OUR TOWN IS DYING

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ 4ᵀᴴ EDITION MINI-ADVENTURE BY BRENT P. NEWHALL

THE APPROACH

The wind screamed across rolling hills, bending young trees in half with its ferocious strength. It roared through the small crevice of path that curved through the trees and tore past the small knot of figures that trudged slowly through the gathering snow.

The group pulled their cloaks closer around them and pushed forwards, methodically following the overgrown road through the mounting drifts. These travelers were no novices. They were many hours from their last hot meal, but they steadily continued onwards.

Their discipline was soon rewarded with the view of soft lights that seemed to dance through the trees. It was a rural village, half-buried in the snow.

Most of the lights shone from a large, central building. The travelers made their way towards it, noticing but ignoring the faces that appeared behind the windows of houses they passed. A massive hand reached out of a cloak and rapped at the solid wooden door of the building. The door lumbered open.

Half the village was gathered in this inn, and every face turned to stare as the cloaked group strode across the threshold, into the crowd of silent townsfolk.

An old woman dressed in worn brown robes rose on the other side of the common room. "You answered the call that we left in Darkmoor?" she croaked. The adventurers nodded.

"I am Stellvia," she stated. "Come, sit, and prepare."

A DIRECTION IS REVEALED

"Autumn came early," Stellvia continued. "The first snow, barely forty days later. We hadn't time to gather enough crops. Our water is frozen. We are starving.

"My bones have warned me that this is not natural. Now that you've come, I will perform a sacred ritual, which will reveal the source of this perversion of nature."

She raised a hand above her head. A mote of light appeared above her head, then shone brighter by far than any lamp. It was as if the room's light was being sucked into it, then it flashed and there was a loud bang.

A glowing miniature landscape hung above their heads in the darkness. In the center lay a tiny village, surrounded by woods. Everyone in the room recognized it as their own. Three hills away, a red ink blot stained the countryside. The image hovered for a few seconds, then faded away like a

sunspot.

Stellvia regarded the adventurers levelly. "That is your destination," she said. "My magic can say no more. We have gold enough to reward you for finding and stopping it. It is worth our lives."

SMALL PROBLEMS

The adventurers pushed their way through woods very much like the ones that had led them into the village. The wind, though, was meaner, worming its way into their cloaks and blowing snow into crevices, soaking their undergarments.

One of them put a hand on the pommel of his sword. The others saw this and peered more closely into the woods. The trees thinned into a whiteness, but it was a white with thickness, with solidity.

The left the trees to find themselves in front of a swirling wall of snow and ice. As they stepped into the clearing, the ice swirled and solidified into four small figures, humanoids made entirely of ice, their cruel, squat faces grinning maniacally. They giggled.

"Ice pygmies," growled one of the adventurers.

Ice Pygmy	Level 1 Soldier
Medium humanoid	XP 75

Initiative +3
Senses Perception +1
HP 24; **Bloodied** 12
AC 13
Fortitude 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12
Speed 6; see also *storm shuffle*

STANDARD ACTIONS

(BW) Iron Fists (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+1 cold damage, and if the target is bloodied it is knocked prone.

Wind's Embrace (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+1 cold damage, and ongoing 5 cold damage (save ends).

Frigid Cyclone (standard; encounter, only while bloodied)
Close burst 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 cold and lightning damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS

Storm Shuffle (move; encounter)
The ice pygmy disappears and moves up to its speed. It cannot be targeted by an attack during its move, or until it reappears at the beginning of its next turn.

Ice Pygmy	Level 4 Soldier
Medium humanoid	XP 175

Initiative +6
Senses Perception +4
HP 44; **Bloodied** 22
AC 16
Fortitude 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15
Speed 6; see also *storm shuffle*

STANDARD ACTIONS

(BW) Iron Fists (standard; at-will)
+9 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+4 cold damage, and if the target is bloodied it is knocked prone.

Wind's Embrace (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+4 cold damage, and ongoing 5 cold damage (save ends).

Frigid Cyclone (standard; encounter, only while bloodied)
Close burst 3; +9 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 cold and lightning damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS

Storm Shuffle (move; encounter)
The ice pygmy disappears and moves up to its speed. It cannot be targeted by an attack during its move, or until it reappears at the beginning of its next turn.

Ice Pygmy	Level 8 Soldier
Medium humanoid	XP 350

Initiative +10
Senses Perception +8
HP 84; **Bloodied** 42
AC 20
Fortitude 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19
Speed 6; see also *storm shuffle*

STANDARD ACTIONS

(BW) Iron Fists (standard; at-will)
+13 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+7 cold damage, and if the target is bloodied it is knocked prone.

Wind's Embrace (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+7 cold damage, and ongoing 5 cold damage (save ends).

Frigid Cyclone (standard; recharge 5-6)
Close burst 3; +13 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 cold and lightning damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS

Storm Shuffle (move; encounter)
The ice pygmy disappears and moves up to its speed. It cannot be targeted by an attack during its move, or until it reappears at the beginning of its next turn.

The cloaked adventurers drew their weapons and leapt at their foes. Steel met ice, which sparked and glimmered with eldritch power. Strangely, the ice creatures began calling out descriptions of each adventurer, as though reporting back to an unseen master.

Less than a minute later, shattered ice littered the ground, and the adventurers paused to catch their breaths. The howling wind that created the snow wall sounded nearly intelligible, like the rantings of

an insane god. However, a quick test showed that its force had weakened, and they pushed through.

THE SHRINE OF SPURNED LOVE

Within was a bizarre sight.

In the center of the perpetual twilight of the storm-surrounded clearing sat a beautiful knoll. On its slopes, now covered in huge drifts of snow, stood wooden pillars supporting a gently sloping roof, within which stood a solitary figure. At first it looked like a tree, but its form too closely matched that of a woman. "A dryad," murmured one adventurer.

As though seasons had been sped up by thousands of times, ice continually formed and melted away over the dryad's form. Though it maintained an angelic stance, the eldritch power it must have been using to ward off the ice couldn't have been easy to maintain.

The wind grew louder, howling what sounded almost like curses, and suddenly a figure dropped from the maelstrom of clouds above. It fell to the earth, kicking up a small whirlwind as it landed. It stood, revealing a blue-skinned giant wearing leather battle armor and a ram-horned helmet.

The giant turned to the adventurers and roared, "You will not interfere!" He pointed at the dryad. "I tried to woo her, oh how I tried! But she would have none of me. I, Thothgar of the Mount, was not good enough! So now she shall die, and so...will...you!"

Young Ice Giant — Level 3 Solo Brute
Large humanoid — XP 500
Initiative +6
Senses Perception +6
HP 180; **Bloodied** 90
AC 17
Fortitude 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14
Speed 5
Action Points 2

STANDARD ACTIONS

(BW) Iron Mace (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC; 3d6+2 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Chill Blast (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+1 cold damage, and ongoing 3 cold damage (save ends).

Sheet of Ice (standard; recharge 5-6)
The ice giant creates a zone 4 of ice within 10. This zone counts as difficult terrain. If a creature begins its turn standing within this zone, it must succeed on a DC 12 Acrobatics check or be knocked prone and take 3 damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Snow Cover (minor; encounter)
The giant creates a snow-filled zone 4 that includes him. This zone grants total concealment.
Sustain minor: The zone persists and moves up to 5 squares, but always moves so that the giant is within the zone.

Frigid Cyclone (minor; recharge 5-6)
Burst 3 within 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d4 cold damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares away from the center of the burst.

Young Ice Giant — Level 6 Solo Brute
Large humanoid — XP 900
Initiative +9
Senses Perception +9
HP 280; **Bloodied** 140
AC 20
Fortitude 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Speed 5
Action Points 2

STANDARD ACTIONS

(BW) Iron Mace (standard; at-will)
+11 vs. AC; 3d8+5 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Chill Blast (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+4 cold damage, and ongoing 6 cold damage (save ends).

Sheet of Ice (standard; recharge 5-6)
The ice giant creates a zone 5 of ice within 10. This zone counts as difficult terrain. If a creature begins its turn standing within this zone, it must succeed on a DC 15 Acrobatics check or be knocked prone and take 6 damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Snow Cover (minor; encounter)
The giant creates a snow-filled zone 5 that includes him. This zone grants total concealment.
Sustain minor: The zone persists and moves up to 5 squares, but always moves so that the giant is within the zone.

Frigid Cyclone (minor; recharge 5-6)
Burst 3 within 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 cold damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares away from the center of the burst.

Young Ice Giant Level 10 Solo Brute
Large humanoid — XP 1,600
Initiative +13
Senses Perception +13
HP 400; **Bloodied** 200
AC 24
Fortitude 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21
Speed 5
Action Points 2

STANDARD ACTIONS

(BW) Iron Mace (standard; at-will)
+15 vs. AC; 3d8+8 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Chill Blast (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+8 cold damage, and ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends).

Sheet of Ice (standard; recharge 5-6)
The ice giant creates a zone 7 of ice within 10. This zone counts as difficult terrain. If a creature begins its turn standing within this zone, it must succeed on a DC 19 Acrobatics check or be knocked prone and take 10 damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Snow Cover (minor; encounter)
The giant creates a snow-filled zone 7 that includes him. This zone grants total concealment.
Sustain minor: The zone persists and moves up to 5 squares, but always moves so that the giant is within the zone.

Frigid Cyclone (minor; recharge 5-6)
Burst 3 within 15; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 cold damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares away from the center of the burst.

Young Ice Giant Tactics: The ice giant starts with a frigid cyclone, attempting to hit as many adventurers as possible. It then splits its attacks between the PCs and ranged attacks against the dryad.

Dryad	**Level 2 Soldier**
Medium humanoid	XP 500
Initiative +1	
Senses Perception +6	
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20	
AC 12	
Fortitude 11, **Reflex** 10, **Will** 12	
Speed 0	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Song of Solace (standard; encounter)	
Each adventurer within 10 squares of the dryad can spend a healing surge.	

Dryad	**Level 6 Soldier**
Medium humanoid	XP 900
Initiative +5	
Senses Perception +9	
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40	
AC 16	
Fortitude 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16	
Speed 0	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Song of Solace (standard; encounter)	
Each adventurer within 10 squares of the dryad can spend a healing surge.	

Dryad	**Level 10 Soldier**
Medium humanoid	XP 1,600
Initiative +9	
Senses Perception +13	
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60	
AC 20	
Fortitude 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 20	
Speed 0	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Song of Solace (standard; encounter)	
Each adventurer within 10 squares of the dryad can spend a healing surge	

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS
Words of Encouragement (standard; encounter)
Each ally within 5 squares of the user gains temporary HP equal to 5 plus the ally's level.

An *environmental action* is available to all creatures in the encounter (heroes and monsters). An at-will environmental action can only be used once per round (so, once used by one creature in a round, it may not be used by any other creature that round). An encounter environmental action may only be used once total in the encounter.

It was a memorable fight. The giant threw out blasts of frigid wind, forming slick sheets of ice as he swung his massive mace at the few adventurers who dared draw near. The group, for its part, hacked and slashed and fired at their mighty foe, weakening his resolve until a final blow toppled him to the ground.

The wind slackened. The wall of snow faltered and dissipated, turning first into a snow storm, then into a flurry before fading away.

And the ice giant began to melt, its very skin and bones turning to water and washing away.

The dryad smiled.

CREDITS

This adventure is part of Wombat's *Winter Is Coming* blog festival, and was written by Brent P. Newhall, who is currently attempting to play 50 games in 50 weeks. He writes about this and other topics on his RPG blog.

The photos are larsjuh's *Snow* and doortoriver's *Snowing!* on Flickr.

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