

REIGN OF WINTER



KOSTCHTCHIE

KOSTCHTCHIE (KOSH-TIK-TI-KAI), ALSO KNOWN AS THE DEATHLESS FROST, IS AN IMMORTAL WARLORD TURNED DEMON, A DEFORMED GIANT COLDLY BURNING WITH A LONG-AWAITING REVENGE. TRANSFORMED BY BABA YAGA INTO THE VERY THING HE HATED MOST AFTER DELIVERING AN ULTIMATUM TO THE QUEEN OF WITCHES, HE NOW RALLIES GIANTS TO HIS BANNER AND PLANS FOR THE DAY HE CAN DEFEAT HIS WITCH ARCHNEMESIS AND RECLAIM THE HIDDEN FRAGMENT OF HIS SOUL. HE IS A BRUTAL TYRANT, CONSUMED BY HATE AGAINST WITCHES AND BURNING WITH VENGEANCE AGAINST ALL WHO WRONG HIM.

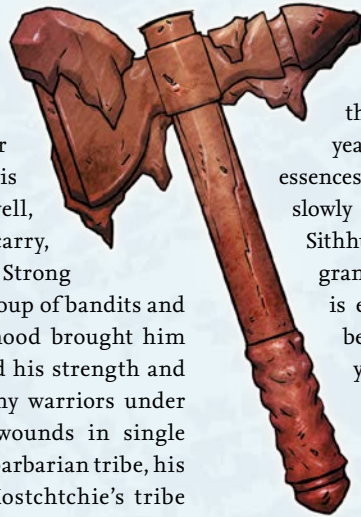
KOSTCHTCHIE

Born to Ulfen parents in Old Iobaria, Kostchtchie was raised in a household where the men ruled and women were little more than slaves. As a disease called the Choking Plague decimated the country, Kostchtchie's father found solace in drinking, and when the drunkard's wife accidentally spilled his last keg, he flew into a stumbling rage. Too drunk to sate his anger, the man ordered Kostchtchie to murder his mother in punishment for the mishap, and then his sisters when they tried to stop him. After carrying out his grim deed, Kostchtchie felt nothing but contempt at his father for being too drunk and weak to do his own killing, so he murdered him as well, gathered what few valuables he could carry, and left to make his own way in life. Strong and cunning for his age, he joined a group of bandits and eventually came to lead them. Adulthood brought him handsomeness and power, and he used his strength and charismatic good looks to gather many warriors under him. When he survived incredible wounds in single combat against the leader of an enemy barbarian tribe, his tribe dubbed him "the Deathless." Kostchtchie's tribe controlled a large territory in the aftermath of the Choking Plague, warring with other tribes, raiding cities, and battling giants, Kostchtchie's most hated foes, whenever they dared leave their mountain homes.

As he grew older, Kostchtchie the Deathless began to fear infirmity, disease, and death. Hearing rumors of a powerful witch called Baba Yaga living in a nearby forest, he hand-picked a small army of his best men and sought her out. When he found her, he issued her an ultimatum: grant him immortality, or he would destroy her with his army. The witch agreed to his terms, but since Baba Yaga almost always puts her own twist on requests, she granted his wish at a great price. She made him immortal, but transformed him into a deformed giant—meeting his price by giving him the form he hated most. As Kostchtchie twitched and spasmed with the pain of the transformation, she plucked out a fragment of his soul, placed it in a torc, and hid the torc away. She commanded his army to drag their misshapen leader from her sight and never return. Kostchtchie fled his people as soon as he could stand again, loathing his new form and ashamed that his people would see him brought so low. Shunning all humankind, he found a portal to the Abyss. After wandering for decades, he reached the frozen realm of Jhuvumirak and defeated its master, the demon lord

Sithhud, claiming the realm for himself. As word of the immortal demon-giant spread throughout the planes and the mortal realm, many frost giant priests turned to worship the aggressive Kostchtchie the Deathless Frost instead of their often-slumbering god, Thremyr.

Kostchtchie is unusual for a demon lord in that he was neither a qliploth nor a dead soul that advanced from sin-bloated larva to greater demon to demon lord. He never died a mortal death, and the immortality granted to him by Baba Yaga allowed him to bypass the normal process through which evil souls become demons. Over years of living in the Abyss and absorbing the essences of that plane and his slain foes, Kostchtchie slowly transformed into a demon, and the defeat of Sithhud transformed him into a demon lord able to grant spells to his followers. As a demon lord, he is effectively immortal and ageless; he can only be destroyed by violence. Kostchtchie is very young for a demon lord, having spent less than 2 millennia in that role, and less than a century as a mortal. He is thus very cautious in dealing with other demon lords, suspicious of their greater experience and strange plans that may



THE DEATHLESS FROST GATHERS POWER IN THE
FORTRESS-REALM OF JHUVUMIRAK, WAITING FOR
THE DAY HE INVOKES VENGEANCE UPON THE
WITCH BABA YAGA.

~THE TALE OF THE DEATHLESS FROST

predate his own existence. At the same time, he considers himself superior to them, for he was once a human and ascended to such power without dying.

Kostchtchie is driven by two things: desire and revenge. He desperately wants the torc containing the missing piece of his soul, fearing that whoever holds it may be the key to his undoing, and hoping that he could use it to remove his deformities. He rightfully blames Baba Yaga for his deformities, and believes that perhaps only she can reverse the transformation—and if she refuses, killing her may reverse the spell anyway. As a human, he believed women were good only for breeding. As a demon, he has no need to reproduce, and has stoked his ages-old contempt into a burning hatred of women—with Baba Yaga as the tinder that fed that ember into a flame.

With his worshipers, Kostchtchie is brusque but fair. Whether worshipers are true spellcasters or creatures granted power through the Demonic Obedience feat (see Obedience and Boons), he gives them much leeway in using his magic, knowing he can make demands for specific tasks if necessary under threat of withholding that power. If a worshiper dies in his service, its soul becomes a larva in his realm and he may make further use of it. The only restriction he places upon his worshipers is the order to follow his commandments (see Commandments). Though

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he originated on Golarion, he has worshipers on other worlds, and therefore his priests rarely gain his undivided attention. Prayers to him are usually answered by demonic proxies (see Planar Allies), though if a tribal chieftain becomes a priest Kostchtchie makes an effort to speak directly to him from time to time as a sign of his favor.

As the demon lord of revenge, Kostchtchie expects his followers to avenge any slights against them. Since he is unable to strike directly against Baba Yaga, he commands his worshipers to hurt her by proxy, attacking her minions, children, and lackeys, especially in the land of Irrisen. Most of his followers are more at home in the cold than the heat, and he teaches that the dark powers granted by obedience to him will eventually blanket the world in frost, allowing his faithful even more territory to conquer and pillage. He despises any intelligent creature smaller than a human, including dwarves, gnomes, and halflings, calling them “rat-filth” and deeming them unworthy of even being slaves.

Kostchtchie appears as an immense, deformed frost giant with twisted legs, tiny white eyes, and a thick matted beard into which are woven dozens of skulls. These skulls are trophies he took from people he killed, especially mortal kings and priests of rival faiths. He always carries his adamantite warhammer, a weapon too huge for even the strongest frost giant to lift without difficulty, but he wields it with ease. In art, he is shown as an immense giant with skulls in his beard and carrying a warhammer; some depictions show only his head and beard, tangled with skulls, accompanied by an image of his hammer.

When Kostchtchie is pleased, weapons deal additional cold damage (as if temporarily becoming *frost* or *icy burst* weapons), enemies slip on ice or their weapons break, and pet dogs and wolves give birth to snow-white pups that grow up to be winter wolves. When Kostchtchie is angry, even minor wounds bleed freely, beards become tangled, and firstborn sons are afflicted with fits and warped bones.

Kostchtchie is chaotic evil, and his portfolio is cold, giants, and revenge. His weapon is the warhammer, and his symbol is an ice-caked, rune-carved warhammer. His domains are Chaos, Evil, Strength, and War. His faith is common in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, the Crown of the World, and Iobaria, primarily among monstrous creatures, though some scattered barbarian tribes praise him as their battle-god. His priests are adepts, clerics, or rangers.

Many worshipers of Kostchtchie are frost giants, but ettins, hill giants, ice trolls, ogres, and human barbarians in cold lands pay him service (as does the occasional white dragon). They are ruthless and violent, and use their power to oppress females in the tribe (even trolls, who are normally matriarchal, tend to follow this family structure). Prone to violent outbursts and revenge plots in response to even the smallest insults and slights, they listen much and say little for fear of giving a rival an excuse to attack.

Services to the Deathless Frost usually involve sacrificing a victim, either as part of an obedience (see Obedience and Boons) or simply by piercing or crushing the sacrifice’s chest with ice, either slowly or quickly depending on the temperament of the priest and whether or not the victim is a witch. In giant tribes, the sacrifice is usually eaten afterward, though this practice is rare in humanoid cults. Episodes from Kostchtchie’s tale are sung during the ritual, and music accompanies it in the form of percussion (usually banging on a shield), a panpipe, or a simple harp (with strings made from the gut of an earlier sacrifice).

Given the demon lord’s brutality and ruthlessness, his followers have little interest in love and affection. Instead, they create blood-oaths between allied males, such as actual siblings, a father and son or nephew, or comrades-in-arms. This is a promise sworn in Kostchtchie’s name to pursue vengeance if one oath-brother is killed or shamed and unable to do it himself.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Few tribes have the interest or resources to create a separate building just for worship. In most cases, the common hall or cave has an alcove that functions as the center of worship; a dedicated temple follows this arrangement. A shrine may be as plain as a simple runestone, or may have elaborate carvings and sculptures (either in ice or stone) and be surrounded by carved wooden, bone, gemstone, or ivory offerings. The need to make blood sacrifice on snow-covered ground means most tribes have an altar outside, typically an upright stone or pole to which a victim can be tied. In tribes that have changed from worshiping Thremyr (the original frost giant god) to Kostchtchie, converting the altar area is a simple matter of adorning the carvings with skulls and carving a hammer, as both entities are depicted as bearded giants.

A PRIEST’S ROLE

A priest’s main task is to convert others to the worship of Kostchtchie, either through threats or rewards. He must follow the god’s three commandments (see below) but for the most part is left to his own discretion as to how to further the god’s agenda of vengeance and the advancement of giant-kind. A priest may seek leadership in a tribe, or be more comfortable advising the chief from a position of security. The priest’s involvement is critical in the tribe’s plans, even if those plans only involve when and where to make raids. Rather than emphasizing healing and defense, a priest primarily uses his magic to augment his power and that of key members of the tribe. Dominant priests usually have ranks in Intimidate; manipulative ones usually have ranks in Bluff.

Daily tasks for a priest are usually no different than for any other male in the tribe, except on days when a

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sacrifice occurs, which requires the priest's special skills. The hierarchy within the cult may vary from tribe to tribe, with some only having one priest and others having several cooperating or vying for power.

There is no formal dress for priests, though most grow their hair long and adorn it with the skulls of witches, priests of other religions, and enemy leaders.

HOLIDAYS

Worshippers of Kostchtchie honor the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. On this day, they make elaborate battle plans and schemes for vengeance to be enacted during the coming year. Traditionally, they sacrifice one or more witches on this day, or the lowest-ranking female of the tribe if no witches are available.

COMMANDMENTS

As Kostchtchie's followers are ordinary people pushed into extraordinary circumstances, many of the faith's common phrases are used to inspire determination.

Avenge Yourself Times Three: If someone harms you, harming him back in the same way is merely fair; true vengeance harms the offender more than he harmed you. An appropriate response is to harm the offender three times as much as he harmed you. If someone puts out your eye, put out both his eyes and the eye of his friend so your enemies see you are ruthless. If an enemy cuts off your hand, cut off both his hands and his tongue so he may not strike or speak ill of you again. If a man kills your son, kill three of his descendants so that your very name becomes a demon in their memory. If it takes time to complete your vengeance, so be it—an enemy maimed twice-fold lives in fear of your third strike.

Bow to No Woman: Women serve no purpose but to pleasure men and give birth to warriors. Accepting a woman as a superior means you place yourself in a position of weakness. Cry out in rage or laughter, but never pain—screaming in pain is something women and children may do, but a man bears his wounds with dignity and honor. Even a frail man is more worthy of respect than a strong woman.

Kill All Witches: Men live by strength, whether in the, prayer, or blood. Witchcraft is women's magic, a vile thing taught in secret by hags and harridans. If you have the opportunity to kill a witch, do so before her magic saps your manhood. If you are outmatched by a witch and cannot attack, gather allies and strike when you can kill.

HOLY TEXT

The official book of the demon's cult is *The Tale of the Deathless Frost*, which is usually carved in runic form on a round or oblong stone with the words spiraling around a symbol of Kostchtchie's hammer. It tells the tale of his



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rise as a warlord, how he bargained with Baba Yaga for immortality and conquered a part of the Abyss to become a demon lord, and includes his three commandments to his worshipers. The portion about Baba Yaga states that she betrayed him, rather than the truth about his ultimatum to her and the unexpected price for his hubris. The tale is short enough that it can be memorized and recited orally, which is fortunate as the runestones bearing the tale usually weigh hundreds of pounds and are too heavy to easily carry, even for giants. If a runestone is ever destroyed, its pieces must be sunk in a frozen lake, with the fragment bearing the hammer symbol carried by a priest until a new runestone is carved, at which time the hammer fragment is buried under the new runestone.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

As a mere demon lord, Kostchtchie is beneath the notice of most of the powerful gods, though Iomedae longs to smite him as a demon, murderer, and torturer of women. Most of his rivalries are with other demon lords. He hates Mestama, patron of hags and witches, and takes great glee in sacrificing her minions and worshipers. He likewise hates Dagon, lord of deformity, seeing in that creature the worst of his own physical corruption. He lusts for Nocticula as a conquest rather than a partner, and would take her as his concubine and make her realm subordinate to his. He avoids Lamashtu and her rival Pazuzu, wary of their power and not wanting their conflict to distract him from his plans against Baba Yaga. In theory he opposes the old frost giant god, Thremyr, but that creature's indifference to worship and lack of concern about losing followers to Kostchtchie means the two powers are content to ignore each other.

NEW SPELL

Antipaladins, clerics, and rangers of Kostchtchie may prepare *hex ward* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*) as a 1st-level spell and *chill metal* as a 2nd-level spell. His clerics and rangers may prepare *litany of vengeance* (*Ultimate Combat*) as a 4th-level spell. His priests also have access to the following spell.

FROSTHAMMER

School evocation [cold]; **Level** antipaladin 3, cleric 3, inquisitor 3, ranger 3 (Kostchtchie)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target one creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** yes

You create a warhammer of magically hardened ice and send it hurling toward the target.

You must succeed at a ranged touch attack to strike the target. If hit, the target takes 1d8 points of damage per 2 caster levels you possess (maximum 5d8); half this damage is bludgeoning damage, half is cold damage. The *frosthammer* counts as having a +1 enhancement bonus for the purpose of bypassing DR. If the target takes any bludgeoning damage from the hammer, you may attempt a trip combat maneuver check against that target, except you may use your caster level instead of your BAB and your spellcasting ability modifier (Wisdom for clerics, and so on) instead of your Strength modifier.



SERVITOR DEMONS

Kostchtchie hates being reminded that he is the size of a giant, and he has transformed many of his servitors into larger, deformed versions of their normal selves, often resembling giants more than demons, granting them the giant creature simple template (but otherwise not affecting their game statistics, despite any apparent deformities); even demons who are already Large or Huge usually have these alterations. For example, a glabrezu of Kostchtchie may have warped arms and legs, malformed pincers that resemble deformed humanoid hands, and a humanoid head instead of a wolflike one.

Given his hatred of women, he has very few female demons in his service, and most of them are similarly deformed and altered. For example, a succubus of Kostchtchie may be a fat, bandy-legged crone in her true form, and a marilith's upper half may be more apelike than humanoid.

A worshiper of Kostchtchie can use conjuring spells to call these deformed demons as if the creature had 2 additional Hit Dice, or summon them by using a *summon monster* spell of 1 level higher than normal. For example, a cleric could use *planar ally* to call a deformed, Large babau with the giant creature simple template as if it were a 9 HD creature, or use *summon monster VI* to summon one.

PLANAR ALLIES

In addition to his enlarged and deformed servitor demons, Kostchtchie has several proxies with magical power who transmit spells on his behalf.

Chernog Chort: This nalfeshnee was hand-crafted by Kostchtchie from the soul of one of his mortal lieutenants. When Kostchtchie wandered in the Abyss, Chernog Chort took over the tribe and used it to gather a great hoard of gold and jewels for himself. His greed in life and willingness to kill for it made his larval soul prone to becoming a nalfeshnee, and the demon lord elevated his new creation to the steward of his treasures. Hobbled by a shortened, deformed left leg, he rarely leaves Jhuvumirak except to pick over tribute and plunder. In addition to his demonic powers, he has the spellcasting ability of an 8th-level cleric.

Stoxtorn: This treachery demon was once a famous mortal witch-hunter, a soul-slaved inquisitor-priest of Kostchtchie, and is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of witches and accused witches. Stoxtorn fabricated evidence and testimony (especially against women) to stir up public hatred against witchcraft, and the blood of many innocents is directly and indirectly on his hands. After Stoxtorn's mortal death, Kostchtchie transformed his soul into a glabrezu and placed him in charge of the demon lord's spies and witch-hunters. His humanlike arms are reversed left to right and bend the wrong way. In addition to his demonic powers, he has the spellcasting ability of a 7th-level inquisitor.

CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Kostchtchie's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spell descriptions (see also the section on Servitor Demons).

Summon Monster III

Fiendish ice elemental (Small) (*Bestiary 2*)

Summon Monster V

Fiendish ice elemental (Medium)

Half-fiend yeti

Summon Monster VI

Fiendish ice elemental (Large)

Summon Monster VII

Fiendish ice elemental (Huge)

Summon Monster VIII

Fiendish ice elemental (greater)

Summon Monster IX

Fiendish ice elemental (elder)

OBEDIENCE AND BOONS

Unlike normal gods, demon lords require physical and painful proof of devotion from their worshipers. Such acts are called obediences. A creature who takes the Demonic Obedience feat and performs the obedience required by its demon lord once per day gains a magical ability related to the demon lord's divine portfolio. Such worshipers gain additional abilities (called boons) once they reach 12th, 16th, or 20th level or have at least 12, 16, or 20 Hit Dice.

Kostchtchie's obedience is spilling the blood of a living creature onto snow-covered ground. The creature must remain alive during the entire obedience, and it must die within a minute of the obedience's end. Completing the obedience gives the worshiper a +4 bonus on all saving throws against cold. Kostchtchie's boons are as follows.

Frozen Wrath (Sp): At 12th level, you gain *chill touch* 3/day, *bull's strength* 2/day, or *sleet storm* 1/day.

Cold's Caress (Ex): At 16th level, you gain cold resistance 30. If you are immune to cold, you may instead gain fire resistance 30. You may likewise change this boon's benefit to fire resistance if you gain immunity to cold after gaining this boon.

Wrath of Frost (Sp): At 20th level, you can cast *giant form I* once per day. Three times during this ability's duration, you can cast an empowered *cone of cold* as a spell-like ability. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

More information on obediences, the Demonic Obedience feat, and demonic boons can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2*.