

Jotenheim III – King Tholak’s Citadel

Introduction

This is Part 3 of a four-part quest. This third adventure module is intended for approximately four characters of Level 20, with epic boons already awarded.

One of the plane shift tuning forks found at the Frost Giant Cavern (Jotenheim II) in Porphatys, the fifth layer of Carceri (aka Tarterus), along with the stamped metal plate showing a sigil sequence, leads to this glacial citadel in the frozen wastelands of Jotenheim on the Gladshheim plane. The air here is even more frigid than that of the Tarterus lair, causing 5-10 hp of cold damage per turn unless protected.

[DM Note: There are several “non-official” monsters used in this adventure; these come from “D&D Beyond” (www.dndbeyond.com/homebrew/monsters). To find these creatures’ specs, simply visit the website and enter the creature’s name in the “MONSTER NAME” field, and hit enter. Some of these creatures have been modified for this adventure so watch for modifications to the descriptions herein. The authors’ usernames appear here with their creations. Many thanks to those who have created and posted their homebrew monsters...]

[DM note: If the gender roles herein are found to be offensive, DMs are encouraged to reverse roles or otherwise make changes for their own campaigns...]

The Citadel

Like the Tarterus lair, this citadel is also still under construction, mainly in Level 2. Small sections have been carried to completion while other areas have only been roughed in. Most of the work is in some intermediate stage of progress. Work is being performed by lesser beings indigenous to Jotenheim, so all slave labor here is immune or resistant to the effects of cold.

The ruler of the citadel is King Tholak, who oversees his small but growing empire from his giant throne room, which is under construction on Level 2. Tholak uses the Tarterus location as a buffer of protection and isolation between his Jotenheim/Gladshheim citadel and the Jotenheim 1 and 2 locations. He hopes to gain wealth and influence by spreading his reach to the prime material plane.

The air and the “feel” of this plane are different than that of the PM plane; any creature visiting for the first time will be at disadvantage on attacks, saves, and ability checks for the first 3 turns upon arrival. In addition, any initiative check in the first three turns must subtract 5 from the roll. And as noted above, the air here is frigid, causing 5-10 hp of cold damage per turn unless protected.

1 – Plane Shift/Teleport circle: if the tuning fork and sigil sequence from Jotenheim II are used to plane shift, this is the destination. The circle is about 20’ in diameter. The circle is located on a stone platform carved into the side of a massive stone and ice glacier. A trail leads down from the platform, which sits 5’ above the trail level. Giant-sized (3’) steps lead up to a higher platform (2). The area is cold and snowy, with rough terrain and giant conifers. A chilly fog lightly obscures visibility.

2 – A **Frost Giant** guards a giant double door on the raised stone platform. Flanking the doors on either side are giant-sized windows, 5' from the floor level, 25' wide, and 30' high. The Frost Giant is alert and will shout out and then attack any unrecognized intruders. He has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. Each door requires a combined strength of 46 (2 Frost Giants) to open. The windows are open air, however.

3 – Another **Frost Giant** guards the citadel entrance from inside this ornately carved stone open air hall. The Frost Giant is alert and paces the hall, watching the outside through one or the other of the windows. He has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. He will hear and/or see battle outside and assist. He can throw rocks at any enemies he can see outside, while maintaining half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws.) A large single door on the opposite wall requires a combined strength of 40 to open. The hall is lit at night by a large brazier in the center of the hall.

The White Dragon Cavern: Areas 4-15 comprise a large cavern within the glacier. It is the lair of Karnak, an Ancient White Dragon. Karnak is loosely allied with King Tholak, and they derive mutual benefit from each others' presence. There are ledges and plateaus in the cavern, from which Karnak can observe out to his darkvision range of 120'. The cavern floor is virtually impassable, comprised of jagged chunks of ice and rock. Footing is unstable and movement requires crawling and climbing. Movement is at 1/3 normal speed, and requires a successful Athletics or Acrobatics check of DC 17 or better. Failure of the ability check precludes any movement for that turn. The ceiling at the center is about 170' above the cavern floor above areas 5 & 6, and from there it slopes or curves downward fairly uniformly. The entire ceiling and walls are made of jagged shards of ice and stone. Climbing the walls from one ledge to another would require 1/3 normal movement speed and a successful Acrobatics check of DC 18 for 25' of movement.

Karnak can fly to and land on any of the various ledges, or fly to the walls or ceiling and latch onto them.

4 – The door opens to a ledge in a large unlit cavern area. The ledge drops 25' to a practically impassable floor littered with ice, rock, and possibly bones. The ledge appears to trail along the cavern wall to the right, and another ledge at approximately the same height can be seen about 60' out. The ceiling is beyond normal darkvision range of 60'.

5 – A plateau rises above the cavern floor 25', at the level of the entry ledge (4). A curved wall of ice 15' high shields the western portion of the plateau. Karnak, an **Ancient White Dragon** lounges on the plateau at its eastern end, with its head about 110' from the door between areas 3 and 4. With his 120' darkvision range, Karnak can see any visible creatures entering the cavern. If any enter who are not accompanied by one of the frost giants, Karnak will assume they are enemies and devise an attack based on what it sees. If the door opens but the dragon does not see anyone, he will assume invisible creatures have entered and will be on high alert. The ice wall provides 75% cover (+5 to AC and Dex saves). If Karnak ducks below the height of the wall, he will have total cover. The dragon can sense when the door at area 4 has been opened. If the door is open during daylight hours, it offers enough light to see no more than 60', the same as normal darkvision range.

6 – Another plateau rises above that of area 5, 25' above area 5 and 50' above the cavern floor. A longer ice wall provides cover for the dragon if he is on that level.

7 – The cavern-side trail from area 4 leads to a “Y” along the SW edge of the cavern. A tunnel heads south, and the trail along the edge of the cavern continues on along the southern wall. Another ledge (8) can be seen. It is partially obscured by another 15' high ice wall. The tunnel winds several times as it descends sharply to 200' below the cavern floor.

8 – This ledge dead ends along the southern cavern wall, but a smaller tunnel opens along the SW wall of the ledge. This tunnel is about 25' high and 15' wide.

9 – This access tunnel is used by the frost giant guards to get to the cavern's eastern opening. It ascends from area 8 (25' above cavern floor) to area 10 (+40').

10 – This ledge sits 40' above the cavern floor, and a large opening (approximately 30' x 30') is mostly blocked by an ice wall. An opening at its southern end (25' high x 15' wide) allows the frost giant guards access to areas 11 and 12.

11 – A large tunnel descends from area 10 to an outside ledge (area 12). The floor of this tunnel is slick ice, but a rope is secured to the southern wall to allow the frost giants to easily climb back up from area 12 to area 10. The tunnel can be used by Karnak to escape the cavern if he is losing a battle. He can break through the ice wall without movement penalty to do so.

12 – The tunnel (11) exits the cavern at a ledge which is at a level 15' above the cavern floor, but the ledge drop away sharply along the glacier side, roughly 200' before leveling off in very rough terrain. A **Frost Giant** guards the ledge, watching outward for intruders who might try to enter the cavern from the eastern access. The frost giant has a horn that he will blow if he sees anyone attempting to scale the cliffside or enter the tunnel. He will hear loud battle noises (fireball, lightning bolt, meteor swarm, etc) from within the cavern and move quickly to investigate. Less pronounced battle noise cannot be heard here due to the swirling winds and crackling of the freezing fog. Upon hearing battle, it will take the giant three turns to reach area 10. He has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**.

13 – This ledge is 30' above the cavern floor; its only features are some humanoid remains that have not yet been swept away to the cavern floor.

14 – This ledge is 70' above the cavern floor, and is very rough terrain due to rocks, boulders, and ice chunks. There are some excellent relief ice carvings on the walls, depicting a dragon doing battle with various enemies. The carvings were done by Karnak himself.

15 – This ledge is 50' above the cavern floor and is sealed over by an ice wall. Characters within 10' of the ice wall can notice that it is not quite similar to the cavern walls and might be hiding another chamber, with a Passive Perception 20+. If actively checking for anomalies (passages, abnormal surfaces, etc) within 20', a Perception check of DC 20+ will discover the existence of the chamber behind the ice wall. This ledge contains Karnak's treasure hoard:

5 Magic Potions (Flying, Heroism, Invisibility, Invulnerability, Lightning Resistance)

Scroll-Mass Suggestion; Scroll -Mordenkainen's Sword; Scroll -True Seeing

2 +1 Daggers

Rod of Security

3 chests of coins: 3500gp value, weighing 80 pounds

sack of gems: 25x10gp gems, 20x10gp gems, 50x5gp gems

jewels: 5 rings worth 25gp each; pearl necklace worth 100gp; periapt worth 75gp

16 – The entrance to the Throne Hall is set in a partially finished foyer guarded by a **Frost Giant** and a **Frost Titan** (see D&D Beyond, *mepersoner's* "Frost Titan") in the center of the room. Both are alert and will notice any adventurers approaching unless they take precautions against being seen. The abutting hall ceilings are 30' high, and the foyer ceiling is 40' high. The Frost Giant has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. The Frost Titan has a pouch with **30gp**. The hall and foyer are lit by a *continual flame* spell cast on sconces every 25' and on either side of the doors. The double doors to the throne room (22) are ornate and heavy, and require a strength of 23+ to open.

17 – A **Frost Giant** stands guard outside of the temporary slave quarters (20). The hall is dimly lit by *continual flame* spells cast on faux torches on the east wall every 50'. The Frost Giant has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. The hall ceiling is 30' high.

18 – The kitchen is manned by slaves of various humanoid and demihuman races. They are performing cleanup activities, restocking shelves, and generally trying to look busy. They will ignore any intruders, not knowing who is supposed to be where anyway. There are currently 7 slaves working. The kitchen was made for giant-sized creatures but it has been adapted for smaller ones, with many step-ladders, ladders, and some scaffolding. All of the slaves have adapted to the cold and do not suffer hp losses due to it, although they are typically exhausted. While the giants and titans prefer to hunt their food and eat it immediately, the kitchen is used to prepare meals for the slaves, smoke and cure meat for the giants, and cook meat pies for the giants. The kitchen ceiling is 40' high. The kitchen is well-lit by torches on the walls.

19 – The pantry is full of barrels, sacks, and boxes of foodstuffs. Two more slaves work here. A lantern hangs from the ceiling, providing light to work by. The pantry ceiling is 30' high.

20 – The slave quarters are occupied by 12 slaves who are currently resting. The double doors are barred from the outside and required a combined strength of 20+ to open once the bar is removed. A single torch on the west wall provides dim light. The ceiling is 40' high.

21 – The double doors to the barracks are heavy and require a strength of 22+ to open. The room is occupied by **one Frost Giant** (sleeping) and **two Frost Titans** (see D&D Beyond, *mepersoner's* "Frost Titan") shooting craps with a set of giant dice. There are 10 bedding pallets, two tables, 10 chairs or stools, 10 trunks (containing giant clothes, tools, games, etc), another dozen pallets stacked against the west wall, various piles of blankets, wood and other construction materials, and a cart full of rocks. Because of the clutter, movement here is difficult (1/2 speed). The Frost Giant has a sack with several rocks and chunks of ice, along with **20gp**. Each Frost Titan has a pouch containing **30gp**. The room is dimly torch-lit.

22 – King Tholak's Grand Throne Room is being carved out of another huge underground cavern. Most of the walls are of natural rock and ice, with only three sections of smooth stone walls having been placed. Near the center of the cavern are two rock columns rising to the 80' high ceiling. Slaves labor busily around two openings along the cavern's north wall, and along along the far (east) wall.

The cavern floor is not perfectly smooth but it has obviously been worked to achieve some degree of flatness, so movement is not impeded. The floor is, however, comprised of both ice and stone, so any movement requires a successful Athletics or Acrobatics check of DC 14 or better; failure results in a fall to the prone position. The cavern denizens (giants, titans, troll mage, slaves) are accustomed to the treacherous footing and do not require an ability check to move at full speed.

Much of the cavern's west wall has a large clutter of construction material (stone, wood, tools, etc). Several large piles of rock and ice (marked as "rubble" on the map) litter the floor. These piles are about 15' high.

The entire cavern is well-lit by torches and *continual flame* devices mounted on the walls and free-standing on the cavern floor. The ceiling is also lit by *continual flame* so there are no blind spots in the throne room.

A roughed-out pair of thrones occupies a large dais near the center of the cavern. Seated on the larger of the thrones is **King Tholak** (see D&D Beyond, *jon_m47's* "King Tholak"), a huge giant towering over any of his kin, standing well over 30 feet tall. His hair and beard are light blue, matted with frost and clattering with icicles. His flesh is as blue as glacial ice. His helmet extends into four large twisting horns and has a large gash over one eye. On his back is the fur of a mammoth and at his side a large battle ax covered in giant runes and a large blue gem in the center. At his feet rests a glowing lantern. This is obviously the king or ruler of the citadel.

King Tholak wields a **giant-sized +2 Greataxe** (+16 to hit, damage 30 (3d12+11)). He has a sack of throwing rocks (+14 to hit, damage 31 (4d10+9)). The lantern at his feet is a **Lantern of Revealing**, which makes visible any invisible creature within 30'. He wears a **Ring of Fire Resistance**, along with a **jeweled earring worth 50gp** and a **necklace worth 150gp**. There are two keys on the necklace; one that opens the manacle on Accura's ankle (see below), and the other opens Tholak's treasure chest in area 23.

Seated in the lesser throne is a **Storm Giantess** wearing royal garb. She has violet skin, blue-black hair and silvery gray eyes. and slouches gloomily in the throne. A closer inspection will reveal that she is chained by the ankle. The chain is spiked to the cavern floor near the throne. The chain has been magically enhanced to preclude breakage by non-magical means. King Tholak keeps the key on the necklace that he wears.

The storm giantess is Accura. She was forced to marry King Tholak four months prior by her guardian and uncle, Prince Tarrance of Fortuna in Gladshiem. She is bound to prevent escape and is only normally allowed movement within the throne room, within the range of the 250' chain. She is Chaotic Good and hates King Tholak and his minions and allies. If she has an opportunity, she will provide information about Tholak, such as his possession of a Ring of Fire Resistance. If he is being defeated, she will join the fight against him. Accura does not speak the common tongue, only giantish. Accura wears **jewelry worth 250gp**. It was all given to her by King Tholak as a wedding present, so she despises it and would be happy to part with it.

A **Frost Titan** (see D&D Beyond, *mepersoner's* "Frost Titan") attendant stands 20' to Tholak's right, watching for threats. It has a pouch containing **30gp**.

A male **Storm Giant** stands on the dais to Tholak's right, conferring. He is an emissary of Accura's uncle, and is allied with Tholak. He is armed with a giant-sized **+2 Greatsword** (+16 to hit, damage 32 (6d6+11) slashing), and has a satchel containing 3 rocks for throwing, and **75gp**. He wears a **bejeweled bracelet worth 125gp**.

One group of slaves labor outside area 24, working on the hinges that will hold a set of double doors which lean against the cavern wall. Amongst the slaves working outside of area 24 is the **Troll Mage** (D&D Beyond, *Deckedaxis'* "Troll Mage") named Chandyllis. He is hunched over and engaged in the work, and is not readily recognizable as a threat amongst the diversity of the slave crew. He wears a **Ring of Warmth**, and carries a **Broom of Flying**. He carries in his robe pockets **three plane shift tuning forks** and corresponding **metal plates stamped with teleportation/plane shift sigil sequences** (to Jotenheim 1, 2, and 3), and **40gp**. He has been casting the *Wall of Stone* spell on a daily basis to create some of the smooth stone walls of the citadel. He does not cast it more than once a day, in order to preserve his spell slots in case of attack. He selects *Wall of Stone* instead of *Immolation*. He has *Plane Shift* in his spellbook (see area 24), and selects *Plane Shift* rather than *Teleport*.

Another group of slaves works on the entry to area 23. The double doors have been hung on a smooth stone wall but there is an opening where the west end of the wall ends. The slaves are working on smoothing the cavern wall near the opening.

Another group works on expanding and smoothing the eastern edge of the cavern, carting rocks and rubble to the nearest pile.

23 – King Tholak’s chamber is unfinished, and is temporarily lit by fires. More slaves work on cutting smooth walls. There are a giant bed, table and chair, furs and skins, and (mostly worthless) battle trophies adorning the room. One “trophy” is a well-made giant battleaxe (see “Aftermath” section). There is a locked chest (DC 24 check w/thieves’ tools to open) containing **400gp**.

24 – the Troll Mage’s chamber, currently shared by the visiting Storm Giant emissary until a guest chamber can be developed. There are two bedrolls (giant-sized), shelves of books written in giantish and other arcane languages (the **library is worth 1000gp**), spell component jars and boxes, a table and 2 chairs, and a bureau. The room is lit by a large brazier in the center. One of the books on the shelves is the Troll Mage’s **spellbook**, which contains all of the spells listed for him, plus *Wall of Stone* and *Plane Shift*. The bureau contains extra clothing for the troll mage and the storm giant emissary.

25 – Queen Accura’s chamber is roughly finished. There is a mat on the floor, huge chest, table and two chairs, a bureau, and a very large **mirror** (25’ high) **worth 200gp** if successfully transported. The chest contains the queen’s wardrobe and jewelry. The jewelry is some that she owned prior to her marriage, and she is not allowed to wear it now. She still treasures it, however, and would be loathe to part with it. In all, her **jewelry is worth 500gp**.

Aftermath

If King Tholak and his minions are being defeated, and Accura is still alive, she will join the fray against him, casting lightning bolts and throwing rocks at him while awaiting recharge.

If Accura is killed, the reward for defeating Tholak is reduced. Epic boons will still be rewarded for defeating Tholak and taking the citadel, but DM should withhold the one best available boons for each character.

If Accura survives and is helped by the party to return home, the full epic boon reward will be offered.

If Accura survives:

Upon King Tholak's death, she will first try to secure a weapon with which to defend herself, preferably the storm giant emissary's +2 Greatsword or Tholak's +2 Greataxe. She will not attack the party, but will assume a defensive posture. If the party is friendly and not aggressive, she will relax and back away, and will then take or bargain for the key from Tholak's neck and unlock the ankle chain. She will then try to defile his body and cut off his head (don't diss a storm giantess!). After that, she will try to move to her chamber to get some heavy clothing. If the party allows all this, she will take a more friendly attitude and if able to communicate, will offer thanks and will offer the jewelry that she wears as a reward if they will help her get home.

Prior to leaving Jotenheim, she will urge the burning of the bodies and building materials, and will throw her clothing provided by Tholak on the fire as well. She will also advocate freeing of all the slaves.

Since she only speaks giantish, that is the language she will use to attempt to communicate, asking for the means to return home. If communication is successful, she will try to convince the party to teleport her back to the city of Fortuna which is on the plane of Glasdheim. She is not familiar with the mechanics of teleportation, but if the party explores options with her, she will reveal that one of her gems was made by the royal lapidary in Fortuna, and it could be used as the teleport token to safely teleport there.

She does not want her return to Fortuna to be made known yet, so she will further coax the party to cast invisibility on her, then teleport to the lapidary shop, and then teleport or move invisibly to a tower which is visible from the shop. This process should get her to the safety of her brother's hideout, where she will hope to lead a rebellion against her uncle the prince.

Once her safety is secure, she will allow the party to stay in a safe location in Fortuna, and provide them with whatever luxuries they desire, but will attempt to dissuade them from participating in the rebellion, which she and her brother believe must not rely on any outsiders. Further, since at that point she will understand the mechanics of teleportation, she will provide a rough description of an enemy's (Fire Giants) lair in Muspelheim, along with an item from that location which should allow for error-free teleportation there. She only asks that they not move on it until the rebellion has started, lest the Fire Giants become suspicious of a larger plot. They are loosely allied with Prince Tarriance and King Tholak, and Accura would like to neutralize them once the rebellion begins.

The item from Muspelheim which will allow teleportation there, is a giant-sized battleaxe, keenly forged and worth **200gp**. It was a wedding gift from a Fire Giant leader and is kept with Tholak's battle trophy collection. It is inscribed to commemorate the wedding, so it is no more than 5 months old. Using it to teleport to Muspelheim will take the party to the forge building of a huge compound in Muspelheim.

In the event of this alliance with Accura, the full epic boon opportunity will be awarded each character, in the week between her rescue and the start of the rebellion.

She will also allow her agents to show the party the location the sigil sequence of a teleport/plane shift circle in Fortuna, which the party could use to return.

Epic Boons

As noted in the introduction, this adventure module is intended for approximately 4 characters of Level 20, with epic boons already awarded. If the party successfully completes this part of the adventure (alliance with Accura), the DM should award an epic boon to each character. Following is a list of suggested boons from which to select and assign:

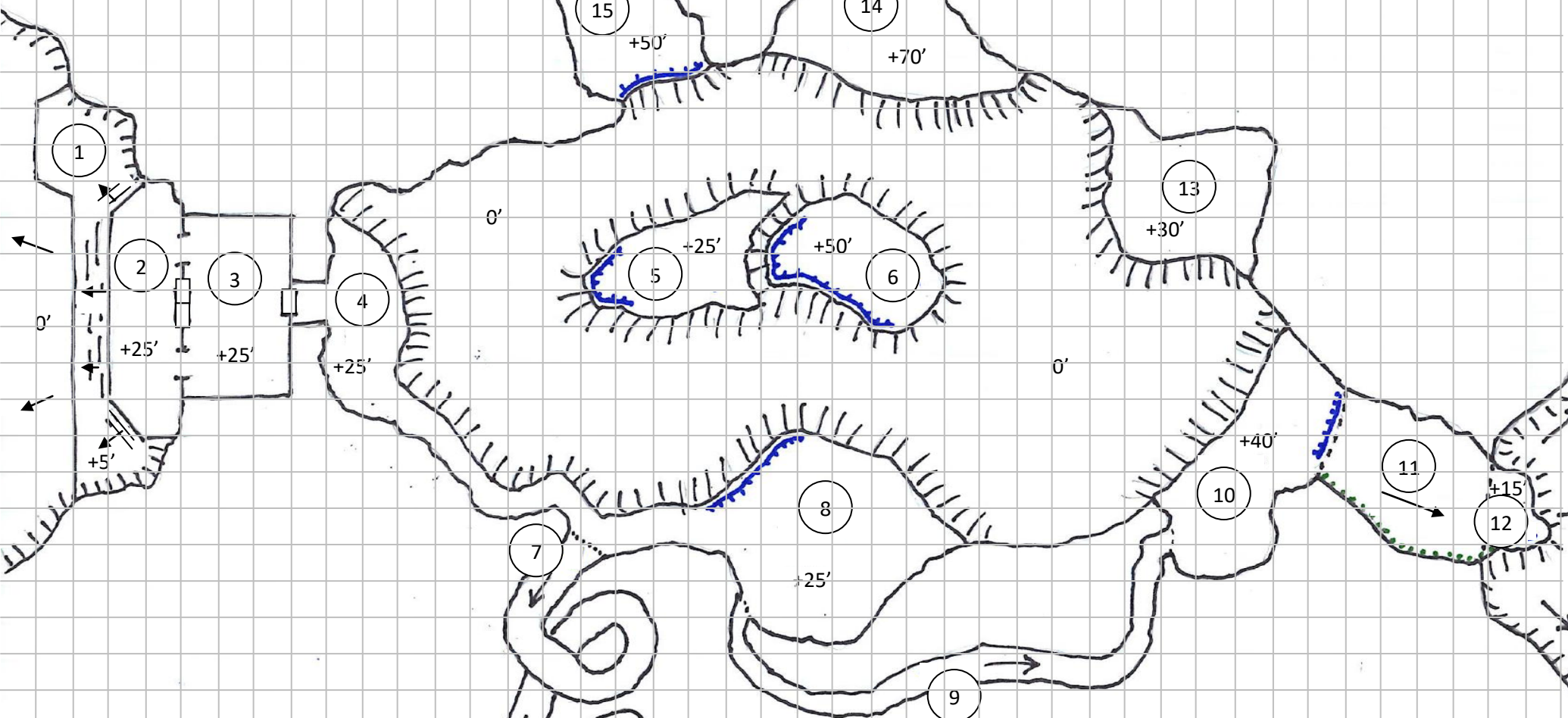
- Agility (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Attunement - (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Elemental Void (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Epic Flight (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Growth (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Hasty Heroics (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Intellect (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Irresistible Offense (DMG)
- Legendary Actions (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Nirvana (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Proficient (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Quickness - (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Resistance (dandwiki/homebrew)
- the Cleric (dandwiki/homebrew)
- the Fire Soul (DMG)
- the Frozen Path (dandwiki/homebrew)
- the Mountain (dandwiki/homebrew)
- Truesight (DMG)
- Warmage (dandwiki/homebrew)

Below is a suggested process for characters to receive their next epic boon. No two boons awards should be duplicated...yet.

- DM selects boons applicable/beneficial to each character and creates a list of 8-10 beneficial boons for each character.
- Party must determine the order in which characters receive their boons (avoiding duplications would possibly require removing some selections from one or more lists, so order of selection may be important).
- The character selects three candidate boons from the list.
- The DM randomly selects one boon for the character, from the winnowed down list of three.
- The boon is awarded immediately upon selection.

Jotenheim 3 -- King Tholak' Citadel


1st Level



+5' - Elevations relative to entrance base

One Square = 25 feet

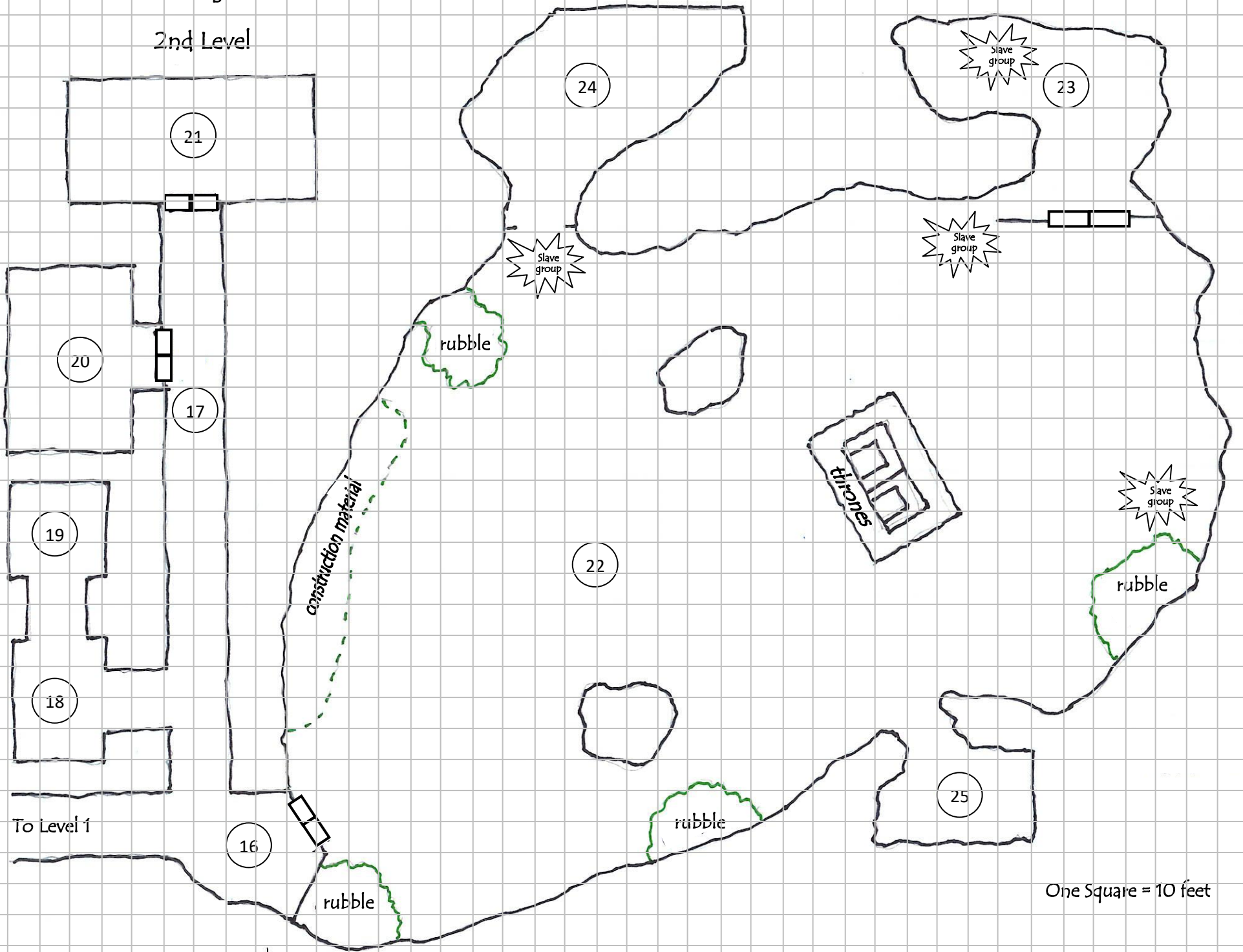
Arrow = down →


Ice Wall

To Level 2
Area 16

Jotenheim 3 - King Tholak' Citadel

2nd Level



One Square = 10 feet