

DUNGEONS & LAIRS #63: FROST GIANT PASS

Frost Giant Pass is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 8, 11, 14, or 17**. This document offers details for the **8th-level version**. For the full adjustments for all level ranges, sign up for the [DMDave Patreon](#). A pass high in the mountains is home to a settlement of antagonistic frost giants. The party will have to travel through the pass without succumbing to the deadly winter conditions or provoking the wrath of an entire army of 20-foot-tall warriors.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. You can access a free basic ruleset from the official source if you don't have a copy.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block to say, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

Spells and non-magical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the appendix.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The table in the full version offers some ideas if you don't have a reason for the characters to investigate Tharngrold Pass. If you need to motivate the party with a monetary reward, their patrons offer 500 gp per level of the adventure.

BACKGROUND

Tharngrold Pass was once occupied by humans, but frost giants moved in long ago and took control. The frost giants are incredibly hostile to any other sapi-

CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

Design and Writing. DMDave, Ellie of Adventures, EH?

Editing and Layout. Tony Casper

Cartography. Tom Cartos

Artwork. Paper Forge

ent creature who intrudes on their domain and have been at odds with the neighboring settlements for decades. They've typically limited their interactions to the occasional raid to steal sheep and other farm animals, but lately, something has stirred the giants to bolder action. Now, there's legitimate worry that the giants may march to war.

THARNGROLD PASS

It's charitable to refer to the frost giant's territory as a pass. Its treacherous, icy pathways are located high in snow-capped mountains where frigid winds and blinding snow and ice storms constantly buffet those who dare to traverse them.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, Tharngrold Pass has the following features.

High Altitude. The lowest point in the pass is above 10,000 feet in elevation. The thin air makes traveling require more effort. Any creature that needs to breathe can only spend half as much time traveling as usual. Thus a typical party will only be able to travel for 4 hours each day before requiring a Forced March (see below) to continue.

Forced March. Each character must make a Constitution saving throw at the end every hour past 4 hours (or 8 hours, if acclimatized) of continuous travel through the pass. The DC of this saving throw is equal to 10 + X, where X is the number of hours past 4 hours (or 8 hours, if acclimatized) of continuous travel through the pass. On a failed saving throw, a character suffers one level of exhaustion.

Visibility. The pass is almost always lightly obscured by clouds and falling snow which reduces visibility to 100 feet for creatures that are not acclimatized to the area.

Acclimatizing. A creature can spend 3 days at a stationary camp to acclimatize to the altitude: they regain the ability to travel a full 8 hours, and become accustomed to the obscuring winds. Assume all creatures native to the pass are acclimatized.

Terrain. The pass itself is relatively flat and easy to move through, but the surrounding mountains are steep and jagged; treat it as difficult terrain. It can be climbed with a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check using appropriate tools, or a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check without tools. This check must be repeated for each Move action. Failing a check results in a fall, causing the creature to take 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 5 feet fallen and landing prone.

Strong Winds. The winds in the pass are strong and unpredictable. Ranged weapon attacks and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing are made with disadvantage. Any flying creatures must land at the end of their turn or fall.

Extreme Cold. The temperature of the pass is always well below freezing. A creature without resistance or immunity to cold damage or that isn't wearing cold weather gear must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. A creature that becomes soaking wet makes this saving throw with disadvantage and cannot benefit from cold weather gear until it is dry again.

Frost Giant Patrols. The frost giants patrol their territory to protect themselves from hostile creatures and keep out intruders. For every 2 hours the party spends in the pass, roll a d8. On a result of 1, they cross paths with a frost giant patrol. The patrol size is determined by the level of the adventure.

Frost Giant Patrol

Adventure Level	Encounter
8th	1 frost giant
11th+	Available in the full adventure

The patrol frequency increases significantly if the characters are detected. If a frost giant flees an encounter, the patrol frequency increases immediately. If the characters kill any frost giants, but do not hide the bodies, the patrol frequency increases after 1d4 hours. Once the characters are detected, roll a d8 after every hour the characters spend in the pass. On a result of 1, they cross paths with a frost giant patrol as detailed above.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the regional map of Tharngrold Pass on page 4.

01 – The Ascent

Ascending the mountains to the pass requires a skill challenge. The General Features of Tharngrold Pass don't take effect until the characters finish the ascent.

A skill challenge simulates a task requiring more time and effort than a single ability check. In its simplest form, the characters make a series of ability checks to earn a required number of successes before accumulating a maximum number of failed checks—similar to how death saving throws work.

This skill challenge consists of the following elements:

- ▶ **Difficulty.** Primary skill checks related to this skill challenge are made against DC 15. Secondary and repeat checks are made against DC 20.
- ▶ **Complexity.** The characters must succeed on five ability checks related to this skill challenge.
- ▶ **Primary Checks.** When the characters partake in a skill challenge, they may commit any ability check they like to the skill challenge. Certain ability checks, however, lend themselves better to a successful outcome than others. These ability checks are primary checks and usually have a lower DC than their secondary checks. The primary checks for this skill challenge are Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), and Wisdom (Survival).
- ▶ **Secondary Checks.** Secondary checks represent all the skills the characters may use to participate in a skill challenge that aren't considered primary checks. The main reason for the disparity between primary and secondary is that primary checks are a little more "obvious" in their function.



- ▶ **Other Conditions.** A character with a *climber's kit* gains an additional +5 bonus to Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and only takes half damage from the Skill Challenge Outcome.
- ▶ **Consequences.** Once the party has achieved 5 successes, the number of failures determines the outcome of the skill challenge.

Skill Challenge Outcome

Number of Failures	Outcome
0	The party reaches the pass after 2 hours with no complications.
1–2	The party reaches the pass after 3 hours. Each character takes 4d10 bludgeoning damage from climbing mishaps.
3–4	The party reaches the pass after 4 hours. Each character takes 6d10 bludgeoning damage from climbing mishaps.
5+	The party reaches the pass after 6 hours of climbing. Each character takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage from climbing mishaps and must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.

02 – Guard Post

Entering the Pass. Both sides of the pass are guarded by watch towers that are manned at all times (use the same map for both sides). The party enters the pass at the southwest corner.

Encounter: You Shall Not Pass. The frost giants attempt to use their superior vision and high ground to pelt any intruders with rocks before they can even be seen: if the characters are not acclimatized to the pass, the giants surprise them. The number of guards depends on the level of the adventure.

Guard Post

Adventure Level	Encounter
8th	1 frost giant
11th+	Available in the full adventure

03 – Avalanche Alley

The pass winds beyond the guard post as a road carved into the side of the mountain. Thick snow has accumulated over a slippery layer of ice despite the strong winds.

A Bad Feeling. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check knows that these are perfect conditions for an avalanche.

Hazard: Avalanche. When the first character in the party reaches the midway point, the inevitable happens. With a ground-rattling rumble a huge mound of snow breaks away from the mountain above the characters and races towards them. Unless the party has a way to protect themselves, such as using the spell *tiny hut* they will need to run.

Starting the Chase. Have each character roll initiative. The front of the avalanche is centered on the party.

Progressing the Avalanche. On initiative count 20, the avalanche advances 50 feet along the path.

Chase Complications. Each round, at the start of their turn, a character must roll 1d12 to determine whether they face a chase complication.

Avalanche Complication

d12	Complication
1	You step on a patch of slippery ice. You must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.
2	The wind picks up, driving sharp shards of ice into your eyes. You must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become blinded until the end of your turn. You may not dash while blinded.
3	A boulder smashes into the ground in front of you. You must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to vault the boulder. Otherwise it counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
4	A large drift of snow covers a 15 foot stretch of road in front of you. If you are unable to jump across, the remaining drift counts as difficult terrain.
5	A giant goat flees the avalanche. It makes a ram attack as it pushes you aside (+5 to hit; 4d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit and you must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or fall prone).
6	A section of the road collapses beneath you. You must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall into a pit 1d4 x 5 feet deep, taking falling damage as normal and landing prone. The walls are easy to climb.
7–12	No complication.

Ending the Chase. There are two ways for a character to escape the avalanche. Ideally, they will be able to reach the large overhang that protects the road 250 feet ahead from the starting point.

The other way for a character to end the chase is to be overcome by the avalanche. A character hit by the avalanche must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the character takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage, and is buried under 10 feet



of snow. On a success, the character takes half as much damage and is buried under 5 feet of snow. A buried character is restrained and suffocating.

Finding a character buried in the snow requires a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check or another method of detection such as *locate creature*. A character can use their action to dig 5 feet of snow. Alternatively, a five-foot cube of snow can be melted with 10 fire damage.

04 – Rickety Bridge

A 60-foot-long, rickety wooden bridge, slick with ice and heaving in the howling winds, spans a 120-foot-deep chasm between two mountains.

Hazard: Don't Look Down. A character crossing the bridge must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or slip and begin to fall off the bridge. The falling creature can haul itself back onto the bridge with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. A creature that fails both checks falls

off the bridge, plummeting 120 feet and taking 12d6 bludgeoning damage and landing prone.

Climbing back up from the bottom of the chasm follows the Terrain rules from the General Features section.

05 – Frost Giant Temple

Just beyond the rickety bridge, the mountain flattens into a plateau with a large stone temple at its center. An old frost giant stands at the center of the temple, her hands resting on the altar at either side of an offering basin. Angular runes etched into the altar glow with pale blue light that reflects eerily off of her yellow eyes.

Encounter: Ritual Interrupted. The frost giant shaman (see the Appendix) and her guardians immediately stop the ritual to attack any intruders. The shaman keeps as far from the party as possible, relying on her guards to protect her and push the intruders back towards the bridge. If one or more of her guards are defeated or she is reduced to a quar-

ter of her hit points, she attempts to flee towards **area 7**. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure.

The Temple

Adventure Level	Encounter
8th	1 frost giant shaman with a <i>staff of withering</i> guarded by 2 polar bears
11th+	Available in the full adventure

Treasure: Divination Temple. The *divination temple* as a whole functions as a magic item (see the Appendix).

06 – Mountaintop Shrine

A narrow path branches off from the main pass, switching back on itself as it ascends towards the peak of a mountain.

Rarified Earth. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check can tell that this path doesn't get much traffic, especially not from giants. The trail leads 3 miles up the mountain. Once the characters reach the top, read or paraphrase the following:

The clouds suddenly part, and you arrive at a small open-air shrine with an unmarked stone sarcophagus at its center. The peaks of mountains jut out like islands atop a vast sea of clouds, whipped into rippling whorls by the fierce wind.

Cliff Faces. Each cliff face on the provided map is approximately 10 feet tall.

Hallowed Ground. The shrine is infused with holy power from the *hallow* spell. Celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead can't enter the area, and dead bodies interred here can't be turned into undead.

Encounter: Ambush. After the characters have had a few minutes to examine the shrine, a pack of **winter wolves** surround and attempt to ambush them. The number of wolves depends on the level of the adventure.

Temple Ambush

Adventure Level	Encounter
8th	5 winter wolves
11th+	Available in the full adventure

Treasure: Holy Bones. The sarcophagus appears to be a solid block of stone, but has a sheet of iron around its interior to protect the magic items within from detection (such as by the *detect magic* spell or similar effects). A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check knows that there is usually a hidden latch on this type of sarcophagus;

alternatively, a character that succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check can find the hidden latch. The sarcophagus is a 500-pound large object with AC 17, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The bones of a long-dead paladin are interred in the sarcophagus, along with the paladin's beautifully wrought (but completely mundane) longsword, and the rest of his worldly possessions, detailed in the table below.

The Paladin's Remains

Adventure Level	Treasure
8th	70 pp; 1,000 gp; 6,000 sp; 700 cp; a scabbard decorated with 10 jade gemstones worth 100 gp each; and an <i>arrow-catching shield</i>
11th+	Available in the full adventure

Any patrons requesting items from this sarcophagus were unaware of the other treasures within.

While the characters rest here, they are safe from frost giant patrols (see General Features).

07 – Giant's Home

The frost giants live in dwellings hewn into the face of the mountain like a massive hornet's nest. Dozens of lookouts with frost giant guards are interspersed amongst the residences. It is clear that a frontal attack on the frost giant's settlement would be folly, perhaps even for a well-prepared army.



Hazard: Giant’s Everywhere! To avoid detection, characters moving through the area must each make a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If half or more of the characters succeed, the group avoids detection. If the characters are detected, a patrol of frost giants (see General Features) pursues them.

Opportunity: Espionage. A character can spend an hour attempting to surveil the area. First the character must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid detection. On a success, they may make an Intelligence (Investigation) check. The total result of the check determines the quality of the data collected.

Data Quality

Intelligence (Investigation) Check Result	Outcome
0–9	The report has glaring omissions and many unsubstantiated guesses.
10–19	The report has minor omissions but is detailed enough to provide a tactical advantage to any of the frost giant’s enemies.
20+	The character is able to create a highly detailed report on the population demographics, defensive capabilities, and tactical weaknesses of the frost giants. A patron or NPC interested in this information will offer a 1000 gp bonus on what they originally agreed to pay.

08 – Paddocks

A smaller path branches from the main pass and winds down to an animal paddock full of mountain goats.

Bahhh! At any given time, there are 3d20 goats in the paddock. This is one of the frost giant’s main food sources. There is nothing of interest here.

09 – Crevasse

A large crevasse cuts into the mountain, slightly off of the beaten path. It is sheltered from the strong winds and could provide a hiding place if the party is desperate to avoid detection. A character with a passive Perception score of 15 or higher hears faint moans coming from below.

Hazard: Steep and Deep. The crevasse drops 100 feet. Its sheer walls are coated in a layer of hoarfrost that make climbing difficult. It can be climbed as detailed in the General Features section, but the DC of all climbing checks is increased by 2.

Encounter: 27 Hours. Robinson (CG human male druid) stumbled into the crevasse while seeking shelter during a snowstorm. He used his last spell slot to cast *animal messenger* to beg the local adventurer’s guild for help, and has been waiting twenty-seven hours for a rescue party. Robinson is barely conscious, with only 7 hit points and four levels of exhaustion.

AFTERMATH

If the party managed to complete their objective without alerting the frost giants, the uneasy peace between the frost giants and their neighbors continues. The characters receive whatever rewards they were promised by their patron.

However, in the more likely event that the characters were seen (or had left evidence of their presence), relations with the frost giants deteriorate into open conflict. Storm giants begin raiding the nearest settlements in retribution, and may even instigate a full-scale war. Of course, the party is under no obligation to get involved in military matters, but their patron may incentivise them to join the upcoming conflict. If the characters successfully surveilled the giant’s settlement (**area 7**) the war will be all the easier.

APPENDIX

DIVINATION TEMPLE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

The altar at the center of the temple is magically fixed in place and can’t be removed from the temple.

The temple has 7 charges, and it regains 1d4 + 3 expended charges daily at dawn. You can use the charges in the following ways:

- ▶ While touching the altar, you can expend 3 charges to cast one of the following spells as a ritual: *clairvoyance*, *divination*, *locate creature*, or *locate object*. A spell cast in this way has a functional range of 100 miles, if applicable.
- ▶ After a creature you can see within 30 feet of you makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, but before you know the outcome, you can expend 1 charge to add or subtract 1d4 (your choice) from the total.

As long as you are on the same plane of existence as the temple, you only need to visit the temple once every 30 days to remain attuned to it. If you travel to a different plane of existence, your attunement to the temple immediately ends.

Frost Giant Shaman

Huge Giant, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +7, Cha +4

Skills Nature +4, Perception +7, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Giant

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shaman makes two attacks with its quarterstaff.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

Glacial Flurry (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest). The shaman conjures a swirling cloud of snow and ice that extends from it in a 30-foot radius. The cloud lasts for 1 minute, and it moves with the shaman, remaining centered on it. Frost giants in the area deal an extra 3 (1d6) cold damage with their weapon attacks, but are otherwise unaffected by the cloud.

An affected creature's speed is halved in the area, and the area is lightly obscured for it. When an affected creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) cold damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage.

Spellcasting. The shaman casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15).

At will: *guidance*, *create or destroy water*

3/day each: *cure wounds* (as a 3rd-level spell), *gust of wind*, *hold person*, *thunderwave* (as a 3rd-level spell)

1/day each: *call lightning*, *ice storm*, *water breathing*

BONUS ACTIONS

Alpine Escape. The shaman takes the Disengage or Hide action. While in rocky or snowy terrain, it has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide.

FROST GIANT PASS BATTLEMAPS

Battlemaps for this adventure can be found in the Into the Wilds set on the Tom Cartos Patreon:

- ▶ 02 – Guard Post ([Mountain Path map](#))
- ▶ 05 – Frost Giant Temple ([Temple Ruins map](#))
- ▶ 06 – Mountaintop Shrine ([The Summit map](#))

RECENT ADVENTURES FROM DMDAVE

Dungeons & Lairs

- ▶ [#28: Ninja Clan Hold](#)
- ▶ [#29: Minotaur Maze](#)
- ▶ [#30: Owlbear Wood](#)
- ▶ [#31: Mimic Museum](#)
- ▶ [#32: Oni Palace](#)
- ▶ [#33: Rust Monster Mine](#)
- ▶ [#34: Revenant Ghost Ship](#)
- ▶ [#35: Sphinx Pyramid](#)
- ▶ [#36: Shadow Hotel](#)
- ▶ [#37: Salamander Forge](#)
- ▶ [#38: Treant Grove](#)
- ▶ [#39: Troll Bridge](#)
- ▶ [#40: Unicorn Island](#)
- ▶ [#41: Water Weird Ruins](#)
- ▶ [#42: Wyvern Motes](#)
- ▶ [#43: Vampire Undercroft](#)
- ▶ [#44: Xorn Tunnels](#)
- ▶ [#45: Cultist Cathedral](#)
- ▶ [#46: Noble Tower](#)
- ▶ [#47: Mage Cube](#)
- ▶ [#48: Assassin School](#)
- ▶ [#49: Green Hag Forest](#)
- ▶ [#50: Doppelganger City](#)
- ▶ [#51: Hobgoblin Hideout](#)
- ▶ [#52: Fire Giant Mine](#)
- ▶ [#53: Gargoyle Cathedral](#)
- ▶ [#54: Wight Cemetery](#)
- ▶ [#55: Chain Devil Crypts](#)
- ▶ [#56: Zombie Farmhouse](#)
- ▶ [#57: Ettercap Forest](#)
- ▶ [#58: Lamia Temple](#)
- ▶ [#59: Santa's Village](#)
- ▶ [#60: Naga Ruins](#)
- ▶ [#61: Marilith Prison](#)
- ▶ [#62: Lizardfolk Village](#)

Dungeon of the Week

- ▶ [#1: Scattered Chambers of the Leper One](#)
- ▶ [#2: Hidden Keep of the Death Arrow](#)
- ▶ [#3: Lost Archive of the Silent One](#)
- ▶ [#4: Ruined Sanctum of the Void Prince](#)
- ▶ [#5: Forlorn Temple of Mash-Dinaxis](#)
- ▶ [#6: Dungeon of Hari](#)
- ▶ [#7: Boxrock Hole](#)
- ▶ [#8: The Treacherous Chasm](#)

Yazur Island

- ▶ [#1: Forest of Faces](#)
- ▶ [#2: The Whistling Monolith](#)
- ▶ [Player's Guide](#)