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Legacy Of The Crystal Shard: Sundering Adventure 2 (D&D Adventure)



Synopsis

Return to Icewind Dale! Legacy of the Crystal Shard presents Icewind Dale in the time of the Sundering, a period that will define the future of the Forgotten Realms. In addition to providing 64 pages of in-depth information on the settlements of Ten Towns and their inhabitants, this product includes a harrowing 32-page adventure in which the player characters defend Icewind Dale against a rising threat with ties to the past. Legacy of the Crystal Shard allows characters to participate in important events connected to the Sundering and glimpse the future of the Forgotten Realms.

Components: 64-page setting book describing Icewind Dale and its inhabitants
32-page adventure book
Four-panel, foldout DM screen keyed to the adventure
Illustrated folder

Book Information

Series: D&D Adventure

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Wizards of the Coast; Pck Har/Pa edition (November 19, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786964642

ISBN-13: 978-0786964642

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.3 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

R.A. Salvatore is the New York Times best-selling author of more than forty novels, including the popular Forgotten Realms series The Legend of Drizzt. He's an avid gamer, father of three, and loyal citizen of Red Sox Nation. Residence: Massachusetts

SUMMARY: A hefty chunk of adventuring with callbacks to the history of Icewind Dale and a well-designed branching plot. Wizards of the Coast and their parent company, Hasbro, know that video games sell at least an order of magnitude beyond roleplaying book supplements. It's no

surprise, then, that the initial offerings for the latest edition of D&D are a set of stories strongly tied to successful video game properties -- *Legacy of the Crystal Shard* is, as the name implies, tied heavily into the events of the *Icewind Dale* novels by R. A. Salvatore and their related happenings as described in the *Icewind Dale* video games. This adventure is written on the assumption that it happens in the *Forgotten Realms* setting post-Sundering (about a little over a hundred years after the events told in the *Crystal Shard* novel), but with a small amount of reworking it could be placed at different points in *Realms* history, so long as the events of the *Crystal Shard* have already happened. The physical form factor of this adventure is nicely laid out but poorly implemented physically. The booklets are standard bookshelf size, matching the other D&D core books. The paper stock is glossy and thick with full-color illustrations, including maps and character portraits. Unfortunately the adventure comes in the form of a thin paper wrap around a heavy slick DM screen with two booklets inside: the adventure and a gazetteer of the *Icewind Dale* region and the *Ten Towns*. The thin wrap (pictured in the entry) is prone to tearing and does a poor job of holding the contents together. The assumption seems to be that the wrap would be thrown away by most buyers, which seems counterintuitive since it's good protection for the booklets and also has pleasing cover art. Various potential solutions include putting the booklets in a folder and putting the wrap into a cover insert, carefully cutting the wrap and gluing it to backing and then binding the booklets inside, or keeping everything in a single folio, but this is a lot of work that could've been avoided simply by using a more traditional folder-like cover. (The module couldn't easily have been done as a single stable-bound book because the DM screen wouldn't work in that format.) This adventure is built for use with 3rd, 4th, or 5th edition; important character and monster statistics are included in a separate document for download from Wizards' website. This means that the adventure calls out encounters in bold type, the DM then finds that encounter template in the encounters document, and the encounter template then lists which monsters are included in the encounter, listed later in the document. This in turn means a lot of page-turning, but if you've printed your own copy of the encounter document you can mark it up with pencil or pen as players progress through the adventure without worrying about marking up your glossy printed module booklets. The adventure itself provides a loose set of starting hooks for novice characters entering the *Icewind Dale* region at the town of *Bryn Shander*. From there, events start offering the notion that danger is afoot in the Dale, and the characters have to choose what they consider important and what crises they choose to address. The events in the module proceed on a timetable, and multiple antagonists have plans that intersect. Depending on the characters' actions, some antagonists may be defeated while others advance their plans and become more dangerous later in the adventure. The party

won't have enough time to deal with every crisis, so this provides excellent role-playing opportunities for the party members to discuss their priorities and figure out which enemies they choose to face. As the adventure moves toward its climax, the characters can explore different parts of Icewind Dale and pursue different pieces of the adventure, so they'll gain treasures and experience, which they'll need when all of the varied plots collide in the final climax. Thanks to the structure of the adventure, different groups can play the adventure in different ways. If the party deals with crisis A and doesn't handle crisis B, then crisis B and its related antagonist become more powerful and dangerous later, so the party will need the advancements they've earned earlier to handle the more dangerous enemies. This structure means that the players have a lot of freedom to go where they want and do what they will, and they'll confront the major problems in the Dale one at a time, with each problem becoming successively more difficult in tandem with the players' victories and successes. Defeat one major villain, gain a level, move on to the next -- but the next villain's been busy and has become more powerful in the meantime. In the end all of the threads tie back up to a final resolution that will leave the players feeling like they're part of the epic history of Icewind Dale. Because the adventure has a branching format and potentially meanders throughout the Dale, it is highly recommended that DMs READ THE ENTIRE ADVENTURE FIRST. I personally also recommend then re-reading the adventure and following each individual plot thread so that you have a strong idea of what each villain is doing and how each separate crisis unfolds. The form factor of the books -- separate gazetteer and adventure booklet -- mean that sometimes cross-referencing is necessary. A description of a particular character in the gazetteer, for instance, may offer a simple profile of the character's personality and social position; the adventure may reveal that the character also happens to be a villain. Presumably this is so that DMs who choose to use the gazetteer simply for their own campaign reference may do so without any assumptions from the adventure intruding upon their character profiles. Overall: Form Factor: Moderate. The cover is extremely fragile and does not help in actually holding the booklets together. The DM screen, by contrast, is sized well and has on its inside tables that are very useful specifically for this adventure, such as travel times between various settlements. Story: Excellent. Players have many opportunities to explore Icewind Dale and the Ten Towns, to meet the tribes of Reghed barbarians, and to venture to the Dwarven Valley and meet the dwarves of the Silverstream clan. The events in the story will continue to pull players to various sites, where they will see the remnants of history from the Crystal Shard novels and make a little history of their own. Systems: Good. The module is flexible enough to run in multiple versions of D&D, or your own preferred game system. Having a separate systems document for encounters has advantages and disadvantages -- it's nice to be

able to mark up the booklet, but it means yet another book to reference while running the adventure. Value: Good. Thought the cover price may seem a bit steep for a short adventure module, this also includes the very nice DM screen and the gazetteer. Essentially, the adventure serves as a starter jumping-off point for DMs to run campaigns in the Icewind Dale region. If you are just looking for a starter adventure and don't care to spend the rest of the campaign in the frozen north of the Realms, this may not be your best value.

Like its predecessor, *Murder in Baldur's Gate*, *Legacy of the Crystal Shard* is an edition-neutral game supplement for *Dungeons & Dragons* which in and of itself is an interesting hook. If you, like me, came to *The Forgotten Realms* via R. A. Salvatore's Icewind Dale trilogy, aka the Drizzt Do'urden series; this adventure will be of particular interest to you. Set in the Icewind Dale more than one hundred years after the events in the Icewind Dale trilogy, *The Legacy of the Crystal Shard* revisits and updates the setting for a new generation of heroes -- your heroes, since *Wizards of the Coast* is soliciting your progress and the outcome of your group's participation in the adventure to determine the overarching outcome of their event: *The Sundering*. The materials included in the packet are top-notch: beautiful maps; loads of information about Ten-Towns, Kelvin's Cairn, and more; all wrapped in a slick DM screen with head's up display laid out information for running the adventure on the inside, and setting maps on the outside. WOC pretty much has all D&D editions in print right now, so play through this adventure with your preferred set, or use the D&D Next rules if you participated in the public play test. Cheers!

This module is a little too loosely plotted for my tastes. They try to twine three plotlines together but it doesn't work so well. My players were annoyed at all the "distractions" (i.e. anything off the plotline of the Winter Witch). I ended up abandoning one of the threads in this because it just felt so jammed into the module (the town takeover/pirates plot).

Enjoyable setting and a variety of villains to pursue. Adventure is pretty open ended, so you should be ready to fill in information, encounters, etc. Shout out to the great DM screen included.

The books are neat, they have great art and the screen is of very good quality, but the information is complex to follow, disordered and the information available for play with Next does not adapt well for 5e, WoTC should update it so more people can play it with 5e. My group enjoyed the adventure but for me as DM it was a pain to run it.

Absolutely love this product. Wizards of the Coast has finally brought back the Forgotten Realms I knew and loved. I am so happy to see Toril moving back to its old self. This product is multi-edition compatible (you can even play it with Pathfinder). I highly recommend this product, even if you were disgruntled with 4th edition's version, give the Sundering modules a chance. They do not disappoint.

I hope Wizards keeps this model with the new edition too. I love that if people don't like a game system they gave a choice of what version to run it as. I only wish they would add stats for basic and 2nd edition too to give new life to those editions as well.

Nice source material. Very interesting campaign with lots of interwoven plot lines. My group is loving it.

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