

# Flurry the Bear

The Throne of Frost



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2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – January 2015

First Published – July 2013

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The Throne of Frost  
(Flurry the Bear – Book 3)  
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Cover art by Luís Figueiredo, Francois Beauregard,  
J.S. Skye, & Tony Washington

ISBN: 0692372547  
ISBN-13: 978-0692372548



## CHAPTER 3

### THE CAVE AT URSIDEA

The temperature continued to decrease, and the wind grew stronger, but Drizzle was determined and would not be swayed. He had to prove that he, too, was courageous and of value. Drizzle was grateful to have the staff he had brought from Christopher Kringle's house. Without it to anchor him in the snow, the wind might have blown him away.

Drizzle continued to focus his attention on reaching Ursidea. He did not hear the

faint voice on the wind which called out his name. “Drizzle! Drizzle! Wait!” Fall shouted out to him. She was quite a distance behind him, but his black fur starkly contrasted the snow, which enabled her to see him. The wind blew so hard that she could hardly hear her own voice when she called out to her friend up ahead. In fact, she thought that she should have brought a walking stick of her own. Fall had to hunch over to press forward. She nearly had to crawl at times, to fight against the strength of the wind.

When Fall realized it was no use to call out to Drizzle any longer, she focused entirely on trying to keep up her pace. She could not allow her friend out of her sight. In this kind of a storm, she was greatly concerned that Drizzle would get lost and be

stranded all alone in the middle of the squall without knowing how to get back home. However, Fall was not sure how to get back herself. The wind quickly erased any and all signs of their presence. Her footprints were completely undetectable in the swirling snow.

Fall gasped when Drizzle was no longer in sight. Her fears had become reality. *Oh no!* Fall thought to herself. In a panic, she shouted for him repeatedly. “Drizzle! Drizzle! Where are you? It’s me! Fall!” She paused for a moment then tried again. “Drizzle! Answer me!” She realized that her shouts were of no use.

Fall raced across the snow, toward Drizzle’s last known location, but she still could not catch a glimpse of her friend. A tear trickled down her cheek and quickly

became ice. “Drizzle!” she wept softly. As Fall continued further, she felt hopeless. She cried harder. Fall worried for Drizzle, and for herself as well.

Fall traversed the land the best she could, though the terrain now sloped away. Without warning, Fall slipped and tumbled down the hill. She slid to a stop, stood up, and brushed the snow off. The wind blew so hard that it was impossible for her to see the terrain or to know where the clouds stopped and the ground began. Fear gripped tightly upon the young cub’s heart. She screamed, “Help me! Help! Please help!” Fall attempted to turn back, but continued to slide back down the hill.

Fall lay in the snow. Her hope fled from her. She had no idea what she’d do next. She lifted her head, wiped snow from her eyes,

and saw a shadowy figure come toward her. She stood up and put her paws over her eyes to shield them from the snow. She hoped it would allow her to get a better look. Before long, the figure stood right in front of her.

“Fall? What are you doing here?” Drizzle asked.

“I came to get you!” Fall struggled to reply through the turmoil of the storm.

“Why? I’m on a dangerous mission! You shouldn’t have come!” Drizzle insisted.

“Drizzle, I’m worried about you! Come back with me,” Fall beckoned.

“I can’t! I have to prove that I’m not worthless. I want my parents and Flurry to see that I can be brave and courageous, too.”

“Drizzle, you don’t have to prove anything to anybody! I’m your friend, and you didn’t need to prove anything to me.”

“You wouldn’t understand.”

“Okay, now you sound like my brother,” Fall shot back. “You’re more like him than you ...” Before their conversation could continue, they heard a bloodcurdling howl. “Uh ... what was that?” Fall asked in an uneasy tone.

“It sounded like a wolf,” Drizzle replied with concern in his voice.

“Drizzle, I’m scared!” Fall ran up and grabbed his arm.

“Come with me! I think I found a place where we can take shelter.” Drizzle led Fall by the paw. They pressed forward and disappeared into the blanket of heavy snowfall.

Meanwhile, Vallidore continued to howl. “I hope they can hear me and call back to us,” Vallidore told the cubs who rode on his

back. They continued on their course toward Ursidea.

“Unless they hear your howl, and it scares them away,” Flurry reasoned.

“You have a point. I’ll redouble my effort to get us there sooner,” answered the white wolf. Vallidore added another burst of speed to his hot pursuit of their friends.

Vallidore ran as fast, if not faster, than any wolf could run, but the deep snow made it difficult for him. His muscles ached as the icy precipitation continued to descend from the sky with no end in sight. Vallidore was without any footprints to track. Luckily, he knew the land very well, and he could find Ursidea with his eyes closed.

“We’re almost there! Both of you keep your eyes sharp. This land is very dangerous. There’s a good reason why

Christopher made this region forbidden.”

“Why?” Flurry asked. “What’s so bad about it?”

“Have you heard of Jack Frost?” Vallidore asked.

“Uhm ... I’m not sure. Kind of. I guess?”

“Ages ago, Jack and Christopher were friends, but Jack became evil. At the peak of his tyranny, Jack ruled all of the northern lands from his throne in Ursidea. Jack was cruel and unrelenting. He demanded homage from everyone. Those not loyal to him were hunted down and brought to justice. Well, it was what he considered to be justice anyway.

“It seemed like his cruel and twisted rule would never end, until one brave warrior challenged him. A red panda, by the name of Tomodachi the Great, dared to dispute

Jack's reigning dictatorship. Christopher Kringle sought the help of the Great King. The King gave a special sword to Christopher and asked that it be delivered to Tomodachi. This sword was forged by the blue stars of Khima. It's said that the sword has the power to defeat evil regardless of what form it may take. Tomodachi and Jack had a final confrontation in Ursidea. Tomodachi and a bear cub defeated Jack together. Jack was imprisoned in his palace and buried. He has remained there for the past 7,000 years."

"If he's in prison, then we don't have anything to worry about," Flurry concluded. "We don't, right?"

"Christopher is worried that Jack might be free. The weather was his first point of concern. It has never gotten this cold, nor

has there been a blizzard since the time of Jack's rule. He's either free, or it's a sign that his evil is awakening."

"Uh, oh!" Flurry's face expressed an immense amount of fear. Noah listened intently to every detail of the story. When he noticed that Flurry looked worried, he patted him on the arm to reassure the cub that he was there to watch over him.

Suddenly, they came to a stop. "There!" Vallidore called out.

"What?" Flurry asked.

"We're near Jack's palace. However, this is a bad sign. I don't see Drizzle or Fall. They're either lost, or they've gone inside. Both outcomes are bad. Hold on tight! We need to go down and make sure they haven't gone into the palace."

Vallidore rushed down the hill. This was

the very same slope that Fall slid down only moments prior, but all signs of her presence were erased by the snow and wind.

When they ascended another hill, Flurry saw something out ahead of them that glimmered. “Look!” Flurry shouted and jumped off of Vallidore’s back to run toward the shimmering object.

Noah was horrified by Flurry’s haste. He, too, alighted from Vallidore’s back. The lion cub waved his arms back and forth to warn Flurry of danger, but the bear cub did not listen, as usual. Flurry scurried out onto what seemed to be fresh ice.

“Why isn’t this covered by snow?” Flurry asked the wolf. Before Vallidore could reply, the ice cracked, and Flurry fell through.

“Flurry!” Vallidore shouted, sped up to

the edge of the broken ice, and peered down into the hole. It was too dark for the wolf to see anything clearly.

“I’m okay!” came Flurry’s soft, faint voice.

Noah felt relieved, but Vallidore’s concern grew more dire. “Flurry! Stay where you are! Noah and I will find another way down. Stay put! I mean it!”

Vallidore and Noah rushed down the hill to search for another entry point. The terrain had changed a lot over the years, but Vallidore realized that the giant mound of snow was, in fact, Jack’s buried palace. Vallidore was deeply troubled by how imminent the danger really was. Jack lived long before Vallidore was born, but the wolf knew full well the horrible things Frost had done. Jack would not hesitate to kill anyone,

not even a cub. Vallidore hoped that Flurry would do as he was told, for once, and stay put.

However, Flurry was far too inquisitive to simply stand by and do nothing. When his eyes adjusted to the cave's dark surroundings, he was able to make out the silhouettes of statues, columns, and arches. The hole up above helped. It allowed rays of light to beam down into the cave. Flurry stumbled through the dimly lit room before he came upon a torch mounted on the wall. Flurry still had his flint stones that Wolfhroc had given him from his last adventure. The only problem was that Flurry was not tall enough to reach it.

He pondered how to obtain the torch when something startled him. Flurry froze in place. He was not alone. The sound of

footsteps approached. A chill shot down Flurry's body, and his fur stood on end. "Doggy? Is that you? Doggy?" The cub jerked his head to and fro with each sound that echoed across the stone walls. His heart sank as fear gripped him further.

Flurry thought he saw movement, but was unsure. He peered out into the distant darkness, but could not make anything out. *Maybe it was just a statue*, Flurry thought to himself. Flurry was content with that explanation until he saw it move. There was no mistake. Flurry was convinced that he was not alone in the darkness. The dark, shadowy figure moved closer. Flurry backed up. His movement alerted the other, and it came toward him quickly. "Ahhh!" Flurry screamed.

Flurry's bellow caused a rumble in the

cave, and icicles crashed down from the ceiling. The commotion knocked Flurry and the dark figure to the ground. *This is my chance!* Flurry thought to himself. The cub decided to gain the upper paw on the mysterious visitor while they lay on the ground – momentarily stunned from the fall. Flurry launched himself at the figure and tackled it. “Gotcha!” Flurry shouted in victory.

\*“Ouch! Flurry! Get off! It’s me! Drizzle!”

A \*bit\* surprised, Flurry ceased his grip. “Oh! Sorry, Drizzle. I didn’t know it was you. What are you doing here?” Flurry asked.

Drizzle stood up, brushed the dust off of his fur, and answered. “I could ask you the same thing. Right now, I’m looking for a light source. Your sister is trapped in some

sort of room, and I can't read the symbols on the door to figure out how to free her."

"Symbols? What symbols? What does that have to do with freeing my sister?"

"I think this place is booby-trapped. I could free Fall if I could just read the markings, but it's too dark in here."

"This should be a good thing. I thought you hate light?" Flurry sarcastically remarked.

\*"Really? You want to do this now? I'm trying to save your sister, and you make fun of me!" Drizzle shook his head and walked away.

Flurry sighed and followed after him. "Well, I have flint, so we could light a torch. Wolfhroc taught me how to do it."

"Who?"

"Never mind! Just help me reach that

torch!” Flurry pointed up at his target.

“How?” Drizzle asked.

“Let me stand on your shoulders. I think I can reach it.”

“No, you can’t.”

“Yes, I can.”

“No! You can’t!”

“Why do you always have to argue with me?” Flurry shouted.

“I’m not trying to argue with you. I’m only stating a fact,” Drizzle defended.

“Oh, so now you think you know it all?”

“I never said that I know it all. I’m just saying that you cannot reach that torch even if you were standing on my shoulders,” Drizzle tried to articulate his meaning.

“Well, somebody is Mister Glass Half Empty!”

“No! You don’t understand! You and I

are each eighteen inches tall. If you stood on top of my head, that would give us a combined height of three feet. The torch on the wall is at least five feet from the ground. There's no way we can reach it. We need to find another light source or something to stand on to give us some additional height.”

Flurry did not know what to say. He always considered conversations with Drizzle to be so laborious. The black-furred bear frequently misunderstood dialogue, and conveyed or interpreted everything literally.

Flurry went along with Drizzle's plan, and they explored the cave for anything that would aid them. They were about to give up when they entered a large open room with a pedestal at the center. The room had a domed roof and an arcade that encircled the space.

“Look!” Flurry shouted. The cub’s outburst caused the stone to rumble. Ice cracked and echoed throughout the adjoined chambers.

“Uh ... Flurry? Maybe you shouldn’t shout so loud,” Drizzle advised with a cautious tone.

“Yeah, I’ll have to agree with you on that one,” Flurry replied. “Look at that! There’s something glowing over there!”

\*Flurry and Drizzle rushed over to the pedestal\* together. There they found a golden-yellow gemstone which glowed and shimmered while it hovered in the air. “How do you suppose it floats like that?” Drizzle asked.

“I don’t know! Who cares? It’s very pretty though.” Flurry was completely mesmerized by the jewel. “Ooooh!” was the

only thing Flurry said. He was so entranced that he did not even blink.

Drizzle leaned forward and waved his paw in front of Flurry's face. "Flurry, come on! We need to go help your sister. Grab it and let's go."

"Right!" Flurry stretched his paw toward the gemstone, but it was slightly out of his reach. "That rock over there! It should be enough to boost me up." Flurry shuffled over to the nearby stone and pushed it toward the pedestal.

Drizzle would have helped Flurry, but something caught his attention. There was a plaque on the pedestal covered in ice. "Flurry! Look at this!"

Flurry stopped what he was doing and rushed over to look where Drizzle had pointed. Flurry picked up a small stone and

smashed it against the ice. The frozen sheet broke away and fell to the ground. Drizzle brushed the remaining fragments away from the plaque. “What does it say?” Flurry asked.

“What do you mean? Can’t you read?” Drizzle responded.

“Of course I can! I was just testing you to see if you could or not,” Flurry dishonestly replied. He still had not learned, but was too prideful to admit it in front of Drizzle.

Drizzle, on the other hand, was adept with his reading skills for a cub his age. “It looks like a riddle. It says, ‘Frozen in time, Frost will keep. Deep underground, Jack will sleep. By the origin paw, may the ice be moved. If so you do, all will be doomed. Beautiful and lovely, the gem may be. Remove it and find trouble indeed.’ I

wonder what that means.”

In haste, Flurry answered, “Not important. Now help me with this rock!”

“Flurry, I think we need to be careful in here. This place isn’t safe.”

“Whatever. Be a wimp. I don’t care.”

Flurry’s comment cut to the heart. Grieved, a tear fell from Drizzle’s eye and landed on the plaque below. Drizzle wiped the tear off to find a second set of engraved letters. “Flurry! There’s more!”

Drizzle brushed the second set of text off and found a single sentence which startled him. He scratched his head and glanced back and forth between the text and Flurry. It did not seem possible. Drizzle read it again: “Flurry, don’t even think about it!” The cub’s eyes widened, and his mouth fell ajar. Why did this engraved text have Flurry’s

name on it? How could such an old place know about Flurry? “Flurry! You have to see this!”

“Not now, Drizzle! I almost have the rock in place, no thanks to you, I might add.” Flurry panted and gasped for breath while he pushed the stone. Doing it by himself was difficult and taxing for the little fellow.

“Flurry! This is important! It mentions you!”

\*“What? That’s not possible! Where?” Flurry rushed up to look.

“It says, ‘Flurry, don’t even think about it!’”

“Yeah, right! You’re just making that up. Really funny, Drizzle! Really funny!” Flurry was irritated that Drizzle would make such a poor attempt at a joke. Flurry shook it off and pushed the stone up to the pedestal.

“Would you two stop arguing and help me?” shouted a female voice in the distance. Suddenly the cave rumbled, and ice shattered and fell down around them.

Flurry realized that their voices carried pretty far inside the cave, and that his sister could hear him from whatever room she was currently trapped in. Flurry blushed and answered his sister. “So you heard all of that, huh?”

\*“Yes! Now hurry up and get me out of here!” Fall bellowed. Her action made more ice crumble and smash down from above. The place shook hard enough that Flurry and Drizzle both stumbled to the ground.

Before Drizzle had a chance to recover, Flurry had already returned to his task. He reached for the glowing, yellow crystal. “Flurry, no!” shouted a distant voice, but it

was too late. Flurry grabbed the radiant stone. He looked up from his paw, which now held the gem. It had changed from emitting yellow light to blue. Flurry saw Vallidore and Noah off in the distance.

The entire cave shook, and an evil laugh echoed throughout the cavern walls. Icicles fell all around them. The floor cracked and gave way. Stones shoved out from the walls, which caused them to buckle. The entire place was falling apart. Flurry and Drizzle could barely stand while the ground shook vigorously.

“Help me!” Fall shouted. Flurry and Drizzle rushed to the wall that Fall was trapped behind.

“Stop! You must be careful about this! If she’s caught in one of Jack’s traps, the wrong button or switch could end her life!”

Vallidore shouted.

“Now that we have some light, I believe I can do this,” Drizzle answered.

“We need to free her and get out of here quickly! The whole place is coming down around us!” the wolf replied.

Vallidore was correct. The stone roof was collapsing, and rocks dropped more frequently. “Hurry!” Fall screamed.

“We’re here! We’re here! We’re going to get you out! Just hold on!” Drizzle called out to her. “Flurry, hold up the light so I can see.”

Flurry did as Drizzle instructed. The crystal’s light revealed a peculiar locking mechanism on the door. There was a square indentation in place of a typical lock. Within the recess of the strange lock were many differently-sized rectangular shapes that

were able to slide in different directions. “What kind of a lock is this?” Flurry asked. “What ever happened to using a key?”

“It’s a puzzle lock. This is very common in the land of Nallan Min. That’s where Jack is from,” Vallidore answered. “It can only be opened by sliding the pieces in the right direction. If you do it the wrong way, it will undoubtedly activate a deathtrap that would certainly spell doom for Fall.”

\*“I’m good at games! Let me try!” Flurry ran up and started to fiddle with the puzzle lock faster than anyone could react.

“No!” shouted Drizzle and Vallidore in unison, but it was too late. Flurry had activated the trap – this much was obvious when Fall screamed.

“Flurry, help me! The ceiling is coming down on me!” Fall cried as the room got

smaller and smaller.

Drizzle pushed Flurry out of the way, “Let me do this!”

“Hey!” Flurry replied.

Noah quickly grabbed Flurry and pulled him back. “Noah is correct! Let Drizzle do it!” Vallidore ordered.

Time ticked away. The walls of the cave collapsed further. Stones collided with the floor and sprayed fragments of rock in every direction. Drizzle’s paws moved speedily. He continued to maneuver the different pieces of the puzzle lock.

The top of the room drew nearer to Fall’s head. “Guys! I’m going to be crushed! Please hurry!”

There was no reply. Fall could not hear anything except the rumbling of the walls as they gave way. Fall sat in a corner with her

arms wrapped around her legs. Her hope of survival dwindled. She buried her face between her knees and cried.

The stone roof continued to draw nearer with each second. It now touched the top of her head. Fall lay down flat on the floor, and attempted to call out to her brother once more. Tears streamed down her cream-colored fur.

“Flurry, tell Mama and Papa I love them, and that I’m so sorry!” She paused momentarily to sob. “Oh, and Flurry, despite our differences I love you very much!” Fall did not hear a reply. “Flurry? Flurry?” She screamed, “Flurry!” Her death was imminent. The room continued to shrink. In a brief moment Fall would be crushed.

She closed her eyes and bawled. Fall braced herself for the inevitable. The rock

surface inched down and pressed against her ears, but suddenly ceased. The ceiling reversed its direction, and quickly returned to its original spot.

The door opened. “Come on!” shouted Flurry and Drizzle together. They beckoned for her to come out of the room. Tears of joy came down from her eyes. She smiled and bolted out of the room as quickly as she could.

\*“We have to go! Now!” Vallidore shouted.\*

“So soon?” echoed an evil voice.

“Uh, what was that?” Flurry asked uneasily.

They all froze in their tracks. Vallidore turned to look in the direction of the pedestal. Just beyond it stood two stone statues, and between the statues were steps

that led up to a throne. The throne was not clearly visible, since it had been covered in ice. As Vallidore stared at the ice-covered throne, cracks formed across it. The wolf looked back at the cubs and shouted, “Run!”

They ran as fast as they could, but the ground shook so much that they kept falling. Stone and ice continued to shatter everywhere. It was clear that the entire palace would cave in very soon. Each step they took was riddled with danger. In fact, Flurry would have been crushed if it had not been for Noah. The lion leapt and shoved Flurry out of the path of a falling stone.

It looked like they would make it. They were near the opening of the cave, when tragedy struck. The roof fell down behind the cubs and sealed Vallidore inside.

“Doggy!” Flurry shouted.

“Oh no! What are we going to do?” Fall asked.

“Vallidore knew the risks. He ordered us to escape. We need to respect his wishes,” Drizzle answered.

“We can’t leave Doggy behind!” Flurry insisted.

“The reason he came here was to ensure our safety. Going back puts us at risk again,” Drizzle tried to reason.

\*“You’re just saying that because you’re a coward!” Flurry shot his insult at Drizzle.

“No, I’m not!”

“Yes, you are!”

Fall interjected before the argument got worse. “Both of you, stop it! I’m so sick of you two fighting all of the time! This wouldn’t even be happening if you two weren’t always bickering with each other! I

think what we should do is head back to Mr. Kringle's house and get help."

"That would take too long! It took us hours to get here. It will be late in the evening by the time we make it to Ursus, and then it would be early tomorrow morning before we could return to save Vallidore," Drizzle explained.

Flurry ran to the caved-in entrance, and pulled loose stones away to make an opening for himself. Tears flowed freely from his eyes. Flurry sobbed. "I don't care what anyone says! I'm going in to save him! Hang on, Doggy! Hang on! I'm coming!"