

# Seer's Hall Plain

Set in the frozen lowlands of the Kristol Tundra in central Ezrute, just south of the fantastic ice-forms of the Jää Spires, where the road from Skorra to Ezrute's west coast meets the trail that wends away northwest to the Ruins of Urksgard, is this small area that takes its name from one of the few settlements in these parts, the village of Seer's Hall. The region lies around latitude 72 degrees South, so is well within Nibirum's Antarctic Circle, making the summers very short, yet permanently daylit, while the winters are long and permanently sunless. However, the winters are not always so dark as might be imagined, as this area of Ezrute lies almost directly below the central line of Nibirum's Polar Auroral Zone, which means light from auroral displays often illuminates the landscape with its silent, eerie forms, something that can equally enhance, or trigger, unusual magical effects nearer the surface. Indeed a couple of Ley Lines span even this small region, forming a nexus at Ice Kraken Hill (Hex 405), before running away towards the southeast and north-northwest. The Ice Kraken Ley Line passes directly over Seer's Hall in its Village (Hex 204) as well.

This map covers an area around six miles square (10 kilometres) and the notes here give details on the contents of the various number-labelled one-mile hexagons on it. The surrounding area has some basic terrain sketched over it too, if in less detail than the centrally-mapped part. Everywhere is frozen for much of the year, often covered in deep snow and ice year-round. Many of the hills shown are not geological features. Instead, they are compacted snow and ice, solid enough to be land-like in structure, albeit they can be treacherous and variable in size and form over time, with elements such as thinly-covered ice crevasses forming serious hidden hazards in places. The middle of the mapped zone has a substantial area of giant redwood forest, which may help explain how Seer's Hall Village has survived here, as the woodland helps create a somewhat milder microclimate nearby, allowing hardier crops to be grown where the soil becomes sufficiently ice-free to allow limited agriculture.

Much of the map's contents were determined randomly using tables and ideas from "Into the Wild - Omnibus Edition" by Third Kingdom Games, the Shadowdark RPG main rulebook, and its supplementary zine "Cursed Scroll #3 - Midnight Sun", both the latter by The Arcane Library. The general map appearance was based on the style adopted for regional maps in the Cursed Scroll periodicals too. In the following notes, "SD", sometimes with page numbers, refers to items from the main Shadowdark rules, where items have been reused, suggested by, or adapted from them.

## Numbered Hex Features

**001 - Temple of the Savage Twilight:** A squat, black-stone Temple to which no trail leads. It is not large, and looks grim, even in midsummer daylight. Inside are four great, stone, humanoid effigies, seemingly carved from the stone walls. Beneath a central altar is a secret subterranean treasure chamber containing several items. The most notable is a powerfully magical suit of holy, golden, plate armour, able to defend its wearer against inimical spells as well as physical blows, and which can be used to call an avatar of its deity up to a dozen times a year to fight alongside the wearer. Only followers of the same deity may safely use the armour. (SD: This is the Armour of Saint Terragnis, p. 298, worth 1,200 gp.) With this are four items sacred to a different deity: A golden holy symbol adorned with a lustrous, large pearl (SD: These four are all sacred to Madeera the Covenant; this is worth 60 gp); A healing potion in a golden flask, decorated with the same holy symbol (SD: worth 150 gp); A suit of magical, lightweight mail armour that allows its wearer to fly at normal walking pace up to three minutes daily, enables the wearer to speak the language of angelic creatures, and intimidates creatures not aligned with its deity (SD: This is +2 mithral mail, AL L, flying is for up to 3 rounds per day, the language is Celestial, and attacks against creatures not having AL L have advantage while wearing it; worth 320 gp); and A mace with inlaid holy symbols on its head (SD: worth 50 gp). The effigies are actually Stone Golems, placed here to protect the treasure (SD, p. 222). Surrounding the Temple, hidden by the snow, are numerous concealed bear traps, designed to keep all intruders out. Who maintains and resets these when sprung, is unknown. Approaching the Temple from any direction will risk triggering up to 1d6 of these.

**003 - Enchanted Tor:** A low ice hill that rises into a curiously regular pylon of ice, around 30 feet tall (9 metres). The pylon has a square plan, and a pyramidal tip. Somewhere within either pylon or hill begins a Ley Line that runs southeast through features in Hexes 204, 405 and 606 before exiting the map. This is a line of magical energy, sometimes enhanced when the aurora dances in the skies high above, and which, while invisible to those without magical powers, often enhances the abilities of those near it that do possess such. It has an arcane scent like fish and the salt sea that lifts the spirits, for all this region is in the most landlocked central part of Ezrute. Those locally who know of the Line's existence commonly call it the Ice Kraken Line

(see Hex 405). Further ideas for using Ley Lines in RPGs may be found in various sources. However, adapted concepts from the Dolmenwood RPG by Necrotic Gnome have been used preferentially here.

**004 - Blue Ice Rocks:** One of the rarer instances where genuine rock outcrops are visible above the icy tundra as low hills occurs here. The rocks are of a strange, resistant, pale blue marble, and are quite extensive, running almost parallel to the nearby Urksgard Trail for nearly half a mile (not quite a kilometre), albeit not continuously. Seemingly quite natural rocks, their blue colouring can be mistaken for ice easily, hence their name.

**101 - Elof Trygg:** A large, stone-built homestead, with ice-block stables and other ancillary buildings all set on the open tundra here, is home to a family of five Frost Giants (SD, p. 219). They often travel about using Polar Bear-drawn sleds (SD: Polar Bears, p. 148). A log-outlined trail leads south to the Urksgard Trail from Elof Trygg, locally known as the Plank Road. The Giants regard most of the territory on the map - and beyond - as their domain, although they prefer not to linger near the Ley Lines, and they also respect Seer's Hall (Hex 204), so will not attack or raid it. Indeed, they have, if rarely, made use of the Seer's guidance.

**104 - Mammoth Wallow:** This is a large, low-lying vale, surrounded by low ice hills, where a herd of Mammoths (SD, p. 231) come to hunker-down when the weather turns especially bad, and when calving. They roam freely over long distances across the tundra otherwise, though they do loosely favour this as their "home" spot. The frequency with which they return means one or more Arctic Smilodons are apt to be lurking nearby, ready to pounce on any convenient source of fresh meat passing through (SD: White-furred, cold-immune versions of the normal Smilodon, p. 251, with the Polar Bear's Thick Fur attribute from p. 148).

**105 - Silent Valley:** Another curious vale, south of Mammoth Wallow (Hex 104), again surrounded by low ice hills, this area has the magical property of deadening all sounds within it, so nothing can be heard there. The Valley lies roughly east-west and is nearly a mile long (1.5 km) by three-quarters of a mile wide (1.2 km). As this effect is a property of the terrain, it cannot be overcome by any means, although a strong aurora overhead might be able to influence it - or spread its effects still further afield, temporarily.

**202 - Kristol Spires:** Southeast of Elof Trygg (Hex 101) is a zone where mysterious, sharp, pinnacles of ice have formed an extensive field across the tundra. While somewhat like the features so prevalent across the Jää Spires ice-field to the north and northwest of this map, these are more regular, narrower, if less tall, more transparently-colourful, and have very sharp edges and points. The tallest are up to 60 ft high (18 m), although many are much smaller, able to strike through boot-soles when stepped upon in their sharpness. Some have spiral forms, others can be more irregular, and there is clear evidence they grow, and sometimes collapse, if at quite a slow rate. They seem not to be overtly magical in nature, yet are not being produced by any obvious natural processes within the ice either.

**204 - Seer's Hall Village:** Detailed by a separate Atlas map, this is a small settlement of Ice Dwarfs who tend the subterranean Hall of the Seer, a great oracular location.

**302 - Ylvabrand:** On the northern edge of the Redwoods forest stands the gigantic form of a leafless, deciduous tree with many branches, a thick trunk, and roots that descend like branching fingers or claws deep into the icy tundra. It is made entirely from translucent ice, and is about 200 ft tall (60 m). It is very ancient, and has apparently stood here as long as any records from Ezrute have existed. A most significant local landmark. Those who pass nearby always show reverence, and comment favourably, towards it.

**401 - Trappers' Caves:** Among the low ice hills that extend over much of the northwestern corner of the hex-mapped zone (covering at least parts of Hexes 401, 301, 302, 201, 202, 102-105 and 003), several in this hex contain sizable caverns that are sometimes used as lairs by wild creatures, sometimes by humanoid hunters and trappers when traversing the tundra. Each cave system is enclosed within its own hill.

**404 - Bear Heart Lake:** Alongside the Skorra Road, a little north of the Urksgard Trail turning, is this small lake, fed by the Heart Stream, that flows out of the western end of the Gulbrand Canyon (Hex 605). While both Lake and Stream are frozen over, the Lake has thinner patches where holes have been cut through the ice, sometimes repeatedly, for fishing and to collect freshwater by travellers. Locals, knowing the true nature of Gulbrand Canyon and the source of these waters, avoid it, and look askance at any who mention having eaten fish or drunk water from it. (SD: Future social-interaction CHA checks are made at disadvantage after making such a revelation in this region.)

**405 - Ice Kraken Hill:** A large, in places translucent, ice hill just south of the Urksgard Trail-Skorra Road junction, which lies at the nexus of a pair of Ley Lines, making it an especially powerful, magical site. The arcane scent of the Lines mingling around it combine fish, the salt sea, and silvery metals, in a palely refreshing way that can sometimes seem a little too cold. This silvery-metal-cold sensation is the dominant arcane scent of what is called hereabouts the Skorra Ley, after the Road which the Line runs nearby here, although the Line passes only a great many miles west of Skorra far to the north in actuality. On the southeastern side of the Hill is a 10 ft (3 m) transparent ice pillar, deliberately shaped to look like a menhir, and which marks the southeastern Ley Line's direction beyond the Hill's summit. Within the Hill may be seen sometimes the albino form of the Ice Kraken. It is fully alive, alert and seems to swim comfortably through the ice as if it were water in the ocean, where such a creature might be more commonly expected. A small, secretive cult reveres the Ice Kraken like a deity, coming here occasionally in dead of night, to hold their ceremonies, always well out of sight of the nearby Road. (SD: The usual Kraken details, if required, can be used from p. 229, with the addition of an Impervious ability, as the creature is cold immune, and not liquid-sea-water-dependent. Its Storm ability can work equally well on land, perhaps with suitable adaptations, which will affect the whole of Hex 405.)

**502 - Statue Line:** On the eastern side of the Skorra Road, just where the Skorra Ley Line passes closest to it northeast of Ice Kraken Hill (Hex 405) and Bear Heart Lake (Hex 404), is a line of thirteen Human-shaped and sized statues, all carved from local blue-grey granite. The faces and detailed features on each have been smoothed away to indistinctness by the ages, as they have been here a very long time. Local legend has it that they were memorials set-up to commemorate a great battle somewhere in the vicinity in the distant past.

**605 - Gulbrand Canyon:** Not a simple geological canyon, this is a great ice crevasse that extends far below the surface, deep into the tundra. The Canyon lies on a generally southwest-northeast line, for all it is not especially straight for any distance. It is a little over a mile long (about 1.8 km) and up to 150 ft deep (45 m). Sheltered from the icy wastes above, the temperature further inside the Canyon remains above freezing all year, easily reaching 20 degrees C (70 deg F), sometimes even in winter. Melting ice from the tundra sides creates a small river, the Heart Stream, that flows along much of the Canyon floor, exits the western end and continues across the tundra to the Bear Heart Lake (Hex 404). Outside the Canyon, its surface is frozen over most of the year, except during parts of the summer. Ordinarily this warmth and flowing water, with the plant and small animal life in this deeper region, might attract local attention, and even a settlement or two. However, the place is shunned, as it was used in ages past as a burial ground for fifteen Dwarfs, who have somehow since become undead creatures that rise at night as Ice Zombies or Draugr. These are blue-black, powerful undead, whose presence brings a deadly chill with them, and which can pass through frozen earth and stone as if it were water and they were swimming. (SD: The Draugr are from p. 45 of Cursed Scroll #3.) The one positive aspect is they cannot cross a Ley Line without destroying themselves.

**606 - Erlingstone Ring:** An outcrop of grey granite in an oval Ring lies with its long axis along the Ley Line across this area, parts of which stone Ring have been carved, or perhaps magically moulded, into the form of low, standing stone pillars, equally spaced along the Ring's centreline, with one at each end. The outcropping seems perfectly natural, although the magical Ley Line here makes this hard to confirm.