

DCC: World of Iriolis

Our Group

Player	Character	Description	Class
Bruce	Gallfred Weasel	Guild Beggar	Thief
Chris	Old Man Fish	Locksmith	Ranger
Ernest	Hemp	Weaver	Warrior
Matt	Mordecai	Gravedigger	Wizard
Patrick	Podrick	Squire	Warrior
Tim	Ned Wimbley	Beekeeper	Wizard

Chris notes that *Bruce* appears to be dressed for very cold weather. *Bruce* observes that the cold front has already arrived in Dallas, and that it was really quite pleasant when he played the role of a sophisticated urbanite and traveled out to get coffee and a croissant. *Tim* mourns that the excitement in his life is an ear infection. Bogus!

Paul joins in to explain that things other people say are always overrated. This prompts *Tim* to explain how he is going to try assembling Warhammer minis when it's not his turn, as a way to avoid being distracted by the Internet. As he's explaining, *Ernest* shows up and is gratified to find out that he is being allowed to sit at the big-boy table, made of both wood and wood-like substances.

Patrick shows up to find out everyone is now comparing the printings of their copies of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* rules. We can get up to 10th! Anybody have 11th?

The Top of the Floating Ice Ziggurat



The characters have used their (temporary) *sovereign fire* powers to reach the top of the floating ice ziggurat and made short work of the *tontuu* ice gnome guards. The top of the iceberg includes the square entrance to the buried ziggurat and a roughly square courtyard formed from randomly-tumbled rocks. The characters move through the broken stone doors and into the chamber.

The stone chamber is small, and clustered with small (3') pine trees that somehow grow from the plain stone floor. The air carries the scent of pine needles and pine sap. A spiral staircase descends down into the depths.

Gallfred Weasel looks around the stairway for traps. He finds nothing, but assures the others, "A thief of my level would surely have found any traps in the area!" *Gallfred* also notes that the entire place seems incredibly ancient – sheer time has worn down the stonework.

The others do not find this assurance particularly reassuring. They actually suspect that Gallfred might be simply lying.

Everyone heads down the stairs.

Chamber of Dead Children

The chamber below is longer and warmer. The floor is made of flagstones, and the walls are decorated in hieroglyphics of an unknown language. More small trees sprout from the floors, larger and more numerous than those above. Some have spindly trunks seem almost humanoid, and their boughs rustle in spite of the lack of wind. The air smells of evergreen.

Several of the characters light torches and lanterns. Gallfred Weasel does not, reasoning, "That which costs you torches does not cost me torches."

Ned Wimbley notes, "I appreciate the way you're really embracing your role as group sleazebag."

Old Man Fish prods at one of the trees. It rustles and answers in a high-pitched childlike voice, "He's old, so old! Older than even Grammy and Grandpa!" The others agree that this is new information – they hadn't realized that anybody was transforming children into trees.

Hemp asks another tree, "Who are you?"

The tree answers, "Scary head and mean eyes! Dark forest monster! I'm Romu!"

Hemp asks, "How did you get here?"

Romu answers, "The forest spirit imprisons the souls of those children it has harvested in its crown of thorns."

Hemp remains optimistic, "How can we free you?"

Romu proves to be quite knowledgeable about this topic, "Find and destroy it's crown. It used to be worshipped as a god, but all its worshippers died so now it seeks children to rebuild its power." *Romu's* spirit explains that the old one has followers, the ice gnomes and goat-creatures. She is being held here until the entity decides to eat her soul to increase its power.

Gallfred Weasel is creeped out by dead children trapped in trees, so he studies the walls instead. The hieroglyphics go back to the dawn of written language, but he gets a sense for what they say. They describe how the gods made their followers, and how the god who made mankind created them with no limits on their abilities – and as they grow more skilled they might someday become immortal and challenge the gods. Oddly, there is no cartouche indicating that the hieroglyphics were written by "EGG", though everyone expects that.

Old Man Fish finds that there are two doors out of the room. He calls Gallfred Weasel over to look for traps. Gallfred assures him, "It's fine, totally safe. You go first." *Old Man Fish* readies his weapons.

Podrick leads the way.

Goat Monster! Dangerous Goat Monster!

Broken columns and upheaved flagstones turned the next room into a flagstone. Icy stone covers the floor and patches of ice protrude through cracks in the walls. And moments after the characters enter, a four-armed creature covered with icy white fur and bearing the head of a horned ram raises up and rattles a chain. It bleats with furious rage! The characters recognize it as a *joulbok*! A ferocious joulbok!

Hemp invokes *sovereign fire* upon his bow and shoots. Sadly, he shoots wide.

Old Man Fish sends a sling stone downrange. The joulbok turns out to be a surprisingly wily target.

Gallfred Weasel heads to the other door. Maybe he can set up for a backstab? Much more likely, he can avoid getting slammed into bloody fragments by a joulbok. He heads towards the door, and halfway there sees the door open and five tontuu sneak through. Gallfred Weasel hides as if his life depends upon it. The tontuu remain blissfully unaware of his presence.

The joulbok roars and howls. This is *very* impressive, but so far it doesn't do any real damage. It does unsettle Ned Wimbley enough that he bobbles his attempt to *enlarge* Podrick, and disorients Ned's summoned bees enough that they fumble an attack upon the joulbok and end up flipped over and struggling on the ground.

Mordecai studies the situation. He decides that while the joulbok is probably not an illusion, it definitely wants the characters to try rushing it. He warns the others, "Don't just run in, there's something bad in the chamber between us and the joulbok!"

Hemp takes *Mordecai*'s words to heart. He hits the joulbok right in the breadbasket with a longbow arrow. This doesn't kill the creature, but it does get it's attention. The creature is pretty frustrated, so it simply squashes Ned Wimbley's summoned bee with a chain hit. The joulbok emits a triumphant goatlike bleat, revealing that while it has the head of a goat its teeth are sharp and filthy.

Ned Wimbley has had enough of the joulbok. He casts *magic missile* at the creature. Ghostly bees fly from his fingers and strike the monster, blowing a gaping hole clean through it. The joulbok collapses in a spray of viscera. Podrick assumes that this ends the fight, so he moves into the room, poking the ground with his sword to look for traps, and wondering there that Weasel thief has gone. *Mordecai* has a better idea – he uses charcoal from his torch to mark areas that have been proven to be safe.

Hemp finally realizes that the tontuu are sneaking up on the party. He yells, "Incoming!" and shoots the front one in the face, hoping to scar it for life. He kills it instantly, though he doesn't technically manage to scar it. Old Man Fish simply charges the next tontuu with his ignited short sword, killing the next one. The tontuu aren't very pleased by this development. One of them stabs Old Man Fish, giving him a nasty cut.

And about this time, Gallfred Weasel fails to backstab a tontuu for the second time. He is so dismayed by this failure that the tontuu finally come aware of his presence. And not to be outdone, Ned Wimbley and his ghost-face both manage to bobble spell casts, leaving Ned with zero remaining magic.

Podrick and Old Man Fish fall to sword fighting with the tontuu. Old Man Fish suffers for this, taking a nasty cut. And Gallfred Weasel retaliates from taking a cut from a tontuu knife by almost cutting one straight down. Apparently, as bad as he is at backstabbing he compensates for with a tremendous facility at front-stabbing. And then Hemp the Weaver shoots the creature with his long bow.

Podrick decides that he had better turn the situation around. He simply executes a tontuu, chopping the top of its head clean off. The half-headless tontuu collapses to the ground. Mordecai's bear is inspired by the smell of tontuu blood and claws the last of the creatures to death.

Gallfred Weasel is offended by the sight of Old Man Fish doing an amateur job of robbing the dead. He demonstrates a *professional* job of robbing the dead. Unfortunately, the tontuu really only have knives and javelins. Ned Wimbley claims a couple of knives to add to his bandolier of things to throw at people. Because, you know, he's got no more magic at the moment.

Looting the Joulbok with Care

Hemp the Weaver is eager to desecrate the joulbok's body, but he is concerned about traps. He calls over Gallfred Weasel, who reports that the area right in front of the creature is only snow and ice, no actual floor – stepping on it would send an unfortunate character straight to the next level. With some damage. Hemp bypasses the dangerous area and hacks off a pair of joulbok horns. He also claims the creature's *smashing chain*.

Podrick moves farther into the room and finds a low rock wall around a stairway going down. He can see where the five tontuu were sitting before they headed out to try and murder the characters. There is a small camp there. The snow around there is bloodstained and packed down into sleeping nests. Among animal bones and debris there are six small bundles, boxes made from animal bone and hides. The characters find:

- Spare clothing and other worthless personal objects
- an ivory comb (15 gp value)
- a silver necklace (25 gp value)
- a wineskin holding potent brandy (20 gp value)
- a fox stole (50 gp value)
- a collection of silverware (45 gp value)
- 26 cp, 8 sp, and 4 gp.

Old Man Fish volunteers to hold the party treasure in spite of Gallfred Weasel's loud insistence that he has a sack and should be the one to do it. Podrick insists that he has hair, therefore he should have the comb. Gallfred Weasel almost explodes with indignation.

The Ransacked Storage Area

Podrick chips through the ice and snow area in the floor. He is able to see a ransacked and partly-collapsed storage area below. He proposes chipping a moderate hole through the ice and climbing down, with the idea of sneaking up on the locals. All agree!

The area below really is, or was, a storage area. The walls are partly collapsed and broken shelves are piled along the walls. There's nothing of real value remaining – the pottery is all shattered, the contents are long gone or spoiled, and the shelves are rotted.

There isn't an easily visible door out, so the characters start looking for secret doors. Podrick is fairly sure that there is a door buried under four feet of collapsed stone and ice in the southwest corner of the room. Hemp uses *sovereign fire* to melt a pathway through. Gallfred Weasel proclaims that the area is safe, and that someone who isn't him should open the door. Podrick obliges, revealing a chamber clogged with even larger pine trees, again growing from the stone. Unlike the other evergreens, these trees are pallid and pale. Globbs of pine sap drip down their trunks and pool upon the ground. The growth is dense enough that moving through the corridor requires brushing against the trees and getting covered with sap.

Everyone agrees this is a bad idea. They climb back up, then head down the stairs, once Gallfred Weasel has assured them that there are no traps.

The Oracle Room

The room at the base of the stairs is large. A frozen pool in the center was clearly once used for ritual purposes. Or bathing. A fish is visible within the ice. Six pillars (one engulfed in ice) support the ceiling. The west wall is a broken mass of ice. A frozen figure is visible within the ice floe, and the glint of gold can be seen upon it. And the only door out leads back to the corridor full of trees.

Hemp the Weaver tries to slip between the trees in the corridor. He ends up covered in sap and stuck in place. And he learns that the sap drains heat from living creatures on contact. He starts shivering uncontrollably, which makes it hard for him to free himself. He expends some *sovereign fire* to warm up and escape. However, he does find that the hallway extends to the north and a pair of double doors.

Gallfred Weasel doesn't care about trees. He cares about the incredible fortune in gold that the frozen figure is wearing. He examines the body more closely and finds that it is a human figure wearing black robes. The gold glint is from an amulet around their throat. Ned Wimbley volunteers to provide the *sovereign fire* to clear the way.



The characters find that the body is somewhat rotted, but the amulet is in fine shape. But when they pick up the amulet that triggers ancient defensive spells. The magic reaches out to the ice in the pool, forming into a *demonic ice guardian*.

While Ned, Gallfred, and Mordecai bicker over which of them is most deserving to own the robe and the golden amulet, Podrick empowers his blade with *sovereign fire* and chops off one of the guardian's claws, while Hemp the Weaver shoots it through with an arrow. And Old Man Fish uses *sovereign fire* and a javelin to destroy the creature. It melts and dissolves into quickly-dissipating acrid steam. It leaves a pile of rotted fish behind.

Gallfred Weasel ignores the ice guardian in favor of liberating the golden amulet. He finds that it is decorated with carvings of a pair of wings and more of the ancient hieroglyphics. Both Ned and Mordecai attempt to get the amulet from him. Mordecai tries threatening him. Ned points out that he provided the money Gallfred used to buy his short sword. Gallfred gives the amulet to Ned.

Then Ned figures out that he can't use the amulet unless he knows the command word. Gallfred obliges by translating the hieroglyphics to reveal that the word is "Ogalltus". Ned tries out the amulet and discovers that it causes him to sprout giant black demon wings. But they don't seem to allow him to fly. They do last about four rounds and allow him to float slowly to the ground – a *feather fall* effect.

Dismayed by his failure to get the amulet, Mordecai searches the dead cultist's robes and body. He claims the robes.

Feather Fall Amulet

When spoken, this word causes a pair of ghostly black wings to sprout from the amulet wearer's back, allowing him to descend from heights as if under the effects of a spell check 14 feather fall. The effect lasts for four rounds and can be used once per day.

The activation word is "Ogalltis."

Tjaptar's Throne Room

The characters decide to burn the trees in the corridor to clear the way to the double doors. They burn with black, oily smoke. Everyone covers their mouths with cloth and coughs a lot, but nobody suffers from smoke inhalation.

Then the characters open the double doors. A wave of power, like static electricity, washes over them. The room behind is filled with fat, vibrant pine trees. The fifteen-foot-tall figure of *Tjaptar*, a man with the head of a stag stands upon a dais in the background – but his decline in power is visible because there are gaps in the flesh of his skull, through which bone is visible. A brilliant aura reminiscent of the Aurora Borealis flickers around his antlers and the rest of the chamber, an aura powerful enough to stun Gallfred Weasel and Hemp. Those who are not stunned are able to see the ghosts of children within the folds of the creature's aurora.

Mordecai orders his summoned bear to rush forward into the chamber. Old Man Fish reasons, "That will show us what the trees are going to do, at least." Mordecai ignores him in favor of casting *invoke patron*. He is disappointed to find that his patron *Samhain* is ignoring him right now.

Hemp yelps in pain as his bow is affected by a *wood wyrd*. The weapon sprouts thorns that pierce through his hands. He flings the bow away!

Mordecai uses *gourd puppetry* to infest a dead tontuu with pumpkin seeds, turning it into an undead abomination under his control. His *gourd puppet* flings itself at Tjaptar, tearing and biting. Tjaptar howls and staggers back under the puppet's unexpected frenzy.

Hemp the Weaver sadly discards his bow and picks up a broken piece of pine branch to use as a spear. Meanwhile, Gallfred Weasel simply hides. Maybe this time he'll be able to execute a backstab. Podrick

has no patience for this kind of delay tactic. He steps right up to the Stag King and slashes with his blade! He is delighted by his success right until a joulbok rampages at him and head-butts him.

Ned Wimbley is not pleased when a tontuu comes out of the forest and tries to bite him. He is even less pleased to note that it is better built than most of the other tontuu, and has sharp green teeth. Then the creature actually *bites* him and poisons him! He suffers STA loss and takes a penalty to future rolls. Ned pulls out a dagger and ignites it with *sovereign fire*, which doesn't actually hurt the tontuu but does impress it with just how dangerous Ned can be.

Then Gallfred Weasel demonstrates how mistaken the tontuu is. He stabs the creature from behind with a burning dagger. His blade goes right through the tontuu's liver and keeps on going, killing it instantly. Also stunning it for a round, which is not much of a consideration in the grander context.

Podrick gets a lucky hit upon Tjaptar, knocking the creature down and inflicting a ghastly slashing wound upon its flank. Then the joulbok comes in from Podrick's flank, striking him strongly with his chain. Podrick gives ground and moves to a defensive posture. And Ned Wimbley moves in to stab Tjaptar with a *sovereign fire*-enhanced blade.

Tjaptar struggles to its feet. Hemp moves in with his jury-rigged spear and impales the creature, bringing it to the verge of death. Gallfred Weasel rather incompetently swipes at it, to no effect except to convince the others that he has no martial skills at all. Then Old Man Fish drives his short sword into Tjaptar's throat. The creature emits a reindeer-like gurgling scream of pain and falls still.

When the Tjaptar is slain, a wave of concussive force bursts from its body. The stolen essences of the children it had taken are sent free. Second, the floating iceberg becomes unstable and starts to break apart. Fissures appear in the walls and floor of the chamber. It is obvious that the Tjaptar was a load-bearing boss.

The joulbok flees for its life.

Everyone flees for the surface, dodging falling debris as best they can.

Escape the Doomed Sky-Berg!

The characters reach the courtyard at the top of the iceberg. Mordecai transforms into a *fire-form* and flies away. The characters can see chunks of ice falling away from the main mass. They float for a while, but then fall at speed once the magic suspending them fails.

Ned Wimbley summons up a giant bee and has it fly him to safety.

Hemp leads the others down the stairs to the rope ladders at the bottom of the sky-berg. He's forced to spend luck, but manages to find a clear path. Hemp, Podrick, Old Man Fish, and Gallfred slide down the rope at speed, get to the ground, and then start running because they know the sky-berg is going to fall.

With a final great clap, the soaring iceberg collapses into a cloud of ice crystals. A glittering dancing light forms in the sky as the ice crystals flow across the sky. A moment later, snow starts to fall. Across the

land, stricken children stir and recover as their souls return to them. And then the sky-lights head North. The forces of winter have been vanquished by the powers of fire and light!

Each of the characters gains +1 Luck point.

Victorious Return

The characters return to the village and great acclaim. The comatose children have already awoken, and the residents are more than happy to celebrate and fete the great victory!



As a side benefit, Old Man Fish gains the magical power to *lay on hands*. He uses this new ability to (mostly) heal up the group, with the assistance of the fire-priest *Loptir*. Then he heads out on a hunting trip and comes back with a boar, which is worth 4 units of meat and 2 units of pelts.

Hemp finds a local crafter to whittle the thorns off his longbow. He leaves a couple of the cooler-looking ones behind. Then Hemp and Old Man Fish trade some of the goods the group liberated for a longbow and some padded armor – a transaction that Gallfred Weasel is somewhat annoyed by, because it does not result in any coins falling into his hands.

Gallfred Weasel, for his part, talks with some locals. He wants to know if they're aware of a Dreadful Pit nearby, a place where slavers might do business. It takes him no trouble at all – the Pit is just to the East, and it's a terrible place that nobody should go. The villagers assure him that the people who live there have tentacles and other gruesome features. Nobody sensible should go there. So of course, that's where the characters decide to go.

Preparations for the Pit

The characters know that slavers take slaves to the Pit – so someone needs to act like a slaver, and the others need to act like slaves. Podrick, Hemp, and Old Man Fish look too doughty to be slaves (and Old Man Fish has a horse besides), so they put on disguises so they can look more evil. Hemp has an axe taken from the sky-berg that he designates as a *slaver axe*. Meanwhile, Gallfred Weasel is professionally able to look pathetic and the two wizards have taken so much spellburn that they *actually* look pathetic.

The Knights of Lushnia

Under Old Man Fish's capable leadership, the group skirts the southern edge of the mountains heading towards the Pit. After a day of travel, they encounter a group of knights in glittering armor. Their banners show the device of a noble water buffalo. Their leader tells Old Man Fish, "We are the Knights of Lushnia, on a sacred quest to protect the realms."

Podrick knows that the Knights of Lushnia are a group of Lawful knights sworn to protect the Mystical Kingdom – a place that the characters are technically within, because they all live under the rule of the Mystical King. Gallfred, Mordecai, and Ned Wimbley all wish they could hide, but they didn't see the Knights coming so they don't have that option.

The fact that half the group are acting pretty suspicious doesn't improve the Knights' attitudes. Hemp does his best to portray the group as heroes who only recently defeated the returning Old God Tjaptar and destroyed a floating iceberg. He and Old Man Fish show off severed demon horns, and display Ned's new golden amulet. The Knights are happy to hear the story and show some interest in the amulet, but not particularly deep interest. "If you should happen to find anything of deep historical interest, please bring it to our Chapter House in Wymoor." It is clear that the Knights are primarily interested in collecting interesting magical items.

Hemp happens to mention a group of cultists trying to raise a lich in the Bloodfens. Ned Wimbley is almost apoplectic. His face turns darker with every useful word Hemp utters, especially because the Knights seem very interested in killing off lich cultists on their own, with absolutely no regard to the treasures and mysteries that Ned hopes to extract from the cultists (once they're dead).

Meanwhile, Podrick takes the Knights of Lushnia as a plot hook. The others take this as a potentially existential crisis and plot how they can prevent him from joining up. Of course, they're plotting right in front of him, which he feels free to tell them.

The End of the Session

The characters have defeated the 2013 Holiday module *The Old God's Return*. Each character gains 8 XP (for a total of 25 XP for those characters who have been here for both sessions).