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List DoIP42

LIST OF SHIT I DO TO BE A GOOD DM

for DnD

For use from 0000 for all DnD games involving Dragon of Icespire Peak

This document contains 16 printed pages

Lore

Phandalin

- Phandalin was a mainly human village located northeast of Leilon, where the road that ran from the High Road to Triboar faded into a trail. It was raided by orcs in 951 DR and subsequently abandoned. It was eventually resettled, however, and Phandalin became a frontier settlement of farmers and prospectors looking for wealth in the Sword Mountains in the late 15th century DR. -- Forgotten Realms Wiki
- The surrounding area of the Sword Mountains were once the home to a powerful dwarven civilization wiped out by the orcs centuries ago. Many of their great strongholds still remain though they are empty battlegrounds littered with bones of the orc/dwarf war. Some locations have been turned into orc strongholds. Such places include, Dwarven Excavation, Axeholm, Icespire Hold, and optionally places from other adventures such as Wave Echo Cave.

Blue Dragons

- Blue dragons, also known as storm dragons, were orderly creatures and are unusual for chromatics in that they keep fairly well-ordered, hierarchical societies. They were more likely to be mocking and manipulative than outrightly cruel or murderous to 'lesser' creatures, aided greatly by their natural talents for hallucination. They were infamous for tricking desert travelers into drinking sand or going miles out of their way to avoid nonexistent dust basins. Their breath weapon was a line of lightning or a large electrical discharge. --Forgotten Realms Wiki
- Blue Dragons are canonically desert dwellers. This story has a mountain dwelling storm dragon as its main adversary. Allowing this small lore inconstancy will greatly enhance the cohesion of the story.

Icespire Peak (Now Stormhold)

- After the orcs eradicated the dwarves here, they have built this fortress up as a stronghold. Years of worshiping the storm god has left the surrounding landscape black from lightning strikes and nothing grows naturally nearby.

Talos

- Evil aligned Greater Deity of storms and destruction
- His dogma was self-serving, demanding utter obedience from his priests and instructing them to spread destruction where they might.
- Worship of Talos was outlawed in many countries. Most Talossan holy sites were secret because of the church's reputation. Public churches often took the form of castles or fortified strongholds that lay on earthquake fault lines or in the path of storms or lava; Talos ensured they remain unscathed.
- Clerics of Talos celebrated Talossan festivals with ceremonies that summoned lightning and storms.
- Calling Down the Thunder – This ritual involved the sacrifice of an intelligent being by lightning.
- The Fury – This was the ceremony in which the cleric prayed, made berserk attacks to wreak as much destruction as possible in a small amount of time, then prayed again.

Anchorites of Talos

- These Religious recluses are granted spellcasting power by talos, the god of storms. their human ancestors bred with orcs, and now all anchorites of Talos are half-orcs. -- Dragon of Icespire Peak p. 51
- Enraged by the death of their war chief, the orcs have called upon ancient allies—evil, shapechanging, half-orc spellcasters who bless and advise them. These half-orcs worship Talos, an evil god of storms, and many dwell in the dark depths of Neverwinter Wood. In stormy weather, they gather on remote hilltops to summon Gorthok the Thunder Boar, a primal entity that serves Talos. Like the god it serves, Gorthok delights in destruction. -- Dragon of Icespire Peak p. 7

Blood Anchorites

- Based on the Anchorite Moesko described on pages 41 and 42 of the manual.
- Highly trusted and influential Anchorites of Talos are granted additional powers by the evil god. Such boons are granted only to those who demonstrate a lifetime of devotion to destruction in the name of Talos
- Blood Anchorites have a pseudo immortality similar to lichdom.
- In a ritual involving lightning sacrifices, A potential blood anchorite's heart is removed and placed on the altar. If Talos accepts the candidate lightning strikes the heart filling it with life despite being detached from a body. Additionally the heart is filled with an evil power to accomplish the work of Talos.
- The heart works similar to a phylactery. If [a blood anchorite] is killed but his heart has not yet been destroyed, his body reforms in 24 hours, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the heart. -- Dragon of Icespire Peak p. 42
- Blood Anchorites are rare and powerful. They serve as the leaders of Talos worshipping cults and set up temples to their unholy deity.

Notable NPCs

Cryovain - Young Blue Dragon

- As a young storm dragon, Cryovain was in search of a lair to claim as his own. He was drawn to StormHold by a large thunderstorm. Unbeknownst to him, the orcs here were performing a ritual of Talos attempting to summon Garthok the Thunder Boar. He flew down to the roof of the fortress as the orcs were at the peak of his ritual. As he began to attack the orcs with his deadly lightning breath, he was amazed by their reaction. Rather than running away or fighting, the orcs were bowing down and worshipping him. The orcs mistakenly believe that Cryovain is an emissary of Talos summoned by their ritual.
- The storm dragon has continued this illusion using his innate abilities for hallucination. He has the Cult leader of the orcs, Yargath, convinced of his ruse and continues to send the anchorite "visions"
- Cryovain relishes in this manipulation of a lower species as he sees the orcs. To him, this great game of illusion is a far greater prize than physical treasure could ever be. He has no specific purpose for manipulating the orcs but instead treats them as a pet colony of ants. He enjoys sending them about according to his whims and is just as happy to watch them fail as he is to see them succeed.

Yargath - Blood Anchorite

- The cult leader of the orcs and the highest ranking blood anchorite of Talos
- Truly relishes in absolute destruction of innocence. He desires to lead the orcs to completely destroy Phandalin and the surrounding area.
- His heart is buried in the center of the circle of thunder, providing the source of occult ritual power in this ring.
- He is fully convinced that Cryovain is an emissary of Talos.

Grannoc - Blood Anchorite

- Many years ago, a half-elf wizard interested in the exploration of ancient elven ruins built a stone house in Neverwinter Wood, not far from several ruins that piqued her interest. In the course of her explorations, the wizard disappeared, and the protective magical wards on her home expired. The house fell into disrepair, then eventually into ruin. Ivy has all but engulfed it in the years since. Recently, a half-orc anchorite of Talos named Grannoc took over the ruined house -- Dragon of Icespire Peak p.44
- This house was home to a magical tree known as the Gulthias Tree which the wizard studied. It held amazing properties to create sentient life from plants and give healing. Grannoc has corrupted this tree by placing his heart inside it. Its sap has been replaced by blood through dark magic and it now spawns evil blights to do Grannoc's bidding.
- Only by cutting or burning into the tree can the heart be found and destroyed. Once it is, the tree will eventually heal and grow back, changing the house and forests around it and replacing blights with wonderful and good plant creatures.
- Grannoc is part of Yargath's cult and is a subordinate leader under him. Grannoc doubts that Cryovain is truly an emissary of Talos and believes that Yargath is a fool for following the dragon. Grannoc is secretly seeking to overthrow Yargath and reject the storm dragon.

Moesko - Blood Anchorite

- Years ago, he invaded a small lighthouse on the Sword Coast operated by a family of sea elves including Miraal. His forces overwhelmed the family quickly destroying them all. Moesko desired to consecrate the destruction to Talos and turn the lighthouse into a temple of destruction called the *Tower of Storms*. He sacrificed Mirall the sea elf in a lightning storm and was rewarded with becoming a blood anchorite.
- His heart acts as a siren light bringing ships and sailors to their doom on the rocky cliffs below the tower. Talos's favorite and most common form of destruction has always been ruining sea voyages and killing sailors.
- Miraal's life is tied to Moesko's heart as her life was given as the sacrifice for his occult powers. She is tied to this location unable to leave and haunts the place as a wailing banshee. Only by destroying Moesko's heart can she be set free.
- Moesko's temple of storms operates largely separate from the organized cult of Yargath and Grannoc.

The Campaign

The adventure is divided into four main parts:

1. Preparing for the worst
2. Rumors of War
3. The worst is upon us
4. Bring the fight to them

Preparing for the worst

This section is the start of the campaign. Players are given simple tasks to help prepare the town for impending battles. They can complete the quests in any order. Players gain one level for each quest completed until a maximum of level 3.

Dwarven Excavation

- Dazlyn Grayshard and Norbus Ironrune, Dwarf prospectors found ancient dwarven ruins in the mountains southwest of here, and have been working an archaeological dig seeking treasure and relics. -- Dragon of Icespire Peak
- The dwarves have a strong understanding of the Sword Mountains and many of the fortresses contained therein. The town master hopes they know something about where the orcs may be attacking from or if there are any defensible positions for the townspeople in the mountains. Bringing information back from the dwarves is rewarded with 50gp.

Gnomengard

- A clan of reclusive rock gnomes resides in a small network of caves in the mountains to the southeast. The gnomes of Gnomengarde are known for their magical inventions, and they might have something with which to defeat the dragon.
- The Town Master has heard of a particular invention that can shoot a dragon out of the sky. He wishes for someone to go ask about this. He sends adventurers with 150gp to buy such an invention and will allow them to keep the excess
- **In order to fulfil the Phandalin quest players must convince Facktore to sell them the Autoloading Crossbow Platform. Depending on their persuasion skills and roleplaying she will charge them more or less, determining how much of the 150gp the players get to keep. She will give them a cart to take it back to Phandalin included in the selling price.**
- **Players can fulfill all other encounters in this area unchanged and receive the treasure unchanged**
- **Completing the Gnome King's story line will positively impact the players' bargaining with Facktore.**

Ubrage Hill

- Adabra Gwynn is the local midwife and healer. She is an amateur potion crafter capable of making potions of healing. She lives in an old windmill alone outside of town. She may be needed if orcs attack and the town would be devastated without her. Adventurers will be rewarded 25gp to return her safe to Phandalin.

Rumors of War

This is the mid section of the campaign. Players should now be familiar with their characters and the rules of the game. From this point, things will slowly get worse. The severity of the quests increases and prospects begin to look bleak. The DM is encouraged to convey this by roleplaying phandalin NPCs as disheartened or anxious. Begin introducing these quests after at least 2 preparation quests have been completed. Players gain one level for every two quests completed.

Logger's Camp

- Harbin Wester is worried about his brother. Many orc raids have happened in or near the forest and Harbin has not heard from Tibor in weeks. He is offering 100gp to anyone who can bring news of his brother.
- **Boar Encounter Has been replaced, all other encounters and treasure are unchanged**
- **On the first night resting in/near the woods on the way to Phandalin the party is attacked by a swarm of boars.**
- **2 Boars per player and Yargath Blood Anchorite in Boar form**
- **Yargath can cast thunderwave in boar form but not his spells which require material components.**
- **Yargath will begin to flee as boars are killed**
- **If he is caught and/or about to be killed he will transform into his true form and confront the players. He taunts the players claiming that he can never die. He laughs meaningly as he slits his own throat.**

Shrine of Savras

- A raiding party of orcs has been tracked to an abandoned shrine in the countryside. This may be our opportunity to find out more about the orcs or at least prevent future attack from this band. 100gp to anyone who can find out what the orcs are planning or clear out the shrine.

Mountain's Toe Gold Mine

- Many of the miner's wives live in phandalin while their husbands work in the mines during the week. The miners have not returned and they are several days late. 100gp to anyone who can find out what happened and hopefully bring the miners home safe.
- **On the way to the mine players find the bodies of miners with large claw and tooth marks on them. A successful DC12 wisdom(Medicine) check will reveal that many of them have taken lightning damage.**
- **Players who continue into the mine itself will find Don-Jon Raskin wounded but alive outside the entrance.**
- **Players may return to the town master after finding the bodies or Don-Jon. Those who wish to explore the mine will face the encounters and find treasure as described in the module.**

The worst is upon us

This section is meant to be the negative climax of the adventure. Things at this point are terrible. If players make a wrong move, they can actually fail and Phandalin will be destroyed. The DM is encouraged to hang this over their head. These quests are to be played in order. Continue leveling players up for every two quests completed including Rumors quests.

Butterskull Ranch

- A lone rider, heavily wounded rides into town screaming for help. All he can say before passing out is that there are orcs at the ranch, pointing frantically in the direction he rode from.
- **Orc encounters occur as described in the book with small exception**
- **In the kitchen, orcs are roasting petunia the cow whole on a giant spit**
- **In another room, orcs are accompanied by an anchorite of Talos. Players find this group engaged in a prayer rite offering the destruction to Talos.**
- **Alfonse Kalazorn is in the cellar with his legs broken but left alive. He is clutching a bloodied map of the sword coast. On this map, phandalin has been drenched with blood so as to be completely obscured. The words "YOU'RE NEXT" are written in blood across the map.**
- **Alfonse will offer the players his mithril armor as they leave if they have not yet found it**

Axeholm

- Alfonse Kalazorn alone was left alive at Butterskull ranch. He was spared to deliver a message. The players found him clutching a bloodied map of the sword coast. On this map, phandalin has been drenched with blood so as to be completely obscured. The words "YOU'RE NEXT" are written in blood across the map.
- Dazlyn Grayshard and Norbus Ironrune have found an abandoned dwarven stronghold from before the orc/dwarf war. It should be sufficient to hold and defend the townspeople but it is not safe yet. The prospectors were driven forth from the fortress by ghouls. The people will be outrun before they can make it to neverwinter; Axeholm is their only hope.
- The players are sent ahead to clear out Axeholm with the townspeople following as quick as possible. A large raiding party of orcs is tracking them only a few hours behind.
- **Run all interior encounters as described in the module.**
- **Townspeople will arrive at Axeholm 1 day after the adventurers, seeking sanctuary.**
- **A large raiding party of orcs, ogers, and anchorites of Talos lead by Yargath arrives 4 hours after the townspeople.**
- **If the adventurers have successfully cleared the stronghold in time for the townspeople to take up defenses, Phandalin will easily repel the attack using the siege equipment and weapons found in areas A2, A3, A6, and A22. The DM can choose to simply describe this battle, run small combat with the players and a few enemies - assuming that the townspeople are dealing with the rest of the attackers - or optionally run it as large army combat:**
- **Use Scout and Thug stat blocks from basic rules for townspeople skirmishers and regiments respectively**
- **The portcullis has 50hp and the double doors have 100hp. If these are both destroyed, the orcs storm the fortress and win.**
- **The Townspeople win if they last 6 hours or defeat $\frac{2}{3}$ of the orc forces.**
- **If the adventurers fail to clear Axeholm in time or the players simply choose to turn aside and do a side quest immediately after Butterskull ranch, the orcs will attack and destroy the townspeople. Few survivors will be left to convey disappointment or betrayal to the players. The DM is encouraged to really let the players know that they failed.**

Bring the fight to them

This section is designed to be the epic conclusion to the adventure. The players turn from defense to offense. There are two boss battles and opportunities for real villain development.

If players succeed in the Battle of Axeholm, the sense of impending doom is replaced by a joy of victory and accomplishment. They will be able to fight back knowing the townspeople are safe in the fortress.

If the players failed to protect the townspeople, their failure hangs over their heads. Filled with remorse and anger, they turn to exact revenge on the orcs who caused this destruction.

Play Woodland Manse first then players are free to face Yargath or Cryovain in whatever order they desire. Each boss quest grants one level up to the party to a maximum of level 7.

Woodland Manse

- After weeks of being beaten back on the defensive, it is now time to attack back. Join forces with Falcon the hunter and bring justice to the orcs. Falcon has tracked the orcs to a mansion in the woods but he cannot attack it on his own. He will lead adventurers to the mansion and help them take it down.
- **Run Encounters Unchanged with one exception**
- **When Grannoc is about to die and/or if all of his creatures are killed leaving him alone, he will attempt to make a truce with the players calling off any remaining creatures as well.**
- **He explains why he wants Yargath and Cryovain dead. He promises to reveal crucial information regarding their whereabouts and weaknesses as well as help in attacking them.**
- **If players accept the truce he will explain the situation with Cryovain and the Talos worshippers. He will reveal the location of Yargath's heart, but not his own.**
- **Grannoc has selfish motives for helping the players. After fighting one boss with the players he will attempt to betray them, thinking he now has the upper hand.**
- **If the players do not accept the truce, They will find a map pointing to StormHold and Circle of Thunder. With a successful DC15 Intelligence(Investigation) check players can find information about Yargath's Heart.**
- **If players kill Grannoc but fail to destroy his heart in the Gulthias Tree, he will respawn and may appear at later battles to hinder them.**
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Circle of Thunder

- A map found in the Woodland Manse has this location highlighted but the players are unsure what could be here
- If the players form a truce with Grannoc, he will tell the players that this is the ritual center of the Talos Cult. Yargath and his remaining armies are here and are probably attempting to summon a storm creature. Grannoc does not trust Yargath to lead the orcs anymore and he will offer to help the players kill him in order to supplant the leadership position for himself.
- **Swap “Yargath’s Patrol” encounter with a patrol lead by Flenz.**
- **Yargath will be in the center of area C1 performing the ritual. His heart is buried in the center of this circle.**
- **If players have not yet learned the location of Yargath’s heart from Grannoc or investigating woodland manse, a successful DC15 Intelligence(Investigation) check in area C2, C3, or C4 will reveal it.**
- **Buff Yargath’s stat block and spell damage. Gorthok the thunderbear will fight alongside him rather than appear after his death.**
- **If players worked with Grannoc to defeat Yargath, he will now attempt to rally any remaining orcs to follow him as leader. He will betray the players and not accompany them to fight Cryovain.**

StormHold

- A map found in the Woodland Manse has this location highlighted but the players are unsure what could be here
- If the players form a truce with Grannoc, he will tell the players that this was the home of the orcs before it was raided by Cryovain. Grannoc wants the dragon dead and will offer to help the players kill him so he can claim the stronghold for himself.
- **I prefer to replace the entire “Stone-Cold Reaver” Plotline. Or run all the encounters as unchanged.**
- **Replace veteran encounters a few remaining orcs and Anchorites of Talos who are acting as servants for Cryovain. If players are allied with Grannoc, he will attempt to persuade these orcs to let the party pass by and not tell the dragon.**
- **Cryovain being a young blue dragon makes him a challenge rating 9 instead of 6 for the young white dragon. He should not need to be buffed, but due to magic items parties of 4 or more should be able to defeat him without reducing the threat level.**
- **If Grannoc is still with the players, he will now attempt to claim the stormy fortress for himself. He will rally any remaining orcs and betray the party.**

Random Dragon Encounters

Page 11 of the module gives a table for random dragon encounters whenever the players travel.

- Cryovain is most interested in manipulating the adventurers or playing with them. He may choose to do this by causing hallucinations to get them lost on their travels, talking with them, or actually fighting.
- Cryovain is highly intelligent and will enjoy conversing with the players as long as they keep him interested. He will only attack once he feels bored of messing with them in other ways or players attack him first. When speaking, Cryovain will try to turn the players against each other, against Phandalin, or simply confuse them.
- Players may see through his lies by a successful Wisdom(Insight) check contested by his Charisma(Deception) check.
- Through careful roleplaying or a successful Charisma(persuasion) check, players may convince Cryovain to boast about his trickery of the orcs. The DM decides how much he reveals.
- If a random encounter leads to combat, Cryovain will fly away after taking damage equal to 2 times the total level of the players. (Example: 4 level 1 characters must deal 8 damage. 5 level 3 characters must deal 30 damage).

Ending the Adventure

Players may need to tie up loose ends if they have not yet destroyed all the hearts of the blood anchorites.

If Phandalin was victorious in the defence at Axeholm, players travel there to bring the good news. The town returns home hurting for their losses, but grateful for their lives. The adventurers are heralded as heroes and feasts are thrown in their honor. The town of Phandalin begins to rebuild and continues to grow faster than ever now that the threat of orcs is gone.

If the people of Phandalin were destroyed, the adventurers begin their long journey back to neverwinter to deliver the news. The enemy was defeated, but at what cost?