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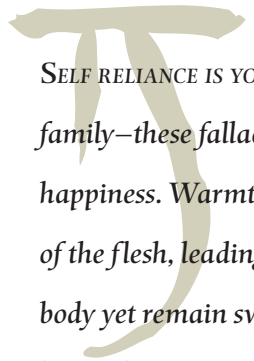


FORGOTTEN REALMS

HALL OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

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SELF RELIANCE IS YOUR ONLY ALLY. Society, community, family—these fallacies stifle the pursuit of one’s own happiness. Warmth and companionship are weaknesses of the flesh, leading to sloth and gluttony. Harden your body yet remain swift on your feet. Embrace your cold-hearted nature and demand respect of your inferiors. These are the tenets of the Storm-bringer, carried aloft by chill winds. Heed these principles and you could come to know the Frostmaiden’s caress.

—Excerpt from the Icedawn Syllabus, penned by Demetrios Whitefire of Sossal, High Chillbringer of Auril, Year of the Elves’ Weeping (1462 DR)

DEEP WILDS

Beyond the ken of most mortals exists an otherworldly dominion of fantastic terrain dominated by untamed wilderness and populated by all manner of feral beasts and faerie folk. The Deep Wilds epitomizes the raw unfettered force of nature—a savage expanse that liberates the spirit and brings out the beast in all who spend too much time there.

Every type of natural environment that exists on Toril is exemplified here. Desert, savannah, meadow, steppe, jungle, forest, marsh, frozen tundra—all these and more exist in the Deep Wilds. Even the weather is as wild as the plane's inhabitants. Weather patterns change and fluctuate without warning, so a beautiful clear day can turn to a raging snowstorm in minutes.

Along the southern and eastern reaches of the Deep Wilds stretches vast woodlands. The canopy of leaves overhead grows so densely that it seems all light must surely be blotted out. In the Deep Forest, where the vegetation grows thick and the wildlife is

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abundant, the greatest of all trees flourishes. Here, at the heart of the great wood in a glen called Sumeroak, almighty Silvanus makes his home.

West, across the Singing Water and below the great escarpment, lies the Land of the Hunt, demesne of the Render. The River of Blood winds for uncounted miles across the untamed savannah to the shore of the Blood Sea.

From her court hundreds of leagues beneath the crimson waters of the Blood Sea, the Queen

of the Depths commands the undersea denizens of her ocean realm. Above the rolling seas, gale-force winds and torrential rain threaten to drown air-breathers foolish enough to cross the burgundy expanse.

As a traveler moves north through the Deep Wilds, the land grows colder and colder until all terrain dissolves into an ever-present covering of ice and snow. Known to many as the Frostfell, and named Tír fo Leth by the fey, the Land Under Eternal Ice is bitterly cold and mirrors perfectly the harsh nature of the realm's unfeeling monarch.

THE LAND UNDER ETERNAL ICE

From the outside it might seem that the Land Under Eternal Ice is similar to any polar region of the mortal world. Some observe that it appears to mirror the terrain and species found in Pelvuria or Sossal—the wintry lands of Auril's Teeth in northern Faerûn. Though similarities exist superficially, travelers to Tír fo Leth quickly discover a harsh

truth: No colder place exists among the astral dominions. Even the sky of the Frostfell is strange and beautiful since it appears to be caught forever in the throes of a spectacular sunset, swathing the land in perpetual twilight.

Auril's dusky realm is an enigma floating in the Astral Sea. It's a land where raw, intangible belief meets raw, immutable reality. Read on for a brief examination of the more prominent landmarks in the Land Under Eternal Ice.

LORNNURE, THE ICEWAIL SHALLOWS

Massive bergs of scarlet ice wander silently throughout the chill northeastern waters of the Blood Sea, which the Queen of the Depths ceded to Auril's control. Aside from dealing with predatory sea life, surface travelers also must be wary of blood snow blizzards. These poisonous winter storms form up frequently in the region.

Sionnan Lagoon: Divers surviving the frigid arctic temperatures and dangerous aquatic predators of Sionnan Lagoon report seeing the ruins of a crystalline city in its darkest depths. The sunken walls and towers are covered with glyphs etched in ruathlek—a lost script not seen in the Realms since before the Time of Troubles.

LAIRGMORE, THE HALLOWFROST PLAINS

Sandwiched between the Beastlord's Forest of Gnashing Teeth and Nightfall Glacier, Lairgmore is an austere steppe-tundra of frozen lakes and sparse vegetation. Here snow falls in abundance, blanketing the ground most of the year. The wind-swept plains are populated by great mammoths, alpine megaloceros, and saber-toothed smilodon.

Shiverfang Gulch: An intricate pattern of serpentine trails among the snow drifts marks this sharp depression at the center of the Hollowfrost Plains as the favored hunting territory of the frost worms. A dim blue light shines from the gulch, though the subtle light is visible only at night.

Lawgoch's Labyrinth: Rumors state that the entrance to this chaotic subterranean maze is buried somewhere beneath Shiverfang Gulch. Legends say that a titan or primordial of incredible size and ferocity was chained here by Auril in a past age.

STROMFEAR, THE FROSTHORN PEAKS

Rising up sharply from the Hollowfrost Plains stands the imposing Frosthorn Peaks. After navigating the

treacherous Pass of Magog, travelers find themselves on the broken highland plain known as Semion-Tor, or the Icespire Crags.

Pass of Magog: The towering cliffs along this precarious trail through the Stromfar are riddled with countless crags, rookeries, and aeries where various avian and winged petitioners nest—including the enigmatic Aearee-Quor.

Icespire Crags: Here the permafrost tundra juts up from the bedrock at severe angles, which makes navigation arduous at best. Treacherous deep ice crevasses lie concealed underfoot between icy tors. The crags are the dominion of Gale Monarch Leucetios.

SHIVERPINE FOREST

The lush, verdant, snow-capped woodlands of the Shiverpine Forest exhibit the essence of a winter wonderland. Here Auril's fury is less severe, which permits all manner of woodland creatures to inhabit this primeval pine forest.

Creirwy Glade: Fey of the Shiverpine Forest revere Auril as the Queen of Air and Darkness, a malevolent faerie goddess banished from the Feywild at the dawn of time after a failed coup against the Seelie Court. A dark moonwell centered in Creirwy Glade is rumored to be a ley crossroad to the Feywild. The gate is guarded fiercely by spriggans in service to the Goblin King. Most outsiders that stumble upon Creirwy Glade are never seen again.

GLAS NURE, THE ICEWALL MOUNTAINS

The northern highlands of the Shiverpine Forest eventually give way to the majestic Icewall Mountains, which has peaks climbing above 25,000 feet. Well above the timberline, this bleak range marks the frontier between the more temperate regions of the south and Nightfall Glacier beyond.

Silverlight Aerie: Nestled within a sheltered dale among the southeastern peaks of the Glas Nure exists a community of al karak elam, known to mortals as the avariel or winged elves. The mist-laden nest-town was settled amid a soaring canopy of ethereal yew trees, and it stretches nearly half a mile vertically while remaining an equal distance above the ground at its lowest point. The avariel here profess a deep devotion to Auril, having adopted the faith of the Frostmaiden following her victory over Aerdrie Faenya. Highly reclusive beings, the al karak elam seldom initiate contact with others.

Path of Votigern: In the darkest depths beneath the mountains, hidden from the twilight above, winds a shadowy path—an ancient road. The road's egress lies along the northern side of the range, where it opens at the foot of Galebreaker Trench. Some speculate that a hidden chamber nestled deep within the Icewall Mountains along the Path of Votigern shelters a gate to Fimbulwinter in the Elemental Chaos, which is the domain of the titan lord Thrym.

NITHARAY, THE NIGHTFALL GLACIER

Commonly perceived as an uninhabitable ice field, the Nightfall Glacier is indeed an inhospitable wasteland of ice and snow. In addition to the bone-chilling temperatures, travelers on the glacier must also be vigilant against Nitharay's many hazards. Numerous cracks, fissures, and chasms abound here, because the glacier constantly shifts, buckles, and reforms. In addition, numerous supernatural storms and hazards spring up in the area from time to time, posing even greater threats to the unwary.

Galebreaker Trench: This vast crevasse, nearly 100 miles at its widest point, cuts deep into the glacier from north to south, and it ends at the Icewall Mountains. Howling winds racing down the trench strum and pluck at myriad hanging icicles to pro-

duce hypnotic music that some have compared to a symphony of tuneless harps.

Fog of Unyielding Ice: Moving northwest along the glacial shelf brings explorers to an uneven plain of churning, super-cold vapors. These mists are breathable, but they can freeze a traveler's lungs solid if he or she doesn't have some manner of protection from the cold. Vortices to the Boundless Blue in the Elemental Chaos are common in the skies above the Fog of Unyielding Ice.

DEARGPOOL, THE EVERFROST BAY

In contrast to the violent waters of the Blood Sea, the clear blue waters of Everfrost Bay are calm and almost inviting. Vast walls of sheer ice border much of the western coastline. Travelers must be wary of ravenous winter wolves stalking the periphery of the Shiverpine Forest.

Sepulcher of the Sleeping One: Here in his icy tomb beneath Deargpool, the corpse of Sea King Ulutiu rests for all eternity. A cadre of frost titans guards the sepulcher against tomb robbers and vandals.

WINTER HALL

Like a severe winter storm, Auril's Winter Hall moves slowly across the Deep Wilds, bringing strong winds and heavy blowing snow wherever it passes.

Built of wind and ice, the structure seems as if it were carved from a massive iceberg, flipped on its end, and thrust hundreds of leagues into the sky. The palace is nearly 5,000 feet in diameter at its base and an equal number of feet high at its summit, with a labyrinthine maze of corridors, halls, and passages inside it. With nearly twenty thousand damned spirits and immortal servitors dwelling within it at any given time, Winter Hall is easily the size of a small city.

Immense crystalline beams protrude from the shell of the Hall in several locations. Massive in size, these crystal spires give the otherwise drab fortress

some color, which ranges from deep royal blue to sea green. Much of the colossal ice mote is shrouded in a perpetual miasma of thick fog and freezing rain. If Auril is particularly angry, fierce cerulean thunderclouds form over the Hall, bringing merciless blizzard conditions upon the lands below.

Winter Hall as a physical structure is an amalgamation of varied styles that has undergone continual expansion over the millennia. The most recent addition was the assimilation of the Winged Mother's floating palace in the Year of the Wrathful Eye (1391 DR).

THE NEST

A yawning portico open to the sky below marks the underbelly of Auril's floating palace. Within this cavity, and shielded by a wall of wind, are sprawling docks and shipyards, which might appear as both impressive and bizarre to first-time visitors. Among the spiderwork wharfs are moored all manner of derelict airships including flying chariots and astral-jammers. Loyal stormwardens patrolling the skies over Tír fo Leth have commandeered these vessels. Why the Frostmaiden keeps these captured vessels instead of destroying them is unknown.

THE PROMENADE

Araamroth, also known as the Promenade, is an immense cavity a mile across that sits at the core of Auril's Winter Hall. This space is filled with a chaotic latticework of crystalline pathways that dance and flicker with prismatic radiance. Support columns permit access from one level to the next. Countless petitioners utilize these walkways to go about their daily tasks. Pathways are kept lit by lamps made from will-o-wisps (or other luminous creatures such as tiny glowing sprites) frozen in globes of ice. Many of Auril's petitioners, gifted with wings or another method of flight, fly from one platform to the next.

THE DOME

Capping the Promenade is a majestic, clear dome of the purest elemental ice. At will, Auril can banish the howling winds and thunderstorms enveloping the palace, which then exposes to viewers within the dome a breathtaking view of the polar lights dancing across the twilight sky.

THE ABATTOIR

At the foot of Araamroth stands the Abattoir, a twin oscillating structure crafted of chaotic elemental forces. In a time not too distant, high priests and fell warlocks would perform bloody sacrifices and vile rituals within this temple with the hopes of blanketing all Toril in darkness and ice. Today the abattoir stands unused, a fading yet grim reminder of the corrupting influence of the Black Diamond.

LYCEUM OF FROZEN SHADOW

Secreted away in the bowels of Winter Hall is Auril's grand throne room, Amon Thyryr—the Lyceum of Frozen Shadow. The lyceum is a grand and intimidating place, which is by design. When she manifests in the Hall, Auril broods or holds court from her throne of blue fire. She appears as a haughty winged faerie of terrible, cold beauty, with bone-white skin and angular features; her mane of flowing black hair is adorned with an ornate crown of platinum and diamonds.

LEGEND AND LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful History or Religion check.

HISTORY

DC 15: No mortal realm is beyond Auril's influence. Even the scorching desert of the Skyfire Wastes was frozen over for months in the Year of Holy Thunder (1450 DR), while the Frostmaiden sent her vassals to battle the genies and efreet of Calimshan.

DC 30: Auril's palace is a trophy hall of sorts that displays for all to see her victories over countless enemies over the ages. The Lyceum, for example, was crafted from the beating heart of the primordial Durbaagal, whom she defeated at the dawn of time.

RELIGION

DC 15: Auril is one of the Three Furies, along with Malar and UMBERLEE. The Furies owe their allegiance to Silvanus following the events of the Stormstar Requiem—where Talos was revealed as the orc god Gruumsh and banished from Fury's Heart.

DC 20: Since the coming of the Spellplague, Auril has gained significant power by siphoning the faiths of Ulutiu, Aerdié Faenya, and Gruumsh into her own. In addition to her classic portfolio of cold and winter, the Frostmaiden now claims dominion over wind and storms—bringing her into direct conflict with the ancient primordial power Akadi.

DC 25: Chosen invested with a portion of the Frostmaiden's divinity, Auril's exarchs include The Ice Queen, Iyraclea and Artus Cimber. Iyraclea is charged with ferreting out Akadi's spies within Auril's realm, while Artus spends most of his time in human guise among the mortals of Toril.

WINTER HAG

UNIMAGINABLY DEPRAVED AND CONNIVING, the winter hags are the handmaidens of Auril, goddess of wind and ice. These chaotic creatures are feared throughout the Realms for their abundant array of deadly powers, but occasionally sought out for their wise council and skilled prognostication.

WINTER HAG TACTICS

A winter hag typically opens combat with rimefire blast to evaluate an opponents' vulnerability to cold. Enemies who appear resistant to cold are subjected to

winter curse. Winter hags prefer to ambush foes with their great maneuverability. They like to lure opponents into inescapable deadfalls and snowdrifts or trap them with icy bonds. A winter hag retreats from a dangerous opponent with *blizzard step* rather than fight to the death.

AURIL

Frostmaiden, Storm-bringer, Icedawn, Lady Frostkiss

Chaotic Evil Goddess

Auril (awe-riil) is a vain and fickle creature whose cold heart remains untouched by any hint of true love, noble feeling, or honor. She is a somewhat aloof deity, and she embodies freedom and impulse. She toys with those who offend her by trapping them in snow storms and then driving them insane by tantalizing them with visions of warmth and the comforts of home before she freezes them to death. Her eternal beauty is cold and deadly—the flower of womanhood preserved forever in a slab of arctic ice, but with sensibilities to match the ice.

WINTER HAG LORE

A character knows the following information about winter hags with a successful Religion check.

DC 20: The white hag is a hideous and wretched old crone with a taste for human flesh. Winter hags are the most likely of Auril's handmaidens to be encountered on Faerûn—notably in the land of Rashemen. As the month of Tarsakh approaches, seasoned hathran witches of that realm are dispatched to battle a winter hag. If they fail, spring is delayed and bitter winter conditions persist for several weeks longer.

Winter Hag		Level 19 Lurker
Medium fey humanoid		XP 2,400
Initiative +16	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
Whiteout aura 4; severe snow and wind obscure sight and movement; all creatures that start their turns inside the hag's aura gain total concealment and are slowed. The hag is unaffected by whiteout conditions and can see enemies clearly.		
HP 139; Bloodied 69		
AC 33; Fortitude 29, Reflex 32, Will 30		
Immune cold		
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)		
⊕ Graystaff (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon +24 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
⚔ Winter Curse (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Cold Ranged 10; +24 vs. AC; 3d10 + 6 cold damage and ongoing 5 cold damage (save ends), and the target's resistance to cold is negated until the end of the encounter.		
⚡ Rimefire Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold Close blast 5; +22 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 cold damage.		
❄️ Icy Bonds (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ Cold, Zone Area burst 3 within 15; the area becomes a zone filled with chains of permafrost that remain until the end of the hag's next turn. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the area or adjacent to it is restrained and takes ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends both). As a move action, the hag can slide a target shackled in icy bonds 2 squares.		
❄️ Blizzard Step (minor; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Teleportation The winter hag teleports 10 squares, reappearing in a hail of wind and frost; it gains invisibility until the end of its next turn.		
🔄 Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph A winter hag can alter its physical form to appear as an old crone of any Medium or Large humanoid race (see <i>Change Shape</i> , MM page 280).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 17 (+12)	Dex 25 (+16)	Wis 22 (+15)
Con 19 (+13)	Int 20 (+14)	Cha 18 (+13)

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Winter hags are most often encountered in the remote reaches of Rashemen or the Land Under Eternal Ice in the Deep Wilds. It's not uncommon for winter hags to travel with mounted ice archon and avariel escorts.



Winter's Fury (Level 18, XP 11,200)

- ♦ 1 winter hag (level 19 lurker)
- ♦ 1 ice archon frostshaper (level 20 controller [leader])
- ♦ 1 rimefire griffon (level 20 skirmisher)
- ♦ 1 ghaele of winter (level 21 artillery) Ⓜ

About the Author

A software engineering manager by day and FORGOTTEN REALMS® loremaster by night, **Brian R. James** authored the *Grand History of the Realms* and more recently *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*. He also contributed to the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide* and continues to serve up new Realmslore through *D&D Insider* and *Candlekeep Compendium*. Brian would like to thank Gray Richardson for his invaluable assistance during the writing of this article.