



THE COLD ROAD HOME

AN IRON KINGDOMS ADVENTURE

VAERIL THE WISE IS THE OLDEST LIVING NYSS IN the Iron Kingdoms, the high priest of the dead god Nyssor. Knowing that his death and oblivion are near, Vaeril has begun a pilgrimage to his homeland: the Shard Spires. The ancestral home of the Nyss has been overrun by the blighted armies of the dragon Everblight for years, but Vaeril is prepared to brave the treacherous passes of the frozen mountains and the dragonspawn that lurk within. Summoning an escort of brave souls, Vaeril prepares to walk the long, cold road home...

“The Cold Road Home” is designed for a group of 5 characters with an average party level of 3.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Nyss elves believed themselves secluded from the horrors of war, nestled away in the far frozen north. The rise of an all-consuming blighted horror proved them wrong. Attacked by unholy terrors, betrayed from within by subverted members of their own people, the Nyss culture has been shattered.

Many hundreds were slain in early fighting in a futile attempt to defend their shards, but thousands more were overtaken—corrupted and seduced to join the growing legion. This obliteration happened in the blink of an eye by elven standards. Many shards realized immediately that the fight was lost and knew the only way to avoid assimilation was to flee. They became a refugee people, forced to live in the kingdoms of humanity.

Qyr-Aransor (“ancient elder”) Vaeril the Wise is one of the last of the Maelwyr Aeryn of the Nyss and the oldest living elf in the Iron Kingdoms. He is a devotee of the slain god Nyssor and once attended the frozen Winter Father at his fane in the Shard Spires mountain range.

The dragon Everblight spread his corruption across the Iron Kingdoms until being gradually beaten back by an alliance of his many foes. What little remains of the dragon’s forces have fallen back to the ancestral homeland of the Nyss.

Now, the ancient Nyss feels that his life is coming to its end. He wishes to return to the Shard Spires, to the Fane of Nyssor, to purify it of blighted corruption and prepare the holy site for the potential return of the Scyir of Winter.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

“The Cold Road Home” is an adventure for a party of 4–6 characters around 3rd level.

An ancient Nyss priest named Vaeril the Wise hires the party to escort him through the frozen Shard Spires mountains to the defiled Fane of Nyssor. Once the heart of the Nyss civilization, the fane has been corrupted by the blight of the dragon Everblight.

Vaeril wants to reclaim and purify the fane before he dies, hoping to restore a small piece of his people’s lost homeland. Braving the icy mountains, the party must protect the elderly

Vaeril from roaming dragonspawn, blighted Nyss, and other threats.

After reaching the Fane of Nyssor, the party must help Vaeril sanctify the temple’s altars and shrines. But they will soon learn a blighted Nyss warlock named Laessor lurks in the inner sanctum. Laessor attacks, trying to stop the purification ritual.

After defeating Laessor, the party will need to recover lost relics and treasures from the fane. Vaeril can then begin the long process of fully cleansing the temple so it is prepared for the potential return of the Winter Father.

With their task complete, the party will descend from the mountains back to civilization, frostbitten but rewarded for their efforts. Vaeril will remain at the fane, keeping a lonely vigil until his dying day.

The adventure provides several combat encounters and scenario hooks to engage the party plus opportunities for exploration and roleplaying. Themes of corruption, civilization in decline, and protecting ancestral sites help drive the story.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following are some ways the characters can get involved with the adventure. As written, the adventure assumes you used the first hook, but it can be adapted to suit any of the others.

Looking for Work. Characters with a mercenary outlook can have learned through their connections that there is a Nyss offering decent pay for an escort into the mountains.

Passing Through. If the characters are in the region, they may hear rumors of a strange Nyss in Kaldynsk who is looking for capable individuals to help him with a situation.

For the Winter Father. A group that contains a Nyss character may have learned that the respected Qyr-Aransor Vaeril the Wise has left his people and set out on his way to the Shard Spires. It is impossible to dissuade the elder Nyss from his path—but protecting him on his journey is still an option.

THE WHITE BEAR

Vaeril the Wise interacts with the characters to enlist their aid in returning to the Fane of Nyssor in the Shard Spires. He has arranged for them to meet him at the White Bear in Kaldynsk, a minor town northwest of Porsk in the foothills of the Shard Spires.

The adventure begins in the White Bear, a road station in the north of Khador. When your players are ready to begin, read the following boxed text aloud:

A biting wind blows through the chinks in the walls of The White Bear. Like the rest of the backwater town of Kaldynsk, it is dilapidated and nearly free from comforts. By the roadhouse's small hearth, a cluster of three Kossite hunters warm their frozen fingers while passing a flask of strong drink around and stamping snow from their boots.

Kaldynsk is the last in a chain of flyspeck towns and lies hard at the foot of the Shard Spires in the northern fringe of Khador. Cold glacial winds blowing down from the north have seemed to strip the town of any color or joy, replacing it all with a fine layer of frost.

The cold doesn't seem to bother the Nyss sitting across from you, your reason for ever stepping foot this far to the north of the world. He is the oldest elf any of you have ever laid eyes on. His skin is a map of wrinkles, his eyes as colorless as ice. Mercenaries like you meet all manner of people while working a contract, but something about the job this elderly Nyss has to offer you is unlike any other you've undertaken so far.

If the characters already know each other, they arrived at the White Bear as a group. If they each came on their own, they trickle in one at a time, and Vaeril waits for them all to arrive before speaking. Give the players a moment to introduce their characters before Vaeril explains his reasons for being at the White Bear. Read or paraphrase:

ROLEPLAYING VAERIL

Vaeril speaks in a slow, raspy voice. He sizes up every situation with an icy stare. He longs to see his homeland restored before he passes, yet grief weighs heavily on him from the plight of his people. He possesses solemn wisdom and unhurried cadence. Vaeril emanates a quiet dignity despite his frail form. He is slow to trust but quick to scowl at any sign of deception or mockery. He strokes his ivory pipe thoughtfully when pondering something. It is a deep sadness that truly drives this elder to undertake one final journey.

The Nyss takes a deep draw from an ivory pipe before speaking. "Thank you for responding to my offer. In those mountains to the north is my ancestral homeland, stolen through betrayal and corruption. Those of us who escaped were scattered to the winds. Those who remained were twisted and defiled by the dragon Everblight, enslaved to do his bidding. The dragon's schemes are unraveling, though. His legion is spread thin and crumbling. The time is now for me to return home, to the temple of the Winter Father, and to reclaim it from those have defiled it."

Use the following information to guide the conversation with Vaeril.

- The Nyss knows that the end of his life is drawing near.
- Vaeril knows his fellow Nyss would try to stop him from undertaking this final pilgrimage to the Shard Spires. They believe he is too important to allow him to head off on a final expedition; hence, his need to find other people to escort him to the Shard Spires.
- He wants non-Nyss to serve as his escort. His is already a diminished people, and he cannot in good faith put any yet living at risk.
- He is skilled with the claymore, but his advanced age means he is not as swift as he once was. He pledges his arcane abilities to help protect his escort.
- He plans to return to the Fane of Nyssor in the mountains. He believes that his god will return one day, and Vaeril wants to prepare Nyssor's home for him.
- While the dragon's legion is diminished, there are still likely to be blighted Nyss and dragonspawn in the mountains. Vaeril is a skilled swordsman, but he knows that he alone cannot survive the trek.

To compensate the characters, Vaeril has collected payment in the form of fine silver statues of Nyssor, collected from various fanes, worth 250 gp each. He also speaks of relics in the Fane of Nyssor that could not be recovered during his flight from the Shard Spires. If the characters return the relics to the Nyss sheltering in Korsk, they can expect to be rewarded with at least 1,000 gp.

If the characters agree to act as his escort, Vaeril advises them to visit the local exchequer to gather any necessary supplies for the journey, such as cold weather gear, snowshoes, and rations. He arranges to meet them at the hamlet's center to set out for the Shard Spires.

KALDYNSK

Kaldynsk is not much of a town, mostly serving local hunters as a place to resupply before heading back out into the wilderness. In addition to the White Bear, it has a small general goods store, a mechanic's shop, a gunsmith, and a post office.

The town was founded around 50 years ago as a trading post and resupply station for hunters, trappers, prospectors, and explorers heading into the mountains and tundra.

The town is quite small, with a population of only around 300 people. Most of the buildings are simple log cabins with moss chinking between the logs to keep out the cold. Smoke from stoves and chimneys drifts through the chilled air.

GRIGORI'S GENERAL GOODS

This modest general store is run by the gruff, bearded Grigori Vanyovik. Its shelves are stocked with basic equipment, foodstuffs, and supplies for venturing into the icy wilderness surrounding Kaldynsk like ice axes, crampons, and snowshoes. An earthy smell of leather and oil permeates the space.

SNIT'S MECHANIKS

Kaldynsk's mechanic's shop is operated by a bogrin tinkerer named Snit. Various gadgets and parts clutter Snit's workspace behind the counter. He can repair damaged equipment and occasionally has clever inventions for sale. The shop echoes with the clangs of Snit's work.

VALENSK GUNWERKS

A one-room building houses Kaldynsk's resident gunsmith, a human woman named Katya Valensk. Katya meticulously crafts and repairs firearms for the town's hunters and trappers. The smell of smoke, oil, and freshly worked wood lingers around her workshop. She has a regular supply of simple firearms and ammunition.

INTO THE SHARD SPIRES

Traveling into the Shard Spires is no small feat. The terrain is rugged, leading up into the icy peaks of the Nyss homeland. From where they set out to the Fane of Nyssor is 50 miles into the mountains.

Vaeril acts as a guide for the characters. Despite the ten years he's spent away, he still ably recalls the safest and best passage through the mountains. During the journey, he will give sage advice to the characters and describe what the home of the Nyss was like before it was corrupted by the dragon Everblight.

The road ascends from the foothills into narrow pathways that switch back and forth, bringing you ever higher into the mountains. Before long, the landscape becomes snowy white.

Walls of ice and stone rise up, stretching into ominous gray clouds overhead. The wind becomes fiercer, carrying flecks of ice with it. The more you ascend, the lower the temperature dips, and before long you are in a frozen landscape.

"There is no more road to follow," Vaeril says, "other than the one written on my heart."

BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

The Shard Spires are a chilly wasteland of glacial ice, blizzards, and freezing rock. The Shard Spires has the following general features:

Extreme Cold. For each hour spent in the cold weather, a creature that is not resistant or immune to cold damage, or that does not have the appropriate cold weather gear, must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1 level of exhaustion. The DC of the saving throw increases by 1 for each hour after the first, with a maximum DC of 20.

Foraging. There are limited options for foraging if the characters run out of supplies. Foraging DCs in the Shard Spires is DC 20.

Lighting. A gray expanse of clouds filters pale sunlight during the day, and at night the stars and moonlight reflect off the snow.

Rests. It is difficult to comfortably rest while in the Shard Spires. Unless the characters are resting in a secure shelter, like a Nyss structure or a natural cavern with a source of fire, resting in this region is less effective than the character might be used to.

When a character finishes a short rest, instead of expending hit dice and regaining hit points equal to the total, they can expend hit dice and regain a Constitution modifier (minimum 1) for each hit die spent.

When a character finishes a long rest, instead of replenishing total hit points and hit dice, a character replenishes any spent hit dice and can then choose to expend hit dice, regaining hit points equal to the total roll of hit dice spent.

If a character is in a secure structure or cavern with a source of heat, a short or long rests function as normal.

Rugged Terrain. Due to the rugged terrain and snow, travel through the Shard Spires is a slow affair. Halve the travel pace of the party as they move through the Shard Spires.

Weather. The prevailing weather is windy with

SHARD SPIRES WEATHER TABLE

d20	Weather	Effects
1-5	Clear skies	None
6-10	Light snow	Light obscurement, no movement penalties
11-15	Heavy snow	1d6 inches of snow falls per hour. Heavy obscurement, half movement
16-17	Blizzard	2d6 inches of snow falls per hour. No visibility beyond 5 ft, quarter movement
18-19	Freezing rain	The DC of Constitution saves to avoid exhaustion increases to DC 15. Icy terrain is difficult terrain
20	Aurora	Nighttime skies are vivid with color and are dimly lit

temperatures as low as -30 degrees Fahrenheit. At the start of each day, roll a d20. On a roll of 16 or higher, the weather fluctuates. Roll on the Shard Spires Weather table to determine changes in the weather.

TRAVEL PACE

The journey takes the characters through the Shard Spires, a freezing mountain range where jagged peaks of ice reach toward the sky. The icy winds cut through even the warmest furs as the characters ascend treacherous paths. They must take care not to lose their footing on the slick ground or tumble into deep ravines hidden by snowdrifts. Along the way, the characters spot herds of shaggy ulks and packs of frost wolves stalking the mountains.

How long the journey takes and the number of random encounters that occur depend on whether the characters are moving at a normal, fast, or slow pace.

Normal Pace. The journey takes four days, and the characters have three random encounters.

Fast Pace. The journey takes three days, and the characters have two random encounters.

Slow Pace. The journey takes six days, and the characters have four random encounters.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE SHARD SPIRES

As the characters travel to the fane, you can use the following to spice up their travel. Unless specified, you decide what time of day each encounter occurs. Encounters marked with an asterisk (*) are unique and can occur only once, while the others can happen multiple times. If you roll an encounter that can't be repeated, roll again for a new result or choose one you like.

BLIGHTED WILDLIFE

The characters encounter a heavily blighted animal. Choose a **polar bear**, pack of 6 **wolves**, or **giant ulk**. The beast attacks without regard for its safety and fights to the death due to its blighted nature.

LESSER DRAGONSPAWN

Numerous dragonspawn roam the region, having lost their controlling warlocks and reverted to their base instincts, stalking and hunting prey among the glacial peaks. Each time this encounter occurs, the characters encounter a different creature. The characters encounter 1d4 **shredders**, **harriers**, or **stingers** of your choice.

WINTER ARGUS CORPSE

Just off the trail, the characters spot the corpse of a winter argus. Its body is riddled with black-fletched arrows and a pool of frozen blood stains the snow around it.

A character who examines the corpse and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies strange, birdlike footprints in the snow near the argus. These distinctive tracks have been left by a group of blighted Nyss striders.

RAPTOR PATROL

There are numerous raptors in the region that patrol around

SHARD SPIRES ENCOUNTERS

d8 Encounter

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|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Blighted Wildlife |
| 2 | Lesser Dragonspawn |
| 3 | Winter Argus Corpse |
| 4 | Raptor Patrol |
| 5 | Frozen Battlefield |
| 6 | Ice Cavern |
| 7 | Ominous Tracks |
| 8 | Abandoned Sleigh |

the edges of the territory. Each time this encounter occurs, the characters meet a different patrol. Choose one of the following options:

Active. A single **raptor** is actively patrolling and might be engaged in battle with another creature like a winter troll, winter argus, or pack of wolves.

Passive. A single **raptor** has made camp in the shelter of an icy outcropping. If it notices the PCs, it mounts up on its ulk and tried to ride them down.

FROZEN BATTLEFIELD

The characters encounter a field of frozen bodies partially buried in snow and ice. These corpses are the remains of the Nyss who were slaughtered when Everblight first corrupted the region. Their bodies are desiccated and blackened by exposure to the extreme cold.

ICE CAVERN

An icy precipice rises from the glacial plain, and the characters spot a cave on its eastern face. Within this glacial cavern is a shrine to Nyssor.

OMINOUS TRACKS

While they travel, the characters encounter alarmingly large tracks of splayed, taloned feet, either left by a massive dragonspawn or a frost drake. After they first encounter these tracks, each day the characters hear the bellowing of a giant creature off in the distance, obscured from sight by driving snow.

ABANDONED SLEIGH

The characters stumble on a long-forgotten Nyss war sleigh. Its driver and animals are nowhere in sight. The skids of the sleigh have been frozen into the ice and its cab filled with snow, but the characters can either chop it free from the ice with axes or similar items or break it free with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

The sleigh contains basic survival supplies: five days of frozen rations, fire-starting equipment and tinder, and a seal-skin, fur-lined bedroll.

THE FIRST STEP

After they have traveled for the first twelve miles, Vaeril leads the party to the base of a 100-foot-tall cliff. A weather-beaten series of steps are carved into the cliff face, coated with a thin layer of ice. This pathway leads to the Nysyll Plateau.

It is likely the end of the first day of travel when the characters reach the wall. Vaeril will suggest camping at the base of the wall and making the ascent in daylight.

CLIMBING THE WALL

If the characters don't think to do so first, Vaeril advises that they tie each other together in case one of them slips.

Each creature ascending the cliff will need to make three rolls: a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, and a DC 10 Constitution check. A creature that fails two or more of these checks slips and falls. Roll 1d10×10 to determine how many feet the creature had ascended before falling. Due to snow at the bottom of the cliff, a creature that falls takes half the normal damage from the fall.

MOUNTAIN AMBUSH

After the second day of travel, the characters arrive at one of the Winter Stones, markers that delineate the extreme boundary of the former Nyss homeland, and a gateway from the lower mountains up to the frozen plateau above.

Getting to the upper reaches of the Shard Spires requires travel through one of these narrow mountain passes. The Nyss used to guard these passes with the Rysovass, skilled great sword-wielding wardens of the mountains. They are currently being watched by a group of five **strider scouts**.

The mountain path ahead appears clear as you trudge through the snow. Vaeril suddenly perks up, his eyes narrowing as he scans the rocky cliffs surrounding you.

"It's too quiet. Be on your guard," the elder Nyss warns.

Suddenly, a volley of arrows rains down from above. Three blighted archers have set up an ambush from concealed positions up the slope.

"Take cover!" Vaeril shouts as he dodges behind an outcropping of rock.

Characters who have a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher are not surprised by the ambush.

The striders use the advantage of height to pepper the characters with arrows. If reduced to 5 hit points, a strider will attempt to flee and regroup rather than fight to the death. The striders fall back to the nearby village of Aerylyth to alert more of the blighted Nyss and to muster a larger force to track down the intruders.

CAPTIVES

If the characters manage to keep one of the striders alive, Vaeril can speak with the creature. It is violent and standoffish, hissing and spitting at its captors, but can provide the following information:

- The Aerylyth village nearby has a small force of blighted Nyss, led by Captain Caelmir, a legionnaire.
- There are two patrols of raptors that circle the plateau.
- If the striders do not report back within three days, Caelmir will send scouts looking for them.

After any conversation, Vaeril heavy heartedly suggests any surviving striders be killed—it is a better fate in his mind than continuing to live on as the blighted servant of a corrupting dragon.

TREASURE

The striders don't have much in the way of traditional treasure, but each one has a Nyss bow, 20 arrows, and an explorer's pack (backpack, bedroll, mess kit, tinderbox, torch [10], rations [10], waterskin, hempen rope).

DEVELOPMENT

If the striders escape, read or paraphrase:

Vaeril looks to the north. "Those scouts will be from a larger shard. If we don't stop them, we'll have raptors riding us down before long. There was a village near here, Aerylyth. They might be headed there."



MOUNTAIN AMBUSH

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PASS WALLS



AERYLYTH VILLAGE

This village is one of the few permanent structures on the plateau. Nyss shards would migrate from one such village to another throughout the year. It is now the staging area for a group of blighted Nyss.

The characters may choose to skirt the village to avoid any conflict with the Nyss. If they do so, they must travel nearly 20 miles out of their way. Otherwise, they will have to pass nearby the village, where they are likely to be spotted by its sentries.

As the characters approach the village, they can see the handful of low, black timber buildings that comprise it. There are tracks in the snow—a mixture of ulk, Nyss, and striders—coming in and out of the village, heading in numerous directions.

SUPPLIES

If the characters need supplies, Vaeril suggests they can be found in the village. The Nyss would leave caches of supplies in earthen cellars where the permafrost would keep them preserved. The supply cache at Aerylyth includes a variety of nonperishable goods like dry grain, hardtack, and provisions for ulk. The supplies are enough to provide 20 days of rations.

CAELMIR'S BAND

Captain Caelmir and a group of 10 **blighted Nyss warriors** are currently occupying the village. Two sentries are always at their posts and, if they spot any threats, will sound a signal with bone whistles before attacking with their bows.

The Nyss attack any intruders on sight. They are enraptured with blight and will fight to the death.

TREASURE

In addition to their weapons and armor, Caelmir's Nyss have furs and pelts from recent meals that can act as cold weather clothing if worn.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Within the last few miles of the Fane of Nyssor is the Aericspan, a bridge of ice crossing a glacial chasm that leads to the fane.

When the characters come within a mile of the bridge, read or paraphrase:

Through eddies of snow, the form of a lacy bridge comes into view to the north. Glinting spires of ice link together in graceful curves to form its structure. It spans across a wide fissure of glacial blue. Even from a distance, cracks along the structure are evident.

Vaeril sighs upon seeing the sorry state of the bridge. "The Aericspan. Forged of ice by the prophet and attended to by hundreds of generations of ice witches. But in six short years, this is what it has been reduced to."



The bridge is 20 feet wide and has a 100-yard span across the chasm, which is 50 feet deep. Strong winds gust up from below, bringing clouds of frost into the air around the bridge in intervals. The walls of the chasm are sheer and slippery. Climbing them without a climber's kit requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Fragility. The poor condition of the Aericspan means that it can't sustain much damage. If a section of the bridge (AC 15, 10 hit points) takes damage, a 10-by-10-foot area of it falls into the chasm.

Slippery. A creature that takes damage or moves farther than its walk speed while on the bridge must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, falling prone on a failed save. If the save fails by 5 or more, the creature slips on the ice and falls off the bridge to the chasm floor below, taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage.

WING AND A LAIR

A colony of 10 grotesques lair beneath the Aericspan. When the characters have reached the midpoint of the bridge, the grotesques emerge and attack. Working in pairs, the grotesques try to drag creatures from the bridge and pitch them into the chasm.

THE FANE OF NYSSOR

The Fane of Nyssor was once the heart of all Nyss civilization. It housed the frozen body of the god Nyssor. Now it is a shadow of that former glory, a defiled and forgotten relic of an age long passed.

APPROACHING THE FANE

As the characters approach the fane, read:

Through a haze of wind-blown snow, you see the Fane of Nyssor rising up from the plateau of ice, backed by a chasm in the glacial plain. Drifts of snow pile against its walls, and icicles hang from every surface. Stairs rise up from the snow to the fane's entrance, a massive set of double doors that stand ajar.

The exterior of the fane does not have any guards patrolling, but a character who makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check notices numerous sets of footprints headed toward the entrance. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, a character also identifies a larger set of footprints left by the dragonspawn warbeast of the warlord Laessor.

FANE OF NYSSOR FEATURES

The locations in the fane are detailed on the map. Unless otherwise noted in an area's description, the following features are common throughout all areas of the fane.

CEILINGS

The ceilings in the fane's rooms are 10 feet high, with eight-foot-high doorways connecting them.

DOORS AND WALLS

The fane's heavy doors are made of black iron, and its walls are made of gray stone. Each door and each 10-foot section of wall has AC 17; 27 hit points; resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage; and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

If an area's description notes a locked door, the lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or the door can be forced open with a successful DC 18 Strength check. Vaeril carries a master key that locks or unlocks all the doors in the fane.

FANE OF NYSSOR LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map.

F1. FANE ENTRANCE

The massive iron doors of the fane stand ajar, allowing blowing snow to drift inside. Beyond is a large hall rimmed with frost. Several blighted Nyss huddle near a small fire, trying to ward off the bitter cold. There are five **blighted Nyss** soldiers led by a **blighted Nyss abbot** and a **blighted Nyss champion**. When the characters enter the fane, read:

As you step through the towering entrance of the fane, the warmth from a fire across the hall cuts through the icy air. A group of gaunt, blight-ravaged Nyss gather around the flames, turning to glare at you with hollow eyes.

F2. NAVE

The main chamber of the fane is dominated by rows of stone benches facing an altar at the far end. Frost coats every surface, and piles of rubble partially block some of the benches. When the characters enter the Nave, read or paraphrase:

You step into the main chamber of the fane. Stone benches covered in frost lead up to an altar at the far end. The wind whistles through gaps in the walls, billowing drifts of snow across the floor. Along the sides, alcoves contain ancient shrines caked in ice.

Ancestral Shrines. On either side of the nave are shallow alcoves containing the ancestral shrines of the major Nyss shards. In addition to a small ivory idol worth 25 gp, each shrine contains 1d10×5 gp worth of minor sacrifices to the shard's ancestors. At your discretion, a shrine can contain a Nyss claymore or Nyss bow in addition to the other sacrifices, which is the weapon of a distinguished ancestor.

The idols and relics here are worth a great deal more to the surviving Nyss people. If brought to them, each is worth 100 gp each, for a total value of 1,000 gp.

Desecration. Each of the shrines has been desecrated with blighted blood. A character can purify a shrine by spending 1 minute in prayer followed by a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check. Nyss characters have advantage on the check.

F3A. DORMITORY

The barracks where the priests and defenders of the fane would rest and prepare contain rows of stone beds. All useful supplies have long been scavenged by the blighted Nyss. If the characters enter the dormitory, read or paraphrase:

The barracks are dark and cold, with rows of frigid stone beds covered in layers of dust.

Occupants. Some of the warlock Laessor's soldiers are resting in the dormitory. There are 1d6+2 **blighted Nyss soldiers** present. If Laessor calls for aid and the characters have not already defeated them, these soldiers join combat in 1d4 rounds.

Storage. The storage room contained supplies and a cooking area for the priesthood of the fane. It has long since been pilfered by the blighted Nyss.

F3B. RUINS

Other than the dormitories, many of the outlying structures of the fane have been reduced to rubble. If the characters approach one of the ruins, read or paraphrase:

Sections of walls crumble amidst piles of rubble blanketed in snow. Shattered idols and collapsed colonnades mark where additional buildings once stood. Now there is only debris, destroyed ages ago when the blighted hordes swept through these sacred halls.

F4. HIGH ALTAR

The high altar is carved from gray stone, etched with swirling runes praising the Winter Father. Offerings of silver and ivory to the god have been swept aside into piles. A staircase behind the altar leads up to the inner sanctum.



Treasure. The offerings on the shrine are art objects with a total worth of up to 500 gp to the right collector. It also includes the Frostbrand hammer (see Appendix).

Desecration. The high altar has been desecrated, like the ancestral shrines in the nave. The DC to sanctify the altar is DC 15.

F5. FORGE

The forge houses the giant anvil where Nyssor himself once slumbered. Tools of the Grand Crafter line the walls, and they are now dusty and untouched. The furnace at the back provides the only heat in the freezing chamber. When the characters enter the forge, read or paraphrase:

A gaunt figure riddled with blight leans against the gigantic anvil that dominates the center of this chamber. At his side, an eyeless creature growls at your approach.

Vaeril looks at the figure and whispers in disbelief. "Laessor. You're alive."

"How desperate you must be to come back to this place," the Nyss says. "Did you tell your new friends about how you left so many of us behind? How you and your lapdogs fled with your crippled god at the first whisper of trouble? Go on, let them know the pathetic coward you really are. I have a new god, one who offers real power."

Glowing runes form in the air around one of the Nyss' hand as he prepares to attack.

Occupants. Laessor and his bonded **raek** are the only occupants in this room, but if they have not already been dealt with, sounds of combat brings the soldiers from the dormitory at the end of the first round of battle.

Nyssor's Anvil. The anvil is a legendary relic of the Grand Crafter of Lyoss. A character who is Nyss or otherwise of the faith of Nyssor can use an action to strike the anvil with Nyssor's hammer.

When the anvil is struck, any creatures hostile to the character who struck the anvil within the Fane of Nyssor must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) cold damage and have their speed reduced by 10 feet until the end of their next turn on a failed save, or half as much damage and no speed reduction on a successful one. After being used in this way, the anvil cannot be used in this way again until the next day at dawn.

Desecration. The shard of *athanc* in Laessor's chest is itself desecrating the chamber with radiating blight. Only by defeating him and removing his body from the shrine can Vaeril begin the long process of resanctifying the Forge of the Winter Father.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the purification ritual complete, the characters have cleansed the Fane of Nyssor of blighted corruption and protected it from future threats. Vaeril expresses his gratitude to the characters for helping him fulfill his life's final mission.

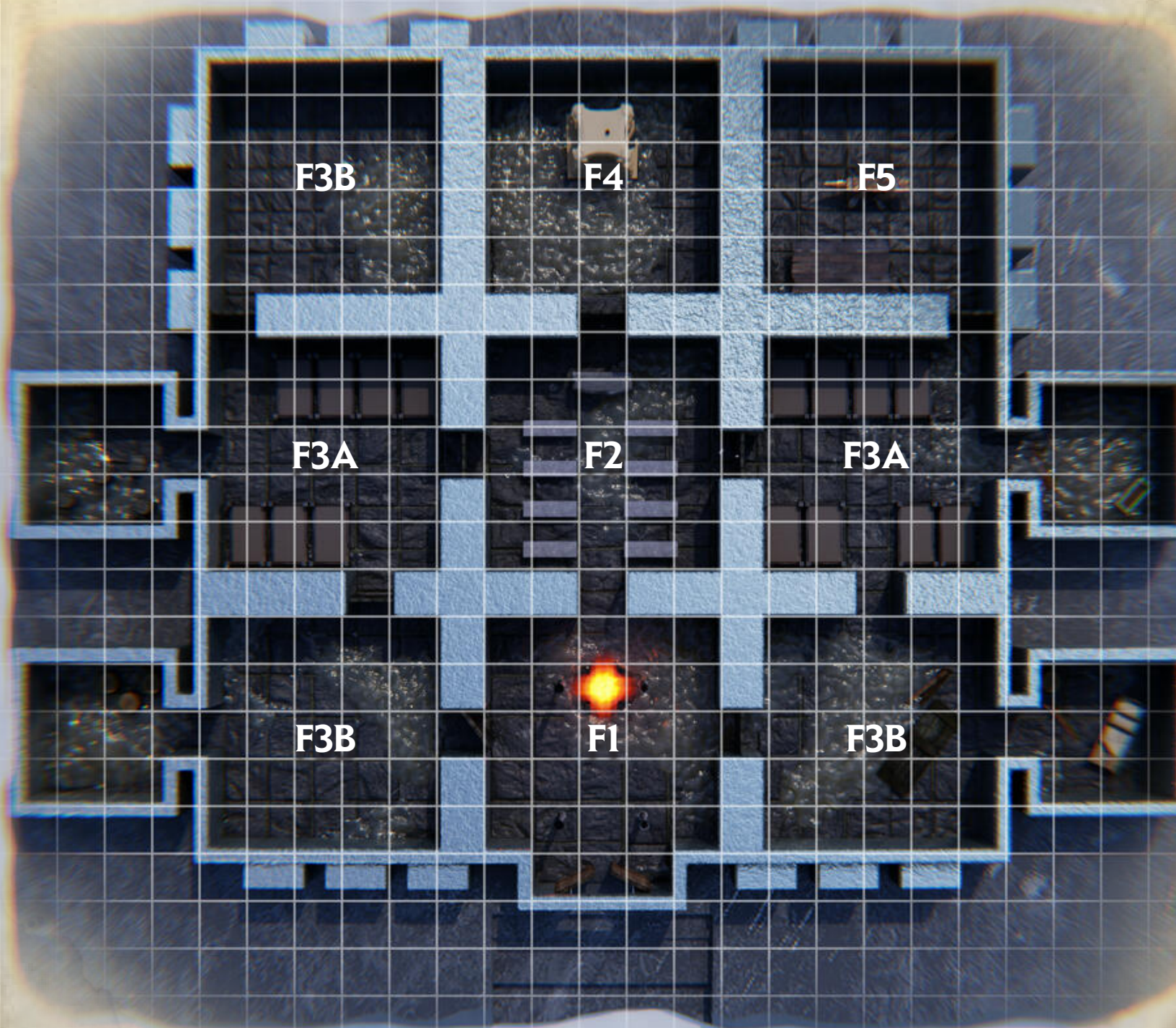
As the characters prepare to descend from the frozen mountains, Vaeril bids them a somber farewell. He will remain at the fane, keeping vigil until the day the Winter Father returns.

When the characters exit the mountains, the journey back to civilization is much easier than the trek in, unless you'd like to have them experience even more peril on the way back to civilization. Regardless, each of the characters is granted the following boon until the next full moon:

Gift of the Winter Father. The character gains resistance to cold damage. If it already had resistance, it gains immunity instead. Additionally, checks made with artisan's tools are made with advantage.



FANE OF NYSSOR



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

IRON KINGDOMS - THE COLD ROAD HOME



NPC APPENDIX

VAERIL THE WISE

Medium humanoid (Nyss), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 168 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4

Skills Religion +2, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Aeric, Cygnaran, Khadoran

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Vaeril is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Vaeril has the following 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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Vaeril makes two melee attacks.

Nyss Claymore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

Black Flame. A creature within 60 feet of Vaeril must make a Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

LAESSOR

Medium humanoid (blighted Nyss), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 67 (15d6 + 15)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Aeric

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Fury Manipulation. Laessor is a warlock with 3 fury points and a control range of 30 feet. It regains all expended fury points after it finishes a long rest. During its turn, the blighted Nyss can expend fury points on the following options:

Attack Bonus (1 Fury Point). The blighted Nyss gains advantage on its next attack roll.

Damage Bonus (1 or More Fury Points). For each fury point expended, the blighted Nyss deals an extra 1d8 weapon damage on its next weapon damage roll.

Shake It Off (1 Fury Point). The blighted Nyss gains advantage on its next saving throw.

In addition, the blighted Nyss can force a warbeast under its control and in its control range to use any of these options, in which case the warbeast gains the number of fury points and the benefits described above.

Spellcasting. The blighted Nyss is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Casting a spell requires the blighted Nyss to expend a number of fury points equal to the spell's level. The blighted Nyss can cast the animus of a bonded warbeast in its control range. It knows the following warlock spells:

At will: guidance, resistance

3rd level: guardian beast, healing word

ACTIONS

Nyss Claymore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Blade Shield. The blighted Nyss adds 2 to its AC against one ranged attack roll that would hit it. To do so, the blighted Nyss must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

FROSTBRAND WARHAMMER

Melee weapon, Warhammer, uncommon

A symbol of authority within Nyssor's fane, this elegant smith's hammer bears the mark of Nyssor on its striking face. This +1 warhammer has 3 charges. When hitting with it, the wielder can expend 1 charge to deal an extra 2d8 cold damage. The hammer regains 1d3 expended charges each dawn. If the last charge is expended, roll a d20. On a 1, the hammer turns to frost and is destroyed.



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