

Jotenheim I – Prime Material Outpost in the Tsojcanth Wilderness Mountains

Introduction

This is Part 1 of a four-part quest. This first adventure module is intended for approximately four characters of Level 20.

[DM Note: in the author’s campaign, the party had already achieved 20th level and one epic boon; each character was at level 19 in their primary class and had elected to go with another class one level in order to enhance some of their capabilities. In the dungeon immediately prior to this adventure, the party completed the mission and each character was awarded their first epic boon of “Expanded Knowledge” (a dandwiki/homebrew boon), so that each character was level 20 in their primary class at the start of the Jotenheim campaign.]

The first three parts of the adventure involve getting to the bottom of attacks against the Gnomes of the Vale and other groups in the Tsojcanth Wilderness, by Frost Giants and their allies. The Tsojcanth setting, including the Vale and the area Wilderness Map, was introduced by TSR as an AD&D adventure entitled “The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth.”

[DM Note: in my campaign, I placed the Vale of the Gnomes at location 2 on the wilderness map, and the Frost Giant lair in this adventure is near the northern edge of the map. If you want to integrate this adventure into your own pre-existing campaign setting, find somewhere cold and mountainous!]

[DM Note: There are several “non-official” monsters used in this adventure; these come from “D&D Beyond” (www.dndbeyond.com/homebrew/monsters). To find these creatures’ specs, simply visit the website and enter the creature’s name in the “MONSTER NAME” field, and hit enter. Some of these creatures have been modified for this adventure so watch for modifications to the descriptions herein. The authors’ usernames appear here with their creations. Many thanks to those who have created and posted their homebrew monsters...]

The campaign begins when the party is relaxing in a tavern in their home-base city, between adventures and wondering what comes next. A sad and weary gnome named Vitas Veritus recognizes the party, who have previously campaigned in the Tsojcanth Wilderness, where they became friendly with the Gnomes of the Vale. Vitas Veritus of the Vale relates his sad tale, in which the Vale has been sacked and most of the gnomes killed or taken away as captives. Vitas barely escaped with his life in the dead of night. He knows that the attackers were Frost Giants, although he is aware that there were other monsters with them. Alone and in constant danger, Vitas worked his way to civilization in a harrowing journey through the mountain trails. He encourages the party to return to the wilderness and avenge the attack on the Vale.

If the party accepts the challenge, they should return to the Vale of the Gnomes. Having spent down time there previously, they know the sigil sequence of a teleport pad there. Upon reaching the Vale, the destruction wreaked by the giants on the village is immediately apparent. Few buildings have been left standing, and most of the structures have been burned or torn asunder. However, a small but hardy

band of gnomes have reclaimed their home and are working on repairs to the remaining buildings. They have also tracked the Frost Giants to the approximate location of their lair, a treacherous two-week journey to the frozen mountains high in the northern Tsojcanth region. Lacking strength or numbers to conduct any offensive missions against the giants, the gnomes have left a few of their bravest and stealthiest in the area to better pinpoint the exact location of the lair.

The gnomes are unfortunately unable to offer any effective aid to the party, other than identifying the approximate lair location on a map.

If and when the party ventures to the lair area, they may (25% chance or DM's discretion) meet up with one or more of the gnome scouts, who could point them in the right direction. If not, they could use magical means to ascertain the exact location, or they might eventually track a foraging party back to the lair.

[DM Note: If the above description does not fit in your campaign, feel free to adjust the concept or details as necessary. The goal is to come up with some reasonable hook to get the party to the giants' lair...]

The Lair

The Frost Giants and their allies here are under the supervision of Frost Giant Warlord Mugatu. He has recruited some local talent and also brought in some special muscle. Mugatu and his minions have been increasing their activity in the Tsojcanth Wilderness, with raiding parties hitting the various human, demi-human, and humanoid settlements. They have been making life difficult for all of these factions, and more recently have all but wiped out the Gnomes of the Vale.

Mugatu is the local leader of the Frost Giants, but he is subordinate to the real brains behind the operation, King Tholak, who has expansion plans across three planes. King Tholak hopes to gain slaves, wealth, and prestige/influence by expanding his reach to the Prime Material plane, which he views as weak and ripe for the picking. Tholak also has an intermediate buffer zone outpost in Porphatys, the fifth layer of the Carceri (aka Tarterus) plane. This arrangement (he hopes) would make it more difficult to trace the source of the trouble back to his citadel in Jotenheim, in the Gladsheim plane.

The air here is classified as "Extremely Cold", and the rules for this climate apply within 20 miles of the lair.

A ravine meanders roughly east-west between two of the many mountain peaks in the area. There are two entrances to the Frost Giants' lair, one facing NW and another, about 180' away, facing NE. The paths from the ravine sloping up to the entrances both show signs of (large) foot traffic.

[DM Note: this location is not protected by any Forbiddance spells, and there are no doors within. So scouting of the entire complex is possible by magic means such as Ethereal travel or Arcane Eye. However, all of the creatures within are extremely alert and ready for action, with the exception of the sleeping Frost Giants in area 5.]

1 – NW Entrance: **4 Abominable Yeti** guard the entrance which is a 25' diameter roughly circular tunnel. AY1 lies in ambush in the snow outside the entrance, giving him advantage on stealth. AY2, AY3, and AY4 are inside the tunnel. If there is battle at the NE Entrance, the Abominable Yeti will not be able to hear it due to the bitter wind whistling through the ravine. They will hear and investigate any loud battle noises coming from area 3, however, sending two of their group to see what's going on.

2 – NE Entrance: **2 Frost Giants** stand guard here, alert for intruders coming up the slope from the ravine. Each has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. If there is battle at the NW Entrance, the Frost Giants will not be able to hear it due to the bitter wind whistling through the ravine. They will hear any loud battle noises coming from area 2, however, and one of them will investigate. Rock-throwing within the tunnels is limited to 40' range due to the relatively low ceilings.

3 – Remorhaz Cave: The tunnels leading to this cave vary in width and height, but with a minimum height of 25'. They are unlit, but a soft, flickering glow comes from within the cave, which has a ~40' ceiling. Torches in the SW and SE corners barely illuminate the area. In the center of the cave is a rearing Remorhaz, poised to strike and gobble up its prey. However, inspection reveals that it is made of stone, and realistically painted to appear as a real Remorhaz.

A **Frost Giant** stands guard at the junction of the two tunnels and the cave. He has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. He will investigate any loud battle sounds coming from either entrance (areas 1, 2). Rock-throwing within the tunnels is limited to 40' range due to the relatively low ceilings. The junction is lit by a single torch only at night.

A **Nimbus Wyrms** (see D&D Beyond, *Steedling's "Nimbus Wyrms"*) waits for some action in the SE corner of the cave. Upon hearing any loud battle sounds, it will casually move to investigate. It is too large to fly in the tunnels or in the Remorhaz cave. If it does perceive a threat in one of the tunnels, it will not want to get caught doing battle in the tunnel, but rather will try to use the other tunnel to exit the lair and circle around behind the attackers. The Wyrms has a pile of treasure (amongst a pile of bones from its meals that it has dragged into the cave to consume) consisting of mostly broken up armor & weapons, adventuring odds & ends, a set of **+1 Splint armor**, a set of **+2 Half-Plate armor**, and a **+1 Shield**. The Wyrms is only staying here in the cavern temporarily, having been convinced by Mugatu's persuasive abilities that it will be beneficial for the Wyrms to join forces with the giants. Mugatu is the only one in the cavern who can converse with the Wyrms other than at a rudimentary level. The ice devils can communicate telepathically but are not on good terms with the Wyrms...

[DM Note: The Nimbus Wyrms's treasure is not intended to be anything useful for the party. It is booty taken from the raid on the gnomes and if recovered by the party, as a goodwill gesture they might consider returning these items to the gnomes... If the party can use any of these items, I suggest downgrading them to something less useful. In my campaign, this was actually equipment owned by the party, and "banked" at the Gnome Vale while adventuring in the surrounding wilderness, when better equipment was found.]

A set of rough-hewn and giant-sized steps lead down from the south wall of the cave. The descending tunnel/stairway is unlit.

4 – Descending Cavern: The stairs wind and turn downward, opening up into a large unlit cavern. The stairway hugs the north wall of the cavern, heading west. A break in the rock stairway is bridged by a well-built wooden stairway, then resumes as it turns south along the west wall of the cavern. There is a tunnel in the center of the south wall. In the tunnel is an **Ice Golem** (see D&D Beyond, *Clockwerk66's* “Ice Golem”, CR8), standing guard with orders to attack any “unknown” creatures (creatures known to it are Frost Giant types, Ice Devils, Yeti types, the War Mage, and the Nimbus Wyrms). It has Darkvision to 60', so it can see any visible creatures descending on the stairway, once they are on the wooden bridge section of the stair. A party descending cautiously and stealthily can see the Ice Golem before it sees them, however. Unless precautions are taken, the 2 Ice Golems in area 5 will take note of an attack on the Ice Golem guarding the tunnel, and will move to attack intruders.

5 – Intersection: The tunnel from the Descending Cavern (4) leads to an intersection guarded by **2 Ice Golems** (see D&D Beyond, *Clockwerk66's* “Ice Golem”, CR8). To the east is a large cavern which serves as the barracks for the Frost Giants. Leading west is a tunnel sloping down. A single torch is ensconced on the northeast wall, opposite the descending tunnel, offering minimal light. If the Ice Golems notice an attack on the Ice Golem in the tunnel leading from area 4, they will move to defend the tunnel.

6 – Barracks Cavern: This cavern serves as the barracks for all of the Frost Giants in the lair. The ceiling is roughly 40' high and is unlit. There is a jumbled array of bedding and equipment supporting 15 giants. There are crates filled with unused torches. There are **3 Frost Giants** sleeping in the positions noted by an “X” on the map. Each has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. Their weapons and sacks are within reach as they sleep. Although sleeping soundly, they may hear battle sounds at the tunnel entrance from area 4 (DM's discretion depending upon the activity), and will very likely hear battle and awaken if the Ice Golems are attacked at the tunnel intersection. Unless light is introduced, the first action in a battle will be for one of them to light a torch.

[DM Note: There are only 6 Frost Giants currently in the complex; the rest are off foraging/hunting/raiding. They are days or even weeks away, so it is highly unlikely that any additional giants beyond the 6 described will be encountered here.]

7 – Welcome Center: **3 Ice Devils** guard access to the southernmost cavern area and its higher ranking occupants. The Ice Devils are fairly loyal to Mugatu and are enthusiastic about supporting his mission. They enjoy inflicting damage on lesser creatures using their melee attacks, but if they are being outfought, they will use their “Wall of Ice” capability to divide and conquer their foes, or to defend themselves if necessary.

8 – War Mage’s Quarters: The War Mage **Divarty** (see D&D Beyond, *B_T_Fox’s “War Mage”*, CR10) is a Fire Genasi who has allied himself with Mugatu and hopes to expand his own capability and power through the giants’ campaign. His specs are shown in Appendix A. If taken by surprise, he will be sitting at a desk with his back to the entrance; if there have been battle sounds or other warning, Divarty will have prepared himself for battle and then moved out into the Visitor Center area (7). His quarters are rough-cut stone, with a ceiling about 30’ high. It is well-lit, with torches along the walls 5’ above the cave floor, about every 10’.

As noted in the description in Appendix A, Divarty has **+2 Quarterstaff** and a **Ring of Cold Resistance**. He also carries a **scroll-Dominate Monster**, and a pouch containing **20gp** and **2 tuning forks**, each chained to its own labeled metal plate which is stamped with teleportation sigils. One is for the teleport pad in this cavern area 11 (which is needed to return here from another plane), and the other is for a teleport pad in the Jotenheim 2 adventure (needed to plane shift to the outpost on Porphatys, the fifth layer of the Carceri (aka Tarterus) plane). He carries his Arcane Focus which is an **amethyst crystal** the size of his fist, worth 25gp.

In Divarty’s quarters are various knick knacks, reference volumes, supplies, his **spellbook** (containing all of the spells noted for the (D&D Beyond, CR10) War Mage, plus *Plane Shift* and *Flesh to Stone*. Divarty does not current have these two spells prepared, but if he survives through the night, he will replace *Prismatic Spray* with *Plane Shift*. He also has **450gp worth of gems** in a **small ornate chest worth 250gp**, which he keeps hidden in a large faux book of elvish poetry.

[DM Note: Divarty turned the Remorhaz in area 3 to stone, and then painted it to appear “live” as a deterrent to any invaders who might have gotten past the entrance guards.]

9 – Alcove: A **Frost Giant** is always on guard here, with eyes on Mugatu in his cave opposite the alcove, and watching who might come from the Welcome Center (7) or up from the Teleport Pad (11). He is well-hidden in the dark alcove, and has a +4 on Stealth attempts to surprise interlopers. He has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. He will hear and investigate suspicious noises coming from areas 7, 8 (Divarty’s quarters), 10 (Mugatu’s cave), or 11. He will only investigate loud obvious battle sounds (like a fireball or lightning bolt) or calls for assistance coming from the Barracks (area 6).

10 – Mugatu’s Cave: the Frost Giant Warlord **Mugatu** (see Appendix A) is typically here plotting his next moves, unless he is out leading a raid or conferring with other evil allies in the wilderness. He is the local leader and is feared and respected by the rest of the creatures here. His cave is roughly dome-shaped and 40’ high at the center. It is lit by torches 20’ above floor-level, about every 10’.

As noted, Mugatu has a giant-sized **Shield +2** and giant-sized **Greataxe+2**. He also wears a **Ring of Swimming**. He has a sack tucked in his belt, containing **700gp in mixed coins** weighing a total of 15 pounds. He has a pouch in a pocket containing **20gp** and **4x25gp gems**.

His cave is filled with battle trophies (damaged/dented armor, nicked weapons, some bones, etc), valuable to him but worthless to anyone else. He has a few items of clothing but his needs are spartan. He has maps of the Tsojcanth Wilderness, but nothing is identified that the party is not already aware of.

11 - Teleport Pad: This roughly circular cave is domed like Mugatu’s cave, but is only lit by two torches, one each on the E and W walls. The floor is smoother than the rest of the complex, and has a permanent teleportation circle inscribed in it. If spellcasters in the party are able to cast *Teleport* or *Plane Shift* and have already captured the tuning forks from Divarty, they will recognize the sigils on the floor here as a match with the sigils on one of the metal plates chained to one of the forks.

Aftermath

Divarty uses the tuning fork for this location to return here via the Plane Shift spell, when he has been visiting the other planar locations in this campaign. Likewise, there are other plane shifters allied with King Tholak, who occasionally visit this Prime Material outpost. If this outpost is hit hard but Divarty survives, the next day he will prepare the Plane Shift spell and go for help. The day after that, reinforcements from the Porphatys/Carceri/Tarterus outpost will arrive. This adventure is intended to be a quick strike on Mugatu’s lair to neutralize Mugatu and his minions, with another quick follow-up attack on the next outpost, using the other tuning fork to get there.

If Divarty is killed, nobody else here has plane shift capability so no additional help can be summoned; however, within 2-4 days, other Frost Giants will return from foraging. Within 4-9 days (d6+3), the High Priest Angar Baneberry will arrive from Carceri with a Frost Giant and Frost Titan escort. See the next adventure in the series (Jotenheim II) and “D&D Beyond” for descriptions of Angar Baneberry (High Priest CR14) and Frost Titans.

If the party is successful in neutralizing this outpost and capturing the tuning forks from Divarty, they may recognize one of the tuning forks as tuned to the teleport pad in area 11. They will not know where the other tuning fork leads, unless magical means are employed. They may elect to use the tuning fork to perform a Plane Shift (not knowing where it leads), or they may use divination means to determine where the shift would lead, or if it would be beneficial (presumably yes), or they may wait and unfortunately allow the Frost Giants to better prepare for their threat. As noted, the attack on this location would be discovered in a fixed amount of time, by allies of the Frost Giants...

Epic Boons

As noted in the introduction, this adventure module is intended for approximately 4 characters of Level 20. If the party successfully completes this part of the adventure, the DM may elect to award an epic boon to each character. Following is a list of suggested initial boons from which to select and assign:

- Expanded Knowledge (dandwiki/homebrew) – only if party members have not yet hit level 20 in their primary class
- Hasty Heroics (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Irresistible Offense (DMG)
- Legendary Actions (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Nirvana (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Proficient (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Resistance (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Truesight (DMG)
- Warmage (dandwiki/homebrew)

Below is a suggested process for characters to receive their first epic boon [exception: if “Expanded Knowledge” is awarded, it happens immediately after the character’s next short or long rest]. No two characters will receive the same boon, except for “Expanded Knowledge.”

1st Boon Process:

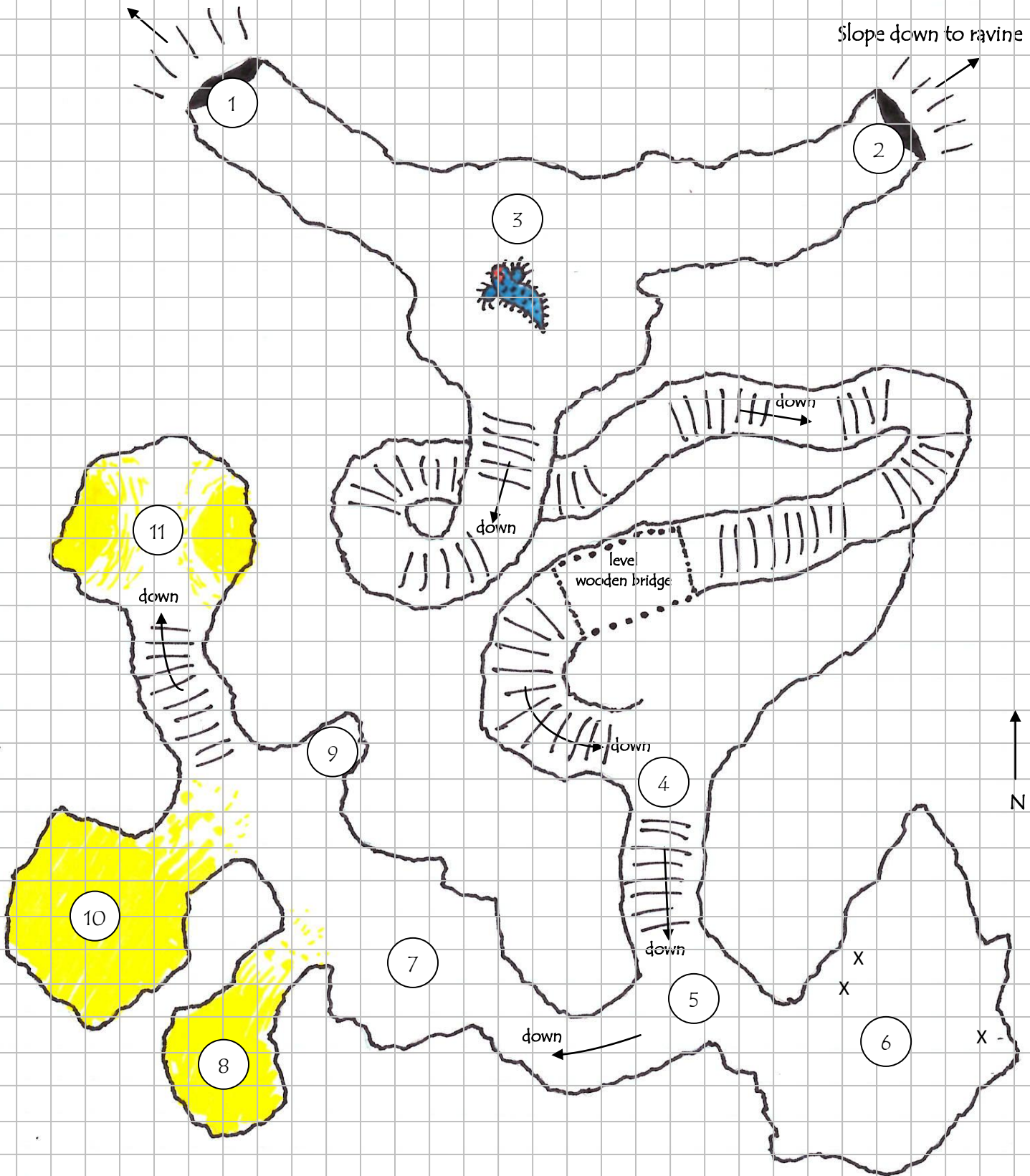
- DM selects boons applicable/beneficial to each character and creates a list of potential boons for each character.
- The boon is not immediately awarded; rather, upon the first opportunity where any boon from the list would benefit any character, that character has a chance to accept the boon; for example, if an additional +1 to proficiency would allow for a successful save, hit, or ability check, it could be accepted (or declined). There could be multiple boons that would benefit a character under certain circumstances (for example, Nirvana, Proficient, and Resistance might all benefit a character who failed a certain saving throw and is about to take damage). Describe this opportunity as a sudden momentary disorientation, then a feeling of being torn apart and seeing oneself disembodied, with possibly several different alternate outcomes. The character can see the outcomes and elect to accept one, or decline all of them. In order to accept, the character must then select option(s) which benefit under the immediate circumstances (for example, a character being hit by a rock could accept the “Resistance” boon, but would have to select “bludgeoning” as one of the damage types to which the resistance applies.
- If all prior boon opportunities on the list for a character have been declined, the last one must be accepted. Upon their first opportunity, characters can be informed how many epic boon choices there are for that character, but not what they are.

The intent is that the party moves on to the second module of the adventure, and receives their boons there during the adventure.

Jotenheim 1 -- Prime Material Outpost

Slope down to ravine

Slope down to ravine



One Square = 10 feet

Appendix A – Creatures

War Mage (Divarty)

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

AC 15 (includes Mage Armor which he casts twice daily; so depending upon the time of day for the encounter, he may have used one or two level 1 slots, or if he was sleeping at night but was alerted, he will cast it a third time)

HP 77

Speed 30

Saving Throws INT+9, WIS+6

Skills Arcana+9, History+9

Damage Resistances Fire, Cold (**Ring of Cold Resistance**)

Senses Darkvision 60', Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Giant, Primordial

Durable Magic. While he maintains concentration on a spell, he has a +2 bonus to AC and all saving throws.

Power Surge (1/day). Once per turn when dealing damage with a spell, one target of the spell takes an additional 7hp of force damage. Whenever he ends a spell via *counterspell* or *dispel magic*, he regains one use of this ability.

Spellcasting. As a Fire Genasi, the War Mage has the *produce flame* cantrip. He can cast the *burning hands* spell once as a 1st-level spell, and regains the ability to cast it this way after a long rest.

Constitution is the spellcasting ability for these spells. His **Wizard spells** and specs are as shown for the (D&D Beyond, CR10) War Mage (14th level Wizard).

Actions

Melee Weapon Attack: The War Mage uses a **+2 Quarterstaff**, +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.

Reaction: Arcane Reflection. When hit by an attack or failing a saving throw, he gains a +2 bonus to his AC against that attack or a +4 bonus to that saving throw. In addition, up to three creatures within 50 feet of him take 7hp force damage.

Frost Giant Warlord (Mugatu)

Huge giant, neutral evil

AC 20 (patchwork armor + **giant shield +2**)

HP 216 (16d12+112)

Speed 40'

STR=25 (+7), DEX=10(+0), CON=25(+7), INT=10(+0), WIS=10(+0), CHA=14(+2)

Saving Throws STR +12, CON +12, CHA +12,

Skills Athletics +12, Perception +5, Persuasion +12

Damage Immunities Cold

Senses Darkvision 60', Passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant, Draconic

Magic Resistance. The frost giant warlord has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The frost giant warlord makes two melee attacks with its **giant +2 greataxe**.

Giant +2 Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10', one target. *Hit:* 28 (3d12+9) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit* 29 (4d10+7) bludgeoning damage.

Legendary Actions

The frost giant warlord can take 2 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. Spent legendary Actions are regained at the start of each turn.

Weapon Attack. The frost giant warlord makes a weapon (greataxe or rock) attack.

Ice Storm (Costs 2 Actions). The frost giant warlord casts the spell *ice storm* at the fourth level (spell save DC 15 using his CHA ability modifier and requiring no material components). The spell is centered on the frost giant warlord's person (range = zero); he takes no damage but all others within range (20' radius), including his allies, are potentially subject the spells effects (dexterity saving throw, 2d8 bludgeoning damage and 4d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one).

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the frost giant warlord takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Freezing fog fills a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the frost giant warlord can see within 60 feet of it. The fog spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. Each creature in the fog when it appears must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that ends its turn in the fog takes 10 (3d6) cold damage. A wind of at least 20 miles per hour disperses the fog. The fog otherwise lasts one full round.
- Ice crystals form and grow from the ground and air around the feet of one opponent that the frost giant warlord can see within 60'. The creature must immediately make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be subject to the "Restrained" condition. The condition lasts one full round or until the restrained creature takes an action/bonus action/legendary action/etc to remedy the condition (a successful DC10 Strength save, a *fire bolt* to the feet, *misty step*, etc).
- Wind whips ice and snow around one opponent's face and eyes, causing snow blindness, unless a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw is made. For one full round, the creature is effectively blind unless it has magical means to overcome the situation, or has blindsense or tremorsense.

Description – A frost giant warlord appears as a typical frost giant, but with a greater ferocity and cunning in battle.