black panthers with red highlights in their fur, glowing flaming eyes, and flames flickering from their claws and mouths. When attacking, it uses its fire breath for multiple targets, then use its next turn to pounce.

## **Skeletal Miner**

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

- **Armor Class** 14 (hide armor)

- **Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

<b>STR</b>	<b>DEX</b>	<b>CON</b>	<b>INT</b>	<b>WIS</b>	<b>CHA</b>
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

- **Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning
- **Damage Immunities** piercing, poison
- **Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
- **Languages** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak
- **Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**War Pick.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

**Rubble Rumble (Recharge 6).** If the Skeletal Miner is within 5 ft. of a mine or cave wall, it can slam its pick on the wall and send a shockwave through the ceiling, causing a collapse in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.