

HOME FOR THE HEARTSDAYS

A Winter Holiday Scenario for Ryuutama

by G. P. Davis

Introductory Remarks

During its initial conception, this scenario had two antecedents. The first is the opening chapters of Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872). Hardy's second published novel, it begins with a traveler on Christmas Eve:

To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir-trees sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy its individuality.

On a cold and starry Christmas-eve within living memory a man was passing up a lane towards Mellstock Cross in the darkness of a plantation that whispered thus distinctively to his intelligence. All the evidences of his nature were those afforded by the spirit of his footsteps, which succeeded each other lightly and quickly, and by the liveliness of his voice as he sang in a rural cadence:

“With the rose and the lily
And the daffodowndilly,

The lads and the lasses a-sheep-shearing go.”

The lonely lane he was following connected one of the hamlets of Mellstock parish with Upper Mellstock and Lewgate, and to his eyes, casually glancing upward, the silver and black-stemmed birches with their characteristic tufts, the pale grey boughs of beech, the dark-creviced elm, all appeared now as black and flat outlines upon the sky, wherein the white stars twinkled so vehemently that their flickering seemed like the flapping of wings. Within the woody pass, at a level anything lower than the horizon, all was dark as the grave. The copse-wood forming the sides of the bower interlaced its branches so densely, even at this season of the year, that the draught from the north-east flew along the channel with scarcely an interruption from lateral breezes.

One of the main plot elements of *Under the Greenwood Tree* is a rural reverend's attempt to replace his traditional string choir with a modern organ; this scenario directly appropriates this element for one of its encounters.

The second antecedent is George Eliot's *Silas Mariner* (1861). In that novel, a lonely, miserly weaver finds his place in a rural community thanks to his adoption of a child who mysteriously shows up in his house on a cold New Year's Eve. Think of it as a Victorian version of Yumi Unita's *Usagi Drop*, without the ill-conceived, cringe-inducing ending.

Of course, thanks in large part to Charles Dickens, Western audiences are encouraged to connect England's Victorian past with traditions surrounding Christmas from the moment they're able to appreciate a narrative. Even if the average American seven-year old hasn't had *A Christmas Carol* read to them, or watched one of the hundreds of movie adaptations, most children can somehow explain the important events of Scrooge's story. This tendency to connect 19th Century England and Christmas can seem fitting at first, but ultimately, it can

have unfortunate consequences. English culture of two centuries ago shouldn't have an exclusive monopoly on fictional holiday settings.

With this in mind, this scenario represents a deliberate attempt to separate holiday tropes from any relation to 19th Century England. Ryuutama is, after all, an RPG about travel; it's never made much sense to me why someone would travel if only to have the exact same experiences they have at home in a different ZIP code.

0.1 Adapting this Scenario to Your Group

Let's get this out of the way: with its emphasis on family and human drama, *Home for the Hearthdays* is a Blue Ryuujin scenario, through and through. While the central NPC, Siccanoatle, does have a tragic backstory, if the PCs successfully complete their deliveries, they'll help him recover the daughter he abandoned, along with his sense of community connection — things he thought he'd lost forever.

That's not to say that this scenario can't work with the other Ryuujin — just that they're not a natural fit. When using one of the other Ryuujin, GMs should especially consider altering the person of Loiyoi'im in §7.2. As noted in §§11.2-11.3 (which gives detailed information on all of the NPCs), Loiyoi'im is meant to be a local name for the party's Blue Ryuujin, who also happens to operate the orphanage in Noinoi'a.

Finally, it should be noted that because all of the traveling in this scenario occurs in snowy, mountainous environments, the associated checks are appropriately difficult. Low Level (Levels 1-4) parties will fare poorly if they attempt this scenario as written. Instead, it's recommended that all PCs be at least Level 5, unless the GM wants to reduce the difficulty of checks, or increase the party's opportunities to earn bonuses.

0.2 Organization of this Scenario

With its tangled NPC relationships and reveals, a GM should review all of the material in this scenario before attempting to run it. Frankly, it's already long enough, and any summary rehashing of the overall plot is a waste of space.

The chapters containing the actual scenario run from §1 to §10. These sections do not contain detailed information on the people and places encountered there. Instead, the GM should look to §11 for detailed descriptions and other relevant bits of information for *every* named NPC, place, and organization found within this work.

0.3 The Yascoiye

This scenario takes place among the Yascoiye (yas-COI-ye) people, a distinct ethnic and cultural group who live in small communities located in a mountainous, out-of-the-way area of the world. If it's needed, the actual political situation of the Yascoiye vis-à-vis everywhere else is up to the GM. With respect to their own internal political institutions, I would suggest that each village is organized around communal principles, with a limited degree of feudal

bureaucracy allocating resources around the territory. The real-world inspiration for this kind of government is that of the pre-Columbian Inca; however, besides this element (which is hardly essential to the scenario itself), the Yascoiye and their culture are not based on any real world historical analogues.

Whatever broader ideas the GM wishes to incorporate with respect to the Yascoiye, the important themes respecting them are that their individual communities exist as quiet, isolated villages centered around potato-farming and mining. Moreover, while their technology level is roughly that of Europe's Iron Age, and their loamy mountain soils nurture excellent root vegetables, the mountains themselves are poor in iron, which means items made of materials tougher than bronze will often fetch a premium (+30-60% of normal value) in the local markets.

A pronunciation guide for Yascoiye names appears in §11.1, before the NPC entries.

0.4 Hearthstide

Precisely why the PCs find themselves in the mountains in the dead of winter is up to them. Moreover, while they're all aware of the Yascoiye and their culture, they really only know the general contours of three basic facts:

- The Yascoiye celebrate a mid-winter festival called Hearthstide, which takes place over three days and nights ("Hearthsdays" and "Hearthsights"), with the morning of the third day being the most significant.
- During Hearthstide, the Yascoiye do not work or travel. They manage this thanks to the nekogoblins, who represent a sizable minority in Yascoiye villages. The nekogoblins follow their own cultural traditions which do not include Hearthstide festivities. These are left to the GM; however, Canta Claws's entry in §11.2 might offer some useful facts to consider.
- The Yascoiye are known for wearing a traditional kind of hat, that looks like something between a Phrygian cap (think of a smurf) and a nightcap. These come in a variety of vivid colors.

The scenario begins as the PCs enter Yascoiye territory, on the morning of the day *before* the first day of Hearthstide. After a handful of encounters in the first village, Anscotsa, the PCs will have several tasks that will take them through two more villages, before they have to rush back to Anscotsa.

0.5 NPC Gender and Sexual Orientation

Romance plays a significant role in this scenario, and therefore the GM should give some consideration to NPC gender and sexual orientations. The GM should feel free to modify these (or any other) aspects of the NPCs if they wish to improve representation.

Nothing really requires Siccanoatle to be a cis-male, who is attracted to females. The only

major consideration for a GM is how any change would affect the medallion Mirenda wears; as written, the Yascoiye are a matrilineal society, and as such, Mirenda's medallion does not match the one worn by her father.

Chapter 1: The Totem

The party finds itself on a poorly-maintained mountain path at the edge of Yascoiye territory. They know they're at the border because someone has erected a totem with an inscription announcing the boundary and pronouncing blessings on travelers.

The Yascoiye welcome you to their world.

Gifts should be shared.

Joy and a warm hearth await you.

The totem itself is seven feet tall and carved from wood in a distinctive style. Knowledgeable PCs (such as a Noble using their *Refined Education* skill) will identify this design as characteristic of Yascoiye art. This totem depicts a feline creature, not unlike a bobcat, but with a fantastic tuft of hair that seems to run the full length of its jawline. The creature is wearing the distinctive Yascoiye cap which has been painted red. There's also a small platform below the inscription. On this platform are the frozen, shriveled remains of what was once a potato.

Time, Terrain, and Weather: It's about an hour after dawn. The road ahead is wide, but it is also very steep. The whole area is also densely forested, so that the PCs can only wonder at their current elevation and the mountains around them. Moreover, it's been snowing since before they broke camp; the path is covered in about an inch of snow, and a dusting is starting to make its way down to the forest floor. Finally, while it's cold enough for the snow to stick, it's not terribly so, and if there's any wind, the trees are sheltering the party from it.

For this scene, the **Terrain Difficulty is 10, + 1 for the Weather.**

1.1 Setting the Stage

The GM should begin by describing the scene and the totem. They should also give a general overview of the information in §§0.3-0.4 about the Yascoiye and Hearthstide. While the PCs know about the existence of both of these things, they are not familiar with other aspects of the culture. In the GMs discretion, an exception might be a Noble using their *Refined Education* skill; but even in this case, the information given should be limited and of no significance to the main plot.

If they haven't already, the PCs should take turns introducing themselves to one another — who they are, what they look like, and most importantly, their reason for traveling into Yascoiye territory on the eve of Hearthstide.

As they take their turns, the PCs should also make their **initial condition checks**, and explain the results.

GM Option: An Orphaned PC

The central narrative of this scenario is based around a (supposedly) orphaned Yascoiye who was raised in foreign lands. Should players wish to play a character with a similar background, a clever GM can integrate this into the narrative.

To do so, it is suggested the character be in possession of a Yascoiye family medallion, just like Mirenda (see §§ 2.1, 11.2). Also like Mirenda, the orphaned PC should be ignorant of the medallion's significance, their own origin, and any material facts about the culture of their birth.

Once the party discovers what the medallions are for, an associated quest for this PC can be to discover their birth village. Conveniently, with their medallion in hand, this can be accomplished using the records at the orphanage in Noinoi'a.

One final word of caution to GMs considering allowing this option; this scenario shouldn't be dominated by a single player. Unless the GM is very careful, focusing too much on one PC's personal quest can have the unintended result of that player's opinion carrying more weight in party discussions. This PC will have a deeply personal, and considerably self-serving motive in furthering the action of the story, and this can distract from the light-hearted, altruistic themes of this scenario.

1.2 The Totem's Gifts

The PCs might want to inspect the totem, and especially the little platform with the old potato. Clever players may want to try taking the old potato (Size 1) with them, or leaving an offering in its place. Both will have beneficial effects for any players who do so.

In the first instance, Canta Claws will not attack a PC who possesses the old potato. Moreover, a PC can choose to attack Canta Claws with the old potato, throwing it at the creature using [STR+DEX]. On a successful strike, it does damage equal to the character's STRx3! Of course, this leaves the PC without its protection, but — *haven't you already been generous enough?*

Should any PC choose to leave an item on the little platform (even something as small as a few seeds), they will automatically gain a +1 to their Travel and Direction Checks while in the Yascoiye territories.

Of course, the players who do either of the above things should have no way of knowing that they've been given a gift. The PCs may ask the Yascoiye they encounter about the totem and its gifts. How much they know or reveal is ultimately up to the GM, but it's suggested that the PCs ultimately stay in the dark about any mechanical benefits, if only to keep them guessing.

Chapter 2: The Journey to Anscotsa

The first of the Yascoiye villages, Anscotsa (pronounced ans-CO-tsa), is half a day's journey away, and the PCs should get a move on. **Travel and Direction checks are in order.**

A failed Direction check at this point only means that the PCs lose sight of the path as the snow covers the ground. In this situation, it takes them a little longer to get to Anscotsa, so that instead of reaching it at midday, they reach it at sunset. This lost time will only make the latter part of this scenario more difficult, as they find themselves hurrying back to Anscotsa before sunrise on the third day of Hearthstide.

Throughout this scenario, while the PCs are traveling (especially through wooded areas) the GM should emphasize the pleasant, almost serene silence that pervades the scene. (The Hardy excerpt in the Introduction is there for a reason). Other than the encounters listed below, the PCs shouldn't meet any other Yascoiye on the road, because their traditions discourage travel during the holidays.

2.1 Mirenda the Organist

The PCs crest a rise, only to find that the path drops down steeply in front of them, while the forest gives way to several fallow, snow-covered fields. About a mile away where the land begins to rise again, they have their first sight of Anscotsa. Large, round buildings made of stone with straw-thatched rooves are the predominate structures. Most have two-stories, and appear to have a chimney located in their center; curling plumes of smoke issue from these, reminding the PCs of the totem's stylized beard.

As with all places encountered in this scenario, a full description of Anscotsa (including its holiday decorations) is given in §11.4.

Between the PCs and the village, at the lowest point of the dell, they also observe someone in trouble. Two individuals, a human woman and a nekogoblin, are idling beside a reindeer and an overturned brown sleigh. It's readily apparent that the sleigh was carrying some kind of large, cloth-wrapped object — “was” being the operative word.

At this point, any PC who **scores a 6 or higher** on a **Perception Check [DEX + INT; Diff. 6]** will notice the sleigh's tracks in the snow. They'll determine from these that it got up too much speed coming down the hill, and veered off the path. The result was that it overturned, during which its cargo was thrown off. If the PC **scores a 9 or higher** on this check, they also see that the nekogoblin appears to be injured.

This encounter presumes that the PCs will attempt to help these individuals. Within a few minutes they arrive at the scene of the accident.

Initial Observations: Review the notes and descriptions given in §§11.2-11.3 on the PCs Mirenda and Ubs, and in §11.5 on Ubs's Parcel Slingers, along with the following paragraphs. Then set the scene for the players.

When they first come upon her, Mirenda is clearly distressed. She's trying to comfort

Ubs, the injured nekogoblin, but doesn't seem to know what to do. Once Ubs is treated, her attention then turns to the parcel that was thrown off the sleigh.

Important Information: As the PCs talk to her, they'll discover some important pieces of information. For the sake of clarity, they are set out here.

- Mirenda has been hired as an organist by the archdeacon in Anscotsa. The parcel is her positive¹ organ.
- She's suffered several delays, but it's important for her and the organ to get to Anscotsa because the archdeacon will dedicate it at a service on the morning of the third day of Hearthstide.
- While she looks Yascoiye, she doesn't know much about their culture. She was adopted as a baby by a group of traveling musicians and raised in foreign lands. She doesn't know anything about her birth parents or village of origin.
- She's really glad that the PCs stopped to help her. Mirenda will tell them that an old man with a scarred face passed by them right after the accident. He looked like he was going to help, but then seemed to take offense and ran off.
- The PCs should notice that Mirenda wears a ceramic medallion that will become important later. It should be prominent (since Siccanoatle saw it), hanging down in front of her when she bends over the injured Ubs, or over the organ. The medallion is described in her full description in §11.2. She doesn't know the cultural significance of it, but all the Yascoiye will be able to tell the PCs about this, even if they can't make the connection to Siccanoatle.

2.2 Treating Ubs

Ubs's has suffered a significant compound fracture of his left leg. This is treated as an injury status effect that reduces both his STR and DEX to d4. The injury is strength 12. If the party has a Healer who successfully performs *First Aid* on the injury, Ubs will be able to make it to Anscotsa under his own power. If not, one or all of the PCs can go to the village for help. Regardless of how he's treated, Ubs will have to spend the next few days recovering in the village, and is unable to make his deliveries.

Speaking of these, this is a good time for Ubs to mention that he has deliveries to make, and that Hearthstide is his biggest time of the year. He doesn't need to ask the PCs to help out just yet. There'll be several opportunities to develop this once they reach Anscotsa.

2.3 Getting the Organ to Anscotsa

Once Ubs is treated, the party will have to figure out how to get the organ back on the sleigh. Alone, a character can set the sleigh right with a **difficulty 10 [STR+DEX]** check. This difficulty is lowered by 2 for every character who also helps in the task; however, to do it

¹ If you're reading this adventure and you understand the adjective "positive" in this context, I'm granting you personally a +1 bonus to all your checks for the rest of the day. Time to buy a lottery ticket?

successfully, all participating characters must succeed.

Now for the hard part. To pick up the organ and return it to the sleigh should be nigh impossible for one PC acting alone; it's a **Difficulty 16 [STR+DEX]** task. As with righting the sleigh, this difficulty reduces by two for each character who helps out. Again, however, all participants must check successfully to get the organ back in the sleigh.

Smaller parties, or those with low overall STR and DEX scores should consider running to Anscotsa for help. If they do so, this provides them with a good opportunity to introduce the quiremen, along with Siccanoatle.

Chapter 3: The Village of Anscotsa

Once Ubs is treated and the organ is handled, the party should proceed to Anscotsa. Whether they ran to Anscotsa for help, or enter it for the first time alongside Ubs and Mirenda, the GM should describe the village to the PCs, emphasizing not only the people and the look of the permanent structures, but also the snow-covered Hearthstide decorations.

Anscotsa is described in detail in §11.4, and the GM should be familiar with its features.

3.1 Out with the Old (Quiremen)

Regardless of how they first enter Anscotsa, one of the party's first encounters should be with the old men of the quire. A GM in a hurry can have them arguing with Siccanoatle as the PCs approach. *"Listen to me Tsiwuyo, I'll kill you if you so much as even think about it!"* Siccanoatle will notice the PCs approaching and leave immediately. The GM should point out his ugly scar, so the PCs can make the connection with the man who didn't help Mirenda. As Siccanoatle leaves, Tsiwuyo or one of the men of the quire can shout after him, *"What do you care about it anyway?"*

If the PCs don't take the initiative to interact with the quire, the old men will confront the party themselves. A natural subject is the organ and the organist, since this is what they're upset about.

Important Information: There are several pieces of information which the PCs should be able to glean from a discussion with the men of the quire.

- They're all traditional Yascoiye musicians, and they're offended that Archdeacon Migoitsi is replacing them with some foreigner and her infernal contraption.
- They mean to boycott the organ, and the more radical among them might actually imply that they intend to destroy it when they get a chance. This is what Siccanoatle was arguing with them about.
- They feel that no one treats them seriously, and the younger folks wish they'd go ahead and die off, taking their outmoded traditions with them.

Resolutions: How this encounter proceeds is ultimately determined by the PCs' actions.

If they encounter the quiremen while seeking the villagers' help to get the organ back onto Ubs's cart, this can actually occur rather quickly. The old men may be upset, but they're good people at heart. They'll feel guilty if they don't help someone in need.

If, on the other hand, they're encountered after the organ is already in town, it's still up to the PCs to de-escalate the situation. The important thing here is that no one, especially Archdeacon Migoitsi, has treated their concerns seriously, and if the PCs ignore them, the old men grow increasingly prone to act out in their desperation.

However this situation is brought to a head, the PCs should ultimately be able to resolve it with a **Negotiation check** [INT + SPI]. The **default difficulty for this check is 9**, however the GM can reduce the difficulty if the PCs make particularly compelling arguments, or propose sensible compromises. The men of the quire might also take them more seriously if there's a competent Minstrel among the PCs.

3.2 Siccanoatle

The PCs will see Siccanoatle around town, selling his wares and engaged in other business. In fact, as the PCs move around Anscotsa, they will often come upon him as he begins an argument or confrontation with an NPC, only to beat a hasty retreat when he notices the approaching PCs.

Important Information: The residents of Anscotsa are familiar with Siccanoatle, but actually don't know that much about him. If the PCs inquire after him, they'll learn:

- He's not well-liked.
- He's from a mining village called Noinoi'a about a day and a half's journey away.
- He's a fantastic weaver; he can create garments with any of the following characteristics: *cute, beautiful, sturdy, and high quality.*

Should the PCs corner him, Siccanoatle will make every effort to escape. If he does share any information, it might be one of the following:

- He got his scar from Canta Claws. He'll say this in a joking manner, so that the PCs remain in the dark about the beast's true nature.
- That the PCs should look out for Mirenda. He will refuse to say why he cares about her.

A GM that wants to give Siccanoatle a reason to talk to the PCs can have him come up to them and give them some kind of gift. This can be money, an expensive bolt of cloth, or a special garment. He'll try to say, "*Thanks*" and storm off. If the PCs press him, he'll finally add, "*For looking out for the girl.*"

Beyond this, nothing can induce Siccanoatle at this point to reveal his connection to Mirenda. This is the central plot point of this adventure: Siccanoatle understood his connection to Mirenda from the moment he saw her medallion, but no one else does.

Resolution: There is none, at least not at this point. It's important that Siccanoatle

departs Anscotsa before the PCs, so that he'll be ahead of them on the road to Potloitu. A good time to do this is after the PCs witness him leaving Matloidoidoi's Magical Meetings; he's angry that the MMM can't guarantee his gift will reach Tloima during Hearthside.

3.3 Kumpo's Fingerlickin' Chickin'

On the edge of the town square, the PCs will get their first *taste* of a Yascoiye staple: KFC. This business and its place in Yascoiye culture are more fully described in §11.5, and the GM can relate any of the information listed there (through discussions with NPCs). Several bits that might be appropriate at this stage:

- Whatever time of day it's observed, there will always be a line of Yascoiye waiting to pick up Kumpo's chickin'.
- A description of the stylized rendering of Kumpo, including his beard, and how it looks a lot like the one on the totem in §1.0.
- KFC is incredibly popular with the Yascoiye during this time of year, because their traditions discourage cooking during Hearthside. Since KFC is operated by the nekogoblins, buckets of KFC chickin' and their attendant potato-based "sides" are fixtures around Hearthside feasts.
- Kumpo is a resident of the nearby village of Potloitu.

Ultimately, KFC has no relevance to the plot of this scenario. It can, however, be a fun encounter for players between their more significant interactions. Any meal from KFC has the quality *delicious*.

3.4 Matloidoidoi's Magical Meetings

Also prominent on the town square is another important Yascoiye institution, the dating service called Matloidoidoi's Magical Meetings. It's important that the PCs get acquainted with MMM here, because the agency plays an important part in motivating the party to head on to Potloitu, and once there, receiving information related to the mystery surrounding Siccanoatle.

Important Information: MMM is described fully in §11.5. The GM should relate details relevant to the establishment's appearance immediately.

A good way to set up this encounter is to have Siccanoatle storming off as the PCs approach. Almoiya, the shopgirl, is flustered, and says to the PCs, "*Ugh, what an awful man!*" If she's asked about her encounter with Siccanoatle, she'll relate the following:

- He wanted to send a gift to a woman named Tloima in Potloitu.
- Ubs is injured, and he's the only mail service, so MMM's gifts can't get to Potloitu until he's better.
- There'll be a lot of disappointed lovers in Potloitu and Noinoi'a, the other two villages on Ubs's route.

She should also supply the PCs with any relevant information about MMM, and the services it performs.

Resolution: At some point, someone (probably either Almoiya or Ubs) will suggest that the PCs complete the UPS route and deliver gifts to the villages of Potloitlu and Noinoi'a. The suggesting NPC will also offer to pay the PCs for their services, and will do so, if the PCs agree. However, unbeknownst to the PCs (and the players!) agreeing to perform the deliveries, but declining the fee will actually confer upon them two arguably more valuable benefits: they'll gain a **+1 bonus to all Travel and Direction checks** while they're in Yascoiye territory, and they'll receive triple the normal XP reward for successfully completing the deliveries!

3.5 Archdeacon Migoitsi and the Broken Organ

Before the PCs depart Anscotsa, they're summoned to the Yascoiye church at the edge of town. This is a fantastic, new construction, and the PCs should be impressed by its size and design. The particulars of Yascoiye religion are not outlined in any part of this text; frankly, it doesn't much matter to any part of the plot, and will probably be distracting to players to spend too much time on matters of theology.

When the PCs arrive, they should find Mirenda frantically attempting to make the organ work, while a stern Archdeacon Migoitsi looks on. The PCs should be familiar with Mirenda by this point; Archdeacon Migoitsi is described in full in §11.3.

Important Information: Mirenda doesn't beat around the bush. *"It doesn't work! It must have been damaged in the accident!"* This encounter should introduce several important pieces of information.

- If the PCs haven't already, they should realize that Mirenda doesn't share the accent of the other Yascoiye they've met. A GM can require a **Perception [DEX + INT]** check to recognize this if they want, but the **difficulty should be low (2-4)**.
- The PCs should determine that the organ is in fact broken. This can occur in several ways, the most natural of which is if there is an Artisan (of any occupation) in the party who can examine the organ using their **Job Knowledge [INT + INT]**. The difficulty for this check should be **low to moderate (4-6)**, although the GM can raise it if the artisan's discipline is one with little relation to the inner workings of complex instruments like the organ. Should the party lack an artisan, or should the artisan somehow fail to diagnose the problem, Mirenda, or one of the villagers can do so for them.
- Ultimately, it's determined that part of the organ is broken. For one of several reasons (usually a lack of materials or requisite knowledge among the villagers or the PCs), it's determined that the broken part can't be replaced or repaired locally.

- In connection with the cited reason, one of the NPCs (usually the Archdeacon, or one of the quire if they've been pacified) will suggest taking the broken part to Boiponagoi'il, a legendary artificer who lives in the town of Noinoi'a.

This encounter also gives the GM an opportunity to develop the Archdeacon, and his and the town's attitudes towards modernizing Yascoiye holiday traditions. If the quire hasn't been dealt with yet, this encounter can be used to further that plot thread.

Resolution: Of course, because the Yascoiye don't travel during Hearthstide, they'll suggest that the PCs make the trip for them. The archdeacon is insistent that they return in time to repair the organ before the dedication service on the morning of the third day of Hearthstide. Mirenda, for her part, remains upset, but wishes the party luck on their journey.

3.6 Rumors of Cantá Claws

Throughout their encounters in Anscotsa, the GM should use conversations to hint about Cantá Claws. "Cantá take you!" is a curse they might hear uttered at Siccanoatle, while a nekogoblin might shout after them as they leave town, "You better watch out! Cantá Claws comes tonight!"

Regardless of what is said, the players should remain in the dark about Cantá Claws as long as possible. The Yascoiye will only make vague, ominous allusions to the creature, and if pressed, will say that speaking too much about Cantá Claws is dangerous, and could draw his attention. The nekogoblins, for their part, see Cantá Claws as something of a mascot or folk spirit, and like to make jokes about him.

Chapter 4: The Journey to Potloitlu

The PCs should eventually leave Anscotsa. When they do, they'll have to make travel and direction checks. Unfortunately for the party, while they've been engaged with the Yascoiye of Anscotsa, the snow has continued to fall. The **terrain difficulty remains 10**, but it's now **+2 for the weather**.

If the PCs succeed on their direction check, they should reach Potloitlu within six hours. Failure prolongs their journey, and will exacerbate the difficulties of returning to Anscotsa with the organ part in time.

The party discovers that Potloitlu is very different from Anscotsa. Their first sign of this is that the dense forest which has surrounded them since leaving Anscotsa thins out and disappears altogether long before they reach the village. In its place, they find vast stretches of cleared land. These are the fields of Potloitlu, now buried under nine inches of snow.

4.1 Siccanoatle Stranded

As they near Potloitlu, the PCs encounter Siccanoatle in his sleigh, pulled by the reindeer Hoica. His sleigh has gotten stuck at a place where the fallen snow hides a treacherous

depression, and the old man can't free the sleigh by himself.

Important Information: This gives the PCs a chance to glean any information about Siccanoatle they missed in Anscotsa. Moreover, with a successful **Negotiation Check [INT+SPI] difficulty 8**, they'll learn:

- He's alone in the world. His wife was killed years ago, traveling this same route! If pressed on this point, he'll add that Canta Claws was her killer, but remain vague about the beast's true nature.
- He really needs to get to Potloitlu, but he'll refuse to tell the PCs why.

Resolution: The PCs will need to get the sleigh out of the snowy hole and moving again. Much like their earlier encounter with the overturned sleigh, the difficulty of this task is reduced by 2 for every PC who participates in it, with the caveat being that all participants must succeed on their checks. Moreover, because the sleigh is only stuck, and not actually overturned, a PC acting alone can successfully free it with a **difficulty 8 [STR+DEX] check**.

Once the sleigh is free, Siccanoatle will thank the PCs and they'll head on to Potloitlu.

Chapter 5: The Village of Potloitlu

Potloitlu is described in depth in §11.4. The GM should especially note that there are not farm houses among the fields, and that the people of Potloitlu live in a village protected by a wall. This is relevant because it shows that the villagers want to keep something out, namely, Canta Claws.

If the PCs have had success on their Negotiation check with Siccanoatle in §4.1, and they ask him about the walls, he'll tell them that the villagers want to keep Canta Claws out of the village. As to the precise nature of Canta Claws, Siccanoatle will continue to avoid giving answers.

Siccanoatle will enter Potloitlu ahead of the PCs and leave them at the gate, where the village guards detain them.

5.1 "Oh bless us! Travelers!"

If the PCs reach Potloitlu before dawn on the first day of Hearthside, they will find the gate guarded by two gatekeepers, Coitlatlo and Himmidcoiye. If Hearthside has begun, the nekogoblins Bonq and Tung will be stationed there in their place. In this second instance, Bonq will immediately go and fetch Coitlatlo, while Tung remains with the party at the gate. He'll fidget about in typical nekogoblin fashion, and might make a random comment like, *"Wait for it..."* or *"You're gonna love this!"*

However she encounters them, Coitlatlo will squeal with delight when she sees the PCs. She will then wait with them, and herself dispatch Himmidcoiye or Bonq (whichever is on guard duty given the above circumstances) to notify the villagers. Within a few minutes the PCs begin to hear the sounds of celebration.

A large group of Yascoiye meet them at the gate and place garlands of pine over all of the PCs' necks. The odor emanating from the garlands is pleasant, and the PCs gain +1 to their conditions while they wear them.

The party will be escorted toward the center of town, and into the large civic building there (see §11.4 - *Potloitlu*). Inside, they'll be conducted to the long hearth, across from a roaring fire. The PCs will be asked to be seated, and after a ceremony in which the village's priest preaches a sermon about the importance of hospitality and gift-giving, the whole village will sit down to a meal of KFC with the PCs. Should the PCs partake of the meal, it's *delicious*. They receive +1 to their condition checks for the next day.

If the PCs are beginning to feel hurried to get to Noinoi'a, they can attempt to **Negotiate** ([INT+SPI] difficulty 7) with the villagers. Success means that the whole interaction takes only 1 hour of time. Failure means that the PCs either have to wait for the full ceremony and dinner to play out (4 hours!) or offend the Yascoiye of Potloitlu. The consequences of this offense are primarily roleplaying-related — the Yascoiye won't kick them out, but their feelings will be hurt. However, if this occurs, the PCs will suffer a reduction in the XP awarded at the end of this scenario (see §10).

5.2 Tloima's Intoxicating Egg Nog

In the midst of their dinner, the PCs will be approached by Tloima and offered to try some of her egg nog. Tloima is described in §11.3.

Getting Drunk: This drink is fantastically strong, and any character who imbibes it will gain the condition [**Muddled: 4**] if they drink it **when their condition is 6 or less**. Should any of the PCs take a drink, Coitlatlo and Himmidcoiye will descend upon them and challenge them to a drinking competition. The PCs suffer no consequences if they don't accept (besides being the butt of Coitlatlo's playful jokes), but if any of them take up the challenge, they will have to make a contested **Drinking check** [STR + SPI] against both Coitlatlo (STR 6, SPI 8) and Himmidcoiye (STR 10, SPI 4). Failure means the PC collapses momentarily; they can be awakened shortly, but gain the condition [**Muddled: 8**]. Success, on the other hand means that the PC wins; they stay conscious, but gain the condition [**Muddled: 4**]. They gain no other benefit for winning the drinking contest, besides the knowledge that there are no true winners in these kind of endeavors.

Tloima's Information: While Tloima is serving them, the PCs have an opportunity to discuss her connection to Siccanoatle.

- If the PCs haven't yet learned that Siccanoatle wanted MMM to deliver a gift to Tloima, she might begin the conversation by mentioning that she was told the PCs entered Potloitlu in his company.
- Tloima will politely encourage the PCs to overlook Siccanoatle's faults. *"He's such a nice man inside,"* she'll say, *"You just don't understand what he's been through."*

- From Tloima, the PCs will learn the full story about Siccanoatle's family; the death of his wife, and his giving up of his infant child for adoption.
- If the PCs describe the color pattern of Mirenda's medallion to Tloima, she'll confirm that it is identical to Siccanoatle's dead wife's, and that moreover, this means that Mirenda is his child!
- Finally, she'll imply that she's sweet on Siccanoatle. She has a gift in a small square box (Size 1) for the PCs to give to him, because she suspects he's already headed on to Noinoi'a.

Tloima doesn't have to supply all of this information immediately during the encounter in the civic building. Instead, she can relate it over several encounters with the PCs during their time in Potloitlu.

5.3 Matloidoidoi's Magical Meetings Redux

If the PCs took it upon themselves to perform Ubs's deliveries, they'll have to drop the gifts from Anscotsa off at the MMM kiosk. There, they'll need to pick up a second bag of UPS packages before leaving town.

Important Information: When the PCs arrive with the gifts, there's a large crowd waiting for them. As the hired nekogoblins begin to go through the gifts and collect the packages for Noinoi'a, a girl approaches the party. This is Tsica'a, the local MMM representative, who isn't working because it's Hearthstide. She's holding a gift in an oblong box (Size 3), and will engage in conversation with the PCs.

Tsica'a can tell them the following.

- It's been a bad year for her, because she failed to set up the Yascoiye's most eligible bachelor with anyone. The name of this person — one Boiponagoi'il, artisan of Noinoi'a.
- To cap it all off, a scarred old man just yelled at her. *"It's not my fault no one wants to give an awful old man gifts!"*
- The old man (clearly Siccanoatle) left in a huff, and threw his gift at her. This is the oblong box she's holding.
- She doesn't care if Canta Claws gets him tonight.

Should the GM wish, they can have the PCs make **Perception checks** ([DEX + INT], **Difficulty 6**), to read the tag, which says *"TO TLOIMA FROM SICCANOATLE."* If the PCs don't ask to deliver the gift, Tsica'a will suggest they do just that for her; it's Hearthstide, and she shouldn't be working.

There's nothing else for the PCs to do here for the time being, except take whatever deliveries this MMM franchise has for Noinoi'a.

5.4 Kumpo

In the unlikely event the PCs didn't eat the KFC served at the celebration, they've earned a visit from Kumpo. Like the other minor NPCs, Kumpo is described in §11.3.

The way this encounter will play out initially might make the PCs think they're entering combat: as they're walking through town, a score of nekogoblins armed with cooking implements appear out of nowhere and surround them. Before anyone can take any hostile action, Kumpo appears, carried on a palanquin stylized to look like a red sleigh. *"Thought you could insult me did you! Well, you'll try my chicken' now!"* As his palanquin is lowered to the ground, the circle of nekogoblins parts to allow a procession of 20 more nekogoblins through, each carrying a bucket brimming with KFC.

How the PCs choose to resolve this encounter is up to them. Fighting the nekogoblins would be ill-advised, but PCs don't always make the wisest choices. They can attempt to **Negotiate** ([INT+SPI] **difficulty 8**) with Kumpo to *not* eat the chicken', or they can try to leave, in which case the nekogoblins will try to wrestle them to the ground (a contested check, [STR + DEX]) and force-feed them some of the chicken'. They could also just ***eat the chicken'***. If they do so, they receive the same +1 to their condition checks for the next day which they would have received if they'd eaten it earlier. It's *delicious* chicken'.

5.5 Siccanoatle's Gift

If they haven't already, delivering Siccanoatle's gift to Tloima gives the PCs a reason to interact with her. They should be able to find her easily. She'll be excited, and will open the gift in front of them. It's a superlatively well-made scarf with both the *beautiful* and *high quality* characteristics.

If Tloima hasn't already given her gift for Siccanoatle to the PCs, she should do it now. *"It breaks my heart to think of him alone on Hearthday, but he has his obligations."* The obligation she speaks of is the old man's donation to the orphanage, but if Tloima is asked about this, she'll say, *"That's not my story to tell,"* or *"It's a secret."* If the PCs continue to press, she'll remain good natured, but add, *"Haven't I told you enough already?"*

Chapter 6: The Journey to Noinoi'a

As they leave Potloitu, most of the village sees the party off. If the PCs didn't offend anyone at the celebration, this is a raucous, cheerful affair. But if the PCs hurt the Yascoiye's feelings, they will be downcast and glum, basically going through the motions of their farewell ceremony.

Once again, travel and direction checks are appropriate. The snow has stopped by now, but the **terrain difficulty remains 10, +4** for the seventeen inches of snow now covering the ground. Noinoi'a is normally 4 hours' journey from Potloitu during the winter. As before, failure of the direction check means that the party temporarily gets lost and takes longer to get to Noinoi'a. Even if they've had easy travels thus far, they should be feeling pressed for time

if they want to make the service on the morning of the third Hearthday.

Now would be a good time to tease Canta Claws's arrival. The PCs could discover his large, feline footprints in the snow, his fewmets, or even (in a Black Ryuujin scenario) the remains of one of his victims.

6.1 The Little Path

As they leave the fields surrounding Potloitlu behind them, the PCs again enter a dense forest. At first it seems identical to the forest they passed through on the way to Anscotsa, but as they move forward they notice more and more stony boulders everywhere. Within sight of the village of Noinoi'a, the PCs discover a narrow trail that intersects the path at roughly a right angle. A Hunter who successfully uses his *Animal Tracking* skill can determine that a man walking beside a reindeer pulling a sleigh turned from the road into the path and proceeded up it. A non-hunter can also make this determination with a successful **Perception** [DEX + INT; difficulty 14] check.

If the PCs choose to enter the path at this point, the GM's best option is to pull the trigger on the climatic scene (§8) early. The GM should not be too disturbed by this premature event. If they detect Siccanoatle's tracks, the PCs have a very important motivation to follow him; they should have Tloima's gift for him. If they don't perceive the tracks, they probably won't go that way.

If they choose to ignore the narrow trail and proceed on to Noinoi'a, once they're a few yards away they'll hear a faint "*HO, HO, HO!*" in the distance from the direction of Potloitlu. This is, of course, the distinctive call of Canta Claws; however, he doesn't catch up to the PCs just yet.

Chapter 7: The Village of Noinoi'a

Like Potloitlu, the village of Noinoi'a is protected by a wall. However, unlike Potloitlu, Noinoi'a is built into the side of a massive stony spur of mountain, with its protective wall forming a half-circle.

As the PCs near the gate, they hear a fine, deep voice, singing a traditional nekogoblin tune acapella. When the PCs present themselves at the gate, they find a single nekogoblin on guard duty — the massive seven-foot-tall being known as Guq. Guq is the source of the singing they heard. He's also happy to see the PCs, and welcomes them to town warmly, hugging each of them, and patting the shortest member of the party gently on their head. He'll seem genuinely concerned about their journey, and ask if they've seen any sign of Canta Claws.

With these preliminaries out of the way, Guq ushers the PCs into town. He asks them to wait outside the gatehouse, which he enters to ring a giant bell. After a moment, this deafening sound is answered by a multitude of other bells, as the villagers signal their response to his summons.

7.1 Hospitality Ceremony Redux

The arrival of travelers prompts the same response the PCs encountered in Potloitlu. All of the town turns out, and the PCs have a chance to see for themselves the differences between the Yascoiye of a farming village, and those of a mining town.

As in Potloitlu, each of the PCs will be presented with a gift — in this case a size 3 ingot of bronze, stamped with the name of the village. These ingots confer no benefits upon the PCs, but they do have value as useful metal.

After this presentation, the town will hold a celebration and dinner in the PCs' honor. If the PCs wait this out, it will last three hours, during which they can partake of more *delicious* KFC (the bonuses **do not** stack). As before, the PCs can attempt to excuse themselves politely, most likely by mentioning the time-constraints of their organ quest. As before, this will involve a **Negotiation ([INT+SPI] difficulty 7)** check with the villagers. Success in this situation means that the PCs will immediately be allowed to proceed on their way. Failure gives the PCs the same choice they would have faced in Potloitlu: participate in the full ceremony and dinner, or offend the Yascoiye of Noinoi'a.

7.2 The Children's Choir and Loiyoi'im

One of the fixtures of Hearthstide hospitality ceremonies in Noinoi'a is a choral performance by the children of Loiyoi'im's orphanage. The PCs might already be interested in the orphanage, and this encounter gives them an opportunity to encounter Loiyoi'im herself, as she organizes and conducts the children.

The GM should be familiar with Loiyoi'im's entry in §11.3, as well as that of the Orphanage found in §11.5. As discussed in those sections, this scenario presents her as being one and the same with the party's Blue Ryuujin. This is hardly essential to the plot, but if she is in fact the ryuujin, the GM should make that obvious as soon as the PCs see her (especially if they'd met her before this adventure).

"Loiyoi'im" (as the Yascoiye call her) will not simply blurt out any information related to Mirenda's parentage and adoption. She's been corralling (*or is that choralling?*) orphans for the past few days; she should make it clear to the PCs that they are not her sole hobby, nor do they have a monopoly on her attention.

If she's asked about Siccanoatle or the pattern on Mirenda's medallion however, she should be able to give the PCs the information they need to make the proper connections. The point here is that Loiyoi'im *does* have this information, but just because the PCs are near the end of the adventure doesn't mean they can expect everything to be handed to them without a little conversation.

7.3 Boiponagoi'il

Once the hospitality ceremony is dealt with, the PCs will probably ask after Boiponagoi'il. They'll be promptly shown to the artisan's workshop, which is built into the side of the

mountain (see §11.4 — *Noinoi'a*). Even before they knock on the door, the PCs can hear the sound of machinery inside. They'll have to shout and hammer on the door to get Boiponagoi'il's attention.

Once the PCs are admitted, they'll immediately see the source of this ruckus. The whole of this wide, low-ceilinged space is Boiponagoi'il's workshop, and he's working on something that looks like a wagon with a giant, motorized drill bit on the front.

The PCs might be curious about why the Yascoiye inventor would be working during Hearthdays. He'll rather bashfully admit that he's lonely.

If the GM really wants to, they can make the PCs roll **Negotiation** to have Boiponagoi'il work on the damaged organ component. This is discouraged, as Boiponagoi'il's personality is such that he'll be fascinated by the damaged organ part, and the instrument whence it came. In his workshop, with all of the proper raw materials and his tools at hand, he'll have it fixed within an hour.

Moreover, he'll ask a lot of questions about the organ, and the PCs shouldn't have any trouble convincing him to return with them to Anscotsa. Still, he'll stop short of coming out and asking this himself, unless the PCs mention the beautiful young organist. This will peak his interest, and if the PCs haven't already thought to visit the orphanage, Boiponagoi'il will suggest doing so, or help the PCs make any connections they missed.

7.4 Where's Siccanoatle?

Of course, by now the PCs should be getting back to Anscotsa. But first, they have to deliver Tloima's gift to Siccanoatle. Checking with the local MMM franchise won't help them (and they should do so if they need to complete Ubs's route), although the shopgoblin, Soom will be familiar with the old man, and his fledging romance with Tloima.

In fact, no one in town has seen Siccanoatle in days. This doesn't seem to worry anyone, except perhaps Loiyoi'im. The Ryuujin/orphanage owner will confide in the PCs that for the last two decades, in the weeks leading up to Hearthstide, the old man travels the Yascoiye villages selling his wares. When he returns, he always brings a large bag of money by the orphanage, which covers one-hundred percent of their annual operating costs.

Loiyoi'im, or anyone else in Noinoi'a can tell the PCs that Siccanoatle lives just outside of town, up a narrow path that branches off the road to Potloitlu.

Chapter 8: Canta Claws Climax

By now, the PCs should be in a hurry, but they should check on Siccanoatle first. Not very far up the little path mentioned in §6.1, they'll discover the old man carrying a large bag of money, cornered by Canta Claws.

Canta Claws's full description and stats are given in §11.2. Frankly, he's a beast and even with the old potato from §1.2, the PCs might not be able to kill him. The GM should be comfortable allowing Canta Claws to retreat into the woods after the PCs have been knocked

around a little. This is a Blue Ryuujin scenario after all, and combat is ultimately a distraction.

However the encounter with Canta Claws plays out, the PCs can immediately engage in denouement with Siccanoatle. It won't take much for the old man to break down and confess everything to them; depending on what the PCs know at this point, the players will usually provoke this by asking him about his relationship to Mirenda, or presenting him with Tloima's gift.

Siccanoatle will open Tloima's gift immediately when it's given to him. Inside is a small wooden ring. Siccanoatle will break down and begin to cry. Any other Yascoiye present (like Boiponagoi'il) will understand its meaning, and get excited. After a moment, the old man will recover and tell the PCs it's a marriage proposal.

Chapter 9: Return to Anscotsa

If the PCs have brought the Siccanoatle situation to a conclusion, the old man will suggest they all pile in his sleigh for the trip back to Anscotsa.

If the PCs are almost out of time to return the organ part to Mirenda before the Hearthside service (and the GM is feeling generous), Siccanoatle can suggest giving Hoica some kind of magical stimulant. A natural choice for this is some of Tloima's egg nog; he might have some of it in storage, or one of the PCs might have brought some with them.

Whether or not Hoica gets this speed boost, Siccanoatle and the PCs (along with Boiponagoi'il if they brought him along) go barreling and bumping through the mountains, blasting past Potloitlu, on their return to Anscotsa.

How things resolve once the PCs arrive depend on when they return, and which of the NPCs they've brought with them. The installation of the organ part is a *fait accompli*. The reconciliation of Siccanoatle with Mirenda, the introduction of Mirenda to Boiponagoi'il, and even Siccanoatle and Tloima sharing a moment, are all possibilities.

Chapter 10: Rewards

If the men of the Quire were reconciled to the arrival of Mirenda and the organ, any PC who helped further this end gains 100 XP.

If the PCs managed to complete Ubs's route before dawn of the third day of Hearthside, each party member gains 100 XP. Moreover, if they refused the money offered by Ubs or the MMM to do so, they can *triple* this reward.

If the PCs did not offend the people of the village of Potloitlu, every party member gains 50 XP.

If the PCs did not offend the people of the village of Noinoi'a, every party member gains 50 XP.

If the PCs save Siccanoatle from Canta Claws, every party member gains 300 XP. If the PCs killed Canta Claws, they can *triple* this reward.

If they return to Mirenda with the organ part every party member gains 300 XP. If they're able to do this so that the dedication ceremony can take place on time, they can *double* this reward.

If the PCs bring Siccanoatle and Mirenda together as father and daughter, they each gain 200 XP.

If the PCs bring Siccanoatle and Tloima together, they each gain 100 XP.

If the PCs introduce Boiponagoi'il to Mirenda, they each gain 50 XP.

Chapter 11: People, Places and Organizations

This chapter includes entries on all of the people, villages, and organizations the players will encounter during this scenario. First off, however, is a discussion of Yascoiye names and naming conventions.

11.1 Pronunciation of Yascoiye Names

Like the Yascoiye themselves, their names are not intended to be rooted in any real-world language. While certain phonetic elements might seem similar to those of Nahuatl (*-tl-*) or certain Amerindian tongues (*-coiye*) these were chosen specifically because they weren't sounds normally found in English words or names.

Furthermore, in naming the Yascoiye characters, an effort was made to follow a certain set of conventions, ones that frankly evolved in an *ad hoc* fashion. That isn't to say, however, that this task was undertaken lightly; names and the sounds of names are an important part of world-building.

While all of the characters in this scenario are given names, the unpredictable nature of PCs may mean that a GM has to create more Yascoiye on the fly. With that in mind, the following list gives surplus Yascoiye names, which can be used as needed.

Anscmoi (ans-CO-moi)	Matlimoi (ma-TLI-moi)
Codtsistlu (cod-TSIS-tlu)	Oi'iloicca (oi-'i-LOIK-ka)
E'oi (E-'oi)	Poicca'a (poik-KA-'a)
Gimtsi (GIM-tsi)	Tsiccoatle (tsik-ko-A-tle)
Hawwoitlu (HAW-woi-tlu)	Tlotlocca (tlo-TLOK-ka)

In composing these names, several conventions have been followed:

- The sounds represented by the English letters F, J, Q, R, V, X, and Z do not occur in Yascoiye.
- The sounds represented by the digraphs *-tl-* and *-ts-* occur frequently. When these occur, these consonants should never be pronounced separately; *e.g.*, the name Yanatloi is always pronounced ya-NA-tloi and not ya-NAT-loi or yan-AT-loi. All other consonants are pronounced individually, with the notable exception of the *-nʃ-* in Anscotsa (ans-CO-tsa).

- All English vowels are represented, with “e” being rare. The only diphthongs used are *-oi-*, and *y* preceding a vowel or *-oi-*. When they occur next to one another, the vowels *-oa-* (e.g. Siccanoatle) should be pronounced separately (i.e. a hiatus), and not as a diphthong, e.g., sik-ka-no-A-tle.
- C is always pronounced like K. K, moreover, should not occur in Yascoiye transcriptions.
- The glottal stop represented by ’ can occur only after a vowel, and only if it’s followed by another (usually terminal) vowel.

Have I lost you yet?

11.2 Major NPCs

Mirenda

(actual birth-name Micitoiye)

Mirenda is the second-most important NPC in this scenario, after Siccanoatle. Her backstory, and her connection to Siccanoatle, are things that the PCs should have to piece together over the course of the adventure. Precisely how they do this has a lot to do with how they interact with her and the other NPCs.

Appearance: There’s no question that Mirenda is ethnically Yascoiye. But she’s dressed in foreign traveling clothes, which seem out of place based on what the PCs think they know of the Yascoiye. She wears a scarf and gloves, but no cap (Yascoiye or otherwise). She also wears a medallion, which is described below.

The PCs don’t know it at first, but as they encounter other Yascoiye, they’ll realize that Mirenda doesn’t share their accent.

Mirenda is also an attractive woman, and in her twenties.

Demeanor and Background: Mirenda is kind, but easily flustered. She’s excited to find out more about the culture of her birth, but she’s also quite clueless about it. Mirenda doesn’t know anything about her origins. She doesn’t know that her birth name was Micitoiye (mi-ki-TOI-ye), or that her parents were the weaver Siccanoatle and his deceased wife, a miner named Miccatamtlo.

Soon after Mirenda’s birth, the family was attacked by Canta Claws. Miccatamtlo was killed, and Siccanoatle barely escaped with baby Micitoiye and a terrible facial scar. Heartbroken and unable to raise the child on his own, Siccanoatle put Micitoiye up for adoption at Loiyoi’im’s Home for Lost and Orphaned Children, whence she was adopted forthwith by a couple of traveling musicians.

Mirenda was raised by these musicians in a foreign place (one probably more familiar and less exotic from the PCs’ point-of-view), but has been recruited by the ambitious archdeacon of Anscotsa to play the church’s new organ.

Mirenda's Medallion
Like all Yascoiye, Mirenda wears a medallion, whose three concentric circles are colored in a specific way identical to those of her birth-mother. Anyone who knows this pattern (specifically it's red-gold-green in her case) and knows that of her mother's medallion knows her true parentage.

Siccanoatle

The most important NPC in this scenario, Siccanoatle's tragic backstory can only have a happy ending though the intervention of the PCs.

Appearance: Siccanoatle (sik-ka-no-A-tle) is a Yascoiye man in his late 50s. He wears *high quality* snow boots, a *high quality* woolen hat, and a *high quality* warm cape, all of traditional Yascoiye design. He has a distinctive, ugly scar across the right side of his face where Canta Claws attacked him years ago.

Demeanor and Background: Siccanoatle will be grumpy and impatient throughout this adventure, although he'll soften somewhat during his encounter with the PCs in §4.1. He has lived a lonely life for so long, that he often becomes terrified at any chance to develop a connection to someone.

He traverses the Yascoiye territories in a large sleigh, pulled by his sturdy reindeer, Hoica. As mentioned in §3.2 Siccanoatle is a legendary weaver. He can create garments with the following characteristics: *cute, beautiful, sturdy, and high quality*.

Siccanoatle gave up Mirenda for adoption in her infancy, after his wife was killed by Canta Claws. The old man hates the beast for taking his family from him, but doesn't fear him; although he'd never admit it, Siccanoatle often wishes that Canta Claws would return to finish what he started.

Prior to the events of this scenario, Siccanoatle has no idea what happened to his daughter, besides the fact that she was adopted from the orphanage in Noinoi'a. Upon meeting her outside of Anscotsa immediately prior to the events of §2.1, he instantly recognizes the family medallion she wears, and knows her true relation to him. This gets to the core conceit of this scenario: Siccanoatle knows from the start that Mirenda is his daughter, but the PCs have to discover this, and warm his heart so that he's ready to disclose the truth to her.

Of course, time hasn't stood still for the old man. Siccanoatle has known Tloima of Potloitlu for decades, but since she's become a widow, they've grown closer. The MMM office in Noinoi'a has been working overtime to bring them together, and unbeknownst to Siccanoatle, Tloima is planning to propose to him.

Canta Claws

Canta Claws (KAN-ta KLAWS) is a large feline beast who terrorizes the Yascoiye during

the winter months.

Appearance: Canta Claws is powerfully built, and muscular enough that at first he might be mistaken for a bear. His shaggy fur is a reddish-brown color, except for a large tuft of white fur that runs the length of his jaw. He also wears a red Yascoiye hat for some reason.

Demeanor and Background: Always hungry, Canta Claws has the personality of a particularly ornery wolverine. He's also intelligent, and takes joy in hunting and torturing any Yascoiye he can catch. This contrasts with his attitude towards the nekogoblins; he's been known to be playful with nekogoblin parties, or bring them gifts. Canta Claws will never attack or injure a nekogoblin. During the summer months, Canta Claws's whereabouts are a mystery. The Yascoiye assume that he estivates somewhere high in the mountains. Likewise, no one understands his attitude towards the nekogoblins.

Canta Claws only appears at the climax of this scenario, but the PCs should hear rumors of him in every village. It's important not to reveal too much about this beast too early. When the Yascoiye make reference to Canta Claws, the PCs should wonder if the Yascoiye are merely teasing them.

As mentioned elsewhere, Canta Claws killed Siccanoatle's wife when Mirenda was an infant, and scarred the weaver's face. Why the creature hasn't finished the job is anyone's guess, but the most likely answer is that he enjoys watching the lonely old man torture himself.

Canta Claws	
Habitat: Yascoiye Territory	
Season: Winter (specifically Hearthside)	
Materials: Fur (500 G)	
HP: 24	Abilities: 12 10 10 10
MP: 20	Accuracy: d12 d10
Initiative: 10	Damage: d12
Condition: 14	Armor: 2
Special Ability: Double Attack — This monster can attack two times in one turn	

11.3 Minor NPCs

(In Order of Appearance)

Ubs

Appearance: Ubs is a nekogoblin. He wears a uniform of brown shorts and a brown, short-sleeved, button-up shirt. On his head is a cook-pot, with a little bronze plaque that says "UPS" — upside down.

Demeanor and Background: Ubs is good-natured and hard-working. Like all nekogoblins, he thinks human traditions are kind of silly, but he enjoys riding his route between Anscotsa, Potloitu, and Noinoi'a. He's proud of his reputation, and won't hesitate to remind others of it.

Ubs is the owner, operator and sole employee of Ubs's Parcel Slingers (UPS; see §11.5 —

Ubs's Parcel Slingers). Normally, he makes all the Hearthside gift deliveries between the three eastern-most Yascoiye villages. Unfortunately for everyone, his injury at the beginning of this scenario will make him unable to do his job. Good thing the PCs showed up.

Relevant §: 2.1

The Quire

Hamtsa (ham-TSA)

Hewatamtoo (he-wa-TAM-too)

Matoiye (ma-TOI-ye)

Tsiwuyo (tsi-WU-yo)

Lallo (Lal-LO)

Appearance: All of the Quiremen are 55+ years old. They all appear warmly and well-dressed in traditional Yascoiye fashions, and have carefully groomed beards and facial hair. Each of them also wears a Yascoiye cap (in various colors), and a Yascoiye family medallion.

Demeanor and Background: The Quiremen love their town and the culture of their youth; it's who they are, and they have a deeply personal connection to it. As a result, they're concerned about the new ideas and foreign influences that have presented themselves among the younger and richer people of Anscotsa. They've had a long-running feud with Archdeacon Migoitsi, but his latest plan to replace their traditional string orchestra with a foreign organ has provoked them to the point of rebellion. At heart, they're good people, but they feel slighted and ignored. They're desperate, but hopefully the PCs can prevent them from doing something they'll regret.

Relevant §: 3.1

Kumpo

Appearance: Kumpo appears as an old, overweight nekogoblin. Year-round, he wears a white suit, a bolo tie, and reading glasses. Any similarity to other fast food mascots is absolutely intentional.

Demeanor and Background: Kumpo is the founder, president and CEO of Kumpo's Fingerlickin' Chickin' (KFC; see §11.5 — *Kumpo's Fingerlickin' Chickin'*), a popular restaurant with franchises in every Yascoiye community. He might be the richest nekogoblin among the Yascoiye. In his old age, he's become obsessed with his chicken'. He demands perfection from his employees and absolute loyalty from his customers.

Relevant §: 3.3 (as a carving); 5.4

Almoiya

Appearance: Almoiya (al-MOI-ya) is the shopgirl who runs the Anscotsa branch of Matloidoidoi's Magical Meetings. As such, she wears their uniform, a fuchsia maid outfit with a white apron and furry white boots, pink leggings, a pink scarf, and pink mittens. Her Yascoiye cap is also pink, with a fluffy fuchsia heart hanging from the point. She also wears a

Yascoiye family medallion.

Demeanor and Background: Excitable. Whatever she turns her attention to is *the most important thing ever!* She's also a gossip, and knows everything about the love-lives of her customers. As a result, she's quite good at her job.

Relevant §: 3.4

Archdeacon Migoitsi

Appearance: A tall, slim Yascoiye man in his late 30s, the Archdeacon is dressed in *high-quality* religious vestments. He wears a green Yascoiye cap and matching scarf. He also wears a Yascoiye family medallion.

Demeanor and Background: Migoitsi (mi-GOI-tsi) is arrogant and impatient in the extreme. He's one step away from the highest religious office in the Yascoiye territories, and won't let anyone stand in the way of his vision (or his advancement). In his youth, he served as a Yascoiye missionary, and traveled to foreign lands. He finds much of Yascoiye tradition stifling, and intends to *modernize* (his word, not mine!) the village, regardless of who stands in his way. He's been at odds with the men of the quire for a while now, and refuses to even speak to them, or acknowledge their presence. Whether he really likes organ music, or whether this is just a gambit to further disenfranchise the old men, is something only he can answer.

Despite his attitude, however, he's well-liked among the young and the wealthy Yascoiye of Anscotsa.

Relevant §: 3.5

Coitlatlo

Appearance: A female guardswoman of Potloitlu. When she's on duty, she wears medium armor, a bright blue warm cape, and a yellow Yascoiye cap, and carries a pole arm. Off duty, she dresses in yellows, browns, and oranges. Like many of the Yascoiye, she wears mittens and a scarf. Finally, whether on or off duty, she wears a Yascoiye family medallion.

Demeanor and Background: Coitlatlo (coi-TLA-tlo) is a party girl. She specifically put in for a guard job so that during Hearthsdays, she would be the first to know of the arrival of any travelers. Coitlatlo loves to eat and drink alcohol as much as she loves teasing and flirting. She's a handful, and any time spent in her company should be *memorable*.

Relevant §: 5.1; 5.2

Himmidcoiye

Appearance: A burly guardsman of Potloitlu. When he's on duty, he wears medium armor, a bright blue warm cape, and a purple Yascoiye cap. Off-the-job, he dresses in loose fitting breaches and a large coat, usually in blues or browns. He never wears a scarf or mittens. On or off duty, he wears a Yascoiye family medallion.

Demeanor and Background: Himmidcoiye (him-mid-COI-ye) is Coitlatlo's partner in

crime, and in guard duty. He doesn't much care about guarding, or even about drinking and partying, but he really likes spending time with Coitlatlo. Of course, he wishes they could be more than friends, but Coitlatlo doesn't seem to be aware of it. Tsica'a, the local MMM representative *is* aware of his feelings, and she's subtly tried to discourage him. What Tsica'a doesn't say is that she's conflicted; she has feelings for Himmidcoiye herself.

Relevant §: 5.1; 5.2

Bonq and Tung

Appearance: Two nekogoblins, these guys watch over Potloitlu's gate during Hearthsdays. On duty, they wear medium armor and bright blue warm capes, all one size too large for them. They also wear random pieces of Yascoiye crockery as hats, and carry pole arms.

Demeanor and Background: Bonq is mischievous, while Tung is nervous. This is a terrible combination, especially if you're Tung. Why Bonq volunteered for guard duty is a mystery to Tung; his partner is lazy, and gets bored easily. Tung, on the other hand, is writing a play about the brave warrior-goblin Unctu the Unctuous, and he thought that guard duty would give him a chance to finish it.

Relevant §: 5.1

Tloima

Appearance: Tloima (TLOI-ma) is a woman in her early 50s. She dresses in traditional Yascoiye fashion, in reds and whites. Her scarf and mittens are white, and her Yascoiye cap is silver. Her long gray hair is neatly braided in a traditional manner. Like other Yascoiye, she wears a family medallion.

Demeanor and Background: Tloima is kind and generous. She runs a local distillery, and she makes fantastically strong drinks. In her youth, she briefly dated Siccanoatle. They parted amicably, and the weaver soon started seeing a miner from Noinoi'a, whom he married. Over the years, Tloima has done everything she can to keep Siccanoatle in the world, and moderate his antisocial behavior. After her husband died three years ago, Siccanoatle comforted Tloima through her grief. They've been seeing each other increasingly more over the past year, and Tloima is sensitive enough to know that they've fallen in love with one another. Unbeknownst to Siccanoatle, she's planning on proposing to him.

Relevant §: 5.2

Tsica'a

Appearance: By the time the players encounter her, Tsica'a (tsi-CA-'a) will probably be on vacation for Hearthside. When she's working, her uniform is virtually identical to the one

worn by Almoiya. Off-the-job, she wears blood-red stockings under a black dress with puffy sleeves. Whether working or not, she always has heavy make-up with black eyeshadow and lipstick. Her Yascoiye cap is black. The bright colors of her Yascoiye family medallion clash with this outfit.

Demeanor and Background: Tsica'a doesn't have a *bad* attitude per se, but she doesn't hide her cynical nature. *Things are just terrible sometimes, you know?* She doesn't really like her job, even if she's actually pretty good at it. Part of the reason she hates it is that she has a huge crush on Himmidcoiye. Unfortunately, he only has eyes for his best friend, party girl Coitlatlo.

She doesn't mind gross or scary things, and is fascinated by Canta Claws.

Relevant §: 5.3

Guq

Appearance: Guq is a seven-foot tall nekogoblin. He wears no armor, only a loin cloth and a bright orange cape with a bushy fur lining. He has a large, crude sword belted to his side.

Demeanor and Background: Guq is a fantastic singer, and spends his Hearthsights sitting at the city gate, singing to small animals. He also really enjoys meeting visitors, and introducing them to the city. Guq is a nice guy, and the PCs should be better people for meeting him.

Relevant §: 7.0

Blue Loiyoi'im

Appearance: As this scenario is written, this is the party's Blue Ryuujin. When encountered in Noinoi'a, she appears dressed in a Santa Claus suit, complete with a Santa hat and threadbare fake beard, which is hanging loose and away from her face.

Demeanor and Background: In addition to being the party's ryuujin, Loiyoi'im (loi-YOI-im) runs the orphanage in Noinoi'a, and probably has her hands in many other businesses, institutions, and plots. She'll always act like she knows more than everyone else, and will explicitly state that it would be more interesting for the PCs to work out the details themselves without her help.

Loiyoi'im knows everything about Siccanoatle and his orphaned daughter, and can confirm that the color pattern on Mirenda's medallion matches that of her true mother. She'll also encourage the PCs to find Siccanoatle; she makes no secret about the fact that he financially supports the orphanage, and that she's been expecting him to show up with a bag of money for the past few days.

Relevant §: 7.2

Boiponagoi'il

Appearance: Boiponagoi'il (boi-po-na-GOI-'il) is a handsome Yascoiye in his mid-twenties. When the PCs first encounter him, he's wearing traditional Yascoiye fashion under a dirty leather apron. He also wears thick gloves, and a welding mask.

Demeanor and Background: Boiponagoi'il is absent-minded and easily distracted. Still, he's a great engineer, but he's also a little lonely.

As soon as the organ part is presented to him, he'll be fascinated with it and ask a ton of questions about the organ. If he learns that Anscotsa's new organist is a beautiful young woman, he'll also become very interested in her. As described in §7.3, it shouldn't be too hard to get him to return to Anscotsa with the PCs.

Relevant §: 7.3

Soom

Appearance: Soom is a nekogoblin. When the PCs encounter her, she's dressed in an MMM uniform like the one worn by Almoiya in §3.4, with the exception of a cooking colander in place of the MMM cap.

Demeanor and Background: Like all nekogoblins in Yascoiye territory, Soom is mischievous, but ultimately helpful. She's very happy to receive Ubs's deliveries, saying, "*Hey! It's about time!*" If asked, she'll share any gossip she knows, especially about Siccanoatle's budding relationship with Tloima.

Relevant §: 7.4

11.4 Villages

(In Order of Appearance)

Anscotsa

Population: 979 Yascoiye, 138 nekogoblins (in Ryuutama terms, it's really a "town")

Appearance: Surrounded by a few acres of fallow fields, Anscotsa (ans-CO-tsa) is not protected by a wall. Its buildings are on the whole larger than those found in other Yascoiye villages. Their walls are composed of thousands of tiny, palm-sized stones, and their roofs are thatched straw. Most are two-stories, and all have central chimneys which emit merry plumes of smoke.

At the center of town, travelers find many of the buildings and institutions which are central to this scenario. The stone church is the most impressive structure in town. It's built in the same fashion as the rest of Anscotsa, except on a much grander scale. The adjacent town square is where most of the town's commercial vendors are located. These include kiosks of the local KFC and MMM franchises, as well as several specialty merchants and a general store.

Holiday Decorations: When the PCs enter Anscotsa, the town square has been decorated for Hearthside. A 20-foot tall evergreen conifer grows at the very center of the square, and the Yascoiye have decorated this with garlands of silver and gold, and various glass baubles. Smaller trees similarly-decorated are found in and around many of the businesses and homes in Anscotsa. Garlands and banners are strung over many of the town streets, and often these have messages wishing good tidings to travelers, or happy home-comings.

Demeanor and Background: Anscotsa is situated at the head of the trade route through the mountains, and the community has become very wealthy over the past two generations. Moreover, increased contact with the outside world has made the residents more aware of foreign places, their cultures, technologies, and ideas. Many of the people of the village seem to act as if they think they're smarter and better than their peers in the villages further into the interior. They remain Yascoiye however, and despite these foreign influences, the people of Anscotsa still hold their traditional values regarding the importance of hospitality, a warm hearth, and home.

Potloitlu

Population: 458 Yascoiye, 142 Nekogoblins

Appearance: Potloitlu (po-TLOI-tlu) is a farming village, and as such, is surrounded by several miles of fields. The town itself is enclosed by an eight-foot high wall of packed earth, surmounted by another six feet of timber.

Travelers will find the homes significantly more modest than those in Anscotsa. While most houses in Potloitlu are circular or ovoid, they are usually only a single story, and on the whole are smaller. Their walls are also composed of larger stones than those in Anscotsa, and there is much more wood used in buildings. Moreover, where many of the buildings in Anscotsa appeared new or recently renovated, most construction in Potloitlu shows its age; the newest building in town was built a century ago.

At the center of town stands Potloitlu's main civic building. This is a large, rectangular hall, made of stone and wood, with a thatched roof, and a large chimney at one end. Inside under the chimney is a long hearth that runs the full length of that side of the building.

Nearby is the local MMM franchise. The largest KFC in the world is also here, which not only serves the residents of Potloitlu, but is also the corporation's headquarters.

Holiday Decorations: Hearthside decorations in Potloitlu are modest. Nowhere will one find the gaudy silver and gold garlands of Anscotsa; instead, garlands of snow-wreathed pine boughs decorate every window, ledge, and eve in town, and at night, candles light every

window.

Candles are also lit on the large tree in the village center, next to the great hall. This tree is only about 12-feet tall, but makes a pretty, heartwarming sight on a cold night.

Demeanor and Background: The people of Potloitu love a good party, almost as much as they love Hearthside travelers. The Yascoiye here have none of the pretensions of their cousins in Anscotsa, and enthusiastically celebrate all of the traditions associated with the holidays, gift-giving and hospitality among them.

Noinoi'a

Population: 418 Yascoiye, 49 Nekogoblins

Appearance: Built against a colossal spur of mountain, the economy of the village of Noinoi'a (noi-NOI-'a) is based around mining. Protected by a wall that forms a half-circle with the mountain, the bricks of its fortifications are identical to those that compose the town's grounded dwellings: precisely cut cubes of dark stone. The architecture of Noinoi'a is blocky, dark, and uniform. Most of the homes and businesses in Noinoi'a are small for Yascoiye settlements, usually little more than one or two rooms around a central hearth. Larger warehouses, storerooms, furnaces, workshops and the like are built into the side of the mountain. These are accessed by a series of wide, tiered streets and steps carved into the rock itself.

Unlike many other Yascoiye villages, Noinoi'a doesn't have a village square. Instead, the main commercial area is set along the base of the mountain. It is here that the local MMM and KFC are located, as well as Loiyoi'im's orphanage.

Holiday Decorations: There are no trees in Noinoi'a. Instead, at Hearthside, the people of Noinoi'a erect a 30-foot high statue of a humanoid being with wings. This statue is made of multicolored stained glass set in a bronze frame, and lit from the inside. Opinions vary about who this statue is supposed to depict: foreigners sometimes think it's an angel, but it also looks like a ryuujin in their humanoid form. The garlands found in Potloitu and Anscotsa are also not present here; in their place, the Yascoiye of Noinoi'a craft glass baubles in many different colors and sizes, and light them with an alchemical fire. They hang these baubles everywhere; in their homes, over the streets, even up and down the mountainside.

Demeanor and Background: The Yascoiye of Noinoi'a have more difficult lives than those of Yascoiye villages that do not have mining operations. People are injured or killed in this kind of work with a greater frequency than those engaged in agricultural or trading ventures. While one would assume that this might make them a grim and dour people, it has the opposite effect. At Hearthside, the people of Noinoi'a are not only glad for the break, they hold dear every tradition related to it.

11.5 Organizations

(In Order of Appearance)

Ubs's Parcel Slingers

Description: A business owned and operated by the nekogoblin Ubs, UPS delivers packages and gifts between the villages of Anscotsa, Potloitlu, and Noinoi'a. Ubs prides himself on his reliability and the speed of this service, and while that's great, he doesn't actually have any competition. The Yascoiye are delighted to have a nekogoblin making deliveries at Hearthstide, and not only because they don't have to violate the prohibitions on work and travel during Hearthsdays. They know that as a nekogoblin, Canta Claws will not harass Ubs during his deliveries.

Ubs travels on a large, boxy-looking brown sleigh, with his name poorly-painted on either side in yellow. It's pulled by an excitable young reindeer named Doatle (do-A-tle).

Kumpo's Fingerlickin' Chickin'

Description: KFCs are found in every Yascoiye community. This is because they're incredibly popular with humans and nekogoblins alike. While the design and construction of all KFC franchises are influenced by the customs of the villages in which they're located, in front of all of them is a long counter where customers line up to order food. The large kitchen is located behind this, but concealed from customers' view by a curtained door. Food is passed through a window from the cooks to the nekogoblins who man the counter.

The main KFC office located in Potloitlu is an exception to this design. Instead of just a take-out window, it includes an enclosed, brightly-lit dining room, as well as a long attached building which serves as the corporate offices.

KFC's colors are red and white, which might have something to do with its popularity during Hearthsdays. As mentioned above, while Yascoiye holiday traditions don't absolutely prohibit cooking, it is discouraged, so most families live off of KFC take-out during Hearthstide.

Finally, all KFCs have a life-sized carving of Kumpo placed out front. No two of these totems are alike; the one in Anscotsa sits on a park bench with one of his arms stretched out across the back, while the one in Potloitlu snacks on a piece of his famous chickin'. In Noinoi'a, Kumpo's totem poses in the lotus position; this statue is also unusual in that it is carved from stone and not wood.

Matloidoidoi's Magical Meetings

Description: MMM kiosks are found in every Yascoiye village. Among this isolated, hard-working people, the MMM performs an important service: it helps to set up courtships between single Yascoiye all across the territory, and encourage and foster those relationships

if both parties are interested.

Founded by the Yascoiye minstrel Matloidoidoi (mat-LOI-doi-doi), these franchises are identical in every village: a small kiosk built from wood, with barely enough space behind the counter for one person. All MMMs are painted bright pink, fuchsia and purple. The MMM logo, which is prominently displayed over the front of its kiosks, is two hearts overlapping one another, with “Matloidoidoi’s Magical Meetings” inscribed in elaborate characters over it.

Single PCs should be wary about interacting with MMM representatives, especially if they spend any time in Yascoiye villages. Often, when a particularly attractive PC passes by, the shopgirl will run out and confront them, loudly asking, “*Are you single?*” Answering this question in the affirmative can be dangerous for a PC, as agents of the MMM will harass them where ever they go. How they’re able to do this is a trade secret, but the fact is that the MMM maintains an intelligence network among the Yascoiye the scope and breadth of which would be the envy of any autocrat.

Loiyoi’im’s Home for Lost and Orphaned Children

Description: Life in the mining community of Noinoi’a is harsh, and children are abandoned or orphaned with depressing frequency. As a result, the being known to the Yascoiye as “Loiyoi’im” has setup an orphanage in the town, one that she has operated since the time of their great-grandfathers.

Loiyoi’im and her staff see to the daily needs of the children, while also educating them and allowing them to participate in various community projects. Among these is the Children’s Choir, which is reputed throughout Yascoiye territory as a choral group *par excellence*.

The orphanage itself is a grim, rambling two-story construction made of dark-lacquered wood. Its ornate architecture is completely unlike the rest of the buildings in Noinoi’a; many travelers have commented that it looks like it was swept away from some foreign place and set down here unchanged.

The Pilgrimage of Ash

A Ryuutama Scenario for Travelers levels 4-6

Written by Richard Allred

Introduction

Harsh winds blow across a mountain, and several people struggle to carry a shrine up a canyon. They shield their faces from the snow but all look upward as a low rumble begins to overpower the sound of wind, and a wall of white surges towards them.

Notes before you begin:

1. In the adventure, regular text - like this - is used to indicate things that can be read aloud to the players. Italic text - *like so* - indicates an aside to the Ryuujin and GM not meant to be read aloud.
2. This scenario uses a new mechanic called **Exposure**.

Exposure happens when you suffer the effects of harsh weather, especially the cold. Mechanically, **Exposure** gives you a penalty on your condition roll, equal to the amount of **Exposure** your character has. **Exposure** goes away during a modified **Camp Check**:

Camp Check - [DEX+INT] Check Difficulty = Terrain+Weather

1 Traveler (1 person may support)

See if the Travelers can find shelter and spend the night safely. If there are no tents and sleeping tools, apply a -1 penalty to the check.

Success: Current HP is doubled, all MP is recovered. Heal 1 Exposure if you have had food, water, and have dry clothes.

Failure: Recover only 2 HP and MP.

Critical: Recover all HP and MP. Heal 2 Exposure if you have had food, water, and have dry clothes. +1 to the next days Condition.

Fumble: Recover no HP or MP. Gain 1 Exposure.

Dry clothes are important to staying warm in the cold. This scenario has several places that characters can get wet. As long as the characters have access to a campfire at night they can dry out their wet clothes, but doing so will prevent them from participating in the Camp Check, or doing other activities that would prevent them from helping with it such as Hunting or Crafting.

3. Healers and Exposure

Exposure is tricky to prevent and deal with once it sets in, this is why it is not a status effect, and cannot be healed through use of the First-Aid skill. Fortunately for the observant Healer there is a new Healing Herb to be found in the hills and mountains around Benu.

Physical Type

Hearth-leaf Poinsettia LV 3 Terrain: Hills/Mountains Portion: Leaf

Use: By snapping the stem and rubbing the leaf, it emanates a soothing warmth that relaxes muscles and calms the soul. Use during a successful First-Aid skill check. Treat the Healer's level as two higher when reducing the strength of the Status Effect. If using Exposure rules, can be used to instead reduce Exposure by 1.

Description: A plant found growing in the vents of old volcanoes. Its green leaves turn a bright red after use.

Pilgrimage of Ash

We fade in as our travelers arrive in a small town nestled comfortably in the embrace of rolling hills. The midwinter sun already hangs low on the horizon, its distant glimmer already fading in the distance. Silvery light glints off icicles hanging from rooftops and tree branches in the orchards, snow lying thickly over the town and its surrounding fields.

The town is oddly silent as the travelers make their way through the streets, signs of habitation are obvious and any kind of tracking skill or an average ability check would immediately lead the group to a large barn on the outskirts of town, where some kind of meeting is happening.

The Town of Bennu

POP ~ 600 People

Ruler Baron/ess _____ Galent, tries to be fair, but has a hard time changing their mind once it is made up.

_____, the leader of the pilgrims; Currently trapped in the mountains

Environment Settled in the foothills of dark mountains

Representative Building White trimmed buildings set in winding stone streets, and a three story public house that is the pride of the town

Specialty Goods Winter White Apple Cider, available as a trade good

Sight/Sound/Smell The crunch of footsteps in the snow, icicles hanging from rooftops, puffs of breath in the cold air, and the quiet only winter can bring

Threats The annual Pilgrimage of Ash is now several days overdue for it's return

The Pilgrimage of Ash

This is an annual tradition in Bennu.

The Nobility of the town have a Phoenix that is born, lives, and dies every year. During the winter - as the sun begins to die - a shrine is constructed (think a mikoshi) and the dessicated body of the phoenix is taken to the top of the nearby mountains and burned, where it's spirit can go to renew the sun and start a new year.

The people in the meeting are concerned, as the pilgrimage was due back several days ago, and the sun seems to still be getting colder every day. The Baron/ess is trying to hear what everyone has to say, but the town seems split on what to do. One group feels that they should send a rescue party, saying that if the pilgrimage fails the sun will no longer rise. The other group worries that they already sent the best along with the shrine, and sending more people to their deaths is foolish at best, especially since it's time to begin harvesting the Winter apples and they will need everyone they can.

Hopefully the travellers will step in and volunteer their services, but if they are hanging back while you have a conversation with yourself as all the NPCs, the Baron/ess will notice them in the back and offer them the first keg of cider from this year's harvest if they will agree to go find the pilgrimage. (This will be given them as a reward freely if they volunteer.)

They are told to prepare for a four to five day journey, depending on conditions, though there are supposed to be caches of food prepared for the pilgrims at the end of each day's journey (*these grant a +1 to camping checks, rather than replacing rations entirely*). A heavy storm happened during the time the pilgrimage would have been climbing the mountain, so there are no obvious tracks to follow. *If they volunteered to help, they are invited to spend the night inside the public house, otherwise they are offered a small discount on lodging for agreeing to help. In either situation they are told that since they are helping with the pilgrimage they can store things they do not want to take up the mountain.*

Setting off

The group heads out as most of the townsfolk set off to begin the harvest of winter apples. Cheers are abundant, as are frequent looks of concern from those who had family members among the pilgrimage. The Baron/ess and a few of the too old/young to help with the harvest see the travellers to the road that leads from the town up into the mountains. The journey is cold, but not too difficult. The road, while sometimes covered by a drift of windblown snow, leads easily up into the hills towards the peaks in the distance.

2 The Journey Begins

Terrain: Hills/Highlands TN 8
Weather: Cold/Clear Skies +1

The day is cold, but clear, the sun shines as a distant silver ball, it's light providing illumination, but no warmth. As the trail winds up through the hills the travellers are greeted by the sights and sounds of mountains in winter - small birds pick at the now exposed seeds and nuts of the barren leafy trees, while evergreen boughs hang heavy with snow, occasionally dropping a branch-load of snow in a muffled crunch. The trail joins up with a stream as it enters a canyon, the steady flow keeping it from freezing here, but the crystal clear waters are intensely cold.

Eventually, as the trail climbs higher, it comes to a ford across the stream. The slower water here has allowed it to freeze, but the water can be seen moving underneath the ice.

The group will need to make a [DEX]+[INT] roll to cross the ford without breaking through the ice. Success lets them cross without incident; Critical Success lets them find a few thicker patches granting anyone following a +1 to cross. Failure causes them to punch through the ice, losing two health points and getting them wet, unless they have dry clothes to change into they will gain 1 point of Exposure, they will also gain the Injured:6 Condition; Critical Failure means that they are fully submerged in the water, soaking all of their gear. They lose five health points, gain 2 points of Exposure, and gain the Injured: 8 Condition.

[Travel check here]

The rest of the day's travel is reasonably uneventful, barring truly dramatic failure on a travel check. Since they are following a trail there is no need for a direction check until the end of the day, to help them find the pilgrim's supply cache. If they succeed it will give them a +1 on the camp check.

3 A Journey, Unfinished

Terrain: Mountains TN 10
Weather: Cold/Clear Skies +1

Dawn breaks cold and clear, though the sun seems even more distant than the day before. Today the trail begins climbing the mountain canyons in earnest, switching back and forth for a steep ascent up to the canyon's rim before moving up the southern slope. Trees grow sideways out of the canyons face, before curving quickly to grow straight up. The trail takes the travelers close to a ridge that overlooks the valley below, and far in the distance they can see Bennu, small plumes of smoke rising from the chimneys helping you pinpoint the town in the distance, the villagers no bigger than small specks against the white of the snow.

As the trail heads further up the slope the travelers will notice several piles of berries and nuts leading just off the trail into the woods. The trail of food will lead them to a cave opening, and any investigation inside will show a bear and two cubs, hibernating away, the food probably stashed for springtime. If the travelers choose to gather the food, it works out to be around 6 meals worth of food.

[Travel check here for today]

Late in the afternoon, about an hour before you were looking to finish up travel for the day the trail leads back into another canyon, it's wall rising steeply around you and plunging you into cold shadows as the feeble light of the sun is blocked by the mountain. another quarter hour in traveling through the dim half-light the travellers are confronted with the trail leading straight into a wall of snow. An avalanche!

The wall of snow blocks the whole valley, wall to wall. The group has a few different options on dealing with the avalanche; the snow isn't too steep to climb [STR+DEX], but they will find that it's a very steep drop on the other side. Another option is to dig through the wall of snow [STR+INT], if they have some kind of tool. If the party seems stumped or on the verge of turning back, a Ryuujin might find them tools, or more directly, as a dragon make them a path over/around/through the avalanche.

It's not far beyond the avalanche where our travelers will find the original pilgrimage. There are six men from Bennu, and all are in pretty bad shape, most of them are only Condition 2-4, and all but two have some form of Injury or Illness. They were trapped here by the avalanche, around seven days ago, and with the injured, stuck without any real way of either continuing, or going back. They have a very rudimentary camp set up around where the cache of supplies is supposed to be, but all the supplies have been gone for at least two days. With food from the travelers and some rest tonight, they should be able to make the journey back down the mountain to town, but are clearly unfit to continue the pilgrimage, though they will insist on doing so unless the travelers volunteer to finish the journey in their stead. In order to finish the pilgrimage, they would need to carry the shrine the rest of the way to the peak, and there burn the shrine to free the phoenix's spirit to restart the sun. If any players look inside the shrine they find the dessicated body of some large bird, mostly just bones now, but with a few dull feathers hanging off it.

Carrying the Shrine

The shrine is a Size 20 object, but it's weight can be spread out across the party, but not carried by pack animals. No matter how much carrying capacity your Technical Farmer has, it takes a minimum of two people to carry the shrine.

4 To the Summit!

As the third day of the journey dawns the sun is once more a distant pale silver orb, shedding light but no warmth, and tucked down in the canyon the sun arrives even later than the brighter sky. After decent rest the night before the townsfolk are in much better spirits and laugh and talk with the travelers over the small breakfast available, telling them about the last leg of the pilgrimage and what to expect on the last day to the peak.

They are told that there are two paths to the summit, and both have a draw to them. Tradition has the shrine follow the trail along the south and west face of the mountain, winding its way toward the peak in a measured and steady climb, getting the shrine to the peak around sunset, in time to burn it with the last rays of the sun, and have the travelers spend the night at the pinnacle of the earth. The other way lies in a series of caves, not normally traversed in winter due to the difficulty of the climb, but the route is much faster and would enable the pilgrimage to reach the summit by noon, allowing them to perform the rites and still have time to retrace their steps and be back at this camp by nightfall.

The townsfolk start heading back home by whatever method the travelers used to overcome the avalanche as the travelers head out towards the summit. It only takes about an hour of walking before they get to the tree line where markers lead away from the trail towards the caves.

[The Traditional Path is section 4a, the trip through the Ice Caves is section 4b]

4a The Traditional Path

Terrain: Mountains TN 10
Weather: Cold/Strong Winds/Cloudy +2

The trail once more switches back and forth across the mountainside, but without the trees to shield them a fierce wind drives the loose snow, and the cold stabs through protective clothing like a driven nail. Any traveler climbing the path without a hat of some kind immediately gains 1 **Exposure**. With the wind driving the snow the trail often fades into obscurity beneath the moving drifts. The only indication that the group is on the right path is a rope strung between wooden posts, with small charms and momentos tied to it, memories of past pilgrimages and small indications of what people were feeling as they made this same climb. *Sample trinkets: a small wooden placard with the words "I Promise" carved in, a grey beaded bracelet with a single blue stone, a simple mechanical lock with a ribbon tied to it.*

Late in the morning the posts suddenly end, the rope frayed and flailing in the wind. Looking forward is nothing but a slope of shifting white snow, and in the overcast light all the edges seem to blur into each other, leaving the impression of a living thing.

[Travel and Direction check]

Since the normal path is buried in snow, today the travelers will need to make a direction check to successfully navigate to the peak before sunset. Any lost travelers will need to camp on the exposed slope, which will give them a -1 to the Camp Check.

4a.1 Ritual on the Peak

Upon reaching the summit, the small group of pilgrims will find a carved stone platform, about the right size for the shrine, a cache of supplies like on the trail, a ryuuzoh statue near a carved tablet, and a small lean-to filled with firewood. Investigating the tablet by the ryuuzoh reveals the following carved into its surface, slowly fading as time wears it down:

This monument is a gift from the Galent family, dedicated to those who sacrificed to bring our town prosperity, and to those who make the journey in the future. The sun shines not for you, but because of you.

Here we inscribe the names of the first Pilgrimage, may we never forget them.

Maloff the Brave
Roland, Hunter of Middle Granite
Amily, Healer of Springs
Scarlet the Songweaver
Kayleigh, Wagonmaster

Upon beginning the rite and burning the shrine, the smoke shifts from a standard white and grey, to a glowing fiery red/orange that hangs in the air above the fire, gathering until the entire shrine has burned, before forming into a glowing phoenix and winging its way into the setting sun. There is a swirl and movement in the clouds around the sun when the phoenix arrives at the horizon, a small flash of red, and suddenly the clouds are bathed in a wash of red and orange, and the wind dies just as the sun disappears for the night.

The next morning dawns in a dazzling display of light, the clouds are settled below the peak so the travelers among the few who have seen the sun rise over a sea of clouds, spreading its morning colors across wisps and curls of a moving sea, and as the clouds move and part they watch as the light paints the world below.

Those who have seen such sights often find themselves lifted in life thereafter, all the travelers have their maximum MP raised by 3.

4a.2 Down from the Peak

The time has come to return down to Bennu and already the sun seems warmer, though that may just be the colors, it's certainly cooler when the group re-enters the cloud layer on their way down. The trek down to the previous camp is just as windy, and will once more give those without headgear 1 Exposure.

[Travel and Direction checks here]

It's certainly a relief when the rope trail comes into view, and the party can hear the jangling of the trinkets tied to the rope. From here it's easy to find the way back to the camp, but the winds seem to be blowing in a storm with the change in weather, and the wall of snow from the avalanche looms large for tomorrow's journey.

[move to scene 5]

4b Through the Caverns

Terrain:	Ice Caves (Alpine)	TN 14
Weather:	Cold	+1

The markers lead to a cave mouth that is just barely big enough to fit the shrine into. Inside the cave is suffused with a cold light that seems to filter through slabs of ice in the ceiling, muting the colors inside the cave, leaving the frozen columns and shelves to only hint at deeper color within. As the group carries the shrine, they notice the rock and ice becoming slick, and a small stream runs along the bottom of the caves. The entrance and first few caverns are fairly straightforward, but quickly the rooms begin to branch and split, the rock looking like it was pouring jelly, and columns of rock and ice hold up the roof, while smaller stalactites and icicles look like silver dragons teeth just overhead. In order to reach the summit this way they will either need to get exceedingly lucky, or do some clever spelunking while carrying a shrine so today, they will need a direction check to navigate the caves.

[Travel and Direction check here]

Failure on the travel check will, in addition to the normal problems, mean that the traveler has slipped and is wet.

Success on the direction check will let the party arrive at the summit before noon, and they will be able to return back to camp through the caves, without needing to make another set of checks.

Failure on the direction check means that it will take all day to arrive at the summit; after the travelers leave the caves at the peak snow will collapse and block the entrance forcing them to go back along the normal route, so you will want to refer to the ritual section along the traditional path, and follow its story in section [4a.1]

After a grueling trek through the caves, the travellers eventually feel a cold draft and come out of the caves underneath a snow laden tree, almost impossible to locate if you hadn't seen it yourself.

4b.1 Ritual on the Peak

Upon reaching the summit, the small group of pilgrims will find a carved stone platform, about the right size for the shrine, a cache of supplies like on the trail, a ryuuzoh statue near a carved tablet, and a small lean-to filled with firewood. Investigating the tablet by the ryuuzoh reveals the following carved into its surface, slowly fading as time wears it down:

This monument is a gift from the Galent family, dedicated to those who sacrificed to bring our town prosperity, and to those who make the journey in the future. The sun shines not for you, but because of you.

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Upon beginning the rite and burning the shrine, the smoke shifts from a standard white and grey, to a glowing fiery red/orange that hangs in the air above the fire, gathering until the entire shrine has burned, before forming into a glowing phoenix and winging its way skyward towards the noonday sun.

As the smoke hits the sun disc there is a small flare, and a burst of wind, swiftly sweeping the nearby clouds from the sky and revealing the landscape far below. The world painted in crisp light looks almost like an artist's rendition rather than reality, Bennu just a speck far below, visible only by the more orderly shapes of the fields and orchards around it.

4b.2 An Aurora in Stone

Descending back into the caves, you can almost immediately feel something is different, but it isn't until you make it away from the entrance tunnel that you see it. The now bright sunlight streams through slabs of ice and crystal, refracting and dancing across the caverns. Hidden colors, deep blues and greens, lurk in the ice, and the stones and crystals span the spectrum. Reflected light swirls in the water and pools along the floor, looking like a rainbow melted and pooled within your sight.

A sight as beautiful as this is one not taken lightly, and seems to suffuse the travellers with an energy all its own. The traveler's Condition score raises by one today, and they gain a permanent +1 to Condition rolls.

Leaving the caves the whole world seems faded and muted in contrast to the journey just taken, but it seems they have left the caves just in time, the wind has shifted and now blows storm clouds in from the south. Spending the night at where the pilgrims were trapped behind the avalanche just serves as a reminder of the descent still to come.

5 A Storm on the Slopes

Terrain:	Mountains	TN 10
Weather:	Snow	+3

The storm has finished blowing in overnight, the air warming as fat snowflakes begin to fall, and heavy wet snow begins to stick to the trail. It's arduous work getting back past the avalanche, but doable since it has only just begun to snow. The trek down the slope here is not difficult, however you can already see where the heavy wet snow has

started to cause slides further from the trail, and indeed when the group arrives at where the bear's den was, a large slide here has buried the cave, trapping the animals just as surely as the pilgrimage had been.

If the group decides to dig out the bears it will be a group [STR+DEX] check. The group is successful no matter the result, but failure will both mentally and physically tax them, draining 5 HP and MP. Inside the cubs are sleeping soundly, but mama opens one eye and huffs acknowledgment before returning to rest.

The trail continues to the lip of the canyon, where it begins its steep descent down the wall, the trail slick with the wet snow. The trees that looked so whimsical on the climb up now seem more like white spikes, waiting for any slip or stumble to break your fall.

[Travel check here, again the direction check is only necessary to find the supply cache]

The camp that night isn't nearly as cold, and the worst of the storm seems to be over. The fresh snow seems to eat all sound outside the camp, giving the impression that you are the only living things in the world.

6 Over the River and Through the Woods

Terrain: Hills/Highlands TN 8
Weather: Flooding/Cloudy +3

The last day of the journey is overcast, but the warmest day so far. The physical exertion from travelling keeps travelers warm enough that coats and gloves begin to feel too hot, and those that don't take them off begin to work up a sweat. All around you trees are dumping their snow as the mild melt makes it too heavy for the branches, often it comes close to dumping the snow on unlucky travelers.

The ford across the stream is greatly changed when the group arrives. The heavy snow followed by a quick thaw has caused the stream to flood, no longer is there ice to cross but a frigid torrent that surges out of its banks and threatens to sweep away the unwary.

It is a [STR+DEX] check to make it across the flooding river.

Success means they make it across and are only soaked; Failure means the river will sweep them off their feet, soaking them and battering them against rocks further downstream they will lose ½ their current HP and gain 1 Exposure. Critical success allows the character to cross the stream in some manner without getting wet, a truly impressive jump, or climbing from one tree to another perhaps. A Fumble sweeps the character completely through the rapids dropping them to ½ their current HP, giving them 1 Exposure as well as the Sick: 9 status.

If the players dug out the bears, then anyone who fails the check will be fished out of the stream by the mama bear, reducing the damage they take from ½ of their current HP to ¼ of their HP.

[Travel check here]

The water is cold, and while it may be warmer today than it has been, it is by no means Spring yet. The travelers are wet and slowly turning into popsicles after a long days walk when they make it back to the outskirts of Bennu.

Waiting for them at the house closest to the trail is Baron/ess _____, the leader of the pilgrims, and a small swarm of children. The children run up to the group and hand each of the travelers a fur lined blanket, then dash towards town shouting excitedly while the travelers and the two townsfolk take a more sedate pace.

7 Back in Bennu

The travelers are led through a town much more filled with life than the first time they passed through, and they begin to notice that other towns folk fall in behind them, quietly following and chatting amongst themselves. The townsfolk are carrying small bundles of firewood, or crates of the white winter apples from the past several days' harvest. Soon they arrive at the small square in front of the Bennu public house, where there are already many of the villagers tending to a large bonfire near the center of the area.

They are ushered to several chairs that have been pulled from the public house and placed near the fire, and told to rest as the folk prepare for the evening. Around them crates of white apples are stacked near a small cider press, while barrels of all sizes are wheeled into the courtyard, some being used as stools, others placed near the press.

A line of people then forms and the villagers begin pressing the apples, the first of it going into a large pot that gets placed near the fire, and soon everyone is handed steaming cups of hot fresh cider, bits of clove floating in the mugs. A gaggle of children takes places sitting around the group, and the leader of the Pilgrims steps toward the fire and begins to tell the tale of their journey, and when they reach being rescued by the travelers invites them to tell their story as well.

After the stories are told the town begins softly singing around the fire, a song of hope for the new year, and the rising sun as a watchful phoenix that looks over them and each night tells what it sees to the ryuujin of the world. After the song they break into small groups singing and telling stories late into the night as the cider from the harvest is pressed. The travelers are made welcome in any group they choose to join, and they discover an unofficial competition among the town, seeing who can press the most cider before having to take a break, *([STR+SPI] with the result being how many loads of apples you can press)*.

As they wrap up for the evening the Baron/ess loudly presents the group with the first keg of the cider from this harvest *(size: 3 trade good)*, before moving in closer and making a more private entreaty to the travelers. They stammer slightly then make the group honorary members of their town, and invite them all to stay and live in Bennu.

If the group declines, the Baron/ess makes sure to promise them that Bennu will always be a home to them, even when the journey is done, and the whole town turns out to wish them well on the Journey.

If the group accepts then there is another loud announcement to the town, and over the next several days the town helps to build houses for it's newest members.

Use a mix of the two if the group is split, and just as promised, if the group decides to return to Bennu, they are welcomed with open arms.

Appendix

A. A Note about the Ryuujin

This adventure was written with a Green Ryuujin in mind, hence the focus on the natural sight of mountains in winter. This does not need to be the case for your group, and it can easily be adapted to be run with any color Ryuujin. Here are some suggestions on changing it to fit Ryuujin of other colors.

Blue

With the focus on emotional connections there are several things you can do to shift the focus of the adventure. Several of these were initially in the adventure until my decision to focus on the natural wonders.

1. You can add a young lover that has someone in the pilgrimage, and end the festival night with a candlelit wedding.
2. Perhaps someone wants something placed at the tablet at the peak to remember an ancestor, and it turns out that someone in your group is also related to that person.
3. Add more interaction with the bears across the mountain, with the party slowly befriending them.

Red

This one was honestly the hardest one for me, as the focus on combat really goes against the feeling I was trying for, but here we go.

1. Simplest is just making the bears hostile, I don't like it, but it's an option.
2. You can add a Foxphoruos [p. 195] to try to trick the party off a cliff, and let combat fallout from there, during the storm may be especially intense.
3. Turn the journey through the ice caves into more of a small dungeon rather than scenery. Drop it from Alpine to Mountains and just have the combats with creatures inside be the reason most Pilgrimages avoid taking that route.

Black

Tragedy seems to come naturally to harsh mountain winters. Adapting for this is more a question of scale than a true question of how. Consider ramping up the amount of Exposure used, and get them wet by hook or by crook.

1. Take a look into either the Donner Party, or the Mormon Pioneer Martin/Willie handcart groups. Both got stuck in the mountains in winter, the Donner Party stuck long enough to turn to cannibalism, and the Mormons mounted a rescue effort to save those trapped, much like this scenario.
2. Change the trinkets on the rope to be mementos of those who lost their lives in the climb, and have one of the pilgrims already dead when the group arrives. Task them with placing the memento on the mountain. Alternately, you can have the travelers find a pilgrim frozen to death during the first day, as someone sent back to get help from town that didn't make it.
3. If you want a villain rather than Nature at her cruelest, consider having the Baron/ess deliberately sending the pilgrimage with not enough supplies, or far later in the year than they normally travel. (Blue/Black; they did it to get revenge on one member of the pilgrimage whose family had felled a tree that killed the Baron/ess' parent.) You may want to reconsider the ending if you go this route though.

B. Inspiration and Media

Phendrana Drifts from the Metroid Prime soundtrack, basically all remixes of it are great

The album Calling All Dawns by Christopher Tin

- Especially listen to the track Mado Kara Mieru, it's what I imagine the song the people of Bennu sing
- The Hogfather by Terry Pratchett, either the book or movie, both are well done.

A quick google of the Midway Ice Castles and Rainbow Cave, China will let you know what I sort of saw in my head for the return through the ice caves

C. A Final Thought

What happens if the players choose not to help the pilgrimage, or perform the rite at the mountains peak? To that question I submit the same answer as Terry Pratchett:

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T SAVED HIM?

"Yes! The sun would have risen just the same, yes?"

NO

"Oh, come on. You can't expect me to believe that. It's an astronomical fact."

THE SUN WOULD NOT HAVE RISEN.

...

"Really? Then what would have happened, pray?"

A MERE BALL OF FLAMING GAS WOULD HAVE ILLUMINATED THE WORLD.

— Terry Pratchett, *Hogfather*

Snowdrop Scenario

Written and Illustrated by Luiz Comassetto

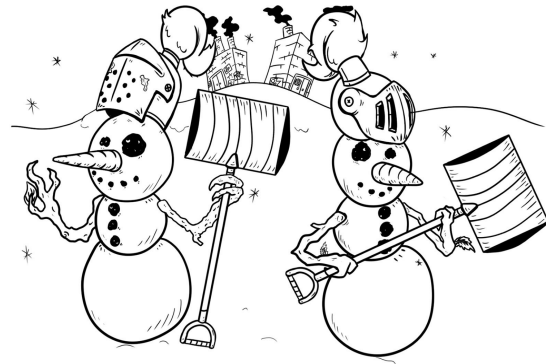
The Town of Snowdrop

Town Population: 500 people

Ruler or Representative: Mayor Pomfle Tambers

Environment: Snowy Woodland

Representative Building: Two large red brick
Tinny Toy workshops



Specialty Goods:

- Hot Chocolate: Delicious food that helps warm both the body and heart. Made from cocoa beans grown during the brief but intense summers the town experiences. Used as both food and fuel for the Tinny Toys workshops.
- Tinny Toys: Clockwork trinkets built of iron purchased from nearby mines. Available in small and medium sizes and only limited in appearance by their creators' imaginations.
- Trained Reindeers: Specially trained riding animals that provide a +1 to travel checks during snowy weather regardless of terrain level.

Five Senses:

- Sight: Bright white snow and icicles cover every building and tree. Small plumes of chocolate smoke billow out of the workshop chimneys. Bright red and green decorations around the town advertising the annual reindeer race.
- Smell: The smell of chocolate fills the air but doesn't fully mask the reindeer droppings.
- Sound: Loud clattering of tools and machinery. Busy chattering of townsfolk.
- Taste: Hot Chocolate, Gingerbread Cookies, Roast Beast, and Pecan Pie all fill the Frosty Mug Inn's specialties menu.
- Touch: A chilly breeze wafts through the town and leaves most of the stone and brick buildings cold to the touch.

Town's Threats:

- Several reindeers have gone missing.
- The town's Snow Golem Guards population has been on the decline.
- Ideas for new Tinny Toys are always in high demand.

- Monsters from outside the town's borders have been attacking more often than usual lately.

NPCs:

Mayor Pomfle Tambers - Mayor of Snowdrop. He is normally very jovial and loves his town, but currently is distraught by the town's recent troubles. Between Randolph's illness and the upcoming games, the mayor still has a lot of work to do, and not enough people to help with these tasks. Dresses in bright blue suits with delicate golden accents.

Landiel Silvers - Owner of the **Frosty Mug Inn**. This burly Snowdrop resident has lived most of their life in this town and is friends with almost everyone around. They are a font of rumors and a great resource for the goings on and history of the town. They dress in simple but durable brown and tan leather clothes.

Thistle and Tinsel - Snow Golem Guards. A bumbling pair of guards that always mean well, but due to being the last two around find themselves greatly overworked. The pair struggle to keep an eye on the entire town while also protecting it from outside threats. These two wear metal visored helmets that are too small for their oversized heads and carry large shovels as both weapon and tool. Their main distinguishing features are the coals used for their eyes are different sizes with Thistle having the larger left eye and Tinsel a larger right.

Randolph the Red - Snowdrop's head wizard. This wizened and elderly mage is usually quite spry for his age but due to a recent poisoning has been rendered helpless. The poison has weakened him physically but also cut off his connection to the winter magic he uses to create the **Snow Golem Guards**. Though the poison is not fatal, the town will be left defenseless without Randolph's golems. Randolph and Grimfol grew up and learned magic together and even to this day the wizard still considers the warlock an old, if misguided, friend and rival. Not surprisingly, Randolph dresses in bright red robes that match his often-glowing red nose.

Grimfol the Green - Self-exiled warlock. Though he was born in Snowdrop, Grimfol could never get used to all the noise and excitement the town created, especially around this time of year. As such, the warlock abandoned the town and moved into a nearby cave. Though the noise was still audible from within its depths. Because of this, Grimfol has been unable to sleep peacefully for some time now. In his sleepless stupor he has begun to plot to destroy the town's **Tinny Toys Workshops**, silencing the noise once and for all. His plan involves poisoning **Randolph**, leaving the town defenseless while he attacks with an army of **Metal Eaters** he met in the cave. The warlock dresses in pale green robes slick with odd fluids.



Galthorn Telos - Grandson of **Granny** and top reindeer jockey in Snowdrop. This kind and noble boy is always helping his grandmother with raising the reindeer while also training them. He dresses in tan fleece clothes made from reindeer hair.

Granny Telos - Owner of the **Clip Clop Stables**. She is a wizard in the kitchen and kindly soul to all who come to visit. She has been living in Snowdrop for nearly as long as the town has existed. She wears yellow and white checkered dresses and work clothes.

Tel'do'ran Val'do'ran - Elven manager of the **Tinny Toy Workshops**. This hardworking elf always gives 110% when it comes to toy-crafting and expects the same from everyone else. Though difficult to talk to, they are always receptive to great toy ideas and reward those that pull their own weight. Tel'do'ran dresses in the plain red uniform all the other elves don, but theirs is always covered in baked-in chocolate stains from the machinery.

Gen'ral Tea'leaf - Elven owner of the **Gen'ral's Goods Store**. This friendly neighborhood shopkeeper is always looking for a deal on goods from beyond the town's borders. They dress in very nice violet clothes that really catch the eye of any travelers.

Hiffle Toms - Cheerful owner of the **Mount Up-High Ski Resort**. A very laid-back and easygoing skier that turned her passion into her career. She always dresses in heavy grey and black snow gear.

Important Locations:



Clip Clop Stables - One of the oldest sections of Snowdrop and supplier of all the reindeer traders and travelers for all manner of labors in town.

Frosty Mug Inn - A small but cozy inn and restaurant in Snowdrop. Offers simple rooms for 20 gold a night as well as nicer suites for 100 gold. The restaurant menu includes hot chocolate, gingerbread cookies, and roast beast and vegetable stew.

Gen'ral's Goods Store - This eclectic though orderly store carries most general items a traveler could ever want at reasonable prices.

Musky Cave - Dark and dingy cave on the outskirts of town. Small flecks of gems can be seen along the walls and floors. Houses **Bats**, **Metal Eaters**, and **Grmilfol the Green**.

Mount Up-High Ski Resort - Situated on Mount Up-High on the east side of Snowdrop, this popular lodge that rents skis and provides lessons to beginners while also catering to the more advanced crowd with weekly challenges and competitions.

Randolph's Tower - A tall and ancient stone tower said to be even older than the town itself. This place serves as both home and laboratory for **Randolph the Red**.

Snowdrop City Hall - This very austere and sturdy building sits near the center of town. Its dark pine exterior is covered in icicles and decorations for the upcoming **Reindeer Games Festival**.

Tinny Toy Workshops - A pair of red brick buildings that the whole town appears to have been built around. The outside is covered in advertisements for the latest Tinny Toys. Several hundreds of crafters work tirelessly within creating cool and cute toys.

Sample Timeline:

Day 1: Arrival at Snowdrop, Frosty Rumors, Missing Reindeer, Festival Prep

Day 2: Snowdrop Hospitality, Wizard Down, Hit the Slopes, Grimfol the Green

Day 3: Restoring Randolph, Reindeer Games, Workshop Muses

Day 4: Leaving Snowdrop

Scenes:

Scene Name: Arrival at Snowdrop

Time: Morning

Terrain: Woodland

Weather: Snow

Difficulty: 11

Scene Purpose:

Get the party to the town and sow the seeds for some of the quests to be found in the town. Give the players a place to escape the snowy weather.

Five Senses:

Due to all the snow on the ground, even today's light snowfall greatly diminishes visibility. The chocolate brown smoke stacks from the workshops are easily seen from afar. The smell of hot chocolate draws hungry bellies toward the town. Lively voices and the sounds of loud machinery can be heard far beyond the city limits

Events:

A pair of chocolate brown smoke plumes guide the party through the pale white snow toward the lively town of Snowdrop. There they are greeted by **Thistle and Tinsel** who welcome the group and tell the players of the upcoming **Reindeer Games Festival**. The two guards can provide some information about the town such as suggest the party rest up at the **Frosty Mug Inn**. They may also drop some hints about **Randolph's** current condition but have no idea about the cause of it. They can also be convinced to escort the party to see **Mayor Pomfle Tambers**.



Scene Name: Frosty Rumors

Time: Afternoon - Evening

Terrain: Woodland

Weather: Clear

Difficulty: 8

Scene Purpose:

Introduce a few of the NPCs that reside in Snowdrop and allow the players to start planning out which tasks to try helping with.

Five Senses:

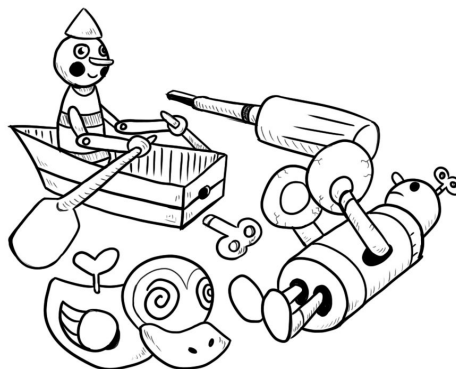
The warm and inviting inn is a welcome reprieve from the chilly outdoors. The smells of sweet hot chocolate and gingerbread mix with savory roast beast to cause any adventurer's stomach to rumble. The modest interior of the inn is sparsely decorated with a few decorations including a few advertisements for the upcoming **Reindeer Games Festival**. The chatter of several patrons fills the space.

Events:

The party meets **Landiel Silvers** who is familiar with all the residents of the town and can answer most questions the PCs may have about the goings on in Snowdrop. **Landiel** knows that **Mayor Pomfle Tambers** is looking for people to help with setting up for the **Reindeer Games Festival**. **Landiel** is also aware that **Randolph** is ill and as such hasn't been able to create any new snow golems to protect the town. The innkeeper can also introduce the party to **Galhorn Telos** who is at the inn looking for help to locate his family's missing reindeer. **Landiel** offers to reduce the cost of rooms and food to anyone willing to help with the aforementioned tasks.

Galhorn Telos asks the party for help tracking a herd of reindeer that have recently gone missing from his family stables. He has managed to track them to a clearing outside town, but is worried about the monsters that are rumored to reside there. He is willing to pay the party 500 gold as well as offer a 50% discount on any reindeer they'd like to purchase from the farm. He is willing to go with the group to the clearing, but is not a fighter, so will not participate in combat. Any skill checks to reach the clearing gain a +1 for **Galhorn's** assistance.

If the party ever goes to the **Frosty Mug Inn** during the evening, they may encounter **Tel'do'ran Val'do'ran** resting after a long day's work. The elf can be looking for inspiration for new Tinny Toys.



Scene Name: Missing Reindeer

Time: Afternoon - Evening Terrain: Woodland Weather: Snow Difficulty: 11

Scene Purpose:

Locate the missing reindeer and hint at the metal eater threat.

Five Senses:

The strong stench of deer droppings fills the clearing. A light breeze causes the already chilly weather to feel even more intense. Reindeer braying and metal crunching can be heard as the group approaches the clearing.

Events:

The group makes their way to the clearing where they discover the herd of reindeer being attacked by a group of **Metal Eaters**. **Metal Eaters** are a form of **Stone Eaters** that have developed a more refined appetite for metals, as such, they have the same stat block. The **Metal Eaters** haven't harmed the reindeer but are eating the bells wrapped around their collars. Suggested objects for use in the clearing include tree branches, snow banks, icicles, reindeer, Galhorn, and pine cones. Upon defeating or scaring away the creatures, **Galhorn** will point out that **Metal Eaters** are not native to the area and worries about the **Tinny Toys Workshops'** metal storage. Aside from paying any agreed upon reward for helping retrieve the missing reindeer, **Galhorn** also invites the party to visit the stables for some of his grandma's delicious home-cooked breakfast.

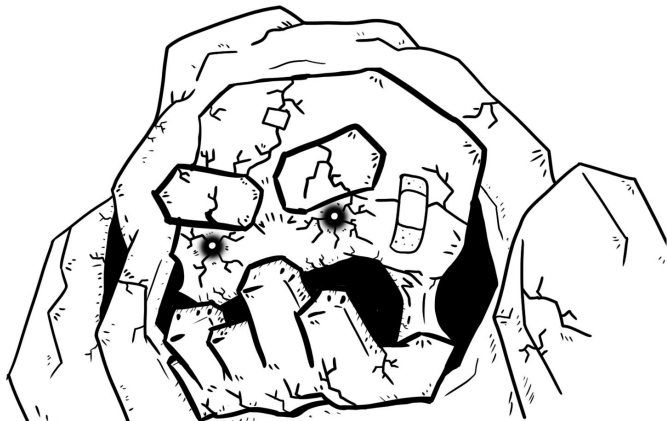
Metal Eater - Level : 4

Habitat : wasteland, rocky terrain, mountain, desert

Season : none

Materials : Tough rations x 2

Dragonica Number : 123b



Description: *A large, metal-eating giant. These are a breed of rock eaters that have grown up on a diet of tools and weapons dropped by careless adventurers.*

HP: 24 **MP:** 8 **Initiative:** 5 **Condition:** 9

Abilities: d10, d6, d2, d4 **Accuracy:** d10 / d6 **Damage:** d10 **Armor:** 2

Scene Name: Festival Prep

Time: Morning - Afternoon Terrain: Woodland Weather: Cold Difficulty: 9

Scene Purpose:

Set the stage, literally, for the upcoming **Reindeer Games Festival**.

Five Senses:

The hustle and bustle of the few assistants **Mayor Pomfle Tambers** has been able to recruit can be seen and heard throughout the town's market square. The smell of fresh paint wafts hangs in the chilly air.

Events:

As the party enters the market square, they are immediately greeted by **Mayor Pomfle Tambers** who hopes to hire the group to help finish with the preparations for the **Reindeer Games Festival** in a few days. **Mayor Tambers** explains that he needs help with building a presentation stage for the reindeer grooming contest, collecting tools for the snow sculpture competition and repair the race track for the reindeer race finale. The mayor offers 500 gold to anyone willing to help. Each of these tasks would take a single adventurer a few hours to complete and would require a successful check against the scene's **TN (9)**. The following are some suggested skills for the tasks at hand:

- **Build the Presentation Stage:** [STR+STR] or [STR+DEX] due to the strain of hauling lumber around.
- **Collect Tools:** [DEX+INT] or [INT+INT] to locate or identify useful tools for crafting the perfect sculpture.
- **Repair the Race Track:** [STR+DEX] or [DEX+SPI] to make the needed repairs to the deceptively delicate race track.

Regardless of the group's overall success, **Mayor Tambers** pays everyone that helped out and hopes to see everyone having fun at the festival. If anyone spends time talking with the mayor, they realize that beneath his outwardly jovial appearance lies some apprehension. If pressed about it, he will describe his worry about **Randolph the Red's** worsening condition and asks if the party could check up on the bedridden wizard.

Scene Name: Snowdrop Hospitality

Time: Morning Terrain: Woodland Weather: Clear Difficulty: 8

Scene Purpose:

The party gets a delicious home-cooked meal and learns about **Randolph the Red**'s role in the town and about his current condition.

Five Senses:

The smell, taste, and touch of freshly baked bread and muffins, home-made jams and jellies, as well as savory meats and eggs fill empty stomachs and warm chilly hearts. Gentle bleating of the reindeer outside provide ambient accompaniment for the breakfast conversation.

Events:

Granny Telos prepares a delicious meal for the group, which provides +1 to everyone's condition check result for the day. She thanks the group for all their help in retrieving the lost reindeer and talks about how the appearance of the **Metal Eaters** has worried her. **Granny** tells the party about how the town used to have a large militia of **Snow Golem Guards** that would protect the town from such creatures. She explains that the **Snow Golems** have mostly melted ever since **Randolph the Red** fell ill.

Scene Name: Wizard Down

Time: Morning - Evening

Terrain: Woodland

Weather: Clear

Difficulty: 8

Scene Purpose:

The party meets **Randolph the Red** and discovers the source of his "illness" is actually a poison sent by **Grimfol the Green**.

Five Senses:

Brightly colored and bubbling vials and beakers litter this packed and messy tower. The smells of magical reagents long past their expiration dates upset weak stomachs. A pair of half-finished **Snow Golems** sit near a desk, cooling the room considerably.

Events:

The party meets a bedridden **Randolph the Red** who is being attended to by a pair of brooms he has animated with his magic. The animated objects follow his raspy commands and bring him a variety of potions as he tries to cure himself. None of the potions have had any effect so far. **Randolph** informs the party that this all began a few weeks back when he was working on a pair of **Snow Golems** and a package arrived at his doorstep. Within the oddly wrapped box was a fruitcake, **Randolph's** favorite treat; however, shortly after consuming the fruitcake, he began to feel weak, and has been getting weaker since. The wizard laments that ever since his old partner, **Grimfold the Green**, left town, he's been the only one able to finish the **Snow Golems**, but now even he is unable to do so.

The rest of the fruitcake is still sitting on the desk where he was working. Inspecting the fruitcake and its box leads the group to discover trace amounts of poison on the box and in the cake itself. The box appears to be an old **Tinny Toys** gift box from several seasons ago. **Randolph** explains that all old boxes are used to deliver unusable scrap metal to the **Metal Eaters** living in the **Musky Cave** outside of town. If the party decides to journey to the cave, **Randolph** will suggest they rent skis from the **Mount Up-High Ski Resort** to make it down to the cave more quickly.

Scene Name: Hit the Slopes

Time: Morning - Afternoon Terrain: Mountainside Weather: Snow Difficulty: 11

Scene Purpose:

Get the party to the **Musky Cave** more quickly than trekking the mountain while also getting a chance to try some skiing.

Five Senses:

The packed resort is loud with the chatter of skiing enthusiasts boasting about their accomplishments and offers to teach newcomers their tricks. A sea of blue and white snow gear blankets the mountainside.

Events:

Hiffle Toms warmly welcomes the group and offers to rent them a set of skiing gear for 100 gold each. She also offers to provide a lesson on how to ski for an additional 100 gold. She will also point out the general direction of the **Musky Cave**, providing the party with a +1 to their direction check to find the location.

Travelling by skis is much faster than walking, allowing the party to make it to **Musky Cave** in a matter of hours as opposed to a full day of walking. However, it also carries with it its own dangers. Players travelling by skis will need to make the following checks to successfully navigate the difficult route, failing each check results in the associated status condition. Any player that took Hiffle's lesson gains a +1 to these checks.

[STR+DEX] to properly control the skis. Fail - Injury:8

[DEX+INT] to avoid any of the natural hazards. Fail - Injury:8

[STR+SPR] to endure the rough conditions for such a long time. Fail – Exhaustion:8

Failing all three checks or the group's direction check could lead the group right into a den of **Metal Eaters** who hungrily attack the party in order to take their metal skis and ski poles.

Scene Name: Grimfol the Green

Time: Morning - Evening

Terrain: Cavern

Weather: Dark

Difficulty: 11

Scene Purpose:

The party discovers **Grimfol the Green** and his motivations. The party will have the opportunity to convince the warlock to not attack Snowdrop.

Five Senses:

The stench of mildew and bat guano fills the cave. Dripping water from melting snow echoes through the barren halls. The sounds of the **Tinny Toys Workshops** can still be heard this far out of town.

Events:

The group encounters a collective of **Slimes** at the cave entrance which ooze from the ceiling and immediately attack them. The **Slimes** do not fight for long and make a hasty retreat deeper into the cave as soon as one of them is downed. The cave eventually leads into a large central room that **Grimfol the Green** has made his home.

The elderly warlock has filled the room odd vials and bottles of all manner of poisons and pages covered in magical runes and sigils. When the party arrives, **Grimfol** is currently busy drawing a large magical circle on the cavern floor. A magical identification [INT+INT] check can reveal the circle is part of the ritual to cast a version of the **Seven Fortune Frigate** spell modified to work for monsters. If unimpeded, he will use this spell to empower the squadron of **Metal Eaters** sitting by the northern wall of this room before attacking Snowdrop.

If the party speaks with **Grimfol** he is startled and angered by the intruders but does not attack unless threatened, wishing to preserve his strength for the attack on Snowdrop. **Grimfol** demands to know what the party is doing in his home before explaining his motivation and plans to attack Snowdrop as described in his character summary. If the party can convince the warlock that they will find a way to quiet the workshops or find another solution to the noise problem, **Grimfol** will not attack Snowdrop and offers the party the antidote to the poison that is afflicting **Randolph the Red**.

If instead, the party chooses to fight **Grimfol**, he is a **High Level Magician** with access to the Fall and Winter spell lists and is joined by a group of **Metal Eaters**. This is a boss battle and as such contains up to 10 objects. Some suggested objects include vials of poisons, a work desk, bookcases, stalagmites and stalactites, piles of scrap metal, and smelly bat guano. If **Grimfol** is defeated in combat, a search of the cave [DEX+INT] can find the antidote for **Randolph's** poison within a locked box. **Grimfol** lives a reclusive life with few comforts, as such not much else of value will be found in the cave.



Scene Name: Restoring Randolph

Time: Morning/Evening

Terrain: Mountainside Weather: Clear

Difficulty: 8

Scene Purpose:

The players get back to Snowdrop and cure Randolph. They also assist the wizard with creating **Snow Golem Guards**.

Five Senses:

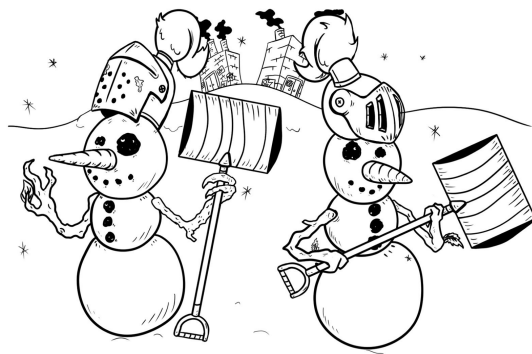
Brightly colored and bubbling vials and beakers litter this packed and messy tower. The smells of magical reagents long past their expiration dates upset weak stomachs. A pair of half-finished **Snow Golems** sit near a desk, cooling the room considerably.

Events:

If the party battled **Grimfol**, there may still be some **Metal Eaters** sympathetic to the warlock chasing the party back up the mountain. If the party made peace with **Grimfol**, he can instead provide a **Metal Eater** sherpa to guide the group back using some well-hidden shortcuts. Returning to Snowdrop with the antidote can be treated as much easier than the initial trip or even more treacherous depending on the mood you would like to go for.

Upon returning to **Randolph's** tower, the party may give the wizard the antidote to the poison. How much information about **Grimfol** they share is up to them as the wizard will not press them for information about how they managed to get the antidote. The antidote is fast acting and within seconds **Randolph** is back to his old self again. The mage is immediately in a hurry to get his half-finished **Snow Golems** completed before the **Reindeer Games Festival** and asks for help from the party once more.

The tough part of creating the Snow Golems will be handled by **Randolph** but he needs the party's help to gather usable materials to build the golems out of. No checks will be needed to collect these items, and this could be a fun opportunity for the players to be creative in customizing some golems. Various materials and trinkets can be added to make each **Snow Golem** unique to the player that created them. For their help, Randolph pays each player 250 gold pieces and offers to teach any magic wielders among them any 1 low level winter magic spell, even if they do not have access to that spell list. Players can instead be gifted a +1 weapon, armor or tool of their choosing which he has enchanted to also make it quite Cool.



Scene Name: Reindeer Games

Time: All Day

Terrain: Woodland

Weather: Cold

Difficulty: 9

Scene Purpose:

The party joins in the much talked about festival for a chance to win gold and prizes.

Five Senses:

The festive sounds of vendors selling their wares and festival goers enjoying the attractions fill the air. Smells of hot chocolate and fried treats fill the nostril as the bright red, green and gold decorations stimulate the eyes. The chilly weather almost goes unnoticed due to all the people around.

Events:

Among the many stands selling toys, food, and traveling gear are also some areas sectioned off for activities the party may have helped set up. Players are welcome to participate in these activities. Each one consists of a pair of skill checks against the scene's **TN (9)**. Succeeding in both checks means the participant took first place, succeeding in one check means they took second, and failing both means the player did not manage to place. If two or more players participate in an activity, the higher check results in a success.

- **Reindeer Grooming Contest:** A competition to see who can best shear and groom an overgrown reindeer's furry coat. The skill checks for this activity are [DEX+INT] and [DEX+SPI]. If the party visited **Granny Telos**, competitors receive a +1 to these checks.
- **Snow Sculpture Contest:** Crafters go head-to-head to build the most astonishing sculpture using the most abundant resource in town, snow. The skill checks for this activity are [DEX+DEX] and [DEX+INT]. If the party helped **Randolph** build snow golems, competitors get a +1 to these checks.
- **Ski Slope Trick-off:** Large slopes have been built onto the sides of some of the town's houses to create a series of skiing slopes where athletes can attempt to outdo each other's skiing prowess. The skill checks for this activity are [STR+DEX] and [DEX+INT]. If the party took skis to reach **Grimfol**, competitors get a +1 to these checks.
- **Reindeer Race Finale:** The conclusion to the games is a city-spanning race that tests the reindeers' abilities as much as the racers'. The skill checks for this activity are [STR+DEX] and [STR+SPI]. If the party helped **Galhorn** retrieve the lost reindeer, competitors get a +1 to these checks.

First place in any of these events is awarded with 1,000 gold and 500 gold worth medium trade goods in the form of Snowdrop Hot Chocolate. Second place winners only receive the 500 gold in Hot Chocolate.

Scene Name: Workshop Muses

Time: Morning - Evening

Terrain: Woodland

Weather: Clear

Difficulty: 8

Scene Purpose:

The party is asked to come up with ideas for fun toys.

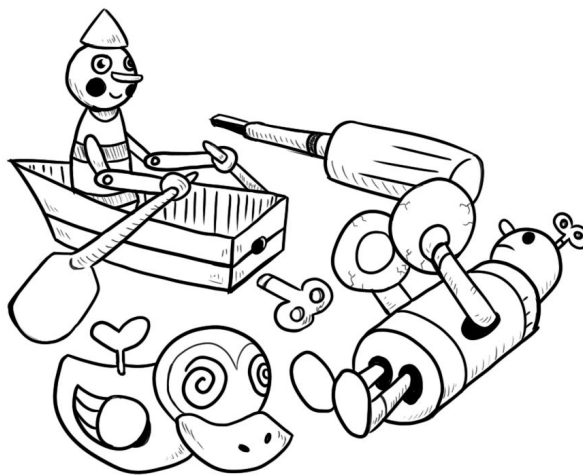
Five Senses:

Clattering tools and machinery deafen most visitors not used to the ambient noise. Several odd machines spitting steam and chocolate smoke keep the workshop much warmer than anywhere else in town and give the whole place a chocolatey aroma.

Events:

Upon first entering one of the workshops, the party is greeted by **Tel'do'ran Val'do'ran** who believes the group to be some very tall new elven hires he requested from **Mayor Tambers**. The workshop manager is very busy and wastes no time getting the party some uniforms that are several sizes too small for them. Their job, as the elf instructs them, is to each design a new **Tinny Toy** concept in the hopes of coming up with this season's hot new seller. The characters are led to a workstation with several drafting tools including pencils, paper, chalk, chalkboards, and a captive audience of elven engineers ready to try building their designs.

Each player can come up with whatever design they can think of and the elves will build them. Each time a design is prototyped, the player rolls an [INT+INT] skill check against scene's **TN (8)** to see if the toy is a success. Each success raises the next skill check's **TN +1** and awards the toy's designer 50 gold as their "Toyalties" for the toy design. Any fumbles on this check make the design a total flop and greatly angers **Tel'do'ran**. The party is welcome to spend as much time as they want coming up with toy ideas and making some money; however, two consecutive failures or two non-consecutive total flops will get the party fired and kicked out of workshop.



Scene Name: Leaving Snowdrop

Time: Morning

Terrain: Woodland

Weather: Clear

Difficulty: 8

Scene Purpose:

The party says their goodbyes to the town and may receive some souvenirs of their time here.

Five Senses:

The cool morning air is filled with the infinite possibilities of the next journey the party embarks upon while the friends they've made bring gifts to share.

Events:

Every resident of the town the party helped shows up to say their goodbyes and gives the characters something to help them on their journey:

Mayor Pomfle Tambers - Gives the players 500 gold each

Thistle and Tinsel - Give the players a shovel that functions as a snow staff

Randolph the Red - Gives the players an herb bottle with 3 herbs inside

Galhorn and Granny Telos - Give the party 10 delicious rations

Tel'do'ran Val'do'ran - Gives each party member one of the toys they designed

Grimfol the Green - Gives the players an herb bottle with 3 herbs inside

THE END

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The Giving Spree of Doctor Dimwit

A Red Ryuujin Scenario for Ryuutama

Scenario Summary

Every year outside the town of Schlossblitz, an old man descends from the mountains to give gifts to the children. However, he is seldom welcomed by the townspeople...

Act 1 - Seeking Shelter from the Snow Storm

The PCs are trapped in a violent snow storm that shows no signs of letting up. The wind is harsh, it's hard to see through the snow, and the cold air is almost freezing. Their map shows that the nearest town is a place named Schlossblitz.

At this point, the entire table should fill out a Town Creation Sheet. The GM should add two things to the sheet:

Town's Threats: "The wild, mountain man Doctor Dimwit"

Representative Buildings: "The temple Schlossblitz, which the town is named after."

When the sheet is completed, the PCs realize the town should only take one more day to reach, though the powerful snowstorm they're caught in could cause delays.

Terrain: Grassland (TN: 6)

Weather: Blizzard (TN: +5)

Total TN: 11

Act 2 - The Town Defenses are Dummy Thick

When the PCs arrive in Schlossblitz, they're welcomed, but find that the townspeople are boarding up windows, digging pitfall traps in the snow, and creating barricades and mazes out of ice blocks.

If asked why, the townspeople would give these explanations:

-- *Every year, we're harassed by this crazy old man from the mountains that calls himself Doctor Dimwit.*

-- *I've seen the things Doctor Dimwit has in his "gift bag." It's nothing but weapons, poisons, and other dangerous things!*

-- *Doctor Dimwit says he's here to give gifts to the children. If that's the case, why does he barge into people's houses in the dead of night?*

The PCs are free to wander around the town, though the GM may have them make Direction or Travel checks to navigate the mazes or avoid the traps the townspeople have set for Doctor Dimwit.

If the PCs want to help with stopping Doctor Dimwit, the townspeople suggest the following:

Build barricades and mazes: [STR] + [STR]

Set Traps: [DEX] + [INT]

Stop Doctor Dimwit before he reaches town: [Special]

If the PCs decide to help with building barricades and mazes, or setting traps, the townspeople won't have much they can reward them with, other than free lodgings and a meal for the day.

However, if they decide to stop Doctor Dimwit before he reaches town, they'll be given the following information by the leader of the town:

--Doctor Dimwit lives in the mountains about 3 days South of Schlossblitz

--Doctor Dimwit claims to have once been a wrestler

--Doctor Dimwit is very tough, but also not very smart.

--Doctor Dimwit only wears a pair of striped pants, and has bright red hair

(See Appendix A for more information)

Act 3 - This Dimwit isn't Really a Doctor

The objective for this act is to subdue Doctor Dimwit long enough to either drive him away, or to otherwise resolve the problem the townspeople have with him. (Such as explaining to him that his gifts for the children are inappropriate, or that he shouldn't break into people's houses to give gifts.)

In any case, since Doctor Dimwit is stubborn, he will need to be brought to 0 HP before he is willing to talk things out, insisting all the way "I must give the toys to the children!"

If the PCs decide to stop Doctor Dimwit before he reaches town, they can find him by travelling to the south. They'll encounter him somewhere halfway between the mountains and the town.

Terrain: Grassland (TN: 6)

Weather: Cold (TN: +1)

Total TN: 7

Outside of town, Doctor Dimwit will prioritize escaping from battle if he can. If he escapes, he will make it one space closer to town. (Meaning the PCs will have to challenge him the next day.)

Inside town, Doctor Dimwit gets trapped in the mazes and barricades, and if the PCs decide to fight him in town, they must all be in the Front Area during combat. However, Doctor Dimwit will be unable to escape.

Conclusion

There are at least three possible endings depending on how the situation with Doctor Dimwit is resolved.

Normal End

Doctor Dimwit is driven away, and told not to return. However, he remains resolute that the children of town don't want his gifts because they haven't been given the chance to truly appreciate them, and vows that he'll return again next year.

Bad End

Doctor Dimwit overcomes the town's defenses, and manages to break into a few people's houses and leave behind gifts of weapons, and poisons, and other dangerous things. The town isn't ruined, but a few families do have accidents involving Doctor Dimwit's dubious gifts.

Good End

It turns out Doctor Dimwit was just confused about what counts as a good gift. He enjoys dangerous things, so he thought the children would too. Doctor Dimwit apologizes for the misunderstanding, and the townspeople forgive him. Some of the townspeople volunteer to teach him how to make toys for the children, and he says next year, he'll come to the town center to give out the toys instead.

Appendix A

Doctor Dimwit

Habitat: South of Schlossblitz

Season: Winter

Materials: A Random Broken Weapon, Alcohol

HP: 20

MP: 20

Initiative: Rolled as if PC

Condition: 9

Accuracy: d4 d12

Damage: d12 - 2

Str: 10 Dex: 4 Int: 4 Spi: 10

A wildman that tries every year to give gifts to the children of Schlossblitz. However, the gifts he gives are...questionable.

Special Abilities:

Running Like a Devil - Doctor Dimwit can flee from battle if his Initiative is higher than at least one enemy's.

Too Dumb To Feel Pain - Doctor Dimwit is allowed to act for one turn after his HP hits 0.

Afterword

This scenario was created by Aaron der Schaedel for the Kotodama Heavy Industries 2019 Winter Holiday Scenario Contest.

I was hoping I'd have more to say after all this was said and done, but, all that comes to mind is this:

"I apologize for nothing."

(I run this scenario by having my Ryuujin actually BE the late Sanpa, which helps with a later part of the scenario)

Scenario Cultivation Sheet

Scenario Name Don't Cry, Santō! Ryuujin: Sanpa / Sanma

Scenario Type: Travel - Gathering - Fight Season: W Session Time: about 3 hours

	Main Event	Sub Event/NPC
Opening	The party arrives at YamaKita, home of Santō. He is the son of the late patron of Ryuutama's Yule holiday. While the town prepares for Yule in two days, Santō is crying outside his workshop.	Santō – toy artisan Ryuutama's newest patron of the winter holidays young adult, average build, clean-shaven, like a NEET, has a body pillow
Act 1	The party helps Santō with the first item on his wish list: getting a fancy new red suit.	Adrienne – seamstress Olric – dyer
Turning Point	Santō feels a surge of confidence in his new red suit, but anxiety still lingers in his mind.	
Act 2	As part of Santō's extravagant Yule plans, the party captures new "reindeer" to pull his sleigh. They search for snow dragons in the forest surrounding YamaKita.	posse of snow dragons small and cute, but not good at pulling sleighs
Turning Point	The snow dragons are too puny to fly Santō's sleigh. The party must bait and catch an alpine dragon, which is just an amalgamation of snow dragons.	Spirit of the North fabled alpine dragon that resides on the North Mountain an amalgamation of snow dragons
Act 3	It is the night of Yule Eve, and the party is helping Santō deliver toys to children aboard his flying sleigh. First-day jitters and general anxiety still plague Santō, who is mixing up toy deliveries.	rural children children living in the Ryuutama countryside, whose houses are visited by the Yule patron every winter
Climax	Inside one child's humble home, Santō sees that someone has already delivered presents here! The child is awake and calls him a phony, especially because of his tacky suit and weird looking reindeer. Santō, devastated, runs out crying. The party follows but must fight none other than North Pole Santa's elves, who are trying to steal Yule from Santō.	the elves of the North Pole Santa's henchmen: Elfrid, Noelle, and Legolas Elfrid and Legolas are bombastic grunts, but Noelle is a competent magician
Ending	The voice of Santō's parent reassures him that he needn't upstage past traditions nor the North Pole's Santa—he should only be true to himself. With the elves beaten, Santō delivers the rest of the presents.	



Town Creation Sheet

<i>Town Name</i>	YamaKita
<i>Town Population</i>	5,000
<i>Ruler or Representative</i>	Sanpa / Sanma (recently deceased)
<i>Environment</i>	snowy woodlands / forests in the shadow of the North Mountains
<i>Representative Buildings</i>	workshop pillow factory
<i>Specialty Goods</i>	toffee natural cicada lights
<i>Sights Sounds Scents</i>	snow / snow dragons pine tree forests with cicada lights roasted meats and candies
<i>Town's Threats</i>	the elves of North Pole Santa are trying to steal control of the Yule holidays from Santō

Target Memo:	Scenario Name	Creation Date
● Name	Santō's Suit	
● Appearance	red latex	
● Ability	+1 confidence +3 eccentricity	
● Location	mended by YamaKita's master seamstress Adrienne dyed by YamaKita's master dyer Olric	
● Location of clue to target's whereabouts	Santō tells the party that he's allergic to all textiles except latex, but he doesn't say before the party attempts to offer him suits	

● PC's reason or duty to find target	Santō feels like his hand-me-down red suit is lame and itchy, so he asks the party if they can help him find one that is fashion-forward and hypoallergenic. He is too busy making toys to handle this himself.
● Point of departure and encounter location	depart from Santō's workshop Before reaching Adrienne's and Olric's shops, the party will visit various shops around YamaKita but be unsuccessful in presenting Santō with an acceptable suit.
● Hardest encounter besides finding target	Santō He will deny most of the party's efforts to submit a red suit for him

Target Memo:	Scenario Name	Creation Date
● Name	"Reindeer", and the Spirit of the North	
● Appearance	snow dragons (see game manual)	
● Ability	flight	
● Location	surrounding forests and the North Mountains (above YamaKita 山北)	
● Location of clue to target's whereabouts	animal tracks and artifacts in the forests	

● PC's reason or duty to find target
The traditional deer Santō was given to pull his sleigh are <u>so</u> last year. He asks the party to capture the trendiest flying reindeer these days: snow dragons.
● Point of departure and encounter location
The puny snow dragons are found on rooftops in YamaKita and all around the surrounding woods. A more powerful alpine dragon—made of many smaller snow dragons—named the Spirit of the North awaits in the shadow of the North Mountain.
● Hardest encounter besides finding target
snow dragons
Most of them are mischievous and hard to capture. After overhearing Santō insult their flying ability, a bunch of them bound together to become the Spirit of the North.

Fight Scenario

Don't Cry,
Santō!

Nov 2019

Target Monster Memo	Scenario Name	Creation Date
<p>● Name</p> <p>the elves of the North Pole</p>		
<p>● Appearance</p> <p>1) Elfrid, first of his name. Privileged. Chic emerald green chaps. Overzealous about the North Pole's holiday. 2) Noelle, the temp. Humble clothing. Only there out of duty to her job. Would rather be with her cats. 3) Legolas, the 100% genuine elf. Knee-high gnome in disguise. Overcompensates his hidden identity.</p>		
<p>● Special ability/How does it live in its environment</p> <p>The elves infiltrated this part of Ryuutama from their home in the frigid North Pole. They're a strike force dispatched to ruin Santō's holiday efforts. Elegant, green, European-style fashion. Elfrid and Legolas are <u>Hoodlums</u>. Noelle is a <u>Mid-Level Magician</u>.</p>		
<p>● Location</p> <p>just outside the house of a rural family along Santō's delivery route</p>		

<p>● PC's reason/duty to defeat target monster</p> <p>If the elves continue causing a ruckus, they'll steal Santō's chances of remaining the winter holiday patron of Ryuutama. Also, they're currently hurting Santō's feelings and ruining his confidence.</p>
<p>● Point of departure and encounter location</p> <p>Depart from YamaKita, along Santō's delivery route. Houses along the route will be asleep, except for the chances of remaining the winter holiday patron of Ryuutama. Also, they're currently hurting Santō's feelings and ruining his confidence.</p>
<p>● Hardest encounter other than defeating target monster</p> <p>Santō gets heartbroken when, after a few failed deliveries, one child calls him a fraud</p>

Event Sheet

Scenario Name Don't Cry, Santō!

Ryuujin: Sanpa / Sanma

No. 1 Event Title Yuletide Tears

Time	Midday	Weather	Cold, clear	Terrain/Stage	Grassland
<p>● <i>Scene Purpose</i> Introduce party to Santō and YamaKita</p>				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	7 (6 + 1)
<p>● <i>The Five Senses</i> 👁 Small town covered in snow. Crying NEET-looking guy sitting outside his toyshop. Clean-shaven, average build. Plain yet slightly shiny latex clothes. Holding a pillow of future Mrs. Santō for comfort. 💡 Soft snow crunching under feet. Peaceful, except for the sound of sobs. 🍷 Crisp winter air. Warmth near any building, since all fires are busy roasting treats. 🍖 Roasted meats and candies from every home. Minty pines from the surrounding forests. 🍷 The taste of bitter holiday vibes.</p>					
<p>● <i>Event</i> As the party arrives at this peaceful town, soaking in the quaint houses and inviting hearths, muffled sobs upset the calm. Outside his family's toy shop, a young man named Santō is anxiously freaking out, clutching his pillow for comfort. He tells the party that his parent Sanpa / Sanma (♂ / ♀ depending on the current Ryuujin) died the last year. Santō is now the new patron of the winter holidays in this part of the world. He must promote holiday cheer and deliver gifts to children across the countryside upon his flying sleigh. Yule is two days away, but Santō feels extremely unprepared and unconfident. Yet he does feel excitement about being a patron—he dreams of making Yule spectacular, but much of this comes off as being overly eager. Deep down, he wants Sanpa / Sanma to have noticed him and his efforts.</p>					

No. 2 Event Title A Rare Allergy

Time	Afternoon	Weather	Cold, Clear	Terrain/Stage	Grassland
<p>● <i>Scene Purpose</i> Acquire a satisfactory suit for Santō</p>				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	7 (6 + 1)
<p>● <i>The Five Senses</i> 👁 The party visits 1 – 2 different stores trying to find a red suit that Santō can wear. The stores will be humble and family-owned. The final stores (Adrienne's dressmaking and Olric's dyeing services) are specialty stores run by masters of their crafts. 💡 The YamaKita people speak in kind, gentle voices. They regard Santō with slight annoyance but overwhelming fondness. 🍷 Shops have warm interiors, especially from the roasting treats. 🍖 Unlike homes, stores have especially sharp smells from chemicals or materials. 🍷 The party can purchase YamaKita's specialty roast treats: deer and fox meat; nuts; caramels and mints.</p>					
<p>● <i>Event</i> The first item on Santō's spectacular holiday list is to replace his lame, hand-me-down suit with something more fashionable. While he continues working on toys in his workshop, the party will explore YamaKita and keep an eye out for clothing stores. • <u>Target number 8.</u> The following will depend on the party's rolls: Very low rolls will make the party fail to find a new suit at all, which does nothing to help Santō's anxiety. Low rolls will make the party find a suit that isn't more fashionable than his existing suit. Successful rolls will make the party find a new, swanky suit; however, upon presenting the suit to Santō, the party will be belatedly informed that he is allergic to <u>all</u> textiles except latex. In his absentmindedness, he forgot to mention this. • At this point, Santō finally points the party towards the only seamstress in town who can work with latex: Adrienne. For good measure, he tells them about YamaKita's finest dyer as well: Olric. Critical rolls during this day will allow the party to skip the run-around and speak with Adrienne and Olric from the beginning of their search. • With a shiny new red suit, Santō thanks the party but nevertheless feels lingering anxiety.</p>					

Event Sheet

Scenario Name Don't Cry, Santō!

Ryuujin: Sanpa / Sanma

No.3 Event Title Boreal Safari

Time	Morning	Weather	Cold, Fog	Terrain/Stage	Woods
● Scene Purpose Catch 8 snow dragons to pull Santō's sleigh				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	9 (8 + 1)
● The Five Senses 🦋 The woods around YamaKita feature medium-sized pines covered in fluffy snow. During winter, the trees start glowing—lunar cicadas embed their nests in the snowy trees, giving off the appearance of hanging lights. • See the game manual for a depiction of the snow dragon. They come in sizes from the width of a hand to the size of an adult torso. 🦋 The lunar cicadas emit a hum—non-irritating—that can be heard if standing right next to a tree. Snow dragons that sit on snow or ice for too long will sizzle. 🦋 The fog makes the damp, cold air penetrate into the party's skin. Tripping is not a big danger in this soft, pillowy snow. 🦋 Boreal forests like these are famous for being unbothered by civilization. A complex scent in the heart of the forest indicates centuries of arboreal life. 🦋 Thankfully, this cold isn't the type to dry up the party's mouths.					
● Event On the morn of Yule Eve, Santō informs the party about his next wishlist item: impressive new flying reindeer to replace his family's old herd. He must stay in town to put finishing touches on his toys, but he does tell the party about typical hiding places, for the creatures he has in mind: local snow dragons. • The following are habitats for snow dragons—the Ryuujin can let the party choose up to three locations to visit in town or in the woods: - inside the snow on rooftops; - dogpiled in humps of snow on the ground; - roosting on the tallest pine trees; - hiding behind waterfalls; - holed up in igloo shelters; - atop a floating island / cloud colony; - impersonating a human in a cabin close to town. • The snow dragons do not speak but are able to communicate vague thoughts and emotions. They mostly have spunky yet immature personalities. <u>Target number 8</u> , multiple attempts. Very low rolls to capture a dragon will make the party fail and sustain 1d4 damage as that dragon lashes out. Low rolls will allow the party to capture a snow dragon with wings too small to fly. Successful rolls will let the party catch snow dragons with the size and strength Santō specified. Critical rolls provide the opportunity to befriend the snow dragon (for example, it will also breath ice on the party's perishables to preserve them indefinitely). • After three capture attempts, the party will be in the shadow of the North Mountain.					

No.4 Event Title The Spirit of the North

Time	Afternoon	Weather	Cold, Fog	Terrain/Stage	Woods
● Scene Purpose Catch a dragon that can actually pull a sleigh				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	9 (8 + 1)
● The Five Senses 🦋 On a slope of the North Mountain, clumps of dense trees conceal the fabled home of the Spirit of the North: an alpine dragon that keeps YamaKita snowy all year round. The Spirit is technically made of many lifeforms—an amalgamation of snow dragons that join when they need to. See the game manual for a depiction of the alpine dragon. 🦋 The Spirit as an individual makes no noise, but its hundreds of snow dragons make clinking noises as they move against one another. 🦋 Stronger winds and damp air coat the area as the Spirit emerges. 🦋 Almost humid fog fills the party's noses when confronted with the Spirit. 🦋 The party tastes awestruck wonder more so than fear. Santō is certainly drooling over the thought of spearheading his sleigh team with the famous Spirit.					
● Event Immediately after the party captures at most three snow dragons, they find themselves at the base of the North Mountain. Santō is on his lunch break and meets the party there. Upon seeing the pipsqueak snow dragons, he irritably expresses that they're far too weak to fly his entire sleigh. In response, the North Mountain trembles and unleashes an ice blue creature the height of four men. Santō recognizes it as the famed Spirit of the North, whose powerful wings are perfect for pulling his sleigh. He excitedly points the party in its direction for capture. • The party does not fight the dragon, instead treating it with curiosity and friendship in mind. <u>Target number 12</u> , multiple attempts. Very low rolls will make the party behave in offensive ways to the dragon, who becomes angered or even violent. Low rolls will distract a few snow dragons, which fall off the Spirit. Successful rolls will allow the party to learn more about the dragon's behavior, history, and personality. Critical rolls will endear the dragon to the party. • Whatever the party attempts, the Ryuujin will eventually have them appease the dragon with food items—especially any roast treats obtained from YamaKita which the Spirit regards as fragrant offerings. Any particularly fond snow dragons that the party previously recruited can also persuade the Spirit. By catching the Spirit of the North, Santō's team finally looks fearsome enough to dazzle during tomorrow.					

Event Sheet

Scenario Name Don't Cry, Santō!

Ryuuji:Sanpa / Sanma

No. 5 Event Title The Night Before Yule, 'Twas

Time	Midnight	Weather	Dark	Terrain/Stage	Grassland
● <i>Scene Purpose</i> Deliver presents to rural children				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	9 (6 + 3)
<p>● <i>The Five Senses</i> 🕯 Although the night is dark, hearths remain lit during Yule Eve to guide Santō from house to house. All the houses on the countryside are simple, with few decorations outside or inside. 🕯 No creatures are stirring along Santō's route, especially not mice. Snore inside of homes. 🕯 In the upper atmosphere where Santō flies, winds and weather give the party a bit of a tough time traveling. Each warm house provides much-needed rest from the route. 🕯 The smells of the whole country are experienced during Santō's trip—crop fields, woods, rivers, livestock, stony gravel, and of course snow. 🕯 No matter how humble the home, its residents always provide a nighttime snack for Santō to eat while they sleep. From simple sugary breads to the most exquisite roast meats, these countryside confections are more than enough to satisfy Santō and the party.</p> <p>● <i>Event</i> Just a short nap after preparations are complete, the party joins Santō to assist in his present deliveries. Wearing his swanky new suit and commanding his fresh reindeer team, Santō is excited to give gifts to all the rural children and is optimistic about his first holiday! • <u>Target number 12</u>, multiple attempts. Whether handling delivery logistics or assisting Santō as he enters homes through their chimneys / fireplaces, the party does whatever they can to help. Very low rolls lead to broken packages and failed deliveries. Low rolls lead to delivery errors, damages, or low-quality presents / wrapping. Successful rolls lead to the expected number of presents being delivered to a house. Critical rolls lead to more presents than expected being delivered to a lucky child. • These checks are so difficult because Santō still feels anxious no matter how much preparation went into this night. His new suit and reindeer are surely impressive, but don't add to his confidence in any meaningful way. As the night moves along, he makes more and more mistakes due to nerves.</p>					

No. 6 Event Title Don't Be So Elfish

Time	Night	Weather	Dark	Terrain/Stage	Grassland
● <i>Scene Purpose</i> Fight some elves!				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	9 (6 + 3)
<p>● <i>The Five Senses</i> 🕯 A later child's home is especially simple, with just one room besides the room where the presents are to be laid. But when Santō arrives here, the floor is already covered with extravagant presents, wrapped in a foreign design! • There are three elves the party must fight: 1) Elfrid, a low-ranking but pompous brawler, wears make-up, equipped with brass knuckles and chocolate coins; 2) Noelle, a plain-looking but higher ranked magician, stoic but irked expression; and 3) Legolas, a knee-high dwarf trying to fit in as an elf, using a slingshot. 🕯 Santō is crying again while the party fights the elves. Elfrid speaks princely; Noelle speaks precisely; Legolas speaks like a sprite. 🕯 It sure isn't good for the party's complexion—getting punched and pelted and blasted by enemies. 🕯 Overwhelming peppermint wafting from Elfrid and Legolas. 🕯 The taste of victory (hopefully).</p> <p>● <i>Event</i> At one child's simple home, Santō enters to see that someone has already delivered here—five times more presents than he was about to deliver! The child is up already—admiring their many presents—when Santō enters, shocked. The child takes one look at his "tacky" suit and his "gross" reindeer and mocks Santō; in their words, "You're not the <u>real</u> Santa!" With his worst fears of failing the children realized, Santō rushes out of the house devastated. • Before the party can catch up with him, they cross paths with the persons who delivered these foreign presents: three "elves" who answer to "Santa" from the north pole of the world. They are a strike force dispatched to steal Santō's holiday. • <u>2 Hoodlums (LV 3) and 1 Mid-Level Magician (LV 5, Winter season)</u>. The party must fight the elves so they don't continue ruining Santō's time. There is a bit of infighting among the elves, since Noelle gets irked at the low-level Elfrid (for taking the lead on this mission) and at Legolas (for clearly impersonating something he is not). Elfrid and Legolas—who consider Noelle to be overly serious—play off of one another's flamboyance. • This event does not end before the following event.</p>					



Event Sheet



Scenario Name	Don't Cry, Santō!	Ryuujin: Sanpa / Sanma
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No. 7 Event Title New Year, New Me!

Time	Early Morning	Weather	Dark	Terrain/Stage	Grassland
● Scene Purpose	Wrap up the scenario			Weather/Terrain Difficulty	9 (6 + 3)
● The Five Senses	👁 Santō appears to be glowing! An imperceptible yet warm shine that fills him with new optimism. 💡 While the party fights, Santō hears the gravelly, old voice of his late parent. Afterwards, he speaks with authority against the elves. 🧡 Watching your friend start believing in himself—no better feeling. 🟡 The party can finally breath without the pungent smell of peppermint blocking their noses. 🍷 The taste of victory!				
● Event	The party continues fighting the elves, and as Santō wallows in his inadequacy, a voice is heard in his mind: Sanpa / Sanma is speaking to him! "My son, why do you torture yourself like this?" "Sometimes I wish I weren't born as your son. Then I wouldn't have to feel like such a disappointment." "If you're disappointing anyone, it's definitely not me. You're my son! Are you a good Sanpa / Sanma? No, and you shouldn't aim to be either. Are you a good Santa? No, he's a greedy thief! But are you a good toymaker? A great Santō? Yes. No one better." • Santō then realizes that nothing has been causing him anxiety except his own unreasonable standards for himself. Yule isn't Sanpa's / Sanma's. It's his. And it's in danger! • Santō joins the battle. The Ryuujin may have him stay a few rounds. But he will end the fight by blasting the elves with his honey-roasted, pinecone-fueled holiday spirit. • With everything settled, Santō has the confidence to finish his deliveries alone. He tells the party about his experience with his parent, and about his new approach to being a holiday patron. He leaves the party to rest in the current town, flying off into the night while shouting, "Ha Ha, New Year, New Me!"				

No. Event Title

Time		Weather		Terrain/Stage	
● Scene Purpose				Weather/Terrain Difficulty	
● The Five Senses					
● Event					



By Loren Ponder [@winglorn](#) - November 2019

Overview:

An unexpected and unrelenting blizzard is plaguing the small mountain village of Rovinnia.

Ryuujin: green/midori-ryuu

Season: winter

Terrains: rocky [+8], mountain [+10]



Locations:






Rosemary's Cottage: A cozy cottage beside the road.





Rovinnia: A small village at the base of a tall mountain. It is cold here due to the snow dragon that lives on the mountain. The villagers provide for themselves by hunting and ice fishing on the frozen lake as well as trading with passing travelers.

The Lodge: The Lodge is the largest building in town. It serves as Rovinnia's communal meeting space, restaurant, and lodging for visitors. A huge stone fireplace in the center keeps it warm 24/7.

The Dragon's Cave: A crystalline ice cave at the top of the mountain, home to Northgale

Cast of NPCs

	<p>Rosemary (she/her), an elderly witch.</p> <p>Rosemary is reclusive and a little grumpy, but helpful if pushed. She makes medicines and good-luck charms, and she keeps an enchanted haniwa golem to help her with chores.</p>
	<p>Ember (he/him), a teenaged hunter.</p> <p>Ember is young and impulsive. He hides his guilty conscience behind overconfidence. He is very concerned with helping his sister.</p> <p>HP: 15 / MP: 8 / Initiative: 7 / Condition: 8 Abilities: 6 8 8 4 / Accuracy (bow): d8+d8 -2 / Damage: d8 / Armor: 1</p>
	<p>Meeka (she/her), a wolf.</p> <p>Meeka is standoffish to strangers and never leaves Ember's side.</p> <p>HP: 15 / MP: 4 / Initiative: 7 / Condition: 8 Abilities: 6 8 2 2 / Accuracy: d6 d8 / Damage: d6 / Armor: 1</p>
	<p>Garnet (she/her), a tanner and hatmaker.</p> <p>Garnet is 9 months pregnant and bedridden due to illness. She is Ember's older sister and her husband is away on a journey.</p> <p>[SICKNESS: 8]</p>
	<p>Ilya (he/him), the midwife's apprentice.</p> <p>Ilya is young and soft-spoken, with short-cropped hair & soft hands. The old midwife passed away a few weeks ago and Ilya is struggling to fill her shoes as the town's only healer.</p>

	<p>Hearth (he/him), a weatherwitch and elder councilmember.</p> <p>Hearth is Ember & Garnet's grandfather. Normally he can predict the weather; he is baffled by this sudden blizzard and worried about the health of the dragon on the mountain.</p>
	<p>Gaelle (she/her), a traveling merchant.</p> <p>She is stuck in Rovinnia due to the blizzard. Gaelle is a shrewd businesswoman and very annoyed at this roadblock. She sells Elsaneth's candy, as well as other goods she picks up on her travels.</p>
	<p>Elsaneth (she/her), a traveling candymaker and Gaelle's partner.</p> <p>Elsaneth is definitely the sweeter half of the relationship. Her rock candy is the best around!</p>
	<p>Northgale (she/her), a snow dragon.</p> <p>She resides at the peak of the mountain and is usually very peaceful. However, Northgale was recently injured and a dragon madder has taken up residence in her mouth, causing a massive blizzard.</p>



Rosemary's Cottage

Weather: Snow **Terrain:** Rocky **TN:** 11

Scene Purpose: Pick up medicine to deliver to Rovinnia.

Five Senses:

Snow covered hills & rocks. A lonely cottage, blanketed in thick snow, set back from the road. On a clear day the mountain is visible from here... but right now a massive wall of blizzard is raging about ½ a mile down the road from the cottage.

The inside of the cottage seems slightly larger than the outside. Rosemary keeps chickens and a few goats, and has a small solarium with herbs & tomatoes. Dried herbs hang from the rafters.

Scene Events:

- As the players travel down the road, a haniwa golem that was buried in the snow shakes itself off. It opens the cottage gate and wordlessly but very insistently ushers everyone inside.
- Inside the cluttered cottage is Rosemary. She offers the group a good luck charm (*single use, consume to crit any roll*) in return for delivering a bundle of critical medicine to the village of Rovinnia, 15km/a day's travel up the road. The medicine is overdue but she is too old to travel there herself and the mysterious blizzard around the town has stopped anyone else from coming and going.
- If the group is unprepared for the weather, Rosemary will offer to let them have whatever winter gear they can find in the shed. Anything they find is *used* and *uncool* (1 item for each player, choose between: snow boots, snow staff, or warm cape).



The Blizzard

Weather: Blizzard **Terrain:** Rocky **TN:** 13

Scene Purpose: Find Rovinnia, meet Ember

Five Senses:

Blinding white and freezing cold. Words stolen away by the wind. Snow stinging like needles on any exposed skin.

Scene Events:

- Travel into the blizzard 15km to find Rovinnia. The road is covered in waist-deep snow and it is slow going. Travel and direction checks [TN: 13].
- If your players enjoy combat, they can encounter a Frozen Statue (pg 193).
- As they get close to town they will meet Ember and Meeka trying to travel through the blizzard for the medicine. Ember will guide the players back home to Rovinnia's town lodge. If asked about the blizzard, he goes silent and sulky.



The Lodge

Weather: Blizzard **Terrain:** Rocky **TN:** 13

Scene Purpose: Get lodging and information, meet merchants, deliver medicine

Five Senses:

Deep, deep snow. Severe, sloping roofs on tiny cabins. Reindeer pulling plows through the main road to stamp down the snow. Barrels of potatoes. Chimney smoke. The smell of fish stew.

Scene Events:

- The players can find lodging and food here from Ember's grandfather, Hearth. Hearth will tell the group that he is worried about the health of the snow dragon that lives on the mountain, and reminisce about how he used to feed her rock candy--her favorite food--in his younger years.
- Deliver the medicine to Ilya, the midwife's apprentice. If there is a healer in the group Ilya will ask them to help with Garnet's illness [SICKNESS: 8].
- Two traveling merchants, Gaelle and Elsaneth, are stuck here due to the storm. They are bored and will offer the group samples of candy in exchange for stories.



Dragonfall

Weather: Blizzard **Terrain:** Rocky **TN:** 13

Scene Purpose: Encounter the dragon, battle Snow-Sprites


Five Senses:

Snow

Scene Events:

- At some point when the players are gathered in the lodge, Gaelle will go outside to smoke. Suddenly the players will hear screams and the sounds of panicked reindeer from outside.
- Outside, Gaelle is unconscious on the ground and the blizzard seems to be impossibly even stronger than before. Any player who passes a perception check [DEX+INT] at [TN:4] will catch a glimpse of a massive snow dragon hovering above the town. If they beat [TN:6] they will also see a broken arrow in her shoulder and something brightly colored lodged in her mouth.
- The dragon roars and breathes Snow-Sprites* from her mouth, then leaves and flies away, back up the mountain.
- Battle the Snow-Sprites to save Gaelle and regroup back to the lodge.

***Snow-Sprite:** It is said these sprites are born from the breath of a Snow Dragon. Quick and sharp, but fragile, they are mischievous constructs of ice and snow. In small groups they are a mild annoyance; in large numbers, they may be deadly.

	<p>Common Habitat: Alpine, mountain, highland</p> <p>Season: +1 to Initiative and Condition if encountered during Winter</p> <p>Materials: n/a</p>
<p>HP: 2</p> <p>MP: 5</p> <p>Initiative: 10</p> <p>Condition: 6</p>	<p>Abilities: STR 4, DEX 10, INT 4, SPI 4</p> <p>Accuracy: d10 / d10</p> <p>Damage: d4</p> <p>Armor: 0</p>



Up the Mountain

Weather: Blizzard **Terrain:** Mountain **TN:** 15

Scene Purpose: Travel 15km up the mountain to find the dragon.

Five Senses:

Deep snow and steep pathways. Blinding white and freezing cold. Words stolen away by the wind. Snow stinging like needles on any exposed skin.

Scene Events:

- When the players return to the lodge Ember is missing. He has grabbed his coat and rushed up the mountain after the dragon.
- Hearth loans each player a pair of snowshoes [+1 in snow/blizzard] to follow Ember.
- Elsaneth gives the party a bag of rock candy to take to lure the dragon.
- Travel up the mountain
- A perception check of [TN: 6] will allow the players to find Ember's campfire once it gets dark.
- When they catch up, Ember will confess that he mistakenly shot at and wounded the dragon a few weeks ago while he was hunting on the mountain. He feels like it is his responsibility to set things right and save the town, but he doesn't know how.



The Dragon Madder

Weather: Blizzard **Terrain:** Mountain **TN:** 13

Scene Purpose: Defeat the Dragon-Madder, heal the dragon

Five Senses:

An icy, crystalline cave. Silence at the eye of the storm. Breathtaking cold.

Scene Events:

- The dragon is curled up in her cave at the top of the mountain, an arrow sticking from her shoulder.
- Give her the rock candy so that she will open her mouth wide, then battle the Dragon-Madder (pg 200) and ~3 Snow-Sprites inside. The Dragon madder will stay in the enemy back area, behind the snow sprites, and cast *Winter Magic* spells.
- When the madder is defeated the dragon will allow the players to approach and remove the arrow from her shoulder.



Celebration

Weather: Clear, Snow **Terrain:** Rocky **TN:** 13

Scene Purpose: Return to town and celebrate!

Five Senses:

Clear skies and sun sparkling off fresh snow. A bonfire next to the lake. Twinkling lights and celebration and sleigh-rides.

Scene Events:

- The blizzard has stopped and the sky is clear. Return to town with Ember.
- The town rewards the players with a celebration feast (delicious food, +1 to the next day's condition check)
- During the party Hearth offers a free weather prediction before the group heads out of town (pg 62).
- Garnet gives birth to twins! She gifts each of the players a handmade, *high-quality fur hat* (+1 in cold) to thank them for the medicine.



End!

I hope you enjoy!

Deepest Winter

Part One: The Horned Way

This scenario is Part One of a Legendary Journey, fit for 10th-level Travelers. It is intended for Green Ryuujin. Playing through the scenario should take 4-6 hours. This scenario merely covers the beginning of the Legendary Journey, which will likely take several sessions to complete. However, it can be played as a standalone scenario, in which case the summit of the Horned Way is the end goal of this Journey rather than just one destination.

Outline

The group begins a Legendary Journey to discover and solve mysteries surrounding winter. Do Alpine Dragons exist in multiple varieties? Why do snow dragons only make their homes in parts of the world? Do they get along with the cloud dragons that often allow for easier delivery of snow? Answers to these questions and more are the aim of this Journey.

This scenario, Part One: The Horned Way, will cover the abandoned settlement of Myra and the mysterious and dangerous Horned Way the town overlooks.

Opening

[Terrain] *Rocky Terrain* **[Weather]** *Fog, Night* **(Difficulty: 12)**

The small settlement of Myra sits atop a tall plateau, overlooking a deep, forested valley leading to the mountain path called the "Horned Way." Cold, misty fog seems to perpetually cover Myra, hiding it from distant view and preventing sight of locales other than the path ahead to the mountain—for some reason, these are always visible, regardless of how much fog situates itself in the settlement.

It's been days on the road with conditions only growing more difficult to deal with as they moved closer to the beginning of their true journey. Night falls as the group takes their first step onto the plateau and into Myra. They see a wooden sign covered in frost showing the settlement's name, and beneath that, the word "Population" and the number next to it scratched over, making it impossible to tell how many live here. It seems to be a ghost town. Nobody is outside, and if anyone has lights in their homes, they're not visible. The only sound is the soft howl of a chilly breeze circling the whole plateau. If the group intends to stay in the settlement for some time, they'll have to find lodgings on their own or set up camp.

Act 1

[Terrain] *Rocky Terrain* **[Weather]** *Fog, Night* **(Difficulty: 12)**

Myra is silent save the wind, and night is upon you. Seeking shelter among the shacks and houses may be your best bet for tonight in order to prepare for the arduous journey ahead. In the center of town, a rather large log cabin seems to beckon you. Something about it is...warm.

Inviting, even. The other homes in the area are cold, but this one feels like it has something special to offer.

Have the party make Perception checks [DEX+INT]. The target number is 12. If anyone in the party succeeds, they spot a Toy Soldier (Dragonica Number 171) peeking from behind the log cabin. It's pouring cold water onto the ground, which is freezing, creating a slick surface near the cabin! If the party sees this, there is no risk of falling on the ice. If the entire party fails, they still spot the Toy Soldier, but they fail to see it pouring water onto the ground, and the party risks slipping on the ice it creates. If they decide to investigate the cabin, have the party make Balance checks [DEX+DEX]. The target number is 7. A failure indicates a minor injury (have the player narrate how they fall and get hurt and give an appropriate injury) [Injury:4].

The Toy Soldier enters the log cabin through a sixty-centimeter-tall door situated in the corner. This entrance is obviously too small for the party to enter, but there is a much larger door nearby. A lightly-frosted brass knocker in the shape of an evilly-smiling human face with goat horns protruding from its forehead sways lightly in the wind, seemingly inviting the party to knock with it. If the group decides to do so, they will hear thumping, booted footsteps growing closer to open the door.

A latch on the door clicks and the portal opens. Inside, a Horned God (see Horned God monster entry; Dragonica Number 165) cautiously sizes up the group, but there is a kindness behind his eyes. He turns away while motioning over his shoulder to follow. "Well, are you coming in or not? The fog will eat you up if you stay out too long." If the party asks about this, he tells them it's not true and he was just making a joke at their expense. "It has been an age since this place has seen any other. I thought perhaps the mountain had scared off all potential travelers." He thoughtfully takes a long draw from an elderberry pipe, breathing out a puff of smoke in the shape of a fir tree. He continues to smoke while speaking with the party, puffing out different shapes every time (pine tree; oak tree; sprig of holly; mistletoe; bottle; goat; red demon; cabin complete with chimney that puffs out its own smoke a moment later; mountain; human; koneko-goblin; walking egg; etc.). "Do you plan on taking the journey to the summit?" He will be excited if the party answers in the affirmative or says they plan on going near it at least ("Excellent! Stay awhile. Darkness encroaches. You should enjoy the warmth of my cabin before your arduous task."), and disappointed if told they do not plan on traveling there ("I see. I suppose I am not surprised. Braving the mountain is a foolhardy notion, after all. Still, you should stay here for the night. Darkness encroaches."). Either way, the Horned God will finally introduce himself. "Apologies, it has been too long since I have interacted with any but the passing winds. I am Mikkelis. What do you call yourselves?" Once the party has introduced themselves, Mikkelis will offer to make the party a meal. "I have apple cider and hot chocolate brewing in the kitchen and ham in the oven. You may feel free to partake." This counts as a Delicious ration.

If the party asks about the Toy Soldier's prank, Mikkelis will briefly laugh and ask, "So, the little one was getting itself into trouble again? Typical. I will make it apologize to you immediately."

He then knocks loudly on one of the cupboards in the kitchen, after which the Toy Soldier the party saw earlier jumps out of the cupboard and bows, then salutes, clearly doing its best to apologize. "Next time you'll get a harsher scolding, you know." Mikkelis chuckles to himself before sitting back once more to draw from his pipe. After this, or if the party simply asks about the Toy Soldier without knowing that it was the one who made the ice slick (or they don't mention it), Mikkelis will explain: "It has been a resident of Myra longer than I have. It comes and goes from house to house. A constant thorn in my side, it is, but...perhaps not an entirely unwelcome one."

Once the party begins to reach a lull in conversation with Mikkelis, if they elect to stay the night, the Horned God will provide bedding. Before the group begins resting, if they said they planned on traveling to the summit of the Horned Way, a thought occurs to Mikkelis, and he offers to sell everyone gear for their climb at a slight discount. He carries two each of the following items:

Item	Price (G)	Size	Bonus (+1)
Sturdy climbing shoes	1215	Size 1	Wasteland/Rocky Terrain/Mountain/Alpine
Sturdy snow boots	1350	Size 1	Snow/Blizzard
Used jungle boots	432	Size 1	Woods/Deep Forest/Jungle
Sturdy windbreaker	324	Size 3	Strong wind
Sturdy warm cape	432	Size 3	Cold
Sturdy raincoat	1080	Size 3	Rain/Hard Rain/Snow
High Quality camo cape	1800	Size 3	Hide check +2* for Alpine
Sturdy hiking staff	270	Size 3	Rocky Terrain/Mountain
Sturdy snow staff	756	Size 3	Snow
Mythril Shining cap	2280	Size 1	-
High Quality woolen hat	900	Size 1	Cold
Orichalcum woolen hat	9000	Size 1	Cold
Goggles	3600	Size 1	All Rain, Wind, and Snow and related conditions
Sturdy Plus One Goggles	18800	Size 1	All Rain, Wind, and Snow and related conditions
Sturdy Speaking Compass	6050	Size 1	Direction Checks

*Includes High Quality in bonus

In the morning, he will provide a wrapped Preserved Delicious meal of ham and stuffing. This food will never go bad, thanks to its Preserved characteristic. He wishes you safety on your trip, but before you leave, he nervously scratches his back. "Travelers. I wish to ask a favor of you. If you go and are able to reach the summit, return to me and tell me if you think I can make it myself. That is all." He will explain his reasons if prompted at any time, including during the night before. Questions such as, but not limited to, "What brings you here?" or "Is there a reason you asked about the summit?" or "Do you know anything about the summit?" will be enough. If the party agrees, Mikkelis will be elated and wishes the party good luck. If the party acts unsure or says no, he will be visibly disappointed, but will not press the issue, wishing them good luck anyway.

Mikkelis

Horned God, demon (he/him/his), ?? years old. See Horned God monster entry.

He is a hospitable demon, if somewhat gruff and formal at the same time. He will warm up to the party quickly if they are polite. Now the only resident of Myra, he plans on eventually traveling the Horned Way to find evidence to support an idea: that Horned Demons are not demons at all, but a new classification of monster altogether. He believes that he—and all other Horned Demons—came from the summit of this mountain when the dragons of the seasons and the dragons of the earth and sky created all that is. He thinks that the Winter dragon specifically created his kind. This trip (rightfully) intimidates him, however, so he gathers his courage in the remains of a long-abandoned settlement.

Act 2

[Terrain] Deep Forest [Weather] Cold, Deep Fog (Difficulty: 14)

A deep forest in an even deeper valley steeped in a yet even deeper fog stands as a barrier to those who would dare to attempt the climb on the Horned Way. The edge of the forest seems to repel the fog cascading down the rocky hills from Myra, only to introduce its own fog with ice crystals magically floating within it.

A chill runs down the group's spines as they step into the forest, the temperature suddenly dropping. Icicles—suspended from the treetops—hang several feet down each, not unlike spears. The party must be careful not to disturb the trees too much, else they face danger of impalement.

A sense of foreboding surrounds the party shortly after entering the forest, as if they are being watched. Have the party make Sense checks [INT+SPI]. The target number is 12. Anyone who is successful feels a presence in the fog itself, though they cannot see it. They get the feeling that grasping at the floating ice crystals will reveal what is hidden—and indeed, that is exactly what will happen. Grabbing an ice crystal after succeeding on this check (the success also allows the character to sense which crystals are dangerous and which are not) will cause a multitude of other crystals to coalesce into a moving storm of ice shards. Somehow, its malice is clear at this point. If everyone in the party fails on this check, they are subject to a Surprise Attack. Likewise,

if those who succeeded decide not to grab an ice crystal, they are subject to a Surprise Attack.
[COMBAT: FRIGID DEATH CYCLONE]

When the monster is defeated, the crystals floating in the air—even the ones that posed no danger—fall to the ground with tiny clinking noises. Some of the ice seems to group together, as if magnetized, forming a chunk of ice that refuses to melt or break regardless of temperature or pressure.

Behind the party, icicles begin to fall from the treetops due to the fighting. The party must rush ahead or find a place to take shelter quickly, else the icicles threaten to stab them. Have the party make Hard Exercise checks [STR+DEX] or Dodge checks [DEX+INT] depending on their choice. The target number for the Hard Exercise check is 9, while the target number for the Dodge check is 12. If either check fails, an icicle spear gravely injures the failing party member (have the player narrate this or narrate it yourself) [Injury:8]. The icicle also inflicts d4 damage. A Critical Success on a check allows a character to somewhat protect another, reducing the status effect to [Injury:6] and reducing damage inflicted by 1.

After this obstacle has been dealt with, the party is free to continue forward, and they will encounter no more significant obstacles until out of the deep forest hours later. In fact, if the party is so inclined, there is a patch of Moonlight Snowgrass to harvest near the exit of the forest, as well as a group of three Crystalline Rimeflowers (see below) surrounding the Moonlight Snowgrass, refracting the last vestiges of the day's sunlight into the fog, dispelling it from this edge of the forest. Night is quickly approaching, and it only grows colder.

Act 3

[Terrain] Mountain [Weather] Snow (Difficulty: 13)

The Horned Way lies ahead. A tribe of mountain goats leisurely rest in a bed of snow under the shelter of a small cave carved out of the mountain's base. One goat raises its head, gazing at you briefly before lying down once more.

The mountain goats will not run away from or attack the party without cause, even if the group decides to share the small cave space. Indeed, if the party members share a bit of food, they can even snuggle close to some of the friendlier goats in an effort to stay warm tonight if they like, giving them a +1 bonus on the next day's Condition check.

There is no need for a Direction check on this part of the mountain—it is clear that the way up is along the spiral path. When the party is ready to embark, if they shared food with the goats, the tribe will follow for a short distance up the mountain, occasionally kicking up snow to graze on some cold grass underneath or stopping to eat moss off a cliffside. After walking for a while, the mountain path begins to spiral more and more quickly upward, at which point the mountain goats stop following the party if they were coming along.

The party can see the outskirts of Myra and the treetops of the forest beneath them, both cloaked in fog. Sunlight reflects off the snow under the party's feet and the distant waters of a lake long past. The air begins to grow crisper and thinner as the group climbs, but with that said, the trip is, compared to the forest, relatively calm. The sounds of the mountain goats behind them begin to mute, replaced by the constant drone of wind and drifting snow. The near silence only cements the calm of the mountain, allowing the party to simply enjoy the moment.

Hours pass as the party climbs higher and higher, and the spiral of the mountain continues to thin, though the group is nowhere near the summit. After a few more minutes, the spiral violently halts, ending in a cliff. Looking over the edge, it's as anyone would expect—a long fall into more cliffs and white snow.

Thankfully, the party doesn't need to climb sheer cliffs to reach the summit. A dark tunnel only a few feet up the side of the mountain, lit slightly by the falling sun, shows a way further upward. When the party enters the tunnel, have the party make Perception checks [DEX+INT]. The target number is 12. If anyone succeeds, they see an alcove in the tunnel that would shelter everyone from the wind if they decided to rest there. If everyone fails, the tunnel itself is shelter enough from the snow, but the party will need to set up more camping materials to prevent the wind from allowing good rest. The party may not get another safe opportunity to sleep before reaching the summit, and somehow they can feel it.

The next morning, if the party found the alcove and someone has the Herb Gathering skill, with it, they can find some White Night Chrysanthemum tucked into the corner of the alcove, growing out of a moss-filled crack in the floor. Have the character make a Job Knowledge check [INT+INT] as part of finding the plant. The target number is 9. If successful, they recognize that a pocket of poisonous gas may be underneath. Quickly pulling the plant out and moving out of the way allows the character to avoid being affected. If this check is failed, the character is subject to the poisonous gas, which inflicts [Poison:8].

Act 4

[Terrain] Alpine [Weather] Blizzard (Difficulty: 19)

The final stretch of the Horned Way is upon you, and you steel yourselves while walking through the short tunnel upward before stepping out into the frigid morning air. Not even a minute of walking passes before ice, wind, and snow begin to whip into a violent blizzard.

The party must struggle to breathe while pushing against the blizzard's icy winds battering them with hail, sleet, and snow. This open part of the mountain is merciless, and no amount of waiting around will lessen its ability to put travelers in their humble place. Every step is on rough, uneven ground covered in snow and ice, and the party's only hints that the summit is in the direction they're heading are the tunnel they came from and the cliffs.

After pushing through the blizzard for a short while, the party hears a howl—a different sort of howl than the wind—this is a creature. The howl echoes in the group's heads, attempting to

rattle their psyches [Muddled: 6]. They cannot see anything through the blowing snow and ice, and after a few minutes, the howl stops echoing, though its effects remain. The party may continue, and nothing reveals itself immediately.

Driving forward for another hour, the same howl the party heard before strikes again, only much harsher and louder this time [Muddled: 8]. Have the party make Sense checks [INT+SPI]. The target number is 16. If anyone in the party succeeds, they feel a presence approaching from behind. If everyone in the party fails, they are subject to a Surprise Attack from a Hailstorm Phantom hovering over two White Wolves. [COMBAT: HAILSTORM PHANTOM AND WHITE WOLVES]

After the fight, the party is left breathless from battle in a blizzard. Still, they must press on. The summit is within reach.

Ending

[Terrain] Alpine [Weather] Blizzard (Difficulty: 19)

At last, you have reached the summit. Winds blow, snow and hail batter you, but you have conquered all challenges. Yet...

The party has reached their destination, and they are rewarded with a brief respite from the blizzard, which seems to let up just a little as soon as they reach the top of the mountain. Sunlight shines through the storm, and the group can sit for a bit and enjoy howls that belong to no creature—only nature in its majesty.

As the party gazes out into the horizon that seems to stretch forever, they see a flying figure—a dragon—come toward them at top speed. It is not hostile, however. Instead, it seeks to speak with the party.

The dragon—a snow dragon—slams into the side of the cliff claws-first, then clambers up the side until it rests calmly at the precipice of the summit. It tilts its head at you for a moment before acknowledging your worthiness. "You may ask three questions on winter of me, and I shall answer."

You make your way into Myra once again, this time on a return trip. Stopping in to Mikkelis' home, you tell him about your journey and the perils along the way. He accepts that the trip is likely too difficult for him, but eagerly asks whether you learned any secrets of winter—especially about the Horned Gods' origins.

The snow dragon gave a hint as to where you should head next to learn more on your Legendary Journey—the Ghostwalk River, a stream where the living cross into the realm of the dead.

New Herb

ENHANCE TYPE	Lv	TERRAIN	PORTION
Crystalline Rimeflower	3	Forest	Flower

USE: Grants knowledge of a single Low Level or Mid Level Winter spell for one full day upon consumption. Only a character with the Magic Type benefits from this flower.

DESCRIPTION: A species that grows only in cold forests. The entire plant appears to be crystalline, and touching it fills the body with minor chills. Its surface is impossibly smooth. When the flower is consumed, the stalk and leaf begin to melt, completely liquefying within one minute, the water seeping into the ground to seed a new Crystalline Rimeflower, assuming the conditions are correct.

New Monsters

Phantom Beasts

White Wolf

Level: 6

Habitat	Rocky terrain, mountains, and alpine		
Season	Winter		
Materials	White Wolf Pelt (1000G)		
Dragonica Number	022		
HP	27	Abilities	10 12 6 6
MP	12	Accuracy	d12 d10
Initiative	9	Damage	d10
Condition	8	Armor	1

A stark white wolf about three times larger than an average timber wolf with glowing silver eyes that stand out even in a blizzard. They aim to confuse foes with an eerie howl before striking with deadly fangs. **SPECIAL ABILITY:** Echoing Howl — A stark white wolf can howl, causing [Muddled:6] when more than a mile away from targets and [Muddled:8] when closer than that. It will only howl when it knows there is something potentially threatening in the area.

Demonstones

Frigid Death Cyclone

Level: 10

Habitat	All		
Season	Winter		
Materials	Immutable Ice (2500G)		
Dragonica Number	118		
HP	28	Abilities	10 8 10 12
MP	20	Accuracy	d12 d10
Initiative	14	Damage	d12
Condition	16	Armor	1

A group of floating ice crystals spinning seemingly without sense or pattern make up this monster's body. It's said that it was created by a snow dragon's breath. Despite simply being animated ice, this monster has incredible willpower. Its favorite tactic is to blend in with fog, snow, and blizzard conditions while waiting for an opportune moment to ambush its prey. If it succeeds in killing its target, it will freeze them, then shatter them into tiny shards of ice to create a new Frigid Death Cyclone. **SPECIAL ABILITY:** Malevolent Icy Gale — A Frigid Death Cyclone attacks a Close Area by spinning even more violently, inflicting [SPI](1 die) damage to enemies and [Sickness:6] no matter their Condition, once per combat.

Undead

Hailstorm Phantom

Level: 8

Habitat	Alpine		
Season	Winter		
Materials			
Dragonica Number	119		
HP	36	Abilities	4 6 12 12
MP	20	Accuracy	d12 d12
Initiative	12	Damage	d12
Condition	11	Armor	0

The restless spirit of one who died in a blizzard very near their goal. Its face is twisted in an agonizing expression, its jaw appearing broken from screaming in anger and disappointment beyond its limits. **SPECIAL ABILITY:** Hailblend — A Hailstorm Phantom can use an object in combat to Hide for 1 round, during which it cannot be targeted and it cannot

attack. While inside the object, the hail around it seems to whip even more violently in a Close Area, inflicting [INT+SPI] damage to enemies.

Demons

Horned God

Level: 8

Habitat	All		
Season	Winter		
Materials	Cure-All Elixir (12000G)		
Dragonica Number	165		
HP	24	Abilities	10 6 8 10
MP	16	Accuracy	d10 d10
Initiative	12	Damage	d10
Condition	12	Armor	1

A hairy goat-horned demon that masquerades as a deity among other species. Its tongue lolls out of its fanged mouth, slowly dripping saliva into its beard, where it seems to magically disappear. It is one of the very few demons that is not inherently evil or violent. In fact, it prefers to avoid combat whenever possible, despite its capability. Instead, it prefers to garner favor from various peoples by staging monster attacks and "protecting" said people from the monsters, or by providing a Cure-All Elixir. Once it has gained a foothold in an area, it will begin to act as a sort of parental figure to children, but it tends to be too strict. It will swat naughty children with birch branches. Occasionally, this will cause the parents or other adults in the area to push the demon out, but more often than not, its reputation and usefulness keep it in the adults' good graces. If a child continues to be naughty, a rare Horned God may attempt to spirit the child to the Underworld in a sack. These children are never seen again, and the Horned God will never return to the area the child came from. **SPECIAL ABILITY:** King of Oak and Mistletoe — A Horned God can create a concoction of oak and mistletoe called the Cure-All Elixir. It will cure infertility and any Poison conditions when consumed. Creating this elixir takes 10 MP and half a day of preparation.