

Pine Doom Forest

Pine Doom Forest is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for **four to six players with an average party level (APL) of 8, 11, 14, or 17.**

Awakened trees known as pine dooms terrorize foresters, hunters, and other humanoids in West Nornswood. The characters must enter the ancient forest and confront these terrors before they destroy the village of Arnarhvall.

Adventure Hook

Arnarhvall's master carpenter, Halvor, renowned for his exquisite woodwork, finds himself in a conundrum. The nearby forest, his primary source of quality lumber, has recently become infested with deadly awakened pine trees known as pine dooms. Local legend suggests that an imbalance in the magical ley lines coursing through the earth may be responsible, though no one knows for certain. This invasion not only jeopardizes his livelihood but poses an imminent threat to the delicate local ecosystem. The arcane-infused trees could destabilize the balance of nature in the entire region, affecting wildlife and perhaps even the people of Arnarhvall. In desperation, Halvor is offering a finely crafted item from his workshop as a reward for anyone who can quell this unnatural menace.

Backstory

In truth, the sudden appearance of the pine dooms is the result of an experiment gone awry by Ingrid the Enchantress, a recluse wizard living deep within the forest. Obsessed with unlocking the secrets of the ancient runes to create a symbiotic relationship between nature and magic, her latest incantation inadvertently shattered a protective seal on a subterranean wellspring of raw magical energy. This rupture led to the magical energy seeping into the soil, affecting the flora, particularly the pine trees, transforming them into malevolent, awakened beings known as pine dooms. Ingrid

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

APL	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
8	8th-Level	Hard
9	8th-Level	Medium
10	8th-Level	Easy
11	11th-Level	Hard
12	11th-Level	Medium
13	11th-Level	Easy
14	14th-Level	Hard
15	14th-Level	Medium
16	14th-Level	Easy
17	17th-Level	Hard
18	17th-Level	Medium
19	17th-Level	Easy

is now desperate to reverse the consequences of her actions but fears approaching the townspeople, knowing that her arcane tampering has put the entire community and natural world at risk.

Adventure Summary

The adventure should play out as follows:

Part 1. Arnarhvall

The characters meet Halvor, Arnarhvall's master carpenter, and learn of the dangers the pine dooms pose. Almost immediately, pine dooms attack the western edge of the town.

Part 2. Into the Nornswood

The characters head into the Nornswood, hoping to find a way to quell the pine doom's animosity. Eventually, the characters discover an old hunting cabin where Ingrid the Enchantress lives. Ingrid reveals that she is the one responsible for the pine dooms' attacks. She believes she can reverse the condition but needs three ingredients to do it: sapphire water, stone circle resin, and Bruinna's claw.

Part 3. The Ritual

With ingredients in hand, the characters meet Ingrid at the Frostbite Clearing. Before she can start the ritual, pine dooms attack. The characters must fight the pine dooms and defend Ingrid so she can successfully perform the ritual.

Part 1. Arnarhvall

The adventure begins with the characters in the large village of Arnarhvall. The characters might be passing through or there because of another quest hook. See the Arnarhvall document for details on this settlement.

At some point, they're invited to Timber's Edge, Arnarhvall's famous woodworking shop. When they arrive, read the following:

As you walk into Timber's Edge, the scent of freshly cut wood fills the air, mingling with the subtle notes of varnish and sawdust. Various wooden objects, from intricate carvings to functional furniture, are displayed around the shop. Behind the counter stands a burly man with a thick beard and hands that have clearly seen years of labor. He looks up from his work and greets you with a warm but weary smile. "Ah, travelers! Welcome to Timber's Edge. Name's Halvor, Master Carpenter of Arnarhvall. You seem like the sort who knows how to handle themselves in a scrap. I could use some help with a rather..unnatural problem we're having in the nearby forest. We call them pine dooms—trees that have come to life in the worst way. If you can help me put an end to these monstrosities, I'd be happy to craft something special for you. More than that, you'd be doing the land a service; those pine dooms are twisting the very essence of the forest."

Before the characters have time to respond, read this:

Just as Halvor finishes speaking, a sudden commotion erupts outside the shop. The door bursts open, and a townspeople, breathless and wide-eyed, stammers, "Pine dooms! They're attacking the eastern side of town!" The alarming news spreads like wildfire; you can hear shouting in the streets, the hurried footsteps of people rushing to arm themselves or gather loved

ones. The ambient noise of sawing and hammering in Timber's Edge ceases abruptly as Halvor's assistants look at each other in disbelief. Halvor's eyes narrow, his face hardening into a serious expression. "By the gods, they've never come this close to town before. This is bad, very bad. We need to act, and fast." With that, he reaches for a sturdy wooden mallet hanging on the wall behind him, clearly ready to join the fight.

If the characters choose to help, Halvor (**COMMONER**) leads them to the other side of the village. Once the party comes near a shop named Foreign Words, they see the pine dooms.

Emerging from the eastern edge of Arnarhvall, the pine dooms make a terrifying sight. These aren't ordinary trees; they're hulking, sentient monstrosities, their bark almost like armor and their limbs twisted into gnarled fists. With each step they take, the ground seems to shudder, as if nature itself fears them. Suddenly, one of the pine dooms rears back and hurls a barrage of oversized pine cones with deadly force. The projectiles rain down upon the villagers, incapacitating many who were unfortunate enough to be in the line of fire.

Two of the town's clay golem protectors are doing their best to hold the line, their earthy fists landing solid blows on the animated trees. But even these formidable defenders are outnumbered and struggling to keep the situation under control. Amidst the chaos, a bookish woman collapses on the ground, her face a mask of utter terror. She shrieks as a pine dooms looms over her, its massive branches reaching down like the claws of some primeval beast, ready to snatch her away.

The prone woman's name is Edda. She is Arnarhvall's linguist (**COMMONER**). If the characters don't get involved in the fight, she will surely die.

The number of pine dooms that the characters will face in this encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Attack on Arnarhvall table. Halvor insists on joining in the fight. The pine dooms' stat blocks are detailed in the appendix of this book.

ATTACK ON ARNARHVALL

Adventure Level	Encounter
8th-Level	2 PINE DOOMS
11th-Level	3 PINE DOOMS
14th-Level	4 PINE DOOMS
17th-Level	6 PINE DOOMS

This introductory encounter is designed to be somewhat difficult, putting the sheer power of the pine doom threat on display. Fortunately, the pine dooms fear fire and will flee if the characters utilize it in the fight. You might also have two of the village's clay golem defenders join the fight, especially if the characters struggle with the challenge.

Award the characters inspiration if they keep both Edda and Halvor safe.

Once the battle with the pine dooms ends, Halvor—and many of the other locals—hope that the characters recognize the threat that Arnarhvall faces, and will help them prevent any further incursions.

If the characters agree to help, continue with Part 2. If they don't, the Arnarhvalldic people jeer the characters. Shop owners and innkeepers double their prices or will outright refuse to sell them any goods. Reports of the characters' cowardice quickly spread throughout the region.

WHAT HALVOR KNOWS

The characters can ask Halvor what he knows about the pine dooms. He does his best to answer.

Question: "How long have these Pine Dooms been causing trouble?"

Halvor: "Well, they've been a menace for nearly two moons now. At first, we thought they were isolated incidents, but it's gotten worse lately. The first attack happened near MacLeod Cairn, a ways north of here, just east of the Jarnvdir Trail. The area around the cairn has always held some mystical significance, but it's never produced threats before."

Question: "Is there a specific area in the forest where these Pine Dooms are commonly found?"

Halvor: "Aye, most of the reports have come from the forest's eastern edge, along the Serpentine Creek. That's where the most attacks have occurred. Some folks claim they heard strange chants near the old Druidhenge of Alba, but that could be fearful talk. You can get to the Druidhenge by following the East Road toward the mountains. Just before crossing the bridge over the Serpentine Creek, head north for four miles. Careful, though—a colossal brown bear named Bruinna stalks the woods near there."

Question: "Do you have any clues or leads on how these Pine Dooms might have been created or awakened?"

Halvor: "I'm no scholar, but some say dark magic might be involved. Ingrid the Enchantress is looking into it, and she's as knowledgeable about these things as anyone around here. They say she's staying at an old hunter's cabin that's south of the East Road."

Part 2. Into the Nornswood

The characters must enter the Nornswood forest. Show them the Player's Handout of the West Nornswood, making note of the locations Halvor mentioned.

Navigating the Nornswood

The Nornswood is large but not particularly dense. The biggest challenges are steep hills, jagged rocks, and the bitter chill sliding off the Svartefjell, the titanic mountain range to the east.

The characters can move through the forest at a rate of 2 hexes per hour at a normal pace, 3 at a fast pace, and 1 at a slow pace. Double these speeds if the characters are traveling with a ranger that has forests or hills as their favored terrain. While moving at a fast pace, the characters have disadvantage on passive Wisdom (Perception) checks. And while moving at a slow pace, the characters can use Stealth.

One of the characters should take on the role of navigator. Every four hours of the travel, the party's navigator must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. If the check succeeds, the navigator knows the party's exact location on the map of the West Nornswood. If the check fails, the party becomes lost. Whenever the lost part moves 1 hex, roll a d6 to determine which neighboring hex the party enters randomly, and do not divulge the party's location to the players. While the party is lost, players can't point the group's location on their map of the West Nornswood. The navigator can attempt to find the party's location at the end of a short rest. The party also finds its location if they find a road so long as a blizzard is not hitting the region.

Random Encounters

Once every eight hours, roll a d20 to determine if the party has a random encounter. On a result of 19 or 20, a random encounter occurs. Use the Nornswood Random Encounter table to determine the nature of the encounter. Each encounter is described after the table.

NORNSWOOD RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d4	Encounter
1	Blizzard
2	Bruinna the Bear
3–4	Pine dooms

Blizzard. A blizzard suddenly sweeps over the region. It brings with it extreme cold, strong winds, and heavy precipitation and lasts for 1d3 days. Creatures exposed to the blizzard's cold must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion.

Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear (thick coats, gloves, and the link) and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates, such as the pine dooms.

The strong winds impose disadvantages on ranged weapon attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. Strong winds also extinguish open flames, disperse fog, and make flying by nonmagical means nearly impossible. A flying creature in a strong wind must land at the end of its turn or fall.

The precipitation lightly obscures everything, and creatures in the area have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Navigation checks made during the blizzard are made with disadvantage, as well, and must be made once every hour instead of every four hours of travel. Cut travel times in half, as the deep snow makes travel slow and arduous.

Bruinna the Bear. The party encounters the bear, Bruinna. See Bruinna's Den for more information.

Pine Dooms. Pine dooms attack the party. The number of pine dooms that attack the party depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Pine Doom Encounter table. Pine doom stat blocks are detailed in the appendix.

PINE DOOM ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
8th-Level	1d2 PINE DOOMS
11th-Level	1d3 PINE DOOMS
14th-Level	1d4 PINE DOOMS
17th-Level	1d6 PINE DOOMS

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of West Nornswood as seen on page [x].

A–Bruinna's Den

Bruinna's Den, at first glance, appears to be a particularly spacious and unusually structured bear's den. The entrance is a wide aperture partially concealed by thick shrubs and coniferous branches, leading into a dark, cavernous interior. The walls are not just earthen or lined with foliage as one might expect but are curiously reinforced with smoother, harder substances like stone and even what appear to be metallic elements.

Once inside, the space opens up dramatically, revealing sections that are too architecturally intricate to be the work of any bear. Shelves carved into the wall hold various trinkets and items, some glinting with an otherworldly gleam. The air is cool but surprisingly fresh, devoid of the mustiness one would expect in a bear's habitat. Most startling is the hoard of treasure subtly piled in one secluded corner, consisting of silver coins, gemstones, and arcane artifacts.

Encounter: Bruinna the "Bear." It is only upon venturing deep inside that one might encounter Bruinna, not just an ordinary bear but an ANCIENT SILVER DRAGON in disguise. With the ability to polymorph into a bear, she

observes intruders carefully before deciding whether to reveal her proper, majestic form.

If the characters have come to claim her claw as part of Ingrid's ritual (see page [x]), the dragon gladly relinquishes one of its claws, so long she senses that the characters' intentions are pure. If the characters inquire why the dragon hasn't helped against the pine dooms, Bruinna shares that she's been busy dealing with "private matters" in the mountains. Nothing short of strong enchantment magic will make her change her mind.

Treasure: Bruinna's Hoard. Like any dragon, Bruinna has a sizable hoard. Of course, trying to steal from her may cause her to lose her temper. The hoard contains two million silver pieces (Bruinna finds all other types of coins tacky), an ancient shortsword with a pommel in the shape of a goblin's face (it belonged to the goblin hero Jarl Horak the Tall, and is worth 2,500 gp), a cape studded with gemstones and featuring epaulets of egret feathers (worth 2,500 gp), 100 banded agate gems worth 25 gp each, a potion of supreme healing, two spell scrolls of plane shift, and a bag of devouring (she uses it to dispose of waste and sometimes kobolds that sneak into her cavern).

B-Druidhenge of Alba

The Druidhenge of Alba is an enigmatic and awe-inspiring site nestled deep within a secluded forest glade. A ring of towering, ancient menhirs, each adorned with intricate carvings and moss-laden surfaces, forms a mystical circle. At its center, a great stone altar rests, worn by the elements yet resonant with palpable energy. Age-old trees encircle the henge, their branches seemingly bowing in reverence to the arcane space, and their roots visibly intertwining with the stones as if guarding some secret wisdom.

Encounter: The Custodians of the Stone Circle. The Druidhenge of Alba is safeguarded by a reclusive order of six female druids known as the Custodians of the Stone Circle. One of them, an elderly woman named Elira serves as the speaker of the Custodians, but their true leader is a majestic awakened roc

named Skysong. Revered as a celestial guardian by the druids, Skysong nests atop one of the tallest trees overlooking the henge. With her keen eyesight and formidable talons, she scans for any threats to the sanctity of the sacred stones.

If the characters have come to the henge to claim stone circle resin, the druids will deny them the privilege. They believe that the pine dooms are the personification of the forest itself and exist to punish the humanoids that live in the area for their innumerable transgressions. If the characters choose to fight the group, the druids fight valiantly. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure.

- **8th-level.** The six **DRUIDS** fight the characters. The **ROC**, Skysong, only joins the fight when the characters take out half of the druids. Otherwise, she keeps her distance.
- **11th-level.** Skysong the **ROC** fights alongside the six **DRUIDS**.
- **14th-level.** Skysong the **ROC** fights alongside the six **DRUIDS**. If Skysong falls in combat, or the characters kill half the druids, one of the druids or Skysong summons a **PINE DOOM** (see the appendix) to join the battle.
- **17th-level.** Same as 14th level, except two **PINE DOOMS** join the battle.

Treasure: Stone Resin. The altar at the center of the menirs is covered in enchanted sap called stone resin, one of the ingredients necessary to complete Ingrid's ritual (see page [x]). The characters can scrape away some of the sap using a sharp implement. In addition to its use in the ritual, the resin has magical properties. The resin can be used as the spell components for the awaken spell instead of an agate, but only when used to grant a plant sentience. A plant awakened this way gains Intelligence and Charisma scores of 12 (instead of 10).



C–Sapphiresjön

Nestled amidst the undulating hills of the Nornswood lies Sapphiresjön, a crystalline pond that mirrors the clear azure sky above. The pond is so named for its sapphire-like hue, and it's said that its cold, pure waters hold both mystical properties and ancient secrets. Ringed by towering pine trees, the surface of the pond occasionally ripples in the breeze as if whispering the tales of the old gods to those who would listen.

Encounter: Kelpie. A **KELPIE** (see the appendix) protects the pond. She doesn't look for confrontation but issues the following warning to anyone who comes to the spring.

*Drink from Sapphiresjön, fear not its flow,
In liquid whispers, ancient secrets glow.
But lift its water beyond its shore,
Find a new form you'll wear evermore.*

*In clear reflection, a caution told,
Dare you risk it? Are you that bold?
Take heed of these words, a riddle's core,
Lest you walk on four legs, forevermore.*

Trick: Magical Water. The water of the Sapphiresjön's bears an ancient enchantment. A creature that drinks the water gains 1d4 + 1 temporary hit points and is cured of poison and disease. However, any creature who carries water from the pond becomes cursed. With each passing day, the creature's physical appearance and stature become more boar-like. After seven days, the creature permanently polymorphs into a wild **BOAR**, as if subjected to the *true polymorph* spell. The remove curse spell or similar magic ends the condition.

Water from the pond is one of the ingredients necessary for Ingrid's ritual (see page [x]).

D–MacLeod Cairn

MacLeod Cairn is an ancient, enigmatic mound of stones, rising solemnly in a clearing amidst the cold, coniferous forest. Overgrown with hardy moss and half-buried in snow, the cairn

radiates an air of ancient reverence and eerie tranquility. An intricate network of carved runes decorates its weathered stones, and a single, massive boulder rests atop the formation as if placed there by giant hands long ago.

Encounter: Another Adventuring Party. The first attack from the pine dooms was here, at the cairn, where they battled a woefully underprepared party who'd just searched the cairn in hopes of treasure. The pine dooms killed two of the party's members. The remaining three have just laid their companions to rest and are trying to decide what to do. This party consists of Thorvald Ironaxe (a dwarven **BERSERKER**), Astrid Stormshield (a human **VETERAN**), and Gunnar Wolfheart (a half-elven **SCOUT**).

Although they are distraught over the loss of their companions, the adventurers mention that just before the encounter, they spotted a strange, old woman with a brown eyepatch rushing through the trees. The adventurers don't know it, but that was Ingrid the Enchantress running away from the pine dooms.

The other adventurers are relatively inexperienced compared to the characters. If the characters have a high-level cleric among them, they humbly request that the cleric revive their two companions who died, an elven **MAGE** named Amraam, and a tiefling **KNIGHT** named Reverence. They have 1,000 gp between the three of them, which they will gladly give the characters should they perform this task.

Development: The Cairn. Curiously, the cairn is devoid of dangers. It is simply a burial place for the tribes that once inhabited this area. However, if you wish to add a bit more mystery to this area—and a side quest or two—feel free to populate the cairn with appropriate challenges.

E–Frostbite Clearing

Frostbite Clearing is a hauntingly beautiful yet perilous expanse in the heart of the cold forest. During the day, sunlight filters through the skeletal branches of surrounding trees,

casting dappled shadows on the ground that's perpetually covered in a layer of snow and frost. At night, the area takes on an ethereal glow under the light of the moon, but the beauty belies the danger. The cold here is intense, unnaturally so, and many creatures steer clear of the area.

Investigation: The Rituals. If the characters come here before meeting Ingrid and recovering the ingredients, they won't find anyone here. However, they can learn quite a bit from a variety of successful ability checks, which shed light on the original ritual performed by Ingrid the Enchantress. The characters may make as many ability checks as they like, uncovering the following information.

- DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception). At least one humanoid was recently in the area.
- DC 15 Wisdom (Survival). The humanoid originally came from the south. They were here briefly, even setting up camp here. After a couple of days, they fled back south. Further successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks will lead inevitably lead the characters to the old hunter's cabin and Ingrid the Enchantress.
- DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana). The humanoid performed some sort of ritual here. The remains of spell components and other magical paraphernalia suggest that it was a ritual similar to a druid's awaken spell, except far more potent.
- DC 15 Intelligence (Nature). Numerous trees near the clearing were suddenly uprooted. Indentations in the mud and snow suggest that the trees gained sentience and started walking.

Development: The Ritual. If the characters successfully gather Ingrid's ingredients, they can accompany her here to Frostbite Grove to perform the ritual, ending the pine dooms' hostility. See Part 3 for details.

F–Wailing Willow Grove

The Wailing Willow Grove is unlike any other forest clearing, for here, the willows themselves appear to be made entirely of ice. Each delicate branch and drooping limb glistens as if sculpted from frozen water, turning the trees into intricate chandeliers of ethereal beauty. The air itself seems to carry their lament; a haunting melody made all the more resonant by the ice that forms their very essence. Though undeniably captivating, a heavy sense of melancholy emanates from these icy sentinels, causing locals to give the grove a wide berth. But for those who dare to venture close, the grove offers a chilling yet unforgettable spectacle, where even the whispers of the wind seem to echo the willows' eternal wail.

Encounter: Ice Willows. The trees here are actually sentient creatures called **ICE WILLOWS** (see the appendix). So long as the characters don't cause them any harm, the willows will allow them to travel through the area unhindered. The willows speak Sylvan and will share what they know of the pine dooms, having tussled with them once or twice since the trees became awakened by Ingrid's ritual. The willows know that a humanoid woman with only one eye performed a ritual at the Frostbite Clearing two months ago, awakening the pine dooms.

G–Old Hunter's Cabin

Tucked away in a secluded corner of the forest is this rustic, single-story wooden structure that has clearly seen years of use and weather. Its timeworn shingles and moss-covered logs give it an air of quiet permanence, as though it has been a part of the forest for generations. Most surprising, perhaps, is the wisp of smoke curling out of its stone chimney, suggesting that despite its seemingly abandoned state, the cabin is currently occupied.

Encounter: Ingrid the Enchantress. Ingrid the Enchantress (CN human **MAGE**) is an elderly human woman with a stern yet troubled countenance. Her eyes, one of which is obscured by a brown leather eye patch, hold

the weight of wisdom and a lifetime of arcane knowledge. Clothed in layered robes adorned with mystical sigils, she carries an aura of authority and a presence that commands respect. Despite her fearsome reputation and formidable magical abilities, Ingrid is deeply concerned about the pine doom crisis plaguing the forest. With enough coaxing, she reveals that she is the one responsible for their creation.

Her usual confidence is overshadowed by a palpable sense of desperation; she knows the ritual to end the trees' hostility but is apprehensive about venturing into the increasingly dangerous woods to gather the necessary ingredients. This dilemma leaves her anxious, keenly aware that time is of the essence as she searches for a way to protect her home and the natural world she cherishes.

To complete the reversal, she tells the characters to gather the following ingredients:

One of Bruinna the Bear's claws (see page [x]). Ingrid knows that Bruinna is a silver dragon, but won't share this information with the characters.

Stone resin from the Druidhenge of Alba (see page [x]). Ingrid knows that Skysong and her druids won't help the party, believing that the pine dooms represent the forest's judgment on humanoidkind.

Water from the Sapphiresjön (see page [x]). Although she won't willingly share this with the characters, Ingrid suspects that there is a magical curse that protects anyone from taking the water—and she is correct.

Once the characters gather the ingredients, she instructs them to travel to the Frostbite Clearing where she can perform the reversal ritual.

Treasure: Ingrid's Effects. In addition to a spellbook containing all the spells Ingrid knows, she also carries a *staff of frost*.

Development: Witchhunt. While the characters are speaking with Ingrid, some of the villagers from Arnarhvall, have hunted her down. They (correctly) suspect that she is responsible for the pine dooms, and believe that killing her will end the curse. The mob consists of four **TRIBAL WARRIORS** and three **SCOUTS**. If the characters met the adventuring

party at MacLeod's Cairn but didn't revive their dead companions (see page [x]), Thorvald, Astrid, and Gunnar lead the mob. Otherwise, they are led by a **VETERAN** named Sigurd. None of the mob's members are evil, but they are angry and afraid and want someone to suffer for their losses.

Part 3. The Ritual

Once the characters successfully collect the three ingredients Ingrid needs to complete the reversal ritual, she instructs them to meet her at Frostbite Clearing. Of course, things don't go smoothly—the pine dooms, sensing that the Enchantress hopes to end their awakened state, mount an attack against Ingrid and the characters. The pine dooms and allies they've gathered to their cause attack in waves. The number and types of creatures that appear each turn depend on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Attack on the Frostbite Clearing table, fighting on their own initiative count. Recognizing that her ritual could end their sentience, the pine dooms continue fighting even if fire is used against them. Pine dooms and swarms of awakened shrubs are detailed in the appendix.

It will take Ingrid one minute to perform the ritual to end their awakened state. Once the ritual is done, all of the pine dooms lose sentience and root in the ground. The pine doom's allies, recognizing that the battle is lost, flee or surrender.

If Ingrid dies before she can complete the ritual, a spellcaster of 8th level or higher can attempt the ritual using Ingrid's notes. Performing the ritual requires 10 successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) checks. The successes don't need to be consecutive; keep track of them until the character achieves ten.

If there are no spellcasters present, the characters will likely have to retreat and come up with a new plan to end the pine dooms' hostilities.

Development: Here Comes Help! If the characters struggle with this combat, you might offer some help in the form of allies gained along the way. The adventurers from MacLeod's cairn (see page [x]) will likely help

ATTACK ON THE FROSTBITE CLEARING

Round	8th-Level	11th-Level	14th-Level	17th-Level
1	1 PINE DOOM	2 PINE DOOMS	3 PINE DOOMS	3 PINE DOOMS
2	1 SWARM OF AWAKENED SHRUBS	1d2 SWARMS OF AWAKENED SHRUBS	1d3 SWARMS OF AWAKENED SHRUBS	1d3 + 1 SWARMS OF AWAKENED SHRUBS
3	—	—	1d2 - 1 PINE DOOMS	1d2 PINE DOOMS
4	1d3 + 1 DRYADS	2d3 DRYADS	1d6 + 2 DRYADS	2d4 + 2 DRYADS
5	—	1d2 - 1 WINTER WOLVES	1d2 WINTER WOLVES	1d3 WINTER WOLVES
6	1 PINE DOOM	1d2 PINE DOOMS	1d3 PINE DOOMS	1d4 PINE DOOMS
7	1d2 AIR ELEMENTALS	1d3 AIR ELEMENTALS	1d4 AIR ELEMENTALS	1d4 + 1 AIR ELEMENTALS
8	1d2 - 1 PINE DOOMS	1 PINE DOOM	1d2 PINE DOOMS	1d3 PINE DOOMS
9	1 SWARM OF AWAKENED SHRUBS	1d2 SWARMS OF AWAKENED SHRUBS	1d3 SWARMS OF AWAKENED SHRUBS	1d3 + 1 SWARMS OF AWAKENED SHRUBS
10	1d2 - 1 PINE DOOMS	1d2 PINE DOOMS	1d3 PINE DOOMS	1d4 PINE DOOMS
11+	Roll a d10 each round after the tenth. Compare the result to this table to determine what creatures appear. For example, a roll of 3 reproduces the enemies from the third round.			

if the characters convince them that Ingrid's ritual was an accident or if the characters revived their dead companions. The ancient silver dragon, Bruinna, could suddenly appear, taking care of flying enemies. Even a few ice willows (see page [x]) could join the fight. Instead of rolling for these extra NPCs, have them eliminate any targets that are already close to falling in combat, allowing the characters to focus on more dangerous enemies.

Aftermath

If the characters manage to help Ingrid the Enchantress perform the ritual successfully, the pine dooms revert to their original non-sentient state, effectively ending the threat they pose to Arnarhvall. Master Carpenter Halvor gratefully crafts a finely made item for the heroes, and his respect among the townsfolk rises. Bruinna, the silver dragon disguised as a bear, may become a valuable ally to the characters, occasionally assisting them with her magical capabilities. The folks at MacLeod Cairn see the characters as fellow adventurers and may offer assistance in future quests.

If the ritual fails, the pine dooms become an ongoing menace to Arnarhvall and its surrounding areas. Attacks from the awakened

trees become more frequent, and the balance of the local ecosystem grows increasingly unstable. Tensions rise in the community, and the failure may attract opportunistic invaders or even darker creatures, making Arnarhvall's situation even more precarious. Halvor, disappointed, will be wary of seeking outside help again.

Successful completion of the quest earns the characters valuable allies. Ingrid may offer to provide magical assistance or share rare spells and potions in the future. Bruinna, intrigued by the characters' valiant efforts, may lend her draconic aid when most needed. If the adventurers assist the denizens of MacLeod Cairn, they earn strong allies proficient in combat and wilderness survival.

However, not all relationships develop positively. Interference in the Stone Circle's rituals may attract the ire of its mystical custodians, who view the adventurers as a threat to their sacred rites. Skysong, the majestic roc who oversees Druidhenge, might see the adventurers as intruders, causing tension between the characters and the mystical druids of the forest. Failure to resolve the pine doom problem could also turn public opinion against the characters, making Arnarhvall a less-than-friendly place to visit in the future. Ω