

# Cliffhangers Adventures

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## A Giant Ransom

### *Episode One: The Big Deal*

*By Stephen Schubert*

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*A Giant Ransom* is a short adventure for four 11th-level characters. There are opportunities for diplomacy, stealth, and combat, based on the choices the PCs make, so any mix of classes is appropriate. The adventure can be set in any campaign world, in a frontier region near glacier-covered mountains.

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### Adventure Background

The newly appointed Duke Castaril Ambrinigan has recently relocated to a modest, newly constructed keep near the frontier town of Ormanlak. He and his family arrived safely, but a caravan containing family heirlooms was waylaid by a band of frost giant raiders. Most of the items were of no consequence to the Duke, with the exception of one: a three-foot tall golden statue of a lion.

The Duke, wanting to avoid a war, sent an emissary to the frost giants. He offered gems totaling 10,000 gold pieces in value as ransom for the lion. The giants accepted, and a time and place was set for the exchange.

But there is more. A white dragon named Whildenstrank lives in the midst of a nearby glacier, and has maintained a network of winter wolf spies, including some in the frost giants' camp. Through these spies, Whildenstrank learned of the capture of the golden lion, and the upcoming trade. Thinking that the lion would make a fine addition to his frozen treasure hoard, Whildenstrank has prepared to strike.

### Hooking the Characters

Duke Ambrinigan wants the exchange to occur, but is concerned that the giants might double-cross him. Even a platoon of troops would be short work for a few frost giants. So he has decided to enlist the aid of more powerful allies -- the PCs. The PCs could become involved in a number of ways.

- The Duke may have provided for the PCs in the past, and is now calling in a favor.
- Upon hearing of the reputation of the party, the Duke approaches them with a business proposition. He will pay 1000 gp per person for the return of the golden lion.
- One or more organizations with which the PCs are affiliated is sympathetic to the Duke's problem, and

encourages the PC to help out.

- The PCs may be looking to improve their reputation in the eyes of the local nobility. Helping the Duke with his problem could go a long way in political circles.

Roleplay the negotiations. Allow PCs to use Diplomacy (or related skills such as Intimidate) skill checks to improve their reward, whether material or intangible. In any case, the agreement requires the return of the golden lion at all costs. The Duke will provide the ransom payment of 10,000gp in a single bag of mixed gems, and will present it to the PC that appears the most honest.

## The Dragon Attacks!

The exchange was arranged to take place four days hence at noon. The meeting place is a clearing on a hillside, a three-day journey from the town of Ormanlak, and about a day away from the glacier. At the discretion of the DM, the journey to the designated hillside can be either uneventful, or be filled with random encounters appropriate to a temperate or cold mountainous region.

On the day of the exchange, the PCs are standing in or near the clearing when they witness Whildenstrank's attack on the band of four giants that constitute the frost giant envoy. Read or paraphrase the following text.

The peaceful sounds of nature are interrupted by the sound of a horn, blaring in the distance to the west. Looking in the direction of the sound, you witness a winged shape drop from the clouds into the midst of the forest, perhaps a half mile away. A few treetops sway and topple near where it landed.

As you strain your eyes to get another glimpse of the creature, you see it again, as it leaps into the sky and flies off to the west. There is no mistaking the reptilian form and large wingspan: It is definitely a dragon, as white as the ice on the distant mountains.

As it flies off, a horn again sounds from the same general direction, and seems to echo off the mountains in the distance.

Whildenstrank dropped from the clouds in a dive attack at the leader of the giant band. In a few short rounds the dragon was able to take down two giants and escape with the golden lion. A PC that succeeds at a Spot check (DC 25) might notice that the dragon is carrying a bag of some sort in its claws.

The horns are the means of distance communication for the giants. The echoing of the horns was actually additional frost giants, relaying the message of the attack.

Even if the PCs are able to attack the dragon at this distance, he mostly ignores them, since he wants to return to his lair with his new treasure.

## The Cliffhanger

The heroes hear horns sounding again in the distance. Someone, or something, survived that dragon attack...

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## About the Author

*Stephen Schubert is a freelance writer who spends too much of his time at his day job. When not working or writing, Stephen runs two **D&D** campaigns, and plays in a few others. He dedicates this, his first published adventure, to his wife, whose paladin will always remember "242 points of damage!"*

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# Cliffhangers Adventures

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## A Giant Ransom

### *Episode Two: Giant Trouble*

*By Stephen Schubert*

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### Adventure Background

In the first episode, the PCs were employed by Duke Ambrinigan to exchange a ransom of 10,000 gp in gems for a golden lion that was taken by frost giants in a recent raid. While waiting for the giants to arrive at the designated meeting place, the PCs watched as the white dragon Whildenstrank attacked the giants and then flew off with the statue. Charged with returning the golden lion statue at all costs, the PCs move to investigate the site of the battle.

### Angry Giants (EL 10)

The PCs may elect to go search the site of the dragon attack. There they find two dead giants, and two others that survived the attack, but are obviously nervous.

As the characters approach the clearing, read or paraphrase the following text:

The target of the dragon's attack becomes evident as you approach the clearing. Two wounded frost giants remain standing in the clearing, and the bodies of two others lay on the ground. The two live ones scan the sky frantically, perhaps waiting for the dragon to return.

The giants are concentrating skyward, so it would be relatively easy to sneak up on them from below. If the PCs remain hidden, the frost giants will complain loudly about the dragon attack, and suggest to each other that the dragon must be working with the Duke, and they blame the humans for setting up the ambush. After a few more minutes, they will gather up the bodies of their companions, and head back to their tribe. If the PCs are detected, give them enough time to attempt to explain themselves, but any overt offensive action will result in the giants attacking.

The giants will initially believe that the PCs are in league with the dragon, and have plotted to finish what the dragon started. Therefore the giant's initial attitude toward the PCs is hostile, and they will first threaten the party before attacking. These giants speak both giant and common. The PCs can attempt Diplomacy, or Charisma checks:

*Unfriendly (DC 20):* Information: the giants will indicate that the dragon took the statue. If the giants learn that the PCs have the gems for the exchange, they may attack the bearer of the gems, and then flee when they have the loot (perhaps even taking the gem-bearer!).

*Indifferent (DC 25):* Information: the giants will relate general information about the area. They know the dragon lives in the midst of the glacier, past the "ice canyons."

*Friendly (DC 35) or Helpful (DC 50):* Information: the giants avoid the glacier because of the "hot worms" that live there. The last horn blast should have alerted Velg the Dragon Tamer, and Velg will likely be on his way soon to the glacier.

If the PCs loot the corpses of the fallen giants, the remaining giants will become hostile.

Treasure: a sack on the 110-hp frost giant contains 1071 gp, and a +1 *longspear* is on the corpse of the leader.

**Wounded Frost Giants (2):** hp 80, 110; see [Monster Manual](#) page 98.

## Velg the Dragon Tamer (EL 13)

The party must now head west, in the direction the dragon flew, toward its lair. Assuming normal means of transportation, the trek to the glacier takes about a day. During this time, the frost giant ranger Velg, also known as Velg the Dragon Tamer, heard the warnings of the horns, and has likewise journeyed to the glacier to do battle with this draconic foe. His trusty servant Zim is with him.

When the PCs arrive at the glacier, they see Velg and Zim sitting on the ice, about 200 feet from the tree line, finishing off a meal of venison. Velg *wears eyes of the eagle*, and has +16 to Spot checks, so unless the PCs were particularly sneaky, Velg has spotted them as they approach the edge of the glacier.

*Initial reaction: Indifferent:* Velg will start the encounter by lobbing large snowballs at the nearest PCs. He lobs one per round as Zim busily packs more snowballs. Treat the snowball as a rock attack, +12 ranged, 1d6+9 subdual damage, with a 100-ft range increment. If the PCs respond with regular attacks, Velg's attitude will become *unfriendly* and he will throw until he or Zim has taken 20 points of damage, at which point Velg he will call for a cease-fire. If the PCs persist in their attacks, the giants will become hostile and move to engage in melee.

*Friendly (DC 15, 25 if the PCs attacked):* Velg will share his meal, and talk about his upcoming conquest over the white dragon Whildenstrank. He will also warn of the dangers of the "ice canyons": the "hot worms" that melt weapons, so use ranged attacks on them, and the "cold worms" that stun opponents with a screeching trill. He might join the group if asked, but will

demand the dragon's hide and half of the dragon's treasure other than the golden lion. Zim will stay behind and await word.

*Helpful (DC 30, 40 if the PCs attacked):* Velg will join the group for the dragon's hide and an equal share of the hoard. Zim will still be ordered to stay behind, to inform others of Velg's fate.

**For the DM:** The addition of Velg to the group could make combat encounters easier for the party. Consider increasing the strength of the creatures in subsequent encounters, or have Velg refuse to fight, and instead save his strength for the dragon.

**Velg the Dragon Tamer:** Male frost giant Rgr3; CR 12; Large giant; HD 14d8+70, 3d10+15; hp 164; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21 (touch 8, flat-footed 21); Atk +11/ +6/ +1 ranged (2d6+9rock); or +23/ +18/ +13 melee (2d8+14/19-20/x2, Huge +1 *greatsword*); SA Rock throwing; SQ cold subtype, darkvision 60 ft., favored enemy dragons, rock catching; AL CN; SV Fort +17, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 29, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +14, Hide -7, Intuit Direction +7, Jump +14, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +6, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +6; Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Sunder, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

*Cold Subtype:* Immune to cold damage; takes double damage from fire unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

*Darkvision:* The creature can see in the dark as though in normal daylight.

*Favored Enemy:* The ranger has selected dragon as a favored enemy. He gains a +1 bonus to his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks when using these skills against this type of creature. He gets the same bonus to weapon damage rolls against creatures of this type. He also gets the damage bonus with ranged weapons if the target is within 30 feet. The bonus doesn't apply to damage against creatures that are immune to critical hits.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, *eyes of the eagle*, Huge +1 *greatsword* (not useable by most PCs due to size), 2 longswords, large white dragon hide cloak, black dragon hide boots, 656 gp, platinum belt buckle (400 gp value).

**Zim, male frost giant:** hp 120; wields huge greataxe; see [Monster Manual](#) page 98

## The Cliffhanger

A few hours after the encounter with Velg, while they are traveling west across the glacier, allow the PCs Listen and Spot checks. A successful Listen check (DC 15) reveals a low rumbling sound. A successful Spot check (DC 20) is required to see the ice shifting 100 feet away, as if something were burrowing under it, headed straight toward the heroes...

## About the Author

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# Cliffhangers Adventures

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## A Giant Ransom *Episode Three: Thin Ice* By Stephen Schubert

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### Adventure Background

In the first episode, the PCs were employed by Duke Ambrinigan to exchange a ransom of 10,000 gp in gems for a golden lion that was taken by frost giants in a recent raid. While waiting for the giants to arrive at the designated meeting place, the PCs watched as the white dragon Whildenstrank attacked the giants and then flew off with the statue. Charged with returning the golden lion statue at all costs, the PCs dealt with the remaining frost giants and then headed west, toward the lair of the dragon in the midst of the nearby glacier.

Along the way, they encountered Velg the Dragon Tamer, another frost giant who was also on the trail of the dragon. Velg may or may not be with the party now.

The PCs are now traveling across the flat icy surface of the glacier, and may have just noticed something burrowing under the ice, heading straight toward them.

### Atop the Glacier

The eastern edge of the glacier is mostly flat ice, with the occasional crevasse or sinkhole. Travel is relatively safe, and the surface is perhaps 4 inches of heavy snow or slush, soft enough that feet sink in an inch or two, but not so wet that water puddles in footprints. The flats of the glacier eventually give way to the "ice canyons", a maze of ice walls and pillars. The white dragon Whildenstrank makes his home in a spire of volcanic rock that juts out above the glacier like a black fang in the middle of the icy expanse.

### Tunneling Trouble (EL 9)

The PCs have not been unnoticed as they cross the snowy landscape. A pair of bulettes has adapted to living under the glacier, and they have noticed the presumably armor-clad meals



marching above. Not bulettes of the sort to allow a meal to walk by, they burrow up to the PCs and attack.

**Bulettes (2):** hp 90, 100; see [Monster Manual](#) page 28

## Walking on Thin Ice (EL 8)

Once the bulettes are defeated, the PCs will discover another danger: the tunneling of the bulettes has weakened the ice beneath their feet, and it is about to give way! Read or paraphrase the following text:

You sigh with relief as the last of the landsharks slumps motionless to the ice. Before you can begin your next thought, however, the ice beneath your feet shifts, nearly throwing you to the ground. You see cracks and crevices begin to appear on the surface of the ice, and the small rifts begin to spread, becoming larger, as if the glacier were opening a gaping maw to swallow you up!

The PCs have very little time before the ice gives way. Have each PC roll for initiative, and begin a round. At initiative 10, the ice gives way. Any PC still within 30 feet of the bulettes will fall into the sinkhole with the ice. A PC that falls into the sinkhole must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15). Success means the PC has managed to stay atop the ice as she falls, failure indicates that the PC will be buried.

Treat this situation as a cave-in (see *Dungeon Masters Guide* page 114). A PC that succeeded his first saving throw will need to make another Reflex save (DC 15), or sustain 3d6 points of damage and become pinned in the ice. Any PC that failed his first saving throw will be buried, and will take 8d6 points of damage, or half that if another Reflex saving throw (DC 15) is successful, and is pinned beneath the ice.

Pinned characters take 1d6 points of subdual damage per minute while pinned. Buried characters are under 1d6 feet of ice, and digging them out will require moving 500 pounds per foot of depth, or about one minute per foot of depth for the average PC working alone. Velg, with his 29 Strength, can dig down about 14 feet in one minute, if he is there. See the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 114, for rules on cave-ins and digging. Characters who are not buried, but still pinned, can free themselves with a Strength check (DC 25), or can break free in one minute with some assistance.

## The Ice Canyons

After the characters dig themselves out of the sinkhole, they should continue west, toward the dragon's den. The relatively smooth surface of the glacier slowly gives way to a network of interweaving Ice Canyons. The walls of the canyons rise nearly one hundred feet above the canyon floors, which vary from twenty to thirty feet wide.

The canyon floors are covered with a layer of ice dust, and there are some tracks in the snow. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 18) by a PC with the Track feat will reveal a set of large wolf-tracks

leading into the canyon maze. The tracks are from the winter wolves that act as spies for the dragon Whildenstrank. The PCs could even try to follow the tracks through the twisting paths to the dragon's lair.

The PCs should reach the Ice Canyons near dusk, and may wish to rest. Throughout the night, they hear the whistling of the wind through the twisting ravines, and very faintly they might hear what sounds like the howling of wolves, or the sound of the frost giant horns carrying on the wind.

## The Cliffhanger

The next day, or when the PCs head into the twisting canyon maze, they hear a high-pitched screeching echoing off the canyon walls, followed by a raspy roar. The sounds of combat resonate in the narrow fissures for a few seconds, another roar is heard, followed by a noise not unlike thousands of icicles shattering on the ground. The sound seems to be coming from just around the next bend...

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## About the Author

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# Cliffhangers Adventures

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## A Giant Ransom

### *Episode Four: The Worms Go In*

*By Stephen Schubert*

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### Adventure Background

In the story thus far, the PCs have been tasked by Duke Ambrinigan, a local lord, to recover a stolen statue of a golden lion. The lion was stolen in transit by frost giant raiders, and was to be ransomed back to the Duke for 10,000 gp. The PCs were sent to perform the exchange. The giants, however, were attacked by the white dragon Whildenstrank, who stole the statue and retreated to his lair in the middle of a nearby glacier.

The PCs encountered the remaining giants, and then set off westward toward the dragon's lair. They traveled across the flat part of the glacier, encountering the frost giant ranger Velg the Dragon Tamer, as well as some burrowing bulettes. The PCs now have entered the Ice Canyons: a maze of twisting passageways surrounding the black spire of rock that the dragon calls home. They have just heard sounds of a battle ahead.

### Recent Battle

Around the next corner, the PCs find the remains of a battle between a remorhaz and a frost worm. Both creatures are dead. Read or paraphrase the following text:

Shards of ice are scattered across the ground at an intersection of two canyons. In the middle lays a enormous blue-white segmented worm, with dozens of legs and winglike fins near its head. The back of the worm glows faintly red, and steam is rising slowly from its body. It does not appear to be moving. The entire area is covered with shards of ice.

The high-pitched scream the PCs heard was the keening of the frost worm. It attacked the remorhaz, but was destroyed by the heat generated by the remorhaz. When the frost worm died, it turned to ice and exploded, killing the remorhaz. The shards of ice on the ground are all that

remain of the frost worm.

PCs examining the body of the remorhaz may find what appear to be wounds caused by huge mandibles, and other wounds like hundreds of dagger thrusts, but no weapons can be found (Search DC 15). If they search around the area the PCs may deduce that the ice shards are in a pattern that suggests the explosion (Search DC 20).

## The Ice Canyons

The PCs could very quickly lose their way in the maze of canyons. The quickest path through the Ice Canyons would take about 6 hours of travel. The dragon's den is almost directly west. A successful Intuit Direction check (DC 15) will ensure arrival in 6-8 hours. Alternatively, a character could climb, fly, or levitate to the top of the canyons to spot the black spire and direct the party. Without some means of finding the direction, there is only a 1 in 4 chance that any hour's worth of travel gets them closer to the spire.

Whildenstrank's winter wolves patrol the Ice Canyons. Each hour the PCs move through the Canyons, there is a 1 in 6 chance that a winter wolf will find them. They will avoid combat, and will try to remain hidden (Hide +13) and spy on the PCs and report back to their master. A PC with the Track feat could track the winter wolves back to the spire with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 15).

## Ambush! (EL 7)

The Ice Canyons are home to many remorhaz and frost worms. Along their trek through the frosty landscape, the PCs will be ambushed by a remorhaz. If the PCs travel for longer than 6 hours, there is a 1 in 12 chance per hour, cumulative, that another remorhaz will lie in wait.

The remorhaz will burrow out and attack the character in the back of the party. Since the remorhaz eats all the prey it finds, and incinerates all it ingests, it has no treasure. If Velg is with the party, he will suggest using ranged attacks.

**Remorhaz:** hp 67; see [Monster Manual](#) page 155.

## Canyon Worm (EL 12)

The dragon, Whildenstrank, likes his lair for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the number of dangerous creatures that make their home in the Ice Canyons, deterring any inquisitive explorers. The frost worms, in particular, are a favorite of the dragon, because even those that are strong enough to defeat them might still fall victim to the worm's death throes.

After traveling four hours toward the black spire, the PCs are attacked by a frost worm. The attack happens at an intersection between many canyons, and there are many columns of ice in the middle of the intersection. As a result, the frost worm has one-half cover from any character more than 30 feet away and total cover beyond 60 feet. The reverse is also true. The frost worm will begin by trilling, then will move in to attack a stunned character.

If the characters flee, the worm will only pursue 100 feet from the intersection. If the worm is defeated, the PCs may find a mound of oval-shaped ice formations. A successful Knowledge (nature) or Wilderness Lore (DC 20) check will reveal that the ice formations are actually four frost worm eggs.

**Frost worm:** hp 154; see [Monster Manual](#) page 92.

## The Cliffhanger

After overcoming the obstacles of the Ice Canyons, the heroes finally make it to the black spire of rock that is the home of the dragon...

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## About the Author

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### *Episode Five: The Wyrms Go Out*

*By Stephen Schubert*

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The PCs encountered the remaining giants, and then set off westward toward the dragon's lair. They traveled across the flat part of the glacier, encountering the frost giant ranger Velg the Dragon Tamer, as well as some burrowing bulettes. Then they braved the hazards of frost worms and remorhaz in the Ice Canyons: a maze of twisting passageways surrounding the black spire of rock that the dragon calls home. The PCs now stand at the edge of an open space, looking at the towering edifice in front of them.

### The Approach (EL 8)

While in its lair, the dragon Whildenstrank relies on his winter wolf spies to inform him of trespassers. The entry to the lair is a simple affair, with a gaping hole in the side of the black stone spire that leads down a tunnel to an inner grotto. Whildenstrank has covered the drab black walls of the tunnel and the entry with ice, and icicles hang from the lip of the cave mouth. A narrow footpath used by the winter wolves, climbs up the steep slope to the entry.

Three winter wolves rest in the entry. If they see the PCs (Spot +9), they will trot down the footpath and challenge the party, demanding to know why they have come to the spire. The initial attitude is unfriendly, and they will attack if the party does not leave. If the PCs try to talk their way past the wolves, have the speaker make a Diplomacy check:

*Indifferent (DC 15):* The wolves will allow them to pass, but will follow them into the tunnel. If

combat breaks out with the dragon, the wolves will join in and attack from behind.

*Friendly (DC 25):* Information: the wolves don't like working for the dragon, and could be convinced to ignore the party, for a sufficient bribe of 1,000 gp.

*Helpful (DC 40):* The wolves will let the PCs pass, for an unspecified favor in the future.

If Velg is with the party, he will wait for the wolves to come down, and will then attack, explaining later that they might warn the dragon.

If two of the wolves are killed, the third will try to run back to the cave, to warn Whildenstrank.

**Winter wolves (3):** hp 42, 46, 64; see [Monster Manual](#) page 184.

## Lair of the Dragon (EL 12)

From the entry, a wide tunnel leads inward and slightly downward to Whildenstrank's lair in a large hollow in the middle of the black spire. The cavern is roughly 60 feet across, and is ringed by a dozen 5-foot wide columns made of ice. As light shines on the columns, it reflects off the gems, jewels, and thousands of coins embedded in the ice. One column is half-formed, and the head of a golden lion protrudes from the top of the ice mound. Whildenstrank is most likely working on encasing his newfound treasure by using slow, controlled breaths of ice.

When the PCs arrive, Whildenstrank is disturbed by the interruption, but is curious as to why the PCs journeyed all the way to his lair. His patience will last long enough for the PCs to briefly explain their presence. He is initially unfriendly, unless Velg is present, and his actions are further influenced by the results of a PC's Diplomacy check:

*Hostile (less than 5):* He attacks. See tactics, below. He will also attack if Velg is present.

*Unfriendly (DC 5):* He demands that they pay tribute (1,000 gp each should do) and leave. If they do not pay and leave, he attacks. See tactics, below.

*Indifferent (DC 15):* He will be open to discussing a trade for the golden lion statue. The initial price will be 20,000 gp in gems and/or items. A PC may attempt to negotiate a better deal, with opposed Diplomacy checks (Whildenstrank has +9 on Diplomacy), but the dragon will not go lower than 15,000 gp.

*Friendly or Helpful (DC 25):* The dragon will trade, and the initial price will be 12,000 gp, and he will negotiate down to 8,000 gp.

Alternatively, the PCs could attempt to sneak in and steal the statue. That approach is best when the dragon is either gone hunting or sleeping. If the party waits for it to sleep, they can sneak in, but any loud noise will rouse the dragon (Move Silently DC 20). The golden lion statue is stuck halfway in the ice pillar, and will require a Strength check (DC 20) to pull out, and will most assuredly wake the dragon. The party may come up with more clever methods of retrieving

the statue. Use your best judgement.

Whildenstrank will not leave to hunt until the statue is fully encased. But the PCs should have an hour or two to break it free and leave. Of course, the theft will be noticed the moment the dragon returns, and he will proceed to hunt down the PCs, using his winter wolf allies to track the thieves.

**Whildenstrank, Male Mature Adult White Dragon:** Male white dragon; CR 11; Huge dragon; HD 21d12+105; hp 241; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); AC 28 (touch 8, flat-footed 28); Atk +27 melee (2d8+8, bite), +22 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws), +22 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings), +22 melee (1d8+12, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. [TS] 20 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (cone of cold, 50 ft., 7d6, save DC 25), Crush, frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ blindsight 210 ft., cold subtype, damage reduction 10/+1, dragon traits, Icewalking, spell resistance 20; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +13, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +21, Hide -8, Intimidate +17, Intuit Direction +12, Listen +27, Search +18, Sense Motive +18, Spot +27; Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Wingover

**SA -- Frightful Presence (Ex):** Any creature within 210 feet and with fewer hit dice than the dragon must succeed at a Will save (DC 21) whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. A creature that succeeds the save is immune to that dragon's frightful presence for one day.

**SA -- Breath Weapon (Su):** A cone of cold that inflict 7d6 points of cold damage, Reflex save half (DC 25).

**SA -- Crush:** As a standard action the dragon can leap or land on an opponent up to size Small. Opponents struck must succeed a Reflex save (DC 25) or become pinned and take 2d8+12 points of crushing damage each round they are pinned.

**SA -- Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day -- *gust of wind, fog cloud.*

**SQ -- Blindsight (Ex):** A dragon can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues).

**Tactics:** Whildenstrank begins by casting fog cloud, which fills the room. His blindsight makes him unaffected by the fog. He will then position himself to get the most opponents in the cone of his cold breath. After that he will move through the fog, attacking one character for a round or two, then moving to another character to attack. If his fog cloud is dispelled, Whildenstrank will try to avoid a flanked position, and will focus his attacks on one PC at a time. If he is reduced to 50 hp or fewer, he will attempt to flee.

**Treasure:** In addition to the golden lion statue (approximate value 1,500 gp), Whildenstrank's hoard is frozen in the columns of ice around the grotto. It will take some time, but the PCs could



end up with coins, art objects, and gems worth a total of 11,700 gp, a suit of +1 *blue scale mail*, a *ring of sonic resistance*, a +1 *quarterstaff of shock*, and a +3 *icy burst warhammer*.

## Continuing the Adventure

Once the statue is secured, the PCs can return it to Duke Ambrinigan. They may have encounters with the wildlife of the glacier on their journey back, or may meet another band of frost giants, who may or may not be hostile. Upon their return, the Duke will reimburse the characters for any reasonable expenses they may have incurred. The heroes could then choose a number of avenues:

- Depending on the results of the encounters with the frost giants, the frost giant tribe may have a different attitude toward the human settlement. If all the giants were killed, they may decide to attack more caravans to exact revenge.
- If Whildenstrank was not killed, then he may prove a threat to the region, or could perhaps be considered as an ally against the frost giants.
- The winter wolves working for Whildenstrank may be just the outer ring of a more elaborate wilderness information network.
- The mystery of the golden lion statue remains. Why was Duke Ambrinigan willing to pay so much for its return? Is it worth more than it seems?
- Velg the Dragon Tamer, if still alive and on good terms, may contact the PCs to help him in further dragon "taming" exploits.

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## About the Author

*Stephen Schubert is a freelance writer who spends too much of his time at his day job. When not working or writing, Stephen runs two **D&D** campaigns, and plays in a few others. He dedicates this, his first published adventure, to his wife, whose paladin will always remember "242 points of damage!"*

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