



DUERGAR AT THE SNOWED INN

D*uergar at the Snowed Inn* is a Fifth Edition adventure for **four to five characters of 1st to 3rd level**, and is optimized for a party of **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 2**. This adventure takes place in a small arctic hamlet beset by polar nights, where the sun shines for only four hours each day—and even then, it casts only dim light before setting below the mountains. Its formal location is left intentionally blank so you can easily insert it into any campaign of your choice.

BACKGROUND

Volqer, a grumpy duergar if there ever was one, and his squad of Ironheads were sent to the small hamlet of Borgstrand by their supreme commander. Their mission? Lay low and wait for the “event.” Of course, the supreme commander was purposely vague about what this “event” is and when it might actually happen.

At first, Volqer and the Ironheads were glad to take the assignment. The six rushed to Borgstrand, became squatters at an abandoned inn, and made the best of it. But as the cold months dragged on, Volqer and the rest grew tired and anxious. Recently, two of Volqer’s soldiers decided to go on a “walkabout.” The pair broke into a tavern, stole the owner’s supply of clam chowder and wheat mash liquor, and huffed it back to their hideout.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The owner of the local drinking establishment is furious. Someone broke into his tavern and stole two buckets of his famous clam chowder and the entire supply of wheat mash liquor. Already business has been lousy thanks to the polar nights, and this might be the final nail in his business’ coffin.

“Twenty-five gold pieces and all the chowder you can eat and liquor you can drink to someone who finds out who stole my supply!” he cries to anyone who can hear him. Of course, most of the Borgstranders are too tired, busy, or grumpy to take up the task. Once he sees the characters, though, he knows he’s found a squad for the job.

The tavern owner has no idea who stole the goods. The break-in happened in the morning. When he came downstairs to see what was going on, all he saw were two pairs of small footprints in the ice and snow. Following the tracks is easy—a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check is all that’s needed to track the duergar back to The Snowed Inn.

THE SNOWED INN

The people of Borgstrand always told old Dagfinn Bendixen that opening an inn as large as The Snowed Inn this far north was a bad idea. Sure, there were sailors and traders making their way through the tundra to trade during the warmer months. But once the polar nights descended on the Syhros Peninsula, not even wild hares would dare head that far north. A year ago, Dagfinn quietly shuttered The Snowed Inn. No one heard what happened to Dagfinn after the spot closed. Most Borgstranders assumed the old man went back south to join his family in the warmer climates.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Snowed Inn is a two story wooden structure with a stone foundation. The floors, walls, and ceilings are made from sturdy shiplap timbers. Doors inside and out are made from sturdy wood hung on rusted iron hinges. Most of the doors have heavy barrel locks for the sake of privacy.

Unless otherwise stated, a door locked in this way requires a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open, or a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break down. All doors have AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Although stained glass windows once allowed in what little light the Absent Sun has to offer, they've since been boarded up. Not only does this make viewing inside difficult, but it keeps the interior bathed in darkness. A creature armed with a crowbar can easily pry the boards from their place. Otherwise, the boards have AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Sound travels far in the creaky old inn. Break-in attempts will alert all of the duergar within to the presence of pesky adventurers.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to the map of The Snowed Inn included in this article.

1 - FRONT ENTRANCE

Heavy chains bound by a padlock bar entry to the old inn. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools picks the lock. Alternatively, a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) checks breaks open the doors. The lock itself has AC 18, 10 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

The entrance is curiously devoid of tracks—the duergar use the rear exit to avoid notice.

2 - OLD STABLES

Adjacent to the inn's old entrance are its defunct stables. Built from lesser materials, the whole thing is pretty close to falling over. Other than a few rusted tools and some garbage left by derelicts, the place is empty.

3 - TAPROOM

The inn's old tap room has certainly seen better days. Despite the windows being boarded up for the last twelve months, it's still a mess. Cobweb-covered tables and knocked over benches crowd its old floor. The fireplace has started to crumble and cave in on itself. And even the staircase leading up to the mezzanine surrounding it is dangerously near collapse.

Encounter: Duergar. Unless the characters have already encountered them, the two **duergar** thieves were busy bringing in their ill-gotten gains through the kitchen's back door (see area 4). If the characters weren't quiet breaking into the inn, the two duergar take to the shadows and turn invisible. They wait patiently for one or more heroes to come within reach, then get the drop on them using their Enlarge ability. Highly trained combatants, the duergar are tactical masterminds. One duergar plays the role of "tank", dodging and taking blows from melee combatants, while the second uses the old bar for cover all the while chucking enlarged javelins at characters taking up the rear.

Treasure: Stolen Goods. Both duergar carry 2d6 gp on them. In addition, the characters will discover 10 bottles of wheat mash liquor and 4 buckets of clam chowder, the duergar's bounty. Returning these stolen goods to the inn-keeper intact earns the character's their reward.

4 - KITCHEN

The few hot meals The Snowed Inn served came from this unnecessarily large kitchen, which now sits mostly in ruins.

The duergar use the backdoor as their entrypoint to avoid notice. As such, the door remains unlocked.

Encounter: Duergar. Unless the characters encountered them earlier, the two **duergar** thieves are here unloading their stolen goods. Refer to area 3 for their tactics. A fight in this part of the tavern alerts the sleeping duergar in area 6.

5 - PANTRY

This large room is wrapped with empty, dusty shelves. Although the entire inn is cold, the pantry seems to be a full 10 to 20 degrees colder than the rest of the abandoned building.

The duergar avoid this room.

Hazard: Frost Mold. A thin layer of ruddy mold covers the surfaces of this old pantry. The mold feeds on warmth and sucks the heat out of anything that comes near it. When a creature moves to within 5 feet of the pantry's westernmost wall for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The frost mold is immune to fire, and any source of fire brought within 5 feet of a patch of it causes it to instantly expand outward in the direction of the fire, covering a 10-foot square area (with the source of the fire at the center of that area).

Ironically, effects that deal cold damage instantly destroy the frost mold.

6 - GUARD POST

This old room once served as a room for the inn's workers to rest between shifts. It offers two moldy beds, a nightstand, and an empty wardrobe.

Encounter: Sleeping Duergar. One of the **duergar** is supposed to keep watch in this room at all times. The current guard, Luole, is fast asleep on the far bed. If a fight breaks out in areas 3 or 4, Luole stirs awake and joins the fray after 2 rounds.

7 - DAGFINN'S CHAMBERS

The inn's old owner, Dagfinn, claimed this room as his own. In the year since the inn closed its doors, mold, cobwebs, and a few critters have taken up residence here.

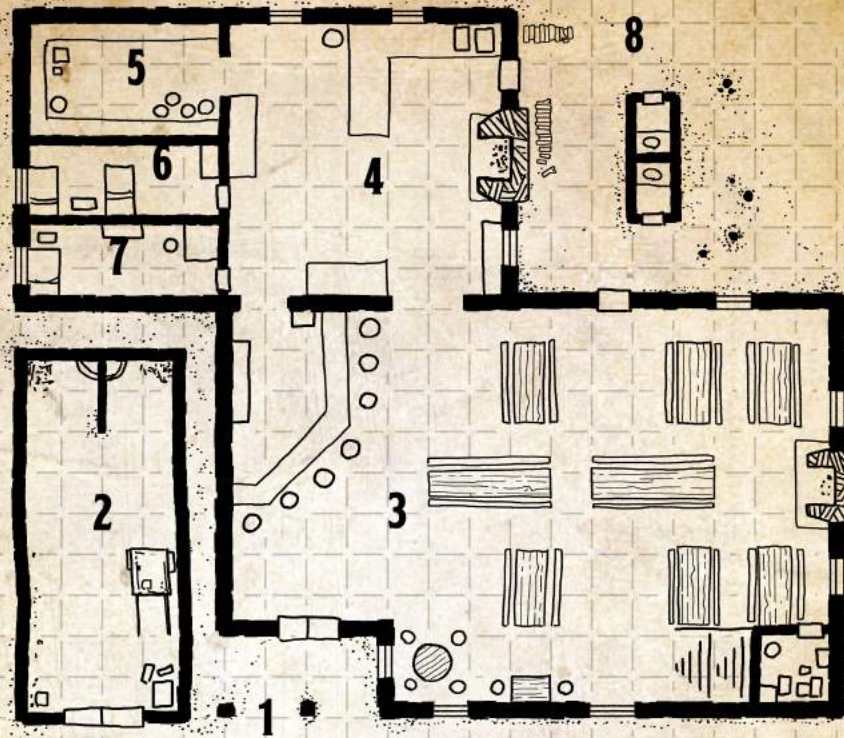
Encounter: Swarm of Rats. A **swarm of rats** hollowed out Dagfinn's old mattress. Characters who tamper with the mattress or search under Dagfinn's old bed cause the rats to leap out and defend their hive.

8 - REAR ENTRANCE

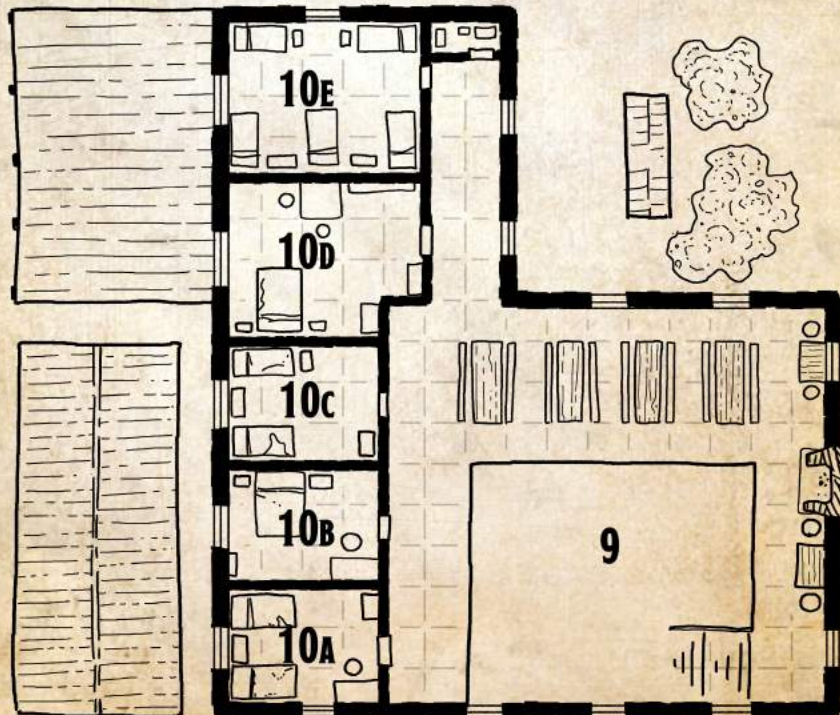
The back of the inn is well-tread by the duergar within. Unlike the front door, the back door is open. The chain that once held the door closed has been cut away with a war pick and discarded in the snow.

The back of the inn also served as the spot for the patrons to relieve themselves. A pair of outhouses half-buried by snow drifts still stand.

DOWNSTAIRS



UPSTAIRS



SUPPORTED ON PATREON

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Encounter: Ice Mephit. One of the outhouse stalls is home to an **ice mephit** named Bork. Should a character open the door to Bork's home, Bork looks up from reading his romance novel and asks in Aquan, "Do you mind?"

9 - MEZZANINE

An impressive mezzanine overlooks the inn's taproom. Although the floor is creaky and many of the warped boards have begun to pry themselves free of their nails, the structure is still sound.

10 - INN ROOMS

The Snowed Inn once boasted five comfortable rooms. Each room had a minimum of one bed, a desk, a wardrobe, and a footlocker for patrons to use. Now, most of the rooms are destroyed by time and the harsh neverending winter.

Encounter: Wolf. Volqer's **wolf**, Zuuk, stands guard by her master's door (area 10e). The moment Zuuk senses the presence of the characters, she starts to snarl and bark, alerting Volqer and the other two duergar in that area. Zuuk won't enter combat unless her master commands her to.

10A - ROOM A

After Daggfinn Bendixen shuttered the Snowed Inn, he didn't leave. Saddened by his failed experiment, the old man climbed to the top of the stairs, entered Room A, and fell asleep on the bed. He never woke. Daggfin's desiccated corpse still lies on the bed.

Encounter: Blood Hawks. Four months ago, the boards covering the eastern window were blown free by blizzard winds. This allowed a family of four **blood hawks** to slip inside and build a nest. Additionally, the birds picked apart Daggfin's dried, cold corpse, adding posthumous insult to injury for the failed business owner. The blood hawks are vicious and attack anything that comes near this room.

Treasure: Daggfinn's Coin. Daggfinn's corpse still clutches a single gold coin in its fist. This was the first coin The Snowed Inn ever earned.

10B - ROOM B

Only cobwebs and dust here.

10C - ROOM C

A leak in the roof has completely ruined this room with two beds.

Hazard: Collapsing Floor. Any character who inspects the floor and makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes that the waterlogged boards that make up this room's floors could collapse at any moment. If creatures or objects weighing 200 pounds or more sets foot in this room, the entire floor breaks. Each creature in the area when this happens falls down to the inn below, lands prone in the bar area, and takes 9 (2d10) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

10D - ROOM D

Like area 10a, the western window of this room is free of its boards, exposing the interior to the elements.

Encounter: Nature Spirit. A small nature spirit (noncombatant) uses the frozen floors of this room as an ice rink, "skating" around the frozen surface, performing jumps and spins that would make even professionals "ooo" and "ahhh." When it sees the characters, it turns and leaps out the window.

Hazard: Icy Floors. The floors of this room are frozen over, subjecting the entire area to slippery ice, as described in Chapter 5 of the DMG.

10E - ROOM E

Being the largest of the inn's rooms, Volqer and the Ironheads claimed this area for themselves.

Encounter: Volqer and the Ironheads. The three **duergar** are likely alerted the moment Zuuk starts to snarl and bark. All three are excellent fighters. Before they enter a combat, the three swell to Large size with their Enlarge/Reduce ability. Then, Volqer sends Zuuk forward to pin down ranged fighters while one of the duergar dodges and protects the back two. Those two throw javelins until they run out (they have three each). Once out of javelins, the three take turns stepping forward, attacking, then backing away so that their frontline can cover them.

Fanatical to the greater duergar cause, Volqer and the Ironheads fight 'til the death.

AFTERMATH

No amount of threats or nonmagical interrogation will cause Volqer or his Ironheads to reveal why they were hiding out in the old inn. Nor did they leave any clues. Even their armor is devoid of heraldry.

As promised, the tavern owner pays the 25 gp and offers all-you-can-and-drink chowder and liquor to the characters for their victory.

When the townsfolk discover that old Daggfinn died, they grant the man a proper burial and once again board up the old inn. Later, another southerner with big dreams might take up the reigns of the old inn. Until that time it will continue to decay until the northern winds finally drag it to an icy grave.

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