

# DUNGEONS & GARDENS — SYNOPSIS



OUR STORY UNFOLDS IN THE desolate Greying Wildlands of Wildemount, within the frost-rimed confines of Palebank Village. Here, a disparate group of adventurers—the aasimar bard Elara, goliath fighter Halite, orc warlock Kragor, halfling druid Scarlet, tabaxi rogue Whisper, and the enigmatic rogue Doctor Pepe—find their paths converging. Arriving aboard the *Frostwind*, drawn by whispers of Aeorian ruins scattered across the perilous northern islands of Eiselcross, they disembark into a village shrouded in mourning. Urgon, a dwarven explorer, has succumbed to a mysterious freezing affliction after returning laden with treasures from Eiselcross. This chilling illness, marked by creeping blue veins and an unshakeable internal frost, has halted all expeditions north. Elro, a stoic elven Glassblade tasked with protecting the village, implores the newcomers to investigate, revealing that another villager, the reclusive trapper Tulgi, suffers from the same malady.

Lodging is secured at the Jolly Dwarf tavern, courtesy of the jovial proprietor Arl Bortock. Information is scarce, but Tulgi's solitary nature is noted. The adventurers proceed to Urgon's ransacked cabin. Amidst the disarray, Halite discovers a crucial receipt from Pelc's Curiosities, detailing Urgon's sale of several Aeorian artifacts for a thousand gold pieces: a dagger, scroll case, jade statue, quiver of arrows, a jasper-set silver ring, and two blue glass vials containing a fine powder. Tracks lead them to Tulgi's cabin. Confronted, the afflicted trapper confesses. She and her sister, Hulil, are criminals from Shadycreek Run, hired to steal Aeorian artifacts. They raided Urgon's cabin; Hulil now possesses the remaining treasures and is hiding in Croaker Cave, though Tulgi hasn't seen her in weeks. She surrenders Urgon's dagger to Kragor.

Their investigation takes them to Pelc's Curiosities, where they interrupt a burglary

in progress. Bandits, later revealed to be Hulil's underlings, are tearing the shop apart. From the rooftop, the observant Doctor Pepe watches the unfolding chaos. A fierce battle erupts within the shop, complicated by Scarlet casting a dense fog cloud. Kragor fells one bandit in the mist, while Halite skewers another. Whisper confronts the rooftop observer, grappling him awkwardly before shoving him to the ground, where he feigns injury before slipping away. Elara heals the wounded Kragor and inspires Halite, who dispatches another bandit. The remaining two surrender, confirming they work for Hulil, a priestess of Tiamat now suffering from the same freezing sickness. She sent them to find clues about a cure, believing Pelc's shop might hold answers. They reveal Hulil has the artifacts in Croaker Cave. The party also makes the grim discovery of Verla Pelc, the shop owner, frozen dead in her bed. Searching the bandits yields meager coin and a peculiar Scanlan Shorthalt t-shirt, which Elara deems potentially valuable.

Before venturing to Croaker Cave, the party visits Gramini, an elderly elf potion seller at the docks. They negotiate the purchase of healing potions, partially funding the transaction by trading the Scanlan Shorthalt shirt, much to Gramini's nostalgic delight. As they approach the cave, the mysterious rogue reappears, introducing himself as Doctor Pepe and offering his assistance, claiming a shared interest in the disease. Inside Croaker Cave, they face immediate peril from giant ice frogs lurking in a murky pool, one managing to severely wound Whisper. Reinforcements arrive in the form of more bandits loyal to Hulil, positioned across the water. A chaotic battle ensues, involving crossbow fire, javelins, eldritch blasts, and divine magic. The party prevails, capturing one dwarf bandit who reveals Hulil uses the frogs for transport and has trained a particularly large one, "Old Croaker," to ferry people across a deeper



underground lake. He also warns of a pit trap near their sleeping quarters.

Using the captured dwarf's knowledge and bat carcasses found nearby as bait, the party crosses the underground lake astride Old Croaker. On the far side, they confront Hulil, her skin marred by the blue streaks of the affliction, and her last remaining follower. Another intense fight concludes with Hulil's defeat, her final words a chilling curse upon Halite. They find a chest containing the stolen Aeorian artifacts listed on Urgan's receipt— all except the two blue glass vials. Hulil's journal reveals she sold one cracked vial to a traveling bookseller named Irven Liel, hoping to fund her search for a cure.

Returning to Palebank Village, they encounter Elro again. After hearing the adventurers' story, he is able to identify the disease as "Frigid Woe," an ancient Aeorian magical contagion. Crucially, he reveals a cure exists: a milky white liquid stored in golden vials, likely found near the source of the blue vials. Elro pays the party for dealing with Hulil and hires them to travel to Eiselcross, find the cure, and send it back via a contact in the outpost of Syrinlya known as "The Buyer". He also offers a substantial reward for the remaining blue vial.

The party tracks down Irven Liel at the Jolly Dwarf. He is traveling with his husband Fenton and their twin tiefling daughters. Irven admits to buying the cracked blue vial from Hulil as an investment. Scarlet confirms it contains the Frigid Woe contagion. The party warns the family they may be infected and secures the vial, receiving Elro's promised payment. Before departing, they visit Westeroff, a retired wizard who identifies the dagger as magical but offers little else. Halite purchases an arcane crystal focus from him.

Prior to the voyage, each party member undergoes subtle growth: Elara hones her persuasive magic and performance, Whisper enhances her agility and resilience, Scarlet deepens her bond with nature (gaining an owl

familiar, Sparky), Halite sharpens his tactical mind and culinary skills, Kragor unlocks new eldritch power, and Doctor Pepe refines his stealth and dexterity.

The adventurers board the *Remorhaz*, captained by the seasoned Jarl Stonebeard, bound for Syrinlya. Once at sea, Stonebeard drops his deferential act, running a pragmatic ship where all must contribute. Kragor hauls up an ancient anchor from the legendary privateer ship, the *Snowy Plover*. Whisper assists with rigging, Scarlet and Halite learn cooking from the gruff chef Ingrid, Kragor discovers a knack for filleting fish, and Doctor Pepe proves an adept fisherman. Ingrid, recognizing talent, gifts cooking utensils to Kragor, Halite, and Doctor Pepe. Evenings bring camaraderie through card games and Elara's enchanting musical performances.

A disturbance erupts one night: a winter wolf is found in the galley. Kragor spots Ingrid's distinctive moon-and-rune amulet discarded nearby. After Whisper is injured attempting to retrieve it, Halite nets the beast, and Elara manages to place the amulet around its neck. The wolf transforms back into Chef Ingrid, revealing her lycanthropy, a secret seemingly unknown to Captain Stonebeard, who orders everyone away while confronting her privately.

Their journey continues into thick fog. The ship comes across wreckage in the gloom, and the crew spots survivors clinging to debris while a giant squid attacks them. The party, alongside the crew and the rescued survivors— Gerhard (former captain of the lost ship *Frostfang*), his young crewman Rorik, and a passenger, Bret (a wizard revealed to be of the Cerberus Assembly)— fight off the colossal creature. Bret demands passage to Icehaven, but Stonebeard refuses to deviate from his course to Syrinlya.

Finally, after four days at sea, the fog lifts, revealing the desolate, frozen shores of Eiselcross. The *Remorhaz* docks at Syrinlya, a rough outpost of yurts huddled against the biting wind. They are met by Morgo



Delwur, a local guide who directs them to find Orvo Mustave, Urgon's former adventuring companion, and provides them lodging in an abandoned, well-appointed yurt. Inside, they find supplies left by the previous occupant, including rations, rope, a pickaxe, and a copy of Scanlan Shorthalt's *Adventure Sexy*.

They locate Orvo, who is devastated to learn of Urgon's fate. He confirms they found the blue vials at a ruin called Salsvault, roughly an eight-day trek northwest across treacherous ice fields known as the Thin Sheets. He warns them of Ice Mephits and animated armor guarding the ruin, admitting they fled after encountering the constructs in the third chamber. Of the golden vials, he knew nothing. For supplies, Orvo directs them to Javel, an ancient dwarf trader. The party negotiates with the eccentric Javel, acquiring seven pairs of snowshoes (including a pair ominously stained red, hinted to be from a Yeti victim) and climbing hammers, sealing the deal partly through a shared appreciation for the raunchy novel *Tusk Love* (which Elara trades for a discount) and receiving a bottle of Sandkeg's High whiskey as a parting gift. Equipped and informed, the adventurers brace themselves in their borrowed yurt, planning their perilous overland journey to Salsvault in search of the cure for the Frigid Woe.