

BEASTS & BARBARIANS

HEROIC TALES

UMBERTO
PIGNATELLI



 G A M E L

TROLLHUNT



Trollhunt!

*A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds Heroic Tale for Beasts and Barbarians
for a party of 4-6 Veteran characters.*

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There is a vale, deep in the Northlands, where people live under the constant shadow of a huge glacier. They fear the mass of ice, but even more they fear the ancient creature dwelling in it: the Skarnahir, Lord of the Glacier and master of the vale.

Every year the villagers of Skarn, as the vale is called, make a horrible sacrifice to appease the monster, accepting this dire bargain in exchange for the safety of their families.

Will the heroes find a way to end this ancient threat?

Terrible battles, the secrets of forging and an evil older than mankind await the adventurers in this adventure!

Special Book of Lore Expansion: Trolls and troll hunting! Everything you need to know about these savage beasts and the ways to kill them!

A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

To save space, several abbreviations are used in this book to refer to other books of the *Beasts & Barbarians* line. They are listed below:

SEPG: Steel Edition Player Guide

SEGM: Steel Edition Game Master Guide

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Trollhunt!*, a heroic tale of the *Beasts & Barbarians* Savage Worlds setting.

To play this scenario you need a copy of the core rules of Savage Worlds and *SEPG* and *SEGM*.

This scenario is for a party of four Veteran heroes, with some experience (40–45 Experience Points is the optimal level), but it can easily be modified, following the Steel Edition instructions, for parties of different size and experience.

Due its nature the adventure is also quite suitable to be run at a convention (using a standard four hour slot) or to be played by a solitary hero (see Lone Wolf rules, *SEPG*).

You can play it with characters of your own, or download (for free) a party of pre-generated heroes from the same store where you found this product, or customize the archetypes found in the *Archetypes of the Dominions and Jalizar* free supplement.

If you haven't got gaming terrain at your disposal, you will also find gaming stones and several copies of Burst Templates handy, to represent specific terrain features in fights.

Parts in italics are intended to be read aloud or paraphrased by the Game Master to the players.

Now, if you intend to play this scenario, stop here: the following sections are reserved for the Game Master.

Otherwise, if you plan to run this adventure, go on, and prepare to start the Trollhunt!

CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

This scenario is set in a natural environment, so good Survival and Climbing skills will be useful.

There are also some opportunities to speak in public and generally have social interactions, so a character with Persuasion or Intimidation can make their mark on the story.

Rather unusually, the party will have the chance to help forge a mighty weapon, so a hero with Repair will have the chance to shine and a character with Knowledge (Legends and Lore) and Knowledge (History) can give additional insights useful in the scenario.

As usually happens in the Dominions, fights will be common, so a warrior or two are more than welcome in the party.

Although all the skills above are useful, they are not essential to complete the adventure successfully.

Horses: The party is given mounts for free if they haven't already got them.

BACKGROUND

The Legend: The village of Skarn stands in a remote valley in Northcim, not far away from the Troll Mountains. Nights are cold and winters long, but the Valley of Skarn is a peaceful one, and rich in plants and game in summer.

But there is a dark doom looming over the Valley: the Skarnahir, the Troll of the Glacier, a mythical creature which lives in the very heart of the enormous mass of ice lying immediately above the valley.

According to the legend, the Troll of the Glacier is terrible and powerful. During summer, when

the air is hot, he melts the ice and makes the glacier come down the valley, devouring it. In the old times the advance of the glacier was slow, but in recent ones the ice ate great chunks of good land each summer, making the villagers tremble in their homes.

Then, thirty years ago, a strong warrior, Ebbhorn of the Blue Shield, left the village and ventured to the glacier, determined to finally find and defeat the Troll, stopping the glacier forever.

Many were the perils he endured, but in the end he managed to face the Skarnahir in his lair: the monster and the warrior fought for seven days and nights, but neither was able to win.

So they made a pact: the Skarnahir swore to let the village live untouched and to stop the glacier if the villagers gave him a bride, a pretty girl, every winter.

Ebbhorn, battered and wounded, came back to his people and reported the words of the monster to the village elders, who after some consideration accepted the deal with the creature.

So every year, at dawn on the Midwinter Day, a girl chosen by the Elder Woman of the village is left tied to the Tree of Sacrifice, in the heart of the woods. By the morning of the following day, the girl is gone, taken by the Skarnahir to his den in the glacier to be his bride (or his meal!), and the villagers know they can live without fear of the ice for another year.

The chosen girl is marked with red paint, made of equal parts of boar's blood and strange herbs, on the face and breast, and is called the Bride of the Troll.

The Truth: What's told above is the legend, as the people of the Valley of Skarn know it; the truth is far more disturbing. When Ebbhorn went into the glacier, he found no Troll, but instead, wandering in a network of caves in the very heart of the glacier, he found an ancient city encased in the ice (it is Skarnakah, see sidebar on page 21) and a dark well, so deep that the bottom cannot be seen.

Here dwells the Spirit of the Glacier, a malevolent being trapped in the ice for eons, which caused the destruction of the city, and which has lain here half-asleep for centuries. The presence of the warrior and the smell of his warm blood woke up the creature which, using only a fraction of its power, easily captured him. To save his life, the cowardly warrior proposed a bargain: he would convince his fellow villagers to give the Spirit a life every year, in exchange for being spared.

The Spirit, which enjoys wickedness, accepted the deal, and so Ebbhorn came back to the village to report his false story of battling against a troll. The only one to whom he revealed the truth was his mother, Ebba, the Elder Woman, who fully understood what her son had done and took upon herself the task of choosing, every year, the girl that must be sacrificed to let her son (and her village) to continue to live.

Ebbhorn, being a coward, tried to escape from the vale, but he found that the wounds he suffered fighting with the Spirit of the Glacier were infected and transformed him into something inhuman – a twisted, enormous creature; a troll!

The malevolent being in the ice had decided in a show of dark humor that if the villagers expected a troll, he must give one to them.

Driven by a primeval instinct, Ebbhorn came back to the glacier and began his slavery as servant of the Spirit, becoming to all intents and purposes the real Troll of the Glacier. Year after year he comes out from his cold prison in the ice to bring the Bride, chosen by his mother, to the evil lurking in the depths of the glacier...



Part 1: Pacts of Life and Death

SACRIFICIAL LAMB


It is Midwinter Day, usually a day of feasting, but there is no warm fire, no rich meal and no bards' songs for you today; coming back to civilized lands after leading a caravan of merchants to the Cairnlands, you were forced to take an alternative route due to heavy snow closing the passes, and now you are plodding somewhere in the southern outskirts of the Troll Mountains, on the saddles of horses almost as disheartened as you.

In particular, you are crossing the remote Valley of Skarn, a pleasant place, even if it is darkened by the huge shadow of a glacier hovering on the northern mountains.

It is midmorning now, and you are slowly riding in the fresh snow, under the pale winter sun, heading to the other side of the valley. If the lone hunter you met yesterday told the truth, there you'll find a pass to the southern lands.

Let the players do some role-play, asking them what their characters plan to do after reaching civilization. Hopefully this will create some in-game dialogue between the players. When you think everybody is well into character go on with the following.

Suddenly your horses whinny and rear up, made nervous by something. You hear the sound of growling nearby, and you see a peculiar scene in a nearby clearing. Tied to a huge tree, there is a girl. Dressed only in a white fur, she is almost freezing in the cold weather. But this isn't her biggest problem; a pack of wolves, starving from the hard winter months, has surrounded her and is ready to attack! The girl doesn't scream but seems terrified indeed.



The heroes hopefully will rush to save the girl!

The battle area is a rough square 18" by 18". The clearing where the girl is tied is a circular area, 6" in radius, with the huge pine in the middle.

The path the party is crossing is a straight line, 2" wide, going from south to north, placed within 3" from the east side of the battlefield. All the remainder of the battlefield is covered in trees (see below).

Place the girl in contact with the huge pine surrounded by the wolves (from 3" to 6" from her), while the heroes are on horseback, on the path.

The wolves haven't yet attacked the girl, and the presence of the party disturbs them. The beasts only growl at the girl (counts as an Intimidation roll), and they concentrate their attacks against the adventurers.

The beasts are ravenous, but when half of them (or the Pack Leader) are killed, the cold bite of iron is enough to discourage them, and make the rest of the pack flee into the woods.

At this point the heroes can check on the unfortunate damsel.

(M) Mountain Wolf (2 per hero). See page 36.

(M) Mountain Wolf Pack Leader (1). Use the Mountain Wolf profile adding Size+1 and raising Strength and Vigor by one die step. It is a Henchman. See page 36.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- ❖ **HolyTree:** The tree is 1" by 1" on the tabletop and is carved with ancient inscriptions (see below). The girl's bonds are strong (Toughness: 7), but they are only ropes, so cutting attacks receive +2 damage against them.
- ❖ **Snow:** The abundant snow is two feet deep. The whole battlefield counts as Difficult ground for the heroes. Horses and wolves ignore this feature.
- ❖ **Trees:** If the heroes are on horseback, crossing a tree-filled area can be dangerous. They must make a Riding or Notice (-2) roll; in the case of failure they must slow down their mount (counts as crossing Difficult ground). If a rider rolls 1 on the skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, he hits a branch, and is automatically Shaken.
- ❖ **WolfScent:** Unless a hero is riding a trained war mount (GM's call), horses go wild when smelling the wolves. Characters in the saddle must make a Riding roll at the beginning of each round, in the case of failure they suffer -2 to any Agility-linked Skill roll due the wild bucking of their mount. On the other hand, if they score a Raise the horse reacts to his fear by making a free Wild Attack against a wolf in melee range.

SILENT FOX

When the fell beasts are killed or have fled, the party can examine the girl they saved more closely.

She is very fair of complexion and with blonde, almost white hair. Her delicate beauty is somewhat marred by some crude red paintings on her face and breasts, which smell weirdly. The girl is shoeless, but dressed in a fine white fur and wears a crown of white winter crocus. She stares at you with deep blue eyes, but she says nothing.

Adventurers of Northlander origin, making a Common Knowledge roll, recognize the crown of winter crocus as an ancient trapping of the wedding dress of Northlander women; as the heroes will soon discover, she is Silent Fox, daughter of Norgal, a poor orphan chosen to be the Bride of the Troll for this year.

With a Lotuscure roll, the strange paint on the girl's body is identified as a mixture of boar's blood and wood mosses, but there is no Lotus or other magical herb in it.

The girl seems very scared, with good reason, but she isn't able to speak a single word: she is

mute. She is in shock and desperately clings to the first hero saving her, and refuses to leave him.

Silent Fox's Protector: To make the player "chosen" by Silent Fox attached to her, hand him a Bennie. The hero is called, from now on, the Protector and he is given the Protector Bennie, which works as normal. If the Protector is with Silent Fox and actively protecting her, he gains a new Bennie at the beginning of each session (works till the end of the adventure).

Holy Tree. The tree to which Silent Fox was tied is quite unusual. First, it isn't a pine but an oak, and any character making a Survival roll (heroes with a woodland-dweller background can roll Common Knowledge instead) understands it isn't a typical plant of this area. Second, it looks very ancient, and it is covered with strange inscriptions, glyphs and decorations. With a Knowledge (History) or Knowledge (Legends and Lore) roll (-2) they can be recognized as being somewhat similar to Cairnlander inscriptions, while with a raise they are identified as holy symbols to unknown nature deities of the Ancestors, the population from which the Cairn people descends.

AN UNFRIENDLY VILLAGE...

The party cannot leave the girl here, alone in the woods, so they'll probably take her with them. Silent Fox is exhausted, so she quickly falls asleep in the saddle, holding on tight to the back of the Protector.

The characters must soon find food, shelter and warm clothing for the girl, so the best thing to do is continue on the path.

You continue to slowly ride down the vale for a couple of hours, immersed in the silent woods, wondering who left a young girl to die in such a way, and why. It is full afternoon when you hear the sounds of thunder coming from the mountain. It is quite strange, because it is winter and there is no storm coming.

After a moment you understand the noise is not thunder, but the huge glacier hovering over the vale, which roars and creaks like an angry giant.

The girl, who is sleeping on the saddle against your back (the Protector) stirs and moves in her sleep, as if disturbed by the deep grumbles.

Finally the party reaches the bottom of the valley, where a village stands. It is a typical Northlander settlement, the first they've seen in several weeks, and the group needs to restock supplies.

Surrounded by a tall palisade, it is composed of two dozen log buildings and a central well. There are no sentinels on the gate, which is quite unusual for such an isolated place.

The scenario supposes the party enters the village openly; if that isn't the case, change the following scene accordingly.

You enter the village at a slow pace, riding along a muddy road. Children playing in the dirty snow and women at the windows stare at you with open curiosity.

You stop near the well, to water the horses, but you have no time to unsaddle them, because a number of stout Northlander villagers quickly surround you, watching you angrily.

Silent Fox wakes up, and clings, scared, to her Protector.

A person advances from the crowd and speaks. She is a tall old woman, with white hair. Despite her plain brown dress, she has the bearing of someone accustomed to command.

She is Ebba, the Village Elder. Despite being a woman, she is the de-facto ruler of the village.

"You, strangers, what have you done? That girl was chosen to be the Bride of Skarnahir! By freeing her you have brought the rage of the Lord of the Glacier down upon the village of Skarn!"

At these words, the people grumble and nod, with dark frowns.

"And you" the woman continues, speaking to the girl "Silent Fox, daughter of Norgal. We raised you even if you were an orphan, and the village chose you to be the Bride of the Troll this year!

Submit to your destiny and don't bring shame on your dead parents!"

At this point the situation is very tense: the heroes can answer Ebba as they want, but their words only have the effect of stirring the crowd, which attacks the party!

The battlefield is a circle of 9" radius, with the well in the middle (see below). Outside the border of the battlefield there is a crowd of people (see below). Ebba is well behind the crowd, so she cannot be reached in any way.

Place the adventurers, on horseback, within 6" of the well. The Northlander villagers come out from the crowd, moving and attacking them. First they try to unhorse the heroes (opposed Strength roll, in the case of failure the character suffers the effect of falling from the horse) and then they make normal attacks or try to push them into the crowd (using the Push rules, see *SWD* page 75).

The villagers aren't a great threat so probably the party will trample them into the mud rather quickly. At this point go on with the next scene.

(M) Northlander Villager (1 per hero+2). See page 36.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- ❖ **A Good Ol' Fistfight:** The Villagers are big guys, but not real warriors, so they don't use weapons and attack only barehanded (doing Nonlethal damage). This goes on until the heroes use weapons; in this case the Villagers grab their own and the fight turns serious. The first adventurer using a weapon should be penalized with the loss of a Bennie for un-heroic behavior.
- ❖ **Raging Crowd:** The crowd is ready to threaten, kick and beat every character unlucky enough to finish up in it, dealing him 2d4 damage. After suffering damage the poor sod is thrown into the battlefield (roll a d4" inches to see how far he is thrown in) again and must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken.
- ❖ **Well:** The well is 2" wide, grants Medium Cover and counts as Difficult Ground. A character on it can grab the bucket, and the long chain on which is attached, and use it as an Improvised Weapon (Str+d6, Reach 6, grants the Sweep Edge to the user). Using the bucket isn't considered a weapon for the purposes of A Good Ol' Fistfight above.

... AND A FRIENDLY FIREPLACE

When the last villager is trampled into the mud, the crowd melts away like snow under the sun. You see that backup is arriving: a number of hunters clad in leather and furs, armed with bows and spears, led by a massive warrior with a big helm.

There are more than a dozen of them, with ranged weapons. The best thing to do is run away from this unfriendly place.

You jump into the saddle again and spur the horses: villagers and warriors alike jump out of your path, cursing and shouting, while you gallop through them, like hawks in a flock of wild geese.

Characters must make a Riding roll, and if they roll 1 on the Riding die, regardless of the Wild Die, they are hit by a lucky arrow (2d6 damage).

You slow down only when you are far away from that damned place and turn back.

Apparently nobody pursued you.

Kronn's Guests. At this point the most logical thing to do for the party is go on, crossing the vale, trying to put as much distance as they can between themselves and the village of Skarn.

The road climbs again, this time up the other side of the vale. The day is ending: the first stars appear in the deep blue sky, predicting a freezing night. You must find shelter otherwise things will turn ugly, especially for Silent Fox, who is scantily clad and in need of a warm place to pass the night.

Luckily for the heroes, after a while, they smell burning wood, indicating that someone lives around there. With some investigation they find a secondary path leading into the woods, off the main road.

The path leads to a clearing where a solitary house stands. The building seems very solid; apart from the thatched roof, it is entirely made of stone, and has a very big chimney, from which comes a wisp of smoke.

If the heroes knock, after a while someone opens the door.

He is a bald man of sixty years, dressed in black furs. He seems very strong, with a right arm thick as a wooden log, even if the left one is missing. The man seems quite drunk, but still capable of handling himself.

He is Kronn the Smith. The man stares suspiciously at the party, but seeing the girl, his frown smooths.

Silent Fox, on the other hand, seems very frightened by this man.

"Don't fear me, girl," he says. "Despite what the villagers say, I am no warlock or demon, only a smith." The old man continues, his voice hoarse from booze: "You and your friends are safe under Kronn's roof."

The house of Kronn is a smithy, with a large forge, an anvil and the other trappings of the work. Strangely, they are covered in dust, as if rarely used. Only the forge is lit, but the fire is small, and dwindling.

Kronn is cooking a stew in the fire of the smithy, and offers it to his guests, with butter, hard black bread and some tasty beer.

Questions. After dining, probably the heroes will have a lot of questions about what is happening in this remote vale.

Kronn answers as best as he can, frequently drinking hard stuff from a barrel. He tells the party the story of Skarnahir, Ebbhorn and the Troll Bride, being evasive only about himself, the cause of his exile and the origin of his crippling.

Some of the typical questions the players will ask, with the answers, are listed below.

Q: What is this place?

A: This is the Valley of Skarn. Skarn is the village, and the Skarnahir is the glacier... and not only that.

Q: What do you mean?

A: The Skarnahir is also the name of a terrible monster, a huge troll living in the glacier and commanding the ice. Thirty years ago a powerful warrior, Ebbhorn of the Blue Shield, challenged him, but he didn't manage to defeat him. In the end he made a pact with the monster; every year, during Midwinter Night, the villagers leave the Skarnahir a girl, to be the Bride of the Troll for a year. In exchange for this the monster prevents the glacier from devouring the valley.

Q: Is that the reason Silent Fox was tied to that strange tree in the forest?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: Who chooses the girl to be sacrificed?

A: Ebba, the village elder, does. She was the mother of Ebbhorn, the warrior who made the pact, and she took on this task, together with ruling the village.

Q: What happened to Ebbhorn?

A: The stories say he went back to the glacier to ensure that the Skarnahir respects its part of the bargain. He never came back. He was a close friend of mine...

Q: Why you don't live in the village?

A (His expression darkens): I don't like how the people of Skarn behave, and they don't like me. I prefer to be on my own.

Silent Fox relaxes after a while and the heroes, with a Notice roll, surprise Kronn looking at her strangely, with a mixture of sorrow and tenderness.



Part 2: The Bride and the Groom

DUEL IN THE SNOW

Night falls while the heroes dine and chat with Kronn. Then the peace of the smith's forge is suddenly broken by a harsh voice coming from outside. A voice the heroes already know.

"Kronn! We know the girl and the strangers are there! Make them come out!"

It is Ebba, the old crone who unleashed the villagers upon you. Spying from a window you see that she has gathered a host of men, holding long staves with burning torches on the top.

But Kronn isn't a man to oblige such a request. "Ebba!" He growls. "Go away with your baying dogs! You'll never have this girl!"

The woman answers: "You are a fool, old man, banishment wasn't enough for you! The Skarnahir will have this woman, as it had your wife many years ago, you cannot rebel against the will of the village! Come out, all of you, or we'll set fire to your shack and watch you burn!"

"The Lord of Thunder will judge you for your evil deeds, woman!" Kronn snarls back.

This is a good moment for the heroes to parley: the forge of Kronn is defensible, but the menace of fire must be taken seriously: the roof of the house is made of pressed hay, and will burn very well.

The parley can be handled with the Social Conflict Rules, pitting the heroes' Persuasion (or other relevant skill) versus the average Spirit of the crowd (d6 plus Wild Die). Optionally, if the GM prefers, he can handle this part as purely a roleplaying scene.

If the heroes score at least two successes in the Social Conflict, go on with The Duel scene; otherwise they fail to reach an agreement, go on with Fire Upon You!

THE DUEL

Someone steps out from the crowd. He is the hulking warrior the heroes spotted during their escape from the village. He speaks in a thundering voice: "Strangers! Are you puny dogs hiding behind the legs of their master? I, Thorrak Bear Claw, challenge you! Choose one of you to fight against me singlehanded; if you win, on my honor we'll let you stay, if you lose, the girl is ours!"

Thorrak is looking for glory; he wants to become a war chief, and this could be a good way to make himself a name. His proposal is sincere (even if Ebba doesn't want to honor it).

If the heroes accept the challenge go on with this scene, otherwise the strongest warrior of the party loses a Bennie - continue with Fire Upon You!

If the party accepts they must choose a champion and send him out. They can go out to watch the duel or stay inside, but Kronn insists on keeping Silent Fox inside the house, because he fears that Ebba will try some trick.

The battle area is a square 12" by 12", in front of the forge. On the north side of the battlefield is Kronn's forge, while on the south side stands the crowd of villagers. East and west there is some open ground, then the forest.

The two fighters start respectively from the northern (the heroes' champion) and the southern (Thorrak) borders. Thorrak's tactics are straightforward; if he wins the initiative the first round he rushes toward the opponent making a Push attack with his shield, if he loses it, he stands firm using the First Strike Edge. He also uses the Blood and Guts Setting Rule, trying to obtain maximum damage from each successful hit.

Note that although only the heroes' champion is in melee, the rest of the group can influence the fight as detailed below.

The combat is to Incapacitation, but whenever the final blow is going to be dealt (roll damage as normal) something happens (go on with the next scene, The Skarnahir), and the blow is never dealt (so no real damage is caused). If the heroes' champion is the moral winner of the duel, he is awarded a Bennie.

(WC) Thorrak Bear Claw (1). See page 38.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- ❖ **Treacherous Ground:** The fight is staged in front of the forge, where the ground is covered by a thin layer of snow, hiding obstacles on the ground. Whenever a character is dealt a non-face card club as his first Action Card, it means he might trip over a hidden obstacle on the ground! He must make an immediate Notice (-4) roll. In the case of failure he doesn't spot it and trips, suffering -2 to Parry and to Agility-based rolls for the current round; if he scores a result of 1 or less, he falls down, with the same penalties as above, plus he is Shaken and is considered Prone. Every fighter can only encounter a single hidden obstacle during the fight.
- ❖ **Support:** While the fighters duel, the spectators don't stay idle. Both the crowd and the heroes can use Intimidation (-2) or Taunt (-2) to distract the enemy as per standard Test of Wills rules. As an alternative they can shout encouragement, rolling on Spirit (-4) or Persuasion (-2); with a success the supported champion gains +1 to a single skill roll of his choice (expires at the end of the round), while with a Raise he gets a special Support Bennie which expires at the end of the fight. All of the rolls above can be cooperative. The crowd, given its sheer numbers, can make up to four rolls per round, using d6 plus the Wild Die.

“FIRE UPON YOU!”

“So you choose fire?” Ebba shouts.

“Then fire it shall be!”

At her order the villagers throw their flaming staves onto the roof of the forge. From your position you cannot see the flames, but you hear the crackling sound of the hay catching fire!

“Old bitch!” Kronn curses. “We must get away from here or we’ll die like rats in a trap!”

The situation isn’t immediately dangerous, but the longer the party stays inside the forge, the more dangerous it becomes. Check the table below.

FIRE IN THE FORGE TABLE

ROUND	EFFECT
1 st -2 nd	<i>No Effect.</i>
3 rd	<i>Some Smoke.</i> Vigor roll to avoid suffering a level of Fatigue, (see Smoke Inhalation in the core Savage Worlds rules)
4 th	<i>Intense Smoke!</i> As above, but rolls are made at -2.
5 th	<i>Brimstone!</i> As above, plus several logs fall down. Characters must make an Agility roll or suffer 2d4 damage.
6 th	<i>Get Out of Here!</i> As above, but the Agility roll is made at (-4) and the damage increases to 2d8.
7 th	<i>Collapse!</i> The ceiling falls down! Characters still inside suffer 3d8 damage and must roll Agility (-4) to avoid getting stuck under the flaming debris! Stuck characters suffer 2d6 damage per round till someone frees them with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative.

Getting Outside. Sooner or later the characters will get out of the forge. The place has a single exit, the front door, 1” wide. Thorrak and his fellow warriors are placed within 4” from it, forming a circle, ready to receive any escaped heroes. They are on Hold, and try to beat characters senseless (they cause Nonlethal damage) and to grab Silent Fox. The combat goes on till one of two things happens; they manage to capture the girl, or all the heroes are outside the forge. At this point go on with the next scene, The Skarnahir.

Smoke Fatigue. The heroes inhaled smoke only for a brief period, so they automatically recover Fatigue at the beginning of the next scene.

(M) Northlander Warrior (2 per hero +2). See page 36.

(WC) Thorrak Bear Claw (1). See page 38.

THE SKARNAHIR

The text below supposes the party accepted the Duel and that Silent Fox is still in the forge. Otherwise, change the scene accordingly.

Suddenly a sound of creaking plants is heard, and a terrible growl comes from the forest.

“The Skarnahir!” Ebba shouts. “The Skarnahir is here!”

From the woods an enormous creature comes out. It is a troll, a great troll, the biggest and strangest the heroes have ever seen: it is almost as tall as a tree, with antlers like those of a deer, and its skin is deep blue, as if made of ice.

All the characters must make a Fear roll, as per the Skarnahir’s description. Instead of applying the normal fear effects, whoever fails the roll is Shaken, frozen in place from fear and surprise. The

villagers (except Ebba) must also roll, whoever fails simply runs away.

The Skarnahir grows terribly, and moves toward the forge! You must fight for your life!

The creature has a very fine sense of smell and has followed the smell of the Trollmark, the potion used to smear the Trollbride, to locate her. Now he is here, and wants his bride.

The battleground is an area 24" by 24", with the forge, 12" by 12" in the middle. The monster begins on the eastern border of the battleground. Place the heroes accordingly to their position in the previous scene. Silent Fox is placed in the forge, while Kronn is near one of the heroes of your choice. The position of the villagers isn't important; they don't attack the Troll and the monster ignores them.

The Skarnahir is only interested in one thing: the girl. He moves toward the forge and smashes the walls with his huge fists. Once he has her, he leaves.

The Troll only responds to attacks, he doesn't actively look for trouble. Given his blue skin (see Special Abilities of the monster), he doesn't have to fear the opponent's attacks and he causes temporary damage (after all he is respecting his part of the pact with the villagers). Despite his invulnerability, Kronn tries to stop him, and the monster bashes him away into a pile of snow.

Then he goes away, with his prey in his hands.

(WC) Kronn the Smith (1). See page 34.

(WC) Silent Fox (1). See page 37.

(WC) Skarnahir (1). See page 37.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- ❖ **The Forge:** The building's walls are quite sturdy (Toughness: 8, Heavy Armor) but not a match for the Skarnahir, which can easily destroy them.

BEATEN BUT NOT DEFEATED

"Come back!" shouts Kronn to the Skarnahir, "Come back and fight!" and then falls down on the ground, weeping from rage.

The villagers watch the scene terrified: none of them has ever seen the monster before and Ebba is ready to make the best of the situation. "This is what happens to those who don't respect the pact with the Lord of the Glacier!" She says "Be happy, men of Skarn, because the Skarnahir has his Bride and he'll let us live in peace for another year!"

Then the villagers, a wild-eyed Thorrak included, go away, but some of them look at Kronn with ashamed eyes.

GM'S TIP: UNEXPECTED HELP

This adventure includes a very tough fight with the Skarnahir. If you feel the party lacks the strength to face the monster, or if you simply want to add another NPC to interact with them, you can decide that Thorrak Bear Claw spots Ebba when she left the village headed to the glacier (see below). Suspicious of what the old woman is doing (and secretly hoping to find leverage to seize power) he decided to follow her. The heroes meet him on the mountain trip and they can forge an alliance. Thorrak will fight bravely and loyally at the heroes' side but will also try to take all the glory for the adventure.

BLOOD AND IRON

The villagers, like the girl, are gone. Kronn is still in the snow, weeping and cursing at the same time.

The party has lost a battle, but surely the war isn't over; the heroes must lick their wounds, check Kronn and decide what to do next. Surely, they cannot leave the Troll with the girl!

After a while, the one-armed smith composes himself. As the characters are heroes, they'll probably want to go chasing the Skarnahir. When they express this, Kronn answers as follows.

"Forget it, fools! Isn't what happened before enough? No mortal weapon can wound that thing, as my missing arm testifies!" he says, raising the stump.

If the heroes try to make him talk more he continues.

"Twenty years ago, Ebba, the village Elder, chose my wife, Willa, as Bride of the Troll. I opposed the decision, but I could do nothing. So I hid in the woods, near the Tree of Sacrifice and attacked the Skarnahir when he came to reclaim her. The monster, which cannot be wounded by mortals' weapons, maimed me, but did not kill me, for some unknown reason," the old man says.

"But that wasn't enough; because of my rebellion Ebba banished me from the village. Probably she didn't have me killed because I was a close friend of her son Ebbhorn." At this point Kronn asks for some booze, then he continues.

"So I left the village and wandered in the south for many years, learning many strange things: in particular, I was searching for the way to kill that damned monster, but no smith I asked in Northeim could help me. Nobody except the strange smith priests living in the Monastery at the Mount of Fire. I, a trained smith, was their servant for many years, and in the end I stole from them the secret of forging a blade capable of killing a creature like the Skarnahir!"

Kronn's eyes are aflame telling this story, but you cannot be sure if it is just the effect of the alcohol. But when the smith continues, his tone is full of sadness. "But when I came back to the vale and tried to put the secret into practice, I discovered that I had the knowledge to forge the weapon, but not the hands to do it. A smith with a sole arm is worthless! So I stayed, idle, in this place, brooding and drinking, till tonight; when I saw that girl, for a moment I saw again my dead Willa, the same terror in her eyes when they took her away from me..."

So Kronn knows how to forge a weapon to destroy the Lord of the Glacier! Although he lacks a hand the party can surely lend him one! If the heroes propose this, role-play the smith accordingly; first he is against it, then dubious, and finally he seems convinced of the thing. If the player role-plays the scene well, reward them with a Bennie.

"So you'll help me, you say? Have you ever used a smith's hammer? Of course not, methinks! Well, you'll learn! Help me start the forge's fire, and if the gods and demons of the North help us, tonight you'll see something the skalds will sing about for years!"

A long night awaits the heroes: they must help Kronn to forge the best blade he ever made in his life. The whole process is handled through a particular type of Dramatic Task, The Secret of Iron and Blood, but first they must get the smithy running again.

Cleaning All the Mess. It has been many years since Kronn used the forge, so it is a real mess; the party must make a cooperative Strength roll, representing the party lighting the fire, preparing the tools and so on. The roll is at (-4) if the villagers burned the roof of the smithy (luckily the fire didn't destroy the forge, made of solid stone, and the anvil, of the purest iron). If the roll is successful, the rolls for the Secret of Iron and Blood suffer no penalty, if they score a raise or better they receive +1 to all rolls, while with a failure all the rolls in the Dramatic Task suffer -2.

THE SECRET OF IRON AND BLOOD

This Dramatic Task is very long: every step requires two hours, for a total of ten hours of very hard work, because it is divided into steps. At each step, the party members can make the cooperative roll described below. At the end of the Task list, count in how many tasks the heroes succeeded and check the table below. Note that Task 4 is the crucial one and can net more successes.

Smith of the North. Characters with a smith background or with the Smith of the North Edge (see *B&B* #5 – *The Amulet of Dogskull*) are advantaged in this scene. If they make the roll, or are the leading character in cooperative rolls, they receive a +2 bonus.

Task 1 – Making the Fire. The party must make the fire, and keep it hot with the bellows.

“Come on boys!” Kronn shouts to overcome the roar of the fire “We need a fire much hotter than this one!” Don’t be shy with the bellows, and you, bring in more coal!”

This is a Vigor (-2) roll, which should be cooperative: in fact the roll suffers an additional -1 per hero less than four in the task. For example, if only two heroes do this job they both roll at -2. Despite the success of the cooperative roll, any character missing the roll, gets a level of Fatigue, which can be recovered only by skipping two Tasks.

Task 2 – Making the Iron Hot! The iron must be incandescent to be used, but finding the exact shade of red isn’t simple and Kronn is very picky on the topic.

“Keep watch on the ore while I do other things. It must be of the right red, not less or it won’t shape properly, not too much or it will melt under the hammer. It must be the color of a bull’s heart!”

This is a Repair or Smarts (-2) or Notice (-4) roll.

Task 3 – Hammering. Now comes the hard part; Kronn hammers the metal, chanting a strange song in a foreign language (by rolling on Knowledge (Religion) the heroes can recognize a very ancient prayer to Hulian, Smith of Words).

“Ah! How good it is, feeling the hammer in my hand again! You, lad! Hold it steady!”

One of the heroes (and only one) must hold the metal firmly with tongs for several hours! This is a Strength (-4) roll. In the case of failure the character also suffers a level of Fatigue (recovered as for Task 1 above).

Task 4 – Tempering in Blood! At this point the blade is shaped, but it needs to be tempered, and this phase of the process is the crucial one.

Kronn orders you to bring in a large metal bowl filled with cold water, then he draws a dagger and cuts deeply into his arm, letting the blood mix with the water.

“This is the secret: in blood runs the fire of mankind and in this fire we’ll temper our blade.”

The water reddens, and then the Smith puts the hot metal inside. A cloud of steam rises up.

“Hurry up!” Kronn says: “We need more blood! A lot more blood!”

The heroes must put their blood in the bowl; ask each player if he wants to do this, and how many Wounds he wants to sacrifice. These Wounds are special; they cannot be Soaked or healed in the normal way (but will be recovered faster than normal, see below). At this point let the hero who sacrificed the most Wounds make a Spirit (-4) roll, +2 times the total number of Wounds sacrificed. For each success and raise, consider an additional successful Task accomplished.

Under your amazed eyes the steam raising from the bowl turns red, and when Kronn picks it up, you see that the blade now has a similar reddish color.

Task 5 – Sharpening. The weapon is almost done; the blade need only be sharpened now. Kronn is very tired, the work was exhausting for him, so the task of sharpening falls mostly upon the heroes.

“You must do it!” Kronn says “It must be finished before sunrise, otherwise the magic will fade away!”

TROLLHUNT!

This is a Repair (-2) roll, which can be made by a single hero.

The Trollbane. When the final part of the task is finished, the blade is done.

The first light of sun is touching the sky when finally the sound of the sharpening stone fades away.

Kronn raises up the blade in his hand, and you can see the perfect workmanship of it. Sharp as a razor, it shimmers with a reddish light, as if the blood used in tempering it somehow diffused into the metal.

"It is done, finally," the old smith whispers. "The Trollbane."

Now is the moment to check how well the characters worked. Basically, the weapon receives the Trollbane Special Ability (see sidebar), plus some additional features deriving from the success of the crafting process.

Count the number of successful Tasks the heroes achieved (remember that Task 4 is special and can count as many Tasks) and check the table below.

TROLLBANE FORGING TABLE	
SUCCESSSES	EFFECT
0	<i>Bad Magic.</i> The blade is brittle (breaks like bone) and no magic is infused in it! It doesn't have the Trollbane Special Ability. The party still has a chance to defeat the monster using the Big Stalagmite (see page 32).
1	<i>Weak Magic.</i> The weapon's magic is very weak. The Trollbane Special Ability lasts only for three successful hits, then it wears off. The blade is considered bronze.
2	<i>Unstable Magic.</i> The weapon's magic is unstable: after every time it successfully hits a Troll, roll a d6, if 1 is rolled, the Trollbane Special Ability is lost. The blade is considered bronze.
3	<i>Trollbane.</i> The weapon is a true Trollbane. No special effect. The blade is considered iron.
4	<i>Great Weapon.</i> The weapon is of amazing quality: it grants +1 Damage and +1 AP. It is considered iron.
5	<i>True Trollbane.</i> A real masterpiece! It gives +1 Damage, +1 AP and the user can freely reroll any 1 on the Fighting die, as if he had spent a Bennie. It is considered steel for quality.

The Exact Nature of the Weapon. The adventure supposes Kronn forges a Troll Hunting Spear (see New Gear in the Book of Lore), but feel free to make him craft the most useful weapon for the party: the best options are a battle axe, a long or two-handed sword or even a dagger...

THE TROLLBANE

A weapon with the Trollbane Special Ability has the following effects.

- 1) It is considered magical for all purposes.
 - 2) It deals double damage to Trolls and similar beasts (GM's call, but should not work on Nandals).
- The magic of Trollbane, unless the GM decides differently (see adventure end) lasts only for this scenario.



Part 3 – Under the Glacier’s Shadow

MOUNTAIN HUNT

After the ritual, Kronn, who did most of the forging, collapses from fatigue. The heroes can put him in bed, and he will sleep for a day and more. The smith’s role in the adventure isn’t ended yet, he will reappear later (see The Lair of the Troll scene).

Late Tokens. In this part of the scenario, speed is going to be very important; the more time the heroes use to track down the Skarnahir, the more difficult it will be for them to save the girl. This is handled in an abstract way, by assigning Late Tokens, which make the scenario harder.

Some Rest. The heroes now have a weapon to fight the Skarnahir and are ready to hunt him and retrieve Silent Fox. If they head off immediately, they have no chance to recover from the Fatigue or Wounds of the night, but the players should be rewarded with a Bennie.

If they decide to rest till midday, eating some food and resting a bit, they can make a Vigor (+2) roll; for each success and raise they can recover a Wound or a level of Fatigue suffered during the Secret of Iron and Blood, but they receive a Late Token.

The text below supposes the party sets off immediately; if they rest, change it accordingly.

The sky is steely and you smell snow in the air. It hasn’t started falling yet, but you are sure that it will before nightfall. Following the tracks of the Skarnahir is simple, because the monster didn’t make any attempt to conceal his passage. He left big tracks in the snow, and pushed aside trees in his path.

His destination is clear: he is headed to the glacier, looming over the Vale of Skarn.

At midday you have crossed the whole vale, and are at the base of the mountain, where the big ice mass starts.

There is a sort of goat path going up the mountain, beside the glacier. The monster went this way. It seems some mountaineering awaits you.

The path the Skarnahir took is parallel to the glacier, and runs up the mountain side till it enters directly into the ice mass. The whole trip requires more or less half a day and several events will happen during it, as described below.

MYSTERIOUS TRACKS

The path goes on steeply up the mountain. You can clearly see the large footprints of the Skarnahir impressed in the snow. You glance at the sky before starting the climb; it is even grayer than before.

While the heroes are going up the first part of the path, if they look at the tracks with more attention (Notice (-2) roll) they spot, over the tracks of the Skarnahir, another, fresher, set of tracks. They belong to a person with quite small feet. The tracks are Ebba's, as will be clear later. If you decide to add Thorrak to the party (see Unexpected Help sidebar on page 13), this is a good place to do it. Thorrak is behind the party, and initially will try to shadow them without being noticed.

WIND, SNOW AND A STRANGE GROTTO

The sky was gray all day, and now it is finally snowing, with large, heavy snowflakes. In the meantime the wind starts howling. In few moments you can see almost nothing, while snow and ice whip at you harshly.

The heroes are caught in a snowstorm! If they decide to continue despite the snow, go on directly to the next encounter, Treacherous Path, but the party suffers from Dark (-2) lighting conditions. In addition, the heroes must make two Vigor rolls; in the case of failure they suffer a level of Fatigue due to the cold and the exertion. This Fatigue is recovered when the party reaches the glacier (see next scene).

If the party decides to look for shelter, with a Survival or Notice (-2) roll they find a small grotto in the mountainside. It is dry, with a floor covered in white sand. A perfect place to stay during a storm! There is a small fissure at the end of the cave, through which a Small hero can pass without any problems (normal sized ones must make an Agility roll, while Brawny or Obese ones cannot get through at all).

It leads to another room. Unlike the natural grotto, this place is an artificial room, carved in stone, with some columns and some inscriptions on the walls. There is a corridor leading away from it, but it is blocked by debris. With a successful Knowledge (Legends and Lore) or Knowledge (History) roll the party can learn several things, depending on the roll. Each entry is inclusive of the previous one.

Failure. It is all strange gibberish. The paintings look like towers or a city or something like that.

Success. The inscriptions talk about a city or a civilization (it is unclear) called Skarnakah of the Tall Towers. They were rulers of the North, when the north was a garden. Strange, what era can this refer to?

Raise. The inscriptions are very old, they pre-date the fall of the Dread Star. The shape of the glyphs is similar to those found in the Cairnlands. Probably the city of Skarnakah belonged to the empire of the Ancestors. It is very strange, there is no reference to this city in modern chronicles...

If the heroes discover the grotto, examine the inscriptions and score at least a success on the

Knowledge roll they should be rewarded with a Bennie. This knowledge can be useful later, in the fight against the Lord of the Glacier (see page 31).

The storm lasts four hours; if the party waits for it to end they lose precious time and acquire a Late Token.

No More Tracks. Note that from this point on the tracks of the Skarnahir are covered by the snow, but there is only single path going up the mountain, so by following it the heroes will hopefully find him anyway.

“THEY ALL FALL DOWN!”

You are laboriously going up a very narrow path on the verge of the mountains, knee deep in the fresh snow, when you hear a rumble above you: you stare upward and see stones and boulders falling in a deadly avalanche!

The falling stones aren't a natural phenomenon; a sentinel of the Ice Guardians (see below) starts it, and then flies away to its nest, unseen unless a hero explicitly looks upward and succeeds in a Notice (-4) roll.

The deadly rain lasts for four rounds plus one round per Late Token the heroes have accumulated.

Rockfall! During each round all the players draw a card from the Action Deck. Heroes with the Bad Luck Hindrance draw two and pick the lower one, while characters with the Luck Edge draw two and pick the higher one.

The hero who picked the lowest card is unfortunately in the path of one of the boulders and must roll Agility to get out of harm's way. Check the table below to see the penalty of the roll and the effect of the damage if the roll is failed.

If several heroes share the lowest card number (suit doesn't matter), all of them are in danger and must roll. Remember that if the group is in the storm, seeing the boulders is more difficult, so the heroes suffer another -2 to the roll

FALLING ROCKS TABLE

CARD	AGILITY MOD	DAMAGE	SPECIAL EFFECT
2-3	-4	2d4	<i>Pushed Off Path!</i> If hit the hero must make a Strength (-4) roll or fall off the path, hitting the rocks below for 3d6 additional damage.
4-5	-3	2d6	<i>Safe Place!</i> The hero is near a large barrier of some sort which can give him shelter (+4 Armor for the rest of the scene), if he sees it with a Notice roll.
6-8	-2	2d8	<i>Debris!</i> The hero is struck by a small piece of Debris. Ignore any Armor bonus he has.
9-10	-1	3d6	<i>Clear Sight!</i> The hero saw the boulder in advance, so he can choose to roll on Agility or Notice to avoid it.
J-A	0	3d8	<i>Really Big Rock!</i> The hero must make a Spirit roll before the Agility roll to avoid being paralyzed by fear: if he fails he suffers -4 to the Agility roll.

After the Fall. After the avalanche, the path is seriously damaged. To continue along it, the heroes must make a Climbing roll, which can be cooperative. If all the party succeeds, they can

HERO'S JOURNAL: AZURE LOTUS OF THE MOUNTAINS

These strange, bluish, berries grow only in very cold areas and mature under the snow. They are particularly sweet, but leave a strange aftertaste for hours after ingestion. Each dose counts as Refined Lotus. The user can use a dose of it to create a *succor* concoction, even if he doesn't know the Power, with a simple Lotusmastery roll.

If the character already knows the Power, by using a dose he adds +2 to the Lotusmastery roll when crafting such a concoction. In addition, if the Lotusmaster scores a raise or better, the imbiber gains +2 to roll to resist Fatigue for a whole day. Each dose can be sold for 150 Moons.

go on, otherwise they must find an alternative way with a Survival roll, acquiring a Late Token (no Token if they score a success on the Climbing roll).

STRANGE HERBS

Finally the path stops climbing so much, and you can go on more easily. It is very cold now, and the air is as sharp as polished glass. After a while you reach a clearing protected from the wind. The road goes on but this seems a good resting place.

Scattered on the far end of the clearing there are several bushes of plants with deep blue fruits, similar to blueberries. With a Lotusmastery roll, they can be recognized as Azure Lotus of the Mountains, a fairly rare plant. The heroes can gather the berries, if they want, but must be very careful, making a Lotusmastery (+2) or Survival or Notice (-2) roll, because only one berry in three is good, depending on how ripe it is. In the case of failure the berry has the effect of a Slow Ingestion Poison cast with arcane skill of d8.

The effects of the Lotus are described in the sidebar. The heroes can gather up to three doses (making the rolls above). If they want to search the area, they can spend another hour to find another three doses (another roll is required), but in this case they acquire a Late Token.

THE ICE GUARDIANS

The path ends in proximity to the glacier. A large chasm separates the mountain from the mass of ice, but there is a passage to cross it: a wonderful arch, a sort of bridge made of the purest ice, which shimmers with hundreds of colors in the light of the sun. You can see, on the opposite side, a large crack in the glacier, leading inside it.

The bridge isn't very wide and seems quite slippery. The heroes can cross it only in single line. When half of the party is upon it (or when the first adventurer is on the other side) something happens.

You hear a chorus of shrieking sounds, and from behind the mountains a flock of horrible animals comes flying. A little smaller than a man, they seem like white featherless birds with long serpentine necks, bat-like wings and reptilian heads. The creatures plummet over you, talons ready to rend. You must defend yourself!

The battleground is a 27" by 27" area. The south side (3" wide) represents the mountain, while the north side (3" wide) is the glacier. The two sides are divided by a large chasm, crossed by the ice arch, placed on the north-south axis. It is 1" wide and 21" long, and ends on the mountain (south side) and on the glacier (north side).

The heroes begin where they were when the beasts arrived, probably at least half of them are on the bridge, while the others are on the south or the north side.

The Ice Guardians, which can fly, enter from the east, directly over the chasm. The tactics of the beasts are simple, they harass the adventurers, attacking them and making them fall. The monsters, minions of the Lord of the Glacier, fight till only one of them remains, then the survivor flies away, shrieking, returning to its nest among the mountain peaks, and the heroes can continue their journey, going on to the next scene.

(M) Ice Guardian (1 per hero + 2 per Late Token). See page 34.

(M) Ice Guardian Flock Leader (1). Raise Fighting, Strength and Vigor to d8. It is a Right Hand. See page 34.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

❖ **Brittle Ice:** The bridge is very arched, and becomes quite thin in the middle part. When a character passes over the central 3" (from 9" from the south to 9" from the north), there is a chance that the ice breaks! Draw a card from the Action Deck, if it is a face card, the ice breaks! The hero can jump to safety with an Agility (-2) roll. In the case of failure he falls off the bridge (see below)! When the ice starts breaking, it can start a chain reaction: at the beginning of the next round, draw a card, if it is a face card, another 1" chunk of ice, adjacent to the previous one, breaks off!

❖ **Fighting On the Bridge:** There isn't much space for footwork on the bridge. Whenever the character rolls on Agility or an Agility-based skill, if he rolls 1 on the trait die, regardless of the Wild Die, it means he trips, and, unless he makes an Agility (-2) roll, he falls off the bridge! The same happens if he runs, in this case treat any 1 on the running die like a 1 on the Agility die. An Extra suffering this fate automatically dies, disappearing in the chasm below, while a Wild Card clings on to the edge of the bridge. To regain solid ground he must make a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative. He must roll every round, at the beginning of his turn. If he rolls 1 or less he falls down, luckily hitting a snow covered ice chunk 8" below, suffering 4d6 damage, and must be recovered in some way (with a rope or with Climbing rolls).

SKARNAKAH, THE CITY IN THE ICE

The creature known as the Lord of the Glacier is in truth a demon from a distant, very cold, planet. He fell on the Dominions centuries before the Dread Star fall, when the Ancestors' empire (the progenitors of the Cairnlanders) ruled the northern part of the world. In particular, he fell in the mountains near the city of Skarnakah.

Skarnakah was a prosperous city and its dwellers were in large part philosophers and farmers, with a small caste of warriors. They were ruled by a Queen and worshipped ancient, long-forgotten, nature deities. Skarnakah, due to its position, was sheltered from the northern winds and thanks to the benevolence of the gods enjoyed good weather, and was a true garden. The perfect playground for the Lord of the Glacier.

A small larva when he arrived, he used his weather powers to gradually change the local climate into a very cold, almost arctic, environment. Then he started hunting the citizens, devouring their souls (the monster is nourished by fear). In the end, when he was big enough, he assaulted the very city, devouring every living being. Without any further food, he engulfed the whole town in an enormous "cocoon" of ice, which became the Glacier of Skarn. The monster stayed more or less dormant until, thirty years ago, a glory-seeking warrior called Ebbhorn ventured into the glacier looking for a legendary monster to kill...

IN THE GLACIER

You are finally on the glacier. The thought of being upon an enormous tongue of ice and stones, big as a city, which could at any moment slip down the mountain unnerves you a bit. But, after all it has been there for ages, why should it move now?

Bad thoughts aside, there is a large fissure in the ice wall, a passage leading to a cavern carved inside the mass of ice.

Ask the group for a Notice roll. With a success, despite the tracks being erased by the snow, the characters find a piece of fur near the entrance of the cavern, which was torn away from Silent Fox's dress, a sign that the girl and the Troll must be inside. Now they must be quiet.

The cavern is actually part of a network of grottoes, created by the natural cracks in the glacier. This part of the scenario is made of several interconnected locations. The party starts from *Location 1 – Fresh Snow Grotto*.

1 ~ FRESH SNOW GROTTTO

The large, round grotto where you are now isn't a real cavern, but more a large crack in the glacier. There is no ceiling, and the whole floor is covered by a thick, soft mantle of fresh snow. There are a clear set of human tracks crossing the room, leading to the only other exit, a passage on the opposite side of the room.

If the heroes found the tracks in the Mysterious Tracks part of the previous scene, they can easily recognize these ones as being made by the same feet. They are Ebba's, and she is now slightly above the group (see *Location 3 – Someone Among the Pillars*). The sequence of recent events is as follows: the Skarnahir and Silent Fox arrived, then it snowed covering their tracks, then Ebba passed by, and now the heroes arrive.

This room is very dangerous: the floor, concealed by the snow, is only made of a thin layer of ice, which can sustain only a certain weight. The Skarnahir, in fact, always passes to the sides, which are strong enough to sustain his massive weight.

If the heroes cross in the middle, there is a chance the floor breaks under their feet. Every time a hero passes over it, draw a card from the Action Deck. If it is seven or less, the ice breaks, swallowing the poor sod (see below). The chance increases to Jack or less if the hero is Obese, Brawny or carries a lot of weight (GM's discretion) or decreases to four or less for Small or very light characters.

If the floor collapses, anyone within 3" of the main victim must make an Agility (-4) roll to avoid his fate by jumping to the sides of the room.

The swallowed victims must make a Vigor roll to avoid taking a level of Fatigue from shock, cold and partial suffocation and emerge from the snow in *Location 4 – Shadows in the Ice*. This Fatigue wears off at the beginning of the next scene.

The snow, falling down, closes the hole, dividing the party into two groups. From this moment on each group must not only find the Skarnahir, but also join up with the others.

Connected to: The main passage leads to *Location 2 – Old Weapons*, while falling through the floor leads to *Location 4 – Shadows in the Ice*.

GM'S TIP: SPLIT PARTY

An old saying in the RPG world is: "Never split the party."

This is more a suggestion for the players than for the GM: a full party is stronger and better equipped to face the threats of the adventure.

But in some cases, like this one, splitting the party is fun and can add to the story.

The most important thing while playing with a split party is to avoid excessive downtime for the idle part of the group, while the other part is actively playing. As a rule of thumb, try to play the same amount of time (not more than 15 minutes) with a group, then leave something for the others to do (like discussing a plan, a short board-game and so on). Another good idea is making them run several Interludes autonomously (one per character so every player can earn a Bennie).

A trick greatly enhancing the game when the party is divided is to physically divide the players, keeping them in two different rooms so they cannot overhear what happens to their companions.

Regardless, try to limit the times when the group is divided; if you do this on a regular basis or for a long time, you should find a buddy to act as "secondary" GM so you can play two interlinked games at the same time.

2 ~ OLD WEAPONS

This cavern is made of ice. The ground, unlike the previous cavern, seems made of very solid ice. In a corner, covered in frost, you see a pile of abandoned stuff. Apart from the corridor you came from, there is another passage, not very large, going deeper into the glacier.

This cavern, unlike the previous one, is a real one, with an ice ceiling and so on. If the heroes examine the pile of stuff, they find some objects, perfectly preserved. They are a shield, painted blue, a horned helm, and a sheathed long sword. They seem well-used but perfectly preserved, in particular the shield must have survived a couple of hard fights, but it is still pretty usable. These are the weapons of Ebbhorn, which the warrior left there before his transformation into the Skarnahir. If one of the players remembers the story of Ebbhorn (who was called "of the Blue Shield"), and identifies the weapons as his, he should be rewarded with a Bennie. If Thorrak is with the party he automatically recognizes them too. The question now is: if these are Ebbhorn's weapons, where is he? The party will discover this soon.

In the room there isn't anything else of interest.

Connected to: The corridor leads to *Location 1 – Fresh Snow Grotto*, while the passage deeper into the glacier leads to *Location 3 – Someone Among the Pillars*.

3 ~ SOMEONE AMONG THE PILLARS

This grotto is wondrous: the pavement is a unique layer of ice, and several stalactites and stalagmites made of the purest ice create pillars of ice where the light of the torches reflects to form bewitching images. There is the sound of dripping water somewhere and a whisper of cold air creates strange echoes among the frozen pillars.

There is someone hidden among the pillars: Ebba, the village elder who has fiercely opposed them throughout the adventure! The heroes can spot her by winning a Notice roll opposed by the woman's Stealth.

She is also the creator of the small tracks the party found before. If they are quick enough, they can stop her; Ebba is there to see her son, but she tries to convince the party that she is

here because she wants to free Silent Fox. She can be very persuasive, saying that her people have paid too high a price in lives, and she wants to at least save the latest girl. Actually, Ebba will try to kill the heroes at the first opportunity; throwing them down the crevasse of the Crevasse Room, or putting them in danger in the Hall of Deadly Shards.

(WC) Ebba the Village Elder. See page 33.

Connected to: A passage leads to *Location 2 – Old Weapons*, while a slightly descending corridor heads towards *Location 6 – The Crevasse Room*.

4 ~ SHADOWS IN THE ICE

The text below supposes that the heroes reach this location after falling down through *Location 1 – Fresh Snow Grotto*. If they arrive in another way, change the description accordingly.

You close your eyes while the massive snowdrift brings you down! The snow is fine as wheat powder and enters your lungs, making you cough. Luckily, your fall ends on a cushion of soft snow, so you don't suffer any damage. You immediately look upward, but you see that the snow has completely sealed the hole through which you passed!

Despite this, there is a faint light in this place, and you discover you are in a grotto, entirely made of blue ice, with a single exit, a passage leading deeper into the innards of the glacier.

The luminescence originates directly from the translucent walls, and you see strange shadows in them.

If the heroes look at the ice, they see a marvelous thing.

Encased in the ice, there are the bodies of three people, perfectly preserved. They are all tall, with angular features: one of them is a muscular warrior of some sort, armed with a finely-carved war club, while the second, the oldest of the trio, is a wizened man, probably a priest or a sage, dressed in plumes and with an intelligent expression. But the most impressive one is the third: she is a woman, wearing a jewel-encrusted bikini and holding a silvered scepter in her hand. Despite her young age, she has the bearing of a queen, and seems caught in the act of saying something, a phrase that will never be pronounced.

The people locked in the luminescent ice are the ruling council of the old town of Skarnakah (see sidebar on page 21). They are respectively: Tanak, General of the army; Juzul, the High Priest; and Velatah, the Queen.

They look very similar to Cairnlanders; with a successful Knowledge (History) roll they are recognized for what they truly are: members of the ancient empire of the Ancestors. They are buried too deep in the ice to be removed from it in any way.

Visions from the Past. The ice is magical, and touching it triggers strange visions, transmitted by the three souls trapped in the ice, which tell the history of the destruction of the city by the foul power of the Lord of the Glacier.

In game terms, the characters touching the ice must make Spirit rolls, of increasing difficulty (written in parenthesis) to “live” the vision. If the character rolling knows the *divination* Power, he rolls at +2.

In the case of failure, they suffer a level of Fatigue, two if the roll is 1 or less. When they are Exhausted they are automatically excluded from the vision. Fatigue lost in this manner is recovered at the rate of one level every five minutes of rest. If they succeed, they can pass to the next vision. If they succeed with a raise they obtain some additional info or other benefit, described below.

Every hero enduring the vision till the last scene should be rewarded with a Bennie.

FIRST VISION ~ TIMES OF YORE (0)

"In front of your eyes you see a marvelous city, with spiraling towers of white marble. It is populated by a fair race of people, similar to the ones you saw encased in ice. The climate is fair; the gardens and orchards are ripe and full of life."

Raise: The hero somehow knows that the city was called Skarnakah, which in the ancient Ancestors' language means "The Beautiful One".

SECOND VISION ~ THE BLUE STAR (~1)

"A blue star falls down from the sky. The citizens look at it in awe. After some years, the climate changes and the first snowflakes fall. People look around, puzzled."

Raise: The adventurer understands that this blue star isn't the Dread Star. This event is far earlier.

THIRD VISION ~ THE SHADOW (~2)

"The gardens are covered in snow, and the sun is pale and sickly. A long, serpentine, shadow is cast on the towers. The people of the town flee in fear from it!"

Raise: The character knows that the people are dying because the evil Lord of the Ice, come from the sky, is silently stalking and killing them. No warrior can endure it, because its main weapon is cold fear!

FOURTH VISION ~ THE QUEEN'S MEN (~4)

"You have the feeling of something big, enormous, pounding towards the city! A huge mass of ice engulfs the towers, freezing the people inside their very homes. In the throne room of the palace you see the General (the first man in the ice) and the High Priest (the second one) speaking with the Queen (the woman in the ice). The woman is going to answer, raises the scepter and then..."

Raise: The hero hears the words of the last council of the city: General Tanak is saying to Queen Velatah that all warriors are dead, while the High Priest says that almost all the city is engulfed in ice, apart from the palace. Queen Velatah says that they, the last survivors, will face the Ice Lord there. She touches the two men with the scepter as if blessing them... at this point the vision ends the hero who made the highest roll finds in his hands the Scepter of Skarnakah (see sidebar) and hears a spectral voice whispering "Avenge us".

Connected to: A corridor leads to *Location 5 – The Bottom of the Crevasse*.

THE SCEPTER OF SKARNAKAH

This peculiar looking object is a short staff (treat as a club dealing Str+d4 damage), long as a man's arm, of ancient wood plated in silver and decorated with a carving resembling the face of a weeping woman (a forgotten deity) surrounded by vines and plants. After being sealed in the ice with the entrapped souls of the rulers of Skarnakah for centuries, the item has acquired some strange powers.

First, the wielder gains +2 to any roll to resist Fear and mind-controlling effects (like the *puppet* Power or the Lord of the Glacier's Fear Devourer Monstrous Ability, see page 35).

Second, even if he doesn't know the spell, the wielder can cast the *dispel* Power with Arcane skill die. The scepter stores 30 Power Points that can be used for this purpose only. If the user already knows the Power, he can spend 1 Power Point from the scepter to gain +2 to the arcane roll.

Third, it is considered a magical weapon for the purposes of hitting supernatural creatures.

The Power Points of the item recharge once a year, on the night of the first moon of spring.

When the Scepter is without Power Points, it has no powers (including the third one).

5 ~ THE BOTTOM OF THE CREVASSE

You are in a narrow, round room, made of ice. Raising up your eyes, you understand that you are at the bottom of a sort of crevasse, and the only way to exit from this place, apart from the passage you came from, is by climbing. The wall is highly-polished, but there are several small holes, large as rabbit holes, which can be used to speed up climbing. But the most marvelous thing is the floor. It is entirely transparent, and through it you can see, hundreds of feet below, a city totally engulfed in ice!

The city in the ice is Skarnakah, as the players will imagine if they have lived the visions in *Location 4*. There is no way to reach it.

Climbing the crevasse isn't very difficult, given the number of footholds; each adventurer must make three Climbing rolls, respectively with +1, 0, and +2 modifiers. If someone helps from the top of the crevasse (*Location 6 – The Crevasse Room*), all rolls are made at +4. In the case of failure the character falls, suffering 1d6 damage per section of the climb he is at (so 1d6 if he is at the first roll, 2d6 at the second and 3d6 at the third one).

The real danger of this place is that the holes in the walls host a number of small, hostile creatures; they are the Ice Bats, the larval form of the Ice Guardians the party encountered in the previous scene.

After making the Climbing roll, each character must draw a card from the Action Deck to check if he disturbed some of the beasts, as per the table below.

ICE BATS TABLE

CARD	EFFECT
2-8	Nothing happens.
9-10	<i>Single Bat.</i> A single bat comes out from a hole and bites the character with Fighting d6, dealing 1d6 damage. Keep count of how many times this effect happens. After three times, they are considered a Small Ice Bat Swarm.
J-Q	<i>Small Swarm.</i> A Small Swarm of bats comes out from the walls! It stays on the battlefield until dispersed.
K-A	<i>Medium Swarm.</i> As above, but the Swarm is medium-sized.
Joker	<i>Large Swarm.</i> As above, but the Swarm is Large.

Fighting while Climbing. Every time a character attacks or is hit (at least Shaken) while climbing he must make a Climbing (+2) or Agility roll. In the case of failure, he falls down. In the same way, if a hero is engulfed by bats he can try to continue climbing up, but suffers -4 to the Climbing roll.

(M) Swarm of Ice Bats (up to 1 Large Swarm per hero or similar combination). See page 34.

Connected to: A corridor leads to *Location 4 – Shadows in the Ice*, while climbing leads to *Location 6 – Crevasse Room*.

6 ~ CREVASSE ROOM

This tall room, made of ice and compressed debris, has two exit corridors, one going slightly upwards, while the second goes downwards, and seems to lead into the very heart of the glacier. There is a large fissure in the ground in the middle of the room, a sort of crevasse, from which cold air comes out with a sibilant sound.

The crevasse in this place is the upper floor of the previous location. If the party was divided for some reason (probably because some of them fell through the floor in *Location 1*) this is the place where hopefully they join up again.

Characters in this room, if they have a rope, can help their companions at the bottom of the crevasse (*Location 5*) to climb up. They do so by making cooperative Strength rolls, in this case for each success and raise the ascending heroes receive +1 to their Climbing rolls.

Beware of Ebba! If Ebba is with the party and sees that all the heroes are busy with ropes helping their friends, she'll try to take the adventurers by surprise, pushing them into the crevasse! This is an opposed Agility roll, with Ebba rolling at +4. In the case of victory by the evil villager, the unfortunate hero suffers 3d6 damage and falls into *Location 5*. After this dirty trick, Ebba flees to *Location 7*.

Connected to: A corridor leads to *Location 7 – the Hall of Deadly Shards*, while by climbing (or falling!) down the party can reach *Location 5 – The Bottom of the Crevasse*.

7 ~ HALL OF DEADLY SHARDS

This grotto is a real marvel: the light of the torches reflects from the walls and the ceiling which are covered in thousands of ice crystals, shining like diamonds. It is perfectly silent, as if untouched by time for centuries. A sort of stair, carved into the ice on the opposite side of the cave, leads to a dark passage. Clearly visible in the ice are the footprints of something really big.

Despite the beauty of this place it is really dangerous: the crystals are very sensitive to sounds, and strong noises can provoke a deadly avalanche of razor-sharp ice shards.

The heroes must cross the hall because it leads directly to the Lair of the Skarnahir (the tracks are his).

Rain of Shards. If the heroes move without caution, after some steps, they trigger the deadly avalanche, and ice blades start falling from the ceiling! At this point the only thing they can do is run for it, trying to avoid the falling ice. This is considered a very Short (three rounds) Chase, based on Agility. Run it as normal, but instead of having any pursuers, during each round players must check the table below according to the Action Card they draw.

DEADLY SHARDS TABLE

CARD	EFFECT
No Card	<i>Scythe-like Shard!</i> A really big shard is falling! The hero must jump to safety by making a Strength (-4) roll, or suffer 3d6 damage (AP: 3)
2-4	<i>Ice Blades!</i> The hero must make an Agility (-2) roll or suffer 2d8 damage.
5-7	<i>Rain of Ice Debris!</i> The hero, and any other character drawing a 5-8, must make a Vigor (-1) roll or suffer 2d4 damage due to a rain of tiny ice needles.
8-10	<i>Black Ice Shard!</i> A really deadly shard is falling on the hero's path. Unless he spots it with a Notice roll, he suffers 2d6 damage (AP: 2)
J-Q	<i>Big Ice Block Falling!</i> A large block of ice shatters nearby, causing a tremendous noise. The hero must make a Spirit (+1) roll to avoid being Shaken. If the hero is Shaken, until he recovers he suffers -4 to all Chase Rolls.
K-A	<i>Safe Spot!</i> No shard in the immediate vicinity.
Joker	<i>Run for It!</i> The hero is in a spot devoid of shards. The next round he doesn't need to draw an Action Card.

Moving Silently. If the party wisely decides to move silently, the heroes must make Stealth rolls. For every round they manage to be quiet they can skip a round of the Rain of Shards. A single hero making a clumsy move (failing the roll) is enough to trigger the deadly avalanche.

Ebba. If the heroes are with Ebba, the woman uses the room as a trap for the heroes: she leads the heroes inside, staying in front, then when she is near the exit she rushes shouting and hitting the wall with all her strength, causing an even more deadly rain, which she hopes will kill the adventurers. Consider the Chase two rounds longer (five rounds) if this happens. The woman then rushes into The Lair of the Skarnahir.

Connected to: A corridor leads to *Location 6 – The Crevasse Room*, while the ice stair leads to the Lair of the Skarnahir (see next scene).

KRONN RETURNS

The role of the old smith in this adventure doesn't end with the forging of the Trollbane. Kronn, after recovering from the fatigue of the forging night, cannot leave it to the party to defeat the Skarnahir and avenge his wife. For this reason he follows the tracks of the party and will catch them up on the glacier. He can be used as an unexpected helper for the party. To maximize the effect of his appearance there are two dramatically-appropriate moments for him to appear:

- 1) In the Crevasse Room, if all the heroes fell into the crevasse, he appears and helps them.
- 2) During the combat with the Skarnahir, he arrives and intervenes, joining the fight.



Part 4 – Ice and Fire

THE LAIR OF THE TROLL

Finally the heroes arrive in the lair of the Troll.

This is a great cavern, bleak and dark, made almost entirely of ice, but floored in stone. Strangely, there is a stone well, of human crafting, in the middle of the room. The place stinks of Troll. Lying on the floor, on some dirty pelts, is Silent Fox, dozing. When you enter the room she immediately opens her eyes and stares at you like a trapped deer.

There is no trace of the Skarnahir, but there is an opening leading deeper into the glacier. The heroes must free the girl, because she is bound with an iron chain (Toughness: 8, it can also be broken with a Strength (-4) roll).

Once the chain is broken, the heroes are ready to escape, but at this very moment, from the dark opening, Ebba appears in the company of the Skarnahir.

“They are escaping!” she shouts. “Stop them, my son!”

With a mighty bellow, the Skarnahir attacks you!

The battleground is an irregularly-shaped square room, 24” by 24”, with two openings, 3” wide, one on the south wall where the adventurers came from and another one on the east wall, from which Ebba and the Skarnahir enter.

In the middle of the room is the well (see below), while scattered around in the room there are several Stalagmite Fields, plus a very Big Stalagmite in the northwestern corner.

Place Silent Fox within 3” of the Big Stalagmite (she is chained to it) and any hero busy freeing the girl close to her. The other heroes are scattered around the room as you wish.

The Skarnahir and Ebba start within 6" of the eastern passage.

The monster's tactics are very straightforward: he charges the heroes trying to smash them; Ebba supports him.

This time, the party should have the Trollbane, so they should be able to defeat them. If they have no real Trollbane, or if the weapon breaks, they can try to impale the monster on the Big Stalagmite.

During the third round of the fight, if he hasn't arrived already, Kronn the Smith arrives (see sidebar).

Both Ebba and the Skarnahir fight to the death. When this happens, go on with the Death of a Hero scene, but before this happens, reward every player with a Bennie.

(WC) Silent Fox. See page 37.

(WC) Skarnahir. See page 37.

(WC) Ebba the Village Elder. See page 33.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- ❖ **Big Stalagmite:** This large stalagmite, made of ice, is three yards tall and very sharp. It is the only item in the scene, apart from the Trollbane, capable of wounding the Skarnahir. To make the Troll impale himself on the Big Stalagmite the heroes must lure the monster near the Stalagmite and succeed at an opposed Agility Trick. If they win the trick the monster suffers 2d8 damage, if they win with a raise it deals 3d8 damage. The Big Stalagmite counts as a Trollbane, and is represented on the battlefield by a Small Burst Template. Sadly it can be used in this manner only once; then it breaks.
- ❖ **Old Well:** The old well is very deep, and contains a nasty surprise, as the party will discover later. Any hero thrown in the well manages to cling on to the edge, and can regain solid ground with a Strength (-4) roll which can be cooperative. It is represented on the battlefield by a Medium Burst Template.
- ❖ **Pick and Throw:** One of the favorite tactics of the Skarnahir in this battle consists of grabbing an opponent (using the normal Grapple rules) and then throwing (Range: 2/4/8) the poor sod against a companion! If he hits, both the characters suffer Str+d4 damage (using the Strength of the Troll) and are automatically knocked prone and 1d4" away from the monster, while in the case of failure only the thrown hero suffers the damage.
- ❖ **Stalagmite Field:** This area is full of short but very sharp stalagmites. It counts as Difficult Ground. If a character walks into it he must make an Agility roll to avoid being Shaken. If a character is thrown into it (for example by the effect of a Trick) he suffers 2d6 damage. Each Stalagmite Field can be represented by a Medium Burst Template. Place up to six of them on the battlefield.

DEATH OF A HERO

This part supposes Kronn is with the party. If he isn't, change it accordingly.

Once the Troll is killed, he falls to the ground, and an incredible transformation happens: the body twists and becomes smaller, till an old, battered warrior lies on the ground, mortally wounded.

Kronn instantly recognizes him: "Ebbhorn! You, the sworn defender of your people, are the Skarnahir!"

"Yes, old friend, I am. I fought the real Skarnahir, and I lost. To save my life I agreed to serve him... and to be his slave... I am very sorry..."

Suddenly, something weird happens in the room. The light of the torches dims, the temperature goes down, and there is a trembling in the ground.

"I feel him... he is arriving... and he is hungry! Get away!" Ebbhorn says, and dies.

After few heartbeats the Spirit of the Glacier, the real Skarnahir, arrives to reclaim his bride and his meal.

THE SPIRIT OF THE GLACIER

The trembling grows, the entire grotto shakes; something really HUGE is coming from the well!

The party must make a Vigor roll to avoid falling down and being Shaken.

Finally you can see the real monster terrorizing the vale: an enormous caterpillar, covered in snow-white fur, with scythe-sized claws and a single giant eye, in which twirl the lights of seven pupils.

He raises up his body like a snake ready to strike, and you can hear a soft human voice, but only in your mind.

The Spirit of the Glacier is telepathic, and the heroes hear him speaking in their native tongue.

"So, my faithful servant, you died. How amusing," he says.

"But it isn't important. You have my bride and my meal, and one of you will be my new slave. Who wants to have the honor?"

This is the moment for the heroes to react and to attack the monster. If Kronn is present, he'll lead the charge.

This is exactly the type of reaction the Spirit of the Glacier expected.

"Fools! You dare challenge me! I was old before your race fell down from the trees! I crushed cities and devoured kings! Face the doom of your ancestors!"

The Spirit's main nourishment isn't meat, but fear, and he uses his great mind powers to stimulate it in his victims.

The seven pupils of the monster start swirling, and a maddening blue light fills the eye of the Lord of the Glacier...

The heroes are dragged into a short nightmare scene, where they face the destruction of Skarnakah, the city laying under the glacier.

Your mind is invaded by a series of visions: a blue star falling from the sky, a beautiful city among the mountains, cold and snow coming, the sensation of something dangerous lurking in the snow covered streets of the city, the certainty of being chased, and a maddening, heart-breaking flight, only ending with death!

Fear Devourer! Ask every player to make three Spirit (-4) rolls. Characters with the Brave or Iron Will Edge roll at +2, and the same bonus applies to characters that experienced the visions during the *Location 4 – Shadows in the Ice* scene. If a character has the Scepter of Skarnakah he obtains another +2, and the other members of the party gain +1 to their rolls.

At this point check the table below, and apply the effects to each player.

FEAR DEVOURING TABLE

SUCCESSSES	EFFECT
0	<i>Strained!</i> The mind of the adventurer is almost shattered by the mind vampirism of the Lord of the Glacier. The hero is Shaken and he must roll on the Fear Table at +4. The monster begins with 5 additional Power Points, a Bennie, and his Arcane Skill is increased by one die step.
1	<i>Succumbed!</i> The mind of the hero grants delicious food to the Lord of the Glacier. The hero is Shaken and the monster begins with 5 additional Power Points plus a Bennie.
2	<i>Resisted... at least!</i> The hero partially succumbed to the fear-inducing effect of the Creature. He begins the combat Shaken. The Lord of the Glacier receives 5 additional Power Points.
3	<i>My Mind is the Stronger!</i> The hero doesn't succumb to the Lord of the Glacier's powers! He gains +2 to resist to all the Powers of the monster, and steals a Bennie from the Lord of the Glacier!

When you wake up from the nightmare, the Lord of the Glacier is ready to kill: he has opened his mouth and protruded a long, stinger-tipped tongue, which is slowly snaking toward the face of Silent Fox!

At this point the real fight can start. Place the heroes wherever they were at the end of the past fight, while the monster is placed protruding from the well. He is long enough to reach every corner of the room.

When the monster finally dies, the adventure ends, and you can go to the End.

(WC) Lord of the Glacier. See page 35.

(M) Ebba the Village Elder. The Village Elder is back on her feet, but now she is considered only a Right Hand with the Hardy Monstrous Ability. See page 33.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- ❖ **Ebba's Revenge:** The Village Elder isn't dead yet, even if she seemed to be. The first time a character is dealt a club face card, it means that Ebba wakes up and is ready to strike! In the next round, consider her On Hold. She tries to stab the nearest hero with her concealed dagger, getting the Drop on him.
- ❖ **The Scepter of Skarnakah:** This artifact holds the power of the souls of the rulers of Skarnakah, which are ready to take their revenge on the Lord of the Glacier. The character holding the scepter, feels a surge of power from the item immediately after the combat begins, as it starts vibrating. If used to strike the Lord of the Glacier it causes +4 damage; in addition, if the damage dice ace, draw a card from the Action deck – if it is red the item detonates, causing 3d6 damage to the Lord of the Glacier and half as much damage to any other target in a Large Burst Template. If the Scepter is thrown into the mouth of the beast, it automatically explodes, but the damage is limited to the monster and ignores Size and Armor modifiers.

THE END

The nightmare terrorizing the valley is finally ended: the Lord of the Glacier lies dead at your feet. Battered and wounded, you can leave the glacier, taking Silent Fox with you. For the first time in many years, the Skarnahir won't have a Bride this year.

The party should leave the Glacier soon, because shortly after the death of the Lord of the Glacier, the ice starts creaking and howling: it was only the existence of the Lord that kept it in place!

You run across the bridge of ice, and reach the side of the mountain before the Glacier, with all its might, falls into the valley, destroying everything! In the end, the people of the village met their fate.

The heroes, Kronn and Silent Fox can go to the village, but there are no survivors, and the place is very dangerous, because there are large chunks of ice still on the mountain which can fall into the valley at any moment.

"This is what happens when you do a deal with the Devil," Kronn says, shaking his head. He feels very little compassion for his fellow villagers. The old smith looks better now, the haunted look in his eyes has disappeared, and he is sober for the first time in months.

Kronn asks to join the heroes in their travel to southern lands (this can be for as long as the GM wants). Northlander villages always need a smith and he is a damned fine one.

"I lost a wife, but it seems I found a daughter, and we need a new house," he says, tenderly caressing Silent Fox's blonde hair; she smiles back shyly.

The heroes receive no monetary reward from this adventure, but they can always count on Kronn's help from now on. The smith isn't a man who forgets his debts and, in addition, he has the Connections Edge with the Monastery of the Hammer (see *SEPC*). The characters can also keep the Trollbane, a powerful magical weapon.

CREATURES AND NPCs



EBBA THE VILLAGE ELDER

This stern-looking Northlander woman is almost seventy years old, but she is a real daughter of the north, made of iron and cold ice. In her slim visage there is still the shadow of former beauty, although her hair is white as snow. Ebba rules the village of Skarn by her sheer charisma, and even the strongest warriors tremble in front of her steely gaze.

But Ebba hides a terrible secret: her son, Ebbhorn, made a pact with the Lord of the Glacier thirty years ago, buying his life with the yearly sacrifice of a young girl and it is Ebba who every year chooses a girl to be the Bride of the Troll, though she knows the poor woman ends her life in the lair of the Lord of the Glacier.

Ebba knows that her son is the Skarnahir, but prefers the life of a monster for him to having him dead.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6 Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d6.

Charisma: +3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6/5; **Toughness:** 6.

Edges: Charismatic, Harder to Kill, Improved Nerves of Steel.

Hindrances: Elderly, Vow (protect her son, Ebbhorn of the Blue Shield).

Gear: Staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, 2 hands, Reach: 1), iron dagger concealed under her dress (Str+d4), plain brown dress.

Special Abilities

- **Village Elder:** Ebba is the absolute ruler of the village of Skarn. She has the Command Edge toward the Villagers, and gains +2 to Persuasion, Intimidation and Taunt rolls against them.

ICE GUARDIAN

This beast belongs to a forgotten era. Despite its similarity to birds, it is a flying reptile, similar to a pterodactyl, but with a snake head. They were enslaved centuries ago by the Lord of the Glacier, which saved them from the Dread Star's Fall and changed them, adapting their race to live in cold temperatures.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6.

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5(1)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Cold Resistance:** The Ice Guardians' blood was altered by the Lord of the Glacier to endure freezing temperatures, so they gain +2 Armor and +4 to opposed rolls to resist ice- and cold-based effects.
- **Fly:** An Ice Guardian flies with Pace 8 and Climb 3.
- **Size -1:** Ice Guardians are somewhat smaller than men.
- **Talons:** Str+d4. The beast can make two attacks per round with talons without any penalty, but in this case it cannot bite.



KRONN THE SMITH

Kronn is a middle-aged Northlander man, totally bald, and missing his left arm. Like all the people of his profession, he is gifted with enormous strength. Willa, Kronn's wife, was chosen as Bride for the Skarnahir many years ago.

Kronn, against the will of the tribe, decided to fight the monster, only to discover that the creature cannot be wounded by normal weapons. He lost his arm, but survived. Ebba, as a punishment, banished him from the village. Kronn wandered in the south, and questioned many famous smiths, trying to find a way to forge a weapon capable of killing the Skarnahir. Sadly, none of the Northlander metal workers knew how. Eventually, many years later, he got in touch with the Monastery of the Hammer, and he learned from the Smith Priests of Hulian the secret of forging a weapon capable of wounding the Skarnahir. He returned to his vale and occupied his old forge, but he discovered the irony of his destiny: he knows how to forge a weapon capable of killing the Troll, but lacking an arm he cannot forge it and he would not be able to wield it. This discovery threw him into a deep melancholy, which he drowns in booze.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Knowledge (Legends and Lore) d8, Notice d6, Repair d10, Survival d6, Tracking d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7(1)

Edges: Brave, Combat Reflexes.

Hindrances: Habit (Overdrinking), One Arm, Vow (avenge Willa by killing the Skarnahir).

Gear: Iron short sword (Str+d6), iron dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), smith's leather apron (+1), smith's tools.

Special Abilities

- **Great Smith of the North:** Kronn is a true master of the forge. He receives +2 to any roll to repair weapons and armor and he rolls a d8 as his Wild Die for the Repair skill, if the task is related to metalwork. In addition, by spending a Bennie and a full night of work, and making a Repair (-4) roll, he can imbue a weapon with +1 Damage (or a suit of armor with +1 to Armor), representing re-forging and bestowing great spells on it. The weapon is also considered a step harder than normal for weapon breaking purposes (so a bronze weapon is considered made of iron). The bonuses are permanent.



LORD OF THE GLACIER

This evil, alien creature comes from a distant world where everything is cold. In his full-grown form he resembles a huge caterpillar covered in whitish fur, with a single, enormous eye where the light of seven pupils shimmers. The creature needs a surprisingly small quantity of food to live, because he is mainly sustained by something else: emotions, in particular he savors the taste of fear.

The Lord of the Glacier has a lifecycle composed of long periods of lethargy, followed by short vigilant periods. Immediately after feeding, he is full of energy and capable of incredible feats of sorcery, including changing the local weather of an area or shape-changing a man into Troll form.

The following profile refers to him immediately after waking up, a moment of relative weakness for the creature.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Notice d8, Taunt d10, Stealth d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Alien Mind:** The Lord of the Glacier doesn't think as mortals do, so he has uncanny coordination. Every round he can use a Power (see Mind Master) and make a melee attack of his choice, or use two Powers rolling at -2.

- **Armor +2:** Very thick, chitinous hide.

- **Claws:** Str+d6, Reach 1.

- **Feeding Tongue:** Str+d4, Reach 6. The mouth of the Lord of the Glacier hosts a whip-like tongue ending in a sort of stinger, which the creature uses to suck the life fluids out of his victims. For each Wound inflicted in this way, he recovers one Wound. If he hits with a raise, he continues to cause damage until the tongue is severed (it has Toughness 6, a Called Shot (-2) is necessary to hit it).

- **Fear Devourer:** The Lord of the Glacier feeds on fear. He is particularly skilled in making his opponents experience terrible visions, and gorging himself on their anguish. The fear caused increments his Arcane Skill, Power Points and Bennies (see page 31).

- **Large:** The Lord of the Glacier is so big that attacks against him are made with +2 to the attack roll.

- **Mind Master:** The Lord of the Glacier is gifted with incredible mind powers. In game terms he can use the following Powers: *deflect* (I am not here!), *fear* (waves of terror), *lower trait* (numbed arms and mind), *slow* (hypnotic gaze), *stun* (psychic attack). He has 20 Power Points (plus bonus points from the Fear Devourer Monstrous Ability) and uses Spirit as his arcane Skill.

- **Size+4:** The Skarnahir is several hundred feet long, but only the head and a small part of the body come out from the well.
- **Weakness (Eye and Mouth):** The Skarnahir's only weak points are his eye and his mouth. Hitting these locations requires a Called Shot (-4). They both have Toughness 7 and no Armor.

MOUNTAIN WOLF

This beast belongs to an ancient race, indigenous to the Troll Mountains. Bigger and somewhat stronger than a common wolf, they have brownish fur and a knot of muscles over their necks, so they are sometimes called Hunchback Wolves. They have very powerful legs, especially the back ones, making them excellent jumpers and rock climbers. The jaw is slightly broader than those of other canines, and more similar to a hyena than a dog.

Sages think that these beasts aren't true wolves, but the offspring of Cairn Dogs, beasts tamed by the Ancestors of the Cairnlanders, gone wild after the fall of that ancient empire.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Tracking d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet Footed:** Mountain Wolves aren't fast as their southern cousins, but they are quite good runners. They roll d8 instead of d6 as their Running Die.
- **Go for the Throat:** Mountain Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on the attack roll, they automatically hit the opponent's least armored location.
- **Pounce:** Mountain Wolves' back legs are quite strong, making them capable of long leaps. They can leap 1d4" to gain +2 to their next attack and damage roll, but when performing this maneuver they suffer -2 to Parry until their next action.

NORTHLANDER VILLAGER

A burly man with arms thick as logs. He isn't a real warrior, but can be a nasty customer in a fistfight.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (specific trade) d6, Notice d4.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Improvised weapon (Str+d4, -2 Fighting rolls).

NORTHLANDER WARRIOR

A skilled warrior or grizzled hunter of the Skarn village.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Survival d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: -.

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Warriors are armed with bronze battle axes (Str+d8), hunters with bronze-tipped spears (Str+d6, 2 hands, +1 Parry, Reach 1), both have leather light armor (+1).

Special Abilities

• **Son of the Glacier:** The people of Skarn have always lived under the shadow of the massive glacier. They fear it, but also feel somehow protected by it. While they are in the Vale, they can reroll any 1 on the Spirit die, as if they had spent a Bennie.



SILENT FOX

This Northlander girl is very beautiful, with blonde, almost white, hair and deep blue eyes. She is an orphan and mute from birth. The villagers of Skarn raised her collectively with the specific intention of sacrificing her to the Lord of the Glacier. Silent Fox is a very sensible soul.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d10, Survival d6, Stealth d4.

Edges: Alertness, Danger Sense, Very Attractive.

Hindrances: Damsel in Distress.

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: White fur dress.

Special Abilities

- **Trollmark:** Silent Fox's face and breast were painted by Ebba with a ritual potion made of boar's blood and other strange herbs. They produce a subtle smell that Trolls can easily follow. The Skarnahir receives +4 to Tracking rolls to track her while he is within ten miles from her. The Trollmark fades away in a week.



SKARNAHIR

This huge Troll specimen is in truth Ebhorn of the Blue Shield, a Northlander warrior transformed into a monster by the evil magic of the Lord of the Glacier. He is almost six yards tall, with great horns, but the strangest thing about him is his bluish skin, which sparks like flint when hit by a normal weapon.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Throwing d6, Tracking d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor+2:** The skin of this creature is hard as metal armor.
- **Claws:** Str+d4. Reach 2. The creature is so big that his claws are considered a Heavy Weapon.
- **Fear (-2):** The Skarnahir is so terrible-looking that the first time you see him, he causes a Fear check.
- **Frenzy:** The Skarnahir can make two claw attacks per round without suffering any penalty.
- **Glacier Skin:** The Skarnahir's skin is imbued with a strange blue color, which grants him Heavy Armor. In addition, every time he is hit by a normal (non-magical, non-steel, non-Heavy) weapon, and the damage roll is equal to or greater than his Toughness, pick a card from the Action Deck: if it is red the weapon breaks, regardless of the hardness of the material!
- **Ice Howl:** In the throat of the beast lives the purest cold. Once per scene he can use a terrible ice breath, freezing opponents on the spot. Place a Cone Template in contact with him: characters hit by the template must make an Agility (-2) roll or suffer 2d10 damage. In addition, during the next round they must discard any Action Card higher than ten.
- **Large:** The Skarnahir is so big that attacks against him are made with +2 on the attack roll.
- **Size+4:** The Skarnahir is six yards tall, plus another yard of antlers.
- **Weakness (Trollbane):** The magic of the Trollbane is strong enough to ignore the Glacier Skin

Special Ability. In addition, the first time the Trollbane successfully wounds the monster, the blue of his skin melts away, and the creature loses the Glacier Skin and Armor Special Abilities. The hero making the hit should be rewarded with a Bennie.

SWARM OF ICE BATS

The term “bat” isn’t correct for these beasts: in truth they are small flying reptiles, the larval form of the ice guardians. Only one in every twenty of them survive this stage, usually eating his brothers and sisters. They are noisy and quite dangerous, especially in large groups.

Swarm: Swarms are treated just like a creature. Swarms can be of Large, Medium or Small Size occupying the corresponding Burst Template. Swarms respectively have three, two or one Wounds, and when a Swarm suffers a wound it automatically “shrinks” to the next smaller size. Two or more Swarms of Medium/Small size can merge, increasing their size one step, up to a maximum of Large Size.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Notice d10.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5/7/9

Special Abilities

- **Bites:** Ice Bats inflict dozens of vicious bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; because the swarm is composed of dozens of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do only half damage. Area-effect weapons work normally.
- **Variable Size:** The first Toughness value refers to Small Swarms, the second to Medium ones and the third to Large ones.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Ice Bats are very sensitive to heat and fire. Any fire-based attack or Trick deals +2 damage or receives +2 to opposed rolls.



THORRAK BEAR CLAW

This fierce Northlander warrior looks like a bear: he has a long red beard, bulging muscles and a growling voice. Despite his rough appearance, he isn’t stupid at all, and he is trying to make himself a name to become chief, seizing power from Ebba. He is quite skilled, and in recent years he has joined various attacks on the Borderlands Forts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Taunt d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7/6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Edges: Armor Use, Brawny, Brute, First Strike.

Hindrances: Overconfident.

Gear: Bronze battle axe (Str+d8), medium chain mail armor (+2), horned helm (+2, 50% chance of protecting against head attacks, +1 to Intimidation rolls), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs ranged attacks), bearskin cloak.

Special Abilities

- **Son of the Glacier:** The people of Skarn have always lived under the shadow of the massive glacier. They fear it, but also feel somehow protected by it. While they are in the Vale, they can reroll any 1 on the Spirit die, as if they had spent a Bennie.

Book of Lore: Troll Hunting

ECOLOGY

HUGE UGLY BEASTS

Trolls, or Real Trolls as they are usually called, are very large humanoids dwelling mainly in the Troll Mountains, but they can be found almost anywhere: in cold Northeim, the misty Cairnlands or in the snowy Iron Mountains the echo of their mighty bellow can be heard in the wind.

Physical Aspect. Generally speaking, they range from three yards to six or even seven yards in height, and are as heavy as a cart full of stones. On this last point, the general belief that these beasts are made of stone is false, but they have grayish, very thick skin, and surprisingly little body hair, apart from on the loins. Their faces are ugly and flat, with long canine teeth protruding from the lower jaw and sunken eyes.

They are almost nose-less, but with very ample nostrils, nothing more than holes in their face, which constantly inspire air, probing the surrounding environment. In fact, despite being quite short-sighted, they have an excellent sense of smell.

Growing and Aging. You can guess the age of a Troll by the size of the antlers, which branch like those of stags, but are much thicker and sturdier. They are permanent and continue to grow until the beast dies, or breaks them during the fights that happen during the mating season.

They are various stories about the lifespans of these creatures: the Northlanders think that they are almost immortal, and that they continue to grow forever until killed: an infant Troll is as big as a full-grown human, a young one can easily reach four yards in height and there are rumors of very old ones as tall as city gates.

The Sages of Syranthia, by examining the old bones and antlers of Trolls, estimate that a Troll's lifespan is between thirty and one hundred years, even if they have found some rare cases of beasts several hundreds of years old.

Despite the fear they provoke in people, today Trolls are fairly rare and sparse, not more than one per several hundred square miles, mainly because of the quantity of food they require.

BEHAVIOR

Life Cycle. Trolls share some similarities with bears: during winter, they find some secluded spot and hibernate in lethargy, waking up at the beginning of spring, terribly hungry.

There are two exceptions to this rule: first, Ice Trolls (see Subspecies below) have an inverted

HERO'S JOURNAL: TROLL BERRIES

These reddish fruits, similar to strawberries, grow only on piles of Troll dung, in the few cases when the wind blows the seeds upon them. They are a particular type of Lotus that, thanks to a strange alchemy caused by the exotic components present in the Troll's waste, causes a stimulant effect.

If consumed raw, a single berry allows a man to ignore the effect of Fatigue from sleep deprivation for a week. After that period the user must make a Vigor (-4) roll or be Exhausted and fall asleep for three days.

They count as Refined Lotus for the purposes of making a *succor* concoction, in addition the Lotuser adds +2 to the Power roll when making the potion.

Trolls are very fond of these berries and eat as many of them as they can find.

This alters their metabolism, preventing them from falling asleep. If this happens during the month immediately prior to the lethargy, they totally skip the winter sleep period, and remain awake.

A single Troll Berry is worth 150 Moons to Lotusermasters and is considered a Rare Item.

a cunning shaman who uses them as petty deities. These beasts are more or less tame, while they are kept well fed, but during the direst winters they become very dangerous and have no qualms about eating their kinsmen.

life cycle, and second, if a Troll eats Troll Berries (see sidebar) in the moon immediately before the first snowfall, he cannot sleep anymore, and passes the whole winter awake. In this case he is very dangerous, because he has the hunger typical of summer, and he seeks human settlements in order to satiate it.

Intelligence. There are different stories about the intelligence of these creatures, too: basically a Troll has animal cunning, being no more intelligent than a dog or an ape. He doesn't know how to use tools, is not capable of speech, apart from some unintelligible grunts, and isn't capable of foresight. But there are cases of beasts, especially older ones, who recognize people and places, have more or less organized lairs and use huge clubs as weapons.

According to the Northlanders this second type of Trolls are sons of the dark gods of the mountains, and for this reason must be respected and feared. For the Sages of Syranthia, they are a separate sub-race of humanoid, probably derived from some archaic crossbreed with mankind.

Ethology. Trolls are lonesome beings, and they shun even other members of their own race, except during the mating season, which happens only once in many years. Trolls aren't very fertile and few of these unions produce offspring.

There are two exceptions to the solitude of Trolls.

First, the most ingenious ones tame packs of mountain wolves and live in a sort of symbiosis with the pack, acting as leaders.

Second, certain Nandal tribes capture infant Trolls and raise them in the clan, usually under the control of

SUBSPECIES

Although Trolls are a unique race, Northlanders identify several subspecies of them, depending on the environment where they are found. They are three main subspecies: Mountain, Forest and Ice Trolls.

Mountain Trolls. The typical Troll, they dwell in high mountains and hills. Their skin is brown to gray, in certain rare cases even black. They aren't tall as Forest Trolls or massive as Ice ones, but they are very sturdy and with very long tusks. Their antlers are very sturdy and highly sought by artisans, because they are the sturdiest ones (comparable to iron). They have a very fine sense of smell and emit terrible bellows.

Forest Trolls. These beasts are taller and leaner than the other races, with skin ranging from light green to bark-like brown. Unlike other Trolls, they have long sharp noses, pointing toward the chin like deformed beaks, and dull elk-like antlers, often covered in velvet. The horn of Forest Trolls is the weakest, but very elastic, so it is favored for building bows.

These creatures, as the name suggests, dwell in forests, woods, or swamps, and even near lakes. Excellent swimmers, they are probably amphibious or with an unusual lifecycle, because when they fall into their winter lethargy they bury themselves under piles of mud, rotten foliage or even in the beds of lakes and rivers. Forest Trolls are strange; they are silent, you'll never hear one bellow or howl, and they are very stealthy. Their favorite hunting technique consists of quietly stalking prey and then crushing them with their long hands.

Ice Trolls. If you have ever met an Ice Troll, you'll surely remember him. They are the biggest of their race, some of them are as tall as the pines of the northern forests, and their fists could easily smash the gates of an Imperial fort. They have white or even azure skin, often blubbery and with many folds, inside which lichens and parasites grow. They have short, dull antlers, but long, razor-sharp teeth, both of an uncanny blue hue. There is a legend among Northlanders saying that they are made of ice and will melt if exposed to fire.

Ice Trolls have an inverted life cycle: they are fully active during winter and generally sleep in summer. They adapt to the scarcity of food in winter by eating large chunks of dirt, which probably they digest in some manner. They are totally impervious to cold, but generally quite sensitive to heat and they absolutely hate fire. Ice Trolls are very rare and often considered a legend except by the Northlander clans living near the Troll Mountains.

TROLLS IN PLAY

TROLL

These stats reflect a Troll of average size and age. Usually young Trolls are Extras, adult beasts are Henchmen and the older monsters are Wild Cards.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Intimidation d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor+2:** The skin of this creature is hard as metal armor.
- **Claws:** Str+d4. Reach 2. The creature is so big that these are considered a Heavy Weapon.
- **Fear:** A Troll is so terrible-looking that the first time you see him, he causes a Fear check.
- **Frenzy:** Trolls can make two claws attacks per round without suffering any penalty.
- **Size +3:** This Troll is four yards tall, plus another yard of antlers.

SUBSPECIES MODIFICATIONS

Here follows some modification you can add to the previous template to represent specific types of Trolls.

MOUNTAIN TROLLS

Howl: Mountain Trolls can forfeit all their attacks in a round to emit a mighty howl. Place a Large Burst Template centered on them; the monster makes an Intimidation (+2) roll against every target caught by the template.

Long Tusks: Str+d4. Mountain Trolls have very long tusks. If a Mountain Troll hits an enemy with a raise, he can immediately make a Fighting (-2) attack with the tusks, representing the fact that he has partially restrained his opponent, just long enough to bite him.

Armor +3: Mountain Trolls' skin is very thick.

FOREST TROLLS

Skills: Stealth d8.

Aquatic: Pace 6. Forest Trolls are excellent swimmers and can stay underwater for an indefinite period of time.

Grapplers: Forest Trolls are very good at trapping prey with their huge hands and smashing it. They receive +2 to Grapple rolls.

ICE TROLLS

Hardy: This creature doesn't suffer a wound for being Shaken if already Shaken.

Immunity (Ice and Cold): Ice Trolls are immune to the effects of ice and cold, both mundane and magical.

Large: An Ice Troll is so big that attacks against him are made at +2 to the attack roll.

Size +4: Ice Trolls are very big, at least six yards tall.

Weakness (Fire): Ice Trolls are very sensitive to heat and fire. Any fire-based attack or Trick deals +2 damage or receives +2 to opposed rolls.

INTELLIGENT TROLLS

Intelligent Trolls can be of any race, they must have Smarts d4 (or even more), plus some or any of the following modifications.

Skills: Notice d6.

Dressed in Iron: This Troll has collected scraps of armor from dead enemies and sewn them into a crude suit of armor. It gives him Armor (+2), and, more importantly, he can use the Armor Use Edge with it. (Consider only the armor worn, not the natural armor of the creature, for the purpose of the Edge).

Master of the Pack: This Troll is always accompanied by a pack of wolves or mountain wolves (from 4 to 20). He has the Beast Master and Command Edges toward them, plus they can use the Fanatic Setting Rule to defend him.

Weapons of Men: This Troll uses a crude version of a human weapon, usually a massive war club (Str+d10) or axe (Str+d10, AP 1). When using such a weapon, he gains the Improved Sweep Edge.

TROLL HUNTING

AN ATAVISTIC THREAT

Despite being rare and sparse, Trolls are a threat that many Northlander clans must face, sooner or later. A hungry Troll can easily devour all the livestock of a tribe, and, once finished with it, he'll move on to the clansmen. Killing one of these beasts isn't easy; they are enormously strong, bigger than oxen and more dangerous than raging bears.

TROLL HUNTERS

To deal with such a deadly customer, a warrior must have strength, guts and a good share of bravado; these are the qualities that make a good Troll Hunter, plus a fair number of ugly scars, if he manages to survive the risks of his job.

The legend says that the first Troll Hunter was the mythical hero Kruss Fire Hand, a fabled warrior, who, in times of yore, wrestled singled-handed the dreaded Night Troll, a terrible Cara Onaga (see *Beasts & Barbarians* #5 – *The Amulet of Dogskull*), drove him to the ground and broke his horns. After suffering such a defeat the Night Troll fled, full of shame, to never been seen again, and so the Fire defeated the Night.

Regardless of the symbolic meaning of myths, the Troll Hunters of today are itinerant warriors and hunters specializing in a single thing: tracking and putting down Trolls. They are a closed caste; usually an experienced Troll Hunter, when he starts getting slower, finds a promising apprentice and trains him, passing on to the young one his knowledge and skills. In some cases the apprentice finds a gruesome death under the claws of a Troll, in others he survives, hones his skills and is prepared to take the place of his mentor when he retires.

They usually work alone, or in small bands, often held together by blood ties; it isn't uncommon for them to pass the art from father to son, and certain families of Troll Hunters trace the origin of their profession to centuries ago.

Troll Hunters are easily recognizable by the red tattoos they sport: usually on the face, arms and chest. In truth these marks aren't real tattoos, but the indelible marks left by the blood of the first Troll they kill.

They wander the North, called in by clans which are endangered by Trolls to put down the threat. Their services aren't cheap, but usually the price is paid without question. Troll Hunters are notoriously neutral in politics, and they are allowed to pass unharmed everywhere: after all there aren't many people wanting to piss off such fearsome warriors.

Golan's Paw. Despite not being a real caste, the people in the job (and they aren't many, probably not more than twenty persons in the whole North) meet once a year at the Golan's Paw, a remote trading post near the Skullbroken Hills (see *Beasts & Barbarians* #5 – *The Amulet of Dogskull*).

Golan is a retired Troll Hunter, with a limp from an injured left leg, who offers his place for a three day long reunion during which the hunters exchange information on the migration of Trolls and the killings of the year, mourn for their dead comrades, trade stories and tricks of the job and generally get drunk together. There are also rumours that during the Gathering, as it is called, Troll Hunters perform strange secret rites, but given that no visitors are allowed during the occasion, there are no first hand reports.

HERO'S JOURNAL: TROLL HUNTER CHARACTERS

A Troll Hunter is an excellent archetype for a player character. Skilled warriors, they are natural wanderers, giving them a hook to find any type of adventure, when they aren't busy tracking down trolls.

Usually they are male Northlanders, but rarely, a grizzled hunter picks as his apprentice a foreigner or even a woman. Rules-wise you can create a Troll Hunter by picking at least one initiative-linked Edge (Quick or Level Headed) and Woodsman. First Strike and Giant Killer are also very useful as is a minimal level of Repair, especially if you want to craft items with the trophies taken from your prey.

A Troll Hunter character can buy Troll Hunting gear (see below) ignoring the Rare keyword.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Troll killing isn't like deer or rabbit hunting: you need guts, courage and, more than anything, knowledge.

Over the centuries hunters have developed several tricks and tips to help them survive and minimize risks, plus several items of specialized gear (see below). Some of them are described below.

There are basically two schools of thought on Troll hunting: the solitary hunt or the group hunt. Ask different hunters, and they tell you different things.

The solitary hunter sneaks alone through the woods, follows the tracks of the troll and tries to lure it into a chosen spot. If he had time, he has dug a trap, with pointed sticks at the bottom; otherwise he peppers the monster with arrows. No pit can contain a Troll and surely arrows cannot kill him; the purpose of these expedients is driving the beast mad, so that he doesn't protect himself. When that happens the hunter must be ready to strike the prey with all his strength, usually using a troll-hunting spear or a crow's beak, aiming at some vulnerable spot, like the head, or the heart, passing through the armpit. If the blow is good, the monster is defeated, otherwise... let's hope

the hunter has good legs.

Sometimes even solitary hunters work with a hunter-in-training, who has the task of the distraction, and intervenes if their master misses the killing blow.

Group hunts are a totally different thing: hunters are usually called in by villagers who hire them to dispatch a Troll. So, the hunter can count on a group of more or less voluntary helpers, which he leads into the woods to create a ruckus and enrage the Troll. The purpose of these supporters is the same as the pits or arrows; driving the Troll mad so that the hunter can exploit an opening to dispatch him. Usually, during these fights, a number of villagers die in gruesome ways, so troll hunters with some honor try to avoid this approach.

The techniques above seem easy, even if dangerous, but they presume that the Troll is easily found; this isn't always true. When a troll is filled with food, he hides somewhere to sleep and digest, so it can be days, even weeks, between sightings.

For this reason you must lure it into the open. There are basically two ways to do this: using a call or using bait.

Trolls communicate using growls and howls. Some hunters are capable of mimicking them, either just with their voice or by using special horns, and lure the prey out of their dens.

(Rules-wise this is done with an opposed roll pitting the hunter's Survival against the Troll's Smarts. Having a horn grants +2 to the roll: see *Beasts & Barbarians* #5 – *The Amulet of Dogskull*, page 85 for Horns rules).

Calls are good if the monster is relatively near, but if you don't have an idea of where the Troll is or you must cover a great area the best way is using bait. Some hunters use lambs, goats or even cows

as bait, but every hunter worth the name knows that the best bait is something else: a human being, best of all a woman, smeared in blood.

Trolls have an exceptionally good sense of smell, and for some reason the scent mix of human females and blood drives them mad, luring the beasts from miles away. When they finally arrive they are totally mad, so an easy target for a cold-blooded hunter.

Certain hunters think that the best bait by far is a maiden, smeared in blood; no troll can resist such bait, and will probably ignore any other living being in its presence.

In game terms the Troll must make a Smarts roll each round, or ignore any other target in his range apart from the bait, and suffers -2 to Parry. The effect ceases when the Troll is attacked.

This knowledge drives certain hunters to harsh decisions; they pick a girl, call her the Troll Bride, make her drink a particular concoction of poisonous Lotus, called the Troll's Dark Dream, and put her somewhere she can be easily reached, without any attempt at defense. The Troll finds the prey, devours her and then dies, poisoned.

It is cruel, it is hard, but this is the way of the North; the poor Troll Bride dies, but she isn't forgotten and her name appears in the songs of the clans along with those of heroes.

NEW GEAR

This chapter describes new Gear, some of it typical of Troll hunters, and others items which can be made using Troll trophies: bones, teeth, skins and antlers.

Unless otherwise stated, they are all Rare Items and almost impossible to find in lands other than Norheim, the Cairnlands and the Borderlands.

Troll Parts. An item with this keyword must be made using parts from the body of a Troll, in particular the bones, antlers, skin and teeth. There are two ways to obtain such an item: finding one for sale (they are very rare: -2 to the Streetwise roll to find one) or getting the materials and crafting with them.

The only way of finding the materials, is, of course, slaying and skinning a Troll. The process must be done within three days of the killing, otherwise decay sets in and the materials are wasted.

Rules-wise, skinning characters must make a Survival (-2) or Repair (-4) roll, which can be cooperative, with a +2 (they stack) if they have the Woodsman or Smith of the North Edge. For each success and raise they gather 100 Moons' worth (equal to 4 lbs) of useful crafting material.

Each attempt requires an hour and the skinning process can continue till the skimmers fail two rolls or they exhaust the prey. As a rule of thumb the maximum value of material that can be gathered is 300 Moons x Size point of the beast.

Troll Parts can be sold for their current value or used in crafting (see sidebar).

HERO'S JOURNAL: CRAFTING ITEMS WITH TROLL PARTS

Crafting follows the standard *SEPC* rules, but, depending on the description of the item, you could need some parts of a Troll's body to make it.

Troll Parts Hardness. A weapon made of Troll parts is considered harder than bronze and weaker than iron for weapon breaking purposes.

MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

TYPE	DAMAGE	WT	COST	NOTES
POLEARMS				
Troll Hunting Spear	Str+d8	8	700	Reach 1, 2 hands, AP 1, See Notes
BLADES/AXES				
Troll Bone Blade	As weapon	-25%	+100%	Troll Parts, AP 1, See Notes
AXES AND MAULS				
Crow's Beak	Str+d10	28	600	2 hands, -1 Parry, AP 2, See Notes

RANGED WEAPONS TABLE

TYPE	RNG	DMG	COST	WT	STR	NOTES
Troll Bone Bow	12/24/48	Str+d8	800	8	d8	Troll Parts, See Notes

AMMUNITION TABLE

AMMO	WT	COST	NOTES
Troll Tooth Arrow	1/3	100	+1 Damage, AP 1

ARMOR TABLE

TYPE	ARMOR	WT	COST	NOTES
Troll Skin Armor	As Armor	-50%	Troll Parts	See Notes.
Troll Skin Shield	-	-	+50%	+1 Parry, +3 Toughness vs ranged attacks, Troll Parts, See Notes.

ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

Crow's Beak. The origin of this crude-looking weapon is probably Cairnlander. It is basically a huge maul, with one end of the head shaped into a cruel point, exactly like a crow's beak. In ancient days these weapons were made of stone, but now they are forged in bronze, or, more rarely, in iron. Rules-wise a Crow's Beak works in this manner: when you make a successful Called Shot to the vitals or head against a Large or Huge creature, you can ignore the Size Modifier to the creature's Toughness. In addition, if you deal at least one un-Soaked Wound, the weapon remains stuck inside: every round the target must make a Vigor (-2) roll or suffer another Wound. It can break free of the weapon with a Strength (-4) roll.

Troll Tooth Arrow. This arrow is made with the sharpened tooth of a Troll. It is razor-sharp and deadly.

Troll Bone Blade/Axe. Any short to medium bladed weapon (from dagger and hand axe to long sword and battle axe) can be made from the bones of a Troll. It is lighter, but razor sharp and deadly.

Troll Horn Bow. This bow is made of one of the most elastic, and robust, materials of the Dominions: the antlers of a Troll. It requires a mighty man to stretch the bowstring, but it can deliver an arrow with deadly force. Legends say that Kruss Fire Hand himself crafted the first Troll Horn Bow and used it to hunt the Scaly Bird of the Sky, a mythical creature of the North.

Troll Hunting Spear. This wide-bladed spear is usually made of solid pinewood, with the point made of bronze, iron, or (rarely) Troll bones. It is an unwieldy weapon, but has a single purpose, penetrating the hard skin of a troll and piercing the heart of that damned beast! It grants the user the Giant Killer Edge, or, if he already has the Edge, it grants 2d6 additional damage instead of a d6. However, using this weapon against giant creatures can overstress the handle, which can break at the worst moment; if the additional dice for the Giant Killer Edge roll one (or double one) you must immediately check if the weapon breaks (see *SEPC*). Magical versions of this weapon are immune to this last effect.

Troll Skin Armor. Any Light or Medium armor can be made with Troll skin. It is very robust and flexible. Light Troll Skin armor ignores one point of Armor Penetration, medium armor ignores up to two points.

Troll Skin Shield. Medium shields can be made with reinforced layers of Troll skin. They are very robust, granting extra protection against arrows and ranged attacks.