


PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH[™]

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

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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