

Dark Paths:

# WINTER LORD'S THRONE



**Wherever winter grasps and  
bites, there I dwell...**





# WINTER LORD'S THRONE

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— Nerdarchist Dave

The Fifth Edition content in this book explores new, darker paths for adventurers to follow. Beginning down one of these dark paths leads to power but at a perilous cost. Heroes of the dark face insurmountable odds and face challenging decisions whether it is worth the cost to fight against such forces by tapping into the same source of insidious influence as their terrible foes. In this Dark Paths series we're taking a broader approach to content creation with further reaching goals and cohesiveness between each new product. Will heroes face the darkness alone, or fight fire with fire and bring their own dark forces to bear?



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# Wherever winter grasps and bites, there I dwell...

*An adventure scenario for four 9th level characters.*

The following hooks can be used to prompt adventurers to investigate the mausoleum:

- The village of Lightwater uses the ceremonial Sword of Spring in their vernal rites as part of banishing the winter. The blade has gone missing and they wish for its return. The best information elders have is an eerie region of brutal winter just east of Lightwater, which appeared around the same time it went missing.
- Zellen contacts adventurers with great concern that followers of the Winter Lord intend to turn them into something unholy as part of a ritual. These followers stole the Sword of Spring, a crucial component of the ritual, and Zellen requests aid in retrieving it. A manifestation of the Winter Lord's tomb appeared not far from the village of Lightwater where the blade was stolen from.
- A traveling silver dragonborn wizard named Kyr-ridan came into this area to study local flora but the sudden appearance of an eerie region of brutal winter in a place that should be in the middle of spring has proven to be a delightful diversion from the writing of this treatise of western plant life. He would be willing to pay a hefty sum of gold were someone to forge ahead into this harsh area, discover the source and perhaps bring him back some samples.

## Environment

Although a far northern or southern environment, a tundra or any region of extreme cold makes an ideal setting for this scenario, it could also be interesting to have the ice and snow appear in a place where it should not be as this location manifests itself into the world, immediately tipping the players off that there is something very wrong.

Feel free to substitute the village of Lightwater for any small, remote and isolated village in your own setting.

The Winter Lord is a dark cosmic entity, a being of malediction with unknowable motivations and unfathomable goals. An aspect of the Winter Lord manifests at places of death like mausoleums, graveyards and crypts, subsuming these sites into a pocket dimension within the throne, a complex mazelike demiplane.

**W**inter Lord's Throne is a small dungeon meant to convey the presence of a dark entity in an otherwise standard fantasy world. We are dealing here with themes of un-death and the temptation of power.

In this adventure, Zellen Stringer has stolen the Sword of Spring, a symbolic artifact used by the nearby village of Lightwater to banish the winter and hearken in the warmer seasons. They are hoping to corrupt it to bring eternal winter to the town.

These manifestations take the form of the Winter Lord itself, a gargantuan armored skeleton frozen upon an obsidian throne.

The region surrounding the Winter Lord's Throne is warped by the creature's presence, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- Biting cold and harsh winds cause extreme cold within 6 miles of the Winter Lord's Throne. For every 30 minutes a creature remains outside it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of **frostbite**.
- High wind blows within 1 mile of the lair, making it impossible to light a fire unless the location where the fire is lit is protected from the wind.
- Blowing snow obscures the land and halves travel pace within 12 miles of the Winter Lord's Throne.







## Monsters

Entombed Bones (12)

Arctic Mummy (6)

Frozen Watcher (2)

Rimepelt Bear (1)

Zellen Stringer (1)

## Treasure

*Flute of the Danse Macabre, Rimeclash, Skull of Mork, two daggers +1, gilded lute, thieves' tools, 5 pp, 25 gp, 5 sp*

### 0 - Winter Throne

The entirety of this adventure takes place in one of the legs of this manifestation of the Winter Lord's throne, sealed off from the rest of the compound for Zellen's purposes.

The Winter Lord itself is too preoccupied to give notice to such small creatures, and even frantic attempts to draw its attention will be met with a lack of awareness. The adventurers are like ants in comparison.

It stands precisely where you were told it would be, the heart of an eerie and unnaturally brutal region of frigid cold sprawling outward over the plain, light meant for the summer season glaring off of the ice and snow and into your eyes. It takes a long time for your vision to adjust, but as it does, the sight before you comes clear in stages.

At first you see the outline of a massive structure in the distance somewhere near the middle of all of this cold and dark. The outline is what you suspect could be a small keep with towers on either side but as your eyes become accustomed to the lighting you realize that no, it isn't a keep at all but a chair.

A throne the size of a castle with gleaming sheets of ice crawling up the legs and arms and back of it and over the gargantuan humanoid frozen to it — the Winter Lord itself. A massive black sword pierces through the figure's chest, the impossibly large blade's point thrusting out the back of the throne.

Even from a distance ropelike strands of his white hair can be seen, along with the lattice of ice clinging to them. The figure's blue tinged skin is covered by a layer of creeping hoarfrost. The face appears sunken and sallow, the expression by turns anywhere from disdainful to furious. There it sits, seething, and such is the ice encasing its legs that it is clear even if it tried to stand it would be kept in this spot.

Along the stone of the seat, holes can be seen, and the lights in some of them over others mark them as windows. Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check can see figures moving in some of those windows, showing that this unusual structure is occupied.

A **rimepelt bear** waits near the entrance into the complex, concealed by ice and snow. The first time any creature moves within 20 feet of the double doors it rises, unleashing its Arctic Roar as it attacks.

Toward the bottom of the throne, at the base of one of the four legs, the ice appears to have been chipped away giving way to a set of double doors. Images carved into the stone archway surrounding the doors show several scenes.

In one, humanoids prostrate themselves before an enormous armored figure. In another, the humanoids walk in a line through a portal. Another scene shows smaller armored figures guarding a gateway, each holding a different item — an axe, a spear and a torch.

The next scene shows skeletons encased in ice, and beside it the armored figure stands with a smaller robed and hooded entity.

The final image shows the armored figure sitting on a throne, impaled by a sword while the hooded entity hides between two portals.

Characters who succeed on a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana, History or Religion) check recognize the symbology as a myth of the Winter Lord. Even to the most learned, information is scarce and the best you can recollect is this entity entices followers into icy death with the promise of rebirth in a new universe.



## 1 - Hall of Bones

This dark 30 by 30 foot room is littered with bones and has five doors. The party enters through the double doors to the west. There is a door to the north, a door to the south, and two doors to the east. Additionally, three very frozen piles of bones have accumulated in the northeast corner, the southeast corner and the gap between the doors on the western wall.

The bones do nothing unless touched. Any attempts to warm them up or root through them causes two **entombed bones** to rise from that pile and attack.

## 2 - Northern Sanctum

This darkened tomb is 35 by 25 feet with no light at all if the door is closed, and dim light if it has been left open. There are six sarcophagi total in this room, all frozen shut. The layer of hoarfrost on every surface here makes it clear this room has not been disturbed in quite some time.

Fire can melt the ice enough to open a sarcophagus after a few minutes of application, although if left alone the layer of ice sealing the sarcophagi shut returns within the hour. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Strength check can push the lid open and break through the layer of ice.

Sarcophagi are numbered starting with the one in the northwestern corner and going clockwise from there. The bodies here that do not animate each have a coin in their mouths, frozen to their tongues. The coins are stamped with a crow on either side, one side the profile of the head and the other the entire body of the bird with its wings spread wide. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check Religion check recognizes this custom as an appropriate sacrificial offering to many death deities.

The first sarcophagus contains the frozen remains of a nobleman, whose hands are lifted and curled, the bones of the fingers broken. The stone lid of the sarcophagus has been scored with lines where the occupant tried to claw his way out. The frozen corpse holds 25 gp in its pockets. The lips

of the nobleman are parted slightly and the glint of metal can be seen against his tongue in the presence of any light illuminating the room.

The second sarcophagus contains an **arctic mummy** that animates and attacks as soon as the lid is opened.

The third sarcophagus contains the frozen remains of a young girl, perhaps 14 years of age by her height though the ravaging of time has made it impossible to tell one way or the other. Strands of her curly blond hair still cling to her mummified skull. She does not animate. Her small body is curled around the remains of a teddy bear. Inside the teddy bear are 5 silver pieces. The lips of the girl are parted slightly and the glint of metal can be seen against her tongue in the presence of any light illuminating the room.

The fourth and fifth sarcophagi each contain an **arctic mummy** that animates and attacks as soon as the lid is opened.

The sixth sarcophagus contains the remains of a dwarven woman. Clutched in her dead frozen hand is a gilded lute with a few red gems in its construction, worth up to 80 gp to the right buyer.

## 3 - Southern Sanctum

Like the sanctum to the north, this tomb is 35 feet by 25 feet. There are six sarcophagi total in this room, five of which are closed. The southwestern most sarcophagus has been left ajar and mist spills out of it, unending, leaving the room lightly obscured by three feet deep of frigid fog.

Sarcophagi are numbered starting with the one in the northwestern corner and going clockwise from there. The bodies here that do not animate each have a coin in their mouths, frozen to their tongues. The coins are stamped with a crow on either side, one side the profile of the head and the other the entire body of the bird with its wings spread wide. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check Religion check recognizes this custom as an appropriate sacrificial offering to many death deities.



The first sarcophagus is completely empty and has been cleaned and polished to a degree the other sarcophagi in this room have not.

The second sarcophagus contains the frozen remains of a young man of considerable height. Although he has nothing in his pockets, a character who succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a hollow concealed in one of the corpse's boots containing 5 platinum pieces.

The third sarcophagus contains the frozen remains of a former spy, still wearing their black leather armor with two well made +1 *stiletto daggers* and their thieves' tools tucked into one sleeve.

The fourth and fifth sarcophagi each contain an **entombed bones** that animates and attacks as soon as the lid is opened.

The sixth sarcophagus, with the lid ajar, contains the warhammer *Rimeclash*, which is the source of the frozen mist spilling into this room. The cold mist emanating from the warhammer ceases once it is removed from the sarcophagus.

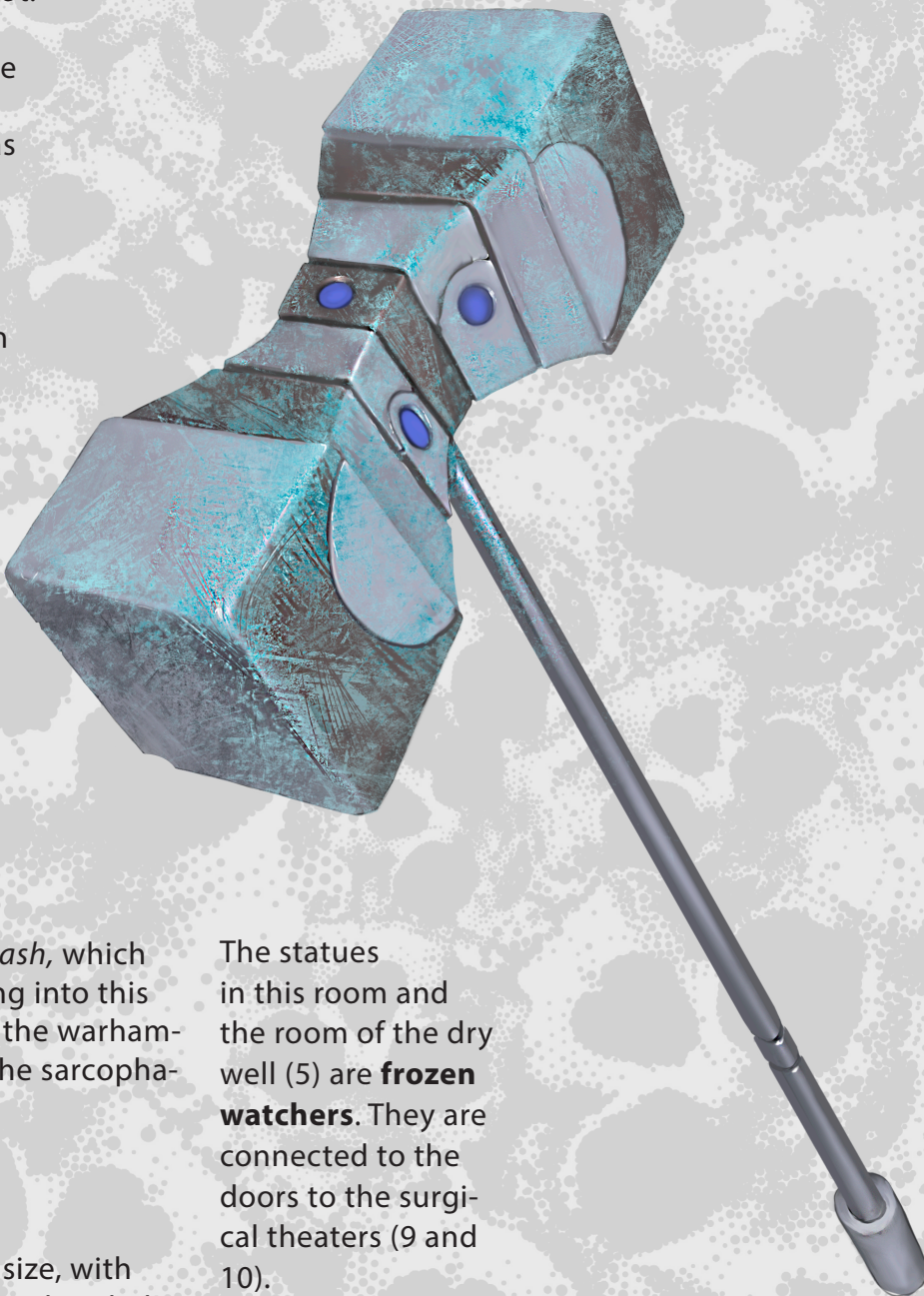
#### 4 - The Watcher's Well

This dark chamber is 15 by 20 feet in size, with no light source on the inside. An empty handed statue depicting the stern visage of the Winter Lord looks out over a long pool of water. On the surface of the water, the reflection of the statue holds a burning torch.

At the northern end of the room two humanoid skeletons hang strung up with their arms spread and their heads bowed.

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines these humanoid skeletons are elven. Unlike the animated skeletons in the area, these are not frozen.

*Rimeclash*



The statues in this room and the room of the dry well (5) are **frozen watchers**. They are connected to the doors to the surgical theaters (9 and 10).

Neither statue holds any items. When the correct objects are placed in their hands, the corresponding doors to the surgical theaters unlock.

The correct object for the statue in this room is a lit torch. If an axe or spear is placed in the statue's hands, the frozen watcher animates and attacks, gaining the appropriate special action. If another item is placed in the statue's hands, nothing happens. Defeating the frozen watcher does not destroy it, but returns it to its dormant state, allowing another attempt at the puzzle.



## 5 - Dry Well

This dark chamber is 15 by 20 feet in size, with no light source on the inside. An empty handed statue depicting the stern visage of the Winter Lord looks out over a 5 foot deep pool without a single drop of water in it.

If the pool in this room is filled to an inch deep, the reflection of the statue in this room can be seen holding a spear. At the southern end of the room two humanoid skeletons hang strung up with their arms spread and their heads bowed.

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines these humanoid skeletons are elven. Unlike the animated skeletons in the area, these are not frozen.

The statues in this room and the room of the dry well (4) are **frozen watchers**. They are connected to the doors to the surgical theaters (9 and 10). Neither stat-

ue holds any items. When the correct objects are placed in their hands, the corresponding doors to the surgical theaters unlock.

The correct object for the statue in this room is a spear. If an axe or torch is placed in the statue's hands, the frozen watcher animates and attacks, gaining the appropriate special action.

If another item is placed in the statue's hands, nothing happens. Defeating the frozen watcher does not destroy it, but returns it to its dormant state, allowing another attempt at the puzzle.

## 6 - Spear Room

This 15 foot by 30 foot room contains only a spear and a lit torch on a sconce on the eastern wall. There are two doors along the southern wall, one leading into the dry well (5) and one leading into the long hallway (8). The door on the eastern wall next to the lit torch leads into the northern surgical theater (9). The door has no handle or keyhole and there is no way to get at the locking mechanism.

Solving the puzzles in the watcher's well and dry well unlocks the mechanism and causes the door to become ajar. Anyone in the room when this happens hears an audible click and sees the door swing open slightly in response.

## 7 - Axe Room

This 15 foot by 30 foot room contains only an axe and an unlit torch on a sconce on the eastern wall. There are two doors along the northern wall, one leading to the watcher's well (4) and one leading to the long hallway (8).

The door on the eastern wall next to the unlit torch leads into the southern surgical theater (10). The door has no handle or keyhole and there is no way to get at the locking mechanism.

Solving the puzzles in the watcher's well and dry well unlocks the mechanism and causes the door to become ajar. Anyone in the room when this happens hears an audible click and sees the door swing open slightly in response.



*Hoarfront armor*



## 8 - Long Hallway

This long hallway is 15 feet at its widest point, though most of it is 10 feet east to west. There are lit torches on the wider points of the hallway, illuminating the areas near the doors.

Once the doors to the long hallway are opened, there are 10 foot deep pits carved into the stonework in front of them with spikes on the bottom. Any character that does not specify they are entering carefully must make a DC14 Dexterity Saving Throw to avoid falling into the pit.

Once the doors to the long hallway are opened, there are 10 foot deep pits carved into the stonework in front of them with spikes at the bottom.

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) checkspots the pit before entering the hallway and stepping into it. Anyone failing to see the pit must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the pit.

A creature falling into the pit takes 11 (2d10) piercing damage from the spikes and 5 (1d10) cold damage from the magic lingering here. In addition, the stone cover above them snaps shut to trap them inside.

A DC 20 Strength check can pry the cover open.

The double doors along the eastern wall in the part of the hallway that is in shadow are locked magically by a thick layer of enchanted ice. When a torch is brought near to them, the ice glistening there melts partially to reveal an inscription.

*"Open me by firelight to the North and South."*

When the braziers in both surgical theaters (9 and 10) have been lit, the ice thaws and allows entrance to the altar room (11).

## 9 - Northern Surgical Theater

This 25 foot by 30 foot room is all aglow in bright light from a pit of fire near the door leading into it on the western wall. The light highlights all of the bloodstains accumulated here, and in spite of the

glow of the fire, the room is as cold as the rest of the complex.

The fire in the pit is magical in nature and provides light but no heat. However, flammable objects held in it will catch fire. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes these unusual qualities' arcane origin.

There is an operating table in the center of the room, partially rusted from years of blood being spilled upon it. To the north and south of this table there is bench seating, stone steps curved inward for onlookers to get a view of the surgeries being performed here.

Along the eastern wall there is an unlit brazier. Lighting the brazier satisfies the conditions for unlocking the door to the altar room (11).

## 10 - Southern Surgical Theater

This 25 foot by 30 foot room is dark. There is an empty 5 foot deep pit near the door leading into it on the western wall. This room feels even colder than the rest of the compound. Creatures inside the room without a source of heat equivalent to a bonfire or more must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw for every one minute they are within or gain a level of frostbite.

There is an operating table in the center of the room, partially rusted from years of blood being spilled upon it. To the north and south of this table there is bench seating, stone steps curved inward for onlookers to get a view of the surgeries being performed here.

Along the eastern wall there is an unlit brazier. Lighting the brazier satisfies the conditions for unlocking the door to the altar room (11).

## 11 - Altar Room

This 35 foot by 30 foot room is carpeted from wall to wall in stark contrast with the rest of this compound. Four large support pillars stand on the northern and southern ends of the room, the rest of the area lit by torches mounted on the walls between them.



# Dark Content Appendix

## Frostbite

In the dead of winter, in the coldest of places, there are things colder than cold. When exposed to such sever temperatures, this cold can begin to do deeper damage to a creature. Frostbite is what happens when prolonged exposure to the cold sinks in deep and causes tissue and nerve damage. The skin goes from whatever color it was supposed to be, to reddened as blood floods the area and tries to warm it, and eventually blackens as the tissue necrotizes. Characters who have not taken proper precaution against the cold, such as gloves and cloaks, may find themselves contending with frostbite. For every one hour a creature is exposed to brutally cold conditions they must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of frostbite. Affected creatures repeat this saving throw every hour they remain exposed, and the DC increases by one each time. Frostbite is measured in five levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of frostbite, as specified in the effect's description.

Level	Effect
1	During this early warning stage a creature's skin begins to redden and there is pain from the cold.
2	Ice begins to crystallize on the affected area. The creature now has frostnip, and has disadvantage on skill checks relying on Dexterity.
3	The affected area begins to turn grey and numb. The creature takes 2d6 necrotic damage, and their maximum hit points are reduced by the same amount until they finish a long rest.
4	The affected area begins to blacken. The creature has disadvantage on all Dexterity based checks. This remains the case until the creature is affected by a lesser restoration spell or similar magic as the nerves have been damaged beyond the repair of normal healing.
5	For every failed save after this, the creature takes 4d6 necrotic damage, and their maximum hit points are reduced by the same amount until they finish a long rest.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check on the pillars reveals hidden hollows inside with space enough for a Medium creature. Three of the pillars conceal piles of frozen bones. The southeastern pillar conceals an egress from the complex. A rough hewn shaft descends 80 feet to a 5 foot wide, 10 foot high dark natural tunnel. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check can use the natural handholds in the shaft to climb down safely. The tunnel goes on for about a half mile before reaching the exit, an unremarkable cave in the nearby foothills.

In the center of the room is a long ornate rug leading up to an altar flanked by two high backed chairs, each with a human skeleton frozen to it in a mockery of the Winter Lord himself, swords thrust through the torso and piercing through the back of the chairs. The Sword of Spring lays across the altar on the eastern wall of the room. **Zellen Stringer** kneels before the altar, wearing the *Skull of Morkk*. A gagged figure is bound to the altar with chains as an intended sacrifice to corrupt the Sword of Spring. This could be the dragonborn wizard Kyrridan, a villager from the town of Lightwater or any appropriate character from your campaign. Zellen possesses a set of coins stamped with the raven, enough for each party member and one for the sacrifice they brought here with them.

Confronting Zellen interrupts their plans. They grab the Sword of Spring, causing the two skeletons to animate as **entombed bones** and attack as Zellen's allies. Zellen defends himself if attacked. When they have half of their hit points or fewer all four pillars open and an **entombed bones** animates in three of them, emerging to attack and cover Zellen while they attempt to flee through the egress in the fourth pillar. Zellen hopes to overwhelm the party with the entombed bones here and offer one or all of them up as sacrifices, which will corrupt the Sword of Spring and make it a more suitable offering for the Winter Lord. They're concerned failure means other cultists will target them as the next sacrifice. Zellen's suspicions are not unfounded. If left undisturbed it takes Zellen 4 rounds to complete the ritual and finish the sacrifice, freezing the coin to the tongue of the victim they brought here with them. If the party gets to them before they complete the sacrifice, they will abandon the ritual to engage them in combat.



# CREATURES

## Arctic Mummy

The arid dryness of the desert is very good at desiccating and preserving corpses, but the tundra is every bit as good. An arctic mummy is the corpse of a creature who died out on the snow and was dried out and frozen within reach of the Winter Lord's grasp. The Winter Lord's will causes these undead to rise and extinguish all warmth — especially the warmth of the living. They are drawn toward any source of fire or heat, seeking to snuff it out and expand the chill domain of the vengeful being of malediction whose terrible power compels them into service.

## Arctic Mummy

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 135 (12d8 + 24)

**Speed** 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** WIS +2

**Damage Resistances** necrotic, poison, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** Cold, fire

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** The languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Extinguish Flame.** Nonmagical sources of fire within 10 ft. of the arctic mummy are extinguished.

**Fire Absorption.** Whenever the arctic mummy is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The arctic mummy can use its Dreadful Glare and make one attack with either its frostbitten fist.

**Frostbitten Fist.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (4d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) cold damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of frostbite.

**Icy Glare.** The arctic mummy targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the mummy, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or have its speed halved until the end of the arctic mummy's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it also has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Icy Glare of all arctic mummies for the next 24 hours.

## Entombed Bones

Very little is left of the bones of this creature beneath its icy encasement. This creature dropped where it died and the bones have been frozen over so thoroughly that the ice may as well be the bones at this point. It's been worn down to splinters held together by a thick layer of frost.

They are creatures of the Winter Lord's will, ice and undeath working in perfect tandem to carry out his will. Whatever fragments of a spirit are left in this being, they are distant and difficult to reach. The entombed bones have very little will left of their own. What will is there is used to try and satiate the unending hunger associated with undeath.



## Entombed Bones

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (16 when defrosted)

**Hit Points** 134 (13d8 + 13)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Understands languages it knew in life but does not speak

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Prison of Ice.** Entombed Bones are coated in a thick layer of ice that causes it to move more slowly and provides a layer of protection against outside attack. If the entombed bones has half of its hit points or fewer its speed increases to 30 ft. and its AC is reduced to 16.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The entombed bones makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit., reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 9 (3d6) cold damage.

**Creeping Frost (Recharge 5-6).** The entombed bones touches the ground with one ice encased hand and ice spreads out in a 15 foot cube. Creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 16 (3d10) cold damage and gaininst one level of frostbite. On a successful save a creature takes half as much damage and does not gain a level of frostbite.

## Frozen Watcher

One of two massive statues within the frozen throne of the Winter Lord. They were carved to depict his stern visage, and unlike the Winter Lord himself, these statues were made unbound.

One hand is depicted folded over the handle of a sword that is thrust into the ground in front of it and the other is extended with the fingers slightly curled as if to accept something as an offering.

There are certain objects the statue can hold that will trigger magical unlocking mechanisms within the compound, but any other weapon placed in its hand will bring the statue to life to attack, instead.

The pair of them were made as gifts by a dwarven follower of the Winter Lord, long ago, and he accepted these offerings, giving in exchange a not-so-small amount of power over the cold.

## Frozen Watcher

*Large construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 22

**Hit Points** 206 (15d10 + 75)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Understands Common but cannot speak.

**Challenge** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Immutable Form.** The frozen watcher is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The frozen watcher has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The frozen watcher's weapon attacks are magical.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The frozen watcher makes two slam attacks.





*A dullahan noble*

**Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Ancient Armaments.** There are three varieties of frozen watchers, each originally constructed with a particular item that grants it a special action. Depending on the item held in a frozen watcher's hands it can use its action for one of the following abilities:

- **Ice Spire (Axe).** The frozen watcher thrusts the butt of the axe into the ground and spikes of jagged ice erupt upward. The frozen watcher chooses up to three creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or it takes 17 (5d6) piercing damage and 17 (5d6) cold damage.

- **Winter Nova (Spear).** The frozen watcher thrusts the point of the spear and flash freezes the ground in a 20 foot radius. The area becomes difficult terrain and creatures in the area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or takes 27 (6d8) cold damage and their movement reduced by 10 feet. On a successful save a creature takes half damage and their movement is not reduced.

- **Storm of Embers (Torch).** The frozen watcher whips the torch in a wide arc, shedding hot embers in its wake. Creatures in a 15 foot radius of the watcher must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage and becoming blinded until the end of its next turn. On a successful save a creature takes half damage and is not blinded.

## Rimepelt Bear

A massive bear, as all of the creatures here, encased in a layer of ice so deep that its teeth have become long jagged icicles and its claws sharpened out of the living rime.

The coat beneath this ice is tattered and frayed, and the eyes filmed over and solid blue from the cold.

## Rimepelt Bear

*Large undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 228 (24d10 + 96)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	7 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the rimepelt bear remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a mound of snow and ice.

**Keen Smell.** Rimepelt Bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The Rimepelt Bear makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage and 9 (2d8) cold damage.



**Claws.** Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) cold damage.

**Arctic Roar (Recharge 5-6).** The Rimepelt Bear opens its jaws and lets out a blast of frigid air in a 30 foot cone. Creatures in range must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 6d6 cold damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

## Zellen Stringer

A Stygian Shadow ranger and agent of the Winter Lord, Zellen has spent years on the tundra among the undead, honing their skills at the hunt and drawing power directly from the source.

It started innocuously enough in their youth. They followed a curiosity, accepted the power of frost when it came to them for the sake of keeping the flesh eaters away from their village with more ease, but the thirst for more power followed. Suddenly it wasn't enough simply to protect the village from the things that might harm it.

They decided to push outward. They made a case for invading one of the neighboring settlements, and the first time it even worked. But by the time Zellen started dabbling in necromancy and using the bodies of the vanquished in their works, the elders of their own village made their disapproval known and they were run out.

Following the call led them far to the north where the Winter Lord's throne sits, frozen in the sea of ice. There were already plenty of dead things in the area, and though Zellen's intentions began pure, over time they lived to see themselves become the thing they were so concerned about in the first place.

Now, they quietly plan their revenge.

### A Frozen Bow

Zellen was once an attractive half-elf, but years on the road in proximity to the undead have left

them gaunt and far more difficult to look at. Their skin is an ashen brown, eyes sunken, brittle black hair still kept long but thinner than it once was.

They sport armor collected from the bones of larger creatures, most notably a skull worn over the top of the head, looking out from the orbitals. There are still a few teeth attached.

Once a member of a nearby village called Lightwater, Zellen fell under the whispers of the Winter Lord. They started out simply tracking what undead creatures existed around the village in order to protect it, but over time their fascination with these beings caused the village elders to become disturbed and thereby cast them out.

Although in exile, Zellen returned one time to steal an important blade from the village — the Sword of Spring, a ceremonial weapon meant to represent cutting through the last vestiges of winter in order to welcome the warmer seasons back into the world.

Zellen did this in order to get revenge on the elders who cast them out for doing what they thought was in the best interests of the town in the first place, but their first priority is vengeance against the elders who threw them out to begin with.

Ever paranoid, Zellen is also beginning to suspect the Winter Lord has darker intentions for them as well, and can be persuaded to aid in retrieving the sword if they can be convinced there is another way to obtain revenge against the elders.

Regardless, Zellen is unlikely to be an ally to a good party. With an evil one, however, they will be affable, laughing along with their jokes and offering to share blood wine around a fire.

To a wicked party, or one that pretends to be so long enough to get into Zellen's good graces, they will be more than happy to show them the secrets of the tundra and the frozen undead creatures that live there, simply glad to have new friends that seem to understand them and their own dark desires after spending so much time alone in the cold and dark.



## Skull of Mokka



## Zellen Stringer

Medium humanoid (half-elf), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** Cold, necrotic

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Giant

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Heartlock.** As a bonus action Zellen forces a creature they can see within 60 feet to make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure Zellen has advantage on the first attack they make against the

target each turn and they have advantage on any saving throws the creature forces Zellen to make.

In addition they deal an extra 3d6 necrotic damage on any attack they make against the target.

### Special Equipment.

Zellen carries a *flute of the danse macabre*. They also wear the *Skull of Mokka*, giving them advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious. In addition, magic can't put Zellen to sleep.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Zellen attacks three times with their sabre.

**Sabre.** Melee Weapon Attack. +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

**Wicked Wind (1/Day).** Zellen calls on the Winter Lord to send a frozen wind on hostile creatures in a 20 foot radius. Creatures in the area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) cold damage and 14 (4d6) necrotic damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one.

### Reaction

**Heartshatter.** Whenever a creature affected by Heartlock deals weapon damage to Zellen, they can use their reaction to end the connection and force the creature to make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure the attack fails and the creature is stunned until the end of Zellen's next turn.



# CHARACTER OPTIONS

## Dullahan

A headless undead creature with roots in the realm of the fey. The original dullahan were elves of the realm of the fey who led a coup against the Winter Queen long ago. She had every knight that rode against her lined up and beheaded, one after another, but did not allow them the mercy of death.

Now, the dullahan wander the planes carrying their heads with them. Some keep them tucked under their arms, some carried within large lanterns that hang from the ends of their weapons, and others attempt to affix them back to the stumps of their necks between their shoulders with helmets or ribbons around the neck.

### Headless Haunt

How a dullahan carries its head says a lot about them as an individual, as well as the manner by which they were decapitated. Many of them tend to have a rather sanguine sense of humor about it, some going as far as to play pranks with their own severed heads, setting them on plates at tables to be uncovered and scare the pants off of dinner guests. Others are more somber about the whole affair.

Regardless, the head of a dullahan remains animate, the eyes still capable of seeing and the mouths still capable of speaking. More than one dullahan has been thrown off by an enemy simply taking their head and chucking it into the woods to leave their body to play marco polo with their head until it's been found and replaced.

### Dullahan Names

The dullahan are merely other fey that have been beheaded and brought back to life with the heads not attached. Most dullahan continue using the

name they used in life, though some prefer not to be recognized and will take another.

What this other name is, however, has no continuous rhyme or reason to it as each individual dullahan is permitted to choose whatever fits best for them.

### Dullahan Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength score increases by 2. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

**Age.** Dullahan are undead and whatever age they were when they were beheaded is what age they will remain. Some start counting the years over again from the point of their death rather than their original birth.

**Alignment.** Dullahan have no particular lean toward alignment, the best and worst can be found among them, though many of them do end up straying to evil out of madness. Not just anyone can live with their head unattached from their body without suffering a little bit of malaise.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your walking speed is 30 feet.

**Breathless.** You don't need to eat, drink, or breathe.

**Undead Nature.** Your creature type is undead, rather than humanoid. You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage. In addition you don't need to sleep, and magic can't put you to sleep.

**Armored Knight.** You have proficiency with heavy armor.



**Detachable Head.** Your head is not permanently affixed to your body. You can remove your head and when you do so you can still see and hear from it. You retain control of your body and can sense the direction to it. Your body is considered blinded and deafened while your head is detached. If you cannot see your body, your speed is halved.

## Ranger — Stygian Shadow

Familiar with the terrain of the coldest of hells, you know how to tap into the power of undeath. Though not all stygian rangers are themselves undead, and in fact most are not, they have a kinship with that which is caught between life and death.

Experienced trauma of liminal space between life and death and part of you never came back. So you seek that part in others and feel the pull of their pulsing life force.

A brush with death once brought you right up to its doorway, and perhaps a step beyond, and a portion of you remained. Although you don't remember what you saw there, it left you with an unusual connection to that which separates the living from the dead. Acutely aware of your own heartbeat and the thrum of life within others you have an uncanny knack for tracking the living and the dead, as a part of you never came back from that near death experience.

### Stygian Shadow Quirks

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| <b>d6</b> | <b>Quirk</b>   |
| 1-2       | You are always cold to the touch.  |
| 3-4       | You have a tendency to rock or tap your fingers in eerie sync with the heartbeat of the creature closest to you. |
| 5-6       | When you are cut, your blood stays chilled and still in the wound instead of actively flowing.                   |

### Stygian Shadow Magic

Starting at 3rd level, you learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class,

as shown in the Stygian Shadow Spells table. The spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

### Stygian Shadow Spells

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>False life</i>
5th	<i>Detect thoughts</i>
9th	<i>Sleet storm</i>
13th	<i>Locate creature</i>
17th	<i>Antilife Shell</i>

### Heartseeker

When you enter into this conclave at third level, you gain the ability to feel the life force of nearby creatures. You can use your action to force a creature you can see within 30 feet of you to succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become heartlocked for one minute. The duration increases to 10 minutes at 7th level and one hour at 15th level. This feature has no effect on constructs or undead.

While you are heartlocked you have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks to determine if the creature is lying, you are always aware of its location if it is on the same plane of existence and you have advantage on any saving throws the creature forces you to make.

In addition, your connection allows you to anticipate their actions before they do. The first time each turn that you attack that target with a weapon attack, you have advantage on the attack.

You can use your bonus action to sever the connection prematurely. The creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or take 3d8 necrotic damage, or half as much on a successful save. The damage increases to 4d8 at 5th level, 5d8 at 10th level and 8d8 at 15th level.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses of it when you finish a long rest.



### Heartsbane

Starting at 7th level, the cold no longer bothers you. You gain resistance to cold damage. In addition, when you hit a creature you are heartlocked with a weapon attack you deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. The damage increases to 2d6 at 11th level and 3d6 at 15th level.

### Heartshroud

When you reach 11th level, you've seen what lies

beyond the veil and frankly you weren't impressed. You gain resistance to necrotic damage, and you have advantage on death saving throws.

### Heartbreaker

Starting at 15th level, whenever your heartlock connection ends, the creature you are heartlocked with must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be stunned until the end of your next turn.





# MAGIC ITEMS AND GEAR

## Flute of the Danse Macabre

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

This flute is carved from the hollowed out arm bones of a large creature, with holes drilled into the top to change the pitch of the sound when wind is blown through it. As an action you can play the flute and choose a pile of bones within 30 feet, expending a spell slot to animate a number of skeletons equal to the level of the spell slot you expend. The skeletons animate for one minute and you may only have one set of skeletons active at a time.

On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command any skeletons you made if they are within 60 feet of you (if you control multiple skeletons you can command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the skeletons will take and where they will move during their next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as to guard a particular chamber or corridor. If you issue no commands, the skeletons only defend themselves against hostile creatures. Once given an order, the skeletons continue to follow it until the task is complete.

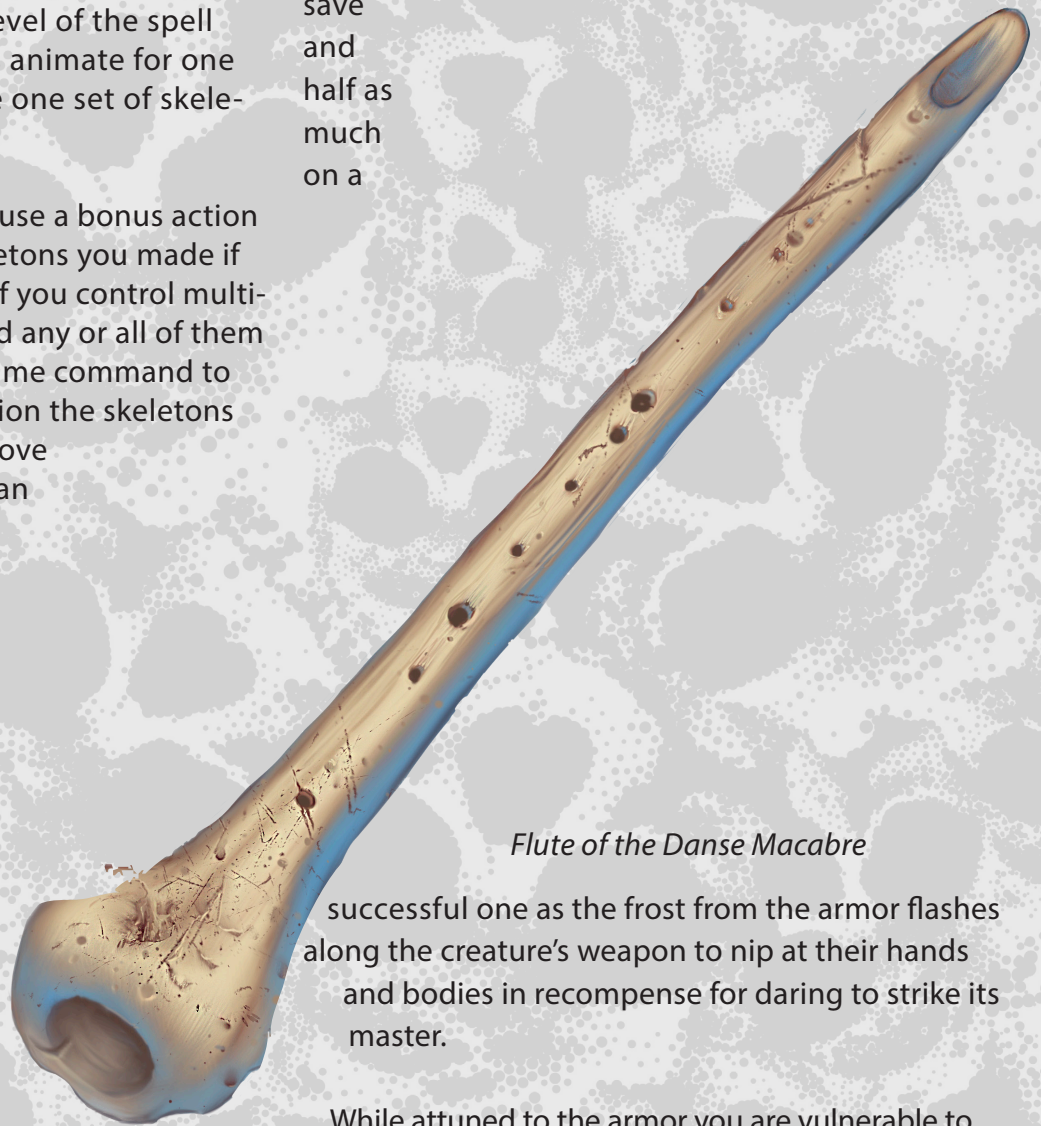
## Hoarfrost Armor

*Armor (plate), very rare (requires attunement)*

This plate armor is constantly cool with a sheen of ice over the metal that comprises it. When worn,

until it is attuned to, it sends a chill to the core of the person wearing it. You have a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor.

Once attuned to, that chill disappears. The Hoarfrost armor grants resistance to cold damage. Whenever you are hit with a melee attack you can use your reaction to force the attacker to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 3d6 cold damage on a failed save and half as much on a



*Flute of the Danse Macabre*

successful one as the frost from the armor flashes along the creature's weapon to nip at their hands and bodies in recompense for daring to strike its master.

While attuned to the armor you are vulnerable to fire. If fire damage reduces you to 0 hit points while wearing the armor you die as your body is incinerated and you rise 24 hours later as a wraith.



## Rimeclash

*Weapon (warhammer), rare (requires attunement)*

This heavy warhammer glitters with a constant sheen of ice around the head and haft, cool to the touch but not freezing. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Rimeclash has 3 charges. As an action you can strike the ground with Rimeclash and expend 1 charge to send out a 30 foot cone of frigid air that turns the ground slick with crackling ice. Creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, they take 8d6 cold damage and fall prone as they slip on the ice. On a successful one they take half as much and are not prone.

Rimeclash regains 1d3 charges daily at dusk.

## Skull of Mokk

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

This helmet is fashioned from the skull of an ettin's smaller head, worn over your head with the orbitals coming down over your eyes.

The vertebrae extend off of the back of the skull and align with your spine, knitting into your flesh while you are attuned to the helm. Tiny bone splinters prevent it from being removed against your will.

When you attune to the Skull of Mokk your maximum hit points are decreased by 2d6. This reduction lasts as long as you are attuned to the helmet.

You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

In addition, magic can't put you to sleep. The helmet remains aware of your surroundings and you are considered awake even when you sleep normally.



*A dullahan knight*



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