

L O N G I N T E R V I S I T O R S B O O K

Visitors Book

Luka Rejec



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Visitors' Book



Luka Rejec

“ Autumn, our poor garden is all falling down, the yellowed leaves are flying in the wind.

epigraph by A. N. Tolstoy
Tchaikovsky – October: Autumn Son

Keep
warm
my
heart



Winters are long and beautiful in the high valleys of Brezim.

Longwinter is the two book RPG sandbox of a mountainous winter country on the cusp between the old and the new, the edge of modernity, the stepping stone of a new age. New mines and industries are opened, light breaks the gloom of ancient ruins, change comes to sweep away the cobwebs of history. But cobwebs do not go easily into the dust.

This book contains common knowledge and mechanics for all the players: heroes and referee. The other book, *Harsh Mistress*, contains tools for the referee to run *Longwinter* at the table.

The setting is profoundly close to that of *Witchburner*.

This one is for the cloaks of elvenkind
one snowy December in Rut.

This one is for the heroes who ran there.

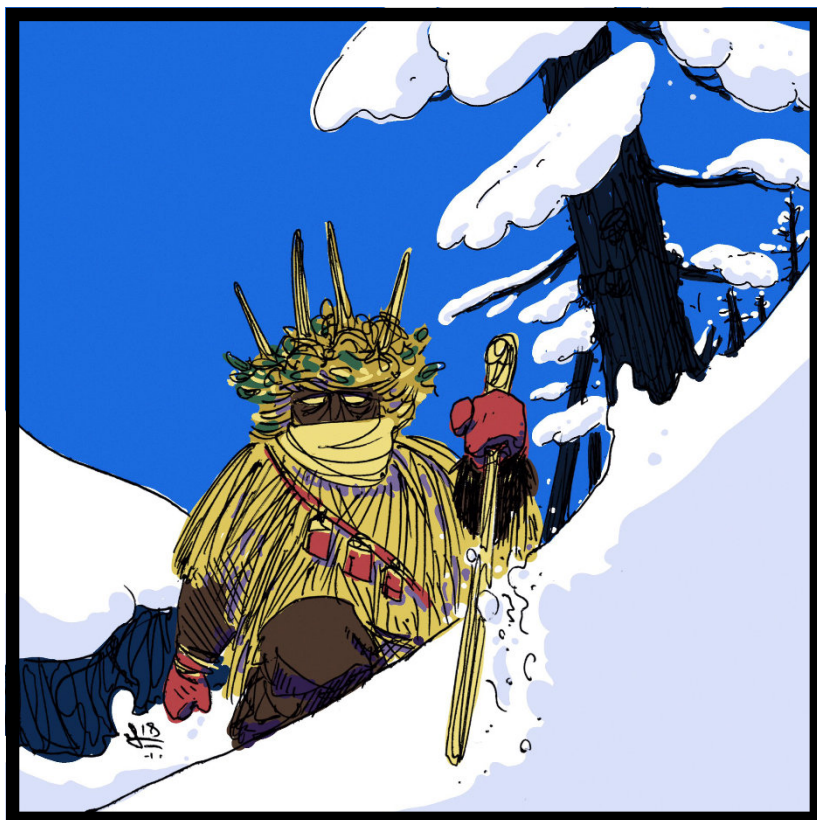
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Fourth Wall Fracture

Longwinter is not a setting of canon. It glides uneasily between unreliable, if earnest, narrative, and outright satire. Characters and even tables casually contradict one another. Dissonance is a given. There is no one right way to imagine or play it. You and your friends at the gaming table will take this world, run with it, reinvent it, recreate it, and quite possibly break it. And that is good.

—Luka Rejec, December 2019



Why Are You Here?

It may be cold here in Brezim. It may seem dull so far from the bright city lights. Yet still the gentle traveller will find many a reason to visit.

Reasons To Visit (d10)

- 1 Viktor Bluntstone – a cousin – purchased a chalet and found an unusual old laboratory in the basement – a week later a letter arrived stating that he was “missing in unusual circumstances.”
- 2 Ermelina Redwater – an aunt – has decided to purchase a townhouse on the Vreley promenade and needs someone to seal the deal for her.
- 3 Runo Whitetower – a great-uncle – has died and deeded his holdings in Ta Krasney to “the first of my ungrateful brood to bring this letter to the mayoral office in Rudvey.”
- 4 Sigma Delmar – a proletarian researcher of old architect ruins – has secured funding from the Whiteyes Institute to secure an undisturbed bunker on the Dimnaya stream. She needs spelunkers and specialists.
- 5 Obol Fastfoot – a childhood friend, now a City investor – has purchased the deeds to several foreclosed holdings in Pey Holzey, but his agent has not reported back. He needs someone to go and explain to the yokels what that means.
- 6 Zena Blackwolf – a rich merchant – is convinced that her husband’s “botanical research vacation” in Pey Dimna is actually a secret tryst with a famous young actress who is known to spend winter there.
- 7 Andrey Resttree – a nephew – has been diagnosed with a rare respiratory condition and his parents require somebody to accompany him to the Painted Tree in Vreley for treatment.
- 8 Lena Riflesteel – a famous illusionist – is recording a crystal-film about the Snow Apes of Brezim. She needs mountaineers and adventurers.

- 9 The heroes – as a reward – received a month’s stay at the fabled Painted Tree spa in Vreley. This will be an opportunity to rest, recuperate, move the clock forward, and do a bit of safe carousing.
- 10 Igor Ironwood – the son of an Eastern City count – has been “allegedly” involved in a ridiculous scandal and was sent to Gomily for a few months to discreetly stay out of trouble. Somebody needs to keep him there.





Gomiliy from Solniy Shoulder

Welcome to the Barony of Brezím

“Brezim. The name conjures visions of birch forests and dappled deer, bucolic baronials and alpine pastures, thick pine and gingko forests, hot springs and glittering icefields. Yet the barony also has much more modern conveniences to offer the gentle visitor.

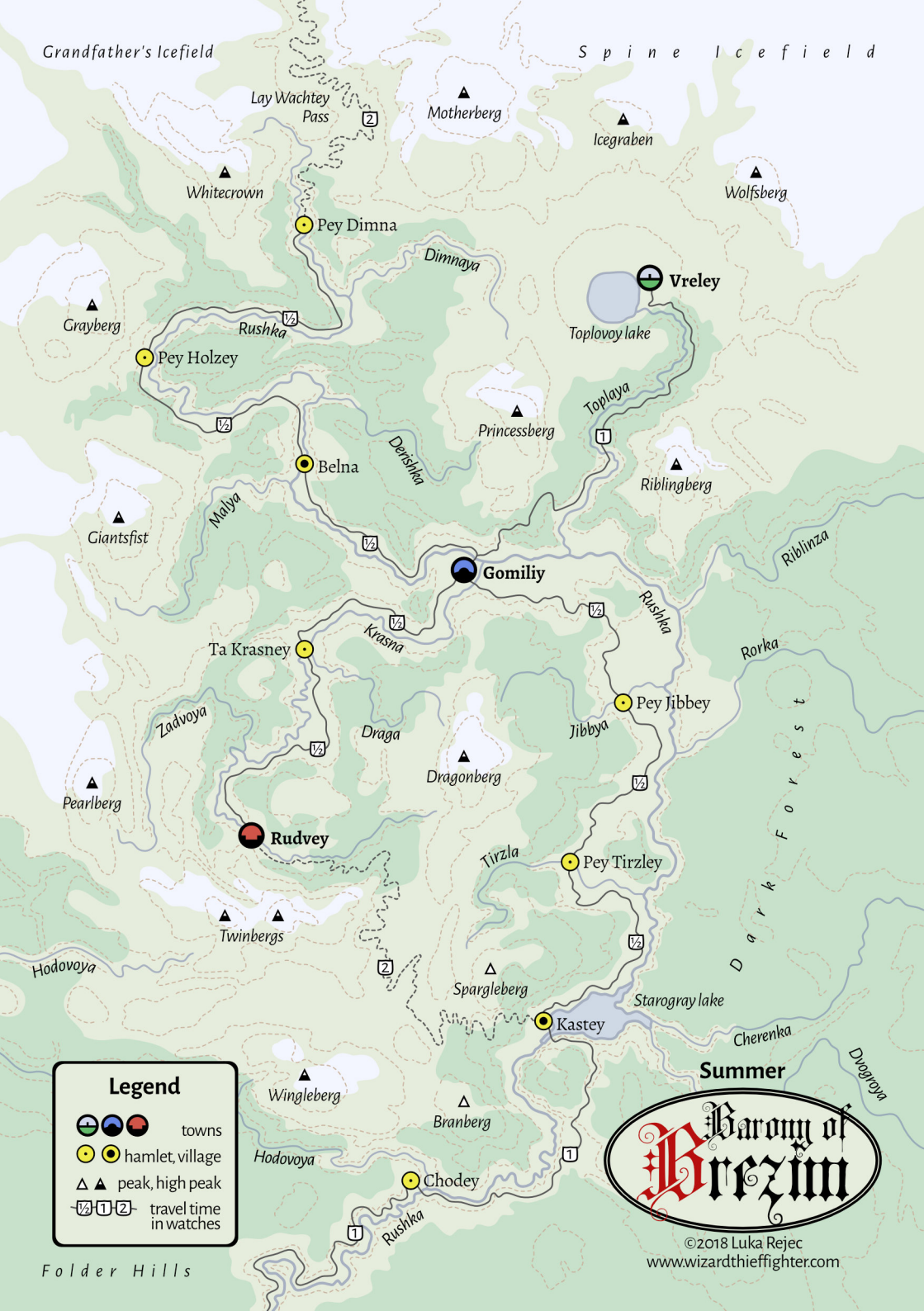
The barony of Brezim is changing fast under the progressive democratic leadership of the good baron Soren Greencorner II. The reopening of the fabled Mines of King Rudvik is just the most visible sign of the province’s booming economy and plans are afoot to build an ironway to link the valley with the Eastern and Western Cities.

Surely now is the perfect time to visit Brezim, a safe and prosperous valley, yet still offering a wealth of charming vistas and quaint traditions to amuse even the most jaded palate.”

—*Brezim, Barony of Snow, Spas, and Industry. Gentle Visitor’s Guides*, Zuleiman Publishing, Second Federated Edition (new year 120)

Grandfather's Icefield

Spine Icefield



Lay Wachtey Pass

Motherberg

Icegraben

Wolfsberg

Whitecrown

Pey Dimna

Vreley

Toplovoy lake

Grayberg

Pey Holzey

Rushka

Toplaya

Princessberg

Belna

Derishka

Riblingberg

Riblinza

Giantsfist

Malya

Gomiliy

Rushka

Roroka

Ta Krasney

Krasna

Jibbya

Pey Jibbey

Zadvoya

Draga

Dragonberg

Pearlberg

Rudvey

Pey Tirzley

Tivzla

D a r k F o r e s t

Twinbergs

Spargleberg

Starogray lake

Hodovaya

Wingleberg

Branberg

Summer

Hodovaya

Chodey



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Folder Hills

Legend

- towns
- hamlet, village
- peak, high peak
- travel time in watches

Land & History

† rock and wood and water †

The Barony of Brezim is a mountainous province of a larger world. It is a world that has risen and fallen and risen again, like an ark sailing the seas of time and chaos. History mostly passed the mountains by. There are too few people there. The bones are too strong. The rocks are too high.

More than the acts of kings, it is the will of nature that shapes Brezim. To the north and west of Brezim the vast sweep of the Unwalk Mountains claws at the sky, a wall between South and North. The high and treacherous Rushka pass hardly bridges this divide, before the Motherberg Massif reasserts the dominance of the old nature gods. The east is dominated by the Dark Forest, a highland jungle of lumpen oak and shrouding pine, marbled with birchen bogs and heavy with moss. It is the river Rushka that opens the way for people, if not always civilization, to crawl among these forbidding ramparts of the wild.

But still, history lapped against Brezim, high tides brought invaders and trader, low tides let the old, eternal truths crawl back from beneath rock and tree. Today the federal order has broken the cycles of the past and the current civilization will never decline again.

Federation

† today †

The Common Congress of Cities and Provinces is strong and stable, bound by the cunning of the bourgeoisie, the traditions of the nobles, the dynamism of the industrialists, and the passions of the working classes. This order will last a thousand years.

The banks and the industrialists from the great cities come to invest and exploit the land. Local goodfolk prosper, but discontent stirs among the lowest type of baronial and among the oldfolk. Fortunately, the new money also brings better wages and firearms for the baronial guards companies keeping the peace.

Empire

† more than a generation ago †

A single autocrat ruled the civilization. While the first autocrats restored peace after the excesses of the Republic and its wars, the world was too old and too wise to rest for long in the hands of an absolute ruler. Repression mounted and eventually exploded in the Trenchant Wars.

War then came also to Brezim. Today's gap-toothed elders are the conscripts and survivors of that time, when the great wagons of war were dragged up mountains and down rivers, to burn in that devastation of youth.

Republic

† barely remembered by the eldest †

The new classes overthrew the monarchs, taking civilization into their own hands. Alas, they were unschooled in administration and restraint, and their fervor led them too far. After initial success, the Republic and the remaining Royals destroyed each other in the bloody Leveller Wars.

Many baronials came to Brezim in those days. Refugees from the wars and privation and many royalists seeking a redoubt with the baron Greencorners.

Kingdom

† history books and imagination †

Once upon a time there had been a single good kingdom, united under a single good ruler. Alas, humans are animals, and animal morality cannot be counted on. The descendants of the good ruler grew fat, lazy, greedy, and vicious. As the fringes strained forward, the center pulled them back. In the end the leash snapped and the Newfolk Revolution engulfed civilization.

The first baron Ivan brought a company of good folk to Brezim in the time of the last good king, creating a beacon of order and nobility that survived even the privations of revolution.

Older Times

† centuries past † thick with exaggeration †

There were other civilizations in the past, other people, other ways of life. But though we see their remains, they are gone now, and we can only wonder where. All else is amateur archaeology and armchair assumption.

- 1 The Green Flag Rebellion of the centaurs was the last spasm of the steppe peoples against the ordered might of civilization.
- 2 The Success Wars devastated civilization as the three great generals fought each other after defeating the anti-civilization.
- 3 The Night of Tight Nooses saw the new gods die and the old gods reassert the primacy of natural ways.
- 4 In the Hungry Days the monasteries were cracked open and their marrow used to feed the commonfolk.
- 5 Division Bell Prophets split civilization between old gods and the new.
- 6 In the time of the Awakening Libraries scholars emerged from beneath the frozen mountains to restore vigor to civilization.

Oldest Times

† the forgotten past † legend and myth †

A hundred stories are told of these times, different in every town and village. Common folk believe them fact, though scholars will always disagree.

- 1 In the Era of Giants great human-shaped beasts built cities of cloud and iron, while true people hid like mice in the undergrowth.
- 2 In the Silent Era the gods turned away and monsters crawled from the corners of the world to drown the wizards and priests in their hubris.
- 3 When the Turning Wizards promised life everlasting they turned the world into a shadow realm of soulless bodies working to keep the wizards' palaces lit and warm.
- 4 In the Forging Era the dark took away another half of all humans, but the gates of the Former Afterlife were closed and the dead were lost.
- 5 In the Purification Era the light took away half of all humans into the Former Afterlife.
- 6 When the Hot Winds blew, crops wilted and whole cities died under the Green Sun.

Government & People

† power † masses † subversion †

Brezim is officially a congressional democratic province of the Federation. In practice it is a hodge-podge of local custom, traditional landed nobility, wealthy bourgeoisie, imperial orthodoxy, rising industrialists, exploited workers, and oppressed peasants. As are all provinces of the Federation.

The Baron

† democratic autocracy †

With the old titles abolished after the Trenchant wars, the baron is de jure a private citizen. However, the baron remains by far the largest landholder in Brezim, privately owns the Barony Mining Corporation which is the largest employer in the valley, and has been elected Governor of Brezim Province by a landslide at every provincial election since the establishment of fraternal suffrage. This may strike the astute observer as somewhat corrupt.

Fortunately, the sixth baron Soren Greencorner II is a courteous and melancholy man, always willing to listen to the council of his vizier and the three mayors.

The Vizier

† federal representative †

Viziers are elite civil servants of the Federation, among the best-educated and best-compensated of the betterfolk. In practice this means the second and third children of wealthy federal families who could afford to reach the lowest rungs of the civil service. This may strike the astute observer as somewhat unfair.

Fortunately, Ibrahima Falconsbrood, the vizier of Brezim, is a cosmopolitan well-traveled woman, whose charm and kindness compensate her enthusiasm for profiting from the local tax collection, civil guard, and judiciary.

The Mayors

† bourgeois plutocrats †

It is in the towns and cities of the Federation that the modern meritocracy is most visible. After all, nothing buys votes as effectively as promises, and no promise is better than cold hard cash.

Fortunately, Brezim's mayors exhibit neither excessive cruelty nor incompetence, kept in line as they are by the wealth of the baron and the greed of the vizier.

The Federal Faith

† organized witchery †

A country is merely a territory if its citizens do not believe that together they are part of something grand and good. In the Federation it is the organic and adaptable Imperial Faith that nourishes this narrative of humanity as the fulcrum between the divine and the natural through the cultivation of civilization. It adopts local beliefs and welds them to the root of law and order.

Sadly in Brezim the orthodoxy is weak, the witch-bishop Simon the Wizard poorly supported by vizier or mayors.

The Baronial Faith

† disorganized witchery †

In remote places it is only natural for the natives to invent new beliefs and improvise old ones to fit their needs. So it is in Brezim where both baronials and oldsettlers reach for rude and ready answers when faced by the looming might of mountains and woods and waters.

Does this make it a powerful force in Brezim? No. It is as fragmented as the terrain, with one witch helping a banker while another helps an oldsettler serf.

Baronials

† *goodfolk* † *citizens* †

The civilized inhabitants of the barony of Brezim, who restored many of the old ruins and brought wealth and culture back to the valleys under the Motherberg.

Or perhaps just the richer and luckier class of provincial citizen.

Stories of the Baronials (d10)

- 1 Their ancestors were the lost legion of Adam Goldenmouth.
- 2 They were stranded in the Sea of Grass after the Centaur Khan destroyed the twin dragons.
- 3 They are common miners, woodsmen, and shepherds with pretensions beyond their class.
- 4 They are proud of their freedoms and willing to defend them to a man.
- 5 They are a fractious lot and the only people they hate more than each other are outsiders.
- 6 They do not bow to their rulers and drown them if they fail to bring the blessings of the gods.
- 7 They have worshipped their old gods since before the Federation, before the Empire, before the Republic, before the Kingdom.
- 8 Without gold and industry their lands are poor and for many years they sent their sons away to serve as merchants and mercenaries.
- 9 They know how to whisper to trees and plants, making them grow in strange or useful shapes.
- 10 Their "nobles" are all nouveau riche upstarts.

Oldsettlers

† landfolk † residents †

The pre-civilized inhabitants of Brezim, who dwelled in rude dugouts and subsisted as impoverished gardeners and hunters. They were dying out before the baronials arrived, but since then many have adapted to the higher culture of the civilized peoples, adopting modern dress, dialect, and habits.

Or perhaps just the poorer sort of provincial peasant.

Stories of the Oldsettlers (d10)

- 1 The baronials know that they oldsettlers are less intelligent than them and incapable of true civilizations.
- 2 The oldsettlers never tell the truth to the baronials.
- 3 The oldsettlers are nearly extinct. Serfdom has saved those who are civilized enough to contribute to the new federal order.
- 4 Many oldsettlers remain, submerged within the baronial population, emigrated to the cities, living within the deep woods.
- 5 The oldsettler shamans could walk with the forest spirits and take the shapes of beasts and birds.
- 6 There are still oldsettler shamans and priests and witches, hidden among the free baronials.
- 7 The oldsettlers are the descendants of the Purification Era survivors who hid in the tunnels and time machines.
- 8 The oldsettlers are newcomers to the federal lands who arrived after the Dragonbreath Plagues.
- 9 The oldsettlers and the baronials are the exact same people, the only difference is who they supported during the Revolution.
- 10 All oldsettlers are incorrigibly lazy, that's why they're not fit to own land.

Wolffolk

† skintakers † outlaws †

Monstrous savages, born of oldsettlers gone feral and wild, they are more beast than human. Some still exist in the Dark Forest and the deepest tortured valleys, but bounties have thinned their bestial packs.

Or perhaps they are the sort of thing the deep wild always breeds, taking the lost and the exiled and making them strange and differently human.

Stories of the Wolffolk (d10)

- 1 There is no difference between wolffolk and oldsettlers, every oldsettler reverts if let off their leash.
- 2 They are the product of a curse or blessing of the old gods of rock and wood and water.
- 3 They can speak to wolves and bears and foxes.
- 4 They do not really think the way humans do, they are beasts of instinct and savagery.
- 5 They can turn into wild, hairy creatures, similar to two-legged canines.
- 6 They eat the flesh of humans, which gives them monstrous strength.
- 7 They flay their victims and wear their skins to pass in normal society.
- 8 They hibernate in deep caves under the hills after eating. That's why they're so hard to root out.
- 9 They have a secret city beyond Wolfsberg.
- 10 They are infectious, spreading their disease through ticks and lice, spreading dreams of moon and tasty mice.

Old Architects

† spiral square culture † ancient visitors †

The wondrously accomplished builders of many livingstone and everglass ruins in Brezim and the wider area. Distinctive spiraling rectangular patterns cover their remains, reflecting a ponderous obsession with the interplay of the organic and the mechanic. They are extinct.

Perhaps they were not even human? Aliens maybe?

Stories of the Old Architects (d10)

- 1 They could whisper stone into motion, making it flow like honey.
- 2 They knew how to build on the ghost of ground now gone.
- 3 Their hands had six fingers.
- 4 Their mouths had no teeth and they only drank juices and soups.
- 5 They had abandoned their humanity to escape the Purification.
- 6 They knew how to knit living creatures into stone and earth.
- 7 They tried to challenge the gods and failed.
- 8 They had built flying chariots and walking skyscrapers.
- 9 They lived on the blood of humans, parasites on the body politic.
- 10 They had sacrificed their health and wealth to build vaults to survive the Purification. All for nought, their hubris undid them still.

Economy & Society

† growth † degradation †

Brezim's curse are rock, wood, and water. Earthquakes and landslides threaten oblivion. Verdant nature chokes civilization and breeds wolffolk. Water floods and freezes.

But these curses are also its strength.

Mining

† capitalists † miners † factories † toxic tailings †

The upthrust mountains and the deep valleys expose the ores and minerals that fuel the Federation. Coal and iron from Rudvey are the engines of Brezim's development today. Deposits of silver and copper, mercury and marble, asbestos and lead show promise for growth tomorrow.

Lumber

† landlords † lumberjacks † sawmills † deforestation †

Great swathes of old growth oak and pine, fir and larch, deck the slopes and plateaus of Brezim. A nigh inexhaustible resource for carpentry, construction, and fuel.

Water

† investors † local peasants † dams † pollution †

Healing thermal springs draw the rich and poorly to Vreley, certainly, but that is not the only advantage. The many rivers and streams, once damned, drive mills and with investment, the great turbine golems that will power entire factories.

Wool

† landlords † farmers † shepherds † erosion †

The heavy rainfall in Brezim ensures fertile soils and perfect conditions for fast-growing grasses. Once higher slopes are cleared, the large estates of baronial gentry make the profitable expansion of the wool and dairy industries a given.

Manufacture

† industrialists † laborers † migration †

Raw materials and water power make Brezim an appealing place for investors keen on new factories. Alas, the local population is too few to man them all, so the call must go out to landless residents from overcrowded provinces. Opportunity calls! The valleys of Brezim will soon bristle with new villages, where an honest day's labor will buy an honest day's food at the company store.

Powerful Few

† nobility † bourgeoisie † industrialists † betterfolk †

They call themselves by different names, they affect different styles and ambitions, but one thing still unites them: they have power and fear to lose it.

Stories of the Powerful (d10)

- 1 This will be a fine new school. It will teach the poor letters and discipline and obedience and how to work in the factories.
- 2 This unpromising ground will be a new village, far from squalor, where employees will focus on their work. And shop at the company store.
- 3 This wasteland of huts and gardens will become a beautiful park. It will inspire poets and gentle visitors.
- 4 This swamp will be drained and filled, the bad vapors stopped. It will become a plantation.
- 5 This wild forest will be tamed and made fruitful. The trees numbered and ordered. The outlaws and wolffolk driven out.
- 6 This slum will be made modern. The streets wide and fair, the houses gentler and finer.
- 7 This old castle will become a barrack for guards who will protect the citizenry from ungrateful, thieving lowfolk.
- 8 This festival will the townspeople's bellies with food and their hearts with love. It will be grand.
- 9 This newspaper will educate the masses and let them understand us better.
- 10 This road will make export easier. And moving guards faster.

Powerless Multitudes

† laborers † peasants † serfs † outlaws † lowfolk †

They are called many names and it is easy to dismiss them. Unwashed because hot water is a luxury, unread because books will not feed a child, unwell because cleanliness is next to wealthiness. One thing still unites them: they have lives but do not fear to lose them.

Stories of the Powerless (d10)

- 1 We shall run away to the woods, become like beasts if need be.
- 2 We will find solace in this cult, for it listens to us.
- 3 This printing press will be ours and with it we shall set ourselves free.
- 4 We must teach one another, for the masters will teach us nothing useful.
- 5 We train in the hidden places in solidarity, to resist the owners.
- 6 Drink and death are the only ways out, what else is there?
- 7 When war looms they praise us, when peace reigns they abase us.
- 8 Beneath this neighborhood we have built a labyrinth for our resistance.
- 9 We abhor crimes against one's fellow human, but the lords are no fellow humans of us. Let us shelter those who fight for us.
- 10 Change is coming. It whispers on the wind and on the wires. Only the rich are so deaf they do not hear.

Culture & Faith

† piety † ambition † desperation †

Three Spirits in a Human

† leits † lords † ladies †

The baronials of Brezim love the number three. Just as it is a land of rock and wood and water, it is also a land beholden to the three avatars. They believe that every human also has three spirits, but disagree quite how this ties together.

The dominant spirit sets a person's dress and tongue and role. Thus they show respect by calling some people leits, others lords, yet others ladies. This confounds some visitors and delights others.

However, they rarely show the same respect to oldsettlers or wolffolk; humans whom they sometimes deem barely people.

Polite Address

† they † you † we †

A baronial's identity comes from their birth and their wealth, whence they come from and where they are headed on the great wheel of status and position.

A gentle traveler will address those of the highest status in the third person, as they, not speaking directly at them. After a series of platitudes and flatteries, they may address someone of equal status by their title and, eventually, possibly even by their name. Most outsiders have a guide to address the lower orders for them, but a visitor may refer to inferiors simply with we, assuming them as part of their own body social.

Are the oldsettlers fine with this? The betterfolk would say yes, but one need not believe they know what they say.

Local Colour

† cozyness † charm † terror †

The visitor will discover many charming customs and old beliefs current among the baronials of Brezim. The famed ethnologist Irshiy Wetfoot, PhD, of the Institute of Popular Beliefs at the University of Sunrise has made it his life's work to record these cultural gems.

Bonfire Beds

The oldfolk build them on exposed ridges at solstices for the **Firebringer**, avatar of sun and sky. They celebrate this dangerous and loving deity by jumping through flames and walking across coals. The ritual brings virility.

Buckwheat Brick

Common folk place a small brick made with buckwheat and stamped with the plum sigil of **Saint Cleareyes** near their granaries to chase away vermin. These days schoolchildren place folded paper prayers under the bricks before exams to partake of the prophet's enlightenment.

Clay Seneschals

These effigies may be as large as a bear or as small as a pig. Farmers and herdsmen fill them with grain and blood and alcohol and set them up on hillsides overlooking their fields to propitiate **Earthbeater**, avatar of crops and earth. On the equinoxes they light cooking fires and feed the effigies polenta and sausages and beer. Prayers to this nurturing deity ward off its destroying aspect.

Copper Disc

Copper discs hang above every fireplace that can afford one. They please the **Green Sun**, the child of the Firebringer and the Earthbeater. The Green Sun is an ambiguous deity, the creator and destroyer of humanity, and until a copper disc acquires a green patina prayers are offered every sunset to protect the house from its wrath.



Fat Bear

Chubby wooden bears holding hives dripping with honey, bowls of stew, and stone mugs of beer stand on plinths at crossroads. They are made to appease **Hollowfear**. The Famine Bear is the manifestation of the grey morality of hunger. The god of cannibals. Placing a nut or berry at the plinth ensures good digestion.

Glass Flowers

A popular window decoration with oldfolk and baronials alike, the glittering glass ornaments please **Winterwhite** and show her that she needs not bring too much snow and ice next winter. Lady Deadfingers is the avatar of ice and death, a dangerous god and bringer of hunger. Praying and peering through a glass flower brings visions.

Golden Mushroom Locket

Some baronials are partial to **Doctor Love**, the city god of the Eastern and Western Cities, an ambiguous deity of growth, love, and rebirth. To others the mushroom only confirms Doctor Love as an avatar of temptation and a denier of old provincial truths. The golden mushroom, also known crudely as the shiny treecock, is a mildly toxic stimulant aphrodisiac.

Lace Honey Candies

Lovers give each other honey candies wrapped in white sugar lace on the first day of frost to recall the **Suncatcher**. The winged spider embraces the sun with her webwork every winter as a gift for Winterwhite. The candy is a prayer for love and dreams restored.

Nailed Coins

Everyone, rich leit or poor man, nails a coin to a hardwood post of their house, or to their pillow block if they have no house. This is the coin for the **Devil's Grandfather**, The Dark Beggar. Spurned, the Skingiver steals light and brings confusion. Rewarded, he is the giver of forbidden knowledge, permissive friend of beasts.

Northern Neckerchief

Most baronials wear warm-hued neckerchiefs, belt sashes, or scarves. The warm colors appease hungry **Northwind**. The gusty deity chases away the Eater's rots, but brings pain, ache, and windlung if displeased.

Plaster Henge

Witch priests use small plaster **models of famous temples** to string their prayer threads and chants. Each square peg is painted with a face of the divine and the order of the thread encodes a request. Rich baronials have decorated stone versions made for their courtyards and gardens. Burning the prayer string at high noon is the best if you want your wish to heard.

Sky Babies

Priests and doctors carve cherubic figures high into rocks and remote trees. The carvings distract the **Eater of Virility**, Amimami, who is the messenger of age and impotence. A lucky word and a warding gesture helps the traveler hide from the castrated god when they spot one of these curse-prone cherubs.

Spider's Knot

Lowfolk weave the knots from hemp or straw to hang from the eaves of their houses, while the betterfolk have whole curtains of multi-colored knots of dyed cotton, silk, and wool. The spider's knots are amusements for **Miss Netmaker**, a trickster spirit. Everyone desires her boon, for she is also lady luck.

Talon Wheel

Hunters and guards make wheels from the hooked talons of birds of prey to recall the **Angelhunt**. Nature's Claw is a shifting deity, a furious host which restores the harsh balance of the gods. Placing a feather by the wheel lightens the heart and brings justice.

Tanglehair Pools

Witches and hunters tend ink kelp in secluded pools. The long hair-like strands recall the strangling locks of **Waterdrinker**, avatar of underworld and river. Supplicants give offerings of clay loaves and bronze fishes to this loving and deadly deity on moonless nights. Bathing in the pool brings fertility.

Triple Triangles

Throughout Brezim geometric patterns of triangles and trefoils recall the **Three Avatars**, the Firebringer, Waterdrinker, and Earthbeater. These patterns keep the divine anger of the natural world quiescent.

Watching Column

At least one stands near every settlement, on a vantage point whence **Fourface** can watch and be seen. The Worldwatcher is the god of the turning seasons, of the directions of the sky, of birthing and dying couples. Offerings are burnt to ashes in twos, a pair of pears works best, to please this remote, cruel, tender god.

Yellow Bar

Most baronials paint at least a single yellow horizontal line above their doors, the richer sort build elaborate yellow lintels. These recollect the **Bridgespirit**, an avatar of perseverance, long life, stability, and troubles traversed. The spirit of the Bridge is a good god to ask for blessings, as she asks little in return.

The Three Towns

† *government* † *industrial* † *leisure* †

Gomiliy

† *picturesque baronial capital* † *tiers on a round hill* † *sparkling roof tiles* †
 † *great triple-gate* † *staircases* † *darling markets* †

Fortress: a grand and cubist thing, it has been built and rebuilt since time immemorial. It predates the current gentle age and its roots worm into the nethers of Gomiliy hill.

Classical library: a tour de force of federal neoclassicism, funded by the Zuleiman Estate. The librarian and scholar Irma Loveless organizes tours of the pre-temporal fortress on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Equestrian Statue: Baron and Warlord Ivan Greencorner, founder of Brezim. Note the sensuous lips, the proud ears.

Head of State: Baron Soren Greencorner II. Courteous, sheltered, and melancholy. Receives dignitaries and gentle betterfolk every Thursday.

Ruler: Vizier Ibrahima Falconsbrood, of the Federalist Falconsbroods, cosmopolitan and well-traveled. Brezim could want no better ruler.

Chapel of Saint Nomm (Imperial Faith): an exuberance in basalt and colored glass. The witch-bishop Simon the Wizard presiding. A modern crematorium speaks to the progress in these parts. Available: guided tours of oldsettler crypts and dugouts lacing hill.

Four Stones (Baronial Faith): solid as the titans' bones, they flank the poultry and vegetable markets. Shaman-healer Isolda Longrocking offers help, residing in the cottages by the seven-span linden to the trinity. The meadow of death is available for cinerary rites.

Tiered Town: rings of roads and houses terrace the hemispheric hill above the old revolutionary walls. The fabled bronze portcullis has been removed to the Grand War Museum on Munchhouse Square. Niso Telldigger, the custodian, is available, but grudging.

Grain King Guesthouse: the place for jubilant ale-and-heart pies. Site of the '88 Witch-hewing. House lady: Vizya Aspmilker. Kindly political.

Great Farrier Hotel: decently overpriced and suitable for gentle travelers. House lord: Yuva Borderer. Discrete. Beware his parakeet.

Baronial Beer Hall "Pey Ivan": cheerful place with cicada motifs. Great for experiencing the students. House leit: Zoog Godgrain. Salty old soldier.

Rustic Beer Hall "Moldencrust": famed for its tar-thick ale. Great for slumming. House lady: Ziva Hasbrawn. Tart as lemons, quivers like aspic.

Peacock's Tail Cabaret: the place to go for dance and 'other' amusements. House lord: Lomo Dealbaker. His sister never leaves her white iron suit.

Wares: manufactured goods from many workshops: weapons, armors, tools. Wood and bone dolls are a local peculiarity.

Wednesday Market: Deluvian artefacts and more. Everything for sale. Perfect for the budding antiquarian.

† *crystal megaliths* † *tales of deep things* †

Pearly Barrow on the flanks of Dragonberg with its crystalline trilithons on an ancient mound makes a romantic picnic spot. Was it perhaps an astronomical observatory in some forgotten past?

Orso Vulpina's "**Oldfolk Tales of Elder Things**" calls Gomiliy hill "Koletumba" and alludes to deep layers beneath where the bones of frozen giants lie and misty old things creep and lurk. Beneath those bones she writes of a blood altar of Winterwhite where Verdek Greencorner sacrificed himself to the White Queen so that his brother Ivan could conquer the valley.

Rudvey

† industrial town of Brezim † reactivated old architect mine †
 † new blast furnaces † laborer apartments excavated in pit's higher tiers †

Popular Palace: owned by the Corporation of Civil Associations, its pomp is an affront to aristocrats throughout Brezim. Gardens and orchards crawl in terraced steps up the flank of the Twinbergs above the town.

Mayor: grand siro Erik Whiteyes rules Rudvey with a benevolent death grip. The proletarian engineer made noble is proof that birth is no disadvantage to station in the Federation.

Miner and the Virgin: the wonderful bronze statue by Rivka Woodlip represents some of the finest artisanry in the lower states.

Ruddy Town: at first glance grim, the ash-grey brickwork of Rudvey hides a profusion of warm nooks and crannies. Still, the visitor in search of the natural wonders of Brezim would do well to pass by swiftly.

Mine: run by the baron's privately owned Barony Mining Corporation, the correctly conservative representative Neva Longflanks takes fine care of the lower class of folk that works in the pits. Visit the museum of mining to marvel at the spectacularly petrified "fluted mining boy."

Pey Two Devils Inn: the best Rudvey has to offer. Serves a mean bear-porker pie. Houselord Izi Redhairing is a hunter and hiker. The strange sport sees Izi climbing high bergs for mere amusement.

Beerhall "Under the Pick": the schnapps-laced beer is particular to this town. Houseleit Lun Breakface cracks the snappiest jokes in Brezim.

The Pepita Theatre: famed for its vaudeville act, pay attention to the Iron Clown. Houselady Maya Oldwalker collects stories and gossip.



Wares: steel, coal, and fuel are the big ticket items in Rudvey, of course, but hard-wearing cloth also makes an entry thanks to the new Van Frankley mills.

Friday Market: wrought iron, pocket knives, and varied tinkeries.

† prehistoric mining † gossip and tensions † wonderful apes †

Great Pit: the ancient open-cast mine is now much expanded and houses three BMC neighborhoods. The Pit Museum has a fine selection of ancient curios from the mine, including an archaic golem-watt pump.

Miners Gossip of ancient mining monsters in the deepest pits. Moonless nights are considered particularly dire.

Be Aware: proletarian bandits and banker thugs of the Eastern-Western Organization for Cooperation often duke it out in the streets.

Observe the wonderful mountain apes in their natural Twinberg habitat.

Take Precautions against urban cultists. A chthonic panic is afoot.



Vreley

† *spa town of Brezim* † *frost free microclimate* †
 † *orchards and greenhouses* † *Awlschild Palace* † *lustrous rainbow pines* †

Promenade: along the saturated waters of thermal Toplovoy lake the villas and guest houses of the betterfolk follow one another in serried ranks. Awlschild Palace stands out as the finest example.

Mayor: fourth sira Ostya Awlschild is old money of the Borderfield-and-Liberia Awlschilds. A proper betterfolk, if a tad blinkered.

Painted Tree Spa: famed for its orange cakes and glasshouses. Owned by the mayor but managed by Zon Butterworth. A loyal lieutenant, generous to their betters, but a martinet to the staff.

The Eagle's Corpse Inn: the association inn makes a stunning pine-nut and dormouse confit. It is run as a housecorps for the Burner Veterans' Society. Houselady Martina Seekmiél is a bear of a woman, her chest heaving with medals.

Wares: Vreley is famed for its fruit and vegetables, preserves, and hot mineral waters. Several local apothecaries produce a variety of cures and medicines.

† barrows and cliffs † marble follies † volcanic landscape †

Obsidian and basalt cliffs rise above Vreley to the geologically fascinating Wolfsberg icefield barrows. Oldfolk fairy tales talk of wyrm tunnels in the friable basalt depths and a skinchanger temple in the ever-warm depths.

Marble ruins of a smallfolk town and later oldsettler remains make a haunting destination for romantic hikes from Vreley. Older locals tell tall tales of a mechanical-man altar buried in the ruins.

Dangers abound in the wild mountain lands about Vreley. The winding roads are beset by **rock falls and steam vents**. On the jagged hiking trails one can hardly decide which is more of a nuisance: the **fearless wolves** or the smirking **oldsettler bandits**.

The Eight Villages

† rural centres † isolated hamlets † strange folk tales †

Belna

† growing market village † prehistoric walls †

Prehistoric Walls of petrified wood constrict the growing village. The handsome new government house sports a lovely crystal clock from Sicher.

Mayor: third siro Bonifas Swiftling is a low-born accountant with the style and affectations of a better-born marcher duke.

Quaint Chapel: dedicated to Saint Adom Longbeard, it's Purification Era frescoes are literally to die for. The paint is highly toxic.

Foaming Giant Inn: famed for buffalo cheese and flat mountain bread. Houselady Kunigunda Tavernborn is wiley and somehow lupine.

Wares: visit the Third Vanya wool cooperative and Belnay woodwork fields.

† alpine necropolis † torrents and bees †

The Murt above the Derishka, on the Princessberg just below snowline, draws macabre souls to its shadowed halls. Baronial records tell how the oldsettler villain Yamash killed a changeling mechanifex in the Murt and donned its dark mantle. They plagued local woodcutters until three hunters put them down.

The beautiful forests and meadow of the the Princessberg and Giantsfist conceal great dangers: sudden **torrents** and vicious elf-touched wild **bees**.

Chodey

† *petite bucolic village* † *living wood wall* †

The traditional woodsingers of Chodey daily sculpt and tend the **Living Wood Palisade**. Oak, pine, yew, plane, spruce, and bronzewood twist together to create a verdant, moss-decked defense for the village.

Fat Volecatcher Inn is where you must stay and try the mountain sausage soup. Houselord Viktor Dormouse is a gentle giant, but rumors fly that he used to be a vicious pit fighter nicknamed “Eyescratcher”.

† *toll bridge* † *hero's barrow* † *dangerous woods* †

Pay the toll when you reach the **Hanging Bridge** over the Rushka. It's a fair price and worth it for the views alone. And a detour to the shallows in the gorge below will take half a day. Spit on the iron gnome in the middle of the bridge for luck.

Kolgar's Barrow is a pre-human mound reused by the oldsettlers to bury the hero Kolgar Bloodkiss “Sancbacho” who slew three giant brothers. Folk tales say that inside Kolgar's Axe waits to deliver the oldsettlers in a time of need.

Beware the steep slopes of the Branberg, they are prone to **landslides**. The forests covering the dimpled highlands either side of the Rushka are full of **playful trees**. They'll steal your hat or shoes if you let them. Don't.

Kastey

† center of southern Brezim † large village † new suspension bridge †

The **fortified hilltop** of Kastey is centred on the massive royalist war monument. It is ill-repaired—little surprise, since it celebrates the Empire.

Hungry Hans Inn: try the finest suckling boar and mushrooms in the bergs. House lady Luna Sunstringer tells charming tales of the old faith.

First Baronial Granary: a powerful statement of the Baron's care for the commonfolk. Kastey biscuits keep famously long.

Mayor: first sira, Joia Tolltaker, is a bored conservative reactionary. Were it up to her, the Empire would be restored.

Suspension Bridge: made with finest BMC steel, it is a proud sign of the barony's development, crossing the end of Starogray lake. The toll is steep, but progress demands it.

† pass to Rudvey † steep Spargleberg † wolffolk hunters †

Mountain Pass: two watches will see you across the saddle between the Twinbergs and Dragonberg to Rudvey. The pass is only open in good weather. Stop by the **Silverhorn Chalet** operated by the Fraternal Hunters of Kastey and Rudvey and sample their mountain goat and juniper ghoulash.

The Spargleberg is steep and a hard hat is a recommended against **falling rocks**.

Be aware of the edge of the Dark Forest just past the Rushka and Starogray. **Wolffolk and oldsettlers** haunt the woods.

Pey Dimna

† last village on the Rushka † waterfalls and gorges †

Gorgeous Dimna snuggles on a series of wide terraces above the steep crevasses and pools of the upper Rushka. Breathtaking sights await the intrepid visitor.

Last Hearth Inn: fried potatoes and alpage cheese are de rigeur here. Houselady Ilka Ninthling used to be a court painter in the Eastern City.

Big Citizen Nora Huntersdaughter is a mountain guide, expert tracker, and local shaman. Half-oldsettler, her position shows the Baron cares about both oldsettlers and baronials, making Brezim a model of integration.

† iron ruins † Winterwhite fairytales † snow field creatures †

Iron Palace: this rusted, twisted ruin spiders along the cliff-face of Motherberg. It whispers of some ancient industry or war. Local tales say that within is a fairy tomb with six sleeping gold-horned virgins of Winterwhite and further in the half-world, the White Shrine of that goddess itself.

Avoid the ice fields of Motherberg and Whitecrown. **Dangers abound:** snow apes, mountain savages, and snowfolk.

Pey Holzey

† woodcutters' village † narrow valley † sulphurous springs †

The steep flanks of Greyberg and the dark conifer woods crowd close on the **long village** of Pey Holzey. The smells of the sawmill, the sulphurous springs, and the collieries, makes this a rather dull spot on the trail.

Darling Jack Inn: unfortunately closed after a queer incident involving the houselord, his dog, and a traveling wizard. It was famed for its rum-and-herb pound cake.

Big Citizen: Umo Droopstone is a grim prospector and trapper. Militiamen mutter about dreamvine fields in the high narrow valleys beneath the Grayberg.

Sawmill: the wood from Pey Holzey is famously sturdy and easy to work.

† thieves † wild beasts †

Beware the **Droopstone gang** of thieves operating in the area. The conifer forest is thick with **wolves**, while the springs attract **sulphurous salamanders**.

Pey Jibbey

† charming village † solstice bonfires †

Jolly wooden houses with heavy stone roofs hug the flower-decked bridge across the sulphurous Jibbya. The blossoms mask the smell quite well, and the farming village really gets swinging for its traditional solstice bonfires.

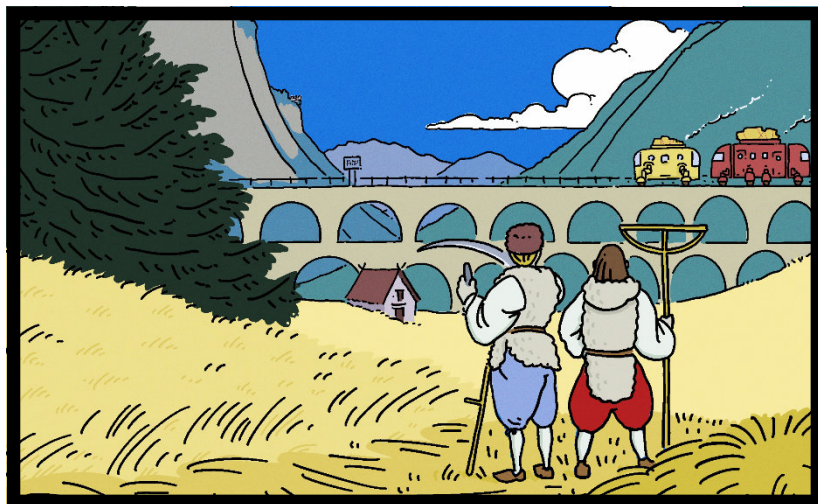
Bonny Fire Inn: try the oddly-shaped Jibbey sausages and herbal tea. Houseleit Vinyo Briskwood has a kindly mien and sharp business sense.

Big Citizen: Zora Bearbreaker, soft-spoken, hard-hearted dairy farmer.

† forest barrows † winds and wolffolk †

Veley Big Barrow in the Dark Forest across the Rushka makes for a gothic excursion. Inside antiquarians have found pre-diluvian dust and crushed oldsettler remains. Locals tell ghost stories of a petrified changeling garden deeper within the barrow.

Be aware that the Dark Forest is still only half-tamed, and **aggressive wolffolk** are known to prey on unarmed travelers. **Gusting northeasterlies** off the plateau can throw one of their feet, so pay attention to the wind signs.



Pey Tirzley

† *views of mountains and gingkos* † *freefolk* †

Picturesque village on the Tirzla, its spectacular vistas recommend it rather better than its cultural offerings. The village is curious in that it has no betterfolk, instead the local free baronials, descended from the first barons personal guard, hold all the lands in freehold and go about their daily labors heavily armed. This lack of a cultured class likely explains why the local cross-valley songs sound rather like foxes in heat. Loud, out of tune foxes.

White Boris Inn: an impressive deer goulash, be careful that you do not mistake buck shot for juniper berries. Houselady Ines Cashfolk is as stunning as she is mercurial. Be aware that her three nephews are quite protective of her, as your correspondent discovered to their misfortune.

Big Citizen: Roon Southcome, unpredictable but canny geologist and owner of cement manufactory.

† *burial grounds* † *oldgrowth forests* †

Samoyba, the Lonely Barrow, is the heart of a large oldsettler burial ground. The soulful visitor will detect a queer aura about the place, where antiquarians have recovered grave goods from as far back as the tertiary bronze age. From Wednesday to Sunday the cleaned up oldsettler tunnels are open to visitors. Basil Quietdoor has collected unbelievable local folk tales of a survival vault full of lonely ghosts deep beneath the barrow.

Beware the **bears** in the woods of Tirzley. **Deadfalls** seem purposeful in the old growth, and there are certainly **savages** across the Rushka in the Dark Forest.

Ta Krasney

† rock village † ruins of older times † confluence †

Set in stone on a spar between the Draga and Krasna river, this place has been settled for a long time. Ta Krasney is a wondrous place, built on the megalithic ruins of an oldsettler village that was itself built in the husk of an old architect palace. The fancifully decorated iron Nuvo Styl bridges across the two rivers show that time will not yet pass this place by.

Buttery Bear Inn: try the spectacularly rich buffalo-butter coffee. Houselord Igor Holdover likes to reminisce about the Grand War.

Big Citizen: Almira Dustman, the kindly proprietor of general store and chief gold-dust buyer. An inveterate scalper.

† monolith † wild waters †

Visit the yellow-flecked **blue rock monolith** with pictograms of an older age. Antiquarians agree that it far predates the oldsettlers.

In the steep hills beware of **avalanches** in winter and **flash floods** after heavy rains. The **dire beavers** can also be a nuisance. Bribe them with corn or beans.

Mountains and Forests

† pinnacles and pines † skin and bones of Brezim †

Branberg

† razor-fractured southern peak † deep gorges †

Fortress mountain of the barony, it looms above the way to Kastej. Trenches, platforms, and craters pock and marr the southern peak, traces of the Grand War.

Immense cave network: the limestone is fissured and riven by waters and aquifers for miles. Chthonobiologists confirm the folk tales that translucent-skinned degenerate after-humans live deep within. However, that they worship a great green malevolent orb and feeding on slime creatures? Hardly possible, for their brains are no larger than a monkey's.

The hiker should beware the **chasms** and **predatory ape-cats**. A lilac species of local **poisonous vine** is a terrible nuisance.



Dragonberg

† heart of the barony † forested flanks † small glacier †

Prominently featured on the most famous postcards from Brezim, the wonderful Dragonberg rises in cliffs and massifs to a final **spectacular peak** of blinding white ice. Carpets of pine and gorse cover its flanks, before the high tundra and rockfields take over.

There is **gold dust** in the Draga river and panhandlers are a common sight. Do not ascend too high to appreciate their quaint folkways, for the Draga flows from **Dragon's Hole**, home of the barony dragon.

Certainly beware of bears and wolves, but also of **the Dragon**. The great shimmery beast of slate and ice, bloated with deep-ripping magic, keeps to the highest parts of the mountain. Dragon-watching with telescopes and binoculars is a popular pastime in the summer months for gentle travelers, though the oldsettlers swear it brings misfortune.

Dark Forest

† old growth, eastern highland † wolves, wolffolk, and oldsettler hideouts †

Wild and rough, the Dark Forest is claimed by the Baron and the logger clans, but truly it is nobody's land. A wild country of jagged limestone, gnarled oaks, and shady pines. There streams appear and disappear, bogs trap the unwary, and the four shady rivers (the Riblinza, Rorka, Cherenka, and Dvograya) carve dark, grim gorges. No gentle fishing excursions there!

The adventurer may be attracted by the untouched **oldsettler barrows** scattered among ancient **pre-Purification ruins**. Antiquarians agree that untouched vaults still remain, hidden in that green labyrinth.

There is danger in the Dark Forest: **malevolent tree spirits** and **wild animals**, and **shifting mazes** of tree and bush and rock.

Giantsfist

† plateau fringe † massive glacier † riven ridge †

The **second-highest peak** in Brezim marks the fringe of the Brezim Plateau, Giantsfist dominates the barony's western horizon. Its riven dolomite heights erupt from ruin-spattered glacial barrens, reminders of titanic conflicts from a forgotten time.

Deep wrym holes riddle the Fist's north flank, home to bogeymen and terrors according to the locals.

The grand mountain is cruel to visitors. **Snow apes** abound on the alpine tundra, while **ice-threaded worms** and **giant dead things** lurk and prowl in the deep glacier.



Grayberg

† grey dome † rubble slopes †

The white-capped smooth **granite dome** of Grayberg rises from extensive plains and slopes of rubble. The brooding, humped mountain does not look like it quite belongs in the sharp sky-scrabbling company of its neighbors.

Ancient alien pyramids or boring natural formations? Natural philosophers agree the rubble plains are a waste of time, but many a geoshaman will tell you these five-sided structures do not belong. They are curious, but hard to reach. Only accessible in summer.

No matter the season, beware the **glacial winds** and **landslides** that pester Grayberg. And the unusually murderous **mountain goats**.

Icegraben

† ridge between Motherberg and Wolfsberg † metal remains †

Also called the **invisible peak**, this commanding height almost completely disappears from view, dwarfed by the taller Motherberg and nearer Wolfsberg. The Spine Icefield piles up and around it, entombing the eerie metal remains scattered across its ridges and craters.

The largest of the known remains is a **blue-metal installation** in the high dry valley locals call the Vissledole. Credible accounts and lumigraphs depict frozen machines and mummified humans. Perhaps the mythical old architects who oldsettlers claim predated our own times?

The remote heights of Icegraben are a dangerous place, home to both demented, **rime-heavy machines** (vomes) and **savage snowfolk**.

Motherberg

† tallest peak † southern edge of the Spine Icefield †

Baronials and oldsettlers alike call this mountain the **mother of mountains**. Great cliffs mark its eastern and western flanks, and it is usually the first mountain to create clouds on any given stormy day. Locals call those clouds “the Mothershroud” and warn children and tourists to get indoors at such times.

Almost unclimbable, a number of fairy tales are associated with the Motherberg. A popular one tells of the **white shrine, in the high ice**, where crystal-skinned children serve at the altar of Winterwhite. There, like beneath a fairy mound, a portal leads to the Frozen Palace of the cold queen.

The heights of Motherberg are otherworldly, with **snow worms**, great **white birds**, and **avalanches** responsible for numerous deaths. However, the lower reaches are pleasant and offer admirable views.

The **Lay Wachtey** pass winds north under the Motherberg along the dry Wach valley. It is only open in summer, so plan carefully. Word from the Transport Federation is that an iron road feasibility crew is due to arrive soon, which is exciting many betterfolk.

Pearlberg

† *Westernmost peak* † *spectacular sunrise and sunset hues* †

The **painted mountain's** incredible hues are best admired from Ta Krasney. Artists and luminographers flock to that village to capture the breathtaking contrasts of the dolomite cliffs, pearlescent calving glaciers, and endless skies.

Though its upper structures are ground away to dust, the cellars of a **titanic ruined palace** remain drowned in the glaciers. Skilled guides and explorers navigate the ice caves to reach one of the many entrances to that mysterious place.

As with much of the western mountains, **snow apes** and **giant dead things** from antedeluvian times are a threat high up the mountain. Additionally, the **snow vultures** are not above hastening an injured hiker's demise!

Princessberg

† *breath-taking view* † *reddish flanks* †

Opposite Dragonberg, the second **central mountain** of Brezim is the reddish-flanked Princessberg. It towers above Gomiliy, just across the Rushka, its small glacier like a bridal veil. A ridge links this pretty mountain to Motherberg.

You should undertake a tour to **Úbletto, the last highland oldsettler fort**. The baronial antiquarian society museum in the fort offers a fascinating reconstruction of primitive oldsettler folkways before civilization was brought to the valley, including examples of cannibal sacrifice. Indeed, local wise-crackers jest that abandoned within the complex is a collapsed chthonic temple complete with hundreds of animated frozen children and old people. Not for the faint of heart!

The Princessberg's slopes are quite safe, but nevertheless be aware of the indecencies of playful **forest spirits** and dangerously **sudden gusts** of wind due to the unusual local microclimate. And, of course, the **bears**.

Riblingberg

† *crinkled peak* † *rib-like ridges* † *eroded valleys* † *dark forest* †

The **rumpled massif** of Riblingberg offers many old and unusual volcanic terrains. Hot vents, dunes, columnar cliffs, and magma caves abound, but much has been smoothed and polished by the glaciers of the Purification Era. The thick silence of the dark forest chokes the eastern heights.

Natural philosophers should visit the **bone morraines** of dead land behemoths on the north-eastern plateau.

Besides **wolves** and **savage oldsettlers**, the trees of the dark woods sometimes **fall soundlessly** to trap the unwary traveler.

Spargleberg

† *half-shattered* † *scrub and rock* †

The **lumpen mountain** of Spargleberg is riddled with the remnants of an ancient war or mining operation (it's unclear which). Its thin, leached soils can barely support proper trees and the poor mountain must make do with a coat of hostile, thorny scrub.

The extensive **Starogray ruins**, carved into the south-eastern flanks by celestial forces, may be the blasted and weathered remains of a long dead city. They housed some of the last oldsettler holdouts.

The ghosts of that long ago war still haunt Spargleberg. Half-animated **wire traps**, old pits and hungry tunnels mar its slopes.

Twinberg

† glacier-bound twin peaks † large white ape population †

The emblem of Rudvey, the roots of its twin peaks shot through with mineral veins. As technology progresses, Twinberg will continue to feed the wheels of baronial industry. However, this does make it a less attractive mountain for hikers or hunters.

The **great sphinx** carved on its southern outcrop recollects the buried sphinxes of the Auriphages. The insides were repurposed in some later war and are now all barrel vaults, graffiti and dirty camps. Spelunkers speculate that deeper within caves might lead all the way to the pit mine of Rudvey past old architect engines deep within the mountain.

Away from the mines, the traveler must beware not just **abandoned mines**, but also **carnivorous apes**, **great hawks**, and **timberwolves**.

Whitecrown

† numinous cliff-sided peak † remote and cold †

The **lone peak** marks where the vast Grandfather's Icefield meets the Western Brezim Plateau. Its high dolomite ridge resembles the spine of a great snake crawling out of the deep, old ice.

The glistening **white arch** on the northern icefield is a fascinating sight, rising over twenty paces above the packed ice. Wags suggest it might be a titanic zygomatic arch.

The ice causes sudden fogs and deep clouds, so be prepared. It is easy indeed to get lost in a **whiteout**. The high tundra is home to aggressive **white apes**, while **dragon-worms** tunnel through the glacier.

The **high pass of Lay Wachtey** leads north between Whitecrown and Motherberg along the high and dry Wach valley. It is only open in summer, and even then there is a danger of sudden blizzards.

Wingleberg

† dotted with glaciers and forests † caverns †

This **many-folded southern peak** offers beautiful views south, out of Brezim across the Folder Hills, towards Widefeld and Forum Bay. But looks can be deceiving, and the hills themselves are a pernicious mess of zones and old murder machine fields.

Mostly collapsed **Purification Era city tunnels** are all that remains of a large shelter city from that era. The renowned Ram Moranadzi University plans further excavations next summer.

Besides the **wolves, bears** and **giant timber bats**, make sure to avoid the **exclusion and delusion zones** that crawl along the southern flanks. You can spot them by the grid-like shimmer of their false haze.

Wolfsberg

† looming eastern peak † thick pines † thermal fissures †

The **crumpled slopes** of Wolfsberg nestle uncomfortably against the southern tongues of the Spine Icefield. With geysers and hot springs, this dormant monster of a mountain makes a spectacular backdrop for the beautiful town of Vreley.

Isolated on the high mountain is the **caldera of Gorundol**, a true lost valley, home to Purification Era relifed creatures, including fascinating edaphosaurs and moschops browsers. However, visitors to the caldera also report wolffolk dreamwalkers, so caution is advised.

As the name suggests, the berg is infested with **wolffolk** and **wolves**. The **crumbling volcanic rocks** are also a hazard not to be underestimated.

Rivers and Lakes

Cherenka River

† peaty water † heavy smell †

Dark and grim, in caverns unseen born, the Cherenka flows from the Dark Forest into Starogray lake. With every flood it vomits unpleasant, ill-favored corpses of better forgotten things into the common waters of the lake.

The wild waters offer exciting finds for natural philosophers, the beaver dams, waterlogged swamps, and deep pines hide many **botanical and zoological treasures**.

But only visit with an escort. Not only **dire beavers** and **leeches**, the upper stretches of the Cherenka are reliably held by the **wolffolk**.

Derishka Stream

† icy torrent † red pebbles † thick forests † waterfalls †

The Derishka **laughs and roars** down the Princessberg, its reddish waters a reminder of the numerous ancient works that once tried to stop its flow.

The breached remains of **old architect dams** are a curious reminder of a bygone age. Ruin-lovers will enjoy the amusing petroglyphs.

Sulphurous salamanders and **hot springs** may surprise a careless visitor. Be careful when swimming, because many pools are still threaded with rustless ferro-ceramic **cables** and **spikes**.

Dimnaya Stream

† rushing torrent † basalts and reddish schists † great boulders †

The **cold grey** Dimnaya rushes from a great cavern in the pierced flank of Princessberg. Even in coldest winter, steam rises of its waters like smoke. Even in hottest summer, its flow does not stop.

The Sixthfinger tributary emerges from a great cleft which conceals excavated passages leading to **deep caverns** and a pillaged old architect **seed vault**. A visitor's center is planned soon.

Avoid eating the **snow fish** below the tributary. It's not their vicious bites, but the old architect toxins in their flesh. The terrain is also rather treacherous, particularly the **rolling boulders** and **slippery molds**.

Draga Stream

† torrential stream † gold dust † dark water †

The **dragon's river** is less reliable than most in Brezim, fed largely by storms and (so the local's mutter) the dragon's relievings. At least, that is where they believe the gold dust in its waters come from.

Ethnologically-minded travelers can book a **gold-panning** experience in Ta Krasney.

Others, of a more macabre inclination, will enjoy visiting the many pools with bronze and stone and bone **oldsettler sacrifices**, as well as visiting the **dragon otter** sanctuary.

If hiking alone, beware the **flash floods** and **falling trees** that make the torrent such a killer during storms. And, of course, take care to mind the **dragonsign forecasts**. They are quite reliable and scientific, unlike the astrological nonsense peddled so often in the Westerly Fringes.

Dvogroya River

† *sour water* † *old architect ruins* †

The **wide and slow** Dvogroya's murky water is unusually sour to the taste, and its fish are universally disliked for their poor taste. Its origins in the Dark Forest are unclear.

Tours lead as far as a series of **corroded artefacts** of uncertain origin and several eroded **ruined dams**. Guides mention warding obelisks farther up its course that warn of changelings. It is good to mind those.

Some of its tributaries emerge from dark and dangerous old tunnels where tribes of **cancer trolls** live according to popular folklore. Stories say that they can be bribed with flesh, gold, or promises that they will recover their ancient memories and become giants once again. Oldsettler soothsayers suggest that the mottled flesh-mothers of the trolls carry memories of Long Ago and that they use gold to bind memories within their cancered flesh. It is certain that even a pact with the Devil's Grandfather would be better than meeting such monsters!

Whether the cancer trolls are real or not, **troll-otters** and **toxic mists** certainly are. A thick scarf and a sturdy spear are vital equipment here.

Grandfather's Icefield

† *north-western glaciers* † *rotten ice* † *crevasses* †

In the northwest the Baron claims this fringe of the high glacial altiplano popularly known as the "Emperor's Tailbone". Although nearby as the white crow flies, no passes lead to county of Zelenim or the slightly more distant Veriy Tural.

The high ice is riddled with the tunnels of **dragon-worms** and **dragon-nymphs**. It is best avoided, unless in a montgolfier.

Hodovoya River

† *green water* † *shallows and cascades* †

The **emerald waters** of the Hodovoya are thick with algae and kelpy weeds as the wend their way through a series of gorges towards Chodey and the Rushka.

Most visitors will be fascinated by the Purification Era **glass-bottomed lake**. The precise substance is unclear, but it reveals a deeper river, flowing perpendicular to the Hodovoya.

The rugged, wooded terrain hides a profusion of beasts: **giant timber bats**, **crocodilian salamanders**, and **soldier bears**.

Jibbya Stream

† *sulphurous* † *yellow water* †

The beautiful **polychrome pebble banks** of the Jibbya have long attracted artists and alchemists to its somewhat smelly waters.

Novelty seekers and the superstitious like to visit a peaty upland of the Jibbya called the “**Dragon’s Sandbox**” with its piles of magic-rich fossilized dragon dung.

The lower course is settled and safe aside from the odd treacherously decayed tree. However, the swampy upper reaches present quite a few challenges, including **dire dung beetles** and **carnivorous quicksands**.

Krasna River

† reddish water † industrial architecture †

The **oxide-rich waters** of the Krasna are said to have healing properties. Doctors disagree, but this does not dissuade the gullible. The many dams and waterwheels of the recent industrial expansion may do more on that account.

Occasionally **dragon scales** are found in the Krasna's settling pools, and a small scale prospecting tourism has grown up around the curious polished objects. Their utility is questionable, but their exotic rarity is not.

Swimming in the Krasna is not recommended due to the somewhat **toxic tailings** of the Rudvey mines and ironworks, while **dire leeches** are a problem in some tributaries and marshes.

Malya Stream

† gentle babbling stream † icy cold †

The **frigid** Malya depends from Giantsfist, exposing fossil beds of strange ancient behemoths.

Fossil hunters often proclaim they have found **wyrm teeth** and **claws** in the stream. However, the most common finds are calcified swimslug heads and the double-spiraled bookfish shells.

That said, after particularly strong rains the Malya becomes a **dangerous torrent** and it often deposits broken **un-living carcasses** on its gravel banks. The **fishing apes** that live in the vicinity are also fond of throwing sharp rocks.

Riblinza River

† *milky water* † *rustling shallows* †

The **deep gorges** of the Riblinza usually smoke with the mists coming off its numerous hot springs. Plans to cut back the Dark Forest and build thermal resorts on its lower reaches remain speculative.

The Riblinza flows through strange sedimentary layers, for it commonly deposits polished **bone pebbles** and **cobbles** after heavy rains. This river ivory is quite prized by artisans and betterfolk curio seekers.

Dire otters and **wolffolk fishers** make the Riblinza a hostile waterway. Some swimmers have even developed **wasting diseases** after attacks by what they described as bone fish.

Rorka River

† *pure water* † *dense beech and oak forests* †

The **thundering cascades** and deep pools of the Rorka bring a whiff of the untouched deep heart of the Dark Forest to the edges of Brezim.

Natural philosophers will admire the giant **vegetarian salamanders** and **coral lotus** that thrive in the Rorka.

However, they should pay attention that they do not mistake the herb-loving salamander for the **giant carnivorous sail-backed salamanders** also found in the Rorka. Also, at least one cameraman of this reportage carelessly fell off a waterfall while recording a river nymph.

Spine Icefield

† *major federal divide* † *great north-eastern icefield* †

The long spine that **divides the Federal heartland** from its southerly regions begins at the Motherberg and continues east for hundreds of miles. The few large passes, such as fabled Bonethrone pass, have played a large role in the history of the settled lands.

Visitors should be aware that the Spine Icefield is one of the harshest environments known to modern civilization and **nobody has yet traversed it successfully**, unless one counts the revenant of Comte Boris hen Vliegasse as successful. The revenant is still displayed in a large glass jar in the Letobor geographical society.

Rushka River

† *largest river* † *swift, rough* †

The Rushka defines Brezim. **Richly flowing**, swift, rough and turbulent. Attempts were made to tame her flow and failed, though plans are afoot to build a new hydro-golemic plant near Chodey, below the oldglass barriers. The dukes of industry remain in fervent discussions.

Sports fishermen prize the **trophy granite trout** of the Rushka. Its armored head is hard enough to dent the side of a canoe!

However, only the strongest swimmers should try the Rushka. It abounds with **whirlpools** and **cascades**, not to mention the **tremendous current**.

Starogray Lake

† *artificial lake* † *mile-thick oldglass barrier* †

The **cold waters** of Starogray are held back by a massive **oldglass barrier**. Archaengineers have become a regular fixture at the site, testing and prodding, but the magical material remains impervious to their methodologies, the waters of the lake spilling over the top and creating curious open-air dripstone lips and stains on the clear matter.

Visitors to Kastey should book a boat to take them to the **drowned old architect ruins** in the middle of the lake. There they can marvel at well-preserved oldsettler dwellings from the early days of Brezim settlement.

Avoid swimming in the Starogray. **Giant snake fish** prowl its depths and the banks are often thick with sneaky **gripping mud**. Many a shoe has been lost to its pungent stickiness!

Tirzla Stream

† *laughing torrent* † *picturesque pools* †

The **gentle** Tirzla runs like a song off the riven flanks of the Spargleberg. Its lower reaches are popular with bathers and sunseekers.

Hikers will enjoy the **greatwood trees** of its middle reach, particularly the two-hundred foot Grinning Grandad. The trees are of an ill-set species, perhaps local mutants. Still, they are quite safe and it is a tradition to pose inside the restful hollow of the Grandad.

Avoid the waters of the higher reaches due to the **bloodthirsty otters** and dangerous **falling boulders**.

Toplaya River

† warm † azure waters †

The **hot waters** of the Toplaya run from Vreley to the Rushka. Bathers enjoy comfortable temperatures year round and some springs are said to be very good for skin and digestive disorders.

Zoologists will be thrilled by the **crystal-shelled armored fish** that live in its colorful waters.

However, do be aware that some springs have rather **intoxicating fumes** and that some **hot vents** emit jets of boiling water or even steam. In cold weather **rolling mists** can severely reduce visibility.

Toplovoy Lake

† volcanic lake † hot springs †

The **round lake** presents the visitor with a striking panoply of colors. It is little wonder that it is such a popular touristic destination.

The flora and fauna of the region is simply spectacular. Mineral-loving **crustaceans**, pale lake **kelp**, string **lotus**, and hot-water **snails**. All are available in profusion and eaten as a curative for arthritis and gout.

Beware the predatory **lake scorpions** in the deeper reaches of the lake and some hot steam vents. **Wolffolk** highlanders come to swim in the lake when the moon is full.

Zadvoya Stream

† pyrite nodules † refreshing waters †

The **mineral-rich** waters of the Zadvoya promise much further industrial development in the hinterlands of Rudvey, although several Vreley hoteliers also want to develop the mineral water offerings in the region.

High up the stream, past a series of difficult cascades, is a **crude shrine** in the middle of a small glacial lake. Local guides claim the apes built it and that it hides strange meats and machines from the glacier above. This seems unlikely, as the apes are mere brutes.

Fishing apes armed with nets and harpoons are a menace. The **tangling water plants** and **calving rocks** also act almost like traps, so more care is required than usual.



Game Rules

Back To The Game

Let us fracture the fourth wall once more and return to Longwinter as a game. The previous section was a lot of world-building, a lot of it presented by the marginally reliable authors of the Zuleiman Publishing *Gentle Visitor's Guides*.

It represents shared but incomplete knowledge about the world. If you are the referee, do not be intimidated. Feel free to improvise, mix and remix, and apportion the blame for any inconsistencies to an out of date and shoddily researched tour book. If you are a player, likewise, do not feel bound to the blinkered world view of the tour book's writers. Make Brezim yours. Take it and rework it into your game.

The following section of rules is written with the same ideal in mind.

All the players, those running characters and the referees, should share the burden of making the world turn. Of rolling for random encounters, generating weather, choosing where to travel, and fleshing out terrains. This is why a lot of the basic encounter tables are presented right here, in the Visitors' Book. The idea is that this is normal information, familiar to any reasonable native or visitor.

That said, perhaps things are different in the *Harsh Mistress* referee book?

Anyhow, enough, enough. Be welcome to the winter wonderland!

— the author, once again, *December, 2019*

Let's Recap

The Barony of Brezim is a mountainous place. The terrain is harsh, building and maintaining infrastructure is expensive, travel is slow, going off the beaten path is difficult, bad weather makes everything much worse. This is clear.

To simulate this environment in a game set in the barony, time is the crucial constraint and measurable distance on a map is almost irrelevant.

Encounters happen regularly to make it clear that time is a serious constraint, relentlessly depleting the heroes' resources.

Space is relevant as scenery for encounters, providing opportunities and obstacles for the heroes, and to set the mood. The referee can use the terrain tables to make encounters more or less challenging. The players can use them as ideas for set dressing they can spot or use during encounters.

If you are looking for a real-world environment similar to that of the Brezim, think of the Alps or the Pyrenees or the Carpathian mountains in the 1920s and 1930s. Substitute some witchy magic and golems for telegraphs and Daimler-Benz Lastkraftwagens, and you should be all set. When playing characters, be sure to affect an exaggerated faux-Mittelberger accent.

Time

Time in the game

A minute or less: usually rounds or turns in combat. Treat them however you like.

An hour: this is the basic unit of time for any activity. Whether the heroes bind wounds after a fight, explore an abandoned house, visit a blacksmith for a chat, or make diagrams of a creepy idol, this is how long it takes. This is an obvious abstraction. Use a d6 to tally hours up to the watch.

A watch: 6 hours long, this is the basic unit of time for travel, short rest, and encounter checks. Heroes should sleep at least one watch per day. Every watch missed applies penalties to activities.

A day: 4 watches long, the day is the basic unit of time for weather, environmental modifiers, and events.

A week: 7 days. The length of a long rest and some solid carousing.

Distance is Time

The map of Brezim shows settlements, mule-roads and travel times between them, the major mountains, rivers and forests. Travel times include basic preparations, packing, sandwich stops, and time to gawk at panoramic scenery.

Points of interest and hiking destinations are not marked. Add them to the map approximately where it makes sense when you visit them. Roll d6 twice to determine **how far the location is from the nearest settlement and what the best path is like.**

d6	Distance	and Path Type
1-4	half a watch	hunterway
5	one watch	beastway
6	two watches	mule-road

Mountains are hard to climb. For peaks, double the time required. For high peaks, triple the time required.

Going off trail, say to avoid an obstruction or enemy, is always slower.

d6	This is not a shortcut
1-3	x2 travel time
4-5	x4 travel time
6	x8 travel time

Space

Paths

Going anywhere in a mountainous landscape means following paths and trails, because every other option is harder.

Beastway: a narrow trail, ill-maintained and used more by beasts than humans. A single infantry must watch their footing carefully. Most forest or mountain trails are of this sort.

Impassable for vehicles without extreme effort, *even pack animals* double travel time.

Hunterway: a narrow trail kept in good condition by the local hunter society. A single infantry can easily fight on such a trail.

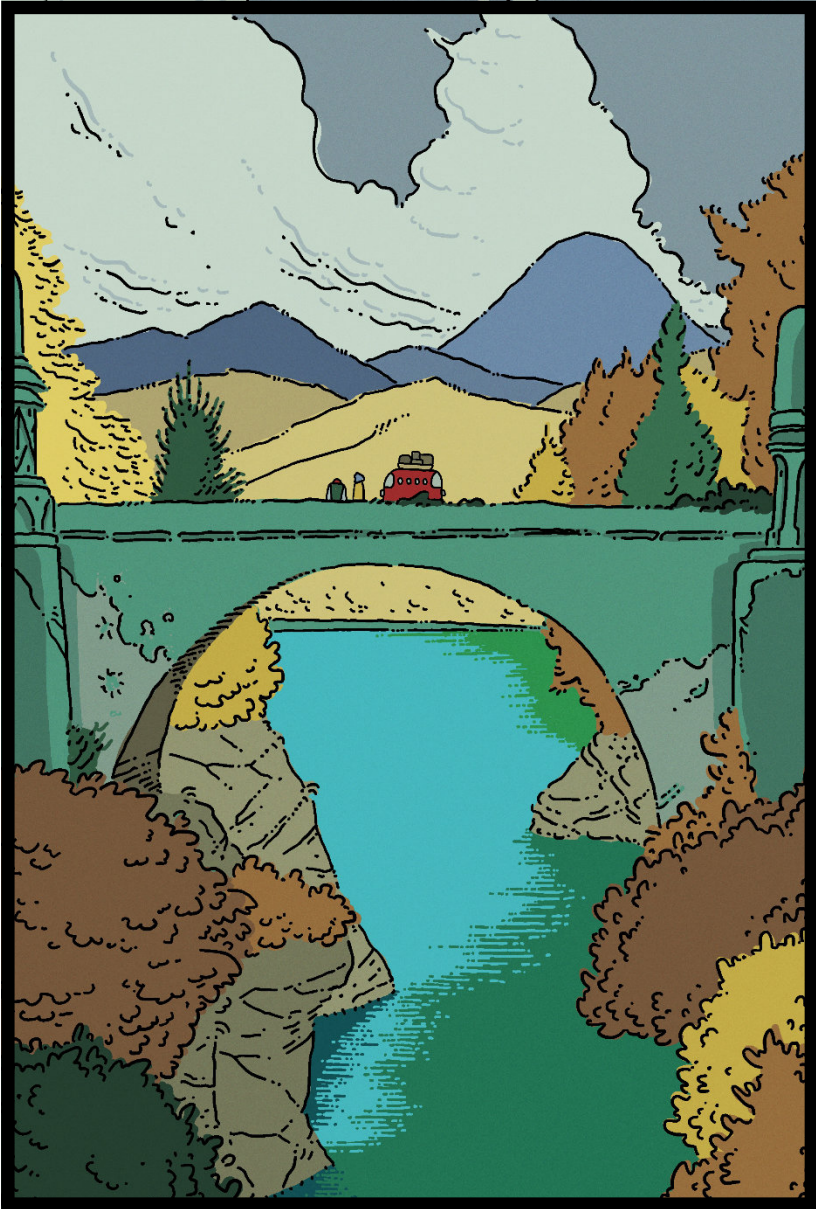
Almost impassable for vehicles, quadruple travel times.

Mule-road: a modern mountain road, specifically made for the narrow front-and-rear steering mechanical mules originally made by the Ovestá company. Two or three infantry can easily fight side-by-side on such a path.

Normal travel times for vehicles. Mule-roads connect most major settlements in Brezim.

Livingstone road: a wide road like those built long ago, in the time of the Old Empire. Most are long dead, but some are still usable. As many as ten infantry could easily fight together on such a behemoth.

Halve travel times for vehicles. There are currently no such roads in Brezim, but everybody knows about them and dreams about the day they might reach Gomiliy or even Rudvey.



Views from Ta Krasney

Encounters

In the wilderness an encounter occurs **once per watch, every watch**. A player rolls d100 and the referee consults the appropriate encounter table (it might well be one of the *Harsh Mistress* tables, depending on the time of year). Every encounter table in Longwinter is 'overloaded,' like the Summer/Autumn Daytime Encounters table on the next page. This means that something happens every time it is checked. The referee section has nighttime and winter encounters.

Remember that not every encounter with a creature should result in combat. If the party encounters The Dragon, they should probably just stay still and not move. Apparently dragons have frog DNA and can't see immobile objects. Ok, that's not true, probably. Maybe.

Sometimes it matters *when* an encounter takes place—whether the heroes can run back to their point of origin, or press on to a safe house. In that case **roll 1d6 to determine the hour of the watch when the encounter takes place**—1: first hour, 2: second hour, and so on.

Encounters put pressure on the heroes to get somewhere safe fast.

In an enclosed dungeon or city environment, encounters might occur more often. Individual modules or locations usually have specific encounter rules. Otherwise, roll a 1d6 every hour: on a 1, an encounter occurs. Shockingly, this still results in exactly one encounter per watch.

Optionally, to simulate mounting tension and rising alarms in an enclosed location, roll an additional die for encounters every hour that nothing happens. To add yet more zest, make encounters more dangerous the more 1s are rolled. Reset the multiple encounter dice after every encounter, as the tension drops.

Encounters of Summer and Autumn

Doo	Summer/Autumn Daytime Encounters
01	The Dragon, flying surreally (HD 20).
02	Older Thing, flesh machine moaning and hiding (HD 10).
03	Forest Spirit, gracefully patrolling (HD 8).
04	Woodland Wyrn, crawling for prey (HD 7).
05	Mountain Apes, playing monkey games (HD 6).
06	Aurochs, browsing coolly (HD 5).
07	Bears, stuffing themselves (HD 5).
08	Dire Lynx, stalking prey (HD 4).
09	Wild Boars, digging nuts and roots (HD 3).
10	Deer, a herd nervously awaiting winter.
11	Gnome Monkeys, squirreling away food (HD 2).
12	Mountain Goats, giving the evil eye (HD 1).
13	Wolffolk, shying from humans (HD 3).
14	Rabbits, multiplying.
15	Oldfolk, serfs slinking (HD 1).
16	Baronial, freesettlers working their holdings (HD 1).
17	Outlander, craftsmen and tourists (HD 1).
18	Baronial, official patroleurs keeping the peace (HD 2).
19	Cityfolk, merchants or specialists (HD 1).
20	Baronial, families, picking mushrooms.
21–30	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice.
31–40	Corpse: roll 1d10+10
41–60	Traces: roll 1d20.
61–70	Hunger: use food or lose 1d4 health.
71–80	Terrain: use survival gear or lose 1 stat.
81–90	Heat: use water or lose 1d4 health.
91–95	Soothing rest: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d6 of one stat.
96	Wonderful spot: regain 1d6 of one stat.
97	Panorama: advantage to one mental check.
98	Delicious berries: advantage to one physical check.
99	Forgotten goods: roll on "loot the body."
00	I needed this! Pick a common item. You've found it.

Terrain and Weather

Whenever something happens in the mountains, the land is always an antagonist. Players or referees roll on the relevant terrain and weather feature tables to figure out what is going on, and the referee decides what kind of penalties and bonuses might apply.

Terrain Features

D20	Icefield	Mountain	Forest	River
1	Crevasse	Slippery slope	Great linden tree	Beaver dam
2	Slippery	Grassy hummocks	Overgrown pit	Rapids
3	Deep snow	Shattered terrain	Leaf-filled trench	Cascades
4	Pitted	Narrow ridge	Ravine full of broken wood	Waterfall
5	Rotten	Friable rocks	Fallen pines	Confluence
6	Avalanche danger	Falling stones	Overgrown dwarf-pines	Bridge
7	Sharp shards	Unstable boulders	Dense ferns	Massive boulders
8	Rocks in the snow	Cliff	Barrier of raspberry bushes	Sandy beach
9	Ice cliff	Overhang	Dark fir grove	Pool
10	Frozen slope	Cave	Ivy-choked larches	Tangle of lilies and frogs
11	Smoothed boulders	Pinnacle	Rocks broken by oaks	Exposed riverbed
12	Overhanging ice	Massive boulder	Tangled woody vines	Pebble stream
13	Icicles	Crevasse	Barrow with hazel thicket	Slippery clay banks
14	Briny pools	Natural bridge	Clearing with mushrooms	Uprooted tree
15	Pink algal ice	Ravine	Somber beeches	Ruins of dam
16	Powder drifts	Chimney	Flash-flood debris	Gorge
17	Ice cave	Hole	Storm-broken trees	Spring
18	Ice bridge	Small lake	Quiet meadow, flowers	Deep water
19	Broken blocks	Rocky outcrop	Slippery mosses	Rushing shallows
20	Gravel and ice berms	Plateau	White birches, long grass	Gravel banks

Weather Features

D20	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Snow
1	Rustling	Rolling banks of fog	Humid	Sparkling crystals
2	Gentle	Crawling mist	Drizzle	Floating snowflakes
3	Whipping	Dull grey	Pelting droplets	Flurries
4	Howling	Ominous bruised	Gentle	White feathers
5	Murmuring	Heavy	Cool mist	Fine
6	Pelting dust and leaves	Towering	Showers	Light
7	Tossing sticks	Oppressive	Clammy	Like flower petals
8	Shaking treetops	Climbing hillsides	Remorseless	A white veil
9	Rattling shutters	Tumbling down slopes	Morose	Heavy flakes
10	Flying snow	Dropping	Heavy	Sticky wet flakes
11	Stabbing like ice	Gathering	Sour	Dry
12	Squalling	Breaking	Slow	Powdery
13	Screaming	Rising	Ominous	Glutinous
14	Ripping foliage	Scattered	Freezing	Gathering in drifts
15	Scouring soil	Drifting	Sleeting	A duvet of snow
16	Booming	Diaphanous	Thunderous	Silent
17	Hollow	Gauzy	Exhausting	Rushing
18	Ceaseless	Icy	Unremitting	Blizzard
19	Gusting	Cold	Dark	White out
20	Laughing	Thick	Torrential	Howling snowstorm

Encounter Mishaps

Mud, rain, wind and snow make combat difficult. Ridges and slopes make falls dangerous. In the mountains, almost no encounter happens on a simple flat square. Encounter mishaps roughly model the inherent difficulty of getting anything done in such terrain.

Whenever a character rolls a 13 during a physical check, including combat, they suffer a misfortune depending on the environment. Apply effects after resolving the check. The character may lose 1 point of Charisma instead of suffering the misfortune.

d10 Ice Misfortunes

1	Weapon dropped and lost.
2	Clothes damaged.
3	Shoe caught.
4	Character injured by ice shard.
5	Slips and falls.
6	Stumbles.
7	Slips and wheels arms comically.
8	Breaks through into pit.
9	Stumbles off ledge, hanging on.
10	Stumbles off ledge and goes flying.

d10 Mud Misfortunes

1	Mechanism jams.
2	Character slips.
3	Slips and falls.
4	Stuck in place or loses shoe.
5	Splashes into puddle.
6	Falls into puddle.
7	Slowed by sticky mud.
8	Blinded by flying mud.
9	Choked by flying mud.
10	Injured by hidden rock.

d10 Rocky Slope Misfortunes

1	Weapon damaged
2	Clothes damaged
3	Armor damaged
4	Equipment damaged
5	Character injured by sharp rock
6	Falls painfully
7	Knocked out by fall
8	Sprains ankle
9	Slowed
10	Stumbles off ledge, hanging on

d10 Rain Misfortunes

1	Ammo wet.
2	Food wet.
3	Lamp wet.
4	Clothes wet.
5	Character blinded.
6	Character deafened.
7	Splashes into puddle.
8	Slips.
9	Slips and falls.
10	Stumbles on hidden rock.

d10 Wind Misfortunes

1	Attack blown widely off mark.
2	Hit ally or attack blown off.
3	Light item blown away.
4	Clothes blown away.
5	Character blinded by debris.
6	Confused, thinks someone is behind them.
7	Deafened.
8	Injured by debris.
9	Thrown off balance.
10	Stumbles.

d10 Snow Misfortunes

1	Weapon dropped and lost.
2	Ammo wet.
3	Food wet.
4	Lamp wet.
5	Character blinded.
6	Deafened.
7	Slips and falls.
8	Slowed by drift.
9	Dazed and confused.
10	Injured by hidden rock.

Flying Lessons

D10+Charisma Flying Off A Cliff

1 or less	Lethal. Gruesome. Combat pauses as everybody watches, suddenly aware of their own mortality. Human combatants can call off the fight.
2-3	Long, steep, and probably lethal. Fall seems to take forever. 2d10 x 10 damage at the end.
4-5	Gruesome, tumbling fall. Takes three rounds, 1d6 x 10 damage per round. After taking damage, character can check to see if they catch themselves on a shrub or rock.
6-8	Painful tumbling slide. Takes three rounds, 1d6 x 5 damage per round. After taking damage, character can try to stop themselves.
9-10	Slide down gravel slope in tangle of limbs and small landslide of loose rocks. Takes three rounds, 1d6 damage per round. After taking damage, character can try to stop themselves.
11 or more	Flies off the edge, takes 1d6 damage and is caught in a convenient tree or eagle nest about 10' below the ledge.

Survival and Inventory

There is no bad weather, there is only bad equipment. This is usually a fact, but sometimes lightning strikes a hero exposed on a hilltop. Then again, is lightning even weather?

The basic rule is that a human can carry one sack unencumbered and two sacks encumbered.

Each sack breaks down into 10 stones. One stone is about 15lb: one generic significant item, like a sabre or spear or short sword or shovel. Leave aside one stone for 10 'soaps': generic small items, like a signal whistle or signet ring or spike. Or bar of soap.

Add or subtract stones equal to the character's Strength bonus.

Ranger and barbarian types gain three free "survival inventory slots" which can only be used for warm clothes, food, or survival gear.

Resources

The following are crucial in winter:

Warm Clothes

Coats, caps, mittens, parkas, scarves, leggings, and more. A human who is not the Michelin man cannot wear more than 5 units of warm clothes. Warm clothes work as "heat points," insulating the character against the cold. Cold checks are rolled every watch that the hero spends outside. Mark clothes as chilled when the cold gets through.

Warm clothes may also double as survival supplies for encounters. Slashing weapons, explosions, and fire ruin warm clothes. Water makes them ineffective (they get chilled and wet).

Meals

Bread, water, cheese, schnapps, butter, sausages. Staying warm takes a lot of energy. One day's meal takes one stone, travel rations may be more compact. Some encounters require characters to eat meals or lose health.

A character must eat one meal per day or they lose 1d4 hit points.

Armor

Keeps white apes and ice worms from hitting the hero. Armor is also bulky. Light armor takes one stone. Medium is two, and heavy is three. A shield takes another stone.

Weapons

To kill wolffolk and skintakers. If weapons need ammunition, it runs out when a 13 is rolled on an attack. The hero may choose to miss instead of using their last piece of ammo. Each weapon takes one stone. Each pack of additional ammunition takes another stone.

Survival Gear

Tents, ropes, sleeping bags, pitons, walking sticks, crampons, axes, ladders, picks, carabiners, axes, harnesses and more. At any time, a hero may use up a unit of survival gear to reroll a failed mountaineering or climbing check. One unit of mountain gear is always used up when a 13 is rolled on a check. In this case, the hero may choose to fail the check instead of using up their gear. Some encounters require characters to use survival gear to avoid losing health or stats.

A character can use one unit of survival supplies per short rest (one watch) to recover 1d4 hit points.

Lamps

Fuel, oil, wood, torches, batteries, coal braziers. Something that gives off light and heat. Lamps are often used up by night time encounters. Lamps can be used to attack undead and cold creatures, dealing 2d6 damage when used up.

Rest and Recovery

Longwinter assumes gritty realism rules with slight modifications. Resting rules are a little more forgiving, but the environment is a lot harsher.

Short Rest

Lasts one watch (6 hours). After a hero can **use HD to recover hit points** and one of the following:

- † Recover one point of a lost stat (Str, Dex, etc.).
- † Remove one exhaustion level.
- † Regain one heat point.
- † or End one harmful effect.

Heroes should sleep once a day or else:

Days Without Sleep	Effect
1 day	Disadvantage on social activities.
2 days	Disadvantage on all activities.
3 days	Disadvantage on all activities and all saving throws, every watch save or fall asleep.
4 days	Disadvantage on all activities and all saving throws, halved hit point maximums, every watch save or fall asleep.

Long Rest

Takes five full days, leaving a weekend for carousing. After a long rest a hero:

- † Recovers all their hit points and heat points, and half their HD.
- † Recovers 1d6 points in every stat (Str, Dex, etc.).
- † Removes all exhaustion levels.
- † Ends all harmful effects, including sleep deprivation.
- † Checks to end all illnesses.

If a hero is being cared for by another character, they recover more quickly.

Resting Conditions

It's **horrible**. Heroes should avoid sleeping in here.

d10 *Horrible Conditions*

1	Contracts pneumonia (max hit points halved) or flu (disadvantage to all checks). Marks corresponding exhaustion level. Cure requires a long rest and care.
2–4	Sleeps poorly, dreaming of white birds and laughing death. Cannot recover any lost points or remove exhaustion levels. Can still use HD.
5–9	Sleeps ok.
10	Wakes up surprisingly refreshed. One chronic ache is gone or one disease is cured or gains 1 temporary point to a random stat.

It's **ordinary**. Most nights should be uneventful.

d10 *Ordinary Conditions*

1	Sleeps poorly, dreaming of an ice princess and bleeding eyes. Cannot recover any lost points or remove exhaustion levels. Can still use HD.
2–8	Sleeps ok.
9	Wakes up eager to change the world. Gains 1d4 temporary hit points.
10	Wakes up refreshed and ready to attack the day. Gains 1d8 temporary hit points or 1 temporary heat point.

It's **splendid**! Everybody wants to rest this way.

d10 *Splendid Conditions*

1	Dreams of bloody slaughter and frozen children clinging to the bosom of a graceful ice goddess. Cannot remove any exhaustion levels. Gains 1 temporary point of Charisma.
2–5	Wakes up with +1d4 temporary hit points.
6–8	The effects of rest are doubled.
9	The effects of rest are doubled and gains 1d6 temporary hit points or 1 temporary heat point.
10	Wakes up feeling blessed by wealth and kindness of the Firebringer and the Green Sun. Rest effects are doubled and gains 2 temporary heat points or 1d6+6 temporary hit points.

The Cold

As far as the human body is concerned, the weather can be infinitely bad. In game, the referee estimates how cold it is based on the described weather.

Heroes wandering around outside in the cold have to make a check.

If a hero is wearing more units of warm clothes than the cold level, they do not have to roll a cold check. Their body heat is enough to keep them going.

Cold Level and Cold Checks

- | | | |
|---|-------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Cool | Survival DC 5 |
| 2 | Cold | DC 10 |
| 3 | Bloody Cold | DC 15 |
| 4 | Siberian | DC 20 |
| 5 | Frozen Hell | DC 30 (auto-fail, basically) |

A roll of a 1 is always a failure.

Wind imposes a disadvantage on survival checks against the cold.

Digging into snow or leaves gives advantage to the cold checks.

Rain and damp means the cold effects are doubled.

A character in cold water makes an immediate cold check, and then another cold check every few minutes. The water soaks 1d4 items of warm clothing per round. Wet clothes provide no heat points and impose a disadvantage to cold checks out of water.

Failing the Cold Check

When a character fails the cold check they lose a heat point (two if it is raining). Medium animals like humans and wolves start with one heat point. Big animals like horses and bears start with two.

Warm clothes, fluffy fur, or winter feathers add additional heat points.

When a hero has no heat points left, any additional heat points lost translate directly into fatigue.


Fatigue

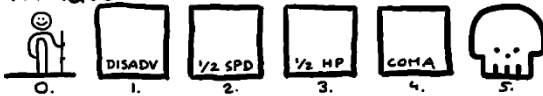

As a hero gets colder, sicker, and more tired, they grow more fatigued. Soon enough, they're dead.

- 0 It's fine.
- 1 Disadvantage to all checks.
- 2 Speed halved.
- 3 Current and max hit points halved.
- 4 Comatose, unresponsive, 'sleeping.'
- 5 Dead.

A short rest can remove one level of exhaustion.

An Inventory Sheet

BODY / HEAT POINTS


FATIGUE

 0. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 

SACK 1: "STONES"
small things

10 "SOAPS" per "STONE"


SACK 2: DISADVANTAGE

10 coin (25/soap)

CASH

STR -3
STR -2
STR -1
FULL
STR +1
STR +2
STR +3
STR +4
STR +5

STR -3
STR -2
STR -1
STR +1
STR +2
STR +3
STR +4
STR +5



Sporting Supplement

† by special dispensation from the Betterfolk Bettershooter Quarterly †

Guns and Weapons

The mountains and forests of Brezim provide much entertainment for the gentlefolk aficionado of the hunt. Both the local betterfolk and visitors appreciate the chase and if you are keen to try your trigger against the local prize game - especially the fabulous snow apes, dire bears, elk, mountain goats, and capricorns - you can easily rent or purchase the requisite equipment in any of the towns and some of the larger villages. However, for our choice, the best place to shop is Rudvey's Gentle Pheasant, were gunleit Ivo Blewmount and his craftsmen create true artworks from regular Zuleimans and Redyards.

As Brezim is a liminal province of the federation, the strict gun controls you may be used to from the better class of city do not apply. Indeed, by decree of the First Baron, all adult baronials are required to keep weapons and attend bimonthly practice with their free defense clubs. The oldsettlers and wolffolk are, of course, constitutionally unsuited to handling weapons, which are therefore forbidden them. The penalties for possession are quite severe, and should you spot any oldfolk with a firearm, you can be sure that they are enamored of the bandit lifestyle. Report them to the authorities and, at the very least, you will be treated to a rousing round of songs and beverages at the local club drinks hall or inn. This is indeed a good way to make friends with the local citizens in good standing.

The general selection you of sporting goods you will find in Brezim is a little more restricted than in more famous safari entrépôts like Zamorey or Schitz, but should suffice.

—Nesram Wittbroed 'den Loopwinkle, Author and Hunter

Redyard “leadspitter” Sub-machine Gun – a staple of trendy gangland flicker pictures, this trusty local replica of the Skolnikow-28 is quite common in Brezim among the militia, both serving and retired. This semi-automatic drum-fed gun is very nearly the equivalent of an official badge. Redyard guns is a subsidiary of the Baronial Mining Company and manufactures rugged weapons in its small factory in Rudvey.

Zuleiman “sunshiner” Rifle - a popular hunting rifle, available with many options and in multiple calibers. Nearly every store will hold at least one, and most baronial chalets will have one. So long as you’re not going up against a bear, this bolt-action rifle is a rugged and accurate choice.

Walking Spear - capped for safety, the walking spear comes with a sturdy heel spike to help with navigating rough terrain. Not really a proper infantry weapon, but solid for chasing off a drunken lout or spearing an overly aggressive wolf.

Redyard Revolver “pinky” - a six-chambered revolver of somewhat uninspiring make. Wildly popular among baronials since it is subsidized for militia members. Locals often fondly call it the “shouting teacher” for the way it tends to disperse oldsettler riots.

Fifthface Revolver “laughing Tom” - the five-chambered high-caliber revolver is powerful enough to stop a bull. A sure sign of an insecure person, not proper betterfolk would use one. Still, if you are going into the Dark Forest, you might pack one for self-defense.

Kaiserlich Shotgun “harvester” - this classic shotgun is perfect for bird hunting. The double-barrel version is also popular with housemasters for keeping the peace in inns.

Kaiserlich Carbine “smitten ling” - a cheap double-barreled bolt-action affair, the Kaiserlich was issued to irregular troops during the Grand War, and later during the Afterwar Affair. As such, many baronials and even oldsettler bandits, have these notoriously inaccurate rifle substitutes hidden in their houses. Still, it is light, and easy to handle.

Kaiserlich Pistol “ten-fingers” - the old imperial gun foundry has truly come down in the world since the rise of the federation, but the ten-fingers is indeed quite a marvel. Small, reliable, easy to conceal, and with 10 chambers in its magazine. Not something to stop an armored soldier, but certainly enough to scare of a wolf or a bandit with an axe.

Zuleiman Handcannon “nightbringer” - this bolt-action single shot carbine can just about be used one-handed. Adapted from a cavalry weapon in the last war, it is strong enough to bring down a bear. Its large caliber also makes it easy to make custom munitions for it, for example if you are going hunting the skinchanged. The strangely deformed skulls of wolffolk skinchangers are quite popular in extreme sporting circles these days, but you should still take extreme care. The wolffolk exhibit near human cunning coupled with a savagery and resilience unmatched even by the peninsular buffalo!

Zuleiman Carbine “starsky” - the overpriced original on which the Kaiserlich was based. Rare now, but still available. It compensates for the Kaiserlichs defects in all aspects except two: its price and the unreliability of its finicky build. That said, this shooter is nearly the equal of a hunting rifle and can easily take a buck at a hundred paces.

Ironbaron “aristocrat” Rifle - a powerful, heavy rifle, used for the biggest game. A version of the Ironbaron was used in the Hedgerow Conflict to stop scout golems, so you can imagine that his gun punches through any armor. Located in nearby Eastern City, the Ironbaron is a prestige marque, popular with betterfolk social climbers.

Federal Pistol “polizey” - the standardized police pistol of the federation, with semi-automatic action and nine rounds. Not as strong as a revolver, but simpler to hide. You'll find some on the market, but not many. Federal officials are issued with them when they are posted to remote provinces like Brezim.

Pole-shovel - a nasty polearm, somewhere between a pole axe and sharpened shovel. Oldsettlers often improvise them for their uprisings. That said, if you ever had to fight off a shambling ghoul (ha ha), this clumsy neck-breaker would be ideal!

Cavalry Saber - a leftover from older wars, many baronials who served in the brigades proudly display their company sabers with their enameled pommels. Militia officers carry shortened versions called “reminderlies”.

Ironbaron Shotgun “broomer” - a pump-action shotgun, its use to slamfire clear trenches in the Grand War earned it its nickname. This isn't really a hunter's weapon, and unless you are cleared with the baronial militia, you may have to store it at a safe house. Anyone you see with this weapon is likely affiliated with one of the free defense clubs. Or a bandit.

Axes - tool and weapon in one, axes of all sizes are found everywhere in the densely forested highlands and valleys of Brezim. Since even oldsettlers are allowed to carry them, they are also quite popular with bandits.

Giantsbone Swords - a curiosity in the southern mountain provinces, these blades are made from the fossil steel of creatures from before the Purification Era. The locals will try to sell you replicas, so be careful of what you buy. That said, one of these blades above your townhouse mantelpiece will draw delighted sounds of approval from guests and relatives.

You Could Be Here

† *Interested in gentle travel? † Keen to reach new audiences? †*

Contact the editors of the Gentle Visitor's Guides at Zuleiman Publishing House, Vituperi Gasá 14, Omboló. Ask for Smelovek Goodsoldier.

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Longwinter

Harsh Mistress



Luka Rejec

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LAYOUT

Luka Rejec & Anna Urbanek

EDITING

Probably the Moonrats? Who knows. Are they reading this? I wonder.

PUBLISHING

WTF Studios

Harsh Mistress



Referee Book

Luka Rejec

“ Deceive the masses in the dark, seal their fate. Divide and conquer, keep the wicked in control.

Seven Headed Whore
Iced Earth — Incorruptible (2017)

Best
not
fight
it 

The snows are alive. A soft, cold spirit courses through them. Her lace threads the world; watching, drinking, listening, stroking, soothing, killing. Her touch is soft and icy. She is Winterwhite, the daughter of the Waterdrinker and the Northwind, and she is a terrible god. An avatar of ice and hunger, of visions and death.

Longwinter is the RPG sandbox of a realm that has broken its vows to Winterwhite and will now pay the cold price.

This book contains secret knowledge and mechanics for the referee.

In memory of how differently Brezim played each time I ran it. In memory of how much joy my players brought me those times. In hope that I brought them as much, and that Brezim may bring you and your players even more.

—Luka Rejec, *Seoul, December 2019*

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How to Referee the Icebox

The Barony of Brezim is an rpg sandbox. Let the players weave their own adventures out of a mix of strange locations, sidequests, and random encounters. It's a good idea to have numerous maps of dungeons, locations, and buildings ready to whip out for an improvised crawl. I recommend the superb (and free) resources designed by Dyson Logos, but there are many, very many, available to the referee, no matter their budget.

Winterwhite's curse provides an overarching narrative to this sandbox: survival in the face of an unending winter. As the barony gets colder and darker, Winterwhite snaps the doors shut. Ice worms crawl down from the peaks and up from the rivers to lock the valley in ice.

Do not make this immediately clear to the players or the inhabitants of the Brezim, announce it with portents and growing danger. Indeed, several of the factions are straight up distractions from the threat of Winterwhite, and the squabbling locals will add more chaos to the mix.

As the trap closes, the environment becomes harsher. Travel becomes more difficult. The weather kills faster. Food becomes scarcer. The baronials grow weaker. The monsters grow stronger.

When the players decide to escape, it will be possible, but hard. They will lose NPCs and friends along the way. Think of the movies "K2" and "Alive". Or "The Thing" for that matter.

A 'True' History of Brezím

† a fictional vignette or interlude †

The snow is alive. A soft, cold spirit courses through them. Her lace threads the world; watching, drinking, listening, stroking, soothing, killing. Her touch is soft and icy. She is Winterwhite, the daughter of the Waterdrinker and the Northwind, and she is a terrible god. An avatar of ice and hunger, of visions and death.

The ice-drowned mountains that spread behind Motherberg are her home. Brezím and other mountain valleys grow and quietly die at her whim.

A hundred years ago Verdek and Ivan Greencorner came up the valley with four hundred civilized soldiers. The oldsettlers met their muskets and maces with bows and traps.

That first summer the Greencorners burned oldsettler villages and fields, tore down the henges and crucified the men, bayoneted the babies and kidnapped brides for themselves.

That first winter the oldsettler shamans called and the wolffolk and the skintakers came. Children and grandmothers crawled out of mass graves to drown the soldiers in their own blood. One after another the wood-whispered invader forts cracked and broke.

At last the oldsettlers pushed the Greencorners to the great barrow hill between the Rushka and the Krasna rivers.

The frozen ancestors claimed the kidnapped brides for themselves. The skintakers took the enslaved and rode them. The oldsettlers howled to the moon, for never could they be unfree.

The Greencorners retreated up that hill, among ruins like fangs and ribs. The horde came for them. Their bullets ran out and they dropped their guns. Skintakers whipped amalgamated horrors of flesh and wood across the old living walls at the hills' crown. Their swords grew as blunt as their maces as they

staggered back into mist-laced bowel of the hill. Roaring worms of flesh and bone battered down metal hatches and stone doors as the oldsettlers followed.

The last dozen soldiers fled deeper and deeper, until they reached a white room with black tapestries, and an altar of crystal-clear ice. On the altar stood a white bird with red eyes and a bloody beak.

“You are new,” said the bird.

The soldiers ignored it and heaved the mighty white stone door shut.

“That won’t stop them,” said the bird.

“It talks,” said Verdek.

Ivan grunted and squinted with as the doc tightened the tourniquet on his left leg.

“The bird, it talks,” repeated Verdek.

A couple of the warriors inched towards the altar. The bird flapped into the air and perched on a frost-rimed chandelier. Its talons left a bloody stain.

“Stop, guys,” said Mira Falconsbrood, “I’m as hungry as you, but eating the magic white bird won’t do anything. The savages are coming for us with their needle teeth.”

On cue there was a hollow thump as something broke through a barricade, getting closer.

“So it talks,” said Ivan.

Verdek stepped under the chandelier and craned his head, “Bird! Who are you?”

“Oh, questions! I like that game,” said the bird, “I am the soft hand of winter, and who are you?”

Mira squinted thoughtfully.

“We are the brothers Greencloak, rulers of this land,” announced Verdek.

“We are supplicants to the lady,” added Mira.

Verdek frowned, "We're republican soldiers, we don't..."

"Shut up," she hissed.

The bird made a rattling cough. The warriors stopped.

"It's laughing," said Ivan.

"Yes! The one-foot is right, I am laughing," said the bird.

Verdek leapt onto the altar, windmilling his arms to keep his balance on the ice. Mira reached out a hand to steady him.

"Get down here, you feathered mockery," shouted Verdek. With his numb fingers he fumbled for the throwing knife at his side. It wasn't there.

His leg buckled under him and he fell hard onto the ice altar.

"Oh, Winterwhite, we beg you! Save us!" cried Mira and plunged Verdek's throwing knife into his throat, "Accept our sacrifice! Accept our ruler's youngest kin! Accept our worship!"

The white stone cracked and the survivors crawled out from under the barrow as winter squeezed the valley. For three months the winter did not let up. The oldsettlers starved. The soldiers ate the dead.

That second summer Greencorner and his soldiers went to the cities to tell their stories of oldsettler savagery and cannibalism.

That second winter the Emperor of the Republic bestowed a baronage on Ivan Greencorner and a posthumous order of valor on his brother Verdek, who gave his life to save his companions. At the same time the Generalissimo of the Western City made Mira Falconsbrood the treasurer of the Brezim Burners.

That third summer Ivan and Mira returned to the valleys with the Brezim Burners. White birch gibbets full of oldsettler savages greeted the first snows that year.

Every year after that the gun and the axe pushed the savages further into barren highlands and dark forests.

The whispered wood pallasades and the warding runes went up. The second

baron of Brezim sacrificed her youngest nephew to Winterwhite. The mule-roads were built. The third baron of Brezim sacrificed his twin sons to Winterwhite. The great ancient silver mine was reopened. The fourth baron of Brezim quietly sacrificed her younger sister to Winterwhite. Traders and craftsfolk came. The fifth baron quietly sacrificed his baby niece to Winterwhite and said she had died of measles. Guesthouses and spas opened. The sixth baron, Soren Greencorner II, ascended to the silver-bone throne.

Soren did not sacrifice his daughter to Winterwhite. His vizier, old Negra Falconsbrood begged him to reconsider.

Soren refused and Negra died in an unfortunate motoring accident. Her nephew, Ibrahim Falconsbrood, a well-traveled ethnologist from the Eastern City took her position.

Years passed and nothing happened, and Soren realized that the terrible family stories of sacrificing their children to the laughing ice goddess were just superstition and lies covering up the bestial cruelty of his ancestors.

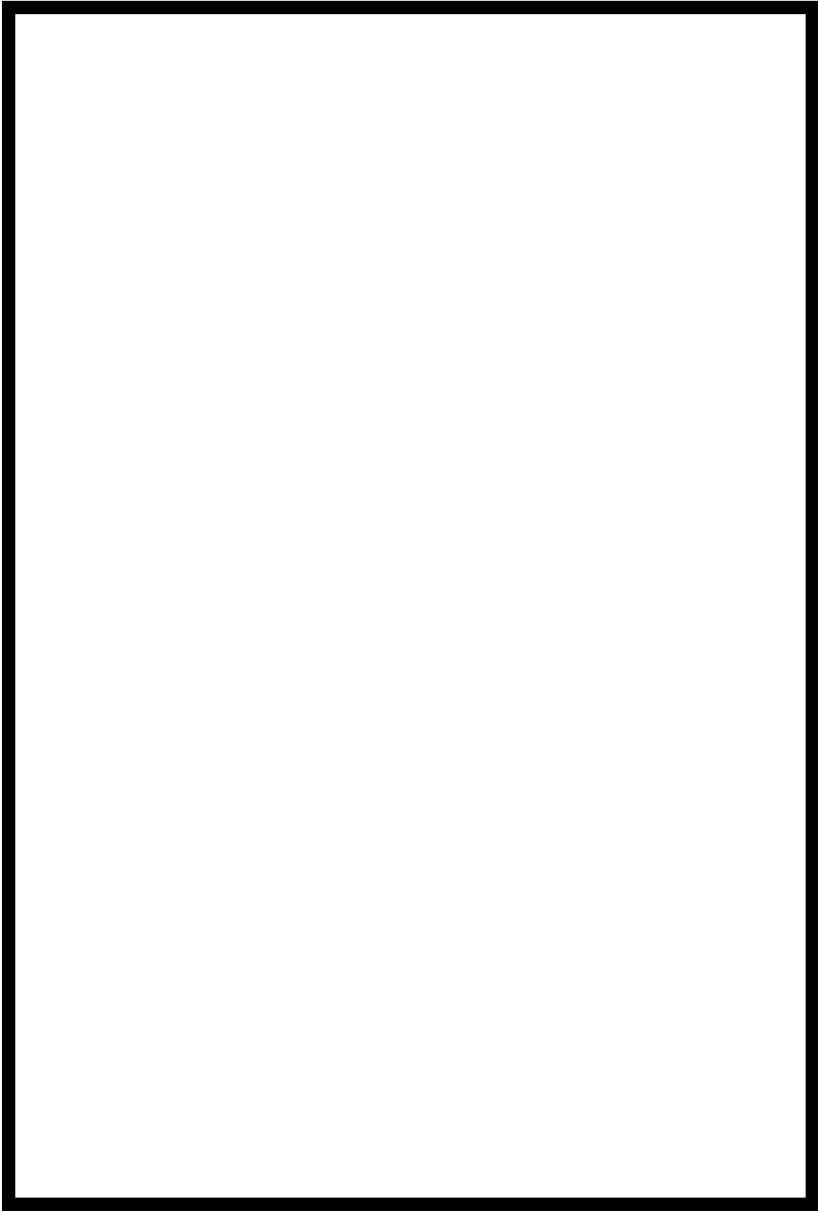
Soren opened orphanages and schools for oldsettler children, to integrate them into society as upstanding citizens, free from the savage superstitions of their ancestors.

He lobbied the Kings' Council to open equal education to all children, regardless of ethnicity. The industrialist conclaves supported him and he achieved a modicum of fame.

Then his daughter turned eighteen and Winterwhite sent her insistent dreams.

Soren ignored the ice queen.

They all ignored her.



Winterwhite Aggrieved

Winterwhite, daughter of the Waterdrinker and the Northwind, is a terrible god, the bringer of ice and hunger and visions and death. She rules her peaceful white domain with a soft, cold touch.

She smiles as she inhales the souls of the dead and covers their cold corpses with a gentle shroud.

She is never angry when somebody breaks their vow.

No, she is glad.

For then neither Firebringer nor Green Sun, neither Devil's Grandfather nor Doctor Love can guard her prey from her.

Her white birds carry her dreams to her subjects, witting and unwitting.

They visited Soren, the baron of Brezim, and whispered, "Soren, your ancestors' vow still binds you, the Lady remembers."

Soren ignored them.

They flew again, "Soren, your great uncle's shadow begs you consider, the Lady remembers."

Soren visited the apothecary and took sleeping draughts.

Winterwhite's birds flew again, "Soren, summer is turning and the Day of All Ghosts will come. Your vow-given ancestors will gather at the altar of ice to see you renew your vow to the Lady."

Soren drank the best vintages brought by long-haired traders from the sun-kissed hills.

The birds left hoarfrost where they stepped, "Soren, tomorrow is the last day. Pay your blood debt, or the Lady's interest will be steep."

Soren awoke on the Day of All Ghosts with a pounding headache and went

hunting. He bagged a five-tine stag on the ridge behind Gomiliy, while his friend Lazar Woolmaker bagged an incredible eight-tine hart. It was a good day.

When the sun set, Winterwhite sent her white birds to Northwind and Waterdrinker. The birds announced that the winter of her content had come.

Winterwhite's Curse

"The gods stitch our human world together, but they are not human." —Vedom the Iskari Wolf Prophet.

The vow of Mira Falconbrood was simple: save us, and we will give your our youngest and bravest. The vow amused Winterwhite, but she took it seriously.

The vow has been broken, and now she will destroy everyone in the land she gave to the Greencorners. It's nothing personal, it's just a vow.

This year the winter will not end. The north wind will blow. The snow will fall. The rivers will freeze. The ice worms will crawl. Frost will choke the sky.

Darkness will come and everybody in the valley will come to sleep with Winterwhite.

Best not fight it.

After a year and one winter, the spring will come again. Winterwhite is not all powerful, after all, and the Firebringer would have words with her if she overstepped her prerogative.

Portents of Winterwhite

Portents will come. The foolish modern rulers will ignore them until it is too late, of course, but these things must be done properly.

In the end, the sun will close its eye over Brezim and darkness and cold and soft silence will reign until the next solstice.

d30 Portents

1	White faces float beyond windows at night.
2	Pale icy ghosts crawl from frozen puddles to accuse the living.
3	White foxes dig holes in the cemeteries.
4	White crows land on the temples.
5	Frozen birds on the trees in the morning.
6	Fish frozen in streams.
7	Frogs turned to ice together with their ponds.
8	Tree trunks snapped open by the sudden cold.
9	Barrows ploughed open by upthrusting ice.
10	Tinkling laughter on the icy wind.
11	Crawling shadows leaving rime behind them.
12	White wolves whose shaggy manes drip hoarfrost.
13	Shattered corpses of birds frozen mid-flight.
14	Glaciers slithering down mountainsides like icy worms.
15	Powdery snow that refuses to melt.
16	Whistling wind that steals voices.
17	Dead leaves that crumble to snow.
18	Ornaments on the yule trees turn to ice.
19	Dead trees that sweat ice.
20	Flowers of snow and vines of ice grow in gardens.
21	Hoarfrost spreading in starbursts from the graves of the recently deceased.
22	Fog and mist dropping suddenly to the ground as a thick layer of hoar frost.
23	Frosted handprints and footprints on doors and windows.
24	Clouds that freeze in place.
25	The sun crawling, purplish as though bruised.
26	The moon eclipsed by blackish ice.
27	The moon disappears.
28	The sky turns white, as though it is a dome and frost is crawling up its sides.
29	The days grow shorter after the winter solstice.
30	The sun weeps ice.

Factions in an Icy Hell

“When the world unravels, watch closely my child, watch well, for every scale that falls makes a scale to rise.”

—Earthbeater to the Grave Child

As the ice embraces Brezim, as the roads are cut, as the federation fades away, as even the baron grows remote, it is the local ties, the bonds of blood, the cords of clan, the love of land that may yet see communities through the cold and dark. Perhaps, some will even see a way to appease Winterwhite.

A disaster overwhelms with troubles, forcing groups and individuals to improvise and prioritize. Yes, it sows discord, but it also ties people together. Faction tables simulate the lengthening odds in Brezim. Each faction has two tables, one for when they wax strong, the other for when they dwindle. Each success or failure also brings additional complications.

Most of the tracks give no easy answers. Simply helping one side over another will almost always merely lead to a different disaster.

Don't worry too much about what is happening off-screen. Check for new problems **when the heroes arrive in a different location, or after a week spent in one place.**

Also, while you should encourage the heroes to get involved, do make it clear that they cannot fix everything. There is simply too much going on and the problems are too systemic for an adventurer with an axe to fix, even an axe like Kolgar's.

Winterwhite

† *force of nature* †

Winterwhite is not a faction per se, she is a force of nature incarnate. The janus-face of Summerbright, the daughter of Autumnwed, the mother of Springtimebred. She cannot be swayed or moved by the spasms and twitches of the short-cycle mortals. Even if the world became a cinder, in the void her cold domains go on and on, the ice promised in the shadow of every sun.

Yet, she is incarnate. She is flesh of a cold and calm sort. The dreams and nightmares of mortal souls make her so, or perhaps she always was so, and mortal lives are the fruit of her dreams and the whispers of her fellow gods. She can be bargained with, she can be paid.

She is coming, and she will come. That cannot be stopped. But she is still listening.

Angering Winterwhite

Killing her messengers, denying her dominion, bringing foreign gods like Doctor Love into her collection, these things focus Winterwhite's attention.

- 1 The Winterbird appears, the white bird with red eyes. A chill afflicts the joints of those who see it, and does not depart for days.
- 2 You awaken with a frost coating your face like a funeral shroud. The frost does not melt at your touch or breath.
- 3 Ice crawls up from the ground overnight, freezing baggage and vehicles stiff. Even fuel freezes in this unearthly cold.
- 4 Faces swirl and whirl in the icy fog, watching. The fog follows and watches. Her many crystal eyes now refuse to close.
- 5 A crystal maiden appears, her body purest ice, her gown purest snow, her lance purest cold. A gift of warmth will appease her. Her lance will freeze a limb or a heart.
- 6 A globe of cold surrounds you, swirling with fragments of ice that burns your lungs like the ash of a funeral pyre.

- 7 The silence of deepest winter surrounds you. All noise is muffled. Hope begins to fall like nitrogen snow.
- 8 The world turns white and milky. From that liquid nothing swims the Winterwurm, all icicle teeth and freezing fronds. The cold is its sea and its bite will drag you under. The warmth of your life will now pay for your sins. Your cold body will now serve Winterwhite, your flesh like the surface of a still pond, your eyes sparkling jewels, your voice Winterwhite's tinkling laugh. And when winter ends, you will end, an iceman melting in the breath of Spring.

Listening to Winterwhite

Offering her tribute, building altars to her, sacrificing warmth and life to her, accepting her as cruel but necessary, submitting to the cycle of the world, to her and her sisters/mothers/daughters.

- 1 Despite the cold, the snowflakes that fall feel gentle. Warm even.
- 2 A nimbus of colors girds the wan sun and remains in the day, a promise of Spring to come.
- 3 A gentle snowfall blankets the area, almost glowing in its virginity and peace, refreshing souls and minds.
- 4 The Winterbird appears, tugging and cawing, red eyes rolling as it leads the supplicants to a fresh carcass, a sheltered cave, or a stack of cordwood.
- 5 The skies clear and a piercing ray of sunlight breaks through, its brightness casting the world into pure relief, its warmth reviving cold limbs, chasing away weariness.
- 6 From the fog a snowman appears, the antlers on its head decked with glitter, the wolf's tooth necklace round its neck promising protection and peace.
- 7 The tinkling of ice, the patter of droplets, like a gentle symphony, leads to a hidden hot spring surrounded by great banks of snow. With an igloo, this could be a home.
- 8 A holy supplicant in white furs, ridden by the spirit of Winterwhite, comes

calling, offering a way out of the winter, a cave and a potion and furs and hibernation. With the deep winter sleep, one can pass by dreaming Winterwhite's dream.

- 9 "Say my names, accept my names. Gift me your name and write mine into your own," she whispers in your dreams. Those who carry the names of the four-fold goddesses in themselves do not feel the cold so terribly.
- 10 The visions come, strong and bright, of a deep place, far beneath the surface, hidden from sun and sky, wind and shoot. There, among the roots, Mira Falconsbrood offers the baron's blood to secure Winterwhite's blessing. The visions come, a century turns, the baron Soren Greencorner ignores the bargain and does not pay Winterwhite. The visions come, now the payment is due with interest. The visions come, there atop Princessberg is Glaciertgut, the Ice Spear. They that wield Glaciertgut will feel no cold, for they will be the avatar of Winterwhite. Spill the blood of the betrayer Soren Greencorner upon the ice. Spill the guts of the promised child upon the snow. Satisfy the agreement, then, perhaps, a new bargain can be made. A lesser punishment exacted. Perhaps not quite a summer this year, for Winterwhite cannot change the agreement of Firebringer and Earthbeater. A great mountain far to the east will be made small this year. Its ash will bring fiery sunsets and violet sunrises and snow in midsummer. But it will not all be grinding ice and death. Those who accept the old cycles, who are humble in the face of the impenetrable vastness of the cosmogons will survive and learn.

Baronials

† *lords of this realm* †

Essentially, the powerful of Brezim. The landowners, the freeholders, the citizens, the militia members. They differ from the oldsettlers in culture, dress, wealth, and education, but to any visitor from a distant province, they are the same people.

Growing Stronger

Tightening control, gathering food and fuel, fortifying their settlements, defeating the wolffolk, controlling the oldsettlers.

- 1 Deputies swell the rank of baronial militias. Guns and arguments proliferate.
- 2 Food and fuel stores are centralized, mayoral powers are increased. Dissent is viewed with suspicion.
- 3 Palisades are reinforced, walls are raised, barricades are built. Free movement is curtailed.
- 4 Loyalty pledges are introduced, weapons and equipment is requisitioned from oldsettlers and their sympathizers. Disaffection grows.
- 5 Outlying hamlets and isolated farmsteads are emptied out, bigger settlements are fortified. Troublemakers are kicked out.
- 6 Bands of free baronial militia begin collecting emergency “taxes” from oldsettlers, requisitioning food, fuel, and warm clothes. Protests break out and are dealt with violently.
- 7 Safety teams begin cutting fire breaks and burning isolated hamlets and oldsettler settlements, to make it harder to attack baronial towns.
- 8 Disloyal serfs, fifth columnists, and other troublesome mouths are kicked out of baronial towns. Dismembered traitors are clearly displayed on roadsides and crossroads.
- 9 Harvesting patrols raid and pillage oldsettler and wolffolk settlements for

food and materiel. Ethnic cleansing begins in earnest.

- 10 Artifacts from old architect vaults are deployed to defend the baronial betterfolk and maintain a semblance of settled society, even as the winter worsens. Show trials, witch hunts, and a reign of terror ensure loyalty. Mandatory triage is introduced. The dead are stored “in case the food situation becomes dire.” Dark pacts are made anew.

Facing Setbacks

Relinquishing power, losing settlements, being pushed out, losing battles, oldsettlers rebelling, skintakers sowing dissent.

- 1 Isolated farmsteads are looted and torched, lone baronials are accosted and robbed. Angry crowds gather, demanding action.
- 2 Water wells are poisoned and cholera breaks out. Witchcraft is suspected.
- 3 Fuel is stolen, stranding vehicles and making heating difficult. Watches are set and inspections increase.
- 4 Granaries are plundered, leaving small communities hungry and scared. Lynch mobs are formed to hunt down perpetrators.
- 5 Small hamlets are attacked, baronials are shot, supplies are stolen. Baronial refugees flock to bigger settlements.
- 6 Oldsettlers rise up against their masters, killing them in their beds, taking over isolated manors, burning farmsteads and plantations closer to the towns. Baronials start executing oldsettlers indiscriminately.
- 7 Wolffolk skintakers raid remote hamlets, kidnapping livestock and baronials alike for food. Baronials gather together for defense, oldsettlers are evicted and tortured.
- 8 Wolffolk shamans awaken the cold dead, spreading terror and fear. As the baronials retreat, many oldsettlers join in the plunder.
- 9 The skintaker high chief Añelo di’Usta demands all the oldsettlers rise up against the baronials. Many take up the high chief’s call. Rebellion and violence flares. Settlements burn. Dead oldsettlers and baronials alike are

pulled back to shambling revenance.

- 10** Fortresses fall to the dead and the monsters and the wolffolk. Desperate baronials leave behind the weak and the sick, retreating to citadels and vaults. Bands load up with supplies and try for the edges of the frozen hell that Brezim has become. The Greencorners are lost in the chaos, and it seems impossible to appease Winterwhite now.

Oldsettlers

† those who were first † those who are last †

Growing Stronger

Taking back their lands, regaining control, throwing off their bonds, finding freedom.

- 1** The old songs echo through the hamlets. Even baronials make the sign of the three-and-four in secret.
- 2** A quiet mob raids the chamber of records and burns the deeds of land and service. Serfs quietly stop wearing their bond amulets. Baronials take their guns out of their cases.
- 3** Oldsettler self-protection societies come out into the open. Bands of youths armed with illegal carbines and sharp axes patrol districts and hamlets.
- 4** Landless laborers and servants occupy empty chalets and summer cottages. Skirmishes break out as the militia fails to evict them.
- 5** The most disliked baronial landlords are hunted down, tortured, and strung up by their heels. Their freed serfs and laborers sing and dance all night, while they slowly freeze. Scared baronials start attacking individual oldsettlers.
- 6** Organized oldsettler rebels raid isolated militia barracks and outposts, evicting the outnumbered soldiers into the snow without coats or weapons.
- 7** Oldsettlers choose chiefs and declare that baronials must take the furs or

leave the hamlets. Many scores are settled. Baronials desperately try to send word to the federal troops stationed south of Brezim in Iron Forum.

- 8 Baronials are evicted from the countryside, many starve or freeze to death. Accusations fly. Then fire arrows. A village burns. Moderate oldsettlers begin to argue with the more extreme chiefs.
- 9 A worker's uprising seizes the town. Baronials and betterfolk are hunted through the streets like animals. The mayor's family is taken to a remote farm house and accidentally executed, before being dumped into a cistern to hide the evidence. Pitched battles divide Brezim.
- 10 A gun factory or cache is captured. The purges become more savage. Captured baronials are given a taste of their own medicine and enslaved. Moderate oldsettler chiefs are murdered at the event later remembered as "the bloody breakfast."

Facing Setbacks

Hunted, beaten, exiled, mutilated, manipulated, betrayed.

- 1 Hunger compounds the malnutrition of most oldsettler children. Typhoid and cholera begin to spread.
- 2 Food protests are violently beaten back and shallow trenches fill with hungry oldsettlers. The laments of parents bereft provide a haunting backdrop to the cracks and bangs of the militia executioners.
- 3 Masses of poor laborers are evicted from towns as potential troublemakers. These hungry bands wander the countryside, increasingly desperate.
- 4 Armed bands confiscate food and fuel from the poorest and weakest. Cold corpses begin to appear in alleyways, nooks and corners.
- 5 Rumors of cannibalism spread. There is truth in the rumors. True ghouls emerge among the hungriest, children of Hollowfear, a menace to oldsettler and baronial alike.
- 6 Skintaker agitators find fertile ground and provoke bloody, but unsuccessful uprisings. The baronial oppression becomes more violent and savage.

- 7 Terrified oldsettlers begin to trek away, hoping to find sanctuary outside of Brezim. Most die on the way. Some out in the cold, others in deep ancient vaults and bunkers. Some find strange old things, which offer succor for souls, life for sacrifice.
- 8 Desperate oldsettlers accept the wolffolk's bargain. Their children's lives for theirs, and hurl themselves in pathetic assaults against the baronial fortresses. Their corpses re-animated to hurl themselves again and yet again. Whistling foxes lead their children into the dark forest, not to be seen again.
- 9 The surviving few eat whatever they find, live or dead, burn anything for heat, their bodies and minds burned out, reduced to ghoulish shells that are barely human, host to the worst of the old gods' haunting terror. They embody now all the worst prejudices of every civilization. The fall, the decline, the end of the road.
- 10 Silence and death now rule the oldsettlers hamlets and barracks. The old songs stilled. When warm weather comes, plague will be the child of this doom.

Wolffolk

† *the dark savagery of the human heart made flesh and fur* †

It looks like the wolffolk are allies of Winterwhite, for they come with her winter. They ride and run down from their high and deep and cold and dark fastnesses. They drive down drakes and giants, demons and monsters. In fact, they are no such thing. They are the mirror of civilization, the abyss of Amimami, the subconscious terror of the baronials made flesh in their oppression. The long winter, the dark night, has simply given them the opportunity they had been waiting for for so long.

They are the oppressed whose yearning for freedom and dignity has become a thing of twisted envy, hatred, despair, greed, longing, hunger, loathing, self-destruction mixed with unrequited love. The anti-eros, the thanatos that comes forth in this long dark.

Growing Stronger

The nights lengthen, the cold grows more bitter, the fires go out, the living dwindle. Indeed, the deeper Winterwhite's winter becomes, the stronger the wolffolk become.

- 1 Footprints, pawprints, and brimstone spoor start appearing around remote hamlets. A vile, somehow greasy aroma lingers in the area.
- 2 Wolves and the shadows of wolves and snow flurries like wolves stalk the hamlets and the ways and the paths. Predators, demanding to be fed. Fear grows among the settlers, old and new alike.
- 3 Children disappear, stolen by the gaunt long-fingered snatchers and filchers. The wails of parents are many. Doors are closed against strangers.
- 4 A local leader mysteriously disappears. Then returns, the same, but slightly different. The day after they trade the community's fuel and food for weapons that fail to materialize, they are found dead and desiccated, like their marrow and meat have been extracted. Fear of witches and skintakers grows to a fever pitch.
- 5 Deer and dogs, bears and beavers flee the nearby woods, leaving them silent, brooding, and menacing. A malignant aura of dread hangs over them

and soon the locals start to mutter about getting out while they can.

- 6 The dead start disappearing from mortuaries and shallow graves. The old folks eye each other nervously and start hanging up lavender bushels and knots of holly to ward off the ill-walking dead.
- 7 The Greencorner mausoleum and monuments are desecrated by unknown attackers. Statues are broken. Curses are written. The baronials arrest oldsettler troublemakers. The air is tense.
- 8 Massacres at remote farmsteads leave no survivors. The children go missing. The tracks are inhuman. Baronials blame oldsettlers, and vice versa. Pitched fights break out.
- 9 Avalanches, landslides, and barricades start cutting off remote hamlets. Terrified families try to flee to the city, but many disappear with no trace. Outsiders suspected of being wolffolk are hung.
- 10 Distant peals of thunder turn out to be gunfire. A baronial patrol disappears with nary a trace. Only trodden snow and blood remains.
- 11 A village goes dark. No messages gets out. The roads are cut. The lights go out.
- 12 In darkest night, in a blowing blizzard, a company of wolffolk and skintakers lead an army of monsters, swarming ambulatory horrors from stitched together parts, long and freshly dead oldsettlers, chewed-up baronial militia still waving their carbines, against a town. As the dead wave piles up against the ramparts, there is a ripping, tearing sound, and a series of fine town houses collapses into a pit. The whole town was built on top of a Purification Era buried town, and now things are crawling out from that hollow pit. Perhaps they were human once, but no longer. Over everything, the painful, desperate, longing whoops and laments of the wolffolk resound.
- 13 Companies of hungry dead, let loose upon the land, wander the lowlands. Some get buried in the snow, laying in wait for passers by. Others freeze in the rivers. Yet others get tangled in the waving trees. The wolffolk seem unsure of how to proceed after their capture of a town, while the baronials and oldsettlers hunker down further.
- 14 The skintakers begin gathering information on the whereabouts of Soren

Greencorner. Of Mira Falconbrood. The wolffolk's loathing has found a new focus. Torture, food, the promise of surviving the cold are their methods now. Some desperate souls join them, offering their flesh to their sculptors.

- 15 The hordes of the dead descend on Greencorner's hideout, besieging it. The rest of Brezim grows quiet. There appear to be few things left moving as Winterwhite's grip tightens.
- 16 The last fortress of Soren Greencorner falls. Soren and his daughter are lost under the press of shifting, twitching dead. Then the whole ancient pile erupts in a gout of flame and noise and thunder. The heat sears eyebrows and burns bare skin for miles around. The mushroom cloud rises above the Motherberg itself. The wolffolk and skintakers are scattered, their jubilation turned to dust again. With the Greencorners dead, there is no way to appease Winterwhite, and as she had decreed, so it will be. The whole valley shall be locked in ice for a season and a year.

Facing Setbacks

Tracked down by rightmakers, hunted down, burned out of hideouts, stopped with piety and prayers to the old gods.

- 1 The mark of the beast is found on a councilor. In the heat of the investigating iron, they twitch and shift sideways into a monstrous form. The terrified crowds arm themselves and start investigating outsiders.
- 2 A skintaker is trapped while trying to steal a toddler. It injures four, but is eventually subdued. As it sheds its skin, its quivering, gelatinous flesh feels the fires of justice. Inquisitions are set up in the towns to pursue the horrors.
- 3 A group of infected dogs is tracked to a barrow where a skintaker shaman is collecting the dead for an attack. The cold creatures were slowly excavating a vast holding pen under the old stones. High explosives from the baronial mining company took care of that nest.
- 4 The twitching dead in a mortuary are spotted by a cautious assistant. Baronials and oldsettlers band together to burn and break the dead, to prevent any fifth column forming.
- 5 A wolffolk attack against a baronial militia outpost is stopped with the help

of oldsettler axemen. The oldsettlers are pardoned their banditry and inducted into a standing self-defense unit.

- 6 A giant devastates a remote hotel built on a picturesque overlook. The caretaker and his family are killed in the event. A mixed unit of oldsettlers and baronials traps the giant in a pit and destroys it.
- 7 An undead attack on a large village is repulsed with moderate losses. The defenders pursue the dead and discover pustulant nests under the ancient barrows. Oldsettlers are offered full citizenship for joining the barrow busters. Explosives are handed out to the teams.
- 8 A raiding party of wolffolk is stopped in the Baron's secret fortress. After much questioning, they divulge the location of the wolffolk hive in the wilds off Wolfberg.
- 9 A large expedition attacks the wolffolk hive. Many shamans skintakers are stopped. Over three dozen children are rescued. Many dozens die in the savage fighting and the gouting flames burn for days. The sulfurous smell is atrocious.
- 10 The last of the major undead bands are cleared up and the Baron presents medals to the new baronial citizens who participated. An oldsettler revolutionary throws a bomb that kills the Baron and his daughter. With the Greencorners dead, there is no way to appease Winterwhite, and as she had decreed, so it will be. The whole valley shall be locked in ice for a season and a year.

Old Architects

† *aliens or ancestors?* †

In truth, the Old Architects are a red herring. The ghost of a faction, the false promise of a powerful past now dust. The ones returned to life are echoes and reverberations of heroes and villains who hoped to cheat death herself, and now in this cataclysm of Winterwhite they hope to sneak out into the world once more.

Growing Stronger

Awakening, spreading from their vaults, finding helpers and allies, expanding their influence.

- 1 Lights appear in the night sky, seeking, searching. The glow causes blisters and burns.
- 2 Steam boils off the snow as old engines come to life in deep vaults. A caustic ash falls as the engines misfire in a different atmosphere.
- 3 Lithe machines dressed in strange fabrics come forth and promise new saviors and better masters. Their kisses steal memories.
- 4 Slippery weapons of crystal and plastic that fire bolts of heat are gifts for their supporters. The warmth of the weapons causes hair to fall out and fingers to shorten.
- 5 Tunneling machines open new tunnels that promise warmth and safety in the bowels of the earth. The food provided by the machines rots teeth and makes limbs shorter, stubbier.
- 6 Glassy-eyed old architect mummies promise survival in exchange for love and bodily fluids to revive them. As they fill with juice once more, their odor grows vile and nauseating.
- 7 Bloated old architects wrapped in machine suits appear, offering access to heated vaults and underground farms in exchange for new bodies they could occupy. Within their suits, their bodies are collapsing into nutritious gelatin.

- 8 Old architects implanted in new bodies stumble about and flail, made strange, their connection to their selves tenuous. The bodies glow with a viridity that belies their shambling gait. Cold-adapted lichens and mosses grow in their presence.
- 9 Furry cocoons of green and blue swaddle the metamorphosing old architects. A sour smell, like rotten vegetables thrice frozen, surrounds them. Spores from the cocoons provoke fits of coughing and eat away at lungs.
- 10 The cocoons sublime into ice and nothing remains on this low plane. The old architects machines, left alone, wind down into hibernation again, packing themselves away.

Facing Setbacks

Sickening, not adapting, being hunted, misunderstanding the world.

- 1 The air burns and chokes the old settlers. Their servants lie where they fell, freezing gently. Thawed, spores emerge, carrying a hemorrhagic plague that kills some and disfigures many.
- 2 The ice rises and throttles the old machines. The worldclock will not turn back. Fuels and lubricants spill, poisoning land and limb.
- 3 The skintakers' curses crawl and clamber through the tunnels. As the old architects awaken, their bones and skins are stolen. A kindly abmortal goes to sleep, a six-fingered abominations rips out of their strange fabric suit, thirsty for livers and spleens, mind burning with the hatred the wolffolk bear.
- 4 Unsettled in these modern times, a baronial militia guns down the old architects with impunity and breaks into their vault. They throw out the strange machines and mutating field emitters, but keep the thermal engines. If moles they need be, then heavily armed moles they will be.
- 5 Cheated and robbed, a naked old architect emissary wanders through the snow. Their chest implant keeps them warm despite the ice, its glow turns bowels to so much bloody glue.
- 6 Oldsettlers angry at the poisoned gifts seize the old architects in the night

- and throw them into the icy river. Armed with glowing guns, swaddled in bandages, they ravage the land about them.
- 7 Betterfolk terrified of these usurpers launch a daring raid into their large vault, following the tunnels of the burrowing machines. There, they uncover grandiose plans and evil conspiracies. The detonation of an atomic heat engine brings down a whole mountain flank and sends a plume of poison spreading across the land.
 - 8 Starving and decomposing old architects fan out across the land, promising anything in exchange for their salvations. Strange radiation weapons, melting explosives, and disease follow them.
 - 9 As the last corpses liquify, their spores are lofted high on the fires of their burning vaults. Those who breathe them choke, cough blood, and become strange, plant-like, inhuman.
 - 10 The remaining possessed begin ululating and screaming in the old architect tongues. Their flesh ripples and grows mossy. Spores flicker, flare, and gutter out. Nothing sentient remains of them, a dead end. No plague of the dead, merely a misfire, a distraction.

Days of White Snow and Red Ice

† *the ice clock* †

Longwinter covers 100 days—3 months and change—that take the Barony of Brezim from late autumn to the dark year of Winterwhite's curse, when the sun is obscured until the solstice returns again. You can use the three months as an actual calendar, or as a random table to generate weather and events.

Where events are large-scale, encounters affect only the heroes. Like the weather, the encounters are also split by month and time of day, to model how Winterwhite's curse changes the land.

Roll encounters every watch. Until half way through the second month there are two daytime watches and two nighttime watches, after that, as the darkness gathers, there is only one daytime watch per four watches.

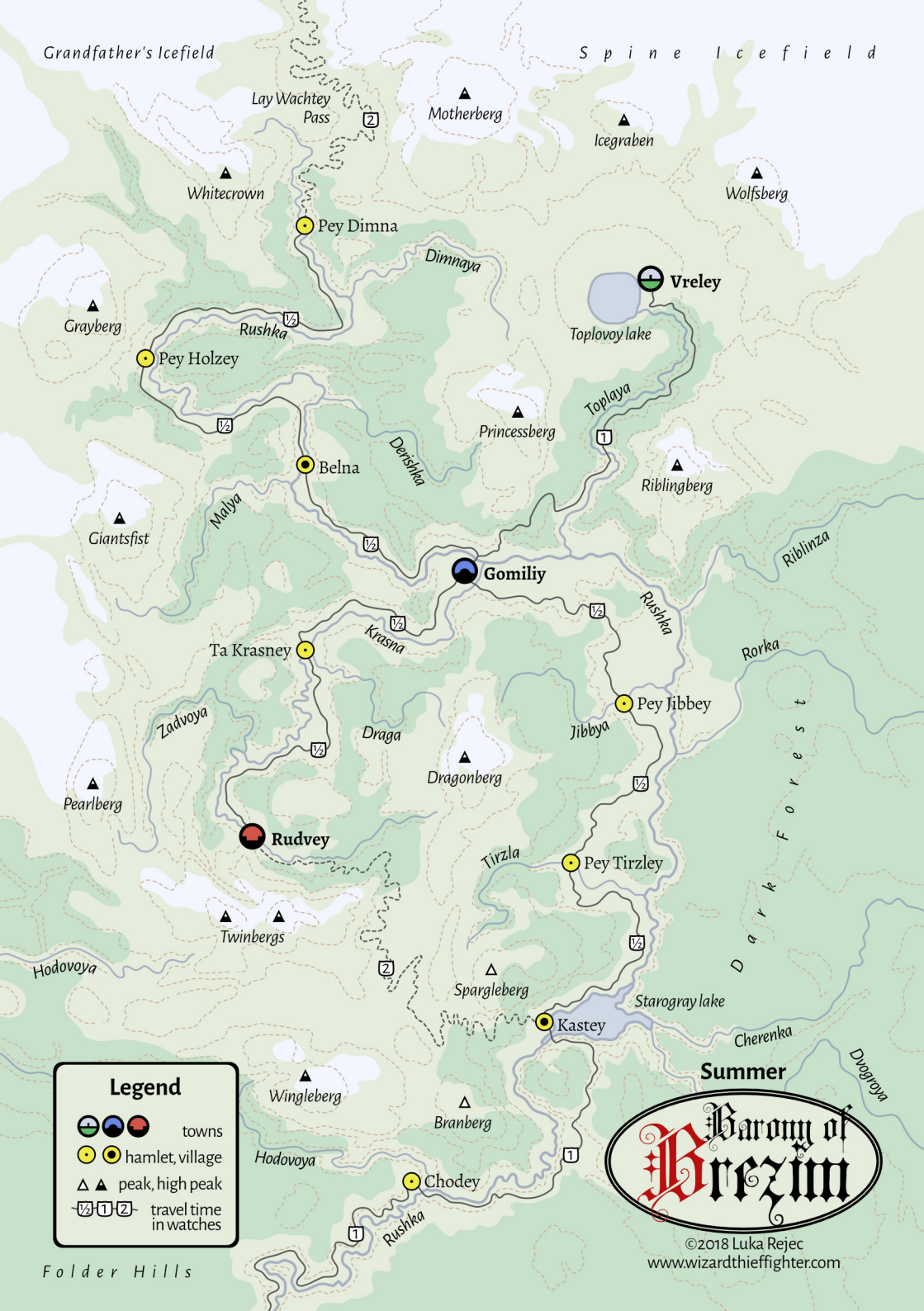
Some encounters cause stat loss. A stat is any number on a character sheet, health refers to any health stat. In a D&D-type game, the stats are Str, Dex, etc., while health is usually hp. One point of damage should suffice in most games that do not have ready access to infinite healing. If you are using 5E, Longwinter assumes gritty healing rules.

Days of Autumn

Before Winterwhite tightened her grip, autumn seemed normal. It was cold. It rained. Sleet and leaves fell. Start your icebox here if you want a slow lead up to winter. Use the standard map.

Grandfather's Icefield

Spine Icefield



Lay Wachtey Pass

Motherberg

Icegraben

Wolfsberg

Whitecrown

Pey Dimna

Dimnaya

Vreley

Toplovoy lake

Grayberg

Rushka

Pey Holzey

Toplaya

Princessberg

Belna

Derishka

Riblingberg

Giantsfist

Malya

Riblinza

Gomiliy

Rushka

Ta Krasney

Krasna

Rorka

Zadvoya

Draga

Jibbya

Pey Jibbey

Pearlberg

Dragonberg

Rudvey

Tirzla

Pey Tirzley

D A R K F O R E S T

Hodovoya

Twinbergs

Spargleberg

Starogray lake

Kastey

Cherenka

Wingleberg

Branberg

Summer



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Legend

- towns
- hamlet, village
- peak, high peak
- travel time in watches

Folder Hills

November – Leafall – Autumn

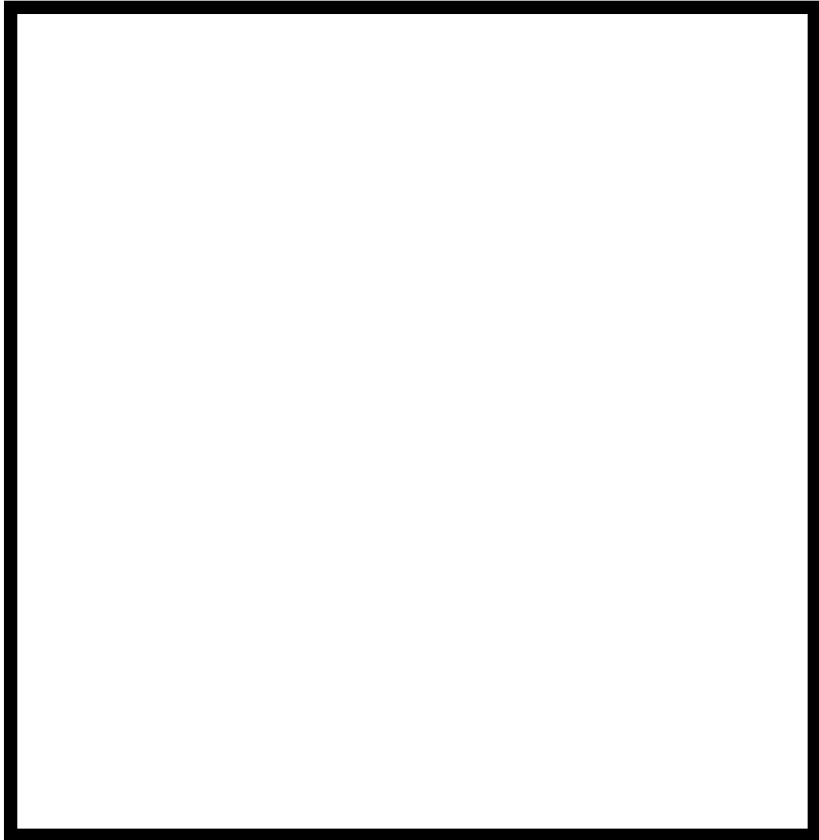
D30	Weekday	Day Weather (Cold Level)	Night Weather (Cold Level)	Events
1	Thursday	Fine and sunny (0)	Cold and clear (2)	Day of All Ghosts
2	Friday	Bracing and cool (1)	Windy, cold (2)	Rudvey market
3	Saturday	Stiff breeze (1)	Still, very cold (2)	
4	Sunday	Cloudy and ominous (0)	Foggy (1)	
5	Monday	Lashing rain showers (1)	Bone-chilling rain (2)	Belna farm market
6	Tuesday	Persistent heavy rain (2)	Breaking clouds (1)	Pey Dimna pass cut
7	Wednesday	Dull fog (1)	Pea-thick fog (1)	Gomiliy market
8	Thursday	Oppressive fog (1)	Frost (2)	Last Quarter
9	Friday	Clear day (0)	Wood smoke and frost (2)	Rudvey market
10	Saturday	Smell of snow on breeze (1)	Skins of ice on troughs (2)	
11	Sunday	Pillows of building clouds (1)	Surprisingly warm night (1)	
12	Monday	Light snow and steady wind (2)	Clammy, cold night (2)	Kastey farm market
13	Tuesday	Clinging fog (2)	Rime crawls up windows (2)	
14	Wednesday	Cool, humid day (1)	Woodsmoke crawls low (1)	Gomiliy market
15	Thursday	Heavy rain (1)	Sleet falls (3)	
16	Friday	Freezing rain (2)	Ice storm (3)	Rudvey market. New Moon
17	Saturday	Gelid showers (2)	Long icicles grow. Freezing (3)	Earthquake. Branberg landslide cuts southern mule-road.
18	Sunday	Grim mists (1)	Tinkle of breaking ice (2)	Landslide investigation
19	Monday	Strong winds (2)	Gale-force gusts (2)	Belna farm market
20	Tuesday	Calm, cold day (2)	Cold night (2)	
21	Wednesday	Bright and icy day (2)	Mild night (1)	Gomiliy market
22	Thursday	Towering clouds in the west (1)	Heavy fog wreathes the valleys (1)	
23	Friday	Flurries of snow (2)	Eerily calm night (2)	Rudvey market
24	Saturday	Blizzard (3)	Whiteout (3)	Trolls attack landslide area. First Quarter
25	Sunday	Lonely snow flakes falling (2)	Clear night, diamond stars (2)	Spargleberg pass cut
26	Monday	Blindingly bright day (1)	Cloudy night (1)	Kastey farm market
27	Tuesday	Hot wind and grey clouds (0)	Misty night (1)	
28	Wednesday	Slow, heavy drops of rain (1)	Freezing rain showers (2)	Gomiliy market, a damp affair
29	Thursday	Reletless rain (1)	Driving sleet (3)	
30	Friday	Heavy wet snow (2)	Gelid cold snap (3)	Rudvey market cancelled

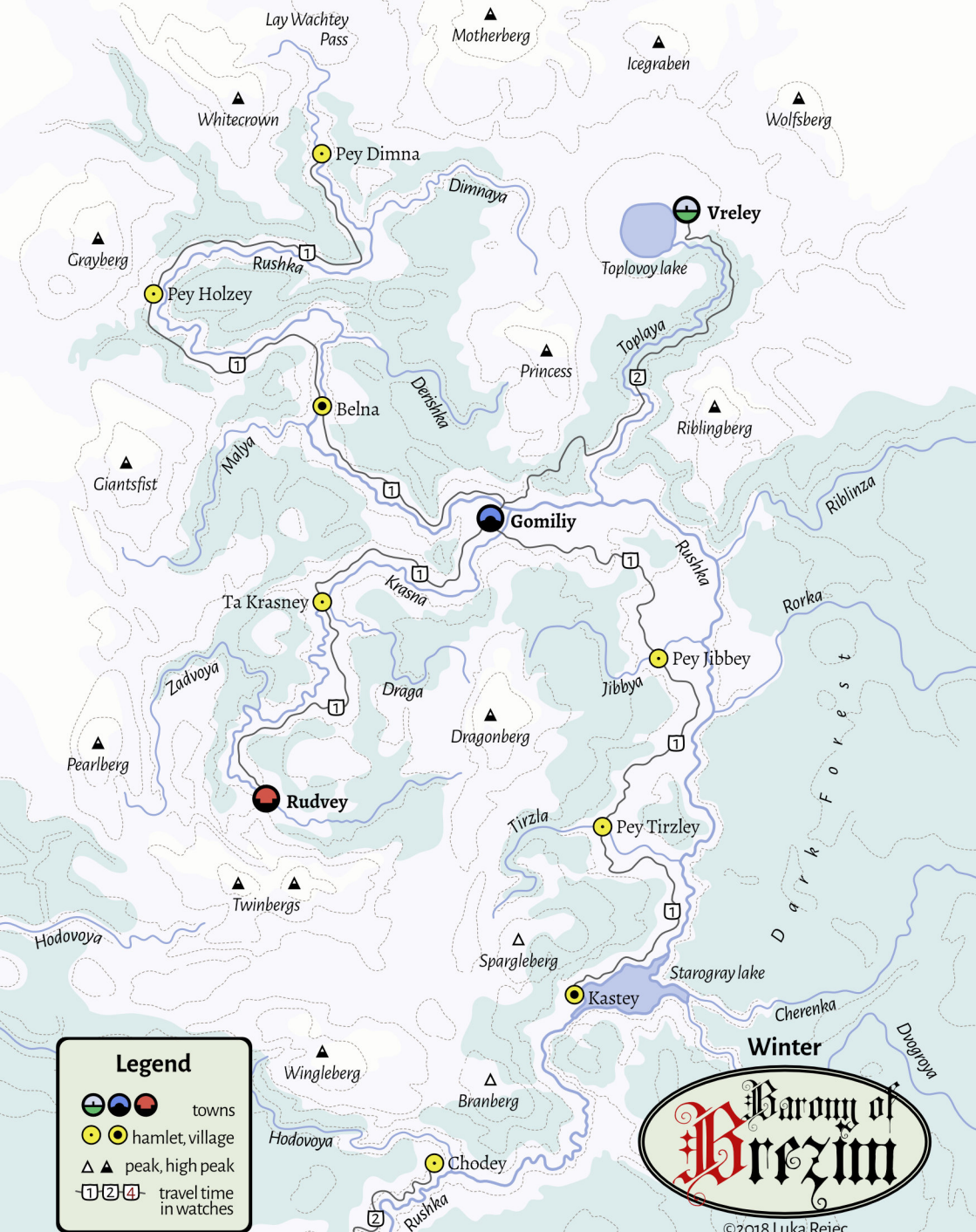
Encounters of Autumn

Doo	Day	Night
01	The Dragon, flying surreally (HD 20).	The Dark Father, spirit of the First Baron (HD15).
02	Older Thing, flesh machine moaning and hiding (HD 10).	Undead Troll, drawn from its unquiet rocky rest (HD 13).
03	Forest Spirit, gracefully patrolling (HD 8).	Wild Spirit, looking for mad fools to possess (HD11)
04	Woodland Wyrms, crawling for prey (HD 7).	Skeleton Thing, eyes afire with calcified passion (HD 9).
05	Mountain Apes, playing monkey games (HD 6).	Night Wisps, flickering with the red of fast decay (HD 7).
06	Aurochs, browsing coolly (HD 5).	Werewolves, prowling and hungry (HD6).
07	Bears, stuffing themselves (HD 5).	Heart Owl, looking for souls and loves to steal (HD5).
08	Dire Lynx, stalking prey (HD 4).	Dire Wolf, howling for hell (HD 4).
09	Wild Boars, digging nuts and roots (HD 3).	Wolves, hunting fools (HD3).
10	Deer, a herd nervously awaiting winter.	Lonely Dead, begging to be near light, food, life (HD2).
11	Gnome Monkeys, squirreling away food (HD 2).	Gnome Monkeys engaged in bloody sacrifice (HD2).
12	Mountain Goats, giving the evil eye (HD 1).	Fairies, promising lies with mirror eyes (HD1).
13	Wolffolk, shying from humans (HD 3).	Foxes, laughing and bewitching.
14	Rabbits, multiplying.	Scurrying Rodents, fearful and hungry.
15	Oldfolk, serfs slinking (HD 1).	Changelings, singing like dogs in the night (HD2).
16	Baronial, freesettlers working their holdings (HD 1).	Oldfolk separatists pretending to be cultists (HD1).
17	Outlander, craftsmen and tourists (HD 1).	Wolffolk skin-takers, looking for skins (HD3).
18	Baronial, official patroleurs keeping the peace (HD 2).	Baronial cultists, appeasing old gods (HD1).
19	Cityfolk, merchants or specialists (HD 1).	Baronial smugglers (HD2).
20	Baronial, families, picking mushrooms.	Baronial Dark Rangers (HD3).
21-30	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice.	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice.
31-40	Corpse: roll 1d10+10	Corpse: roll 1d10+10
41-60	Traces: roll 1d20.	Traces: roll 1d20.
61-70	Hunger: use food or lose 1d4 health.	Dark: use lamp or lose 1 stat.
71-80	Terrain: use survival gear or lose 1 stat.	Dark: use lamp or survival gear or lose 1 stat.
81-90	Heat: use water or lose 1d4 health.	Cold: eat meal or lose 1d4 health.
91-95	Soothing rest: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d6 of one stat.	Soothing rest: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d6 of one stat.
96	Wonderful spot: regain 1d6 of one stat.	Wonderful spot: regain 1d6 of one stat.
97	Panorama: advantage to one mental check.	Friendly spirits: temporary +1d4 to one mental stat.
98	Delicious berries: advantage to one physical check.	Friendly bear: temporary +1d6 health.
99	Forgotten goods: roll on "loot the body."	Forgotten cache: roll on "loot the body" twice.
00	I needed this! Pick a common item. You've found it.	I really needed this! Pick a common or rare item.

Days of Winter

As the winter descends on Brezim, the mule-roads begin to fight the traveller and the passes out are cut. Start the icebox here if you want to go straight for the survival horror as the sun fails to be reborn at the winter solstice.





Legend

- towns
- hamlet, village
- peak, high peak
- travel time in watches



December – Rawsoil – Winter

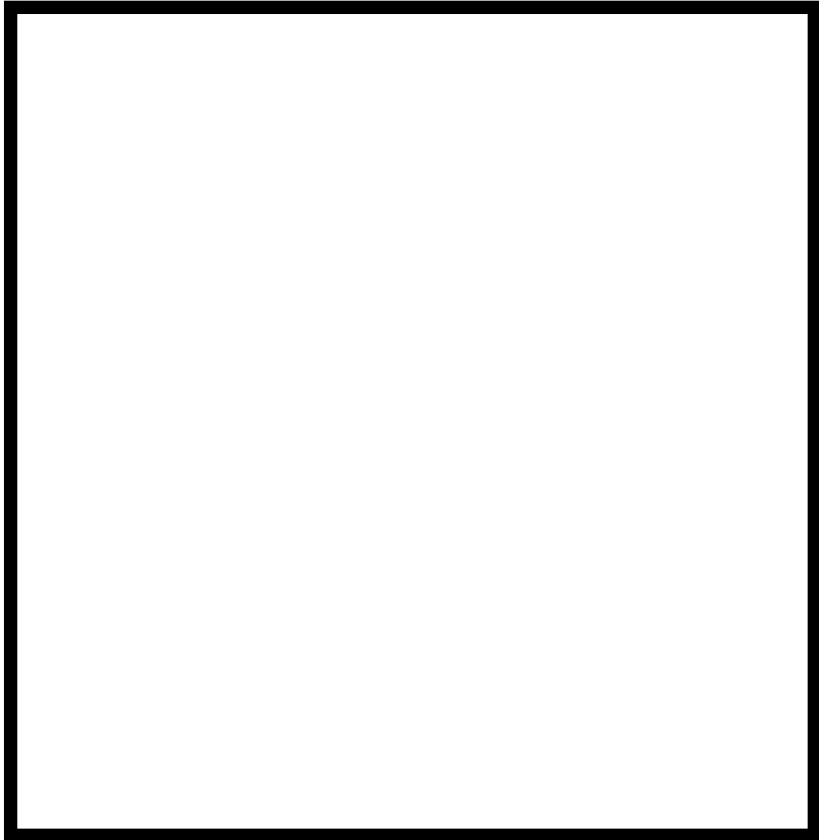
D30	Weekday	Day Weather (Cold Level)	Night Weather (Cold Level)	Events
1	Saturday	Icy crust on heavy snow (2)	Freezing winds (4)	Full Moon
2	Sunday	Howling winds, clear skies (3)	Silent and freezing (3)	
3	Monday	Clear and silent day (2)	Silent night (3)	Belna farm market
4	Tuesday	Ice melts in weak sun (1)	Icy night (3)	
5	Wednesday	Gusting north winds (2)	Icy winds (4)	Gomiliy market, flapping awnings
6	Thursday	Gentle flurries (2)	Silence and clear skies (3)	
7	Friday	Heavy snowfall (2)	Heavy snowfall, whiteout (3)	Rudvey market cancelled
8	Saturday	Whiteout (3)	Light snow (2)	Last Quarter
9	Sunday	Gray skies, whistling wind (2)	Temperatures plummet (4)	
10	Monday	Cold snap, streams freeze (4)	Cold takes breath away (4)	Kastey farm market
11	Tuesday	Sun, hazy veils (2)	Stars like cold hatred (3)	Days shorten and have one daylight watch
12	Wednesday	Cool steady chill breeze (3)	Painfully cold (3)	Gomiliy market
13	Thursday	Powder falls steadily (3)	Powder and darkness (3)	
14	Friday	Powder fall, clouds darken (3)	Dark, cold, winter night (3)	Rudvey market
15	Saturday	Thundersnow and powder darken the day (3)	Lightning crackles in the clouds (3)	
16	Sunday	Storm dies down, powder continues to fall (3)	Wind picks up, tossing snow (4)	New Moon
17	Monday	Gelid north wind howls, piling up snow drifts (4)	Temperatures grow cruel, winds die down, (4)	Belna farm market cancelled
18	Tuesday	Silent gray day (3)	Silent black night (4)	
19	Wednesday	Silent slate gray day (3)	Silent purple night (4)	Gomiliy market
20	Thursday	Quiet, freezing day (3)	Spittle freezes in the air (4)	
21	Friday	Ice cracks like bells (4)	Gelid night (5)	Rudvey market
22	Saturday	Sun blazes, wind whips snow (3)	Gentle snow, cool night (3)	Solstice
23	Sunday	Blizzard (3)	Mocking blizzard (3)	First Quarter
24	Monday	Howling blizzard (4)	Quiet blizzard (3)	Kastey farm market cancelled
25	Tuesday	Laughing blizzard (3)	Sudden silence, freezing (4)	Avalanche cuts road south of Chodey
26	Wednesday	Cold snap, small rivers freeze (4)	Evil stars and rising wind (5)	The day has not started getting longer! Gomiliy market
27	Thursday	Wind howls in the pines (4)	Booming wind, vicious cold (5)	
28	Friday	Gusts of wind continue (4)	Biting icy wind (5)	Rudvey market
29	Saturday	Steady north wind. (4)	Still night, groaning ice (4)	
30	Sunday	Fluffy clouds, frozen landscape. (3)	Cruel, icy night. (4)	Full Moon.

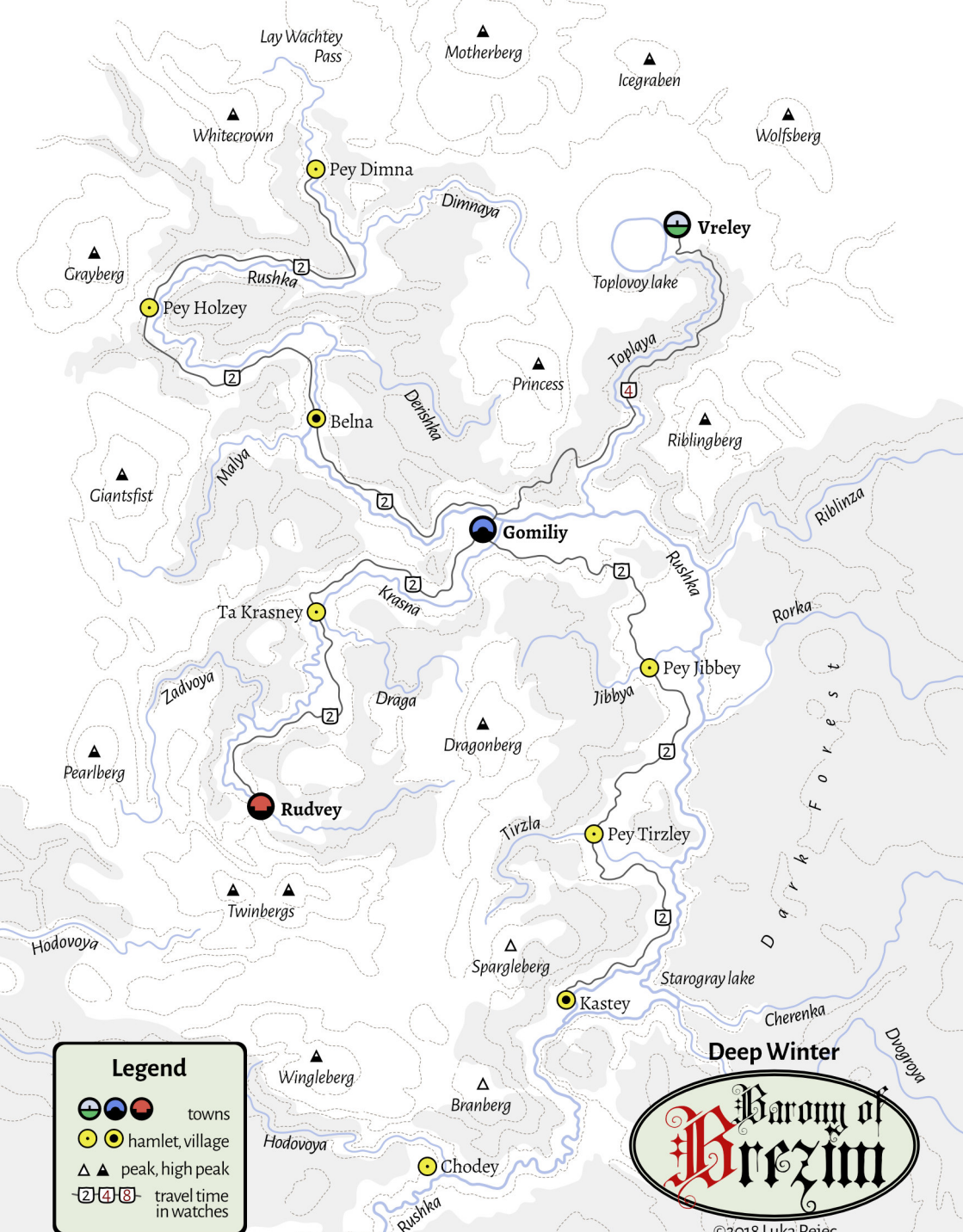
Encounters of Winter

Doo	Day	Night
01	The Dragon, flying nervously (HD 19).	White Giant, beard of rime, eyes of silver fire (HD 20).
02	A Giant, skin dead ice (HD 16).	Frozen undead horde (HD 18).
03	Shaggy Bone Spirit, confused (HD 13).	Crawling Glacier Wyrms (HD 16).
04	Ice Wyrms, stalking (HD 10).	Winter Spirit, possessive (HD 14).
05	Great White Birds, cruel (HD 7).	Skeleton Troll, dripping ice and acid (HD 12).
06	Desperate Snow Apes (HD 6).	White Shadows, stealing breath (HD 10).
07	Hoary wired ghouls (HD 5).	Skintaker Shamans, riding great beasts (HD 8).
08	Snow Vultures (HD 5).	Werewolves, stealing the young (HD 6).
09	Ice-threaded Worms (HD 4).	Dire Wolves, eyes aglow (HD 5).
10	Savage Boars, bloodthirsty (HD 4).	Frigid oldsettler ghoul children (HD 3).
11	Dire Lynx, leaving (HD 4).	Ice-stiff Salamanders (HD 2).
12	Savage Wolves (HD 3).	Great White Bats (HD 1).
13	Ape-cat Hunters (HD 3).	Two-legged Foxes, performing magic (HD 2).
14	Elk, rutting (HD 3).	Sad Dead, splintering and decaying (HD 2).
15	Oldfolk, hunting (HD 2).	Oldfolk, saboteurs (HD 3).
16	Oldfolk, rebels (HD 2).	Oldfolk, runaways (HD 1).
17	Baronial, trappers (HD 2).	Wolffolk, assassins (HD 4).
18	Wolffolk, spies (HD 4).	Baronial, possessed cultists (HD 2).
19	Baronial, patroleurs (HD 2).	Baronial smugglers (HD 2).
20	Baronial, vigilantes (HD 3).	Baronial Dark Rangers (HD 4).
21–30	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice.	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice.
31–40	Corpse: roll 1d10+10	Corpse: roll 1d10+10
41–60	Traces: roll 1d20.	Traces: roll 1d20.
61–70	Hunger: use food or lose 1d4 health.	Dark: use lamp or lose 1 stat.
71–80	Terrain: use survival gear or lose 1 stat.	Dark: use lamp or survival gear or lose 1 stat.
81–90	Cold: eat meal or lose 1d4 health.	Cold: eat meal or lose 1d4 health.
91–95	Soothing rest: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d8 of one stat.	Soothing rest: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d8 of one stat.
96	Healing shrub: regain 1d6 of one stat.	Healing shrub: regain 1d6 of one stat.
97	Awesome vista: advantage to two mental checks.	Frightened spirits whisper warnings: temporary +1d6 to one mental stat.
98	Frozen 'meat': advantage to two physical checks.	Frozen potion of the bear: restores 1d6 health.
99	Beast-torn corpse: roll on "loot the body."	Frozen well-armed corpse. Roll on "loot the body" twice.
00	I needed this! Pick a common item. You've found it.	I really needed this! Pick a common or rare item.

Days of Deep Winter

They rail against the fading light, but it is too late. Start here if you want forty days of bleak despair and a game focused on scrounging the resources required for escape.





Legend

- towns
- hamlet, village
- peak, high peak
- travel time in watches



January - Iceling - Deep Winter

D30	Weekday	Day Weather (Cold Level)	Night Weather (Cold Level)	Events
1	Monday	Wet snow falls patchily (3)	Ice coats the forests (3)	Belna farm market
2	Tuesday	Snow blankets the land (2)	White night (3)	
3	Wednesday	Temperatures plummet, icy wind roars down mountains (4)	Wind-blown snow obscures the night (4)	Frost crawling up the sides of the sky, Gomily market cancelled
4	Thursday	Clear skies, whistling wind (3)	Lakes freeze (4)	
5	Friday	Clear skies and silence (3)	Icy quiet (4)	Rudvey market
6	Saturday	Cauchy clouds and silence (3)	Frost-growing night (4)	It's like a snow globe freezing over!
7	Sunday	Hazy skies and silence (2)	Rime spreads (4)	Third Quarter
8	Monday	White skies and silence (2)	Snow and cold, silence (3)	Kastey farm market
9	Tuesday	White skies, light snow (2)	Silent, white night (3)	
10	Wednesday	White skies, heavy snow (2)	Whiteout (3)	Gomily market
11	Thursday	Whiteout (3)	Whiteout (3)	
12	Friday	Whiteout (3)	Cruel mocking snowflakes (4)	Rudvey market cancelled
13	Saturday	Silvery sky, gusting winds (4)	Gusts shiver the stars (5)	
14	Sunday	Gusting icy winds (4)	Still horribly cold (5)	
15	Monday	Thundering gelid winds (5)	Dark and windy night (5)	Belna farm market cancelled. New Moon
16	Tuesday	Sustained icy winds (4)	Wind. Cold. Cruel (5)	
17	Wednesday	Laughing icy winds (4)	Gleeful stars like cold hell eyes (5)	Gomily market
18	Thursday	Barreling icy winds (5)	Trees break under ice and wind (5)	
19	Friday	Icy gale (5)	Wind stops. Waters freeze (5)	Rudvey market cancelled
20	Saturday	Silence. Rivers freeze over (5)	Freezing continues (5)	
21	Sunday	Silence and ice (5)	Ice worms crawl out (5)	
22	Monday	Ice and silence (5)	Ice worms crawl down hills (5)	Kastey farm market. Panic
23	Tuesday	Sparkling snowflakes (4)	Ice worms crawling (5)	First Quarter
24	Wednesday	Mocking snowflakes (4)	Ice worms reach Rushka (5)	Gomily market
25	Thursday	Ice and sun (3)	Hoar frost grows long (4)	
26	Friday	Wan sun and building clouds (3)	Icicles grow like fangs (4)	Rudvey market
27	Saturday	Rag clouds, slight warming (3)	Snow falls from branches (3)	
28	Sunday	Reddish sun, slight warming, icicles drip (2)	Puddles and ice freeze again (4)	Avalanche cuts several roads
29	Monday	Clear sky and crackling ice (3)	Clear, cruel night (4)	Belna farm market
30	Tuesday	Clear sky and silence (3)	Shredded clouds chase moon (4)	Full Moon. Lunar eclipse

Deep Winter Encounters

Doo	Day	Night
01	The Winterbird, croaking doom (HD 20).	Winterwhite's Angelhunt, freezing blood and smashing bone (HD 20).
02	A Flayed Ice Giant, awake again (HD 17).	Snow-driven undead horde (HD 18).
03	Avalanche Horses, galloping (HD 15).	Loping Glacier Wyrms (HD 16).
04	Ice Worms, soothing the land (HD 13).	Winterwhite's Ice Skeletons (HD 14).
05	White Knights with glass swords (HD 11).	Shadow Troll, dripping hoar and hate (HD 12).
06	White Apes with mechanical implants (HD 8).	Death Fairies, in for the fun (HD 10).
07	Great White Oxen (HD 7).	Ice Troll, eyes drooling (HD 9).
08	Worm-riddled Ghouls (HD 6).	Werewolf Skintakers (HD 8).
09	Undead oldfolk warriors (HD 5).	Skintaker Necrodancer (HD 7).
10	Snow Vultures (HD 5).	Undead wolffolk (HD 6).
11	Wolffolk riding dire wolves (HD 5).	Slippery snow whisps, eyes red and dead (HD 5).
12	Great White Hart (HD 5).	Undead baronial ghouls (HD 4).
13	Shaggy Ice Apes (HD 4).	White Foxes sacrificing changelings (HD 3).
14	Dire White Boars (HD 4).	Hungry Shadow Bats (HD 2).
15	Pack of fresh-frozen undead (HD 3).	Troop of icy undead villagers (HD 3).
16	Oldfolk, soldiers (HD 3).	Oldfolk winter soldiers on sled (HD 4).
17	Baronial, traitors (HD 2).	Wolffolk, burners (HD 4).
18	Baronial and oldfolk rabble, starving (HD 1).	Baronials mad with hunger (HD 1).
19	Baronial, cultists (HD 2).	Baronial, defenders (HD 2).
20	Baronial White Rangers (HD 4).	Adventurers, looters (HD 3).
21–30	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice, once for Day, once for Night.	Interaction: roll 1d20 twice.
31–40	Corpse: roll 1d10+10	Corpse: roll 1d10+10
41–60	Traces: roll 1d20.	Traces: roll 1d20.
61–70	Cnawing hunger: use food and lose 1d4 health, or lose 1d4+4 health.	Grim Dark: use lamp and lose 1d4 health, or lose 1d6+4 health and 1 stat.
71–80	Brutal terrain: use survival gear and lose 1d4 health, or lose 1d4+4 health and 1 stat.	Grim Night: use two lamps or survival gear, or lose 1d10 health and 1 stat.
81–90	Very cold: eat two meals or lose 1d10 health and 1 stat.	Very cold: eat two meals and lose 1d4 health, or lose 1d10+4 health and 1 stat.
91–95	Warm and dry: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d6 of two stats.	Warm and dry: spend 1d6 hours to regain 1d6 of two stats.
96	Frozen dragon's tear: regain 1d8 of one stat.	Frozen dragon's tear: regain 1d8 of one stat.
97	Dead troll: melt its blood to create 1d6 healing potions (heal 1d6 health each).	Echo of hibernating spirits. Regain 1d4 of one mental stat.
98	Dead unicorn: eat its heart to gain advantage to three checks.	Frozen dragon blood: restores 1d8 health.
99	Cannibal-eaten corpse: roll on "loot the body."	Flash-frozen hero. Roll on "loot the body" twice.
00	I really needed this! Pick a common or rare item.	Treasure in the snow. Roll on "magic items" table.

Trying to Get Out

† *something a little different* †

The next section of concerns itself entirely with how to run a death march through a frozen wasteland. It builds on the ideas hinted at in the previous chapters, mentioning the wider calamity of a year without summer. It deals with getting out of Brezim, and the conditions prevalent in frozen winter wasteland conditions.

The simplest way to use it is as a resource for your maginuclear winter game, pillaging it for encounters and NPCs and locations using a card deck to pick likely spots.

Alternatively, you can try your on-the-fly seat-of-the-pants chops by using the cards mechanic. It's actually quite simple ... but would really benefit from proper, custom cards, so the players could actually see the titles and the pictures, and use those to make decisions about where they are going.

Still ... I hope you will enjoy the icehells, too.

—Luka Rejec, *Winter, Korea*



Escape

The
cold
draws
in — 

“ Remember, when the gods fight,
it’s us mortals that do the dying.

Lenora “Mother Mercy” Fuméry.

This Is Not Normal

The cold has finally become too much. Where before the old hunters returning wild-eyed from their hides in the krumholz, on the edges of the alpage, could be dismissed, now their stories of crawling tongues, rivers, and snakes of ice locking the valley in a vise ring too true. The words are on every worker's chapped lips. In every pair of ice-tinged eyes, whether leit's or lady's or lord's.

"This is not normal," say those looks, say those faces.

Siras and siros attend the baron Soren Greencorner in the Rudvey fortress. Attend, or hole up there? They have brought wagons and servants and militias. They have requisitioned wood and oil, furs and silver. For security, for redistribution.

Workers and peasants gather beer halls and village manors, faces grave as they count their supplies and their duties, faces grim as they read the nobles' 'requests'.

Oldfolk swaddle themselves in furs and disappear into the deep woods, to die or to plot. Some smile at the baronials' discomfort, others look uneasy, a few talk of the old demon, the death that comes with the cold sleep, the harsh measure of Winterwhite.

"This is not normal," everyone knows and does not have to say.



Questions for the Players

You are correct. This is not normal. Now that you think about it, the signs were there for a while. Who is responsible? Why is this happening? Does it even matter? Is survival not the priority now? How bad will it get?

How to Referee a Survival Game

Congratulations. You've reached the point of the icebox where the players realize that the whole campaign was just a cover, a red herring, for the real adventure: survival. Optionally, if you want to just run an ice survival adventure, this is where that begins.

A survival adventure pits heroes against an overwhelming antagonist who is not actively malevolent but is fundamentally hostile. In *Longwinter* it is the cold personified in the form of the deity Winterwhite, who has descended on the Barony of Brezim to extract her debt in full and without mercy. She does not come for any particular victim, she does not care if one or another escapes, she comes for all the barons Greencorner hold dear: the barony.

This kind of adventure has some specific constraints.

Because the antagonist is impersonal, there isn't a big boss to beat, there is no expectation of a climactic confrontation, there is no emotion contained in the antagonist, and there is nobody actively trying to thwart the heroes. The antagonist simply is.

This means that as a referee you can't simply keep raising the stakes, introducing new enemies, and developing a plot, because that makes the antagonist personal. You also don't have a villain to play, you cannot embody the winter to deliver a scathing speech, to tug on heartstrings with a nuanced childhood story, or even to deliver a lazy, "you haven't seen the last of meeeee!"

The winter doesn't care.

In *Longwinter* I suggest two methods of delivering a gripping survival adventure.

First, the challenges of survival. Use playing cards to procedurally generate a sequence of situations for the players trying to escape the icebox. This takes the antagonism out of your hands and makes you the arbiter of the will of the uncaring cards. You can cheer for the players to succeed as much as you like, but have the players draw and play the cards publicly, so it's clear that it's the deck, the environment, building this challenge for them.

Second, the emotion of the story. A survival story is about fear and hope, terror and relief. Life and death are possible outcomes, but it is the emotions we play with. Do not ask for their characters' emotions directly. Narratively, as referee, focus on the characters' sensations. Sight, sound, smell, temperature, pressure,

wind, movement, acceleration. Focus in on the physical, embodied sensations, on what the characters' bodies experience and how they. Give them clear, physical options, "You are clinging to the slick, cold rock, but see no way further up. Do you drop back down into the deep, pillowy snow, or try to jump across to the opposite face of the crack? If you fail the jump, you will hit the hard, sharp rock and tumble down, banging knees and elbows." Ask them if their character's heart is racing, if their palms are sweaty, if there is a knot in their belly, if their muscles are burning, if their knees hurt. Ask them how their character reacts to a blow, to a fall.

As supplies run low, as the cold draws in, as injuries accumulate, the emotion will follow.

The Problem of Tools

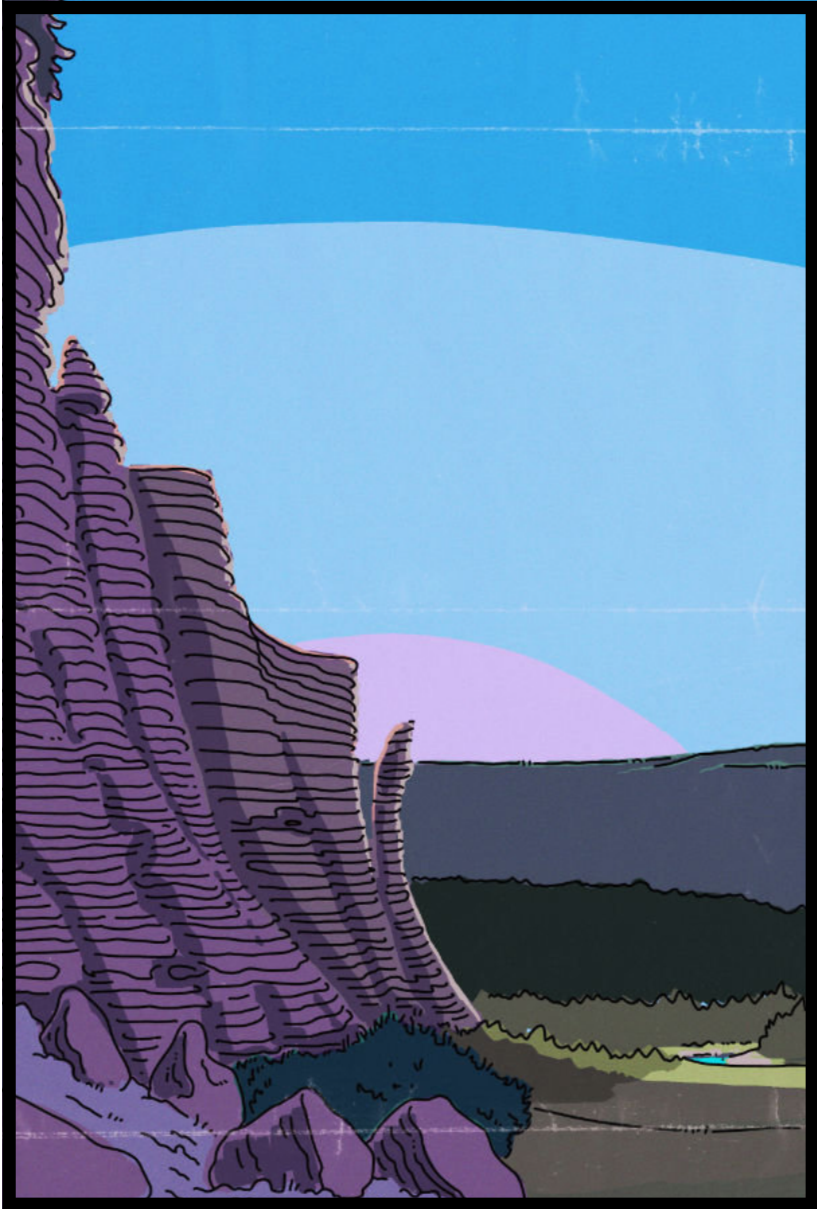
Some games offer heroes many tools that render environments irrelevant. Whether spells, artifacts, or technologies, I often find these deployed too casually. As soon as heroes can ignore terrain through flight or teleportation, weather through resistance and immunity, the roleplaying campaign has moved to an entirely different stage, one that makes this kind of adventure essentially unplayable—and, I would argue, generally boring without a significantly different setup than offered by "like our world in the past, but with magic."

My recommendation is either removing these kind of character tools outright, or providing severe material and mechanical limitations on those you permit. Flight may be provided by fragile magical wings, which have to be stowed and carried. Resistance to cold could be provided by a magical cloak, which must be cleaned and repaired and maintained. They might certainly be created by spells, but they are imagined within the fantasy as physical objects, which can be stolen, broken, and lost.

This is, of course, something to discuss with players. If they insist on keeping their supernatural super powers, ask them to narrate a fictional reason why they are suspending them for this adventure, or suggest they create a different character to use for this adventure instead.

Honestly, an entire party of characters who can fly or teleport or ignore extreme cold, will make this survival adventure pretty useless.

From here on out I will assume that the heroes your players are using may well somewhat surpass a pinnacle of human physical aptitude, yet are not the equal of a superhero.



Harsh Mistress: The Escape

The Crossing

† *This is a story. But it captures the mood this survival adventure aims for.* †

Crack!

Kuya dropped softly to all fours and breathed out slowly.

Creak.

She gingerly spread her arms and legs. Her fur-lined mittens and boots pushed the dusty snow along the ice with a whispering sigh. Like the frozen lake wanted to tell her something.

Creak.

It was uncanny. It sounded just like the tea cabinet hinge in her grandmother's apartment.

She breathed in shallowly, not moving. No creak. That tea cabinet always creaked. She'd been fascinated by it as a child. The mother of pearl inlays in the green and blue lacquer hinting at strange warm lands. Aramie lacquer, from the warm shores past the Grand Betons, where the hills are round like green sheep.

She breathed out. Focus. The ice should hold. Winterwhite's flowers had visited the window panes five days ago and never left. The ice should hold.

Creak.

But maybe there was a hot spring beneath that blue-black cliff on her side. Maybe that's why it wasn't hung in icicles like a come-of-age-cake. Maybe warm water welled up. Maybe it was warm enough to ruin the green tea Granna called her gentle delight. The expensive one she never let anyone else brew. The one she quietly cursed at whenever she steeped it too long. Count the heartbeats, she said, count a hundred as you breathe, and it's steeped.

Kuya counted her heartbeats as she breathed. Slowly. No creaking. She spread herself wide as a spider, hugging the ice of the lake, then started inching just her left hand in, towards her chest. She must look a fool. Or a tasty snack. Maybe

there was some wolf watching her right now. One of the big, strange ones that ran with the Architects' redesign, the ones that patrolled the preserves and kept people out. No, that was nonsense. She was nowhere near the nearest preserve. She'd struck out south-west from the bivouac, across the high field towards the Riblinza valley. She'd kept the crinkled white peak of the Riblingberg at her right.

Still. Her heartbeat picked up again. No, no. She turned her head, the ice chilling her left cheek. A bit further back. Yes, there it was, just peeking above the grey tablecloth of cloud, like wadded up pages torn from a snow-white notebook. She breathed slowly again. Ok, she wasn't near a preserve.

She started inching her hand inwards again. Lapel. Cap string. Iceberry pin. Backpack strap. There!

Creak.

Her breath stalled. If she fell through the ice here she'd drown. Her body would scream as the cold bit, but it would be the water, in her mouth and nose, throat and lungs and gut, like a flood of liquid fire, making her body thrash and flail, desperate for air, for oxygen, for life. The the lack of air would shut her awareness down. Eventually. With this cold, it might take five minutes. Ten? An eternity of fire and then an eternity of silence. The oldfolk said a winter's death wasn't so bad. The pain of the cold lifted, a deep weariness came, and then sleep. There was gentle sleep at the end. But a water death, that was bad. The Waterdrinker was not gentle with mortals' souls.

Kuya realized she wasn't breathed and gulped frigid air again.

Creak.

There wasn't time for this, she had to scuttle across this damned lake. Backpack strap. Clasp. Ice axe. Strap. Buckle clasp. Tug. No, the mittens. She needed fingers for this. She shifted more weight onto her hand, pinning hand and mitten. Slowly she withdrew her hand from the warm fur. Immediately the bitter cold went to work. Soon her fingertips would be on fire, but she had enough time.

Buckle clasp. Metal. Fingers sticking. One release. The second. Press. Stuck. Clear the strap out of the way. Ah, that cold steel burned. Press both releases.

Click.

Now the belt clasp. Down. Scraping knuckles on cold ice, not feeling the cuts, just the ice water. Or ice blood. Too cold. Button. Backpack belt. The big clasp.

Click.

Quick, back in the mitten. Kuya breathed quietly for a while then shuffled to her left. A handspan. Two. Pressing down her right arm on the right shoulder strap she inched out from under her backpack, crawling out like a hermit crab abandoning its house.

With a clatter of poles and axes and carabiners her backpack rolled off onto its side. Ten kilos more spread out.

Kuya looked up. She was nearly across the kidney-shaped lake. To her left, the blue-black cliff, to her right the gentle, welcoming slope. The lying slope. The one that promised avalanches. A hundred metres to the nearest shore, but that was close to the cliffs.

First she'd crawl back five, ten metres, then strike out for middle of the little beach. There, under the two boulders, the skinny and the fat one.

She pushed the backpack. A foot. Inching like a worm, or maybe a crippled crocodile, she crawled up behind it. Pushed again.

Creak.

Nothing to do now. Count your breaths. Wait for the tea to steep. Wait for the ice to thicken. Push, crawl, push, crawl. Ten pushes, three metres. Thirty, ten.

The ice had been solid here. Kuya carefully raised herself up on hands and knees, the ice stopped bleeding heat from her belly. No creaking.

Now she could push the backpack half a metre and crawl faster. A hundred and fifty metres to go. Three hundred more pushes, three hundred more crawls. Too much for tea, unless Granna had trapped her for the full 'ceremony'. No creaking from the Aramie lacquer ice tea box lake. Six hundred. Enough to steep the fine green tea six times.

"Do you taste the difference? The melody of the tea, from the first pour to the last? Ah, it's the little things," her Granna nodded. She'd nodded along and only tasted water from the third cup onwards.

Fourth cup. Seventy metres to go. She could almost taste the solid ground. The sweet density of rock.

Fifth cup. Forty to go. She wept. The ice whispered underfoot. The air hinted at more snow. The boulders beckoned.

Sixth cup. Ten metres to go. Yes. There was a taste. There was a melody. Ice and lake now had a different timbre. The crunch as she pushed the backpack was deeper. The vibrations under her mittens and knees weaker.

Five metres to go. Nearly there. Ice all crumpled at the shore. Floes pushed up. There had been an avalanche. That lying hillside, she'd known it.

Two metres to go. She was going to make it!

One metre to go.

Snap.

The backpack broke through a thin, upraised sheet and thumped down a handspan to the rime-coated pebbles beneath.

Kuya sobbed and giggled as she stood on shaky legs again.

Crack. Crunch.

She dragged the backpack away from the ice and bit her mitten to stifle a whoop.



Survival Card Mechanic

† this is version 2.0 of the card generator †

Get a deck of ordinary playing cards, the ones with hearts and diamonds, clubs and spades. These will generate the narrative framework of the survival adventure. Show them to the players and explain this to them, so they understand this adventure and how it works.

Different suits represent different terrains, complications, and characters. Diamonds represent icefield locations, supernatural challenges, and magical characters; spades represent mountains, physical challenges, and violent characters; clubs represent forests, resource challenges, and natural characters; and hearts represent rivers, social challenges, and helpful characters.

In every case, lower numbers are less challenging, higher numbers are more challenging. Aces are mixed, offering great opportunities and great risks. Jokers are random.

To activate the escape event and “win” the players have to collect a set of cards: three of a kind (e.g. three kings) or four in a row (e.g. 2,3,4, and 5 of diamonds); or deplete all the location cards. The higher value their set, the better their escape result (three queens give a better result than three sixes). Not all the player characters have to survive for this to happen!

Generate and play the adventure using watches (6 hour periods, 4 to each day) and actions. Each watch a different player chooses the group’s action. Some actions may spend additional watches. Track cold, weather, events, and encounters using the Longwinter calendar as normal.

Play starts with all the cards in the deck. During play, cards will be placed into three additional areas: the discard pile, the misfortune pile, and the players’ card collection. If at any time there are not enough cards in the deck to draw from, shuffle the discard pile and add it to the bottom of the deck.

The Card Actions

Travel: this is the basic action required to win the game. The player deals three cards from the deck onto the table. River and Forest cards (hearts and clubs) cost one additional watch. Mountain and icefield cards (spades and diamonds) cost two additional watches. The player chooses where the group will travel and marks that card. The referee then generates the challenge using the remaining card on the left, and the non-player character using the remaining card on the right. Both of these cards are then added to the discard pile.

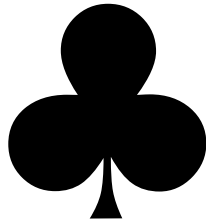
The referee then resolves challenges, weather, events, and encounters for that leg of the journey. When at least one member of the group overcomes the challenges and reaches the location, that card is added to the players' card collection.

Rest: this is how the player characters recover health and heat. It requires shelter from the weather. The player then draws a card from the deck and places it on the misfortune pile (if there isn't a misfortune pile yet, this creates one). If the card is lower in value than the last card on the misfortune pile, the referee immediately generates a challenge and character from that card. Kings are the only cards lower in value than aces. Jokers are higher in value than every other card, except sevens. The whole misfortune pile is then shuffled and added to the bottom of the deck.

Build Shelter: if no shelter is available, it takes one watch to scout out a suitable location and reinforce it with snow and branches to provide a place to rest. The player then draws a card from the deck and places it on the misfortune pile, as with the rest action.

Explore: challenges and characters may leave behind clues, locations, or resources. It takes a watch to explore them and recover anything of value. The player then draws a card from the deck and places it on the misfortune pile, as with the rest action.





Forests

† forests and brush † resource challenges † natural characters †

♣ 1 Abandoned Lookout

The mule-road snakes along the rugged mountain flank. Dark fir forests rise above, cliffs and tumbled rocks collapse into a torrent below. A blackened bunker complex dusted in snow keeps dead-eyed watch atop an outcrop. The road continues through a tunnel carved beneath.

Ambushers and defenders are advantaged.

It is easy to avoid the worst of the weather here.



Challenge: Spilled Grain

The sack did its best to hold the grain in, but step after weary step, another few grains tumbled down. Now, after a watch's walking, the sack is empty.

Easy test to sweep fresh snow over the tracks. Alternatively, easy test and one watch to pick up most of the spilled food.



Character: Cautious Patrol

Two baronial soldiers in padded greatcoats, armed with walking spears and Redyard leadspitters. Both are also decked with holy stones of the Three Avatars. Brade Icewinkler. Dale Everloyal.

♣ 2 Old Hamlet

Feral orchards choke the old hamlet. Collapsed Oldsettler homes now resemble burial mounds under the snow. A few Baronial-style log cabins have been built among the gap-toothed megaliths of an old sacred circle. Nobody is home.

Defenders and ambushers are advantaged.

The log cabins provide respite from the weather.



Challenge: Mold and Damp

The meat has sprung fine fur, and blue patches coat the bread.

Moderate cooking test to make edible, if unpalatable, meals from the spoiled food. Difficult medicine test to make antibiotic paste from one of the molds.



Character: Inquisitor

A silent masked figure in red and white furs. Their skis are nearly as sharp as the knife at their belt. Their long rifle is an ancient, intricately scoped Zuleiman. Looped around one wrist they wear an inquisition rosary. Doctor Yana Fardaughter.

♣ 3 Isolated Facility

Black pines choke the dale and creep up the hillsides, reclaiming oldsettler pastures and rude shielings on the lower fells. Rusted barbed wire tangled with blackberry brambles creates a wall around a series of log cabins built over the ruins of an Architect facility.

Defenders are strongly advantaged.

The facility provides respite from the weather.



Challenge: Frozen Water

With a loud pop, like a gun misfiring, a water bottle's side bursts open. All the water has turned to ice.

It will take fire or a watch carrying it close to the body to melt it again.



Character: Licensed Explorers

Four figures draped in ropes and exploration gear. They have a Whiteeyes Institute license for a bunker on the Dimnaya. Carefully concealed, they carry baronial Redyard revolvers. Zoran Oldstone. Hektor Smithson. Viktoriya Sunrise. Doctor Sigma Delmar.

♣ 4 Alpine Rainforest

Buttresses of limestone rise along the steep slope of the mountain, funneling humid air into the constricted valley. Great firs and spruces challenge the hills for height. Vines and beard lichens deck the trees. Mists roll among the dark trunks.

Ambushers are advantaged in the thick wood.

The conifers block all wind.



Challenge: Sole-Less

Glue and gum have become brittle in the cold and after a particularly rough descent the soles of several shoes start flapping.

Easy agility tests to avoid losing the soles. Moderate cobbler tests to fix the soles, but this requires tools. Improvised solutions will work for 1d4 watches, but after that the cracked, seeping shoes impose disadvantage on tests against cold and wet. Improvised shoes impose disadvantage to agility and endurance tests on the trail.



Character: City Slicker

A stumbling man in heavy parka and bespoke city shoes is making for the valley. His marten fur cap smells strongly of pomade. Despite the stubble on his cheeks, his curled moustaches still follow the last Eastern City fashions. He keeps mumbling about a hotel in Pey Holzey. His watch is a jeweled TPK Scheephouse with seven complications. Obol Fastfoot.

♣5 Twisted Krumholz

The violent winds along the long slope gnarl the red pines into crawling dwarfs. Layer upon layer of ancient wood creates a tangled maze of trees barely as tall as a shepherd. As the snow grows thicker, it covers the krumholz in a treacherous blanket.

Everybody is disadvantaged in the grasping krumholz

There is no protection from the elements.



Challenge: Tinderless

Only damp coal and a foul odour remains of the kindling. The box of matches is nearly empty. The lighter is nearly dry.

Strong disadvantage to starting fires until new equipment is found.



Character: Wolffolk Scout

A slender oldsettler man in light white furs and white cloak, carrying a recurved bow of bone, sinew, and old architect spring steel. He does not feel the cold and his pupils are feral. When he runs, his feet do not sink into the snow. Wolves and dogs love him. Raham "Red" Cruseao.

♣ 6 Black Forest

Dense woods of witch spruce cover the slopes and highlands like an impenetrable blanket. They block sun and moon, wind and snow. A carpet of dry, sour needles muffles all sound below.

Ambushers are advantaged in the black forest.

It is warmer and windless beneath the spruces.



Challenge: Frayed Rope

The wet, the ice, the rock, all have taken their toll. The fibres of the ropes are frayed and worn.

Disadvantage to all climbing tests until ropes are repaired.



Character: Dead Skinwalker

A bulky oldsettler swathed in tattered furs. Their face is covered in a skin mask. One cold white eye looks out. A chill walks with them. They are polite to outlanders, but coldly mock baronials. "Ah, your greed, you crossed the blue-mouthed lady. You will see her revenge. She will eat you cold." Orso "Deadeyes" Tornato.

♣ 7 Mass Gravesite

Lumpen bearded oaks and silver-needed spruces are reclaiming this plateau. Dense brambles and stands of staff-grass choke sinkholes filled with shattered limestone. Oldsettler wicker wheels and tin triangles mark small dolmens built discreetly by the corpse-filled sinkholes.

The thick growth advantages anybody wanting to stay hidden.

The wind is weaker among the trees.



Challenge: Wet Powder

Snow falling from the trees gets into the ammunition. Arrows warp, bullets freeze together, and the powder is damp.

A watch of careful rest and drying at room temperature will help. Otherwise, disadvantage to ranged attacks.



Character: Infected With The Ice

An older man and a middle-aged woman in rich parkas. The man is missing one hand and the cold awakening of Winterwhite will consume him soon. They have left their fortified townhouse in Pey Dimna after the town was again attacked by the risen oldsettler ghouls. Tomo Blackwolf. Ksenia Redgift.

♣ 8 Sacred Grove

A marshland of juniper and grassy hummocks covers the gentle hill-top depression. Mossy mounds mark ancient earthworks. Sixty blood cedars arranged in five circles form the sacred grove. The bark is marked with angular Oldsettler runes.

The marsh disadvantages all movement.

The wind is weaker among the trees, but there is water and ice everywhere.



Challenge: Torn It Seems

Stumbling through brambles, down gravel slopes, and past broken shreds of barbed wire, tears gape in parkas and pants.

Disadvantage to tests against cold and wet. Moderate sewing tests and one watch to fix the clothes, if needles and thread are available.



Character: Wolfmother

A slender red wolf with hazel eyes. She walks at a distance and watches, carefully. Her wolffolk family is curious how the baronial newsettlers will deal with this calamity. Within her belly she carries an old architect dagger that can sing at strange frequencies and cut the hardest rock. When she needs it, her paw becomes a ghostly human hand that can reach right into her own body and withdraw the blade. Ulna “Trained” Aureina.

♣ Willow Swamp

A forest of bent and broken willows lies beneath the snow. Ice and dessicated cane reeds crunch underfoot. Mulchy ridges and ditches alternate. Deep pools hide beneath surprisingly thin skins of ice.

Tracking is easy in the snow-draped swamp. Travel is difficult.

The wind is weaker among the trees.



Challenge: Blunted

Crampons, ice axes, and picks are blunted and pitted from traversing ice and rock. Disadvantage to climbing checks and damage with these tools and weapons.

Easy blacksmithing test and one watch to fix everything, but requires a smithy.



Character: Good Boy

A wheezing boy in fine greatcoat out looking for help for his nanny who has come down sick. He has a respiratory condition. His cheeks are rosy and he is well-fed. In his chalet, the nanny is in the last stages of starvation. The larder is well stocked with meat and frozen stew. The corpses of the butler and the footman have been neatly butchered, wrapped in canvas bags, and stored in the ice cellar. Andrey Resttree. Hema "Nanny" Farlog.

♣ 10 Shattered Woodland

Stumps and scattered branches mark a savage clear-cutting. Snow covers the raw earth, gouged by heavy golems. Isolated clumps of bushes and twisted trees sway feebly in the wind. Broken wood waits to trap the unwary foot.

Tracking is easy in the open terrain. Travel is difficult.

The clearcutting is exposed to the elements.



Challenge: Spilled Fuel

Perhaps it was the last tumble down the gully, among the ice boulders and broken trunks. The oil cans have punctured and soaked through the packs. The coal bin has spilled. The bundle of wood has come loose.

Moderate test to salvage half of the fuel.



Character: Political Prisoner

Two figures. A bulky city officer packing a Fifthface revolver and a weedy aristocrat in fur-lined parka. The officer agrees: the witness needs to stay alive. Zora Darknoon. Igor Ironwood.

♣ J Stormstruck Linden

Boulders piled with turf and loam glisten through the snow. They shoulder aside smaller trees and create a clearing around a mighty linden. Six woodsfolk could not encompass it with outstretched arms. Its trunk is marred by a great lightning scar. Its long branches have been broken by ice. A wooden womb opens within.

Attackers are advantaged in the clearing.

The wind is merciless.



Challenge: Crunch

Everything was packed so carefully, but packs shift during travel. Falling back onto the pack, a sickening crunch resounds. Something fragile, complicated, and irreplaceable has broken.



Character: The Filmmaker

A bedraggled figure with cases of crystal-film. It records snow apes using tools to excavate an old architect vault. Lena Riflesteel, famous illusionist.

♣ Q Wolffolk Forest

Spruce and pine and oak crowd close. Their branches obscure the sky, their roots obscure the ground. Bronze spikes remain where the Wolffolk sacrificed to the Devil's Grandfather and the Earthbeater.

Defenders are strongly advantaged among the trees. Travel is slowed.

The wind is much weakened.



Challenge: Bad Medicine

You open the first aid pack. It's full of rags, but no medicines. Somebody ripped you off.

The referee saves this challenge and plays it the next time medicines are used.



Character: Orderlies

Three brothers in matching winter uniforms, patched and mended. Wide-eyed, teeth chattering. They talk of ice ghoul worms awakening the dead. Their axes are notched. Their rifles are short on ammunition. They were orderlies at the Painted Tree spa. Hektor Bearson. Igor Bearson. Andrey Bearson.

♣ R Needletooth Trees

Worms of ice crawl up from the ground. They embrace the trees. Leaves become diaphanous frosted wisps. Needles become sharp and hard as crystal teeth. With every breath of wind the forest rattles and wheezes with the laughter of dead shamans.

Ambushes are advantaged, travel is disadvantaged.

The wind and the cold seem sharper here.



Challenge: Machine Dies

Engines seize, ice fractures clockwork, rust destroys firing pins. A machine breaks down.

Moderate test to repair if a replacement part is found.



Character: Secret Cultist

Baronial official, growing gaunt under voluminous winter coat. Dragging books, compass, telescope, and chalk. Befuddled and confused. Hears a deep, promising voice, “she has kept her bargain.” Maya Ogrerider.



Rivers

† valley bottoms † water † social challenges † sometimes, helpful characters †

♥1 Frozen Waterfall

The valley closes in from all sides. Towering buttresses and walls of slick blue-black flysch heavy with dead weeds and ominous icicles frame the pale sky. At the very end, mounds of ice pile up at the bottom of what was a waterfall but is now a crazily shattered ice cliff.

The location is safe on three sides and advantages defenders, but leaves no easy retreats.

It is sheltered from wind.



Challenge: Hubris

This will be easy. Easier than you know. Hardly an inconvenience.

Draw an extra card. Hard test, it is a second location reached this watch. Failed test, it is an additional challenge.



Character: Proof of Horror

A skeletal man comes stumbling out of the woods in a bear-fur cloak much too big for him. Ice dusts his unkempt beard. There is fear in his eyes. He carries sheafs of lumographs depicting oldsettler corpses, their bones knitted together with sinews of ice and muscle of cold clay, crawling out of a lichpit. Academic Asbert Marmotson.

♥ 2 Hoar-Decked Gorge

Past the mountain's shoulder the slope becomes steep and nigh impassable. The path stumbles steeply down, carving through steps made for giants of earlier times, into the gorge. There the path worms forward, inching through tunnels and carven galleries. Water rushes below, the sky is lost beyond the overhanging rocks and hoar frost.

The location is slippery and narrow, making all maneuver difficult, but advantaging defenders.

It is sheltered from the wind.



Challenge: Desperation

A terrified old man, Yivo Fivecorner, is walking in circles. Tracks lead to a small holdfast hidden in a gorge. "They've thrown me out!" he weeps, "they say they don't have enough, but I know they do! I helped lay those stores, I know they have enough!"

Eleven baronials, five adults and six children, are hidden in the holdfast of Drisley. There used to be twenty, but together they decided there were only enough supplies for half of them. The other old and sick people chose the deep sleep. Yivo changed his mind and fled back, begging to be let back in. They did not let him in, and he has become convinced in his fear of death, that it was all a plot.

There are fifty sacks of food at the holdfast. Enough for the remainder to barely survive the longest winter in living memory, no matter how harsh. Too bad the winter will last a whole year instead of just one season.



Character: Hungry Hunter

A muscular woman swaddled in a downy parka squats in a dugout snow shelter. She is trying to grill a rabbit on a weak fire. She is oblivious with hunger. Zuzana Brokenspear.

♥ 3 Hot Spring

An intrusive igneous rock rises from the slope like the prow of a landship. The path makes a looping detour past this mass, obscuring the way beyond. A steaming hot rivulet forces its way out, burbling from beneath the rock, carving through sand and snow to join the ice-covered river downslope. A small bridge crosses the rivulet.

The location is open and exposed, the rock and trees advantaging ambushers.

The hot water creates an island of warmth.



Challenge: Mother's Mercy

A weeping figure struggles along the gritty snow. They drag a flimsy sled, laden with bundles. She is Iva Redend and the bundles are her two frozen children. They died in a cold snap one night. One of the children is missing a leg. Her husband was killed by the wolffolk that raided her hamlet. She has no food left, but she still has five flasks of lamp oil and three survival supplies.



Character: Shepherd's Hut and Stores

Two dirty children, a boy and a girl, dressed in oversize coats lined with old newspapers, huddle in a shepherd's hut. The last headline reads, "Pey Tirezley graveyard condemned. Inquisitors destroy fifteen risen demons." The hut is well-stocked with coal. Viktor Frankstone. Liona Thirdwinter.

♥ 4 Choked Sandbar

The river braids itself into steaming streams around an ice-rimmed sandbar. The sandbar is thick with reeds and shrubs matted beneath snow and ice. Up-stream and down the river collects itself, a swift and deep barrier to crossing once again. Icy fog curls among the bearded thickets crowding the pebbled banks of the river.

The location is very open, advantaging attackers. It is an easy place to ford the river. Unwary forders can easily slip on the slick rocks and fall into the water.



Challenge: Trapped Travelers

Two terrified travelers approach, gesturing that they are peaceful. Harson Longflanks and Brita Builderschild praise Greencorner and beg your help. While gathering supplies, their sled fell into a crevasse, trapping their friend Orso Flamemane within. Without help, Orso will die.

It will take a watch to help them and this watch's journey is lost. They have 3 sacks of supplies and give 1 for assistance.



Character: Doctor Sawbones

A bedraggled doctor and a dead man with an amputated leg. The doctor is tired and very hungry. She has a hidden revolver. Tisa Streamling. Lament Od'heckboosh.

♥ 5 Ice-Ringed Pool

A natural rock dam compounded by the efforts of generations of beavers creates a large pool. The path around is treacherous, climbing among boulders and stunted pines. The ice covering the pool is thin and fragile in the center. Trout and carp have congregated here, safe beneath the ice.

The ground is treacherous and the vegetation is thick, advantaging defenders and ambushers.

Trees protect from the wind.



Challenge: Hungry Gnome Monkeys

They came silently, without words. Their fur lush and thick, framing wizened faces atop child-like bodies. They tried to pilfer food and survival supplies, but the party was too canny. 1d4 of them are caught, helpless. Perhaps the animalistic things have a lair? Perhaps they taste alright?



Character: House-Clan in Hiding

A one-eyed leit dragging a sled piled with supplies. She has a Kaiserlich shotgun with a pearl stock. Her house-clan is excavating an old architect bunker. Duwin Redwater.

♥ 6 Spiritual Confluence

The path descends into a frozen marsh. Ahead rise the eroded remains of a moraine carved in half by the outflow of the waters. A deathly cold smaller stream joins the main river at a confluence marked by sand and gravel beds. Grotesque geometric wooden totems rise from the beds and the waters, watching over this place.

The location is concealed from outside observers. The spiritual residue of the totems advantages defensive magics and the whims of the Waterdrinker.

Nothing stops the wind.



Challenge: Sick Oldsettlers

Wicker and snow huts huddle beneath an overhang. Large icicles form a feeble barricade. They are fleeing Winterwhite, too, but they are sick with dysnety and infectious. Without care, there is a 50% chance any one of them might die. With care, they will all survive and recover within 1d6+4 days. They have two full sacks of food.

Voz Lindling is old and suspicious, they remember the stories of the first baronials. Kol Oakling is pregnant and determined, her will is indomitable. Arz Buckling is young and reckless, without guidance he will do something foolish.



Character: Amateur Researcher

A young man on skis and wearing a very warm winter suit. The goggles on his winter-mask keep fogging because of a defective air filter. He carries a couple of volumes of research notes on winter corpses. He has the keys to a small chalet around his neck. His hand cannon is the latest Zuleiman model. Viktor Bluntstone.

♥7 Abandoned Mill

A low dam of ice-slick boulders and gravel traverses the river, creating a shallow lake. The empty-eyed bulk of a fortified mill stands at the water's edge. The disconnected mill wheel spins lazily. Poles stick out of the rude dam to help travelers.

The exposed location advantages attackers.

Wind howls loudly over the open water.



Challenge: Whispers and Mistrust

It is obvious. The party is lost. The leader does not know where to go. This will all end in tears.

Hard Charisma test for the leader, or a new leader is chosen and this watch's journey is lost. The old leader now makes Charisma tests with disadvantage.



Character: Vengeful Descendant

An oldsettler woman dressed in an inquisition great coat. Her iron hair is bound with snow ape bone buckles. She carries a long Ironbaron rifle and a notched pole-shovel. Her eyes are haunted, her mouth is set hard. Runa Vicaria.

♥ 8 Snowy Floodplain

The valley broadens and fills out. Alluvial terraces bracket a field of mud, water, and ice covered by a thick blanket of snow. The plain is studded with clumps of dead canary grass and snow-bound swamp willows. The tracks of wild animals and other things traverse the expanse.

The exposed location advantages attackers and trackers. Wind and cold are severe in the open plain.



Challenge: Fear of the Dark

The dark is always near, always long this winter. Perhaps this is not just Winterwhite's doing. Perhaps it is as the stories of the Final Gift foretold, when Suncatcher steals Green Sun forever and the people will wail to the Three Avatars and suffer the four-hundred plagues before the Blue Sun will come.

Easy test or refuse to travel when the cloak of Moon's Inkbrother is upon the land. If cajoled into traveling at night, a fearful character is disadvantaged.



Character: Opportunistic Rebels

Three oldsettler youths in fur caps and heavy coats dragging a dead buck on a sled. One of them was wounded by a baronial police pistol. Their accents are heavy. None of them is wearing a citizenship tablet around their neck. Ayo Bergha. Runa Valés. Ono Devente.

♥ 9 Icy Cascades

The valley rises steeply across a series of stone ribs. The waters have carved a series of bowls and channels. Floods have left massive boulders piled with broken trees. Slippery round shells of ice now cover everything.

The terrain is treacherous, disadvantaging everyone. The lees of boulders provide respite from wind, but the damp and ice strengthen the cold.



Challenge: Weakness and Frustration

The weak only slow down the strong. Perhaps some will have to sacrifice themselves so the group survives.

The strongest and the weakest in the group make moderate tests. If the weakest fails, they want to be left behind. If the strongest fails, they want to leave the laggards behind.



Character: A Rightmaker

A rider on a shaggy mountain pony, dressed in thick white snow ape furs. Their necklace of snow ape tusks has a three-stone pendant of the Avatars. A cavalry sabre hangs by their side and they casually hold a Kaiserlich carbine. They have two boxes of holy Earthbeater shot. Their baronial has a heavy Bridge accent. Zalo Cityson.

♥ 10 Bridges Old & New

The valley narrows as the river carves a calm path across an exposed bed of marlstone. A wide, solid bridge of well-dressed stone crosses the waters. Upstream; the stumps of an older wooden bridge. Downstream; the corroded shards of a yet older metal bridge.

The terrain is open and exposed. The wind is harsher here.



Challenge: Cabin Fever

There is nobody else. The world stretches. Vast. Empty. Everybody else must already be dead. Locked in ice. Are these sorry fools truly the last this world can offer?

Moderate test of anger and frustrations grow, disadvantaging cooperation.



Character: Bunker Seeker

A striding, long-limbed figure, swaddled in linens and leathers under a wolf-fur cloak. Their walking staff is tipped with battered steel. They keep consulting an old architect compass. It leads to a deep bunker. Under their furs, they have an old Zuleiman carbine. Roy Sevenmonth.

♥ I Breached Dam

The sweeping curves of an ancient dam embrace the valley like the wings of a great white eagle. The heart of that curve is breached by an ancient gash. The oldstone of the dam is worn smooth by erosion. Ice coats the boulders of the alluvial fan. River willows and the woody skeletons of sunroots cluster about the dam.

The enclosed location and vegetation advantage those who want to hide. The dam blocks wind, providing relief.



Challenge: Greed and Hunger

The ice has embraced the world. Hollowfear, the famine bear, has entered the hearts and bellies of men. The grey morality of starvation is coming, and only hard choices remain.

Moderate test or begin hoarding and stealing food from the group. If there is no food, perhaps it is time to sacrifice the weakest?



Character: Oldfolk Guides

Two young women hunters in sturdy parkas with long rifles and knives. They are tracking a snow lion that has been plaguing their hamlet. Their faces are marked with baronial tattoos marking criminal oldsettlers. Their bodies are covered in Green Sun tattoos. Their teeth are unusually sharp. Irse “Duna” Deogotta. Wayana “Ana” Valés.

♥ Q Lake and Island

Sheer mountains drop away revealing wide terraced fields embracing a half-frozen lake. A small island emerges from the middle of the lake. Ice-crushed willows surround a small temple. On the near shore an ice-locked paddle boat leans at an angle besides a pier groaning under heavy snow.

The ice over the deep lake is dangerously thin in places.

The open lake is exposed to wind.



Challenge: Dark Despair

The sun is waning. The Suncatcher is wrapping it. Winterwhite has enlisted the Amimami, the Eater of Virility. She has bribed the Green Sun to stay away. This ice will never end. Best to end it all, to embrace the long sleep now, before the Eaters come.

Easy test or lose all Aura and Charisma points, and decide to give up. When a character is healed, they recover the will to continue their journey. A character without Aura or Charisma has to be led by rope or hand, and has no volition.



Character: Finer People

An old woman and two bulky young men. Two ponies pull a sleigh with supplies among which the old woman is nestled. The men wear baronial military parkas, the woman wears sable fur. They are leaving their chalet for the hot springs of Vreley. Ermelina Redwater. Isen Headwater. Zoran Sunrise.

♥ K Subterranean Spring

The valley ends in a dizzying cliff. Mosses grow thick on the undersides of sharp boulders. Cold mist fills the air. Paths reduce to chiselled toe-holds. The river emerges from a square-sided crevasse at the foot of the cliff.

The looming cliffs provide relief and advantage defenders.

The confined space blocks wind. After heavy rains the river gushes and seethes violently.



Challenge: Panic at the Angelhunt

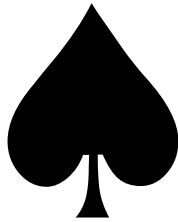
The world howls for justice. The air warps at the passage of the Winterwhite's Angelhunt. Blood chills, fires flicker, and hope dies. The Angelhunt smells hope and communities and the blood debt of Winterwhite. Who is marked for the Angelhunt?

Moderate test or flee the group to avoid the Angelhunt's bone-smashing kiss.



Character: Final Services

A sinewy oldsettler man on skis pulling a corpse on a sled. The corpse was Runo Whitetower, his coat is stuffed with legal documents, bonds, and deeds to his holdings in Ta Krasney. The oldsettler is taking his dead master to the family crypt in Rudvey. Anastasio "Ani" Bergha.



Mountains

† mountains † slopes † physical challenges † dangerous characters †

♠ 1 Precarious Ridge

The shoulder of the mountain rises and narrows, until it suddenly falls away. On one side, a cliff plummets to the valley below. On the other a smooth expanse of frozen snow plummets like a flight of doves into a dark, ice-bearded forest. Ahead the ridge is sharp as a knife, the blown snow and ice overhanging the cliff.

The location is exposed on all sides with nowhere to hide.

Wind and weather are more punishing here.



Challenge: Exposed Traverse

A knife-edge ridge connects two mountains. Gusts blow shards of ice across the lip. It is a dangerous crossing, a fall would be deadly.

Difficult agility test to cross and set a guide rope. Secure the first climber, please. Alternatively, lose a watch going around.



Character: Disciples of the Old Architects

Two figures, faces masked, wearing heavy parkas. They try to avoid contact. Beneath their coats they are swaddled in old architect amulets. One has a mechanical heart that whispers cultic directions. Irma Spoolwinder. Zeko Rabbitfarmer.

♠ 2 Sky-piercing Pinnacle

The roof of the sky stretches limitless above. The mountains and valleys open around. Snowfields, cliffs, and ridges surround the pinnacle, their patterns laid bare.

The location is hard to reach, advantaging defenders.

It is exposed to all elements.



Challenge: Ice Wall

Climbing across the slick, slippery surface is slow and dangerous going. A fall would be very bad.

Difficult strength test with ice axes. Or a difficult endurance test with rope, hammer, and pitons. Going around takes one watch.



Character: Bringing Peace to the Dead

Four baronial rangers in white parkas on skis, hefting Zuleiman rifles. Their hunting knives are notched and they're carrying irregular battle shovels and incendiary grenades. "The corpses of those stinking beasts are crawling out of the icy ground. Nothing a little fire can't fix." Ariya "Cap" Soldiersdaughter. Viktor Warschild. Ludvik Bearson. Vid od' Return.

♠ 3 Shattered Crater

The top of the mountain is a bowl of fractured rock splinters. Many of the splinters are black and glassy, testament to a recent explosion. The bottom of the bowl is flooded with snow and ice. A frozen pool lies beneath.

The exposed center of the crater advantages attackers.

The bowl is protected from the harshest wind.



Challenge: Wet, Heavy Snow

It feels like with every step, Winterwhite's children grasp your legs with clammy fingers, trying to drag you down.

Difficult endurance test or take one point of fatigue. Skis make the endurance test easy.



Character: Two Skintakers

Two peasants with luminous complexions, wearing light parkas. Their snow shoes are light but strong. They carry heavy bundles of kindling, pitch, torches, fuel, and rags. Their eyes glow with warmth. One has a bundled fox pelt, the other an eagle skin. Roy "Fox" Agnidey. Zoya "Birdie" Alilonghi.

♠ 4 Narrow Chimney

A narrow crack zig-zags up the mountain, splitting one flank from the other. It is dark and irregular, protected from wind and snow by overhanging rocks and lodged boulders.

The tight space disadvantages everyone, but makes a rapid ascent possible.

The chimney is protected from wind and precipitation.



Challenge: Grueling Avalanche

Trees and rocks and ice fill the valley like a plug. Each slow step drags. Going around takes an extra watch.

Difficult endurance or moderate agility test to cross.



Character: Baron's Cousin

Woman in winter armor on skis, with two sabres and a filigreed Ironbaron hunting rifle. Blood marks on her cheeks call Fourface to watch her way and guard her on her diplomatic mission. Ivana Tealcorner.

♠5 Overhanging Cliff

The hulking cliff cuts the world in half. It is pitted with rusted bolts. Within its hard granite the ancients have excavated small cells.

Climbers and anyone at the bottom of the cliff is severely disadvantaged.

The cliff is extremely exposed to wind.



Challenge: Broken Rope Bridge

The way ahead, across the narrow gorge, is broken. The weight of ice has ripped the rope bridge in half. An expert climber or a brace of ladders are needed to fix the problem.

Extreme climbing test to get across with a guide rope. Moderate climbing test and one watch to do it more carefully. Moderate engineering test with ladders, poles, and other supplies to jury rig a temporary bridge.

Alternatively, spend two watches going around.



Character: Militia Massacre

Three baronials in heavy furs, flying a village militia flag. They are dragging a sled loaded with lamp oil and supplies. One is injured—an ice ghoull bite. They are suspicious of outsiders. Tomo Smallengine. Viktor Templechild. Luna Suncatcher.

♠ 6 Deep Couloir

A clean-scraped gully ascends steeply up the flank of the mountain. Snow and boulders accumulate at the bottom. Avalanches are common after snowfalls.

Defenders are advantaged in the couloir.

The gully is protected from harsh wind.



Challenge: Frozen Lake Crossing

Sheer ice and rock bracket the lake. The ice looks solid enough, but is it?

Moderate thought test to cross safely. Alternatively, spend a watch skirting the edge.



Character: Freedom Fighters

Four oldfolk in looted armor, flying a freedom flag. They are dragging a sled loaded with lard, butter, and ammunition. One is injured—a sabre cut. They carry dented Zuleimans. Lomo Valés. Ulya de’Piz. Oryen de’Selá. Viktor “Baronial” Súma.

♠ 7 Sweeping Plateau

A broad flat plain of hard limestone dotted with lonely granite megaliths forms the top of the mountain. Harsh winds clear snow and dirt away. Spectacular iceforms grow in the leas of the megaliths.

Defenders are advantaged on the plateau.

The plateau is extremely exposed to wind and weather.



Challenge: Long Icy Slope

The slope glitters, smooth as the white-silk bridal gown of a desert princess. Only much more slippery, with few ways to stop on the way down.

Moderate strength test to traverse carefully. Easy skiing test to cross swiftly (heroes can ignore one future challenge of their choice).

Alternatively, spend a watch to detour.



Character: Possessed and Corrupted

A skinny figure in flapping furs, antlers strapped to its back. Its hard to tell if it was once a man or a woman, now only madness flares in its rolling eyes. The cold does not affect it. It has no teeth. Beneath its mittens, it has vestigial sixth fingers. Dey Mugay.

♠ 8 Cave-Riddled Shoulder

A ring chiselled clean through the curtain of the mountain's shoulder greets visitors. Further down-slope the cracked rock of the formation is eaten away by spiral caves and splintered chambers.

Defenders are extremely advantaged.

The caves are protected from the weather.



Challenge: Spraying Waterfall

This mass of water is too large to freeze. It sends spray and mist across the path. Crossing, you will get wet.

Moderate agility test to traverse with oiled cloths and umbrellas without getting soaked. Alternatively, a watch to detour lower down the valley.



Character: Returned from Grandmother's Cave

A tall woman, face like stone, eyes like steel. Her raven hair is bundled beneath a horned fur cap. A great sword of polished giantsbone rests light upon her wide back. She speaks in a strange old tongue. Memories of the Winterbird haunt her. Runa Wreya.

♠ 9 Scree Slope

The long open slope mixes fallen rocks, chunks of ice, and snow. Rock slides and avalanches regularly scour the slope. Careful travelers can traverse surprisingly quickly.

Tracking and pursuit is easy.

The slope is exposed to wind and weather.



Challenge: Terrifying Gales

Tearing the trees, scouring snowy slopes, Northwind's spawn bear the curse of Winterwhite.

Moderate agility test to not fall in the gale, easy strength test to hold onto carried objects. Alternatively, wait a watch under cover and the wind abates.



Character: Proof of Possession

A short man, broad, carrying a clockwork automaton of ancient make strapped to his back. He fingers his Kaiserlich carbine nervously. "At the Institute. We had papers. I have to get it back." The automaton repeats phrases and sometimes makes rude gestures with its six-fingered appendages. Rudo "Rusty" Stoneshaper. Van Mal.

♠ 10 Titanic Terraces

The entire flank of the mountain has subsided in a series of tectonic steps. Flat fields alternate with rough cliffs and scree. Snow and ice collect in every crevice.

Defenders are advantaged by the boulders and cliffs.

The terraces are exposed to the wind.



Challenge: Blinding Fog

Suncatcher's offering to Winterwhite creeps from the crevasses, billows off the rivers, rises from the wet snow, shrouding the world in white. Visibility becomes non-existent, the world fades to white.

Difficult thought test to avoid getting lost (draw a new challenge and lose one random card from the players' card collection). Alternatively, wait 1d4 watches for the fog to lift.



Character: Two Strangers

Two figures, one tall, one wide. The taller wears a turban under its parka. Tattoos of Fourface and the Three Avatars adorn their skins. The taller has a bone needle, the shorter has an Ironbaron shotgun and brace of axes. "We're safe so long as we carry word to Waterdrinker," they hope. Olga Skywatcher. Nedyia Holybolt.

♠ Unstable Boulder

A spectacular boulder forgotten by its glacier rests at the lip of a cliff. Paths wind around and under it. Hundreds of simple pebble stupas disappear beneath the gathering snow.

Attackers are advantaged on the open terrain.

The boulder area is lashed by unpredictable winds.



Challenge: Freezing Rain

Rain falls like the cruel tears of the Devil's Grandfather, freezing as soon as it hits ground or branch or hand. Soon tree branches and snapping and falling with the weight of the ice.

Difficult endurance test to continue traveling without taking one point of fatigue. Moderate thought test to find safe cover for one watch. Moderate endurance test to cower in place for one watch in paltry cover without taking one point of fatigue.



Character: Monkey Gnome

A tiny figure, swaddled in furs, with the face of a shrivelled old person. Its smile reveals large canines and a nest of tentacles instead of a tongue. "I've seen the Devil's Beggars, I have," chuckles the Monkey Gnome. Djuzmarsyan Nal Nal.

♠ Q Howling Saddle

Two fang-peaked mountains meet in a pass worn smooth by the natural wind funnel. The uplift has left striated bands of rock twisted like salted worms. Chiselled steps and rusted pitons mark the way.

All ranged attacks are disadvantaged by the winds.

The wind and cold are both magnified in this pass.



Challenge: Hell's Own Blizzard

Winterwhite's cold blanket falls upon the land, trapping howling star demons upon the world's surface. Temperatures fall, winds whip, and snow fades the world to white.

Moderate endurance test or take a point of fatigue. Moderate thought test or lost. Alternatively, cower for 1d4 watches in a makeshift shelter.



Character: Smuggling Supplies

Three bulky figures, packing heavy Kaiserlich pistols, and whipping a tired horse dragging a sleigh. The sleigh is full of salt and oil. Smugglers. "We've no business with you, you've no business with us. Leave and everyone gets along. Fini Sweetapples. Henrik Foundling. Berengar Knockwood.

♠ ♠ Chiselled Stairs

A staircase switchblades up cliff and couloir to cross the mountain range. Ancient galleries and tunnels with mysterious eroded bas reliefs make passage easier. Panoramic platforms thick with drifted snow surprise travelers.

Defenders are strongly advantaged in the the old stairwells.

The wind and weather are very erratic.



Challenge: Winterwhite's Breath

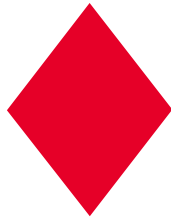
The silence rings like a clear bell. Nothing moves. Like gunshots sap-filled trees explode. Birds on the wing fall to the ground. The chill comes, hard and more brutal than anything yet experienced.

Extreme endurance test or take a point of fatigue. Alternatively, moderate thought test to find shelter and cower for 1d4 watches. In that case, easy endurance test or take a point of fatigue.



Character: There Was a Witch

A lady in white, draped against the cold with white furs and bone medallions. Her staff gleams with dismal runes, and her smile seems to wrap round and round her neck twice or thrice. A witch. "Be along, Doctor Love don't need to know you've seen me by, neither do the Three-and-Four. I'm just bearing witness." Stella Slingstringer.



Icefields

† *locations on the high ice* † *supernatural challenges* † *terrifying characters* †

◆ 1 Powder Dunes

The relentless wind has scoured the high meadow of snow, piling the powder up in drifts taller than a house. Frozen snow and ice gravel hide the rocks and grass. Light scatters in floating chips of ice. Dry escarpments pen the snow dunes.

Anyone moving across the dunes is immediately visible, travel over the powder drifts is difficult.

The wind is exceptionally harsh on the snow.



Challenge: Dark Ranger Lure

Warm light. Laughter. Song. A warm place beckons. It is an illusion, concealing a sharp-walled crevasse. Within, a writhing mass of broken, trapped ice zombies.

Moderate thought test to see through the lure. Easy thought test to spot the baronial warning signs painted on nearby trees.



Character: Firestarters

Five baronials in fur and armor. Greased. Silent. Hooded. They carry rope and pitch and Kaiserlich carbines and fire starters. "Have you seen any of those savages? They brought this upon us, with their wicked demons. We're bringing them some justice in return." Rudy Longstocking. Sandi Blacktemple. Dani Princebrewer. Vidya Ironbeater. Sasha Southson.

◆ 2 Deep Snowfield

Trees, boulders, and houses, everything is swallowed in a silent blanket of heavy snow. The landscape is alien, silent, and white. Digging down, more snow. As sunlight strikes the snow it becomes soft and clinging, when night returns it freezes to a crust.

All action in the clinging snow is disadvantaged, at night travel is easy.

Building a shelter from the wind is very easy here.



Challenge: Old Architect's Face

A large snow ape with machinery in its belly. Within the machinery, a crystal box suffused with harsh phosphorescent light. Shadows flicker within the light, displaying a wizened face. The face speaks with a clicking voice, thick with static. It offers help in exchange for a living body to carry old Nur Enmaw the Reawakened on a fact-finding mission into the outer world.

Difficult fight to defeat the snow ape. Moderate charisma test to politely refuse the old architect. Easy thought test to let the old architect in (this kills the old personality of the character, overwriting it with Nur Enmaw's). Alternatively, easy endurance test to run away from the heavy snow ape.



Character: Ice Troll

A giant figure, three metres tall, swathed in fur and painted robes. A troll of Winterwhite, its blood is leeching acid, its breath is soul-stealing frost. Upon its back, a sacrifice to Winterwhite squirms weakly. "The hamlet has paid, this child will spare them for this month."

◆ 3 Mirror of Ice

The heavy layer of snow has melted and frozen so many times that the surface is now a slippery mirror of ice. Piles of frozen snow and lonely broken trees break the surface. Breaking the icy surface or building

Travel is disadvantaged because of the slippery surface.

Building a shelter from the wind is very hard here.



Challenge: White Fox Sacrifice

Bound upon an altar, a youth with unblemished skin. Around, seven seven-tailed foxes. The youth must freeze to propitiate Winterwhite and avert her gaze. A successful sacrifice gives advantage on the next four encounters.

Moderate battle to save the youth, a wolffolk skintaker. Moderate charisma test to be allowed to participate in the sacrifice. Alternatively, quietly walking away works fine.



Character: Mother Ghoul

A ragged figure, swathed in torn canvas, missing an arm. Its flesh is blue. Ice worms squirm within its wounds, animating it. It is searching for its children, "They ran away, with the sleigh, with the light, without me. They can't leave me like this!" Manya Oldschild.

◆ 4 Sculptures of Rime

The forest flash-froze in a blizzard. Beards and streaks of ice deck every leaf and branch. Flowers of ice grow upon the corpses of small creatures caught outside. Every step sets off a tinkling, jangling orchestra as delicate ice crystals explode.

Hiding and stealth is disadvantaged here.

The wind is weakened by the sculptures.



Challenge: Snow Wisp Funeral

Red-eyed white ghosts follow a procession bearing the corpse of a suicide. Hunger in their eyes, soon they will ride this dead baronial. Soon. But before, perhaps, a few more suicides?

Easy aura test to avoid the snow wisps' lures. Difficult thought test to dispel them with sulphur, egg, and blue paint.



Character: Oldfolk Soldiers

Three winter soldiers on a sled, armed to the teeth. Their furs are leached white, their faces tattooed with the old animals, from before the Purification. "Have you seen where those invaders are hiding? We'll smoke them out, the thieves of our land, the killers of our forebears." Troy "Pickles" Belgroyé. Ina "Juniper" Fiayés. Carso "Bones" de'Montéy.

◆ 5 Frozen Slope

The north-facing slope deceives the eye. A smooth, sharp expanse of frozen snow draped over the mountain like a table cloth. Making an impression in the snow is difficult. A single misstep and a walker will accelerate into the cliff-ringed valley below.

All movement is disadvantaged here. Care is a must.

The sun does not shine here and it is unusually cold.



Challenge: Death Fairy Lights

Red lights in the sky, shimmering golden haze, phantasmal flowers blooming in the night. A trilling sound takes residence behind ear and dream. Glistening, curious faces appear in the air. The death fairies are here to observe and amuse themselves. They will draw attention to whomever they follow, disadvantaging stealth and encounter tests. The fairies will get bored after three watches with no battles or deaths.

Moderate agility test to avoid their attentions. Difficult thought test to amuse them with riddles and make them go away. Alternatively, wait in hiding for a watch, and the fairies will leave.



Character: One of the Responsible

Two figures, one limping. Dressed in fine furs, equipped for the snow, dragging a full sled. Their Zuleiman handcannons have pearl grips. "We can make it out, we know the way. Just past that ridge is Soren's hunting lodge, we can gather our breath there, then make a straight dash under the ridges past Hodovoya and into Now Garday." Lazar Woolmaker. Ulna Guardschild.

◆ 6 Rotten Snow

The south-facing valley is swaddled in pock-marked snow. Melt water glistens and scars open up in the rotten snow. Every step the snow threatens to give way, swallowing the walker to their waist. Loud noises or explosions could easily trigger an avalanche.

Travel is horribly exhausting here.

It is unusually warm in the protected valley.



Challenge: Riddle of Worms

A wood henge hung in hoar and ice tops an eroded kurgan. Glistening icy cocoons hang heavy on the henge, pregnant with ice ghoulish worms. When the worms emerge they will dig deep into the kurgan, awakening the bones of the century-dead oldfolk, and perhaps even some of the far older bonethrone centaurs from the time of the hungry khan. The ice ghouls melt into clumps of bone and rotted flesh when the temperature is above freezing.

Moderate agility test to carefully gather up the cocoons and make a bonfire of their deathbringing flesh. Extreme thought test to figure out how to use the ice ghoulish worms to reanimate the dead on command.



Character: Sacrificial Party

Seven bent figures, their furs spattered with blood. All are weeping. They do not feel very cold. "We paid our price twice over. Perhaps Winterwhite will spare us now." Origen Falconbrood and the elders of the Falconsong clan.

◆ 7 Ice Bridge

Two slopes nearly touch above a deep blue gorge. Several chunks of ice cemented with snow form a natural bridge across the gap. The snow on either side is well-trodden and icy. Four megaliths stand askew, streaked with ice and snow. The capstone lies nearby, cracked in the fall.

Ambushers are advantaged, travel is disadvantaged.

The bridge is exposed to sudden gusts of wind.



Challenge: Greetings of the Skintaker

A skinned buck, its seven-point antlers bound to a tree. A skinned snow lion, its head on a pole. A skinned man, his inquisition great coat scare-crowed on a snowman. There is a skin-taker nearby (the next NPC encountered is actually a powerful wolffolk skintaker shaman).

Difficult aura test to discern the karmic residue of the skintaker. Moderate thought test to find their tracks in the driven snow.

Alternatively, spend a watch to put some distance between the travelers and the shapeshifter.



Character: Fear the White Knight

A tall figure, with flying translucent hair, its eyes like mirrors. A sword of glass upon its back. Glistening armor upon its chest. White and red fur stiff on its cloak. A white knight of Winterwhite. A seeker of tribute. Speaker-to-Northwind, It-that-hides-pain.

◆ 8 Avalanche

The valley is filled with a plug of ice gravel, churned snow, boulders, shattered trees, and probably bodies. The slopes above are swept clean by the avalanche's passage. Icy scarps, bare rock, and tree stumps remain exposed.

Travel across the avalanche is disadvantaged, the slopes are slippery.

The valley is exposed to the elements.



Challenge: Necrodancer's Ritual

Upon a barrow three wizened and tattooed oldfolk, stripped naked and glowing red in the snow, dance the massacred women and children of the May Tornay tribe awake from their graves. Iceworms elongate and thread the bones, becoming cold nerves for the dead, while frozen clay flows to become cold sinewy flesh. The risen dead caw like the Winterbird and thirst for outlander flesh, keen to avenge their deaths.

Difficult fight against the oldfolk necrodancers. Alternatively, spend a watch avoiding them, and consign the nearest baronial hamlet to death later that day.



Character: Rag Children

Four ragged children, flesh turned blue, wounds stitched with icy silk, eyes empty and white. Ice ghouls, animated by Hollowfear. "Mother gave us to Winterwhite, what will you give to Winterwhite?" Penelopa, Tuna, and Viktor Takewood. Lano "Curly" Valéry.

◆ 9 Ice Cave

The face of the mammoth glacier looms above, a wall of slowly advancing ice. Rills carve through the snow before it, where the water from a warm subterranean spring forces its way from beneath the ice. Ice caves riddle the underbelly of the glacier, offering passage to clearer terrain beyond.

Travel in the caves is difficult. Also, it's dark.

There is no wind in the caves, and it is always freezing.



Challenge: Snow Circle of Hoar and Hate

Nauseating runes chase each other upon the snow, constricting upon a hamlet or a lonely house, a curse of hoar and hate for those within. Icy undeath will follow soon.

As the circle draws tighter, those within find it harder and harder to avoid the red mist (the aura tests grow harder and harder every hour). Anything that dies within the circle rises again as a hoar ghoul (one level stronger than it was in life).

Easy test to avoid stumbling into the circle. Difficult thought test to figure out how to dispel the circle with incantations of the Green Sun and offerings of liver, blood, and mead to the Winterbird.

Alternatively, just give it a wide berth, spending one watch.



Character: Dead Hero

A hero in fine Western City armor. Skin cold and blue. "Come now, give a body, awaken the sleepers." Odilo Kolgarschild.

◆ 10 Cruel Crevasse

From peak to cliff-edge, the glacier is shorn apart by a fresh crevasse at least a ten-length wide. The bottom is deep and jagged. The lip of the crevasse is pinkish and slick, stained by algae within the ice. Only experienced climbers would dare to attempt a crossing.

Following the edge of the crevasse leads to more icefields. On the next travel action, the players must pick an icefield, or they have not yet reached the edge of the crevasse. If that is the case, the referee only plays one new challenge and one new non-player character, then puts

Everybody is disadvantaged in the crevasse.

Wind is weak in the crevasse, but it is always freezing.



Challenge: Circus of Ice Skeletons

The ice bends and shifts and breaks before you. Contorted, grinning figures rise from ground. Winterwhite's ice skeletons rise to dance and fiddle and play the greetings of their queen.

Moderate agility test to pass them by stealthily. Alternatively, wait a watch for them to leave.



Character: Possessed Prophet

A man, stumbling, half-crippled with pain, burning with fever. One eye glows bright, the other tears with panic. "I have come! I am the prophet of fire! I have returned from the vault of purification!" He is quite mad. May Qizey.

◆ I Staircase of Ice

A cascade of ice blocks the size of houses tumble from the overflowing corrie. The blocks form a titanic staircase damming the valley and ascending the mountain flanks. A lake thick with floating ice is forming behind this fresh plug in the valley.

Travel is disadvantaged, defenders are advantaged on the ice blocks.

Nooks and crannies out of the wind are easy to find, but the ice is freezing.



Challenge: Glacier Worm's Passage

A trail of supernatural cold and glistening ice marks the passage of a glacier worm. The cruel cold chills blood and freezes eyes in their sockets.

Moderate endurance test to cross the magical cold trail without suffering a point of fatigue. Alternatively, spend a watch waiting for it to dissipate or finding a path around it.



Character: Traveler In Time

A scrawny young thing in heavy robes with a bloody sword of ancient make. Its blade glistens like opal, and when it shimmers, it hews through stone. Upon his shoulder rests a white bird with blood red eyes. "This was never about you. Go along now." Carl Foundling.

◆ Q Grand Glacier

As far as the eye can see, all is white and blue. Black knives of sharpened rock peek above the ice at the edges of the glacier. The ice is covered in layers of snow that hide crevasses and pits. Downslope the ice stretches and breaks apart as begins to slide into the settled valley below.

The surfaces is treacherous to all walkers.

The cold and wind are intense upon the ice.



Challenge: Hollowfear Awakens the Ghoulfire

The roar of the famine bear shakes snow from trees. That night the ghoulish hunger is kindled in the bellies of the weak. The unconsecrated dead shake and shiver awake, driven to feed and feel warmth again.

Easy aura test to avoid the call of Hollowfear. Moderate test to spot the first stirrings of any dead being carried by the group.



Character: Dark Beggar's Champion

A monster in scaly, oily armor. A great axe like foul smoke rests lightly in its hand. It has two mouths, one white, one red. On a chain it leads three child ice ghouls. "Oh, but the Dark Beggar will be paid well tonight." Elvir Dustheart.

◆ R The Iceworm Comes

The air is filled with the screams of a thousand grinding teeth. The ground rumbles with the pounding of ten thousand fists. Sharp shards of stone and ice fall like rain. A living glacier infused with the the curse of Winterwhite flows across the land. Crevasses open and close in the iceworm like smacking mouths. Before your eyes trees, huts, roads, and boulders are scoured.

Walking on the iceworm is difficult. Everybody is disadvantaged on the iceworm.

The cold upon the iceworm is infernal.



Challenge: Angelhunt Will Eat

The stars melt through the clouds, leaving rainbow streaks upon the brain as they tunnel to the ground. Then comes the shrieking. It is the angelhunt. Shut your mind. Hide your soul. The angelhunt will take their due.

Difficult aura test to silence the quaking fear and awareness that draws the angelhunt. Alternatively, alcohol and stupefaction also work, but at a cost of 1d4-1 watches.



Character: The Old Architect

A feral figure in glistening parka, with glass helmet. Its step is tremulous and confused. Its hand clutches a gleaming silver tool. Perhaps a pistol? "What is this snow? This trickery? Have the vaults betrayed us?" Nix Zeykey.

The Final Two

Joker 1: Mother Mercy

A werewolf, shaggy and tall, loping quietly through the mist. It is decked with bandoliers and holds a Zuleiman shotgun with a firm, professional grip. Its eyes hold no malice, “Remember, when the gods fight, its us mortals that do the dying.” Lenora “Mother Mercy” Fum y.

Joker 2: Bearer of a Demiurge’s Soul

A snow ape, its head gripped in a vise of machinery and crystal. Its face contorts in a rictus as it tries to roar, but the machinery keeps it controlled. In its great arms it carries a crystal machine. It keeps repeating to itself, “Render the vermin, mold the chosen. From the many the few, anew. Anew.” Duy Slawdey.



We could use a bigger ‘joker’ graphic for this.

Escape: Last Location

The players collect their last card, completing three of a kind or four in a row. The last location is the escape from Brezim.

Referee: Presenting the Escape

Add something like this to the last location:

“A mild breeze announces the end of Winterwhite’s reach. The snow does not end yet, but in the still winterland the sound of dripping, melting ice can be heard. A bird trills. The smell of woodsmoke. A crofter? A federal outpost? Help is at hand.”

Then make a final encounter check and describe the last challenge. If the last NPC is helpful, you can ignore it. Remind the players that only one of them has to get out for them to “win”.

Scoring the Escape

To determine the escape event from Longwinter add up the value of the players’ collected set of cards. The lowest possible result is three twos (2, 2, 2) worth 6 points, the highest value is four in a row of jack, queen, king, and ace worth 50. The value of an ace varies, it can be 1 or 14 depending on its position. To determine the value of a set of three aces roll 3d12+6.

Ask the players questions to flesh out the aftermath.

6-10: A grueling escape leaves the heroes scarred and hurt. What nightmares of Winterwhite plague your dreams? Why do you feel like something darker stirred beneath the ice? How do you cope with your trauma? Were there many you betrayed on the way? Why will nobody believe you, when you talk of ice ghouls?

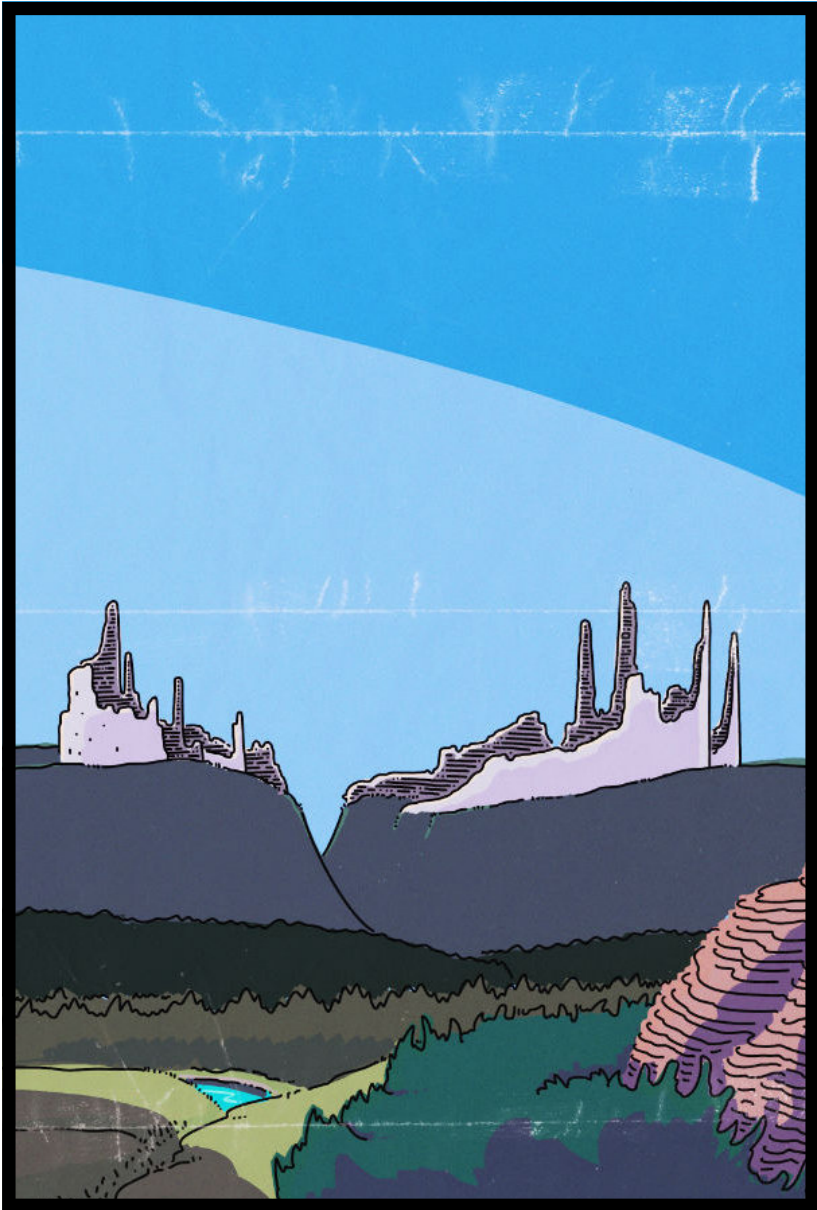
11-20: A painful journey, full of grim memories. What happened to those you left behind? Was there more you could have done? What will search parties find

when the ice lets up? Will anyone believe the icy plague ever happened? Do you have any proof?

30-40: A hard journey has made you stronger. What have you learned of this valley? What truths were hidden deep in the history, beneath the oldfolk? What will happen now to the struggle of the oldfolk? How will you prove the depths of darkness and terror that have gripped the valley? Did you help anyone survive on your way? Is there someone else who might come after you?

41-50: A heroic escape. Who did you find when you made your way out? Is there somebody they could help you save? What proof of strange ancient pacts and cultists do you have? Can you save anyone else? Will there be a mission to save more innocents? How is your journey immortalized? What is the radio-play recounting your deeds titled? How accurate is it?

Then thank them for playing, and have a warm drink against Winterwhite's chill.



Appendix: Music of Longwinter

A curated selection of songs to capture the slide from light into darkness,
from harvest to hunger.

Antonio Vivaldi. *Winter; The Four Seasons* (1725).
<https://youtu.be/TZCfydWF48c>
A classic, in all senses of the word.

Bijelo Dugme. *Hajdemo u planine; Pljuni i zapjevaj moja Jugoslavijo* (1986).
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_AFE6UZ8DHk
Going to the mountains because there is no winter there. Sure.

Black Sabbath. *Fairies Wear Boots; Paranoid* (1970).
<https://youtu.be/ab-ZNU76UDE>
Fairies? Yes, fairies. Scary fairies.

Devin Townsend. *Juular; Deconstruction* (2011).
<https://youtu.be/n-DKs0qfdEk>
It's cold inside the worm.

Ennio Morricone. *Complete Album; The Thing OST* (1982).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgiSXR0G2tQ&t=1336s>
Something about the ice and snow.

Ghost. *Rats; Prequelle* (2018).
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_4jc7A5oAc
In times of turmoil.

Grand Magus. *Hammer of the North; Hammer of the North* (2010).
<https://youtu.be/gGBpOZpmq1U>
This list would be dull without a bit of epic viking doom.

Iced Earth. *I Died For You; The Dark Saga* (1996).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUGuF8hpMQs>
Something about sacrifice and death and mistakes? Well, why not? Was the pain just too much?

If These Trees Could Talk. *Iron Glacier; The Bones of a Dying World* (2016).
<https://youtu.be/IdqRK7D3Qvc?t=1668>
Ominous post-rock for ominous times.

Jim Reeves. *The Blizzard; Tall Tales and Short Tempers* (1961).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2fyFumisiU>

Encapsulates Longwinter.

Joe Satriani. *Ice 9; Surfing With the Alien* (1987).

<https://youtu.be/eyVWOH7jIg8>

Intense riffage and the name. Blunt.

Led Zeppelin. *Immigrant Song; Led Zeppelin III* (1970).

<https://youtu.be/RINhD0oS5pk>

Of course a song that starts with “We come from the land of ice and snow” has to go on this list.

Mephistopheles. *Devotional Doom; album* (2017).

https://youtu.be/Rf4f_wBXaIk

Simon & Garfunkel. *A Hazy Shade of Winter; Bookends* (1968).

<https://youtu.be/bnZdlhUDEJo>

Because it weeps.

Stoned Jesus. *I Am The Mountain; Seven Thunders Roar* (2012).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iW1jxI6ISks>

Because it is excellent.

Stribog. *Morana; U Okovima Vječnosti* (2010).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuSWgAUb9cU>

In the realms of ice she disappears.

The Sword. *Age of Winters; album* (2006).

<https://youtu.be/eEsmxjvgcjU>

Slower and noisier than you would expect of The Sword.

Tchaikovsky. *November; The Seasons* (1875).

<https://youtu.be/h5fMMaF8pPo>

Autumn, our poor garden is all falling down, the yellowed leaves are flying in the wind.

The Unseen Guest. *Let Me In; Out There* (2004)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBG00IVrA_g

A terrifying song.

Van der Graaf Generator. *White Hammer; The Least We Can Do Is Wave To Each Other* (1970).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-6QXVFcczw>

Well, this could have gone for Witchburner, too.

Vangelis. *Other Side of Antarctica; Antarctica* (1983).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mkq_Ep5daTM

Instrumental.

Witchcraft. *Firewood; album* (2005).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P80DrCZcQ4>

Have to include Witchcraft, because of Witchburner.



Credits

This whole adventure, this whole creative endeavor, has been made possible by 432 supporters at the WizardThiefFighter patreon (<https://www.patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>). The heroes and metaheroes will be listed in the complete work.

- Luka Rejec, Seoul, November 2018 to
December 2019

“I did not mean this to happen,” wept the Baron.

“Ah, but we’ve made it through. And at least, now we’re free.”

“I don’t know if I can live like this.”

“Take all the time you need, I will keep your lands safe for you in the meantime.”

“Thank you Mira, you are the kindest vizier a baron could hope for.”

Fin.