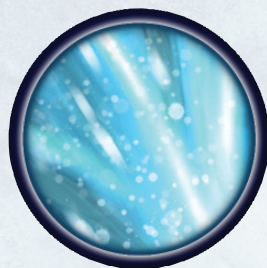


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HELLFROST

THE MOUTH OF THE FROTHING BEAR





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THE MOUTH OF THE FROTHING BEAR



● BACKGROUND ●

Deep within a cave system in the nearby hills lies a thermal spring, a site sacred to Kenaz, the god of fire. The hot waters well up through a crack in the earth, then flow through the caves as a narrow river, eventually tumbling from the darkness onto the surface of a frozen lake. The reaction of the hot water smashing onto the ice produces constant hissing, and a shroud of fog that extends for several miles. The cavern's sole entrance takes its name from an unusual shape, which resembles a bear's open maw.

Recently, a band of Vendahls, cannibal marauders devoted to Ursarix, the bear god, settled here. Inreda, the resident cleric of Kenaz who watched over the spring, was taken prisoner, and the fell Vendahl began using the Mouth as base for their raids. Ideally, the Mouth should be placed on the banks of the Frostwater Lake, but any lake, big river, or frozen coast is suitable.

Note: Unless otherwise stated, visibility in the caverns is Pitch Black (–4).

● ADVENTURE HOOK ●

Villagers who have suffered at the hands of the Vendahl ask the heroes to investigate in exchange for a reward of the GM's choice. Alternatively, a relative of the party is kidnapped during the Vendahls' last raid. As a third option, if there is a cleric of Kenaz in the group, he has a vision prompting him to investigate the Mouth.

● LOCATIONS ●

1. DEADLY CLIMB

Terrain: The 50' high cliff appears near vertical. A successful Notice roll at –4 reveals a narrow, cleverly

concealed path winding up the rock face. Otherwise, the only option is to climb. This requires a Climbing roll at –2. Failure causes the character to slip, suffering 2d6 damage. A critical failure inflicts 4d6 damage.

Due to the dense fog, the visibility is Dark (–2).

2. BEAR MOUTH

Two Vendahl warriors are on guard just inside the cave entrance. Unless the characters make excessive noise, the crash of the waterfall conceals their approach. Treat the warriors as inactive sentries.

Terrain: The guards have a single torch, which burns with a pale light. Lighting is Dim (–1).

Monsters: Two Vendahls guards stand here. They have bows (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 2d6) and a large signal horn carved from an aurochs' horn.

● **Vendahl Warriors (2):** See page 5.

Tactics: The Vendahl are quick to investigate noises coming from below. Both cautiously approach and peer over the edge, their bows strung and ready for use. If intruders are detected, they each unleash one arrow before signaling an alarm. Should the horn be blown, the dwellers of the **Hunters' Place** (Area 7) rush here in 2d4 rounds.

3. HOT RIVER

The river is hot, but not enough to be too dangerous to dive into it. Draw a card from the Action Deck every time the party enters the long, winding tunnel. If it is a face card, they stumble across a lone Vendahl moving between locations.

4. DANGEROUS ICE GROTTO

Terrain: This great room is submerged to a depth of 3 feet with water bubbling up from secondary springs. The water is frozen but, due to the near hot river, the ice isn't very solid. Treat it as Thin Ice. Small rocks protrude from

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the water, allowing explorers to safely reach the other side of the room. These can be spotted with a Notice roll at -2.

Monsters: Any loud noise, including breaking the ice, awakens a swarm of bats. They flock down from the ceiling the round after the noise is generated.

Ⓜ **Swarm of Bats (1):** See page 5.

5. INREDA'S PLACE

This pleasant looking cavern was the home of Inreda, the resident cleric who tends the spring. The Vendahls haven't bothered exploring the area, and have yet to discover this room. Over the fireplace hangs an iron holy symbol of Kenaz. Concealed in a makeshift closet is a pair of iron bracers with a stylized flame engraved on them.

The bracers are an alchemical device storing a *prolonged blast* spell. The spell has a fire trapping.

6. WELL TO BELOW

This cavern is blocked by a huge stone. It can be moved away with a Strength (-6) roll. The well inside is very deep. At the GM's discretion, it can lead deeper into the earth— into the largely unexplored land known as Ertha's Realm.

7. HUNTERS' PLACE

This room is home to several Vendahl warriors and their pet wolves.



Terrain: Hanging from the ceiling are a number of carcasses, two of which are human.

Monsters: Unless alerted to the party's approach by the guards at the entrance or excessive noise, a small group of Vendahl is present when the characters enter. They are busy cleaning and sharpening their weapons, and are thus already armed.

Ⓜ **Vendahl Warriors (1 per hero):** See page 5.

Ⓜ **Wolves (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 6.

8. DRY CAVERN

Terrain: The air in the cavern is hot (70° F) and dry. Graffiti adorns the walls, though it mainly comprises stylized images. Heroes with Kenaz as their patron can make Common Knowledge rolls to recognize these as prayers, albeit ones dating back centuries, if not millennia. Worshipers of other gods must use Knowledge (Religion).

There is a narrow passage in the wall, but it is concealed from rocks. A Notice roll is required to spot it. The passage in the wall is so thin that only an Engro or a character with the Small Hindrance can use it.

Treasure: Besta, the Vendahl shaman, uses this place to dry herbs. Several batches are lying on the warm rocks. There are two doses each of berserker and numbing, herbs and a single stimulant II herb. The stimulant herbs are designed for canine, not human consumption. Using the herbs on any creature other than a canine causes a level of Fatigue.

Deducing the nature of the herbs requires a Knowledge (Alchemy) roll. Roll once for the three batches. Detecting the stimulant as a canine herb requires a raise on the roll.

9. ROCKY BRIDGE

Terrain: The bridge is slippery due to a covering of ice. An Agility roll is required to cross it without mishap. A failure means the hero slips, but manages to cling to the edge. He can make a Strength (-4) roll each round to haul himself back onto the bridge. A critical failure causes 4d6 damage as the unfortunate explorer slams into the ground 40 feet below.

10. WARRIOR'S ROOM

Three roaring fires arranged in a triangular pattern provide warmth and light. Bearskins hang on the walls, and the floor is littered with the spoils of raids. The chamber is home to Golth-Khar, the tribe's champion, and his warriors.

Terrain: Any creature entering a square containing a fire suffers 1d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Monsters: If the heroes are stealthy they witness the following scene. A beautiful woman, dressed in rags and with eyes recently blinded, is dragged in. She is Inreda the Hearthkeeper, cleric of Kenaz. She is forced

to dance, blinded, among the fires, while the Vendahl mock her and her impotent god of fire. If the heroes are patient, when the dance ends the women from the **Females Cavern** (Area 13) bring in food. The warriors guzzle and drink stolen brandy. After an hour they are drunk (Exhausted). One of the bear skins hanging from the walls hide a secret passage for the **Shaman's Room** (Notice roll to spot it). If the battle lasts more than 10 rounds, the Shaman is automatically alerted by the noise.

Ⓜ **Golth-Khar, Vendahl Champion (1):** See page 6.

Ⓜ **Vendahl Warriors (2 per hero):** See page 5.

Treasure: The assorted loot hoarded here is worth 1,000 gs.

11. PRISONER'S CAVERN

In this room are held the prisoners (and future food) of the tribe. Currently there are a fat Anari merchant, a young, pretty farmer girl, and a snoring, muscular, man. All the prisoners are free except the snoring man—he is chained to the wall. The last one is a totally mad Tuomi berserker, who attacks whoever awakens him.

Monsters: The prisoners are guarded from a giant wolf, apparently sleeping on the cavern entrance. Moving away the rocks from the secret passage can awake both the wolf and the berserker.

Ⓜ **Giant Wolf (1):** As wolf except it is Size +1 and has Toughness 6. Its bite causes Str+d8 damage.

Ⓜ **Mad Tuomi Berserker (1):** Use Vendahl stats, adding Strength d10, Vigor d10, and the Berserker Edge.

12. TINY PASSAGE

Terrain: Movement through this passage is difficult ground.

13. FEMALES' CAVERN

This room hosts the women of the tribe (2d6 of them) and several children (1d6). The women are busy cooking something on a spit, the meal for the men in the **Warriors Room**. "Something" means a man! Heroes succeed at a Guts roll to avoid being Nauseated until they leave the room. Women and children don't fight, and will try to escape to alert the warriors.

14. BEAR TEMPLE

This room is a temple of Ursarix, the bear god of Vendahls, adored in the form of a giant bear skull. The room is littered with bones and skulls, the remains of the savage meals of the Vendahls. Moving in the room requires a Stealth roll to avoid alerting the dwellers of the Shaman's room. If the party defiles the giant bear skull, Besta, the shaman, suffers -2 to Faith rolls until the room is sanctified again, but she becomes immediately aware of the party.

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15. SHAMAN'S ROOM

Monsters: If the heroes were stealthy in their approach, they can catch Besta, the tribe's shaman, by surprise. She is always with her faithful companions, a couple of wolves. In the room there is assorted jewelry worth 300 gs and an alchemical device: a cloak made with wild goose feather with the *shapechange* (wild goose only) spell.

🐾 **Besta, Vendahl Shaman (1):** See page 5.

16. SPRING'S ROOM

This room is where the holy spring of Kenaz originates. The lake was used as burial place by an ancient lord of the area, today only known as the Lord of the Lake.

On the bottom of the lake there is the wreckage of a Smabyrding (small vessel). The Lord's horse, wife, and treasures (reduced to worthless junk now) are stored inside the hull, while his body rests on the deck. He still grips a magical battleaxe (Fair Friendship) and a shield. The lake isn't a safe place because a giant water snake lives in the wreckage and attacks everyone, except bearers of a Kenaz holy symbol. The Vendahls avoid this place because many of them were eaten by the snake.

🐾 **Giant Water Snake (1):** See page 5.

🐾 CREATURES 🐾

WATER SNAKE

An enormous beast, typical of hotter climates, it is a mystery how it reached the Mouth's cavern. His skin has a strange, reddish shading, and his reptilian eyes glows as if he is burning inside.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

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

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Treasure: None.

Special Abilities:

- * **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- * **Bite:** Str+d4. His long neck and hunched posture gives it a Reach of 3.
- * **Crush:** The snake may wrap its serpentine body around a target as a grapple. Victims suffer damage each round the grapple is maintained. A sea serpent may crush and bite in the same round without incurring a multi-action penalty.
- * **Kenaz's Beast:** The water snake doesn't attack anyone who shows him a Kenaz's holy symbol.
- * **Large:** Attacks against the water snake receive +2 due to the beast size.
- * **Size +4:** The water snake measure over 30' long, but is quite thin.

SWARM OF BATS

Sometimes the most deadly foes come in the smallest packages. The swarm described below can be of almost anything—from biting ants to stinging wasps to disease carrying mosquitoes. The swarm is treated just like a creature. When it is Incapacitated, the swarm is effectively dispersed. Swarms cover an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attack every round.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d8

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Treasure: None.

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites each round, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location.
- * **Mindless:** Unaffected by Tests of Will, Tricks, or arcane powers like *puppet*.
- * **Split:** Bat's are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 4 each).
- * **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area Effect weapons work normally, and a character can wave his arms to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

VENDAHL

The Vendahl are primitive, cave-dwelling humans who survive by raiding nearby communities. The Vendahl are cannibals, and treat any living creature as a source of food. They worship the bear god, Ursarix, a very minor deity whose worship is unknown outside the Vendahl tribes. Their crude societies are usually led by a female shaman.

WARRIOR

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Snow Walker

Gear: Bearskin (+1, acts as fur), bear claw (Str+d6, +1 Parry)

Treasure: Meager for every 5 warriors.

BESTA, VENDAHL SHAMAN

Vendahl shamans are always female. They never leave their caves. Besta is an old crone that dominates the tribe thanks to her devious cunning.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Faith d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Healing d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Elderly, Mean.

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Level Headed, Snow Walker

Gear: Poisoned dagger (Str+d4, plus Vigor save or paralyzed for 2d6 rounds)

Treasure: Meager.

Special Abilities:

- * **Powers:** Besta knows the following powers: *boost/lower trait* (Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Survival), *fear* (roar), *shapechange* (bear only), and *stun* (roar).



GOLTH-KHAR, VENDAHL CHAMPION

Champions are the best warriors in the tribe, renowned for their strength, resilience, and brutal attitude. Golth-Kahr is a typical champion. He lost the left eye years ago, thanks to a Hearth Knight's arrow.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: -3 **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Mean, One Eye

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Improved Frenzy, Snow Walker, Sweep

Gear: Bearskin (+1, acts as fur), battle axe (Str+d8), bear claw (Str+d6, +1 Parry).

Treasure: Meager.

WOLF

Vicious man-eaters tamed by Vendahls.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Treasure: None.

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** Str+d4.
- * **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- * **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- * **Size -1:** Wolves are relatively small.



FAIR FRIENDSHIP

This ancient battleaxe is partially ruined from the prolonged immersion in water, so the wooden haft breaks on a 1 on the Fighting die. Once replaced the weapon is perfect again—the metal blade is sharp as the day it was forged. An inscription in Hauld Saxa on the blade says: *"This is the axe of my friend Scatwulf, who gave his life to save mine. On my honor I swear to do the same."* The axe grants +1 Parry and the Common Bond Edge.

MURDEROUS MARAUDERS AT LARGE!

Welcome to the Triple Ace Games free Christmas 2010 adventure!

Along the banks of the Frostwater Lake lies a horde of cannibal marauders. These Vendahls have raided hamlets, farms and small settlements in the local vicinity of their hideout. The local farmers are desperate for help and are looking for volunteers to rid their lands of the terrible raiders.

In *The Mouth of the Frothing Bear*, the adventurers must go in search of these violent creatures and dispatch them quickly. Spend your Christmas exploring the caves in this brilliant mini-adventure for Hellfrost!



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