PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS FREEFROSTS THE HEART OF WINTER

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This adventure is designed for a group of four Veteran characters, but can be run with more advanced or larger parties. It can be played as a standalone adventure, or as the third part of a quartet which began with *Shadow of Darkness* and *The Siege of Watchgap Fort*.

Most encounters are based on a number of antagonists per hero, and thus automatically allow for increased party size. Scaling for higher Ranks is easily handled. For each additional Rank the party is above Veteran, add one additional Extra of the most common sort to an encounter. For instance, if the text says the heroes face one cultist per hero, a Legendary party of four members would face six cultists. You might also want to add a second Wild Card frostborn priest of Thrym if the heroes are particularly powerful. As always, an adventure is designed to be fun for the players—it needs to be challenging for their characters, not suicidal.

The adventure takes place in mid Sowanmonan and is set in the Hearthlands. As the adventure unfolds, so the temperature will lower dramatically. As such, the GM should pay attention to the characters' winter clothing. See the *Savage Worlds* rulebook for the effects of cold weather and the *Hellfrost Player's Guide* for how the rules work in this setting.

A selection of pre-generated Novice characters can be found at our website, **www.tripleacegames.com**.

Treasure: Each cultist has mundane treasure worth 2d6 gs. Ice goblins carry just 1d6 gs.

PLOT BACKGROUND

Five centuries ago a terrible host of ice trolls, frost giants, ice goblins, Hellfrost dragons, and other foul creatures swept out of the north, ravaging everything in their path. Once through Hellfrost Pass, the northern hoard divided its forces. One force punched due south, into what is now Midmark. At the base of the Tower Hills the Saxa drew up their battle lines, aided by their cousins in Sutmark, Ostmark, and Veermark. Here they stood, here they died, and here they won.

The engagement did not mark the beginning of the end of the Blizzard War, though it was a pivotal battle, for it halted the Hellfrost army's advance south and freed the Saxa to march north and join up with their embattled allies. Skalds sing of the mighty battle, of how the blood of the Saxa melted the ice and snow, of how heroes were made and broken. What they do not sing about is "The Heart of Winter."

Before the Blizzard War began, Thrym gave each of his generals a sliver of his frozen heart. Relics of truly awesome power, these fell devices were intended to shroud the Hearthlands in perpetual winter. Fortunately for the civilized races, few were ever employed, and those that saw use were quickly hunted down and smashed by the clerics of Kenaz and Sigel.

The army that strove to conquer Midmark carried a sliver of Thrym's heart, known as the Heart of Winter. After capturing the Tower Hills they excavated a great chamber far beneath the ground in which to house the artifact. From here, they hoped, it would cast a white shroud over the southern lands. Before it could be activated, the Saxa triumphed in battle. Unknown to the Saxa and forgotten by the defeated Hellfrost army, the Heart of Winter has lain undisturbed for almost five hundred years, dormant but still eager to fulfill its purpose.

Cultists of Thrym uncovered ancient documents in the far north referring to the Heart of Winter. Through diligent research, torture, and fortune they identified its location and secretly began digging. Less than twenty miles from the nearest settlements, the enemies of civilization labored long and hard. After many long months, they located their prize.

With the artifact uncovered, they prayed to Thrym for guidance. The winter god responded. Through visions, he ordered a frost giant jarl to send a frost giant priest to complete the activation ceremony. As the adventure be-

gins, the terrible ritual is mere hours from completion. It may be spring in the Hearthlands, but winter is coming.

THE VILLAGE OF TORTON

The village of Torton ("Thunor's Enclosure") sits on the road between Hamna and the Crystalflow Confederacy town of Scathmoor. Before the Anari stamped their dominance on what is now Midmark, Torton was known as Aithton ("Aith's Enclosure"), after the local jarl who founded the site. It began as a small farming stead of little importance.

Although the citizens were farmers, they honored Thunor over Eostre, praying to him for ample rain and warm winds during the summer months, and beseeched him to hold off the winter storms until after harvest. To show their dedication, they carved a huge stylized storm dragon into the chalk hill overlooking their village. Worship at the dragon, which also served as Thunor's temple, attracted a powerful air spirit, which took up residence within the carving. Offerings were made to appease it, but the citizens did not treat it as a god. In their eyes, it was simply a messenger of Thunor.

After Midmark was conquered, the Anari developed Scathmoor as a trading center. Under the rule of Anari overlords, Aithton (the name was retained) grew in prosperity thanks to its location along the new trade road.

Then, during the Blizzard War, Aithton was leveled. Time obliterated what little ruins remained. Grass covered the chalk dragon, erasing it from the physical landscape. The passage of years (and the Saxa'a burning desire to overthrow the Anari) erased its existence from memory. Scant folk tales spoke of a white dragon on a hillside, but no one could tell of its exact location.

The lands now known as Midmark finally threw off the yoke of Anari repression in 119 IR. The Saxa once again began to reclaim the land. Around 135 IR, a priest of Thunor (some legends say he was a paladin) travelling from Hamna to Scathmoor witnessed lightning dancing across the hillside. Oral traditions claim the lightning took the form of a miniature storm dragon, though there is no corroborating written testimony. Taking it as a sign from his deity, the priest began scraping away the grass and soil. Whether fate or divine intervention guided his hands is not recorded, but the priest uncovered part of the dragon's wings—carved centuries ago in the shape of lightning bolts.

Within the month the priest had revealed the entire dragon. He immediately declared it a miraculous sign from Thunor and consecrated the site as a temple. Thunor's pleasure at this act was quickly made evident, for the valley beneath the hill enjoyed warm summers thanks to the south wind and ample rainfall. The uncovering of the dragon and consecration of the site also reawakened the dormant air spirit, which once again became revered by the valley's inhabitants.

Within a few years, a tiny farming community had grown up around the dragon. Named Torton, in honor of Thunor, the village slowly grew in size and prosper-

THE CHALK DRAGON

Known to the locals as Stormbrother, the air spirit inhabiting the dragon is fully sentient. A devoted minion of Thunor, it bestows certain benefits upon those who appease it and worship Thunor. Although it plays no significant part in this adventure, its powers are detailed below for possible future use and to give GMs an example for creating their own guardian spirits.

* Stormbrother hears every sound in the valley it watches over (Notice d12 + Wild Die if listening for specific noises). This extends from hilltop to hilltop across the valley (about half a mile), and a mile in either direction along the valley floor. It has no interest in the petty politics and intrigues of mortals, though it is not beyond eavesdropping just to pass the time.

* Stormbrother alerts the villagers to impending trouble by communicating with the village priest using an innate power similar to *voice on the wind*.

* Stormbrother can bestow *fly* on mortals. However, it only does this on holy days to Thunor, thus allowing the villagers to take to the air and worship Thunor.

* It can cast *bolt* (lightning), *knockdown* (strong wind), and *whirlwind* when called upon by the village's priest of Thunor.

These spells are cast with a d12 arcane die and Wild Die, suffer no range modifiers, and can affect targets anywhere within 500 yards and line of sight of the chalk dragon's eye. However, power comes at a price. A terrible storm sweeps through the region a few days after the spirit's help is requested, a reminder that Thunor is both benevolent and cruel, and should never be taken for granted.

ity as the years passed by and trade routes reopened. The formation of the Crystalflow Confederacy, and the increased traffic along the trade road linking distant Ostmark to the rest of Rassilon, was a major boost to Torton's economy. And so, for the better part of four centuries, the villagers have worshipped Thunor and enjoyed favorable seasons.

Torton is unusual in that it is not protected by a palisade or ditch. The air spirit watches over the valley and its inhabitants, and Torton's sizeable militia (and the fury of its clerics) is an added deterrent to raiders. Torton is currently home to 358 inhabitants (including those at the outlying farms).



The adventure assumes the heroes are travelling through Midmark, one of the major Saxa realms of Ras-

silon. The GM is free to transpose the adventure to any realm, altering names as necessary, but ideally the region should have Thunor as one of its major deities. The party's reasons for being on the open road are left to the GM to work into his current campaign.

The endless rolling bills covered in beather and gorse are becoming monotonous. For the last few days, the only signs of life bave been berds of goats and sheep, evidence of steads somewhere in the landscape, but now, something else bas caught your eye. Up ahead, above the Tower Hills, small, dark objects are circling and wheeling in the sky.

The objects are too distant to be discerned clearly without the aid of magic. Use of *farsight* reveals the objects are predominantly kites fluttering high in the wind.



However, darting among them are several flying people. Some wear robes of varying shades of blue, while others appear dressed as peasants. All are smiling widely and apparently shouting, though the spell does not allow the caster to discern their words and the flyers constant motion stymies attempts at lipreading. Without this spell, the party must reach their own conclusions as to the nature of the objects.

Assuming the objects arouse the party's interest and they move toward them, they eventually get close enough to identify the flying objects for what they are. A tall hill blocks the adventurers' view of who is flying the kites, though, forcing them to venture onward to discover their identity.

As you near the brow of the bill you hear a series of long whistles and musical notes drifting tune-

lessly on the wind. Stepping onto the crest, you cast your eyes down on a large village of thatched and wood buildings. Brightly colored banners and wind socks attached to long poles wave and dance in the steady breeze, which, this time of year, blows from the south, bringing warm air to the Heartblands and staving off the frigid, northerly wind. A windmill stands nearby, its vanes turning in steady motion.

Clustered in the center of the village are more long poles. Attached to the top are brass dragon beads with open maws. Blue banners flutter behind the beads, like the body of a great dragon gliding through the sky. Young children are rotating the poles, ensuring the dragon mouths are always facing into the wind. As the wind rises and falls, so the bronze beads produce different musical tones.

A large group of people are standing at the base of a steep bill, away from the bouses. Many of them are controlling the kites which swoop above the village. Nearby, children are giggling and laughing as an air elemental lifts them up and down and spins them around, though only a few feet off the ground.

Dominating the slope of the hill facing the village is a colossal chalk figure; a stylized dragon with lighting bolts for wings.

Elsewhere in the village there are obvious signs a market is taking

place. Brightly colored stalls are arranged in lines down the main street, villagers are roasting pigs or boars over hot coals, and a skald can be seen entertaining a small audience. By his sweeping gestures, whatever tale he retells has to do with the wind.

Any followers of Thunor immediately recognize what is taking place. Other heroes must make a Knowledge (Religion) roll to understand the events they are witnessing. The citizens are honoring Thunor, praying for warm winds and plentiful rain to benefit their crops during the short summer months. The kites are prayer kites, carrying messages to the god. The chalk carving is likely the local temple; the dragon a representation of a storm dragon, one of Thunor's major symbols.

FLY A KITE

Whether the party stands and watches or makes its way down the slope toward the village, one of the flyers swoops down. He comes to a halt a few yards ahead of them, still hovering in the air.

"Greetings, strangers," be calls. "Welcome to Torton. I am Unroch ap-Adalbert, Thunderson of Thunor. If you come in friendship then pray, join our celebrations. But be warned if deceit or violence is in your heart, for great Thunor, lord of the sky, watches down on our festivities." With that, be takes back to the sky, his blue robes fluttering loudly.

All Saxa heroes know Torton literally means "Thunor's enclosure" in the local Saxa dialect. In this case, it relates to the valley between the hill the heroes crossed and the one bearing the dragon figure.

On nearing the village, a comely young maiden of barely sixteen summers approaches the group, a cheerful grin on her freckled face. By her height she is Saxa, but her dark hair points to Anari blood. Clutched in her hands are a bundle of strings, to which are attached a dozen or more kites.

"Ignore Thunderson Unroch," she sighs. "He gave the caution about Thunor watching over us, right? Here," she says, pulling a kite string from her hand and offering it to you, "have a kite. Just write a prayer on it, come join the others, and launch it into the air. The wind will carry your words to Thunor."

The girl, Anbeth Wigmundsdohtor, refuses any offers of money for the kites. She hands one to any character who wants one. Then she leads them through the village toward the kite flyers. During the short trip she is happy to answer any questions the party may have. Likely questions and Anbeth's answers are detailed below.

Q: What is going on in the village?

THE HEART OF WINTER

A: "Summer is coming! Every year we bonor Thunor so be will send us warm winds and rain for the crops. We bold a market and invite our neighbors to use our temple."

Q: Shouldn't there be a storm?

A: "Usually, yes, but Unroch said the omens were good for this day, storm or no storm."

Q: Where is the temple?

A: "Over there—the chalk storm dragon. Thunor hates being confined, so we bonor him outside."

Q: How long does the festival last?

A: "Three days. One day for the south wind, one for the east, and one for the west. We don't bonor the north wind. Unroch says that empowers Thrym, not Thunor. This is the first day, so you've arrived in time to see the whole festival."

Q: What it is chalk dragon for?

A: "Tbat's really old. The skalds say it was carved before the Anari stole our lands and forced us into slavery. When our people returned to their ancestral lands, the dragon was lost beneath the turf. A priest of Thunor was walking through the valley when he saw lightning dancing across the bill. He dug down and uncovered part of the dragon's wings. After he uncovered the whole thing be bad it consecrated as a temple and founded the village. Thunderson Unroch claims the priest was one of bis ancestors, but no one takes that claim seriously.

"But it's not just a carving; a spirit lives in it. We call it Stormbrother. That's how we can fly." She gestures to the flyers high above. "We make offerings, and if the spirit is pleased it uses its powerful magic to lift us up on the winds. I've never done it, though. My father says I should be married with babies before I risk my neck."

Q: Who are your parents?

A: "Ab, you mean am I of mixed blood? Don't worry, I get that a lot from our rural neighbors. You'd think we still bated the Anari or something. My father is a Saxa farmer, Wigmund Aelfredsunu. My mother, Thunor guard her soul, was the daughter of an Anari merchant from Drakeport. Father met her at one of these festivals. Eventually her father and my father's father reached an agreement and allowed them to marry. She died of black lung when I was seven."

Q: Who runs the village?

A: "That depends on who you ask. Technically, it's Ridder Coenmund, but Thunderson Unroch likes to think he's in charge because he can talk to Stormbrother and he leads the militia. They get on well enough most of the time."

Q: A cleric of Thunor leads the militia?

A: "That's what I said. It goes back to the village's founding. From what I know of Thunor, he doesn't like tyrants. Not that Ridder Coenmund is a tyrant, but his not having control of the militia prevents him from being able to unjustly enforce his will on us. My father says it's a political balancing act—Coenmund can never obtain full control, and Unroch cannot pass laws. I guess they need each other for the village to run smoothly."

Q: Is there an inn?

A: "Aye, the Four Winds. People are always staying there, so it must be nice."

AIR SPELLS

All spells cast by clerics of Thunor, eir elementalists, or those which use an air trapping are cast at +2. This bonus won't last much longer, though. Any hero who wants to use fly to join the celebrations may do so. The locals cheer and clap as he takes to the skies. The kites are averaging forty feet above the ground, the flyers between thirty and one hundred feet. Ask the character how high he wants to fly in whole tens of feet.

THE DEAD WIND

Once the characters are ready they can release their kites into the air. Letting go of the string or having the kite fall to the ground is a bad omen. Having the strings ripped from your hands by the power of the wind is an especially good omen. Deal a card from the action deck to each hero who flies a prayer kite with a prayer inscribed. Heroes whose patron is Thunor get an extra card and pick the best, while Thundersons and Lightningsons draw two extra cards and pick the best.

A black deuce means the kite falls straight to the ground or the hero lets it slip through his fingers. The unfortunate hero immediately loses a benny. A Joker indicates the kite is whipped away by a sudden gust of wind. That hero earns a bonus benny immediately. He also gets an extra benny at the start of each session it takes to play through the adventure. This is an omen from Thunor, as the heroes soon learn.

Whether or not the characters launched kites, read the following text aloud:

A startled cry from above causes everyone present to look skyward. The flyers, every single one of them, are plummeting to the ground like stones, along with the kites and all the birds in the sky. The air elemental lifting the children vanishes, causing the youngsters to tumble to the ground. The windmill stops, the fluttering banners drop, and the dragon-head whistles cease. Even the clouds are frozen in the sky.

Important Note: From this point on, the following spells *automatically fail* when invoked: all spells cast by clerics of Thunor or eir elementalists, all spells which involve an air or wind trapping, and all spells which somehow involve the air and creatures of the air, regardless of trapping (such as *fly* and *storm*). Any spells matching these that are currently being maintained are automatically disrupted (no roll is allowed to avoid this occurrence). Other spells function as normal. Devotees of Thunor also lose the benefits of the Edge.

The caster doesn't risk the Siphoning if he's a mage air-related spells have absolutely no magical power in them. Similarly, clerics don't risk offending their deity because the prayers never reach them.

SAVING THE FALLERS

Excluding any heroes who took to the sky, there are six villagers airborne. The falling citizens hit the ground in three rounds. It's up to the heroes if they want to try to save them. Any character who used *fly* to join the aerial celebrations takes damage at the end of the third round based on how high they said they were flying.

Any reasonable attempt to save a faller should have a chance of working, but without time to prepare adequately and because the flyers are dropping in different places it is pretty much impossible for the heroes to catch them all.

Assuming none are saved, the injuries are two deaths, three Incapacitated with multiple fractures and internal bleeding (including Thunderson Unroch), and one with a bad knock on the head and extensive bruising. Any fallers the heroes stop from slamming into the ground reduce fatalities first, then those Incapacitated. So, if two are saved then no one dies. Healers and herbalists immediately tend to the injured. The characters may assist as well. (Several of the children suffer bruises and cuts, but nothing worse).

Thunderson Unroch: See page 25.
Falling Villagers (5): See page 26.

THERE'S NO AIR

Once the fallers are on the ground, safe or otherwise, the heroes should realize that the wind dropping naturally might have affected the kites, but not the flyers, who were all held aloft with divine magic, and certainly not the birds. Eerily, there isn't a breath of wind to be felt. The effect covers a 100 mile radius, centered near the village, though unless the heroes have some means of rapid communication with folk in other parts of Rassilon they won't know this. Each day, the effect increases in radius by ten miles.

Heroes who succeed at a Vigor roll realize their breathing is unduly labored, as if it is suddenly harder to draw in air. Those who fail assume they are momentarily out of breath following the panicked rescue of the flyers. Until the adventure concludes, any character dealt a deuce in combat as his first action card in a round, must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue from shortness of breath. This can lead to Incapacitation, but not Death. One level of Fatigue is recovered with five minutes rest.

A Healing roll at -2 or a Survival roll indicates most of the birds escaped their ordeal without injury. However, none of them can take to the air, despite furiously flapping their wings. Any thrown skyward simply drop back to the earth.

On a successful Survival roll, the characters deduce that the wind hasn't simply dropped—it has completely ceased to exist. The air is unnaturally still—fanning a

cloak or similar object produces no breeze. Furthermore, they know that without the warming southerly wind, the temperature is likely to drop sharply over the next few days. With the crops planted, too many frosts this early in the year would lead to famine come fall and winter.

Clerics of Thunor trying to invoke spells realize, to their horror, that all access to their deity has been severed. Likewise, eir elementalists cannot draw energy from the elemental realm.

A Knowledge (Arcana) roll allows the hero to know these events are beyond any known magic. *Dispel* affects but a single target, and neither that nor *negate arcana* would affect the birds, cause shortness of breath, or kill the wind.

Lanterns, candles, torches, campfires, and so on burn only languidly due to the lack of wind. Reduce the radius of non-magical light sources by half. Bullseye lanterns illuminate an area 1" wide and 5" long. Normal campfires raise the temperature by just one level in a Medium Burst Template, instead of the usual two levels in a Large Burst Template. Double the amount of firewood is required to reach the normal levels of heat.

Absolutely no amount of die rolling reveals the nature of the problems besetting the village—no event such as this has ever been recorded and thus there is nothing to compare it with. Don't correct the heroes if they come up with possible causes—supposition is all they have right now.

Hopefully the heroes are intrigued enough to stay around and investigate the situation.

COENMUND'S PLIGHT

The furor quickly dies down, leaving the villagers totally stunned. None can truly comprehend what has just happened and what it means for their village. Rumors begin to spread like wildfire. Thunderson Unroch, once he regains consciousness, descends rapidly into morose babbling—he is quickly led away to his house to recuperate.

Ridder Coenmund, the secular leader of the village, quickly orders the villagers back to work, promising them the festival will continue as soon as the wind rises again. Few look convinced that is going to be any time soon. The noble then leads the heroes to one side.

"Strangers," he says, "I am Ridder Coenmund Ragnarsunu, headman of the village. Strange things are afoot in the valley, as I am sure you have noticed. The wind has not only dropped, but the air is unearthly still. Even the birds cannot fly.

"I am a leader of men and deal in earthly matters. This is beyond my comprehension. Thunderson Unroch's physical wounds will soon be bealed, but I sense his mood will be ill and his mind disturbed. Until such time as be comes to terms with what bappened, he is dangerous—the

FARMING 101

Different crops are grown throughout the year in Rassilon, though cereals, such as wheat and barley, grow only through the short summer months. Other crops are defined as cool or warm.

Cool crops require a soil temperature of 45° F to germinate, and include beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, onions, peas, potatoes, radishes, spinach, sprouts, and turnips. Warm crops germinate at 55° F. These crops consist of beans, cantaloupe, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, sweet corn, and squashes. Cool crops can thus be found in the Hearthlands and Low Winterlands, while warm crops grow only in the Hearthlands.

villagers accept bis every word as truth, and we cannot afford bysteria or panic.

"So, I need men of sound mind unconnected with the village to help me discover what is happening.

On acceptance, Coenmund promises the characters 5,000 gold scields, to be divided between them. As an added incentive, if appropriate, he promises to put in a good word with Anbeth's father. Asked how he knows about any romantic interest, he smiles coyly and says, *"Words carry on the wind in a village this size."*

In addition, a successful end to the mission earns the party a number of favors with the village as a whole equal to the number of party members who began the quest. See the free download entitled **Favors** at **www. tripleacegames.com** for more information. Failure to save the crops, even if the giant was slain, earns the party half the number of favors (rounded down)—they tried, and that deserves some recognition.

Should the heroes refuse to help, Coenmund plays his trump card. It's not something he wants to do, but circumstances leave him little choice.

"You are guests in our village, welcomed as friends. Governed by the laws of bospitality, you are bonor-bound to aid your bost in times of crisis. That time bas come, and I, as ruler of the village, invoke the ancient law and bereby order you to assist us!"

A second refusal is a serious breech of hospitality. As well as the usual penalties (see the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*), Coenmund spreads word of the adventurers' snub up and down the trade road. A -10 Glory penalty is immediately applied to every hero. Should the heroes see sense and accept, Coenmund offers no reward. The laws of hospitality place the burden of unrewarded aid on the guests.

RUMORS AND OPINIONS

None of the villagers know the truth behind recent events, but they all have opinions. Draw a card from the action deck and consult the chart below whenever the heroes speak to a villager. Don't show the card to the players. The heroes may encounter key villagers during their investigation. Most have specific information to pass on, but some also gossip. A (T) notation indicates the opinion or rumor is true, whereas (F) means it is false. Note that many rumors are part true and part false. In these instances the (T) or (F) are shown after the relevant text. Duplicated rumors/opinions can be reused-just change the wording but keep the intent. For instance, instead of the gods taking folk in rumor 7, perhaps the villager blames orcs or wolves. True information can also be reworded, but the basic facts should still be presented to the characters. Naturally, the players should never be told which rumors are true and which are false-they must sort that out for themselves.

Card Rumor/Opinion

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"I blame Thunderson Unroch. He's always forbade us from honoring the north wind. (T) I reckon Thunor has finally taken offense and this is divine punishment." (F) "My father always said we Saxa had gone soft. We need to go back to the days of human sacrifice. That always appeased the gods when they were angry." (F) "There's a lot of strange folk in town, begging your pardon. Sauson the innkeeper said one of them keeps wandering off into the Tower Hills for days on end." (T) "I don't know why everyone is so worried. Why has no one spoken to the Norn priestess about this?"

"Bad shrooms! That herbalist has poisoned us with some of those hallucinogenic mushrooms. None of this is real. You mark my words." (F)

"I heard from a friend that folk from other villages have gone missing. (T) He reckoned they were all devout folk, taken by the gods before the end of days comes." (F) "Can't say as I can harbor a guess at the cause, but I know it means trouble. (T, but irrelevant) If this keeps up, I reckon we'll all suffocate in a few more days." (F) "I reckon Edwin had it right. He said he felt something wrong in the Tower Hills a few weeks back. And he should know, man's a fine hunter. Great instincts he has, great instincts." (T)



The heroes are now free to wander around the village and talk to folk as they see fit. Unless they do so, they won't gather enough clues to solve the mystery and deal with the perpetrators. Give the heroes a copy of the village map—there are no secret places. Note that not every location is important to the plot—the owner's occupation is listed for reference. The GM has free reign to create names for incidental villagers. Although predominantly Saxa, there are Anari in the village and a handful of engros.

Locales of specific interest are detailed below. When dealing with the general populace, the GM should draw a card, consult the Rumors and Opinions table, and roleplay the villager's passing on of information.

TIME CHECK

By the time the heroes are invited to investigate the mystery it is midday. Because the temperature drops as the adventure progresses, the GM needs to keep a rough track of time passing. Walking between locations in the village takes only a few minutes and need not be tallied. For ease, assume that talking to anyone takes an hour. Citizens don't just blurt out their rumor or opinion—there is the formality of having something to drink, routine small talk, and lesser options and grumbles before the actual information the person has to share is made available.

The sun sets at 8 o'clock in the evening and rises at 7 o'clock in the morning.

TEMPERATURE DROP

For the first day the temperature is normal for spring in the Hearthlands. On the first night, the temperature drops *two* levels. As day two dawns, frost covers the ground. The temperature is now equivalent to a Hearthland winter. It stays at this level until the heroes discover the cause of the dead wind. On the fourth morning after the adventure begins (day five) the frost has killed the village's hardy crops. While there is still time for some planting, the harvest will be poor this year. No snow falls within the affected area, as the clouds are stationary. However, thick frost coats every exposed surface.

Ideally, the party will spend one or two days in the village questioning the locals. They will then venture into the Tower Hills, taking an entire day to reach their destination (this could take longer, based on the party's Overland Pace). The next day is spent continuing the journey and defeating the villains. With any luck, they'll complete the adventure in time to save the crops.

FOUR WINDS INN

The area around the inn is dotted with tents. These

belong to the visiting merchants. One tent contains a shrine to Var, god of merchants, and is serving as a make-shift temple. No cleric is present—he left after blessing the shrine.

The Four Winds Inn is unusual in that it has four doors leading into the establishment, one facing each of the cardinal points. For reasons no one can fathom, the owner, Sauson ap-Burcan, keeps the south and north doors firmly bolted. When questioned about this, his answer is always the same—"*That's bow it's always been and bow it always will be.*"

There's no dark secret here. Sauson's father inherited the inn from his father, and he his father before him, and so on back for nigh on seven generations. The original builder, who wasn't actually a relative of the family, constructed four doors, one for each of the four winds. When Sauson's family took over the running, they bolted two of the doors simply because folk kept leaving them open. Over time this has been forgotten, and now it's just a family tradition.

Sauson lives with his wife, Irene, his son, Valeray, who runs the kitchen, and his twin daughters, Carelia and Edith, who help as serving maids. During busy times (like the festival), Sauson hires two locals, Dragan and Jules to help his daughters. Though all four are of similar age, Dragan and Jules keep their eyes off Sauson's daughters—they've been belted several times in the past for "--eying up what you can't afford."

The innkeeper greets his patrons with a friendly smile, but he's always alert for troublemakers. He keeps a large club (Str+d6) under the bar in case of emergencies. Patrons who dally with his daughters are liable to find a dose of purgative added to their beer or broth (he keeps several doses just for this eventuality). Irene, a talented singer, entertains guests with songs and poems, but only after 7 p.m. Carelia and Edith both love their father dearly, but they are now 16 years old, old enough in Saxa culture to marry and start a family of their own. Carelia is plain but outrageously flirtatious; whereas Edith is a stunning beauty (Charisma +4) but extremely shy.

During the day there are 4d6 patrons present. Men represent three-quarters of the crowd. At night, the number of patrons doubles, though the mix between sexes falls to roughly equal.

Characters looking for rooms can find space in the communal bar or they can hire the last remaining double room. Six guests are staying in the inn over the festival. Sauson, a notorious gossip, is happy to reveal what he knows about his guests, so long as the heroes are drinking. In addition to these facts, he also knows two rumors/opinions.

* "There's a skald staying in one of our private rooms. Goes by the name Olvir. Likeable enough fellow, and good at his job, but rather too fond of his own voice. Arrived yesterday for the festival, but spent the night entertaining Ridder Coenmund and Thunderson Unroch up at the lord's stead."

* "A couple from Hamna arrived early this morning. They're in one of the double rooms. I think their names

rumors and opinions cont.

10	"Thrym has killed Thunor. There'll be no
	wind save for Thrym's breath from now
	until the end of time. We should switch
NAME.	faiths, before it's too late." (F)
Jack	"Those old towers out in the hills contain
	more than just faded memories. (T) Some
	idiot has probably awakened a barrow
a card	dweller, and now it's cursed us." (F)
Queen	"I was speaking to Sauson the innkeeper
	this morning about nothing in particular.
	He said he had someone arrive this morn-
	ing who's planning on leaving tomorrow.
	(T) I find that a bit of a coincidence, don't
	you?" (F)
King	"Want to hear something funny, to lighten
	the mood? Oeric, he runs the local store,
10.000	bought in a batch of potions to help folk
	fly! Who needs them now, eh? He must be
	spitting feathers, the old miser." (T)
Ace	"Skalds say this entire area is bathed in
Lat of	the blood of Saxa who died in the Blizzard
- The	War (T, but irrelevant). We haven't hon-
44/	ored them properly. This trouble is being
11/2	caused by their angry ghosts." (F)
Joker	The GM may either draw two cards or
	invent one completely fictitious but plausi-
- Hell	ble rumor as a red herring.
Martin Contractor	

are Horsa and Liaze. Just married, they said, and visiting to get a blessing from Thunor. Strange, but I baven't seen them since the disturbance." (Horsa, a Saxa, and Liaze, an Anari, are indeed newly weds. That's the reason they haven't been seen. They are currently in their room).

* "There's an engro trader by the name of Odbert. He's over in that corner, smoking some pipeleaf with a few locals. Odbert comes by every few months, sells silverware, no questions asked, and goes on his way." (Odbert is a silversmith, but likes to maintain an air of mystery. He travels between Drakeport and Hamna regularly.)

* "A white-baired lassie booked a private room about a month back, now. We hardly see her. Always out and about in the Tower Hills she is, often for days at a time. She's one of them Lorekeepers, looking for hidden knowledge. Speaks Trader fluently, but with a strange accent. Says her name is Angarad. Very private, she is; only comes down for meals when she's in. Haven't seen her since breakfast this morning." (Angarad is actually a Hearth Knight on a mission. She is currently in her room. See below for details. If asked, Sauson says she has a gray and green cloak. He doesn't volunteer this information otherwise.)

* "Last of all we bave Aescric. Not sure what be does for a living. He arrived this morning and said be was

beading out tomorrow. He basn't left bis room since be arrived." (Aescric is a paladin of Freo. He carries an important message for the queen of Midmark, and has royal seals to prove it. He is headed for Nordmark.)

Save for Angarad, none of the guests are of importance to the adventure. As strangers, they haven't been here long enough to form an opinion or learn any rumors. They corroborate Sauson's version of them or set the record straight where the innkeeper erred, but have little else to add.

Olvir the Skald: See page 26.

Angarad Deocilunon: See page 26.

Aesric the Paladin: As villager (page 26) except he has Faith d8, Arcane Background (Miracles), Fleet Footed, and four spells of the GM's choice from his god's list.

Other Guests (3): Use villager stats (page 26).

THE WHITE LADY

Angarad returned to her room after the debacle at the festival to take notes and plot a course of action. She comes down for meals at breakfast (8 am, but already passed today), lunch (around noon), and dinner (6 pm). If the heroes have left instructions for someone to tell them when she enters the inn, Carelia finds the heroes. She demands a kiss from the hero with the highest Charisma or Glory before passing on the message. Her father soon learns of this and takes "preventative action" with the character's next drink or meal.

If the characters are present when she enters or leaves, have them make Notice rolls at -2. Seasoned warriors or clerics of Tiw receive a +2 bonus. With success, the hero can tell she doesn't walk like a scholar. It's hard to detect, but she keeps an eye on the patrons as she moves between tables. A raise reveals she is someone who has seen battle—her stance, her musculature, and her gaze are all indicative of a warrior.

Angarad is posing as a Lorekeeper. She has told the story so many times in recent months she is starting to believe it herself. Only magic, such as *detect lie*, can reveal the falsehood, and even then a raise is required (success reveals only that she *may* be lying). Questioned about her reasons for being in Torton for an extended period or her visits to the Tower Hills, she replies:

"Tm a Lorekeeper. The Tower Hills are littered with old ruins and very few have been thoroughly explored. I'm slowly searching them in the bopes of finding bidden chambers that may contain lost tomes. While I'm searching the local area it makes more sense to stay at the inn than go camping. Given the choice between a soft bed and bot food and the damp grass and dried rations, which would you take?"

Questioned on her combat skills, Angarad says simply that she was not always a Lorekeeper. She does not elaborate (no one else has detected her warrior traits, so she has no cover story planned). Angarad is actually a Hearth Knight on a secret mission. If pressed further as to why she is in the village, or if she comes to trust the heroes for aiding Torton, she reveals her story. See **The Hearth Knight** below for details. Otherwise, she sticks to her claim that she is a Lorekeeper.

If at any time the party announces its intentions to go exploring in the Tower Hills, Angarad approaches the heroes and volunteers to help. She tells her story about being a Lorekeeper in search of potential caches of lost knowledge, and claims there is safety in numbers. She is happy to prove her combat abilities in a mock duel if the heroes doubt her abilities. Parties who go without Angarad soon find her tailing them through the Tower Hills. With any luck, Angarad will end up accompanying the party (she has many useful talents). Create an Ally Sheet for her and give it to the players.

THE HEARTH KNIGHT

"All right, I'm not a Lorekeeper," she admits. "I'm a Sword Captain serving with the Hearth Knights in Hellfrost Keep. I've been sent here on a secret mission and I've been tracking a frost giant through the Marklands. Seeing one this far south is unbeard of, even more so with the weather warming, so I knew he had an agenda.

"I've stayed one step behind him for several months, watching to see where he ended up and for what purpose. I lost him in the Tower Hills, but I know he's still there. And now the winds in this valley suddenly die. I don't know how, but I'm sure his presence this close to Torton is connected to recent events. If I can find him, I might be able to put a stop to this and restore normality before the freezing temperatures ruin the crops. So, since our goals are likely connected, what say we join forces and head into the Tower Hills and hunt the giant down?"

Angarad accepts any offers of help, but admits she has no idea where to start looking. The Tower Hills contain dozens of old ruins, caves, and hidden valleys. She's checked all the locales within ten miles of the village, but hasn't turned up anything useful.

Previous Adventures: If any of the heroes fought in *The Siege of Watchgap Fort* then Angarad knows of them and can recount some of their deeds. She reveals the following information.

"There's a very strong chance the frost giant I've been trailing was sent here on the orders of the same giant whose forces besieged Watchgap Fort, and whose goblins and orcs were raiding the steads in southeast Heligioland."

Sword Captain Angarad Deocilunon: See page 26.

GENERAL STORE

Torton's general store is run by Oeric Pandsunu and his brawnier, mute assistant, Hlothere. A consummate businessman, Oeric's motto is, "You never know who'll come in next or what they'll want."

To that end, he keeps his store well-stocked. The only things he never sells are weapons (he has a deal with the local smith), anything to do with herbalism (another deal, this time with the herbalist), animals, and food (except for rations). Any other item with a V (Village) availability can be purchased (even pygmy mammoth leather barding) at 10% above the usual rate. T (Town) items with a value of 30 gs or less can be purchased at a 75% mark up (including the usual 50% increase detailed in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*).

He can order in C (City) availability items or buy them from passing merchants, though customers have to wait 2d4+2 days and pay three times the usual cost (again, including the standard markup).

He keeps a small stock of alchemical devices. Only the spell names are given here—the GM should add his own descriptions as he feels. Prices are per potion.

* 2 x aim (125 gs). He keeps these in stock for Edwin the hunter (see page 11) who is slowly losing his eyesight. He charges Edwin only his cost price and Edwin gives him game in return.

* 1 x confusion (250 gs): Oeric keeps this behind the counter, hidden from view. It is part of his store security, but he's the sort of man who'd sell his mother.

* 2 *x healing* (110 gs). Each cures a single wound taken within the "golden hour."

* 4 x voice on the wind (150 gs). Always handy for merchants who want to communicate with contacts in Scathmoor and alert them to their imminent arrival.

When the heroes enter the store, Oeric has a face like a thundercloud, while Hlothere is silently chuckling while stacking the shelves. Questioned on the reason for his sour face, Oeric dumps a dozen bottles on the table.

"Tm ruined!" be scowls, thumping the counter. "Ruined! Look, look!" He waves a bottle in your face, but his frantic motion makes it impossible to read the label. "I bought in two dozen flying potions and now they're totally useless! Var is going to note this in his ledger for sure! Ob, what an afterlife I'm doomed to endure!"

Oeric planned to sell the potions for 500 gs apiece to rich visitors. That's the standard 300 gs for a Veteran spell, plus a hefty increase because the items were going to be hot sellers. Oeric bought them for 300 gs each (his alchemist friend charged extra because he knew why Oeric wanted them). Oeric accepts any offer over 300 gs initially, though he does so only after bitterly complaining that he paid more for them. He will drop as low as 200 gs, but only if the heroes buy the lot. Oeric doesn't accept promissory notes—it's hard cash or nothing.

INN PRICES	
All costs are in silver scields.	
Food/Drink	Cost
Breakfast (porridge, cheese, bread)	- 1
Cheap meal (one course)	5
Good meal (two courses)	10
Excellent meal (three courses)	15
Anari brandy, per mug	9
Imported beer, 4-pint pitcher	-6
Local beer, 4-pint pitcher	2
Mead, per mug	2
Local wine, 1-pint pitcher*	3
Accommodation/Extras	Cost
Space in stables	1
Bar common room	2
Shared room (2-person)	4
Private room	8
Bath (no soap)	2
Laundry service (per person)	1
Stabling, with oats, per horse	5
* Carrot, elderflower, nettle, potato,	X A A
strawberry, or turnip	XIIIII

A lot of people pass through Oeric's shop and he picks up gossip. He knows two random rumors/opinions.

Oeric: Use Villager stats.

[©] Hlothere: Use Villager stats, but add Brawny and Strength d10.

HUNTER

Edwin Bjornsunu is a hunter by trade. He keeps the village shop stocked with rabbit, game birds, venison, and wild boar. The skins he usually sells on, via Oeric the storekeeper (see page 11). Edwin had a strange encounter in the Tower Hills a few weeks ago. While he's told some of the story, he has never revealed the whole truth.

Edwin is hospitable when the heroes call on him. He offers them soup and bread, and a mug of weak ale. Before they can ask about what he saw, Edwin starts talking.

"Save your breath; I know why you're bere." Edwin takes a seat by the fire, spreading the embers with a poker before adding another log. "It was a few weeks ago now, maybe a month. I was in the Tower Hills bunting rabbits as normal when a fog rose. Nothing unusual about that this time of year, what with the warm wind bitting the cold air.

"Anyways, I got lost trying to find my way bome. First time ever, would you believe? Next things I know is it's cold, really cold. There was snow and everything, but only in the air, not on the ground.

I peered into the gloom and...and...look, I know it sounds stupid, but I swear on Ullr's bowstring I saw a giant pair of legs walking past. Well, I turned and ran as fast as these tired legs would carry me. Fog lifted after a mile or so, and that was the end of that day's bunting."

Edwin can't recall any details about the legs, except he only came up to the knee. Edwin's poor eyesight (see below) combined with the fright of seeing the legs has fogged his memory—the hunter was actually on his knees at the time the legs passed by. The pair of enormous legs belonged to the frost giant sent here to oversee the final stages of the ritual. He used *fog cloud* to hide his passage through the hills.

A character who succeeds in a Notice roll at -2 realizes Edwin is badly shortsighted. Questioned about this, the hunter admits his eyesight isn't what it used to be. He claims to be taking special medicine, but is evasive as to its nature. Only if the characters threaten to reveal his condition to the village does he reveal the nature of his medicine—magic potions containing the *aim* spell. He buys them from Oeric, the only man who knows the truth.

Characteristic Edwin Bjornsunu: Treat as a villager (page 26) but add Shooting d6, Stealth d6, the Woodsman Edge, and Bad Eyes Hindrance.

HERBALIST

The herbalist is an aged engro by the name of Elisa. Widowed a decade ago, and her children long since left home, she has devoted her remaining years to the study and practice of herbalism. Outside her tiny cottage, which is bedecked with flowers (until the first freeze comes), is a small herb garden.

Elisa invites the characters into her cramped home and offers them freshly-baked chicken and mushroom pies. If questioned about the mushrooms, she looks puzzled, and says they are from her garden. If asked about hallucinogenic mushrooms, she laughs and says:

"Ob, I do pick them occasionally, but only for personal use. I'd never poison a customer, either deliberately or in error. Thunderson Unroch sometimes buys a bag to help his meditations, but I keep my source a closely guarded secret. I thought someone bad stumbled across them just last week. Gave me the fright of my life, it did, and that isn't good at my age.

"I was out...well, gathering musbrooms, when I saw someone walking by. At first, I thought perhaps some village lad had followed me in order to learn where they grow, but it wasn't any local. Not sure who it was, they were wearing a gray and green cloak you see, due to the rain. Judging by their direction, they were heading back to the village, anyway. Likely a traveler passing through on the scenic route." She has the following herbal brews for sale: 2 x anti-inflammatory, 4 x antibistamine, 10 x breakages (blunt), 3 x numbing, 2 x restorative, 2 x soporific, and 3 x stimulant I. These are available for sale for 35 gs a dose. For ease, assume all are good for another four days. She has dried herbs (not for sale) enough to brew any herbal remedy. For those listed above, she has as many doses as she has completed remedies. For other herbs she has just a single dose.

© Elisa: Treat as a villager (page 26) but add Knowledge (Alchemy) d8 and the Hedge Magic Edge. Add the engro racial abilities.

MARKET

Traders have come from far and wide for the three-day festival. In order to accommodate them, Ridder Coenmund has ordered stalls be erected along the length of the main street. Brightly colored canvases cover wooden tables stacked high with wares. The morning's events have placed a damper on the festive mood. Few citizens are willing to spend money at the market with an uncertain future ahead. The main customers are inhabitants of neighboring villages, who have yet to discover their lands too have been affected.

Any items with V availability can be found here. Goods with a T availability have a 50% chance of being available. Roll once per item—failure indicates no traders are selling that particular piece of equipment. C availability items have a 10% chance of being found. There are no alchemical devices or Special availability items for sale. Prices follow the rules in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*.

Wandering around the market, the characters hear two opinions/rumors.

NORN PRIESTESS

The Norn priestess, Sexburh Eadbaldsdohtor, lives in a small cottage on the outskirts of town. She's a constructive member of the local community, being responsible for brewing most of the wine sold in the inn, but chooses to live close to her orchards and small vegetable patch.

Contrary to the stereotypical image of Norn priestesses being aged crones, Sexburh is in her early thirties, though neither attractive nor ugly. She's also very welcoming of strangers. Her favorite trick is to invite guests into her modest cottage with the words, *"I have soup ready. I knew you were coming."* She actually keeps a pot of soup on the simmer all day, but people seem to expect mysterious things of those who honor the Norns.

Sexburh does not listen to gossip and she refrains from spreading rumors. However, she does offer a simple reading of the rune stones, a popular divination method among the Saxa. She consents to use her Disciple Edge, but does not offer to read the party's fortunes.

Sexburb sits cross-legged on the floor and pulls a small leather pouch from her belt. She holds it above her head, murmurs a prayer, shakes the pouch, and then tips the contents onto the floor. Slowly she leans forward, her eyes darting between the rune-marked stones. "Find the child of winter who is not," she says quietly after minutes of silence. "Then you will know the way." She begins to gather up the stones, but stops. "Wait, there is more. Winter must be slain from its summit." She pauses momentarily. "That is it. There is no more to be seen."

Sexburh can reveal no more. She does not offer an interpretation of the reading—those who seek the Norns' wisdom must unravel their own threads in life.

Sexburh Eadbaldsdohtor: Use the villager stats (page 26), but add Arcane Background (Miracles), Faith d8, Knowledge (Craft: Winemaking) d10, and the Disciple of the Norns Edge. She knows four spells of the GM's choice off her god's list.

STORMBROTHER

The air spirit does not respond to any offerings or prayers, nor can Unroch communicate with it. If asked, Unroch admits he can sense its presence, but it is greatly diminished and languid. The magic affecting the region has caused the spirit to enter a state of deep torpor. Without the wind, it cannot use any of its powers.

THUNDERSON UNROCH

Unroch suffered several broken bones and a crisis of faith when he fell. Healers (possibly the heroes) mended most of his breakages, but his mind is still unhinged and his flesh several shades of black and blue. In a state of total despondency, Unroch answers questions, but has absolutely no interest in helping to solve the mystery. No die roll can snap him out of his despair (see **Event #1** below).

Unroch does not answer any knocks at his door. However, the door is not bolted and prevents no obstacle to characters who want to step inside. The priest is lying on his bed, staring at the ceiling. His holy symbol, a silver storm dragon head, lies discarded on his bedroom floor. Because Unroch is sullen, he has no prepared narrative for the heroes. Instead, they must delve for answers by asking the right questions.

The GM should ignore questions not covered below or, at best, provide vague answers. Unroch is completely uninterested in anything, and should be role-played in a deadpan, monotonous voice.

- Q: Can you tell us what happened?
- A: "Thunor has deserted us. He has stripped me of my powers and taken away our protection against the north wind."
- Q: Why don't you allow the north wind to be honored?
- A: "No man of sense would ask that question. The north wind is Thrym's wind. It deserves no worship."
- Q: We think we know what happened. Will you help us?
- A: "There is no point. Thunor is gone. We are doomed."

THE HEART OF WINTER

- Q: Have you tried communicating with Stormbrother?
- A: "He still lives, but be does not answer me. He is Thunor's, and Thunor bas gone."
- Q: There are other gods. Couldn't you switch faiths? (someone might ask)
- A: "Such beresy. Is it any wonder the world is imperiled with such irreverence?"



The GM should use the following events during the heroes' investigations in the village. They can be run in any order. Each has brief notes as to where the scene occurs, but the *when* is left to the GM.

#1: UNROCH'S MOMENT OF MADNESS

Thunderson Unroch's despair at losing his connection to his beloved god has driven him into a deep, black pit of hopelessness. Feeling he has nothing left to lose, Unroch climbs to the very top of the windmill. His booming voice carries across the village.

"Thunor!" Unroch roars, his deep voice echoing off the bills. "Thunor! Hear me! I have served you faithfully my whole life! Thunor, when I jump from this lofty perch I shall die unless you catch me. Is this what you want? Is this my life's purpose? Send me a sign, oh lord of thunder!"

Within moments the villagers begin rushing to the base of the windmill. Some citizens beseech Unroch to come down and end his foolishness. Others encourage him to jump, convinced the lack of wind is a test of their faith. Most simply stand silent, gazing up at Unroch, their thoughts private. Within a few minutes Coenmund arrives to investigate the disturbance.

"That," be says, lifting bis chin to indicate Unroch, "is a man suffering a deep crisis of faith. All the signs indicate Thunor won't catch bim, not today at least. What I do not know," be frowns, "is whether trying to save him is the right course of action. Any man who challenges the gods to answer his prayers is asking for trouble. Still, if be jumps and dies, it will only add to the villagers' grief and sense of foreboding."

Talking Unroch down requires a Persuasion roll at -4. Bonuses should be awarded for good role-playing, such as cautioning Unroch against making demands of Thunor, reminding him of his duty to the villagers, and such like. This takes 1d2 hours of talking back and forth. A success causes Unroch to see sense. He safely descends the windmill, though remains sullen and withdrawn. On a raise, Unroch turns his crisis into a positive, believing

Thunor is testing him and that, if he shows resilience and keeps strong faith, all will be better soon. He goes from depression into mania.

Failure doesn't mean Unroch jumps. Rather, he prevaricates, glancing nervously skyward and then at the ground. A second roll Persuasion is allowed, this time at -2 (and another 1d2 hours). Unroch tests his god on a critical failure of the first Persuasion roll or any failure on the second attempt to talk him down.

The roof of the windmill is 75 feet above the valley floor. Unroch suffers 8d6 damage for hitting the ground. Remember, his Disciple of Thunor Edge is now functioning, so he takes the rolled damage. Precautions such as stretching out a large blanket or sheet can be used to help break Unroch's fall. Attempts to stand beneath Unroch and catch him result in both Unroch *and* his would-be savior suffering 6d6 damage.

Once Unroch is down, the villagers trudge back to work in silence, each wondering what the future holds.

Thunderson Unroch: See page 25.

#2: KILL THE SKALD

Sooner or later, the characters will enter Torton's sole inn. They might be lodging there or searching for a specific individual. As they draw near, read the following text aloud.

The door to the inn crashes open with a loud bang. A clay drinking mug sails through the air, narrowly missing the lanky man ducking out through the door. Without looking up be starts to run. Moments later a large group of villagers, redfaced and murderous looks in their eyes, come charging from the inn. Many are holding farming implements in an aggressive manner.

The tall man is Olvir the skald. Unless the heroes have already encountered him they don't know his identity. He has no intention of stopping for a chat just now. As the villagers pour out from the inn, one of them grabs the nearest character by the arm. *"He did it!" the man shouts, pointing after the fleeing form. "He made the winds die!"*

Olvir, a follower of the Unknowable One, had a little too much to drink. Pestered by the locals to sing a heartlifting song to ease their sullen mood, Olvir's tongue moved before his alcohol-sodden brain could engage. Though not a cleric, he tries to obey the Unknowable One's tenets, and he taunted the villagers. *"Wouldn't it be funny," he slurred, "if all this was a trick by the Unknowable One. I mean, you lot are constantly relying on Thunor to survive. Maybe you need to learn to stand on your own two feet and take responsibility for what happens to your crops."*

Drunk or not, Olvir crossed the line from a taunt into what the similarly drunken villagers saw as an open admission of guilt. Anger overrode common sense, for Olvir is a skald and thus cannot also be a priest of the Trickster. The bard might have been able to defuse the situation, but before he could gather his thoughts someone threw a mug of ale at him. The crowd turned ugly and reached for their farming tools, intent on taking justice into their own hands.

Hopefully the characters realize the villagers intend to skewer Olvir and decide to put a stop to it. Guilty or not, the man is entitled to a trial. Assuming the heroes wish to intervene, run this scene as a chase.

The Range Increment is 5". Olvir and the heroes act independently and thus draw their own action cards. The villagers act as a mob, sharing one action card and using a Group Agility roll. Olvir starts three Range Increments ahead of the mob, which starts two Range Increments ahead of the heroes.

In order to try and calm the mob, a hero must interpose himself between Olvir and the villagers and succeed in a Persuasion roll at -4. A bonus may be applied if a good speech is role-played. Only one Persuasion roll may be made per round, though any adventurers in the right place can assist through a Cooperative roll. With success, the chase is put on hold and the mob becomes Neutral—they don't lower their weapons, but they aren't prepared to tackle the well-armed heroes just yet. A failure means the mob turns on the heroes. The chase ends and a regular melee begins.

Should the mob and Olvir end up on the same Range Increment, the skald suffers 2d6 damage per round from a flurry of fists and awkwardly aimed blows with farming instruments. No Fighting roll is required.

If the mob is calmed, Ridder Coenmund arrives on the scene with his two huscarls. He immediately demands to know what is going on. The villagers voice their grievance with Olvir. Coenmund then turns to the characters and asks for their side of the story.

Should a melee take place, run it as normal for three rounds. The characters, while endangered by the peasants, should have the sense to avoid a blood bath—these are angry, scared yokels, not bloodthirsty orcs or bandits. Coenmund and his huscarls arrive at the end of round three, after all other actions are taken. The nobleman bellows for the villagers to lower their weapons, which they do. Unless a hero takes a free swing, in which case he is assaulted by the militia, the fight is now over. Weregild claims may be made by both sides if lethal injuries were taken. Coenmund, once he assumes control of the situation, mitigates losses by cancelling like for like claims.

However the fight ends, Olvir stops running. He slinks back and uses the characters as a human shield.

Panting for breath and ruddy-faced, Olvir tells his side of the story. He swears he didn't admit to being responsible for the wind dying, though he admits he made unsuitable comments given the circumstances. He further swears he has nothing to do with what is happening and has no information to share. Coenmund scratches his beard for a moment.

"This man," Coenmund says, gesturing at Olvir, "is a guest in our village. It seems be spoke unwisely. Perbaps he did insult his hosts, but he meant no malice. Whatever is happening is beyond the work of one man. Shun him if you wish, but anyone who lays a hand on him will be punished to the fullest extent of the High King's laws. Do I make myself clear?" The villagers nod, but few look satisfied with how things have ended.

Coenmund then turns to you. "Thank you," be says without a smile. "My people are rightfully scared and angry. Dark times are upon us and scapegoats are being sought. You," be says to the skald, "are to stay at my stead until this is sorted. Do you bear me?" be calls to the villagers. "This man is now under my personal protection. If it is found be is involved somehow be will be punished, but by the law, not a mob.

"Go now," he gestures to the crowd, "get back to your jobs." Olvir smiles his thanks to you and follows Coenmund back to his stead.

- Ridder Coenmund: See page 25.
 Huscarls (2): See page 25.
- Olvir the Skald: See page 25.
- Villagers (20): See page 26.

#3: IT'S NOT JUST TORTON

Erland Kolsunu, a young lad from the neighboring village of Erkel's Stead, comes running into Torton. Exhausted, the red-faced youth collapses to his knees in front of the heroes.

"Sirs," be pants, clutching bis sides as be tries to draw breath, "terrible news! The winds...bave stopped in our village. Birds bave fallen...from the sky, the clouds do not move, and people are finding it bard...bard to breathe. Please sirs, you must inform the lord of this at once."

The youth's face turns from red to white in an instant when informed the dead winds also affect Torton. He stares blankly for a few moments and then rises to his feet.

"Thunor's bammer," be mutters quietly. "It's everywhere. All of Rassilon must be affected." He glances skyward. "We're all going to die, aren't we?" he asks. "Starvation and cold will kill us all as surely as a giant's axe. May the gods take pity on us."

Erland's village is one of those from where citizens have gone missing. The lad only mentions this if specifically asked.

"How did you know, sir? Yes, two men have vanished in the last month. Old Egbert vanished while

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off bunting in the Tower Hills. He was poor sighted, though, and the bills are treacherous. And last week Ranulf disappeared. He wasn't much older than me. Said be was going to explore one of the old towers. We all told him not to, what with the gbosts and all, but he went all the same. The men of our village looked for them both, but they never found any bodies. Wolves probably took them."

THE TOWER HILLS

Sooner or later the heroes are going to enter the Tower Hills. They might be following up Edwin the hunter's story of a giant pair of legs, searching there out of sheer desperation, or seeking the frost giant with Angarad.

Sandwiched by the Crystalflow and Lesser Crystalflow, the Tower Hills are the most northerly point of Midmark. The hills are named from the ancient watchtowers which stand on the highest peaks, a legacy of older times, when men were less trusting of their neighbors. Crumbling through neglect and weathered by the wind and rain, the towers are used today by hunters and trappers, not to mention bandits and orcs. One of these towers is now inhabited by the frost giant and the cult of Thrym.

The Tower Hills cover thousands of square miles and there are countless towers upon them in various states of disrepair. Heroes who venture out on the first day are not allowed to make any rolls to locate their tower—it is miles away from Torton and there are no clues indicating it is occupied.

Starting on day two, when the frost first forms, the presence of the frost giant and the magical artifact used to kill the wind begin to have an effect on the surrounding landscape. The party may make a Notice roll at -4 (only one roll is permitted, but it may be Cooperative). With success, they spy a distant hill whose peak is actually covered in thick ice. Strangely, higher peaks are frost-covered, but not to the same extent. On day three the Notice roll may be made with no penalty—the effect has spread.

REACHING THE TOWER

The tower being used by Thrym's cult lies 20 miles north of Torton. Because time is a factor in this adventure, use the Overland Pace table from the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*. The rugged terrain counts as difficult ground and there is no trail. Hence, the party moves a number of miles every two hours equal to half the Pace of the slowest party member. Due to the lack of wind there is no weather.

Assuming the slowest Pace is 5 (a dwarf or Obese hero), it takes the party 16 hours with no rest breaks. A lame hero (Pace 4) extends the journey to 20 hours. A hero with Pace 3 would require a total of 27 hours to make the journey. On the off chance every hero has Pace 6, the trip can be accomplished in a little over 13 hours.

However, these times assume the party is traveling during daylight. At night the lighting is Dim (minimal cloud cover and a bright moon), which slow the adventurers further.



The Tower Hills are dotted with numerous watchtowers and small outposts. Some were simple round towers used as lookout posts or housing signal beacons. Others, like this one, were more fortified. Built to a standard pattern, each had a square gatehouse tower protecting a walled courtyard. Within the courtyard stood wooden buildings—barracks for soldiers, workshops, and so on. Many were later expanded with subterranean levels, providing further protection for the occupants and additional storage space.

Most of the tower-forts were actually places of refuge rather than permanently garrisoned fortifications. When the surrounding lands were attacked, local citizens would rush here with their flocks.

POLITICAL DIVISIONS

Although the cult of Thrym found the Heart of Winter, their position has been superseded by Svadalfari, the frost giant priest, and his ice goblin warriors. The cult's leader, a frostborn priest of Thrym, despises the giant, but is currently helpless to do anything. The cultists and ice goblins have a frosty relationship (pardon the pun) and violence between the factions is only held at bay by mutual fear of Svadalfari and his huscarls.

Once the winter brought on by the relic begins to take hold properly, Svadalfari intends to purge the complex of the cultists. Although the frostborn priest doesn't realize this, he has sent word to other cultists to come to the tower. Once he has enough manpower, he intends to murder Svadalfari, slaughter the goblins, and take control of the relic.

With both sides seeking to remove the other, cooperation is virtually nonexistent beyond token gestures. Should the cultists ever enter combat alongside the goblins, Gang Up bonuses generated by the different factions should be *avoided* unless absolutely necessary. That is, if there is a goblin attacking one hero and none attacking another standing further away, the cultists always go for the second adventurer first.

The two factions wear different symbols as well, further emphasizing their fractured nature. The cultists wear the standard symbol of Thrym on their tunics and shields. The goblins, frostborn huscarls, and Svadalfari display the symbol of their frost giant jarl master—a gauntlet-clad hand clutching a coldfire rune of ice.

REORGANIZATION

If the heroes launch an abortive raid on the cult's

headquarters, Svadalfari, the frost giant priest, takes steps to bolster the defenses. All the cultists in the lower level (areas 1, 3, 4, and 5) are ordered to man the surface level, while the goblins are put on high alert. The frost giant hopes a second attack on the tower will cull some of the cultists, thus saving him the effort.

Parties which delay subsequent forays into the tower, perhaps because they need natural healing, find the defenders have been reinforced when they return. For each whole week the party doesn't make an attack on the tower, one-quarter of the ice goblin casualties (rounded down) are replenished. Cultist losses are not replenished. As an added "bonus," the GM may wish to have a few orcs or perhaps an ogre take up residence in their place. Svadalfari, his huscarls, and his pet polar bears are never replaced.

COMMON FEATURES

Doors, except where noted, are wooden and have Toughness 10. Unless otherwise stated all doors are unlocked. Locked doors are barred, and thus Lockpicking is of no use. Doors barred on the same side as the heroes require two actions to open—one to remove the bar and one to open the door.

The aura of the Heart of Winter has coated the floors in a thick layer of ice. All the floors in the old, Saxa section of the tower's dungeon are paved with flagstones. These count as smooth ice (see the *Hellfrost Player's Guide*). Floors in areas excavated by the cultists are less worked—they are treated as rough ice. Ice also covers the walls and ceilings.

Ceilings are 12 feet high, except for those in the frost giant's lair and the Heart of Winter's resting place. These have been extended to 20 feet to accommodate the priest.

Only chambers containing sentient beings are illuminated. Hateful of fire, the cultists use torches made of icewood. These provide illumination as per regular torches, but burn cold rather than hot and with a bluewhite flame. Due to their construction, each is good for four hours constant use.

Obstacles that fill part of a square, such as a table or small piles of rubble, impede movement. Treat movement through these squares as difficult ground. Where applicable, obstacles provide Cover.

The temperature in the dungeon level is equal to that in the outer Hellfrost (-4 Vigor penalty).

UPPER LEVEL

Read the following text when the party is an hour's walk from the tower.

On the next billtop stand the remains of a onceimposing gatebouse. Its walls remain erect after centuries of exposure to the elements, a testament to the builders' skill. A tall wall, broken in places, topped by battlements, extends from either side of the tower.

The tower-fort is a crumbling ruin of a bygone age. Old before the Blizzard War, it, like many others, was near destroyed when the Saxa engaged the Hellfrost army in battle. All that remains are partial walls, a section of the gatehouse, and the remnants of stone buildings (erected by the Hellfrost army) that once stood in the courtyard. The ice goblins have performed some rudimentary repairs, but not enough to attract unwanted attention.

The heroes do not have to approach from the front of the gatehouse. A few minutes extra walking allows the group to approach from any side they wish.

If the party does not make any attempts at a stealthy approach, the goblins on sentry duty automatically spot the characters in time to prepare their defenses. All the ice goblins crouch down behind the nearest wall, so as not to be seen by any anyone peering into the fort. They are counted as being on Hold.

A stealthy approach requires a single Cooperative Stealth roll from the party opposed by separate Notice rolls from each of the two sentries. Success allows the party to get within 10" of the walls unseen. Failure gives the goblins a chance to prepare an ambush as above. Depending on where the characters decide to enter the fort, the sentries may be allowed another Notice roll to detect them.

Heroes looking for signs of activity from the front of the fort must make a Notice roll at -6. Viewing from the side gives a -4 penalty. Seen from the rear, the characters can make Notice rolls with no modifier—the rear of the gatehouse has collapsed, allowing a clear view inside. Unless they are using *farsight*, Notice rolls to spot the sentries can only be made once the party is within 100 yards. A second roll may be made only when the party moves within 10 yards.

Terrain: Movement over rubble and across the low walls in the courtyard is treated as difficult ground. The low walls stand only two to three feet high, and provide just Light Cover (-1). The stairs in the gatehouse are very steep and count as difficult ground. The arrow slits provide Very Heavy Cover (-6).

The trapdoor to the lower complex is covered with a false layer of turf. Four man-hours of careful searching automatically reveal its location. It is not locked. The trapdoor opens upward, revealing a set of spiral stairs. These lead to area 1.

Monsters: Svadalfari has ordered a detachment of his ice goblin warriors to man the fort day and night. During the day, the goblins actually on watch duty count as active sentries. At night they are inactive.

One goblin is stationed on the first floor of the tower and another on the second floor. They divide their time between scanning the main approach to the gatehouse (by peering through the arrow slits) and standing at the rear of the floor and peering to the side and rear. The others are spread out around the interior.

(M) Cultists (2 per hero): See page 28.

Tactics: If alerted, the goblins string their bows and prepare to ambush the intruders. No attacks are made until the party is within the courtyard. Those outside fire from a crouching position behind the low walls. This



gives them Medium Cover (-2). The sentrices gain Light Cover (-1) due to the height advantage and some bits of rubble.

Once the attackers begin to spread out and engage in melee, those nearest drop their bows (free action), grab their spears (an action), and attack. The sentries remain in the tower and pepper the attackers with arrows. Only when the heroes enter the tower do they reach for their spears.

Under no circumstances do the goblins ever try to retreat through the trapdoor. Svadalfari made it very clear to them that they are to act as a band of goblin raiders using the fort as temporary refuge. In the event they must retreat, the arrogant giant commanded they flee into the hills, then sneak back later to catch any intruders still present, by surprise.

LOWER LEVEL

1) ENTRANCE

The trapdoor lifts to reveal a set of ice-covered, spiral, stone steps. From below, flickering bluewhite light can be seen.

Remember, from this point on the floors are covered in ice, the temperature is far lower, and corridors and unoccupied rooms are in total darkness.

Unless the party makes a Stealth roll to descend the stairs (don't prompt them), the sentries on duty below are alerted to the presence of someone entering the lower complex. If the characters speak loudly, have the guards make a Notice roll. With success, they know the intruders aren't ice goblins. One immediately rushes off to alert his comrades in area 3. By the time the characters enter the room he has already had one round of movement.

Terrain: The ice-covered steps count as difficult ground. A pair of coldfire torches hangs from wall sconces, bathing the room in flickering, blue-white light.

Monsters: Even with the ice goblins stationed upstairs, two cultists are on duty here at all times. They don't really need to be here—their priest ordered them to perform watch duty only to remind the goblins that they, the cult of Thrym, located the Heart of Winter.

Cultists (1 per 2 heroes): See page 28.

Tactics: Once the cultists realize the persons descending the stairs aren't their allies, one rushes off to alert his comrades in area 3. His companion remains behind in a desperate bid to delay the intruders' advance into the complex for as long as possible. Rather than attacking, he moves to block the exit and uses the Defend maneuver to thwart his enemies.

Continuation: The running sentry has boot spikes and so treats the floor as rough ice. Because he is running, he still risks slipping and falling. Once he reaches the cultists' barracks (see page 18) he bangs on the door and raises the alarm. This takes an action. The cultists in the barracks require one complete round to grab their weapons. See the notes on area 3 for more details.

2) EMPTY ROOM

The door to this chamber has not been opened since the ritual was completed. Although unbarred, it has frozen over. Opening it requires a Strength roll at -2.

Glittering frost sparkles from every surface in this empty chamber. Judging by the frozen door and the lack of marks on the floor, no one has entered this room recently.

The room has been set aside for barrack space for expected orc reinforcements. No one inhabiting the complex ever comes here. If the heroes find someway of making the door look like it hasn't been opened (the ice cracks away when the door is opened) then no will enter, even if the complex is being searched for intruders. It can thus serve as a temporary refuge, somewhere to perform healing, warm up with a small fire, or cast spells. Suitable spells for covering the door in ice could include *elemental manipulation (water)*, as well as pretty much any spell with a cold or ice trapping. Don't stymie the heroes unnecessarily—reward imaginative ideas.

3) CULTIST BARRACKS

Four wooden cots covered in mangy, frost-coated furs stand against each wall. A number of men, some in armor, turn to stare as you enter.

Originally barracked in the southern end of the complex, the cultists were forced to relocate by Svadalfari once the goblins arrived. They have now taken up residence as far away as possible from the ice goblins. With space at a premium, the cultists operate a "hot bed" system—as one cultist wakes to go on duty, another coming off watch takes his bed.

Terrain: The wooden cots are only a foot off the ground and thus provide no Cover. Tipping one onto its side requires a Strength roll as an action. It then provides Cover (Armor +2) to those behind it.

Monsters: Half the cultists, rounded down, are relaxing on their beds or sleeping. They are not wearing armor. The remaining cultists are armored and alert.

Cultists (2 + 1 per hero): See page 28.

Tactics: Cultists not in armor don't waste time donning it if the alarm is raised. Dozing cultists take no actions on the first round of combat other than waking and grabbing their weapons, which they keep close at hand.

Attacked in their barracks, the cultists, having no means of retreat, fight to the bitter end.

Should they come to the rescue of their comrades in the guard room (area 1), they plan to hold the crossroad rather than fight in the cramped guard chamber. Two cultists move 2" up the northern passage and two 2" down the southern one. The others wait 1" back from the crossroad along the eastern corridor. Those in the north and south should *not* be placed on the table-top—they cannot be seen as the heroes advance toward the crossroad. Their plan is to lure the attackers down the corridor toward the barracks, thus allowing those in the north and south to flank them (and gain a +2 Gang Up bonus).

4) KITCHEN

A wall of beat slams into you as the door opens. No frost coats the surfaces in bere. Standing before a roaring fire (above which hangs a blackened cauldron) are two men in armor. Their weapons hang from their belts.

The ice goblins may be willing to eat raw, frozen flesh, but the cultists require hot, cooked food to survive. Svadalfari considers this a sign of weakness and a lack of devotion to Thrym, but he allows the cultists to use fire to cook their meals. In his eyes, it is further proof the cult is unworthy to survive for much longer. The goblins mock the cultists for their "human" ways, but there is little the cultists can do except taunt them back about being the frost giant's lapdogs.

Terrain: The heat of the fire, which is constantly stoked, combined with the door being kept closed, prevents build up of frost. Away from the hearth, the temperature is equivalent to spring in the Hearthlands. There is no ice on the floor.

The space containing the fireplace counts as difficult ground. Any creature actually stepping into the flames takes 2d6 damage and has a chance of catching alight. A bundle of firewood is located next to the fire. There is enough to keep the fire blazing for another eight hours.

Tipping over the cauldron hanging above the fire requires a Strength roll as an action. With success the contents (rabbit stew) spill in a direction chosen by the character. The liquid fills an area 1" wide and 2" long. Treat squares covered by the stew as difficult ground.

Toppling a table to use as a makeshift barricade requires a Strength roll as an action. The tables provide +4 Armor when used in this manner. The cooks' winter clothing lies discarded on the table nearest the door.

Monsters: Two cultists are assigned to the kitchen to ensure a supply of cooked food is always available. The roaring fire combined with the clatter of pans, not to mention the closed door, blocks out all but the loudest noises of combat.

Cultists (2): See page 28.

Tactics: The cultists have their weapons hanging from their belts. It takes an action to ready them. They then attack with unbridled ferocity, knowing that it is very likely their comrades in the barracks are already dead and they are trapped in the kitchen.

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5) TEMPLE TO THRYM

Your exposed skin begins to freeze as a blast of unbelievably frigid air bits you like a solid wall. Thick ice coats the surfaces of this large chamber. Slim pillars rise to the roof, though their size seems decorative rather than structural. Flickering blue-white flames crackle and hiss from three rime-coated, iron braziers. A group of figures wrapped in beavy winter clothing stands before an icy altar, atop which sits a statuette of a rearing Hellfrost dragon.

Being loyal cultists, Thrym's human followers have erected a makeshift temple to their god in the largest room. Svadalfari considers their attempts pathetic, for in his eyes Thrym can be worshipped anywhere, but he allows the cultists to maintain what he considers their charade. He even gave them a stash of icewood to burn in the braziers, though his motives were not entirely selfless—Svadalfari hopes that the lower temperature will kill off a few of the more fanatical cultists, the ones who like to "prove" their devotion through constant prayer.

The priest of Thrym allows the ice goblins to use "his" temple, but not when he is conducting ceremonies for the cultists. Despite the bone-numbing cold, the priest spends as much time in here as his body can handle.

Terrain: The altar is a hastily constructed pile of stones topped with a roughly hewn slab. Like everything else in the room, it is covered in thick ice. The pillars are slim, more decorative than structural. They do not impede movement. Heroes gain Light Cover (-1) while standing behind a pillar.

The braziers contain burning icewood. The temperature in here is equivalent to the Hellfrost core at night (-6 Vigor modifier). The braziers can be tipped over with a Strength roll (as an action) in a direction of the character's choice. The contents spill out to fill at area 1" wide and 2" long. Any character standing in the path must make an Agility roll at -2 or suffer 2d6 damage and have a chance of catching fire. The damage is coldfire based.

Detecting the secret door requires an active search and a Notice roll at -2. Should the door be opened for any reason, it becomes clearly visible.

Monsters: Angered by Svadalfari's recent actions, the priest of Thrym and several cultists are in the temple plotting the giant's downfall. The priest stands before the altar facing the main entrance, while the cultists are arranged in a semi-circle before him.

See page 27.

Cultists (1 + 1 per hero): See page 28.

Tactics: The priest's first action is to cast *deflection* to ward off ranged attacks. On the next round, he invokes *entangle* in a Medium Burst Template, taking care not to catch any cultists in the area of effect (if possible). While the cultists hack at the intruders, the priest next invokes *smite* (using his Faith) on the battleaxe in his right hand.

If the party is in melee with him, he proceeds to use his battle axes. Otherwise, he takes the opportunity to invoke *armor* before engaging in melee. He'll use *dispel* as required against obvious spells, such as glowing *armor* and the like.

When he reaches two wounds, the priest switches to the Defend maneuver and tries to reach the secret door. He has used it several times, so knows where it is. Once inside, he bars the door and rushes for the chest and its *healing* potions.

The cultists are loyal to the priest. They willingly lay down their lives to defend him. If any get the chance to tip a brazier onto the adventurers, they will do so.

Treasure: Atop the altar is a quartz carving of a Hellfrost dragon. Although not especially valuable based on its material, the workmanship is exquisite. It is worth 200 gold scields but weights 10 pounds. The priest carries a small silver key (which opens the chest in area 7) and a large iron key (which opens the door to area 8).

6) CORRIDOR OF STATUES

Deep alcoves line this short corridor. Before each alcove is a short flight of descending stairs. At the far end of the passage is a door. Cracks in the ice indicate it has been opened recently.

The statues are covered in ice, preventing any detail beyond their humanoid form from being discerned. Chipping away the ice reveals stone images of ancient Saxa chieftains and warriors. The cultists have defaced each one by gouging crude images of Thyrm's holy symbol into them. None of the statues is magical, though experienced heroes may be expecting an ambush.

Terrain: The cult has not discovered the secret door hidden behind the statue, nor the one at the opposite end. Due to the icy coating on the walls, detecting either door requires an active search and a Notice roll at -2. The door behind the statue is activated by turning the statue's head to the right. The door at the far end is opened by pressing one of the stones at the base of the door. Both doors have handles on the inside, allowing those in the secret passage to get out.

Opening either door causes the ice coating the wall to fall away. This leaves a very visible outline. However, the door behind the statue is partially concealed. A passerby is allowed a Notice roll at -2 as a free action to spot it. The door opposite area 8 is automatically detected by any creature happening by.

7) PRIEST'S QUARTERS

A small cot covered in furs, a rickety table and a three-legged stool, and a small, wooden chest adorn this otherwise uninteresting room.

Terrain: The secret door is known to the priest. On

the temple side, the effect of the braziers quickly recoats the walls in ice, concealing its presence. When the priest has used the door, he casts *entangle* on it, covering it in a layer of ice. Due to the sub-freezing temperature in the complex, it quickly merges with the rest of the ice covered walls. However, a faint outline is still visible. Each hero entering the room is allowed a Notice roll at -2 as a free action to detect it. A deliberate search requires an unmodified Notice roll.

Trap: The chest is both locked and trapped. Picking the lock requires a Lockpicking roll at -1. It has Toughness 8. Most locks open counterclockwise. However, this chest can be opened either direction. Opening it clockwise disarms the trap inside, whereas turning the key or lockpick clockwise, or smashing the lock, activates a trap when the lid is lifted. Do not ask the characters which way they are turning the key or picks—unless they specifically say they are going against the norm they use the standard counterclockwise motion. Because the trap is fully contained within the chest, no Notice roll can be made to detect it.

A *glypb* inside the lid activates, casting *sphere of might (coldfire)* on the chest. Damage from the spell is d10+d8, and victims have a chance of catching fire. The chest is not affected by the spell, as the *sphere* forms around it.

Treasure: The chest is a minor relic. Anything placed inside is subjected to a permanent *environmental protection (cold)* spell. A character does not have to attune to this relic to use its power. The stout chest weighs 20 pounds and can hold 30 pounds worth of goods. Such a device is easily worth 2,000 gold scields to the Hearth Knights.

The chest contains a number of alchemical devices: three potions of *bealing* (each cures one wound), a salve of *environmental protection (cold)*, two sling stones (each a single 2d6 damage *bolt*), a scroll of *sanctuary* (takes the reader to the nearest temple of Thrym, which happens to be next door—the priest carries this with him when forced to leave the tower), and a slim birch wand containing *banisb*. Also inside are 827 gold scields worth of coins, gems, and jewelry.

s) storeroom

The door to this room is locked (with a key). The frostborn priest (area 5) has the only key.

Virtually every inch of this room is stacked floor to ceiling with tools, crates, barrels, baunches of frozen meat, and other assorted goods.

The cult stores its mundane equipment in here. In theory, the cultists are meant to give the ice goblins free access, but since Svadalfari activated the Heart of Winter, the frostborn priest has kept the door locked. Now, if the goblins want anything, including food, they must beg for permission.

Treasure: The storeroom is used to hold mundane

goods as well as foodstuffs. All the food is frozen solid, as are barrels of ale. There are enough provisions to last 300 man-days. The cult's miscellaneous goods amount to 60 icewood torches, 100 pounds of icewood, eight crowbars, 15 shovels, ten pickaxes, five hammers, a set of carpenter's tools, and eight coils of rope. The icewood torches and logs ignite when the Heart of Winter is destroyed (see page 23), destroying everything in the room.

Scattered among the provisions is the equipment taken from the villagers the cult captured. There are two long spears, three short spears, a bow with 20 arrows, a short sword, four daggers, one suit of leather armor, and two sets of furs. A leather pouch, discarded by the captors, contains 37 gold scields.

9) ICE GOBLIN BARRACKS

A jumble of tattered blankets and furs, interspersed with small bones and scraps of frozen meat, cover much of the floor. Small blue-skinned creatures lie or sit on the bedding.

When Svadalfari arrived at the site, he immediately took a dislike to the human cultists. He sent two of his huscarls into the Thunor Range with orders to bring back ice goblin warriors. Fearful of offending a frost giant priest, the local tribes quickly mustered a small force. At first, the goblins lorded it over the human cultists, for Svadalfari treated them much better (not that he was particularly kind to them).

Recently though, the situation has changed— Svadalfari has sealed himself near the Heart of Winter with a handful of goblins. The frost giant has begun feeding goblins who offend him to his pets, and without his presence the cultists are growing more belligerent in their dealings with the goblins.

The goblins have four key duties—watch over the tower for signs of approaching trouble, patrol and forage in the surrounding hills, watch over the Heart of Winter, and keep an eye on the human cultists.

Monsters: Half the goblins, rounded down, are asleep. They require one complete round to awaken and prepare for battle. The other half is already awake and alert.

(M) Ice Goblin Warrior (2 per hero): See page 28.

Tactics: The goblins favor swarm tactics, surrounding one foe and stabbing him repeatedly. They also try to maneuver to garner Gang Up bonuses, though they won't endanger themselves in the process by running past enemies in their path. Given half a chance they break for the door in the vain hope of alerting the cultists to their plight.

10) **CELLS**

This long, rectangular room has several doors

made of rusting iron bars along the walls. There is a faint smell of bodily waste and a tangible air of fear.

Formerly used by the tower's builders to hold captives, the cells are now used by the cult. Only one cell is occupied, though unless the characters call out friendly greetings or poke around inside, the captive remains hidden.

Terrain: The locks are frozen solid. Unless heated first, all Lockpicking attempts are made at -4. However, the intense cold has made the metal brittle. The locks have Toughness 6.

The secret door at the back of the westernmost cell was installed by the ice goblins. It opens into a short tunnel, which eventually emerges close to Svadalfari's lair. The frost giant ordered this constructed as an escape route. Heavy beams allow either door to be sealed from the inside. The secret door in the cell is barred (Toughness 14), but the one at the other end is not. Detecting the door requires only a glance into the cell and a Notice roll—the goblins are not masterful engineers.

Monsters: Huddled in the cell marked X on the map is a lone engro by the name of Bert Pennywhistle. He lies beneath a pile of blankets and furs. A tinkerer by trade, he was taking a shortcut through the Tower Hills from Yorvik to Scathmoor when he was captured. Svadalfari is keeping him alive only so he can throw him to his polar bears (area 11) when they tire of goblin flesh.

Bert Pennydrake: Use the villager stats (page 26) but add the engro racial traits.

Continuation: Bert tells his rescuers there were four other captives in the cells when he was dragged in. He doesn't know their names, but says there were three Saxa and a hearth elf. They were taken away a day or so ago (he's losing track of time) and he hasn't seen them since. He refuses to get involved in any combat. He promises to pay the heroes 100 gs if they free him. Of course, he doesn't have the money on him—but he can raise it through family and friends within a month. Despite the engros' reputation for dishonesty, Bert is good to his word.

11) SLEEPING BEARS

The door to this chamber has not been opened since the ritual was completed. Although not barred, it has frozen over. Opening it requires a Strength roll at -2. Success or failure immediately alerts the polar bears inside. A crude symbol has been carved onto the door—a gauntlet-clad hand clutching a coldfire rune of ice. Heroes who have played through *Shadow of Darkness* and/or *The Siege of Watchgap Fort* recognize this immediately.

The door crashes inward revealing an ice-covered, rectangular chamber. A crude hole has been gouged in the opposite wall. Some sort of tunnel leads away to the west. To your left is a low wall

of stone blocks and rubble. In the center of the room is a large circle of pink ice. ROAAAR!

Locating the Heart of Winter required the cultists to tunnel through part of the old Saxa complex. While much of the rubble was removed, many large stones were left behind. Svadalfari ordered the goblins to move some of these into the newly hewn passage and to use others to create a crude wall near the door—a "nest" for his beloved pets (see Monsters and Tactics below).

Terrain: The rubble piles in the east slope down from the wall. The separate pile is stacked three feet high. Crossing it counts as difficult ground. This provides Cover.

Stashed behind the rubble wall are the cracked bones of three goblins. The bears eat their meal in the center of the floor, hence the pink ice. They have not been fed today.

Monsters: Now that the Heart of Winter is complete, Svadalfari has forbidden the cultists from viewing it. His huscarls are loyal unto death and the goblins live in terror of him, but the cultists are an unknown element. The frost giant knows the civilized races are manipulative and power hungry and, despite his magic, any one of them could slip a knife into his throat while he slept.

To ensure the cultists stay where they belong, Svadalfari has ordered two polar bears, his companions Gullintani ("Golden-teeth") and Vindsvalr ("Wind-chill"), to watch over this room. They have orders to attack any non-goblins or huscarls (they know the latter by sight and smell) on sight. Both are a little cranky at being kept indoors, but Svadalfari ensures they receive a fresh goblin each day as a meal.

Vindsvalr is resting partway down the corridor running to the Heart of Winter. Gullintani is lightly dozing in the southeast corner, behind the pile of rubble.

Due to their loyalty to Svadalfari, *beast friend* spells work slightly different on the polar bears. They are allowed a Spirit roll to resist. This is opposed by the caster's arcane skill roll.

Polar Bears (2): See page 28.

Tactics: Alerted to any intruders, Gullintani immediately rears up and crashes through the low wall, while Vindsvalr charges down the corridor toward the intruders. Check for Surprise. Both bears attempt to swipe at their foes and take advantage of any "bear hugs" by savaging their captive mercilessly.

12) HUSCARLS' BARRACKS

Blankets and furs lie scattered around the floor. Wooden bowls hold the frozen remnants of a recent meal.



It is virtually impossible for the party to catch the huscarls in this chamber by Surprise. If not alerted by a disturbance in area 14, any attacks on their master in area 13 quickly rouses them from their light sleep.

Monsters: Svadalfari brought four huscarls with him from the Giant's Throne. Two are stationed outside the tunnel leading to his lair, while two are in the barracks in case their master has need of their services. After years of service to the giant, the huscarls have learned to sleep lightly.

• Frostborn Huscarls (2): See page 27.

Tactics: Used to discomfort, the huscarls sleep in their armor and keep their weapons close at hand. Being light sleepers, they rouse, fully ready for battle, as an action.

The huscarls have very clear tactics—slaughter everyone who isn't on their side. They work as a pair, using Gang Up bonuses to gain advantage over foes. If Svadalfari is in danger, they immediately target whoever looks like the most serious threat. Spellcasters invoking fire magic are always top of their list.

13) SVADALFARI'S LAIR

A large pile of furs and blankets has been arranged near the western wall. A wooden chest stands at the end of the bedding. Carved into the walls are strange glyphs.

On arriving at the cult's headquarters, Svadalfari ordered the goblins to create two additional chambers; one for him and one for his huscarls. Except for his huscarls, no one is permitted to enter without permission on penalty of death. Until the Heart of Winter's magic has had time to take full effect (a few more days by the giant's reckoning) he remains in his chambers. He has no idea what is happening elsewhere in the complex, nor does he particularly care.

Terrain: Covering the doorway are several heavy blankets. They are attached to the ceiling by long nails. Svadalfari has little need for creature comforts. His bed is a jumble of furs and blankets—arranged for comfort rather than warmth. The only other item of note is a wooden chest banded with iron straps.

The glyphs are Giant runes. Any one who can understand the language knows they are prayers to Thrym, oaths of loyalty to the winter god, and threats against the civilized races.

The secret door in the passage outside leads to the cells (area 10). Detecting the door, which is coated in ice, requires a Notice roll as an action. The door opens with little effort, though this does cause the ice to crack away from the seams. See area 10 for more information.

Monsters: This room is the private lair of Svadalfari. Unless the characters have silenced the guards in area 14 or snuck quietly through the secret door leading from area 10, it is very unlikely the party will catch the frost giant at home.

Svadalfari: See page 27.

Tactics: Should Svadalfari be caught in his lair, he begins by casting *armor*. He then tries to lure multiple foes into surrounding him, allowing him to cast *sphere of might* and catch his enemies in the spell's area of effect. Next he engages the nearest foes in melee, using his Improved Sweep, while bellowing for his minions in area 14 to come to his aid. Unless the characters have managed to silence them already without alerting the frost giant, the party is liable to find itself attacked on two fronts and all escape routes cut off.

Treasure: The chest is locked (Toughness 12, Lockpicking -2) but not trapped. Inside are 3,000 gold scields worth of small diamonds, a star metal battle axe (little more than a hatchet to the frost giant), and three potions of *healing* (each curing one wound).

14) THE HEART OF WINTER

The tunnel opens into a large chamber bathed in barsh, blue-white light. Standing in the center of the room, its top some six feet above the surface of the floor on which you stand, is a gigantic column of glowing white crystal, emblazoned with fell runes of glacial blue. Between the entrance and the crystal, the floor slopes away steeply in three tiers. Ice-covered steps descend the treacherous slopes to the lower levels. Stretching between the upper tier and the top of the crystal is a thin, ice-coated bridge, its span supported by wooden beams. It slopes gently uphill as it stretches across the chamber. At the very bottom, the crystal us surrounded by a pool of blue-white flame.

The cultists quickly located the top of the Heart of Winter. Through visions, Thrym ordered them to uncover the entire object, for only when it was fully exposed could it be activated. Early attempts were made to dig straight down, but the rock faces collapsed, burying several cultists. Eventually, the decision was taken to dig around the relic, creating a series of tiers to prevent further accidents. Svadalfari personally oversaw the final stages, including the construction of the bridge.

Terrain: The stairs are covered in smooth ice. Rough ice covers the rest of the three tiers. Downward movement between tiers except by the stairs counts as difficult ground. In addition, the hero must make an Agility roll (+2 for wearing boot spikes, -2 if he runs) or slip, fall, and slide to the next lowest tier. Upward movement requires a Climbing roll. Only one tier per round may be crossed unless the stairs are used.

The lowest level has been transformed into coldfire slush by the power of the awakened relic. Any hero entering the slush suffers 2d10 coldfire damage and has a chance of catching fire. The slush is knee-deep and counts as difficult ground.

The bridge is only a few feet across and is covered in thin ice. Any hero who falls or who is Shaken or wounded by a physical attack while on the bridge must

make an Agility roll (with the -4 penalty for smooth ice) or tumble off the bridge to the floor immediately below. For ease, falling onto the second tier down inflicts 2d6 damage and the third tier, 3d6 damage. Landing in the slush at the bottom of the pit causes just 2d6 falling damage, but the victim then takes damage from the coldfire. Svadalfari cannot cross the bridge.

Each 1" section of the bridge has Toughness 8. The supporting beams are each Toughness 12. Destroying a pair of beams automatically causes the bridge to collapse. The collapse extends halfway toward the next pair of supports.

The relic's glow, combined with the coldfire flickering in the pool, provides normal lighting conditions.

The Heart of Winter: The Heart of Winter is a multi-faceted pillar of clear crystal. It stands 24 feet high, measures 12 feet across, and blocks line of sight. Its flat top counts as smooth ice. Attempts to climb the sides require a Climbing roll at -4.

Supernaturally tough, the relic has Toughness 14, the Improved Arcane Resistance Edge, is immune to cold, coldfire, and ice attacks, and can sustain three wounds. It takes double damage from heat or fire attacks. However, magical glyphs protect it from *all* harm delivered against its side facings. Only the top of the column is unprotected. Because the pillar is higher than the top tier, ranged attacks cannot target the top.

The instant it takes a fourth wound, it shatters, releasing a wave of brilliant white coldfire, which roars through the lower level. Every creature in the lower level suffers 2d10 coldfire damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Monsters: Two of the frost giant's huscarls guard the tunnel entrance leading to their master's lair. A number of ice goblins are patrolling the tiers. Space these out around the circumference of the room and across all three tiers.

Svadalfari: See page 27.

See page 27.

[©] Ice Goblin Warriors (3 per hero): See page 28.

Tactics: Both the huscarls cast *smite* during the first round of combat. They then move toward the heroes at their Pace, bellowing at the top of their lungs to alert Svadalfari. If time allows, they cast *armor* as well. Otherwise, they engage the characters in melee.

The goblins are initially carrying their spears, so it takes an action to switch to their ranged weapons. Ice goblins within 9" of the characters attack using their thrusting spears, seeking Gang Up bonuses where possible. Those further away fire their bows (don't forget the Innocent Bystander rule).

Any disturbance alerts Svadalfari (assuming he is still alive) and the huscarls from area 12 enter. While the giant prepares for battle (see below), the huscarls rush to aid their comrades.

The frost giant spends the first round casting *armor* and moving his Pace toward the chamber. Once he en-

ters the cavern he casts *prolonged blast* (3d6 damage, Medium Burst Template) on the top of the Heart of Winter—he knows it won't damage the relic. In doing so, he inadvertently reveals the top surface must be important in some way (let the players work this out for themselves). Now Maintaining two spells, the frost giant priest tries to cast *entangle* on the largest group of heroes. He doesn't care if any of his own troops are caught in the spell. The giant then tries to enter melee, using his great axe to sweep aside his foes.

Should his Maintained spell be disrupted by any means, Svadalfari casts *prolonged burst* atop the relic again, and then casts *sphere of might* on himself. Again, he then begins hacking the heroes to death.

Svadalfari stops fighting to activate his *energy immunity* alchemical devices the round after he takes damage from a heat or fire spell. When wounded, he drinks a potion of *healing*.

Once he has taken two wounds (after using both potions), or if he sees player characters on the bridge, the frost giant switches tactics. He begins attacking the nearest bridge supports in an attempt to prevent the characters from reaching the Heart of Winter's unprotected top. The giant knows how important the Heart of Winter is to Thrym's plan for global conquest—he fights to the death.

Treasure: Atop the Heart of Winter are four skeletons, sacrificial victims to Thrym. The bones are those of the villagers who went missing. Their flesh was devoured by coldfire during the ritual to awaken the relic. Among the bones is a permanent relic, a stylized flame made of iron. This grants the wearer a +1 bonus to resist the effects of cold temperatures (but does nothing against damaging attacks). The cultists assumed this was a holy symbol of Kenaz, but never touched it. They allowed the victim to carry it to his death, seeing in his demise by coldfire a cruel irony. Svadalfari carries his magical great axe, *Hearth-Killer*.

🥘 AFTERMATH 🧶

Once the Heart of Winter is shattered, the winds begin to blow again. Magic is restored, the birds take to the air, Stormbrother awakens, and everyone can breathe normally. The temperature quickly rises back to normal levels. The jubilant citizens of Torton praise the heroes and hold a huge feast in their honor. Thunderson Unroch undertakes a month of severe penance for doubting Thunor, during which time he voluntarily refrains from using magic.

If the Heart of Winter hasn't been destroyed then it likely means the party is dead. Winter reigns over the Tower Hills and the surrounding lands, growing steadily worse each day. As the winter spreads so the winds die. The cult of Thrym reinforces its headquarters with renegade hrimwisards and frostborn, orcs, and ice goblins (and perhaps even ice trolls or frost giant warriors). Invigorated, the cult begins raiding the surrounding Hearthlands. Their activities threaten trade along the Crystalflow, which in turn affects Ostmark and Veermark. Ridding Midmark of the cult should be an adventure for Heroic Rank parties.



THUNDERSON UNROCH

Unroch is an Anari, descended from the ancient conquerors of Midmark. He openly claims his ancestors were benevolent to the Saxa they lorded over and insists several of his forefathers aided the Saxa in their revolt after the Blizzard War. He was born in Tingwall (in Vestmark), and came to Torton on pilgrimage as a young cleric. According to the priest, he was invited to stay by Stormbrother, who told him it was his destiny to serve Thunor at this sacred site. Whether that is true or not, Unroch has been here for over 20 years. He became high priest six years ago, when his predecessor died of old age.

Unroch is also head of the militia, a tradition which dates back to Torton's founding. Except when leading the militia, which is rarely, Unroch carries only his mace. He always wears his robes. His helmet is typical of those worn by Saxa warriors, having a detachable eyes and nose protector.

Unroch's Noble Edge does not bestow a title. It represents his position in the village as high priest of Thunor and head of the militia, as well as his obligations to serve the villagers.

Note that none of Unroch's spells function once the adventure proper begins. They are included for completeness.

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

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +2; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 7 (1) Hindrances: Loyal, Overconfident

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Command, Devotee of Thunor, Fanaticism, Fervor, Focus, Noble, Quick, Sweep

Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Saxa

Powers: *Beast friend* (whistles), *bolt* (lightning), *becalm* (sings to the wind), *deflection* (swirling winds), *fly* (accompanied by rustling robes), *leaping* (glides on wind), *summon elemental* (whistles), *voice on the wind* (whispers into the wind)

Gear: Blessed robes (+1), full helmet (+3), medium shield (+1 Parry), mace (Str+d6)

Alchemical Devices: *Arcane resistance, gift of battle* (Hold the Line), and *wbirlwind* (all worked into his holy symbol)

THE HEART OF WINTER



Ridder Coenmund, born the second son of the previous ridder, was expected to join the priesthood. Instead, he became a mercenary, honing his skills on the field of battle. He was forced back to Torton twenty-five years ago, after his father and older brother succumbed to plague that swept the region. With some degree of reluctance, Coenmund accepted his late father's title and settled down.

Now in his early fifties, Coenmund favors diplomacy over violence (though violence remains a valid option when words alone will not do). Married with two sons, both of whom are serving as mercenaries in the war against the orcs in Vestmark, Coenmund is beginning to feel his age. Slightly portly, a combination of his advancing years, lack of exercise, and a fondness for mead, Coenmund is starting to wonder whether the Norns' fate for him is to die in bed, rather than on the field of battle as he always hoped.

Coenmund only wears his armor, helm, and shield during times of attack.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +2; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 6/8(2)

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, First Strike, Noble, Shieldwall, Sweep

Gear: Chain hauberk (+2), full helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4)

Alchemical Devices: Silvered tooth (*charismatic aura*), golden armlet (contains *healing* (cast with a raise) and *warrior's gift* (Improved Frenzy))

HUSCARL

Ridder Coenmund, as befits his position, has two huscarls in his employ—Aelfneth and Ulfnir. Both live in his stead. In fact, they hardly ever leave his side. Protective and obedient, the villagers jokingly refer to them collectively as "Coenmund's hounds."

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 8 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal, Orders

Edges: Block, Shieldwall

Languages: Saxa, Trader

Gear: Chain shirt (+2), pot helm (+3), medium shield (+1 Parry), long sword (Str+d8), three short spears (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6, Reach 1), two throwing axes (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6).

Alchemical Devices: Each owns one half of a gold scield (*boost Vigor*; one die)

Olvir the skald

Olvir is a practitioner of song magic, but he isn't an adventurer. He uses his talent to entertain people, causing slight breezes, whispering words to an audience member, creating flickering shadows, and so on, to enhance his tales. A native of Hamna, capital of Midmark, Olvir is visiting Torton for the festival. Generally regarded as someone easy to get along with, his mouth has a habit of speaking before his brain engages. More than once Olvir has had to talk his way out of a situation caused by his big mouth.

Olvir's skaldic bonuses to Knowledge skills are included in the stats below for GM convenience.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Folklore) d8+1, Knowledge (History) d6+1, Knowledge (Riddles) d8+1, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Song Magic d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d4

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 **Hindrances:** Big Mouth

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Common Bond, Dodge, Fleet Footed

Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Saxa, Trader

Powers: Beast friend, boost/lower trait, charismatic aura, elemental manipulation (all), speak language, summon beast, voice on the wind, wilderness step. All his spells use song trappings.

Gear: Short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), dagger (Str+d4)

SWORD CAPTAIN ANGARAD DEOCILUNON

Sword Captain Angarad Deocilunon is a Hearth Knight out of Hellfrost Keep. Born to a Tuomi warlord of the Battlelands, Angarad become enamored with the ideals of the Hearth Knights, as told by the local bards. As soon as she was old enough, she trekked west, crossing thousands of miles of monster-infested lands. After checking her story, the Hearth Knights signed her up at once. Since then she has risen through the ranks of the Hearth Knights. She has entered the Hellfrost, but refuses to speak of what she witnessed. All she ever says is, "Sane men stay south of the Icewall."

Among her people she was known as Angarad the White due to her naturally shock-white hair, blue eyes, and pale skin, features often supposed by Tuomi to indicate frost giant blood somewhere in the ancestral line. Indeed, she bears all the physical traits of a frostborn, though she is of human stock. Still, her physical features cause her to hide her hair whenever among strangers. Among non-Hearth Knights she is distant and reclusive, traits which have not endeared her to the citizens of Torton.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Hrimwisardry d6, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Riding d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Taunt d8, Tracking d8 Charisma: +3; Pace: 6; Parry: 9; Toughness: 9 (2) Hindrances: Code of Honor, Heroic, Loyal, Orders Edges: Attractive, Block, Combat Reflexes, Command,

(Hearth Knights), Favored Foe (Frost Giants), Fervor, Frenzy, Hearth Knight, Improved Snow Walker, Level Headed, Nerves of Steel, Sweep, Woodsman Languages: Giant, Trader, Tuomi

Gear: Chain hauberk (+2), closed helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry), winter clothing, furs, two Norn charms.

Alchemical Devices: Scrap of fur (*environmental protection from cold*), crystal Hellfrost dragon head (*energy immunity from coldfire* cast with a success), small ruby (*beat mask*), two potions of *bealing* (each cures one wound), dried berry (*feast*—creates five pounds of food when planted).

VILLAGE MILITIA

While every male between 15 and 50 is a member of the militia and is called up in times of need, Torton maintains a permanent twenty-man garrison. Generally, five militiamen are on patrol in the village during the day and fifteen at night. Unlike most militias, Torton's permanent warriors are well-versed in the Saxa shield wall formation.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (one Craft) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

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

Hindrances: Loyal Edges: Shieldwall

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

Gear: Leather (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), axe (Str+d6). One-quarter carry a single throwing axe (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6) and one-quarter use bows (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6).

VILLAGER

Torton's inhabitants are mainly farmers, though there are a small number of crafters and merchants. Unless a citizen has a unique stat block, use this one. Individuals the GM wants to expand into more fleshed-out characters, such as Anbeth (if a hero decides for a romantic liaison), can have higher Traits or a few Edges and Hindrances. Anbeth, for example, might be Attractive. Don't forget to roll on the Ally Personalities table as well.

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

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

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

Edges: —

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

Gear: Farming implement (Str+d4 if one-handed or Str+d6 if two-handed). Militia duty: leather (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), dagger (Str+d4)

SVADALFARI, FROST GIANT PRIEST

Frost giants, also called hrimthursar (rime giants) or frost lords, are the most common and most powerful species of giant known. They live in high mountains, always above the snow line, or in the frozen reaches of the world. In these remote and frigid realms they construct vast stone forts, from where they rule over orcs and goblins as veritable gods. Their skin is glacial blue, their hair as white as snow, and their eyes as black as the darkest night.

A priest of Thrym, Svadalfari has journeyed from the Giant's Throne, a major frost giant domain, to oversee the final stages of Thrym's plans to freeze the Hearthlands. Dour, violent, hard-hearted, and fanatical, Svadalfari intends to let nothing stand in the way of his god's vision of the future.

Svadalfari lost his left eye a decade ago to a Hearth Knight's lance. The Knight paid the ultimate price, but Svadalfari still hates their organization. In combat, he singles out any Hearth Knights in the party for special attention.

Due to his size, the frost giant treats all 1" wide terrain as difficult ground.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Faith d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Notice d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: -4; Pace: 8; Parry: 5; Toughness: 14 (3)

Hindrances: Habit (Minor; kills underlings who fail him), Mean, One Eye, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Combat Reflexes, Concentration, Command, Devotee of Thrym, Improved Sweep, Level Headed, Snow Walker

Languages: Frosttongue, Giant, Orc, Trader

Gear: Plate corselet (+3), chain limb (+3), full helm (+3), magic great axe (Str+d10, -1 Parry, AP 1, carried in one hand, +1 to Fighting and damage rolls against fyr elementalists and clerics of Kenaz or Sigel).

Alchemical Devices: Two potions of *healing* (each cures one wound), charm of *energy immunity* from fire (cast with a success).

Special Abilities:

• **Devotee of Thrym:** Frost giant devotees draw cold from their own aura. They have a minimum bonus of +2 to Faith rolls, but use a higher bonus only when the ambient temperature permits. Frost giant priests know the following spells: *armor* (icy skin), *bolt* (coldfire), *entangle* (freezes foe), *prolonged blast* (coldfire), *sphere of might* (coldfire), *storm* (blizzard), *stun* (blast of frigid air).

- * **Icy Aura:** Frost giants radiate deadly cold. At the end of movement, all adjacent foes suffer 2d6 damage.
- * **Infravision:** Halve darkness penalties against heatproducing targets.
- * Large: Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls against frost giants, due to their size.
- * **Resistance (Cold):** Immune to background cold. Half damage from cold, coldfire, and ice attacks.
- * Sacrificial Lambs: Svadalfari doesn't give a damn about his lackeys. If an opponent strikes the giant with a successful melee attack, the priest shoves one of his adjacent Extras in the way to take the blow. This is a free action. The damage is dealt against the minion, instead. He can do this once per round, and must decide to use it before damage is rolled.
- * Size +5: Frost giants are over 18' tall.
- * Susceptibility (Fire): Takes +4 damage from heat or fire.

FROSTBORN HUSCARL

The frostborn huscarls are Svadalfari's fanatical bodyguards.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Hrimwisardry d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: -6; Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 8 (2)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Heat Lethargy, Loyal, Orders, Outsider

Edges: Block, Frigid Form, Improved Snow Walker, Winter Soul

Languages: Frosttongue, Giant, Trader

Powers: *armor* (icy skin), *environmental protection* (against cold only), *smite* (icicles grow from hands or a held weapon), *speed* (ice-shod feet)

Gear: Chain shirt (+2), pot helm (+3), medium shield (+1 Parry), battle axe (Str+d8), two throwing axes (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6), winter clothing, furs. **Special Abilities:**

Fanatics: The huscarls automatically go berserk (as the Edge) if they witness Svadalfari take a wound.



The priest was instrumental in discovering the Heart of Winter. He truly believed he had been chosen by Thrym to lead the Hearthlands into eternal winter, and expected to conduct the ceremony to awaken the relic. Much to his annoyance he found himself subservient to Svadalfari. To add insult to injury, he is now barred from seeing the Heart of Winter. Given time, the priest might have staged a rebellion against the frost giant and his minions.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Faith d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8,

Hrimwisardry d6, Notice d6

Charisma: -6; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 8 (2)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Heat Lethargy, Loyal, Outsider, Overconfident, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Command, Devotee of Thrym, Frenzy, Frigid Form, Improved Snow Walker, Two-Fisted, Winter Soul

Languages: Frosttongue, Giant, Saxa, Trader

Miraculous Powers: *beast friend*, *bolt* (coldfire), *de-flection* (snow flurry), *dispel*, *entangle* (victim freezes), *fear* (vision of Hellfrost dragon), *smite* (coldfire swathed weapon)

Hrimwisardry Powers: *armor* (icy skin), *environmental protection* (against cold only), *smite* (icicles grow from hands or a held weapon), *speed* (ice-shod feet) **Gear:** Chain shirt (+2), two battle axes (Str+d8).

CULTIST

Were Thrym ever get to get his way, the world would be completely covered in ice and snow. Although this would likely mean the end of the civilized races, Thrym has cultists among these races. Most are insane, driven mad by the Hellfrost wind or encounters with Hellfrost beasts. A large number are frostborn. They have Hrimwisardry d8 and the frostborn racial abilities.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

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

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Warm Blooded

Languages: Anari or Saxa, Trader

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), mace, short sword, or axe (Str+d6), boot spikes (Str+d4), winter clothing

ICE GOBLIN WARRIOR

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

Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d10, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 5; Parry: 5; Toughness: 4

Gear: Short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6).

Special Abilities:

- * Improved Snow Walker: Treat ice and snow as normal terrain.
- * **Infravision:** Goblins halve penalties for dark lighting against living targets (round down).
- * Size -1: Goblins stand 3-4' tall.
- * **Warm Blooded:** +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effect of cold.

POLAR BEAR

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d8, Tracking d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (1)

Special Abilities:

- * Armor +1: Thick fur and fat.
- * **Bear Hug:** Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned his foe and attacks at +2 until the foe is freed. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" on his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- * Claws: Str+d6.
- * **Resistance (Cold):** Immune to background cold. Half damage from cold and ice attacks.
- * Size +2: These creatures stand up to 9' tall and weigh over 1200 pounds each.
- * **Snow Walker:** Treats rough ice as normal terrain, smooth ice as rough ice, and every inch of movement in snow as 1.5" instead of 2".

Real Providence		The second	Air Elemental				Ice Goblin Warrior		Cultist of Thrym (Axe)
Ŕ	Â	ħ	Bert Pennywhistle (Engro Prisoner)		Ŧ	*	Ice Goblin Warrior		Cultist of Thrym (Shortsword)
			Elisa, Engro Herbalist	14 A	The second secon		Goblin Warrior		Cultist of Thrym (Shortsword)
		t	Odbert, Engro Merchant			İ	Citizen		Sword Captain Angarad Deocilunon, Hearth Knight
			Frostborn Huscarl				Citizen		Edwin Bjornsunu, Hunter
			Frostborn Huscarl				Cultist of Thrym (Mace)		Angarad Deocilinon, Lorekeeper
			Frostborn Priest of Thrym				Cultist of Thrym (Mace)		Aescric, Paladin of Freo
			Ice Goblin Warrior				Cultist of Thrym (Axe)		Sexburh Eadbaldsdohtor, Priestess of the Norns



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		Thunderson Unroch ap-Adalbert			Village Militia (Axeman)
		Ridder Coenmund Ragnarsunu			Village Militia (Axeman)
		Olvir the Skald		Ŕ	Village Militia (Archer)
	Å	Aelfneth, Village Huscarl		*	Village Militia (Archer)
		Ulfnir, Village Huscarl		Ť	Village Militia (Axe Thrower)
		Village Militia (Spearman)		X	Village Militia (Axe Thrower)
		Village Militia (Spearman)			Ansbeth Wigmundsdohtor















Polar Bear (Vindsvalr / "Wind-Chill")









The Death of Summer Looms!

Summer draws near, and the village of Torton is preparing for its annual festival in honor of Thunor. It is a time of celebration and happiness, and the heroes are welcome guests. But hidden away from the warmth, a creature of terrible cold plots and plans the destruction of the world. Through the awesome power of the winter god, Thrym, the servant of evil plans to bring about the Fimbulvintr. Should it succeed, the Hearthlands will be punged into perpetual winter.

The cry goes out for heroes! Are the characters ready to face their greatest threat? Is their destiny to destroy the Heart of Winter or die trying?

Containing a mix of social interaction and combat, this adventure can be run standalone or as the third part of the Saga of the Frost Giants.

The Heart of Winter is a fantasy adventure for the unique Hellfrost setting for the award-winning *Savage Worlds RPG* system.



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