

# Cairn: Lair of the Frost Witch

  
COMPATIBLE

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In the frozen hills beyond Coalfish Bay, villagers whisper of a cruel witch who commands the storm and steals away the unwary. The frost witch lair is hidden in an old pirate cove, now a frozen glacier. It is riddled with deathless puppets, etched runes that glow beneath the ice, and secrets colder than the wind that howls through the bones of the dead. Her staff hums with ritual magic, her mirror of memories sees too much, and her victims may never truly die.

The nearby town of Thornhollow sits on the edge of collapse, the surrounding farmland and nearby fishing village Coalfish Bay slowly freezing. They're caught between a ruthless warlord and the rising power of the frost witch.

To run this adventure choose a frost witch, choose a quest and give the players the treasure map on the last page. Quests 1-3 are less challenging, which could allow a party the chance to make two quests to the frost witch's lair.

## Important Items

**The ice crystal:** A powerful relic that does 1d4 cold damage a round if you hold it bare handed. Destroying it will stop any ritual the frost witch is engaged in and free the ice marionette Lord Maelric at 10 (a 'noble' who is a wight).

**Memory drinking war axe:** bulky d10 damage straight off WIL. After each use the wielder makes a WIL save or they are unable to sleep that night with the axe talking incessantly in their head wanting to spill more blood and drink more memories.

**Crude doll:** A crude doll from a witch's lair. Give it to your children. What could possibly go wrong?

**Ice marionettes' valuables:** A sealed letter could hint at secrets behind the cult in the town. A ring with a house crest could get you into a mansion, banquet, or guild meeting or get you killed.

**Mirror of memories:** The mirror reflects the worst memories of anyone who gazes into it (on the map at 11).



## The Starting Town: Thornhollow

The powerful people in the town where the party gets their quest are vipers and thieves. Once famous for its ironworking and blacksmiths, the town is in decline. The mayor is part of an evil, dangerous

cult, the nearby warlord might be implicated in that cult, and the local merchant is gouging the town. With the outside edges of the town freezing, townspeople are hungry and scared.

## Frost Witch Quests

- 1 Rescue a warlord's son taken by the frost witch before the warlord attacks and burns Thornhollow to the ground. Twist: The child belongs to the frost witch, taken from her when she was gravely ill and given to the barren warlord's wife.  
**Mayor Moran Willet:** Rotund man who carries a live mouse in his pocket 'for luck'. Is secretly a member of a dangerous cult that steals children.  
**Warlord's Wife:** Thigra Iron-Marrow. Tears up easily. Loves her son, Aren, but won't readily admit he's adopted. The crying is an act. She is a scheming liar.  
**Warlord:** Maerk Iron-Marrow. Wears warriors' bones carved into armor pieces. Was raised by bonepickers scavenging off the remains of battlefields. His war axe (d10 bulky), seized by the frost witch, drinks the memories of those it wounds, weakening the mind with each strike. Damage goes straight off WIL.
- 2 Retrieve the mirror of memories for a local merchant before the frost witch uses it to reveal the town's defences. (The mirror of memories is at 11 in the frost witch's lair.) Twist: The merchant wants to use it to blackmail people in the town.  
**Merchant Ketta Varn:** Immaculately neat dresser. Greedy schemer who flashes a charming smile even when she's threatening someone. Making a killing from the cold caused by the frost witch. You can buy from her: Hot water skin 12gp, Thick fur coat (bulky 25gp), Boots with crampons 15gp, Ice axe 15gp.
- 3 Retrieve the nearby warlord's enchanted war axe before the frost witch can use it against the town. Twist: The warlord (see 1) will use it to pillage & kill innocents.
- 4 Free the soul of a noble trapped inside an ice marionette before the family turns to dangerous dark magic that could bring doom on the town. Twist: The noble is a wight that disguises itself as human and feeds off people in the town.  
**Noble wight's servant:** Cremble Thatch. Formal and stiff. Lies that the noble's family in the city are desperate to get him back. Lord Maelric ate his own family.
- 5 Steal the frost witch's staff before she can complete a ritual that will freeze the entire town. Twist: Stealing her staff won't stop the ritual. You need to destroy the ice crystal. Town Mayor (see 1) won't say how he knows about the ritual. His cult told him.
- 6 Slay the frost witch before the nearby fishing village, Coalfish Bay, starves. Twist: Killing her and destroying the ice crystal will melt the bay, but also release dangerous drowned spirits.  
**Boat Captain:** Lorin Codhand. Painfully skinny. Laughs at his own bad jokes. Desperate to get the frozen fishing waters thawed out so they can fish again.

# Frost Witch

**14HP 3AR 10ST 14DX 17WL**  
**d12 Freezing Touch**

Non magical weapons that damage the frost witch turn to ice and shatter.

Blizzard blast d10: Shards of ice fire at every enemy in sight of the witch.

Critical Damage: In three rounds you will be frozen solid.

The twisted mistress of ice, the frost witch wears a long blue dress covered in frozen droplets with a blue witch's hat on top of her frozen hair. A Frost Witch is often twisted because of some dark past. Help her resolve her issues and she may leave you and your land unharmed. Or she may be too unhinged with her evil past for it to make any difference.

## What Is She Doing?

- 1 Looks at a village map and cackles.
- 2 Interrogating a bound traveler whose breath fogs the frozen air.
- 3 Extorting the mayor from a nearby village. The price is live innocents.
- 4 Freezing a terrified villager.
- 5 Chanting over a frozen corpse.
- 6 Etching glowing sigils into the ice floor to complete a powerful ritual.

## Lair Discoveries

- 1 Basket of shrivelled frozen apples
- 2 Crude doll, ice skates, silver key
- 3 Cauldron that uses ice to cook
- 4 Bundle of dried roots and herbs
- 5 Cracked hand mirror, leather scroll
- 6 Vial of bubbling purple/blue liquid

## Name, Quirk, Motivation/Secret, Items Nearby

- 1 **Mother Skrin:** Croons lullabies to no one. Her child was stolen by cultists.
- 2 **Crone Narka:** Sneers with contempt. Her sister was murdered by a noble.
- 3 **Yrla Onehand:** Carries a crooked staff made of dozens of fingerbones fused with ice. Unjustly accused of being a thief by a noble, three of her fingers were cut off.
- 4 **Sava the Unkissed:** Whispers a man's name over and over. She was in love with a man who betrayed her to marry a scheming noble's daughter.

## Ice Marionettes

**4HP 0AR 9ST 6DX 10WL d4**

Dead human enemies of the frost witch, often nobles, strung together with sinew and ice, dancing at her silent command. They punch, bite, and claw at you with icy teeth and bones.

Valuables: 1-Filthy overalls 2-House key 3-Purse with 1d20gp 4-Portrait locket 5-Ring with a house crest 6-Sealed letter

## Frost Wolves

**6HP 0AR 7ST 16DX 8WL d6**

Gaunt, white-furred wolves with glowing blue eyes and a bite that freezes flesh d6. Devoted to their Frost Witch. The frost wolves dart forward, bite, then dart back to avoid you. Save vs DEX, find another solution, or your close range attacks are impaired. Critical damage: Wolves drag you to the ground and bite your throat.

# Lair Of The Frost Witch

The Frost Witch's minions will only attack you: if you attack them, if you use fire, if you trigger the Frost Witch's twisted past, or if you steal something.

13. Stairs lead up and out to the top of the sailing-ship-high stone cave covered in slippery ice.

**Set a timer.** Every 20 minutes game time PCs and NPCs lose 1hp to the cold. Standing near a fire or source of warmth for a minute restores hp.

50% chance that any door is frozen shut. Can be melted open or forced open with a STR save.

1. A sailing-ship-high cove with docks built into rock at the edge of the water, now completely frozen.

2. 4 ice marionettes rock gently with the wind in a boat on the ice, backs to you.

3. Frozen beach with three ice wolves sleeping near the cave entrance to 4.

4. Boy laughing, playing tag with 3 ice marionettes. He is Aren, the frost witch's son and the warlord wife's adopted son. Playful and happy, he says, 'Do you have lollies?'

5. Bedroom. Ice crystal and war axe (d10 off WIL) are hidden here, encased in ice.

6. DEX save to squeeze through the narrow opening to the beach. 3 ice marionettes stand in the corners like statues until you turn your back then they surround you one by one.

7. 4 frost wolves guard a pile of 4,325sp and a locked chest with a strange map, a bone ring, and 450sp (pirate's treasure.)

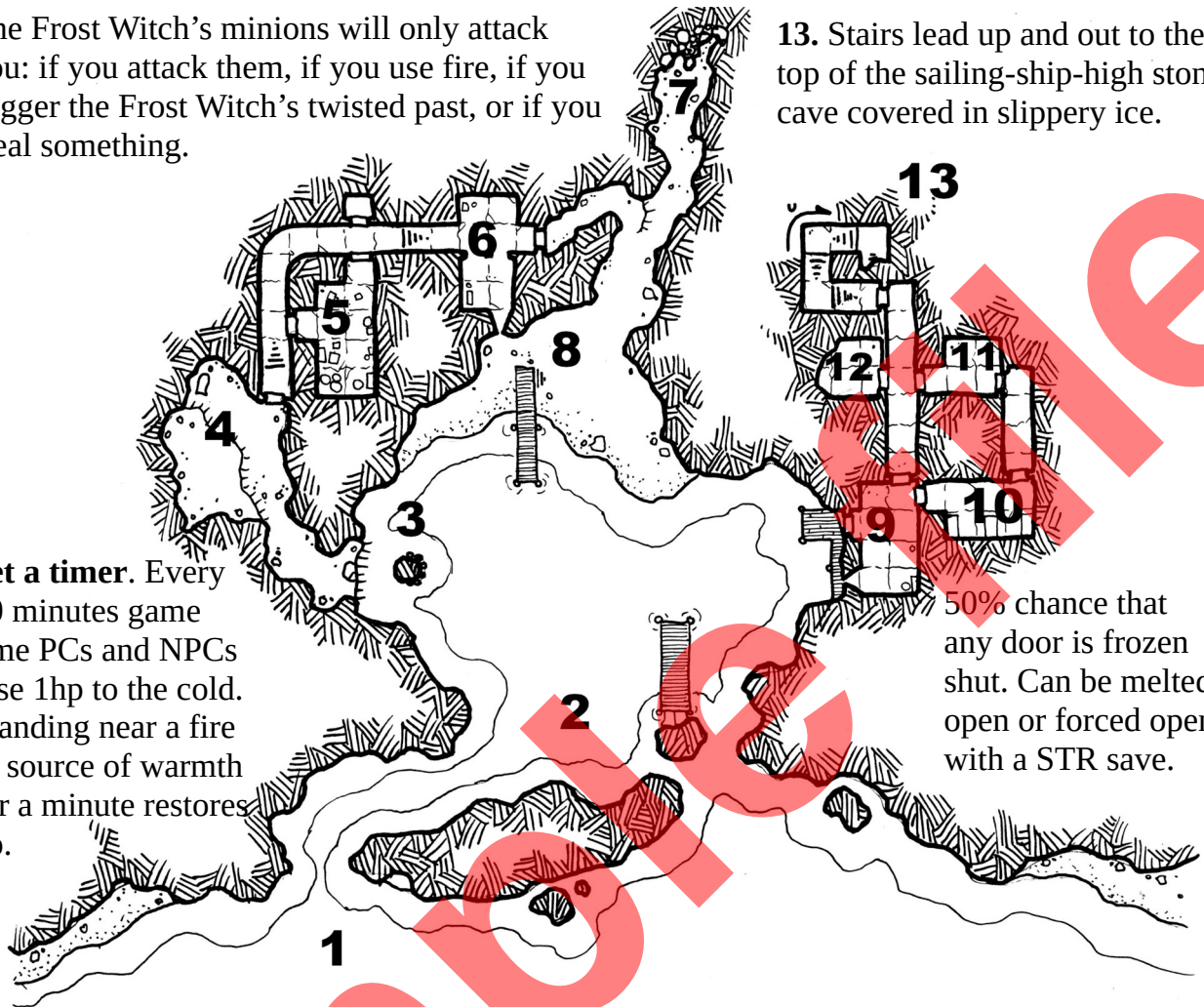
8. Bride and groom marionettes smiling.

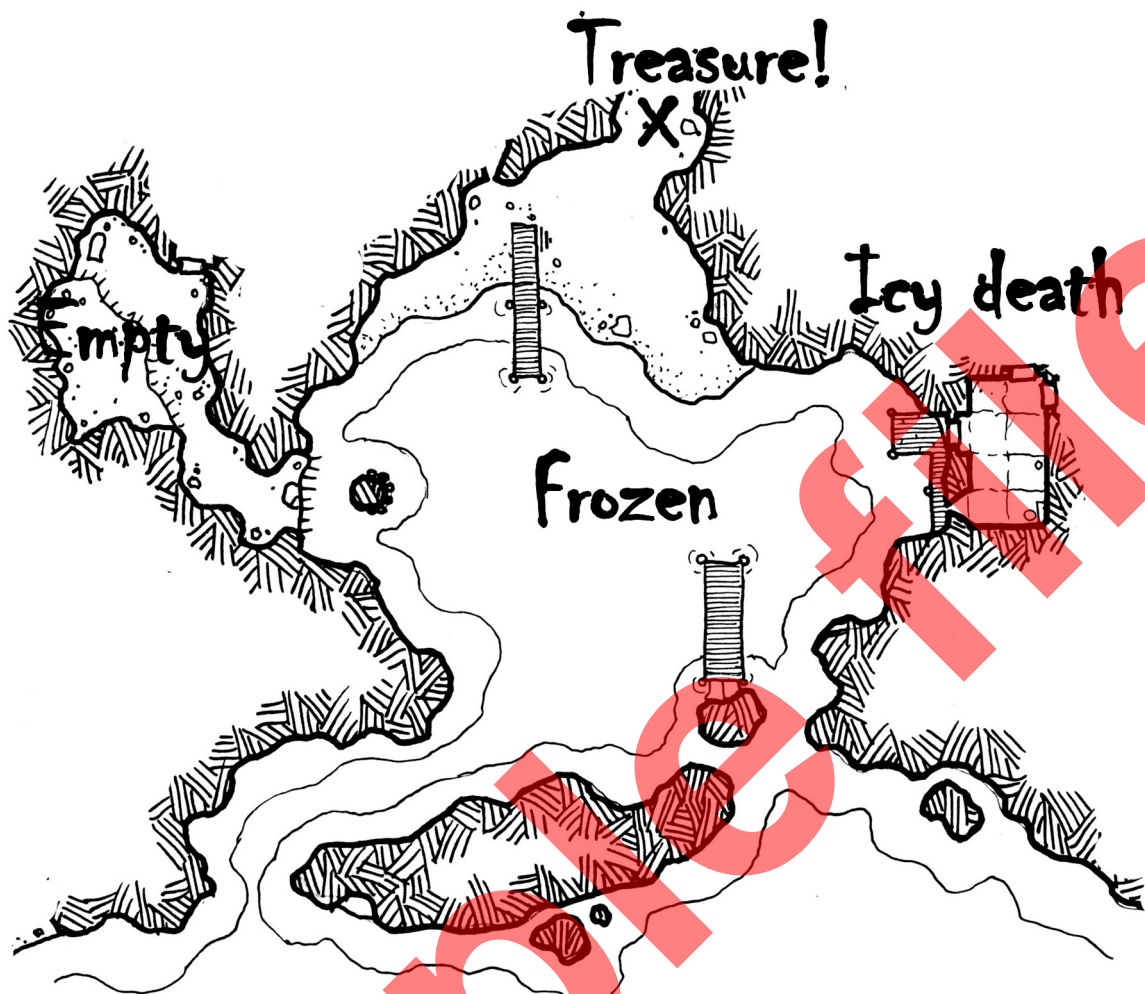
9. Four sealed ice coffins with ice marionettes inside. They all melt as soon as anyone touches a coffin.

10. Two ice marionettes. One is vacant eyed but the other has a pleading look. He's the noble wight from the village, Lord Maelric. Very polite and thankful if freed, he wants to get back to the town. Hold or destroy the ice crystal, or kill the frost witch to free him from her control.

11. Two ice marionettes flanked by two growling frost wolves hold a mirror that reflects the worst memories of the party.

12. Frost witch is here in a room full of strange symbols and 3 frozen corpses.





What I heard...

The frost witch eats children!

The caves are guarded by dancing corpses.

Everything is frozen solid...even the witch.

The witch makes a blue potion that keeps you warm.

A noble did something terrible to her...that's why she hates nobles so much and freezes them solid on sight.

There's a huge pile of pirates' treasure in the caves!