

= Against the Giants =

Against the Giants is an adventure module written by Gary Gygax and published by TSR in 1981 for the Dungeons & Dragons fantasy role @-@ playing game . It combines the G series of modules previously published in 1978 : Steading of the Hill Giant Chief , Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl , and Hall of the Fire Giant King . All three were produced for use with the 1st edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons rules . In 1999 , to recognize the 25th anniversary of TSR , the company released an updated version , Against the Giants : The Liberation of Geoff . Later in 1999 , Wizards of the Coast published a novelization of Against the Giants by Ru Emerson .

The plot of each of the three original modules focuses on a particular type of evil giant . Each can be played as a standalone adventure , or as a series . In Steading of the Hill Giant Chief , a tribe of hill giants have been raiding lands occupied by humans , and the humans hire the player characters to defeat them . Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl pits the player characters against the evil Jarl of the frost giants . Hall of the Fire Giant King concludes the series , this time against a group of fire giants . The first two modules disclose the existence of a secret force behind the giants , which in the third module is revealed to be evil drow elves . The plot involving the drow continues in four additional modules printed between 1978 and 1980 .

The modules were well received by contemporary critics . In 1978 , they earned a 9 / 10 overall rating from a White Dwarf magazine reviewer , who was impressed that Gygax found time to write them while also working on the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons ( AD & D ) rulebooks . White Dwarf also reviewed the re @-@ released G module series in 1982 , giving it a 10 out of 10 . The Queen of the Spiders supermodule , which consisted of the three modules combined with the subsequent modules in the " D " series and Q1 Queen of the Demonweb Pits , was voted the single greatest adventure of all time by Dungeon magazine in 2004 , on the 30th anniversary of the Dungeons & Dragons game .

= = Plot summary = =

Each of the original three modules is a dungeon crawl . The player characters focus on battling hill giants , frost giants , and fire giants , three of the original evil giant types used in Dungeons & Dragons .

= = = G1 Steading of the Hill Giant Chief = = =

The module begins with a prologue explaining that giants of different types have been raiding lands occupied by humans . Angered by this , the human rulers hire a group of adventurers ( the player characters ) to " punish the miscreant giants . " The players ' party is informed that they must defeat the giants , or have their heads placed on the chopping block . The human nobles equip the party with weapons and horses , along with a guide and a map that shows the location of the hill giants . The players are informed that the hill giants are led by Nosnra , a sly hill giant chieftain who loves to set up ambushes ; there is an unknown force binding together different giant groups . The player characters are informed that they may keep any spoils they find , but must return at once if they determine what " sinister hand " is behind the alliance .

The bulk of the adventure takes place in two locations : the upper level fortress of the hill giants ' lair , and the dungeon level beneath it . In the upper level there are halls , barracks and common rooms . These rooms house Chief Nosnra and other hill giants , ogres , and servants . The dungeon level consists of slave quarters , torture chambers , and caverns . These house troglodytes , bugbears , and carrion crawlers . The majority of the treasure can be found by searching the dungeons . The chief 's treasure room contains a map of the glacial rift from Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl , and a magic chain that automatically transports the party there .

= = = G2 Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl = = =

This module starts in one of two ways . If the players have finished Steading of the Hill Giant Chief , they have been transported to the glacial rift via the magic chain . They will know that they are searching for some force behind the giant alliance . If the players are starting with Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl , then they have been hired by nobles to destroy the frost giants . Either way , a safe , hidden cave is easily found for a base of operations .

As in Steading of the Hill Giant Chief , the bulk of this adventure takes place in two locations : an upper area consisting of caves and the rift floor , and a lower area consisting of natural caverns . In the upper area there are ice caves , barracks , and a dome of ice . These are inhabited by yeti , frost giants , ogres , and winter wolves . The dome of ice houses a remorhaz . In the lower area there are caverns that house the servants , serve as a prison , and contain the Jarl Grugnur and emissaries who have come to meet with him . The main inhabitants are frost giants and ogres . The prison contains an attractive storm giantess . There are also polar bears ; pets of the jarl . After defeating the jarl , the adventurers have a chance to pull an iron lever which will transport them near to Snurre 's hall from Hall of the Fire Giant King .

= = = G3 Hall of the Fire Giant King = = =

If it is played as a continuation of the first two modules , the players know that they are searching for the force behind the giants ' alliance ; otherwise , they have been hired by nobles to destroy the fire giants . This module is twice as long as the previous two : sixteen pages instead of eight . Unlike the two previous modules where the giant 's complex consists of two levels , the fire giant hall contains three levels . The giants live in a hot , smoky barren area made of rock ; as in the previous module , the party is able to find a safe location for forays against the giants . The leader of the fire giants is King Snurre Iron Belly , and his hall is made of obsidian and natural caverns .

The first ( top ) level includes the queen 's rooms , barracks , and kennels . Creatures encountered here include fire giants , gnolls , and in the kennels , hell hounds . The second level is also made of obsidian rocks and natural caverns . It houses chambers of spiritual interest to the fire giants . There is a hall that houses the dead fire giant kings , and rooms for worship . There are also rooms that contain drow clerics . This is where the party learns that the drow are behind the giant alliance , led by Eclavdra , a high level drow fighter / cleric . The third level consists of natural caverns and contains a great treasure guarded by a red dragon . There are also more fire giants and drow ; to exterminate the fire giants , the adventurers must penetrate deep into the active volcano where they live . If the DM wishes , there is a tunnel that leads deep into the earth ; to the home of the drow . This allows the adventure to be continued in Descent into the Depths of the Earth .

= = Publication history = =

Steading of the Hill Giant Chief , Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl , and Hall of the Fire Giant King were written by Gary Gygax . In 1978 , Steading of the Hill Giant Chief became the first adventure module published by TSR . Gygax wrote them to take a break between writing the original Monster Manual ( 1977 ) and Player 's Handbook ( 1978 ) . The covers for Steading and Hall featured drawings by David C. Sutherland III . David A. Trampier drew the Glacial Rift cover . Against the Giants 's cover features a painting by Bill Willingham . Interior art was provided by David A. Trampier , Jeff Dee , David S. LaForce and Erol Otus .

The " Giant " modules were set in the Greyhawk campaign setting , and formed the lead @-@ in to an overall campaign that then continued on an odyssey into the Underdark . These adventures included the " Drow " series of modules , Descent into the Depths of the Earth , Shrine of the Kuo @-@ Toa , and Vault of the Drow . The campaign finally culminated with module Queen of the Demonweb Pits . Steading and Glacial Rift were eight pages long , while Hall was 16 pages in length , and each featured an outer folder . The omnibus collection combination module Against the Giants was 32 pages long , and featured two outer folders . Against the Giants was revised and reprinted in the 128 @-@ page supermodule Queen of the Spiders in 1986 in combination with the three " Drow " series modules , and Queen of the Demonweb Pits . Hall of the Fire Giant King

marked the first time that Dungeons & Dragons players encountered the drow ; game statistics for the drow first appear in the module , although drow are mentioned in the 1977 edition of the Monster Manual . At the time these modules were released , each Dungeons & Dragons module was marked with an alphanumeric code indicating the series to which it belonged . The earlier modules have module codes G1 , G2 , and G3 respectively , and the combined module 's code is G1 ? 3 . The " G " in the module code represents the first letter in the word " giant " . Released in 1999 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of TSR , Against the Giants : The Liberation of Geoff provided a set of adventuring materials that expanded on the original three modules . 1999 also featured a reprinting of the three modules made available in the Dungeons & Dragons Silver Anniversary Collector 's Edition boxed set , with slight modifications to make it distinguishable from the original ( for collecting purposes ) .

The concepts and characters from Against the Giants have made appearances in other media . It was made into a novel of the same name by Ru Emerson for the Greyhawk Classics series . In May 2006 , Wizards of the Coast 's website released new versions of the maps for the Hill Giant Stronghold . In July 2006 , they released new maps for the Fire Giant Hall . In 2004 , Wizards of the Coast released a miniature figure of the eponymous King Snurre from Hall of the Fire Giant King , and in 2007 , they released a large Frost Giant Jarl miniature inspired by Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl . In 2009 , Wizards released the super @-@ adventure Revenge of the Giants , an homage to Against the Giants , for the game 's fourth edition .

= = Reception = =

When combined as a single adventure with the rest of GDQ series , this module was voted the single greatest adventure of all time by Dungeon magazine in 2004 , on the 30th anniversary of the Dungeons & Dragons game . According to Dungeon 's editors , the drow remain popular villains in part because of their " exciting introduction " in the module . Judge Andy Collins felt the " hack @-@ and @-@ slash " classic was " packed with action " and has run the module more than any other . Judge John Rateliff said that Against the Giants was the module that showed gamers how to create a themed adventure with a mystery and clues that are periodically provided .

Kurt Butterfield reviewed Hall of the Fire Giant King for The Space Gamer , commenting that " the scenario is well thought out and nicely detailed , " and includes " some intriguing special instructions given for deviously playing several of the intelligent inhabitants of the dungeon " . Butterfield felt that the dungeon was not an easy challenge , especially with the strong and numerous monsters ( such as the roughly eighty trolls on one level ) . In conclusion , he stated , " I advise all DMs who are looking for an exciting , worthwhile adventure for their players to pick this one up . You won 't be disappointed . "

Don Turnbull of White Dwarf magazine gave the three separate modules comprising the G @-@ series 9 / 10 overall . Turnbull was impressed that Gygax was able to find time to write them while also creating AD & D 's rules , saying " Things are really buzzing at TSR . " He felt the presentation of the modules was done well , with easily read maps , although he preferred the black and white maps of the first module to the blue and white maps of the later two . Turnbull found the module 's level of detail to be an improvement over previous Dungeons & Dragons scenarios which gave the Dungeon Master ( DM ) too little information . The review declared the modules " very tough " , stating that " the notes suggest nine characters or so , each of ninth level or better and each with two or three relevant magic items . "

Turnbull commented on several points that he felt went unnoticed by the module 's proofreader . The maps did not contain a scale , which he assumed was 10 feet ( 3 @. @ 0 m ) per square . It is unclear what triggers one of the traps in the first module . In the second module , an exit from map level one does not have an entrance marked on the second level map . Ultimately he found the errors minor , and easily fixed . Turnbull 's most major criticism was that the adventure was aimed at parties of too high a level . Summing up , he said " No DM should be without them , for even if he never gets a chance to run them , they are a source of much excellent design quality . "

Jim Bambra reviewed the re @-@ released G module series very positively in issue 35 of White

Dwarf magazine , awarding 10 out of 10 . Bambra liked the reprinting of the modules , stating that " their printing under one cover has reduced the price at no detriment to the quality . " He noted that the original tournament characters are included , although they were not included in the original three separate modules , and that not all of them conform to the rules in the Players Handbook . Two spells were also added , which had been absent from the original modules . Bambra says that he " would suggest not playing these unless you have been playing for a few years , success depends more on player skill than on high character levels and DMing adventures of this level can be a nightmare unless you have had plenty of experience . "

Anders Swenson also reviewed dungeon module G @-@ 1 @-@ 2 @-@ 3 , for Chaosium 's Different Worlds magazine . Swenson notes that the lower level of the hill giant steading " is a conventional underground dungeon , populated with slaves , guards , and the odd monsters " , but that the relatively small space occupied by the revolting slaves seems unrealistic . Swenson also calls the well @-@ constructed dungeon complex of the fire giants " a tough nut for the adventurers " as the giants are in a place constructed for defense ; Swenson did feel that the scale of the map was too small . Swenson comments that the reprinting shows the progress TSR has made since these adventures were first published , such as how single products had become longer . Swenson does note that the individual room descriptions were lacking a consistent format , and that important monsters can become lost in the middle of a room 's description . Swenson felt that , although the lower levels can degenerate into a random monster mix , the strong points of these adventures outweigh their flaws . Swenson concludes by stating that " Against the Giants is a solid adventure , " and that " this would be a worthwhile purchase " .

Dungeon Master for Dummies lists Steading of the Hill Giant Chief as one of the ten best classic adventures . Stephen Colbert , who played Dungeons & Dragons as a child , reminisced about these modules : " Those old " Giants " modules , those were tremendous . Those are some of my favorite memories : working my way through fire giant , frost giant , and storm giant castles . " Ken Denmead of Wired said the first module is a " pretty easy crash @-@ and @-@ grab , " the second contains " some really excellent treasure , " but the third is " the end @-@ all , be @-@ all of hack @-@ fests " . According to Denmead , the hill giant adventure does not prepare players for the later adventures . Describing the difficulty of battling the fire giants he said , " remember Bambi Versus Godzilla ? You 're Bambi " .