

# 'COLD WIND to VALHALLA'

A *Shadow of the Demon Lord* Adventure for Novice Characters

by Nat 20 Webb † 2018 Young Needles Games † Part of the *City of Lorden* Series

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THE MIGHTY BERSERKER THRAH has been slain! A maid at the Beggar's Horse Inn on Alehouse Row just discovered Thrah frozen to the wall of his room, a strange bird mask on his face. Who killed Thrah? Why? And... how?

## Background

The Temple of the Bird-Man Garuda recently obtained a huge egg that they believed to be a holy relic of their faith. Unbeknownst to them, it was in fact the egg of a white worm (see *A Glorious Death*).

The Green Bones pirates, inveterate trophy-takers, hired Thrah to steal the egg. Thrah succeeded, but on his way home sold the egg to Derrus Rogan, an employee of Zeblume the Ice Wizard.

The angry pirates have been sending Thrah threatening letters demanding he hand over the egg, and are about ready to head over and take it for themselves. Meanwhile, Zeblume demanded that Rogan kill Thrah to cover his tracks. Rogan failed in his first attempt to kill Thrah, but succeeded after the egg hatched and Zeblume lent him the baby white worm that emerged.

## Beginning the Adventure

The party is on Alehouse Row on the Isle of Lorden, celebrating their latest victory, when a crow comes flying over and alights on the shoulder of one of the characters. Zhem, a girl who works at the Beggar's Horse nearby, runs up breathless, chasing the crow. She is very apologetic in the face of such mighty adventurers, but insists she has to get the crow back to her inn because it's evidence in a murder.

Suddenly, Zhem realizes that these mighty adventurers look like mighty adventurers, and suggests that they might be able to help. The City Watch doesn't come to the Isle, so the murder will go unsolved unless someone cares to intervene. Zhem did overhear something about the dead man's treasure...



## Important Players

Ashtops	Ashtops is an acolyte of the Bird-Man Garuda, and not well liked by his peers.
Derrus Rogan	Styling himself an Interbaronial Halfling of Mystery, Derrus Rogan is a free agent for hire.
Green Bones Pirates	A gang of goblin river pirates who delight in trophy-taking.
Man of Mining	The Man of Mining is an invention of Big Kwalish. It's a ten-foot-tall clockwork suit, operated by a size 1/2 or smaller creature inside, which provides power and protection for mining.
Thrah	Thrah is an adventurer from the far south, as well known on the Isle of Lorden for his stupidity as for his mighty thews.
White Worm	White worms are enormous, ice-spitting monsters that dwell in the Blasted Lands and Blötland.
Zeblume the Ice Wizard	Zeblume is a fairly well-known petty wizard. He often gets into spats with those he sees as rivals.

## Timeline of Events

**15 days ago:** The Temple of the Bird-Man Garuda comes into possession of an egg that they believe will hatch the reincarnation of their god. They do not keep this fact a secret. Zeblume the Ice Wizard begins researching the egg.

**10 days ago:** Zeblume determines that the egg is in fact a white worm egg, and hires halfling adventurer Derrus Rogan to steal it.

**9 days ago:** The Green Bones pirates decide they want the egg as a trophy, but fail to climb the Spire of Garuda. Derrus Rogan plans his own attempt on the egg.

**8 days ago:** The Green Bones pirates hire Thrah to steal the egg, and pay him a big bag of gold ahead of time. That night, Thrah succeeds. Returning to his room at the Beggar's Horse, he is stopped by Derrus Rogan, who was in fact on his way to steal the egg himself. Rogan offers Thrah a fat sheep and a jug of sour wine for the egg, and Thrah agrees.

**7 days ago:** Rogan brings the egg to Zeblume, who orders him to kill Thrah. The Temple of the Bird-Man Garuda discovers the egg is missing and sends an acolyte named Ashtops to find it. Thrah begins to spend his money prolifically.

**5 days ago:** The Green Bones pirates, getting antsy, send a message to Thrah asking him where the egg is. Rogan, still trying to figure out how to kill the mighty Thrah, intercepts the message to buy himself more time. Ashtops casts the spell *Find* (see *Freeport Companion*) outside the Beggar's Horse Inn and is disappointed.

**4 days ago:** Rogan rents a Man of Mining from Big Kwalish's Apparatus Rental, and uses it to attack Thrah. Ashtops, trailing Thrah, sees him tear the limbs from the clockwork and throw them into the river, except an arm that he keeps for a backscratcher. Rogan goes diving in after them. Terrified, Ashtops returns to the Temple, where he is put to work dealing with an influx of plague victims.

**3 days ago:** The egg hatches. The Green Bones pirates recover the body of the Man of Mining and make it into a keg. Rogan recovers three limbs of the Man of Mining but can't find the body or right arm.

**2 days ago:** Rogan returns to Zeblume's spire in defeat; Zeblume gives him the baby white worm and again orders him to kill Thrah. The Green Bones pirates send another message to Thrah; suspecting that their first never reached him, this message is in code. It reaches him but he can't decipher it.

**1 day ago:** Rogan, disguised as a delivery man, hides the baby white worm in a crate for delivery to Thrah's room at the Beggar's Horse. The worm kills Thrah, but Rogan is injured in the process.

**Just Now:** Thrah's frozen body is discovered by a maid at the inn. Thrah's pet crow, Caw, escapes. Zhem, a girl who works for the inn, is sent to recover it.

## The Beggar's Horse

The Beggar's Horse is a small, cheap inn on Alehouse Row, no different from a dozen others that serve broke adventurers.

### NPCs

**Sennix** The burly owner of the Beggar's Horse is a former adventurer. He loves to tell tales of the "good old days," but in fact he retired in cowardice after a minor injury.

**Zhembolet Pshinshevy ("Zhem")** The maid who discovered Thrah's corpse is a young human girl who ran away from her overbearing parents. She loves Lorden, and is terrified that she will be deported to her far-off homeland.

### Thrah's Room

*Your eye is immediately drawn to a huge block of hoary white ice against one wall of the room. The blue body of a mighty-thewed warrior with platinum hair is frozen within, with only his head free. A long-beaked bird mask covers the warrior's face. The ice is melting in an incessant drip and spreading a dark stain on the carpet. The room itself has a lived-in feel; aside from the bed, there are a large chest, trophies on the wall, and a line of cages along the left-hand wall in which something is whining.*

### Corpse

Beneath the bird mask, Thrah's head is blue, and a black tongue lolls from his mouth. Within the block of ice, the corpse wears only lizard skins. A huge club is also frozen in the ice near Thrah's right hand.

**Body:** The body has many scars and scabbed-over cuts, but no fresh or open wounds.

**Bird Mask:** The bird mask is a well-known ritual implement of the Temple of the Bird-Man Garuda, just outside the city.

### Cages

Two large cages hold war dogs (as **small animals**) whining to be let out. They growl at the inn staff, but take to the party if offered food and will serve them faithfully. There is also an open birdcage, into which the crow Caw will hop if given a chance.

### Trophies

The walls of the room are hung with numerous weapons, a goblin head mounted on a plaque, a few battered wooden shields, a large metal arm, and a few battle flags.

**Weapons:** Thrah's trophies include weapons of all sorts, all of them still usable.

**Arm:** This is the right arm from a Man of Mining. It has a small plaque reading "If Found, Please Return to Big Kwalish's Apparatus Rentals, Triumphal Row, Jadegate."

### Chest

The chest contains stinking, half-rotten reptile skins, but on top is a letter with the seal broken. The letter is from the Green Bones pirates, but is written in code. *See Handout #1.*

## Interrogating the Staff

### Sennix

Sennix is eager to get the corpse out of his inn and any investigation out of his hair; the dead berserker is an unwelcome reminder of his own adventuring career and it just freaks him out.

He informs the party that Thrah has a small treasure chest in the inn's strongroom; the berserker left standing orders that if he should be killed, the treasure was to be given to whoever avenged his death. Sennix doesn't know what's in the chest and is too superstitious to go through a dead man's things.

Sennix can tell the party that Thrah recently came into some money, and had been spending it profusely for the last week or so.

### Zhem

Zhem is shy and fearful at first, but can be drawn out if the party assures her that she is not in any trouble or danger.

If asked whether she's seen anything odd recently, Zhem tells the party that yesterday she held the door for a delivery man who said he had a new crate of reptile skins for Thrah. She noticed that when the delivery man was leaving, his arm seemed hurt, even though it had been fine before. She heard him muttering that he should have taken "that damned metal arm" with him.

## Kill Squad

Just as the party is finishing up their investigation at the Beggar's Horse, a kill squad of four **goblins** sent by the Green Bones pirates arrives, intending to kill Thrah. The fact that they missed their chance at a good fight makes the goblins irritable and quick to anger, but reminding them that this act is in direct violation of the tacit neutrality of Alehouse Row may calm them down.

## The Sign of the Green Bones

The Sign of the Green Bones is a bar run and patronized by the Green Bones pirates. It is outside the city, amongst the sand dunes along the north bank of the river. High in the dunes, a ship is mostly covered by sand, but its prow juts out to the south and its stern to the north. Entrance to the bar is through an iron door in the sand, which leads to a small dungeon that would-be patrons must traverse to access the bar itself.

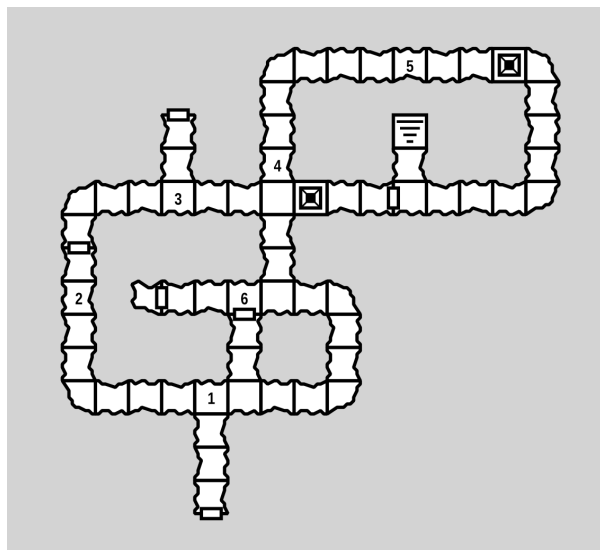
### NPCs

**Bugz** Sick of serving the same pirates all day and night, the barkeep at the Sign is thrilled to meet anyone new who dares the approach to his bar.

**Captain Wurdoc** The Captain of the Green Bones is well aware of how weak his crew really is, even if he'd never tell them the truth. Cautious and prickly, Wurdoc is smart enough to bow to superior strength.

### Entry Dungeon

Entry to the Sign of the Green Bones is from the southern door. The northern door leads to the other side of the dunes; adventurers who end up out this door will be thoroughly mocked by goblins looking down from the windows of the stern of the ship above. Access to the bar is via a staircase leading up.



The dungeon is haunted by an **oculus**. Each time the party enters a numbered hallway, roll a d6; if the numbers match, the oculus is in that hallway, headed towards the party.

All the interior doors of the dungeon are locked, and must be picked. They exist to infuriate and slow down entrants, exposing them to the oculus.

The pits stop the oculus from getting too close to the stairs. They fill the hallways. In darkness,

characters must make an Agility challenge roll to avoid falling in for 1d6 damage.

### Barroom

*The barroom of the Sign of the Green Bones is clearly the hold of a ship, with the stump of a mast at the center of a mess of tables and chairs. A big metal keg sits atop one table, gleaming dully in the torchlight. A little sun also shines in from stairways at either end of the room. A goblin behind the bar beckons you over with a wave and a toothy smile.*

### Bugz

Bugz welcomes the party heartily, and offers them a drink from his brand-new keg, of which he is very proud. He will happily tell how his boys salvaged it after a fight in Backwash, some big berserker with blonde hair versus a machine. Anyone who approaches the bar will notice that a row of bird masks like the one on Thrah hangs on the back wall. Bugz doesn't conceal his hatred for the priests of the Bird-Man Garuda. He doesn't know anything about the situation with Thrah, but suggests that Captain Wurdoc would know.

### Keg

The metal keg is in fact the body of Derrus Rogan's Man of Mining. It has a large plaque reading "Property of Big Kwalish's Apparatus Rentals, Triumphal Row, Jadegate." It can be carried by two people working together whose Strength totals 22 or more.

### Prow

Seven **goblins** are drinking here, enjoying the sunshine and the view of the river.

### Stern

Wurdoc and his lieutenants are meeting here in the old captain's cabin. Wurdoc first boasts that they killed Thrah— in fact his four best guys just did the deed, and Thrah must be bleeding to death even now. He is quite surprised if informed otherwise.

Wurdoc will openly say how angry he is that Thrah never "held up his end of the bargain," but won't say just what the berserker was sent to do. If asked who might have killed Thrah, or who might have stopped him from doing the job, Wurdoc will toss over the goblins' enemies list. See *Handout #2*.

## The Temple of the Bird-Man Garuda

The priests of this particular sect of Bird-Man worship keep a temple high atop a rocky outcropping in the hills north of the city. Just about everyone thinks they're odd, but their healing spells work as long as you're willing to hear a half-hour lecture extolling the virtues of the Bird-Man Garuda.

### NPCs

**Father Yoder** The gruff patriarch of the temple has no time for fools or non-Bird-Man-worshippers. He can be moved by the plight of the sick and poor, though. If necessary, use the stats of an **Acolyte of the New God** for Father Yoder.

**Ashtops** This devout but awkward young halfling is unlikely among his peers, and eager for validation. He longs to recount the story of his spying on Rogan. Ashtops has the stats of a **commoner** and no magical ability.

### The Temple

The temple sits atop a high outcropping of rock north of Lorden known as the Spire of Garuda. Visitors can use a speaking horn to call up and request a litter be sent down on ropes, or spend an hour trekking up winding paths to the summit. The priests will harshly judge any fit person who uses the litter.

The temple itself is small, with a chapel at its heart, a few small dormitories and offices for the priesthood, and an infirmary. The infirmary is full of the victims of a recent plague amongst the hill people (it has not reached the city, and Father Yoder intends to keep it that way). The sick have now spread into the chapel, where they lay moaning on blankets. The priesthood is in crisis mode treating the suffering.

### Interrogating the Priests

#### Father Yoder

Father Yoder is working frantically to care for the plague victims. He will respond only if the characters explicitly say that they know who took the Holy Egg, or if they earn his trust by helping meaningfully with the sick.

If the party can get him to open up, Yoder will tell them about the Holy Egg, how they kept it warm and safe until the Bird-Man Garuda should hatch again. He can also describe Thrah fairly accurately, as the berserker did not disguise his presence during the theft. Yoder doesn't know who hired the berserker, but has two ideas: either the Green Bones pirates, or Zeblume the Ice Wizard. Both of these have long grudges with the Temple.

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#### Ashtops

Ashtops is also busily working, but is willing to take time out to speak with anyone who is interested in hearing his tale. If the party is speaking at length with Father Yoder, Ashtops will hang around the edges of the conversation, hoping to be noticed. Once engaged, he plays coy, enjoying being wooed.

Ashtops was sent a week ago to recover the Holy Egg; he suspects correctly that he was chosen because nobody likes him. He can also speak all about the Holy Egg, and has first-hand experience of the enmity of Zeblume the Ice Wizard— he had to break all the ice off the front door after Zeblume froze it in his last spat with the Temple.

Once he begins telling his story, Ashtops won't stop for anything. A week ago, he was sent into Lorden to try to hunt down the egg, armed only with a description of Thrah and a single incantation of the spell *Find*. He quickly located Thrah and spent a few days trailing him, finally using the incantation outside the Beggar's Horse, only to find that the Holy Egg wasn't nearby.

That night he followed Thrah on his evening wanderings around the Isle of Lorden, and watched as a Man of Mining came out of the night and assaulted the berserker. Thrah tore the machine apart, throwing its limbs in the water as he laughed, then continued on his way using an arm from the machine as a backscratcher. Petrified, Ashtops returned to the temple, his mission a failure.

## Big Kwalish's Apparatus Rental

With a prime location on Triumphal Row, Big Kwalish's does a steady trade in renting heavy equipment of all sorts, mostly to dwarven miners. Kwalish himself is the proud inventor of the Man of Mining, a powered clockwork suit. The shop is guarded by three **small constructs**.

### NPCs

**Big Kwalish** The proprietor is a large, bearded gentleman who wears a colorful sash and open vest over his big belly. He is full of mirth, especially with potential customers.

### Interrogating Big Kwalish

Big Kwalish is fundamentally decent, but never above making a quick bit of coin, so bribes from otherwise decent people work well on him. (These also help him keep up his reputation as a tough wheeler-dealer.) He can describe Derrus Rogan and tell the party that he paid in coins frosted with ice. He also left a small chest as collateral against the rental; as he did not return the Man of Mining, Kwalish considers the chest his now, but will let the party examine it. He will give them the chest if they get his Man of Mining back.

### Chest

Rogan's chest contains 11 gc and 14 ss, all frozen into a block of ice. Under that, beneath a false bottom, are the first letter from the Green Bones to Thrah (which Rogan intercepted. *See Handout #3*) and a map of the Temple of the Bird-Man Garuda.

## Derrus Rogan

Derrus Rogan can be inserted into the adventure anywhere as needed. He has gotten wind of the party's investigation and has been tasked by Zeblume the Ice Wizard to stop them by any means necessary — unless they pay him enough that he can retire somewhere nice (100 gc or its equivalent). If the party is stumped on where to go next, or if a confrontation seems in order, have Rogan appear.

He is carrying the legs and left arm of his broken Man of Mining with him, hoping to turn up the missing pieces and get his deposit back from Big Kwalish. If he is bested or bought off, Rogan will gladly sell out his employer for his life and freedom. He may also ask the party to help him reassemble his rented Man of Mining.

Derrus Rogan	Difficulty 25
Size 1/2 halfling	
Perception 10 (+0)	
Defense 17	Health 22
Strength 12 (+2)	Agility 10 (+0)
Intellect 9 (-1)	Will 11 (+1)
Speed 10	
Attack Options	
Sword (melee) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)	
Shortbow (medium range) +0 with 1 boon (2d6 + 1)	
Special Actions	
Lucky Bastard Whenever Derrus Rogan rolls a 1 on any die, he can use a triggered action to ignore the roll and roll again.	

## Zeblume's Spire

Once the party knows that Zeblume is behind the murder, they can find him simply by asking around. His hideout is under one of the spires of Toothy Town. Rough-cut stairs lead from river level to the top of the tall, jagged rock. Up there stands a single tree above a short stretch of road with a manhole leading down into an abbreviated length of stinking sewer, where Zeblume lives and performs his arcane experiments.

Zeblume has various wards set and knows the party is coming. He and his baby white worm await the party atop the spire. Zeblume mostly wants to be left alone, and will try to talk his way out of trouble. If a fight seems imminent, he will cast *arcane armor*, then let his white worm loose. He will attempt to flee into his sewer if he feels that he is in serious danger.

Zeblume's hideout contains little of worth other than a spellbook containing the spells the wizard knows, and some 120 cp hidden under a filthy mattress.

Zeblume	Difficulty 25
Size 1 human	
Perception 10 (+0)	
Defense 11	Health 16
Strength 10 (+0)	Agility 11 (+1)
Intellect 14 (+4)	Will 11 (+1)
Speed 10	
Attack Options	
Ice Knife (melee) +3 with 1 boon, (1d6 + 2)	
Special Actions	
Spell Recovery Once per day, Zeblume can use an action to heal 4 damage and regain one expended casting of a spell he knows.	
Magic	
Power 1	
Traditions Arcana, Water	
Spells Sense Magic (2), Arcane Armor (2), Produce Warter (2), Freeze (2), Ice Blast (1)	

Baby White Worm	Difficulty 50
Size 1 monster	
Perception 13 (+3); darksight	
Defense 14	Health 50
Strength 16 (+6)	Agility 11 (+1)
Intellect 5 (-5)	Will 10 (+0)
Speed 11; ice walker	
Immune damage from cold; gaining insanity; frightened	
Ice Walker A baby white worm ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain caused by ice or snow.	
Attack Options	
Teeth (melee) +3 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2)	
Special Attacks	
Frenzied Attack The baby ice worm attacks two different targets with its teeth, making each attack roll with 1 bane.	
Ice Block The baby white worm spews a freezing cloud of ice at one Size 1 or smaller creature within medium range. The target must succeed on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or take 2d6 damage and be trapped in ice for 24 hours or until the ice block is shattered. The block has Defense 5, Health 20, and takes double damage from fire. All creatures within 1 yard of the ice block when it is created must succeed on a Strength challenge roll of take 1d6 damage from the backblast of icy wind. The baby white worm may make this attack once per day.	

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xf hbwf zpv dpjot

hjwf vt uif fhh

csjoh ju up uif TJHQ PG UIF HSFFO

CPOFT

ps fntf!!



*Handout #1*

thrah

give us what is ours  
or else!!



*Handout #3*

## *✂ Our Enemies List ✂*

Kun Aguero

stole Capn Wurdoc's hat

Bryman Vicks

Too many spells???

Marloss the Tailor

not make suit for Capn Wurdoc

Urlan

Ranger of the deep

Austinthorpe Vand

bad sheriff

Mayor Lumsk

taxes!

Corlynn Moonshadow

leading from the rear

Zeblume the Ice Wizzard

Cold-hearted

Gort

philosophy insulting

Kill von Kull & the Marauders

v. noisy in bar

Wiry Tom

scammer DO NOT GIVE MONEY

Talon "Tuber" Grumblefoot

stole johnny-cakes, ale



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