

THE NIGHT OF THE GULE CAT

A Holiday Adventure for Mythic Iceland

by Pedro Ziviani and Leo Páll Hrafnsson

The Night of the Yule Cat



*You know the Yule Cat
- that cat is very large
We don't know where he came from
Nor where he has gone*

*He opened his eyes widely
Glowing both of them
It was not for cowards
To look into them*

*His hair sharp as needles
His back was high and bulgy
And claws on his hairy paw
Were not a pretty sight*

*Therefore the women competed
To rock and sow and spin
And knitted colorful clothes
Or one little sock*

*For the cat could not come
And get the little children
They had to get new clothes
From the grownups*

- Jóhannes úr Kötlum,
Icelandic poet

This is a short scenario based on the old Icelandic myth of the Yule Cat, the huge and monstrous black cat that eats children who don't have new clothes to wear at Christmas eve.

The story takes place during the Pagan Commonwealth period of Icelandic history, before the

Christian conversion in the year 1000. As the story starts, the pagan player characters are preparing to celebrate the mid-winter festival of Yule ("Jól" in Icelandic), which is described in Grettis Saga as being a time of "greatest mirth and joyance among men."

With minor changes, it is also possible to run this scenario for Christian player characters living in the years after the country has converted to the new faith. Early Christians in Iceland associated Yule with Christmas and celebrated it on the same date.

Timing is important in this scenario. The GM should keep track of the hours in the day. Try to build a sense of urgency by reminding the players often that they need to complete their quest before midnight, or many young lives will be lost. Do not, however, tell the players how many hours exactly they have left, as the their characters would themselves have difficulty establishing the time of the day when in the darkness of winter and under a cloudy sky.

SYNOPSIS

The scenario starts with the PCs finding out that the new clothes their children were going to wear at Yule night, tonight, have been stolen. They go to their local chieftain seeking guidance, only to find out that the same has happened to all the other farms in the region. A völva, an old woman with the gift of seeing into the future, tell the PCs that they are the ones who should be seeking the stolen



clothes, trying to find them before the Yule Cat comes to eat the children at midnight.

After talking to the children, the PCs discover that exquisite wooden toys were left behind in place of the clothes by whoever took them. The children say they have seen similar toys with their friends from the mountains, the children of the 'hidden people'.

The PCs travel to the mountains on a quest to retrieve the new clothes. On the way there they encounter a group of men being attacked by polar bears. As they try to help, the men vanish into thin air. It is a trap. After fighting the bears they finally meet the hidden people, and go into their farmhouse. The children of the hidden people explain that they were tricked by a group of elven soldiers to steal the new clothes from the human children, and that the soldiers then took the clothes from them.

Following the clues, the PCs find a cave and inside it they find the group of elven soldiers. The must fight and retrieve the children's new clothes.

Once they have the clothes, the PCs travel back to the chieftains farm, getting there right at midnight. They must distract the monstrous Yule Cat long enough so that all children can be dressed in their new clothes and thus spared the terrible fate of being eaten alive by the gigantic beast.

If they act with bravery, the PCs might just be able to save the Yule celebrations.

What is Really Going On

A group of elven soldiers from coming from *Álfheimur*, the world of the elves, was on an exploration mission in *Miðgarður*, the world of men. They met a group of children belonging to elven families who had long ago decided to emigrate from *Álfheimur* and had settled here in mythic Iceland. There is an uneasy peace between the royal elven houses of the elf world, and those who abandoned that world and are now called 'the hidden people' by the humans.

The soldiers decided to stir a little trouble. They knew about the the Yule Cat and the magical binding that compels it to eat any human children who are not wearing new clothes at Yule night,

so they tricked those elven children into stealing the new clothes belonging to their human friends. Later, they took the clothes from the children, and they plan to hide them.

Once those elven soldiers find out that a group of humans is getting close to find out about what they have done, they will set a trap for them.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

The player characters are all established householders. Each and every one of them are farmers who own their own land. Also, they are married and have each a few children of their own.

It is not important where in Iceland the player character's farms are located, but they must be all in the same region and belonging to the same *goðorð* (chieftaincy).

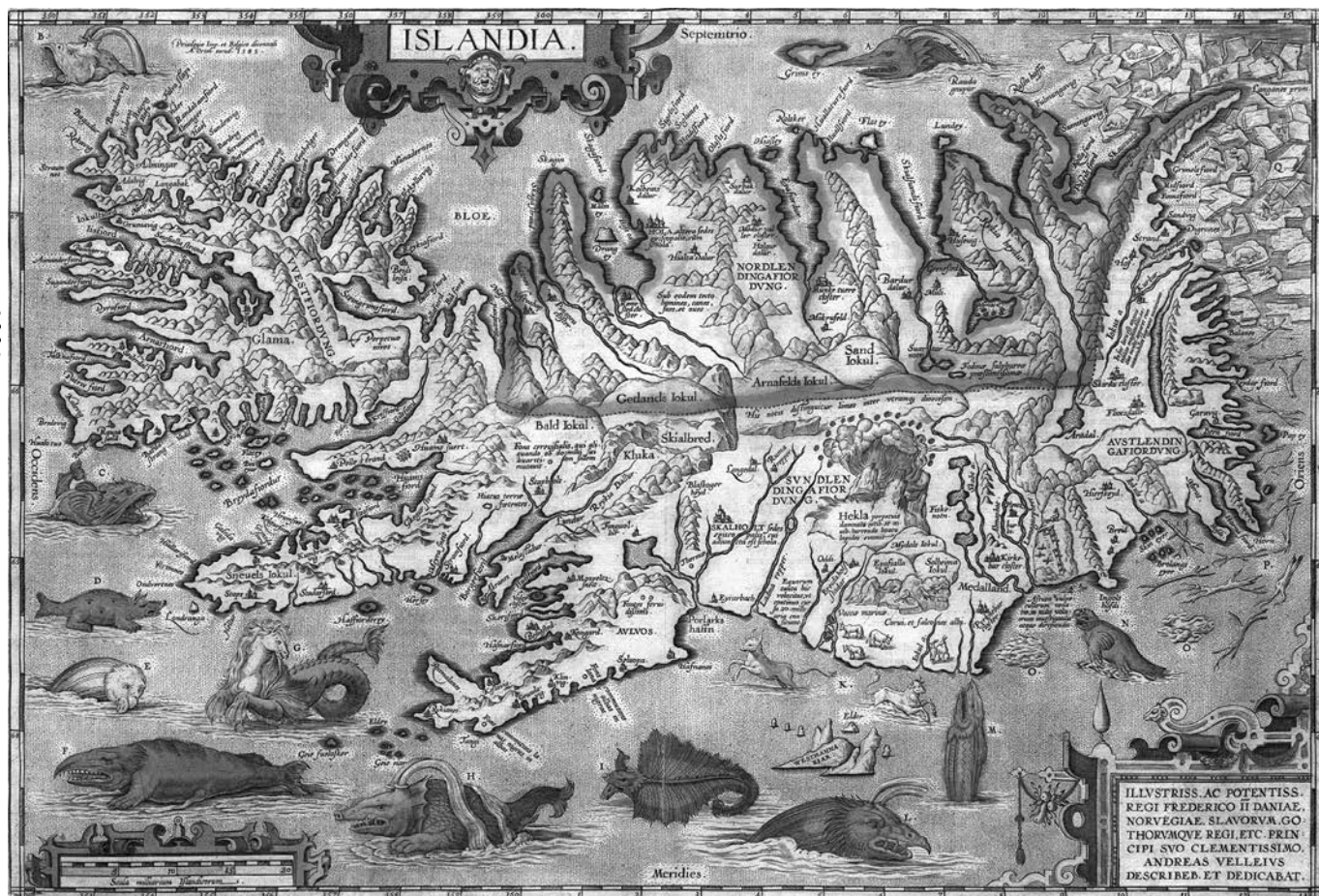
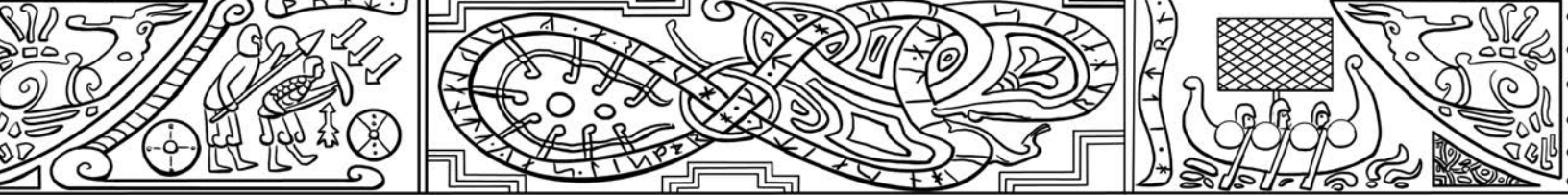
SCENE 1: CLOTHES GONE

It is the morning of the day before the start of Yule celebrations. All the family is up in this cold and dark winter morning. The wind howls outside and snow is falling.

This is a busy morning at the farms of each of the player characters. Each family has been preparing for tonight's Yule feast for several weeks. Cattle has been slaughtered, *skýr* (a type of yogurt) has been prepared, and shark meat has been carefully rotten to the exact point, and urinated on for optimal flavour, as tradition demands. The children have been busy for months as well, making the clothes they will wear tonight and for the next few months after that, out of the wool from the farm's sheep.

Just as the player characters are getting ready for today's work at the farm, in each of their homes, the children scream, terrified. The children are shaking and crying; saying between sobs that they don't want to die.





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Let each of the players roleplay the interaction with their own children. The GM should try to give to each child a distinct personality and memorable description, so that they will seem more real to the players and so lend a greater sense of importance to the quest to protect them throughout the adventure.

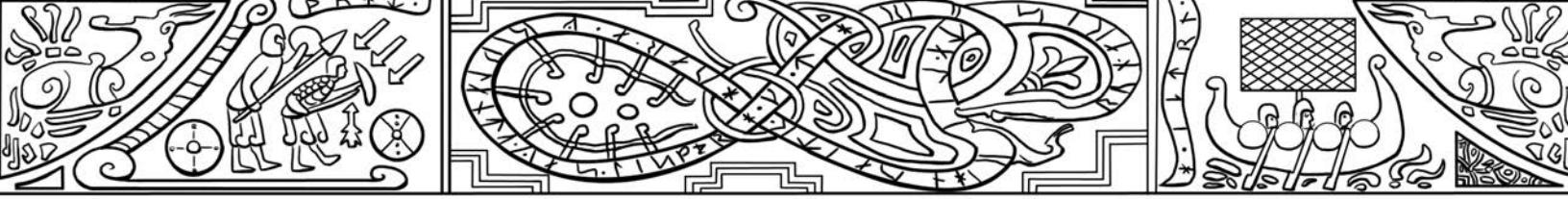
In order to calm the children down, it is necessary a successful Easy roll of Charisma (APP x5). The Charisma characteristic measures interpersonal reactions, and so it's a good fit here. Once they have stopped screaming, the children explain that when they opened their wooden trunks they realized in horror that their new clothes, that they should be wearing later today, were missing.

The player characters can look around for themselves for the cause of their children's fright. A successful Easy roll of Spot means they see the

open wooden trunk where the children keep their clothes, and see that it is empty.

The children have good reason to be this frightened. Everyone knows it that children without new clothes in Yule night get eaten by a terrible monster called the 'Yule Cat'. The player characters themselves have been using the threat of the Yule Cat to persuade their children to work hard so that they would finish making their clothes in time for Yule.

Now, there is only one thing to do. The player characters can't individually hope to find who stole the clothes in time by themselves. So a decision is quickly made by the adults in each of the households to travel to the farm of the goði (chieftain), with all the family. The goði will have the resources to know what to do, or at least he can organize an



armed force to protect the children from the monster.

SCENE 2: ARRIVING AT THE GOÐI'S HOUSE

The player characters arrive separately with their respective families at the farm of their goði, Haki Skaftisson. (if using this adventure with an already established group, just replace the goði's name with the one they are already familiar with.)

The goði is a rich man, by Icelandic standards, meaning that he owns all of forty cows. His farm is comprised of one large longhouse, and three more houses, one being a temple, and the other two are used for keeping the horses, pigs and sheep inside during the winter.

When the player characters arrive at the farm, at around 9:00 am, they are surprised to see two dozen horses hitched outside.

Going inside the large longhouse they find most of the men, women and children of the region gathered there. The goði is seating a his high chair at the end of the longhouse, and he is locked into a heated debate with men who are seated along the wooden benches. The women and children are gathered in the opposite end of the long houses, where mothers and grandmothers are trying to calm down the terrified children.

The player characters can take their seat on the wooden benches. This is the moment when they meet for the first time in this scenario. They know each other as neighbors, and respect one another. They should talk now and exchange details of their experiences this morning. No doubt, they will be surprised to discover that it was not only one farm that had the children's clothes robbed this morning, and will quickly discover that the exact same thing has happen to all the farms in the region.

Finally, the goði says. "Be quiet, all of you! I realize that the situation is grave, and we must retrieve those new clothes or all the children of

this region will die tonight. But yet, we do not know where to start looking." - At that moment the men erupt in shouting again, each one of them angrily offering their idea of what should be done. The goði stands up and in a quick movement he pulls his sword from his belt. The sword gleams in the light of the fire that burns along the center of the room. "Be quiet, or I swear I will cut off the tongues of all of you and I will feed them to the pigs!" - The room gets quiet once more, and he sits down. Still holding his sword, he calms down and speaks again. "We must ask the gods for guidance. As fate would have it, Hrafnhildur Bragisdóttir, my grandmother, is here today, having travelled from the West Fjords for the Yule celebrations. She is well-known for being a völvu, a great prophetess. I will ask her to consult the gods on what we should do to save our children. "

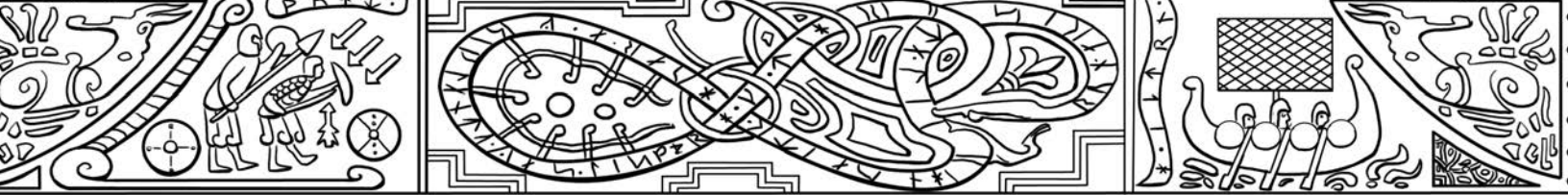
SCENE 3: THE VÖLVA SPEAKS

After a brief wait, the women of the household walk into the longhouse bringing with them an elderly woman. She is wearing a long black cloak, and she walks with difficulty, putting the end of a staff on the ground for support herself with every step, bent with the weight of old age.

All the men assembled in the hall stand up in respect for the old völvu. The goði rushes over to the old woman, his grandmother, and helps her as she walks the length of the hall. Finally she sits on the chieftain's high seat, an honor that no other person in the country would have while the chieftain is alive.

The goði says: "Hrafnhildur, grandmother, I bid you listen to me in this Loki-cursed times. The new clothes of the children have been stolen, and tonight the Yule Cat is coming. I beg you to ask the gods... How can we fight the beast? How can we kill the monster and save the children?"





About a dozen women take position around the high seat. The old woman starts singing. At first it's only a low buzzing and then it grows louder. She is joined by the other women, who sing and dance around the old seeress. The dance is like nothing the player character have ever seen, it's strange and mesmerizing. Of the singing they can only understand a few words about the gods and the ancient times when Miðgarður was young.

Finally, after what seems like a long while, suddenly, the old woman shouts for the dancing to stop. The women around her come to a halt. The völva then says:

“The Yule Cat is an ancient creature of enormous power. It cannot be killed. You must find the new clothes that have been stolen, it is the only way to save the children! The gods have blessed a few of you with the chance to complete this task...”

She then points at each of the player characters in turn, saying “you”, “...and you”, and so on until she's pointed to all the player characters. “You are the chosen ones. You must find the children's clothes before it is too late, or you will be the ones to fight the Cat when it comes! But, beware of the frost giant!”

The völva then collapses on the goði's high seat, exhausted. The goði asks for everyone to leave, as his grandmother needs rest. To the player characters he says they must get on with their task at once.

SCENE 4: INVESTIGATION

The player character may feel a bit lost at first. Much responsibility rests on their shoulders and yet they have don't have any clues yet as to what happened to the children's clothes. Let the players discuss among themselves and decide where to start.

The Scene of the Crime

A natural place to start the investigations would be looking at the place where the clothes were being stored.

In order to do this, the player characters may travel back to their own homes if they wish to do that, or indeed to any farm in this region of the country. Still, they may choose to start their investigations right here at the goði's farm, as the new clothes belonging to his children have also gone missing.

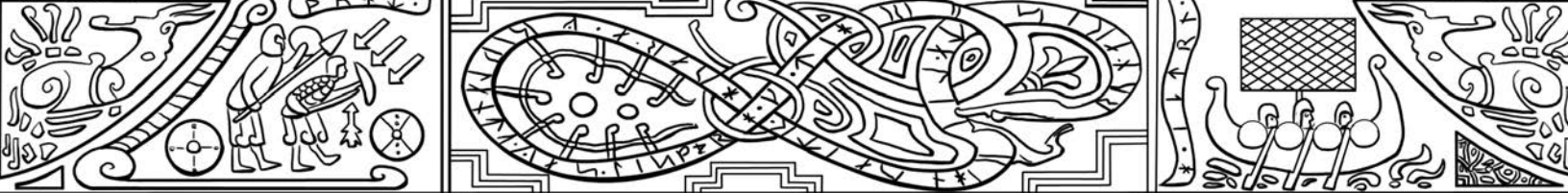
At the goði's farm the children's clothes were kept in a large wooden chest in the main house. It is an ornate chest, carved with battle scenes, and when closed it serves as a sitting bench. Inside the chest the PCs can find sewing tools and a small amount of threaded wool, as well as the wooden bowls that the farm's children eat their meals from. Among these mundane items, resting under one of the bowls, they find a few items that attract their attention - beautiful toy animals exquisitely carved from wood and finely painted with vibrant colors.

Talking to the Children

If the player characters decide to interrogate the household's children, they may do so. It's probably a good idea that one of the farm's adults be present, such as the mother of the children.

When asked about their fine toys, the children say that they only found those in the trunk this morning, and that they remember seeing similar toys with their friends from the mountains. Players characters may guess at this point that those friends are children of the hidden people. The GM may also ask for a roll of Knowledge (Myth) and pass on that information to the players, adding that it is generally believed that children having friends among the hidden-folk, the elves, is a blessing - hidden people are known to secretly watch over their old friends for life and provide them with help in moments of desperation.

If asked whether they have exchanged their new clothes for toys, the children will deny they have done that, which is the truth.



If pressed, the children will reveal that they do know where those friends live. It is not safe, however, to travel with children in this weather, and the player characters will have to travel there alone. The location described by the children is only two hours travel by foot in summer weather, but now in the winter only Óðinn knows how long it will take or if they can even make it all the way there in safety.

SCENE 5: TRAVEL

The place pointed by the children as the home of their friends is on a hill on the top of the valley. The snow is so thick on the ground that horses cannot be used on this journey. The player characters will have to travel on skis.

There is a fierce and cold wind blowing from the north, against the direction the player characters are travelling, and more snow is falling. Also, depending on the time they start their journey, it is likely that they will travel mostly in darkness. There is only about three hours of daylight in Iceland at this time of the year.

The GM should ask for a roll of Ski skill. If all players succeed, the group will take about four hours to arrive at the top of the valley where they want to get. If one or more fails the roll, the entire group gets slowed down and the journey takes one more hour, making a total journey time of five hours. If one or more of the characters rolls a fumble, that means the character has slipped and twisted his ankle, and the journey now takes even longer, making for a total of six hours.

The GM should strive to describe how difficult and taxing this journey is, as well as dangerous. Tell the players that their characters hear strange noises and at times they think they can see large dark shapes moving in the night. Everyone knows that it is not safe to travel in the darkness of winter - if the weather doesn't kill you, there is a good chance that the mythical creatures will - but this is a desperate situation they find themselves in.

Ski Skill

Skiing (25%) [Physical] - A common skill in Viking Age Iceland. For cross-country skiing, unmatched skis are used. On the left foot a long gliding ski is used, while a short, fur-covered kicking ski is used on the right foot. A single pole is used for balance. Skiing downhill for sport is rarely done.

SCENE 6: A TRAP!

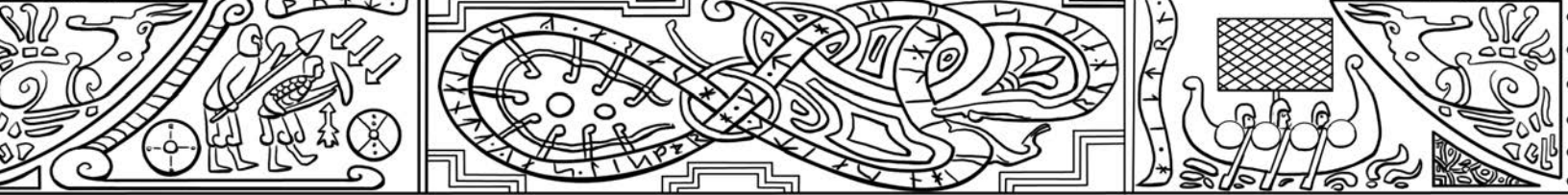
When the player characters are getting close to their destination, they find they can see some commotion at a distance: a group of four people are fighting three polar bears. Not much detail can be seen from this far, however, with their vision obscured by the falling snow.

If the player characters hesitate to run and help the people being attacked by the bears, remind them that they are still in the valley where they have their farms, and that these could thus be people who they know or even be their relatives. Also, the Norse sense of honor should compel them to fight to protect those people.

When the player characters get closer, the GM should ask them to make a Spot skill roll. Those who succeed notice that the people being attacked wear strange armor which covers their whole bodies, save for the head, in dark layered plates which look almost like lizard scales. They are also somewhat shorter than the average Ice-lander, and are defending themselves with spears. Those PCs who failed the Spot roll never notice these details, having had their view obscured by the falling snow and being distracted by the threat of the polar bears.

Just before the PCs reach them, those strange people disappear. They simply vanish into thin air. The bears are confused by that for a brief moment, but then, already in a blood rage, they turn their attention to the PCs and attack them.





You can find the stats for polar bears on Mythic Iceland page 217. Alternatively, there are stats for bears on page 334 of the Basic Roleplaying rulebook.



SCENE 7: MEETING WITH THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

After the PCs have dealt with the polar bears, they see two men approaching on foot from the north. They are dressed in typical Norse winter clothes. Even though they are not wearing any skis, they seem to have no problem walking on the deep, soft snow. They are not carrying weapons of any kind.

The two men identify themselves as Heimir and Vöggur, and they offer to take them to their farm where they may take shelter and have their wounds treated. Heimir, the older of the two, says their house is very close, and just as the PCs look at the direction he is pointing his finger at, they see a farmhouse standing there, less than 200 meters away. There could swear there was nothing there but a large rock only a moment before.

If asked whether they are hidden-people, the men will confirm that they are indeed sometimes called that by the people who came from the lands to the south and settled here in this island. If asked where they come from, they will just say they are from an island just like this one but which lies very far away. If pressed further on the subject they will say they are from another world which hangs from Yggdrasil, the world tree, just this world, Miðgarður, does.

Inside the house, the PCs meet a beautiful woman and three young children. The house looks fairly normal, if not for the total lack of any weapons anywhere inside and for the unusual high quality of the construction.

When the PCs tell of their predicament, the hidden people react with surprise and concern. The adults confront the children about stealing the new clothes from the human children. The three young kids explain that they did not mean

to cause any trouble, but that they had been told by the “other people of ours” that it was tradition among the humans to exchange clothes for surprise gifts in this day. Those people, they say, suggested they take the clothes from all the children in the region and leave them toys. They had been told that the children would be very happy with the surprise.

The adults of the house reprimand the children for talking to those they know to be the elves from Álheimur. “I am very disappointed in you. I told you to never talk to those ‘other people of ours’, the ones dressed in armor and carrying weapons. They are not our friends.”

Heimir will apologize to the PCs and explain to them that those people the children are talking about are from the same world where they used to live in themselves before them left to come live here in Miðgarður. They are most likely, he explains, soldiers in a military expedition into this world. There is an uneasy peace between those who emigrated from Álheimur, the hidden people such as Heimir and his family, and the royal elven houses from their old world.

When asked about the whereabouts of the clothes, the children explain that the “other people of ours”, the soldiers, took the bags of clothes from them when they were coming home earlier this morning. The children will also mention in what direction the soldiers went - with that information, any PCs succeeding on a roll of Knowledge (Regional) will know that in this weather it is very likely that they were making for a cave not too far from here. If no PC succeeds on the Knowledge roll, Heimir will volunteer this information.

SCENE 9: CONFRONTING THE ELVES

The journey to the cave, in the dark of the winter, takes just over an hour.



It is a small round cave, measuring around 20 meters in diameter. There is a hot spring inside the cave, making it a popular bathing site for people travelling through this part of the country. During the winter time, this place is rarely visited due to its relatively isolated location.

As the PCs get near enough to see the entrance of the cave, describe to them a narrow passage on the foot of a mountain, through which they can see light and heated air coming from inside.

If they stand to the side of the door, they can take a peek inside and see the four elven soldiers gathered around a fire they have lit right by the side of the hot spring. One of the soldiers, sitting on the ground, is holding a spear which has cuts of meat stuck on its blade, and he holds it so the meat is just above the flames. The bloody carcass of a sheep lies by the back wall of the cave. The sheep must have been stolen from a farm nearby, maybe even the farm belonging to one of the PCs. They are talking amongst themselves in a language the PCs cannot understand, but seem to be in good spirits - perhaps they are congratulating themselves on the prank they pulled on the children.

At the back of the cave there are also three cloth bags. These contain the stolen new clothes of the human children.

The cave is too small for the PCs to sneak in and steal the bags without being noticed, unless they have a runemaster with them who can somehow magically conceal their presence.

If they just run into the cave ready for a fight, they can catch the elven soldiers by surprise. The soldiers will not surrender and will not listen to anything the PCs have to say. As soon as they notice the PCs, they will pick up their weapons, which are lying on the ground next to them, and fight. The PCs can use the element of surprise and have a free first attack on the elves. They will fight until two of them are dead, then the other two will turn invisible and flee, leaving the stolen clothes behind.

See Mythic Iceland page 151 for stats on Álheimur elves. If you don't have Mythic Iceland, you can use a soldier template with 6-point darkened hard leather armor, armed with short swords, and able to use the following spells from

the Basic Roleplaying rulebook: Light 100%, Frost 60%, Illusion 40%, Wall 60%.

SCENE 10: TRIP BACK

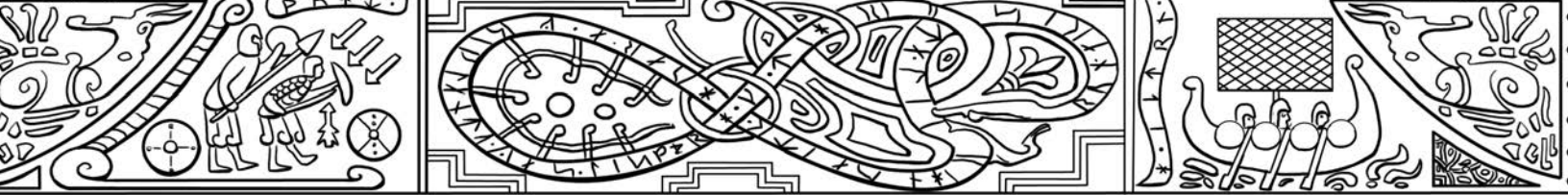
It's time to run back to the goði's house. The journey should take them just over three hours. The PCs are not sure how much time they have before midnight, when the Yule Cat will come and eat the children. It's dark and overcast, so they can't use the sun or stars to accurately measure the time. They can only pray to the gods that they are not too late.

To make matters even more desperate, they face a fierce blizzard. The GM should remind the players at this point of the words from the völva earlier today, to beware of the frost giant. Allow the PCs to make Knowledge (Regional) or even Spot roll in order for them to find a cave somewhere along the way where they can take shelter through the worse of the blizzard. If they insist on pressing on traveling instead of taking shelter, they must make a Stamina roll every hour or take 2 hit points of damage due to frostbite each time they fail a roll, even if they are well dressed for the cold weather.

From the cave where they take shelter, the PCs can see through the falling snow the outline of a giant. It is so huge that all they can see through the falling snow is the giant's body from the waist down. The ground shakes as the giant walks past and beyond the valley. The blizzard follows him. This is none other than Hrym, one of the guardians of mythic Iceland, and king of the frost giants, who brings winter with him everywhere he goes.

After the giant has passed and the ground no longer shakes, the PCs can resume their desperate run over the snow, traveling as fast as they can on skis towards the goði's house.





SCENE 11: GETTING CLOSE

As the PCs get closer to the lower part of the valley, and to the goði's house, they hear a very loud and bone-chilling meow that resonates down the valley. The sound is made by Yule Cat as it too hurries towards the house, and is so loud that it causes an avalanche just as the PCs are clearing the last of the hill sides. Ask for a Skii skill roll from all the PCs. Those who fail get stuck on the snow and need to be pulled out by their friends on a roll of Effort.



SCENE 12: FIGHTING THE YULE CAT

Unless the PCs get severely delayed, they should arrive at the chieftain's farmhouse at the same time as the Yule Cat.

The first thing they see as they arrive at the farm is a huge dark shape in the night, and very large cat eyes, about four meters above the ground, that glow an intense yellow. There is chaos, and people and children are running to the relative safety of the farm houses.

The Yule Cat is just as tall as the biggest longhouse at the farm. It is extremely strong and very fast. The creature is not concerned with fighting the adults, it came for the children who are not wearing new clothes and it will hunt them down wherever they hide. The Cat is as old as mythic Iceland, and is too strong to be destroyed by mundane weapons. The best hope the PCs have is to split the group, so that some of them distract the Cat while the others run to each of the houses and give the children their new clothes.

There are four house in the farm. In the big longhouse there are eight children, and on the other smaller houses there are three, four and five kids

hiding, respectively. There are a total of 20 children.

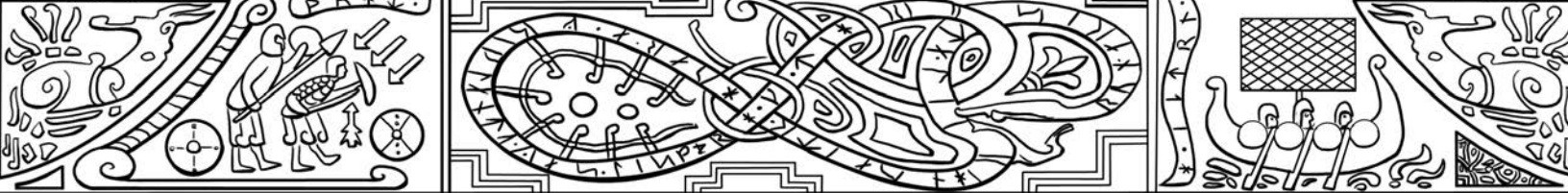
It takes the gigantic Cat only one combat round to destroy the roof of a house with its enormous claws. Once a roof has been destroyed, the Cat will eat the children inside who are not wearing new clothes, at the rate of one child per combat round. Once it has eaten all the children without new clothes in one house, it will move to the next house with one mighty jump.

If the Cat is hit by an attack from a player character, the creature will stop what it is doing for the next combat round and focus on the attacker. It is not interested in killing the human adults, but instead it aims to hit a blow of its paw to get the pesky human away. It has 80% chance of hitting, and can attack twice per combat round. Those attacks can be dodged. If hit, the person is sent flying through the air but lands on soft snow and so suffers only 1D4 hit points damage. After being hit by the Cat, it takes two combat rounds for someone to get back up on his feet and run back to the creature to continue the fight.

If a runemaster attacks the Cat directly with magic, the runic spell will fail to take the expected effect, but the Cat is momentarily dazed by the magical energy that just hit it, and takes one full combat round to shake that off, unable to act that for that time. Magical rune scripts that effect the environment, aiming to affect the cat indirectly, still take effect as expected, and the results are left up to the GM to imagine.

When the Cat is struck three times by attackers, it decides to get away from the house it is attacking at the moment and come back to it later. The great beast will jump high into the air and land right next to another house. This takes one full combat round.

While the Cat is being attacked and thus delayed, ideally one or more of the PCs are running into the houses and dressing up the children with their new clothes. The adult NPCs inside the house are too panicked to help properly with this task. Once a PC carrying enough clothes gets into a house, ask for an Agility roll. On a success, two of the children in that house get dressed in one combat round; on a failure, no one gets dressed that combat round; on fumble, one of the clothes are



ripped and can no longer be worn until a successful roll of Craft can be made to mend it. A critical roll means all the kids in the house are dressed in one combat round. This roll already takes into consideration NPCs trying to help as best as they can. Remember to check the number of children in each house as listed above.

Running between the houses takes two full combat rounds, as the knee-deep snow slows movement down. If someone runs out of the house with one of the children who are not wearing new clothes, the Cat will give chase, knock down the adult, and eat the child.

Once there are no more children not wearing new clothes, as a result of them getting dressed by the PCs or having been all eaten, or most likely a combination of the two, the Yule Cat will decide that its work here is done. It's time for it to move to the next farm somewhere else in the country where there are children not wearing new clothes. The huge Cat jumps up and away from the farm and runs into the darkness of the night with amazing speed and grace. A series of loud meows can be heard at a distance, fading fast.

SCENE 13: WAS YULE SAVED?

Hopefully the PCs will have acted fast and saved Yule! Or at least managed to save some of the children.

BUT WHY CAN'T WE KILL THE YULE CAT?!

During playtest, one of the groups complained that they felt frustrated by the fact that they couldn't kill the Yule Cat during the final confrontation. Perhaps that group was used to other games where characters usually kill everything and take its stuff. But, this is mythic Iceland, and some of the great creature of legend that live here cannot be killed, at least not by such mundane means. Still there is great fun to be had in fighting a mighty creature of myth such as the Yule Cat and to survive to tell the story - maybe skalds will even tell this story at the courts of kings, and write Sagas about this night. Also worth remembering is that saving Yule would be seen as a great heroic deed, no doubt raising the characters' Status in mythic Iceland society to a whole new level.



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These tales of weird fiction blend elements wrung from science fiction, dark fantasy, and horror. Some stories are bent toward bizarre science, others are Lovecraftian Mythos tales, and yet others are just twisted. They all share an underlying darkness, pushing Lovecraftian science and themes in new directions. While H.P. Lovecraft incorporated the astronomy and physics ideas of his day (e.g., cosmos-within-cosmos and other dimensions), these stories speculate about modern science: quantum optics, particle physics, chaos theory, string theory, and so forth. Full of unique ideas, bizarre plot twists, and fascinating characters, these tales show a feel for pacing and structure, and a wild sense of humor. They always surprise and delight.

The Yith Cycle

#6047 ISBN 1-56882-327-4 \$16.95

The planet Yith is the home of the Great Race, a place inspiring H.P. Lovecraft and other authors to pen classic tales of travel through time and space. In "The Shadow Out of Time" there is implicit a very different view of Homo Sapiens' origins, derived directly from the modern mythology of the Theosophical Society. Lovecraft often mentioned Theosophy as a kind of foil and precedent for his own Mythos in his stories. This collection includes tales of Yith both famous and obscure, replete with time travel, mind-exchange, and thrilling vistas of primordial history set in context that enables new readers and long-time Lovecraftian fans alike to enjoy them.

Includes short stories by H.P. Lovecraft, August W. Derleth, Richard L. Tierney and many others.

Mysteries of the Worm

#6037 ISBN 1-56882-176-X \$15.95

"H.P. Lovecraft — like his creation, Cthulhu — never truly died. He and his influence live on, in the work of so many of us who were his friends and acolytes. Today we have reason for rejoicing in the widespread revival of his canon. . . . If a volume such as this has any justification for its existence, it's because Lovecraft's readers

continue to search out stories which reflect his contribution to the field of fantasy. . . . [The tales in this book] represent a lifelong homage to HPL. . . . I hope you'll accept them for what they were and are — a labor of love." —Robert Bloch

Robert Bloch has become one with his fictional counterpart Ludvig Prinn: future generations of readers will know him as an eldritch name hovering over a body of nightmare texts. To know them will be to know him. And thus we have decided to release a new and expanded third edition of Robert Bloch's *Mysteries of the Worm*. This collection contains four more Mythos tales — "The Opener of the Way", "The Eyes of the Mummy", "Black Bargain", and "Philtre Tip" — not included in the first two editions.

The Yellow Sign & Other Stories

#6023 ISBN 1-56882-126-3 \$19.95

This massive collection brings together the entire body of Robert W. Chambers' weird fiction works including material unprinted since the 1890's. Chambers is considered a landmark author in the field of horror literature for his King in Yellow collection, which itself represents but a small portion of his weird fiction work. These stories are intimately connected with the Cthulhu Mythos introducing Hali, Carcosa, and Hastur.

This book contains all the immortal tales of Robert W. Chambers, including "The Repairer of Reputations", "The Yellow Sign", and "The Mask". These titles are often found in survey anthologies. In addition to the six stories reprinted from *The Yellow Sign* (1895), this book also offers more than two dozen other stories and episodes, about 650 pages in all. These narratives rarely have appeared in print. Some have not been published in nearly a century.

A Chambers novel, *The Slayer of Souls* (1920), is not included in this short story collection.

The White People & Other Tales

#6035 ISBN 1-56882-147-6 \$14.95

THE BEST WEIRD TALES OF ARTHUR MACHEN, VOL 2. — Born in Wales in 1863, Machen was a London journalist for much of his life. Among his fiction, he may be best known for the allusive, haunting title story of this book, "The White People", which H. P. Lovecraft thought to be the second greatest horror story ever written (after Blackwood's "The Willows"). This wide ranging collection also includes the crystalline novelette "A Fragment of Life", the "Angel of Mons" (a story so coolly reported that it was imagined true by millions in the grim initial days of the Great War), and "The Great Return", telling of the stately visions

which graced the Welsh village of Llantrissant for a time. Four more tales and the poetical "Ornaments in Jade" are all finely told. This is the second of three Machen volumes edited by S. T. Joshi and published by Chaosium; the first volume is *The Three Impostors*. 312 pages.

CALL OF CTHULHU RPG

CALL OF CTHULHU is a horror roleplaying game set in the world of the Cthulhu Mythos, as described by H. P. Lovecraft, the father of modern horror.

Call of Cthulhu, sixth ed.

#23106 ISBN 0-56882-181-6 \$34.95

CORE PRODUCT — The Great Old Ones ruled the earth aeons before the rise of humankind. Originally they came from the gulfs of space and were cast down by even greater beings. Remains of their cyclopean cities and forbidden knowledge can still be found on remote islands in the Pacific, buried amid the shifting sands of vast deserts, and in the frigid recesses of the polar extremes. Now they sleep — some deep within the enveloping earth and others beneath the eternal sea, in the drowned city of R'lyeh, preserved in the waters by the spells of mighty Cthulhu. When the stars are right they will rise, and once again walk this Earth.

Call of Cthulhu is Chaosium's classic roleplaying game of Lovecraftian horror in which ordinary people are confronted by the terrifying and alien forces of the Cthulhu Mythos. *Call of Cthulhu* uses Chaosium's *Basic Roleplaying* system, easy to learn and quick to play. This bestseller has won dozens of game-industry awards and is a member of the *Academy of Adventure Game Design Hall of Fame*. In 2011 *Call of Cthulhu* celebrated its 30th anniversary. In 2003 *Call of Cthulhu* was voted the #1 Gothic/Horror RPG of all time by the Gaming Report.com community. *Call of Cthulhu* is well-supported by an ever-growing line of high quality game supplements.

This is a softcover 6th edition of this classic horror game, completely compatible with all of previous editions and supplements for *Call of Cthulhu*. This is a complete roleplaying game in one volume. All you need to play is this book, some dice, imagination, and your friends.

Call of Cthulhu Keeper's Screen

#23120 ISBN 1-56882-345-2 \$15.95

A 3-Panel Keeper's Screen mounted on thick hardcover stock that folds out to

33 inches wide. One side, intended to face the players, portrays an investigative scene. The other side collects and summarizes important rules and statistics, to help ease the Keeper's task. The package includes a 22"x34" *Mythos Vade Mecum* poster by the mad french artists Christian Grussi and El Théo, postulating relationships between the deities and minions of the Cthulhu Mythos.

H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham

#8803 ISBN 1-56882-165-4 \$28.95

"Behind everything crouched the brooding, festering horror of the ancient town . . . the changeless, legend-haunted city of Arkham, with its clustering gambrel roofs that sway and sag over attics where witches hid from the King's men in the dark, olden days of the Province.

It was always a very bad time in Arkham . . ."

—H. P. Lovecraft

Arkham is a small town along the Massachusetts coast—the setting favored by author Howard Phillips Lovecraft in his tales of monstrous horror. All in all a quiet place, Arkham is best-known as the home of Miskatonic University, an excellent school becoming known for its esoteric and disturbing volumes residing in its library's Restricted Collection. These tomes form the foundation of all current efforts to thwart the dire desires of the Mythos legion.

H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham contains extensive background information about this haunted New England town — written to be used by serious investigators as a base from which to further explore the mysteries of the Cthulhu Mythos. Pertinent buildings, useful people, and important locations are described in depth. A 17x22" players' map of Arkham is bound into the back, and four thrilling adventures complete the package.

Includes the H.P. Lovecraft short story "The Dreams in the Witch-house" (1933).

H. P. Lovecraft's Dunwich

#8802 ISBN 1-56882-164-6 \$25.95

Dunwich is a small village located along the Miskatonic, upriver from Arkham. Until 1806, Dunwich was a thriving community, boasting many mills and the powerful Whateley family.

Those among the Whateleys came to know dark secrets about the world, and they fell into the worship of unwholesome creatures from other times and places. Retreating to the hills and forests surrounding the town, they betrayed their uncorrupted kin.

Prosperity fled, and a dark despair seized the people. What remains is a skeleton town, mills closed, its citizens without hope or future. However, secrets of the Mythos survive, to be discovered by brave and enterprising investigators.

H.P. Lovecraft's Dunwich begins with "The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft's masterful tale of life in the town and its surrounds. It expands upon the story with extensive information about the town: pertinent buildings, useful people, and important locations are described in detail. A 17x22" map depicts the area for miles around, and two scenarios are included. All statistics and gameplay notes for d20 Cthulhu are also provided.

Keeper's Companion II

#2395 ISBN 1-56882-186-7 \$23.95

A CORE BOOK FOR KEEPERS, VOL. 2—New to Call of Cthulhu? A battle-scarred veteran of many campaigns? Here are essential background articles useful to most keepers.

"The History Behind Prohibition" — A lengthy article bringing anti-alcohol advocates, law enforcement, gangsters, rum-runners, and consumers into focus. Lots of good stories.

"The Keeper's Master List of *Call of Cthulhu* Scenarios" — Lists are alphabetical by the following topics: scenario era; creature / maniacs / great old ones; legendary heroes and villains; cults / sects / secret societies; Mythos tomes; fictitious locations; and Mythos books from publishers other than Chaosium.

"Iron: a Survey of Civilian Small Arms Used in the 1890's, 1920's, and the Present". Practicalities of firearms; common malfunctions; new skills Handloading and Gunsmithing. Firearms considered are likely to be encountered or thought specially useful by investigators. Insightful discussions of nine specific rifles, five shotguns, ten handguns, a sniper rifle, and the Thompson submachine gun. Hot load damage values for most weapons, along with comparative ratings for noise, maintenance, powder, reloading per round, more, plus standard stats.

"Medical Examiner's Report" discusses the unusual corpse recovered by the Essex County Sheriff's Department, as does "Dr. Lippincot's Diary" from another point of view. Also a short article on deep one / human reproduction.

Brian Sammon's "Mythos Collector" submits write-ups for the *Book of Lod*, *Chronike von Nath*, *Confessions of the Mad Monk Clinthanus*, *Letters of Nestar*, *The Nyhargo Codex*, *Soul of Chaos*, *Testament of Carnamago*, *The Tunneler Below*, *Visions From Yaddith*, *Von denen Verdammten*, as well as for more than a dozen new spells.

And More: "Mythos ex Machina" gathers about forty examples of alien technology from Cthulhu supplements. Gordon Olmstead-Dean outlines the odd connections between H. P. Lovecraft and the Satanists HPL never knew, in "LaVey, Satanism, and the Big Squid". Indexed.

Basic Roleplaying

Welcome to Chaosium's *Basic Roleplaying* system, a book that collects in one place rules and options for one of the original and most influential role playing game systems in the world.

Basic Roleplaying

#2026 ISBN 1-56882-347-9 \$44.95

A CORE HARDCOVER BOOK—This book comprises a roleplaying game system, a framework of rules aimed at allowing players to enact a sort of improvisational radio theater—only without microphones—and with dice determining whether the characters succeed or fail at what they attempt to do. In roleplaying games, one player takes on the role of the gamemaster (GM), while the other player(s) assume the roles of player characters (PCs) in the game. The gamemaster also acts out the roles of characters who aren't being guided by players: these are called non-player characters (NPCs).

From its origin, *Basic Roleplaying* was designed to be intuitive and easy to play. Character attributes follow a 3D6 curve, and the other *Basic Roleplaying* mechanics are even simpler. Virtually all rolls determining success or failure of a task are determined via the roll of percentile dice. This means that there's less fiddling with dice of different types, and the concept of a percentile chance of success is extremely easy for beginners and experienced players to grasp. There aren't many easier ways to say a character has a 70% chance of succeeding at an activity.

The system is remarkably friendly to newcomers. It is easy to describe the basics of the game system, and the percentile mechanics, to non-gamers.

Players of other game systems often find *Basic Roleplaying* to be much less mechanistic and less of a barrier to the actual act of roleplaying. Less time spent on game systems usually equals more time available for roleplaying and thinking "in character."

Characters tend to evolve based on practicing the skills they use the most. They do not arbitrarily gain experience in skills and qualities based on ephemeral elements such as levels or experience ranks.

Combat can be very quick and deadly, and often the deciding blow in a conflict is the one to land first.

Basic Roleplaying is remarkably modular: levels of complexity can be added or removed as needed, and the core system works equally well with considerable detail as it does with a minimal amount of rules.

Retail orders for Chaosium titles are filled and shipped by Fergie, our shippin' shoggoth.
To order, find us online at www.chaosium.com.