

Holiday Happenings



2019

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A 25 day community collaboration of holiday gaming joy for those in need.

The holidays can be a rough experience for many folks who do not have good relationships with their families. The reality for a lot of people, especially LGBTQ+ folks, is that if they do not have holiday plans with friends, they do not have any holiday plans. Unfortunately, too many times the healthy choice is to not join family gatherings that stress you out.

This project is dedicated to you and your new gaming friends, uniting for some TTRPG magic and bringing holiday cheer to those who need it most.

Contributions by

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- * Michael G. Barford
- * Richard Ruane
- * James Mullen
- * Greg Gelder
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- * Cover art & layout by Phillip Wessels
- * *(Home Is) Where the Heart Is & A Holiday Tale* layout by Aven McConnaughey
- * The Frozen North/Bellhome cutaway art by Michael Prescott
- * *A Tale of Two Villages* art by Lu Quade

Design Inspirations

- * "Navigating the Snowstorm" is based on the Labyrinth move by Jason Cordova • gauntlet-rpg.com
- * "Swept Away in the Storm" adapts material from *Plundergrounds: The Hoard* by Ray Otus. • jellysaw.com

2019 Staff



Phillip A. Wessels, Coordinator / Web Development / Layout / Artist / Feature Writer - Phillip Wessels is a game designer and coder from the heart of Silicon Valley, San Jose, CA. He's best known for *Pack of Strays*, a game about misfit werewolves he developed over the weekend at Big Bad Con 2016, and later refined into a polished version you can still get for free today. He also occasionally dabbles in digital art and is available for front-end web design & development work. Find him on Twitter at [@pawper](https://twitter.com/@pawper).



Richard Ruane, Coordinator - Richard Ruane is a Brooklyn, NY game designer, occasional grad student, and educational technology professional. He's the creator of *Dark Designs in Verdigris*, *Moonlight on Roseville Beach*, and *Barrow Keep*. Find him on Twitter at [@Arr_Roo](https://twitter.com/@Arr_Roo).



Kate Bullock, Safety & Sensitivity Editor - Kate Bullock is a community and convention organizer from the wilds of Canada. She's the President of the Indie Game Developer Network (IGDN), game room coordinator for Magpie Games, and one of the main organizers of Breakout Gaming Convention. You can find her blog at bluestockings.ca and her game, *Crossroads Carnival*, at Magpie Games. Her freelance gaming work can be found in *Hack the Planet*, *The Veil: Cascade*, *Codex*, and *Atlas Animalia*. She's best known for her work in community development, safety and inclusion, and convention organizing. You can hire her as a freelance writer, dev editor, safety editor, inclusivity and safety consultant, sensitivity editor, or community consultant. Find her on Twitter at [@bluestockingetc](https://twitter.com/@bluestockingetc).



Aven McConnaughey, Layout - Aven McConnaughey is a game maker and community safety consultant. Eir work is focused on offering care to others that meets them where they are. This is eir first official layout project, but eir other design work can be found at Itch ([transistence.itch.io](https://itch.io/transistence)), and in *Kids on Bikes: Strange Adventures Volume 2*, *Behind the Masc*, *The Imposters*, and *The Tragedies of Middle School*. Find em on Twitter at [@transistence](https://twitter.com/@transistence).



Misha Bushyager, Sensitivity Editor - Misha Bushyager is a longtime gamer and designer working on making sure the next generation of geeks sees themselves represented. She's a panelist, writer, editor, proofreader, and sensitivity editor for tabletop RPGs and LARPs. She's one of the founders of New Agenda Publishing and a curator for *More Seats at the Table*. She worked on *Orun*, *#Feminism*, *Fate of Cthulhu*, *Lovecraftesque*, *Dead Scare*, *Misspent Youth: Sell Out With Me*, *Masks: Unbound*, and the as yet unpublished LARP *Nightingales*. Find her on Twitter at [@BGGameWorks](https://twitter.com/@BGGameWorks).



Luiz Paulo Ferraz, Feature Writer - Luiz grew up in sunny Natal, Brazil, a city whose name literally means Christmas. He is a professional video-game translator and hobbyist tabletop designer with a passion for hacking and re-skinning games, especially if it means adapting one of the many IPs he is obsessed with. His largest original project was *Melody of a Never-ending Summer*, but like a dreamy festive bakery, he always has a ton of stuff cooking up. Find him on Twitter at [@puizlaulo](https://twitter.com/@puizlaulo) and keep up with his design at his Itch page (luiz-paulo-ferraz.itch.io).



Allie Bustion, Feature Writer - Allie Bustion is an independent tabletop game designer, making their own games and supplements as Mad Pierrot Games via [itch.io](http://itch.io/madpierrot) (madpierrot.itch.io) and Patreon (patreon.com/madpierrot) and doing contract work for various publishers and developers. On very rare occasions, they stream (twitch.tv/MadPierrotTV). They will eagerly talk to you about pop-punk, comics, wrestling, and other popular media and how those media can make you a better storyteller on Twitter at [@madkierro](https://twitter.com/@madkierro).



1

The Frozen North

*Adventures for
Dungeon
World*

The Frozen North

The Frozen North is always rather inhospitable this time of the year. This blizzard is something else, though. Still, rumor has it that there's magic and treasure to be discovered only in this season.

ADVENTURING GEAR -PHILLIP WESSELS

- ⊗ Rations including water; dehydration makes it easier to freeze
- ⊗ Alcohol seems to warm the bones, although it causes your body to lose heat faster
- ⊗ Snowshoes to stay on top of the cold
- ⊗ Thick gloves and boots will keep frostbite at bay
- ⊗ A heavy cloak and/or coat to block the wind's sharp cold
- ⊗ A fur-lined hood, hat or helmet just might keep your ears from stinging

IMPRESSIONS -PHILLIP WESSELS

- ⊗ Deep, soft snow covering the ground as far as the eye can see
- ⊗ An eerie silence, when the cold wind isn't blowing and biting at your ears
- ⊗ A layer of frost gathered on you and your belongings
- ⊗ A white snowflake swirling down to land in the palm of your hand
- ⊗ The occasional whiteout causing you to walk in circles
- ⊗ Your teeth chattering as you shiver, your steamy breath visible in front of you
- ⊗ Losing the feeling in your toes as you slip, fall and shuffle onward
- ⊗ Trees heavy with snow. So, so many trees.

DRUIDIC LORE

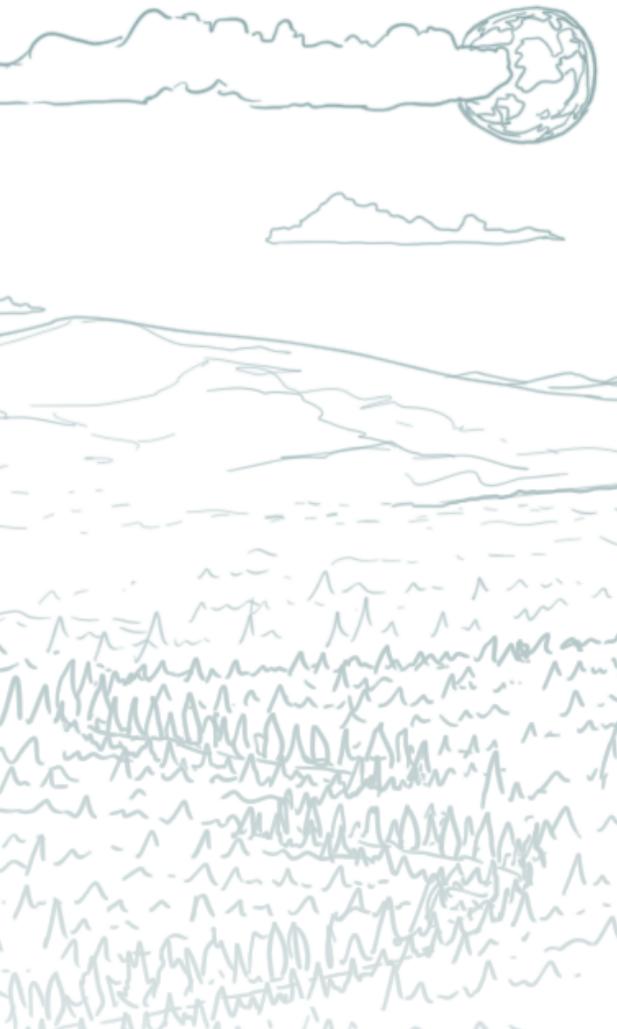
The Frozen North is not just trees and snow; the Druid can see the spirits of the land and its diverse ecosystem of flora and fauna, including the elusive reindeer.

- ⊗ The Arctic Hares are shy and harmless, but they know how to survive in this unforgiving season and how to avoid being prey. If a group of them keeps pace with the Druid and their party, they can kick up the snow around them, creating a brief but dense blizzard to blind predators and cover the party's escape. -JAMES MULLEN
- ⊗ Blizzards are the domain of the elemental spirits of air and night. Druids who can brave the blizzard can learn to lure these spirits into telling them what people have done when they thought wind and darkness hid them. -RICHARD RUANE
- ⊗ Anyone who can speak to animals this time of year will tell you that the owls are exceedingly bored by winter. Hunting isn't nearly as exciting against a bright white background. Thus the parliament of owls turn their attention to the mundane movements of non-prey, they can tell you where anyone went but don't expect their talons in aid. Damn owls and their neutrality oaths. -GREG GELDER
- ⊗ The reindeer of the Frozen North are elusive, magical creatures. A Ranger can track, catch or tame one, if they have the know-how. -PHILLIP WESSELS
 - ⊗ The reindeer's footprints sometimes appear before they have been somewhere and sometimes well after. Don't make assumptions. The tracks sometimes lead to places the reindeer haven't even been. Watch your step... -LU QUADE
 - ⊗ Times are hard in the frozen woodland and the reindeer can be tempted out into the open by the promise of a fresh vegetable: something eye-catchingly bright, like a carrot, works best. It's even been known for a snifter of brandy to do the trick. -JAMES MULLEN
 - ⊗ Any experienced reindeer tracker will tell you that it's just as much about getting them to track you as it is tracking them. One has to have a clear conscience before you can turn around and see them. There, no matter where you are in the forest, will be a clearing of freshly laden snow and a family of reindeer. -GREG GELDER
 - ⊗ Reindeer can be shy when the woods are silent, but are drawn to celebrations. A snowy woodland bacchanal is sure to lure them out of their winter dens. -RICHARD RUANE

-RICHARD RUANE

GAZING UPON THE STARS ABOVE

Despite snowstorm after snowstorm sweeping over the Frozen North, there are times when the sky clears and the stars do shine brightly. There's something strange about the stars here, twinkling as if all the beings out in the cosmos are watching this place. -PHILLIP WESSELS

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- ✦ When you **wish upon a star**, state a broad desire that you feel from the bottom of your heart, e.g. "I wish I could find true love," "I wish I was home," etc. Spend XP (max+3) and roll plus XP spent; on a hit, your wish is granted in a way that seems plausible and not supernatural; on a 7-9, you'll have to give up on something else in order to seize this opportunity. On a miss, your wish is granted, but the intent is twisted for a bitterseet outcome. -JAMES MULLEN
 - ✦ Such activity is forbidden in these parts. Little children are told to wish whatever they want but keep their gaze off the horizon. Nigel the gambler doesn't listen much to these townfolk and if you can pull his mouth out of that tankard he might teach you how to wish proper like. When you **wish upon a star** speak your wish aloud and roll + nothing 10+: You are visited at night by the brightest star in the sky. It will grant you your wish in the form of an object beneath your pillow.
7-9: A flickering star appears to you and requires some clarification on what exactly you meant when you said all that. The whole encounter is very bureaucratic. You awake with a solid idea on how to make your wish come true. Take +1 forward when acting upon that idea until the wish comes true.
6-: A dark void pervades your sleep and troubles your mind. Shadows speak to you in waking hours and pollute your ambitions. You will, in time, be sucked into the void. You automatically fail Last Breath rolls from now on. You were warned! -GREG GELDER
 - ✦ When you **wish upon a star**, name someone whose dreams you want to visit, say why, and roll. On a hit, when you next sleep, you will visit the dreams of the one you named. The GM will tell you what you see and tell you two useful truths that you learn. However, on a 7-9, they will also remember your face from their dreams and learn two useful truths about you. -RICHARD RUANE

OUT OF BOUNDS PLACES

There are many remote locations in the Frozen North that can be difficult to travel to. In fact, the abundance of icy lakes, treacherous mountain passes, freezing temperatures, and general lack of vegetation can make some places downright impossible to reach by normal means. -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

- ✦ The Frozen Rift appears at this season as the larger sheets calve off from the ice shelf, revealing lands below that are buried for much of the year. There are legends of a fallen kingdom here, but the crumbling, icy walls of the Rift are impossible to climb. -JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ Glass Perch is a Roc nest located high up the vertical face of Mt. Ichini. It's called Glass Perch because this particular Roc has an affinity for affixing stained glass windows to it's nest. These broken windows cast eerie, distorted images of long forgotten gods on the vertical cliff faces. The Roc has flown south for the winter of course, leaving whatever else it values as easy pickings, if you can get up there. -GREG GELDER
- ✦ The deathless witch Kaziah has long given up escaping from her prison-cave on the upper peaks Mount Ahmrak. Those who come to her for help will find her willing to bargain. Her magic is powerful, but her prices are always high. -RICHARD RUANE

The Village of Bellhome

IMPRESSIONS -PHILLIP WESSELS & MICHAEL G. BARFORD

- ⊗ A cobbled street banked with soft, powdery snow.
- ⊗ The ringing bells of the ornate clocktower.
- ⊗ A dwarf's braided beard frosted with snow.
- ⊗ A parade of pagan revellers jingling bell-sticks and laughing raucously.
- ⊗ Small children sitting in a circle weaving vines into crowns.
- ⊗ The green and red of holly bushes poking through the snow.
- ⊗ Tinsel hung heavily on trees and inside windows.
- ⊗ An elderly person billowing a dying hearth fire with youthful energy.
- ⊗ Chimneys with faint trails of smoke.
- ⊗ A solemn procession of short, northern elffolk meticulously decorating the trees with brilliant & colorful ornaments.
- ⊗ A cleric dressed in white robes, cutting down mistletoe with a golden sickle.
- ⊗ A pair of elves perform a graceful ritual dance to celebrate the death of deciduous leaves.
- ⊗ A choir of elves sing in ecstatic harmony a song celebrating the immortality of conifers.
- ⊗ Crispy crickets with colorful candy coating.
- ⊗ Ethereal ice nymphs skate along the surface of a frozen river.
- ⊗ A child stops cranking their jack-in-the-box right before it pops.
- ⊗ The candle lights in Bellhome's windows go out one by one.
- ⊗ A holiday greeting sent from a foreign diplomat, sealed with a star insignia.
- ⊗ A rural farmhouse hangs antlers above their door to usher in blessings for the new year.
- ⊗ Priests in gold robes gather solemnly in the courtyard.

NAVIGATING THE SNOWSTORM -PHILLIP WESSELS, BASED ON THE LABYRINTH MOVE BY JASON CORDOVA

When you **attempt to navigate the howling snowstorm**, describe where you're going, push on and roll+CON.

*On a 12+, the party holds 2. *On a 10+, the party holds 1. *On a 7-9, the party holds 1, but encounters a dangerous obstacle or opposition or loses something in the biting-cold wind (unless they spend 1 hold).

At any time, 2+ in present company may agree to spend 1 hold to duck into the GM's choice of shelter, which may or may not contain anything useful.

At any time, the entire present party may agree to spend 3 hold to reach a specific destination.

ENCOUNTERS -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

Snow Golem

Horde, Magical, Amorphous, Construct

Clobber (d6 damage)
Close

Snowball (d4 damage)
Near

4 HP

Special Qualities: Reforms

Something is controlling the snow, making it do its bidding...

Instinct: To drive off trespassers; to carry off valuables to the clocktower.

- Batter with snow limbs
- Throw dense snow balls
- Recover from dismemberment

Elven Bellguard

Group, Organized, Intelligent

Elfsteel Bellclub (1d8 stun damage)
Close

6 HP 1 armor

The bellguard march through town, ensuring that none of the citizens are seen wearing a frown. If you don't heed the warnings of their jingling bellclubs, you will feel their wrath. It's for the good of the people.
Instinct: to enforce cheer.

- Threaten the despondent with jingling bells
- Knock the resistant unconscious
- Call for back-up with a golden bugle
- Smile incessantly

WHAT A DOOR FORETELLS

It's still winter in the Far North, and it's still very very cold. Yet, travelers still make their way to and through Bellhome. The town has a tradition of decorating doors during this season, often as a sign of hospitality, but sometimes as a warning. -PHILLIP WESSELS

❖ Many weary travelers seek hospitality at this time of year and it is a tradition in Bellhome to tie a red bow on one's door to indicate that you offer such respite. To those in the know, however, the knots indicate whether someone inside is open to sharing their own bed for the night... -JAMES MULLEN

❖ Halfling hospitality demands your door be left open to travelers. This of course becomes problematic in the winter months as there is only so much wood to stoke the furnace with. Enterprising halflings have taken to painting murals of their foyer in perfect perspective upon the outside of their doors. It lets travelers know the door is open, even in these cold winter nights. -GREG GELDER

❖ Doors decorated with three holly wreaths are truce doors. In winter, any unarmed creature who enters through a truce door after sunset may ask for shelter until sunrise. Bitter aristocrats designate their smallest doors as truce doors so that anyone coming to ask for shelter will have to grovel. Truly wicked aristocrats make their truce doors too small for anyone to get through. -RICHARD RUANE

WHERE THEY DUCK INSIDE

❖ If you need to get away from the crowds... the **clock tower** itself provides some relief from the worst of the weather. It's not heated, but it shelters from the precipitation and wind... and is usually quiet and empty. -YOSHI CREELMAN

❖ A **barn** on the outskirts of town is a good if not particularly warm refuge for anyone who needs to keep a low profile. Unfortunately, you aren't the only one who had this idea. -LARRY S.

❖ Down a snowdrift riddled alley and around the corner is Bellhome's only **Tinselry**. Here children work the long silver strands into lengthy garlands that shine like the clear night sky. The children are well compensated with the earnings of the shop, but where did they find all that silver? -GREG GELDER

❖ The **Sweatlodge**: every year at this time, a vast tent of hides is erected over a fire pit of glowing embers and hot rocks. Drinks are consumed here as water is poured over the fire pit, creating clouds of billowing steam. -JAMES MULLEN

❖ The **root cellar** is cold and close. Still, it gives you a chance to get out of the wind and tell someone something that will warm them. -LOGAN HOWARD

❖ The **Shrine of the Waters** is a hot spring the people of Bellhome have bathed in for many years, adhering to strict taboos about mixed bathing. For generations, a guardian has been appointed from the village to ensure that no shenanigans take place and they accept gifts in the name of the god of the waters. -JAMES MULLEN

❖ **The Frosty Mug** is a local tavern. -PHILLIP WESSELS

❖ **CW: COERCED PHYSICAL INTIMACY** Mistletoe is strategically hung above an alcove to the side. You might find someone waiting under the mistletoe, ready to step away if they are not interested.

♥ **Arvin the Assassin** has solemnly sworn never to kill anyone he's kissed. If someone might hire him to kill you one day, wait for him under the mistletoe. If someone has already hired him to kill you, wait for him while wearing a mask. -RICHARD RUANE

♥ **Aunty Etna** is a sweet, round woman with rosy cheeks and a winning smile. Although she has no relations in the village, all the kids still call her aunty. If you chance into her beneath the mistletoe, she'll laugh a hearty laugh and hug you tight before pecking you on the cheek and leaving you standing there, feeling ten years old again. -GREG GELDER

♥ **Agreus**, a short burly man, is a heretical cleric the locals try to ignore, which he respects by drinking in the alcove. He readily gives anyone into the bachannal-lite tradition of mistletoe a cute squeaky peck and a silly bright smile, but he's ready to abandon his brown hooded robe for other menfolk that join him elsewhere for one of his less-appreciated bachannalic festivities. It's said he knows the Frosty Mug's drink menu better than anyone. -PHILLIP WESSELS

♥ It's very likely you'll find one of the **rival adventurers** on the next page!

❖ The tavern has some very special drinks, some of which are off the menu.

❖ The **Warming Ale** is the signature drink, but on a busy night they'll only put enough magic in it to keep it slightly above room temperature. The cinnamon is a nice touch, though. -PHILLIP WESSELS

❖ Old Albert runs a little distillery out in the woods and provides The Frosty Mug with a barrel of his **Forest Fruit Dew** every week, but what with all this snow, no-one has seen him and his cart for days. Maybe some thirsty customers could brave the elements and collect the barrel in person... for the good of everybody, obviously! -JAMES MULLEN

❖ The Frosty Mug's daytime barkeep has two twin sons named Oogle and Boogle. To keep them occupied during business hours she has them sell **Hot Fermented Snow Juice** which of course, is just hot water. Most find this cute, and pitch in the copper pieces to amuse themselves while Oogle and Boogle scramble back and forth in elaborate mimicry of cocktail preparation. The water tastes faintly of roses. -GREG GELDER

❖ The Frosty Mug stopped **mulling their wine with the distilled spirits of fir pitch** after last year's cheerful solstice celebration devolved into a frenzied bacchanal. The heretical cleric Agreus still sells the stuff, and it's said to give drinkers disturbingly truthful visions. -RICHARD RUANE

THE RIVAL ADVENTURERS -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

Aega, the Warrior *Solitary, Intelligent*
Hand Axe (1d10 damage) 14 HP 4 armor (+1 Shield)
Close

A gruff woman with wild red hair. She sports an eyepatch that doesn't quite cover the scar over her right eye. Her cold iron armor is scratched and dented, but that is only a testament to the battles she has overcome.

Instinct: Protect her allies.

- Jump in front of an ally to block a blow
- Point out a weakness in the enemy
- Break something useful

Jix, the Rogue *Solitary, Intelligent, Stealthy*
Twin Daggers (2d4 damage) 12 HP 1 armor
Hand

A slender individual with a veiled face. Their leather armor is cobbled together from several different pieces, but has been dyed together with the same polish used on their black boots. Their eyes are heavy with condescension and arrogance.

- Strike from behind
- Set up a follow-through from an ally
- Leave a trap behind

Pinneret, the Mage *Solitary, Intelligent, Magical*
Magic Missile (1d8+1 damage) 10 HP
Near, Far

It's hard to tell what sort of frame this woman has beneath the piles of robes she is wearing. Only her head and one arm are free from the mound of dyed wool. Enigmatic and red-faced.

- Craft a compelling illusion
- Threaten to summon a powerful demon
- Leave behind a runic ward

She often reaches into her folds of fabric and pulls out strange trinkets, tools and talismans:

- A small device that looks like an egg-timer with red sand running through it, the wizard continually checks this and seems to keep some kind of schedule according to it:

The Red Alert: Grip this in your hand and ask it how long it will be until you will next face life-threatening danger, the sands will start running down exactly 3 minutes before the danger occurs, less if the danger is imminent when you ask.) -JAMES MULLEN

- A local boy swears the kind wizard gifted him with a beautiful orange tabby kitten just the other week. It was a handsome cat with a beautiful red ribbon around its neck. He lost the cat though, it ran off in the night.

Pinneret's Polymorphing Present: 0 weight, 1 use Pinneret's Polymorphing Present appears to those who no longer hold joy in their heart as a grey putty like mass. To those who do, it appears as what their childish soul desires most. It can be used as leverage for Parley and will return to the users pocket within the week. The present breaking, running away or disappearing of course robs the recipient of all joy. -GREG GELDER

A QUICK FRIEND -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

Fringham Bellringer 4 HP
2 Loyalty Skills: Minstrel 2

Fringham is a small excitable goblin dressed in festive winter garb. He carries a stick covered in small iron bells. He wears a cheery but unsettling grin that stretches from ear-to-ear. *Instinct:* To spread cheer.

A Hero's Welcome - When you **enter a place of food, drink, or entertainment with a minstrel** you will be treated as a friend by everyone present (unless your actions prove otherwise). You also subtract the minstrel's skill from all prices in town.

Items/Equipment: Festive Garb, Bell-stick

THE HOLLY CROWN GAME -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

The village of Bellhome lies in the ruins of the ancient Elven city of Bellethiel. Long ago, the grand city's sovereign would pass their crown to a humble citizen for the day of the winter equinox as a sign of goodwill. It is speculated that this practice may have once resulted in the decimation of the city.

Today, that ceremony is honored, or rather, lampooned, in Bellhome with a traditional holiday game. Participants pass around a woven holly crown and create silly rules that must be followed for the night. Those who break the rules are pinched on their cheeks for their misbehavior.

Each character willing to participate should take a turn wearing the crown. When you **wear the crown**, your character should take on an accent of mock nobility and come up with a silly rule. For example, "All must stand on one leg." When you describe your character following the rules in spite of embarrassment, mark XP. When you **describe your character breaking a rule to avoid embarrassment**, take 1d2 damage from savage cheek pinches. If your character refuses to take part in this childish game, take +1 forward when the party is interrupted by something sinister.

MAYBE DON'T EAT THE BERRIES -PHILLIP WESSELS

Plucked from a holly bush, these plastic-looking berries appear delectable. You can easily carry an innumerable amount of these.

When you **eat one of the berries**, which are quite bitter, roll+CON. On a 12+, you will succeed on your next move as if you rolled a 10+. On a 10+, take +1 forward. On a 7-9, take +1 forward, but you will be interrupted by uncontrollable vomiting at a vital moment.

Young, unlucky or excessive consumers, should roll 1d6 damage.

You may use the juice of these berries to create poisons.

OTHER BELLHOME TRADITIONS

- ☞ The leaves of the holly bush have been used as wards against evil since ancient times. -PHILLIP WESSELS
- ☞ The tiny wrens that live in the rafters of the village houses are taken in and fed, because it is believed that their song keeps evil presences at bay. It is a bad omen if the wrens leave a house, because it suggests something has scared them away. -JAMES MULLEN
- ☞ A late fall milking of the goats is cultured quickly using leftovers from last year. This sour and curdled "winter milk" is a panacea for all ailments of the physical and spiritual kind. Tastes like goat breath. -GREG GELDER
- ☞ In the dark of winter, ghosts can follow the evergreen vines of ivy to revisit their mortal homes. To cause an unwanted ghost to go astray (forever offending it), loop ivy 13 times around its headstone. -RICHARD RUANE
- ☞ In winter, the warriors of the clan wear thick silver rings on their middle fingers, and clang them against their breastplates to bring courage and bravery to their hearts. -MICHAEL BARFORD
- ☞ Justice in Bellhome is pretty typical. What people don't know is that convicted criminals tend to go missing around this time of the year. It's said that if you put your ear to the floor, you can hear them screaming in the underworld. -PHILLIP WESSELS
- ☞ Little inverted triangles that are meant to bless the eaves, so they don't collapse under the weight of snow and icicles. -MICHAEL PRESCOTT
- ☞ Small brass carriage wheels are often worn by travelers at this time, either pinned to an outer jacket or worn close to the chest on a chain. These talisman are said to ward of traffic on busy roads. Spinning the wheel slowly clockwise often guides you to clear and open roads. Spinning the wheel counterclockwise is not advised. Of course direction is all a matter of perspective and traffic a matter of patience. -GREG GELDER
- ☞ When the second son of the warlord Skyrpon eloped with a local stableboy many Yuletide ago, his father had his new son-in-law beheaded. However, the severed head laid a curse on Skyrpon foretelling his death. Even now, newlyweds celebrating their first Yule wear medals showing the young man's head to ward off the cruelties of their in-laws. -RICHARD RUANE

INUNDATED IN TINSEL

Around this time of the year Bellhome becomes progressively more inundated with silver tinsel. No one knows where the silver comes from (except the children who work at the Tinselry), but the tinsel is used in strange and interesting ways. -PHILLIP WESSELS

- ☞ When the snow falls and the mist rises, travelers in the woods are glad to find the glittering silver rope that guides them back towards town. -JAMES MULLEN
- ☞ Miggs, who takes pride in being an "old cat lady", will tell anyone who will listen about the dangers of tinsel. Too much, wound in just the right way, can produce the most fearsome winter foe: The Tinsel Serpent. Says that's why cats hate tinsel so much. Crazy Miggs...-GREG

GELDER

- ☞ They say that when young lovers tie their hands together with the starry tinsel that drapes the pines beneath an aurora, they will be bound together in the afterlife, as well. -MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ☞ Many of the villagers take fists of tinsel and scrub the walls with it. Scouring out the shadow, they say. -PHILLIP WESSELS
- ☞ The silver sprites are small and generous, but also cautious, and vicious when provoked. It is said if you leave your weapons outside their grove, and come bearing gifts of tinsel for their nests, they will reward you with a feast beyond imagining. -TOMER GURANTZ
- ☞ To calm the ragings of a werebeast, wrap a single strand of Bellehome true tinsel around their eyes. A werebeast so bound will become calm for one night and may even do those who bind it a service. -RICHARD RUANE
- ☞ You might be lucky to be rewarded with a few yards of tinsel bundled together and tied into a knot. When you **throw the tinsel knot into the air**, it catches the light and twinkles. Wish for a specific object and roll+CHA. One a hit, it lands as that object. On a 10+, it is an exquisite silver replica. On a 7-9, it is good for one use only, splitting and unraveling into a mess of tinsel. -PHILLIP WESSELS

Pavuchky, the Little Spider

Stealthy, Solitary, Tiny

Bite (d4 damage)
Close

1 HP

Gold and silver strands of tinsel are found strewn about in spiderweb patterns. They are the gifts of Pavuchky. The little white spider is always around, watching from the shadows, in a tree or shrub if it's there. *Instinct:* to reward good will and charity; to punish greed

- lurk in the shadows, watching
- descend on a golden strand
- jump several feet with the speed of a blink

If Pavuchky leaves its web behind, it is pure gold or silver and can be gathered and spent as coin. Pavuchky leaves at least 1 coin's worth whenever it appears but may leave much much more.

When you **commit an act of selfishness or greed**, Puvuchky may see it and attack. If Pavuchky bites you, your hair turns to silver or gold. The needy and greedy will yank at it and come at it with blades, or try to kidnap you for their wealth. This will only end once you give away all of your possessions and walk the streets as the poor do.

-PHILLIP WESSELS

A Stop at Snowdrift Inn

-MICHAEL G. BARFORD & PHILLIP WESSELS

You notice a small log inn, the roof covered in snow. At first it appears empty, but the windows start to glisten with the light of a fire inside, and then it seems there's actually quite a number of people inside. The door is frozen shut, yet a warmth emanates from within. You feel your hands, your bones even, start to regain their heat as you pry it open. Inside you notice a brick hearth with a large, brilliant fire. An array of patrons are enjoying the warmth of the inn and indulging in food and drink.

DANGER: ETERNAL PATRONAGE OF THE SNOWDRIFT INN

Grim Portent: Falling into an impossibly deep snowdrift next to an inn.

Grim Portent: The warm inviting feast-hall of the Snowdrift Inn delights your senses

Grim Portent: The other patrons have a noticeable obsession with the fire

Grim Portent: The other patrons pressure you into joining the festivities

Grim Portent: The crackling hearthfire mesmerizes you

Impending Doom: You join the tormented patrons of the Snowdrift Inn for eternity

COMFORTS AT THE SNOWDRIFT INN

- 🔥 The hot buttered rum is a shot of glowing warmth that slips its way into your fingers and toes, giving them a little tingle that puts a smile on the face of the least festive person. -JAMES MULLEN
- 🔥 Someone is playing a jaunty tune on an old squeezebox. The song is about exhaling bad memories from the past year and inhaling good fortune in the new year. -MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- 🔥 The haze of smoke smells like cinnamon and the carols are starting to sound like lullabies. If you fall asleep, you might not wake up for days, but the enchanted rest promises to restore so much of what you've lost in your adventures. -RICHARD RUANE
- 🔥 The wild pipeweed is a snow-blooming plant. It's small yellow flowers can be spotted near the roots of cold and barren trees, and even when dried and smoked it leaves a taste like melting snow on your tongue. -RICHARD RUANE
- 🔥 Snowdrift's coffee-dark stout is a legend in the northern realms. When the temperature drops, they turn it into their own version of lambswool, stewing it with dried apples and sage leaves until that you can warm your hands as well as loosens your tongue. -RICHARD RUANE
- 🔥 While garlic and turnips are both native to the north, garlic-turnip stew comes from the mountainous western desert. Northerners have adopted it for themselves, though, and every manor, inn, or public house has its own variation they swear is the most authentic. -RICHARD RUANE
- 🔥 One coin buys you a ticket for the Bottomless Buffet, a limitless supply of sausages, baked potatoes, pots of beans, spicy roast vegetables and other home-spun fare. -JAMES MULLEN
- 🔥 There's a freshly stuffed cushion on every stool and chair, each one hand stitched by someone in the village, each embroidered with their own best wishes for the season. -JAMES MULLEN
- 🔥 It's hard work, and causes the inn to get through 100 times more candles than usual, but the glittering strings of lights that throng the rafters and window frames makes it twinkle like the stars at night. -JAMES MULLEN

INDULGE IN A COMFORT

When you **accept the hospitality of the Snowdrift Inn**, give the GM one hold and roll+CHA. On a hit, you placate the patrons. On a 7-9, you can only do so if you convince another member of your party to indulge.

If you refuse to partake of the warm food, drink, and fire, you will anger the host.

INVESTIGATE A PATRON

When you **check out what's up with a patron at the Snowdrift Inn**, say what they think is really going on with the patron, then roll+WIS. **GM:** On a 10+, show them how this ghost's torment is worse than they imagined, revealing insight into how to deal with Snowdrift Inn. On a 7-9, only give a vague hint that something is amiss; it's on them to make it useful.

AZMODAHL THE SCORNER

The Snowdrift Inn is a popular subject when the children of Bellhome stay up too late sharing whispered tales of ghosts and ghouls. They say it's haunted by a hearth spirit, summoned to this plane by a sorcerer whose name has long faded from memory. Azmodahl, as he likes to be called, is stubborn and insatiable, as is befitting of a demon from the fire plane. He has used this abandoned structure as a trap to gather his favorite form of kindling - the ignorant souls of the content. In addition to his mesmerizing demonic gaze, he can animate the cold, decrepit inn with illusionary comfort and warmth. With enough effort, he can make the illusion reality, and command the inn itself to take the form of a large brick-and-timber golem. **Instinct:** To consume fuel

Fire Demon Form *Magical, Amorphous, Terrifying, Devious*
Searing Heat (1d8+hold damage) (6 x hold) HP
Close hold Armor

"If you won't give me your soul, I guess I will have to settle for your flesh!"

- Mesmerize them with a crackling fire
- Command the patrons to pressure them
- Pull tinder into its gaping maw with flaming tentacles
- Block their escape with a fiery obstacle

If the GM acquires 3 hold, Azmodahl can animate the Snowdrift Inn itself to threaten the party.

Snowdrift Inn Form *Huge, Magical, Amorphous, Terrifying, Construct, In Shambles*
Clobber (d12 damage) 18 HP
Near, Reach 3 Armor

"Did you think you could skip out on your tab?"

- Lock the doors and batten the hatches
- Compact them like garbage
- Punish escape with brick and timber limbs
- Collapse into a smoky pile of glowing embers

Upon defeat, Azmodahl may be gained as a follower:

Hearth Spirit Form 12 HP
0 Loyalty Skills: Hearth Spirit 2

"Alright, you've proven your strength. Before you snuff me out, how about we strike a deal?"

Demonic Engine - When you **appeal to a hearth spirit to inhabit bricks as a golem**, tell the GM what you're trying to achieve. The GM will tell you what you must sacrifice to the spirit as fuel.

Through the Fire Plane - Azmodahl can inhabit an empty hearth with suitable tinder. When you **look in his flames**, describe their color and roll+WIS. The colorful flames fill the entire hearth, and through it you see a destination. On a hit, you may name a known destination and step through. On a 10+, take +1 forward to cast any magic; when you do, it is colored with the color you chose. On a 7-9, take 1 harm when stepping through.

WHAT HERE IS USEFUL OR VALUABLE TO ME?

- ★ There is a basement beneath the inn, with a hatch leading down to the ruins of Bellethiel. It appears Azmodahl rose from somewhere older and deeper.
- ★ Gold coins from different ages and origins.
- ★ The ashes of an extinguished hearth spirit are well regarded in the fields of alchemy and enchantment.
- ★ An ancient leather-bound manuscript, written in ancient Elvish. There are handwritten notes inked in the margins. If someone were able to decipher it, they would discover that it is a textbook on demons, and the notes were written by a young sorcerer's apprentice named Yend.

DEMONS THAT CAN BE SUMMONED ONLY IN WINTER

If Yend's notebook is deciphered, the following entries can be read:

- ★ Fidurath, the Demon of Charity, can only be summoned by making a sacrifice of coins that have been freely given to the summoner, not gained as part of any payment, stolen or found. This is the best time of year to summon the demon, when people give to any stranger who begs for their change, not knowing that the coins are charged with that feeling of generosity: once the coins are sacrificed to Fidurath, you will become the recipient of ever greater acts of charity, but you will need someone very generous in order to donate their soul, or Fidurath will collect from you! -JAMES MULLEN
- ★ Ilgrakaun, the ancient elves called him. Roughly translated as "the bleak sky at morning with no flowers." He can be summoned at the cost of one's ambitions for renewal by laying down on a hill and seeing only the sky with no horizon for an afternoon. Heed this passage, "Woe and misery are his footsteps, like winter wind in ice covered branches!" -GREG GELDER
- ★ Oatherin, whose calligraphy is as exquisite as it is illegible, is the Chief Clerk of the record books of the Abyss. Anyone accepting and opening a gift wrapped in a contract Oatherin has inscribed is bound by that contract as if they had signed it in their own blood. -RICHARD RUJANE
- ★ When a grudge become unbearable, you can summon one of the Nine Mnemoae and pay them to carry the bad memory to their abyssal storehouse. However, they may insist that the storehouse is full, requiring that you volunteer to carry someone else's grudges in return for your own. -RICHARD RUJANE
- ★ You can hire one of the hellish Mithof inquisitors to stand beside your door and howl if an enemy of yours tries to enter your residence. Once a year, though, their standard contracts permit them to lie to you, identifying a true friend or loyal family member as a foe. It is up to you to determine if they are howling at an innocent. -RICHARD RUJANE

Swept Away in the Storm

BY PHILLIP WESSELS, WITH MATERIAL FROM PLUNDERGROUNDS: THE HOARD BY RAY OTUS

Winter's hitting Bellhome particularly hard, and Postmasters have been having trouble making it to town.

DANGER: AN ICE DRAGON HAS MADE BELLHOME ITS HOME, IN THE TOP OF THE CLOCKTOWER.

Grim Portent: A snowstorm hits hard; players must Navigate the Snowstorm when moving outside

Grim Portent: Someone wonders aloud about having been waiting a long while for some packages to arrive

Grim Portent: Postmaster Biggins stumbles in, covered in snow, without his cargo. "It was swept away!"

Grim Portent: The clock in the tower stops (and no one will shut up about it).

Grim Portent: Snow golems take over the village; no one can go outside without being attacked.

Impending Doom: The ice dragon preserves its hoard in impenetrable ice.

❗ **Stake:** Will they raid the hoard of holiday gifts for treasure or be concerned with getting things to their recipients?

❗ **Stake:** Will they try to cut a deal with the young ice dragon and help it find a different home?

NAVIGATING THE SNOWSTORM BASED ON THE LABYRINTH MOVE BY JASON CORDOVA

When you **attempt to navigate the howling snowstorm**, describe where you're going, push on and roll+CON.

*On a 12+, the party holds 2. *On a 10+, the party holds 1. *On a 7-9, the party holds 1, but encounters a dangerous obstacle or opposition or loses something in the biting-cold wind (unless they spend 1 hold).

At any time, 2+ in present company may agree to spend 1 hold to duck into the GM's choice of shelter, which may or may not contain anything useful.

At any time, the entire present party may agree to spend 3 hold to reach a specific destination.

Postmaster Biggins

2 Loyalty

8 HP

Skills: Tracker 2

A big man with a big red beard, tightly bound in furs, he has kind green eyes and round, rosy cheeks. Everyone's friend, though the dogs don't care for him much. He has no qualms about doing what needs to be done. Instinct: To take unwelcome initiative

Track - When a tracker is given time to study a trail while Making Camp, when camp is broken they can follow the trail to the next major change in terrain, travel, or weather.

Guide - When a tracker leads the way you automatically succeed on any Perilous Journey of a distance (in rations) lower than the tracker's skill.

INSIDE THE TOWER

The cold here is beyond any natural cold. You have trouble holding your eyes open as the air tries to turn your tears to frost. -GREG GELDER

Frost glitters on every surface and you spot a bird perched on an icy rafter, watching you as you pass below... but it doesn't turn its head as you pass. It doesn't move at all; that's when you realize it's frozen solid. -JAMES MULLEN

It's immediately evident that the missing mail, post, and everything else has been stashed here. A dragon's roar can be heard from high in the tower.

CONTENTS OF THE DRAGON'S HOARD

- ❗ Anything anyone lost navigating the snowstorm
- ❗ Appropriate treasure, if they loot it (see 2 pages ahead!)
- ❗ A letter from adventurers sharing their intent to come to town and raid the "dungeon"
- ❗ A box of delicious chocolates from "Triselda"

❗ A letter from a young scholar who was arrested when caught inside the Archimandrite's private library; they beg their family for the money for their release or they will rot in an oubliette until next winter. They also hint that they have learned a terrible secret of great importance while in the library... -JAMES MULLEN

❗ The Western lordships are notorious for their byzantine legal systems and mercurial clerks demanding yet another tax stamp or some embossed credential. But here, in this package, is all the legal documentation one would need to liquidate the assets of Baron Truchio VII the Virginal. Such things should not be sent by mail... -GREG GELDER

❗ Countess Renn's grandchild is beloved throughout the northern territories, but this lost letter contains a warrant for the young noble's assassination and permission to present evidence of their death for a significant reward. -RICHARD RUANE

SNOW GOLEM PATCHES -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

Some snow in this area is capable of forming into humanoid snow golems that attack in droves. Your sword and spear are useless here - as long as there is snow, the golems can reform themselves.

When you **devise a clever plan to overcome a snow golem patch** (perhaps through fire, song, or a magical top hat), roll+INT. On a 7-9, you escape without too much cost. On a 10+, choose 1:

- ❗ You gain the loyalty of a snow golem whose sentience is separated from the patch.
- ❗ You acquire a few coal snow golems' eyes, that can summon a brief blizzard when burned.
- ❗ You learn a spell to summon a golem when snow is near.

GETTING AROUND THE TOWER ADAPTED FROM THE MOVE IN PLUNDERGROUNDS: THE HOARD BY RAY OTUS

When you **attempt to navigate the frozen, hoard-cluttered mechanisms of the tower**, roll+INT.

On a 12+ hold 2.

On a 10+ hold 1.

On a 7-9 hold 1, but you encounter a hoard denizen and/or find yourself in a bad place.

On a 6- the dragon is one step closer to detecting your presence and location! (See Danger: A Game of Cat and Mouse.) This is in addition to any hard move the GM has in mind.

After rolling you must spend hold:

Spend 1 hold to find something valuable or useful. (Spend 2 for both.)

Spend 2 hold to get a clue to the dragon's whereabouts.

Spend 4 hold to get a clue how you might possibly harm the dragon.

Spend 5 hold to find an exit, locate the dragon, or find his nest.

One person rolls each time you navigate. The group's hold from multiple rolls is pooled together. When you spend hold, describe how you run through the GM's obstacle.

OBSTACLES TO RUN THROUGH

- * A line of huge swinging pendulums
- * An amorphous scramble of spinning gears
- * Pulleys and cables going between platforms
- * Giant icicles crashing down left and right
- * Flapping shutters in the icy wind
- * Any other icy/mechanical obstacle you think of

DANGER: A GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE ADAPTED FROM PLUNDERGROUNDS: THE HOARD BY RAY OTUS

The ice dragon lives in and loves his hoard. He slumbers in dark corners, roams the tower organizing and admiring his accumulated wealth, decorates it with ice sculptures/frozen people and things, and hunts down any pesky intruders (new decor).

Grim Portent: The interlocked piles of treasure shudder and then grow quiet again with the distant passing of the dragon.

Grim Portent: Snow golems burst out of the surrounding ice!

Grim Portent: A distant roar of rage means the dragon has discovered that one of his treasures is missing!!

Grim Portent: A tangible reminder that the dragon is stalking the characters: e.g. a throaty growl from a side passage, a forceful blast of freezing wind, the tower shakes and icicles fall

Grim Portent: The dragon knows where you are!

Impending Doom: The dragon pounces without warning!

There are damned few people who have been down a dragon's hole and lived to tell about it! If you can find one (maybe one of those other adventurers in town), they will give you the following advice.

Be aware of your surroundings; look for signs the dragon is near. If he is, freeze in place. If he seems to be far off, try to find an exit as quickly as possible and move toward it. Go slow. Look for cramped places and narrow passages where the dragon can't go. Always have multiple escape routes open to you; don't get caught in a dead end. Touch nothing! Stay quiet! Avoid having/carrying anything with a notable smell (so as tempting as a warm, fiery torch is here, ditch it!). Don't leave any traces. And pray – if there are any gods who will listen to you.

Veteran hoard raiders are crazy and tend to rely heavily on luck. They certainly ignore their own "touch nothing" maxim. Plundering hoards is a big game of cat and mouse. If the dragon catches you, it's probably your time to go. Even so, most raiders have a trick or two up their sleeve against that day (or think they do) and they can't resist the lure of a big score. THE RIVAL ADVENTURERS are surely up for it!

Use the checklist to bring the encounter with the dragon closer every time the characters fail at the "getting around" move or another major roll. Tempt them into pushing their luck with the occasional giftbox. If the dragon finds the characters before they hunt it down on their own terms or escape from the hoard, the dragon will catch them flatfooted and probably wreck them!

The Ice Dragon

Solitary, Magical, Huge, Captivating, Hoarder, Wings

Ice Breath (1d12+3 damage, Ignores armor) 16 HP
Near or Far 5 Armor

Bite (b[2d12]+5 damage, 4 piercing, Ignores armor)
Near, Messy

This young 16 foot tall dragon is magnificent, like a moving ice sculpture. Instinct: To make/protect his home

- Freeze someone or something solid
- Stir up some snow golems
- Sweep away their stuff in the snowstorm

COMPENDIUM CLASS: DRAGONBACK POSTMASTER

You have offered the dragon another home (somewhere people shouldn't go) and given it an item of value. You may accept this compendium class if you climb on the bent-down dragon's back with bags of gifts and mail in tow.

You have the dragon as a follower. For now, it will only help you secure its new home. After that, it will always be loyal. If you are not at or securing its home, the GM can have the dragon fly off as a hard move.

When you **ask the dragon to take flight for your bidding**, give it something for its new hoard and roll+CHA. On a 7-9, it will want more.

You are treated as a friend by everyone in town. When you **deliver post**, roll+CON, minus the number of deliveries. On a hit, you will be given a tip of 1d6 gold per delivery. On a 7-9, take 1d6 damage from the cold.

MAGICAL ITEMS

- ⊕ **Ghost Dog Whistle** - A faded blue wooden whistle, with a tarnished silver chain. Blow on the whistle if you are lost, hurt or in danger - the huge furry ghost dog will appear and help you with your woes. -LU QUADE
- ⊕ **Stocking of Treats** - An oversized, red woolen sock with a white fur trim, it has a bottomless supply of rations in the form of satsumas, nuts, candy canes and chocolate shapes. It only works that way if you've been nice all day though; if you've been naughty (made a Hack & Slash or Volley move), it just gives you pieces of coal. -JAMES MULLEN
- ⊕ **Box of PEGOS** - 1 weight, 3 uses. Pegos are a favorite among children of all ages. These locking building blocks also serve a use to adventurers who can use them to construct one use, mechanical devices. Describe what triggers the machine and what the machine operates when triggered. Alternatively can be spread on the floor as caltrops. -GREG GELDER
- ⊕ Place a **dream journal** beneath the head of a sleeping companion and it will record a list of everything that appears in their dreams. The books are thin, leather-bound volumes, and any writing in them disappears with the next moonrise.. -RICHARD RUANE
- ⊕ A tin of **Everlasting Fruit Cake** - If you cut a slice (1 ration) and put it back in the tin, you'll never run out. It's sickeningly sweet and lies on the stomach like a lead slab. -JAMES MULLEN
- ⊕ **Twig of Mistletoe** - A bunch of green leaves and 3 large white berries. Succeed at spouting lore to unlock the following: when you **pluck a berry off of the mistletoe**, take +1 forward or ward off an evil entity. -PHILLIP WESSELS

LITTLE BELLA -PHILLIP WESSELS

A old cloth doll with yarn hair, button eyes, and a simple blue dress; it is about the size of a grown man's hand.

When you **rest somewhere in Bellhome**, you stir during the night to find the doll sitting on the window sill looking out at the village. If you humanize the doll and talk to it as if it were human, even jokingly, she will reply. She will introduce herself as Bella and tell you that she lived in Bellhome as a little girl a very long, long time ago, when it was the capital of the kingdom. She escaped from the terrible danger that destroyed the city a thousand years ago. As she lay freezing in the cold, staring at the sky as she froze and holding her favorite doll, a golden light broke through the clouds and whispered things to her. She hears that whisper now, again, after all this time.

When you **ask Little Bella to scout ahead**, she will be ignored by all. She is but part of the pall that hangs over Bellhome.

TRAPPER HENRY'S LAST GIFT TO THE WORLD

-CIEL FERMA

CW:ANIMAL ABUSE

When you **move through a snowy landscape or town near a wooded area**, ask the GM to unlock this microfront.

"What? The White Bear Clan? Fearsome matriarchal warriors, known, feared and respected throughout the land, even the southerners respect them, for they prize 1 thing above all, to keep their word."

DANGER: THE SNARES OF CRAFTY OL'MAN HENRY (RECENTLY DECEASED) LIE IN WAIT AT EVERY TURN

- **Grim Portent:** A fair haired newborn babe is discovered wriggling in a snow drift.
- **Grim Portent:** At full moon the newborn turns to ravenous bear cub.
- **Grim Portent:** The red burning coals of a wounded mama Werebear's eyes pierce the darkness.

Impending Doom: The Wrath of the White (Were)Bear Clan Descends on Civilization

② **Stake:** Will they return the child or is it too cute and potentially powerful?

② **Stake:** How many must die before peace is restored?

The were-club was born to a trapped mother, and escaped get help. The real danger to the characters is not the White Bear Clan, but the array of snares and traps that Ol' Henry has left (now unattend) about the woods. There is a map of Henry's Trapline. Destroying the traps, revealing the Henry's death, etc will appease the clan.

MAGICAL LIGHT SOURCES

In the dark and forgotten places of Dungeon World, sources of light are absolute necessities, and should be treated with the utmost care. Just imagine what it would be like to be a half-day's journey into a cave, only to accidentally drop your torches into a chasm.

⊕ Who so wears the **Candle Crown** will shed it's light for all to see, but beware! It scratches and scratches at the wearer's head, drawing blood from them to feed the flames (the wearer takes 1d4 damage for every hour they wear the crown). -JAMES MULLEN

⊕ When you are lost in the dark, retell the ancestral story you most treasure. When you wake up, you will be holding a candle that will burn for 2d4 hours. When you summon the light with a story, you must Spout Lore. If you fail, you can never recall that story again. -RICHARD RUANE

⊕ Local farmers have been working with Miktar the Warlock for several years now. They bring their cows and goats to him and he enchants them into glowing statuary for the winter months. Miktar sells these as festive decorations and the farmers don't have to feed the livestock for the winter. No reason you couldn't tie a enchanted chicken to a stick for portable light. -GREG GELDER

Candy for Youth

-PHILLIP WESSELS

CW: DEATH OF CHILDREN, CANNIBALISM

Nobody knows who the mysterious confectionaire is in Bellhome. Delectable sweets have been found just about everywhere. It's unclear how the candies along your path, under your pillow, in your hand. But there they are, and oh how delightful it is!

DANGER: THE WITCH OF THE WOODS

Grim Portent: An orphan is missing in the village.

Grim Portent: A trail of candy leads into the woods

Grim Portent: All of the village's children are missing.

Impending Doom: The now beautiful witch comes with her candy golems to enslave the village.

- ❓ **Stake:** Will they care more about the children than the magic the witch can offer?
- ❓ **Stake:** Will they be tempted to eat any of the beautiful, delectable candies?

DELECTABLE SWEETS

When you eat a piece of the witch's candy, you may gain 1 experience point if you do what the witch whispers into your mind; otherwise take -1 forward.

- ⊛ **Blackstrap toffees** aren't the tastiest candy, but taking one before you fall asleep will allow you to switch places with your dreamworld self. You'll get to adventure in the land of dreams in your own body while your dreamworld self promises you it will see to the wants and needs of those you've disappointed. -RICHARD RUJANE
- ⊛ **Allow a Candied Rose Petal** to melt on your tongue and the words out of your mouth will sound sweet to all who hear them. When you Parley, on a 7-9 you may tell them a true secret that you know as assurance of your promise. -JAMES MULLEN
- ⊛ **Champions Caramel Crunch** appears in the pockets of the witch's favored friends. Not only is it filling (counts as 1 ration) but when you defend you may spend hold to ask "What will bring my opponent to heel?" -GREG GELDER

THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE

A trail of candy leads to an ornately crafted gingerbread house deep in the cold, frosty woods, behind a fence of candy canes. It has walls of gingerbread, a door of chocolate, sugar windows, licorice trim, pillars of peppermint and lemon sticks. Pies and cakes and other desserts cover every surface within. There's some strange magic here, put into the walls; no magic works inside but that of the witch.

Candy Golem

Group, Magical, Amorphous, Construct, Large

Clobber (d6 damage)
Close

4 HP

Special Qualities: Explodes on death to make it rain candy

Instinct: To drive off trespassers; to wander around at night

- Thwok with huge candy arms
- Leave a trail of candy
- Grab any children, retreat swiftly by rolling away

Triselda, The Witch of the Woods

Magical, Devious, Intelligent, Solitary

Scratch (d4 damage)
Close

10 HP

Special Qualities: Heals quickly offscreen; blind but can smell
-2 Loyalty Skill: Adept 6

An old witch living in the gingerbread house. **Instinct:** To live forever. **Cost:** Children **Knack:** Arcane/culinary knowledge

- Sees through her thick glass spectacles
- Bribes adults with magic items & knowledge
- Squeezes the cheeks and fingers of the children

Captured Child

(Sansel, Ava, Thom, Jobby, Dela, Rickard)
2 Loyalty

The captured children are either the witch's slaves or her prisoners. **Instinct:** To run, hide, play, cry.
Cost: Protection

When you approach one of the children, they will tell you one of the following:

- They love the gingerbread house, it's their favorite place in the world
- They tried to escape but the candy golems got them
- They miss their family back at the village

A badly kept secret: all the candy (house included) is made from children.

The Darkness Under Bellhome

-MICHAEL G. BARFORD & PHILLIP WESSELS

Beneath the village of Bellhome lies the ruins of the ancient elven city of Bellethiel. Once upon a time, an ancient enemy of the elves, the dark sorcerer Yend, was imprisoned in the forest outside of the city with ritual magic; his essence stretched thinly and anchored to three points within the woods. It is during the winter solstice—the longest night of the year—that his power is at its height. In ancient times, the elves of Bellethiel engaged in frenzied acts of joyful revelry to starve the sorcerer of the negative emotions his magic preyed upon. Despite enduring a cataclysmic event that left the city in ruins, the ghostly inhabitants of the city maintain their exuberant vigilance unto undeath. If Yend were to gain enough power to break free of his arcane bonds, his shadowy incorporeal form would rise to the village above and terrorize its people until his hunger was satisfied, granting him the strength to fully substantiate his final horrifying form on this plane. No army of this age would be able to defeat him.

❓ **In the green light of the forest you see the silhouette of someone you love or hate. Who is it?**

❓ **How do you get through the thicket of the forest?**

IMPRESSIONS

- ★ Green eyes watching from afar in the darkness of the woods
- ★ A sourceless green light moving shadows of gnarly branches
- ★ Silence jarringly interrupted by the explosive cawing of crows
- ★ Any light or flame slowly turns green
- ★ Yend's echoing whispers of dark thoughts and curses

THE OBSIDIAN FOREST OF YEND

BASED ON THE LABYRINTH MOVE BY JASON CORDOVA

When you **follow a trail through the Obsidian Forest of Yend**, describe how you do it, then roll+STAT.

On a 12+, hold 2

On a 10+, hold 1

On a 7-9, hold 1, but you also face an obstacle or enemy.

On a miss, you face an obstacle or enemy.

On a 1-3, also lose all hold.

- ★ Spend 1 hold to learn something useful or valuable about your circumstances, 2 hold for both
- ★ Spend 1 hold to gain an item that is useful or valuable, 2 hold for both
- ★ Spend 3 hold to catch up to whomever has left this trail

THINGS FOUND IN THE DARK

- ★ **Mask of the Stag of the Dark Star** - 1 weight. This stag skull mask with long antlers has eye sockets which reflect light as if green gems were embedded in them; however, if you stick your fingers in them, you'll find them empty. When **you look in the dark with the mask on**, roll+WIS. On a hit you can see in the dark and summon green will-o-wisps. On a 7-9 you hear the whispers of Yend in your mind. *Instinct:* to give tribute to the Stag of the Dark Star (**GM:** Tempt them with XP)
- ★ **Yend's Darkwood** - 1 weight. This wand is made of a twisted black branch, the handle bound in silver tinsel and an emerald embedded in the tip. Summon green will-o-wisps.

★ **Her Majesty's Locket** - This valuable golden locket contains a portrait of the royal family together, smiling, embracing each other.

★ **Princesses Tears** - 1 use. A strange iridescent ectoplasm was found around the locket. Spouting Lore reveals that it can be wiped on the eyes of the dying to cheat death.

Green Will-o-Wisp

Solitary, Tiny, Magical, Body of Light

Ray (w[2d8-2] damage)

Near

12 HP

You were looking for the source of the green light, then this it appeared. The glowing green orb is moving. Will it take you out of this damed forest? *Instinct:* To misguide.

- Lead someone astray
- Clear a path to the worst place possible
- Take the shape of those in memory

Murder of Crows

Horde, Tiny, Flying, Hoarder, Cautious

Beaks and Talons (d4 damage)

Hand

3 HP

These black birds are ubiquitous in Yend's forest and are mostly harmless. But when they are angered, they will form a horde that acts with a solitary purpose.

Instinct: To murder.

- Swallow them up in a black whirlwind
- Peck out their eyes

Choking Ivy

Solitary, Stealthy, Amorphous, Plant

Thorns (d10 damage, 1 piercing)

Close, Reach, Messy

15 HP

1 Armor

The only living plant life in this forest would appear to be these vines. *Instinct:* To grow.

- Shoot forth new growth
- Attack the unwary

Druidic Cultist of Yend

Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Terrifying

Darkwood Staff (d8 damage)

Hand

Agressive Thicket (d10 damage)

Near

16 HP

2 Armor

Wrapped heavily in ivy vines, they wear a crow-feathered cloak and a stag skull mask. Their large darkwood staff has an obsidian point. *Instinct:* To pay tribute.

- Participate in ghostly echoes of past tributes
- Tear apart crows

Barbaric Cultist of Yend

Group, Terrifying

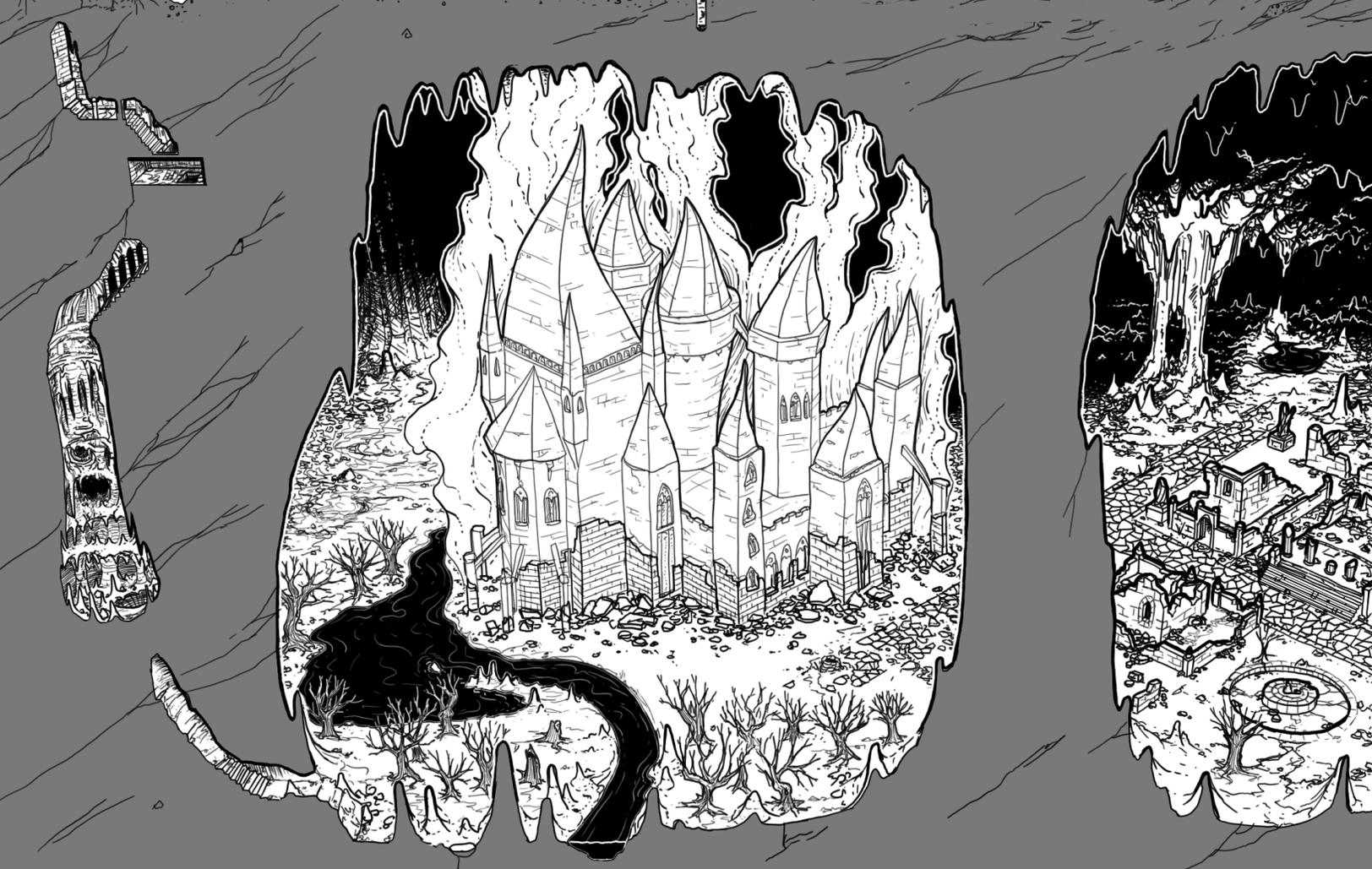
Beat & Claw At (b[2d6+4] damage)

Hand, Messy

10 HP

Aside from their stag skull masks, these cultists only wear tar and crow feathers. *Instinct:* To pay tribute.

- Revel in messy violence and debauchery
- Participate in ghostly echos of past tributes
- Protect druidic cultists



The Light Under Bellhome

-PHILLIP WESSELS & MICHAEL G. BARFORD

Underneath the village of Bellhome lies the ruins of the ancient elven city Bellethiel that was destroyed a thousand years ago. Access to the ruins has mostly been sealed off, though chasms, caves, crypts and cellars may yet lead the way. The villagers are hesitant to talk about ruins. If you press them, they will tell you there are spirits in the ruins and that they are best left alone. But... those other adventurers in town don't seem to care about that and want to raid the "dungeon."

DANGER: VENGEFUL SPIRITS OVERTAKE BELLHOME.

Grim Portent: A group of adventurers interrogates Bellhome seeking to raid the ruins (see *THE RIVAL ADVENTURERS*).

Grim Portent: The ground shakes and splits open somewhere in Bellhome.

Grim Portent: Golden-lit spirits float through the streets of Bellhome, sobbing for help.

Impending Doom: Adventurers reach the ghost princess's quarters and shatter her illusion of life. The players get a vision of the cataclysm. Yend's shadow begins to spread over Bellhome; his bonds have been broken.

❓ **Stake:** Will they disrespect the ruins?

❓ **Stake:** Will they play along with the ghosts?

DANGER: YEND'S SHADOW SPREADS OVER BELLHOME.

Grim Portent: At noon in the market square all business stops. If one blinks they see long shadows on peoples faces and a crow headed figure standing at the village center. The figure slowly spreads its wings and the vision is gone. Business continues in the square. -GREG GELDER

Grim Portent: A hawthorn thicket outside of town has remained mysteriously snow free all winter. The crows gather here. -GREG GELDER

Grim Portent: Pickled vegetables, canned not two months ago, have already turned sour and rotten. A single crows beak is discovered in every jar. -GREG GELDER

Grim Portent: No-one can hear each other speak in the streets of Bellhome over the sounds of crows cawing... but the crows all lie dead in the gutters. -JAMES MULLEN

Impending Doom: The dark sorceror Yend resurrects himself, and is finally immortal. Bellhome's citizens become cultists.

❓ **Stake:** Will they ask the ghosts for help?

❓ **Stake:** Will they seek Yend's magical power?

NAVIGATING BELLETHIEL BASED ON THE LABYRINTH MOVE BY JASON CORDOVA

When you **attempt to navigate between the illusory Bellethiel of the ancient past and its ruined present**, say which you want, push on and roll+WIS.

On a 12+, the party holds 2.

On a 10+, the party holds 1.

On a 7-9, the party holds 1, but encounters a dangerous obstacle or opposition (can include Yend's cultists).

At any time, 2+ in present company may agree to spend 1 hold to slip into a scene in the illusory Bellethiel and meet a ghost.

At any time, the entire present party may agree to spend 3 hold to reach a specific destination, such as the royal palace, Yend's place of power in it, the princess's quarters, or wherever a specific ghost will be.

The Ghost Knight	<i>Solitary, Intelligent, Magical, Terrifying, Planar</i>
Dual Sword Cross Charge (lb)2d12 damage)	16 HP
<i>Near, Far, Ignores armor</i>	4 Armor

A nameless older relative of the ghost princess, she stands tall in a golden light and is obscured behind an ornate, bulky set of armor. A cape hangs from her shoulders with the family insignia of a bell.

- Watch from somewhere unreachable
- Charge a magic-user or into a place of power
- Repeat herself in re-enactments of history (bending down and giving a necklace to no-one, reading books over a table, banging against a large door)

The Dark Sorceror Yend	<i>Solitary, Huge, Magical, Planar, Devious, Terrifying</i>
Shadow Talons (d8 damage)	16 HP
<i>Reach, Near, Ignores Armor</i>	4 Armor

After learning the secret to immortal godhood from the Stag of the Dark Star, Yend set his life and afterlife towards harvesting enough misery and terror to finally fulfill the ritual. He was close in ancient times, but Bellethiel's agents sabotaged his plans. Alas, the city was destroyed in the uncontrolled explosion of energy.

- Minimize the effect of light sources
- Cackle at their torment
- Lure them to dark side with spells & items

Some of My Favorite Things - When you **describe one of your fondest memories in Yend's presence**, reduce his armor by 1 to a minimum of 0.

SERVANTS OF THE PRINCESS

The deeper you go into Bellethiel, the more you find the ghosts pretending the city is still alive, yet many still have a tear in their eye. If anyone disrespects the ruins or treats the spirits as if they are dead, they will come softly crying, and plead for you to please play along, "for her."

You will learn that the royal family was beloved by the people of Bellhome. Then, one fateful day, a sorcerer came to the castle, something went wrong and the city was eaten by the earth. Of the royal family, only the ghost of the princess remained on this plane. Her many servants, of course, did not leave her.

✦ When the princess went to war, Lord Cazriel carried her shield. When she plotted in times of peace, he was her spy. Each time her lovers were assassinated, he hunted the graves of the mortal world to find the lover's lost soul. He's still hunting to return the last of them to her.

-RICHARD RUJANE

✦ Theobold the Steward lovingly brings the princess her breakfast each morning - although it is a job far below his lofty station. His gnarled old hands shake and the crockery tinkles and rattles as he makes his way slooowly down the hall... -LU QUADE

✦ Audouille "the Daring" earned her title by volunteering to maintain the menacing gargoyles poised beneath the corbels of the castle. She used to need ropes and rigging to support her task, but now she can float as lightly as a feather. -MICHAEL G. BARFORD

✦ Salloreon was the Princess' music teacher, schooling her in the fine arts of the harp and flute. Every morning, he fills the palace with a song of rising hope; every sunset is accompanied by an echoing dirge that rolls through the empty streets like a breeze. -JAMES MULLEN

✦ Miirphys was the princess' dance instructor. He can be seen practicing in front of the large silvered mirror that no longer reflects his flourished jumps and intricate steps. When he tires he half limps to his cane and strolls the halls at a leisurely pace. -GREG GELDER

If you enlist the aid of a servant or any other ghost, gain them as a follower. In addition to having a point in Tracker, they have 2 points in another skill area (Adept, Burglar, Minstrel, Priest, Protector, Warrior).

Ghost of Bellethiel

1 Loyalty

4 HP

Skills: Tracker 1, ____ 2

These golden-lit spirits were once denizens of the ancient city buried beneath the village of Bellhome. Even in undeath they have continued their service to their beloved queen. The only reward they can offer is gratitude. The only threat they can bring to bear is a nuisance. *Cost:* Maintain the princess's delusion of Bellethiel being alive and well.

Spirit Guide - When a ghost leads the way in the ruins beneath Bellhome, you automatically succeed on any Perilous Journey.

HELPING THE PRINCESS MOVE ON

The princess's locket can be found in *THE DARKNESS UNDER BELLHOME*. When you give the locket to the ghost princess, she will look at the picture and the Black Gate will open behind her, revealing the spirits of her family waiting for her. She will go peacefully, content to rejoin her loved ones.

Upon preventing another cataclysm and helping the ghost princess move beyond the Black Gate without breaking her heart, the wizard and/or cleric gain the following spell:

SPELL: SUMMON THE GHOST KNIGHT

Summoning, Ongoing

In a flash of golden light, the Black Gate appears, swinging open for the Ghost Knight. She aids you as best she can. Treat her as your character, but with access to only the basic moves. She has +1 modifiers for all stats, 1 HP, and uses your damage dice (*Ignores armor*). The Ghost Knight also gets your choice of 1d6 of these traits (if you have Perfect Summons, she gains all of them):

- ✦ She has +2 instead of +1 to one stat
- ✦ She does 1d8 damage
- ✦ Her bond to your plane is strong: +2 HP for each level you have
- ✦ She can spook away other ghosts
- ✦ She can light the way ahead
- ✦ Upon being defeated, she distracts an enemy (the next to Hack & Slash takes +2 forward)

The Ghost Knight remains on this plane until she is defeated or you dismiss her. While the spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

COMPENDIUM CLASS: FOLLOWER OF THE DARK STAR

You don't have to take the path of light. Yend will offer plenty of reward for joining the dark side. There are many things to be gained from looking in the shadows to the Stag of the Dark Star. If you do, you may gain Yend's Darkwood and take any number of the following moves; for each you do, Yend's shadow spreads further over Bellhome and a grim portent passes.

✦ **Summon _____** - Yend can teach you to summon any normally hostile creature that you have defeated, or any of the demons from his notebook (see *A STOP AT SNOWDRIFT INN*). This is regardless of whether you are normally a magic user (adapt the summon move above).

✦ **Cultivate Cultists** - Just as he tempts you, he has tempted many before. Yend can show you how to gain your own cultists. When you **seek to recruit someone into your cult**, roll+CHA; on a hit, they'll follow you even past their death. On a 7-9, ask the GM what tribute is demanded by the Stag of the Dark Star.

✦ **Mind Whisper** - You can remotely send thoughts to others. When you whisper an instinct into someone's head, roll+WIS. On a hit, they gain that instinct (**GM:** tempt target players with XP). On a 7-9, ask the GM what tribute is demanded by the Stag of the Dark Star.

✦ **Misery Vampire** - You can harvest misery to evade death. Ask the GM what must come to pass. If it does, take +3 forward for your next use of Last Breath.

2

A Tale of Two Villages

*A Two-Way Tunnel Starter
for
Tunnel World*

A Tale of Two Villages

A Two-Way Funnel Starter for Funnel World
By Michael G Barford, art by Lu Quade



This funnel is designed to be run at a holiday party, one where you and several of your companions have gathered for a celebration of friendship and gaming! You'll need two GMs and two tables: one filled with cheerful elves and one filled with grumpy goblins. After you've made up your characters and drawn your maps, trade your completed maps with the other table. When you've finished playing, sit back with a nice cup of cocoa and swap stories of your adventures with your friends until you doze off in front of the crackling hearthfire.

Elves

NAMES

Sugarplum, Goldenlocks, Marzipan, Applebutter, Cranblat, Tiptaptwo, Bottlebright, Gadberry, Whistlewit, Rudderum, Barleybay, Chuck

OCCUPATIONS/GEAR

Baker: Rolling pin (close, awkward, 1 wt), sack of flour (2 wt)
Cobbler: Tack hammer (hand, 0 wt), 1d4 pairs of shoes or boots (1 wt ea.)
Stable hand: Pitchfork (close, reach, 1 wt), bale of hay (2 wt)
Crank-tinker: 1d4 Wind-up toys (1 wt ea.)
Coal miner: Pick (close, +1 damage, 2 wt), lantern (0 wt), flask of oil (0 wt), flint & steel (0 wt)
Intelligent reindeer: Antlers (close, +1 damage, 0 wt)
Candy-maker: 2d4 candies (0 wt)
Doll-maker: Sewing needle and thread (0 wt), 1d4 dolls (1 wt ea.)
Bell-jingler: Bell-stick (close, awkward, loud, 1 wt), 1d4 jingle bells (0 wt)
Marble-maker: bag of marbles (1 wt)
Carpenter: Knife (hand, 0 wt), hand saw (1 wt)
Tree-trimmer: Ladder (2 wt), 2d4 glass ornaments (0 wt)

TRAITS

Physical:

Red and green frock
Festive hat
Jingle bell boots
Rosy cheeks
Striped socks
Gleaming smile
Cinnamon aroma
High-pitched giggle
Deep chuckle
Lively chortle
Freckles
Dimples

Personality:

Brave
Cheerful
Courteous
Earnest
Efficient
Enthusiastic
Friendly
Helpful
Neat
Optimistic
Patient
Vivacious

BONDS

Fill in the name of a character of the player to your left.

_____ and I are inseparable.
_____ owes me a hot cocoa.
I am envious of _____'s work ethic.
_____ can always make me smile.
_____ covered a shift for me.
_____ has never lied to me.
_____ 's singing raises my spirits.
_____ 's handiwork is inspiring.
I hide my true feelings from _____.
I am secretly in love with _____.
I look up to _____.
_____ is my apprentice.

Goblins

NAMES

Sourplum, Scablocks, Toejam, Wormtrail, Bogblush, Tiptoetooth, Beetlebuck, Bagfly, Shrieklip, Rumpscut, Crackerumb, Punk

OCCUPATIONS/GEAR

Rat catcher: Club (close, 2 wt), burlap sack (0 wt), 2d4 dead rats (1 wt)
Burglar: Prybar (close, awkward, 1 wt), burlap sack (0 wt)
Hawker: 1d4 worthless baubles
Dung miner: Pick (close, +1 damage, 2 wt), pushcart full of dung
Footpad: Sap (hand, stun, 0 wt), burlap sack (0 wt)
Gravedigger: Shovel (close, awkward, 2 wt)
Hedge wizard: Belt pouch (0 wt), Prestidigitation cantrip
Tanner: Knife (hand, 0 wt), 2d4 animal hides (2 wt)
Sack-weaver: Sewing needle and thread (0 wt), 2d4 burlap sacks (0 wt)
Mutant abomination: Big club (close, messy, +1 damage, 3 wt)
Bug-hunter: Net (reach, thrown), glass jar with 2d4 beetles (0 wt)
Chandler: 2d4 earwax candles (0 wt)

TRAITS

Physical:

Big feet
Big hands
Wild brows
Missing Teeth
Nose ring
Hunchback
Scrawled tattoos
Pot-bellied
Peg leg
Wheezy
Nasal voice
Bitten ear

Personality:

Arrogant
Cantankerous
Covetous
Crude
Deceitful
Fiery
Greedy
Gullible
Lazy
Nihilistic
Paranoid
Superstitious

BONDS

Fill in the name of a character of the player to your left.

_____ and I are inseparable.
_____ owes me a fried rat.
I am envious of _____'s good fortune.
_____ pisses me right off.
_____ got me whipped.
I lied to _____.
_____ 's snoring keeps me up all night.
_____ 's cunning is inspiring.
I hide my true feelings from _____.
I'm plotting to kill _____.
I just hate _____.
_____ is my stooge.

Elves

Throughout the year our village crafts high-quality goods for the nearby kingdom. At the height of winter, our envoy, the Red Man, transports our crafts to their castle. In exchange, they maintain peace in our village so that we may continue our merry work in safety and seclusion.

Draw the Elven village:

- One of your villager's workspaces.
- A decorated landmark.
- The Red Man's home.
- The village well.
- A place you hold dear.
- A vulnerable entryway.
- The alarm bell.
- A road from where help will arrive.

Name these things:

- A mundane object that Goblins would consider decorative.
- A precious object that Goblins would ignorantly destroy.
- A sacred display that Goblins would deface.
- An incidentally dangerous thing for Goblins to touch.

Name the village:

Prefix:

- Sugar
- Plum
- Snow
- Bell
- Jingle
- Red

Suffix:

- Glade
- Hold
- Ham
- Home
- Bough
- Brook

Player Intro: The Red Man has been kidnapped by the vile Goblins on the eve of the solstice! They have taken him to their horrible keep, for nefarious reasons, probably! If we don't rescue him tonight, he won't be able to make his delivery to the kingdom. If that were to happen, we would have to face the wrath of their crying children and angry soldiers.

Questions:

- Can you recall a time where the Red Man showed you a kindness?
- What terrible fate does your fealty to the kingdom prevent?
- What cruel trick did a Goblin play on you?
- What heroic deed did you perform in your dream last night?
- What prevents you from summoning the knights to deal with this?

Goblins

Our village is our only refuge. We've gathered here because everyone else has either kicked us out of their steadings or stuck our wee heads on pikes. We've chosen this place because nobody else will come here. We'll work to make this place a home for outcast goblins, but it needs some sprucing up.

Draw the Goblin village:

- One of your villager's workspaces.
- A landmark in sore need of decoration.
- One of your villager's haunts.
- Something despicable.
- The abandoned wizard's tower.
- The wizard-juice pond.
- A trail leading to the Elven village.

Name these things:

- The material the walls are built from.
- The mutant freak who guards the gates.
- The guardian's improvised weapon.
- Something that reminds the Elves of their good fortune.
- What dwells in the pond.
- A trap you've set in the wizard's tower.
- A material to bind the Red Man with.

Name the village:

Prefix:

- Sour
- Pickle
- Pork
- Scab
- Scrap
- Green

Suffix:

- Den
- Hole
- Burg
- Moor
- Hollow
- Bladder

Player Intro: Those Elves think they're so great. So what if they have impressive hand-eye coordination and a water source that doesn't make you grow extra limbs. We have spirit! We have guts! And we deserve to have a festive holiday just like those chumps. We've been making due with stuff from the junk pile long enough; it's time we got some of the genuine articles.

Questions

- What gift have you been hoping the Red Man would bring, but have never received?
- Who's in charge of the village?
- How will decorating the village benefit your people?
- What mischievous trick did you play on an Elf?
- How have you managed to delay the arrival of the knights?

Elves

Stakes:

- Can you rescue the Red Man in time for his delivery?
- What will your attempt cost you?
- Will you plead for the absolution or the destruction of the Goblins?

Gate Guardian

Solitary, Silent

Improvised Weapon (d6 damage) 8 HP 1 armor
close, messy

A horrible, ugly, mutated abomination. Instinct: To guard the gates.

- Drive away non-Goblins
- Utilize mutation

Goblin

Group, Small, Intelligent, Organized

Weaponized Decorations (d4 damage) 3 HP
close

Still ugly. Instinct: Thwart rescue attempts.

- Ambush
- Call more Goblins

When **something is dragged kicking and screaming into the wizard-juice pond**, the hunger of the beast that dwells within is satisfied for the day.

When you **tinker with a Goblin trap**, roll+INT. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:
You don't make too much noise.
You don't take 1d4 damage.
You salvage something useful or valuable.

Goblins

Stakes:

- Can you acquire enough decorations to have a proper holiday festival?
- What will your attempt cost you?
- Will you try to earn the respect of the Elves or make them suffer?

Workshop Elf

Group, Small, Intelligent, Organized

Workshop Tools (d4 damage) 3 HP
close

Stinking know-it-alls. Instinct: Protect their handiwork.

- Weaponize a toy
- Call more elves

Intelligent Reindeer

Solitary, Large, Intelligent

Hooves and Antlers (d6 damage) 8 HP 1 armor
close, forceful

Still stinks. Instinct: To stomp.

- Crush underfoot
- Fling with antlers

When you **ignorantly destroy something precious or valuable**, take +1 forward.

When you **stumble into a comfort of civilization**, roll+INT. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:
You don't make too much noise.
You don't take 1d4 damage.
You salvage something useful or valuable.

3

Monsterhearts 2:
The Holiday Special

CW: TEEN DRINKING, POTENTIAL TEEN VIOLENCE/SEX

SUNDAY						
MONDAY						
TUESDAY						
WEDNESDAY						
THURSDAY						
FRIDAY						
SATURDAY						

12 Days of Holiday Hell

Take these and add them to a blank December calendar. Players: Who do you know will be at what? Who do you hope stays home?

Secret Santa Gift Exchange

You give a gift. Maybe it's a hate-gift, maybe it's a love gift, maybe you just don't give a damn. It's the thought that counts, so what exactly are you thinking? (Give or take a string!) - PHILLIP WESSELS

The Christmas Play

A mishmash of scenes and musical numbers from secular stories. Plus the birth of Baby Jesus. No one's going to be sticking to any of their scripts and everyone's going to be vying for the best roles. - PHILLIP WESSELS

A Matinée at the Movies

You're probably not going to be paying much attention to what's on the screen, considering your company. - PHILLIP WESSELS

Soup Kitchen

How effective at feeding the poor y'know, promoting peace and good will, does anyone really expect you to be when a) you're with terrible people and b) some of them are monsters? - PHILLIP WESSELS

Christmas in the Park

In the middle of town they've dragged all these animatronics out and there are dozens of decorated trees from dozens of organizations. Maybe you just enjoy a nice walk through. Maybe you do whatever it takes to get some of that amazing hot cocoa. Maybe you see who's got a tree out that you can fuck with. - PHILLIP WESSELS

The Indoor Mall

The indoor mall is hot and muggy, but at least you're not freezing cold anymore. There are way too many people here and there are carolers near the food court. It's great people watching, and even though there are more 3 times the normal amount of employees... there are 10 times the customers... lots of opportunity to get away with holiday mischief. - YOSHI CREELMAN

Door-to-Door Caroling

You feel so foolish singing children's songs out here in the bitter cold. Your lips are chapped and snot keeps running out of your nose. But at least that one special someone is here to make it fun. Cross your fingers that you don't end up knocking on the door of the house where the cool kids are throwing their own party - you know, that one you weren't invited to.

Caroling door to door has to be about the lamest thing you can imagine. Your lips are chapped and your nose is running, but they expect you to put on a big smile anyway and sing Jingle Fucking Bells for the fourteenth time. There's one perk to this though - while your off-key choir is singing their hearts out, you have a brief chance to peer through the open door of your audience and get a glimpse at the nature of their home. - MICHAEL G. BARFORD

- ✦ What do you see that lets you know this family is dysfunctional? - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ✦ How can you tell that this family has recently suffered a loss? - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ✦ Their eyes scream a message at you as they force a shallow smile out...what are the signs that they need your help but can't ask? - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ They are kind, and smile at your carol, but never open the door more than a small crack. What do you glimpse though the side window that tells you this family doesn't pay their mortgage with honest money? - GREG GELDER
- ✦ What about the oldest child's voice tells you she isn't really alive? What about the mother's movements tells you she expects to be obeyed? What do you remember about this house from prior years that suggests that these people are not who they once were? - RICHARD RUANE

The Tree Lot

You're just here with you're fam, picking out one of the last ugly trees, and look who you run into? - PHILLIP WESSELS

The Annual Community Snowball Fight

The Annual Community Snowball Fight is going down. The real game is getting alone with someone special, or getting a jump on whoever needs to be brought down. Hopefully snowballs are the worst of it. - PHILLIP WESSELS

Places to hang out:

- ✦ It's not a pleasant place to camp out, but when they come out of the portable toilet they won't know what hit them (and with everyone in line watching). - PHILLIP WESSELS
- ✦ Nobody ever looks up. There is a second-floor eating area of the Chinese restaurant, outdoor balcony included. Perfect to sneak away with someone or ambush with a flurry of snowballs. - YOSHI CREELMAN
- ✦ There's a small abandoned house—almost a shack—in the woods next to the field where the snowball fight is going down. Sure, it's rumored to be haunted but that just makes it an even better spot to make-out—seclusion plus a sense of danger. And anyway you don't really believe those rumors, right? - LARRY S
- ✦ This year's snow was especially heavy and the neighborhood kids have been busy crafting tunnels into the ten foot snow drifts in the center of every cul-de-sac. One could get a lot of privacy there, or run into a lot of well armed kids. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ Terry Nelson has had a rough time moving units at Perryton Place, the new luxury condo development. They're mostly empty, and the model units are comfortably furnished. There's a lockbox with the key so that realtors can show the place, but Terry never changed the combination from 1-2-3-4. - RICHARD RUANE
- ✦ The Old Covered Bridge: a rickety wooden construction, condemned years ago but never actually pulled down. Hazard tape closes off both ends but everyone knows that it's where all the teens come and the cops just occasionally shine a torch in to scare people off. - JAMES MULLEN

Party Time

Someone's parents are off at their work's holiday soirée and it's time to get the party started. Who's bringing the beer? What's it like being both drunk and your darkest self? - PHILLIP WESSELS

The Winter Ball

A festive, cheesy, chaperoned dance that everyone's parents are shoveling them off to, and which only matters because you absolutely must have a date. People who care are all buzzing about who will be declared the "Belle of the Ball". - PHILLIP WESSELS & MICHAL G. BARFORD

Themes:

- ✦ "A Snowy Solstice" Due to some scheduling SNAFU on the part of administration this year the Winter Ball was scheduled late and on the winter solstice. Decorations include golden stars and silver moons and a lighting rig that encircles the dance floor casting long shadows across the dancers. Picture backdrop: Stonehenge! - GREG GELDER
- ✦ Some geek managed to push through a Narnia-theme, so the walls are decorated with snow-covered pines with stuffed animal heads peeking out here and there. It's not the whimsical fantasy the committee were aiming for, but a dark, brooding waking nightmare and why does it feel so cold in there? - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ This year's theme is "Ski Lodge" - who the hell thought that was a good idea? Boys and girls are dressed up in flannel and fur, at least until things start to heat up on the dance floor. Oh, and by the way? The punch bowl is filled with hot cocoa. - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ✦ Someone thought it would be cute if the theme was "holiday fantasy" as if someone mashed together high fantasy and holiday postcard art. The art club has painted some messy ice dragons and elves and little snow covered houses. - PHILLIP WESSELS
- ✦ No one is sure why Bryan Howard insisted on "Yule" as one of this year's themes. No one knows where he found the gigantic Yule Log he donated. No one knows why, when anyone asks him about it, he and his friends just laugh about "burning the old year away." - RICHARD RUANE

Extra Content

Backstory from Last Winter Break

CW: POVERTY

It's winter break. Maybe this is your hometown, maybe you're visiting relatives. Either way, the holidays this year are likely to drudge up whatever from the holidays last year. You may use one of these instead of your playbook's normal backstory:

- ✦ You got this brilliant scarf in the secret santa last year, just perfect for you and you were certain you knew who gave it to you, so you ended up asking them out and you've been dating since last winter. Then, for this winter you put on your special scarf for the first time in almost a year and your date asked you "Where did you get that?" Oops... - JAMES MULLEN
Ask who you're dating; gain 1 string on them. Ask who gave you the gift; give them 1 string.
- ✦ Gah. What a stupid gift. You were hard up for cash and didn't have much to give last year, just one of those stupid coupon books. At least things have turned around financially. Surely he's forgotten about that stupid coupon book. - GREG GELDER
Ask who you gave the gift; give them 1 string.
- ✦ When my parents were going through their "rough patch" last year, your parents had me over for dinner on Shabbat. My parents worked things out and are promising we'll have Christmas together, but I kind of want to go back to your place this year... - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
Ask who had you over; give them 1 string.
- ✦ During that storm, it was cold outside, and I stayed over longer than I should have. We definitely stayed warm, for better or worse. - PHILLIP WESSELS
Ask who had you over; give them 1 string.

A Change in Scenery

In the dark and dreary winter months, stringing up Christmas lights can bring a fresh new look to an old home. Likewise, a makeover can change your perspective on someone you had overlooked or forgotten about:

- ✦ You've covered an old jacket and pair of jeans in dozens of strips of reflective, hi-vis tapes, in all colours. You look like a neon jester or the Pied Piper on acid: no one is going to overlook you this winter! - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ You have remarkable fashion this winter because it's not winter fashion at all. It's summer wear. You seem completely unaware of the biting cold wind in your flipflops, daisy dukes and halter top. Adults all mutter something about catching a cold. - GREG GELDER

Childhood Toys

You're not quite a kid anymore, and not quite an adult. There are relics of your earlier years, much of it from Christmas in the past. You may not pay it much attention, but it's there, and it is part of you:

- ✦ A badly made glass paperweight, with large bubbles of air trapped inside the glass. - LU QUADE
- ✦ A mini-projector with cartoon strips you slot into the side; you move the strip through one frame at a time and read the story like a comic book. You used to love putting on shows for your family and were as proud as if you had made them yourself. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ A teddy bear you used to dress up in doll clothes, feed with a bottle, sleep with and read to. You've kept it a secret for so long because boy's aren't supposed to play dress up with dolls. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ After Bella bit that neighbor who kept grabbing you, Animal Control came and took her away. A week later, Bella's bean-bag likeness appeared at the foot of your bed. After six years, the stuffed animal is threadbare, but as long as you can see Bean-Bag Bella before you fall asleep, you know you'll be safe. - RICHARD RUANE

Gazing into the Abyss

Around this time of the year, the ways of the world are slightly skewed. The Abyss is muddled, confused, curious. It emerges from itself. It burns through the fabric of reality where reality burns. Who knows what may happen when you look in its flames?

- ✦ It's a standard myth around town that you can tell whether it's going to snow or not by looking into the crackling flames and watching how the sparks rise. It's less well known that you can change that vision by tossing a handful of salt into the fire... - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ You're off in your own world, zoning out, when your longtime crush bumps into you. They apologize and throw you a quick grin before heading off. You didn't think they even knew your name! - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ✦ It's a tradition for the living to tell histories of ghosts around the winter fire. But if you ignore everyone else, stare into the glowing coals, and listen carefully to the crackling flames, you can hear the voices of ghosts telling the futures of the living. - RICHARD RUANE

Surviving the Hunt

Even though it's cold, there are still hunters. They hunt what you'd expect, like deer, but sometimes they hunt what you don't expect. Like you.

- ✦ The snow forms a deep quilt over the ground, concealing whatever lies beneath; an incautious hunter might easily be fooled into following your 'tracks' over the icy surface of a pond and fall through.. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ In the dark of the winter woods, hunters can't always see what they're hunting. Be on the lookout for anyone you could place between yourself and the hunt as a distraction. - RICHARD RUANE

Mistletoe

CW: COERCED PHYSICAL INTIMACY Around town, mistletoe is strategically hung in certain establishments.

NOTE: Mistletoe isn't an excuse to skip consent and make someone else at the table uncomfortable! Ask players if and how they want to engage in mistletoe situations. Reserve mistletoe moments for when it's no accident and those involved intend to be there together; it's only ever everyone else who isn't in on it.

- ✦ Somehow that shy, repressed dweeb Trevor Lange got himself elected Winterfest King this year. Superstar jock Byan Howard is a good sport about losing and is even making Trevor a mistletoe crown. Don't believe those geeks who say they saw Bryan naked in the old woods, harvesting the mistletoe with a silver scythe by moonlight. - RICHARD RUANE
- ✦ Some wag tied a piece of mistletoe to a shower head in the male changing rooms at the stadium! Everyone's joking about it and daring each other to go shower under it, but that cute goalie looked right into your eyes earlier and now he's walking into the shower... - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ The river-walk is largely ignored this time of year but some enterprising park employee has placed mistletoe beneath one of the bridges, right above the small island below. It's impossible to just run into someone there, but the cute boy who works the hot chocolate cart nearby is said to never turn down a dare. - GREG GELDER

Festive Recreation

The town's local dealer gets surprisingly festive during the holiday and enjoys getting creative with their offerings.

- ✦ The holidays are a time of goodwill and trust. But does that really explain why everyone is suddenly so free with the secrets they promised to keep? - RICHARD RUANE
- ✦ The aftereffects of the drugs give the user a powerful sense of déjà vu that lasts all day; it's not just that events feel familiar, but as if they had repeated them again and again and again... - JAMES MULLEN

Wingmen

Courting someone new is not always easy, especially when you're prone to howling at the moon or sucking blood on occasion. Having someone with you to boost your confidence and break the ice can be beneficial:

- ✦ You need someone to make you look good and watch your back, so who better than The Hollow? Able to feel comfortable anywhere without really understanding why, just follow their lead and hope they don't get overwhelmed by to situation... - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ As long as you can steer the conversation away from blood rituals (which can be surprisingly hard) Ayisha is a fantastic wingman (or... winggirl?) always talking you up to the cute out-of-towners who don't know you yet. She's always telling you the next day that you owe her one. Surely shes only joking about those blood rituals. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ People aren't drawn to Lewis, they're drawn into his orbit. He's friendly and warm, literally warm, so after colliding with others circling around him, you never know who you might end up skin to skin with - RICHARD RUANE

Holly

Holly only arrived in town the day after Halloween, but already she seems to have spread her vines all over the place. She's stuck a thumb in every sugar plum pie, and said, "What a good girl am I!" - MICHAEL G. BARFORD

Ways Holly has established hold over town:

- ✦ Holly is throwing a Winter Festival Meal & Dance, promising five courses, hot cider, music, dancing and entertainment. The tickets are in high demand and the buzz around town is that this is an event not to be missed, but if you can't afford the entry price, she has been known to offer a special deal... - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ Lately packages have been arriving in nearly everyone's mail boxes. Inside are cast pewter mistletoe ornaments. People have been quite excited by their gifts and have hung them in their living rooms and kitchens. You know, places where one expects to have privacy, where surely nobody can hear them. - GREG GELDER

- ✦ Whenever a stranger offends a local, Holly is always right there, whispering. "I'm sorry THEY did this..." she says. "I am here. I can keep you safe. Just do as I say." - RICHARD RUANE
- ✦ The locals have worked themselves up into a frenzy over the giant advent calendar Holly has fashioned in her front yard. Over time, the "gifts" she has revealed have become less cheerful and more...gruesome. - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ✦ Holly was behind in her schoolwork but somehow she's now a contender for top of the class. All of the teachers adore her in a really creepy way. - PHILLIP WESSELS

Later, Holly's plan is finally coming to fruition. She's somehow got everyone doing her bidding. It's gross. But it's not just that she's as popular as ever--this is some freaky mind control shit. You've got to shut her down before the town descends into chaos.

- ✦ The town courthouse has been working overtime to hear all the divorce cases it has been suddenly receiving. People continue to claim strange improprieties of their spouse and can all provide video evidence. How they got the video is as hard to remember as the incident is for their spouse. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ The town Christmas tree, always a gathering place this close to the holiday, is strangely neglected and covered in ivy leaves. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ The last ten days have seen a winter wind shift and dense freezing fog cover the town. Anyone you ask has cancelled their travel plans this season. "I didn't even really want to leave." they all say, verbatim, every time. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ All the stores are playing seasonal music, but for the last few hours they've all been stuck on the same tune on endless repeat: "The Holly & The Ivy." - JAMES MULLEN

The Fae on Winter Break

It is winter. The colors are shifting, and with that, the Fae shift as well. Winter is the time of cold resolve. We can feel the freeze coming, the time in which our magic is dormant, frozen. When spring comes, we will blossom. For now, we must prepare. - PHILLIP WESSELS

A desperate fae will make any promise to itself in the fallow, barren months of winter: I will not get drunk, I will not overeat, I will not sleep with everyone I meet. The substance hardly matters, because a Fae gains power from each promise to themselves that is broken, so this is no more than an a hibernating bear surviving off it's own fat stores. - JAMES MULLEN

You have made a promise to yourself:

- ✦ New Year's resolutions mean a lot more to a Fae than your average Joe. So when I say that I'm going to be Prom King next year, I mean it. - MICHAEL G. BARFORD
- ✦ I have been telling all my friends my incredibly complicated and situational new years resolutions for weeks now to the point of irritation. "I will never drink soda on a Tuesday if the next week will have a full moon!" I'll declare loudly in the middle of conversation. Everyone rolled their eyes in unison, but Chang scribbled something in his notebook. I'll find out what he's up to. - GREG GELDER

The Ghost on Winter Break

Sometimes death has its perks, and for the Ghost, it's this new move:

Spirit Guide - You can take people away into visions. Ask questions to paint what each is like, and towards what you want them to take away. Say what you want them to do. If they do it they gain an XP.

- ✦ The Ghost can carry you into your own past, visiting your childhood and youth to remind you of what you used to be and how you set out on the path that brought you to where you are. Perhaps what you see will renew your sense of purpose, but you might also see the folly in your current course of action. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ The Ghost's penchant for golden age musicals shows through their elaborate dream ballet sequences that they pull others into. The theatrics are always in high gear with saturated light and heavy fog effects and mostly serve to sum up recent events, not drive narrative. The dreamer often awakes with clarified purpose but a gut feeling they could have skipped the whole thing or just gone to the bathroom. The feeling quickly fades. - GREG GELDER
- ✦ Ghosts can take you into the Cold of Winters Yet to Come. There you can name an enemy and the ghost will show you the shadows of one future your enemy dreads. - RICHARD RUANE

The Ghoul on Winter Break

The Ghoul is dead. Their blood runs cold and they lie in wait to consume what warmth they can from those who come their way.

- ✦ Always pale anyway, the Ghoul's colours start to fade altogether: their hair, their eyes, even the veins under their skin turn a soft, almost glowing white. Even the clothes they wear start to bleach, fading, paling, turning everything the same shade as snow. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ "It was just weird Mrs. Patterson! I sat down in the same chair as them in the library but you know, instead of that lingering 'butt warmth' the chair was cold, like ICE cold, Mrs. Patterson! It's just weird, is all I'm saying, and I'd like a new project partner." - GREG GELDER
- ✦ It's not apathy, it's crueler: laughter, tears, a kiss, movies, music, sexual release... It doesn't matter. When the cold sets in, you stop asking anything except "what's in it for me?" - RICHARD RUANE

The Infernal on Winter Break

The Infernal has a deal with an enigmatic Dark Power. Let's make it a little less enigmatic.

- ✦ **CW: GASLIGHTING, ABUSE, NEGLECT, FAMILY ILLNESS** The Peaceful Family is one demon who manifests in the form of family members to tell people what it thinks they want to hear: "Go where you want... Your mom never really misses you"; "What's the point in visiting your sick brother? You can't cure him..."; "Give Daddy a chance and maybe he won't get violent this year." - RICHARD RUANE
- ✦ Long ago, the Winter King ruled for a single day, the shortest of the year, before being sacrificed to make the sun return. The Dark Power was born from this ritual, but the sacrifices have dwindled over the centuries: this year, the Dark Power wants to collect on its overdue bill, with interest. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ Zogomus might be a minor soul accountant in hell but he's one of the last people you want to owe a debt. His annual report is due and he needs the cook the books to come out clean this year for the first time ever. Quotas aren't personal, it's policy. - GREG GELDER

Part of the reason the Infernal has a dark power is because that dark power is locked down, somehow, and needs agents to do its bidding. But any lock can be removed with the right key or pick.

- ✦ At the bottom of the lake there is an old, heavy, pottery effigy of the angelic being who holds the Dark Power prisoner. If it could be brought to the surface and heated in a kiln until it shattered, the guard on the Dark Power's prison would be gone. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ The local radio tower had some very peculiar contractors show up right before commissioning. After showing some government credentials and clearing the site a single worker scaled the tower and installed a single black octagonal box at the very top. Candy, who scaled the structure on a dare, says it's covered in silver etchings. - GREG GELDER

The Mortal on Winter Break

It's winter break, which means whirlwind winter romance. The Mortal is, of course, involved. It's doomed from the start--but this time, it's not the Mortal's fault.

- ✦ One of the Mortal's oldest, same-gender friends has been so helpful, so kind, always covering for them and providing a shoulder to cry on... there may be deeper feelings to explore, but how do you approach such delicate matters of sexual identity with them without damaging that special friendship? - JAMES MULLEN

The Queen on Winter Break

The Queen is so popular. The Queen could fall in shit and come out of it smelling like roses.

- ✦ There was an outbreak of shoplifting at the mall last year, to the point where many businesses announced they wouldn't let unaccompanied high schoolers through their doors any more. No-one ever actually caught The Queen doing anything, but they did get a lot more presents from admirers that year... - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ Everyone got sick at last year's Christmas party from some seriously under-cooked hors d'oeuvres. Of course the Queen was the one who picked the caterer and the menu but through some serpentine rumor-mill bullshit they managed to peg it all on the venue. Nearly everyone has forgotten that they "cooked" those pork shoulder sliders and told everyone at the party as much. - GREG GELDER

The Vampire on Winter Break

The Vampire is immortal and with that, they slip into life after life. Their true self only disrobes from these on occasion, to look at what they are gaining over the course of eternity:

- ✦ An old military uniform, reminding them of the time when they fought for a just cause (or in an unjust war); a lot of blood was spilled, providing a good cover for feeding. - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ A strongly starched and ornate tri-corner hat. The inner brim has a oddly shaped brown stain. The attached feather belongs to the extinct passenger pigeon. - GREG GELDER

The Werewolf on Winter Break

It smelled delicious. You couldn't help yourself; like any werewolf, you are a predator. But having consumed this strange creature is having some effect on you:

- ✦ The reindeer meat gives those who consume it strange visions: temporal and spatial distortions - real and imagined times and places, impossible to differentiate the real and the unreal. - LU QUADE
- ✦ Being able to fly is like, really cool, when you can control it; or choose when it happens; or choose when it stops. - GREG GELDER

The Witch on Winter Break

It's the holidays, the time for sweets & treats! The Witch gains this hex:

Candy Connection - The Witch gains a string on whoever eats candy made in the Hex-Casting ritual, while the hexed loses a string on them. The Witch may spend the string on who ate it immediately to apply an effect per the candy's description. Eating a candy gives 1 XP per consumer per ritual.

- ✦ The witch's Chocolate Forget-Me-Nots will allow you to forget all the petty little cruelties of Bellehome life. Of course, now the witch will get to remember them for you, and put those memories to use. - RICHARD RUANE
- ✦ The Lemon Drops are sharp and sour, few can bear the taste for long, which gets stronger the longer you hold it in your mouth. As long as you keep a Lemon Drop in your mouth, you can neither use nor be effected by any supernatural power, but be warned: the temptation to spit it out grows with every moment! - JAMES MULLEN
- ✦ The witch's kettle corn sold at the farmer's market has been a top seller all week. What people aren't taking about is waking from a stupor in embarrassing situations with the witch holding some fresh polaroids. - GREG GELDER

Notes on the Krampus



The Krampus

They thought you did it. You didn't! But they don't like the look of you. You're what they call a "bad kid." Something fucked up happens in a small town and they point fingers at the likes of you.

Now something's come over you... you're changing. Physically, into some kind of demon. People are noticing, but for some reason instead of freaking out they act like they've been completely unplugged... and that's how you'll get what you want.

That's how you'll find the real monsters.

Credits

*This is a Skin for Monsterhearts 2, available at buriedwithoutceremony.com
This skin designed by the community for Holiday Happenings*

Identity

Name: Nick, Kris, Jes, Lane, Jonah, Harvey, Brad, Mona, Derrick

Look: disheveled, clean-cut, punk, lude, humble

Eyes: angry eyes, bedroom eyes, wide eyes, manic eyes, penetrating eyes

Origin: On December 5th...

your closest was murdered, your sibling went missing, your school was burned down, your family's presents disappeared from under the tree,

Why does everyone blame you for it?

Your Backstory

People can't control themselves well around you. Gain 2 strings on everyone.

One person has been with you through everything. Give them 2 strings on you. Ditch yours on them.

Strings

Darkest Self

When you are around people, they drop all of their inhibitions and fulfill their impulses or desires with immediacy and conviction. They are generally capable of nothing else. You escape your darkest self when Darwinism takes its toll and the storm calms back down a bit.



Harm

Experience ○○○○○

- Add +1 to one of your stats.
- Take another Krampus move.
- Take another Krampus move.
- Take a move from any Skin.
- Take a move from any Skin.
- You have **8 Demonic Reindeer**.

Conditions

Hot 2	Cold 1	Volatile -1	Dark -1
Hot 1	Cold 2	Volatile -1	Dark -1

Krampus Moves

You get this one. Choose two more:

○ *Uninhibitor*

Ask at any time, "what is this character's impulse or desire?" If it's a player, offer an experience point to act on it in an irrevocable way. Non-player characters will just do so. Add this option to Pulling Strings:

- ✦ they must answer you truthfully and in sordid detail

○ *Morality Check*

This morning you woke up with glowing red eyes. You can ask someone to give you the gift they intend to give someone else who doesn't deserve it, or else you will hunt that someone else. You get to know what that gift is so you'll know whether it was deserved.

○ *Gift of Coal*

This morning you woke up on a bed of coals. You may smile, give someone one of these chunks of coal and tell them they've been naughty. Then, roll+COLD. On a hit they gain the Condition crept out; gain a String on them.

○ *Clomp Clomp*

This morning you woke up with hooves. When you sneak around someone. Roll+COLD. On a hit, all they observe is the sound of your steps: they gain the Condition terrified or curious.

○ *Instruments*

This morning you woke up and next to a rusty iron chain with bells attached. Also, a long bundle of sticks bound tightly with leather straps. You don't need to carry these items with you. When you want them, they just appear in your hands. Use them to take +1 to clomp clomp or lash out with violence.

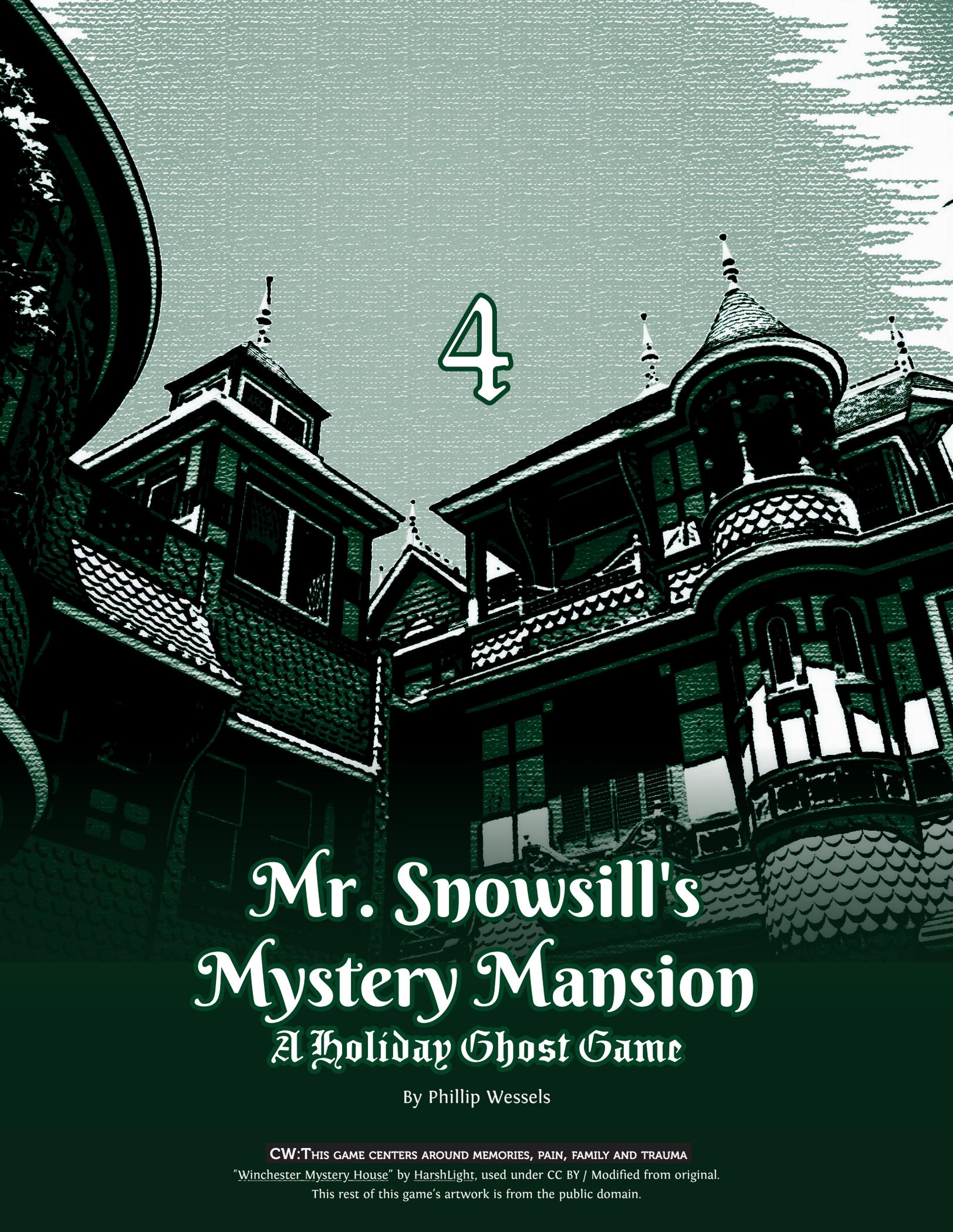
○ *Lust Blessing*

This morning you woke up with your tongue hanging a foot out of your mouth. When you slither your long tongue toward someone invitingly, roll+hot. On a hit, they gain the condition aroused or disgusted, their choice. • On a 10+, you both gain XP if they act on the condition. • On a 7-9, they only have the condition while they see your lolling appendage.

○ *Unchained*

This morning you woke up with discolored skin. When you strip and reveal your flesh, roll+HOT. On a hit, you gain the Condition sex god. You always get at least the 7-9 effects when you roll to turn someone on. This all lasts only while you remain in the buff.

Sex Move When you join others in sex, gain a String on them. When you initiate sex with someone, lose all Strings on them; they are immune to you until you have sex with someone else.



4

Mr. Snowsill's Mystery Mansion

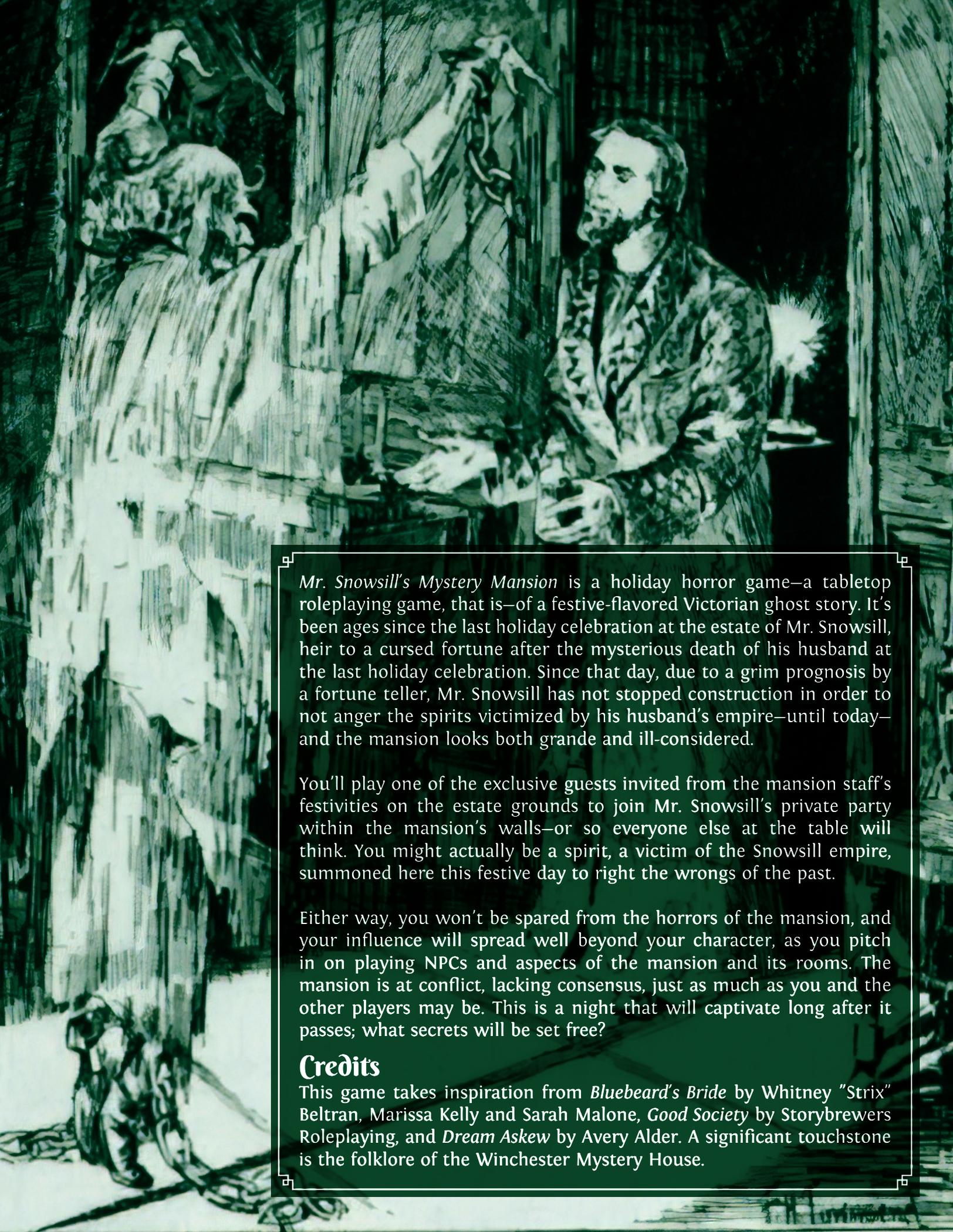
A Holiday Ghost Game

By Phillip Wessels

CW: THIS GAME CENTERS AROUND MEMORIES, PAIN, FAMILY AND TRAUMA

"Winchester Mystery House" by HarshLight, used under CC BY / Modified from original.

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Mr. Snowsill's Mystery Mansion is a holiday horror game—a tabletop roleplaying game, that is—of a festive-flavored Victorian ghost story. It's been ages since the last holiday celebration at the estate of Mr. Snowsill, heir to a cursed fortune after the mysterious death of his husband at the last holiday celebration. Since that day, due to a grim prognosis by a fortune teller, Mr. Snowsill has not stopped construction in order to not anger the spirits victimized by his husband's empire—until today—and the mansion looks both grande and ill-considered.

You'll play one of the exclusive guests invited from the mansion staff's festivities on the estate grounds to join Mr. Snowsill's private party within the mansion's walls—or so everyone else at the table will think. You might actually be a spirit, a victim of the Snowsill empire, summoned here this festive day to right the wrongs of the past.

Either way, you won't be spared from the horrors of the mansion, and your influence will spread well beyond your character, as you pitch in on playing NPCs and aspects of the mansion and its rooms. The mansion is at conflict, lacking consensus, just as much as you and the other players may be. This is a night that will captivate long after it passes; what secrets will be set free?

Credits

This game takes inspiration from *Bluebeard's Bride* by Whitney "Strix" Beltran, Marissa Kelly and Sarah Malone, *Good Society* by Storybrewers Roleplaying, and *Dream Askew* by Avery Alder. A significant touchstone is the folklore of the Winchester Mystery House.

About This Society

You may have some questions about what kind of story this will be, especially in regards to the norms of Victorian society. Because the goal of Holiday Happenings is to bring comfort and joy to queer and other marginalized folk, and the aim is for this to be played as a one-shot, the suggested scope is below. However, please discuss it as a group, come to a consensus, and commit to it as you play.

- 🌀 This will be a silly good time, punctuated with flirty fun and spooky melodrama. Non-mechanical consequences are fleeting.
- 🌀 Historical accuracy is of little importance
- 🌀 It's normal for people of all or no genders to:
 - 🌀 be successful and respected in their work.
 - 🌀 be forward and proactive in courting romance.
 - 🌀 have intimacy with any number of friends or partners, regardless of gender.
- 🌀 In this world, racial prejudice and queerphobia do not exist.

What you need to play

- 🌀 Three to five players
- 🌀 An index card for each player to track their impressions
- 🌀 An index card with two tracks drawn on it, each track going from 0 to 3.
- 🌀 Yet unlit tea candles, one for each player
- 🌀 A bag or box
- 🌀 Tokens
- 🌀 Pencils & index cards
- 🌀 The X-Card (draw an x on an index card)
- 🌀 3-4 Hours

The X-Card

A game of Mr. Snowsill's Mystery Mansion may turn challenging in its social machinations and grotesqueness (or otherwise). This safety tool will help your group resolve unwanted content. To quote its designer, John Stavropoulos:

The X-Card is an optional tool that allows anyone in your game (including you) to edit out any content anyone is uncomfortable with as you play. Since most RPGs are improvisational and we will not know what will happen till it happens, it is possible the game will go in a direction people do not want. An X-Card is a simple tool used to highlight and resolve problems as they arise.

Read this when you start a game:

I'd like your help to make this game fun for everyone. If anything makes you uncomfortable, just lift this card up, or simply tap it.

You don't have to explain why, it doesn't matter why, we simply edit out anything X-Carded. If there is ever an issue, anyone can call for a break so we can talk privately.

I know it sounds funny, but it will help us play amazing games together and usually I'm the one who uses the X-Card to protect myself from all of you! Thank you!

The Guests

As a player you will play a guest in the mansion. You have:

- 🌀 Your **presentation**, **temperament**, and **mannerisms**. Each of these has a symbol for positive or negative, and these can be used to inform your impressions. Choose a positive and negative from each section. Share your choices.
- 🌀 Two **tokens** each

Presentation

Ornate
Shapely
Sharp
Teasing
Stylish
Festive

❖ Pretentious
❖ Gaudy
❖ Comformative droll
❖ Lackluster drab
❖ Unpolished
❖ Risqué

Temperament

Supportive
Appreciative
Clever
Cordial
Considerate
Earnest

❖ Argumentative
❖ Gossip
❖ Two-faced
❖ Crude
❖ Worrywart
❖ Naive

Mannerisms

Upright
Graceful
Inviting
Attentive
Lively
Cozy

❖ Clumsy
❖ Aloof
❖ Laid-back
❖ Space-taking
❖ Careless
❖ Disruptive





Starting the Game

First we determine who is a ghost:

1. Take the yet unlit tea candles. Each player has the option to light and extinguish one. This increases the number of ghost player characters.
2. Place each tea candle in a box or bag.
3. Gently shuffle the candles to disguise which were lit and extinguished.
4. Each player takes a candle, careful not to reveal if it was previously lit and extinguished. If it was, the player's character is a ghost.
5. All of the players return their candles to the bag or box where they may be anonymized.

You've just appeared at the house a moment ago. The mansion will hold off on the supernatural or anything strange too distracting. Each player should do the following:

1. There have been whispers of your behavior amidst the festivities outside (if you're a ghost, it's gossip, of course). Give out an index card with a positive impression tag and an index card with a negative impression tag, each to a different player (you are the **giver** and they are the **takers** for these cards). Don't let others see them.
2. Have a moment. What's the first thing you do at the party? Where is it, who's with you? Jump straight to it, in media res. You make your **first impressions** on the party, one positive and one negative. On your index card write down a tag (a single word) for each.

Cycle of Play

From here, Mr. Snowsill's Mystery Mansion is played in a repeating cycle of two phases: a mingle chapter and an exploration chapter. As you make more of a positive or negative impression with the party, the more your fate is sealed—in these walls or beyond them.



Mingle Chapter

1. Whisper like partygoers about the others and about Mr. Snowsill and his late husband; not as your characters, but characterizing the party in general. What rumors or gossip are flying around?
 - ☞ If you defied your negative presentation, temperament or mannerism, partygoers chat about it. You gain a positive tag.
 - ☞ If you defied your positive presentation, temperament or mannerism, partygoers chat about it. You gain a negative tag.
2. Where are you in the open areas of the house, and who is with you? What do each of you want to see of yours and each others' characters in this phase? Skip straight to these events (or your inversion of them), in media res. No one has the lamp and the mansion will hold off on the supernatural or anything strange too distracting.
 - ☞ Takers may gossip at the party to give a secret tag they hold to the corresponding giver, whenever they want, or whenever you ask. The giver takes another token when they do. Note: this may be best saved for later than the first mingle chapter.
 - ☞ If the rules haven't dictated who doesn't get a candle, someone gives a token to another; this person doesn't get a candle and gives their inner monologue going into the exploration phase.

Exploration Chapter

All but one of you takes a candle. Whoever doesn't have a lit candle sees the mansion's horrors, and they will be the focus in the moment. Other players should take care to bring out the mansion moves.

Your Fate

If it's time to move to a Mingle chapter and you have or would gain a third tag (positive or negative), your fate is sealed.

- With 3 negative tags (gain your 3rd tag if it's been prescribed), you get a **doomed** outcome. Whether they leave you, you leave or you are pulled away, you are separated from the others. In your folly or due to a horror of the mansion, you die and become a ghost. If you're already a ghost, you revisit the circumstances of your death and reveal a new truth about the Snowsill legacy. Choose:
 - Your desire is the redemption of the Snowsill legacy
 - You desire now to express the maleficence in the Snowsill legacy
- With 3 positive tags (gain your 3rd tag if it's been prescribed), if a mystery track (**Redemption** or **Maleficence**) has 3 marks, you sway the rest of the party to leave either believing the Snowsill legacy is redeemed, or that it is truly maleficent. Move to the **Denouement**.



Denouement

The denouement is the end of the game, and only happens under the condition above. Players whose characters survived may spend their remaining tokens to share a moment in a montage of the rest of their holidays.

Players whose characters didn't survive may spend their remaining tokens to share a moment in a montage of Mr. Snowsill's fate.

The Guests

Candlelight moves help you tour the mansion and its rooms. Only someone with a candle can use these moves.

- 🌀 **Disturb an eye-catching object or room** - How does something stand out in the light? If it's a room, what's its door like? Ask one:
 - 🌀 Who does or did this belong to? Do you feel their presence?
 - 🌀 What is the history of this?
 - 🌀 What is strange about this?
 - 🌀 Why did Mr. Snowsill keep this item? Or, why is this door closed?
- 🌀 **Carry the light** - Ask one:
 - 🌀 What hazardous architecture is here?
 - 🌀 What becomes more horrific as you move the light away?
 - 🌀 How has this room been prepared for the party?
 - 🌀 What servant is revealed and how are they labouring?
- 🌀 **Give comfort or joy** - How do you share the warmth of the holidays? Gain a token, though you may first have to convince someone of your good intentions.

Darkness moves allow you to take action. Only one without a candle can use darkness moves.

- 🌀 **Squint in the darkness** - Name what you fear most is in the darkness. Ask: how is it worse than what I am afraid of? Choose two (whichever you don't choose matters).
 - 🌀 Gain a token.
 - 🌀 It doesn't possess you with its maleficence (you might do something like blow out a candle, or be subject to self-defence and be set to return to the party looking like a mess).
 - 🌀 It doesn't show you its trauma due to the Snowsills.
- 🌀 **Ask for a candle** - Offer a token to another, in trade for their candle; if they accept, whatever horror was there, it disappears - momentarily. It will shortly make itself known again, to whoever doesn't have a candle.
- 🌀 **Cry out for another** - Sacrifice a token. Who do you call for? If they come, whatever horror was there, it disappears. If they dismiss your plea, you are worse for the shock of it; you are set to make a negative impression once you return to the party.

Closing moves return all of you to the party, carrying this episode with you. Only one without a candle can use awakening moves. Use a closing move when you are ready to end this exploration chapter and move to the next mingle chapter. No matter which move you chose, this room is sealed.

- 🌀 **Run away** - When you have an opening to leave and you take it, you are running away. The others follow after you. Whoever controls The Boughs will describe how you run into safety. As you return to the party, what negative impression do you make of yourself?
- 🌀 **Put to Rest** - Spend a token to put to rest a controversy of the Snowsill legacy. Detail what you think happened to whom and why, and what clue in the room supports this. Mark it on the matching mystery track.
 - 🌀 If it's a **clue of Redemption**, it would seem that the Snowsill legacy is more complicated than its wrongdoings. You are relieved; return to the party and make a positive impression for yourself and Mr. Snowsill.
 - 🌀 If it's a **clue of Maleficence**, it would seem that the evils of the Snowsill legacy cannot be ignored. You are worse for the shock of it; return to the party and make a negative impression for yourself and Mr. Snowsill.



The Mansion Aspects & Moves

The aspect has five aspects, one of which a player must play. What aspects players choose will inform the tone and story of the game. Any player can use a mansion move at any interesting time.

🌀 **The Boughs** - the halls are decked and a party is going on! Hand this off when you have no candle, or you want to engage in the party. Mansion moves:

- 🌀 Interrupt with partygoers
- 🌀 Demand practice of a tradition
- 🌀 Describe festive decoratio

🌀 **The Madness** - the mansion has secret, labyrinthine and nonsensical architecture. Hand this off when you have no candle, or you explore the mansion. Mansion moves:

- 🌀 Twist to unknown or unwanted places
- 🌀 Announce a potential hazard
- 🌀 Offer a path or opportunity

🌀 **The Shadows** - the mansion exists both in the present and the dark past. Hand this off when you have no candle, or you look closer at your surroundings. Mansion moves:

- 🌀 Bring something or someone out from hiding
- 🌀 Describe something morbid
- 🌀 Ask for their inner thoughts

🌀 **The Wind** - the mansion scares with sensory horror & details that are real and unreal. Hand this off when you have no candle, or you go where you shouldn't. Mansion moves:

- 🌀 Reveal sight, sound, smell, taste, texture, temperature
- 🌀 Describe something grotesque
- 🌀 Rip through with ghostly flashes

🌀 **The Hearths** - the mansion has many hearths, providing comfort, warmth and the perfect romantic backdrop. Hand this off when you have no candle, or you want romance or intimacy. Mansion moves:

- 🌀 Describe something heartfelt
- 🌀 Ask how they make themselves comfortable
- 🌀 Give privacy and warmth



5

A VERY HEXY SOLSTICE

a game of witches and their demon(s)

by Kate Bullock

Blessed Be, Witches! Let's get **HEXY!**

Winter Solstice is around the corner and it's time to get witchy. You and your polycule coven have come together on the darkest night of the year to destroy a demon who has been haunting you all. The demon has manifested in your coven for the entire winter now, and it has impacted each of you and your relationships differently.

This game includes fire and lighting things on fire. Be safe, be smart, and don't light yourselves, your house, or each other on fire. Keep your hair tied up, the extinguisher nearby, and ensure there's ventilation for smoke. If you're uncomfortable burning things, no problem! Just get some fake tea lights, put those in your bowl, and pretend to burn what needs to be burned!

AVHS is a gmless, diceless game for a bunch of witches to deal with their insecurities and remember to love each other in the darkest of times. The game has verbally and emotionally abusive language and actions. These can be modified to include and remove content as the players need.

Everyone will play a witch and will play the demon once. Because of the terrible influence of the demon, the witches are being cruel to each other and the demon is being horrible to them in return. The goal of the witches is to unite as a coven, banish the demon, and become their better selves before the end of Winter Solstice.

Supplies for Wicked Witches

- ⊛ Your coven aka some people (the witchier the better, dressed in witchy stuff, like black clothes and pentacles and badass eyeliner, no capes)
- ⊛ Writing Tools and shit to write on (paper, pens, markers)
- ⊛ A safe place to burn shit (cauldron, bowl, fireplace)
- ⊛ A fire extinguisher (in case the demon does some fucky shit)
- ⊛ Something to drink (wine, water, ginger ale, beer, milk, tea)
- ⊛ Something to eat (bread, crackers, seeds, cured meats, hummus, nuts, dried fruit)
- ⊛ Candles (colour matters, choose ones you want)
- ⊛ Index cards

Boundaries and Limitations

AVHS is a game where characters will deliberately be cruel, manipulative, and hurtful to other characters, as they play witches being possessed by a petty demon who thrives on conflict and discord. If that doesn't sound fun to you, this isn't a game for you. Good job recognizing that and saying not today, satan!

If this does sound fun to you, welcome! You will be playing witches who are becoming possessed by a demon as you celebrate Winter Solstice and attempt to banish the demon forever. But the demon is crafty, knows your weaknesses, and can exploit your insecurities. To do this, the demon will take cheap shots, encourage arguing, and try to turn the witches against each other.

AVHS is not an opportunity to be mean to each other as players. Witches are to keep within the boundaries of the cards in the game, and are never to use real life knowledge or secrets to hurt players.

This game is not an actual spell, nor does it demonstrate or imitate actual witchcraft. That being said, if you decide to play this game closer to imitating or engaging in actual witchcraft, please be mindful it is a religion and should be treated with respect and integrity.

Finally, this game contains fire. Keep the extinguisher nearby (or some water) and be prepared to douse your container. Don't play with fire unless you're okay and safe to do so. Otherwise, like every other game, play pretend! Use artificial tea lights and your imagination.



SET UP

Each player writes down their character's name, pronouns, age, a few things they love about life, a few things they hate, and what makes them a great witch on an index card. Share these details aloud with your coven.

Relationship Map

Start with the weirdest witch, and go around the table deosil. Tell one witch of your choosing which relationship you have with them. You can choose from any of the list, but every witch must have one of the two bolded relationships. Continue going around the table until there's a relationship between each witch.

Each player writes down one witch in their coven for each of the following, starting at the top and going until there are no more witches. They cannot be doubled.

- ★ You are my long-term partner
- ★ You are my new partner
- ★ You are my best friend
- ★ You are someone I desperately want to be friends with
- ★ You are my on again off again partner
- ★ You are my recent ex
- ★ You are my teacher or mentor

Go around the table and reveal your relationships, changing and adjusting them as you need to make your relationships cohesive. Draw a map on a scrap paper if you find that helpful. For each relationship, state what's the best part of the relationship, and what threatens the relationship.

For this game, partner refers to someone we share a mutual, deep connection with and agreed upon relationship structure. This can be romantic or not, sexual or not. That is up to the players.

Creating Your Demon

We all know the holidays are taxing. Your demons come out to play, especially during Scorpio season and during the time leading up to Winter Solstice, when the dark has taken hold of the earth.

In this game, Demons are legit. They're baddies, here to fuck with the coven. One demon is haunting the coven, revealing their insecurities, and touching on their fears. This has kept the coven on edge and struggling to stay together. Realizing the demon could tear them apart, they've come together to try to deal with the demon once and for all.

But demons can be really difficult to deal with, and not all witches may be up to dealing with just how bad a demon can be. To ensure that all the witches are comfortable, hand out index cards to each witch and have them write two sections: what the demon can't do, what the demon can do.

What the Demon Can't Do should cover anything the witches don't want or like in the game. This should include triggers, content, ideas, scenes, or relationship tropes. Anything that could come up in play. This list also applies to Witches. No one gets to do these things!

What the Demon Can Do should be things people want to see this sneaky demon doing. This will help everyone portray the demon accurately. None of these things should be so obvious it gives the demon away though!

Make a master list from the index cards handed in.

Important Note: If something on a Can Do list conflicts with a Can't Do, the Can't Do list wins and that's where it gets written down.

Take one index card per witch and write down something the demon does from the Can Do list on each card. You might have cards like: Lie, manipulate, see secrets of, etc.. Hand one of these cards to each witch and have them write their character name and how this particular thing the demon does is used against them, such as with a secret the demon has found out, an insecurity the witch has, a relationship they're nervous about, or some other tidbit the demon could use.

Ex: Lilith gets a Demon card that says "Sees how things will end" and writes: *Lilith: Sees how things will end: it constantly tells her she'll fail out of school because she's irresponsible, stupid, and lazy.*

The demon won't mince words, but be aware any words you write down, the demon may say. If you realize you need to add some stuff to the Can't Do list while you write these demon cards, then add to the list!

Shuffle the cards and hand them to each witch. The witch can glance at the card to ensure they didn't get their own. They should trade with someone if they did.

Creating Your Insecurities

Each witch will be pressured by the darkness and the demon to bring out their worst self during the ritual. Each witch will write one card per other witch in the coven. These are points of conflict or tension, that come from the witch's insecurities, fears, or past difficulties, that will come up in play.

If there are five witches in the coven, you will write four of these. If there are three, you will write two, etc.

These insecurities, fear, or past traumas should tie to another witch in the coven. Make sure you note who the insecurities focus on somewhere on the card so that you understand it. Don't provide too much detail, but if you have an idea of how to make it a potent conflict, make note of that on the card to help prompt you later.

Once these are created, shuffle them with the demon card. Each witch should have one card per witch total. These will form a face down pile in front of each witch.

The Circle

Now that your decks are ready, it's time to create your circle. Decide where you're going to play, on the ground, at a table, around a coffee table, wherever you like. Place your deck and one unlit candle before you. In the centre should be a bowl or cauldron, where you will burn things. Place snacks, drinks, and anything else you need to feel comfortable around this table.

Within the circle, magic happens. The demon can only possess a witch within this circle. It's also the only place the demon can be defeated. Whenever a witch leaves the circle, they are no longer participating in the craft and are out of character. They will resume their role when they return.

Anytime anyone needs a break or wants to have everyone leave the circle, use the support Spells to signal that and then leave the circle. Do not leave lit candles or fire unattended.

PLAYING THE GAME

Once your circle and cards are set up, it's time to begin the magic.

Each witch sits at their place in the circle. Starting with the youngest witch, each witch lights their candle and says:

"I am (name). I am here to cast the darkness from this coven and welcome the light."

Go around the circle until each witch has spoken their name and intention.

Each witch looks at their top card without revealing it to the coven. If the demon card has come up, they are possessed by the demon this round. If an insecurity card comes up, they must portray that insecurity dramatically and intensely.

The round begins once everyone puts their top card face down before them and looks up at their coven. Any player may begin by playing their character, be it witch or demon, and beginning to bring all that is dark into light.

Witches and the Demon should begin talking about past hurts, insecurities, fears, and pain while bringing each other into these dramatic discussions. There should be arguing, blame games, lies, manipulation, and escalating conflicts. The Demon should be encouraging and starting these. The Witches should be starting them and ultimately finishing them.

Witches will use their spells available to try to discover who the demon is. The Demon can also use the spells, to stay hidden and to get secret information on the witches. Once someone accuses another of being the Demon, they secretly look at that player's card.

If they caught the demon, they burn the card in the cauldron, ending the round. If they didn't, they burn their card and are silent the rest of the round, becoming lost in their own pain. Once the demon is caught, the round ends.

The witches who have not burned their cards keep it face down. If it

was healed in play, the card goes to the side and "healed" is written on the back.

Any unhealed traumas are set aside, under or behind the candle in front of the witch to be dealt with later.

The coven takes a break and returns to the next round.

Play proceeds until one round has been played for every witch in the coven. The round begins with witches secretly looking at their cards and continuing play from there. If the demon is one of the remaining two players in the final round, they overpower the last witch and they have won. If two or more witches remain when the demon's last possession is discovered, the coven is victorious and the demon is banished.

If victorious, the coven then does the closing ritual. If lost, the demon snuffs their candles out.

PLAYING THE GAME *continued*

The Demon

The Demon can behave any way that is on the Can Do list. They must avoid all behaviours on the Can't Do list. The goal of the demon is to remain hidden within the coven and turn them against each other. They do this by acting like the witch they're possessing and manipulating the witches around them.

Demons Can (unless on the Can't Do list):

- ✦ Make people believe the lies they tell
- ✦ Create fake memories others trust
- ✦ Twist the truth to suit their needs
- ✦ Convince others they are being cruel
- ✦ Use someone's words against them
- ✦ Downplay someone's pain with sound reasons
- ✦ Make themselves the victims
- ✦ Blame someone else for their actions
- ✦ Deny someone else's truth
- ✦ Ignore the boundaries and needs of others
- ✦ Offer affection when another obeys
- ✦ Manipulate with sympathy

Use these tools as the demon to spread doubt, encourage witches to go after one another, break apart relationships, and create hurt feelings. Once these witches hate each other, you can take their power and destroy the coven. Be covert but push when you need to. If they discover you, you'll need to jump bodies.

The Witches

The Witches behave as their worst selves in a high stress and important situation. Their covens fate relies on them, and their queer fam could fall apart if they can't overcome their own issues and stop the demon. The goal of the witches is to figure out which person is the demon while dealing with their insecurities.

Witches Can (Unless on the Can't Do list):

- ✦ Verbally lash out at each other
- ✦ Reveal a secret of someone they shouldn't
- ✦ Blame another for their pain
- ✦ Refuse to be accountable for their words or actions
- ✦ Demand punishment for a past hurt
- ✦ Become defensive against accusations
- ✦ Escalate a conflict for no reason
- ✦ Call someone harmful or abusive without cause
- ✦ Ignore someone else's pain
- ✦ Manipulate other witches to help them

Use the tools of the witches to have your insecurities and fears addressed during the spell. This is your coven. They should be there for you. You know you aren't your best self, but the goal of the spell is to bring **everything** to light. The demon is trying to make you hate each other. It's your job to try to find the demon and stop them.

Use your spells to find and stop the demon, take care of your coven, and take care of yourself.

THE CLOSING RITUAL

If the coven has succeeded, the witches start by revealing their unhealed trauma. They explain their hurt and describe what they need to move on before the end of Winter Solstice. Their coven responds with sympathy, empathy, validation, love, and compassion. Witches who have caused hurt or harm should apologize and take ownership.

The coven should work together to talk about how they will help their covenmate move on from this pain.

After each witch has revealed their unhealed trauma, the witches turn over their healed trauma one at a time, and discuss it with their coven. Their coven responds with sympathy, empathy, validation, love, and compassion. The witch who was healed should thank the witch who healed them and talk about how that moment helped them move forward.

The coven should work together to form a plan that helps ensure they don't commit these kinds of harms again going forward.

Once all of the insecurities, healed and unhealed, have been revealed, each witch mentions what they are leaving behind in the darkness and what they are taking with them into the light.

Then the witches all say:

"The spell is done. The demon is banished. We honour this Solstice and each other with love and light."

The witches hold hands and blow out their candles. The game is over.

AFTERCARE

After the game, rip up the remaining unburned insecurities and throw them in the recycling or garbage. Remove the cauldron or burning vessel and rinse it out with water. Clear away any remains of the game. Sit down in a different area (if available). Everyone should take three deep belly breaths.

Once everyone has breathed, gotten something to eat, and something to drink, the group is welcome to discuss their experience.

Ask these questions, but let the conversation flow as it will.

- ✧ What was it like playing a witch
- ✧ How was having these insecurities helpful or upsetting for you?
- ✧ How was playing the demon?
- ✧ What are some feelings everyone is having right now?

- ✧ How is everyone's heart doing?
- ✧ Is there anything anyone needs from each other?
- ✧ How does everyone feel about their experience?
- ✧ Are there any thoughts anyone wants to share?

Once you have finished talking about your experience, take a few more breaths and thank each other for participating in the game. Say what your favourite moment was for each player and what you enjoyed about gaming with them.

Finally, each player should say what they are leaving behind in the darkness and what they are taking forward with them into the light.

SPELLS

for Wicked Witches and Devilish Demons

Not Today, Satan!

If a witch or demon acts in a way that is too much, upsetting, uncomfortable in a bad way, or is ruining your fun, yell "NOT TODAY, SATAN." to cast a spell of repelling. The demon or witch respond to the spell by stopping what they're doing and changing tactics. Keep using the spell until they're acting in a way that isn't upsetting to you.

I Cast You Out!

If a witch or demon is ignoring Not Today, Satan! Or has gone too far and you need a break, yell "I CAST YOU OUT!" The spell breaks the circle and causes an immediate break from the spellcraft. Take a break, get a drink or some food, and decide if you can continue the craft or if the banishment must wait for another day.

I Must Replenish!

If you get hungry, thirsty, need to just take a break or go to the bathroom, tell your witches: "I MUST REPLENISH" The spellcrafting will pause, everyone will take a break, and you will all return when you're ready. If anyone is possessed by the demon, they are released when they leave the circle, as the demon cannot move beyond the circle.

But I Love You!

If you have been fighting and things are getting really painful, and you see someone's hurt for what you think it is, yell "BUT I LOVE YOU" and point to the witch you're saying it to. Name what you believe the witch's pain to be. If you're right, they'll thank you and write healed on their card. If you are not, they'll ask you to see your card and use that information to hurt you instead of hearing you. The demon cannot be healed and acts as though the witch was wrong.

Reveal Your Nature!

If something has you suspicious about another witch in your coven, point your finger at them and yell "REVEAL YOUR NATURE!" Explain to the coven why you believe your covenmate is the demon and then secretly glance at their card. If you are correct, celebrate your victory and burn the demon's card. If you are not, burn your own card; your pain will never be heard or healed again.

Do As I Say!

If you believe yourself true and right, and another will not listen to you, look at them in the eye and yell "DO AS I SAY!" The witch or demon must pause and listen to your demands. Tell them what you want them to do (it cannot be revealing themselves) and justify yourself. If they are a witch, they must obey. If they are a demon, they may do as they please.





A Quiet Midwinter

A short adventure with all the hallmarks of a Macchiato Monsters romance

by Richard Ruane

Cartography by Dyson Logos • dysonlogos.com

Millennia ago, when the gods, fey, and demons finished their war, they signed their peace treaty in the village of Quiet on Midwinter Night. Midwinter has been sacred throughout the known lands ever since, and Quiet's Midwinter celebration is legendary. Once a year, on Midwinter Night, Vidah the Immortal Seer receives a message from the demons of the gorge and the gods of the mountain, naming those of the mortal world who the gods and demons agree are the exceptionally virtuous and exceptionally wicked. Vidah brings the list, which everyone calls the "Naughty & Nice List," to Quiet and gives it to the fey ambassador Archon Winter. Archon Winter is responsible for traveling throughout the world to deliver treasures and rewards to those exceptional souls the gods and demons recognize, whether wicked or virtuous.

Quiet is a festive place in Midwinter, with most visitors and locals decorating their trees with brightly painted miniatures to commemorate the events of the god-fey-demon wars or painted medallions of Archon Winter (which he finds unflattering). Many also dress up as divine heralds (fuzzy white bat suits with chain mail armor), demonic legionaries (leather gladiatorial costumes), or fey knights (velour cloaks, fancy masks, and fake antlers). A costume is worth $\Delta 4$ armor.

Opening: A Missing Seer

The characters have arrived via airship and gotten rooms in The Last Inn. Most people in town are headed toward The Mayor's House, where the Seer is scheduled to make the announcement. The time for the seer's arrival and announcement has come and gone though, and once everyone has stood in the snow for a bit, it's clear the seer isn't coming.

If a Naughty & Nice List isn't announced by sunrise, Archon Winter will be deprived of his fey legacy and condemned to live as a mortal, which is making him fairly grouchy. Archon Winter has promised a reward to anyone who can bring him the list. No one present seems to know where the seer lives, though asking around in town may turn up a guide. There's also a good bit of treasure on Archon Winter's ship that's not being delivered right now, so that might be worth finding out more about.

Tylton Loss, the Mayor of Quiet, is encouraging everyone to return to the festivities before he escorts Archon Winter back to the Mayor's residence. The mayor should be more decisive and helpful given the emergency, but he seems terribly distracted and keeps looking back at an empty space in the crowd. From here, characters can decide what to do: go to the mayor's house, gather info in town, or set out to find the seer's sacred grotto?



Content & Safety

"A Quiet Midwinter" is an adventure in an old-school spirit, that tries to imagine what a Hallmark Holiday movie might be if it were about a group of queer fantasy RPG characters. While it's intended to be an affectionate parody of the Hallmark Holiday genre, it includes themes that will be very real for some players: relationships, holidays with families, breakups, and unexpected reunions.

In this game, we'll be using two safety tools: Lines & Veils and The X-Card. These tools provide a chance to check in with each other before starting this slightly different style of adventure and calibrate expectations with each other during the game.

Lines & Veils are set up before play begins and gives the GM a chance to discuss what content and themes players will encounter, then invites players to list any lines or veils they have around that content. To use Lines & Veils, take a sheet of paper and divide it down the middle. On the left write "veils" and on the right "lines." Give each player a chance to contribute lines and veils to the list. Veils are content that can be discussed in game, but wouldn't be "on-screen": when veiled content comes up, simply change the scene. Lines are content that players don't want to see included in the game: content that's under someone else's line will simply not be included. Common veils for a game might include intimacy beyond kissing or details about violence. Common lines for a game might include slurs, sexual harassment, or violence directed at children or animals.

Once everyone's contributed their own lines and veils, make sure everyone understands which lines and veils are in place and clarify any lines or veils that people find to be unclear. The group should not critique or argue with lines or veils that others want to see in place, but may need to clarify the meaning or scope of some veils and lines. The group should not hesitate to add lines and veils to their list during the game.

The X-Card is a tool that will help your group resolve unwanted content. To quote its designer, John Stavropoulos:

The X-Card is an optional tool that allows anyone in your game (including you) to edit out any content anyone is uncomfortable with as you play. Since most RPGs are improvisational and we will not know what will happen till it happens, it is possible the game will go in a direction people do not want. An X-Card is a simple tool used to highlight and resolve problems as they arise.

Hold up an index card with an X on it and read this when you start a game:

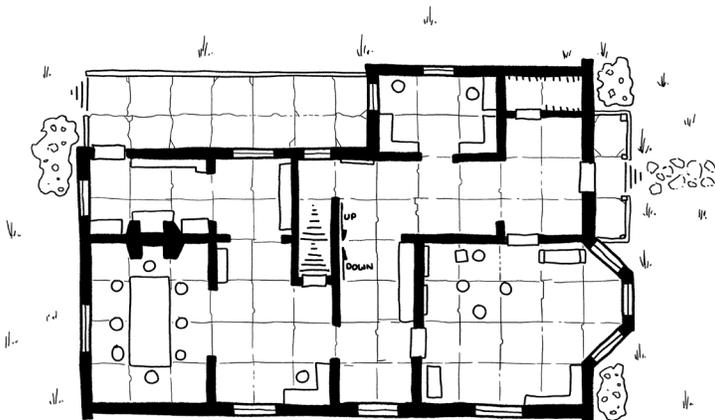
I'd like your help to make this game fun for everyone. If anything makes you uncomfortable, just lift this card up, or simply tap it.

You don't have to explain why, it doesn't matter why, we simply edit out anything X-Carded. If there is ever an issue, anyone can call for a break so we can talk privately. I know it sounds funny, but it will help us play amazing games together and usually I'm the one who uses the X-Card to protect myself from all of you! Thank you!

The Mayor's House

If the players go to the Mayor's House, they'll find themselves at a small (and rather staid) party, filled with about two dozen minor (but haughty) nobles and one annoyed fey Archon. None of these people know much useful about finding the seer, but they may know a few other things. Key people they can meet at the party include:

❖ **Mayor Tylton Loss (He/Him):** *HD 3, letter opener (gift from his ex-husband) d4, Morale $\Delta 8$.* When Tylton settled down several years ago to get into politics, his ex-husband left him for a life of adventuring and crime. Mayor Loss saw his ex-husband in Quiet today and suspects (and fears) he's up to something. He actually misses both his husband and their old lives as wandering adventurers, but can't find an excuse to get away from this house party.



❖ **Archon Winter (He/Him):** *HD 4, $\Delta 4$ Ice Armor, Ice Sword of Cold Anger d8, Winds and Winter Magic, Flight, Morale $\Delta 10$.* If Archon Winter cannot deliver the gifts, the gods and demons will come up with some other services for him to perform, so he is increasingly annoyed and peevish. Once he's drunk, he will tell anyone who will listen that "Winter ain't coming, it's fucking here!" and explaining how he'd "run things in this town."

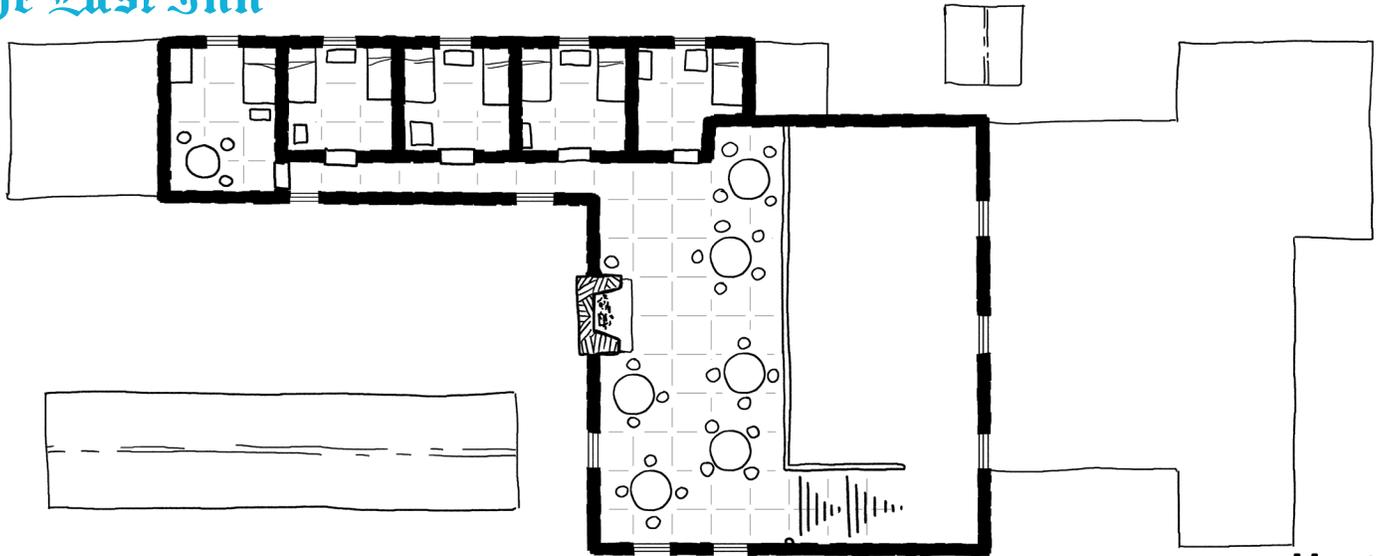
❖ **Guildmaster Quintet Snow (They/Them):** *HD 1, Morale $\Delta 4$.* The head of the matchmakers' guild has finally stopped trying to arrange a match between Tylton and one of the eligible single people in town and instead wants to make a match between one of the guild's clients and the very eligible Archon Winter.

❖ **Mme. Yvette Frost (She/Her):** *HD 2, hidden daggers d6, numerous vials of poisons, Morale $\Delta 10$.* Yvette gives the appearance of a late 30s socialite, but she is a bounty hunter and assassin trying to find both the master thief Dinaz (Mayor Loss's ex-husband) and also someone who can help her remember what Midwinter Feast is really about.

Investigating upstairs will lead to several private sitting rooms and sleeping chambers, each of which has at least one oil painting of Master Thief Dinaz and Mayor Loss together as a couple. Even if none of the party know Dinaz, they should recognize him from the gathering in the courtyard (where the seer didn't show up): he was the one who left very early, just after Archon Winter showed up. Almost anyone who was in the courtyard for the seer's announcement could see that Dinaz and Tylton kept glancing longingly at each other while trying to act nonchalant.

If you can get into the Mayor's upstairs office, he's pre-signed a bunch of requisition forms for "General Expeditionary Equipment," each worth a $\Delta 6$ of Silver. A search will reveal the "Emergency Expeditionary & Defense" requisition forms, worth a $\Delta 4$ of gold.

The Last Inn



Upstairs

The biggest inn in Quiet is always noisy and bustling for Midwinter, with the town's largest Midwinter Tree and special treats from bartender Nick. There's a 50% chance that anyone in The Last Inn will have some idea where Vidah the Seer lives.

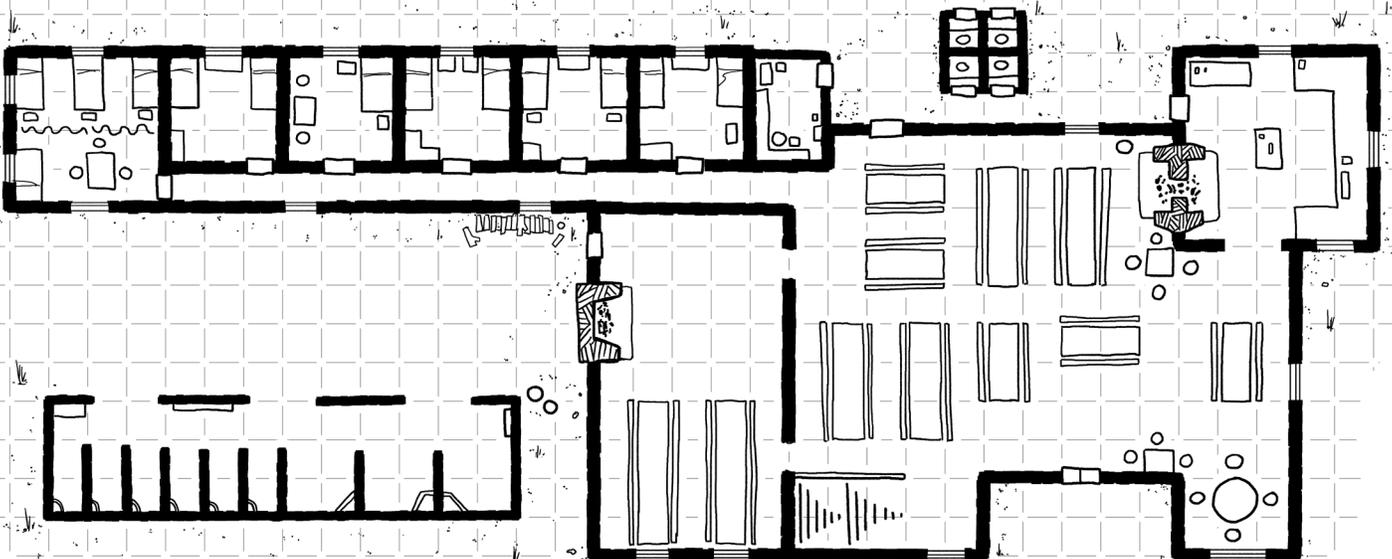
Old Nick (He/Him): *HD 6, Flaming Touch d8, Infernal Contracts Magic, Imp Summoning, Morale Δ10.* Nick's been around Quiet for as long as anyone can remember, but still looks as impishly handsome as he did

when got to town 50 years ago. His "Mana Potion" drinks are famous for fueling magical spells, but if he tells you to pay for a drink "later," get nervous. He's angling to get you into his debt.

Lucretia Bitter (She/Her): *HD 3, Vampiric Touch d8 (Heals Herself), Necromantic Magics, Morale Δ8.* Lucretia is infamous for her viciousness and cruelty, and she's the one who's been spreading those rumors. The rumors aren't true, but she's hoping she'll get the reward money for being the

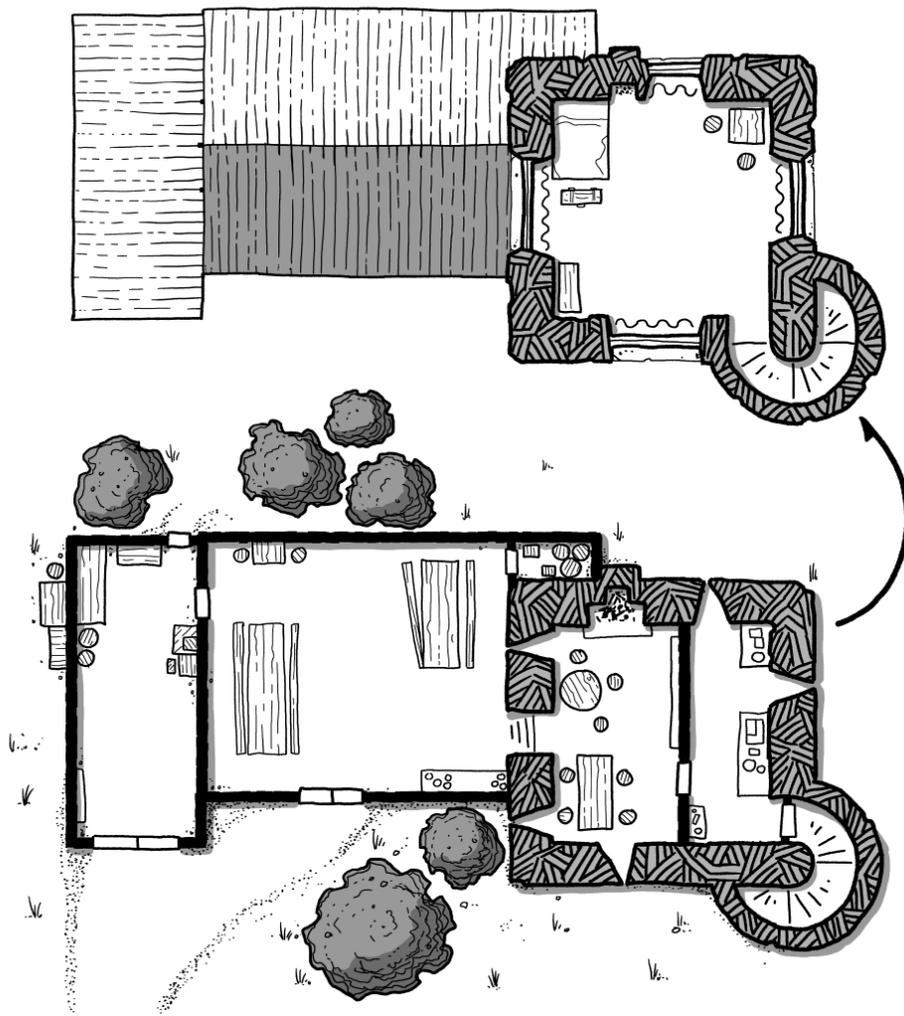
naughtiest so she can stop an ambitious real estate developer from shutting down a school for young necromancers. She's got a scheme involving replacing the seer with an actor, but its not coming together.

General Bleak (She/Her): *HD 4, Δ8 Chainmail, Greatsword d10, Control & Summon Undead, Morale Δ12.* The General, a Death Knight, is Lucretia Bitter's wife. She thinks her wife should just embrace her kind nature and try to get rewarded for her good deeds.



Downstairs

The Overlook



The smallest inn in Quiet has no rooms to let, so it caters almost entirely to locals. It looks out over the airdocks, which hover over the gorge. While The Last Inn is busier, the crowd at The Overlook is rowdier. The Overlook is also where you come to find out about what the real locals know about people living out in the country or how to steal an airship from the town's airdocks.

Master Thief Dinaz (He/Him): *HD 3, Δ 4 Leathers, Throwing Knives $d4$, Morale Δ 8.* Master Thief Dinaz, the ex-husband of Mayor Loss. He originally came to ask Tylton to get back together, but now is convinced he needs to do something dramatic to impress Tylton, so he plans to steal Archon Winter's airship, The Icelight, which contains all rewards the fey have gathered for wickedest and most virtuous mortals. He figures would make a good nest egg for him and Tylton to settle down with.

Cee Shiver (They/Them): *HD 1, Cleaver $d6$, Morale Δ 6.* Cee is the cook at The Overlook. They make a lot of good, preserved to-go foods for people leaving on last minute adventures. Roll three times on the Equipment and Food table to see what food stuff they have in stock (ignoring non foods). During a rest, eating Cee's foods will be twice as effective as normal food.

Pim Melt (They/Them): *HD 2, Δ 4 Leathers, Shortsword $d6m$, Morale Δ 8.* Pim is Dinaz's spunky adventuring assistant who worked themselves up from torchbearer. While they think stealing The Icelight is a terrible idea, they believe in the "Power of Positive Adventuring." Naively oblivious to Dinaz history with Tylton.

Wandering Around Town

Numerous stores and smaller inns and taverns are open. If PCs wander a bit in town, choose one of the following or have these characters come into the place the PCs are hanging out.

Sunial Fang (He/Him): *HD 4, Δ 4 Fur Cloak & Leather Pants, Cold Mockery d6, Moxy & Charm Magic, Changes into a Winter Wildcat, Morale Δ 12.* The werebard used to be a regular winter wildcat until one day he was bitten by a bard. Now, whenever his feline nature decides it's fitting, he transforms into a glamorous and sassy bard. He likes to offer suggestions to adventurers while sipping on catnip infused spirits.

Dame Midge Glimmer (She/Her): *HD 3, Δ 10 Breastplate & Shield, d8 Longsword, Morale Δ 10.* This paladin had a recent breakup with her partner, another paladin, and decided to prove herself to them by hunting down the terrible Necromancer and Death Knight. She's in town to bring Bitter and Bleak in for their "crimes."

Dain Thanely (She/Her): *HD 4, Δ 6 Hide Armor, Longbow d8 (Δ 10 arrows), Morale Δ 10.* The town's guide and ranger is not at all interested in romance, but is hoping to find a way to get money to buy (and wrap) her younger siblings Midwinter presents before the big Midwinter breakfast.

Justicar Null (They/Them): *HD 2, Unarmed d2, Mysterious Coincidences, Intuition, Multilevel Eldritch Pacts, Morale Δ 12.* Justicar Null doesn't know why everyone finds their name so strange. They're really just a cheerful, whimsical friend who wants to buy you a drink and meet their quota for luring people into dark pacts with the dark otherworldly powers they serve. "What do YOU want?" is their favorite question.

Tindy Trusnow (They/Them): *HD 1, Unarmed d2, Morale Δ 4.* Lucretia hired Tindy to portray the Seer and read a fabricated Naughty & Nice list with her name on it. They got lost on the way though, and is wandering the streets in a Seer Vidah costume with the fake list looking for Lucretia.

Reggie Frost (She/Her): *HD 1, Bronze Jug d6, Morale Δ 6.* Reggie was a former player in a jug band, but went solo. She'll provide songs or information (she always knows all the local gossip as soon as its possible to know it) for a good hot buttered rum and Midwinter frosted cookies. She only knows three songs: "That Rare Old Mountain Dew," "Galway Bay," and "Fairytale of Skullport." She's a better singer than jug player.



The Secret Grotto of the Seer

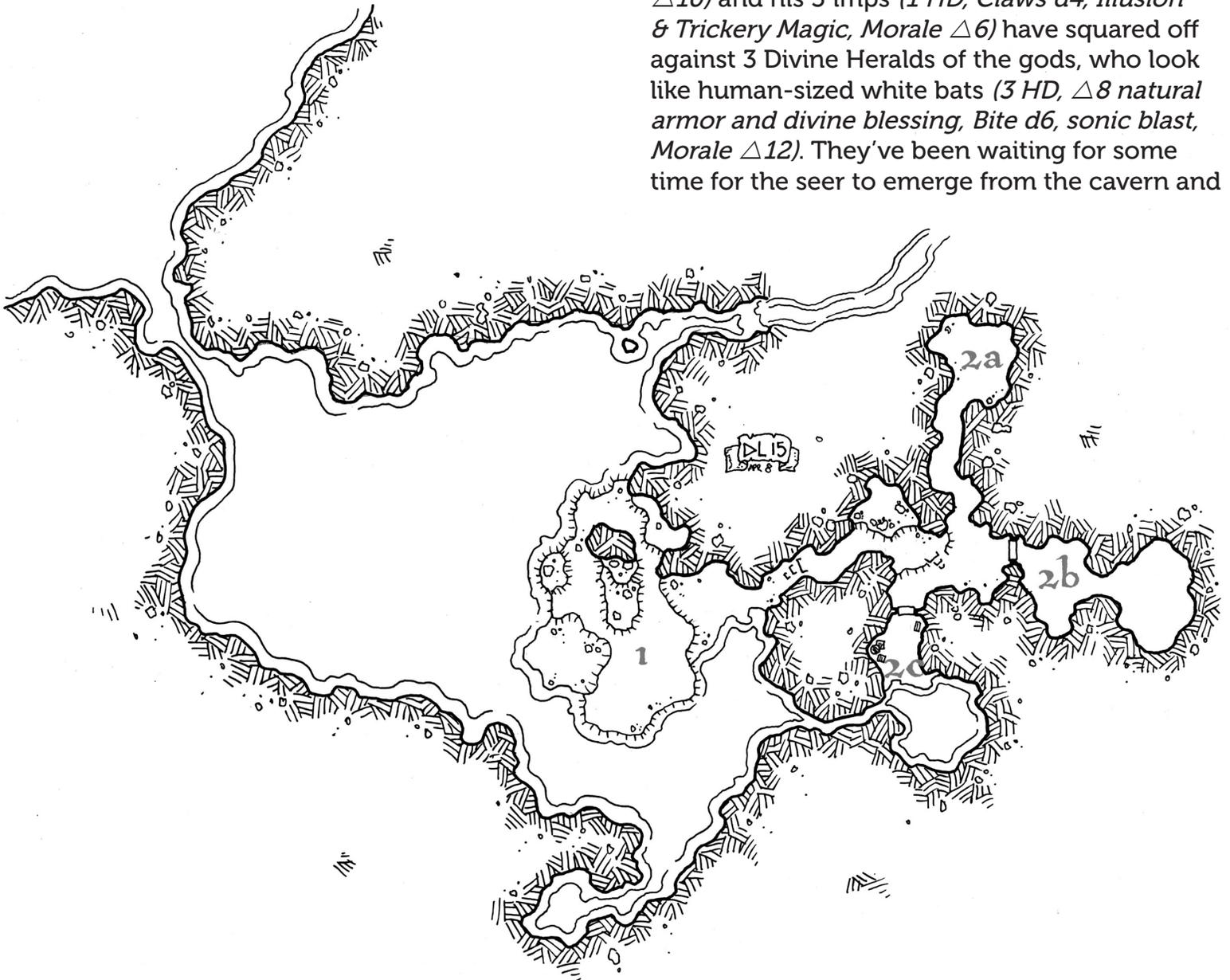
Vidah lives in a grotto that is the source of a hotwater spring, just off a large lake about a mile from town. The grotto can only be approached by boating, swimming, or flying into the cave. Most people in town have no idea where the seer lives or where to find the grotto, only that they live in a cave near the lake. Somehow the cunning (but kindly) necromancer Lucretia Bitter found out.

Lucretia, who desperately wants to get on the Naughty list (but is actually rather nice), decided to incapacitate the seer for the evening and replace them with an actor. She gave the seer a very special "gift basket": a lovely

and completely innocuous herbal tea, several installments of an addictive series of mystery novels, and The Anticlock. When viewed, The Anticlock will appear as an exquisitely crafted clock, but when no one is looking, it moves backward. Anyone failing a Saving Throw while using the Anticlock will lose track of time for 2d6 hours.

Vidah is reading the mystery novels near the Anticlock in area 2b of The Grotto, a large study/receiving room/bedroom, oblivious to the actual time. With the door closed, they can't hear the yelling in Area 1.

In area 1, and the surrounding hallways, the demon messenger Oerthex (*He/Him*, 4 HD, $\Delta 6$ *Demonic Gladiator Armor*, *Battle Axe d8*, *Morale $\Delta 10$*) and his 5 imps (*1 HD*, *Claws d4*, *Illusion & Trickery Magic*, *Morale $\Delta 6$*) have squared off against 3 Divine Heralds of the gods, who look like human-sized white bats (*3 HD*, $\Delta 8$ *natural armor and divine blessing*, *Bite d6*, *sonic blast*, *Morale $\Delta 12$*). They've been waiting for some time for the seer to emerge from the cavern and

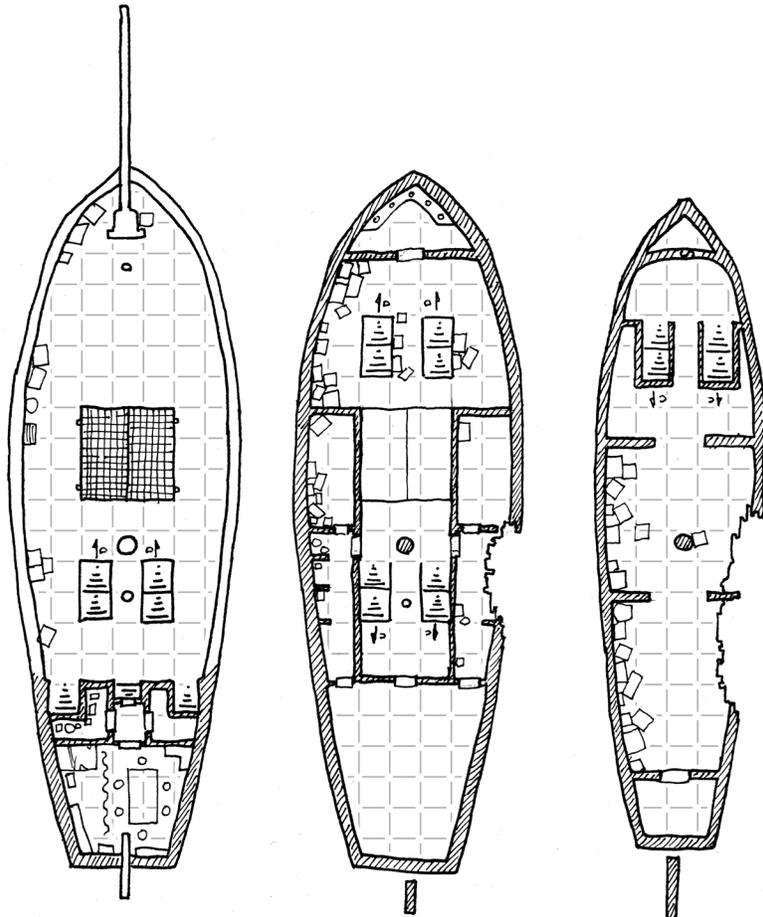


are blaming each other for the seer's failure to appear. Each group has their own naughty and nice list, but they're distracted by trying to intimidate each other right now.

There are two ghouls (2 HD, Claws d6, Bite d4, Paralyzing Bite, Morale $\Delta 6$) named Hopkins and Moare hiding in area 2b. They brought Lucretia's gift basket, but can't make their escape around the divine and demonic messengers. They're rather timid and not prone to attacking people who don't attack them, though they may try to scare the party away.

Area 2c is where Vidah runs a small whiskey import business. They store barrels of southern whiskey here for markets in the north. The barrels stored here now are worth $\Delta 8$ silver each.

The Icelight



The Icelight isn't the classic airship: it has no dirigible balloon or similar floatation mechanism like the other ships in the airdock. Instead, it's just a normal seafaring ship that floats in the air. It's crewed by eight antlered wolfhounds named Darter, Tumbler, Caper, Vulpo, Fireball, Cherub, Jolter, and Salvo (2 HD, $\Delta 4$ thick fur, chomping bite d6, antlered charge d8, fly).

While not much is going on with the ship, if the PCs don't talk down Dinaz, he'll eventually try to steal The Icelight. If none of the PCs are with him, he and Pip will get caught and they may have to rush to the docks to rescue them. If Archon Winter discovers someone tried to steal his ship, he'll demand that the oracle come immediately so he can get the message and be off.

Rewards

If the PCs successfully assist Archon Winter, he'll pay them in strange fey coins worth d6 of Platinum each. If they successfully assist Lucretia, she'll pay them a d8 of gold each. Others in town are less wealthy, but Mayor Tylton will gift them each a d8 of silver if they reunite him with Dinaz (though he may deduct any goods they requisitioned in his name if he finds out about that).

If they successfully steal The Icelight, they'll have many platinum worth of belongings, though it might take a few adventures before they find somewhere to stash the fey archon's ship and sell his stolen goods.

If they successfully assist Vidah in getting free of the Anticlock, the seer will grant each of them three questions about their upcoming plans and adventures. They'll get a one-word answer to each question they ask. The seer will also gladly let them have the Anticlock.



(Home Is) Where The Heart Is

by Allie Bustion

You're a group of friends getting ready for one of your annual holiday celebrations. It's more or less the day, so what better reason do you need to get together? There's only one problem: the only friend who's actually good at cooking has gotten sick and can't do the bulk of the work the way they normally would.

As a surprise, you've all come together to try to make something edible anyway. Use your disparate and not always applicable skills to cobble something together. It might not turn out great, but it will definitely be full of heart. And that's what matters most (so long as you can still order takeout).

Setting Up

(Home Is) Where The Heart Is can be played with any number of players, so long as there are archetypes and dice to accommodate them. For play, you'll need:

- 3d6 per person playing
- A d12
- Something to take notes
- Space to play
- About 1-2 hours

Before playing, make sure to have a chat with your players about boundaries and triggers. If you're looking for safety tools that will work at your table, consider the TTRPG Safety Toolkit compiled by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk for several solid options and resources. Finally, this is a GM-optional game. While having a GM may make play smoother, it's not necessary for play.

The Friends

Each player chooses which an archetype to play. Each one has something they're good at. Try to use those skills in literally every situation because none of you cook and you've gotta make up for it somehow.

The Driving Friend: This friend has a car, valid license, insurance, and knows all the rules of the road. They always remember their turn signals.

The Blade Friend: This friend is really good with swords, knives, and other blades... like inordinately good... They don't just have katanas, they probably study HEMA.

The Agile Friend: While you probably can't run a scrum stand-up meeting (that's probably the Organized Friend), you can get to just about anything anywhere through a combination of physicality and/or chair-based ingenuity.

The Tech Friend: This friend can program literally anything, including things that probably should not be programmed but are now. Your cat? Now posts to IFTTT when their litter box needs cleaning. Your fridge? It's not a smart fridge but it talks to your phone now.

The Long Distance Friend: You aren't normally around but you showed up just for this! You came bearing gifts for your cooking friend so maybe, just maybe, you have something useful for this whole attempt at cooking. They won't mind you opening it early, right?

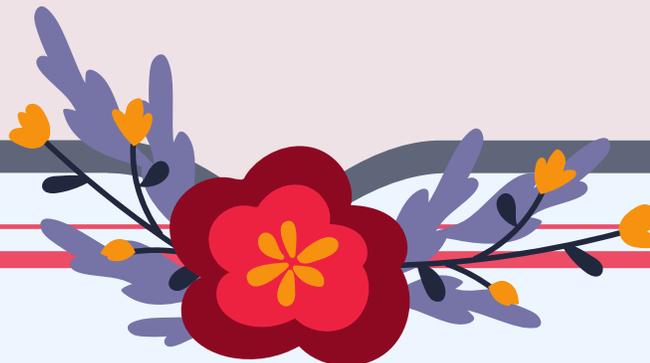
The Extremely Online Friend: This friend is capable of finding a video for anything or at least a blog post about the video. Sometimes, it's a wonderfully detailed tutorial and sometimes it might just be a hilarious tiktok.

The Organized Friend: This friend knows where things are, what goes where, when it's needed, and how things in theory have to happen. They probably have a bullet journal, calendar reminders for everything, and several life-governing spreadsheets. Or so you assume.

The Book Smart Friend: This friend can do mental math easily and has great memory recall, but only for semi-obscure facts you'd learn in school or college. Perfect for when you want to know the chemical effects of turkey but not when you want to know how to cook it.

The Outdoors Friend: You have great wilderness and survival skills and could live off the land indefinitely, provided there's enough land around.

The Bartending Friend: If it involves alcohol and liquid imbibements, this friend is who you should call.



How To Play

To play, roll 1d12 and compare it to the table. This is Your Biggest Problem. It will have an affect on every situation you face.

Your Biggest Problem

1	The Cooking Friend has been sick long enough to have never brought groceries. Are you bad enough to brave the holiday crowds and get what you need?
2	The pilot light on the stove is out. Probably. You think? Is this even a gas stove?
3	None of you have ever made any of these dishes before. Any of them. You're not even sure where to start.
4	The kitchen is full of things that do one very specific thing and nothing else. There's a strange metal stick. Its purpose is unclear. Does it actually belong in the kitchen? Does any of it?
5	There's no cranberry sauce. No one can agree on how to make the cranberry sauce. One of you suggested to just get a can. (It comes in cans?!) Every dish is turning out like this. You need supplies but which ones?
6	There's a stockpot on a stand outside that's full of oil. There's tarps for a splash zone. As far as you can tell, this is the intended cooking method. For what is unclear.
7	The Cooking Friend is actually a Grilling Friend and only has tools for roasting over the flames. There's what looks to be an oil drum with a chimney, a mini-fridge with wood, and a literal pit.
8	The Cooking Friend is actually a Sous Vide Friend. Their entire cooking situation is a variety of buckets, some kind of wand thing, sealed bags, and a blow torch.
9	Your cooking friend has a cookbook! It's called Mid-Century Masterpieces and you're pretty sure you've seen these on Twitter as memes...
10	This year, your cooking friend inherited a set of fine china and silverware. Like, the real kind. And you know they promised to take pictures of this meal served on it. There are just... so many forks and spoons...
11	Your cooking friend had notes and plans and details on exactly what they had planned for this dinner. The only problem is that everything is in their own personal shorthand and none of you are entirely sure what things mean.
12	Secretly, your cooking friend was less good at cooking and more good at following videos and recipes very closely. Their kitchen isn't actually prepared for cooking this large a meal yet.



The Meal

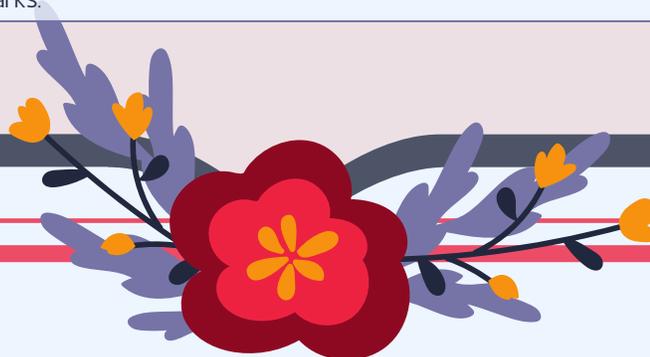
For each dish, you also need to roll on its table for its particular situation.

Appetizers

1	You ate a snack while trying to decide what to do. Unfortunately, that was the key ingredient for the appetizer.
2	Turns out your cooking friend just grabbed their appetizers from the corner bodega at the last minute instead of making them and the bodega just closed.
3	The appetizers your friend always made are from a beloved family recipe that was passed on orally.
4	Your cooking friend has never been exactly clear on what "appetizer" really means and none of you are either. Roll on the Side Dishes table instead.
5	Your cooking friend didn't believe in appetizers but the rest of you like them. Just how hard can it be to make them really?
6	Your cooking friend already made a spread of appetizers! Perfect! Except... someone has recently developed an allergy. So no one's left out, you decide to forge ahead anyway.

Main Courses

1	Your cooking friend really loves exotic meats and that's what they've secured for this dinner. You honestly weren't aware some of these could be eaten.
2	Your cooking friend doesn't eat meat. So... just how do you prepare tofu again?
3	No one took the primary protein out of the freezer and it's basically still a rock. A quick check says it should have been taken out days ago.
4	Your large scale, family-sized protein of choice does not have a cooking time, only a mathematical formula for determining an optimal cooking range.
5	You're not sure what this slab of protein is but you're fairly certain you have never seen or eaten anything made with it. The label says it's... Butt.
6	Your cooking friend planned on trying something completely new, something not even they've tried before. They made notes but the notes are full of question marks.



Side Dishes

1	Your cooking friend has a garden you can pick fresh vegetables from! Unfortunately, you can't read any of the labels anymore.
2	Your cooking friend has a wonderfully stocked spice cabinet, you're pretty sure, but all of them have names like "1-2 Step" and "Them's Fightin' Birds".
3	Your cooking friend apparently had a deep-seated hate for vegetables and there's nothing for preparing them at all. But, like, you need vegetables... right?
4	One of you has a gluten allergy. You're going to need to do some research for this...
5	Your cooking friend has some of the side dishes already started, the only real question is what goes where with what and how.
6	Your cooking friend has an impeccably organized fridge. And a deep freezer. And pantry. And a closet that has cans in it. And..

Dessert

1	You have every ingredient you could need except for one: sugar.
2	There aren't any numbers still on any of the measuring cups or spoons and, if you know one thing, it's that baking is a science.
3	There's also a blizzard coming and the supermarket pickings are slim and near-impossible to get to at best. The farmer's market is sadly not an option.
4	The only things you have to make a dessert are eggs, nonfat milk, assorted frozen fruits, and protein powder.
5	Your cooking friend didn't believe in desserts beyond whatever someone brought with them. This is hard mode now...
6	One of you has recently marathoned an acclaimed and beloved baking challenge show and you're about 75% sure you remember more or less most of one of the recipes.



Each player has 3d6 they can roll whenever the situation matches the thing they're best at (or they're willing to risk it for the biscuits... or stuffing... or gravy... or whatever).

- Roll 3d6 if the situation is an exact match.
- Roll 2d6 if it's mostly a match.
- Roll 1d6 if it's only somewhat applicable.
- If no one has a skill that's a match, roll 2d6 and take the lowest result.

Players can work together and lend one of their dice to another player but cannot otherwise contribute to the current situation. You can only lend one die to a person at a time.

- A **success (5-6)** means you're one step closer to having this meal completed. *Narrate how you managed this despite all signs to the contrary.*
- A **critical success (double 6s)** counts as two successes. *Narrate what this looks like and how things went even better than expected.*
- An **almost success (3-4)** means you don't quite manage what you were intending to do but you also don't fail completely. *Narrate where you had to compromise and how.*
- A **failure (1-2)** means you run into some kind of setback. *What happened to you and how does this affect everything else.*

A dish is finished when the group gets **three successes** or **three failures**. A successful dish goes to the table; a failed one... well, there's no time to try to make another one but there's other food, right?

The game and the tale of your attempt at making dinner ends when you manage to make an **Appetizer**, a **Main Course**, two **Side Dishes**, and a **Dessert**. However, if you fail on **three dishes**, *you'll have to turn to takeout*. No matter the outcome, the cooking friend will always appreciate the effort. Good luck and don't forget to preheat the oven.



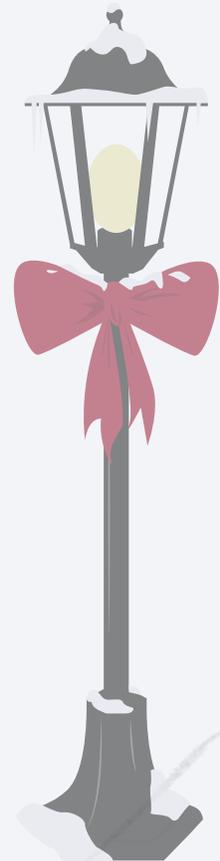
A Holiday Tale

by Luiz Paulo Ferraz

In 1843, Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, a story about Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly, rich man who leads a selfish life, mistreating all of those around him. In Dickens' tale, Scrooge is shown visions of past, present and future Christmases by three spirits and is compelled to change his ways, becoming gentle and altruistic. This story had a huge impact on Western society and established a lot of what we currently take as a given about "the meaning of Christmas", like getting together with loved ones, feasting and being charitable.

A Christmas Carol has been extensively retold in several different mediums and through the lenses of various fictional worlds, like *The Flintstones*, *Looney Tunes*, *The Smurfs*, *The Muppets* and many, many others, showing that the heartwarming tale of a mean person who learns kindness is universal. This game's aim is to let you create your own retelling of *A Christmas Carol* by using whatever real or fictional holiday you want and setting the story in whatever setting you find more interesting.

Since *A Holiday Tale* follows the same beats of *A Christmas Carol*, some content is expected to play into the game, so themes of accountability, emotional abuse, memories, pain, lost family, regret, and emotional pain are present throughout the game. If playing through *A Holiday Tale* and its emotional beats isn't your jam, this game isn't for you. Thank you for knowing your own limits and boundaries.



Story Calibration

While we know how the story of *A Christmas Carol* goes, it's important to be able to edit content as it comes up in the story to keep everyone engaged and feeling supported. This game will utilize an X-Card.

An X-Card is a tool for story calibration. Place a card with an x before each player and read the following:

“We all know and agree that the story is never more important than us, the players. We promise to do our best to care for ourselves and for each other, to check in when we're unsure of how to do that, and to stop if anyone isn't comfortable with the content. As a tool for comfort and safety, we'll be using an X-Card.

This is an X-Card. At any time in the game or out of the game, you are feeling uncomfortable in a bad way, upset, or triggered, or someone is ruining your fun, breaking the tone of the game, or otherwise acting outside of the conceit of the game, touch the X-Card. Let us know what content is bothering you. We'll ask you what you need, then remove or edit the content, or fade to black. If you stand up or move away while touching the card, that shows us we need to stop immediately. We'll take a break and then check in on everyone.”

The X-Card was invented by John Stavropoulos. For more information on the X-Card, check out [this link](#).

What You'll Need

This game can accommodate 2 to 4 players, who will all have the same say in how the story plays out. One of them (the facilitator) should be familiar with the rules to help guide everyone in playing the game and prompt the other players to participate.

You'll also need an easily-referenceable copy of this game, plenty of space to take notes and some flashcards.



Playset Creation

The first thing to do before starting the game is deciding what the flavor of your tale will be by picking or creating a Playset, which defines the setting of the story and the holiday central to it. Will this tale of a lonely, selfish person who learns the importance of kindness be about the grumpy captain of a starcruiser on the eve of the End Cycle Celebration? Or perhaps an ancient elven wizard, all alone in their enchanted tree just as the Centennial Solstice draws near? Or maybe even something more mundane, like a regular person that is part of a community that celebrates one of the many real-world religious and cultural holidays that promote togetherness?

Creating a Playset is a simple matter of defining a couple of aspects, following the structure below:

Title

Something to easily identify the Playset by. An easy way to name your Playset is by using the name of your tale's holiday.

Keywords

Some touchstones of what to expect of this playset, so every player starts on roughly the same page. If you're using a real holiday, you should pick keywords like "non-fiction" and the name of the holiday. For fiction, pick whatever suits your tale best, like "medieval", "magic", "swashbuckling", "elves", "cyberpunk", "vampires", "sci-fi", and so on. Two to four keywords should probably be enough.

Holiday

The real or fictional holiday being celebrated. Name it and give some details about the traditions around it, using the structure "On _____, we celebrate _____ by _____." Be sure to include some activity or object that is central to the holiday and can be improved by having higher status (check the sample Playsets for examples).

Premise

A quick summary of the setting, following the format of "In this tale, Scrooge is a selfish and lonely _____ who is about to be visited by three Spirits on the eve of _____. They will convince Scrooge to change (Scrooge's pronoun) ways before it is too late."

Sample Playsets

Lunar Glimmer

Keywords: magic, high fantasy, fictional religion

.....

In this tale, Scrooge is a selfish and lonely Moon Priest who is about to be visited by three Spirits on the eve of the New Glimmer Festival. They will convince Scrooge to change his ways before it is too late.

On the New Glimmer Festival, we celebrate the rebirth of the Moon Goddess by taking life crystals to the Silver Temple and filling them with energy from the Brightstone.

A New Carol

Keywords: non-fiction, Christmas, modern

.....

In this tale, Scrooge is a selfish and lonely CEO who is about to be visited by three Spirits on the eve of Christmas. They will convince Scrooge to change their ways before it is too late.

On Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and the coming of Santa Claus by feasting with loved ones and exchanging gifts.

The Real Treasure

Keywords: swashbuckling, fantasy

.....

In this tale, Scrooge is a selfish and lonely pirate queen who is about to be visited by three Spirits on the eve of Booty Day. They will convince Scrooge to change her ways before it is too late.

On Booty Day, we celebrate a year of plentiful pillaging by visiting a treasure island, digging up one of our buried chests, and sharing what's inside with our crew.



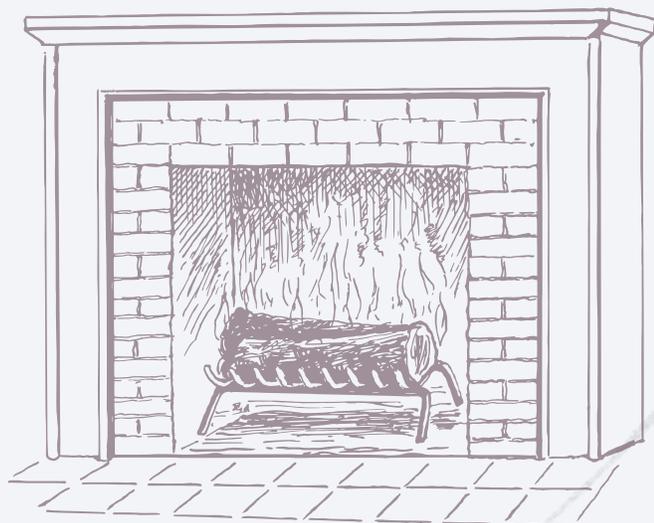
Creating Characters

Players don't have characters of their own in this game, but instead will share a pool of characters based on A Christmas Carol which will be created collectively. The cast is divided in Core Characters, who are more fleshed-out and have some predefined personality traits, and Side Characters, who are described in just a few words.

The most practical way to make the characters is to assign some of them to each player who feels like creating them, but do remember to collaborate, asking for suggestions and throwing ideas to the group so everyone pitches in on whether they think a certain character is exciting or problematic. This last part is especially important, since everyone should be ok with all characters before beginning play, and it's easier to edit things while the characters are being created, rather than waiting until they are fully formed.

Some character creation prompts reference "family" or "relatives". This doesn't necessarily mean blood relatives or traditional familial bonds, but rather people who share a bond with this character ; feel free to reinterpret this to whatever suits your Playset or that you find more interesting.

The pronouns used here and in The Tale are zie/zim/zis by default for all human characters and it/it/its for the three Ghosts, but you should replace them if needed with the pronouns you choose at creation.



Core Characters

To create a Core Character, you'll have to write a short paragraph about them while keeping in mind their predefined traits and guiding questions.

Scrooge

The protagonist of this story. A selfish person who will learn the importance of kindness. Don't worry about fleshing out Scrooge's past in too much detail, since you'll explore it during play.

Traits: Selfish, mean, alone, powerful

Guiding questions:

- What is Scrooge's source of power?
- How did Scrooge acquire this power?
- What is Scrooge's family like?

Ghost of Holiday Present

The second Ghost who will visit Scrooge. It will show zim visions of different holiday celebrations for people from different walks of life.

Traits: Jolly, loud, blunt

Guiding questions:

- What looks supernatural about it?
- What looks human about it?



Cratchit

Someone who is subordinate to Scrooge. A gentle person with a loving family.

Traits: Humble, kind, optimistic, powerless

Guiding questions:

- What does Cratchit do for Scrooge?
- Where does Cratchit and his family live?

Ghost of Holiday Past

The first Ghost who will visit Scrooge. It will show zim visions of his own past holidays.

Traits: Caring, gentle, aloof

Guiding questions:

- What looks supernatural about it?
- What looks human about it?

Ghost of Holiday Yet to Come

The third Ghost who will visit Scrooge. It will show zim the dreadful future that awaits zim if he doesn't change his ways. This Ghost's face is hidden and it never speaks.

Traits: Ominous, mysterious, somber

Guiding questions:

- What looks supernatural about it?
- What looks human about it?

Side Characters

To create or define a Side Character, write a short sentence about them, like “tall, lean and smiley” or “a typical gossip-loving aunt”. The list of Side Characters below are the ones who are explicitly mentioned in The Tale, but feel free to add more Side Characters as you go.

If you feel like the prompt for one of these Side Characters is too vague, read ahead and check the Chapter in which they appear.

Marley’s Ghost (Ch. 1)

Scrooge’s deceased partner in power, who will come back from the dead to warn zim of the perils of leading a selfish life.

Scrooge’s Estranged Relatives (Ch. 1 & 3)

People who Scrooge keeps pushing away. At least one of them insists on trying to include Scrooge in zim life.

Solicitors for Charity (Ch. 1)

Two people who will ask Scrooge to share some of zim power with those in need.

People from Scrooge’s past (Ch. 2)

A few characters who helped shape who Scrooge is today. Suggestions: someone zim loved, someone zim lost, someone who hurt zim.

Cratchit’s Family (Ch. 3 & 4)

A happy and loving family, despite the hardship they go through. Create a few (2 to 5 should be enough) family members.

Miscellaneous characters (Ch. 3 & 4)

Chapters 3 and 4 call for miscellaneous Side Characters “from different walks of life” and “who aren’t at all upset about Scrooge’s past”, respectively. You can create some of them now and have them ready when those chapters come or leave them aside for now and create them on the fly if your group is comfortable with that.



The Tale

A session of this game follows a chapter structure. Each Chapter is a collection of interconnected scenes that have a basic structure and an ending key. The story you'll share in this game is a lot like the characters you just created. It has some predefined aspects to establish a foundation, but it is up to your group to bring each Chapter to life by creating scenes based on the Beats.

Before starting a Chapter, the facilitator will read its italicized text and list of characters. Then one player will take on the role of Scrooge, while the others will collaborate on playing the Ghost (in Chapters 2, 3, and 4) and step in to play miscellaneous core and side characters as needed. To make things easier, create flashcards with each character's name and set them before the people who are playing them in the current Chapter. The people not currently playing Scrooge should use flashcards with the words "apparition", "spectre", "ghost" or "spirit" (each non-Scrooge player should have a different one). When the Scrooge player wants to ask a specific player's input during Chapters 2, 3 and 4, they should use the word on their flashcard. For example: The Scrooge player in asks "Spirit, what is this place?", prompting the player with the "spirit" flashcard to answer and frame the scene.

The chapter has a list of Beats, which are things that need to happen before it can be finished, and an Ending Key, which is something a specific character needs to do or say to bring it to a close once all of the Beats have been played out. Unless otherwise mentioned, the Beats should be hit in the order they are listed.

Remember to give space to everyone in the group to shine, and share creative input so everyone contributes to the story to the extent of their comfort. If someone is not actively playing a character in a scene, ask them if they want to add any details to the setting or if they have ideas on what could happen next in the story.

Be mindful of your fellow player's fun and safety.

Throughout this section, like in Creating Characters, all human characters are referred to by zie/zim/zis pronouns and all three Ghosts are referred to by it/it/its pronouns, but adjust these to suit your game's cast.

Chapter 1

Our story begins on the holiday's eve. Scrooge is having a regular day of demeaning Cratchit and being abrasive to the people around him. Later that night, when Scrooge is alone, Marley's ghost will visit him to warn him of the consequences of the life he leads, and to let him know of the other spectral visitors who will soon appear.

Cast:

- Core Characters
 - Scrooge
 - Cratchit
- Side characters
 - Scrooge's estranged relative(s)
 - Marley's ghost
 - Solicitors for charity

Suggested locations:

- The place where Scrooge holds power (i.e., a workplace).
- Scrooge's home.
- Scrooge's room.

Beats:

(The first three Beats can be hit in any order)

- Cratchit is overworked, Scrooge doesn't care.
- Scrooge's relative(s) come by to invite him over for the holiday, but he refuses.
- Scrooge rudely dismisses solicitors who ask for help for people in need.
- Cratchit begs to have the holiday off, and Scrooge begrudgingly complies.
- Scrooge goes home and is alone in his room at night.
- Marley's tormented ghost visits Scrooge and tells him that being selfish will lead to despair.

Ending Key:

Marley's ghost says: "Three ghosts will visit you tonight. Listen to what they say, see what they show, and change your ways before it is too late!"

Chapter 2

All alone again, Scrooge hears Marley's words echo in his head. Before long, his warning proves true, as the Ghost of Holiday Past appears before Scrooge. This Ghost will show him the most meaningful holidays of his past, both happy and sad, so Scrooge can see why he became who he is. Initially Scrooge will become fascinated with the visions, but before long his frustration about past moments of sadness will become too great and he will snap at the Ghost, causing it to vanish.

Cast:

- Core Characters
 - Scrooge
 - Ghost of Holiday Past
- Side characters
 - People from Scrooge's past

Suggested locations:

- The place where Scrooge grew up.
- The place where Scrooge learned his trade.
- Scrooge's home, from a happier time.

Beats:

(Beats with [Past] before them are visions of some of Scrooge's past holidays, prompted by the Ghost. They can be played in any order.)

- Scrooge inquires about the Ghost's purpose.
- [Past] Scrooge is lonely.
- [Past] Scrooge is joyful.
- [Past] Scrooge feels loved.
- [Past] Scrooge is heartbroken.

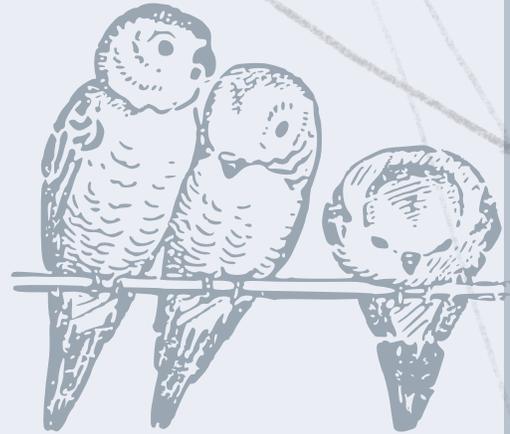
Ending Key:

Scrooge angrily snaps at the Ghost, who turns into mist before. Scrooge finds himself back home.

Chapter 3

.....

Scrooge is suddenly home again, zis heart racing, zis mind spinning. Strangely enough, zie quickly falls asleep, only to be awakened by the Ghost of Holiday Present, who will show zim different holiday celebrations so Scrooge can see firsthand the living conditions of those who have less power than zim and to listen to what people have to say about zim – both the surprisingly nice words of the extremely kind-hearted, and the justified mockery and insults of others. The Ghost will gradually grow frail as the holiday comes closer to ending, and will announce its departure to herald the final Ghost’s appearance.



Cast:

- Core Characters
 - Scrooge
 - Cratchit
 - Ghost of Holiday Present
- Side characters
 - Cratchit’s family
 - Scrooge’s estranged relative(s)
 - Miscellaneous people from different walks of life

Suggested locations:

- Cratchit’s humble home.
- The happy home of Scrooge’s relative(s).
- Different holiday congregations of varying statuses.

Beats:

If Scrooge shows any empathy throughout this chapter, the Ghost will mock zim by throwing zis own cruel words from Chapter 1 back at zim.

- Scrooge is awoken by the Ghost.
- Scrooge is briefly shown different festivities, both merry and poor.
- Scrooge is shown zis relative(s)’ joyous celebration and hears them talk about zim.
- Scrooge is shown Cratchit’s family’s meager, but happy, celebration and hears them talk about zim.

Ending Key:

The Ghost announces that its time is coming to an end, as the clock strikes midnight. It fades away.

Chapter 4

Scrooge barely has time to get zis bearings before a thick mist starts rolling towards zim, bringing with it the ominous figure of the Ghost of Holiday Yet to Come. This last Ghost will show zim a holiday in the future that awaits Scrooge and some people in zis life if zie doesn't change zis ways. At first, Scrooge won't realize that the miser being talked about in disdain is in fact zimself, and as soon as the Ghost shows zim zis final place of rest, the visitations will be over.

Cast:

- Core Characters
 - Scrooge
 - Cratchit
 - Ghost of Holiday Yet to Come
- Side characters
 - Cratchit's family
 - Miscellaneous people who aren't at all upset by Scrooge's passing

Suggested locations:

- A funeral home.
- A mournful holiday celebration at Cratchit's home.
- Scrooge's final place of rest.

Beats:

This Ghost never speaks, opting instead to show Scrooge what zie needs to see (though not necessarily what zie wants to see.)

(Beats with [Future] before them take place in a future holiday. All mentions to "the Miser" actually refer to Scrooge, but zie doesn't find that out until the last Beat)

- Scrooge nervously speaks to the Ghost, and finds out it is silent.
- [Future] Some people mock the lack of attendance of the Miser's funeral.
- [Future] Some people celebrate the personal benefits they gain from the Miser's death.
- [Future] Cratchit's family laments a loss they incurred due to their unfortunate conditions.
- [Future] Scrooge is shown the Miser's place of rest, and finds out the truth about zis death

Ending Key:

Scrooge says zie has learned zis lesson and begs the Ghost to tell zim that it is not too late to change zis ways, before being returned to zis home.



Chapter 5

.....
The holiday eve is over, and Scrooge is home, zis spirit renewed. It is not too late to make amends, and that is what zie'll do!

This is a special chapter that acts as your tale's epilogue. Revisit the different characters that have appeared throughout the game and have each player narrate a vignette of how Scrooge makes up for zis selfish behavior and improves the lives of many. This is the heartwarming happy ending of this story, so make it jolly!

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