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THE ICE FIEND & OTHER TALES

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THE ICE FIEND & OTHER TALES

These adventures are designed for a group of four Seasoned characters, but can be run with more advanced parties. Most encounters are based on a number of antagonists per hero, and thus automatically allow for increased party size.

For higher Ranked parties, add one additional Extra to an encounter for each party Rank above Seasoned. For instance, if an Heroic party of four characters faces two orc warriors per hero, the heroes encounter a total of 10 orcs (eight because of the party size and another two because the party is two steps above Seasoned).

Unless a scenario states otherwise, you can run these tales in any realm and at any time of year.



This adventure can be set in any geographic region, but there **must** be snow on the ground. This generally requires the temperature to be below freezing. In *Hellfrost*, this need not mean it is winter—the High Winterlands rarely thaw, the Low Winterlands suffer snow for as much as 11 months a year, and the Hearthlands can expect snow for as much as four or five months.

The setting, as written, is a Saxa region, dominated by rural steads rather than a large population center. Exactly where this lies should be decided based on the needs of your campaign. The adventure starts with the heroes in a Saxa stead, though it provides no reason for their being here. Depending on your campaign, the characters may be visiting kinfolk or simply enjoying hospitality from a stranger.

The party will be spending periods outdoors, and thus the temperature is more important in this adventure than some others in the *Hellfrost* line. The GM should keep an eye on temperature and the characters' winter protection, as they may find themselves pulling a long guard shift at night, when the temperature is one category lower. See the *Savage Worlds* rulebook for the effects of cold weather and the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* for how the rules work in this setting.

THE MAN WHO CRIED MONSTER

On a misty morning, a loud banging on the door of the stead rudely awakens members of the household and their guests. Whilst the householder dresses, one of the servants opens the door and, after brief discussion with the visitor, invites him in. The visitor, a farmer, is visibly out of breath and his trousers are splattered with fresh mud. Once the stead owner is ready to receive him, the farmer approaches his seat. At this point the characters should make a Notice roll. Success reveals blood amongst the mud on the farmer's trousers and sleeve cuffs.

Still panting for breath, the visitor begins his tale. "I am Ethelbert, son of Ethelred, friend of your family for many years. I live on a small stead five miles from here, where my family raises sheep for market and for your table. Over the last two nights, we have had sheep killed by some borror, sheep that are due to lamb any day now.

"Such savagery, for both sheep and unborn lamb were mutilated and eaten in part. The beast was cunning, for no man has seen it work its evil, save my brother, Wigmund, who, on the night afore last, was mauled by the beast and has since fallen into a fever the likes of which we have never seen. No herb will cure him of his malady and we fear he will die. We are simple farmers, not warriors or wolf hunters. I beg you, come to the aid of our stead before all our sheep are slain. By the time we send word to the thegn all will be lost!" Your bost scratches his chin before replying.

"We have no warriors here among our people. I can think of no one to aid you, unless..." His voice trails off as he turns to face you. "What say you, guests? Will you aid my neighbor in his time of need?"

If the characters refuse, (or perhaps because they want to discuss it first) Ethelbert looks visibly upset, but goes without making a fuss, collecting his spear from the servant waiting by the door. He does not look back as he departs. Should the characters agree, Ethelbert is extremely happy and says, "A feast fit for your lordships will be laid on at my bumble stead ready for your arrival" before he rushes off.

Ethelbert's stead lies at the edge of the local thegn's lands, bordering a small marsh and dense copse of trees, but can be reached in just under two hours at a brisk walk or one hour on horseback. The attacks have only taken place at night and this is likely to require the heroes to stop over at Ethelbert's for a day or two.

This is a perfect opportunity for a hero to boast that he will slay the wolf responsible. Such boasting is well respected by the Saxa as a whole.



There are two primary avenues of investigation open to the heroes at this juncture: They can either visit Ethelbert's stead and talk to his sick brother, Wigmund, or they can head further out and examine the remains of the sheep for themselves in order to form their own conclusions about what may be killing the livestock. This chapter assumes that Wigmund is the first stop.

On arriving at the house, the heroes are greeted by Ethelbert (who has been keeping an eye out for them) and given a warm welcome. He provides mead while they remove their cloaks and, when they are ready, he shows them to his brother's bed. Wigmund, a peasant in his early thirties, lies wrapped in furs, shivering uncontrollably and sweating profusely while his wife mops his brow with a damp cloth. A blood-stained bandage is wrapped around his left forearm. On seeing the heroes enter, Wigmund tries to rise, but drops back into his bed, visibly exhausted by the effort.

Heroes who ask Wigmund to explain what happened are told the following story. Any hero who doubts Wigmund's story after he finishes it may make a Notice roll. Wigmund is telling the truth.

"I was watching the sheep last night (coughcough), for the beast that had been savaging them. A mist had rolled in and visibility was poor, though I have (cough) keen enough eyes. Around the darkest hour, I thought I saw something, a figure, human in outline (cough-cough) running towards the outer fields and I gave chase lest it be a raider.

"Barely twenty paces bad I taken when a (coughcough) claw of ice raked out from the mist and caught my arm. Such pain! I have never felt such pain, though I have fought with the warriors against orc raiders and taken wounds in battle. A sudden malady (cough-cough) came over me and I fainted. When I awoke, it was near dawn and I crawled to the stead (cough-cough), my body shaking as if Wotan himself were rousing me from sleep. Since then, I have had the fever, my lords. That is my tale and on Thunor's hammer I swear it to be true."

Any character trying to diagnose his illness should make a Healing roll. With success, the hero deduces the sickness is unnatural. A raise reveals that while Wigmund is displaying all the symptoms of fever, his body is ice cold. Whatever attacked him was no normal creature. Only a *greater healing* or a very potent herbal remedy (-4 plant rarity) can help Wigmund now. Unless a cure is found, he dies in three days.

THE INNER FIELDS

Although the stead is active and humans and animals regularly walk over the area where the sheep are penned, there are still clues to be found. In the small field just away from the main farm lie the remains of two sheep, savaged last night by the beast and left where they lay for Ethelbert and his family to discover. Surrounding the carcasses are numerous paw prints. Successfully deciphering them requires a Tracking roll. With a success, the characters detect only wolf and sheep prints. A raise reveals other prints, made by something with canine feet but seemingly bipedal in stance. Examining the corpses of the sheep clearly shows that a ferocious beast attacked them and that both were shortly due to lamb.

Further out, just beyond the outer boundary wall, are additional clues. Heroes investigating will need to make a Notice roll. Success reveals footprints, most likely a woman, or small man, made the previous night. A raise finds a woman's silver brooch in the snow. The footprints head towards the next farm and come from the direction of the previous farm. Nothing overly sinister since farmers often travel to each other's steads to trade news or surplus produce. A successful Common Knowledge roll quickly determines that the brooch is Saxa in origin.

NIGHT VIGIL

Eventually the heroes will undoubtedly call for a night watch to keep an eye on the sheep. None of the farmers at the stead volunteer whilst such brave figures as the heroes are present, and cries of cowardice against them are countered by taunts of "Why do our mighty heroes need the aid of simple farmers to defeat a single creature?" and "This is why we summoned you!" The heroes will have to watch alone.

There are three possible events, each detailed separately below, and they may be encountered in any order. The suggested order is: "A Big Wolf", to make the heroes think they have dealt with the matter, "A Lone Figure", to bring up the possibility of a shapechanger, and then "The Creature Strikes". Of course, you should feel free to create additional red herrings or minor encounters (perhaps a pretty, unmarried girl brings mead and bread to one hero) to create as much atmosphere as you desire.

The characters automatically know there are no lycanthropes in Rassilon. However, there are shape-leapers, animals which can assume the form of men (and women) and monstrous hybrids.

Regardless of which event the heroes play through, each begins in the manner described below. Any adjustment for player ingenuity will have to be handled on an individual basis, but the creature is cunning and unlikely to fall for any trap they lay.

The sun has been down for many hours and the night has turned bitterly cold. Huddled in their cloaks, any heroes on watch can only look in dismay as a thick mist begins to rise from the ground, reducing visibility to fifty yards and making the cold air damp. Treat the visibility as Dark (-2). Hopefully the characters have lanterns or torches.



A BIG WOLF

Around midnight each hero should make a Notice roll at -2 (for the darkness). Success spots something moving carefully through the mist. With a raise, the character spies a large bipedal shape. The creature is a lone frost wolf, but a very hungry one. It attacks immediately, bounding out of the mist at full speed. If the party is Veteran Rank, add a second wolf. For Legendary heroes, add a total of two frost wolves.

The battlefield is a large field, broken up only by a few boulders. Deep snow covers the area, making it difficult ground.

Should the beast be brought down, the heroes may boast of their exploits (though killing a single wolf is not much to brag about). Ethelbert hosts a feast the following day and presents the heroes with small gifts worth 25 gs each as a token of his thanks. He also "allows" them to keep the wolf pelt as a trophy. Heroes who demand more reward lose a point of Glory.

If the heroes depart, believing their task completed, they will meet Ethelbert again the following morning as he hammers on the stead door once more. The beast is back and has killed five sheep in a single night! It seems the heroes were a little too lax in making sure all was well.

© Frost Wolf: See page 8. The first frost wolf is a Wild Card alpha male.

A LONE FIGURE

Note: The encounter does not occur if the heroes have discovered the secret affair between Aethelswhith, daughter of Frealaf, and Wulfwig the Farmer.

Around two in the morning each hero should make a Notice roll. The darkness penalty applies, as the event they are trying to witness occurs outside the range of any light source they possess. With success, the character spots a humanoid figure in the mist. A raise means he detects a woman skulking at the edge of the farm.

Heroes who give any sign of having spotted the figure, such as shouting, pointing or moving towards her position, cause her to turn on her heels and flee into the gloom. Given that Wigmund saw a similar figure in the mist shortly before the beast attacked him, the characters may be reluctant to give chase.

Hunting down the figure is not easy, especially given her head start and the thick mist. Heroes wishing to give chase must make a Notice roll at -2 from every hero. Success means the heroes catch her trying to cross a frozen stream. A failure results in her escaping. On a critical failure, the character has become lost in the mist. A lost hero can easily find his way back by calling for his companions to shout so he can follow their voices.

There are two possible outcomes from this encounter. Each is dealt with below:

Catch The Woman: The woman is Aethelswhith, wife of Lyfing, and lives on Frealaf's stead. At first she says that she was "out looking for a lost sheep", but if

pressed harder she tells the same story as in 'Asking the Locals (The Silver Brooch)' below, admitting her guilt as an adulterer. She vehemently denies being involved with the wolf, especially if the heroes suspect a shapechanger is abroad. For proof, she challenges them to question Wulfwig, her lover.

The Woman Escapes: The following morning, the mist will have cleared and heroes may search for the figure's footprints in the snow. A successful Tracking roll allows the party to follow the trail to Frealaf's stead. Any failure to track the woman leaves the encounter open to be used again at the GM's option.

THE BEAST STRIKES

Around three in the morning, each hero should make another Notice roll. This is opposed by the ice beast's Stealth. With success, the characters detect the approaching beast when it is 16" away. On a failure, they are allowed another Notice roll opposed by the creature's Stealth. Success means the heroes spot the beast when it is just 5" away. Those who fail whichever Notice roll signals the start of combat, are Surprised.

Out of the mist looms a huge creature, seemingly a frost wolf, but apparently made of ice and snow. It has malevolent, piercing blue eyes that seem to suck the heat from the characters' bones.

The battlefield is a large field, broken up only by a few boulders. Deep snow covers the area, making it difficult ground.

The heroes cannot harm the creature at this stage of the adventure without fire or heat magic, though they will not necessarily realize this immediately. Attacks by non-heat or fire sources can only ever inflict a Shaken result. However, the GM should secretly record damage as normal, even if the effects are not being applied. For instance, a sword inflicting 19 damage only Shakes the beast, but the GM would record one wound. The beast changes into a whirling snowstorm and departs if it takes one "wound" (real or hypothetical—the beast is testing the heroes' combat abilities) or manages to Incapacitate one hero. Tracking the beast is not possible. Similarly, organizing a hunt in the morning is pointless—there are no tracks.

☑ Ice Beast: See page 9.



At some point the heroes are likely to begin questioning the occupants of neighboring farms, most likely to see how far the killings have spread and whether anything unusual has been seen in the mists. The hero who finds the silver brooch may also wish to determine who it belonged to and what they were doing in the area of Ethelbert's stead.

The two nearest steads are those of Hermund, about

two miles west of Ethelbert's, and Frealaf, just under one mile to the east over the hills.

OTHER KILLINGS

The heroes are warmly welcomed at either farm. Neither has suffered any loss of sheep, though all have heard about poor Wigmund and the sheep slayings. Both stead owners have placed guards on their sheep as a precaution and are eager to see the matter resolved as quickly as possible.

IT'S DEADLY, YOU KNOW

Heroes who mention that the foe may be a shapeleaper receive plentiful blessings from the farmers, who are now reluctant to even venture out of their houses at night. Whilst at Frealaf's stead, they are approached by a rather fat farmer named Lyfing, who has information, he says, that might be useful to their quest. He proceeds to tell the heroes that he believes he knows the human identity of the shape-leaper.

"In the last few moons I've awoken at night to pass soil and found my wife absent or with fresh mud upon her feet. I questioned her about this and she said that she was checking the livestock. Of course, I believed her, she's a good, hard-working wife, but all this talk of shape-leapers and all brings doubt to my mind. Her nocturnal wanderings and the fact that she has never hore me children makes me think differently. Much as it pains me to say so, I suspect my wife, Aethelswhith, is the beast you seek!"

Aethelswhith is innocent of being the monster, but is guilty of having an affair with a young farmer from another stead. Her tale, should she be approached over the matter, is covered below in *'The Silver Brooch'*.

THE SILVER BROOCH

Showing the brooch at Ethelbert's reveals no further information. None of the women has ever seen it before, nor can they recall ever seeing a visitor wearing one similar. Whilst the locals at the two neighboring steads tell a similar tale, there are clues to be found.

While asking around at Hermund's stead, one of the farmers begins to look very uncomfortable, allowing the heroes to make a Notice roll to realize he knows something he is not saying. The man, Wulfwig, has secretly being seeing a married woman at night and has no wish to be accused of adultery, for fear of his life. Assuming his suspicious behavior has been observed, the heroes are likely to want to question him further. Any threat against him will cause him to openly start crying and reveal what has been happening.

"(sob- sob) It was my brooch! I bought it for a

woman whom I love deeply. She (sob-sob) is married (gasps from the crowd) to a lazy man who does not love her as I do. (sob) Her name is Aethelswhith, daughter of Frealaf, our neighbor (more gasps). I swear that she had nothing to do with the sheep attacks. The night of the killing (sob-sob) when Wigmund was bitten, she was coming to visit me in secret, as she has done for many moons (sob). I beg you (sob-sob), spare our lives!"

Adultery is a serious offense, worth at least a doubled wergild of 100 gs, but Wulfwig is still entitled to a fair trial. The heroes should travel to Frealaf's stead if they wish to question Aethelswhith on the matter.

When asking about the brooch at Frealaf's stead, a similar event occurs (use the same Notice roll as above), but this time the guilty-looking party is a woman, Aethelswhith, the married daughter of Frealaf. If openly accused of the crime, she pauses momentarily, looks at her husband, Lyfing, a rotund and lazy farmer, straightens her back, and says, in a loud and confident voice:

"Aye, it is true (gasps from the crowd). I bave been lying with Wulfwig, who, though young, is still more of a man than my husband will ever be. My husband is too lazy and oft too drunk to bed with me, leaving me childless and with age advancing upon me. He has squandered my bride price of 50 gs (for my father is a poor man) on foreign goods and trinkets, which he does not lavish upon me but upon himself. My love for Wulfwig is now open and, though punishment I deserve, I ask for clemency and declare in front of witnesses that I wish to be released from my marriage bonds."

Lyfing steps forward, his face red with rage, and goes to strike his wife across the face. Unless stopped, she ends up sprawled on the floor, a trickle of blood from the corner of her mouth. Wiping it with the back of her hand, she spits at her husband, catching him on the leg, and vows, "*My father will hear of this disbonor! You forced me to look elsewbere for my pleasure and I will make you pay, in this world or the next!*" She then leaves (unless stopped by the heroes) to return to her father's stead, which lies some 30 miles away.

What began as a hunt-the-monster adventure has, for the moment, become a messy adultery and divorce case! Naturally, Aethelswhith also deserves to be punished but, once again, this is neither the time nor the place.

CONSULTING THE WICCA

Eventually, most likely after the monster attack on the heroes, they will realize that their foe is unnatural. Ethelbert suggests they consult with the local wise woman, Raedburh, a priestess of the Norns, who lives not far away. Raedburh is a renowned seer and her powers of prophecy are known throughout this region. Like many of her kind, she is advanced in years and slightly (though some may say completely) mad, dealing as she does with matters man was not meant to know.

Entering her hut is a test unto itself, as she is protected by powerful magics and does not suffer fools. Any hero wishing to gain entry must make a Spirit roll. Failure means he is too terrified to set foot inside, though he may listen from outside. Once inside, the heroes see Raedburh lying on her bed, muttering to herself. As they enter, she raises her head and speaks.

"So, the beroes of men seek the advice of an old woman. What ails thee that you risk visiting me in my own abode? Ab, you seek knowledge of the beast that kills sheep. I too have ears. I hear what the wind says and it speaks of death and sickness not of natural birth. Tell me your woes with bonesty in your beart and on your tongue."

Once informed of the current situation at Ethelbert's stead and of any illnesses caused by the beast, she pulls a bag of bones from her robes and tosses the contents onto a sheepskin lying on the floor of her hut. Kneeling down beside them, she looks intently at them for several long minutes before raising her head and staring into the eye of the most important hero (socially).

"A weapon of power is needed to bring the beast to beel and no such weapon lies in this land. Yet the bones speak of a spear forged for Ulfgar, kept by a lord of a neighboring realm, under a banner of a black dog for long generations. Seek the spear, but use it wisely, for it bas lead men to their death and will do so again."

Raedburh will gratefully accept any payment of 1 gs or over. Heroes trying to leave without offering a gift for services rendered receive a stern warning. "Be generous as leaders of men, for there will be a time soon when you seek the generosity of others and if they look into your beart, they will refuse you." Whether or not the prophecy has any weight is up to the needs of the individual campaign.

THE BLACK DOG BANNER

Heroes may know of the "banner of the black dog" themselves by making a Knowledge (Heraldry) roll if outsiders or a Common Knowledge roll if local to the region. Success reveals the black dog is the banner of Hauld Eossa, a neighboring noble. On a raise, the character also knows he is a devoutly religious man and claims all good deities as his patron. Should they fail, Ethelbert reveals Eossa's name if questioned on the black dog banner.

Once armed with the necessary information, the heroes are free to trek to Eossa's lands to seek the magical spear of which Raedburh spoke. Eossa's mead-hall lies six days march or three days ride from Ethelbert's stead. The journey can be as eventful or uneventful as you desire, but the heroes should arrive without major wound.



The heroes arrive at Eossa's mead-hall late in the evening, but are welcomed in by the steward as guests. Eossa sits at the head of his feasting table, an elderly man wrapped in a bear skin, to his right, his eldest son, Wiglaf, and behind him, mead jug in hand, his beautiful (Charisma +6; Charismatic and Very Attractive), and unmarried, daughter, Aelfwynn. His nobles and huscarls are gathered in front of him, feasting on boar, and drinking flagons of fine mead. The steward of the hall announces the heroes, in order of social seniority and all falls silent as Eossa bids the heroes to attend him.

Many of the warriors nod in polite recognition at heroes with a positive Glory as the characters move to the far end of the hall. Others stare silently; a few mutter something about "ill-bred wastrels," but they are in the minority. Presently the heroes stand before Eossa's chair. He bids them welcome to his lands.

"I am Eossa, son of Uxfrea, who raided lands far and wide, son of Cuthbert, who fought the orcs, son of Abo, who wrestled the great bear of Midmark, son of Beocca, who terrorized the White Sea, son of Ulfgar, who slew the fell frost giant of Ostmark, son of Hereward, who was smith to kings. Welcome to my mead-ball bonored guests. Now, pray tell, what brings you here at such late bour?"

The heroes should begin by introducing themselves to Eossa and his nobles. Failing to do so costs them -1 Glory. Allow them to role-play their speech, using as much embellishment as they wish. Once they have told their story, which is not interrupted by noble or huscarl, Eossa speaks again, assuming they at least succeeded in impressing him.

"Such beasts are the enemies of my kin and your pleas are beard. On the morrow, we shall test you of your worthiness to carry the magical spear that slew the fell giant of Ostmark. The spear of Ulfgar has long been in my family and it is mine to give, or to withbold. For now, come sit before me as honored guests."

Several huscarls move over to allow the heroes seating space, and food and mead are brought to them. The rest of the night is spent discussing heroic endeavors with the lord's huscarls, all of whom are prone to bragging.

GAINING THE SPEAR

On the morrow, which is bright and sunny, Eossa, his nobles, and his huscarls gather in front of the meadhall. Eossa, dressed in his finest clothes, speaks to the assembled mass of warriors.

"These guests come seeking the use of our sacred spear, that which Ulfgar used to slay the fell giant that Eafa, ancient prince of Ostmark would not fight. Though he speaks of his need to wield the spear of power, he must prove to Sigel and our ancestors that he is worthy to wield it against the beast that haunts the lands of our neighbors by being of my kinsman.

"If the spear is gifted to you, you must, upon defeating the beast, swear loyalty to me, forgoing any loyalty to your current lord. In return, I will make you a buscarl. What answer give you, before Sigel and your ancestors?"

Eossa is actually expecting the hero to refuse, for Ulfgar, the first wielder of the spear remained loyal to his lord even when faced with certain death. A hero who is unsure about what to do may make a Common Knowledge roll. With success, he knows that transferring his allegiance would mean his entire family having to uproot and move to Eossa's lands and swear loyalty to their new lord. It is a high price to pay for defeating one beast that eats only sheep.

Once the hero has made his decision, Eossa speaks again. The first paragraph should be used if the hero refuses Eossa's demand, and the second if he refuses with a grand and noble speech (roleplayed out) about the price of loyalty. Should the heroes fail the test, Eossa sends them packing. They suffer -2 Glory for being willing to forfeit their loyalties so easily. Killing the beast now requires the heroes to acquire heat or fire magic.

"You speak wisely, for loyalty to one's lord makes a man great. Poor in bonor is be who changes allegiance over mere temporal power. Great Ulfgar, whose spear this is, accepted death before disbonoring his lord, though cowardly the lord may have been. To you I loan this spear, for a period not to exceed two months. Bring it bonor, bring it glory, in the name of Sigel and my ancestors."

"You speak wisely, for loyalty to one's lord makes a man great. Poor in bonor is be who changes allegiance over mere temporal power. Great Ulfgar, whose spear this is, accepted death before disbonoring his lord, though cowardly the lord may have been. You share many qualities with him. To you I gift this spear, to keep in your family until Tiw takes it back. Bring it bonor, bring it glory, in the name of Sigel and both our ancestors"

THE SPEAR OF ULFGAR

The spear is 7 feet long with an iron tip. The tip is engraved with stylized images of the sun and is scalding hot to the touch in any temperature, though it cannot start fires.

The spear functions as a normal long spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, requires two hands) except against creatures with Immunity or Resistance to cold, coldfire, and ice. Against such foes, it grants +1 to Fighting rolls, inflicts bonus damage as if it was a source of heat/fire, *and* causes an extra d10 damage on a raise instead of a d6 as normal.

Being gifted the spear is worth +5 Glory, whilst being loaned the spear only +1 Glory. Remember, as a permanent magic item the character *must* spend a benny before he can wield its powers. Refusing or forgetting to return the spear after the loan period imposes a -10Glory loss on the hero and makes enemies of Eossa, his household, and his kin. The character gains the Minor Enemy Hindrance and will never again be welcomed in Eossa's lands.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

With the spear in hand the heroes may now return to Ethelbert's to do battle with the creature. On arrival, a red-eyed Ethelbert informs them that eleven sheep have been slaughtered since they left, and (unless he was cured) Wigmund, his brother, died from the illness that afflicted him. The family is waiting until the beast is dead before they bury the corpse in the local graveyard.

Hopefully the heroes have worked out that the beast only attacks when the mist rises. Each night of watch, roll a single d20. On a result of 14 or lower, there is mist and the beast attacks. If there if no mist, the creature stays away—the heroes spend an uneventful night watching sheep.

When the beast does attack, it fights to the death—the power of the spear keeps it bound to the immediate vicinity. Should the hero wielding the spear be killed, another may pick it up as an action and carry on the fight. Note that while not every hero can harm the beast, they can aid compatriots who can by keeping the fiend distracted.

Once the creature is killed, the adventure is over. Ethelbert and his family rustle up 100 gs in coin and goods as thanks. Check for Glory as normal. On the off chance that the creature wins the fight by defeating all of the heroes, it will eventually be slain by a hero from distant lands, who returns the spear to Eossa afterward. 🔵 BESTIARY 🔵

CITIZEN

Unless other stats are provided, the men of the various steads should use this common template. These men are members of the local fyrd and are considered fighting men, but they are not trained warriors. They are capable of driving away common wolves and maybe a nosy bear, but other foes are simply beyond their capability to handle.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one Craft) d6, Notice d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5/6 (1)

Hindrances: – Edges: —

Gear: Leather shirt (+1), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), medium shield (+1 Parry).

FROST WOLF

Frost wolves haunt frozen climes, roaming the tundra in small packs. Unlike regular wolves, frost wolves are bipedal and sentient, living in packs dominated by an alpha male (treat as a Wild Card if required). Their howl can, so skalds sing, freeze the blood of mortals.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d10, Stealth d10 Pace: 8; Parry: 5; Toughness: 7

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Combat Reflexes:** +1 to recover from being Shaken.
- * Fleet Footed: Frost wolves have a d10 running die.
- * **Go for the Throat:** If a frost wolf gets a raise on its attack roll, it strikes its opponent's least armored location.
- * **Howl:** A frost wolf can use its entire action to howl. When it does so, every enemy able to hear the chilling sound must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- * **Improved Frenzy:** Frost wolves can make 2 Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
- * Low Light Vision: Frost wolves ignore lighting penalties for anything less than Pitch Black conditions.
- * **Quick:** Frost wolves can redraw any initiative card of 5 or less.
- * **Resistance (Cold):** Immune to background cold. Half damage from cold and ice attacks.
- * Size +1: Frost wolves stand 8' tall.
- * Snow Walker: Treats rough ice as normal ground, smooth ice as rough ice, and every inch of movement in snow as 1.5" instead of 2".

☑ Ice Beast: See page 9.

THE ICE BEAST

The "ice beast" is a unique creature in modern Rassilon. Molded from the ice of the Hellfrost core and imbued with life by Thrym's ice breath, the "ice beasts" were frightful minions, immune to all but relics imbued with fire and heat. Even clerics of Kenaz could do little to thwart their killing sprees. When the battle turned, brave priests and paladins devoted their lives to hunting down and slaying all the "ice fiends" south of the Icewall. They missed one.

This particular specimen hid itself away from the world and went into hibernation after the War ended, sleeping away the centuries until it was needed again. That time has come.

Ten feet tall, of muscular build, and covered in dense layers of fat and fur, the ice beast is a powerful foe. Its sharp teeth and long claws can puncture armor and rend the flesh from a man's bones. Unhindered by snow and ice, it has a sizeable advantage over prey caught in the wilds when winter falls.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d10, Tracking d8, Swimming d8

Pace: 8; Parry: 7; Toughness: 11 (2)

Special Abilities:

- Armor +2: Covered in dense fur and fat.
- Bite/Claws: Str+d8.
- Combat Reflexes: +1 to recover from being Shaken.
- Fleet Footed: The ice beast has a d10 running die.
- Go for the Throat: If the ice beast gets a raise on its attack roll, it strikes its opponent's least armored location.
- Howl: The ice beast can howl as an action. When it does so, every enemy able to hear the chilling sound must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- Immunity (Cold): Immune to background cold. No damage from cold and ice attacks.
- Improved Frenzy: The ice beast can make two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
- Improved Snow Walker: The ice beast treats all snow and ice as normal terrain.
- Invulnerability: Attacks not caused by a permanent relic imbued with fire or heat spells can cause a Shaken result, but never a wound.
- Low Light Vision: The ice beast ignores lighting penalties for anything less than Pitch Black conditions.
- Poison: Any character Shaken or wounded by the ice beast's natural weapons must make a Vigor roll. Failure means he has succumbed to venom that slowly freezes the character to death from within. The hero's Agility and Vigor drop a die, as do all linked skills. If either Agility or Vigor drops below a d4, the character freezes to death. Curing the poison requires a bealing spell within 10 minutes. After this time, only greater *bealing* or a rare herbal brew (-4 for plant rarity) can

save the victim's life. Once cured, lost dice return at the rate of one per day.

- Quick: The ice beast redraws any initiative card of 5 or less.
- Size +2: The ice beast is 10' tall but powerfully built.

A BRIEF ENCOUNTER



This adventure details a small military engagement against an orc encampment, and serves as an introduction to the regular Mass Battles rules and alternate rules you will see used in future Hellfrost adventures. It can be dropped into any geographic region and at any time of year, making it easy for the GM to work into his campaign.



Someone is hiring mercenaries for a one-week campaign against a small orc encampment. The exact details of who is hiring mercenaries are left to the GM to decide. It might be a nobleman seeking to rid his lands of vicious orc raiders, the clergy of Tiw are always eager for battle, and routinely hire mercenaries to bolster their numbers or perhaps a merchant or trading company has suffered losses to orc raiders and seeks to clear the road of their presence once and for all. Whoever it is, they should have the means and funds to hire troops for a short campaign.

The payment each character is offered is detailed below. The fee is non-negotiable-mercenaries are plentiful and the hirer can afford to wait a week or so for troops who will not haggle. Each character can fulfill only one basic troop type, regardless of how many categories they qualify for. In addition to their wages, the mercenaries may keep whatever treasure they loot from the orcs.

Gold Sci	elds Troops
Basic Tro	ор Туре
15	Archer (covers any ranged weapons)
30	Infantryman
45	Cavalryman (with mount)
50	Mage, cleric, or Sister of Mercy
60	Mage or cleric with a damaging spell, such as
	bolt or blast
Bonuses	
+2	Per Combat and Leadership Edge the charac-
	ter has
+5	Bladedancer or Bludgeoner Edge
+10	Mage or cleric who knows bealing
+15	Iron Guild Mercenary or Knight Hrafn Edge
+20	Gray Legionary Edge

ARRIVAL AT THE ENCAMPMENT

The orc encampment is located some thirty miles from the hirer's home. Scouts report a series of hide tents arranged behind a makeshift wooden palisade. The orcs are prepared for war, and have erected sharpened stakes to break up cavalry attacks and block infantry formations.

The attack is scheduled to take place in the early morning, but as the mercenaries approach, they discover that their presence has been detected. The orcs are arrayed along the perimeter of their camp and have been whipped into a battle frenzy. The mercenary commander (the hirer is not on the field of battle) draws his men up outside missile range and calls a meeting of his officers. Any character with Knowledge (Battle) d6 or higher is appointed as a unit commander and invited to attend the meeting.

An attending player character can make a Knowledge (Battle) roll. If there are multiple heroes at the meeting, each can make a separate roll. With success, the heroes gain a +1 modifier to their rolls at some point in the battle as the tactic is put into play. A raise earns a +2 bonus (this cannot be divided into two +1 bonuses). Whoever rolled the success gets to decide on which round the modifier is used. Encourage the player to come up with a brief description of his tactic.

Example: Rob's hero has Knowledge (Battle) d8. He attends the planning meeting and rolls a success. On the third round of battle, when the tide looks to be turning against the mercenaries, Rob declares that the army's center feigns a retreat, luring the orcs after them. At a given point, the center "rallies" and charges the orcs, who are also peppered with arrows.

THE BATTLE

Unlike the regular Mass Battles rules, this battle does not use commanders, Battle rolls, Morale, or tokens. Instead, it takes the form of scripted battle with a predetermined outcome. Scripted battles are a useful tool for when the GM wants to decide the outcome of the engagement in advance. For this battle, the initial raid must be successful. This opens up the second engagement, in which the characters form part of a rearguard.

For each combat round, the GM is provided with a small amount of text that sums up the main action. The number in parentheses is a modifier to the characters' Character in Mass Battles die roll for that round. This represents the larger strategic struggle, injuries to one side or the other, and use of tactics. As such, the bonuses to Knowledge (Battle) rolls gained from the Character Results table do not apply (there are no Battle rolls). However, damage applies as normal and the results should be recorded, as high rolls are still worth bonus Glory.

FORCES

The allied forces comprise a large number of infantry supported by missile troops and cavalry. The commander

draws up his infantry in three companies with a detachment of cavalry on each flank. The missile troops are arranged behind the infantry. Spellcasters with offensive magic are dotted throughout the formation to provide maximum spell coverage.

The orc force is predominantly warriors backed up by two priests and a small number of archers. A minor chieftain commands their forces. Unbeknownst to the mercenaries, the orcs also have a squad of dire wolf riders lurking out of sight.

ROUNDS

1

Round Event

- The mercenaries begin their assault through the outer defenses but are immediately peppered with arrows and thrown weapons. Only ranged weapons and spells can be used during this round. A character without Shooting, Throwing, or an arcane skill (and an offensive spell) can make no attack roll this round. Instead, they must make an Agility roll as if rolling on the Characters in Mass Battles table. No Glory is earned for making the Agility roll (–2).
- 2 The mercenaries slam into the orc troops at a charge (+1).
- 3 The orc commander signals for his reserves. A small unit of orc cavalry mounted on dire wolves appears on the right flank and engages the mercenaries (–2).
- 4 The mercenaries rally from the dire wolf attack, using their cavalry to counterattack. Meanwhile, the infantry are locked in bloody hand-to-hand combat (+0).

The mercenary commander throws his reserves into the fray, breaking the orcs and causing a general rout (+2).

REWARDS

5

The mercenaries are victorious, though their losses (injured and dead) are significant—the orcs put up a good fight. The commander orders his men to loot what they can, torch the camp, and prepare to leave. Each character earns 2d10 gs in booty. In addition, for every raise a character scored on his Characters in Mass Battle roll he earns a further 1d10 gs. For instance, if Sven Brittle-Bones rolls a raise and then two raises, he earns a bonus 3d10 gs plunder.

Because the battle was a victory, the heroes all earn +1 Glory. The size of the engagement was just a few hundred men, earning them another point of Glory. Additional Glory bonuses for high die rolls apply as normal.



As the mercenaries prepare to depart, a scout rides

into camp. The orcs are regrouping and are preparing for a counterattack. Concerned about the number of dead and injured, the commander orders the wounded to be evacuated as quickly as possible. He asks for volunteers to form a rearguard to protect the withdrawing troops and finish off the orcs. Do not worry if the characters fail to volunteer—the adventure continues with **The Restless Dead** and the heroes miss out on the chance for extra Glory.

COMMANDERS AND TOKENS

This engagement uses the standard Mass Battles rules. There is no predetermined outcome—either the characters will be victorious or their army will be routed or butchered. If the heroes lose, the onset of night forces the orcs to retreat, thus allowing the heroes a chance to escape the battlefield.

The characters' commander is a junior officer with more courage than strategic knowledge. His commander ability is limited, and he is of the opinion that an army should fight to the last man rather than sully its honor by routing. He has Knowledge (Battle) d6, Spirit d6, and the Death Before Dishonor Edge.

In the event a hero has the Knowledge (Battle) skill, the junior officer placed in charge of the rearguard is killed during round two, before the opposed Battle rolls are made. The hero is the only person left with the Knowledge (Battle) skill, and thus becomes the *de facto* leader of the mercenaries from that point onward. Should two or more heroes have the skill, the characters must decide who will lead them (one may have a higher die, but another could have more useful Leadership Edges).

The orc commander, meanwhile, is a cunning tactician. He has Knowledge (Battle) d8, Spirit d8, and the Cry Havoc Edge.

The allies have the larger force and thus have 10 tokens. The orcs are less numerous but are fearless warriors. They have 7 tokens. The fight takes place on open ground, providing neither side with terrain modifiers.

REWARDS

As a small engagement with dozens of men per side, it would normally warrant no Glory. However, because it is a rearguard and the heroes are risking their lives to protect injured comrades, they earn +1 Glory. Additional Glory awards for good die rolls and commanding the mercenary army are as per the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*.



Whether the character won or lost the rearguard action, they are now able to make their way back to rejoin the rest of the mercenaries. Victory means an orderly retreat, while failure ends in a rout. The rearguard action took several hours and has left the party unable to reach their comrades before nightfall. That night, a fierce blizzard breaks across the region. The temperature drops by an additional level (as it is night the temperature is already one level lower than normal). Worse still, the characters become separated from the other rearguard survivors.

Struggling on through the storm, the heroes stumble across what appears to be a low cave. A successful Notice roll at -2 reveals it is not a cave—it is the entrance to an ancient burial chamber! Characters without the *refuge* spell now have a decision to make—do they risk freezing to death, or do they pluck up the courage to enter the cairn and risk an attack by the undead?

A hero who makes a Survival roll knows the blizzard is going to be lengthy and potentially fatal to heroes caught in the open. Opting to travel onward means the characters must each make six Vigor rolls, regardless of the temperature and normal rules for withstanding the cold—the storm is unnatural in origin and particularly fierce. These rolls should be adjusted as normal for temperature and winter clothing. Each failure causes a level of Fatigue, which can lead to Death.

Terrain: The cairn comprises a long, low tunnel (8" long) which opens into a high-ceilinged burial chamber (12" long by 8" wide). Movement through the tunnel requires the characters to crouch. They move at half Pace, but can run (half the total Pace after rolling the running die).

Monsters: Within the main chamber are a number of stone biers, upon which lie blackened, shriveled corpses. The number and type of monsters present varies with the party's Rank. For Novice and Seasoned characters, use one petty hagbui per two heroes. Veteran or Heroic parties should encounter one royal hagbui (an ancient king) and a petty hagbui (his wife). Legendary heroes get to face one royal barrow-dweller per two heroes. The undead rise once the first hero enters the chamber.

• Petty Hagbui: See page 12.

Royal Hagbui: See page 12.

Treasure: Once the occupants have been defeated, the characters can set about looting their tomb. Jewelry on the corpses totals 300 gs.

One hagbui wears a small stone amulet around its neck. This is a minor permanent relic known as a *bealer's amulet*. The wearer gains the Fast Healer Edge, but only if he wears the amulet for the four days leading up to his natural healing roll (a hero cannot borrow the amulet the day before a natural healing roll and benefit from its magic). A wearer who already has the Fast Healer Edge gains no benefit.



After dispatching the barrow dwellers or surviving the storm (which abates with the dawn), the characters quickly catch up with their comrades in arms. On returning to the hirer's home, they are paid whatever is owed them. Calculate Glory for slaying the hagbui as normal. Any failure is put down to hallucinations caused by the freezing temperatures.



Also known as grave wights, these undead are the corporeal remains of Saxa kings and heroes buried in ages past. Until Hela's treachery, they remained still in their graves, but when the gates of the Abyss were opened, foul spirits inhabited their corpses.

Their form is that of a mummified corpse, with tight, leathery skin drawn over taut, wasted muscles, and their eyes burn with a pale, cold light. Although a hagbui can speak, it only speaks Auld Saxa, and rarely bothers communicating with mortals unless they too are heroes or kings.

РЕТТУ НАСВИІ

A petty hagbui is the corpse of a minor noble or lesser hero. Their earthly remains are inhabited by fell spirits. Although buried with wealth, their tombs are not as rich as those of their masters are.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 11 (3)

Gear: Ancient bronze armor (+3), ancient bronze long sword (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- * Bony Claws: Str+d4.
- * **Bound:** A hagbui may not move further than 50" (100 yards) from its burial place.
- * Fear: Anyone who sees a hagbui must make a Guts check.
- * Numbing Touch: Any creature touched by a hagbui must make a Vigor roll. On a failure, the victim suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to Agility rolls and skills linked to Agility.
- * Undead: +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * Weakness (Sunlight): A hagbui is weakened by the sun. Each round in sunlight it must make a Vigor roll or become Exhausted.

ROYAL HAGBUI

These undead were once mortal rulers or great heroes. Although the spirit residing in their bones may not have been a noble in life, these undead retain their status in the eyes of others of their kind. Their tombs are brimming with treasure, and they intend to ensure it remains that way for eternity. Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 12 (3)

Gear: Ancient bronze armor (+3), ancient bronze long sword (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- * Arcane Resistance: +2 to Trait rolls to resist magic and +2 Armor against damage-causing arcane effects.
- * Bony Claws: Str+d4.
- * **Bound:** A royal hagbui may not move further than 200" (400 yards) from its burial place.
- * Fear (-2): Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll at -2.
- * Numbing Touch: Any creature touched by a hagbui must make a Vigor roll. On a failure, the victim suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to Agility rolls and skills linked to Agility.
- * Powers: A royal hagbui knows the following powers: *bladebreaker* (weapon rusts), *fear* (unearthly scream), *lower trait* (curse), *obscure* (mist), *quickness* (supernatural reflexes).
- * Undead: +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison. No wound penalties.
- * Weakness (Sunlight): A hagbui is weakened by the sun. Each round in sunlight it must make a Vigor roll or become Exhausted.

TAXATION TROUBLES



This adventure is intended as a way of getting the party from two points without resorting to a cut scene and yet without making a long journey a roleplaying chore. The trip is handled very abstractly, yet still requires the heroes' direct input. The GM should feel free to swap the animals mentioned for reindeer and goats if the adventure is set in the Winterlands.

The party is hired by a large village or small town to deliver the annual tribute of cattle and sheep to their noble overlord. One of the headman's agents is at the noble's stronghold and will pay the party on successful delivery of the livestock.

Assuming they agree, hand the players a total of 30 tokens—10 of one color (representing the cattle) and twenty of a different color (for the sheep). Each token represents a number of animals, not just a single beast. The exact numbers of animals is irrelevant, and tracking them would be an exercise in bookkeeping, not a gaming experience. Payment for the job is 100 gs per cow token and 25 gs per sheep token successfully delivered to the nobleman.

The tribute is due in 12 days, although the journey

should take only ten. For each day the heroes arrive ahead of schedule, a bonus of 100 gs is given. For each day late, 100 gs is deducted from the reward, to a minimum of zero. All rewards are for the party, not individual members.

PICKING THE BEASTS

Because the heroes will be responsible for overseeing the animals, the headman insists they choose the beasts. This requires a Common Knowledge roll from a single hero. Others may aid using the Cooperative Rolls rules. Clerics of Eostre Animalmother receive a +2 bonus, as do heroes whose background indicates they were herders (not farmers). Clerics of Ullr have a +1 bonus.

On a raise, they pick healthy and easily controlled animals. In each event below, when the animals are involved, the party has a +2 bonus. Success indicates fit specimens of easy temperament. On a failure, they pick animals that are unfit or prone to wandering off. Rolls involving them are made at -2. A critical failure means the party has inadvertently chosen stubborn or easily panicked animals. Rolls involving them are made at -4.

EVENTS

The journey lasts for ten days. For each day, draw a card from the action deck. A royal card (Jack through Ace) indicates an encounter has occurred. Draw a second card and check the results below. A Joker indicates two events occur that day. Draw two cards and check the results below.

The events are handled completely abstractly, and use a system loosely based on the Mass Battles rules. In each event, one hero must be nominated as the lead. The lead can be changed each event, as naturally the best character for the job should be placed in charge. It is his die roll that determines the overall outcome. His comrades aid through Trait rolls using the Cooperative rules. The only difference is a critical failure subtracts -1 from the lead's roll.

Note that some skills are more appropriate to a situation than others are. For this reason, several skills may be listed, some with no modifiers and others with penalties. It is up to the characters to decide what skills they are going to use.

Many encounters have a difficulty die associated with them—the higher the die, the more hazardous the encounter. The encounter die is compared to the lead hero's roll. For each success and raise over the hero's total, the party loses one sheep token. For every two whole sheep tokens lost in a single encounter, a cattle token is lost as well.

Example: The lead bero rolls a modified 4, while the encounter die is a massive 15. That's two raises! A total of three sheep and one cattle token are lost.

Pushing: With time against them, the heroes push the animals onwards at a faster pace. There is a risk of killing weaker animals, but it is either that or arrive late and suf-

fer a reduced reward. This may be done only once—the time saved is made up over the entire journey.

The characters must make Cooperative Vigor rolls at -2 to push onward at a faster rate. With success, they manage to save half a day. This is not enough by itself to warrant a reduction in encounters or earn a bonus, but it might combine with other similar reductions in time. A raise means they manage to save an entire day. With failure, the speed results in the herds becoming separated due to stragglers. Half a day is lost. On a critical failure, an entire day is wasted hunting down strays or through exhaustion.

DEUCE: MOUNTED ORCS

An orc war band mounted on dire wolves spies the herd and launches an attack. The orcs are more interested in stealing cattle than slaughtering the party.

Like all encounters, this one is handled abstractly placing hundreds of cows and sheep on the tabletop is just going to clutter the battlefield. A standard **Characters in Mass Battle** roll should be made for each round of combat, as there is risk of injury or death. The heroes gain +1 per Rank above Novice, but there are no tokens involved. The lead then makes his die roll, which does not have to be a Knowledge (Battle) roll (this is still only a small skirmish).

The orcs flee after three rounds of combat, driven off by the brave adventurers or content with their plunder.

Lead Hero Roll: Arcane skill, Knowledge (Battle), Fighting, Shooting, Throwing

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d8 + Wild Die (represents the orc commander's skill)

Results: Failure on the *lead* character's roll is handled as normal for this adventure. Losses represent animals stolen or slain in the skirmish. Individual heroes suffer injuries as per the **Characters in Mass Battle** table.

THREE: FEED US!

A column of refugees fleeing a battle, the hard winter, or just in search of a better life, clogs the road. The leaders ask the heroes to spare some animals, for the refugees are starving and their journey has many days to go. There is no die roll associated with this encounter.

For this event, a sheep token is worth one point and a cattle token four points. The refugees need a total of four days worth of food to survive the journey. Failure to help does not warrant a Glory penalty—the animals do not belong to the heroes, and the refugees accept that.

FOUR: HAND THEM OVER!

Nobles belong to a feudal chain, which runs from lowly knight to majestic king. A noble and his warband are patrolling the area in search of orc raiders or heading off to war, and they require feeding. The noble is a local and ranks one step higher than the nobleman to whom the tribute is being delivered. He demands the heroes hand over four sheep tokens and two cattle tokens to feed his men.

Lead Hero Roll: Persuasion, Intimidation (-2), arcane skill (*puppet*)

Helpers: As above, except spells like *boost trait* and *charismatic aura* may be used to directly aid the lead hero.

Encounter Die: d8 + Wild Die

Results: With success, the noble accepts half his initial demand. On a raise, he is content with just a single sheep token. Two raises, and he moves on without taking more than a few beasts—not enough to equate to a token loss. On failure, the heroes are again ordered to hand over the stated amount. Refusal is met with threats of violence. The nobleman is a Wild Card noble. His warband comprises two huscarls and four mercenary infantry per hero, regardless of Rank.

FIVE OR SIX: HARD GOING

The ground becomes difficult. It may be steep hills, craggy slopes, a bog, or dense forest hampering movement.

Lead Hero Roll: Knowledge (Area), Notice (-1), Survival (-2)

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d6

Results: Success allows the heroes to lose only half a day's travel. A raise results in no delay. Failure causes an entire day to be lost as the party must round up stragglers, rescue animals from dangerous situations, administer veterinary assistance, or recover from fatigue.

SEVEN: STARTLED ANIMALS

Something startles the animals, causing them to stampede. This event could be triggered by thunder, a wolf's howl, a hunting horn from somewhere nearby, or a messenger thundering past at a gallop.

Lead Hero Roll: Smarts (–2), Notice, Tracking (–1), arcane skill (*beast friend*, *detect cattle* only)

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d8

Results: Success keeps the herd together without losing the heroes much time. Failure leads to a loss of animals. Searching for lost animals proves fruitless—predators have taken them.

EIGHT: GOING OUR WAY?

A party of travelers is heading the same way as the heroes. They suggest banding together for safety, and offer to help herd the cattle. If the party agrees, the travelers stay with the heroes for the next 1d4 days or until the herd reaches its final destination, whichever comes first. During the time together, the other wanderers roll a d6 to support any Cooperative roll.

NINE OR TEN: SHORTCUT

The trail branches off in two directions. Any hero making a suitable Knowledge (Area) roll knows the righthand path is a shortcut, though it is treacherous. Remember, Knowledge (Area) rolls suffer penalties based on the scope of the character's knowledge—the greater the area covered, the larger the penalty when trying to recall local details such as this.

Lead Hero Roll: Knowledge (Area), Notice (-1), Survival (-2)

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d8

Results: Success means the heroes save a whole day, and thus have one less encounter. Failure leads to a loss of animals as normal due to falling off a cliff, drowning in a marsh, becoming lost, and so on.

JACK: THICK FOG

As the morning breaks, a mist begins to rise from the cold, damp ground. Within the hour, the mist is fully formed and visibility has been reduced to only a few dozen feet—there is a serious risk the herd will become separated in the mist. Sounds are muffled, visibility is poor, the damp air negates smells, and finding the dispersed animals presents a difficult task.

Lead Hero Roll: Smarts (-4), Notice (-2), Tracking (-2), arcane skill (*beast friend*, *detect cattle* only)

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d10

Results: Success keeps the herd together without losing the heroes much time. Failure leads to a loss of animals. Searching for lost animals proves fruitless—predators have taken them.

QUEEN: BLIZZARD/SEVERE STORM

Heroes caught in a blizzard or severe storm must make a Vigor roll at -2 every hour until they find shelter. A typical storm lasts 1d4+1 hours. Finding shelter is handled as below.

Lead Hero Roll: Knowledge (Area) (-2), Survival (-4). One roll may be made per hour.

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: None

Results: For each hour the Survival roll is failed, one sheep token is lost as animals wander off, freeze to death, or are struck by lightning. Every two hours, a cattle token is discarded as well.

KING: RIVER

A fast flowing river blocks the party's progress. The normally crossable ford is now swollen with snowmelt or rain. The water is only waist deep, but it is running fast and strong. A character making a suitable Knowledge (Area) roll knows there is another crossing point, but it means adding a day to the journey (and another encounter). What the adventurer does not know is whether the second ford is also swollen. In fact, it too is a raging torrent.

Boating may only be used if the heroes accept a one-day delay. This accounts for building a strong raft and numerous trips ferrying small numbers of animals across.

Lead Hero Roll: Boating (-2), Strength (-4), Swimming

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d10

Results: With success, a handful of sheep and a cow or two are lost, but not enough to warrant forfeiting a token. Failure leads to loss of animals as normal. The poor beasts are swept away and dashed against rocks or they drown in the turbulent water.

ACE: WILD CATTLE

Cresting a steep hill, the heroes catch sight of apparently unguarded cattle grazing nearby. A successful Notice roll determines they are wild, and thus taking them is no crime.

If they have lost any cows, this is a good chance to increase their numbers, and if they have managed to avoid the loss of any beasts, (all praise Eostre Animalmother) they can increase the tribute, keep them as extra profit, or take them back to the village to help offset the high taxation.

Rounding up the cattle requires cooperation—a bunch of adventurers running individually around after cattle may catch one or two each at most, but the rest will scatter.

Lead Hero Roll: Hero's choice. For instance, one may use Agility (herding the cattle) or Smarts (herding the cattle with clever tactics or knowledge of herding techniques), while a warrior might favor Strength (wrestling cattle) or Vigor (for overall endurance). Throwing can be used if the party has rope, and Riding (for mounted characters) is handy for outrunning the cattle and herding them together. Heroes with direct access to any of the following spells may use their arcane skill: *barrier, beast friend, entangle, farsight, fly, speed*, and *summon beast*. Other spells are permissible only at the GM's discretion and must be directly useful in *catching* cows.

Helpers: As above

Encounter Die: d8

Results: Each success and raise the heroes score above the encounter die nets the party one cattle token, to a maximum of +4 tokens. There is no drawback for losing the contest.

For the purposes of balancing the tribute, one additional cattle token counts as four sheep tokens. The nobleman will begrudgingly accept more cattle than he asked for, so long as the overall value is the same.

AFTERMATH

The rewards for successfully completing this adven-

ture are as per the introductory text. Glory is as per the table below. All awards are cumulative.

Glory Earned For

+1 Giving any refugees 4 tokens worth of animals

+1 Per two tokens of excess cattle returned to the

village (max +5 bonus)

- -2 Tribute was late
- +1 15+ tokens of sheep are delivered
- +1 8+ tokens of cattle are delivered
- +1 10+ tokens of cattle are delivered
- -1 8 or fewer tokens of sheep are delivered
- -1 For each token of cattle below 5 delivered

THE HAUNTED WOODS



Shortly after sunset while camping near a forest, the characters spy a pale, white light approaching their camp. As the light draws nearer, a figure becomes visible.

Seated on a jet-black borse is a knight. Clad in black chain mail, which glistens with an unearthly shine, the figure holds a midnight blue standard displaying a silvery spider web symbol in his right hand. Despite the breeze, the standard does not flutter. The mount halts some distance from you. The rider, his face concealed behind his visor, calls out in a hollow voice, referencing each of you by name.

"I am Morgwyn, knight of the Black Queen of the Midnight Court. My Queen requests assistance in a task and you have been chosen. May I approach your camp?"

A hero making a successful Knowledge (Fey) roll recognizes the title of the fey queen. Skalds may make a Common Knowledge roll at -2. She is an important member of the fey nobility, though often associated with the more negative side of the fey.

Asked how he knows the party's name, he simply replies, "You are in my queen's lands. She knows all mortals who enter her domain."

Assuming he is allowed to approach, the fey knight dismounts, sticks the banner into the ground, and walks closer. He removes his helmet, revealing a deathly pale visage of striking beauty. As he draws near, the characters realize his armor is not made of metal, but finely woven rings of black spider-web.

"Several months ago, by your record of keeping time, a creature entered the woods near the village of Dunskelly, a human settlement three leagues north of here. The woods are a favorite place for our kind to meet, and the presence of the beast was of concern. "As is our way, a champion rode forth to slay the beast. Alas, our champion has not been seen since. The local animals report many strange deaths from an unknown source and plant life is withering. My Queen has determined that mortal agents are required to fulfill two tasks—to find the missing champion and to rid the forest of the beast.

"In return, my queen bas promised rewards. First, no natural woodland beast shall harm you for a period of one year unless you first harm that beast. Second, through her power over winter she will lessen the snows within five leagues of a location you pick for a period of one winter. Third, each of you will receive a personal gift as a token of her esteem."

Sir Morgwyn's offer is genuine—the Black Queen is powerful enough to charm woodland beasts across Rassilon and dampen the effects of winter for a short while. The personal tokens, which are presented on completion of the quest, are rings made of spider-web. Not only do they grant a +1 bonus to Charisma when dealing with fey creatures of any type, but each contains a single use of *entangle*. This fires a web with an arcane skill of d12.

Once a deal is struck, the faerie knight remounts and departs. The pale light he exudes suddenly vanishes when he is 200 yards from the party. Any character trying to track the knight discovers the trail ends abruptly at the point where the light ceased.

Should the heroes attack the knight, their weapons and spells prove ineffectual. Morgwyn, protected by his powerful queen, fades away into the land of the fey and does not return. If the party heard his offer first and later go on to complete the adventure, they receive no reward for the insult of attacking the Queen's herald.

JOURNEY TO DUNSKELLY

During the journey to the village, the heroes encounter a merchant who peddles shoes and boots. He is missing his left ear, a result of a dispute with a noble over his daughter's chastity. If the characters mention Dunskelly, the merchant replies he has some information about the place. For a few silver scields, he tells the adventurers that a faerie monster is causing trouble in the woods just north of the village. Apparently, the faeries are playing a cruel joke, and are seeking to lure adventurers into a deadly trap. (This is false; the faerie offer is quite genuine).

THE VILLAGE OF DUNSKELLY

If the characters stop off at Dunskelly for any reason, they may decide to talk to some of the locals regarding the problems. Each hero who makes a successful Streetwise roll learns something of interest. Roll a d10 and consult the table below. A raise grants the character two rumors. d10 Rumor

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An evil faerie is living in the woods. A few local boys went in after drinking too much beer, but only one came back. He had an arrow in his arm and claimed a faerie had shot at them with superhuman speed and accuracy.

There is an area in the woods where no trees grow and animals drop dead if they enter it.

3 The woods are home to a faerie monster that has escaped captivity. The faeries sent a knight to capture it, but he never returned. I guess the monster is still out there.

- A man of wood haunts the woods and drives away intruders, even animals and birds.
- Somewhere deep in the woods lives a group of wizards who scare people away so they can practice their strange ways in peace.
- 6 Ever since the faerie knight entered the woods, the plants and animals have been dying. Some say that it is happening around a fixed point, but I reckon that it is a curse that is affecting the whole woods.
- 7 The trees in the woods are alive and attack people who travel in too deeply.
 - I don't think that there is anything wrong with the woods. I've been in there many times myself and I've never seen anything strange. People just have over-active imaginations and see what they want to see.
 - Many years ago, a wizard named Drennus entered the woods, claiming that he had the power to make wood come alive. He spent many seasons in the forest, sawing and hammering, working on his secret project. When he finished he came back to the village and told us he had to go back to his homeland to pick up some more materials. Strange thing was, he never did return. Some reckon that he left his project hidden in the woods.
- 10

The gods have sent a fearsome monster to punish us for our sins.

Aside from any information gleaned above, most of which is of dubious authenticity, the village of Dunskelly has nothing else to offer the party except a safe place to sleep at night. The inn, The Golden Lion, charges 15 silver scields per person per night, including a hot meal and a pitcher of ale. None of the villagers, regardless of the views on what is in the wood, will willingly enter the forest for any reward.



The woods contain two problems for the party to deal with. The first is a basilisk, the monster the faerie champion was sent to destroy. The second is a wood golem, Drennus' Bowman, which was constructed (but not finished) here many years ago. For each four hours of travel, have the party make a Survival roll at -2 as a Cooperative roll. With failure, they have a minor encounter (see below). Success indicates a major encounter. If the party runs out of rations, use the Survival rules to determine how much food they gain. Because of the basilisk's presence, there is a -2 penalty to the roll. Herbalists are free to gather herbs as they travel through the forest.

MINOR ENCOUNTERS

Roll a d10, consult the chart, and invent suitable descriptions.

d10 Encounter

- 1 **Rabbit:** The rabbit flees if approached closer than 12". An archer is allowed one shot to bag a spot of fresh meat. With a successful Shooting roll (made at 13") the party can eat rabbit for their next meal. On a failure, the startled rabbit bolts into the undergrowth.
- 2 Unusual Herbs: The presence of the fey has affected the woodland. Growing in a small circle is a single batch of herbs. If there is an herbalist in the party, he gets to decide which brew they are good for. The herbs grant no bonuses to transform into an herbal brew, but they remain fresh indefinitely. They are worth triple the usual price for dried herbs.
 3 Snare with Live Bait: A trapper has set up a
 - Snare with Live Bait: A trapper has set up a snare for the monster, using a young fawn. The heroes can ignore it, grab a free meal, or release it, as they so desire. No amount of patience is rewarded by the monster coming to investigate the bait.
 - **Empty Rotten Sack:** Dropped by a hunter several weeks ago.

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- Old Log House: Once used as a hunting lodge, the cabin has fallen into disrepair (though it is still a sound structure). Moss and vines cover the floor and walls both inside and out.
 - **Pit Trap:** Have the lead hero make a Notice roll. With a success, he spots the branches covering the pit and can avoid the trap. A failure causes him to fall through the leafy covering onto sharpened stakes below. He suffers 2d6+2 damage.
 - **Brightly Colored Flowers:** Regardless of the season,

a small clump of flowers grows here. Their beauty is unearthly. If picked, they immediately wither and die.

- **Fresh Deer Tracks:** A successful Tracking roll leads the party to a lone deer. The beast is nervous and it is impossible to get very close. See the **Rabbit** entry above for details.
 - Fresh Carcass: A fawn carcass lies on the track. It was killed only recently by a wild cat. The predator was scared off by the party's approach. Of course, the heroes may think the monster is lurking nearby.
- Special Herbs: This is as per the Unusual Herbs entry above, except the herbs also grant a + 2 bonus to Knowledge (Alchemy) rolls to turn the growths into herbal remedies.

MAJOR ENCOUNTERS

Some of the major encounters are important to the plot, while others are just mysterious locations the party can explore. Roll a d4 and consult the table below. Add a cumulative +1 to the d4 roll for each encounter after the first (so d4+1 on the second encounter, d4+2 on the third, and so on). This represents the party moving deeper into the forest.

d4 Encounter

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1 Circle of Stones



- The Pool
 The Bridge
 The Waterfall
 Faerie Gateway
 The Bowman's Domain
- 7+ The Zone of Death

CIRCLE OF STONES

In a small clearing stands a collection of standing stones. There are seven upright stones and three horizontal stones—the stones stand in a circle formation with three pairs of topped stones and a single stone. The single stone is engraved with peculiar markings that seem to make little sense.

Growing on the stones is a form of moss. A Knowledge (Alchemy) or Survival determines it is an unknown type. It is in fact faerie moss. This information can be gleaned only through an Investigation roll in a suitable library or by asking a woodland faerie. Added to an herbal remedy, it increases its potency. Herbal brews with a one-hour duration are instead increased to two hours. Any which allow a die roll, such as healing herbs or antibacterial herbs, have a +1 modifier to the appropriate Trait roll. There is enough moss for 1d4 herbal brews. Once the moss has been removed, it does not grow back.

THE POOL

A small, slow-flowing stream enters a tranquil pool. The water in the pool is quite clear and a few fish can be seen swimming around. Ducks can also be seen nesting near the water. The glade around the pool is remarkably peaceful and the undergrowth seems healthier than in other parts of the wood. Although there is nothing of special interest here, the heroes may decide to investigate the area.

THE BRIDGE

The trail crosses a wide, deep, fast-flowing river. A wooden bridge of weathered appearance but sound construction spans the water. Attached to the bridge is a wooden box with a small slot in the top. Carved into the box are words. Each reader sees the letters written in his native tongue. Illiterate heroes actually see pictograms. The words say, "One silver scield toll per person." The box radiates magic, but it is not a relic to which the adventurers can attune.

Party members who deposit money hear a small voice saying "thank you." Those who refuse to pay the toll get halfway across the bridge when it suddenly opens up and deposits them into the river below. They are quickly swept downstream and must start Swimming to avoid drowning. Flying heroes find their spell is automatically *dispelled* when they are halfway across the river.

The box has Toughness 10 and contains just 9 silver scields. Anyone who takes money from the box has his or her skin turned bright orange for a period of one month. This gives the thief a -2 Charisma penalty. A *dispel* casting against a d12 arcane die removes the taint, but only one *dispel* may be attempted each week.

The box and bridge were constructed by the fey. They do not need the money for any particular reason—the bridge is a test of honesty for those who would trespass in their woods.

THE WATERFALL

The heroes' route leads them into an area of forested hills. At this point, the river, which starts higher up in the hills, is already a fast-moving stream. It tumbles some five yards down a rocky escarpment before resuming its natural course. Behind the waterfall is a natural cave. Detecting it requires a Notice roll at -2. It is automatically discovered if anyone thinks to walk through the water. Unless the party takes suitable precautions, anyone entering the cave ends up soaked in icy water (see **Immersion** in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide*).

Behind the waterfall is a small cave measuring five yards across by eight yards deep by four yards high. It is a natural cavern, and has been used in the past by travelers as a shelter. Roughly in the middle of the cave are the remains of a fire (a Survival roll reveals the fire is wood ash with a little rabbit bone mixed in. It is roughly four months old).

Anyone who carefully searches the cave discovers, hidden under a rock pile, a small pouch full of dust, clenched in the hands of a skeleton. Simple investigation will reveal that the skeleton has serious cranial damage and several broken ribs. The cause of death seems to have been from a cave-in.

The skeleton is actually that of an earth elementalist who was in the area looking for a gateway into the faerie realm. Whilst staying in the cave he was ambushed by earth faeries and killed in a cave-in of their making.

The dust is a magical powder (an alchemical device). When sprinkled, it covers a Large Burst Template. Any hidden or secret locations within the area of effect are revealed in a glowing outline (a *detect secret doors* spell). There is enough dust for three uses.

FAERIE GATEWAY

Standing alone in the woods are two standing stones topped by a third stone to form a simple gateway. The two pillar stones are covered in typical Saxa-style knot work patterns but have no other markings. The stones form the boundary to the local faerie realm, a land that exists outside the physical world the party inhabits. It is within this land that the faerie who hired the party dwells. Many plants and trees in the surrounding area are covered in dead patches, which are slowly growing in size.

Walking through the gateway has no effect—only the fey or those they invite can use the portal for its intended means. It radiates magic.

THE BOWMAN'S DOMAIN

Within this area stands a wooden golem archer, a creation of the mage Drennus. The party begins 48" from the golem, which is concealed by moss and vines growing on its wooden body. Have the party make Notice rolls. Those who fail are Surprised. The archer gets the Drop until it is detected—the party knows they are under attack, but not from where. Because of this, and its unerring accuracy, the heroes will need to use trees and logs as cover to avoid being massacred.

Terrain: The area is thick with trees and dense ground vegetation. Detecting the bowman is not easy—it is made of wood and now covered with vines and moss. The penalties are -1 (1–12"), -2, (13–24"), and -4 (25–48"). It cannot be detected at greater distances, having blended in completely with the landscape.

Monsters: The only creature present is the bowman. It follows its last order to the letter—attack anyone who enters range who is not its master.

Drennus' Bowman: See page 20.

Tactics: The golem is incapable of movement, so it can never change position or make use of cover. It simply keeps firing at viable targets until it runs out of arrows. However, it does possess some intelligence. If presented with a target behind cover and a target in the open, it aims for the easier of the two.

THE ZONE OF DEATH

Within this area are obvious signs that something is very wrong within the woods. All of the plants and trees are black and decayed, and the area is dotted with dead animals and birds. Nothing within the area is alive. As the party progresses, they run the risk of being spotted by the basilisk.

Deal action cards and have the party make Notice rolls. As soon as someone rolls a 1, regardless of the Wild Die, they are detected by the basilisk. If the Wild Die indicates a success, the hero spies the beast at the same time. Either way, the character is subject to the monster's Death Gaze.

Terrain: The battlefield measure 24" square. The basilisk begins somewhere near the center, hiding beneath a bush. The party begins 12" away. Tall trees, each occupying a 1" square, can be used as Cover. There should be a minimum of 30 trees, placed at random.

Monster: The basilisk, an unnatural creation, has wandered Rassilon for countless years. It came to the forest seeking somewhere to spread its death and decay.

Basilisk: See page 19.

Tactics: The basilisk is a fearsome (and fearless) beast. It charges the nearest hero and engages in melee, biting at its foe while simultaneously relying on its Death Aura and Death Gaze.

Treasure: After slaying the beast, a search of the area turns up the corpse of the faerie knight. It has been reduced to a withered husk. All of its equipment is heavily corroded and of no value.

CONCLUSION

If the party kills the basilisk, then the faeries keep their part of the bargain and pay the heroes their reward (they automatically know when the beast is slain). Characters making Common Knowledge rolls know never to thank a faerie for their gifts, although praising the gifts is quite acceptable behavior.

The villagers of Dunskelly are also grateful to the adventurers for their help, although their reward is more likely to run to a free meal and some drinks at the tavern.



No stats are provided for the citizens of Dunskelly or the faerie knight. The villagers are no match for an experienced adventuring party, and the fey knight simply disappears if attacked.

BASILISK

Created long ago by insane wizards, basilisks are said to have been formed from serpent eggs hatched by a cockerel. These vile creatures, which appear as crested serpents, are surprisingly small given their deadliness. A second species, known as the cockatrice, has the appearance of a cockerel but they possess a snake's tail and fangs. These abominations were supposedly brought into life from a cockerel's egg hatched by a snake. Fortunately, basilisks are incapable of mating, and there are very few left in the Hearthlands.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d12+2, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 4

Special Abilities:

* Bite: Str+d6.

- * Death Aura: Anyone adjacent to a basilisk at the ends of its movement suffers 2d6 damage. This bypasses all armor except the *armor* spell.
- * **Death Gaze:** Victims of the basilisk must meet its gaze to be affected by its deadly power. When making any attack, a hero selects a penalty to his attack roll and Pace (he is not watching where he is going). He must then make a Spirit roll using the same modifier as a bonus. With success, he avoids the creature's gaze. On a failure, he suffers an automatic wound. There is no limit to the number of characters the basilisk can affect each round with this deadly power.
- * Poison Blood: A basilisk's blood is highly toxic. When it receives a wound, every adjacent creature must make an Agility roll as a free action to avoid the deadly spray. Those who fail take a wound.
- * Size -2: Basilisks measure only 12" in length.
- * Small: Opponents must subtract -2 from attack rolls against the basilisk due to its small size.

- * Toxic Trail: Where a basilisk walks, plants wither and stones crack. Attempts to Track a basilisk are made at +4.
- * Weakness (weasel urine): Spraying a basilisk with weasel urine forces it to make a Vigor roll or die instantly.

DRENNUS' BOWMAN

Drennus was an earth elementalist with a fascination for living wood. During his youth he discovered a volume on golem manufacturing, an art outlawed after the Golem Uprising. In secret, he studied the tome, eventually coming to the woods to build a working golem. Alas, he died in a cave-in (see the **Waterfall** above) before his work could be completed.

This construct takes the form of a life-sized wooden statue of a bowman. He is "dressed" in a dark green tunic and hose, and has a sword carved at his belt. He holds a longbow in his right hand and has an oversized quiver strapped to his back. He stands on a wooden plinth about six inches deep, and his limbs are obviously jointed. These can be moved even if he is not magically activated.

The golem is attached to a wooden plinth, which prevents it from walking. As dumb as others of its ilk and programmed to follow orders literally, the golem has stood here for many years, shooting at anyone who is not its master and who wanders within range of its bow.

The golem's construction allows it to rotate a full circle at the waist, though its legs never change facing. Without warning, the statue draws an arrow from the quiver and fires. The quiver still holds 24 arrows.

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

Skills: Notice d12, Shooting d12

Pace: —; Parry: 6; Toughness: 9 (2)

Gear: Long bow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: Str+d6) **Special Abilities:**

- * Armor +2: Solid wood.
- * Construct: +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * Deadly Archer: The bowman has the Improved Double Shot, Marksman, and Mighty Shot Edges.
- * Fearless: Golems are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * Improved Arcane Resistance: +4 Armor against damage-causing arcane powers and +4 on Trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- * Slam: Str+d4.
- * **Susceptibility (Fire):** Takes +4 damage from fire, but not from heat.















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