

DUNGEONS & LAIRS #65: YETI CAVERNS

Yeti Caverns is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3, 5, 8, or 11**. This document offers a general guideline on scaling the adventure for each level. The characters must find and enter the lair of a powerful yeti known as the Terror. Before they can confront the yeti, however, they must first dispatch his goblinoid minions.

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.

LEVEL SELECTION

Before playing, know the level at which you wish to run the adventure. Overall, the adventure's locations and descriptions remain unchanged throughout the levels. However, most encounters, hazards, traps, and treasures scale with each level of the adventure. The keyed locations will present the differences between each level.

Also, the adventure works for more than just the listed levels. If you wish to run this adventure for levels other than 3, 5, 8, or 11, the chart below shows you which version of the adventure you should select for each level. A given adventure ver-

CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

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sion might be easier or more challenging for a given party.

Scaling the Adventure

Average Party Level	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
3	3rd-Level	Hard
4	3rd-Level	Medium
5	5th-Level	Hard
6	5th-Level	Medium
7	5th-Level	Easy
8	8th-Level	Hard
9	8th-Level	Medium
10	8th-Level	Easy
11	11th-Level	Hard
12	11th-Level	Medium
13	11th-Level	Easy

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The table on the following page offers some ideas if you don't have a reason for the characters to investigate the Yeti Caverns. Roll a d8 or choose the one you like best. If you need to motivate the party with a monetary reward, their patrons offer 500 gp per level of the adventure.

BACKGROUND

The Breakneck Mountains, though cold and wind-swept, are not entirely desolate. Several differing communities, from humans to dwarves to gnolls and beyond, have established themselves on the moun-

Yeti Caverns Adventure Hooks

d8 Patron	Adventure Hook
1 Academy	The academy depends on the rare herbs and botanical materials found within the Breakneck Mountains. The academy wants an end to the disruption to their supply. How the party accomplishes this is up to them.
2 Ancient Being	The party's patron sends a strange vision of a noble beast trapped in chains and held prisoner in a swamp to the party.
3 Aristocrat	The local communities owe allegiance (and taxes) to a noble family; these attacks have affected their ability to pay. The family has become concerned enough to hire the party to address the issue.
4 Criminal Syndicate	The syndicate works with several businesses that use the trade routes through the mountains. The yeti's activities are disruptive to their income streams.
5 Adventurer's Guild	The guild has been presented with an offer by the communities throughout the mountains to remove the threat. The guild is looking to contract the party to resolve the issue.
6 Military Force	An expedition sent to eliminate the source of the attacks was slain, and the local scout commander has recognized that the threat is beyond the capabilities of their men.
7 Religious Order	An order of priests has reason to believe that the yeti's lair contains a dragon egg. They want to recover the egg for its use in a divine ritual.
8 Sovereign	The sovereign has heard of the yeti and thinks that its head would make an excellent conversation piece for their throne room. They are looking to hire the party to bring it to them.

tains' slopes and within their hills, surviving and even thriving in conditions that many would deem borderline uninhabitable. Of course, life within these mountains is not easy in the best of circumstances. Lately, it has been made even harder by the terrorizing influence of what has become known as the Terror of the Breakneck Mountains.

In recent months, travelers, explorers, and community members have been turning up dead or going missing entirely, the only evidence of their presence being clouds of blood in the snow. Stories and rumors suggest that the terror of the mountains is a yeti—perhaps even multiple yetis, though none have so far been brave enough to approach the Terror's suspected lair to confirm their suspicions. The Terror is aided by its goblinoid minions, who serve the yeti eagerly in exchange for a meager share of its spoils as well as status amongst the other creatures and folk of the region.

YETI CAVERNS BATTLEMAPS

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

- ▶ Riverside Ambush ([Rapids map](#))
- ▶ Frozen Waterfall ([B3 – Frozen Waterfall map](#))

TRAVELING TO THE CAVERNS

To reach the lair, the party must follow the Benmar Tributary to the south, where it pours over a set of cliffs to form the Sagnear Falls. This waterfall freezes over in the coldest months of the year and is the suspected lair of the Terror of the Breakneck Mountains. Because the river is easy to follow, no ability checks are required for navigation. This does not mean, however, that the trek will be without issue. The lair is well defended by creatures that patrol its perimeter.

Encounter: Riverside Ambush. A few hours into the party's journey along the river, they encounter an ambush lying in wait. The Terror's minions, winter goblinoids and their wolf companions, lurk along its banks within the nearby treeline, waiting for unsuspecting prey that they can beat into submission and drag back to their caverns for food. As the party nears, the minions ready their ambush. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or lower is surprised when the ambushers leap from the treeline and attack.

The nature of the ambushers depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table on the following page. Bugbears and goblins preceded by the word "winter" use their normal statistics, with the addition that they have resistance to cold damage; creatures marked with an asterisk are new monsters detailed in the appendix.



Riverside Ambush Encounter

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	4 winter goblins and 2 wolves
5th	4 winter goblins , 1 winter bugbear elite ,* and 2 wolves
8th	2 winter bugbear elites * and 2 winter wolves
11th	4 winter bugbear elites * and 2 winter wolves

The ambushers hold nothing of value on their persons, only shoddy weapons, scraps of food, and worthless trinkets. If the party attempts to question one of the goblinoids, it may be convinced to reveal information about the lair, such as the general nature and number of its inhabitants, with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check.

APPROACHING THE WATERFALL

After a few more hours of travel along the tributary, the party will come to the waterfall they've been heading toward. Read aloud the following:

Eventually, the ground ahead of you falls away as you follow the river toward the cliff's edge.

As you crest the peak and make your way to the edge, you are greeted by the sight of a frozen waterfall cascading down the rockface. The sound of the water rushing under the ice rumbles through the valley below, and a chilling mist fills the air. The ice sparkles like diamonds in the sunlight.

The entrances to the caves are approximately halfway down the cliff face and are encrusted with rime; they are also concealed by mist to any onlookers observing from afar, noticeable only at distances of several feet. To find the entrances, the party will have to gradually descend the cliff face while keeping their eyes peeled. The cliff face is slippery—characters can climb up or down the cliff face with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check, which must be repeated for every 30 feet of movement. A character using a climber's kit makes this check with advantage.

A character who fails this check momentarily loses their grip, and must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or tumble to the base of the waterfall below. When a character has descended approximately halfway down the cliff, they'll automatically spot either one or both of the entrances that are positioned on either side of the waterfall.

Encounter: Lurking Elementals. The first time a character tumbles down the waterfall, they cause a large chunk of ice to be brought down with them. When they and the chunk of ice crash into the frozen river below, hairline fractures begin to rapidly spread across the surface of the ice. Within moments, ice and water spirits, agitated by the disturbance, break through the ice and attack. The nature of these elementals depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Lurking Elemental Encounter

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	3 ice mephits
5th	1 water elemental and 1 ice mephit
8th	2 water elementals
11th	3 water elementals

YETI CAVERNS

The caves behind the waterfall are naturally occurring, though their inhabitants have spruced up the interior a bit to make them feel more like home. Not all of the Terror's minions are present at the lair at once—some are out hunting and raiding in the surrounding wilderness and trails.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, features of the lair are described as follows:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The caverns are shaped out of the surrounding bedrock of the mountain. Cavern ceilings average roughly 15 feet in height. Floors are uneven, but are not considered difficult terrain.

Light. The caverns are dimly lit at all times. During the day, this light comes from whatever daylight filters in through the cavern openings and small holes in the ceilings. At night, wall-mounted torches scattered throughout illuminate the caverns.

Alternate Access. A tunnel several dozen feet long connects the southern portions of the caverns to the surface of the cliffside. The surface entrance to this tunnel is partially concealed by brush. A character who surveys the area surrounding the waterfall and makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the entrance to this tunnel.

Biting Cold. The caverns are cold—supernaturally so, courtesy of the ice mephits that cohabit within them. For every 5 minutes that a creature not suited for extreme cold spends within the caverns, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take cold damage. The difficulty of the saving throw and the amount of cold damage dealt depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Biting Cold

Adventure Level	Save DC	Damage
3rd	DC 10	1d4
5th	DC 12	1d8
8th	DC 14	1d12
11th	DC 16	2d8

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of the Terror's lair on page 5.

1 – Entrance Cavern

Bloody skulls mounted on wooden stakes are scattered throughout this chamber—suggesting a warning to any who would dare trespass. A pool of water in the west end of the chamber has frozen over. A passageway extends to the north.

The skulls here are the remains of the Terror's victims, mounted by the yeti and his goblinoid minions. A character who approaches the frozen pool at the west end of the chamber can see a cloudy shape that looks like a body submerged at the bottom. The body is a mostly skeletal winter goblin who was killed by the other goblins during the warmer months and left in the pool to rot. The party can smash through the ice to reach it, but there is nothing of value on the corpse.

Encounter: Leashed Wolves. Wolves are leashed with rope to the stakes in this cavern. The Terror and his minions use them as guard and hunting dogs. The wolves are preoccupied with the leftover deer carcasses they have been thrown, which they tear into eagerly. The party can move past the wolves without agitating them with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Otherwise, the wolves will quickly attack the party once they notice them. The wolves have enough leash to be able to freely move throughout the cavern, plus an additional 10 feet beyond it. The nature of the wolves depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below.

Area 1 Encounter

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	4 wolves
5th	2 winter wolves
8th	3 winter wolves
11th	4 winter wolves

Yeti Caverns

1 square = 5 feet



2 – Common Area

The walls of this expansive, stalagmite-littered cavern are lined with tents constructed out of bone and animal skins. The smell of cooking meat wafts from several campfires scattered throughout the room. Debris litters the floor.

The yeti's goblinoid minions are relegated to this area of the lair, where they cook, eat, and bicker

with each other when they aren't out on the surface hunting or searching for their next victim. Every so often, the Terror becomes sufficiently annoyed by their presence and wanders into the room to physically punish an unlucky offender. The goblinoids tolerate this, for their association with the Terror brings them bountiful resources and an elevated status amongst the other folk and creatures of the mountains.

Encounter: Terror Minions. Several of the Terror's minions are present in this chamber, occupying

themselves with food, drink, and fighting. If they notice any intruders, they attack immediately. Once at least two of their number have been dealt with, one minion will begin screaming and flee to **area 4** to alert the Terror. The nature of the minions depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. Bugbears and goblins preceded by the word “winter” use their normal statistics, with the addition that they have resistance to cold damage; creatures marked with an asterisk are new monsters detailed in the appendix.

Area 2 Encounter

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	3 winter goblins and 1 winter bugbear
5th	3 winter bugbears and 1 winter bugbear elite*
8th	3 winter bugbear elites*
11th	5 winter bugbear elites*

Treasure: Minions’ Belongings. Each of the minions has a coin purse on their person containing 1d8 gp and 1d20 sp. Aside from this, there is little of value to be found within this cavern. Other items of note include whittled carvings, jewelry made of teeth, crooked knives, and a collection of carved rocks that vaguely resemble faces.

3 – General Storage

A disorganized pile of crates, barrels, and loose supplies is pushed up against the northeast edge of this small cavern.

Everything in this chamber was stolen from an explorer or traveler or looted from their corpse. The containers hold dry rations, a selection of common adventuring gear, firewood, and scrap materials.

4 – Yeti Cavern

The floor of this large cavern is stained with blood and littered with bone. More blood splatters the walls and ceiling. On a naturally elevated platform of rock in the east end of the chamber, a melon-sized egg rests on a bed of ice, its scales colorfully reflecting the ambient light. A passageway above a 10-foot-high wall extends to the west.

The Terror prefers to indulge live prey, ripping them limb from limb and spraying blood everywhere. The egg within the chamber is the Terror’s prized possession, which the yeti discovered when it moved into the cavern. The Terror correctly believes the egg to be that of a white dragon, and hopes for



it to hatch so that the yeti might domesticate and control the dragon whelping. The yeti’s hope is for naught, however, as the egg is nonviable and has sat undisturbed in this cavern before it was discovered for hundreds of years.

The 10-foot wall in the southwest corner of the cavern is slick with ice and can be climbed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. The yeti can scale it without issue. The passageway above leads to the cavern where the Terror keeps its valuables.

Encounter: The Terror. When the Terror isn’t about on the mountainsides bringing woe and destruction to those who encounter it, the yeti spends its time here indulging in its victims and beholding its dragon egg. The Terror is unlikely to engage in any conversation other than threats and insults. Depending on the level of the adventure, the Terror may be accompanied by another yeti: its mate. The nature of the Terror, and its mate (if applicable), depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the table below. Creatures marked with an asterisk are new monsters detailed in the appendix.

Area 4 Encounter

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	1 yeti*
5th	1 alpha yeti*
8th	1 alpha yeti* and 1 yeti*
11th	2 alpha yetis*

Treasure: White Dragon Egg. Though the egg will not hatch, it is still worth a significant sum to the right collector. Depending on the buyer, the egg could sell for anywhere between 400 and 1,800 gp.

Treasure: Keys. Characters who search the chamber and succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check find two iron keys, each approximately half the size of a human palm, lying on a chunk of ice within the cavern. The keys open the chest and the cage in **area 5**.

5 – Valuables

This small chamber is littered with broken and empty containers. An iron-banded wooden chest sits against the east wall. Near the north wall is a large iron cage, within which is a dirty and weary-looking gnome who looks upon you with an expression of cautious optimism.

The cage and the chest are both fitted with padlocks and can be unlocked with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or the appropriate key from the keyring found in **area 4**. Inside the chest are several humanoid hearts that have been left on ice. The Terror considers them his second-most important treasures, after the dragon egg.

Bilzub the Captive. The person in the cage is named Bilzub, a gnome who previously led a group of independent prospectors who were searching the mountains for mineral veins when they were attacked by the yeti. Bilzub was kidnapped by the Terror itself while the rest of his prospecting companions were slain. The Terror keeps Bilzub as a personal pet, locking him in this cage for hours at a time, allowing him out only to dance for the yeti's amusement. Bilzub had almost lost all hope for freedom, and is in a state of mild shock upon seeing the party. He pleads eagerly to be freed, and he can explain his story to the party as well as everything he knows about the lair, should that still be of use to the characters.

AFTERMATH

If the Terror has been slain, any remaining minions disband and the caverns are soon abandoned. If the party was for some reason unsuccessful in slaying the Terror, the yeti, furious, is likely to bolster the forces of its minions and redouble its raiding efforts to become an even greater threat in the region. If the gnome Bilzub is led safely from the lair, he may later reward the characters when he is able to return to his home settlement. The party may wish to accompany him back to his home to collect their additional reward. Bilzub is native to the Breakneck Mountains, but the precise location of his community is left to the GM's discretion. Ω

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Alpha Yeti

Huge Monstrosity, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 149 (13d12 + 65)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +5

Skills Intimidation +4, Perception +5, Survival +5

Damage Immunities cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Giant

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Alpine Sight. Dust, fog, snow, and other particles suspended in the air don't impede the yeti's vision.

Ice Walk. The yeti can move across and climb icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice or snow doesn't cost it extra movement.

Keen Smell. The yeti has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Snow Camouflage. The yeti has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yeti makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its stomp. It can use its bite in place of one claw attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is prone, it must also succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the start of the yeti's next turn.

Winter Bugbear Elite

Medium Humanoid (Goblinoid), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2, Stealth +6, Survival +3

Damage Resistances cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Ambush Strike. In the first round of a combat, the bugbear deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage to any creature it hits with a weapon attack that hasn't yet acted or taken damage.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Snow Camouflage. The bugbear has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bugbear makes two attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage in melee or 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage at range.

Yeti

Large Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft., climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Survival +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Giant

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Keen Smell. The yeti has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Snow Camouflage. The yeti has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yeti makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

CREATIVE COMMONS INFORMATION

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