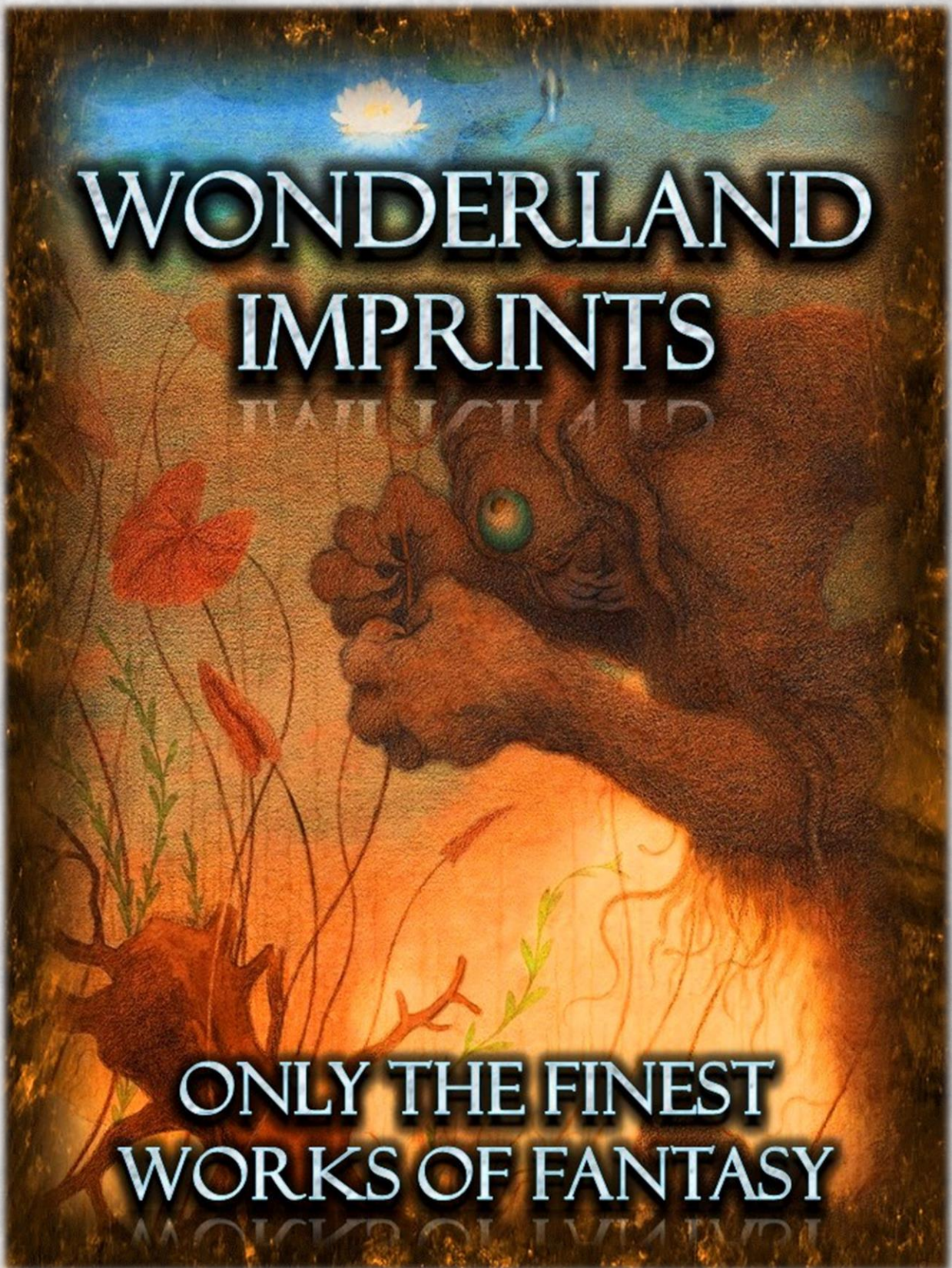


LORDS OF OLDSKULL
BOOK I



KENT DAVID KELLY

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LORDS OF OLDSKULL

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING SUPPLEMENT

LOS1

KRAMPUS, LORD OF BLOODWINTER

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OSR



| <h1 style="text-align: center;">KRAMPUS</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">THE LORD OF BLOODWINTER</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">(Demon Lord in Exile)</p> | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit Dice: | 18 (99 Hit Points) |
| Armor Class: | -3 [22] |
| Attacks: | Rod of Curses (damage 2D6 + Fear, save to negate) / Barbed Tongue (damage 1D4 + Paralysis, 1D4 rounds, save to negate) |
| Special: | Spells (Various), +2 or Better Weapon to Hit, Immunity to Cold, Enchantments and Poison, Magic Resistance (60%), Empathy (100 ft.), Scenting Tongue (666 ft.) |
| Move: | 120' / 180' Leap and Sprint (1 round in 10) |
| Saving Throw: | 4+ |
| Alignment: | Chaos |
| Challenge Level / XP: | 27 / 6,500 |

Krampus, Lord of Bloodwinter, is a legendary demon lord who is both revered, and dreaded with delectation. He is an enigmatic creature who is known throughout the Lands of Oldskull for his fascinations and obsessions, which center upon human downfall, temptation, disillusionment, falls from grace, and spiritual corruption. He is a perennial creature of the darkness, summoned yearly by some fool child or other who dares demand the dire legends to once again come true. His embittered summoner — never above the age of 13 — whispers the name of the demon lord thirteen times, and this singsong chant brings him forth from the Boreal Nether every midwinter without fail.

Krampus' feast of wicked delights, submission, and appeasement (the **Krampusnacht**) is held every Decembre V, upon the eve of the **Feast of Winterlight**. (Winterlight in the game world is an age-old feast of supplication, known in a darker and truer form as the **Yuletide of the Wild Hunt**; or — in secret druidic cabals — as the **Matriarchal Sacrifice of Modraniht**.)

Krampus wryly welcomes such naïve worship and dark play, but appeasing him can never prevent his inevitable arising with winter's night.

His true origin remains unknown. It is said that he was born of human fears of shame, lost in the boreal wilds far beyond the Teutonian Mountains. Some sages and the oldest elves believe he is the misbegotten spawn of Herne the Hunter — Master of the Wild Hunt — and a succubus princess, but the truth of his creation remains a sad and enticing mystery.

In appearance, Krampus is muscled and furry (or in some years, blistered and scaly), with curling horns (or bleeding sockets, where his horns will soon regrow), bloodshot eyes, a cloven hoof, an ageless and leering face tinged with sardonic curiosity, and a lolling crimson tongue. The tongue, whenever it flicks the air, allows him to scent the presence of any living children — human, demi-human, or otherwise — within 666'.

Unlike most demon lords, Krampus is not a creature of unfettered wrath. He does not slay his victims outright, and he does not attack to physically kill unless he is himself first attacked. Magical attacks of the mind and madness, however, are quite another matter. He is highly empathic — a demonic form of emotional telepathy, which allows him to read the minds of all mortals in terms of sensation and imagery — and every winter he feeds upon mortals' fear, disbelief, heresy, dark imaginations, doubts, and fear of the dark. When feeding or “attacking” he licks the scalps and faces of his prey, and swallows sweat and terror. He plucks greedy dreams from wicked children, and leaves behind dark toys and nightmares in the sticky hollows of their minds.

His favored prey are Chaotics, particularly those who have fallen from the former cause of Law; and he craves highly imaginative, fearful, and impulsive mortals the most of all. Therefore, his ideal prey are wicked children, especially those who were good and pure until some furious outburst sent them along a darker path. He also delights in feeding from fallen paladins, tormented and doubtful priests of Law, misers, traitors, madmen, liars, and voluptuous maidens who have newly embraced the vows of Chaos.

Despite his eldritch and demonic nature, Krampus actually (secretly) prefers the company of saints, not other demons. He is a demon lord who surrounds himself with yearning spirits, and darkly beautiful things. He cannot gate or summon other demons of any kind.



The Phantasmagoric Rituals of Krampus

Every year that Krampus is summoned by an embittered child, he finds himself in the benighted Lands of Oldskull with 4 newfound powers to his name. The Game Master should always roll his powers randomly, rerolling any duplicate results. Krampus will become a recurring villain in your campaign, winter after winter, especially as he makes heroic friends and enemies among the Player Characters.

When summoned he will stalk the alleys while using his empathy and tongue to sense preferred prey, and he will begin the hunt as soon as the majority of his future victims are asleep.

He will typically use one spell per visited person, until his powers are depleted for the night. He will only stay to battle further if he is violently resisted. The GM, of course, will always decide which of the PCs will be visited, and which will not, with Chaotics and fallen Lawfuls ... as well as beautiful women ... being highly favored for his attentions.

The newfound powers of Krampus each year should be rolled with 1D100, as follows:

THE RITUALS OF KRAMPUS

[01-07] Animate Plaything (Animate Object) (level 6 spell, 1 use/night):

Krampus can use this spell to turn innocent-looking dolls, toys, and even paintings into nightmarish creatures.

For example, a wooden doll might be AC 7 [12], HD 1, #AT 2 claws/1 bite, D 1/1/1D2, regenerating 5 hit points per round (even from negative hit point totals) until burned or doused in holy water.

Such creations are horrifying to look at, and they will attack if they themselves are attacked. But mostly, they like to sit and sing and watch Krampus' victim try to sleep.



[08-14] Charm Prey (Charm Person) (level 1 spell, 6 uses/night): Anyone successfully charmed by Krampus will be licked and drained (see rules below), and the licking will cause the charm effect to break at first sunlight.

[15-21] Continual Sibilance (Continual Darkness) (level 2 spell, 4 uses/night): This is a unique version of the spell. When it is cast, within its radius people will hear the black confessions of tittering children, whispering murderers, and weeping elderly people who suffered upon their deathbeds centuries ago. These many voices stop and are no longer heard outside the

area of effect. Of course, Krampus prefers to cast this spell on beds where a victim is sleeping soundly.

[22-28] Bloodwinter Fire (Faerie Fire) (level 1 spell, 6 uses/night): This is a unique version of the spell, which creates a crimson light filled with partial ghosts of children, each with a long, phantom tongue. These spirits will writhe and slither about the victim's flesh. The crawling halo appears around the victim's entire body. Typically, victims afflicted by this spell wake shrieking and run about the house, or even the winter streets, for many others to come and see.

[29-35] Fear (of Krampus) (level 4 spell, 2 uses/night): This is a relatively minor effect, in game terms. The GM gets to describe the thoughts and dreams that Krampus sends to this victim when this spell is successfully cast. Be creative, make them memorable.

[36-42] Hallucinatory Demonscape (Hallucinatory Terrain) (level 4 spell, 2 uses/night): This hex creates a demonic landscape of weeping fungi with human-like faces, broken music boxes that play themselves, bleeding black skies, gaunt and leaning houses made out of crystallized pus and blood-ice, and flesh-like furniture that moans and gasps whenever it is touched. This charming spell is usually cast upon a sleeper's bedroom.

[43-49] Magic Mouth (of the Lost) (level 2 spell, 4 uses/night): This magic mouth will have voluptuous lips and fangs. It will whisper terrible secrets of the netherworld, and anyone listening to it will hear the voice of the last loved one who passed away, begging to be freed from the nether realm of Krampus. (The voice was stolen by a succubus for use in the afterlife). The thing will speak quite clearly of what is being done to the deceased victim's spirit every night.

[50-56] Maze (of the Demonlands) (level 9 spell, 1 use/night): This dreadful spell will create a landscape similar to the Hallucinatory Demonscape effect, above; but every object and surface will be grafted and infused with living human bodies, twisted together into whimpering and ghastly shapes.

[57-63] Obscuring Crimson Snow (Obscuring Mist) (level 2 spell, 4 uses/night): This spell does not create mist, but rather cold and gentle falling snow made of blood drops and spun sugar. It can be cast inside or outside, as Krampus deems necessary.

[64-70] Phantasmal Plaything (Phantasmal Force) (level 2 spell, 4 uses/night): The thing created by this illusion will be an animated fanged doll, a headless child, a painted woman that crawls out of her frame, or something similar. It will have a boreal, frigid theme and appearance. It will be lonely, it will want hugs. We all freeze down here!



[71-77] Power Word, Revelation (Power Word, Blind) (level 8 spell, 1 use/night): The GM gets to describe the horrible vision of the Demonworld which Krampus visits upon the victim. The vision will never be forgotten, even after sight is regained.

[78-84] Quest (of the Dolorous Garde) (level 5 spell, 2 uses/night): The Quest will involve being forced to journey somewhere haunted and terrible and strangely beautiful; for example, Krampus will relate the location of a castle lost in the forest populated by sleeping noblewomen, whose faces, open mouths, and eyelashes are all filled with black widow mothers and their squirming, icy egg sacs. Waking means hatching, of course. The Quest will be (for example) to wake one of these young maidens and to ready her for Krampus ere the next year's celebration.



[85-91] Speak with the (Begotten) Dead (level 8 spell, 1 use/night): In this variant of the spell, a corpse is summoned which will pin the victim to his or her bed with unearthly strength. Krampus will explain that the dead thing will not disintegrate until it is asked three terrible and forbidden questions, which it will answer truthfully (with Krampus' own immortal knowledge). The answers will not bring power, wisdom, or solace. GM discretion advised.

[92-98] Web (of Sugar and Ice) (level 2 spell, 4 uses/night): The webs will be made of icicle-like slime, and will taste quite delicious, like bloody spice dumplings (and some of these chilly morsels will surely get into the victim's mouth). When any amount of the web material is swallowed, the victim will be visited by the dreams of a child who died to Krampus last year. Many details and perhaps a secret treasure will be revealed. Perhaps it will even be someone the victim knew.

[99-00] Wish (of Krampus) (level 9 spell, 1 use/night): Krampus will grant the victim a wish, on the condition that when they die, they cannot be resurrected and their soul will belong to Krampus forevermore. This gift can be refused, and Krampus will be impressed if it is. NPCs, even if Lawful, never refuse the gift ... which can create some interesting effects, to be witnessed by all the villagers waking the next morning.

Assessing the Heart: In addition to these random powers, Krampus' empathy gives him the ability Know Alignment (whenever concentrating) for any mortal in sight within 20'.

The Draining of the Prey

Each year in his eternal life, Krampus chooses a new village or city state to visit, and this year he is going to visit the one your Player Characters call home.

During a visitation, Krampus appears for 13 consecutive nights (between the Twelve Days of Winterlight). His nightmares, curses, and creations will surely kill at least several people during his visit. He will only attack a victim — or a victim's defenders — with his rod if he is violently threatened, or attacked. But if he is caught in a dour mood, such as when appearing to a second victim soon after being wounded or lied to by a first, even the merest child's slap will cause him to lay the chosen and wicked cretin low.

Krampus, when not waking a victim or casting a spell, will attempt to lick his prey. This requires a normal to hit roll, and he will attempt this 1D4 times (once per round) before retreating from his victim and proceeding to the next. Lawful victims, if they are targeted for whatever reason, will be targeted for 1D3 nights in a row. Neutral victims will be targeted for 1D4+1 nights. Chaotic victims will be targeted for 1D6+1 nights, or until the 13 nights of terror end, whichever comes first.

Each night that Krampus appears and watches and tastes a victim — in addition to the damage and the paralyzing effect of such an attack — he drains 1 point of Wisdom from that person on the first night, 1D2 points on the second, 1D3 points on the third, and so forth. A saving throw at -3 can negate any one night's draining. After the first draining of Wisdom, a person suffers doubt and fatigue, equivalent to a -1 to all to hit rolls and saving throws, and a 5% spell failure chance. This effect doubles as the result of a second draining (-2, 10%). After a third draining, the victim suffers 10 nights thereafter of terrified insomnia, and loses 1 hit point every night (which cannot be healed naturally or magically, not even by a wish, until the 10 days and 10 points of loss have elapsed). Such damage can be fatal, particularly to low-level prey.

For survivors, drained points of wisdom return at the rate of 1 every 7 days.

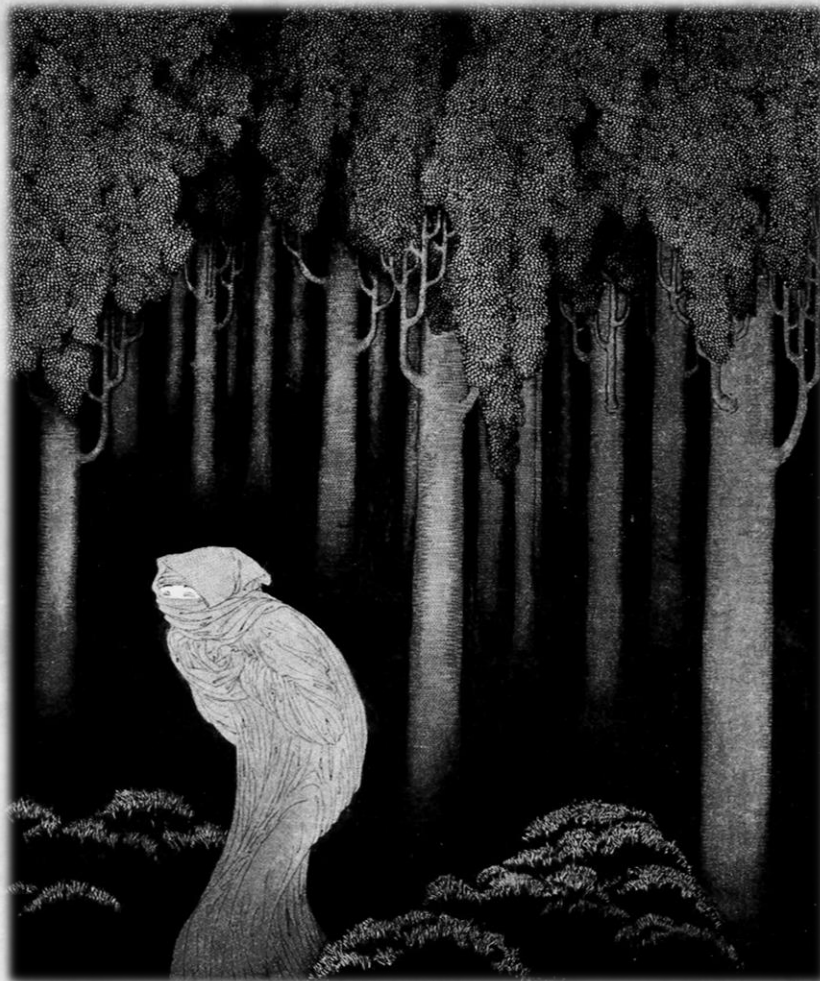
If someone's Wisdom is reduced to 2 in such a manner, they suffer from temporary (and violent) insanity until the 13 nights elapse. Player Characters of Wisdom less than 3 are under the control of the Game Master! They will probably need to be restrained, if not imprisoned outright. If someone's Wisdom is reduced to 1, they will suffer a permanent -1 Wisdom loss that will never heal. And if someone's Wisdom is reduced to zero or less, one of the following effects will occur with a 1 year duration (until the next coming of Krampus):

FATES OF THE WINTER-LOST

The Fate of Lawful Prey: If the drained victim is Lawful, they will suffer from vivid nightmares for a year, meaning that they will rest and heal only half as much, regardless of if the healing is natural or magical. Round healing point totals up. For example, a potion that would normally heal a person for 7 points would only heal the victim for (7 divided by 2 equals 3.5, rounded up, equals) 4 points instead.

The Fate of Neutral Prey: If the drained victim is Neutral, they are haunted by paranoia and doubt. They suffer a -10% penalty to all newly earned Experience Points throughout the coming year.

The Fate of Chaotic Prey: If the Wisdom-drained victim is Chaotic, they must make a saving throw vs. death magic. If the save is successful, they can choose to atone and become Lawful, which results in a loss of 5% of their total XP. If the save is successful and they refuse to atone, their Chaotic alignment is retained but they lose -1 permanently to a random attribute (1D6: 1 = STR, 2 = DEX, 3 = CON, 4 = INT, 5 = WIS, 6 = CHA). If the saving throw fails, the person dies in horror. These souls are dragged into the diabolical winter kingdom of Krampus, and after being fed upon for 66 nights, they are forever dead. And Krampus eats well!



Anyone slain by Krampus, whose corpse is not doused in holy water and buried within 13 hours, will rise as a wraith (if Lawful), a spectre (if Neutral), or a ghost (if Chaotic). The tormented soul will sleep in the earth until the next Krampus festival, and then rise and attack, favoring attacks against former loved ones.

THE WEAKNESSES OF KRAMPUS

Bane of the Light: Krampus is a night creature. He cannot manifest bodily before sundown, and at sunrise he enters an invisible non-corporeal form in which he can neither act, nor be acted upon, until the next darkness comes. If somehow washed in sunlight, he is banished until the next coming of the night.

In candlelight, he suffers -1 to hit and to all saving throws, until he leaves the illuminated radius. In lantern light this penalty is -2, in torchlight it is -3, and in bright magical light or the firelight of a home where love exists, it is -4.

In any kind of light, Krampus' magic resistance is reduced to 10%. He can be banished for 1D6 rounds by a Light spell, or for 1D4 hours by a Continual Light spell.

Forgiveness: If any person, however wicked, genuinely begs for Krampus' forgiveness or to be left alone, Krampus will give that lamentable creature the gift of madness (causing temporary insanity, with no saving throw, lasting 2D6 hours) in which the person will behold the true nature of the Demonlands in their dreams.

This knowledge will fade upon waking, but they will never want Krampus to come and sing to them again. And, perhaps, he will not. (?)

This "weakness" in Krampus' psyche is well known and should be explained to players when Krampusnacht has come. For this effect to work to the advantage of a PC, the GM must deem the role-playing of the PC's beseeching of Krampus to be heartfelt, remorseful, and genuine. Otherwise, Krampus will attack with spells per his usual methods.



Innocent Children: Neutral or Lawful children (meaning anyone less than 18 years of age) who are innocent of evildoing, and their protectors (such as parents), will never be harmed by Krampus unless they somehow harm him first. He might terrify them, but he will never lick them or cause them physical damage. Neutral and Lawful (non-parent) adults, along with Chaotics of any kind, have no guarantee of such mercy.

Feminine Pulchritude: Krampus finds human and demi-human adult females alluring, and he delights in haunting them, even if he is not going to attack them. Any female PC of CHA 16+ will surely be visited by Krampus on at least one of the 13 nights, whether wicked or not. When he appears he will not cast spells or touch them, unless they are Chaotic ... but he will be there, singing lullabies from the shadows, and it will be a disturbing and sleepless night as he leers and muses in silence. Nevertheless, it is also well known that Krampus is highly susceptible to tokens of affection from such women, and he can be lulled (or gentled) by songs, poetry, dancing, chants, confessions, artistry, and the like. This is an opportunity for role-playing, not for rolling the dice!

THE RELICS OF KRAMPUS

Coins of the Horned Child: Krampus has at least 250,000 gold pieces worth of treasure in his lair. He also carries 1D6x1,000 gold pieces in his satchel, and he tends to toss 1D100 such coins in the various places he visits every night. (One at a time, but typically several in one place.) These coins are very old, and carry the goat's head symbol of Krampus the Youngest upon them. Some eccentric collectors pay well for these trinkets (1D10x10 GP per coin), while other shopkeepers abhor them and refuse them outright.

The Ruten of the Wild Wood: Krampus' unique, pitchfork-shaped, birch-wood rod of curses inflicts 2D6 points of unholy damage with a strike, and causes Fear in the victim (a saving throw at +2 applies, but must be made anew for every successful hit). If Krampus ever smites a Lawful cleric or paladin for any reason, the Ruten will slowly turn to gold once the initial damage has been dealt. This transmuted item (now non-magical but worth 2D6x1,000 gold pieces) will be left at the victim's bedside at dawn after the final festival night. Krampus, in such an instance, will craft a new Ruten for himself in the year yet to come.

The Bells of Tearful Whispers: Krampus' mane, beard, and tail (in the years that he possesses one) are tied throughout with 66 silver bells, each worth 250 gold pieces. Each year, a bell will be left for every victim that Krampus accosts ... or, left for their family, if a soul is taken. The sound of these bells is the quiet echo of children's lamentation, heard in a 100' radius around Krampus, and Krampus can never surprise a foe under any circumstances. The bells still ring true after his departure. They are magical, but their effect is atmospheric only.

Satchel of Infernal Nightmares: Krampus carries a bloodstained wicker satchel on his back, which is filled with the half-devoured limbs of wicked children. There's always room for one more piece of fresh and screaming meat, however! Anyone halfling-sized or smaller who is paralyzed, knocked unconscious, slain, or otherwise afflicted and unable to move will be stuffed into the satchel. These victims will drop out of the satchel — wherever they might be — when Krampus vanishes at first light. The satchel is effectively bottomless, and if Krampus were ever to be slain, it would be the most powerful (and messy, and disturbing) Bag of Holding in the world (quintuple normal capacity).



Black Gifts: If Krampus is ever moved emotionally, or grants forgiveness, or refrains from attacking an innocent, there is a 25% chance that he will leave a Black Gift with the appropriate person. This will be something that is worth 1,000 GP, but is rather disturbing, such as ... a carved skull that twitches and smells of apple blossoms; a crystal globe filled with eternally falling pink snow; or perhaps a grinning toy monkey that strikes its tambours together whenever someone within a mile radius dies violently. If the gift is refused, destroyed, given away, etc., it will always appear at the victim's bedside the moment that person falls asleep. Such things can only be gotten rid of with a Remove Curse (10% chance), Limited Wish (50% chance), or Wish (90% chance).

The Departure

When Krampus leaves at sunrise following the final night of celebration, there will be found an angel-shaped pool of warm, sweet, festering blood melting upon the snow. The blood smells of burnt sugar, ashes, and cinnamon. If the bloody patch is untouched for 66 successive nights, a single black rose will bloom there.

The Adorers of Krampus

For such a vile and daunting creature, Krampus — perhaps because of his temerity in killing prey, or perhaps out of some strange form of sympathy the people bear for his nature — has quite a loyal following throughout the Lands of Oldskull. His priests “The Winterbringers” are fairly common, particularly in Teutonia, boreal lands, and the wilderlands surrounding the Teutonic kingdoms. Even Lawful lords and kings are known to sing of Krampus in the winter dark, or to honor and watch the Krampuslauf-chase of the mummer priests, or to await his coming while warning their own children of his imminent approach. He is loathed, but in some macabre and incomprehensible way, he is loved.

See hereafter for details on his cult.

New Character Class: The Winterbringer

(For NPCs, and also for PCs if the GM approves)



Winterbringers are the willing priests and priestesses of the Krampus cult. It is said that anyone visited by Krampus as a youth, who is not destined to walk a pure path, will almost certainly become a Winterbringer once winter comes again and childhood is left behind. As such, approximately 20 to 40 new young adult Winterbringers come of age in any given year, in a whorl of eerie midwinter activity which focuses upon the time of Decembre V-XVII. A Player Character Winterbringer can arise (with such a backstory) whenever a player and a Game Master together agree that such should happen.

These priests must always be of Chaotic alignment. Winterbringers are nocturnes. Too much heat or merriment makes them uneasy. They travel the lands, haunt the dungeons, slay the weak, and caution the worthy. Too, they lead the Krampusnacht festival in their villages of origin every year. They pray, every Winterlight, for Lord Krampus to favor them with a second visitation.

Outside of the dark festival of Krampusnacht and the Krampuslauf, the Winterbringers serve the causes of Chaos, demonology, undeath, nightmare, dark beauty, jaded hope, and spiritual absolution. Unlike most Chaos priests, however, they are found fascinating by Neutral and even Lawful strangers, and they are free to live and adventure as they will. As NPCs, Winterbringers are rarely violent with humans or demi-humans unless they themselves are first attacked. Monsters however do not favor them in any way, up to and including the undead.

THE WINTERBRINGER: CLASS OVERVIEW

Required Attributes: Constitution 12+, Wisdom 12+, Charisma 12+

Prime Attributes: Wisdom, 13+ and Charisma, 13+ (+5% experience bonus)

Hit Dice: 1d6/level (gains 1 hp/level after 9th)

Armor/Shield Permitted: Any. Black-painted antlers, masks, hides, and furs are favored as accoutrements.

Weapons Permitted: Club, flail, hammer (but not war hammer, which is an impaling weapon), mace, sling, staff. The use of flaming oil is forbidden.

Race: Humans and Half-Elves may be Winterbringers, provided they were visited by Krampus in their youth.

It is known too that only a mere century ago, there were Dwarf Winterbringers as well. But while some few still remain (elder NPCs), these haunted souls no longer accept new acolytes into their order.

WAY OF THE WINTERBRINGER: CLASS ABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Spell Casting: Winterbringers are similar to Clerics. They cast unholy spells from a specific list, with numbers as per the Cleric Advancement Table. Each night, the Winterbringer selects spells that will be asked for during sleep. These spells are granted to the worthy by Krampus, or by his spirit disciples, with dream and nightmare. Granted spells will be known upon waking, provided the Winterbringer has slept for at least 6 hours. This dream-sending takes the place of meditation. Winterbringers cannot wakefully meditate for such spells or spell recovery, especially during hours of daylight.

Appeasing the Undead: Winterbringers can influence both unintelligent and intelligent undead monsters, as if they were Lawful Clerics, but with very different results.

When a “turn” result against undead is successful, 1D2 undead will be affected. When a T result is indicated, 1D3 undead are affected. When a D result is indicated, 1D4 undead are affected. Appeased undead will not attack the Winterbringer, or his companions, for 1D6+6 rounds. (The effect duration is rolled randomly by the GM.) Even if companion undead who are unaffected still attack, the appeased ones will not.

This temporary neutrality should never be mistaken for friendship! Appeasement can be attempted multiple times a day, but any one specific undead creature can only be so affected by the same Winterbringer once per month. The appeasement effect is instantly negated if the undead are themselves attacked by the Winterbringer or a companion. Appeasement attempts require an unholy symbol. Winterbringers can never turn undead as Lawful Clerics can.



Saving Throw Bonus: Winterbringers gain a +2 bonus on saving throw rolls against cold, curses, fear, and enchantments.

Boreal Stronghold (9th Level): When attaining experience level 9, a Winterbringer may establish a boreal stronghold in an area of cold-climate wilderness. He or she will attract a body of fanatical followers (8D6, +1D6 additional per Charisma point over 14), with unshakable morale. 90% of these individuals will be normal men and women (militia-level men-at-arms, who will be willing to adventure and risk their lives), while 10% (round down) will be level 1 Winterbringer acolytes of 0 XP and eager disposition.

Such Sights Were Shown to Me: NPC Winterbringers, in games where morale is used, are difficult to unnerve and they gain a +1 permanent bonus to morale.

Sleepless Vigilance: While still awake, Winterbringers are surprised only on a 1 in 6 chance between the dark hours of sundown and sunrise. This effect is negated by daylight (and they are then normally surprised, a 2 in 6 chance).

Krampus is a Jealous Lord: Winterbringers cannot multi-class. Further, if they ever willingly abandon Krampus for another deity, Krampus will appear the next night and attempt to slay them (using spells, not violence, unless he himself is attacked) for 1D4 rounds that night, and for 12 further nights thereafter.

A Strange and Dear Companion: Unlike most Chaotic characters, Winterbringers can ally and adventure with Lawful characters without immediate conflict, up to and including Lawful Clerics and Rangers. Paladins, however, will never abide the presence of a Winterbringer.

The Adoration of the Night: Winterbringers gain “advantage” when magically healing during the dark hours between sundown and sunrise. This means that the dice are rolled twice, and the higher roll is accepted. For example, a Winterbringer casting Cure Light Wounds upon herself would roll 1D6+1 twice, and take the higher result while ignoring the lower.

... And the Pains of Daylight: Winterbringers suffer a 50% reduction to all healing, natural or magical, during hours of daylight (round up). This effect is suffered regardless of whether the Winterbringer is resting, drinking a potion, casting a healing spell, etc.

Special Note: Effects of daylight, nighttime, etc. are a celestial and seasonal effect governed by the stars and the position of the earth-sphere. Therefore, they are dependent upon the hour of the day regardless of where the Winterbringer is. Even if the priest is underground in absolute darkness, if it is noon in the surface world above, the current condition is “daylight” for purposes of spells and power limitations. As a result, all Winterbringers are obsessed with time pieces (such as hourglasses) and timekeeping.

Winterbringer Advancement Table

Winterbringers use the Cleric Advancement Table for Hit Dice, Saving Throws, Combat Prowess (attack rolls) and Number of Spells by Level. They advance a bit more slowly, however, due to having net advantages (despite their disadvantages) over normal Clerics.

| Experience Level | Suggested Level Title | Experience Point Range |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1st | Kult Minion | XP 0 to 1,749 |
| 2nd | Kultist of Krampus | XP 1,750 to 3,499 |
| 3rd | Kult Adept | XP 3,500 to 6,999 |
| 4th | Kult Priest / Priestess | XP 7,000 to 13,999 |
| 5th | Bloodwinter Prefect / Prefectess | XP 14,000 to 27,999 |
| 6th | Wintertemple Canon / Canoness | XP 28,000 to 55,999 |
| 7th | Kristalltempel Elder | XP 56,000 to 114,999 |
| 8th | Kristalltempel Patriarch / Matriarch | XP 115,000 to 199,999 |
| 9th | High Priest / Priestess of Krampus | XP 200,000 to 284,999 |
| Hereafter: +85,000 XP per further experience level beyond 9th. | | |



Winterbringer Spells

Dire Warning: Winterbringers cannot cast beneficial spells (healings, blessings, curing, etc.) on anyone but themselves. They can certainly try out of good intentions, but Krampus will cause the magic to fizzle and the spell will be wasted.

In compensation for this significant disadvantage, Winterbringers gain access to several non-clerical spells of considerable power, which are marked with an asterisk (*) in the lists below.

SPELLS OF LEVEL ONE (ORISONS)

***Bloodwinter Fire** (Faerie Fire variant, as described above)

***Charm Prey** (Charm Person variant, only works if cast at night)

Cure Light Wounds (upon self only)

Darkness (Light is unavailable)

Detect Good (Detect Evil is unavailable)

Detect Magic

Protection from Good (Protection from Evil is unavailable)

Putrefy Food and Drink (Purify Food and Drink is unavailable)

SPELLS OF LEVEL TWO (PRAYERS)

Bless (upon self only)

Blight (reversal of Bless)

Find Traps

***Magic Mouth** (can only be programmed to say vile or disturbing things)

***Obscuring Crimson Snow** (Obscuring Mist variant, as described above)

***Phantasmal Plaything** (Phantasmal Force variant, as described above)

Silence, 15' Radius

Snake Charm (only works at night)

Speak with Animals (only works at night)

SPELLS OF LEVEL THREE (CHANTS)

Cause Disease (reversal of Cure Disease)

Continual Sibilance (Continual Darkness variant, as described above; Continual Light is unavailable)

Cure Disease (upon self only)

Curse (reversal of Remove Curse)

Locate Object

(**Prayer** is not available)

Remove Curse (upon self only)

Speak with Dead (Speak with the Begotten Dead, unique to Krampus himself, is not available)

***Web of Sugar and Ice** (Web variant, as described above; powerful)

SPELLS OF LEVEL FOUR (INVOCATIONS)

Cause Serious Wounds (reversal of Curse Serious Wounds)

Create Snow and Sleet (Create Water is not available)

Cure Serious Wounds (upon self only)

***Fear**

***Hallucinatory Demonscape** (Hallucinatory Terrain variant, as described above)

Neutralize Poison (upon self only)

Protection from Good, 10' Radius (Protection from Evil, 10' Radius is unavailable)

(**Speak with Plants** is unavailable)

Sticks to Snakes (only works at night, creates nightmarish shadow serpents)

SPELLS OF LEVEL FIVE (EIDOLONS)

Commune (only works at night)

(**Create Food** is not available)

Dispel Good (Dispel Evil is not available)

Finger of Death

Insect Plague (creates shadowy spiders with doll-like faces)

Quest of the Dolorous Garde (Quest variant, as described above)

Raise Dead (only works on non-Chaotic creatures; Chaotics belong to Krampus)

SPELLS OF LEVEL SIX (DELIVERANCES / REVELATIONS)

Animate Plaything (Animate Object variant, as described above)

Blade Barrier (creates deadly blades of ice)

Conjuration of Animals (creates shadow animals of nightmarish aspect)

Lose the Path (Find the Path is not available)

Speak with Monsters

Word of Recall (only works at night)



SPELLS OF LEVEL SEVEN (MIRACULI / DAMNATIONS)

Astral Spell (only works at night)

Control Weather (can only be used to produce wetter and/or colder weather)

(**Earthquake** is not available)

***Maze of the Demonlands** (Maze variant, as described above; powerful)

Part Water (double effect on ice or cold waters)

***Power Word, Revelation** (Power Word, Blind variant, as described above; powerful)

Restoration (upon self only)

Shadowed Servant (Demonland variant of Aerial Servant)

Symbol

Unholy Word (Holy Word is not available)

Wind Walk (only works at night, or in cold climates)

LAMENT

THE AULD DWARF'S WINTERLIGHT: AN AGE-ELD CAROL-CHAUNT SUNG IN THE DWARVEN HALLS FOR THE BEMUSEMENT OF KRAMPUS, LING'RING LORD OF BLOODWINTER

(A little something to set the mood, come gaming night.)

I

COME WINTER'S LIGHT, in Winterfell
Where toymakers are known to dwell
And maidens fair bind back their hair
With cinnamon sprig and ribbon fair;

When dragon gingersnaps are wrought,
And grief and love entwine for naught
As chestnuts steam in cinder sweet,
Luscious prisons crack'd beneath
Gilt nutcracker's sweet-oiled teeth;

As cav'lier golems march and wheel,
In tiny danse of death and holm
And arc their blades of mint and bone
To tinkling chaunt of glockenspiel;

As you, my love, are dreamt of, nigh
Forever despite Auld Sandman's years.

Bereft are you of breath,
And I of joy;
Frail life of moments falls away.

II

Yet nigh now, hark!
Nearer? Nearer,
Cloven hoof,
Shadow slith'ring, long of tooth. There!
See not the step
Of heir of Herne, and lord of death?

Crisp and even, snow is broken,
Wicked child cruelly woken.
Cries for mercy, prayer for peace
Are lost in Auldsong's stifled wreath
Of silence, falling,
Silence, weeping,
Left alone our children sleeping.

Nevertheless,
Cold celebration! Candlelight!
O thirteen eves of Winterlight,
Halo, crown, and glimm'ring star,
Sigils of Law loom frozen, far.

This crystal eve! Hark the herald,
Cometh Horned One's prince a-creeping:
Krampus leering, hearken, hear
The jingling of his silvery bells,

Cry of Heaven,
And echo of Hell.

III

To me return, my crimsoned love,
Tangled taut in daemon satchel,
Scent of Hansel, lock of Grethel.
Truly, is it you, my maiden?
Or merely dwimmer'd sugar bleeding,
Shape of your severed angel breathing?

Whose shadow are ye casting high
Upon my lonely bower wall,
Grin of sylphide, tongue of Ba'al,
Silhouette of razored doll?

Beloved yearning,
Eternal returning.
Kiss me, ere he comes a-creeping,
Krampus closer, leering, weeping.

Sweet thy silver tongue of ashes,
Luscious sweet thy nightmare lashes,
Spiders weaving into mouths ...
Fingers silk me, daemon maiden
Flesh that loves me not thine own,
Flicker of cinder, falling gown.

IV

And from the shadow's watching wall?
Krampus sighing, claimeth all.
See his sorrowed eyes abright,
Bells a-tinkling in the night;

Sixty-six the bells they are,
Shiv'ring silver-bright I see:
Bell woven to brimstone, beard, and mane,
Regardless of thy slumber feign'd.

With bell and carol, haunt and harrow,
Krampus-maiden, come and kiss me.
See, in window's frigid crystal?
Winter's light, in Winterfell
Fails becrimsoned, twilit pall.

Maiden mourning, low'ring lashes,
Thirteen crystal claws are stroking,
Lips are parting, wanting, dreading,
Hoof-steps thrumming,
Omen come.

Krampus, maiden's shadow, creep!
Chestnuts crumble, cracked beneath
The chitt'ring nutcracker's
Bloodied teeth;

Cav'lier playthings march and wheel,
Lament, beloved, and harrow Hell.

V

Krampus, loft me this eve alight
 To you, my love. To you, my love,
 And never waking.
 China cloven, and omen breaking.

In crystal kingdom, lover, keep me
 Death alone will now beseech thee.
 And I? Cradled
 In your slumbrous wreath
 Of moments shared eternal, I.

For you and I,
 Together we forever sing
 As fails the final silver light.
 Behold enthroned, O boreal in glimm'ring:
 Our Lord Krampus,
 Longing to dream you, never to know me,
 Bowing, bent, twisted never upright,
 Cloven-hooved, crimson miened,
 Sev'ring ever the prayer of night.

Forever more our winters fall,
 Fall and shiver, fall forever.

VI

And lost beyond us, where in dawning
 Children alone lie waking, calling?
 Silver there the snows are ling'ring,

Silent tears, silent ev'ning.
Orphans all,
No longer dreaming.

Krampus fadeth, forgiving none.
Less the village is of one,
Mother and father now are gone,
Turning of a silver year.
What hope have we left to children here?

Faith in the ages,
Wheel encircling.
Traditions, elders, merry kindred,
Shelter all from tempest storming,
Another year in echo, longing.
Dwarven chaunt of silenced night,
Lament of auld, children, whisper
Naught of delight,
Only of ice ...

Ice adrift, adrift
In age-eld carol-chaunt, my loves,
Echoing
In winter's bright,
Echoing
In Winterlight.

— Kent David Kelly,
October 2017

* * * * *

And there you have it. Pleasant winter nights and nightmares!

Krampus and the Winterbringers are Open Game Content for the OSR, created via much historic and folkloric research, strung together and twisted into something stranger by Kent David Kelly. Enjoy them in your game.

Who will be the next Lord of Oldskull to be featured in this series? An interesting question. You never know who might appear ...

K



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