

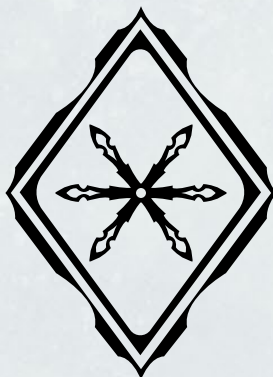


# ICE ROAD TRACKERS

## *A Rime of the Frostmaiden Adventure*

A trek toward Icewind Dale turns deadly when an avalanche blocks the heroes' passage through the Spine of the World.

Rescued by a menagerie of strange creatures, the heroes are asked to return the favor in exchange for answers about what's happening in the cold and frozen North.



### INTRODUCTORY SAMPLE ADVENTURE

The first part of an exciting four part adventure!

To purchase the rest of the adventure, visit

<https://www.dmsguild.com/>

and complete a search for *Ice Road Trackers*.

## CREDITS

**Designer:** Shawn Merwin

**Development:** Chris Lindsay

**Editing:** Ashley Michaela "Navigator" Lawson

**Art Director and Graphic Designer:** Rich Lescouffair

**Interior Art:** Jedd Chevrier, Robson Michel, Robin Olausson, Livia Prima, Craig J. Spearing

**Cartography:** Travis Woodall

**D&D Adventurers League Guildmaster:** Chris Lindsay

**D&D Adventurers League Wizards Team:** Lea Heleotis, Adam Lee, Ari Levitch, Chris Lindsay, Mike Mearls, Ray Winninger

**D&D Adventurers League Administrators:** Alan Patrick, Amy Lynn Dzura, Travis Woodall, Ma'at Crook, LaTia Jacquise, Claire Hoffman, Greg Marks, Shawn Merwin, Will Doyle

**Playtesters:** Bill Benham, Justin Donie, Lea Heleotis, Sarah Keortge, Aurora Merwin, Beth Merwin

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## ADVENTURE PRIMER

This adventure is designed for three to seven characters, levels 1 and 2, and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. Characters outside this level range can't participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in Icewind Dale, north of the Spine of the World.

## BACKGROUND

ICEWIND DALE has been subsumed in permanent darkness, and the citizens of TEN-TOWNS struggle to survive what they're calling the EVERLASTING RIME. This curse, leveled by the goddess AURIL, brings even greater hardship than usual to the denizens of the frozen lands of the North.

An awakened walrus called MOTHER TUSK has brought a group of animals to the safety of the SPINE OF THE WORLD, hoping to protect them from being used by an evil druid to wreak further havoc on the civilized areas of Icewind Dale. Mother Tusk fights against civilization, nature, and otherworldly forces to keep her family safe, and she requests the heroes' help to stem the threats against everyone.

## OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over six parts: a prologue, four 1-hour episodes, and a conclusion. Played individually, each episode should be playable in an hour, and the entire adventure should be playable in approximately 4 hours.

Characters who haven't yet completed an episode begin with the prologue. Characters who've completed all the episodes, or characters who don't plan to play any more episodes, experience the conclusion at the end of the episode they're playing.

**Prologue—Avalanche.** An avalanche threatens the characters, but they're led to safety by an odd muskrat. They then meet Mother Tusk who briefs them on four tasks she'd like them to undertake in return for saving their lives during the avalanche.

**Unsure Footing.** Mother Tusk asks the characters to rescue one of her children, an awakened otter named Spritzel, who's been spying on Easthaven. The characters quickly find Spritzel, and some of his otter friends, fleeing from a pack of wolves.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Adventure Hook 1.** The characters are traveling from the Sword Coast into Icewind Dale seeking treasure and adventure.

**Adventure Hook 2.** The characters each have a secret they're hiding from the world and each other, one which drives them into the frozen North.



# PROLOGUE—AVALANCHE

**Estimated Duration:** 5 minutes

**I**N THIS INTRODUCTION, THE CHARACTERS' PATH INTO Icewind Dale is blocked by an avalanche as they navigate a pass through the Spine of the World. They're rescued by a curious animal, which leads to a meeting with Mother Tusk, leader of a strange menagerie of creatures.

When you're ready to begin, read:

As snow and rocks crash down the mountainsides either side of you, you can't help but wonder if this is how everything ends for you. What brought you here, navigating this dangerous mountain pass, heading north into the frozen lands of Icewind Dale? An opportunity for wealth and power? A dark secret you're trying to escape? A fresh start? An old connection?

Whatever brought you here, it seems the rumors might be true. Strange, weather-related phenomena are shutting down travel through the Spine of the World mountain range. Several passes have been blocked, and you thought this one might be clear. And it was, until now.

As certain death descends swiftly toward you, movement at the corner of your eye draws your attention. A snowy-white muskrat gestures frantically, its clawed paws beckoning you to follow. It slides into a fissure in the ground that was hidden under snow and ice.

Assuming the characters follow the muskrat, they plummet down the fissure just as the avalanche crushes everything in the pass. The characters fall down a vertical tunnel, which turns into a slide. The passage levels out, depositing them in an icy cavern beneath the mountains.

The icy slide dumps you unceremoniously into a cold cavern. The muskrat stares you in the eye, then wiggles a bit, as if happy to see you survived the close call.

A voice from deeper in the cavern echoes toward you, its Common marked by a slobbery rasp. "Muskie found you in time. Good fortune!"

The voice comes from a ten-foot-long walrus resting in the shadows. A walrus calf rests at her side. It starts to wriggle its way toward you, but she pulls it back with one of her long tusks.

Other creatures then move out of the shadows to examine you. This menagerie includes a variety of animals, everything from snow foxes to wolf pups to avian creatures to reptiles. A few seem to converse with each other as they eye you warily.

"Excuse my children," says the walrus. "They're suspicious by nature. Their lives often depend on it. My children call me Mother Tusk, and you may as well. I saved your lives for a reason."

Use the following bullet points to guide the conversation. (Keep an eye on the time if you're running the episode in an hour or less):

- Mother Tusk was awakened by a goliath druid from the North. The druid died, and Mother Tusk took over stewardship of the animals in the druid's care. (This is only partially true. The druid was corrupted and is still alive, and Mother Tusk fled from him with as many creatures as she could recruit. She feared he'd use the animals in a bloodthirsty animal army. She doesn't wish to discuss this with the characters at this time.)
- A terrible curse has befallen the lands north of the Spine of the World: the sun refuses to rise. Survival, never easy here, has been made more difficult by this curse.
- Mother Tusk offers the characters passage beneath the Spine of the World if they agree to search for a scout in her family named Spritzel. The young otter may have run afoul of trouble.

## SHALL WE JUST CRACK ON?

If they agree to perform at least one task, Mother Tusk and her family lead the characters through the tunnels until they reach the open air. She then leads them to a cave, where the Redrun river meets the Redwaters lake. This is her current base of operations.

Once the characters have chosen a task, proceed to the corresponding episode and continue.

### LIGHTING IN ICEWIND DALE

Unless otherwise noted in the adventure, daytime hours provide dim light outdoors, while the nighttime hours are dark. The permanent dusk of Auril's curse makes the promise of sunlight seem a teasing possibility, but the sun never breaks the horizon.

# UNSURE FOOTING

**Estimated Duration:** 50 minutes

**I**N THIS EPISODE, MOTHER TUSK ASKS THE CHARACTERS to rescue one of her children, an awakened otter named Spritzel, who was spying on the town of Easthaven.

The characters quickly find Spritzel, and some of his otter friends, fleeing from a pack of wolves. The otters take shelter in a cave with ice slides, the wolves in close pursuit. The characters must navigate the ice slides to save the otters before the wolves kill them. Then the characters must survive the cold trip back to Mother Tusk. When the characters choose this task, read:

Mother Tusk explains what she needs you to do, "I sent one of my children, a young otter called Spritzel, on a scouting mission to watch the happenings in one of the Ten-Towns where the two-leggers dwell. He isn't back yet. He often gets himself into trouble and I need you to go look for him and make sure he isn't in danger. We've spotted wolves in the area, that could be dangerous for Spritzel."

Give the characters the chance to ask questions. Below are Mother Tusk's answers to the most common questions the characters may ask:

**What Does Spritzel Look Like?** "He's a white-furred otter with a brown patch above his right eye, and he wears a pearl earring."

**Who Was He Spying On?** "He was watching the happenings in the town of Easthaven. A contact in one of the other towns asked me for a favor. But that isn't important right now."

**What Will You Give Us for Doing This?** "I can only offer you my thanks, as well as the gift of your lives that I already saved once."

**How Far Away Is Easthaven?** "From here, it's more than ten miles. But I expect Spritzel's closer than that. Look for tracks as you travel northeast along the shore of Redwaters."

## TRACKING

When the players head off on the task, read:

Travel is incredibly difficult in the deep snow. A bitter wind cuts through your clothing, and ice crystals riding the strong breeze sting your eyes.

Assuming the characters follow directions, it doesn't take them long to find tracks:

After you've traveled about two miles from Mother Tusk's shelter, you notice something on the ground. Although the wind pushes snow around, easily spotted animal tracks mar the fresh dusting.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the deeper tracks were made by wolves, while the smaller tracks on top of the snow were made by otters.

At this point, call for a DC 10 group Wisdom (Survival) check. Give advantage to characters with backgrounds that would give them a lifetime of experience tracking things or surviving in harsh winter conditions.

If the group succeeds, they easily follow the tracks. Go immediately to "Sliding" below. (If all characters succeeded on the check, they all have advantage on saving throws in the "Freezing" section below.)

If the group fails, they lose the tracks several times and take longer to find the wolves and otters. The cold begins to take its toll. In the "Freezing" section of this episode, the characters have disadvantage on their saving throws. Continue to "Sliding" below.

## SLIDING

When the characters reach the end of the trail they're following, read:

Ahead of you, through the blowing snow, a pack of wolves chase a romp of a dozen otters, which weave through and around snow mounds and ice formations.

As the wolves close in, the sneaky otters zip through holes in the snow-packed earth. The wolves hesitate, but then the lead wolf barks a command, and the wolves leap into the holes as well, baying as they go.

If the players ask if one of the otters was Spritzel, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check confirms that one had a brown patch above its eye and a pearl earring.

Further, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check reveals that the lead wolf was acting strangely, as if it was more intelligent than a normal wolf. (This is because the wolf is awakened, and if the party is Very Strong, it's a dire wolf.)





## THE SLIDES

The characters can quickly reach the holes in the earth, which are large enough for Medium creatures to enter without issue. They hear the growls of wolves and the squeaking of otters echoing up from the depths.

If the characters jump into the holes, they find themselves on a series of ice slides leading down. Traversing these slides requires a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The results of the check for each character determine what happens when they reach the bottom:

| Check      | Result  |
|------------|---|
| 5 or lower | The character lands in a heap at the bottom. They take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and start combat prone. |
| 6–10       | The character takes no damage but starts combat prone.  |
| 11–16      | The character navigates the slide successfully and lands on their feet at the bottom of the slides.                     |
| 17+        | The character lands in perfect fighting position and has advantage on their initiative roll.                            |

**Inspiration.** Ask the players to narrate and describe their characters' trips down the ice slides. Award inspiration to players who do so with enthusiasm and storytelling skill.

When all the characters have landed at the bottom of the slides, continue to "Fighting."

## FIGHTING

When you're ready to continue, read:

The ice slides end in a chamber flooded with a foot of frigid water. The otters swim adeptly at the far side of the cavern, avoiding the wolves' snapping jaws. The icy bite of the water seeps up your wet clothes.

At the back of the cavern, a low, ice-covered shelf rises out of the water.

**For a view of the area, refer to The Ice Slides Map.**

**Wolves.** Four **wolves** are attacking the otters but are having trouble catching the slippery creatures. The leader of the wolf pack is Vundrel, an awakened wolf sent by her druid master to hunt Mother Tusk and her family.

When the characters arrive, Vundrel growls at them in deep, snarling Common, "This is our hunt. Find your own food." That's all the talking Vundrel does before ordering her packmates to attack the characters.

**Otters.** The otters use the Dodge action until the characters intervene. On the third round of combat, once it's obvious the characters are here to assist them, Spritzel calls on his otter friends to help the characters:

"Let's get 'em, mates! What ho!" squeaks Spritzel in Common. The otters don't have stats, but they work as a team. Each round, they swarm the closest wolf, and the next attack roll against that wolf has advantage.

Alternately, if one of the characters is in trouble, the otters instead help that character, and the next attack roll against that character has disadvantage.



## ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove two wolves.
- **Weak:** Remove one wolf.
- **Strong:** Add one wolf.
- **Very Strong:** Add one dire wolf.

## SAVING SPRITZEL

If the characters defeat the wolves, Spritzel's overjoyed. He addresses the characters in a high, squeaky voice humming with overwrought energy:

"Thank you! We were returning from the town, and we saw a vicious owlbear with black feathers and we ran away, but then we saw the wolves, so we ran from them, but they saw us and chased us and we couldn't lose them, but we found these tunnels, but they followed us down, but you rescued us—" He stops abruptly. "Wow, you look cold!"

**Treasure.** The frozen body of an explorer who died here months ago rests on the back shelf of the cave. The only thing of note on the body are its boots, which are *boots of false tracks* embroidered with gaudy, but worthless, gems. Continue with "Freezing."

## FREEZING

When the combat ends and the characters (and the otters) are out of immediate danger, a new danger presents itself:

Dripping wet in the freezing water, the cold of the North seeps into your bones. This frigid water could kill you unless you find a way to get warm and to dry your clothes, but the chamber is flooded with water and there's nothing to burn. What are you going to do?

Anyone proficient in Survival or who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check knows the following:

- Being drenched in cold water then moving through air this cold is most likely fatal in three hours or less.
- It's at least a three-hour walk back to Mother Tusk's location, and that's only true if someone isn't slowed from exhaustion. Even an hour in the cold could easily lead to serious exhaustion.
- Creating a heat source to dry off and warm up is vital to survival at this point. Unfortunately, there isn't much to burn in a watery cavern.

Remember, if the party failed their checks to track the animals earlier, their Constitution saving throws to avoid freezing (see below) are made with disadvantage. (If all the characters succeeded on their checks, they have advantage on these saving throws.) The characters have a few choices to make if they want to survive:

**A Cold, Wet Trek.** If they just climb out of the tunnels and start back to Mother Tusk's location, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of

exhaustion for each 30 minutes of travel during the 3-hour trek. (That means 6 checks.) If any character gains 2 levels of exhaustion, they then move at half speed. Strong characters might carry exhausted characters, but it's still a huge risk.

**Burning Wolves.** The characters can attempt to set the dead wolves ablaze to make heat. This could be done on the ice shelf in the cavern, but the smoke could be dangerous. This allows the characters to dry their clothes and get warm, but they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion from the smoke.

Climbing the ice slides with the wolves' bodies is possible but takes effort. Each attempt takes 30 minutes, and the characters must succeed on a DC 12 group skill check. Allow each character to use an ability and skill that makes sense to the overall success of the endeavor. This lets them get the wolves out, where they can burn them without worrying about fumes.

Wherever they decide to start the fire, they must have the means to start it. Fire magic, dry tinderboxes, or a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to light a fire without the proper tools are three options.

**Finding Wood or Other Fuel.** If the characters attempt to get to the surface without dragging the wolves, it takes 30 minutes to climb out, no check needed. From there, the characters can collect enough fuel with a successful DC 10 group skill check. Allow each character to use an ability and skill that makes sense to the overall success of the endeavor. Then they must have a means to start the fire, such as fire magic, dry tinderboxes, or a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to light a fire without proper tools.

**Otter Assistance.** The romp of otters can assist in small ways, but they must do so as a group. For example, they can assist one character in their assigned task. Or alternatively, the otters can huddle around one character to provide them with enough warmth to automatically succeed on their next Constitution saving throw against the cold.

**Magic.** Spellcasters will inevitably try to fix the entire problem with cantrips like *prestidigitation*, *druidcraft*, or **control flames**. Allow ingenious uses of this magic to help the cause without completely overcoming the entire challenge. For example, allow 30 minutes of casting one of these spells every round to dry one person's clothes, giving them advantage on their saving throws to resist the cold.

Of course, a character on cantrip duty can't contribute to a task like moving wolves or searching for fuel.

## CONCLUSION

If the characters get back to Mother Tusk's encampment, she starts a fire to warm them up. Spritzel excitedly recounts the harrowing fight with the wolves and the journey back, and he offers them his earring as a thank you, as well as other small gems and trinkets he's hidden away in the area. Mother Tusk rewards the characters with two *spell scrolls of cure wounds*. They can also take a long rest in her care.

At the end of this episode, if a character has completed two episodes, they may choose to gain a level—or they can decline the level. However, once they reach level 3, they may not play any more episodes in this adventure.

**Another Episode?** If the characters plan to continue with this adventure, move on to a new episode.

**Done?** Any characters who've completed all the episodes or who don't plan to complete any more episodes can be read **Conclusion—Into the Blizzard**.



# CONCLUSION—INTO THE BLIZZARD

**Estimated Duration:** 5 minutes

If a character completes all the quests, or if a character decides they won't be playing any more of these episodes, read them the conclusion:

With an enthusiastic nod, Mother Tusk motions toward the north, indicating all of Icewind Dale. "Be firm in your resolve, two-legger. It's more than wolves or owlbears or wild humans who threaten you here. The very weather itself seeks your demise in the North. Greater powers than you or me war here. Go with my thanks and my blessing. May we meet again under better and brighter skies."

As if the weather itself was eavesdropping on your conversation, clouds roll in, a biting wind cuts across your face, and snow falls like a veil being drawn across the world.

## CAN WE KEEP THE ANIMALS AS PETS?

The awakened animals in this adventure are sentient creatures with their own desires, motivations, and goals. Just as characters can't keep the NPC bartender as a pet in other adventures, they can't keep Spritzel, Wiskette, Ollie, Mother Tusk, or any of the other animals as pets. These NPCs will be returning in future adventures, so they should be kept alive and in good health. Although they might agree to keep the characters as pets if the characters ask nicely!

## REWARDS

At the end of the session, everyone receives rewards based upon their accomplishments.

### CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards:

#### ADVANCEMENT

Upon successfully completing two episodes of this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

#### GOLD

Award each character 20 gp for each episode played. The maximum gold you can award a character for playing this adventure is 80 gp.

#### MAGIC ITEMS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in Appendix C:

- *Boots of False Tracks*

### DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, one of your characters gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

| Tier | GP Earned |
|------|-----------|
| 1    | 80 gp     |
| 2    | 240 gp    |
| 3    | 1,600 gp  |
| 4    | 6,000 gp  |

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

#### MOTHER TUSK

Mother Tusk was awakened by a powerful goliath druid to act as a companion and confidant. The druid became corrupted, and Mother Tusk saw what he was doing to do to the animals in her care. She led the animals to safety, and she's been trying to protect them for the last several months.

**What They Want.** To keep her charges safe.

**Caring, but Ruthless.** Mother Tusk cares more for her animals than for humans, and she'll happily put humans at risk for her family.

#### SPRITZEL (SPRIT-ZELL)

The awakened otter likes to wear jewelry and generally make a spectacle of himself.

**What They Want.** To brave danger and find shiny things.

**Irrepressible.** As an awakened animal, Spritzel knows he's going to die. He doesn't want to die any time soon, but he wants to die spectacularly and for a good cause.





# APPENDIX A: CREATURES

The following creatures appear in this adventure.

## DIRE WOLF

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 37 (5d10 + 10)

**Speed** 50 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 17 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 3 (–4) | 12 (+1) | 7 (–2) |

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

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

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

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## WOLF

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 3 (–4) | 12 (+1) | 6 (–2) |

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

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

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

### ACTIONS

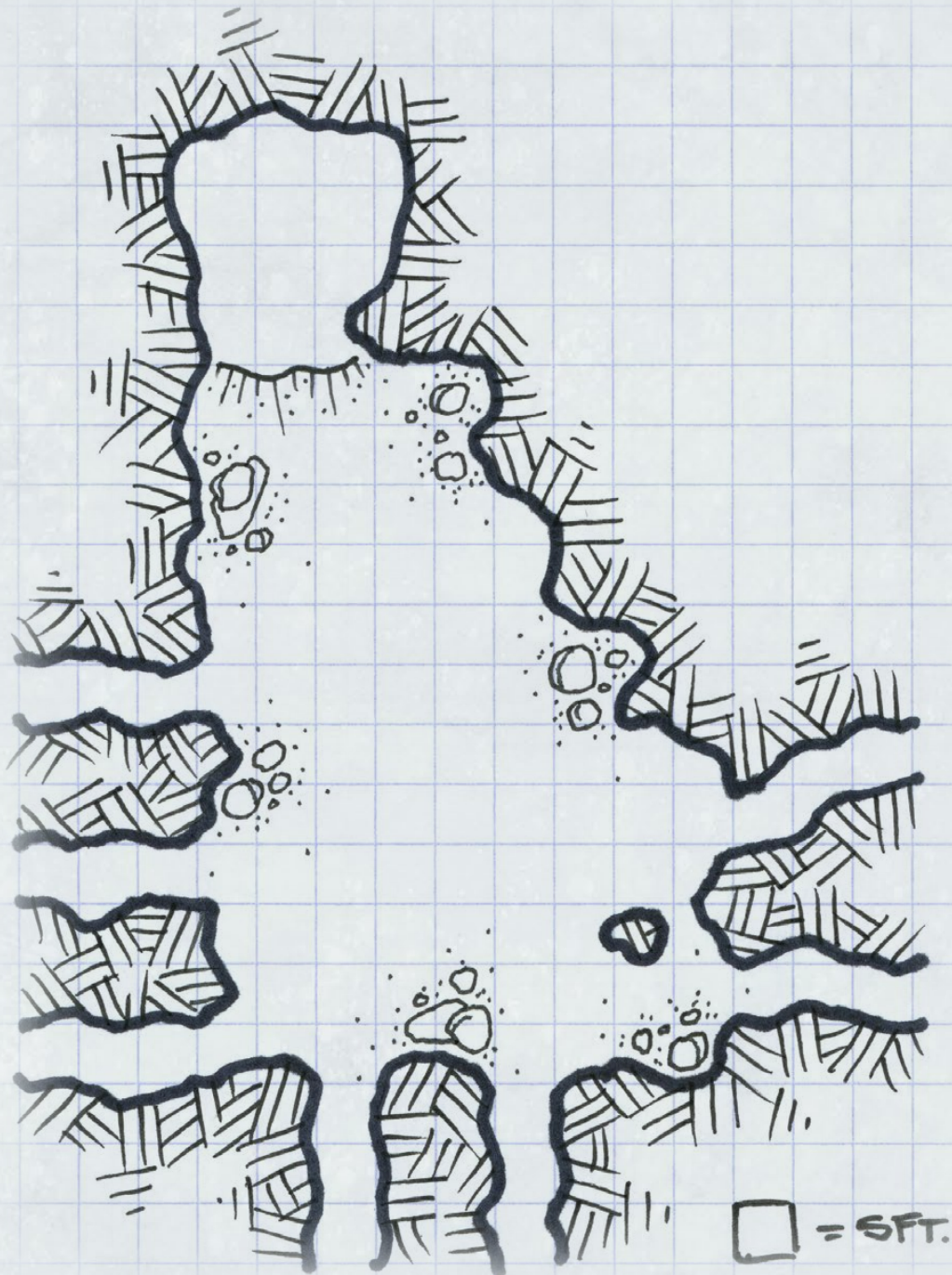
**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.





# APPENDIX B: MAPS

## THE ICE SLIDES



THE ICE SLIDES



# APPENDIX C: MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items appear in this adventure.

## **BOOTS OF FALSE TRACKS**

*Wondrous item, common*

These comfortable, fur-lined boots are embroidered with gaudy, but worthless, gems.

Only humanoids can wear these boots. While wearing the boots, you can choose to have them leave tracks like those of another kind of humanoid of your size.

*Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, p. 136



# APPENDIX D:

## DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you must have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a hardcover adventure may continue to play too, but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they can't return to the first if they level beyond its level range.

### PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score, and anything the adventures specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, and flaws).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you've time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Players Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

### ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

#### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

| Party Composition                | Party Strength |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 3–4 characters, APL less than    | Very Weak      |
| 3–4 characters, APL equivalent   | Weak           |
| 3–4 characters, APL greater than | Average        |
| 5 characters, APL less than      | Weak           |
| 5 characters, APL equivalent     | Average        |
| 5 characters, APL greater than   | Strong         |
| 6–7 characters, APL less than    | Average        |
| 6–7 characters, APL equivalent   | Strong         |
| 6–7 characters, APL greater than | Very Strong    |