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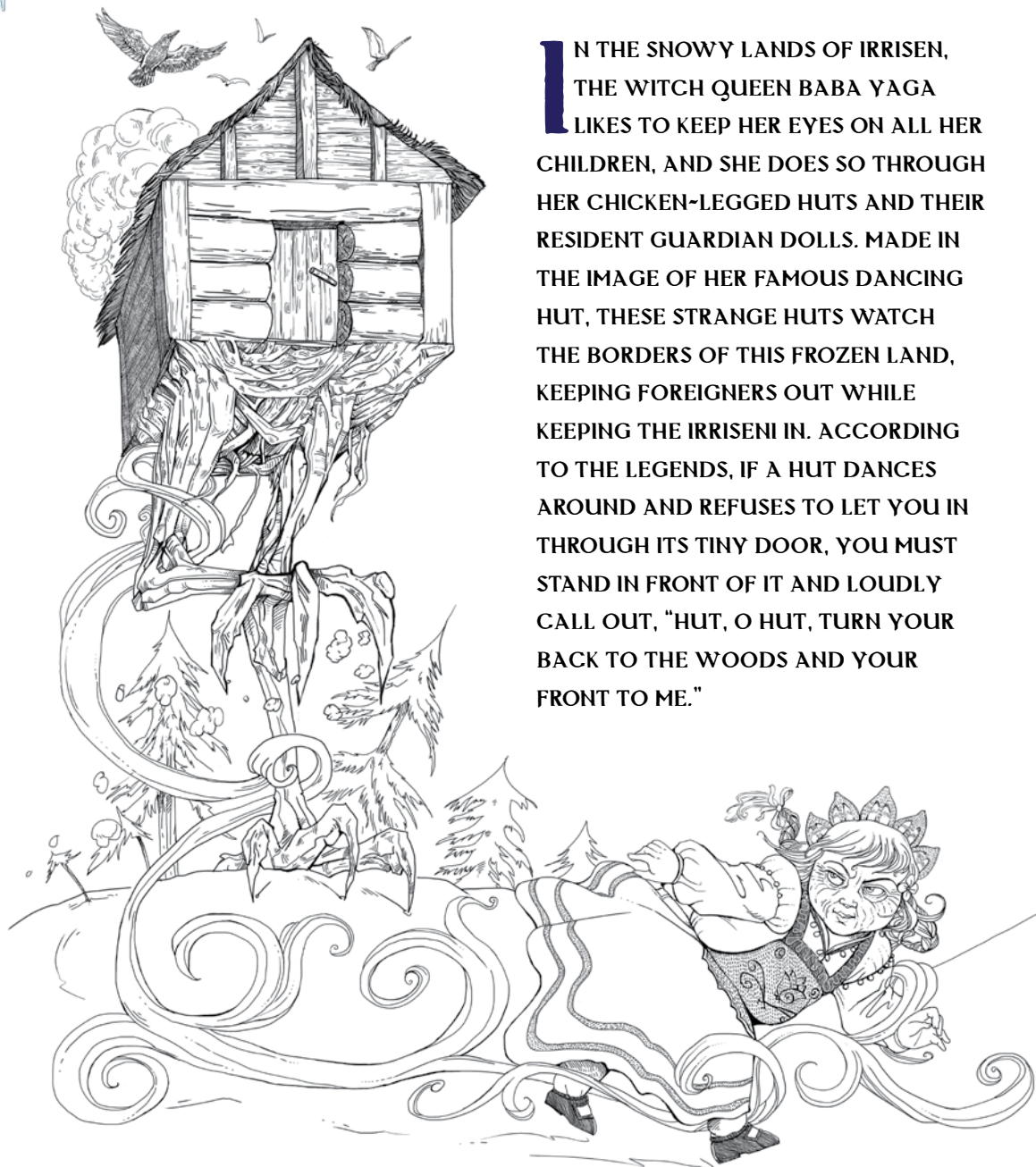
ADVENTURE PATH[™]



REIGN OF WINTER

THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

by Neil Spicer




IN THE SNOWY LANDS OF IRRISEN, THE WITCH QUEEN BABA YAGA LIKES TO KEEP HER EYES ON ALL HER CHILDREN, AND SHE DOES SO THROUGH HER CHICKEN-LEGGED HUTS AND THEIR RESIDENT GUARDIAN DOLLS. MADE IN THE IMAGE OF HER FAMOUS DANCING HUT, THESE STRANGE HUTS WATCH THE BORDERS OF THIS FROZEN LAND, KEEPING FOREIGNERS OUT WHILE KEEPING THE IRRISENI IN. ACCORDING TO THE LEGENDS, IF A HUT DANCES AROUND AND REFUSES TO LET YOU IN THROUGH ITS TINY DOOR, YOU MUST STAND IN FRONT OF IT AND LOUDLY CALL OUT, "HUT, O HUT, TURN YOUR BACK TO THE WOODS AND YOUR FRONT TO ME."



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REIGN OF WINTER

ADVENTURE PATH  PART 1 OF 6

THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

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REIGN OF WINTER



A DOORWAY TO NEW WORLDS

The Reign of Winter Adventure Path has actually been in the works for quite some time—or at least, the concept of it has. Keen-eyed readers of the *Pathfinder Chronicles: Gazetteer* back in 2008 (and of its successors, the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*) might have noticed an otherwise innocuous entry in the timeline for the year 4613 AR: “Baba Yaga installs her daughter Elvanna as sovereign of Irrisen.” It seems a relatively minor piece of royal trivia—one queen’s reign ends and another takes her place—but in the context of Irrisen’s history, it carries far greater meaning. Because Baba Yaga comes back to Irrisen every 100 years to put a new daughter on the throne, her next scheduled appearance is in 4713 AR, or, as Golarion history buffs know, in 2013 on our own calendar.

In other words, the seeds of Reign of Winter were planted about 5 years ago, with the plan that something big would

happen with Baba Yaga and Irrisen in 2013. And now here we are. Welcome to 2013. Welcome to Reign of Winter. And just in case you’re reading this and are planning to play in this Adventure Path, be warned—there are major spoilers ahead!

As we started outlining the Adventure Path, it soon became clear that Reign of Winter would be “the Baba Yaga Adventure Path,” not “the Irrisen Adventure Path.” After all, Baba Yaga’s *Dancing Hut* can take her anywhere in the universe, from other planets to other planes, and it would be something of a disservice to the Great Crone to limit her to just Irrisen. Furthermore, as we detailed more and more of the campaign’s plot, it soon became clear that we wanted to give the PCs access to the *Dancing Hut*, and with such a powerful artifact in their possession, we wanted them to be able to use it as it was intended. So rather than setting Reign of Winter in a single city or nation or region, the hut itself became a location, tying together all of the

FOREWORD

campaign's adventures. The PCs will travel to a number of wondrous, exotic locales, but the hut serves as their "home base" throughout the campaign.

That's not to say that Reign of Winter doesn't go to Irrisen, however. The PCs travel to Irrisen for the first time in this volume and spend the second half of the adventure there, while the second installment of the Adventure Path, "The Shackled Hut," takes place entirely in the land of the White Witches. But once the PCs get their hands on Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*, they're no longer restricted to just Golarion.

So just where do the PCs go in the campaign? We thought long and hard about this while brainstorming the Adventure Path, and came up with a number of ideas. Obviously, Irrisen would be an important location, but we also wanted to show off the traveling capabilities of the *Dancing Hut*, while retaining some of the dark fairy tale quality of the original stories featuring Baba Yaga. The end result is the most far-flung Adventure Path we've made yet!

We decided to gradually extend the "borders" of the Adventure Path beyond the Inner Sea region by setting the third adventure, "Maiden, Mother, Crone," in Iobaria, just east of Avistan on the continent of Casmaron. Iobaria is detailed in its own gazetteer in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #33. It's the most "Russian" of any region on Golarion, and no adventures have yet been set there, so it seemed like the best place for the PCs to take the *Dancing Hut* on its maiden journey.

After Irrisen and Iobaria, where else on Golarion could the hut go? Winter was obviously going to be one of the strongest themes for the Adventure Path, and the only place colder than Irrisen is the Crown of the World. But we'd already explored the Crown of the World in the Jade Regent Adventure Path, so we needed to look even farther for the hut's next destination.

Enter Golarion's solar system, lovingly detailed by Senior Editor James L. Sutter in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds*. And lo and behold, *Distant Worlds* already held the perfect place for Reign of Winter to visit next: the planet Triaxus, whose 317-year orbit results in a planetary winter that lasts for decades, provides the setting of the fourth installment of Reign of Winter, "The Frozen Stars."

And here's where the brainstorm took its strangest, funniest, and scariest turn yet. We'd already decided to go beyond the Inner Sea, and even beyond Golarion. Where should we go next? I don't remember who suggested that we take Reign of Winter to the birthplace of Baba Yaga, but I do remember we were all excited about it, because that meant going to Earth. Our Earth. We've established that Earth exists in the same universe as Golarion—the Material Plane is infinite, or nearly so, so there's plenty of room for just about any planet anywhere—but that's still a far cry from actually setting an adventure there. But as we started

ON THE COVER

The Queen of Witches herself, Baba Yaga, appears on the cover on this month's volume. The PCs don't meet her in this adventure, as her centennial reappearance in Irrisen did not transpire as scheduled, but they will find themselves hot on her trail throughout the Reign of Winter Adventure Path.

grappling with the ramifications of this decision, Publisher Erik Mona came up with one more brilliant, insane, and utterly awesome idea: an adventure called "Rasputin Must Die!" that actually featured the Mad Monk himself. We were all floored by the idea—fighting Rasputin in a Pathfinder adventure? Sold! But we also realized that setting an adventure on Earth was a risky proposition. As we further detailed more of the adventure and the campaign, however, we became even more excited, and we hope that it will be just as thrilling and fun for our fans.

We still had one more adventure to plan, though, and it was clear that it would be hard to top going to Earth. So we came full circle, and decided to set the entirety of the final Reign of Winter adventure, "The Witch-Queen's Revenge," inside Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* itself. In its various incarnations in folklore and in the world's oldest roleplaying game, Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* has always been bigger on the inside than on the outside, and we wanted to play around with our own take on that. I'll talk more about this in next month's foreword, but suffice it to say that the interior of the hut in the last adventure is completely different from the hut the PCs travel around in during the campaign up to that point, and there's more than enough room inside to do justice to the finale of Reign of Winter (and shed some light on one of Irrisen's greatest mysteries: just what does Baba Yaga do with all those daughters she removes from the throne of Irrisen?).

RPG Superstar Neil Spicer, who's long been wanting to get his hands on an early Adventure Path installment, finally gets his chance as he kicks off Reign of Winter with "The Snows of Summer," taking the PCs from a warm Taldan summer to Irrisen's harsh and unending winter. So put on your boots and cold-weather outfit, grab your ushanka and your chicken-legged hut mittens—it's freezing out there, and the Reign of Winter has just begun!



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REIGN OF WINTER



THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

PART ONE: AN EARLY FROST

PAGE 9

To investigate a puzzling incursion of wintry weather and rescue a missing noble kidnapped by bandits, the PCs venture into the Border Wood, mysteriously blanketed in snow even at the height of summer.

PART TWO: THE DEPTHS OF WINTER

PAGE 23

Delving deeper into the forest, the PCs discover a magic portal that is the source of both the wintry weather and dangerous invaders from the far north.

PART THREE: LAND OF THE WHITE WITCHES

PAGE 34

Compelled to undertake a dangerous quest to save their world, the PCs cross through the portal into the winterbound land of Irrisen, where they soon make new friends and enemies among the local inhabitants.

PART FOUR: THE PALE TOWER

PAGE 42

To close the winter portal and save Taldor, the PCs must assault the Pale Tower, an ice fortress controlled by an ambitious winter witch.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“The Snows of Summer” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

1

The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.

2

The PCs should be 2nd level by the time they find the winter portal in the Border Wood.

3

The PCs should be 3rd level by the time they arrive in the village of Waldsby in Irrisen.

4

The PCs should be 4th level before their final battle against Radossek Pavril in the Pale Tower.

The PCs should be well into 4th level by the end of the adventure.

THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Exactly 1,400 years ago, a powerful witch from another world named Baba Yaga arrived on Golarion with her *Dancing Hut*, a formidable artifact that can travel between worlds and even between the planes. In a quick, brutal conflict known as the Winter War, the self-proclaimed Queen of Witches conquered the eastern Linnorm Kingdoms of Raemerrund and the Djurstor Confederacy and founded a new nation locked in eternal winter—the land of Irrisen. After installing her daughter Jadwiga on the throne as Irrisen's first queen, Baba Yaga departed in her *Dancing Hut*, but she returned to Irrisen exactly 100 years later to replace Jadwiga with a new daughter, Morgannan, taking the former queen and the first generation of her descendants with her when she left again. Baba Yaga has continued this tradition every 100 years for the last 14 centuries, resulting in a succession of 14 queens of Irrisen. Most people assume Baba Yaga takes her daughters to explore strange new worlds, times, and dimensions, sharing with them the secrets of the multiverse. But the truth, hidden even from Baba Yaga's daughters, is far darker.

Baba Yaga is a nearly immortal witch of mythic power, and the source of both her longevity and her arcane might is one of her greatest secrets: The daughters that Baba Yaga removes from Irrisen's throne do not move on to bigger and better things—instead, they are sacrificed to fuel their mother's power. Baba Yaga temporarily grants each daughter the crown of Irrisen only so she can mature like fine wine, whereupon Baba Yaga returns after 100 years to drain that daughter's vitality and replenish her own. She then imprisons the withered, undead husk deep inside her *Dancing Hut* and crowns another daughter queen of Irrisen until her next return. This ploy has worked, almost without flaw, for 1,400 years. Only a few of Baba Yaga's daughters have rebelled against their mother to retain their crowns, but even then, none of them knew anything of Baba Yaga's true plans for them.

Now, the time to abdicate the crown draws near for Irrisen's current queen, Elvanna, the fourteenth daughter of Baba Yaga to hold that title, and she has begun to suspect that the popular belief regarding the fate of Baba Yaga's daughters—propagated by her sister, Queen Aelena, 900 years ago—might not be the truth. Through decades of research and magical divination, Elvanna learned that every queen of Irrisen has disappeared, never to be heard from again—not on any planet, plane, or dimension she could find. Though Elvanna could not divine the exact fate of her lost sisters, she discovered enough that she refused to simply wait for her mother to return and subject her to the same fate. Unlike her previous rebellious sisters, however, Elvanna seeks much more than simply to retain the throne of Irrisen. To defy

THE WITCHWAR LEGACY

The Reign of Winter Adventure Path assumes that the events in *Pathfinder Module: The Witchwar Legacy* have already taken place. In that adventure, Queen Elvanna sought the *Torc of Kostchtchie* to increase her own power in her eventual showdown with her mother. Unfortunately, things did not go as Elvanna planned—a band of heroes defeated her granddaughter, Ilivorr Karanasi, and stole the torc, before subsequently losing the artifact to agents of Kostchtchie sent by the demon lord to reclaim it. As a result, Elvanna turned her efforts to other means of keeping her throne—and these new plans set in motion the Reign of Winter Adventure Path.

Alternatively, if you would like to use *The Witchwar Legacy* to continue the campaign at the end of the Adventure Path, it is just as easy to assume that the events in the module have not yet occurred—leaving it to your PCs to seek out the Veil of Frozen Tears in search of the *Torc of Kostchtchie*.

In either case, the events of *The Witchwar Legacy* and the *Torc of Kostchtchie* itself do not impact the Reign of Winter Adventure Path in any significant way.

her all-powerful mother, Elvanna has decided to go all the way, and if successful, her rebellion will allow her to supplant the Queen of Witches herself.

With the help of her half-brother Grigori Rasputin, Elvanna lured Baba Yaga into a trap on the Queen of Witches' homeworld—Earth. A daunting contest of wills ensued, but Elvanna was victorious, and imprisoned her mother in Rasputin's fortress in Siberia. Despite Baba Yaga's seeming defeat, however, she had made her own contingency plans against such treachery. Suspecting something amiss in Rasputin's summons, Baba Yaga summoned her Three Riders—fey harbingers who appear in Irrisen every 100 years to herald her return—and informed them that if she did not make her scheduled appearance in Irrisen, then they should assume some ill fate had befallen her and come to her aid. Baba Yaga's plan was to leave a trail her loyal servants could follow, consisting of a number of items that act as keys for controlling her *Dancing Hut*. This trail would enable the Three Riders (or other rescuers) to track her down across various lands, and even other worlds, to free her.

Unaware of her mother's precautions, Elvanna returned to Golarion and shackled Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* in Whitethrone's Market Square as a trophy and evidence of her success in overthrowing her mother, taking care to deactivate all of the keys inside that could be used to control the *Dancing Hut*, so no one could steal it from her. At the same time, Elvanna created a back door into the

REIGN OF WINTER

hut for herself—a magic mirror portal that allows her to freely pass between the Royal Palace in Whitethrone and the hut's inner sanctum.

With the hut thus secured, Elvanna embarked on a hunt for Baba Yaga's Three Riders. While she was able to capture and kill two of the Riders, the Black Rider managed to evade capture, only to discover that with its keys deactivated, he could not use the *Dancing Hut* himself to find Baba Yaga. Taking the deactivated keys with him to Iobaria, the Black Rider fled into the wilderness. Enraged, Elvanna instructed her armies to hunt down the Rider even as she turned her attention to the next part of her ambitious plan.

Leaving most of the day-to-day administration of Irrisen's government in the hands of her daughter, Princess Cassisoche, and a small army of Jadwiga bureaucrats, Elvanna began performing complex rituals to expand Irrisen's eternal winter to cover all of Golarion and turn the unprepared and unsuspecting planet into an icy world under her iron control. With the power of a new ice age at her command, Elvanna believes that no force on Golarion or beyond could ever challenge her again. The first stage of Elvanna's plan has involved opening portals between Irrisen and numerous locations across the globe. As a result, small pockets of unnatural winter, along with monstrous denizens of the frozen north, have begun appearing all over Avistan and Garund—including near the small village of Heldren in the nation of Taldor.

This winter portal manifests because of the direct actions of the White Witch Nazhena Vasilliova, a member of Irrisen's ruling elite assisting Elvanna in her power grab. Nazhena's apprentice, a winter witch named Radosek Pavril, is carrying on her work while Nazhena returns to Whitethrone to report to Elvanna on their progress. Radosek has already sent many cold fey agents into the Border Wood near Heldren to strengthen Irrisen's presence in the area. The fey are under the leadership of a devious moss troll named Teb Knotten and a vicious ice mephit called Izoze, who are both charged with guarding the winter portal.

Soon after crossing through the portal into the Border Wood, the Irriseni invaders came into conflict with a group of bandits called Rohkar's Raiders operating in the forest, led by a conniving priest of Norgorber named Rohkar Cindren. Although Rohkar and his gang initially resisted the invaders, the bandit leader quickly came to realize that they were no match for the fey and surrendered. Believing that Rohkar might prove valuable in sharing information about Taldor and could act as their agent in the lands surrounding the Border Wood, Izoze was able to convince Teb to spare the bandits.

Now in an uneasy partnership, the bandits have helped Izoze explore the edges of the forest, where they came

upon the caravan of a young noblewoman named Argentea Malassene, who was traveling from the city of Zimar to one of Taldor's canals so she could return by boat to the capital in Oppara. Immediately recognizing the value of such a target, Rohkar urged Izoze to attack the caravan. The ice mephit agreed, provided the bandits took the noblewoman captive rather than sating their bloodlust. The bandits have taken Lady Argentea back to their lair, a sturdy lodge deep in the heart of the forest, but they have left a clear trail in the deep snow. Rohkar is savoring the moment when he can take Lady Argentea's life as a sacrifice for Norgorber, while Izoze and Teb Knotten have instead hatched a plan to use the noblewoman's stature in Taldan society to further their cause.

But Lady Argentea is not the only person to fall afoul of these villains. Some of the locals near Heldren have also encountered the bandits and their cold fey allies, as well as other creatures of the frozen north that were drawn through the portal. Rumors are already swirling about what this unseasonable weather could mean for the region. No one suspects that it could actually spell doom for the entire world.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

When a supernatural pocket of winter appears in the Border Wood near the village of Heldren, the PCs are sent to investigate, and to find and rescue a traveling aristocrat apparently kidnapped by bandits in the wood. At the center of the winter pocket, the PCs discover the source of the unseasonable weather: a magic portal leading to the frozen land of Irrisen, far to the north. But they soon realize that the threat endangers more than just Heldren when a dying horseman comes through the portal—the Black Rider, the last survivor of Baba Yaga's Three Riders. He charges the PCs with finding Baba Yaga to stop Queen Elvanna from spreading Irrisen's eternal winter over all of Golarion.

Driven by the need to save their homeland and compelled to act by the witchcraft of the Black Rider, the PCs cross into Irrisen through the open portal. The PCs have the opportunity to befriend the peasants of the village of Waldsby, but also make powerful enemies as well—for the White Witch who rules the region, Nazhena Vasilliova, is also responsible for creating the winter portal in Taldor. The PCs must journey to the White Witch's stronghold, a fortress of pure ice called the Pale Tower, and face Nazhena's apprentice, Radosek Pavril, a skilled winter witch in his own right. Only after Radosek is defeated can the PCs save their hometown of Heldren and shut down the winter portal. With the portal closed, the PCs find themselves trapped in Irrisen, but the Black Rider's quest points them toward the city of Whitethrone, the next stop in their search for Baba Yaga.

THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

PART ONE: AN EARLY FROST

The adventure begins in the village of Heldren, a small village in Taldor just north of the Border Wood near Qadira. Heldren is detailed in the article beginning on page 62. The PCs should all be residents of (or recent arrivals to) Heldren, where rumors of strange, unseasonable pockets of wintry weather appearing across Taldor have begun to circulate among the town's gossip mongers.

To set the scene and start the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the PCs.

The sleepy village of Heldren has rarely seen so much excitement or concern. Hunters from the nearby Border Wood speak of unnaturally cold weather at the height of summer that descended on the forest just days ago. Heavy snow followed, and those who returned spoke of an uneasy presence in the woods, as well as new, dangerous predators. No one knows what this event means, but the town's soothsayer, Old Mother Theodora, claims dark times lie ahead.

As if in proof of that dire prophecy, a badly wounded mercenary arrived in town yesterday, claiming to be a bodyguard of Lady Argentea Malassene. He told the village council that the noblewoman's escort came under attack by bandits and strange, wintry creatures near the edge of the Border Wood. He alone escaped, and Lady Argentea was dragged away into the forest. Now the townsfolk cast fearful eyes toward the snowy forest, worried what else might emerge to threaten their peaceful village.

If the PCs gather to find out more about these recent events, allow them to attempt Diplomacy checks to gather information or Knowledge (local) checks, and consult the table below for the information they can learn about recent events in and around Heldren and the Border Wood.

LOCAL LORE

Result	Rumor
5+	Everyone says the weather is unseasonably cold for midsummer—it even snowed in the Border Wood! Most suspect magic is involved, and some fear Qadiran agents played a role in it.
10+	Old Man Dansby claims that someone keeps stealing from his fields. His farm lies closest to the Border Wood, where half his crops have died from an icy frost and the rest have been carried off.
12+	A farmer's son took ill a few days ago after falling through the ice over Wishbone Creek. The boy said he spotted a white stag in the forest—and heard it talking—then tried to follow it.
15+	A group of rangers in the Border Wood called the High Sentinels usually keep bandit activity curbed. They're doing a poor job if brigands could attack a well-armed caravan and abduct Lady Argentea.

WHY TALDOR?

The Reign of Winter Adventure Path kicks off in the small village of Heldren. This adventure assumes that Heldren is located in the nation of Taldor. However, the adventure can start almost anywhere on Golarion, enabling you to place Heldren in another nation to support the backgrounds of individual PCs. Heldren is generic enough that it could be a village in almost any Inner Sea nation, as long as it is close to a forest. Likewise, the abducted noblewoman Lady Argentea Malassene can easily be modified to represent any local aristocrat or significant NPC to serve as the catalyst for the PCs' investigation. If you decide to move Heldren, the village should not be placed in Irrisen, as a major part of this adventure involves the PCs crossing through a magic portal to that far-off land, and the adventure ends with the PCs trapped in Irrisen, far from their homes.

- 18+ Locals say a hunter named Dryden Kepp claimed he saw a giant white weasel on the High Ridge in the forest. No one believed him so he went back to trap it and prove them wrong.
- 20+ Two weeks ago, Lady Argentea Malassene traveled past Heldren on her way from Oppara to Zimar to meet her betrothed. Rumor has it the two didn't get along and Lady Argentea caused a scandal by calling off the engagement and returning home.

If the PCs don't seem interested in investigating these strange occurrences or Lady Argentea's disappearance, the village council, led by **Ionnia Teppen** (NG female human commoner 7), eventually approaches them. The councilors confirm the rumors that a pocket of unearthly winter weather has recently appeared in the Border Wood, and inform the PCs that a rider from Zimar arrived in town the previous day bearing ominous tidings. The rider, an Ulfen mercenary named Yuln Oerstag, was part of the guard escorting Lady Argentea Malassene from Zimar to Oppara. As the caravan skirted the Border Wood, however, the noblewoman's carriage came under attack by bandits and strange, wintry creatures. Lady Argentea was carried off, and Yuln was the only one to escape. He is badly wounded, but he has been able to describe the horrific creatures that attacked the noblewoman's party. A native of the far north, Yuln recognized some of the icy creatures that emerged from the forest, and the tales he shared with the council have everyone rightly concerned.

Heldren is barely large enough to marshal a decent militia to protect the town, so it needs the assistance of local heroes like the PCs. Councilor Teppen asks the PCs

REIGN OF WINTER

to investigate these events, encouraging them to rescue Lady Argentea and determine the source of the threat hiding in the icy heart of the forest.

SPEAKING WITH YULN

Before heading into the Border Wood, the PCs may wish to speak with **Yuln Oerstag** (LN male human fighter 2), the lone survivor of the attack on Lady Argentea Malassene's caravan. The village councilors take the PCs to the Willowbark Apothecary, where the wounded bodyguard is recovering. Wrapped in bandages, the Ulfen mercenary's nose, fingers, and toes have taken on a black hue from serious frostbite, and he is still heavily wounded. Despite the best efforts of Elder Safander, Heldren's village priest, it will take some time before Yuln is hale and hearty enough to travel again, much less wield a weapon. Despite his obvious pain, however, he waves the PCs closer to speak with them.

"Would that I could go with you," he says. "My ancestors would ridicule my lack of valor for fleeing rather than fighting to the end. But I faced enemies that even the greatest warriors in the Linnorm Kingdoms have faltered against, though I think I slew at least one of them before they dragged Lady Argentea away."

If the PCs question Yuln further about the attack, his most likely answers follow. A native of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, he can also relate the tale of Baba Yaga's conquest of Irrisen, and warn the PCs of the cruelty of the White Witches who rule there—all described from the perspective of an Ulfen warrior with centuries of bitter resentment bred into him.

Who attacked you? "We thought they were just bandits at first—outlaws who hide like wolves in the forest. They were no match for us. But then came the cold fey of the north. They appeared among us and the battle turned quickly. My people speak of the winter-touched all the time, but I never expected to meet them this far south."

What are the "winter-touched"? "Fey creatures who have sworn themselves to the White Witches of Irrisen, those who stole our lands from us during the Winter War. Tiny sprites no taller than the length of a man's forearm. But don't be fooled by their small stature. Legends say they have taken a sliver of ice into their hearts, and their touch bears the harsh bite of winter."

Where did they take Lady Argentea? "Into the forest, back through the ice and snow. Beyond that, I don't know."

I followed as far as I could, but the winter-touched were too many and too hard to fend off in the snow alone. I barely escaped, and rode to seek help here."

Why would they want Lady Argentea? "I don't know. But if one of the White Witches took her, no good shall come of it. The winter-touched do nothing without the leave of those who placed the ice in their hearts. If they're here, it's because a White Witch sent them. And much worse will follow."

How do you fight the winter-touched? "With cold iron and burning flame. Both burn them, and both are weapons they fear."

Yuln has little additional information to share, but he is willing to loan the PCs his cold iron longsword to assist them in rescuing Lady Argentea. Once the PCs have finished questioning Yuln, they can buy equipment and prepare themselves for their journey into the wilderness, but the village council urges them to make haste if they want to find Lady Argentea alive.



YULN OERSTAG

TRAVELING CONDITIONS

The attack on Lady Argentea's caravan took place approximately 6 miles south of Heldren. None of the intervening territory has been affected by the wintry weather over the Border Wood yet, though the air grows noticeably cooler the closer the

PCs come to the forest's edge. Once the PCs pass inside the tree line where the pocket of winter begins, however, the weather proves much worse, with temperatures below freezing and falling snow. The snow reduces visibility by half, imposing a -4 penalty on Perception checks and ranged attacks (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 438).

The temperatures inside the winter pocket are considered cold (approximately 30° F during the day, and 10° F at night). Every hour spent in the wintry conditions requires a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) to avoid taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Those who have taken nonlethal damage from exposure suffer from hypothermia (treat as fatigued), and if this condition is not remedied, they also suffer from frostbite (*Core Rulebook* 442). If the PCs secure cold-weather outfits before leaving Heldren, they receive a +5 bonus on Fortitude saves against exposure to the weather while adventuring in the forest.

Additionally, within the edges of the Border Wood, 6 inches of snow cover the ground, reducing overland travel rates by half. During combat, entering a snow-covered square costs 2 squares of movement. Snowshoes (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 91) can significantly reduce these penalties, but no one in Heldren makes or sells them.

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However, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Craft (shoes) skill check can fashion a serviceable pair.

A. MASSACRE SITE

Yuln can give the PCs clear directions to the site of the attack on Lady Argentea Malassene's caravan. Retracing his trail, the PCs come across the remains of the noblewoman's escort on the fringes of the Border Wood. When the PCs reach this location, read or paraphrase the following to set the scene.

Near the forest, the temperature grows noticeably colder. The road ahead is littered with debris and the corpses of slain humans and horses. A carriage stands in the roadway, its team of horses missing or cut free, while another overturned carriage lies sprawled and broken next to the tree line. To the south, more bodies have fallen around what appears to be a statue of ice. A snowy trail leads deeper into the forest.

This close to the winter pocket, the temperature has dropped considerably, hovering just above freezing, and a light dusting of snow covers the ground. Lady Argentea's entourage included two carriages, a few handmaidens and servants, and 10 guards. Only she and Yuln survived. The rest were slain in the coordinated attack by Izoze, her winter-touched allies, and Rohkar's Raiders. Most of the bodies lie pierced with tiny needles and shards of ice, the handiwork of winter-touched fey arrows and Izoze's icy breath weapon. All of the bodies, with the exception of the captain (see area A4) have been stripped of armor and weapons.

A1. Wrecked Carriage

Rohkar's bandits already looted this overturned carriage. Two of Lady Argentea's handmaidens lie dead inside.

Treasure: The broken chests and boxes strewn across the ground contain the handmaidens' spare clothing, including three courtier's outfits worth a total of 90 gp.

A2. Locked Carriage (CR 1)

The decorative chasings on this expensive carriage bear the marks of Taldan heraldry, as well as damage from the many arrows fired in the battle that took place here. A spear has been wedged between the handles of the carriage doors to hold them closed. Removing the spear to open the doors is a move action.

Creatures: Muffled sounds of movement emanate from inside the carriage. Rohkar stuffed two slain guards inside and then animated them as zombies. He locked them in the carriage as a surprise for anyone investigating the massacre. He recently animated more undead to defend his lair in the Border Wood (see area H), so these zombies are no longer under his control, but they still attack as soon as anyone opens the carriage.

ZOMBIES (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 12 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

Treasure: While looting Lady Argentea's carriage, the bandits missed a small jewelry box under the seat, which can be found with a successful DC 15 Perception check. Lady Argentea's signet ring is still inside, as are a pair of earrings worth 25 gp, a set of pearl-inlaid bracelets worth 90 gp, assorted gold and silver necklaces worth a total of 75 gp, and one sapphire pendant worth 50 gp.

A3. Ice Statue

The remains of the Taldan captain tasked with escorting Lady Argentea from Zimar back to Oppara stand here as a gruesome statue, his slain body mostly encased in ice. Izoze made an example of him for others to find. Unfortunately, the captain's body is no longer intact, as the mephit carved away pieces of him that now lie in blocks of slowly melting ice at his feet.

Treasure: The frozen captain still wears his breastplate, emblazoned with Taldan heraldry, and one of the chunks of ice contains the captain's arm, still grasping his masterwork longsword.

A4. Snowy Trail

At the edge of the massacre site, an obvious trail leads between a copse of trees and over a snowy plain toward the Border Wood. Rohkar's bandits took the surviving horses from Lady Argentea's carriage with them, transporting both the noblewoman and the valuables they looted from her belongings. The bandits were unable to hide their trail in the heavy snow, so it can be followed easily without the need for Survival checks. The trail leads all the way to their lair at the High Sentinel Lodge (area H).

B. TRAILSIDE TRAP (CR 2)

As it enters the full expanse of the Border Wood, the trail passes through a small clearing among the taller trees before continuing uphill and out of sight. A large chest lies half-buried in the snow, apparently dropped or discarded by those who hastily passed this way.

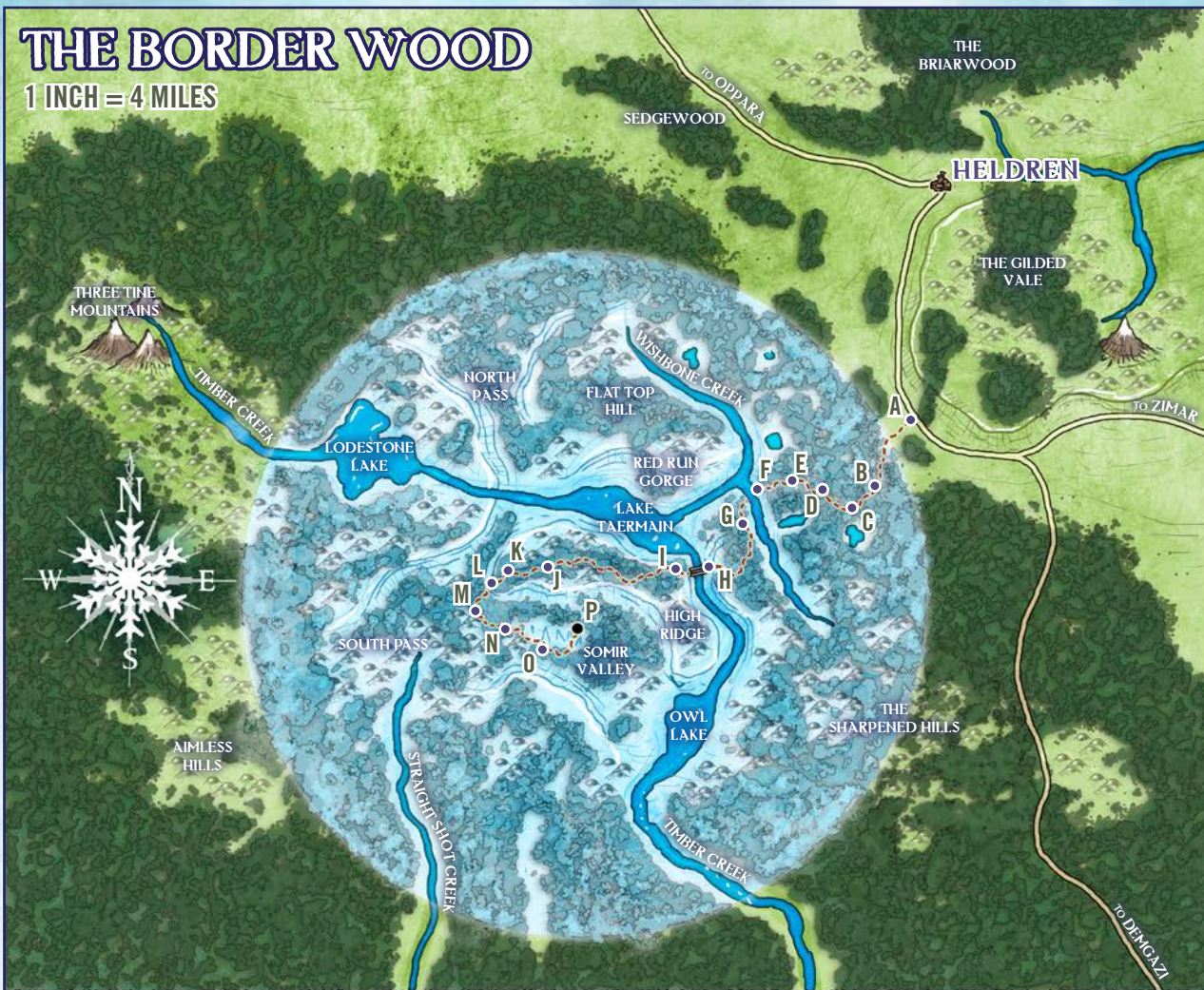
Rohkar's bandits buried the bulkier spoils from Lady Argentea's caravan here so the gang could make faster progress to the lodge that serves as their base, planning to reclaim the goods at a later time.

Trap: The bandits left a surprise to protect their buried loot, using a heavy chest taken from Lady Argentea's carriage. The packed snow hides a rope they strung through the undergrowth to a spiked log suspended high in the trees. Once the trap is triggered, the log drops down

REIGN OF WINTER

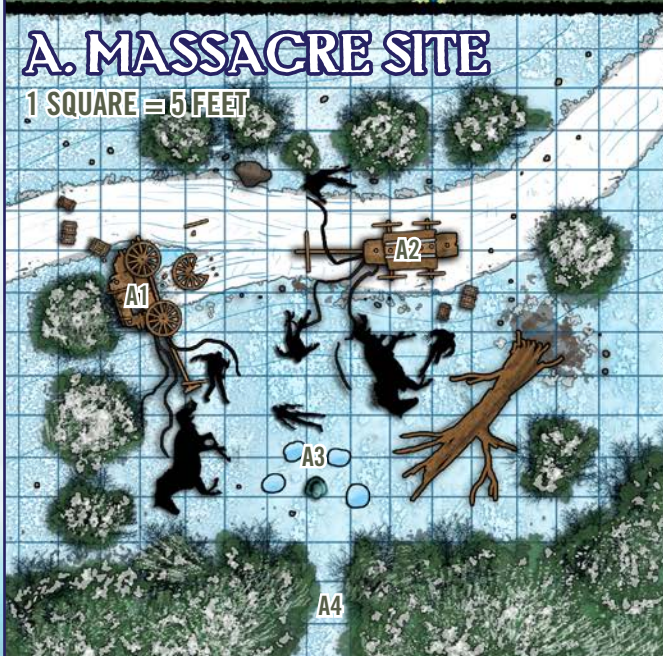
THE BORDER WOOD

1 INCH = 4 MILES



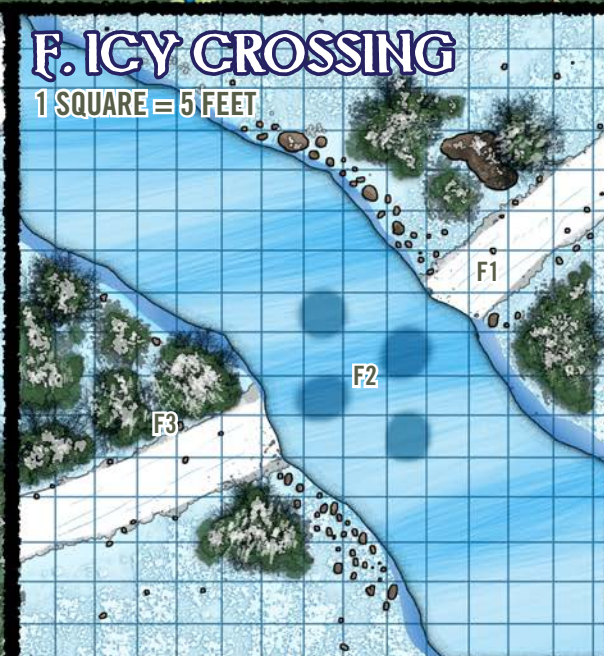
A. MASSACRE SITE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



F. ICY CROSSING

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



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and sweeps through every target gathered around the chest and along the trail.

SPIKED LOG TRAP CR 2

XP 600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +10 melee (1d8+3/19–20 bludgeoning and piercing damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. line)

Treasure: The half-buried chest is empty, but the bandits buried their spoils beneath it. If the chest is dug up, the loot is plainly visible. The cache contains the majority of the weapons and armor stripped from Lady Argentea's guards, including five sets of leather armor, three sets of studded leather armor, a masterwork chain shirt, two light wooden shields, seven longswords, two spears, a masterwork dagger, and three light crossbows with a total of 25 bolts.

C. HEAVY SNOWDRIFT (CR 2)

The snow becomes increasingly deep in this part of the forest, where a windswept gully carves a path through a tree-covered ridge. A soft cascade of snow falls from an overhead branch, hissing softly as it strikes the ground.

Because of the deep snowdrifts in the gully, entering a snow-covered square requires 4 squares of movement.

Creature: Among the many predators released into the Border Wood with the opening of the winter portal from Irrisen was a white-scaled, arctic-born tatzlwyrms that now hunts the forest. At first, it fed on native wildlife caught unprepared for the sudden shift in weather. But heavy snow drove most of its prey into unaffected areas of the forest, so now the tatzlwyrms hides in the snow-covered undergrowth of the gully waiting for new prey to wander past. The arctic tatzlwyrms gains a +6 racial bonus on Stealth checks in snow, so PCs must succeed at a DC 26 Perception check to notice it.

ARCTIC TATZLWYRM CR 2

XP 600

Variant tatzlwyrms (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 261)

hp 22

TACTICS

During Combat The tatzlwyrms relies on its superior Stealth skill to remain hidden before choosing its first victim—preferably someone unarmored and easier to bite. Then it pounces and rakes before grappling with its grab ability. Thereafter, it uses its poison gasp to weaken a victim before dragging her under the snow to suffocate her. If driven out

of the gully, the tatzlwyrms climbs the nearest tree, carrying anyone still caught in its coils. If the tatzlwyrms is slain while holding someone in a tree, the victim must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save to catch herself on a tree branch or she takes falling damage.

Morale The tatzlwyrms fights to the death.

D. DECORATED TREES (CR 2)

Feathered bundles and strange fetishes hang from the lowest branches of the trees in this part of the forest, swaying and shifting in the wind. All are stuck through with small pins holding pieces of leather bound around them.

The feathered fetishes are actually the frozen corpses of dead crows, pierced with tiny sprite arrows, clear evidence of the malevolent fey presence filling the Border Wood. At Teb Knotten's direction, Izoze led several winter-touched sprites into the Border Wood to scout for dangers they might face as they establish a foothold in Taldor. Initially, these fey helped Rohkar's Raiders assault Lady Argentea's entourage, but on their way back, the sprites discovered a flight of crows in this part of the forest. Since then, they've busied themselves with eliminating the pests and making horrific examples of them, harboring the same resentment and hatred for the birds as the people of Irrisen.

Creatures: Three winter-touched sprites named Pym, Shor, and Vosi remain here, but they soon turn their attention to the PCs as new targets. Initially, the sprites hide among the trees, masking their luminosity and surrounding the PCs on different sides of the trail (Perception DC 30 to notice). Any sprite detected by the PCs purposefully increases its luminosity and casts *dancing lights*, shaping the spell to give the impression that a whole host of sprites accompanies them.

PYM, SHOR, AND VOSI (3) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male and female winter-touched sprite fighters 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 256 and page 72)

CE Diminutive fey (cold)

Init +3; Senses detect evil, detect good, low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 size)

hp 10 each (2 HD; 1d6+1d10+2)

Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1

DR 2/cold iron; Immune cold

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee short sword +3 (1d2–2/19–20 plus numbing cold)

REIGN OF WINTER

Ranged shortbow +8 (1d2–2/x3 plus numbing cold)

Space 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks numbing cold (DC 11)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +6)

Constant—*detect evil*, *detect good*

At will—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 11)

1/day—*color spray* (DC 12)

TACTICS

During Combat Initially, the sprites snipe at the PCs while hiding in the trees. After firing, they can attempt another Stealth check at a –20 penalty to stay hidden. If anyone closes on their position, the sprites forgo further attacks until they can silently relocate to another tree. Any sprite spotted by the PCs fights defensively to protect itself, drawing the PCs' attention so its companions can sneak up behind the PCs and catch their enemies in a *color spray*. They take turns with this tactic to blind, stun, and knock out as many targets as possible, then rain arrows infused with numbing cold on those who remain.

Morale If the sprites are faced with fire-based attacks or the PCs manage to slay the majority of them, the remaining sprites flee, seeking out Fawfein (at area E) or Izoze (at area H4) for protection. They cast *dancing lights* once more to mask their retreat, sending the lights in different directions as they dim their own luminosity in the hope of leading pursuers astray.

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8,

Cha 13

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 8

Feats Alertness, Deadly Aim

Skills Escape Artist +15,

Fly +21, Perception +6,

Sense Motive +5, Stealth +20,

Survival +4

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ luminous

Gear short sword, shortbow

with 20 arrows, 14 gp

E. THE TALKING STAG (CR 3)

A narrow game trail winds its way through the trees and undergrowth here. Hoofprints mark the underlying snow, leading in both directions.

Creatures: A winter-touched atomie named Fawfein and his pet stag wander

this part of the forest, exploring the Border Wood to locate future sites and paths for the Irriseni invaders to use. Normally, Fawfein hides on the stag's back, blending in with its white fur (Perception DC 30 to notice). Once he or the stag detects the PCs, however, Fawfein turns invisible and has the animal approach them. Fawfein attempts to engage the PCs in conversation, making a Bluff check to pretend to speak through the stag and make the PCs think the animal is a friendly magical beast. He gathers as much information as he can about the PCs, including why they've come to the forest, so he can warn Izoze and Teb Knotten. A PC who succeeds at a Sense Motive check sees through Fawfein's Bluff to realize someone other than the stag is talking. If discovered, he and the stag attack in unison.

FAWFEIN

CR 1

XP 400

Male winter-touched atomie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 28

and page 72)

hp 9

TACTICS

During Combat Fawfein uses his *speak with animals* ability to direct the stag to charge and gore the least armored foe. Meanwhile, he invisibly flies

after the most dangerous opponent to target that character's weapon with *shrink item* and tip the odds in his favor. Thereafter, he casts *reduce person* on enemies and flanks with the stag to make sneak attacks.

Morale If the stag is slain, Fawfein flies into a rage to avenge it, fighting to the death while cursing the killers in Sylvan. Otherwise, if Fawfein is reduced to 3 hit points or fewer, he commands the stag to flee, turns invisible again, and attempts to flee as well in order to bring word of the PCs to his superiors.

THE TALKING STAG

CR 1

XP 400

Elk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 147)

hp 15



WINTER-TOUCHED SPRITE

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F. ICY CROSSING

With the sustained wintry weather over the past several days, a small stream called Wishbone Creek has frozen over. Teb Knotten and Izoze have sought out natural barriers like this during their exploration of the forest within the wintry pocket created by the portal from Irrisen so they can better position their allies. Use the map on page 12 for this encounter.

F1. Trail Sign (CR 3)

A human-sized snowman stands in the middle of the trail before a frozen stream. A crude wooden sign leans against it and bears the words "Trespassers Turn Back."

Trap: Teb Knotten's minions placed an especially nasty ward here in the guise of a snowman. When anyone comes within 15 feet of the snowman, it seemingly stirs to life and speaks in Common. This effect is actually a *magic mouth* spell, which addresses those who triggered it by saying, "Can't you read? The sign says turn back! Now get lost!" Anyone who ignores this warning and approaches within 5 feet of the snowman activates a *sound burst* that erupts as a scream of frustration from the frozen guardian.

SOUND BURST TRAP CR 3

XP 800

Type magic; Perception DC 27; Disable Device DC 27

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (5 feet, *alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*sound burst*, 1d8 sonic damage plus stunned for 1 round, Fort DC 18 negates stunned effect); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-radius spread centered on the snowman)

Development: The *sound burst* alerts the elementals lurking in the stream below the ice (at area F2), who emerge from the ice to attack any stunned creatures.

F2. Wishbone Creek (CR 3)

A solid sheet of ice extends across this frozen stream, while snow-covered rocks line its banks.

The stream is 20 feet wide at this point, but its surface is frozen (see Hazard, below).

Creatures: Two Small ice elementals named Skrikks and Szassh watch over this creek, acting as guardians toward anyone trying to cross. They patrol the stream in opposite directions before returning here every few hours to consult with one another. For swifter movement, they use their swim speed to navigate the cold waters beneath the

ice, emerging to challenge anyone in this part of the forest. While they're not exceptionally bright, the elementals share their reports with Izoze on a regular basis when she visits to check on them. So far, they've had little to discuss other than the waylaying of a farmer from Heldren, but the mephit has since warned them that additional travelers may come searching for Lady Argentea.

SKRIKKS AND SZASSH (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Small ice elemental (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 114)

hp 13 each

TACTICS

During Combat Skrikks and Szassh attempt to force opponents toward the weakened areas of ice, using combat maneuvers to bull rush or reposition them there if necessary. Otherwise, they emerge in the more solid areas to block and flank those trying to cross, using their slam attacks and numbing cold to stagger and kill anyone still standing.

Morale The elementals fight to the death.

Hazard: The frozen creek acts as an ice sheet; entering a square covered in ice costs 2 squares of movement, and the DC of Acrobatics checks increases by 5 in such squares. A successful DC 10 Acrobatics check is required to run or charge across the creek. The ice is weakened, as the ice elementals have shaved away portions of the surface from below (marked with dark circles on the map). A Medium or larger creature entering one of these squares must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid falling through the ice into the water below. The creek is only 6 feet deep, but any immersed in the cold water must immediately succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or they each take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and suffer from hypothermia (treat as fatigued). These penalties (and the ensuing damage) only end if the victims change into dry clothes, get warm, and heal the nonlethal damage taken from exposure.

F3. Dead Body

The legs and feet of a frozen corpse jut from a pile of snow next to the trees here.

The dead body of Old Man Dansby, a farmer from Heldren, lies here. He chased a couple of winter-touched sprites who were stealing crops from his fields into the forest and ultimately fell victim to the ice elementals.

Treasure: A former soldier of Taldor, Dansby kept his possessions in good repair, and they remain with his body. They include a composite longbow (+1 Str) with 12 arrows; a dagger; a masterwork handaxe; and a pouch containing 14 gp, 25 sp, and 18 cp.

REIGN OF WINTER

G. BANDITS ON THE TRAIL (CR 1)

The trail begins to climb a ridgeline to the south beneath snow-laden trees. The prints of boots and horses mar the freshly fallen snow on the trail.

Creatures: Rohkar tasked three of his followers with staying behind here to intercept any pursuit that might come after Lady Argentea, and give the main force of bandits at the High Sentinel Lodge (area **H**) advance warning of their approach.

Without supervision, however, the lazy bandits have fallen to quarreling over their shares of the loot from Lady Argentea's caravan. If the PCs succeed at Stealth checks opposed by the bandits' Perception checks (the PCs gain a +5 bonus on their checks because of the bandits' distraction), they can easily take the inattentive bandits by surprise. If the bandits detect the PCs first, they hide among the trees to ready an ambush.

ROHKAR'S RAIDERS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Human warrior 1

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 7 each (1d10+2)

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged shortbow +2 (1d6/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat If able to prepare an ambush, the bandits fire on the most heavily armored opponents first, hoping to wound them before engaging in melee. Thereafter, they drop their bows, draw their swords, and charge.

Morale If overmatched or caught by surprise, the bandits withdraw, believing the Taldan authorities have come to avenge Lady Argentea's abduction. Fighting defensively, they separate to put distance between themselves, covering each other with their bows, while they try to make it back to the lodge to warn the bandits of the PCs' presence. If pinned down (or flanked), they draw their swords and fight.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 13

Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Intimidate +3, Perception +0, Stealth +4

Languages Common

Other Gear padded armor, buckler, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, 8 gp, 5 sp

H. THE HIGH SENTINEL LODGE

For many years, an organization of Taldan rangers called the High Sentinels has operated out of a fortified lodge at the top of Red Run Gorge in the Border Wood, charged with guarding the forest against Qadiran aggression, lest Taldor's ancient enemy use the wood to hide another invasion force. Over time, however, the continued lack of hostility with Qadira dulled the sharpness of the Sentinels, and most of the unit's decorated veterans either retired or moved on to other posts, leaving inexperienced citizens of Heldren and the nearby cities of Demgazi and Zimar to fill the rangers' ranks. The Sentinels turned their attention to more local matters, hunting down bandits who used the forest to attack trade routes in the southern prefectures of Taldor.

Rohkar's Raiders have clashed several times with the Sentinels, and once the bandits joined forces with the Irriseni invaders, their leader, Rohkar Cindren, convinced Teb Knotten and Izoze that the rangers would have to be eliminated before the invaders could control the Border Wood. These newfound allies helped the bandits overrun their old enemy. As a result, all of the High Sentinels were slain, and Rohkar's Raiders now use the High Sentinel Lodge as a base from which to operate throughout the Border Wood. The bandits also use the lodge to hold prisoners, including Lady Argentea Malassene, who is being held because Teb Knotten plans to use her to slow Taldor's response to the growing threat in the Border Wood.

Since taking over the lodge, however, Rohkar's Raiders have fallen on hard times. They're still poorly equipped to deal with the wintry weather created by the portal to Irrisen, and nearly half of the bandits have fallen ill, succumbing to the early stages of a sickness called the chillbane shakes.

Rohkar fully expects his supposed allies to turn on him when he is no longer of use of them, so he is closely monitoring the health of those members of his gang who have fallen ill. If the sick bandits don't recover, Rohkar plans to use necromancy to turn them into an army of unfaltering skeletons and zombies he can use against the moss troll and his minions.

The High Sentinel Lodge is constructed of heavy timber and stone harvested from the forested highlands of the Sharpened Hills, a jagged, nigh-impassible region southeast of the lodge. Unless otherwise noted, all of the doors in the lodge are constructed of strong wood (hardness 5, hp 20) and are unlocked. Interior rooms are unlit unless detailed otherwise.

H1. Eastern Trailhead (CR 1)

After climbing at least a hundred feet into the hills, the snowy trail finally levels off. In a clearing among the trees, a large wooden lodge overlooks a ravine spanned by a long

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rope bridge. Smoke rises from the lodge's two snow-covered chimneys, and large woodpile is stacked against the outer wall. A small outbuilding stands east of the lodge, and a stone well nearly blanketed by snow is barely recognizable to the north. Several tracks lead southwest toward a detached stable.

Numerous horse and human tracks cross back and forth through the snow near the back porch of the lodge.

Trap: The bandits have set a crossbow trap with a trip line hidden in the snow at the trailhead. When the trap is triggered, the crossbow not only fires at the creature who triggered it, but also falls from its perch on the porch, dragging a string of attached pots and pans with it that alerts the bandits in area **H13**.

CROSSBOW TRAP**CR 1****XP 400****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20**EFFECTS****Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual**Effect** Atk +15 ranged (1d8+1/19–20/x2) and alarm**H2. Outhouse**

The door to this small outhouse is frozen shut. A small hammer hangs by a rope from its upper eaves to chip away

the ice and provide access. Unfortunately, the weather has made the outhouse much less functional, and the stench of its recent use is somewhat overpowering.

H3. Stable

Twin doors open into this low stable, where five stalls hold three horses and a mix of loose straw. A rack of riding gear hangs on the east wall, and a cast-iron tub sits empty in the corner.

The Sentinels usually traveled on foot in the forest, but kept a few horses here as a swifter means of reaching Heldren or other nearby settlements. Two of the horses were killed during the bandits' assault, but Rohkar replaced them with mounts from Lady Argentea's escort. The riding tack on the eastern wall includes enough gear to equip each horse with a bit and bridle, riding saddle, and saddle bags.

H4. Bridge (CR 3)

A bridge made of rope and wooden planks spans a narrow ravine. It's already covered in ice and snow, and it sways alarmingly in the icy winds blowing through the gorge. The turbulent waters of a fast-moving creek surge through a couple of waterfalls far below.

REIGN OF WINTER

This 30-foot-long rope bridge spans Timber Creek, which runs through the Red Run Gorge 50 feet below. The bridge leads to the High Ridge, a stony backbone of forested cliffs overlooking the entire forest, and provides the swiftest means of reaching the rest of the Border Wood. Izoze and Rohkar's Raiders, like the Sentinels before them, use the small game trails on either side of the ridge to monitor those passing through the woods and guard the approach to the Somir Valley, where the winter portal to Irrisen now stands.

Hazard: Crossing the icy bridge under windy conditions carries considerable risk. Creatures moving faster than 5 feet per round while crossing the bridge must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or they lose their footing and fall into the 10-foot-deep creek below, taking 2d3 points of nonlethal damage and 1d6 points of lethal damage. Anyone who falls into the icy water must

also succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and suffer from hypothermia (treat as fatigued).

Creature: The crafty ice mephit Izoze watches over the ravine, perched in a tree on the opposite side of the gorge from the lodge (Perception DC 22 to notice). She loathes the company of Rohkar's Raiders and the uncomfortable heat of their lodge, so she spends most of her time here, quietly mulling over her decision to spare the bandits when they surrendered to Teb Knotten. Izoze is thus far unimpressed with Rohkar's contributions to their efforts, and she keeps a close watch on the bandit. Thankfully, Lady Argentea's abduction has given them a bargaining chip to use with Taldor's nobility, either by holding her hostage to delay any response to the growing threat in the Border Wood, or as an opportunity to replace her with a well-trained spy. Izoze knows Teb Knotten has communicated with their superiors in Irrisen in anticipation of the latter, but she doesn't yet know who they'll get to impersonate Lady Argentea when the time comes. For now, Izoze waits and watches, guarding the bridge to dissuade anyone—including Rohkar's bandits—from venturing deeper into the Border Wood and closer to the winter portal. Izoze maintains her distance if newcomers arrive at the lodge, counting on Rohkar to handle them. She only fights the PCs if they attempt to cross the bridge or attack her directly. Otherwise, she merely notes their assault on the lodge, and if they rescue Lady Argentea, she flies away to inform Teb Knotten of the Taldan noble's escape.



IZOZE

IZOZE

CR 3

XP 800

Female ice mephit (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 202*)

hp 19

TACTICS

During Combat Izoze attacks any creatures on the bridge with her breath weapon in the hope of forcing them back. She then hovers in the air, casting *magic missile* and *chill metal* on those attempting to cross. She also tries to bull rush weaker opponents into the creek if possible.

Morale If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, Izoze flees to area P to report to Teb Knotten, counting on her fast healing to help her recover even as she abandons the bridge.

Development: If Izoze escapes, she returns later to ambush the PCs as they get closer to the winter portal (see area O).

H5. Tool Shed

The Sentinels stored most of their tools for the construction and upkeep of the lodge here. The shed contains a few shovels, axes, and hammers hanging from the walls.

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H6. Porch

A wooden roof extends over this wide porch. Double doors provide access to the lodge itself. Two small glass windows are set in the walls to either side of the doors.

This porch stands 3 feet above the snow-covered ground. The Sentinels used the porch for weapons training or the occasional celebration and sharing of drinks between fellow soldiers. One of the bandits from area **H13** steps outside here every half-hour to check on the bridge and stables. The bandits stay under the porch's covered roof; none care to cross the snow for fear of drawing Izoze's attention (at area **H4**). If the PCs linger here, they might also attract "Ten-Penny" Tacey's attention in the kitchen (area **H8**).

H7. Trophy Room

A bearskin rug dominates the floor of this trophy room, and the heads of several deer have been mounted on the walls. Doors lead north and south, while two hallways go farther east.

The Sentinels subsisted primarily on game they by trapped and hunted in the Border Wood, and kept these trophies as proof of their skill. A trap door lies concealed beneath the bearskin rug, opening into the cellar (area **H17**). A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals the presence of the trap door, which is locked with a padlock (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18, Disable Device DC 20). Rohkar has the only key to the padlock.

H8. Kitchen (CR 2)

A large fireplace takes up most of the north wall of this room, its radiant heat providing palpable relief from the cold weather outside. Cabinets and shelves line the remaining wall space, and four windows look out on the wintry landscape surrounding the lodge.

Creature: The newest member of Rohkar's Raiders occupies this room—a down-on-her-luck half-orc burglar named Ten-Penny Tacey. Forced to flee Demgazi when a heist went bad, Ten-Penny soon found her way into the Border Wood, where Rohkar gave her shelter and then convinced her to stay on. Ten-Penny reluctantly agreed, and for now, she keeps the fire stoked in the kitchen and occasionally serves meals to her fellow bandits. She is currently simmering a pot of soup (made from one of the slain horses) for those suffering from the chillbane shakes (see area **H14**). So far, Ten-Penny isn't particularly fond of Rohkar's Raiders and harbors thoughts of slipping away when she gets a chance. If she spots any intruders, Ten-Penny calls for help, hoping to slow them down until

reinforcements arrive, but quick-thinking and persuasive PCs might be able to convince Ten-Penny to throw her lot in with them.

TEN-PENNY TACEY

CR 2

XP 600

Female half-orc rogue 3

CN Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6 (+1 vs. traps), **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, orc ferocity, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +5 (1d6+2/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Ten-Penny makes no effort to slay the PCs, focusing purely on fighting defensively, though she takes advantage of opportunities to make sneak attacks.

Morale Ten-Penny had little to do with Lady Argentea's abduction and doesn't wish to die for Rohkar's crimes. If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, she pleads for quarter, claiming no solidarity with the bandits as she surrenders.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +9, Appraise +4, Bluff +7, Climb +10, Disable Device +10, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9

Languages Common, Goblin, Orc

SQ orc blood, rogue talents (surprise attack), trapfinding +1, weapon familiarity

Combat Gear *elixir of hiding*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of pass without trace*, *potion of spider climb*, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** leather armor, dagger, mwk hand crossbow with 12 bolts, short sword, climber's kit, crowbar, grappling hook, key to chest in area **H12**, mwk thieves' tools, silk rope (50 ft.), 28 gp

H9. Corner Bedroom

None of the bandits have claimed this room for their own. It remains dark and silent. The wardrobe contains linens, a washboard, and nothing else of interest.

H10. Small Bedroom

A single rumped bed occupies this room. The bandits in area **H13** take turns claiming its single winter blanket. Otherwise, the room stands empty during the day.

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H11. Rohkar's Room

Three doors open into this room. A sturdy bed heaped with blankets sits near the only window, and a large maple chest occupies the southwest corner.

Rohkar claimed this room for himself, enjoying its closer proximity to the fireplace in area **H13**. He can usually be found here sleeping at night, but during the day, he spends most of his time upstairs in the planning room (area **H15**).

Treasure: The maple chest is locked with a sturdy lock (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 23, Disable Device DC 25) and contains an assortment of trophies and stolen goods Rohkar has collected during his time leading the bandits and murdering in Norgorber's name. Rohkar carries the only key. The chest currently holds a gold ingot engraved with the Taldan royal seal (worth 50 gp), a spyglass stolen from a captain out of Cassomir, a silver lady's ring (worth 25 gp), three shards of tiger's eye gemstones taken from a Qadiran merchant (worth 10 gp each), a fine pair of leather riding boots of elven make (worth 15 gp), a silver dagger with a hidden compartment in the hilt (Perception DC 20 to find) containing 1 dose of small centipede poison, and a leather portfolio containing several pieces of parchment, including a *scroll of endure elements*, two *scrolls of magic weapon*, and a *scroll of unseen servant*.

H12. Ten-Penny's Room

A bed and chest sit across from one another in this small room. Two doors serve as exits, and a window looks out on the north side of the lodge.

Rohkar gave "Ten-Penny" Tacey (see area **H8**) this bedroom as part of an effort to win her over and welcome her to the gang. During the day, it lies empty while Ten-Penny works in the kitchen or administers to the sick bandits in area **H14**.

Treasure: The chest in the room is locked (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 23, Disable Device DC 20) and contains a healer's kit (5 uses remaining), a belt pouch with 25 sp, and a *potion of lesser restoration*. Ten-Penny has the only key.

H13. Great Room (CR 2)

A large table and two benches run the length of this hall, and a twenty-foot-high vaulted ceiling rises into the rafters overhead. To the west, a roaring fireplace provides a welcome heat and light while to the south, a flight of stairs ascends to a wooden balcony overlooking the room. A set of double doors stands in the wall to the east.

This room served as a dining hall and gathering place for the Sentinels when they held the lodge. Now, Rohkar's

bandits use it as their sleeping quarters, huddling on straw mattresses and piles of blankets close to the fire. The bandits have barred the doors to the east leading to the lodge's back porch (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 25).

Creatures: Five of Rohkar's bandits may be found here day or night. More active and alert than those battling the chillbane shakes (see area **H14**), these bandits post lookouts by the eastern windows to watch the approaches to the lodge during the day. Though their spirits were initially dampened by their surrender to Teb Knotten's invaders, the bandits were buoyed by their success in killing the hated Sentinels and ambushing Lady Argentea's caravan. They spend their time planning what they'll do with their share of the money once Rohkar ransoms the noblewoman. If alerted to the PCs' presence, the bandits rouse their sick comrades in the next room (area **H14**), sending a runner to alert Rohkar in area **H15** as well.

ROHKAR'S RAIDERS (5)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 7 each (see page 16)

H14. Sickroom (CR 1)

Four beds, two large chests, and a single table with four chairs occupy this room. Three windows look out to the east, west, and south, providing a grand view of the snowy gorge outside the lodge.

Creatures: Four of Rohkar's Raiders lie bedridden in this room, having contracted an illness called the chillbane shakes—a less virulent strain of chillbane fever, a disease endemic to Irrisen (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter* 48). The disease has left the bandits fatigued and sickened. As a result, they take a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks, and a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. The bandits are unarmored but have their weapons close at hand. Despite their condition, the bandits do their best to defend themselves and respond to any alarm raised by their companions in the great room (area **H13**).

SICK BANDITS (4)

CR 1/4

XP 100 each

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 7 each (see page 20)

Weaknesses fatigued and sickened

Hazard: This room is also a mildly infected area, with poorly ventilated air and sweaty blankets carrying the same germs that debilitated the bandits. Anyone who spends more than a minute in the room or rummages through

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the beds, chests, and discarded clothing is exposed to the chillbane shakes.

CHILLBANE SHAKES

Type disease, contact or inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 12

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect fatigued and sickened; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

H15. Planning Room (CR 3)

An L-shaped table with many chairs takes up most of the floor space in this loft. A second smaller table sits near the entrance, and several windows look over the snowy grounds of the lodge. In the southwest corner, a large map hangs on the wall, opposite another door in the northeast wall.

The Sentinels planned their patrols in this room, marking the best routes on the map of the High Ridge hanging on the southwest wall. Rohkar uses the room for much the same purpose, and the map now depicts possible ambush sites and points of interest to his new Irriseni allies, which he frequently shares with Izoze. The location of the winter portal is also marked on the map, though there is no description of it.

Creatures: The leader of Rohkar's Raiders, Rohkar Cindren, is usually found here during the day. The bandits have no idea that Rohkar is a priest of Norgorber, a divine calling he discovered late in life but which he finds meshes well with his murderous acts of banditry in southern Taldor. Several unexplained murders and convenient disappearances among the original bandits aided Rohkar's rise to power—most of them were poisoned by Rohkar himself. Any revelation about his faith in the god of secrets and murder would likely shake the confidence of the bandits who still follow him. Most believe him to be a necromancer, a ruse he encourages, fearing that half of his gang might quit (or try to slay him) if they discovered the truth.

As a result, Rohkar works hard to keep his faith hidden, locking himself in this room to prepare his spells each morning. He claims he requires uninterrupted study with his spellbook and actually keeps an arcane tome with him at all times to further the deception. He even hides his unholy symbol, producing it at the last possible moment with Sleight of Hand checks when calling on Norgorber's aid.

One of Teb Knotten's allies, a winter-touched atomie named Hommelstaub (see area P1) correctly identified Rohkar's faith when the Irriseni invaders forced him to surrender and they discovered his unholy symbol. Rather than kill or reveal the murderous priest, Teb and Izoze offered him a chance to serve Queen Elvanna as a killing hand instead. Powerless to refuse, Rohkar accepted their offer, but he secretly plots revenge, planning to murder his

benefactors as soon as he can find a weakness to exploit. So far, he's applied himself to learning everything he can about the Irriseni, consulting with Hommelstaub, Izoze, and even Teb Knotten when the moss troll humors him with an audience. These discussions have helped Rohkar increase his own power, as the cold fey shared with him the means of animating skeletons infused with the fierce cold of Irrisen's winter, and Rohkar now commands two frost skeletons that he keeps here as bodyguards.

ROHKAR CINDREN

CR 2

XP 600

Male human cleric of Norgorber 3

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +2



ROHKAR CINDREN

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DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *short sword* +5 (1d6+2/19–20 plus greenblood oil) or dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 13, 2d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
5/day—bleeding touch (1 round), copycat (3 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*death knell* (DC 14), *hold person* (DC 14), *invisibility*^P

1st—*cause fear*^D (DC 13), *deathwatch*, *magic weapon*,
murderous command^{UM} (DC 13)

o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *detect poison*, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*

D Domain spell; Domains Death, Trickery

TACTICS

Before Combat If alerted to the PCs' presence in the lodge, Rohkar casts *deathwatch*, *invisibility*, and *magic weapon*. He also applies greenblood oil to his short sword.

During Combat Rohkar invisibly exits the room when the PCs arrive, squeezing past anyone at the door while his frost skeletons occupy them. If he finds any bandits unconscious or dying, Rohkar slays them with *death knell* to further empower himself, then uses his *scroll of animate dead* to create zombies from their bodies. Upon returning, he directs the undead while channeling negative energy to heal them. If faced with a cleric channeling positive energy, he counters with *cause fear* and his poisoned blade, activating his copycat ability to confuse anyone striking back.

Morale Rohkar lives to kill in the name of Norgorber, but has no desire to die himself. If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, he throws down his weapon and feigns remorse, blaming everything on Izoze and Teb Knotten (see Development, below).

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 14

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 15

Feats Deft Hands, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +6, Disable Device +7, Disguise +6, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +1, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +6, Use Magic Device +3

Languages Common

Combat Gear *scroll of animate dead* (10 HD), greenblood oil (1), oil of taggit (2); **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, dagger, light crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk short sword, *cloak of the yeti* (see page 60), mwk thieves' tools, ring of keys (key to trap door in area H7, chest in H11, and cage in area H16), stolen spellbook (contains *alarm*, *chill touch*, *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *identify*, *locate object*, and ray of *enfeeblement*), wooden unholy symbol of Norgorber, 15 gp

FROST SKELETONS (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Variant burning skeleton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 251, *Classic Horrors Revisited* 54 with the following changes: damage energy type and immunity change from fire to cold, vulnerability changes from cold to fire)

hp 5 each

Development: If Rohkar surrenders to the PCs, he claims Izoze and the cold fey forced him and his gang to cooperate. While this is true, a successful Sense Motive check opposed by Rohkar's Bluff check can discern he's holding back at least part of the story. Regardless, he does everything in his power to convince the PCs to trust him, offering up information about Izoze, Teb Knotten, and the rest of their allies, hoping the PCs will die attacking his enemies while weakening them enough for him to finish the job. He also shows them the captured winter-touched sprite in the storeroom (area H16), giving the PCs the opportunity to interrogate the creature, if they wish. He turns over Lady Argentea, explaining that Izoze and Teb Knotten had some devious plan for her, though he doesn't know the specifics (he just knows they wouldn't let him kill or ransom her). In the meantime, Rohkar continues to pass himself off as a necromancer rather than a priest of Norgorber, knowing full well his faith will earn him little sympathy from anyone. To carry off this ruse, he hides his unholy symbol with a Sleight of Hand check as soon as possible.

H16. Storeroom (CR 1/2)

Dozens of small boxes, bottles, and papers fill this musty storeroom. A small iron cage sits on the top shelf, emanating a flickering light like that of a candle.

The Sentinels used this small room for record-keeping and writing missives for their commanders in Oppara. Rohkar now keeps a special captive imprisoned here.

Creature: Despite agreeing to serve Teb Knotten, Rohkar secretly captured one of the cold fey to better study and understand their capabilities. The captive, a winter-touched sprite named Vrixx, is locked inside the cage (Disable Device DC 25); Rohkar has the only key. Rohkar has made sure to keep Vrixx hidden from Izoze when she visits, knowing full well the mephit and her allies would slay him for the affront. Vrixx has grown increasingly despondent trapped in his tiny prison, his luminosity waxing and waning with his mood. When the PCs arrive, he begs for his release. Anyone foolish enough to free him enables him to fly back to Teb Knotten to tell of Rohkar's treachery and the PCs' presence in the wood. If the PCs question him, Vrixx promises an increasingly horrifying number of tortures he expects his friends to inflict upon the PCs when they find them. He

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refuses to tell the PCs more, knowing full well the White Witches will pierce his heart with a sliver of ice if he talks.

Vrixx

CR 1/2

XP 200

Male winter-touched sprite fighter 1 (see page 72)
hp 10 (currently 3)

Treasure: Rohkar has hidden three scrolls of *lesser animate dead*^{UM} (2 HD) in this storeroom, as well as 2 more doses of greenblood oil and a small lockbox containing 25 pp, 150 gp, 180 sp, and a blue quartz “ice diamond” from Irrisen worth 100 gp that he took from Vrixx. Rohkar has also stockpiled three *oils of magic weapon* and 10 flasks of alchemist’s fire as an insurance policy against Teb Knotten, Izoze, and the cold fey.



LADY ARGENTEA MALASSENE

H17. Cellar

A half-dozen boxes and barrels take up the majority of this underground cellar. A rough blanket lies spread on the floor in the southeast corner next to a bowl of half-eaten food.

The bandits have converted this cellar into a dungeon for Lady Argentea Malassene and any future prisoners. A 10-foot-high wooden ladder provides access to the cellar.

Creature: Lady Argentea Malassene is the sole occupant of this cellar-turned-dungeon. Rohkar has confined her here until he gets further instructions from Izoze and Teb Knotten about her fate. Lady Argentea has suffered some injuries (she currently has 7 out of 20 hit points), but her spirit remains unbowed. She is arrogant and proud, as only a Taldan noble can be, but grateful for her rescue. She tries her best (not always successfully) to keep her more critical opinions and observations to herself, at least until she has reached a place of safety and comfort.

LADY ARGENTEA MALASSENE

CR 2

XP 600

Female noble scion (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 288)
hp 20 (currently 7)

Development: If rescued, Lady Argentea identifies a much greater threat than Rohkar’s Raiders in the Border Wood—extremely dangerous winter creatures at the center of the unseasonable weather with whom the bandits are allied. She can describe the winter-touched fey who

attacked her caravan, as well as Izoze, and though she’s never met him, she overheard her captors mention the name of their leader, Teb Knotten.

Getting Lady Argentea to safety might be a higher priority than investigating these creatures, however, at least at this point. If given supplies and cold-weather gear, Lady Argentea could likely make it back to Heldren on her own, but feel free to allow the PCs escort her back to the village. If safely returned to Heldren, Lady Argentea is profuse in her thanks, and rewards her rescuers with a purse of 500 gp. The PCs can also check in with the village council at this time and resupply themselves for an extended campaign in the pocket of winter. Lady Argentea, Ten-Penny Tacey, and even Rohkar can all attest to the dangers of facing such cold creatures without preparing ahead of time. Once the PCs have rested and recovered, however, the council once more urges them to finish the task they were given and find the source of the winter weather. Alternatively, if the PCs are confident and eager to press on, Lady Argentea could accompany them to the winter portal, becoming a companion or even a replacement PC in the event of a character’s untimely death.

Story Award: Award the PCs 600 XP for successfully rescuing Lady Argentea.

PART TWO: THE DEPTHS OF WINTER

After defeating Rohkar’s Raiders and rescuing Lady Argentea, the PCs can go in search of the source of the winter weather, as well as the cold fey and their allies, by crossing the rope bridge at the High Sentinel Lodge into the highlands of the Border Wood. There’s been enough traffic between the lodge and the winter portal at area P that the PCs can still easily follow the trail through the snow. As the PCs approach the Somir Valley and the magic portal within it, however, the temperature drops even more, and it’s likely that the PCs will need to stop more frequently to warm themselves before pressing on.

I. ANCIENT INVADERS (CR 2)

The forest stands deathly quiet here. Even the wind has grown still as snow softly falls through the stark branches overhead. Tracks, human in size but oddly misshapen, mar an otherwise unblemished trail through the trees.

Creatures: Rohkar has long taken pleasure in experimenting with the bodies of his victims, raising

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them as undead servants and tools that he can use to murder even more innocent people. So far, however, the bandit leader has had to rely on *scrolls of animate dead* to raise such creatures. His first attempt to create frost skeletons using a scroll suffered a mishap, however, and unknown to Rohkar, accidentally animated the skeletons of three Qadiran soldiers slain in the Border Wood hundreds of years ago during the war between Taldor and Qadira. These skeletons clawed their way from the ground and now wander the High Ridge. They are uncontrolled and a lethal danger to anyone who crosses their path.

FROST SKELETONS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (see page 22)

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons mindlessly attack the nearest living creatures, striking with their freezing claws rather than the broken scimitars still strapped to their waists.

Morale The frost skeletons fight until destroyed.

J. SLAIN HUNTER

The rocks and snow along this part of the ridge are stained a reddish brown, and many tracks, both animal and human, cross the area.

Recently, one of Heldren's more esteemed hunters, a man named Dryden Kepp, returned from a hunting foray in the Border Wood with a story about a giant white weasel roaming the forest. The townsfolk of Heldren scoffed at his tale (Dryden was known to nip from his hip flask on a regular basis), which only spurred Dryden to hunt down the beast so he could make a trophy of it and prove everyone wrong. Dryden managed to catch the weasel in one of his bear traps (at area L), but the creature broke free and mauled the hunter before he could make his kill. Dryden retreated up the ridge, hoping to escape the enraged beast, but the weasel eventually tracked him down and finished the job, and Dryden's mutilated corpse now lies half-buried in the snow here. A PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the animal tracks as those of a giant weasel.

Treasure: Dryden's possessions include a variety of things that might aid the PCs. Aside from his bloody and ripped (but still usable) cold-weather outfit, he also wears a pair of homemade snowshoes, and though his shortbow is snapped in half, two *+1 animal-bane arrows* remain in his quiver. In addition, a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals his bloodstained pack lying half-covered by a fresh dusting of snow nearby. It holds 3 days' worth of trail rations, a half-full hip flask of strong applejack, and

a journal detailing Dryden's efforts in tracking the giant weasel. The journal mentions the bear traps he set at the head of Somir Valley, as well as his discovery of the strange hut nearby and the even stranger doll inside it (area M).

Story Award: If the PCs find Dryden Kepp's journal, award them 400 XP.

K. FROST FIRS (CR 3)

A cold wind blows through the forest atop the ridge. Heavy snow burdens the boughs of the evergreen trees, but someone has apparently cleared the snow from a large patch of ground to dig in the pine-needle-carpeted soil.

Creatures: This part of the forest is now home to a pair of tree-creatures called frost firs, who crossed through the winter portal from Irrisen. Akin to treants, frost firs resemble human-sized evergreen trees with grasping, branchlike arms. After arriving in the Border Wood, the frost firs searched for a fertile stretch of land to plant their seedlings, clearing away the snow to dig holes for the cones they carried with them. Frost firs are territorial creatures and fiercely protective of their young. When the PCs enter their domain, the frost firs use their freeze ability to hide among the native pine trees before making a coordinated attack.

FROST FIRS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 15 each (see page 84)

TACTICS

During Combat The frost firs target any PCs carrying open flames first, attempting to grapple and pin these foes so they can put out the fire. They work together to restrain the same opponent, if necessary. Thereafter, they pummel and Power Attack in a furious rage.

Morale The frost firs fight to the death.

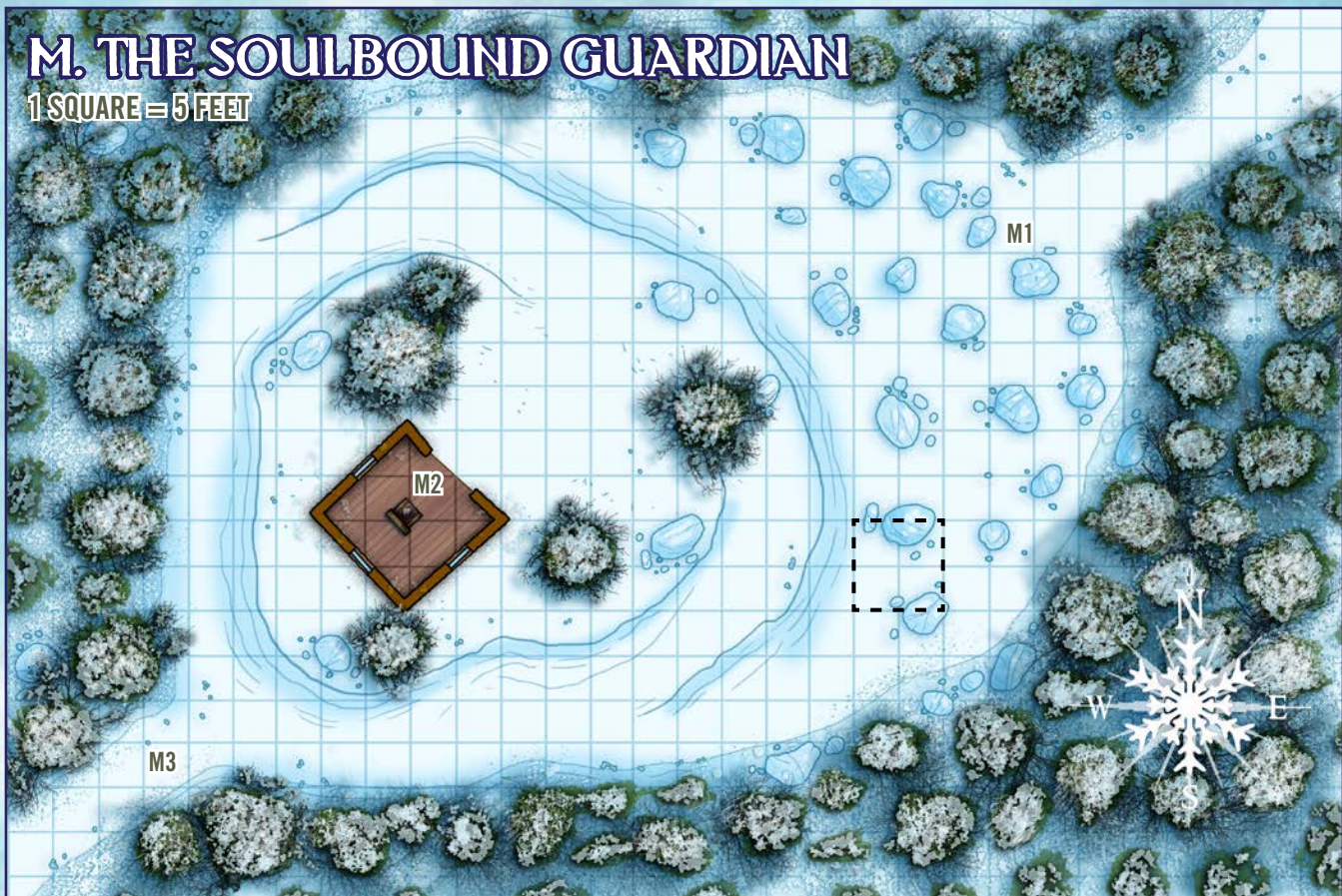
L. BEAR TRAPS (CR 3)

Bloody animal tracks mark the snow where the trail descends from the ridge above.

A successful DC 13 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the animal tracks as those of a giant weasel.

Traps: The hunter Dryden Kepp (see area J) laid several bear traps here in an attempt to catch and kill the giant weasel he had discovered in the Border Wood. Unfortunately, however, the trap couldn't hold it, and Dryden found himself hunted by the wounded weasel instead. Two more bear traps lie hidden in the snow, not yet triggered. They pose a danger to anyone passing through this area. PCs who read Dryden Kepp's journal (see area J) gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Perception checks to notice the traps.

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BEAR TRAPS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Type mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +10 melee (2d6+3); sharp jaws spring shut around the creature's ankle and halve the creature's base speed (or hold the creature immobile if the trap is attached to a solid object); the creature can escape with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check, DC 22 Escape Artist check, or DC 26 Strength check

M. THE SOULBOUND GUARDIAN

One of the first tasks the White Witch Nazhena Vasilliova assigned to Teb Knotten once the winter portal opened was the construction of a wooden hut to house one of the living porcelain dolls that guard Irrisen's borders. This guardian doll would be used to watch over the approach to Somir Valley and defend Irrisen's newly established foothold in Taldor. Nazhena arranged for the construction of the doll, a sentient construct infused with the soul of a living person—in this case, that of a young girl named Thora Petska from the village of Waldsby in Irrisen.

In her few short years of life, young Thora witnessed many atrocities committed by the White Witches of

Irrisen and their minions. An audacious girl when alive, Thora made the mistake of accidentally insulting Nazhena during one of the witch's infrequent visits to Waldsby. It was a childish jest, innocently spoken, but unfortunately made within earshot of the White Witch, who took offense at the remark. Enraged, Nazhena took Thora from her family and killed the girl, using her soul to create a guardian doll. While binding a soul to a doll in this manner usually strips away most of the soul's individuality, something went wrong with the ritual in this case, and Thora retained much of her personality. A tortured construct at best, Thora serves as the eyes and ears of the winter witches in the Border Wood, though she still has the mind of a 7-year-old girl.

M1. Ice Block Maze (CR 3)

More than a dozen boulder-sized chunks of ice litter the clearing ahead where a strange hut sits perched on tree trunks atop a raised mound of snow-covered earth.

The guardian doll Thora (area M2) casts *alarm* on the entrance to this clearing every 8 hours to alert her to anyone who approaches.

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Powerful witchcraft still resonates from the guardian doll that was once Thora Petska, and manifestations of her spirit, empowered by the proximity of the winter portal, stir among the blocks of ice here, creating a haunt and an apparition called a phantom. As the PCs enter the clearing, Thora's phantom—an image of a shivering young Ulfen girl—suddenly appears amid the ice boulders. If the PCs call out to her, the girl darts away, moving deeper into the field of boulders, clearly distraught and afraid. If the PCs pursue, Thora's phantom appears again multiple times among the maze-like passages. Each time, she speaks in cryptic sentences before fleeing again, drawing the PCs deeper into the maze of ice boulders. Thora's words actually come from her past interactions with Nazhena Vasilliovnna, and the PCs can learn some of Thora's story by questioning the phantom. The PCs might be able to use this information to provide closure for Thora's mother, Nadya, when they meet her later in the adventure.

The phantom is not a real creature; it is a manifestation of Thora's restless spirit. Although it can answer some of the PCs' questions, the PCs cannot affect the phantom in any way—it plays out as scripted, much like a *programmed image*, until the haunt manifests. The phantom's speech, and what the PCs can learn from it, are detailed below.

"I'm sorry! Don't hurt me! I never meant to call you names!" Thora is apologizing to Nazhena Vasilliovnna for offending her. If the PCs succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check, they can ask a single question before Thora moves away again.

"Please don't keep me here. It's so cold. I miss my mother." This statement refers to Thora's captivity in Nazhena's Pale Tower, as well as her mother, Nadya Petska, whom the PCs will meet in Part Three. If the PCs succeed at a DC 18 Diplomacy check, they can ask a single question before Thora moves away again.

"I don't want your stupid doll! I want to go home! Take me back!" This was Thora's reaction to the porcelain doll that Nazhena showed her, unaware that it would eventually house her soul. If the PCs succeed at a DC 21 Diplomacy check, they can ask a single question before Thora moves away again.

"I have to get away! And you should, too, before they see you. Run!" This final message comes as Thora's eyes clear and she finally recognizes the PCs as someone other than her tormentors. She implores the PCs to flee just as they reach the center of the maze—one final warning exhorting them to stay away, lest an equally terrible fate befall them.

Haunt: Thora's despair and terror has created a haunt here, which manifests as soon as the PCs reach the area marked on the map in the center of the ice boulders, whether drawn there by Thora's phantom or on their own.

FACES OF THE FROZEN DEAD

CR 3

XP 800

NE haunt (10-ft.-by-10-ft. square)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 20 (to notice a chill wind stirring and a flicker of movement in the blocks of ice)

hp 6; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, sorrowful images from Thora's childhood and the faces of the frozen dead manifest inside the transparent ice blocks. All creatures in the area are targeted by a *scare* spell (DC 13).

Destruction To permanently destroy this haunt, the PCs must tear down the watchful hut at area **M2**, and destroy the soul focus of the guardian doll inside, thereby putting Thora's spirit to rest.

M2. The Watchful Hut (CR 3)

A small hut stands here on four legs, each one a single tree trunk whose gnarled roots resemble the toes of a giant chicken. The hut is constructed of heavy logs with a patchwork roof of shaved bark shingles. Inside the hut's open doorway, a small figure sits on a carved wooden chair, staring across the clearing at the trail on the other side.

Creature: The soul of Thora Petska inhabits the porcelain guardian doll inside the hut, watching over the trail to the winter portal. The doll wears the same dress Thora had on when Nazhena Vasilliovnna took her to the Pale Tower, but she is no longer the little girl who brought laughter and joy to her family. The doll's face is that of an old crone, though it retains Thora's flaxen hair, and it still bears a strong resemblance to the girl's countenance when she was still alive—enough that the PCs can recognize the similarities between the doll and the phantom girl they encountered in area **M1**. Far more unnerving, however, are the doll's mismatched eyes—one a blue gemstone, the other a small round mirror the size of a coin, reflecting the world around her. The gem acts as the doll's soul focus, retaining all the memories the construct experiences, but the mirrored eye serves an entirely different purpose, allowing Nazhena and her apprentice, Radosek Pavril, to scry on the doll's location with the *Irriseni mirror sight* spell (see page 73). When the PCs first encounter Thora, Radosek is using that spell to look through the guardian doll's mirror. Although the winter witch cannot do anything to the PCs at this time, this early glimpse of the PCs enables him to easily recognize them when they encounter him later in the Pale Tower (see area **Q20**).

Thora is compelled to defend this pass into Somir Valley from those she doesn't recognize as servants of the Pale Tower or Queen Elvanna. Initially, she lets the PCs approach her hut, remaining silent if they examine her, pretending to be a normal doll. When the PCs aren't directly observing her, she uses her spell-like abilities, casting *light*, *mage hand*, or *prestidigitation* to make the area

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seem haunted in the hope of frightening them away, or she speaks to further unnerve them, growing utterly silent again if they turn to face her or try to talk to her. While she defends herself if attacked, Thora otherwise allows the PCs to move beyond the hut and through the ward at area M3. She then follows after them, tirelessly pursuing the PCs wherever they go in an effort to slay them. She prefers to attack at night, when her darkvision gives her an advantage, but she doesn't hesitate to face the PCs during the day, if necessary, to prevent them from reaching the winter portal.

THORA PETSKA CR 3

XP 800

Female guardian doll (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Winter* 58)

NE Tiny construct (cold)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 22 (4d10)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

DR 5/magic; **Immune** cold, construct traits; **SR** 14

Weaknesses susceptible to mind-affecting effects, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee doll's dagger +10 (1d2–1/19–20 plus 1d6 cold and paralysis)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +4)

At will—*ray of frost*

3/day—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 11), *light*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

1/day—*frost fall*^{UC} (DC 12), *levitate*

TACTICS

During Combat Thora casts *levitate* to rise into the air so she can more safely cast spells, using *charm person* to create allies to prevent others from attacking her. If forced into melee combat, she casts *frostfall* and then attacks with her doll's dagger, hoping to catch paralyzed opponents in the supernaturally chilled area of the spell.

Morale Thora fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 11

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Escape Artist +5, Linguistics +3, Perception +5, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Hallit, Skald

SQ soul focus

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Doll's Dagger (Su) The dagger wielded by a guardian doll is

treated as a masterwork weapon and deals 1d6 points of cold damage in addition to its normal damage. Those struck by the dagger must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed by the supernatural cold of the weapon for 1d4 rounds. If the guardian doll is destroyed, its weapon becomes a useless child's toy. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Soul Focus (Su) Thora's soul is bound within the doll's gemstone eye. As long as this soul focus remains intact, it can be used to animate another doll, using the same cost as creating a new construct.

Once bound into the soul focus, the soul continues to learn. If it is put into a new doll body, the soul retains its personality and memories from its previous bodies. A soul focus has hardness 8, 12 hit points, and a break DC of 20.

Susceptible to Mind-Affecting

Effects (Ex) Like a soulbound doll, a guardian doll is susceptible to mind-affecting effects. However, because of the singular purpose with which it is imbued, its saves against such effects are made with a +1 racial bonus.

Treasure: Thora's blue gemstone eye, her soul focus, is a sapphire worth 600 gp.



THORA PETSKA

M3. The Harrowed Trail (CR 4)

The trail continues through a narrow pass, descending south and east into an icy valley. An unusual pattern of lines is scratched into the fresh snow covering the trail at the edge of the clearing.

Upon closer inspection, the pattern of lines in the snow is revealed to be a warning in Common that reads, "Turn back before the winter devours you."

Trap: The inscription also incorporates a *glyph of warding*, cast from a scroll by the atomic oracle Hommelstaub (see area P1), which triggers when anyone leaves the clearing by this route. Izoze, Teb Knotten, Thora, and all of the cold fey know the password to bypass the glyph without triggering it.

GLYPH OF WARDING

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast glyph], 3d8 cold damage, Reflex DC 14 half); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

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N. WOUNDED BEAST (CR 3)

A cold wind blows through the valley, bringing a spray of sleet and broken ice. The sky ahead roils with thick, gray clouds and the sun is only a dim glow somewhere in the mist.

Creature: A giant weasel hunts the forest here. A native of the Hoarwood Forest in Irrisen, the weasel has its winter coat of fur, completely white except for the tip of its tail, which is black. The weasel crossed through the winter portal, only to run afoul of one of the bear traps set by the hunter Dryden Kepp (see areas J and L). Although injured, the weasel is still a formidable foe and fearless hunter. It stalks Somir Valley searching for prey to feed its great hunger. The cold fey have managed to keep it away from the winter portal, but driven by hunger, the weasel attacks any other creatures it comes across (such as the PCs), and continues to stalk them throughout the forest until it's slain.

GIANT WEASEL CR 3

XP 800

hp 34 (currently 28; see page 82)

TACTICS

During Combat The weasel charges its first victim, seeking to bite and attach itself to its prey. It ignores all other attackers until it is removed from its victim or its chosen prey is dead.

Morale The weasel flees if reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, but its hunger might drive it to attack the PCs again at a later time.

O. AMBUSH! (CR 4)

Once the PCs enter the Somir Valley, they finally gain the direct attention of those charged with guarding the winter portal. This encounter takes place soon afterward, as a result of either Izoze describing the danger the PCs pose to Teb Knotten, or Teb learning about the PCs through the atomic oracle Hommelstaub. Either way, Teb Knotten sends his agents to the PCs' camp in the middle of the night to eliminate the PCs.

Creatures: Izoze leads this assault, but if the ice mephit has already been killed, Teb entrusts the winter-touched atomic oracle Hommelstaub (see area P1) with slaying them instead. In either case, a Small air elemental named Squald provides assistance, both in speeding Izoze to intercept the PCs, and in cloaking the assassin's approach with the wind.

IZOZE CR 3

XP 800

Female ice mephit (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202)

hp 19

TACTICS

During Combat Izoze launches a cone of ice shards with her breath weapon on the greatest concentration of opponents,

seeking to damage and sicken them. She then casts *chill metal* on the most heavily armored opponent and fires a *magic missile* at anyone using fire-based spells or attacks against her. Thereafter, she uses hit-and-run tactics with her claws until her breath weapon recharges.

Morale Izoze knows the price for failure in her assigned task, so she fights to the death. If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, she attempts to summon another ice mephit to help while she temporarily retreats to recover from her wounds with her fast healing.

SQUALD CR 1

XP 400

Small air elemental (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 120)

hp 13

TACTICS

During Combat Squald stirs up enough snow with his whirlwind ability to create a blinding maelstrom and snuff out the PCs' campfire. He then makes Flyby Attacks, hurtling from the darkness to strike an opponent before again moving out of range of any light source.

Morale Squald fights to the death.

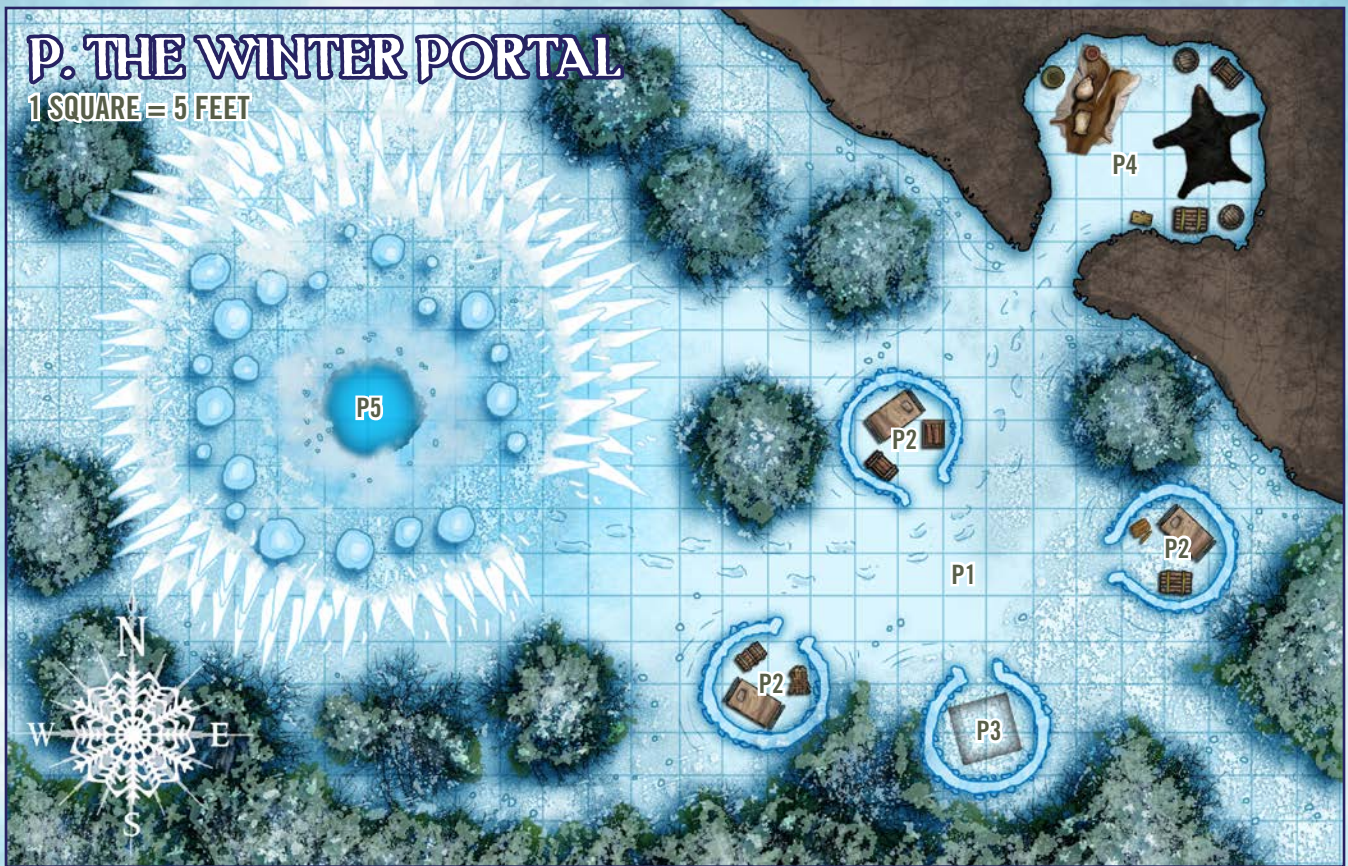
P. THE WINTER PORTAL

The first manifestation of Elvanna's ritual to spread Irrisen's endless winter over the rest of Golarion started with a single snowflake in the heat of Taldor's summer. Cold air descended into the Somir Valley, reaching freezing temperatures in mere minutes. A magic portal then erupted like a bomb, exploding into existence in a shower of ice and felled trees, linking the Border Wood with a sister site in Irrisen's Hoarwood Forest. Since then, the gateway has remained open, causing increasingly wintry weather, and various creatures have crossed through the portal in both directions. Similar developments have happened all across Golarion, with the weather itself acting as Elvanna's first invader in her bid to take over the world.

After 3 days of sustained snowfall, Irrisen's first scouts emerged from the winter portal, led by a moss troll named Teb Knotten. He works for Nazhena Vasilliovna, one of Elvanna's many great-granddaughters. Nazhena charged Teb with securing a foothold in Taldor and ensuring no one crosses back into Irrisen to disrupt her efforts in shaping and worsening the weather in the Border Wood. Teb set up a camp next to the portal, which he personally guards, sending Izoze and the winter-touched sprites to deal with Rohkar's Bandits and other threats in the forest. Nazhena has since gone to Whitethrone to report on her work, leaving her apprentice, Radosek Pavril, in charge of the portal. Both Radosek and Teb have redoubled their efforts in her absence.

Because of the presence of the winter portal, the snow in this clearing reaches depths of 2 to 4 feet. Entering a square covered with heavy snow costs 4 squares of

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movement, and overland travel rates are reduced by 75%. These penalties are reduced for those wearing snowshoes. Heavy snow blows from the portal as well, obscuring all sight (including darkvision) beyond 5 feet, and granting concealment to creatures 5 feet away.

The trail leading into the clearing is buried under 3 feet of snow crusted over with frozen sleet. Heavy ice burdens the trees to either side, bowing their branches until many touch the ground, becoming one with the wintry landscape. No one has passed this way on foot since Teb Knotten's forces conquered the Border Wood's bandits and eliminated the High Sentinels, as the cold fey who venture from here fly rather than walk upon the snowy trail. Only Teb Knotten's heavy footprints mar the otherwise unblemished snow inside the encampment.

The PCs are likely to encounter the atomie oracle Hommelstaub in area P1 first, but this combat has the very real possibility of drawing the attention of other inhabitants of this area, such as the winter-touched sprites in area P3 and Teb Knotten from area P5. Taken together, these three opponents are a CR 5 encounter—likely an epic challenge for the PCs at this level, but not an insurmountable one. On the other hand, if the PCs approach this area carefully and stealthily, they might be able to catch their opponents by surprise and face these threats one at a time.

P1. Campsite (CR 2)

Four low igloos stand here in the snow. A well-packed trail of large footprints passes between them, heading both north and west.

Creature: While Teb Knotten relies on the ice mephit Izoze to scout the Border Wood, a winter-touched atomie named Hommelstaub acts as his main advisor and overseer for the camp. Hommelstaub is an oracle of the gods of cold and the north, an agent of raw winter eager to cover Golarion in ice and purge its warm-blooded population—which makes him a natural ally of Queen Elvanna and the White Witches. A native of the First World, Hommelstaub would like nothing more than to paint the canvas of Golarion in the blues and whites and grays of eternal winter. During the day, the atomie waits in the center of the campsite and attacks any intruders. If the PCs already encountered Hommelstaub at area O and defeated the atomie, then this area is empty.

HOMMELSTAUB CR 2
XP 600

Male winter-touched atomie oracle 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 28, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42, and page 72)
CE Diminutive fey (cold)

REIGN OF WINTER

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 size)

hp 24 (4 HD; 2d6+2d8+8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9

DR 2/cold iron; **Immune** cold; **Resist** fire 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee sickle +8 (1d2 plus numbing cold) or wintry touch +8 (1d6+1 cold)

Ranged sling with *magic stone* +9 (1d6+1 plus numbing cold) or sling +8 (1 plus numbing cold)

Space 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks numbing cold (DC 13), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +10)

Constant—*Speak with animals*

At will—*dancing lights*, *reduce person* (DC 15)

3/day—*invisibility* (self only)

1/day—*shrink item*

Oracle Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +6)

1st (5/day)—*endure elements*, *inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *magic stone*, *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Mystery winter^{POTN}

TACTICS

Before Combat If he has time to prepare, Hommelstaub uses his *scroll of resist energy* and casts *magic stone* on three pebbles to hurl with his sling.

During Combat Hommelstaub turns invisible and flies upward to hide in the falling snow, where his snow sight grants him a superior view of the camp. He then throws a thunderstone, smashing it against an armored enemy or the side of an igloo to deafen his opponents and warn Teb Knotten and his sprite allies (see Development, below). Hommelstaub hurls bottles of liquid ice to snuff out any enemy fire sources, and casts *summon monster I* to summon fiendish eagles to attack opponents while he uses his sling. If drawn into melee combat, Hommelstaub casts *reduce person* on his attackers before making sneak attacks with *inflict light wounds* or his wintry touch.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, Hommelstaub retreats back into the falling snow to drink his *potion of cure moderate wounds*. Thereafter, he fights to the death, though if Teb Knotten is dead, he might try to flee through the winter portal back to Irrisen instead.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 10

Feats Extra Revelation^{APG}, Improved Initiative^B, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8 (+4 when jumping), Bluff +8, Escape Artist +8, Fly +18, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +10, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +20, Survival +8, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Sylvan; *Speak with animals*

SQ oracle's curse (lame), revelations (snow sight, wintry touch 7/day [1d6+1 cold])

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of remove curse*, *scroll of resist energy* (fire), liquid ice^{UE} (3), thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** sickle, sling, 64 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Snow Sight (Su) Hommelstaub can see through falling snow and sleet without taking any penalties on Perception checks as long as there is enough light for him to see normally.

Wintry Touch (Su) As a standard action 7 times per day, Hommelstaub can perform a melee touch attack that deals 1d6+1 points of cold damage.

Development: If Hommelstaub throws a thunderstone, the noise attracts the attention of



HOMMELSTAUB

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the winter-touched sprites at area **P3** and Teb Knotten at area **P5**. These opponents move as quickly as they can through the encampment to join the battle with the intruders.

P2. Empty Igloos

A winter blanket, a pile of furs, and a small wooden chest take up most of the floor space in this cramped igloo. A small hole has been cut into the low ceiling to allow smoke to escape, but no fire has been lit.

The ceilings in these igloos are only 4 feet high. Teb Knotten and the cold fey built the igloos to house additional troops that will come through the portal from Irrisen in the days ahead, but for now, they lie empty.

P3. False Igloo (CR 3)

The interior of this igloo is bare. Several ice blocks extend from the igloo's interior walls, forming small shelves and recesses.

Creatures: The cold fey constructed this cleverly trapped igloo to house prisoners or deceive would-be allies they no longer trust (like Rohkar). Hommelstaub and the winter-touched sprites sleep on the small shelves inside, though most of them have left the camp for missions in the forest under Izoze's direction. Two winter-touched sprites still reside here, however. If encountered here, they try to draw intruder into the igloo, then flee through the hole in the ceiling, planning to use it as cover while they fire on anyone who falls into their trap (see below). If alerted by Hommelstaub's thunderstone (see area **P1**), the sprites fly out to join him in the campsite, though the heavy falling snow affects their vision. At night, Hommelstaub (area **P1**) joins the sprites here.

WINTER-TOUCHED SPRITES (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 10 each (see page 13)

TACTICS

During Combat The sprites cast *color spray* to blind anyone entering the igloo, then try to draw their attackers into the pit trap where they can rain arrows on their victims.

Morale The sprites fight to the death.

Trap: Teb and the sprites dug a 20-foot-deep pit in the floor of the igloo, hiding it with snow-covered thatching. The walls of the pit are slick with ice, requiring a successful DC 20 Climb check to scale, which makes the pit a useful place for dumping prisoners or duping the unwary.

PIT TRAP CR 1

XP 400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); Reflex DC 20 avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

P4. Natural Cave

Two bearskin rugs cover most of the damp floor in this cave, surrounded by crates, barrels, and other supplies. The ceiling rises fifteen feet overhead, where icicles of frozen condensation hang from sharp stalactites.

Shortly after his arrival, the moss troll Teb Knotten claimed this cave for himself. Because Irrisen relies so heavily on imported food, he's had to augment the camp's supplies with whatever he could hunt or steal. The sprites have helped tremendously in this effort by raiding the farms of nearby Heldren, leading away livestock and stealing crops, which Teb stores here. Altogether, the cave holds 34 days' worth of common meals, preserved here by the cold, but quick to spoil if exposed to warmer temperatures. At night, Teb Knotten (area **P5**) may be found here.

Treasure: Teb keeps a lockbox here to fund his operations in the Border Wood (Disable Device DC 20 to open; Teb has the only key). The chest holds four *potions of feather step*^{APG} in an iron coffer, four blue quartz "ice diamonds" from Irrisen worth 100 gp each, a silver diadem worth 300 gp, a near flawless diamond worth 500 gp, a jeweled necklace worth 400 gp, a painting of Whitethrone worth 100 gp to an art collector, three sapphire rings worth 75 gp each, a decorative filigree longsword scabbard worth 125 gp, and a small scrimshaw sculpture of dancing sprites surrounding a piping satyr worth 50 gp, as well as 2,457 gp, 3,313 sp, and 1,760 cp.

P5. Portal of Endless Winter (CR 3)

A bank of quill-like icicles spear outward in a ring, seemingly grown from a heavy sheet of ice covering the ground. A second ring of giant icicle-shaped monoliths stands inside the outer ring, surrounding a swirling cylindrical vortex easily ten feet in diameter. Icy winds and driving snow blast from the vortex, creating the wintry weather in the clearing.

This magic portal is the source of the unseasonable winter weather that has fallen upon the Border Wood. It connects directly to a site in the Hoarwood Forest far to the north in the nation of Irrisen, enabling instant travel between the two locations, and acts as a mystical conduit channeling the power of Irrisen's supernatural winter to Taldor.

The swirling vortex hurls the falling snow out of the ring of icicles to pile elsewhere throughout the camp. As a result, the terrain within the ring of icicles—though

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sprinkled with a dusting of snow—imposes no movement penalties like the deeper drifts in the rest of the clearing.

Creature: During the day, the moss troll Teb Knotten spends his time here, guarding the portal against any unauthorized use. He stays in *tree shape* to surprise anyone venturing here, taking the form of a large, black, dead tree trunk next to the portal. Teb carries a small mirror that allows Radosek Pavril to scry on him via the *Irriseni mirror sight* spell (see page 73). Teb always checks his mirror twice per day, at sunrise and again just before sunset, to see whether Radosek is trying to communicate with him. If the PCs take Teb's mirror, Radosek uses it to spy on them, which might give him information he can use against them when they encounter him later in the Pale Tower (see area Q20).

If alerted by Hommelstaub's thunderstone (see area P1), Teb drinks his *potion of feather step* and moves toward the sounds of combat. Outside the area of the winter portal, however, the heavy falling snow affects Teb's vision, though the troll's scent ability can help him pinpoint foes in the snow.

TEB KNOTTEN**CR 3****XP 800**Male moss troll (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 273)**hp** 30**Melee** *spear of manhunting* +6 (1d8+5), bite +0 (1d4+1) or

bite +5 (1d4+3), 2 claws +5 (1d4+3)

Combat Gear *potion of feather step*^{APG}; **Other Gear** *spear of manhunting* (+1 *boar spear*; see page 61), belt pouch, key to lockbox in area P4, small mirror, 48 gp**TACTICS**

Before Combat As soon as Teb becomes aware of intruders, the moss troll drinks his *potion of feather step*, allowing him to move at full speed through the heavy snow in the clearing.

During Combat Once Teb resumes his normal shape, he attempts to demoralize the nearest foe with an Intimidate check. Thereafter, Teb attacks with his *spear of manhunting* and bite, focusing his attacks on anyone carrying or using fire.

Morale If lit on fire (such as by alchemist's fire or similar means), Teb immediately drops to the ground so he can roll through the snow and put himself out, ignoring everything else until his flesh stops burning. Regardless, he fights on to the death, refusing to surrender or cede control of the portal.

Development: The winter portal has a strong aura of conjuration and evocation magic. It cannot be dispelled or affected in any way, and the PCs can find no means of closing it or stopping the wintry weather from spreading through the Border Wood. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check surmises that the effect actually emanates from somewhere on the other side. If the PCs wish to close the portal, they'll need to go through the portal. The PCs have little time to contemplate this revelation, however, for as soon as they have defeated the portal's guardians, another creature passes through the portal, arriving in the clearing.

THE BLACK RIDER

A surge of wind suddenly blasts from the swirling vortex in the ring of icicles, gusting outward in a stinging spray of snow and ice. Suddenly, a gaunt horseman with curling ram's horns and wearing coal-black armor lurches

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through the portal astride a black warhorse, surrounded by tendrils of cold, dark mist. The rider slumps in the saddle, a shard of blue ice jutting from his back. As rider and mount come to a halt in the snow, the horse suddenly dissipates into black smoke, and the horseman falls to the ground with a groan.

The horseman is the **Black Rider** (LN male unique fey), one of Baba Yaga's Three Riders who herald her return to Irrisen every 100 years. The only one of the three to escape death at the hands of Queen Elvanna, the Black Rider fled into the snowy wilderness of Irrisen. Harried by Elvanna's armies and mortally wounded, he came upon the winter portal and staggered through in the hope of finding someone to whom he could pass on his mission. The Black Rider is a unique fey creature created by Baba Yaga. Normally a CR 13 creature, he is now mortally wounded, and is destined to die here in front of the PCs. His full statistics should not be needed for this encounter, and as a result, his stat block is not presented here. More information on Baba Yaga's riders, including the Black Rider's complete stat block, may be found in *Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter*.

The Black Rider holds two of the keys that control Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*, and that would enable him (or someone else) to use the hut to track down the missing Witch Queen, but he knows that keys don't currently work, deactivated (like all of the hut's many keys) by Elvanna. The Rider also realizes that only his life's blood and connection to Baba Yaga can make the keys functional again. Once he sees the aftermath of the PCs' battle at the winter portal, the Rider makes a conscious choice to turn his task over to them so they can free Baba Yaga and spare Golarion from a new ice age—even if it means sacrificing himself to give them that opportunity.

The Three Riders of Baba Yaga typically bear a frightening, or at least otherworldly, facade, the better to unnerve and intimidate those they meet. This sinister appearance is an illusion, however, a product of the magic robes granted to them by Baba Yaga that functions as *disguise self*. To hopefully put the PCs at ease, the Black Rider drops the facade and appears in his true form, that of an old human man, exhausted, pale from blood loss, and close to death.

The Black Rider is dying; nothing the PCs do can heal him or save him, and he is aware of that fact. What is already done cannot be reversed. He calls to the PCs, claiming to have knowledge of great import to share with them. The Rider tells the PCs who he is and all he knows—the source

of the winter portal, the existence of the other portals appearing throughout Golarion, Elvanna's betrayal of Baba Yaga, and her plans to spread Irrisen's permanent winter over the whole world. If the PCs question him, his most likely answers follow.

Who are you? "Once, I was called Illarion Matveius. Now I am known as Black Midnight. I am Baba Yaga's Black Rider, harbinger of the Witch Queen's return."

Who did this to you? "The servants of Queen Elvanna, ruler of Irrisen and betrayer of her own mother."

Why were you attacked? "Something has happened to Baba Yaga. Every hundred years, she returns to Irrisen to place a new daughter on the throne. But Queen Elvanna has other plans, it seems. Baba Yaga has not appeared as planned, and Elvanna intends to slay everyone loyal to her mother. She hunted down those of us who would herald Baba Yaga's return and slew my associates. I am the last of the Three Riders and a threat to Elvanna's plans."

What are Elvanna's plans? "To take Baba Yaga's place, and claim all of Golarion as her personal kingdom. Irrisen is a land of endless winter, created by Baba Yaga's magic. Elvanna seeks to cover the entire world in ice and snow, using portals like this one."

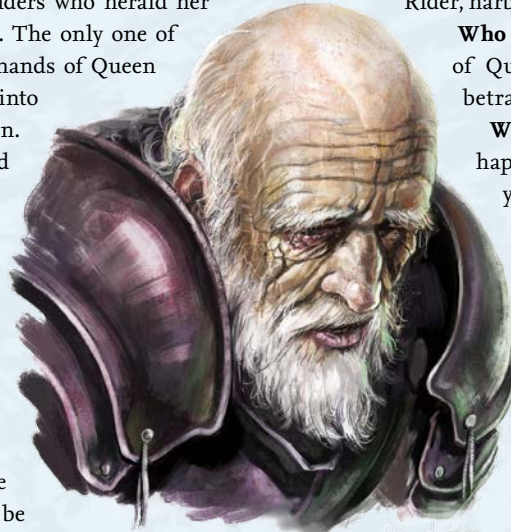
How do we close the portal? "You can find its source in the Pale Tower, on the other side, but this portal is but one of many. Through them, Elvanna will spread a new ice age across your world, consuming it for all eternity. Closing this portal might save your kingdom, but Golarion would still be doomed."

What can we do to stop this from happening? "You must find Baba Yaga. Only Baba Yaga can defeat Elvanna. Only the Queen of Witches can undo what her daughter has done."

How do we find Baba Yaga? "You must use her *Dancing Hut* to follow her. The hut is a powerful artifact that can cross great distances, even travel between worlds. If you can control the hut, it can take you to Baba Yaga."

Where is the *Dancing Hut*? "Elvanna stole the hut and put it on display in Irrisen's capital, Whitethrone, as a symbol of her power. You must go through the portal to Irrisen and find the *Dancing Hut*."

How do we control the hut? "The hut has many keys—objects attuned to the hut—that can take it almost anywhere. I managed to secure two of these keys, but Elvanna stole their power to prevent anyone from using the hut to find her mother. Once they are reactivated, placing the keys in the hut's cauldron will retrace Baba Yaga's path."



BLACK RIDER

REIGN OF WINTER

The PCs can ask the Black Rider more questions, but ultimately, he grows weaker as he explains the danger and what they must do. Knowing his time is running out, the Rider explains that he's no longer capable of carrying out the mission assigned to him—finding and rescuing Baba Yaga—so he must pass the task on to the PCs. He produces the two keys to the *Dancing Hut*—a lock of white hair from a frost giant's beard and a plague doctor's mask. These two items appear perfectly normal and mundane in every way, but they are the literal keys to take the *Dancing Hut* to a new destination in search of Baba Yaga. Elvanna has drained the keys of their power, but the Rider has the power to reactivate them, if the PCs will accept the mantle of responsibility. When he has said his piece, the Black Rider slits his own throat, bathing the two keys in his life's blood. This empowers the keys, but kills the Rider, and there is no way to save him through normal means. As he expires, his magic robes melt away like ice in a fire, leaving behind the body of an old man dressed in a simple black tunic.

THE MANTLE OF THE BLACK RIDER

Unknown to the PCs, the Black Rider's words also carry the power of witchcraft, transferring the mystic ties between himself and Baba Yaga. The PCs take on the mantle of the Black Rider, gaining some of his power, but they must also shoulder the burden of his responsibility to find the *Dancing Hut* and rescue Baba Yaga.

Each of the PCs gains a permanent increase of 2 points to one ability score of his or her choice. Additionally, the PCs are marked as favored servants of Baba Yaga, allowing them to bypass certain glyphs, wards, and other abjurations placed by the Witch Queen or her allies to protect locations or objects attuned to her.

In exchange for these boons, however, the PCs are compelled to go in search of Baba Yaga and ensure her return to Irrisen. This manifests as a *geas*-like effect on the PCs. If a character with the mantle of the Black Rider ceases to carry out this task for 24 hours, she takes a –2 penalty to each of her ability scores. Each day, another –2 penalty accumulates, up to a total of –8. No ability score can be reduced below 1 by this effect. The ability score penalties are removed 24 hours after the subject resumes carrying out its task. Only a *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* can end this effect, though this also removes the ability score increase and favored servant status.

You should be forgiving in exactly what is considered “carrying out the task.” As long as the PCs are moving the story forward, they should take no penalties from the *geas*. Stopping for a few days to craft magic items, going on GM-planned side adventures, or even imprisonment should not trigger the *geas*'s penalties, as long as the PCs are planning to pick up the quest again as soon as they are able. The penalties

should only manifest if the PCs are deliberately trying to avoid the quest or shirk their responsibility.

The mantle of the Black Rider is designed to push the PCs into crossing through the portal into Irrisen and to ensure their cooperation in the effort to free Baba Yaga so she can stop Elvanna and save Golarion from a never-ending ice age. If you think that the threat of the winter portal—which can only be closed in Irrisen on the other side of the portal—as well as Elvanna's plans for bringing eternal winter to the whole world are enough to convince your PCs to go through the portal in search of Baba Yaga, or if you feel your players would react negatively to the *geas*, feel free to remove the *geas*. The point is to set the PCs on the path of finding and rescuing Baba Yaga and to keep the campaign going. As long as the PCs are moving forward and the players are having fun, how you get them there is irrelevant.

PART THREE: LAND OF THE WHITE WITCHES

In order to close the winter portal and carry out the imperative of the Black Rider to find Baba Yaga and her *Dancing Hut*, the PCs must cross through the portal. They need only walk through the swirling cylinder that is the portal to find themselves instantly transported thousands of miles north to the Hoarwood Forest in the land of Irrisen.

It is significantly colder here, and subzero temperatures force characters to make Fortitude saves every 10 minutes rather than every hour spent unprotected from the elements. The PCs face dangerous exposure unless they can secure a means of keeping warm. Fortunately, the portal deposits the PCs on a forested hillside where they can see the faint and distant lights of a village miles away, but they are still far from the warmth of civilization. With a successful DC 15 Survival check, a PC realizes that to make matters worse, a snowstorm appears to be headed their way, and the distant village is the only shelter they can reach before blizzard-like conditions overtake them.

As in the Border Wood, snow covers the ground, reducing overland travel rates by half. During combat, entering a snow-covered square costs 2 squares of movement.

EVENT 1: THE HUNGRY MANTIS (CR 4)

Stumbling through deep snowdrifts, the PCs soon happen upon a band of local travelers. These are peasants from the nearby village of Waldsby, returning with a shipment of food from the Realm of the Mammoth Lords to the east.

Creature: The travelers have come under attack from a giant mantis—a monster that once made its lair in the Border Wood in Taldor, but crossed through the portal into Irrisen. Confused by the cold weather and voraciously hungry, the mantis attacked and grabbed one of the travelers, who now lies unconscious in its mandibles. The peasants are trying to drive the mantis away, but are no

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match for the giant insect. The mantis is unaccustomed to the severe cold, and is currently unable to fly.

ADVANCED GIANT MANTIS**CR 4****XP 1,200****hp 38** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 200*, 294)**TACTICS**

During Combat The mantis aggressively defends its prize, eager to feast. Once wounded, it sets down its victim and uses lunge attacks to snap at its attackers. If it successfully grabs a creature, it holds its victim in place, following through with secondary attacks from its mandibles.

Morale Cold and disoriented, the mantis fights to the death.

EVENT 2: TRAVELERS FROM WALDSBY

This event takes place immediately following the battle with the giant mantis. The leader of the peasants approaches the PCs, clearly relieved by their timely assistance, and introduces herself as Nadya Petska. A native of the nearby village of Waldsby, Nadya immediately recognizes the PCs as foreigners. She thanks them for their help, and explains

to them the peril of wandering uninvited into the White Witches' territory. Because of the approaching storm, as well as the PCs' assistance in defeating the giant mantis, Nadya offers to lead them to Waldsby where they can find shelter, food, and proper survival gear for the icy north.

Nadya's caravan consists of five dogsleds and four "guards" (N human warrior 1), though in truth they are little more than peasant hunters, able to fend off animal attacks, but not much more. A capable winter survivalist, Nadya knows the dangers of overland travel in Irrisen very well, and traveling with her is an experience in cold-weather survival. As the weather worsens, Nadya explains the necessity of setting up camp to rest and keep warm while riding out the storm. As they make camp, the PCs have an opportunity to learn more about their host while also asking questions about Irrisen. Nadya is likewise curious about the PCs' reasons for being in her country. If the PCs share their reasons for being in Irrisen, Nadya grows quiet, even more impressed with their bravery. She easily recognizes the mythical Black Rider from their description and knows full well the power of witchcraft compulsions.

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Nadya is actually the mother of the ill-fated Thora Petska, the little girl transformed into a guardian doll, whom the PCs encountered on the other side of the winter portal (at area M). Nadya is unaware of her daughter's fate, however, believing that the White Witch Nazhena Vasilliova still holds Thora at the Pale Tower. In fact, the shipment of food Nadya is now transporting to Waldsby is meant to appease Nazhena and hopefully secure her daughter's freedom. See page 38 for Nadya's reaction if the PCs inform her of her daughter's fate. Nadya is detailed fully in the "NPC Gallery" on page 56.



MIERUL ARDELAIN

EVENT 3. THE TROUBLING TROUBADOUR (CR 3)

This event occurs once the PCs have made camp with Nadya to wait out the storm.

Creature: Sometime during their evening meal, an unexpected visitor approaches the camp seeking shelter—a winter-touched forlarren named Mierul Ardelain. The product of an unholy union between a fiend and a nymph in neighboring Varisia, Mierul has a hairless body, bare goat legs, and a horned head. After her birth, Mierul found little acceptance among her mother's people. Driven into Irrisen many years ago for her unscrupulous acts, she became a traveling bard, playing a circuit through Irrisen's remote towns and villages, always stopping to pay her respects to the White Witch who governs each region. Eventually, Mierul pledged her loyalty to Queen Elvanna, accepting a sliver of ice into her heart and becoming winter-touched. She now serves the queen as a spy, and is traveling to the Pale Tower to check on Radosek, as Elvanna no longer trusts the accuracy of Nazhena's second-hand reports regarding the Black Rider. Seeing another party of travelers in the wood, Mierul drinks a *potion of undetectable alignment* and quickly seeks out Nadya's band to assess whether they've met the Black Rider or know where he might be.

Nadya is somewhat startled and nervous when Mierul arrives, uneasy about the cold fey's request to join them and yet unable to refuse without arousing the forlarren's ire or suspicion. Mierul sits well away from the fire as she joins the evening meal, doing her part to provide an evening of entertainment with songs, music, and tale-telling. The forlarren's attention is soon drawn to the PCs, however, as she senses something different about them. When Mierul attempts to engage them in conversation, Nadya covers for the PCs by claiming they're relatives visiting from another village, making a Bluff check opposed by Mierul's Sense Motive check (Nadya has a Bluff modifier of +2). The PCs can assist Nadya's Bluff check with aid another actions.

If Nadya succeeds at the Bluff check, Mierul buys the story, and pays the PCs no more mind unless they otherwise arouse her suspicion. Even if the bluff fails, Mierul masks her skepticism, pretending to believe their story. Once she finishes her meal, Mierul takes her leave and journeys on to the Pale Tower (see Development, below).

MIERUL ARDELAIN

CR 3

XP 800

Female winter-touched forlarren bard 2 (*Pathfinder RPG*)

Bestiary 2 125 and page 72)

NE Medium fey (cold)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 29 (6 HD; 4d6+2d8+6)

Fort +2, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

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DR 5/cold iron; **Immune** cold

Weaknesses remorse, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6+2 plus numbing cold) or

flame blade +5 touch (1d8+2 fire plus numbing cold)

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20 plus numbing cold)

Special Attacks bardic performance 7 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1), numbing cold (DC 13)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +5)

3/day—*flame blade*

Bard Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +3)

1st (3/day)—*chord of shards*^{UM} (DC 12), *disguise self*, *ear-piercing scream*^{UM} (DC 12)

o (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 11), *prestidigitation*, *summon instrument*

TACTICS

Before Combat Mierul drinks a *potion of undetectable alignment* before approaching the party's camp.

During Combat If attacked, Mierul uses her bardic performance to inspire courage, then casts *chord of shards*. Thereafter, she casts *flame blade* or uses her natural claws backed with numbing cold to attack her enemies.

Morale Mierul is a coward at heart, not a warrior. If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, she flees into the winter storm.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Perform [sing]), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Linguistics +4, Perception +12, Perform (dance) +8, Perform (sing) +13, Perform (string) +6, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Skald, Sylvan, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +1, versatile performance (sing)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of undetectable alignment* (2); **Other Gear** light crossbow with 10 bolts, *ice floe elixir* (see page 60), entertainer's outfit, white hooded cloak, opal necklace (worth 500 gp), 14 gp

Development: If Mierul survives this encounter, she travels on to the Pale Tower, where Radosek grants her a guest room during her stay. If she saw through the PCs' bluff, she alerts Radosek to the strange newcomers in Waldsby. This prompts the Pale Tower's soldiers to specifically seek out the PCs when they interrogate the villagers about the Black Rider (see **Events 6** and **7**). Mierul remains at the tower for the rest of the adventure, performing in the dining hall (area **Q8**) each evening to entertain the tower's staff and guards. In this case, the PCs will likely encounter her again when they raid the tower in Part Four, whether she's aware of their true identities or not.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully hide their identities from Mierul, award them 600 XP.

EVENT 4: EYES IN THE SKY (CR 3)

This encounter happens the day following **Event 3**. After weathering the storm overnight, Nadya leads the PCs back onto the trail to Waldsby.

Creature: More servants of the White Witches soon beset the PCs, however. This time, a swarm of ravens soars through the sky, on the lookout for any sign of travelers. These birds serve the Pale Tower, coordinated by Radosek and his minions in an effort to locate the Black Rider. Anything they observe or encounter can easily be communicated back to Radosek since many of his allies can use *speak with animals*.

Nadya is well aware of the ravens' purpose, and though her caravan might normally escape their attention, she knows the PCs' southern garb will likely give them away. At her direction, the caravan guards unfurl white tarps to draw over the dogsleds and hide the caravan and the PCs until the ravens fly past. Each of the PCs must succeed at a successful DC 20 Stealth check to fool the ravens in this manner, but the tarps grant an +5 circumstance bonus on the check. In anyone fails this check, the ravens settle to the ground and begin attacking the tarps in an effort to draw out those hiding beneath it. The tarp is relatively light (hardness 0, hp 2) and the ravens deal automatic damage by swarming over it.

RAVEN SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

(*Tome of Horrors Complete* 584)

N Tiny animal (swarm)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee swarm (1d6 plus eye-rake)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 14), eye-rake

TACTICS

During Combat The ravens swarm around as many targets as possible, scratching at opponents' eyes to maim and blind them.

Morale If reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, the raven swarm disperses.

STATISTICS

Str 2, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +3; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Fly +10, Perception +11

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SPECIAL ABILITIES

Eye-Rake (Ex) Any living creature damaged by a raven swarm must succeed at a DC 14 Reflex save or be blinded as the swarm scratches and tears at the victim's eyes. The blindness lasts for 1d4 days or until healed with *remove blindness/deafness* or a successful DC 20 Heal check. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Development: If the PCs fend off the swarm, the remaining birds disperse and take to the air, retreating to the Pale Tower to report to Jairess Sonn (at area **Q17**). Nadya explains the dire nature of this development and urges the PCs to hurry to Waldsby, where she can hopefully hide them before the ravens summon the tower's soldiers to the village.

Story Award: If the PCs succeed in hiding from the raven swarm, award them 400 XP.

WALDSBY

Nadya finally leads the PCs to her home village of Waldsby, on the northeastern fringes of the Hoarwood Forest. Once in the village, the PCs draw plenty of attention from the locals. Nadya greets those residents concerned for her safety, but many of the villagers stare and point at the PCs before whispering concernedly and leading their children away. Others are intrigued, hoping that the newcomers have brought new wares from the south to trade, and not yet realizing the PCs aren't merchants. Nadya does her best to lead the PCs past the throng, taking them to her home—a stout, unassuming cabin on the edge of town. She introduces the PCs to her remaining children, twin boys named Orm and Mjoli, as well as an old woman named Kashka who looks after boys during Nadya's frequent travels. At this point, the PCs have a chance to rest. Nadya provides the PCs with a hot meal and warm beds, bidding them to stay put while she delivers her food shipment to the fortified storehouse on the other side of the village and makes arrangements to better outfit them for their travels in Irrisen. When she returns soon after, Nadya brings a collection of winter clothing (equivalent to a traveler's outfit for each PC) with her, urging the PCs to wear the more common peasant garb of Waldsby to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

Thereafter, the PCs can rest, recover from any injuries, and replenish their resources before following through on the Black Rider's assigned task. They are also free to explore the village and learn more about the people and culture of Irrisen. Note that this far north, very few of the villagers speak Taldane, the "Common" tongue of the Inner Sea region. Most of Irrisen's peasants speak Skald instead. If none of the PCs speak Skald, Nadya can act as a translator for them in their interactions with Waldsby's residents. Waldsby is detailed in the article beginning on page 66.

The PCs should soon realize that Waldsby (and its close proximity to the Hoarwood Forest) eerily mirrors

the village of Heldren in Taldor, down to the location of many of its buildings. Some of the village's residents even bear an uncanny resemblance to villagers the PCs knew in Heldren. This should come across as a bit otherworldly and far too unlikely to be a coincidence. In fact, the villages share a ley line stretching across Avistan, which Queen Elvanna is drawing upon to magnify the rituals she's using to power the winter portals across Golarion.

The PCs also learn that everyone in Waldsby fears Nazhena Vasillovna, the White Witch who rules this area and lives in the Pale Tower, a stronghold less than a day's ride northwest of Waldsby. The villagers actively gossip about the many soldiers from the Pale Tower who recently marched into the Hoarwood searching for someone, but they are unaware that the soldiers were seeking the Black Rider. Some of the villagers think the PCs might be the soldiers' quarry, and wonder if the soldiers will come to Waldsby looking for them.

Despite these concerns, Nadya does her best to make the PCs feel welcome, introducing them to locals and recommending equipment to purchase that will help them survive in wintry Irrisen. She even bestows her *snowshoes of northern pursuit* (see page 61) upon one of the PCs in the hope of speeding the PCs' journey, wherever it takes them.

NADYA'S DAUGHTER

In Part Two, the PCs likely encountered the guardian doll (area **M**) and may have learned that she was once a living girl named Thora Petska. In fact, Thora was actually Nadya's daughter, but Nadya believes that the girl is still being held prisoner in the Pale Tower, and has no idea what really happened to her. In time, Nadya brings up the topic of her daughter, relating the story of Thora's capture and the importance of the food shipment that she intends to turn over to the Pale Tower in an effort to win Thora's freedom. Nadya feels she may have never had that opportunity if the PCs hadn't interceded when the giant mantis attacked her caravan. At the same time, she harbors hope that the PCs might soon go to the Pale Tower and possibly free Thora.

If the PCs learned of Thora's tragic fate and share what happened to her with Nadya, the young mother is horrified. But an icy resolve soon comes over her, and she becomes even more willing to take direct action against Nazhena and the White Witches. In time, she will grieve for her lost daughter, but for now, she volunteers to help the PCs and their cause.

Story Award: If the PCs provide closure for Nadya by discovering Thora's true fate and informing her, award them 600 XP.

EVENT 5: INHOSPITABLE HOSTS (CR 4)

Many of Waldsby's residents aren't pleased with the arrival of the PCs, fearing such outsiders will draw the ire of

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Nazhena Vasillioivna and that the witch's minions will punish the village for harboring these foreigners. Emil and Katrina Goltiaeva, the owners of the village's sole tavern, the White Weasel, cling to this sentiment more fully than anyone. They keep a massive mirror behind their bar that Katrina knows Radosek sometimes uses to spy on patrons who frequent the tavern. Katrina keeps this mirror uncovered to do her part in safeguarding Waldsby from troublemakers.

Creatures: At some point during the PCs' stay in Waldsby, Katrina convinces her husband Emil to lure the PCs into the White Weasel for drinks. Katrina serves the PC who seems to be the group's leader a special concoction called *suggestive tea* (see page 61) and whispers that they should leave Irrisen immediately, hoping to use the tea's magic to convince the PCs to leave Waldsby under their own volition. If the targeted PC successfully resists this compulsion, Emil takes matters into his own hands, threatening the PCs with his crossbow instead and telling them to leave the town and never come back.

EMIL GOLTIAEVA

CR 3
XP 800

 Male barkeep (*Pathfinder GameMastery Guide* 303)

hp 23

TACTICS

During Combat Emil relies on his heavy crossbow, making sure to load his +1 *human-bane bolt* first and targeting the human PC he deems most dangerous.

Morale Emil fights until Katrina tells him to stop. If she's killed, however, he fights to the death.

KATRINA GOLTIAEVA

CR 1
XP 400

 NE female doomsayer (*Pathfinder GameMastery Guide* 298)

hp 10

TACTICS

During Combat Katrina defends herself and Emil by casting *cause fear* or *command* from her scrolls in an effort to drive the PCs from the tavern. She casts *bleed* to aid her husband's attacks, and if threatened directly, she casts *burning hands*.

Morale If reduced to 3 hit points or fewer, Katrina casts *obscuring mist* to hide herself and Emil so she can use a *scroll of cure light wounds*. If Emil is slain, Katrina breaks down and immediately surrenders, cursing the PCs for bringing ruin upon her and the entire village.

SOLDIERS FROM THE PALE TOWER

Once the PCs have had a chance to explore the village and get their bearings in Irrisen, the fears of Waldsby's less welcoming citizens are realized—a contingent of guards from the Pale Tower visits the village, arriving

THE HOUSE SPIRIT

During the PCs' stay with Nadya, a pair of distrustful eyes secretly watches over them. A small fey creature called a domovoi shares Nadya's home. This poor fey, named Hatch, once lived in the Pale Tower. When he didn't receive the respect he felt he deserved from Nazhena Vasillioivna and her minions, Hatch retaliated with relatively harmless pranks, such as tickling the witch while she slept. Needless to say, Nazhena did not take this treatment very well. She ordered her guards to beat the "filthy pest" and cast him out in the snow to die. Nadya found Hatch before the wolves could claim him and nursed the fey back to health. He's befriended her household ever since, invisibly looking after her children and tidying up their home as he used to do for the Pale Tower. He usually conducts these activities late at night, using *prestidigitation* to clean and organize things, and obsessively does the same with the PCs' gear once they move in, hiding away their possessions—including the two keys given them by the Black Rider—in various cabinets, dressers, and chests.

Initially, Hatch views the PCs as outsiders who will draw unwanted attention to his adopted family. Though Hatch has a starting attitude of unfriendly, the PCs can attempt to improve his attitude by treating Nadya and her family well. Leaving out food as an offering for the domovoi grants the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks with Hatch.

Unknown to anyone, Hatch also carries a heavy burden concerning the fate of Nadya's daughter, Thora. He used to joke with Thora about Nazhena, never imagining the child would repeat such insults in the witch's presence. Much like Nadya, Hatch worries about the child and fears what must have become of her in the Pale Tower, but he also dreads returning there to find out. If the PCs describe Thora's fate while speaking with Nadya, the domovoi experiences extreme remorse for Thora's death, and Nadya's home goes uncleaned by the domovoi for the first time in months.

HATCH

CR 3
XP 800

Domovoi (see page 86)

hp 27

on dogsleds. The soldiers immediately head to the White Weasel to confer with Katrina and Emil Goltiaeva, if the pair still live. Although the guards are primarily searching for the Black Rider, if either Mierul Ardelain (see **Event 3**) or the raven swarm (see **Event 4**) warned Radosek of the PCs' presence in Irrisen, the soldiers seek out the PCs as well, especially if the Goltiaevas can describe the PCs to the guards.

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EVENT 6: SEARCH AND SEIZURE (CR 3)

This event occurs at some point when the PCs and Nadya are both present in her house. The Pale Tower soldiers go door-to-door in Waldsby in an effort to root out their quarry, rounding up the known leaders of the village, including Nadya, as well as any shop owners who supplied the PCs in recent days. When the guards arrive at Nadya's house, they abusively question Nadya, singling out the young mother with the full knowledge they've already taken one of her children, and use that to further goad her during the interrogation.

Creatures: Six Pale Tower guards have been sent to Nadya's house to bring her to their sergeant at the White Weasel. The PCs can either hide from the guards or defend Nadya's family and themselves. Each of the PCs must succeed at a Stealth check (opposed by the soldiers' Perception checks) to successfully hide or escape Nadya's home without being noticed.

If the domovoi Hatch (see the sidebar on page 39) learned of Thora Petska's fate while eavesdropping on the PCs, the soldiers' cruelty earns his wrath and the fey starts hurling household items at them with his telekinesis ability. If the PCs take advantage of this distraction, they can get the benefits of a surprise round against the guards.

PALE TOWER GUARDS (6)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Human warrior 1

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 9 each (1d10+4)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** cold iron longsword +3 (1d8+1/19–20) or dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat The guards team up to provide flanking bonuses or use aid another actions to improve one another's attacks or AC.

Morale The guards fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)**Skills** Intimidate +3, Perception +1, Profession (soldier) +4**Languages** Skald

Combat Gear *potion of endure elements*; **Other Gear** chain shirt, light steel shield, cold iron longsword, dagger, light crossbow with 10 bolts, cold-weather outfit, 15 gp

Development: The guards have been charged with bringing Nadya to Radosek for interrogation, so unless the PCs intervene, they lead her away, taking her back to their sergeant at the White Weasel. If the PCs go willingly with the guards, surrender to them, or are defeated, they are likewise taken to the White Weasel (see **Event 7**).

EVENT 7: THE GUARD SERGEANT (CR 4)

This encounter takes place after **Event 6**, either as a result of the PCs or Nadya being captured by the Pale Tower guards, or perhaps because the PCs are rushing to Nadya's rescue.

Creatures: Sergeant Volan Sertane, the leader of the Pale Tower guards sent to Waldsby, waits at the White Weasel with four more Pale Tower guards. When he first meets the PCs, Volan brazenly devalues their prowess, assuming that he can cow them as easily as the villagers he's bullied so often. Even if the PC are not prisoners and have come to rescue Nadya, Volan confidently recommends they mean to surrender and submit to the witch of the Pale Tower, intimating that far worse awaits them—and the villagers—if they refuse. Volan has little intention of taking the PCs straight to the Pale Tower, however. If they lay down their weapons, he wisely orders his guards to bind anyone he suspects as a spellcaster and commandeers the tavern to question his captives on the whereabouts of the Black Rider, using his *potion of interrogation* if he thinks they might be lying. If the PCs attack, Volan and his guards respond in kind.

SERGEANT VOLAN SERTANE

CR 2

XP 600

Male human (Ulfen) fighter 2/ranger 1

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 25 (3d10+5)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2 (+1 vs. fear)**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk cold iron longsword +5 (1d8+2/19–20), light spiked shield +3 (1d4+1) or

mwk cold iron longsword +7 (1d8+3/19–20) or

dagger +5 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)**Special Attacks** favored enemy (humans +2)

TACTICS

During Combat Volan attacks with his sword and spiked shield, targeting humans when possible to take advantage of his favored enemy bonus. Against heavily armored opponents, he switches to single attacks with his longsword

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instead, pausing only to drink a *potion of cure light wounds* to keep going.

Morale If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, Volan realizes the battle has turned against him. He takes the total defense action and uses a move action to retrieve his *attentive mirror* to warn Radosek about the danger the PCs pose before they can overwhelm him (see Development, below).

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Alertness, Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +6, Ride +3, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +3, Survival +4

Languages Skald

SQ track +1, wild empathy +2

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of endure elements*, *potion of interrogation*^{UM} (CL 4th), *screaming bolts* (2); **Other Gear** chain shirt, spiked light steel shield, dagger, mwk cold iron longsword, mwk light crossbow with 10 bolts, *attentive mirror* (see page 60), cold-weather outfit, 24 gp

PALE TOWER GUARDS (4)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 9 each (see page 40)

TACTICS

During Combat The guards support Volan by making sure at least one of them defends his flank. The others attempt to surround and subdue any spellcasters.

Morale The guards fight to the death.

Development: Volan carries an *attentive mirror* (see page 60) with which to report back to Radosek in the Pale Tower. He does so once he locates the Black Rider or anything else that might warrant his master's attention, such as the presence of the PCs in Waldsby. It takes Radosek at least 10 minutes after the mirror's activation to make contact with Volan's mirror, but he maintains the connection so he can observe anyone who picks up the magic device.

If the PCs do not rescue Nadya from the Pale Tower guards, she is eventually taken to the Pale Tower. In this case, she is held in area **Q21** until Radosek decides what to do with her.

WILLING ALLIES

Following the Pale Tower guards' visit to Waldsby, the villagers become agitated. Everyone realizes that the PCs' presence (and actions, especially if they killed the soldiers) will surely bring retribution down on Waldsby as soon as

Nazhena and Radosek learn what happened. If the PCs rescued Nadya, she offers to lead them to the Pale Tower, preferring an aggressive retaliation in hopes of catching Nazhena and her minions off guard rather than cowering in fear, which is the village's typical response. Given the PCs' prowess in handling the giant mantis and the soldiers of the White Witch, Nadya is certain they can succeed. She also implores them to free her daughter, Thora—or avenge her, if Nadya has learned what became of the girl. She also suggests they consult with Hatch, the domovoi who lives in her house. Since Hatch once worked



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in the Pale Tower, he can tell the PCs the best way to enter and avoid detection.

Convincing Hatch to help them is a complicated matter, however. As much as the domovoi loves Nadya and her family, he also fears Nazhena and Radosek. Standing up to soldiers isn't the same as facing the wrath of the White Witches. If the PCs want Hatch's help, they must impress him or otherwise lure the domovoi into speaking with them by succeeding at a Diplomacy check to make him friendly, if they have not already changed his attitude. Even if the PCs have already made Hatch friendly, they must still succeed at a DC 12 Diplomacy check to gain his aid. As before, a gift of warm milk or a bit of food left for the domovoi earns a +5 circumstance bonus on the check. Thereafter, Hatch can assist them in their forays into the Pale Tower (see the sidebar on page 43). In addition, if Hatch is made helpful, he gives the PCs an additional piece of information: he overheard Nazhena telling Radosek that one of the items in her treasury was cursed as a trap for thieves—so the PCs would be wise to be careful if they decide to loot the Pale Tower.

Development: If the Winter Guard captured Nadya and took her to the Pale Tower, Hatch eventually comes forward on his own, reluctantly appearing to urge the PCs to save her. He's aware of the ritual he saw Nazhena performing to create the winter portal, and he knows if the PCs want to shut it down, they'll have to go there and defeat the White Witch. He offers to help them if they agree to save Nadya, even accompanying them to the tower.

Story Award: If the PCs convince Hatch to aid them in their assault on the Pale Tower, award them 800 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

PART FOUR: THE PALE TOWER

Eventually, the PCs must venture to the Pale Tower to seal the winter portal to Taldor and save their loved ones back home. With most of the tower's soldiers still searching for the Black Rider, the tower is fortunately undermanned and more vulnerable to infiltration. Even so, getting inside and navigating the tower proves no easy task. Nazhena Vasillovna's apprentice, Radosek Pavril, presides over the tower in his mistress's absence, and he commands a great number of her most loyal servants. With Nazhena away, he diligently carries on her work, both in maintaining the winter portal and in guarding against the interference of outsiders.

Reaching the Pale Tower should be the PCs' next priority. Nadya or Hatch can easily guide them there. Even the townsfolk of Waldsby can advise them of its location. Assuming the PCs have secured snowshoes, they can make the 6-mile journey in about 3 to 4 hours. Alternatively, they can use Nadya's dogsleds (or those of the Pale Tower guards who came to Waldsby) to make the trip in half the time.

EVENT 8: ON THE ROAD (CR 3)

Creature: Shortly after leaving Waldsby, the PCs attract the attention of a greater witchcrow, a large, intelligent crow with an innate talent for witchcraft. This witchcrow, named Lytil, was drawn to the area because of the potent magic involved in the winter portal. Since arriving, she's become a recurring nuisance for Nazhena and Radosek, who have repeatedly driven her away from the Pale Tower.

Lytil can sense the powerful magic in the keys to Baba Yaga's hut carried by the PCs with her *detect magic* ability and covets one for her nest. She follows the PCs at a distance until she can approach unseen with her *vanish* ability, then appears before the PCs to engage them in conversation, lulling them into a false sense of complacency as she questions them about their destination and bold approach toward the Pale Tower. Lytil's conversation is short-lived, however. Under the pretense of offering them additional information, she narrows her scrutiny with *detect magic* until she can identify the magic keys. Once she locates her prize, she attacks.

LYTIL

CR 3
XP 800

Female greater witchcrow (see page 88)

hp 32

TACTICS

During Combat Lytil casts *vanish* to disappear and circle her quarry, relying on *ventriloquism* to distract and fool opponents as she uses flyby attacks with Improved Steal combat maneuvers. If she successfully snatches her prize, she immediately retreats. Otherwise, she continues attacking with her claws, targeting ranged attackers with her hexes and casting *mirror image* to further defend herself.

Morale Lytil persists until she's reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, at which point she gives up and flees into the forest.

Development: If Lytil succeeds in stealing one of the keys to the *Dancing Hut*, the PCs should be able to easily track down the witchcrow. Her nest is reasonably close by, and a simple divination (such as *augury* or *locate object*) or successful DC 11 Survival check should be enough to find the nest and recover the key. Of course, Lytil defends what she views as "hers" once the key is in her possession.

Q. THE PALE TOWER

The Pale Tower stands upon a flat, snow-covered plain northwest of Waldsby. In clear weather, its battlements command a 6-mile view of the surrounding terrain. Frequent visitors to the tower normally signal the tower's guards with reflective mirrors to announce their approach, but all others attract the attention of a scouting raven swarm from the tower's aerie. The birds circle such interlopers before reporting back to their keeper, Jairess Sonn, who then warns Radosek and the tower's guards.

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When the PCs first sight the tower, read or paraphrase the following description.

Sharp winds whistle across this stark white plain, stinging the eyes along with the near-blinding rays of the reflected sun. A great eruption of frozen ice rises in the distance—an imposing pale tower crowned with icicles spearing into the sky. Seemingly born of the land itself, an unbroken circular wall of ice guards the tower's base, with no means of entrance visible. High above, a large gash opens in the tower's bowl-like crown, ringed in icy spikes and split by a massive plane of ice resembling an inverted crescent moon.

The tower's entire structure is made of solid ice as strong as hewn stone (hardness 8, hp 540, break DC 50), magically drawn from the ground and carved into an imposing fortress by Nazhena Vasilliova's mother, a powerful winter witch. The slippery ice walls require a successful DC 30 Climb check to scale. An underground aquifer and hot spring supplies fresh water to the tower.

Each floor of the Pale Tower is actually a hollowed out section inside the massive icicle that forms the tower. No stairs grant access between these floors, lest they fracture the ice beyond its ability to support the tower's own weight. Instead, Nazhena's mother created teleporters using *ice crystal teleport* (CL 11th; *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 224) to move creatures from one location to another specific location elsewhere in the tower. A teleporter can transport one creature at a time. The target is encased in ice for 1 round, during which time it is paralyzed, then fades away. At the end of the round, the target is teleported to its keyed destination, and the ice immediately melts away. Activating these teleporters requires a simple command phrase or magical key. The domovoi Hatch knows most of these phrases, but Nazhena and Radosek have kept some of them secret to restrict access to certain floors. The command phrases and destinations for each teleporter are detailed in the areas where they appear.

In addition, several large mirrors hang within the tower's rooms and hallways, useful tools for Nazhena and Radosek to spy upon their minions or guests with the *Irriseni mirror sight* spell. Radosek always keeps one of these spells prepared each day to take advantage of them.

Altogether, the Pale Tower normally supports a complement of 35 guards in addition to the stronghold's servants, but Radosek has sent most of his soldiers to scour the countryside in search of the Black Rider, leaving only a token force at the tower.

Q1. Outer Gate (CR 1)

A trampled path of snow, heavily tracked by footprints and sled trails, ends abruptly at an opaque wall of ice.

STORMING THE PALE TOWER

How the PCs assault the tower is largely left up to them, though the domovoi Hatch can make the task much easier. He knows every nook in the tower, as well as most of its inhabitants. He also knows how to use the ice crystal teleporters to move between floors, and can give the PCs the command phrases for the teleporters in areas Q5, Q8, Q15, and Q17. Hatch only accompanies the PCs as far as the first floor of the tower. After their initial foray, he remains behind, securing a safe place for them to rest if they need to retreat.

If Nadya accompanies the PCs, keep in mind that she has a major role to play in the next adventure, "The Shackled Hut," guiding the PCs from Waldsby to Irrisen. If something happens to her in this adventure, you'll need introduce another NPC to serve as the PCs' guide.

It may take several forays into the Pale Tower before the PCs overcome its defenders and locate the source of the winter portal, and they may require rest and recovery before continuing their assault. The tower's ground level could be barricaded against the upper floors of the tower, making it difficult for Radosek to strike back at them. He grows increasingly paranoid, scrying on the PCs through the tower's mirrors and isolating himself in the tower's ritual chamber (area Q20) to await Nazhena's return, but she continues to be occupied in Whitethrone.

If the PCs linger in an attempt to wait out Radosek, he has enough food to last him several weeks. Patrols of the tower's guards should also threaten the PCs as contingents return to the tower from their fruitless search for the Black Rider. Use the statistics on page 40 for these guards. Likewise, more cold fey could arrive at the tower. Up to four winter-touched sprites (see area D) or three winter-touched atomies (see area Q8) could surprise the PCs.

Carvings and ancient glyphs depict only the semblance of a gateway on its surface.

The outer wall of the Pale Tower is 25 feet high, and requires a successful DC 30 Climb check to scale, though if a rope is affixed to the top of the wall, the DC drops to 10. A permanent *wall of ice* (CL 9th) 9 inches thick forms the gate to the Pale Tower, seamlessly connecting to the otherwise mundane ice walls of the tower (hardness 0, hp 27, break DC 24). Anyone smashing through the wall or passing through a breach takes 1d6+9 points of cold damage (no save). Just behind the wall stands a portcullis of inverted icicles. The tower's guards can temporarily suppress the magic wall for up to 9 rounds and raise the portcullis to allow access to the tower's courtyard, but they only do so for recognized guards or expected guests of Nazhena or Radosek.

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Q. THE PALE TOWER

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



AERIE

TOP FLOOR

□ = MIRROR

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Creatures: Three Pale Tower guards are currently posted on the battlements atop the gate. A successful DC 20 Bluff check is sufficient for a PC to convince them that the PCs are expected and they should open the gate. If the PCs have disguised themselves using equipment taken from the Pale Tower guards in Waldsby, they receive a +5 circumstance bonus on this check. Otherwise, they have to find their own way inside the tower's walls. Of course, the guards don't sit idly by while PCs invade the tower. They attack anyone attempting to scale or breach the walls.

PALE TOWER GUARDS (3)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 9 each (see page 40)

Story Award: If the PCs fool the guards into letting them in or otherwise bypass the guards at the gate, award them XP as if they had defeated the guards in combat.

Q2. Courtyard (CR 4)

A massive ice sculpture of a dragon dominates this open courtyard, standing with raised wings upon a dais of solid ice. Seven squat shacks sit along the inner wall, with several dogsleds stored outside. Between them, four ice chutes descend from the battlements of the outer wall. To the west, large double doors studded with icicles lead inside the Pale Tower itself, just beneath an overhang of sharp icicles dangling from above.

When Nazhena's mother first constructed the Pale Tower, she defeated a powerful white dragon named Auburphex who had claimed the area. The courtyard's ice sculpture commemorates their battle. When Nazhena took over the tower, she left the sculpture in place for its intimidation value, both for those visiting her home, and for anyone foolish enough to assault the stronghold. The icicles hanging over the doors, while menacing, pose no threat to creatures passing through the doors.

Creature: The primary danger in this courtyard is a nasty ice troll named Bordegga, retained by Radosek to help guard the tower in Nazhena's absence. The troll is too large to comfortably reside in the tower itself, so she's made her bed among the vacant kennels instead. Bordegga doesn't particularly care for her assignment as no amount of gold has ever filled her empty stomach. Her hunger has already driven her to eat the tower's remaining dogs, and she eagerly assaults any outsiders foolish enough to enter the courtyard uninvited.

BORDEGGA

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female ice troll (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 271)

hp 45

TACTICS

During Combat Initially, Bordegga fights with axe, tooth, and claw, focusing her attacks on anyone capable of casting spells since she fears fire magic. If injured by fire or acid, she flies into a rage, either discarding her battleaxe or hurling it (taking a -4 penalty on her attack roll) at whoever marked her with such an attack. Thereafter, she fights solely with her natural attacks.

Morale Bordegga fights to the death.

Treasure: Bordegga has stashed the payment she's received from Radosek in the kennel to the southeast, totaling 500 gp.

Development: The statue in the courtyard is a completely normal ice sculpture when the PCs first enter the courtyard. When they later encounter Radosek in area Q20, however, the winter witch retreats here to rally his troops and animates the statue with a *scroll of animate objects*, instructing it to attack the PCs (see Development on page 53).

ANIMATED ICE DRAGON

CR 5

XP 1,600

Animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 14*)

N Large construct

Init -3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 52 (4d10+30)

Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -4

Defensive Abilities hardness 0; Immune cold, construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (clumsy)

Melee 2 slams +9 (1d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The animated statue moves at the direction of Radosek, charging from the sky if allowed to fly. It otherwise slams its opponents, seeking to grapple and pin anyone Radosek deems especially dangerous.

Morale The statue fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Base Atk +4; CMB +11; CMD 20 Skills Fly -11

SQ Construction Points (additional attack, additional movement [fly], ice)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construction Points *Ice* (Ex, 1 CP): The object is made of ice.

Its hardness is reduced to 0, and it gains vulnerability to fire and immunity to cold.

REIGN OF WINTER

Q3. Entrance Hall (CR 3)

Steamy air fills this inner gallery, emanating in lazy wisps from a bubbling pool recessed into the floor of a raised dais surrounded by six pillars of ice. Four foggy mirrors hang from the walls near ice sculptures of helmeted pike-wielding warriors.

The bottom floor of the Pale Tower is fed by a hot spring percolating up from the icy plain on which Nazhena's mother built her home. The denizens of the tower often use it for bathing, as the surrounding ice is magically treated to resist melting from the water's ambient temperature.

Creature: A water elemental lives within the spring, acting as an additional guardian and caretaker of the tower's waterworks. It routinely sends fresh water through the hollow pillars surrounding the pool into other parts of the tower, such as the privies (area Q4) and the kitchen (area Q9). Any member of the Pale Tower staff can command the elemental, but it attacks any creatures carrying fire that approach the pool, knowing full well the danger fire poses to those living in the Pale Tower. If a battle takes place here, the conflict warns the guards in areas Q6 and Q7, who quickly arm themselves and plan an ambush.

MEDIUM WATER ELEMENTAL

CR 3

XP 800

hp 30 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 126)

TACTICS

During Combat The elemental uses its drench ability to put out open flames or dispel magical ones. If attacked, it grapples victims to pull them into the hot springs.

Morale The elemental fights to the death.

Q4. Privies

Running water flows through the open latrines of these privies, carrying wastewater out of the tower and into an underground river. The doors to the east of the privies lead to stairs that climb up to the battlements atop the outer wall.

Q5. Ice Crystal Teleporters

A glassy pattern of striated, crystalline ice covers the tiled floor in this open alcove, illuminated by a soft, blue light.

The ice crystal teleporters here on the first floor transport targets to the dining hall (area Q8) on the second floor of the tower. The command phrase is "A gathering within the hall, take one, take us all." If Hatch is accompanying the PCs, he knows the command phrase. Additionally, Sergeant Yana Dultsev in area Q7 possesses a key to activate the teleporters.

Otherwise, the PCs will need to interrogate captured guards to learn the commands, or blindly activate a teleporter with a successful DC 25 Use Magic Device check.

Q6. North Barracks (CR 2)

Nine double bunks, little more than straw mattresses and heavy blankets on raised blocks of ice, occupy most of the space in this partitioned chamber. A single wooden chest and a weapons locker furnish the rest of the room.

Creatures: These barracks usually house 18 guards. Presently, just five Pale Tower guards occupy the room, recovering from an extended foray into the countryside searching for the Black Rider. They have only recently returned, so they're fatigued, unarmed, and unarmored. It takes them 6 rounds to hastily don their armor and pick up their shields if alerted to battle elsewhere in the tower. If surprised, the guards spend the first round of battle arming themselves with weapons from the locker to the south. If unable to reach it, they retreat through the room's other exit to join Yana Dultsev in area Q7 or flee to the dining hall (area Q8) using the ice crystal teleporters. If the PCs haven't yet faced the water elemental in area Q3, the guards command it to attack the invaders, then make their escape.

PALE TOWER GUARDS (5)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 9 each (see page 40)

Weaknesses fatigued

Q7. South Barracks (CR 4)

Eight bunk beds fill this narrow room, separated by a small partition between the tower's icy walls. Several wooden chests and a weapons locker furnish the rest of the chamber.

Creatures: This room provides quarters for another 13 more guards and the three sergeants who lead them. Currently, just one sergeant, Yana Dultsev, and four of her best fighters reside here, sharing drinks after a patrol. Unlike the guards in the northern barracks (area Q6), Yana and her fellow guards have already rested and are fully equipped. If alerted to the PCs' intrusion, they prepare an ambush at each of the barracks' doors with one team fighting defensively to hold off intruders while the other circles around to take the PCs from behind.

PALE TOWER GUARDS (4)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 9 each (see page 40)

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SERGEANT YANA DULTSEV

CR 2

XP 600

hp 25 (use stats for Volan Sertane; see page 40)

TACTICS

During Combat Yana fights at the forefront of battle while the guards accompanying her clamber over beds to surround opponents or fire their crossbows.

Morale Yana and her guards fight to the death.

Treasure: As a sergeant, Yana carries a special key attuned to the ice crystal teleporters in area Q5. The key automatically activates the teleporter without the need for a command phrase when anyone bearing the key steps onto the ice crystals.

Q8. Dining Hall (CR 3)

A crescent-shaped dining table occupies this Y-shaped chamber, while two large mirrors on the north and south walls create the illusion of an even larger space. Twenty feet overhead, an immense chandelier of ice crystals hangs from the ceiling. To the east, rounded steps access a short hallway, flanked by twin ice sculptures of dryads holding ice-carved tree limbs, creating an elaborate archway. Translucent, glasslike double doors are set in the hall's north and south walls. To the west, two alcoves stand between three windows providing an amazing view of the wintry landscape outside the tower.

Nazhena, Radosek, and the rest of the tower's guards, servants, and guests take their meals in this chamber. The raised hallway to the east doubles as a stage for visiting performers and musicians. The alcoves along the western wall are ice crystal teleporters linked to area Q5. They can be activated by uttering the phrase "Spiral downward to the ground, every ounce and every pound" or by using Yana's key (see area Q7).

Creatures: Two winter-touched atomies named Jir and Lask spend most of their time here, perfecting an acrobatic routine in anticipation of the evening's festivities. They turn invisible to defend the tower if they detect intruders.

JIR AND LASK (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Winter-touched atomies (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 28 and page 72)

hp 9 each

TACTICS

During Combat The atomies use their *invisibility* to maneuver into position for sneak attacks. Thereafter, they cast *reduce person* on their opponents and flank with one another or Mierul (see Development, below) to continue the fight.

Morale The atomies fight to the death.

Development: If the forlorn bard Mierul Ardelain (see page 36) survived her encounter during Part Three of the adventure, she is present here as well, providing musical accompaniment to the atomies' routine. She immediately recognizes the PCs and attacks if she believes they threaten the tower. If the atomies are slain and Mierul is reduced below 10 hit points, she surrenders, playing down her friendly relationship with Radosek while trying to formulate an escape from the Pale Tower that won't involve her death at the hands of the PCs. She's willing to cut a deal, even parting with her *ice floe elixir* if they agree to let her go. Mierul's equipment is kept in her guest room (area Q10). Mierul's presence makes this a CR 5 encounter.

Q9. Kitchen (CR 3)

Several cabinets line the narrow walls of this oddly angular room. A chopping block, water barrel, and cauldron stand near the room's only door. The tantalizing smells of fresh baked bread and meaty stew fill the air.

Creature: Nazhena employs an ill-tempered spriggan named Mig Epsel as the Pale Tower's cook. Mig runs his kitchen with the occasional aid of the atomies Jir and Lask from the dining hall (area Q8), but he brooks no interruptions or disturbances from anyone else.

MIG EPSEL

CR 3

XP 800

Male spriggan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 257)

hp 22

TACTICS

During Combat Mig casts *scare* on intruders to force them out of his kitchen and into the dining hall. If successful, he follows along so he can use his size alteration ability to become Large and continue the fight.

Morale Mig fights to death.

Treasure: Among Mig's culinary creations is a tray of baked goods—one of which is a *spiteful cookie* (see page 61) in the shape of a white dragon. He's been saving the treat for Hestrig Orlov (see area Q12) to get back at her for criticizing a rack of lamb the spriggan served 3 nights ago.

Q10. Empty Bedroom

A bed, desk, and storage locker furnish this small circular chamber. A five-foot-tall mirror hangs on the wall opposite the room's only door.

If Mierul Ardelain survived her encounter with the PCs on the road to Waldsby (see **Event 3**), Radosek has offered her the use of this room while she's a guest of the Pale Tower.

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She spends most of her time in the dining hall (area Q8), but keeps her belongings here, locking the storage locker with a key she keeps with her (Disable Device DC 25 to open).

Q11. Guest Bedroom (CR 3)

The scent of perfume fills the air of this small bedroom where several dresses styled for a Taldan noblewoman lie neatly arranged on the bed. A mirrored vanity and chair sit by the door next to a wooden chest, and a larger mirror hangs on the wall between two windows.

Creature: This bedroom is normally reserved for visitors to the Pale Tower, such as winter witches visiting from Whitethrone. Currently, a doppelganger named Gardhek is staying here, retained by Nazhena to impersonate Lady Argentea Malassene. Radosek intends to “return” the false noble to Oppara to act as a spy and delay any response to the winter portal in the Border Wood.

An uncouth creature at best, Gardhek has been trying to perfect Argentea’s mannerisms while experimenting with clothing and items stolen from her carriage. Gardhek learned what Lady Argentea looked like and was able to study some of her mannerisms through Radosek’s *Irriseni mirror sight* spell. More recently, the doppelganger has been studying Taldan etiquette to better blend into noble society. Gardhek has no prior knowledge of the PCs, but immediately attempts to mislead them into thinking it’s the real Lady Argentea, claiming the one they met at the High Sentinel Lodge was an imposter. If questioned, “Lady Argentea” claims to have lost many of her memories because of the trauma of her abduction in an attempt to cover any gaps in her knowledge of the real Argentea’s life. If the PCs see through the doppelganger’s ruse with a successful DC 23 Sense Motive check (if they met and rescued the real Argentea, they gain a +10 bonus on the check), it doesn’t hesitate to attack. Gardhek has a knack for survival and knows Radosek and Nazhena need it to carry out their plans in Taldor. If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, it flees, running for the ice crystal teleporter in area Q15 to join Jairess Sonn in the aerie (area Q17).

GARDHEK CR 3
XP 800
 Doppelganger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 89)
hp 26

Q12. Library (CR 4)

Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves line the walls of this sprawling chamber. An ornate wooden table, covered with open texts and lit candles, and six chairs sit in the middle of the room. A massive mirror hangs on the western wall.

Following her mother’s example, Nazhena maintains an expansive library of collected lore here. The books cover such varied topics as Golarion history, the Great Beyond, and bestiaries on dragons, fey, and magical beasts of the icy north. Each collection grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (history), Knowledge (planes), and corresponding monster lore skill checks. The open tomes on the table all relate to Taldor, to further the education of the doppelganger Gardhek (area Q11).

Creature: The library’s current occupant is the Pale Tower guard captain, a veteran warrior named Hestrig Orlov. Though she is primarily of Ulfen descent, her lineage also includes a white dragon from the northern glaciers. The White Witches immediately recognized the value of her icy draconic bloodline, prompting her to join their service at an early age.

Recently, Hestrig has discovered that the white dragon Auburphex, slain by Nazhena’s mother and commemorated by the ice sculpture in the tower’s courtyard (area Q2), is the same dragon whose blood courses through her veins. Hestrig hasn’t yet come to grips with this realization, unsure whether she should avenge her draconic ancestor or keep the secret to herself. In the meantime, she studies the recorded history of that time, hoping to learn why the dragon opposed the White Witches. She aggressively attacks any intruders venturing here.

CAPTAIN HESTRIG ORLOV CR 4
XP 1,200
 Female human (Ulfen) fighter 2/sorcerer 3
 NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +1; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)
hp 38 (5 HD; 2d10+3d6+13)
Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3 (+1 vs. fear)
Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Resist** cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 greatsword +8 (2d6+5/19–20) or 2 claws +6 (1d4+3)
Ranged mwk throwing axe +5 (1d6+3)
Special Attacks claws (2, 1d4+3, 5 rounds/day)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
 1st (6/day)—*enlarge person* (DC 13), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *snowball** (DC 13)
 o (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*
Bloodline draconic (white)
 * See page 73.

TACTICS

Before Combat If alerted to the PCs’ presence, Hestrig casts

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mage armor and *magic weapon* from her scroll to prepare for battle.

During Combat If she has enough room, Hestrig casts *enlarge person* during a fight, sweeping her greatsword in giant arcs with her improved reach to use Power Attack and Cleave against her opponents, alternating attacks with spells such as *snowball* or *magic missile*. If faced with a formidable foe, she changes strategy and uses her Shield of Swings feat to increase her AC. Hestrig is loathe to use her *elixir of fire breath*, as she acquired it as an insurance policy against treachery from the ice troll Bordegga (see area Q2) or the cold fey in the tower.

Morale Hestrig lacks the wisdom to flee or surrender. She fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without her spells, Hestrig's statistics are AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; **Melee** mwk greatsword +8 (2d6+4/19–20).

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Cleave, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Power Attack, Shield of Swings^{APG}, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Perception +7, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +5, Spellcraft +4, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Skald

SQ bloodline arcana (cold energy spells deal +1 damage per die)

Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath*, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *scroll of magic weapon*; **Other Gear** dagger, mwk greatsword, mwk throwing axe, *cloak of resistance* +1, key to chest in area Q16, teleporter key (to area Q15), 65 gp

Treasure: Hestrig carries a key to the ice crystal teleporter in area Q15. The key automatically activates the teleporter without the need for a command phrase when anyone bearing the key steps onto the ice crystals.

Q13. Mirrored Hall (CR 5)

A long red carpet extends from the western doorway of this mirrored hall between ice sculptures of twin nymphs, ending at an open alcove to the east. Passageways continue north and south, following the contours of the tower's outer wall, where windows look out over the open courtyard below.

The eastern alcove contains an ice crystal teleporter linked to the ritual chamber (area Q20). The command

phrase is "Onward, upward, in a tick. Don't be late, just be quick." If Radosek is aware of the PCs' presence in the tower, he has shut down the teleporter so it no longer responds to the command phrase in an effort to keep anyone from reaching the ritual chamber. Some time ago, however, Radosek gave a teleporter key to Jairess Sonn (area Q17), in an attempt to lure the attractive sylph to his bedchamber while Nazhena is away. So far, Jairess has rebuffed Radosek's advances, but she still has the key, which is capable of overriding the deactivated teleporter. This key represents the only means of reaching the tower's upper chambers to face Radosek directly and shut down the portal to Taldor.

Creatures: The nymph ice sculptures are actually animated objects that guard this hall and the ice crystal teleporter in the eastern alcove. They remain inactive unless they're attacked



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or a creature fails to give the proper command phrase to operate the teleporter. The statues fight until destroyed.

ANIMATED ICE NYMPHS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

N Medium construct

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception –5

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 36 each (3d10+20)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** –4

Defensive Abilities hardness 0; **Immune** cold, construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +5 (1d6+2)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

SQ Construction Points (additional attack, ice)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Construction Points *Ice* (Ex, 1 CP): The object is made of ice.

Its hardness is reduced to 0, and it gains vulnerability to fire and immunity to cold.

Q14. Conservatory (CR 4)

Several tables, covered in flowering plants and decorative figurines both large and small, occupy the corners of this brightly lit large room. A large mirror hangs on the northwestern wall, while double doors lead north and south.

The angles of the ice in the walls and ceiling of this conservatory direct sunlight into the room to feed the collection of plants here.

Creature: Among the many plants in the conservatory is a mandragora that Nazhena created using demon blood. Because of its hostility, even to its creator, Nazhena chained it up here, though to her annoyance, she still occasionally suffers from its unsettling shriek. Now, she mostly shows off the mandragora to visiting colleagues, or feeds it with those servants who displease her. The mandragora has struggled mightily against the chains securing it to the eastern wall, and the ice around the chains is now severely weakened. Each round the PCs remain in this room, the mandragora pulls against the chains. With a successful DC 13 Strength check, it finally fractures the weakened ice. Once released, the mandragora ravenously attacks anyone within reach.

MANDRAGORA

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 185)

TACTICS

During Combat The mandragora immediately shrieks, then grabs and grapples anyone within reach, using its blood drain ability to feed. After this initial surprise attack, it continues feeding unless its opponent breaks free, in which case, it pursues and continues to attack.

Morale The mandragora fights to the death.

Q15. Ice Crystal Teleporter

Tiles of ice cover the floor in this recessed alcove, beneath a large window overlooking the tower's northern exposure.

This ice crystal teleporter connects to the aerie at area Q17. It can be activated with the command phrase "Take wing, soar and fly, let me view the winter sky" or by using Hestrig Orlov's key (see area Q12).

Q16. Hestrig's Bedroom

A bed, desk, dresser, and storage chest furnish this small bedroom. A large mirror hangs on the wall opposite the room's only door, and two windows look down on the tower's courtyard.

This room serves as sleeping quarters for Hestrig Orlov, captain of the Pale Tower's guards (see area Q12). She keeps to herself when not dressing down patrol sergeants for failing to locate the Black Rider. In her calmer moments, she retires here to practice her sorcery.

Treasure: Whether because of her draconic heritage or just natural greed, Hestrig hoards her collected earnings and forced tribute in a chest by her bed, which she keeps locked at all times (Disable Device DC 25 to open). It contains an *elixir of truth*, three *potions of feather fall*, a pair of silver bracers traced with figures of dragons worth 250 gp, a jeweled scepter worth 175 gp, an agate worth 50 gp, and three blue quartz crystals worth 100 gp each, as well as 256 gp, 473 sp, and 894 cp.

Q17. Aerie (CR 4)

A triangle of crossed steel wires runs between three wooden posts in this crescent-shaped room that smells strongly from the bird droppings scattered across the floor. Along the south wall, open windows look down from a dizzying height, admitting a brisk, cold wind. Two doors exit this chamber, one next to a large mirror to the west and another standing between a pair of wooden chests to the northeast.

The witches of Irrisen have a strong affinity for ravens, often adopting them as familiars or using them as messengers and servants. As such, Nazhena maintains an aerie here to house a flock of ravens. The ceiling is 30 feet high in the aerie, which lies 60 feet above ground level. Other than flight, the

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ice crystal teleporter from area **Q15** offers the only means of accessing the aerie, depositing travelers in the alcove in the northern wall. Returning to area **Q15** requires the command phrase “Down a level, to the halls, leave this cage without walls” or Hestrig Orlov’s key (see area **Q12**).

Creatures: A young sylph cleric named Jairess Sonn looks after the tower’s ravens, which proudly serve Nazhena and Radosek as spies. Jairess’s faith in Gozreh allows her to speak with the ravens, and she directs them in scouting the surrounding area. She translates their reports to update Radosek and the tower’s guards, alerting them to unwelcome visitors in Nazhena’s domain. Jairess is actually a newcomer to the Pale Tower. Her exotic nature and attractiveness has drawn the attention of several guards, as well as Radosek himself. Radosek even crafted a special key for her so she could visit the tower’s upper levels should she wish. So far, Jairess has turned down this opportunity, but carries a key to the ice crystal teleporter in area **Q13**. If intruders enter the aerie, Jairess orders the ravens to form a swarm and attack the invaders.

During Combat Jairess directs her ravens to swarm opponents on the first round of battle while she drinks her *potion of fly* (increasing her Fly skill to +12) and rises into the air. She then casts *wind wall* to defend against ranged attacks, followed by spells such as *hold person* and *sound burst* to keep enemies from avoiding the raven swarm. If she must fight, Jairess casts *returning weapon* from her scroll on her shortspear. If she or the ravens become significantly injured, she casts *obscuring mist* and channels positive energy, excluding nearby adversaries with her Selective Channeling feat.

Morale Once she exhausts her offensive spells and healing powers, Jairess surrenders, calling

JAIRESS SONN CR 2

XP 600

Female sylph cleric of Gozreh 3

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 258)

CN Medium outsider (native)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Resist electricity 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk shortspear +3 (1d6–1) or

dagger +1 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk shortspear +6 (1d6–1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 13, 2d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1/day—*feather fall*

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

5/day—*lightning arc* (1d6+1 electricity)

At will—*speak with animals* (6 rounds/day)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

2nd—*hold person* (DC 14), *sound burst* (DC 14), *wind wall*^P

1st—*divine favor*, *doom* (DC 13), *endure elements*, *obscuring mist*^D

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Air, Animal

TACTICS

Before Combat Unlike many of the Pale Tower’s inhabitants, Jairess has trouble weathering the cold, so she casts *endure elements* on herself every day.



JAIRESS SONN

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her surviving birds back to her. If the raven swarm is slain, Jairess avenges them by fighting to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Selective Channeling, Weapon Focus (shortspear)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Diplomacy +6, Fly +3, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +3, Sense Motive +6

Languages Auran, Common, Skald

SQ air affinity

Combat Gear *potion of fly*, *scroll of returning weapon*^{UC}; **Other**

Gear leather armor, light wooden shield, dagger, mwk shortspear, teleporter key (to area **Q13**), wooden holy symbol of Gozreh, silver necklace with star-shaped ice diamond pendant (worth 500 gp), 84 gp

RAVEN SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

hp 30 (see page 37)

TACTICS

During Combat The ravens follow instructions from Jairess, protecting her with their swarming bodies and even allowing her to move among them without endangering her.

Morale The ravens fight only for as long as Jairess directs them. If she is slain, the swarm disperses.

Q18. Jairess's Bedroom

Two bookshelves, a chest, and a comfortable-looking bed heaped with thick blankets furnish this bedroom. A mobile of ice crystals carved to resemble birds hangs from the ceiling, glinting in the light from frost-covered windows.

Jairess Sonn claimed this room when she moved into the tower as caretaker for the aerie. The ice crystal figurines are a gift Radosek gave her in an attempt to win her affection. Though Jairess appreciates the gesture, she mainly keeps them for decoration and as a courtesy to avoid offending him.

Q19. Storeroom

Dozens of stacked crates fill this angular storeroom. Several miniature dollhouses stand atop high shelves.

Jairess Sonn stores grain for feeding the ravens in area **Q17** in this room. The winter-touched sprites and atomies living in the Pale Tower live in the dollhouses on the shelves. The atomies Jir and Lask (see area **Q8**) sometimes use their *speak with animals* ability to assist Jairess with instructing the raven swarm.

Treasure: Jir and Lask have squirreled away many expensive baubles they've stolen from tower guests over the years. Altogether, the dollhouses contain a jeweled +1 *silver*

dagger whose hilt resembles the head of a blue-eyed winter wolf, a jade bracelet in the shape of a Tian sovereign dragon worth 175 gp, a pair of porcelain dolls (worth 40 gp each), a silver medallion decorated with sapphires (worth 300 gp), a gold signet ring with the signet of the Jadwiga Tashanna dating back to the Witchwar 500 years ago (worth 250 gp), and three blue quartz crystals (worth 100 gp each).

Q20. Ritual Chamber (CR 5)

A translucent image of a globe hangs suspended in midair, slowly rotating in place, above a summoning circle in the blue-tiled floor of this large chamber. Lines of arcane energy glow across the globe's surface, faintly humming with power as they connect multiple endpoints in a radiant glow bright enough to illuminate the domed ceiling overhead. Many tables and shelves covered in books, maps, and large scrolls line the room's circular walls, and a large ornate mirror hangs between two open windows to the west. Twin ice sculptures of demonic fiends flank a bubbling cauldron in an archway leading into a deep alcove in the southern wall.

The domed ceiling here is 30 feet high, and this entire level is almost 100 feet above ground level. Nazhena and her apprentice Radosek conduct their greatest magic in this chamber, summoning elementals and fiendish allies while performing elaborate rituals to spread Queen Elvanna's evil across Irrisen and beyond. The spinning globe depicts Golarion, and the ley lines on its surface represent a physical manifestation of the arcane witchcraft extending Irrisen's perpetual winter through various portals into other areas of the world. The books and charts throughout the room detail the ritual and the magic of the winter portals. For details on ending the ritual and closing the winter portal to Taldor, see page 54.

The ice crystal teleporter in area **Q13** deposits travelers in the alcove in the northeast wall. This teleporter is keyed to all of the other teleporters throughout the Pale Tower. Rather than having a specific command phrase, this teleporter is activated by speaking the name of the destination room (i.e., Entrance Hall [area **Q5**], Dining Hall [area **Q8**], Mirrored Hall [area **Q13**], Conservatory [area **Q15**], or Aerie [area **Q17**]). The deep alcove to the south serves as Nazhena and Radosek's laboratory, and holds Nazhena's *cauldron of overwhelming allies* (see page 60).

Creatures: Radosek Pavril is the sole occupant of this room, having sequestered himself here as soon as he received word that the PCs had invaded the tower. He has already prepared the *cauldron of overwhelming allies* with the necessary ingredients for his *summon monster* spells, planning to use it to surprise anyone who arrives through the chamber's ice crystal teleporter. Radosek's familiar, a goat named Valstoi, watches over the laboratory alcove.

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She charges into the room to aid her master if any intruders appear in the ice crystal teleporter.

RADOSEK PAVRIL CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 50 (see page 58)

VALSTOI CR —

hp 20 (see page 58)

Treasure: In addition to Nazhena's *cauldron of overwhelming allies* (see page 60), the laboratory alcove contains enough active ingredients and supplies to constitute a full alchemist's lab. Many completed alchemical items are stored on the shelves in the alcove as well, including two flasks of acid, three flasks of alchemist's fire, two pinches of flash powder^{UE}, three flasks of liquid ice^{UE}, three smokesticks (each a different color), a sunrod, two tanglefoot bags, three thunderstones, 15 tindertwigs in a silver canister (worth 50 gp), and three applications of cold iron weapon blanch^{UE}.

Development: If Radosek escapes, he becomes desperate to prove himself worthy by trapping the PCs in the Pale Tower and retaking it before Nazhena learns of his failure. A powerful witch in his own right, Radosek makes a last stand in the tower courtyard (area Q2). He drinks his *potions of cure moderate wounds* and uses his *scroll of animate objects* to animate the dragon ice statue in the courtyard, sending it after the PCs and directing it to break through the tower walls to reach them, if necessary.

Q21. Empty Bedroom

This small bedroom belonged to Nazhena before she and Radosek took over the Pale Tower, but now she has claimed the bedroom that once belonged to her mother (area Q23). Radosek has tried unsuccessfully to convince Jairess Sonn (see area Q17) to relocate here. If Nadya was captured and brought to the Pale Tower, she is being held here until Radosek decides what to do with her.

Q22. Radosek's Bedroom

A large bed, reading desk, padded chair, bookshelf, and storage chest furnish this long, angular room. Two windows provide ample light, and several paintings of winter scenes hang on the wall.

Radosek sleeps in this room. Something of an art connoisseur, he collects rare paintings, and the chest holds additional paintings of nature scenes depicting every season. He keeps those that portray anything other than wintry locales hidden, but he privately marvels over their more vibrant colors when he has time to himself.

Treasure: Altogether, the masterpieces in this room are worth a total of 500 gp.

Q23. Nazhena's Bedroom

A large bed, wardrobe, reading desk, and bookshelf take up most of this circular bedroom. A carved ice statue of a striking, robed woman with an owl on her shoulder stands next to an alcove of crystalline tiles. To the south, a white curtain hangs in a doorway.

Nazhena claimed this expansive bedroom and its belongings from her mother. The only addition she made to the room's decor is the life-sized ice statue, carved in her own image. Nazhena plans to relocate the statue to Waldsby's town square, replacing the statue there, as a constant reminder that she rules the Pale Tower now. The ice crystal teleporter in the alcove is attuned to the crystalline tiles surrounding the dragon sculpture in the tower's courtyard (area Q2). Only Nazhena and Radosek know the teleporter's command phrase: "Make haste and retreat, with the ground beneath my feet."

Q24. Vault (CR 4)

Several crates, urns, decanters, and storage boxes fill this small room. A mirrored vanity and chair sit next to the east window. An ice statue of a tall, imperious woman stands in the center of the room.

The door to this chamber is locked (Disable Device DC 30 to open). Nazhena carries the only key, but the door is made of ice and can be easily broken (hardness 0, hp 9, break DC 15).

Trap: Nazhena's mother used this chamber as her personal vault to store items and lore she wished to keep from the prying eyes of her apprentice. Nazhena now uses it for the same purpose, instructing Radosek to stay away in her absence and even warding it against his intrusion. Similar to the statue in Nazhena's bedroom, the ice statue depicts Nazhena herself, but this one is actually a trap.



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When anyone enters, a *magic mouth* activates on the statue, proclaiming, “The uninvited shall wither and die like the frost-covered bloom. You should never have ventured here, and you’d do well to leave before my return.” A *glyph of warding* then targets the first creature that crossed the room’s threshold with *bestow curse*.

GLYPH OF WARDING CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*glyph of warding*); Reset none

Effect spell effect (*bestow curse*, –6 decrease to Con [minimum 1], DC 17 Will negates)

Treasure: Nazhena keeps her accumulated treasure here. The storage boxes contain an impressive collection of arcane spell scrolls, consisting of two *scrolls of comprehend languages*, two *scrolls of cure moderate wounds*, a *scroll of delay*

poison, a *scroll of dispel magic*, a *scroll of Irriseni mirror sight* (see page 73), a *scroll of remove disease*, two *scrolls of remove sickness*^{UM}, a *scroll of threefold aspect*^{APG}, and a *scroll of youthful appearance*^{UM}. The decanters hold varying draughts of potions not yet dispensed into individual vials—the equivalent of two *potions of cure light wounds*, two *potions of enlarge person*, three *oils of mask dweomer*^{APG}, and two *potions of reduce person*. The crates hold 50 trade bars of pure silver, each one weighing 10 pounds and worth 50 gp. A locked chest (Disable Device DC 25 to open) holds a bag, a small iron coffer, and a heavy blue robe. The bag is a *bag of holding* (type II), which contains 1,290 gp, 2,198 sp, and 2,787 cp. The robe is a *robe of useful items* (with extra patches for a bag of 100 gp, three flasks of alchemist’s fire, a ladder, an open pit, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, a rowboat, a pair of war dogs, and a window). The coffer holds a pair of *feather tokens* (bird and tree), a *wand of color spray* (23 charges), and a ring of white gold set with a large green sapphire. This ring is magical, and can be identified as a *ring of regeneration*, but it is in fact a cursed *ring of lifebleed* (*Ultimate Equipment* 349). Nazhena placed the ring here as a trap that will afflict thieves long after they have left the Pale Tower with her treasure.

CLOSING THE WINTER PORTAL

Once they have defeated Radosek and the denizens of the Pale Tower, the PCs can turn their attention to shutting down the winter portal between Irrisen and Taldor. Unfortunately, they can only do so from the ritual chamber inside the Pale Tower, which will strand the PCs on this side of the portal, in Irrisen, when it closes. Ending the ritual that keeps the portal open first requires careful study of the ley lines displayed on the projected image of Golarion in the summoning circle in the ritual chamber (area Q20). With a successful DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check, a PC identifies the site of the portal in the Border Wood in Taldor and ascertains the connection between the Pale Tower in Irrisen and the portal in Taldor. A PC who spends an hour studying the charts scattered about the tables in the ritual chamber also identifies this connection.

Thereafter, the PCs must succeed at a DC 22 Spellcraft check to fathom Nazhena’s witchcraft, which powers the portal’s magic. Witches gain a +2 circumstance bonus on this check, while witches with the winter witch archetype gain an



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additional +2 circumstance bonus (for a total bonus of +4). Further study of the books and arcane paraphernalia in the ritual chamber also grants a +2 circumstance bonus on the check. Likewise, the PCs can use aid another to pool their efforts. If this check fails, they must spend a minimum of 1 hour studying the reference material in the ritual chamber before they can try again. During this time, Pale Tower guards, winter-touched fey visitors, or even Radosek (if he escaped) could interrupt their efforts.

Once the PCs fully understand the winter ritual, they can finally attempt to close down the winter portal by casting any conjuration spell and making a successful DC 15 concentration check. Alternatively, a PC can close the portal without the need for spellcasting with a successful DC 20 Use Magic Device check. If they fail at this check, the PCs can try again multiple times, but each attempt requires another hour of work. Success finally unravels the arcane ties between Irrisen and Taldor. The portal in the Border Wood disappears (as does its twin in the Hoarwood), but the remaining winter portals represented on the image of Golarion remain. No amount

of effort conducted from the Pale Tower can affect these locations—for that, the PCs must find Baba Yaga and face Queen Elvanna herself.

Story Award: If the PCs successfully shut down the winter portal in Taldor, award them 1,200 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs close the winter portal, ending the threat to Heldren and Taldor, they're free to return to Waldsby, or shelter in the Pale Tower and recover. But Nazhena Vasilionna still looms as a powerful adversary in the PCs' future, and eventually she will return to the Pale Tower. At the same time, the Black Rider's compulsion urges the PCs onward to Whitethrone, where Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* is imprisoned. Nadya volunteers to guide the PCs to Irrisen's capital, where they must ultimately face the true mistress of the Pale Tower, the White Witch Nazhena. Nazhena is destined to take the PCs' actions at the Pale Tower quite harshly when they encounter her in the next installment of the Reign of Winter Adventure Path, "The Shackled Hut."

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NADYA PETSKA

A young mother of three, the rebellious and wilderness-savvy widow Nadya Petska struggles to import much-needed food and supplies to the village of Waldsby, all while nursing a hatred of the White Witches of Irrisen.

NADYA PETSKA**CR 2****XP 600**

Female human (Ulfen) ranger 3

CG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5**DEFENSE****AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 24 (3d10+3)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** handaxe +3 (1d6+1/x3) and light pick +3 (1d4/x4) or handaxe +5 (1d6+1/x3) or light pick +5 (1d4+1/x4)**Ranged** composite longbow +5 (1d8+1/x3)**Special Attacks** favored enemy (animals +2)**TACTICS****During Combat** Nadya tries to keep her distance in battle, firing her bow at adversaries before they can close on her. When faced with more dangerous foes, especially those attuned to cold, Nadya hurls a flask of alchemist's fire to hinder them.**Morale** Nadya fights with conviction, but recognizes overwhelming odds and surrenders when necessary. In the face of truly uncompromising evil, she fights to the death.**STATISTICS****Str** 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16**Feats** Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Survival), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Climb +5, Handle Animal +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +5, Ride +6, Stealth +8, Survival +8**Languages** Common, Skald**SQ** favored terrain (cold +2), track +1, wild empathy +5**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, composite longbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, dagger, handaxe, light pick, *snowshoes of northern pursuit* (see page 61), backpack, bedroll, cold-weather outfit, flint and steel, hooded lantern, oil (2), rations (10 days), tindertwigs (3), traveler's outfit, waterskin, winter blanket, 36 gp, 27 sp, 41 cp

Only 26 years old, Nadya Petska has already experienced a lifetime's worth of tragedy and hardship. Widowed 2 years ago when her husband Hjalnek fell to a greedy ice troll in the Hoarwood Forest, Nadya harbors a grudge against the White Witches of Irrisen and their monstrous allies. Since her husband's death, she has struggled to care for their three children—a 7-year-old daughter, Thora, and twin 5-year-old sons, Orm and Mjoli. The task is made even more challenging, however, because Nadya must provide for her family, which forces her to rely on friends to look after her children while she travels. Shortly after her husband's death, Nadya took up his trade as a food merchant and importer for the eastern reaches of the Hoarwood, including her home village of Waldsby. Hjalnek had taught her many things about survival and travel in the wilds, allowing her to carry on his work and succeed despite the challenges that she faces. As a result, many people in Hoarwood rely on her business, including the local Jadwiga aristocracy, who use Nadya's provisions to supplement the food they import for themselves from Whitethrone and outside Irrisen.

About a year ago, Nadya established peaceful contact with a friendly tribe of Kellids near Irrisen's border with the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, trading with them for grain, raw meat, livestock, leather goods, and furs. Nadya's dogsleds make frequent, multi-week runs through the forest and the tundra of eastern Hoarwood so she can barter with the Kellids and restock the village storehouses. Because of her boldness and the invaluable service she provides, Nadya has become a trusted name in Waldsby. Unfortunately, she still struggles to win influence with the White Witch Nazhena Vasiliovna, who rules the region from her Pale Tower. Nadya supplies the Pale Tower in addition to Waldsby, but the witch's guards routinely commandeer Nadya's shipments rather than pay a fair price for them. In exchange, the peasants of Waldsby receive a little less harassment when the soldiers visit the village. Although she resents Nazhena's sense of entitlement, Nadya has come to view this arrangement as a necessary food "tax"—one that earns her the continued freedom to look after the well-being of her friends and family.

NPC GALLERY

Unfortunately, another tragedy has recently befallen Nadya. While she was away on a trade run, Nazhena and her guards visited Waldsby. Nadya's daughter, Thora, encountered Nazhena and inadvertently insulted the witch. In a fit of pique, Nazhena had the girl hauled off to the Pale Tower to punish her for her insolence. When Nadya returned and learned of her daughter's capture, she hurried to the tower to plead for the girl's return. Nazhena agreed to release Thora only if Nadya could provide her with a new shipment of food, larger than ever before—supplies which Nazhena would need to provision her forces on the other side of the winter portal. Nadya hastened to fulfill this bargain, trading almost everything she had to secure enough food from the Mammoth Lords to meet Nazhena's price. When the PCs encounter Nadya, she's on her way back to negotiate for Thora's release, unaware that the endeavor is fruitless, as Nazhena has already killed Thora and used her soul to create a guardian doll to watch Irrisen's newly extended border on the other side of the portal (see page 25).

Nadya stands only 5-1/2 feet tall. She wears her vibrant red hair in three braids, two short braids framing her pale face, and a third, longer braid hanging down her back. Her slight build belies the inner strength with which she draws her favorite longbow and weathers the harsh conditions of Irrisen's wilds. Nadya usually dresses in soft leathers laced tight and lined with fur to ward off the cold. When traveling, she dons her armor for protection, along with a white fur cloak and matching hat to make herself less visible in the snow. Her quiver is always full, and she carries a handaxe and pick to defend herself against the many dangers of the wilderness.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Nadya has a significant role to play in "The Snows of Summer," as well as in the next installment of the Reign of Winter Adventure Path. More than anyone, she represents the most accepting, capable, and willing supporter of the PCs' activities in Irrisen. Her hatred for the White Witches and professional dealings with foreign merchants make her an ideal ally for the PCs. Likewise, her experience with cold-weather survival and overland trade routes could benefit them tremendously when they travel through the icy north. Nadya also has a specific grudge against the Jadwiga Elvanna, having lost both her husband and daughter to the depredations of the White Witch Nazhena Vasillioivna and her servants.

In this adventure, the PCs have a chance to win Nadya's gratitude and growing admiration. She offers to shelter them in her home village of Waldsby while they acclimate to the harsh conditions of the wintry north. In addition, Nadya's relationship with the domovoi Hatch, a former servant of the Pale Tower (see page 39), gives the PCs a unique opportunity to infiltrate the tower and face those

responsible for the winter portal. At the same time, the PCs can bring closure to Nadya regarding the loss of her daughter, Thora, by informing her of the guardian doll they encountered in the Border Wood (see page 38).

In the next volume of the Adventure Path, "The Shackled Hut," Nadya is destined to lead the PCs to Whitethrone, acting as an expert guide and putting the PCs in contact with a relative who can aid their mission in the capital.

Romance could also bloom for Nadya as the determined widow unexpectedly finds love again with a kindhearted PC who bonds with her and her remaining children. She could even become a cohort, or accompany the PCs on the rest of their adventures once they find Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*.



REIGN OF WINTER

RADOSEK PAVRIL

Abducted from Taldor as a child, Radosek Pavril distinguished himself as a practitioner of winter witchcraft in Irrisen. Today he serves his mistress, the White Witch Nazhena Vasilliovná, as apprentice and caretaker of the Pale Tower.

RADOSEK PAVRIL**CR 5****XP 1,600**

Male human (Taldan) witch (winter witch) 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 65, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic* 43)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 50 (5d6+30)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *icicle wand* +3 (1d4/19–20 plus 1 cold)

Special Attacks hexes (flight [*feather fall* at will, *levitate* 1/day, *fly* 5 minutes/day], frozen caressSM), ice magicSM

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +4)

Constant—*endure elements* (cold only)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd—*Irriseni mirror sight**, *summon monster III*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *false life*, *flurry of snowballs** (DC 16)

1st—*chill touch* (DC 14), *frostbite*^{UM}, *ill omen*^{APG}, *mage armor* o (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Patron winter^{UM}

* See page 73.

TACTICS

Before Combat Radosek always casts *false life* and *mage armor* before battle.

During Combat Radosek casts *summon monster III* on the first round of combat, using the *cauldron of overwhelming allies* in area **Q20** to summon 2d3 Small ice elementals to surround and protect himself. He then uses his flight hex to levitate or fly above the fray, conjuring *ice spears* with his *icicle wand* or casting *blindness/deafness* on anyone targeting him with ranged attacks or spells. Thereafter, Radosek resorts to his touch spells, spending a swift action to infuse them with his frozen caress hex, either delivering hexes himself or relying on his familiar, Valstoi, to do so.

Morale If reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, Radosek flees, either through the room's windows using his flight hex, or into area **Q23** to use the ice crystal teleporter. In either case, he retreats to the courtyard (area **Q2**), where he rallies any remaining defenders in the Pale Tower (see Development on page 45). Thereafter, Radosek fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness^B, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Iron Will, Toughness

Skills Craft (alchemy) +10, Fly +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +10, Survival +4, Swim +4, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Common, Giant, Skald, Sylvan

SQ cold fleshSM, exceptional resources, witch's familiar (goat named Valstoi)

Combat Gear *icicle wand* (42 charges; see page 61), *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *scroll of animate objects*; **Other Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Exceptional Resources (Ex) As Nazhena Vasilliovná's apprentice, Radosek has access to all of the resources of the Pale Tower, granting him the same wealth as a PC. This increases his CR by 1.

VALSTOI**CR —**

Female goat familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 112)

N Small magical beast (augmented animal)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 20 (5 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities improved evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee gore +4 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks deliver touch spells

NPC GALLERY

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13 (17 vs. trip)

Feats Nimble Moves

Skills Acrobatics +1 (+5 when jumping), Climb +5, Craft (alchemy) +3, Fly +9, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (local) +1, Knowledge (nature) +0, Knowledge (nobility) +1, Knowledge (planes) +0, Spellcraft +3, Survival +0 (+4 to find food), Use Magic Device +1

SQ alertness, empathic link, share spells, speak with master, store spells

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stored Spells All cantrips and prepared spells plus: 1st—*cause fear*, *charm person*, *cure light wounds*, *icicle dagger*^{UM}, *sleep*, *summon monster I*, *unshakable chill*^{UM}; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *resist energy* (cold only), *scare*; 3rd—*bestow curse*, *ice spears*SM

Unlike most winter witches in Irrisen, Radosek Pavril claims no direct bloodline linking him to the Jadwiga descended from Baba Yaga. Instead, he was stolen from his family in Taldor at the age of 4 by a White Witch of Irrisen, and magically transported to the icy north as tribute for a service rendered to his late father—a foolish Taldan noble whose ambitions in Oppara ended in bloody disgrace despite the deal he cut with the White Witch.

Originally, the White Witch planned to sacrifice Radosek in a demonic ritual requiring the soul of an innocent, but the witch's daughter—a teenage girl named Nazhena Vasillioivna—discovered the boy's aptitude for magic and pleaded with her mother to spare him. As a result, Nazhena raised and trained Radosek in the ways of the winter witches. Radosek eventually came to serve as both Nazhena's apprentice and lover, and with his assistance, Nazhena supplanted her mother and claimed the Pale Tower for herself.

Fervently loyal to Nazhena (for now), Radosek is well on his way to establishing a solid reputation for himself. For her part, Nazhena secretly admires Radosek's determination and skill, and for now, Radosek's success furthers Nazhena's own advancement. She readily takes credit for his accomplishments while blaming her failures on her "flawed Taldan apprentice." She's grown increasingly worried, however, about Elvanna's displeasure with their failed attempts to capture and kill the Black Rider. Radosek has sensed Nazhena's growing unease and strives to carry out her task even as she reports to Whitethrone on their lack of progress. So far, he's charged the minions of the Pale Tower to redouble their efforts, hoping to share news of their success with Nazhena.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Radosek is the primary villain in "The Snows of Summer," commanding the Pale Tower in Nazhena Vasillioivna's absence. Although charged only with maintaining the winter portal into Taldor, he secretly hopes to also capture the Black Rider, thereby proving himself worthy of his mistress's continued trust and praise. This motivation keeps Radosek vigilant as he monitors the winter portal, scrying through mirrors in both Taldor and Irrisen to learn more about the PCs and their goals over the course of the adventure. This may provide opportunities for interaction between the PCs and Radosek long before they meet in the adventure's final showdown. Even after the PCs have defeated Radosek—and once they've managed to deactivate the portal to Taldor—Radosek's journals make it clear that a greater threat looms ahead, for Nazhena will certainly seek revenge for the violation of her tower, the death of her apprentice, and the threat the PCs pose to Queen Elvanna's plans for Golarion.



REIGN OF WINTER

REIGN OF WINTER TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “The Snows of Summer.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the *Pathfinder Cards: Reign of Winter Item Cards*.

ATTENTIVE MIRROR		PRICE
		1,800 GP
SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT 1/2 lb.
AURA faint abjuration and divination		

This small, ornate mirror is mounted inside an enclosing case, such as a locket, small jewelry box, or even just a leather flap. To use an *attentive mirror*, the owner must spend 1 hour gazing into the mirror in a ritual to attune herself to it. At the end of this time, the owner can willingly give the mirror to another creature. Thereafter, the creature that has the mirror can use it as an emergency means of communication with the mirror’s owner. Up to three times per day, the mirror’s possessor can open it to alert the attuned owner. This functions as a mental *alarm* with a range of 100 miles. The White Witches of Irrisen frequently provide *attentive mirrors* to their loyal minions and monstrous allies so the witches can be notified when their agents have important news. Once alerted, an attuned witch can then send aid or cast *Irriseni mirror sight* to view the situation through the mirror and receive a minion’s report directly.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 900 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *Irriseni mirror sight* (see page 73), *status*

CAULDRON OF OVERWHELMING ALLIES		PRICE
		4,500 GP
SLOT none	CL 8TH	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
AURA moderate conjuration		



The artistic scrawls on the dark surface of this small bronze cauldron depict an array of exotic animals, legendary beasts, leering fiends, and hosts of elementals. Once per day, if used as the focus or divine focus for a *summon monster*

or *summon nature’s ally* spell, the cauldron automatically conjures 1d3 additional creatures of the same kind from the next lower level list. For example, if a user casts *summon monster III* to summon 1d3 wolves, he could also summon 1d3 additional wolves (or other creatures from the 2nd-level list).

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,250 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, Spell Focus (conjuration), *summon monster IV* or *summon nature’s ally IV*

CLOAK OF THE YETI		PRICE
		4,000 GP
SLOT shoulders	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
AURA faint abjuration		



This heavy cloak is crafted from shaggy white yeti fur. When the cloak’s hood is pulled up over the wearer’s head, it takes on a semblance of its arctic namesake’s fearsome visage. Northern warriors value its ability to ward against the chill of winter, as well as the protection it provides in combat. The *cloak of the yeti* provides

a constant *endure elements* effect in cold weather (it has no effect in hot weather). In battle, the cloak wraps around the wearer, granting a +1 natural armor bonus. In addition, with the hood drawn over the wearer’s head, the cloak grants a +2 competence bonus on Intimidate skill checks.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin*, *cause fear*, *endure elements*

ICE FLOE ELIXIR		PRICE
		2,250 GP
SLOT none	CL 6th	WEIGHT —
AURA moderate transmutation		



This chilled elixir usually takes the form of a pale blue liquid in a small glass vial coated in ice. Imbibing the elixir grants the drinker cold resistance 10 and the ability to merge with solid ice in the same fashion as *meld into stone*. These effects last for 1 hour.

Alternatively, instead of drinking the *ice floe elixir*, the vial can be uncorked, releasing a cold, glowing vapor from the vial’s mouth that coalesces around all living creatures within 30 feet. Creatures covered with the cloying vapor take a –20 penalty on Stealth checks and do not benefit from *blur*, *displacement*, *invisibility*, or similar effects for as long as they stay in the affected area. The vapor also reveals figments, *mirror images*, and *projected images* in the area for what they really are. This effect lasts for 5 rounds before the vapor dissipates. This effect does

REIGN OF WINTER TREASURES

not function in any environment already affected by fog, mist, or cloud-like effects.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 1,125 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>faerie fire</i> , <i>meld into stone</i> , <i>resist energy</i>	

ICICLE WAND		PRICE
		12,250 GP
SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA faint conjuration [cold]		



This fragile-looking wand appears to be nothing more than a sharpened icicle nearly a foot in length, though it is as sturdy as any wand and the ice never melts. A combination of arcane tool and weapon, *icicle wands* find frequent use among the winter witches of Irrisen, and traders have carried them as far south

as the mountains of Cheliox, Andoran, and Taldor. An *icicle wand* functions primarily as a *wand of ice spears* (see page 72), granting its user the ability to create and turn icy terrain against her enemies. In addition, an *icicle wand* can also be wielded as a masterwork dagger that deals 1 point of cold damage with a successful attack in addition to normal dagger damage. An *icicle wand* with a caster level of 7th or higher functions as a *+1 frost dagger* instead.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 6,125 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, <i>ice spears</i> SM , <i>icicle dagger</i> ^{UM}	

SNOWSHOES OF NORTHERN PURSUIT		PRICE
		4,300 GP
SLOT feet	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 4 lbs.
AURA faint transmutation		



These masterwork snowshoes (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 91) provide greater stability and weight distribution in snow. The snowshoes completely negate the effects of normal snow on movement, and reduce the movement penalties in heavy snow by half (i.e., it only costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square

covered with heavy snow instead of 4 squares of movement). In addition, the wearer can increase her land speed in snowy terrain by 10 feet for up to 10 rounds per day. This is considered an enhancement bonus and the duration need not be spent in consecutive rounds. Finally, as a standard action once per day, the snowshoes can generate a ripple effect that removes all trace of tracks left in the snow in a 60-foot radius.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,150 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>feather step</i> ^{APG} , <i>longstrider</i> , <i>pass without trace</i>	

SPEAR OF MANHUNTING		PRICE
		3,925 GP
SLOT none	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 8 lbs.
AURA faint enchantment		



A 2-foot-long blade extends from the heavy crossbar of this *+1 boar spear*^{UE}. Designed to catch and hold humanoid prey, a *spear of manhunting* automatically resizes to match the size of its wielder when grasped. Once per day on a successful critical hit, the wielder of a *spear of manhunting* can cast *hold person* as an immediate action on the target hit by the attack (Will DC 13 negates). The *hold person* effect immediately ends if the spear is dropped or withdrawn, such as by making additional attacks with the weapon.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,115 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>hold person</i> , <i>shrink item</i>	

SPITEFUL COOKIE		PRICE
		750 GP
SLOT none	CL 3rd	WEIGHT —
AURA faint transmutation		

These appealing treats usually come wrapped in wax paper, sealed with a drop of red wax embossed with the face of a smiling child. Made from sugar and bone meal, *spiteful cookies* can be made in a variety of shapes, such as humanoid creatures, dragons, or other legendary beasts. When the seal is broken and the cookie unwrapped, the creature that unwrapped the cookie must succeed at a DC 12 Will save or be compelled to eat the *spiteful cookie*. While initially quite tasty, the treat soon turns to ash, cursing the victim to starvation for the next 6 days, as the *feast of ashes* spell.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 375 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>beguiling gift</i> ^{APG} , <i>feast of ashes</i> ^{APG}	

SUGGESTIVE TEA		PRICE
		1,500 GP
SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT —
AURA faint enchantment (compulsion)		

A single dose of these dried tea leaves is enough to brew a cup of savory tea for one creature, who then becomes susceptible to suggestion for 1 hour after drinking the tea. During this time, anyone can suggest a course of activity to the drinker, who carries out the order to the best of his ability, as *suggestion* (Will DC 14 negates). In addition, the character drinking the tea has no recollection of the time spent carrying out the compulsion.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 750 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>modify memory</i> , <i>suggestion</i>	

REIGN OF WINTER



HELDREN

LIKE IN MOST PEASANT COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN TALDOR, THE PEOPLE OF HELDREN MOSTLY KEEP TO THEMSELVES. FAR FROM THE POLITICS OF LOPPARA AND EVER-WATCHFUL FOR QADIRAN AGGRESSION, HELDREN GOES ON AS IT ALWAYS HAS, AS A RELATIVELY SMALL AND UNIMPORTANT HAMLET OF FARMERS, HERDERS, AND WOODCUTTERS. BUT HELDREN IS HOME TO A SECRET UNSUSPECTED BY ITS NORMALLY COMPLACENT CITIZENS: A MYSTICAL LEY LINE CONNECTS THEIR VILLAGE WITH ANOTHER FAR TO THE NORTH. COULD THE RECENT APPEARANCE OF UNSEASONABLE WINTER WEATHER IN THE NEARBY BORDER WOOD BE A HARBINGER OF WORSE THINGS TO COME?

HELDREN

HELDREN

NG village

Corruption -1; **Crime** -1; **Economy** -1; **Law** -3; **Lore** +0;

Society +4

Qualities broad-minded, rumormongering citizens

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 171 (152 humans, 6 dwarves, 5 halflings, 4 gnomes, 3 elves, 1 half-elf)

Notable NPCs

Councilor Ionnia Teppen (NG middle-aged female human commoner 7)

Elder Natharen Safander (LG male half-elf cleric of Erastil 6)

Soothsayer Old Mother Theodora (N venerable female human adept 5)

MARKETPLACE

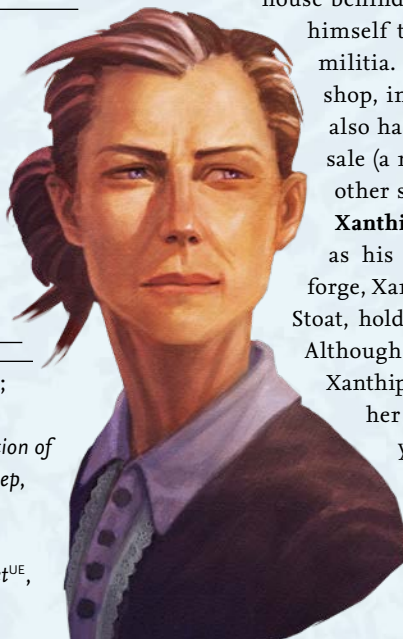
Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp;

Spellcasting 3rd

Minor Items +1 *cold iron sling bullets* (10), *potion of resist energy* (cold), *scroll of aid*, *scroll of sleep*, *wand of magic weapon* (24 charges), *wand of scorching ray* (42 charges), masterwork banded mail; **Medium Items** *arrow magnet*^{UE}, *ring of force shield*; **Major Items** —

NOTES

Broad-Minded: The citizens of Heldren are open, friendly, and tolerant, and react positively toward visitors. (*Lore* +1; *Society* +1)



COUNCILOR IONNIA TEPPEN

HELDREN GAZETTEER

Below are details on several prominent locations in the village of Heldren. Because of the village's proximity to the Border Wood, most of Heldren's buildings are constructed of lumber. Several farms lie outside the village itself, providing food for its residents and for trade with nearby villages.

1. Armory: A dirt path winds its way up a low hill west of town to the single door of this square stone tower. The tower is 30 feet high, with battlements on its roof and arrow slits along its walls. It is completely open on the inside, with no interior floors—just a wooden staircase running along the walls to the roof. The tower serves as Heldren's armory and a place of refuge for the villagers in case the village is ever attacked. In times of peace, the tower is usually unoccupied, but a selection of simple arms and armor—crossbows, bolts, spears, javelins, as well as a few suits of leather armor, padded armor, and light wooden shields—is stored inside for the militia.

2. Isker's Smithy: Although he spends most of his time shoeing horses and repairing farm tools, Heldren's

blacksmith, **Isker Euphram** (LN middle-aged male human expert 4/warrior 4), is quite skilled in battle. A veteran of Taldor's army, Isker served in Zimar and on the Qadiran border for years before retiring to Heldren. His chain shirt, pike, and short sword are still in good condition, oiled and wrapped in a chest kept in his house behind his shop, and Isker has taken it upon himself to oversee the training of the village's militia. He keeps a few weapons for sale in his shop, including 10 +1 *cold iron sling bullets*. He also has a suit of masterwork banded mail for sale (a relic of his army days), and could craft other suits of armor if needed. His daughter, **Xanthippe** (CG female human expert 2), works as his apprentice. When not at her father's forge, Xanthippe's likely to be found at the Silver Stoat, holding court with her numerous suitors. Although widely considered the village beauty, Xanthippe is as proficient with her fists as with her hammer, and those few of Heldren's young men who have tried to woo her too aggressively walked away with black eyes for their troubles.

3. General Store: Heldren's general store carries everything a villager needs, as well as most gear an adventurer requires. Heldren sits on the road to Zimar, so plenty of trade passes through the village.

The store's proprietor, **Vivialla Steranus** (N female human commoner 3), takes advantage of this brisk trade to stock her shelves. In general, most of the mundane adventuring gear listed in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can be found here, including five cold-weather outfits, leftovers from a particularly harsh winter a couple of years back. In general, Vivialla does not carry much in the way of armor or weapons, though she does currently have two magic items in stock: an *arrow magnet*^{UE} and a *ring of force shield*.

4. Town Hall: Rather grand for a village of this size, Heldren's town hall boasts a clock tower overlooking the town square. Its clockworks were imported from Qadira some time ago, and are kept in working order by **Orillus Davigen** (NG old male human expert 3), who can usually be found up in the tower tinkering with the machinery. The clock tower's bells ring every hour from 6 am to 6 pm (the villagers prefer to keep things quiet at night), and can be used to sound the alarm if there's a fire or to muster the militia in case of attack. The town council meets in the hall every week on Starday, though there's usually little to discuss beyond minor disagreements between neighbors. The hall is big enough to host almost the entire populace for monthly village assemblies and large social gatherings, such as the annual Longnight dance.

REIGN OF WINTER

On the wall outside the front door hangs a notice board, where flyers are posted with local news, job openings, and goods for sale.

5. Willowbark Apothecary: A well-tended garden sits in front of this equally neat house, the home of **Tessaraea Willowbark** (NG female elf alchemist 3), Heldren's resident apothecary. Tessaraea is a relatively new transplant to Heldren, having arrived in the village only 25 years ago after a failed adventuring career up north in the River Kingdoms. She is quiet and somber, and most of the villagers believe she suffered some great tragedy in her past, such as the loss of her one true love. In fact, it was Tessaraea's brother who died on an ill-fated adventure, slain by a group of trolls. Devastated by his death, she gave up adventuring and moved south, settling in Heldren and taking a human-sounding surname when she opened her apothecary shop. Tessaraea sells a variety of herbs and all of the special substances and items listed in the *Core Rulebook*, as well as a *potion of resist energy* (cold) and a surprisingly large stockpile of alchemist's fire—since her brother's death, Tessaraea has had an unreasoning fear of trolls, and almost obsessively crafts the stuff for the (in her mind) inevitable moment when she must face them again.

6. Barber: An artist with razors and scissors, **Argus Goldtooth** (LG male dwarf expert 5) offers shaves, haircuts, and dentistry, as well as “leechery and other surgical proceedings.” Argus is a fair healer, though he's prone to prescribing leeches (which fill several jars on high shelves in his shop) for most maladies, from stomachaches to broken bones. Argus also offers gold teeth to replace extracted ones, and is his own best customer—his easy smile reveals more gold teeth in his mouth than original ones. Though he would never admit it to anyone, Argus has something of a crush on his neighbor, the apothecary Tessaraea Willowbark. Argus has never acted on these feelings, but the two have struck up an unlikely friendship, and it's not uncommon to find Argus helping tend Tessaraea's garden on Sundays or sharing a pint with her at the Silver Stoat in the evenings.

7. The Silver Stoat: Heldren's only tavern, the Silver Stoat, stands right on the town square across from the town hall. A fixture of village life, the tavern fills up with patrons in the evening as they gather to share gossip, hear news, and reward themselves for a hard day's work. Anything that's worth knowing in Heldren gets talked about here, and if asked where he got a particularly juicy bit of gossip or information, a villager will likely say, “I heard it from the Stoat.” Husband and wife **Menander** (LG male human commoner 2) and **Kale Garimos** (NG female human expert 3) run the Silver Stoat as if it were their family kitchen—there's always a seat at the table or a space by the hearth for a guest, or a warm bowl of Menander's hearty stew for an empty belly. Menander works in the kitchen, cooking up his famous venison flank steak and numble pie. Kale tends

bar, serving up the tavern's signature brew, Three Devil Ale, which she brews in-house using imported Chelish hops. Heldren doesn't get many visitors, so there is no true inn in the village, but travelers are welcome to a spot on the floor of the Stoat next to the fireplace for a night, as long as they're up early and on their way. Those who linger risk a rude awakening from Menander's wet mop in their faces.

8. Livery Stable: At the stable next door to the Silver Stoat, **Sophia Imirras** (NG female human commoner 1/expert 1) offers horses (and a single pony) for hire or sale, as well as stabling and grooming. Royal couriers on their way to or from Demgazi or Zimar often change horses here. None of Sophia's horses are combat trained. Sophia also has two carts, a wagon, and a carriage for hire. A traveling noble gave her the carriage as a reward when she managed to calm the newly broken stallion he was riding before it could trample him. Both luxurious and ostentatious, the carriage sees most of its use at village weddings.

9. Town Square: The most notable feature of Heldren's town square is the large statue of a beautiful woman right in the center of the town. Usually just called “the Lady,” the statue has been here for as long as anyone can remember, and no one knows who it actually represents. Some believe the Lady was the founder of Heldren or some ancient, forgotten Taldan noblewoman or even a mysterious fey forest goddess. Others have more sinister theories—an evil witch turned to stone for her wickedness or a magical statue through which the satrap of Qadira can spy on Taldor. On any given day, a few entrepreneurs selling goods or produce can be found on the square, and a market is held on the last Fireday of every month. Elder Natharen Safander also hosts the annual Harvest Feast in the town square, during which the people of Heldren erect a giant bonfire in the square and bedeck the Lady in garlands of flowers.

10. Ionna Teppen's House: The leader of Heldren's village council, Ionna Teppen, lives in this simple two-story house just off the town square. Ionna's family has had a place in Heldren's politics for generations, and her membership on the town council was all but assured. She is by far the most influential member of the council, and most villagers consider her the de facto mayor of Heldren.

11. Temple of Erastil: Although Elder Natharen Safander is a cleric of Erastil, he tends to all of the village's flock regardless of their faith. Though most of the villagers follow the teachings of Old Deadeye, the temple also contains shrines to Abadar, Gozreh, Pharasma, and even Sarenrae. Natharen doesn't much care for the Taldan government's intolerant stance on the faith of the Dawnflower, and believes that in a village like Heldren the sun goddess is as important as the god of agriculture. Natharen's wife, **Zaarida** (NG female human commoner 2), is a Qadiran transplant and faithful worshiper of Sarenrae, and assists him during

HELDREN



services and with the temple's upkeep. The temple also has some minor divine magic items for sale, including a *scroll of aid* and a *wand of magic weapon* (24 charges).

12. Carpenter: Heldren's foremost woodworker is **Tengezil Frimbocket** (N male gnome expert 7), a gnome with a wild shock of electric blue hair. He decorates his creations with delicate and elaborate trim he calls "gingerbread," a style that has proven quite popular among the well-to-do of Taldor's southern cities. Tengezil claims to be from Wispil, but he is in fact an exile from the land of Irrisen, far to the north. Tengezil has a twin brother named Arbagazor, but the two were separated when they were young. Although Tengezil assumes his brother is dead, Arbagazor lives and works as a carpenter in the Irriseni village of Waldsby (see page 69).

13. Heldren Sawmill: Heldren's sawmill stays busy day and night cutting timber harvested by the village's woodcutters into planks for shipment to Zimar and other cities, and stacks of lumber are always heaped outside. Partners **Alexius Demetri** (CG male human commoner 1/expert 2) and **Lycio Vallant** (LG male human commoner 4) oversee the sawmill's operation, which makes them two of Heldren's wealthiest residents. Their large house on the north side of town is easily Heldren's largest private home, nicknamed "Sawmill Manor" by the town.

14. The Butcher of Jalrune: The name of this butcher shop refers to the supposed nickname of its proprietor, **Perkin Tarimm** (CN male halfling expert 2/warrior 1), who claims to be a retired Zimar corsair. In fact, Perkin was nothing more than a common river bandit who took up the safer trade of butchery when the real Zimar corsairs almost caught him, and he has never butchered anything beyond the chickens and pigs that inhabit the yard behind his shop. Customers are welcome to enjoy one of the pickled sows' ears in the large jar on the counter while they wait for Perkin to prepare their cuts of meat.

15. Old Mother Theodora's: Every village has its resident wise woman, and Heldren is no exception. No one in the village is sure just how ancient Old Mother Theodora (as everyone calls her) is, but she's been around as long as anyone in town can remember. Old Mother Theodora is Heldren's most skilled midwife, and she helped deliver just about everyone currently living in the village. She's also a soothsayer and hedge witch, and villagers come to her to have their fortunes told or buy love potions or herbal remedies. Among the jars of dried herbs and strange ingredients in her hut, Old Mother Theodora also has a *scroll of sleep* and a *wand of scorching ray* (42 charges) that she might be willing to part with for the right price.

REIGN OF WINTER



WALDSBY

UNLIKE MOST COMMUNITIES IN THE WINTERBOUND LAND OF IRRISEN, THE VILLAGE OF WALDSBY IS NOT BUILT NEAR ONE OF THE NATION'S LIFE-GIVING RIVERS OR LAKES. INSTEAD, THE PEASANTS OF WALDSBY EKE OUT THEIR LIVELIHOODS FROM THE HOARWOOD FOREST, UNDER WHOSE EAVES THE TINY VILLAGE HUDDLES. RULED BY THE WHITE WITCH NAZHENA VASILLIOVNA FROM HER PALE TOWER OF ICE, THE PEOPLE OF WALDSBY FORM A TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY SUSPICIOUS OF OUTSIDERS AND FEARFUL OF WITCHCRAFT, AND THEY HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN KEEPING THE ATTENTION OF THE WHITE WITCHES FROM TURNING TOWARD THEIR HOMES AND FAMILIES.

WALDSBY

WALDSBY

N village

Corruption +1; **Crime** -8; **Economy** -1; **Law** +4; **Lore** +1;

Society -1

Qualities insular, superstitious

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 167 (162 humans, 4 gnomes, 1 dwarf)

Notable NPCs

Barkeep Emil Goltiaeva (N male human expert 4/warrior 1)

Doomsayer Katrina Goltiaeva (NE female human adept 3)

Factor Birgit Holorova (NE female human commoner 3)

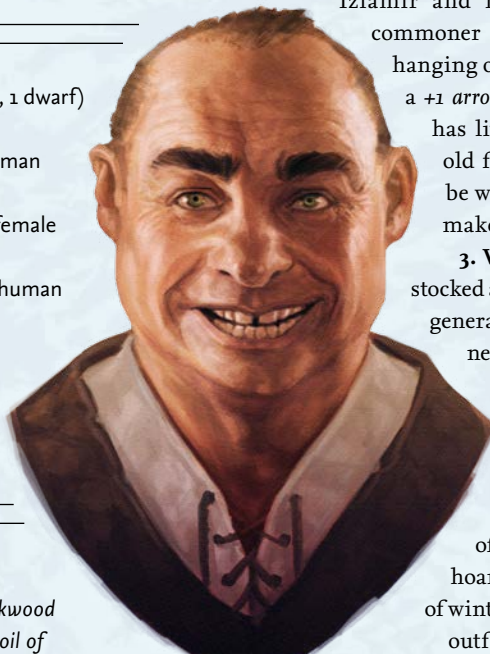
Importer and Guide Nadya Petska (CG female human ranger 3)

Village Priest Rolf Halzberg (N male human cleric of Pharasma 1)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 1st

Minor Items +2 *studded leather*, +1 *darkwood quarterstaff*, masterwork shortbow, *oil of protection from evil*, *potion of feather step*^{APG}, *scroll of goodberry*; **Medium Items** +1 *arrow catching light wooden shield*, *belt of mighty constitution* +2; **Major Items** —



EMIL GOLTIAEVA

WALDSBY GAZETTEER

Below are details on several of Waldsby's notable sites. The vast majority of Waldsby's buildings are constructed out of wood harvested from the nearby Hoarwood Forest. With the land cloaked in perpetual winter, no outlying farms surround Waldsby, and the villagers rely on imported grain to supplement what meager sustenance they can glean from the forest.

1. Storehouse: This 30-foot-tall fortified tower sits atop a low hill west of town, surrounded by a spiked iron fence. The tower stores the imported grain and other foodstuffs the people of Waldsby rely on to survive. Birgit Holorova is Nazhena Vasilliovná's factor in Waldsby. A self-important woman, she lives in a small house at the base of the hill. Birgit holds the only key to the storehouse, and is responsible for dispensing food to the villagers. She also possesses an *attentive mirror* (see page 60), which she uses to keep in contact with her employers at the Pale Tower. It's no secret that Birgit was recently spurned by her former lover, Garthur Kalinin (see area 13), shortly after she had taken great pleasure in announcing their upcoming nuptials to everyone in the village.

2. Blacksmith: Waldsby's blacksmith, **Iziamir Polovar** (LN male human commoner 1/expert 3), mostly keeps busy making arrowheads, sharpening axe blades, and repairing sled runners for the villagers, though the soldiers at the Pale Tower also bring him armor and weapons to repair.

Iziamir and his wife **Tula** (LG female human commoner 1) are childless. The wooden shield hanging outside the door of Iziamir's smithy is a +1 *arrow catching light wooden shield*. Iziamir has little need for the shield, which is an old family heirloom, and he would likely be willing to sell it to someone who could make better use of it than he has.

3. Verana's Sundries: Though not as well stocked as village stores in the south, Waldsby's general store does its best to carry the bare necessities for its customers. In general, the store's proprietor, **Verana Stolya** (NG female human commoner 4), can find most of the mundane adventuring gear listed in the *Core Rulebook* somewhere in the collection of sundries she has accumulated and hoarded over the years. She carries plenty of winter equipment, including cold-weather outfits, furs, skis, snowshoes, and winter blankets. In addition, she has a suit of +2 *studded leather* armor, a *belt of mighty constitution* +2, a *potion of feather step*^{APG}, and

a masterwork shortbow for sale. Verana's daughter, **Milivsa** (CN female human commoner 1), is currently involved with one of the guards at the Pale Tower, and she's likely to pass along information or rumors about strangers in town to her lover in an attempt to impress him.

4. Town Hall: Waldsby's most prominent structure is its town hall, complete with a clock tower overlooking the town square. In truth, the building sees little use—Waldsby has no mayor or town council, so the town hall is usually only opened on the rare occasion when Nazhena Vasilliovná or her minions wish to address the villagers as a group, usually to mete out some form of punishment or to increase taxes. The clock on the town hall's tower is frozen at 10 after 12—some say that's the time when the Winter War began, though the clock clearly can't be that old. Unfortunately, no one in town is skilled in repairing clockwork, and Nazhena is certainly not going to pay to hire an expert from Hoarwood or Whitethrone. A device that could be a source of civic pride for the village is instead a glaring reminder of the White Witches' uncaring rule.

5. The Shorn Beard: The sign outside this barbershop depicts a clearly unhappy clean-shaven dwarf. The village's barber, the surprisingly cheerful **Rusilka Sighjalmsdottir** (N female dwarf expert 3), claims that the dwarf on the sign is

REIGN OF WINTER

her ex-husband, and that the lock of hair hanging above the door is what was left of his beard after he cheated on her with a much younger dwarf-maid. Rusilka was supposedly cast out from her clan's stronghold for the affront, but she contends it's the best thing that ever happened to her. She provides all of a barber's standard services, including shaves, haircuts, and hairdressing, as well as dentistry and surgery. The sight of Rusilka's bloodstained apron and jovial grin, even as she's sewing up a patient, can be discomfoting.

6. The White Weasel: Emil and Katrina Goltiaeva are the owners and proprietors of the White Weasel, the only tavern in Waldsby. In addition to hot tea, the White Weasel mostly serves a watered-down local liquor called "winteryew moonshine," distilled from the bark of the winteryew tree, but Emil also has access to bootleg ice wine from contacts in the city of Hoarwood. The tavern's customers certainly don't come here for the food, which is as bland as Emil's humor and as cold as Katrina's tongue. Waldsby has no inn, but the rare travelers the village gets are allowed to sleep on the floor in the common room provided they have coin to spend and don't mind the chill—the Goltiaevas aren't about to waste good firewood to keep a fire burning through the night. Both Emil and Katrina live in constant fear of punishment by the White Witch Nazhena Vasilliovnna and her soldiers, so they have taken it upon themselves to act as Waldsby's "watchdogs," encouraging troublemakers to leave town, or failing that reporting them to the authorities. Katrina even installed a large mirror behind the White Weasel's bar so their witch overlords can keep a magical eye on suspicious folk. Katrina is always predicting doom and gloom, and she stockpiles minor scrolls for the day of Waldsby's inevitable ruin. She's willing to sell them for a 20% markup in price. Emil is thoroughly cowed by his ill-tempered wife, and tries to stay out of her way, even turning a blind eye to her increasingly blatant flirtations with the sawmill owner Garthur Kalinin (see area 13).

7. Barn: This communal barn houses the few livestock the people of Waldsby possess. Currently, the barn holds a single decrepit cow that provides barely enough milk for the White Weasel's tea. The barn's resident house spirit, a dvorovoi (see page 86) named Polrusk, is hard-pressed to keep the cow alive, much less able to produce milk.

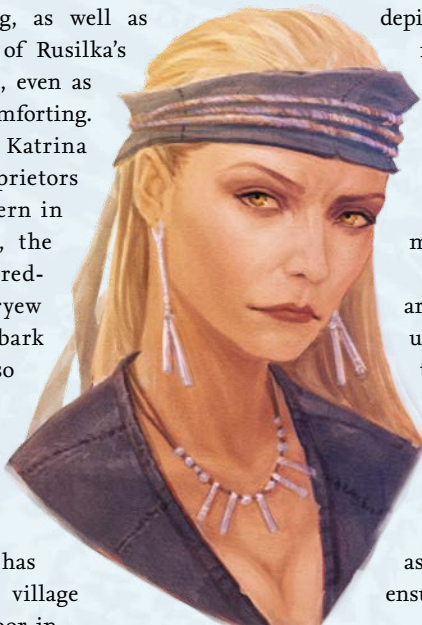
8. Town Square: A large statue of a beautiful woman stands in the center of Waldsby's town square. Curiously, it bears a strong resemblance to the statue in Haldren's town

square—if it's not the same woman, then it was certainly crafted by the same sculptor. No one in Waldsby knows who the statue depicts or where it came from, referring to it simply as "the Cold Woman." Many people assume the statue represents Queen Elvanna, but it stood here before the current queen's reign. Some villagers think the statue depicts the White Witch who first ruled this region during the reign of Queen Jadwiga, and others (quietly) suggest the woman is an Ulfen hero who will come to life in the hour of Waldsby's greatest need to overthrow the oppressive rule of the White Witches. Whomever the statue portrays, it mostly serves as a perch for ravens these days.

9. Cemetery: Generations of Waldsby's dead are interred in this graveyard south of town, under the skeletal boughs of a dead tree said to have been there since the Winter War. A fence topped with bleached skulls encloses the cemetery, though closer inspection reveals the skulls are carved from wood and painted white. Waldsby's village priest of Pharamasma, Rolf Halzberg, serves as the cemetery's caretaker and as undertaker, ensuring that all of Waldsby's loved ones receive proper burials and Pharamasma's blessings, though digging graves in the frozen ground is no easy task.

10. Ruined House: A burnt frame and crumbling foundation are all that remain of the house of Waldsby's last headman, Tjorvar Leikovitch. Three years ago, Tjorvar came under suspicion of being a member of the underground resistance group called the Heralds of Summer's Return. Nazhena Vasilliovnna's response was quick and brutal—her guards burned down Tjorvar's house with his wife and child inside, and Tjorvar himself was hung from the town hall's clock tower until he died of exposure and the ravens picked his bones clean. Since then, Waldsby has been without a leader, and the villagers make signs against the evil eye when passing the ruins to prevent the ghosts of Tjorvar's wife and daughter from following them home.

11. Village Chapel: Waldsby's tiny village chapel is dedicated to Pharamasma. The village priest, Rolf Halzberg, offers what little comfort he can to the beleaguered villagers. Officially, the White Witches take a dim view of organized religion—other than the faiths of Lamashtu and Zon-Kuthon—but in practice, small temples such as this one are usually tolerated in villages throughout Irrisen. Rolf finds himself the frequent target of harassment by the Pale Tower's soldiers, but he remains in his parish, knowing that the villagers have nowhere else to turn for the services he provides. He helps deliver Waldsby's babies and buries



KATRINA GOLTIAEVA

WALDSBY



the dead, records these births and deaths, and performs marriages for Waldsby's lovers. The chapel doesn't much have much in the way of magic items for purchase, Rolf does have an *oil of protection from evil* and a *scroll of goodberry* (a donation from a wandering druid) for sale, as well as holy water.

12. Carpenter: One carpenter living in Waldsby, **Arbagazor Frimbocket** (N male gnome expert 6), received training at the Crooked House in Whitethrone, and his skill is unsurpassed by any other woodworker in the village. Supposedly, Duke Ghrathis even bought one of Arbagazor's carvings as a gift for his sister Duchess Anelisha of Hoarwood, though Arbagazor neither confirms nor denies the rumors. In addition to his carvings and decorative woodwork, Arbagazor also has a +1 *darkwood quarterstaff* for sale. Arbagazor has a twin brother named Tengezil, but the two were separated as children. Arbagazor thinks his brother died long ago, and is unaware that Tengezil lives and even follows the same trade far to the south in the Taldan village of Heldren.

13. Sawmill: Logging in the Hoarwood Forest is strictly regulated, but **Garthur Kalinin** (NE male human commoner 4/expert 1), owner of Waldsby's sawmill, holds the few logging licenses the village has managed

to procure from the authorities in Hoarwood. He then distributes the licenses to Waldsby's woodcutters. Those few lumberjacks who grumbled about the arrangement quickly became object lessons that getting on Garthur's bad side was a sure route to poverty and starvation. As a result, most of the village's loggers not only pay Garthur a "licensing fee," but also have a "license maintenance charge" deducted from the price of the wood they sell to Garthur's sawmill. This racket makes Garthur one of the wealthiest people in Waldsby. Until recently, Garthur was romantically involved with Birgit Holorova (see area 1), but he's now turned his eye on Katrina Goltiaeva (see area 6), and spends many evenings at the White Weasel trying to woo her right under the nose of her husband.

14. Nadya Petska's Cabin: Nadya Petska (see page 56) lives in this stout cabin on the edge of town with her twin boys Orm and Mjoli. Her neighbor, Kashka, is often here as well, watching the boys when Nadya is away. Built by Nadya's late husband, Hjalnek, the house is small and simple, but warm and cozy. A small kennel at the side of the cabin houses the dogs Nadya uses to pull her dogsleds on her trade expeditions. One final inhabitant lives in Nadya's cabin, though his presence is more often felt than seen—the domovoi Hatch (see page 39).

REIGN OF WINTER



REIGN OF WINTER TOOLKIT

THE TWIN THEMES OF WINTER AND DARK FAIRY TALES PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE REIGN OF WINTER ADVENTURE PATH, WHICH TAKES THE PCS INTO FROZEN LANDS, BOTH ON GOLARION AND ON OTHER WORLDS AS WELL. TO SUPPORT THESE THEMES, THE CAMPAIGN FEATURES MANY DIFFERENT RULES ELEMENTS FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES. IN ADDITION TO GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO HELP GMS BREATHE MORE LIFE INTO THEIR CAMPAIGNS, THIS TOOLKIT ALSO PRESENTS A NUMBER OF THE RULES ELEMENTS THAT ARE PROMINENTLY FEATURED THROUGHOUT THE REIGN OF WINTER ADVENTURE PATH.

REIGN OF WINTER TOOLKIT

BABA YAGA

Baba Yaga plays a prominent role in the Reign of Winter Adventure Path. Although the PCs will not meet the self-styled Queen of Witches until the final adventure, her presence makes itself known throughout the campaign. A nearly immortal witch who is known on multiple worlds and other planes, Baba Yaga embodies ancient secrets, planes-spanning intrigues, and magical mastery. She possesses a unique and powerful magic artifact, the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga*, and her witchcraft is said to rival that of demigods. On Golarion, Baba Yaga carved out the nation of Irrisen from the eastern Linnorm Kingdoms 1,400 years ago, and she has returned every 100 years since to install a new daughter on the throne—and to crush the rebellions of those who did not wish to relinquish their crowns. Few have successfully stood against the Great Crone and emerged victorious, and Baba Yaga's cunning, patience, and talent for ironic malice cause wise denizens of untold worlds to dread even a hint of her passage. In truth, however, Baba Yaga rarely deigns to interfere in the affairs of mere mortals, though those who do manage to attract her attention might learn some of her arcane secrets—or face her bitter, far-reaching curses. For more details on Baba Yaga and her magic, including her statistics, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #72: The Witch Queen's Revenge*.

BABA YAGA'S RIDERS

Every century, in the year that precedes the return of the Queen of Witches to Irrisen, the Three Riders descend on the land to herald the coming of Baba Yaga. The White Rider, called “My Bright Morning” by Baba Yaga, is seen only in the hours after sunrise, riding a sleek, white destrier. The Red Rider, or “My Red Sun,” sits upon a reddish-gold stallion; the citizens of Irrisen encounter this creature in the daylight hours after noon. The third is the Black Rider, mounted upon a fierce black warhorse. She calls this Rider, seen only in the hours between sunset and sunrise, “My Dark Midnight.”

JADWIGA, WHITE WITCHES, AND WINTER WITCHES

Several groups active within the nation of Irrisen make appearances in the Reign of Winter Adventure Path: the Jadwiga, the White Witches, and winter witches. The following is a short primer on these groups and the characters who are part of them.

Jadwiga: As much of an ethnicity as the Ulfen, Taldans, or Varisians, the Jadwiga are the human descendants of the queens of Irrisen, and therefore share a bloodline with Baba Yaga herself. Named for Irrisen's first queen, the Jadwiga constitute the middle and upper classes of Irrisen. The offspring of the current queen, known as the

FURTHER READING

For more information on some of the exotic locales featured in the Reign of Winter Adventure Path, check out the following additional sources, available at paizo.com.

Iobaria: *Pathfinder Adventure Path #33: The Varnhold Vanishing*

Irrisen: *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter* and *Pathfinder Player Companion: People of the North*

Triaxus: *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds*

Whitethrone: *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Cities of Golarion*

Jadwiga Elvanna, form the highest echelon of Irrisen's aristocracy, and occupy the most powerful and influential positions in the country's government and military. Those Jadwiga descended from earlier queens—who may thus hail from very old families indeed—sit lower on the social ladder than the Jadwiga Elvanna, but still far above Irrisen's Ulfen peasant population.

White Witches: The White Witches are the landed nobility of Irrisen—princesses, duchesses, countesses, baronesses, and the like—and therefore hold most of the power in Irrisen. They are all female Jadwiga winter witches, and the highest-ranking and most powerful among them are Jadwiga Elvanna. White Witches run Irrisen's government; male Jadwiga, though in command of the country's military, are not considered White Witches. Nazhena Vasilliova (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #68: The Shackled Hut*) is a White Witch.

Winter Witches: Winter witches are characters who have levels in the witch class with the winter witch archetype. Some of them have levels in the winter witch prestige class as well. Many Jadwiga are winter witches, and all of the White Witches are winter witches as well, but neither is a requirement for the archetype or prestige class. A winter witch can be male or female, and can hail from anywhere—a winter witch is simply a witch with powers based on winter and the cold north. The winter witch archetype and the winter witch prestige class are presented in the *Reign of Winter Player's Guide*. Both Nazhena Vasilliova and Radosek Pavril (see page 58) are winter witches.

WINTER CREATURES

Among the various monsters appearing in the Reign of Winter Adventure Path are creatures with one of two new templates: the boreal creature template and the winter-touched fey simple template. The rules for these templates are presented below for your convenience. The boreal template first appeared in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter*, but the winter-touched

REIGN OF WINTER

fey template is a new creation for this Adventure Path. *Pathfinder Adventure Path #68: The Shackled Hut* presents another new template, the winter fey template.

BOREAL CREATURE TEMPLATE

In realms where the icy hand of winter seldom (or never) releases its frigid grasp, some particularly hardy creatures have evolved to better survive in these harsh environments, becoming stronger and much more dangerous. These boreal creatures mostly resemble members of their kind that dwell in more temperate climates, but their fur and skin are much paler, and it is not uncommon for parts of these creatures to be cloaked in frost.

CREATING A BOREAL CREATURE

“Boreal” is an inherited template that can be added to any Huge or smaller corporeal creature. This template cannot be applied to a creature with the fire subtype.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1.

Type: The creature gains the cold subtype. If this subtype is applied to a creature with the animal or vermin type, the creature’s type changes to magical beast. Do not recalculate its Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves, or skill points.

Attacks: A boreal creature’s natural attacks deal an additional 1d6 points of cold damage.

Abilities: Str +2, Con +2.

Skills: The creature receives a +4 bonus on Stealth and Survival checks in snow. An aquatic boreal creature receives a +4 racial bonus on Stealth and Survival checks at all times in frigid waters (its natural habit), instead of in snow.

Environment: The creature’s natural environment changes to a cold climate.

Special Qualities: A boreal creature gains the following special quality.

Trackless Step (Ex): A boreal creature does not leave a trail in snow and cannot be tracked. It can choose to leave a trail, if it so desires. This special quality does not apply to aquatic boreal creatures.

WINTER-TOUCHED FEY TEMPLATE

Chief among the allies of Baba Yaga and the White Witches of Irrisen are the winter-touched, a special breed of fey immune to the harsh weather and low temperatures of the frozen north. Willingly pledging themselves to a wholly evil life, these creatures undergo a complex ritual called the Winter Rite, in which they accept a sliver of ice into their hearts that infuses their bodies with the same supernatural winter perpetuated by the White Witches of Irrisen. The resulting transformation gives the fey’s skin a sickly bluish cast marked with spidery white veins like hoarfrost on glass. These evil fey can channel the power of winter into their attacks, slowing their victims with

numbing cold. The winter-touched universally delight in spreading the influence of the White Witches, carrying out the wills of the witches who performed their Winter Rites. The winter-touched display a chilling loyalty that borders on fanaticism—a devotion all but guaranteed given the White Witches’ ability to fatally pierce the hearts of those who fail them with the same slivers of ice the fey so willingly accepted.

WINTER-TOUCHED FEY (CR +0)

The winter-touched fey simple template can be applied to any creature of the fey type. This template cannot be applied to a creature with the fire subtype. A winter-touched fey’s quick and rebuild rules are the same.

Rebuild Rules: The creature’s alignment changes to evil and it gains the cold subtype; **Special Attacks:** *Numbing Cold (Su)* Any creature hit by a winter-touched creature’s attacks (natural or weapon) must succeed at a Fortitude save or be staggered for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

WINTER MAGIC

The White Witches of Irrisen have developed their own breed of magic, born of their otherworldly bloodlines and practice of winter witchcraft. Some of the spells they have created have spread outside of their wintry homeland, just as spellcasters in other icy realms have devised their own spells tied to the chill of winter. These spells originally appeared in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Cities of Golarion*, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*, and *Pathfinder Player Companion: People of the North*, but they are reprinted here for your convenience, as they are used throughout the Reign of Winter Adventure Path.

FLURRY OF SNOWBALLS

School evocation [cold, water]; **Level** druid 2, magus 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range 30 ft.

Area cone-shaped burst

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** no

You send a flurry of snowballs hurtling at your foes. Any creature in the area takes 4d6 points of cold damage from being pelted with the icy spheres.

ICE SPEARS

School conjuration [cold]; **Level** druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small stalagmite-shaped crystal)

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

REIGN OF WINTER TOOLKIT

Effect 1 ice spear/4 levels

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half and see below; **Spell Resistance** no
Favored by the spellcasters of Irrisen, this potent spell can disrupt spellcasters, topple enemies, and break even seemingly unstoppable charges.

One or more giant spears of ice lance up out of the ground. Each stalagmite-like icicle affects a 5-foot square and tapers to a height of 10 feet. You may cause a number of *ice spears* equal to one spear for every 4 caster levels you possess to burst from the ground. A creature that occupies a square from which a spear extends (or that is within 10 feet of the ground below) takes 2d6 points of piercing damage and 2d6 points of cold damage per square—creatures that take up more than 1 square can be hit by multiple spears if your caster level is high enough. The explosive growth can also trip foes. When the spears erupt from the ground, they attempt a combat maneuver check to trip any targets that take damage from the spears, with a total bonus equal to your caster level plus your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier, whichever is highest. Each additional *ice spear* beyond the first that strikes a single foe grants a +10 bonus on this combat maneuver check. If the check is successful, the *ice spears* knock the foe prone. A successful Reflex save halves the damage and prevents the trip attempt.

If you cast this spell upon an area covered with ice or snow, such as a glacier, frozen lake, or snow-covered field, the spears strike with additional force. Saves against the effect take a –2 penalty, and the spell effect gains a +4 bonus on the combat maneuver check to trip foes.

Ice spears created by this spell remain after they do their damage. They melt as normal depending on the surrounding environment. They no longer damage foes in their square, but can provide cover. An *ice spear* has hardness 5 and 30 hit points.

IRRISENI MIRROR SIGHT

School divination (scrying); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 10 minutes

Components V, S, F (a mirror)

Range see text

Effect magical sensor

Duration 1 minute/level

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell lets you look into a mirror near you and see an image that is reflected in another specific mirror (chosen by you) or an individual reflected in any other mirror. This works like a *scrying* spell, except you can only view creatures on the same plane as you. Each time you cast the spell, you can choose to see one of three types of reflections in your mirror.

Known Mirror: The current reflection in another mirror with which you are familiar.

Known Person: The current reflection of a person you know well, assuming that person is near a mirror.

Known Place: The current reflection of a place you know well, assuming the location is being reflected in a mirror.

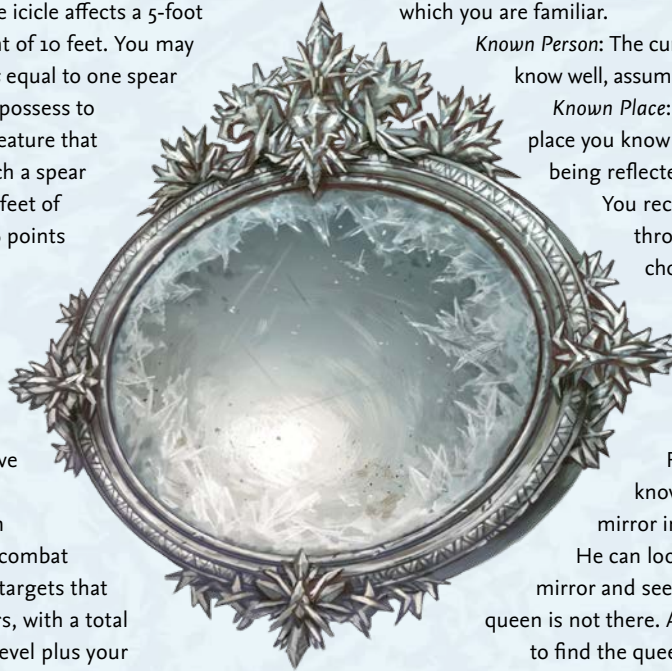
You receive only visual information through this ability. You can choose to transmit information both ways so that a person reflected in the remote mirror can view whatever appears in the mirror you are using.

For example, Urion Petresky knows that Queen Elvanna keeps a mirror in a hall near her throne room.

He can look through his own handheld mirror and see into this hall, even if the queen is not there. Alternatively, he can attempt to find the queen (wherever she is) by looking into his mirror; if, at that moment, the queen is near any mirror at all, he can see her. He may instead cast the spell and try to see into

her throne room, hoping that someone has brought a mirror there. If any of these conditions fails, Urion sees nothing but his own reflection.

This spell works with intentionally fabricated mirrors only; it is not effective with other reflective surfaces, such as still pools or polished metal shields. Effects that block *scrying* block this spell.



IRRISENI MIRROR

SNOWBALL

School conjuration (creation) [cold, water]; **Level** druid 1, magus 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, summoner 1, witch 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect one ball of ice and snow

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude partial (see text); **Spell Resistance** no

You conjure a ball of packed ice and snow that you can throw at a single target as a ranged touch attack. On a successful hit, the snowball deals 1d6 points of cold damage per caster level (maximum 5d6), and the target must make a successful Fortitude saving throw or be staggered for 1 round.

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PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: THE BONEDUST DOLLS 1 OF 6

Esteemed members of the Decemvirate, my name is Norret Gantier. As I am Galtan, I trust you to redact my name from these proceedings, or simply delay publication until such date as I am no longer alive or likely to become so again. Yet despite this need for anonymity, I hope that this missive and the secrets contained within will be sufficient to earn me a place in your august Society.

That said, let me lay out the matter of “The Bonedust Dolls” as it transpired.

Spring had come early to Isarn. It was the morning after Merrymead and its attendant costume balls, and everyone was nursing hangovers, at least in the Eglantine House. My friend and occasional paramour Mistress Philomela had engaged my services to build the temple of Calistria

a still to turn their copious supplies of young mead into a Five Kings Mountains liqueur that translates from the Dwarven as, roughly, “you’ve been mauled by a bear.” Certainly that is what it felt like. Dr. Orontius—the noted arcane scholar and one of our oldest tenants—and I were taking as tonic a bit of the bear that mauled us while we lounged in his apartments.

“The Osirians do not hold the record, however,” the good doctor, still dressed like a sphinx, pontificated on his latest metaphysical tangent. “While some of them believe the soul may be divided into five parts—six if you count the body, and nine if you go with certain heresies—there are philosophers in Tian Xia who say the soul can be divided into two, three, ten, or even a dozen separate pieces. However, losing one or more of these parts generally results

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in some significant handicap—being without one’s shadow, one’s conscience, even the ability to die no matter how much one might wish it.” He ticked off his points on the claws of his lion-pawed gloves. “Have you read of any of this in your studies of alchemy?”

“A bit,” I admitted, omitting the fact that since my brother Orlin’s resurrection, he had been suffering some metaphysical peculiarities. “My scholarship in Tian alchemy is sadly lacking.”

“As is mine,” Dr. Orontius commiserated. “The older I grow, the more lacunae come to light. That said, the most tantalizing fragment of necromantic knowledge I lack is held by the Jadwiga, the witches of Irrisen. The common folk whisper that by their craft—the otherworldly secrets taught by their ancestress, the witch queen Baba Yaga—the Jadwiga can steal the tiniest shard of a soul, so slight that the former owner will scarcely miss it.”

“You make it sound like a cook sneaking out a sliver of cake, then icing it over before serving.” The speaker was Orlin. Just turned twelve, he had become a fair chef. He was back in his usual clothes rather than his costume from the night, before when he had gone as Gigas Minor, the young giant.

I am tall as well, so had gone as Gigas Major, all the while acutely aware that I was wearing nothing more than a loincloth fashioned from a swatch of lionskin from before the Revolution. I suspected my club was still in Philomela’s chamber.

Orlin set a Merrymead ring on the coffee table between us.

I winced, but Dr. Orontius perked up at the prospect of sultana-studded yeast dough and honeyed frangipane. “A very astute metaphor. Indeed, the ancients baked soul cakes, and a cake may be divided into layers or slices. But the more pressing question is this: Which piece hides the bee-eater?”

He referred to the custom whereby votive trinkets were baked into the Merrymead ring. Getting the songbird in one’s slice obligated the finder to buy the next honey cake.

The good doctor dithered until the knife flew up of its own accord. It cut a slice that levitated onto a napkin and into his paws.

I believe I mentioned my brother’s “metaphysical peculiarities.” The main one of these was that, since his resurrection, he had been haunted by Rhodel, the spirit of an aging prostitute. Orlin also has a propensity for manipulating objects without using physical touch. Either of them might have been responsible.

I flipped down a lens of my monocle to ascertain which, but all I saw was my brother with his soul’s hands where they should be. Rhodel’s shade stood beside him, appearing in her preferred form as a beautiful girl of fifteen. She smiled at me, head cocked and hands clasped in a classic attitude of feigned innocence.

I flipped the lens back up. Dr. Orontius nibbled his honey cake in the awkward silence that ensued.

“You were mentioning witches stealing souls?” I prompted.

“Oh, yes.” The wizard brightened. “According to what I have read, the Jadwiga store the shards in exquisite jewels or filigreed phials.”

“To what end?”

“To what end indeed? The Pathfinder Society believes it may have something to do with the dancing huts, the fowl-legged sentries that guard Irrisen’s borders, or perhaps the porcelain crone dolls rumored to dwell within. But even the witches’ formula for porcelain is something that the winter kingdom keeps a closely guarded secret.” The old scholar took another sip of golden liqueur from a pre-Revolutionary crystal flute. “Your late duke made some inquiries into Irrisen’s porcelains, did he not?”

I cursed my loose tongue and then cursed it further with another sip of liqueur, the liquid burning like a honeyed bear claw. “That is true,” I admitted, “but even he was unable to pry loose the secret.”

I had sometime let slip that I had come into possession of the alchemical formulary of Arjan Devore, the last duke of Dabril. He had journeyed to Irrisen with his young bride, the infamous Anais Devore. While there, they had hoped to produce a “magical child”—standard alchemical code for the stone of the philosophers—and thought they might gain aid in this endeavor from “the mistress of the ivory tower.”

The last was likely an oblique reference to the white elixir, one of the two penultimate substances used to form the philosopher’s stone.

My brother cut a slice for himself and perched on the arm of a sofa. “So,” he said to Dr. Orontius, “you’re working your way up to sending us after one of these phials.”

The good doctor nearly choked on his honey cake. “Am I that transparent?”

“You are when you’re drunk.”

“Well,” said the old wizard, flustered, “it’s a bit more than that. I am a Pathfinder venture-captain, emeritus. And while I long ago retired from that august body, I find it tragic that a city as great as Isarn currently has no Pathfinder lodge, even in secret. Yet this house would make an excellent one, so I have made inquiries to the Decemvirate—mentioning those of your brother’s past exploits I am privy to, and others I suspect—and they have indicated that, as Norret is not a known operative and thus might more easily mingle in Whitethrone society, they hope he would undertake an inquiry of utmost urgency on behalf of the Society.”

“Getting you a soul phial,” Orlin surmised.

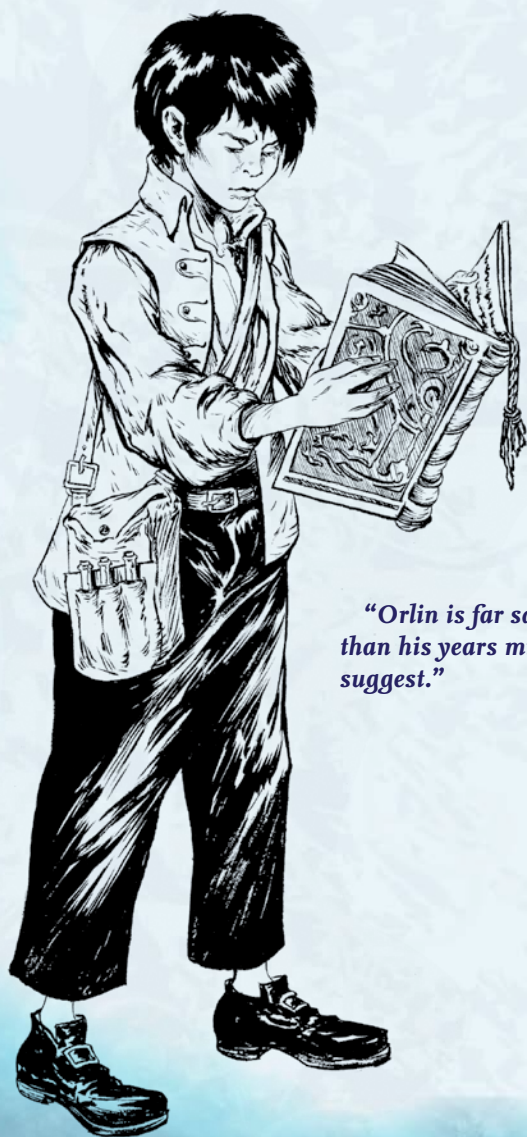
“Not just that,” said Dr. Orontius. “We’ve recovered a number of porcelain phials, but all they held was bone dust. It appears the common folk of Irrisen keep these

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as mementos of those who have passed into Pharama's Boneyard. Similarly, all the dolls we have examined, while finely crafted by the artisans of that cold realm, appear to be nothing more than playthings for the idle rich such as we used to have in Galt, and that still exist in decadent lands such as Taldor. None were the slightest bit magical or even in the form of crones. As for the porcelain shards we sent out for analysis, all our consulting alchemists could tell us was that they were unusually hard, brilliant, and lustrous."

I raised a finger as a point of order. "I believe I also posited that the sample you gave me came from Irrisen."

"And that is what caught the Decemvirate's eye!" the old wizard exclaimed. "Having a man tell you that the hardness, luster, and translucency index matches what is known of Irrisen porcelain from the time of the Forge War, after simply turning it over in his hands? That's impressive."



"Orlin is far savvier than his years might suggest."

I shrugged. Modesty is sometimes the best cover for secrecy, but in point of fact, I had been trained in the science of alchemy by Powdermaster Davin, a dwarf with an almost gnomelike passion for porcelain figurines. "You hadn't mentioned *who* I was doing that analysis for. All you told me is that the job would pay handsomely if your contacts were pleased."

"And indeed they were!" Dr. Orontius's eyes sparkled. "The Decemvirate is so pleased, in fact, that they have deputized me to make a most unusual offer: If you complete this mission, they will grant you a Pathfinder field commission—full membership, with all rights and privileges. Indeed, I myself will induct you, and pay your way south, should you wish to visit the Grand Lodge of Absalom."

I fortified myself with another dose of liqueur. Every child in the Inner Sea, even in Galt, dreamed of being a Pathfinder, of following the open road and searching for lost treasures. Or at least I did, before going to war and viewing countless horrors. Or creating them myself.

The drink burned, doing what it could to salve my conscience.

"So Norret gets to join the Pathfinders if he swipes a soul phial from the witches," Orlin concluded.

My brother has a crass method of summation, but he did put a fine point on it.

Dr. Orontius was not perturbed. "What the Decemvirate requires is not just a soul phial, but knowledge of the relevant rites and information on how they relate to Irrisen's porcelain trade, the crone dolls, and ultimately the dancing huts." The old wizard took a tiny bird-shaped charm out of his mouth and looked rather crestfallen. "Oh, look, I have found the bee-eater," he said. "Did you know that in Irrisen, rather than almonds, they stuff their Merrymead rings with poppyseed paste?"

Orlin was unimpressed. "We're not journeying anywhere with a drunken wizard."

"That can be remedied." Dr. Orontius stood with great dignity—especially impressive considering his costume with the eagle's wings and lion's tail in the back. He proceeded to a cabinet and removed a crystal flask. "Do you have that formula I asked you to prepare, Norret?"

"Yes." He had given me a recipe for some effervescent salts but no notes as to their use. "Right here." I may have forgotten my club, but an alchemist never goes anywhere without his pack. The giant's bag made a good place to conceal mine.

He took the foolscap I retrieved and expertly poured a measure into the clear liquid in the flask. It foamed violently, and he replaced the stopper just before it overflowed. Then it settled, becoming clear and sparkling as champagne.

He poured a glass for each of us. "May Calistria and Cayden overlook the indulgence." Our glasses rang, and then he downed his draught in a single swallow.

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I followed suit. It was extremely refreshing. Invigorating, in fact. Then I belched, and with the carbonation came a huge wave of alcohol fumes.

"I trust you kept some in reserve," said Dr. Orontius. "It is a formula every Pathfinder should have handy."

I was aware that somehow I had accepted Dr. Orontius's mission without ever quite formally agreeing. But the old reprobate knew me and my curiosity too well. I had gone on far more perilous errands for less.

Orlin scowled. "How long will we be gone and what should we bring?"

"Oh, perhaps a week? I understand the Frosthall Theater is mounting a revival of *Kostchtchie the Deathless*, and I was meaning to catch that anyway. They found a frost giant who can act! Can you imagine? Beyond that, simply wear your warmest clothes. Pretend it's the heart of Kuthona and then double that." Then to me, he added, "Bring your perfumer's sample case and any fireworks left from All Kings Day. The witches of Whitethrone are starved for novelty and luxury. You will find doors opening to you as a purveyor of both."

It seemed reasonable. I left and changed into my winter traveling clothes, packed a spare bottle of spirits for good measure, and came back to Dr. Orontius's suite to find my brother swathed in what looked to be the entire scarf collection left behind by the late Madame Eglantine, whom I will not speak of other than to mention that she was known for her knitting.

"You look like a Varisian carnival," I told my brother.

"It's Merrymead. Who's going to notice?" Orlin shrugged. "Besides, at least it should be warm."

Dr. Orontius had donned an over-robe, fur-lined mittens, and a matching peaked hood. He had his owl Muco upon his shoulder. "Don't count on that." He turned to face a wall crowded with landscape paintings, reached out with his catoblepas-headed walking stick, and touched one frame.

Dust disappeared and the gilding began to glow, illuminating the scene within and the brass title plaque. "*Market Square, Merchant's Quarter, Whitethrone*," the catoblepas head bleated in a tinny voice, reading it aloud.

High buildings faced the square, their slate roofs and gables frosted with snow. Market stalls lay below, tented over with swags of white canvas like snowdrifts. Lanterns punched with stars spangled the scene with white lights like the drifting snowflakes. They began to move and dance, then swirled out of the painting and around us, whirling in a blinding whiteness. Then they cleared.

I felt cold creeping through my boots. The Katapeshi rugs of Dr. Orontius's parlor had become a carpet of snow. The chill in the air was so sharp I gasped in surprise, my breath turning white.

Orlin offered me a muffler from his collection. I gratefully took it, winding it over my mouth and nose. My monocle protected my left eye, but tears started from the right.

Dr. Orontius waved his cane expansively. "Behold, the Wintermarket!"

The market appeared much like in the painting, but it was day instead of night. The sun slanted low in the east. Morning had just come to Whitethrone.

Wizards and sorcerers were appearing about us. Here was a Taldan, dressed in robes embroidered with the imperial lion, escorting a cadre of young nobles. There appeared a woman in a black gown dagged with red, an imp on her shoulder, accompanied by a group of halfling porters bearing an ironbound chest.

No one was taking any note of this, so I could only assume that it was just another morning in Whitethrone's Market Square.

Behind us stood the iron statue of a crone, a broomstick in one hand, a bundle of sticks on her back, and a plucked rooster at her waist.

"Till anon." Dr. Orontius saluted with his cane and stepped away. Orlin pointed a finger straight up, then jerked his head to the statue and walked off as well. We had a standard procedure when splitting up—the gesture meant we would meet here at noon.

"Galtan knitting!" my brother cried. "Fine scarves and hosiery! Knit by the brave women of Isarn before the guillotine itself!"

I admired his initiative. I had thought only of my own handicrafts. I hadn't considered that anything quintessentially Galtan might command a good price.

A light snow was falling, just enough to leave a sparkle in the air, and here and there roared open flames that drew folk like moths. One was the merry brazier of a pine nut-toasting cart. Another was the flame of a forge, a dwarven smith before it, ringing his hammer on the anvil in a familiar rhythm. A third was the flame beneath a bright copper cauldron steaming in the winter air, filling it with a heady scent. Three lapis-eyed maidens in veiled headdresses and heavy brocade pinafores danced around it singing a madrigal.

The words became clear momentarily:

Bilberry, blueberry, blackberry brew!

Sweetened with honey and cardamom too!

Come warm your mittens!

Come buy our sbiten!

Come to our cauldron—we brew it for you!

Their stall was festooned with garlands of bees and wasps, fashioned from wirework and tinsel. Merrymead was indeed celebrated in Irrisen as it was in Galt, if in a somewhat different fashion. I moved over to the cauldron, warming my gloves before the life-giving blaze as they bade me. After I had thawed a bit, I took my lidded tankard and passed it to one of the maidens.

She examined it, taking note of the pewter lid and cobalt diamonds of classic dwarven salt glaze—it was a gift from Powdermaster Davin—then nodded, deeming it fit. She held

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it as her sister ladled the hot drink and passed it back with a smile in exchange for silver.

I took a sip, tasting to identify any unmentioned herbs or spices in case their alchemical virtues were needed for an infusion. I detected red clover, which could impart industriousness, and melissa—sometimes known as lemon balm—which was popular among Calistrians and the witches of Galt. Cinnamon and ginger from Jalmeray? Warming spices whichever way you looked. I unbuckled my trusty nutmeg grater and added shavings of a few other reagents to improve the concoction's function as a catalyst, then downed the tankard.

As warmth moved through my veins and the ice melted away, sensation returned to my extremities. I tossed the maidens another silver coin to refill my mug and a third as thanks for a more pleasant winter warmer than what I had brought with me. Citizen Cedrine, former confectioner turned grenadier captain, had taught me the acclimatizing infusion, as well as the importance of using local supplies.

I loosened my scarf and sipped the sbiten, this time just savoring it for its flavor and the delight of discovering another culture.

The market was indeed doing a burgeoning business in imports, and while it was odd to see the fruits of early spring in the middle of winter, it was odder yet to see the peaches of late summer and the apples of fall beside them. I realized I had wandered into the fruit merchants' row.

A white-haired woman who was far too scantily clad for the season—flaunting the same immunity to cold I possessed rather than concealing it—made a great show of displaying some exotic fruit. It looked like a large golden pinecone topped with the crown of an aloe. "Calistria's crown," she declared, drawing a curved silver knife, "brought at great expense from the farthest corner of the world, but now grown by our arts in the Hidden Gardens. Who shall have a slice? A coin of gold for a piece of our golden fruit."

The price was ruinous, but as a Galtan, I was used to absurd prices for food. I tossed her a gold piece and was rewarded with generous wedge, yellow as Mistress Philomela's favorite silk gown and almost as perfumed. "The bottom is the sweetest," the witch confided coyly.

I took a bite. The flesh was dense and sweet, juicy as a peach, acid as an orange, with the scent and aftertaste of a sun-warmed apple.

I was growing to like Whitethrone already.

Other shoppers clamored for a taste of the dainty. I sucked mine down to the last bit of the leathery skin, which I folded in oilcloth and stowed for later analysis. The rest of the sbiten went well with a salmon-and-buckwheat pastry from the next aisle. I noted Dr. Orontius in line at a baked goods stall with a signboard in the shape of a cat sitting before a hearth.

"I believe this should be a lucky one," Dr. Orontius said softly as he passed me the white paper box prettily tied with red string and marked with a gray cat.

Wizards could be cryptic, so I stole a peek inside. The Merrymead rings of Whitethrone were apparently saffron dough dagged to reveal poppyseed filling, these sections forming the abdomens of Calistria's wasps, with gilded marzipan for the wings and bodies, and toasted pine nuts for eyes. Then I glanced at the signboard and nearly dropped my monocle. The tokens baked into Merrymead rings—the Whip of Vengeance, the Fan of Deception, the demon Kostchtchie, and all the rest—were usually tinted tin, sometimes gold-washed silver, occasionally true gold. Before Galt's Revolution, decadent nobles sometimes had them wrought with precious jewels, making the divinatory cakes a gambling game as well.

The witches of Irrisen had done them one better, for the signboard promised that some trinkets bore actual witchcraft.

Enchantments aplenty were on display in Whitethrone's market. Here an ice-eyed Jadwiga man modeled a traditional kaftan embroidered with folk motifs, hounds and horses and the like, only more threadbare and tatty. He ripped a loose applique off one sleeve and tossed it to the ground. All at once it sprang to life, becoming a tiny animal I first took for a white rat, but which rapidly expanded, increasing in size like an image projected on fog when the magic lantern is pulled back. A white mule then stood there in the snow, saddlebags and all, twitching its ears and looking at the witch in the kaftan both crossly and expectantly.

Not every enchantment in the market was so quaint or charming, however. One crone sold severed hands, some ancient and mummified, others as fresh as when they were separated from their rightful owners. I flipped down the relevant lens of my monocle as I walked past, but was not surprised to see the bloody aura of necromancy.

What I was not seeing were dolls.

Stalls sold witches' wands and warriors' swords, wizards' staves, walking sticks and musical instruments, even an assortment of broomsticks and besoms. A white-haired matron held up one of the latter, swearing it would fly me through the air with the grace of a goose.

Then I saw the mammoth. Two giants were admiring it, inspecting its ears and tusks and patting its shaggy flanks the way a person of normal stature would a pony. Then one lifted a young giantess, half again as tall as I am, and placed her atop it. She clutched a porcelain doll the size of a human child.

I suppose I should have mentioned the monsters. Along with the giants, blue-skinned trolls and white wolves the size of horses mingled freely with the humans and dwarves and other denizens of the cold realm, cheerfully inspecting the bales of tea and other exotic wares of a caravan that could only have come over the Crown of the World.

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I was considering the wisdom of asking the giants where they had bought their daughter her doll when a gaggle of frost-blue goblins ran by, gabbling in delight, pointing out a sight that delighted me as much if not more: a Tian fireworks dealer. He was just setting up his display, and his wares were covered in the exquisite papers of Tian Xia. I recognized the familiar dragonfly rockets and witches' candles, a complicated Shelyn's rose pinwheel labeled *Chrysanthemum Lady*, siren fountains, sparklers, strings of firecrackers, and a large assortment of the fireball-launching goblin brands that had the goblins so exited.

Two guards with wolfhounds and wicked halberds idled nearby. I surmised that these were from Whitethrone's storied Iron Guard, and that the alchemist had paid them to keep an eye on his wares.

What I did not see were hop-frogs, the tamer and more festival-friendly version of the venomous toads Powdermaster Davin had taught me to make for the battlefield.

An alchemist's trade is in secrets, but fortunately the alchemist spoke better Taldane than I did Tien. He was interested, but desired a demonstration.

I set a hop-frog in the snow and touched the fuse with a sulfur-tipped Asmodeus match. It burned down and disappeared inside. For a moment, the frog sat there, doing nothing. Then the folded paper of its throat sack expanded and it let out a croak, to the delight of the goblins. This was followed by its mouth opening and its long pink blow-out tongue flicking in and out, the last time with a sparkling dragonfly attached with flames shooting out of its tail. The squibs in the frog's legs then caught fire, causing it to hop as per its name before finally retrieving the struggling dragonfly. Then the jewel in the frog's forehead went bright as the Eye of Aroden, and all at once it exploded—presumably not like Aroden, as I doubt the dead god vanished in a swarm of flaming fireflies and green smoke perfumed with lime blossoms.

The smoke dissipated and the fireflies burned out in the snow, leaving scorch marks and cinders—and a crowd of delighted goblins, each of whom wanted to buy a dozen.

More to the point, the alchemist wished to obtain my formula. While of course he could see the individual components, it would take a long while for him to reproduce the effect on his own. We then set to dickering, and he named one secret or another, all of which I either knew or were beyond my price, until at last he whispered, "You know perfume. But do you know the formula for the famous Tian Wash, an elixir for the banishment of evil?"

That I did not, and I imagined that in a place like Irrisen, banishment of evil might be exceptionally useful.

We traded notes, and I had just tucked my formulary back inside my greatcoat when I heard the scream.

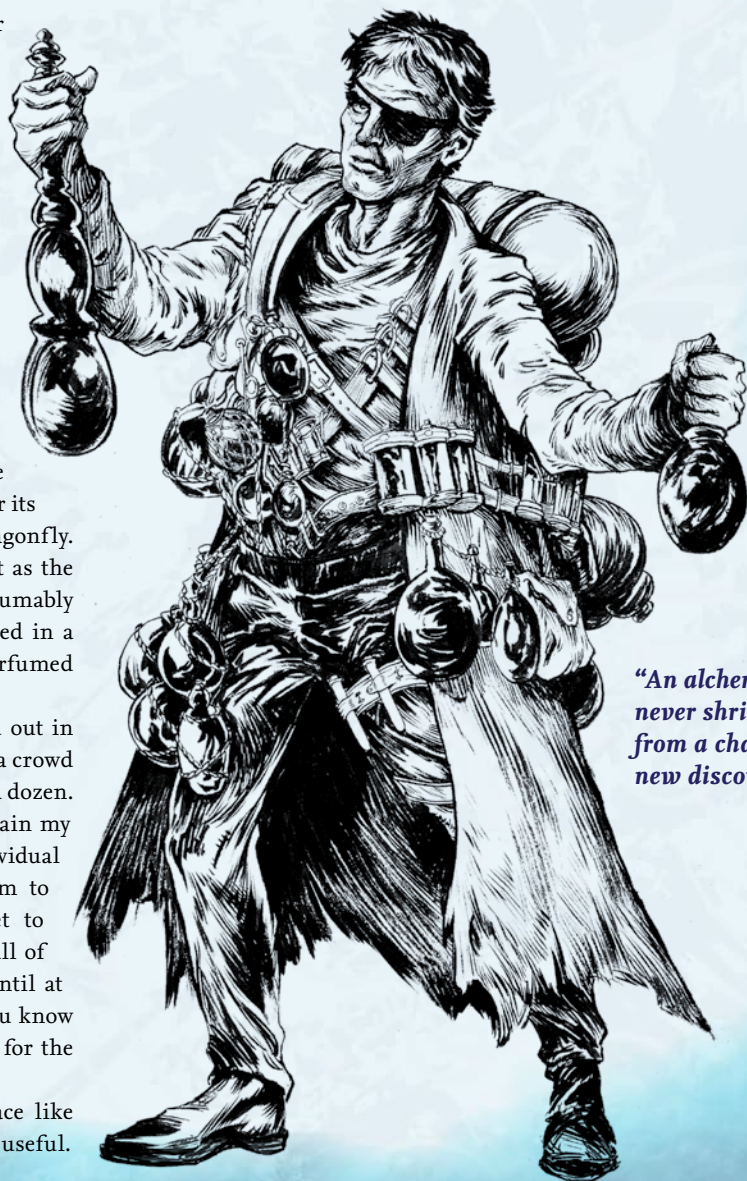
It was not a human sound, but rather the sound we in Galt knew as Liberty's Cry. Wolves howled or whined and pawed their ears, but I looked high into the air and saw the blue plume of smoke mixed with the light snowfall.

Soldiers of my regiment used Blue Liberties as signal flares when they were in distress. I had made sure to entrust one to Orlin.

The stalls of the market, however, were a maze.

I looked at the goblins, grinning at me with their perpetual expressions of wicked delight. "A hop-frog for whoever takes me to where that flare came from."

The goblins grinned even wider.



"An alchemist never shrinks from a chance at new discoveries."

REIGN OF WINTER



BESTIARY

THE SNOW HAD BEEN FALLING ALL NIGHT, LEAVING A BLANKET OF PRISTINE WHITE ACROSS THE FOREST FLOOR. MORE SNOW CLUNG TO THE TREES, DRAGGING THEIR BRANCHES DOWN UNTIL SOME NEARLY BRUSHED THE GROUND BELOW. WITH A RUSTLE, NEARLY A DOZEN RAVENS FLEW FROM THE NEARBY TREES AS TWO OF THE YOUNG FIRS SPRANG TO LIFE. THE TREES REACHED OUT WITH LIMBS GRASPING FOR THE WARMTH OF LIFE, THEIR STICKY SAP DRIPPING FROM THEIR NEAR-FROZEN BRANCHES.

~MARLISS NALATHANE, EXPLORER

Beasts of the north and creatures of winter's chill fill the pages of this month's Pathfinder Bestiary. From real-world folklore come the selection of whimsical house spirits, and fairy-tale magic inspires the creation of witchcrows. Arctic animals help provide more grounded threats, and the frost firs cast the feel of a creepy evergreen forest into a new, dangerous light.

MORE WINTRY ENCOUNTERS

The random encounter table presented here includes a mix of creatures native to warm climates and those that make their home in the Land of Eternal Winter. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 25% chance of a random encounter every 3 hours. If when rolling on this table you get a result that is not appropriate to the climate, the creature can be one that wandered through the portal from one side or the other.

GMs who wish to provide more encounters suitable for a theme of winter and an arctic environment can consult the encounter tables on page 51 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter*. A number of other cold-themed monsters and other Irriseni threats can also be found in Chapter 3 of that book.

A Murderous Crow (CR 3): Casting a dark shadow over those she flies above, Agstarath soars through the skies looking for lone travelers to harass. More specifically, she is always on the hunt for more magical trinkets to add to her hoard. A greater witchcrow (see page 88), Agstarath constantly uses *detect magic* to scan caravans and wanderers to see whether any of their gear glows under the scrutiny of her spell. After finding such an item, she weighs the difficulty of claiming the article for herself against waiting to encounter someone easier to prey upon. However, sometimes the lure of a potent magic item leads Agstarath to get in over her head. When attempting to steal an item from a traveler, she frequently hides among the trees and uses her *ventriloquism* spell-like ability to throw her voice and lead her victim into an ambush. She then casts *vanish* and dives in for a stealthy attack, augmenting her assault with hexes. Though Agstarath is primarily interested in increasing her collection of magic items, those she robs are never found alive, and when their bodies are discovered, their delicious eyes are never intact.

Snare Sisters (CR 4): There are those who eke out a living trapping animals for their pelts, but it's not the best life to be had in the forest. The days are long, the work is filthy, and trespassers and interlopers can scare away prey—or even worse, poach the creatures from right under the trapper's nose. A trapper has to defend her preferred hunting grounds and make constant rounds to check her traps so beasts and other trappers don't take the fruits of her labor. Thayrin (use the stats for a trapper on page 276 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) and her three

HELDREN/WALDSBY ENCOUNTERS			
d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1 frost fir	1	See page 84
5–9	1 giant bee	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 43
10–14	1d6 goblins	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 156
15–19	1 witchcrow	1	See page 88
20–24	1 boar	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
25–29	1d6 stirges	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 260
30–34	1 giant mantis	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 200
35–39	1 lion	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 193
40–44	1 mosquito swarm	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 193
45–49	1 moss troll	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 273
50–54	1 ogre	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 220
55–59	1d4 Small ice elementals	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 114
60–64	1 twigjack	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 274
65–69	1d4 wolves	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
70–74	1 gray ooze	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 166
75–79	1 mandragora	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 185
80–84	1d4 shocker lizards	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 248
85–89	1 yeti	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 287
90–94	1 giant frilled lizard	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 194
95–100	1 polar bear	5	See page 82

sisters Orana, Edyta, and Greta (use the stats for a foot soldier on page 286 of the *GameMastery Guide*) have been working this forest for a few years, and they have snares set throughout the wood. The sisters are paranoid that their unofficial claim on the forest will be violated by poachers, and they grow aggressive toward any strangers who enter the woods—often responding with force before any talk is possible. Those living near the forest have grown afraid to enter because many of the snares are easily large enough to catch a humanoid and hold it fast.

Tavern Tussle (CR 5): No matter how small and calm a tavern is, eventually someone is going to drink too much and misinterpret what a fellow patron just said, and before you know it, tables are knocked over and punches are being thrown. In communities large enough to have a city guard, when a tavern's bouncer can't contain a fight, the guards might get involved. In more rural communities, however, the tavern owner often lets a fight run its course—hoping all involved take their lumps and nurse regret the next morning along with their hangovers. Times have been rough and tensions stretched to their breaking points, so many villagers are deep in their cups. Strangers poking around town always get the regulars suspicious, so any misstep can cause a full-blown bar brawl. Tonight, four surly men (use the stats for a drunkard on page 303 of the *GameMastery Guide*) are more than ready to oblige anyone looking for trouble.




REIGN OF WINTER

ARCTIC ANIMALS

Survival in the extreme cold is difficult for most creatures. Only a few have evolved into apex predators in this harsh climate.

BEAR, POLAR

Red gore stains this bear's muzzle, creating a striking contrast against its white fur.

POLAR BEAR CR 5   

N Large animal
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)
hp 52 (5d8+30)
Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee bite +9 (1d8+7), 2 claws +9 (1d6+7 plus grab)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 17, **Con** 23, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +11 (+15 grapple); **CMD** 24 (28 vs. trip)
Feats Endurance, Run, Skill Focus (Survival)
Skills Perception +8, Survival +8, Swim +19; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Swim

ECOLOGY

Environment cold coastlines and plains
Organization solitary or pair
Treasure none

Polar bears swim along frigid coasts and wander



icy plains looking for prey. They often eat seals plucked from holes in the ice, but will attack any creature when desperate or provoked. Unlike most animals, polar bears show little fear, and can be dangerous scavengers around arctic settlements. They can easily avoid conflict by plunging into the icy waters, which they often do instead of engaging every threat. A polar bear's blubber gives it buoyancy, and its long neck keeps its head above water. Oversized paws with webbed toes propel it along steadily, and a polar bear can swim over 100 miles in a single day.

Some arctic clans hunt polar bears as a significant source of food, and use the furs and bones for clothes and vital tools. Many of these cultures hold the bears sacred, and honor their deaths with rituals and ceremonies. Polar bears live, on average, 15–20 years, but arctic peoples have known individual bears that lived as long as 40 years. One of the largest animal predators to stalk the ice, an adult male polar bear can weigh 800 to 1,200 pounds, with females weighing 350 to 650 pounds.

WEASEL, GIANT

This massive weasel moves smoothly across the ground, almost slithering like a snake, before pouncing with teeth bared.

GIANT WEASEL CR 3   

XP 800
N Large animal
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)
hp 34 (4d8+16)
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +6 (1d8+4 plus attach and bleed), 2 claws +6 (1d6+4)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Special Attacks bleed (1d4)

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. trip)
Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Stealthy
Skills Climb +16, Escape Artist +5, Perception +8, Stealth +5,

BESTIARY

Survival +2 (+6 when tracking by scent); **Racial Modifiers**
+4 Survival when tracking by scent

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

The weasel family includes a long list of common mammals such as ferrets, minks, ermines, polecats, and stoats. All of them, on rare occasions, produce giant varieties. Opportunistic carnivores, weasels prefer their food live, or at least fresh. To maintain their high metabolism they must consume close to 40% of their body weight per day, so giant weasels hunt a wide variety of creatures. Though generally fearful of sentient creatures, giant weasels aggressively protect their territory.

Weasels fight by attaching themselves to their foes with their sharp incisors and then ripping open their victims' flesh with teeth and claws. Using this tactic, giant weasels can take down large animals, such as elk and moose, and attack other predators if they can take them by surprise.

Weasels can be found in almost any climate, from jungles to the arctic. Exceptional climbers, they are equally at ease moving overland or scrambling up rocky cliffs, and can even swim if necessary. Giant weasels make their homes in abandoned dens and burrows, and often bring back fur from their prey to line nests. Most weasels mate in the spring and give birth to litters of four to 10 young in the early summer.

Giant weasels' coats range from red to brown and sometimes gray; their underbellies are usually a lighter color, often white. They also exhibit a wide variety of markings ranging from stripes to masks, and some molt during the winter, producing a pure white coat. The proportion of the head and jaw varies among various subspecies. During mating season and when frightened, weasels release a pungent musk. Though it's offensive to most creatures, it's not debilitating like a skunk's musk.

In folk tales and among hunters and trappers, weasels have a reputation for being exceptionally clever. Elders warn of giant weasels making off with human children, just as small weasels steal the eggs of birds. Giant weasels grow to up to 9 feet in length from nose to the base of their tails, which can grow to almost the length of their bodies. They weigh upward of 300 pounds.

Giant Weasel Companions

Starting Statistics: **Size** Medium; **Speed** 40 ft.; **AC** +1 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d6), 2 claws (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 13, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11; **Special Qualities** low-light vision, scent

7th-Level Advancement: **Size** Large; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Attack** bite (1d8), 2 claws (1d6); **Ability Scores** Str +8, Dex -2, Con +4; **Special Attacks** attach

WOLF, TIMBER

A chilling chorus of howls echoes through the air as a massive, white-furred wolf emerges.

TIMBER WOLF

CR 2



XP 600

N Medium animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 17 (2d8+8)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d6+4 plus trip)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 19, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18 (22 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Survival when tracking by scent

ECOLOGY

Environment cold forest or mountains

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–20)

Treasure none

Timber wolves range in color from white to gray to pitch black. The largest males can weigh 175 pounds. Timber wolves typically have longer legs and bigger paws to help traverse the difficult terrain in which they live. More importantly, their proportionally larger heads, held up by powerful neck muscles, allow them to drag down sizable herd animals.

Hunts begin with a communal howl to unite the pack. They chase their prey over vast distances—sometimes over 50 miles—wearing prey down with fear and exhaustion. Using jaws capable of crushing bones and snapping spines, several timber wolves at a time might latch on to a victim and drag it to the ground. Their speed and pack instincts let them use coordinated attacks, flanking, and hit-and-run maneuvers.

Group howling helps bind the pack together. The howls can be used for calling the pack to the hunt, determining the location of other pack members, communicating food sources, and even determining social order. Howls can be heard over vast distances and help establish a pack's territory, which averages 350 square miles.

The power and majesty of timber wolves inspire many sentient races. For civilized folk, the wolf has come to embody a primitive evil, often playing the role of a villain in fairy tales. This has earned the animal an undeserved reputation for aggression. Among northern peoples, the wolf symbolizes strength and prowess in battle. Many tribes revere wolf totems, and some even claim in their folklore to be originally descended from wolves.

REIGN OF WINTER

FROST FIR

The faint scent of pine sap accompanies this vaguely tree-shaped creature, which stands on two towering trunklike legs. Its arms resemble the branches of a snow-laden conifer.

FROST FIR

CR 1



XP 400

NE Medium plant (cold)

Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +5



DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 natural)

hp 15 (2d8+6)

Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1

DR 2/slashing; Immune cold, plant traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +3 (1d6+3 plus sticky resin)

Special Attacks sticky resin

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 9

Base Atk +1; CMB +3 (+5 disarm, grapple and steal); CMD 13

Feats Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate)^B

Skills Intimidate +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6 (+12 in forests);

Racial Modifiers +2 Stealth (+6 in forests)

Languages Sylvan, Treant

SQ freeze

ECOLOGY

Environment cold and temperate forests

Organization solitary, pair, stand (3–6), or grove (7–12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sticky Resin (Ex) A frost fir's bark

constantly exudes a sticky resin that aids its combat maneuvers and natural attacks. The resin grants a

frost fir a +2 circumstance bonus on all disarm, grapple, and steal combat maneuvers, as well as on saving throws against effects that cause it to drop something it is holding. Any creature that is damaged by a frost fir's slam attack, deals damage to a frost fir with a

natural weapon or unarmed attack, or otherwise touches a frost fir (including with a grapple maneuver), must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or be coated with the frost fir's sticky resin. A creature affected by this resin takes a –2 penalty on all attack rolls and concentration checks (penalties from multiple contacts do not stack). Any enemy grappled by a frost fir takes a –2 penalty on attempts to break the grapple and to escape using the Escape Artist skill. Strong alcohol, universal solvent, or any amount of fire damage dealt to a creature coated in resin removes the resin. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Little known outside the colder climes and higher elevations of the world, the malevolent tree creatures known as frost firs keep to themselves and disdain any who intrude upon their forested realms. Prevailing theories among scholars suggest the species descended from treants long ago, a derivative offshoot with an exclusive affinity for evergreen trees. But despite sharing a common language, frost firs actually disdain treants, citing philosophical differences. This revelation has caused

BESTIARY

others to posit that frost firs originated as an entirely separate species, born of the enigmatic First World where plants walk and speak as freely as other creatures.

The grim-minded frost firs are as cold and impassive as the windswept ice and rocks they call home. They care little for other creatures or societies, keeping their distance at all times and actively driving away any who dare to approach their groves during a reproductive cycle. Frost firs also have an especial hatred for those who create or rely upon open flames for warmth. Northern travelers often tell tales of frost fir attacks on their caravans, usually initiated with a smothering, snowy assault on any campfires. These attacks always come at night, and the frost firs never relent until such interlopers completely withdraw from their lands.

Frost firs make staunch combatants, specializing in stealthy forms of guerrilla warfare. They often utilize pit traps to capture the unwary, or draw their victims into ambushes facilitated by their ability to appear as normal trees. After grappling and pinning opponents, frost firs often take them prisoner and escort them back to a frost fir grove to be butchered and used to fertilize the soil for frost fir young. Frost firs craft any remaining bones into crude trophies and gruesome signposts marking their territory and warning away others. As a result, few species treat with frost firs, and any act of Diplomacy with them automatically faces a starting attitude of unfriendly.

ECOLOGY

Frost firs have no individual gender and reproduce asexually, developing both male and female cones that grow along their inner limbs near their thin torsos. The male cones produce pollen for the female cones, which close and gestate for a full year before the seeds are ready to sprout. To facilitate this process, frost firs often stand together on high outcroppings or in windswept passes during an especially reverent period they call Highwind. This allows a maximized sharing of pollen between multiple members of a grove, though a single frost fir can create its own offspring. Indeed, many groves have sprung from a lone frost fir capable of creating as many as six seed cones in a single reproductive cycle. Such progenitors often earn the title of Elder Fir among their own kind, which carries a significant status when representing the grove in external matters (see below).

Once a frost fir's fertilized cones fully mature, it clears an area of sacred ground, removing any residual snow or ice so it can plant its seedlings. Groves often band together to share in the responsibility of protecting these offspring, and aggressively defend such plots from intruders. Frost fir seedlings grow much like sprouting evergreen trees for their first two years, incapable of moving and sustained primarily by nourishment derived from the soil and sun. Caretakers of these seedlings refer to this time as the

FROST FIRS IN ALCHEMY

Some alchemists prize frost firs for their sticky resin and easily combustible branches. When used as a component in manufacturing tanglefoot bags, a frost fir's resin increases the DC of the bag's Reflex save by 2 and extends the duration of the goo's entangling effect by 1 round. Frost fir resin can also aid in the crafting of tindertwigs, reducing the Craft DC from 20 to 15 and cutting the raw material cost in half.

Loaming, and they often place carrion or other organic detritus around the grove to better fertilize the frigid soil and encourage more rapid growth. Some even hunt living creatures to ensure a supply of carcasses for this effort.

Following 2 years of sustained growth, a young frost fir finally becomes ambulatory enough to join the rest of the grove as a contributing member. Its lifespan extends about 50 years thereafter, and it can bear offspring for only about half that time. Occasionally, a frost fir's development remains stunted during the Loaming process and it fails to uproot itself. Such a child continues to grow as a regular evergreen tree, but never gains sentience. The frost firs often revisit sites where these trees grow to mourn their loss.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Frost firs form communal groves of no more than 12 members at a time, banding together until their numbers grow large enough for a group to separate and establish a new grove. They always make their homes in colder climes where other creatures are less plentiful, choosing the most inhospitable conditions in an effort to further deter intruders. Most frost firs prefer to keep their groves small to attract less attention, and purposefully separate into multiple groves to maximize the survival chances of their species. Only in times of great conflict do multiple groves join forces. Such gatherings have given rise to legends of entire forests disappearing or growing up from an empty field overnight—usually followed by great devastation visited upon whatever stirred up the frost firs' ire.

Within frost fir society, Elder Firs carry a high degree of respect between groves, serving as representatives not only among their own kind, but also to the outside world. They coordinate reproductive cycles with other frost firs to replenish any losses a grove endures, and guide the decision-making regarding the establishment of new groves. Sometimes they grow larger than the other members of the grove, gaining the giant template while taking class levels in druid. Such leaders always select the Plant domain for their nature bond. Elder Firs who obtain the thousand faces class ability use the guises of Medium humanoids to spy upon and interact with nearby settlements to ensure no one encroaches on their lands.




REIGN OF WINTER

HOUSE SPIRITS

These sometimes-helpful fey creatures bind themselves to rural families and live among them. Some bear a resemblance to the family's ancestors, a similarity that grows more obvious the longer they are in the family's service. House spirits use their compression ability and invisibility to stay out of the sight of those they live among.

DOMOVOI

Barely knee high, this small creature looks like a hairy old man who is mostly beard.




Domovoi	CR 3	  
XP 800		
CG Tiny fey		
Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +7		
DEFENSE		
AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +2 size)		
hp 27 (5d6+10)		
Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5		
DR 5/cold iron; SR 14		
OFFENSE		
Speed 20 ft.		
Melee club +4 (1d3)		
Special Attacks telekinesis		
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +7)		
At will— <i>invisibility</i> , <i>lullaby</i> (DC 12), <i>mage hand</i> , <i>mending</i> , <i>prestidigitation</i>		
3/day— <i>reduce person</i> (DC 13), <i>sleep</i> (DC 13)		
1/week— <i>augury</i>		
STATISTICS		
Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 15		
Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 13		
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility		
Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +17		
Languages Common, Sylvan		
SQ change shape (cat or dog; <i>beast form I</i>), compression		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any land		
Organization solitary or gathering (2–6)		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Telekinesis (Su) A domovoi defends itself and its home through telekinesis. This ability functions as the spell <i>telekinesis</i> , usable at will, with a caster level equal to the domovoi's Hit Dice (CL 5 for most domovoi). A typical domovoi has a ranged attack roll of +5 when using telekinesis to hurl objects or creatures, and can use the ability on objects weighing up to 50 pounds. If a domovoi attempts to hurl a creature with this ability, that creature can resist the effect with a successful DC 14 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based.		

The work never ends for those who live on farms or in small villages, and the wise often seek the aid of the fey-folk while pursuing their daily chores. A family might leave a piece of bread under the stove or an old boot in the closet to attract a domovoi to their home. Domovoi help with small tasks like churning butter and mending clothes, but mostly protect the home from intruders and misfortune.

A domovoi appears as small, old man no more than 2 feet high, covered in hair and with a long, shaggy beard. These helpful fey can also tell the fate of the family they protect, but grow annoyed when asked to do so too often.

DVOROVOI

A wild mop of hair tops this small humanoid creature's head. It has prominent, gleaming eyes, and a toothy grin.

Dvorovoi	CR 4	  
XP 1,200		
CN Small fey		
Init +3; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +9		
DEFENSE		
AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)		
hp 38 (7d6+14)		
Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +6		
DR 5/cold iron; SR 15		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft.		
Melee pitchfork +6 (1d8+3)		
Ranged pitchfork +7 (1d8+3)		
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9)		
Constant— <i>Speak with animals</i>		
At will— <i>charm animal</i> (DC 14), <i>hide from animals</i> , <i>invisibility</i>		
3/day— <i>break</i> ^{APG} (DC 14), <i>reduce person</i> (DC 14)		
1/day— <i>entangle</i> (DC 14)		
STATISTICS		
Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 16		
Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 17		
Feats Catch Off-Guard, Combat Reflexes, Throw Anything, Two-Handed Thrower ^{UC}		
Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +13, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +9, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +16, Survival +3; Racial Modifiers +4 Handle Animal		
Languages Common, Sylvan; <i>Speak with animals</i>		
SQ compression, oversized weapons, wild empathy +18		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any land		
Organization solitary or gathering (2–6)		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Oversized Weapons (Ex) A dvorovoi can wield weapons sized for Medium creatures without penalty.		
Wild Empathy (Ex) This ability works like the druid ability of the same name. The dvorovoi's total bonus includes a +8 racial bonus.		




BESTIARY

Just as the domovoi protect the home, the dvorovoi protect a villager's yard and pasture. Some farmers try to lure dvorovoi to their farmsteads by leaving an offering of bread, sheep's wool, or shiny trinkets. When the owner of a farmstead with a dvorovoi purchases a new animal, he leads it through the yard to introduce it to the dvorovoi, hoping to gain the fey creature's approval of the new livestock.

Though undeniably useful to have around for feeding the cattle and keeping predators away from flocks, dvorovoi can be capricious. Dvorovoi despise any white animal, and will never tolerate a white-furred horse or cow in their presence. For unknown reasons, dvorovoi doesn't hold this same grudge toward white chickens.

OVINNIK

Covered in sleek black fur, this vaguely feline humanoid holds flickering flames in its clawed hand.

OVINNIK	CR 2			
XP 600				
CN Tiny fey				
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +9				
DEFENSE				
AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)				
hp 22 (4d6+8)				
Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +6				
DR 2/cold iron; Resist fire 5				
OFFENSE				
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.				
Melee 2 claws +7 (1d3+1)				
Special Attacks luck touch, sneak attack +1d6				
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +7) At will— <i>daze</i> (DC 13), <i>produce flame</i> 1/month— <i>divination</i>				
STATISTICS				
Str 12, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 16				
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14				
Feats Go Unnoticed ^{APG} , Weapon Finesse				
Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +9, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +9, Stealth +18				
Languages Common, Sylvan				
SQ compression				
ECOLOGY				
Environment any land				
Organization solitary				
Treasure none				
SPECIAL ABILITIES				
Luck Touch (Su) With a claw attack or touch attack, an ovinnik can alter a creature's luck. If the target fails a DC 14 Will save, it either gains a +4 bonus or takes a -4 penalty				

(ovinnik's choice) on its next three d20 rolls. The target can choose to automatically fail the saving throw, but must choose before it knows whether the touch will be beneficial or harmful. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ovinniks make their homes in granaries and drying houses. These thin, sleek, black-furred humanoids stand only a foot high. Their eyes and features seem catlike, but they bark like dogs to scare away thieves. No one knows why an ovinnik chooses to take up residence in a particular farm's threshing house, and few would call on them willingly. A wise farmer placates resident ovinniks with frequent gifts of warm milk, pancakes, or dead roosters. By tradition, before the new year farmers and their families go to the granary to learn their fates for the coming year. The ovinnik touches each of them in turn. If the touch is warm, the person will have good luck; if cold, she will suffer terrible misfortune in the days ahead.



B.METHENEY

REIGN OF WINTER

WITCHCROW

With a raucous cry and a flurry of feathered wings, this jet-black bird takes to the air, an unnatural gleam in its otherworldly eyes.

WITCHCROW

CR 1



XP 400

CE Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*, low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 13 (3d10-3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee 2 talons +4 (1d3-1)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +4; save DCs are Intelligence-based)

Constant—*detect magic*, *speak with animals* (birds only)

3/day—*perceive cues*^{APG}, *vanish*^{APG}, *ventriloquism* (DC 12)

1/day—*ill omen*^{APG}, *mirror image*

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3 (+5 steal); **CMD** 12 (14 vs. steal)

Feats Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack^B, Improved Steal

Skills Fly +15, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +11, Spellcraft +3, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Sleight of Hand

Languages Aklo, Common; *speak with animals* (birds only)

ECOLOGY

Environment cold and temperate forests and plains

Organization solitary, pair, covey (3-12), or murder (13-30)

Treasure standard

GREATER WITCHCROW

CR 3



XP 800

CE Small magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*, low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

hp 32 (5d10+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee 2 talons +7 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks hexes^{APG} (cackle, evil eye [-2, 6 rounds], misfortune [1 round])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +8; save DCs are Intelligence-based)

Constant—*detect magic*, *speak with animals* (birds only)

3/day—*perceive cues*^{APG}, *vanish*^{APG}, *ventriloquism* (DC 14)

1/day—*ill omen*^{APG}, *mirror image*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5 (+7 steal); **CMD** 19 (21 vs. steal)

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Flyby Attack^B, Improved Steal

Skills Bluff +5, Fly +15, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Perception +9, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +12, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +15;

Racial Modifiers +8 Sleight of Hand

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Auran, Common; *speak with animals* (birds only)

SQ apportation

ECOLOGY

Environment cold and temperate forests and plains

Organization solitary, pair, covey (3-12), or murder (13-30)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Apportation (Su) In large enough groupings (such as a murder), greater witchcrows can perform a cooperative form of magic once per day to open a glowing ring in one place leading to somewhere else on the planet. This always entails a raucous aerial ritual, usually centered on those that wish to make use of this ability. The ritual functions like a *teleportation circle* (CL 17th), except it requires 1 minute of uninterrupted casting time, the circle doesn't need to be placed on a horizontal surface, and it is not invisible or hard to detect. After coming into existence, the edges of the circle glow and the effect stays in place for 1 minute. Most witchcrows loathe using this power, but some offer it as a service to those in need of quick travel, demanding a high price for such assistance—usually something in the bargainer's possession that is cherished, extremely valuable, and almost always magical.

Hexes (Su) A greater witchcrow uses hexes as a 5th-level witch. Invariably, these abilities include the cackle, evil eye, and misfortune hexes, and require a successful DC 15 Will save to negate or resist. Witchcrow cackling proves especially unnerving as it sounds like extremely mocking cawing.

The dreaded witchcrow, renowned as a harbinger of ill deeds and misfortune, preys on the weak and spies on the unwary. Clever, manipulative, and avaricious in the extreme, these foul birds have no conscience and know no fear. Witchcrows strive to steal not only victims' most cherished possessions, but their hopes and dreams as well. They delight in bringing anguish, sowing doubt even as they feign friendly advice designed to tear down alliances, dupe the gullible, and compromise the virtuous. Despite their deceptive nature, witchcrows can also hold valuable information—or come by such if paid to retrieve it.

Witchcrows value arcane magic above all else, not simply as practitioners—the birds certainly have their

BESTIARY

own innate talent for witchcraft—but also as collectors. In exchange for their services or valuable information, witchcrows trade for scrolls, potions, and other lesser magic items. Even if such items go unoffered, an intense covetous streak drives witchcrows to pilfer these things if they sense them among a bargainer's possessions. Often, they single out arcane casters as targets for thievery, closing on casters from a distance with their *vanish* ability and executing flyby attacks to snatch away any baubles they desire. They carry such loot back to their nests to proudly share stories of their daring raids under the preening adulation of their peers. Prolonged spellcasting (casting spells with a casting time greater than 1 round) often attracts witchcrows in the area. They stalk spellcasters in groups, watching for opportunities to steal from them.

ECOLOGY

Legends claim the first witchcrows spawned in the Dimension of Dreams—hatched from corrupted eggs nurtured by night hags and released onto other planes to carry out misdeeds. Whether this tale is true or not, these birds often keep company with hags. They sometimes treat with more powerful magical beings as messengers, spies, or informants, traveling in groups for mutual protection. Each covey or murder also follows a migratory pattern, moving between sites of power and areas of unusual magic.

Greater witchcrows not only hoard arcane items, but also are dependent on them for reproduction, siphoning away subtle emanations of magical power to aid their gestation process. The likelihood of an egg hatching into a greater witchcrow increases in direct correlation to the time it spends in close proximity to such items. As a result, female witchcrows are much more active in stealing arcane objects for their nests and aggressively fend off rivals to retain any treasure in their possession. Witchcrows can lay a clutch of up to five eggs every year and remain fertile throughout their entire adult lifespan—approximately 20 to 30 years.

As a greater witchcrow nears the end of its life, it experiences an unusual phenomenon called the Dreaming, in which it enters a fugue state lasting nearly a week. During this time, it molts and meditates as it comes to terms with the end of its life and attempts to pinpoint its final resting place. Usually, this is a place it particularly enjoyed in the past. Once the bird determines the location and fixates on it, the remaining members of its group invoke their apportionment to send it there as its life's reward. Thereafter, the others argue and bicker over any magic items left behind by the elder witchcrow.



HABITAT & SOCIETY

Witchcrows have an affinity for colder climes, and often masquerade as normal crows living in the fields and forests near the civilized settlements of other creatures. They particularly seek out magical societies where they can gain greater access to arcane items. On Golarion, this makes witchcrows most prevalent in Irrisen, where they've developed a terrible reputation—enough so that the witches of Irrisen (and the people they rule) both fear and revile the birds, marking them for destruction whenever they find them.

In witchcrow society, greater witchcrows always establish dominance over their lesser kin, rising to lead large congregations of the malicious birds and shepherding them from one habitat to another. Witchcrows always mutually support one another even as they compete for the same resources, following a strict social hierarchy that aggrandizes the most successful thieves among them. Leaders of any given covey collect and dispense the spoils of their activities, assigning arcane treasures to the strongest of their kind during mating season. Those witchcrows that contribute little to the group's success often find themselves with empty nests during these gatherings—or cast out of the flock entirely.

REIGN OF WINTER

WITCH QUEEN OF WORLDS

Spoiler Alert! On these pages you'll find the background and outline for the Reign of Winter Adventure Path. If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! These pages spoil the plot for the upcoming adventures.

For the past 1,400 years, the nation of Irrisen has been blanketed by an unnatural winter—all the doing of the Queen of Witches, Baba Yaga. Once she captured the realm, she left Golarion, placing her daughter on Irrisen's throne to rule for 100 years. Each century since, Baba Yaga has returned, removing the reigning queen and the first generation of her descendants, then installing a new daughter before leaving once again.

But Irrisen's current ruler, Queen Elvanna, is unwilling to leave, and has imprisoned Baba Yaga and stolen her *Dancing Hut*. Elvanna seeks to further increase her own power at her mother's expense by enacting rituals that will expand the eternal winter of Irrisen to cover all of Golarion. Unless Baba Yaga is freed and Elvanna is removed from the throne of Irrisen, all of Golarion will be trapped in a supernatural ice age—unless the PCs can use Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* to find the Queen of Witches and save Golarion from an icy grave!

GMs can find more information and tools to aid in running their Reign of Winter campaigns in the following resources: *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter*; *Reign of Winter Item Cards*; *Pathfinder Player Companion: People of the North*; *Reign of Winter Map Folio*; and the *Reign of Winter Player's Guide* (available for free at paizo.com).

THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

By Neil Spicer

Pathfinder Adventure Path #67, Levels 1–4

The adventure begins in the village of Heldren in the nation of Taldor. A blizzard appears out of nowhere, blanketing the nearby woods in snow. The villagers urge the PCs to investigate this unseasonable phenomenon. At the center of this pocket of winter, the PCs find a magical portal to Irrisen, guarded by creatures of cold. After the PCs defeat the portal's guardians, a creature comes through it.

One of Baba Yaga's Three Riders, this figure emerges wounded and dying, and he tells the PCs that Queen Elvanna has captured Baba Yaga. With his dying breath he

pleads for the PCs to find Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* and use it to rescue Baba Yaga, as she is the only one who can defeat her wayward daughter and save Golarion.

After accepting this quest, the PCs venture through the portal to Irrisen, where they meet a local named Nadya Petska on the road. She brings them to her village, but when the Winter Guard arrives in search of the Black Rider, the PCs learn that the source of their troubles lies in the Pale Tower, home to the White Witch Nazhena Vasilliovnna, who rules this part of Irrisen. After the PCs find a way to close the portal, they find themselves stranded in Irrisen's icy grip.



THE SHACKLED HUT

By Jim Groves

Pathfinder Adventure Path #68, Levels 4–7

With the portal to Heldren closed, the PCs travel to Irrisen's capital of Whitethrone in search of the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga*. The PCs make their way to Whitethrone across the supernaturally frozen wilderness of Irrisen with the aid of their friend Nadya Petska, a guide from the village of Waldsby. Arriving at the capital, the PCs discover the city is under martial law, and as foreigners, they must sneak in.

Nadya introduces the PCs to a relative, who is actually a member of the Heralds of Summer's Return—an underground resistance group of Ulfen nationalists fighting against both the White Witches and Irrisen's supernatural winter. To avoid Queen Elvanna's Winter Guard, Nadya's uncle takes the PCs into the city through the Howlings, the district inhabited by Whitethrone's winter wolves.

Once in the city, the PCs meet the leader of the local resistance cell. The revolutionary can tell the PCs where Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* is located, but reaching it will be difficult, as Elvanna has posted numerous guards around the hut. To deal with this problem, the PCs must create a distraction to draw guards away, so they may approach it in relative secrecy.

Once the PCs reach the hut and defeat its guardians, they gain access to it and make their way inside to explore the

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

device. By using the keys given to them by the Black Rider, the PCs claim the *Dancing Hut* and can now follow Baba Yaga's trail.

MAIDEN, MOTHER, CRONE

By Tim Hitchcock

Pathfinder Adventure Path #69, Levels 7–10

After stealing the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga*, the PCs find themselves in the land of Iobaria. The PCs exit the hut only to find the chicken-legged artifact surrounded by an army of frost giants sent by their centaur leader: Vsevolod, a cleric of the demon lord Kostchtchie. Vsevolod knew where the hut would arrive and stationed sentinels there waiting for it to come.

The PCs must make their way to Artrosa, where there are massive monuments known as “The Three Who Watch.” Inside, they encounter allies and guardians left behind by Baba Yaga, as well as a few new inhabitants that have made their way inside.

Vsevolod moved on Artrosa after hearing that Elvanna had captured the hut, and he plans to delve the dungeons within Artrosa in order to steal Baba Yaga's secrets—both to increase his own power and as an offering to the glory of his demonic patron. Through diplomacy, guile, or brute force, the PCs must get the keys to their next location and return to the hut. Once they return to the hut and place the retrieved keys in the cauldron, the PCs are transported to a place far beyond Golarion.

THE FROZEN STARS

By Matt Goodall

Pathfinder Adventure Path #70, Levels 10–13

Though unaware of it at first, the PCs have traveled to the planet of Triaxus, the seventh planet in Golarion's solar system, in the middle of its decades-long winter. They arrive in a region called the Skyfire Mandate, which is guarded by the dragonriders of the famed Dragon Legion. The PCs also learn that they are close to the border with the Drakelands, a land controlled by evil dragons.

From speaking with the Triaxan natives, the PCs learn the current situation: This section of the border is patrolled by dragonriders from the Dragon Legion aerie of Spurhorn, but the fortress is under siege by an army from the Drakelands sent by the white dragon warlord Yrax, Lord of the Howling Storm. Unknown to the Dragon Legion, Yrax is currently amassing an army of barbarians to invade the Skyfire Mandate, and has sent a small portion of his army to besiege Spurhorn and occupy or defeat its dragonriders in preparation for the larger invasion.

What role the PCs take in this conflict is up to them. They can help defend Spurhorn from the Drakelands army in the hope of making a deal with Commander

Pharamol to claim the next key they need, or they could join forces with General Malesinder to attack Spurhorn to get the key. Alternatively, they could try to avoid getting embroiled in the conflict and instead sneak into Spurhorn to steal the key.

RASPUTIN MUST DIE!

By Brandon Hodge

Pathfinder Adventure Path #71, Levels 13–15

While exploring the hut, the PCs find that Baba Yaga's “trail of breadcrumbs” ends—perhaps the PCs have finally caught up to the missing Queen of Witches? The hut has traveled to Earth—our Earth. Specifically, it arrives in Russia, in the year 1918.

Before the PCs can make much effort to discover where they are, however, the *Dancing Hut* sets off through the woods, making long strides with its powerful chicken legs. The hut stops before a large, fortified monastery in the wilds of the Siberia—the fortress of Grigori Rasputin, Baba Yaga's estranged son who helped Elvanna with her plan to capture their mother. The first challenge is getting inside, as Rasputin has recruited soldiers to defend the fortress with trenches, barbed wire, automatic weapons, and mustard gas. Once the PCs break through those defenses, they must explore the fortress's interior, encountering technologically advanced warriors and strange creatures, before they eventually encounter Rasputin himself. The PCs discover Baba Yaga's fate, finding the Queen of Witches imprisoned inside a *matryoshka* doll.

THE WITCH QUEEN'S REVENGE

By Greg A. Vaughan

Pathfinder Adventure Path #72, Levels 15–17

The PCs return to the hut to find a way to free Baba Yaga and confront Elvanna. They must delve deep into the hut until they reach Baba Yaga's inner sanctum. Like removing layers of a nesting doll, the PCs must uncover deeper levels of the hut to reach the center. Throughout their investigation of the various layers, the PCs get glimpses of the life of Baba Yaga, and as they dig deeper, the old crone begins to communicate with her rescuers.

Entering the hut's inner sanctum, the PCs face more guardians, both old ones and those introduced by Queen Elvanna, before discovering that Baba Yaga's imprisonment is tied to Elvanna's own life. As long as Elvanna lives, Baba Yaga remains trapped inside the doll. To free Baba Yaga, the PCs must kill Queen Elvanna. Provided the PCs defeat her, they can stop the ritual and close down the winter portals that have opened throughout Golarion. If they fail, Golarion will soon be blanketed in eternal winter, and Elvanna will rule over all from her icy throne.

NEXT MONTH

THE SHACKLED HUT

by Jim Groves

Now that the PCs have successfully closed the winter portal, the heroes find themselves trapped in the frozen land of Irrisen with an urgent quest—to find Baba Yaga! In order to track down the missing Queen of Witches, the heroes must brave the monster-infested capital city of Whitethrone, where Queen Elvanna has captured the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga* and put it on display in Whitethrone's Market Square. Will gaining possession of this miraculous artifact lead them to the kidnapped Witch Queen, or will they die a cold death at the hands of Irrisen's White Witches?

ECOLOGY OF THE WINTER WOLF

by Russ Taylor

Find out more about the ways and habits of the devious creatures known as winter wolves. Read about their origin on Golarion and the supernatural abilities these lupine beasts employ to hold their place at the top of the food chain.

MILANI

by Sean K Reynolds

Discover the faith of Milani the Everbloom, and see how her followers foment hope and devotion in the form of rebellion and uprising.

AND MORE!

Norret and Orlin experience the bizarre company of young Jadwiga nobles in the second chapter of "The Bonedust Dolls" in the *Pathfinder's Journal*. Plus face down new fey threats and the herald of Milani in the *Pathfinder Bestiary*.

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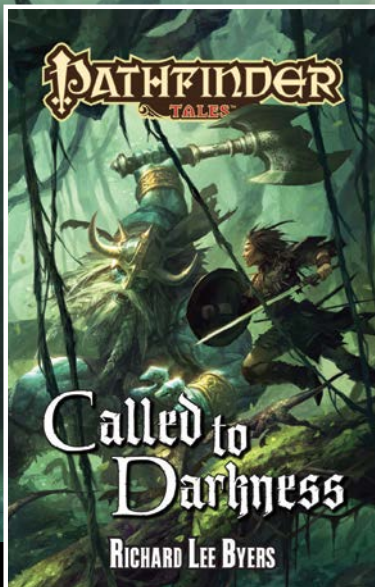
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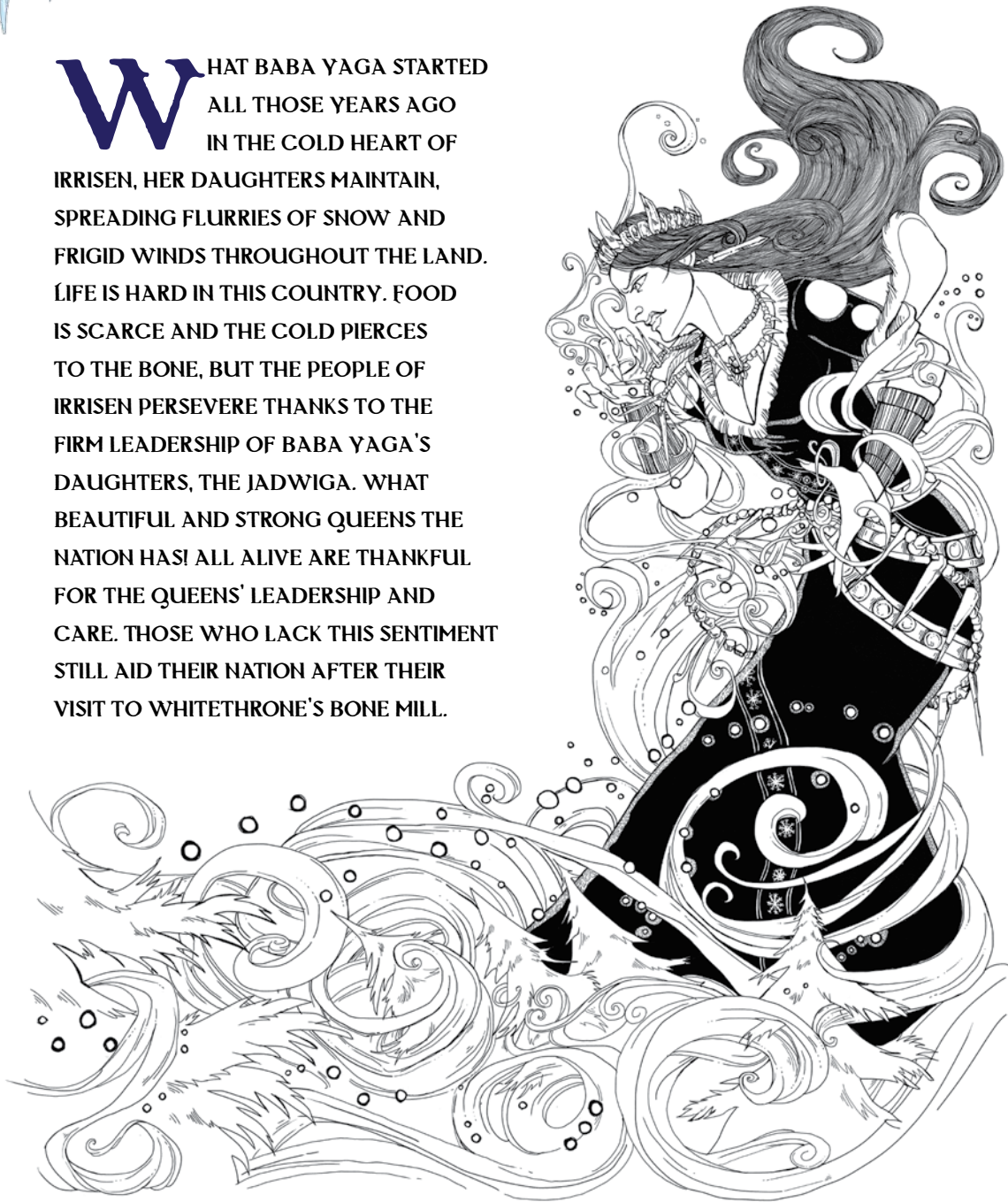
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WHAT BABA YAGA STARTED ALL THOSE YEARS AGO IN THE COLD HEART OF IRRISEN, HER DAUGHTERS MAINTAIN, SPREADING FLURRIES OF SNOW AND FRIGID WINDS THROUGHOUT THE LAND. LIFE IS HARD IN THIS COUNTRY. FOOD IS SCARCE AND THE COLD PIERCES TO THE BONE, BUT THE PEOPLE OF IRRISEN PERSEVERE THANKS TO THE FIRM LEADERSHIP OF BABA YAGA'S DAUGHTERS, THE JADWIGA. WHAT BEAUTIFUL AND STRONG QUEENS THE NATION HAS! ALL ALIVE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE QUEENS' LEADERSHIP AND CARE. THOSE WHO LACK THIS SENTIMENT STILL AID THEIR NATION AFTER THEIR VISIT TO WHITETHRONE'S BONE MILL.



UNSEASONABLE COLD

The Reign of Winter Adventure Path begins with an exciting new adventure from RPG Superstar winner Neil Spicer! Every 100 years, the Witch Queen Baba Yaga returns to the nation of Irrisen to place a new daughter on the throne, but this time, something has gone wrong. Far to the south, winter cloaks the forest near the village of Heldren with summer snows. The heroes venture into the wood and discover a magical portal to the frozen land of Irrisen, whose supernatural winter will soon engulf all of Golarion unless they can discover the fate of the otherworldly witch Baba Yaga—a quest that will take them through snowbound Irrisen to even stranger lands beyond.

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- A look into Irrisen’s legacies and mysteries GMs can use for this campaign, written and compiled by Rob McCreary.
- An alchemist’s journey to Irrisen’s capital of Whitethrone in the Pathfinder’s Journal, by Kevin Andrew Murphy.
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