

FAT OF THE LAMB

DESIGNED FOR USE WITH

**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**



FAT OF THE LAMB

A hunger must be sated. Will you survive at the cost of your sanity?

Nerwig Whal stands upon a tall bluff, wind buffeting and blowing his cherry red hair. He clears it from his eyes. To the west, a long line of wagons winds its way towards him. It ascends further and further into the hills and will eventually come to a stop at the appointed place: A site ordained to produce fortune - or so he thinks. "These miners have few options for supplies," he said. "It takes a bold man to claim a stronghold in these harsh hills ... but we will do it. And we will be the sole supplier in these here hills. And we will laugh all the way to the bank!" Fat of the Lamb can be used in conjunction with other modules, with a different campaign, or as a one-shot adventure.

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FAT OF THE LAMB

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A DISTANT OUTPOST

Nerwig pulled his pant leg down over the wooden stick that served as the bottom part of his leg. The stump ached badly at times, and his stomach was not better; it was a roiling sea of nausea and burning pain. None of that mattered today. Today was the day he would finally cast a net and pull in the biggest fish of his life. Everything was planned; everything was ready, and his fortune awaited.

With a wave to Gruff, Nerwig stepped out of his tent. The weather was cold, but bearable. These roads would be teeming with people looking for supplies, supplies they, no, he, would provide. He heard the 'ting' of coin on coin. Despite his nature, Nerwig smiled and she forced himself not to limp too badly while he made his way to the others.

"Good day," he said, "What a wonderful day it is." He noticed people might not be feeling so lively. They were fifty miles from anywhere, and each made a gamble to make their fortune. They would not make the fortune Nerwig would, but all might make themselves a fair bit of coin if things went right.

"We're well supplied, chaps, we'll be by a hearth before you know it. You'll be sweating in your underclothes." Nerwig laughed, nothing could sour his mood. Not Gruff's dour face, not the old crone that had come with them, no one!

The niceties were done, he hoped. He waved off food as he looked down from a bluff. There sat a flat piece of land that was cut in two by the snow laden road. This would be the spot for the place they would call Fort Whal. One day they would share pints and toast his name. Nerwig was as sure of this venture as any he had ever started. It would work. And ... well, if not, Nerwig would make due. He always did.

INTRODUCTION

The following adventure brings you to the center of Winter and challenges not only players' role-playing ability, but moral constitution - or lack thereof! In the end, Fat of the Land is a tale of survival and difficult, sad choices as players are brought into conflict with themselves and NPCs. There is a real possibility of PC death and the GM should foreshadow this fact with his players before the adventure begins. This is not a story of light and love: it is a story of starvation, death, and difficult decisions.

The adventure opens as Winter closes its grasp. The context is up to you, but the tale will work best if it takes place in a remote location that is far from the hope of help. An outpost, for example, would be ideal and any assistance is many days away and roads and trails are impassable, blocked by swirling snow and unforgiving ice.

As the outpost is being built the expedition is attacked and must band together to defend itself.

A fire breaks out and interrupts winter provisioning and most supplies are destroyed. Even at the outset, players are forced to make difficult decisions: Do we help those caught in the blaze? Or do we try to save the supplies first? If the players choose to endanger themselves, what do they consider a worthy reward?

After Calm Before the Storm, frostbite, hypothermia, and slow starvation nearly become a character unto themselves. As supplies run out, others are found feasting on their fellows. The players are pressed harder and harder to choose sides and take lives in order to save their own.

In A Winter Resolve, scarcity is at its worst and the two sides of the camp take to fighting and the victor gets their pound of flesh -- literally!

At the end of the tale, the survivors are fed and survive the cold snap and their outpost is able to be resupplied. But the scars last forever and can motivate and inform role-play going forward.

Fat of the Lamb provides conflict, but focuses on various mental traumas from the terrible decisions of both the PCs and the NPCs around them. The location of the outpost could be anywhere the Game Master desires, particularly if using this adventure in conjunction with Slaves to Fate and other Forever Winter adventure modules.

REFERENCES

Fat of the Lamb may make references to other Old School Essentials publications. In order to cut down on the wordiness of those references, readers will see an abbreviation along with the section of the book whenever they are required. Fat of the Lamb does not reference page numbers; layout updates, new print editions, and other such changes can cause errors with such methods of reference.

OSE = Old School Essentials

THE LONG WINTER

Winter has fully taken hold of the world and effects nearly everything you do. When the sun is not visible, many skills are more difficult to perform. Apply a +2 penalty to all STR, DEX, and CON Ability Checks during nighttime hours. The Game Master is the ultimate arbiter of when, or if, to use this rule.

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Nerwig Whal stands upon a tall bluff, wind buffeting and blowing his cherry red hair. He clears it from his eyes. To the west, a long line of wagons winds its way towards him. It ascends further and further into the hills and will eventually come to a stop at the appointed place: A site ordained to produce fortune - or so he thinks. "These miners have few options for supplies," he said. "It takes a bold man to claim a stronghold in these harsh hills ... but we will do it. And we will be the sole supplier in these here hills. And we will laugh all the way to the bank!"

He looks to the sky. It is pregnant with heavy grey snow that started falling hours ago. The caravan will arrive in time to occupy the outpost, no doubt, but Granny Bopkins prediction back at the town was worrisome: "You march into Winter's Grasp," the old toothless hag said. "Your undertaking will only bring sorrow to you and those in your employ, for I have seen a realm of hungry ghosts, and their appetite will only be sated by the flesh of the living... and the dead." No matter. Since when did Nerwig Whal, purveyor, profiteer, and philanderer ever listen to the advice of an old hag!? Never.

As he watches the caravan snake into the frozen hills and eventually come to a stop, he makes his rounds, greeting his new employees and sub-contractors. After all, this sort of business is built on trust - and it's hard to stab a man in the back if first you have gazed into his eyes!

The above introductory text may be adjusted to fit your needs. What might not be What. He may be someone else: But the fact remains the players are part of an expedition to establish an outpost in a remote area. Profit from miners in the hills is as good a reason as any, but if you choose to transplant the location of this adventure a clever GM could come up with appropriate circumstances.



MEETING NERWIG WHAT

Towards the beginning of the adventure, the players should get a chance to meet and introduce themselves to Nerwig What. This should take place over the first few days of snowfall while the expedition is felling trees and building their preliminary shelter. Making a favorable impression on Mr. What should result in extra rations for that player-character or other favors. A poor impression may result in extra duties in the outpost or fewer rations than the other players. What values attractiveness and a clever mind, especially when it is put to the use of making coin!

Nerwig What is a large man of over six feet with broad shoulders and a belly to match. His hair is red and roughly tied behind his head with a band of knotted cord. He has thick sideburns that end just over his jawline and accentuate his ruddy cheeks and red nose. What is quick to smile but also quick to anger and he's been known to hold a grudge.

NERWIG'S SECRETS

- He has a weak spot for attractive men and women. When dealing with an attractive character, that player may make all CHA Ability Checks with a -2 modifier. Later in the adventure, however, Nerwig What may impose himself and have to be rebuffed.
- He has a peg leg. He was attacked by wolves in the wilderness and left for dead. The infection turned gangrenous and the leg was amputated. He's still looking for his 'friends' who abandoned him so he can exact revenge.
- What suffers from a digestive condition. He is often racked with severe abdominal pain that leaves him irritable and sour.

NERWIG

AC 3 [16], HD 3 (13hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d6 or by weapon), THAC0 17 [+2], MV 60' (20'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), ML 8, AL Any, XP 35, NA 2d6 (2d6), TT V × 3

- Treated as 3rd Level Fighter

THE WELCOMING PARTY

The expedition takes several weeks to reach its destination. The long cargo train of tools, supplies, and people stretch for a half mile. The PCs should be among some of the important NPCs to come in the story. This should include Nerwig What, the expeditions' organizer and leader. Progress is slow as the head of the expedition finds the road impassible and blocked by debris, the PCs will be asked to help clear it. PCs should make a STR Ability Check.

- If 2 or more of the PCs succeed, 2d4 orcs rush the PCs from the surrounding forest and more attack others nearby.
- If less than 2 of the PCs succeed, 3d4 orcs rush the PCs from the surrounding forest and more attack others nearby.

The PCs must fight for their very survival, and the GM should describe Nerwig doing the same nearby. He will in fact aid the PCs in their fight against the orcs they face. Nerwig should never die in this scene, but can be injured and incapacitated. If the PCs survive the initial onslaught, they find the orcs have been repelled elsewhere as well.

If a GM would prefer to use a different monster other than orcs, they may change the attackers as they see fit. Orcs can be found in Monsters (OSE) for a quick reference.

BUILDING THE OUTPOST

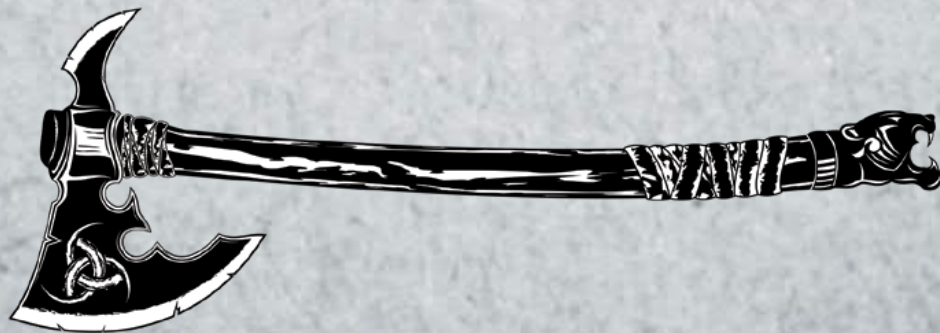
After the orc incursion has been dealt with the PCs will eventually arrive at the spot Nerwig has selected. Over the first several days of in-character time, the players and NPCs should get a chance to design and help build their outpost. This will help make the adventure more immersive as they imagine how a winter outpost would be constructed and give it a name. They should describe a rough layout. Be sure the outpost has appropriate areas for eating, sleeping, conducting business, and - most importantly - a storehouse.

Characters can help build the outpost with a successful WIS Ability Check. Those helping will be an important cog in the machine that gets the outpost up and running. If successful, that character may add a -2 bonus on all CHA Ability Checks used for the rest of the adventure.

IMPORTANT NPCs

Below are several notable NPCs that will be included in this module.

- **Gruff the Brewer:** Gruff is a short but thickly muscled man with a wide nose. Though his ale is not particularly of high quality, he's eager to share it cheaply and for little coin or even a good laugh. He has traveled with his wife, Matilda, and their five children on the journey.
- **Rakkul the Foreman:** A tall and lithe man with copper skin and hair twisted behind his head in knots, Rakkul oversees construction at the new outpost.
- **Brynnjolf the Butcher:** Brynnjolf has one eye and wears a black eye patch over the left side of his face. If asked how he lost his eye and the horrible scar beneath his left eye he simply says, "my knife slipped." Brynnjolf is large with thick fingers and a broad mustache.
- **Diggy Snorls the Scout:** A short and wiry man, Diggy Snorls is able to move through snow, forest, and glen with nary a sound. He has not only served as Nerwig Whal's guide and scout on this journey, but also huntsman.
- **Granny Bopkins:** Wise and venerable, Granny Bopkins is often consulted for advice. Her advice is not always the best. For example, she may vouch for a food-source when in fact it is tainted! Or she may support pursuit only to blame the player-characters when it fails. Try to cultivate your players' relationship with Granny Bopkins. Perhaps her poultices and potions will ease an Affliction? Granny will meet a distasteful and untimely end so it's important the players feel her loss deeply.





A JOB WELL DONE

After the outpost is constructed, the GM should foster a feeling of accomplishment. All is proceeding according to plan: You'll soon be open for business and ready to line your pockets with gold! Though temperatures have continued to drop and the snowfall has made roads to and from the outpost impassible, this is nothing that hasn't happened before. Surely the sun will melt the ice in a day or two and then it can be business as usual. But for now, there is little else to do but drink, feast, and celebrate a job well done!

It may be a good idea to RP a feast with drinking and dancing and storytelling. Give the players a chance to individuate their characters. Be descriptive about the outpost and how it's constructed and laid out. As the players enter a stuporous slumber, visions of plenty should be dancing in their heads. Unfortunately, the opposite is about to happen.

VICES

Some players like drinking and gambling. If time allows, this may be a good time to roll some dice in a way that affects things down the road. This section could safely be skipped if players are looking to press on quickly.

Gambling: Players and NPCs should make INT Ability Checks. Whomever has the lowest roll under their Ability wins the hand/round. This could be dice, cards, or whatever type of game of chance the GM would like to use.

Drinking: Players and NPCs should make CON Ability Checks. This is a contest of who can drink the most before becoming sick or passing out. Whomever has the lowest roll under their Ability is able to drink the other under the table!



COLD INFERNO

It was a pleasant evening. The bite of Winter may have been dulled by dancing, food, wine, and a raucous story. It may be that your head swims or that you went to bed richer or poorer than you started the day, but long before first light you are startled awake. You hear screaming. Frantic yells come from outside the barracks and you hear voices raised in desperation. The clearest of these rings loud in the night. You notice it's Nerwig What: "All hands! All hands! Fire! Fire! Fire! A blaze has a'broken out in the storehouse! Hurry! All hands fetch a pail and anything wet! If this fire is not stanchued now, we'll surely all starve and freeze!"

Going outside, the scene should be chaotic. Men and women run everywhere, screaming and cursing. There are several blazes throughout the outpost and you can see smoke rise into the air, boiling black cauldrons under-lit in red.

Players should role-play their reactions and the GM should quicken the pace, adding stress and pressure to the dire situation. Don't be afraid brutalize NPCs. Perhaps a man runs past the players, his clothes and hair scorched, and dies in the snow? Or maybe a section of the wall collapses atop the very people trying to fight the fire? The important thing is that the players get the sense things have gone very bad very quickly.

A HEATED DECISION

Faced with the horror of the fire and witnessing the first deaths the players should make a WIS Ability Check. If the roll fails, the player must apply a +1 penalty for all subsequent Ability Checks in his scene. A failure this early in the adventure should be ripe fodder for role-play. Those who froze in the moment that mattered may be looked down upon and derided as the adventure moves forward.

As the scene is set, the players should notice the storehouse going up in flames. They should also be startled to see dozens of burned, injured, and terrified civilians running amok. Where do the players' priorities lie? If they choose to preserve foodstuffs and supplies over their fellows, then they may become pariahs in the later part of the game (consider increased difficulty or upgrades when appropriate for social checks). If they choose to aid innocents the players may make some friends but have access to fewer supplies - and more mouths to feed!

To keep the action moving, we recommend a “2 out of 3” scenario: Players should achieve two successful rolls before they achieve two failures. The GM should be liberal about applying penalties in this scenario: The world is burning down, literally, and it’s likely none of the characters have faced such chaos. Below are some examples that you can use in this challenge:

- STR: The player may summon his strength and brawn, lifting unconscious survivors to safety or hauling hulking barrels of foodstuffs away from the blaze.
- DEX: The player may avoid falling or flying debris by dancing and dodging his way safely out of harm’s way.
- WIS: The player may elect to go full bore into the inferno, trusting to their iron will and ample constitution to weather the infernal insults of the fire.
- INT: Perhaps the player looks for ways to fight the fire, thinking quickly on her feet.
- Any combination of the above.

The GM may ask a player to 'mix it up' if he or she is only sticking with their "strong" stat. For example, dashing into a burning building may require a DEX Ability Check (to represent dodging falling debris) before making a STR Ability Check to drag the bodies of unconscious survivors to safety.

It's possible the players may split their efforts. For example, if you have four players and 2 of them decide to help save supplies and 2 decide to help save survivors, then consider that ratio of success or failure when you describe the results narratively. Whatever you decide, you should make it the "most grim version of success" you can surmise.

Examples Include:

- The group splits themselves evenly and everyone is successful. Some supplies are saved and some survivors are saved, but friends and family of those who are left behind are bitter that they were not rescued. Furthermore, losing so much food is disastrous for morale. The survivors nearly wish they had perished in the blaze!
- Most of the group chooses one option and one player chooses another. The majority is successful but the lone wolf fails. Then the majority is seen as saviors while the failure is made an outcast. Who would associate with such a loser!?!?
- The majority fails while the lone wolf succeeds. The failure of the majority may be blamed on the dissenting individual. The success of the individual is minuscule and doesn't matter much. On the other hand, “We almost saved the store-room! We just needed more people and you were not to be found!!!”



A COOLING FIRE

All fires eventually flame out. They run out of fuel. They become weaker and they die. Death isn't far from your mind as you look over the outpost you've built. Blanketed in white, it is now spotted with the ghastly gashes of gutted-out buildings that lay in sad heaps in the snow. The wind howls and temperature drops as the last flames flicker and burning embers go lifeless, their warmth snuffed by the encroaching cold.

The smell of charred wood and flesh fills the once-fresh air and your stomach may turn: It's gone. All of it... or near enough.

True, you may have saved some supplies - but how long will they last?

And how will you ration them? And what of the survivors? While they may have once been fast friends they are now more mouths to feed and bodies to keep warm, happy, and away from the evil that ravages men and beasts in times of wickedness. Prepare for pain. Prepare for famine. Prepare for fighting. It is coming.

The players should be given an opportunity to role-play the aftermath of the fire. They have just lost everything. How do they feel? If they were injured, what does it look like? Are they afraid of the cold days and nights to come or have they put such fear aside and are already scheming ways to preserve their own survival?

A RAVENOUS HUNGER

It's been some time. Days? Weeks? A month? Does it matter? It's clear time has taken its toll, though. The once promising outpost has been swallowed in white death. Drifts as tall as two men surround the area. Any hope of escape vanished with the sun days ago. Cold and disease and misery has descended upon you. You've tried to keep warm. You've started fires but most of them sputter out. You've dug shelters, but the frozen earth is as unforgiving. Your bones hurt and each night you wonder if you'll wake to a frigid morning, or find eternal sleep.

At some point you wake next to someone cold, blue, and not breathing. Their lifeless eyes are open and frozen in a death-stare like glass. Maybe it's best to forget them. Fend for yourself! Or maybe not? No matter your constitution, disposition, or outlook on life: Things are grim. Will you fight? Or given in and go slowly into endless night?

As A Ravenous Hunger opens, the GM should set a scene of cold, miserable hopelessness. After the blaze, most of the outpost has resigned to the fact that they are going to starve or freeze. This is time to get personal. If the characters have personal hooks, use them. If they die cold and alone, what will they miss? Is it a person? What and who will they leave behind?

RP Hooks

- The character remembers a happy time in their life when they were not so miserable.
- The character wishes they could see or talk to a friend or lover one last time before they freeze or starve to death.
- The characters look back on their lives, recounting regrets and missed opportunities.
- The characters make plans for how they are going to face death.

As hopelessness gains a foothold, the characters take their first steps on a journey into horror and madness. Consider using 2-3 of the following five challenges the first several days after the outpost burns down and supplies run out:

- **Bloody Flux:** PCs must make a Death or Poison Saving Throw. Each time they fail this roll, the GM subtracts one from an attribute of their choice until the conclusion of Fat of the Lamb, or until they are treated. If the players were able to save food from the inferno, make this Saving Throw with a +1 bonus.
- **Mental Afflictions:** If the PCs were unable to save some people at the fire, roll a WIS Ability Check, as denizens of the outpost suffer and die one by one. If the PC failed their Ability Check in A Heated Decision, they take a +2 penalty to all Ability Checks for the rest of Fat of the Lamb.
- **Carpentry:** Make a INT Ability Check to determine if the PCs can provide repairs to the damaged outpost. Successes may lower the difficulty of certain future CHA Checks as the GM wishes. Failure does the opposite, raising the difficulty of future checks as those relying on the character have lost all faith.

- **Survival:** Make a DEX Ability Check as the PCs search out a fresh source of food and water. Success may lower difficulty of future Social Checks, while failure poisons the PCs and perhaps others, increasing the difficulty instead.
- **Leadership:** Make a CHA Ability Check. The character observes the social dynamics amidst the survivors of the scorched camp. He tries to make friends and forge alliances. Failure will cause many doors to close to the PCs, limiting their ability to rest in a safe place. PCs only recover some of their HP with rest if they cannot find suitable lodgings.
- **Barter:** As the PCs begin to starve, make a CHA Ability Check as the PCs trade their services for rations. If they fail, a WIS Ability Check is required. If this check is failed, the PCs take an additional +1 penalty to all Ability Checks for the rest of Fat of the Lamb.

Alliances develop as NPCs and players jockey for favorable status and access to dwindling supplies of food and water. The GM may want to narrate the fact that fisticuffs break out more than usual. You may mention a scene with two old men beating an even older woman in order to steal a crust of stale bread. At this point, the players may want to start taking sides:

THE BREWERY

Gruff the Brewer and Rakkul the Foreman make an unlikely alliance, forged over many tankards of ale. These two men along with several others have constructed a hasty shelter of hewn logs and ice blocks towards the western end of the outpost ruins. They have sequestered a few barrels of ale and take nourishment from it, though upon a time too much imbibement occasionally causes intoxication.

CLIFFSIDE

Brynnjolf and Diggy have made their abode on the opposite end of the ruined outpost, digging into a cliff to create a shallow cave. They have more people than Gruff and Rakkul, but fewer supplies and no ale.

WHERE'S GRANNY?

The cold has become part of you. Hope is a luxury you can't afford as scarce supplies dwindle and disappear. Clean water is hard to come by. Most has been tainted with the filth of the camp ruins as survivors move their bowels or relieve themselves without leaving the safety of their comrades. Of all survivors, though, it has been Granny Bopkins that has offered a warm hand and wise word in time of need. But where has she gone? Indeed, Granny is elderly but you've sensed a strength in her that belies a great strength of will. Now – where has she gone?

At some point, the players may be scavenging for food or looking for better shelter when they come across a ghastly sight. In the gloom, they can see hunched figures outlined in the snow. If they get closer, they will see a group of individuals knelt over the lifeless form of Granny Bopkins. Her hands have been removed and her cheeks and nose have been flayed. Floppy bits of flesh lie near the cannibals in little red blooms in the snow.

At this point, the 4 NPCs should notice the players and become defensive. They may say things like:

- "She was close to the end."
- "We eased her transition."
- "She was always very kind.. this way she can contribute even more."

Upon stumbling across the gruesome sight, players should make a WIS Ability Check. Failure gives an additional +1 penalty to all future Ability Checks as things begin to spiral out of control.

The cannibal NPCs should try to convince the characters of the rightness of their actions. After all, desperate times call for desperate measures and Granny was close to dying anyway! For that matter, maybe all the infirm should be euthanized and butchered for sustenance, right?





THE CANNIBALS

"C'mon... join us. We'll finish off old Granny here and then decide what to do next. Brynn and Diggy and Mr. What on the west side of the camp are of a like mind as us... and it's not like our hand ain't bein' forced! We're all gonna perish if we don't make due! And eatin' people is makin' due!"

The players may agree with the cannibals. In that case, they are taken to Brynnjolf and Diggy Snorls and fed the flesh of the fallen. If the players don't side with the cannibals or deign to return to Gruff and Rakkul (on the east side of the outpost ruins), then the players should be attacked.

Use 4 Bandits (OSE - Monsters) or for a more random encounter, use 2d4 Bandits. Include a Bandit Leader with the Thief class.

If the PCs decide to join the cannibals, proceed to A Full Belly. If they choose to shun the consumption of flesh, then go to No Easy Fight.

A FULL BELLY

l's ill-fated outpost. You've realized that survival comes at a price and have decided that consuming the flesh of the fallen is an acceptable alternative to dying frozen and alone in the wilderness.



You are taken to the west side of the ruined outpost where Brynnjolf and Diggy Snorls greet you. "Ah! I see you're in on our little secret, eh? Well... it's all about to be over." Their gaze shifts to the dirty snow on the ground. They make poor eye contact. Mr. What, on the other hand, greets you with a wave and a nod. He is roasting something over a spit. "Well met," he says. "We are going to get through this trying time... though sacrifices must be made." He looks at the meat on the other end of the skewer. "Come... partake with me. You'll find it quite palatable!"

The players should role-play their characters consuming the flesh of the dead. Their narrative should be descriptive and emotional as they act out their feelings on the taboo practice. As they eat, any strain or wounds accrued from starvation or exposure should disappear as the players regain strength. However, players who consume flesh must roll a WIS Ability Check, and as before, any failure gives a +1 penalty on any further Ability Checks as they come to grips with their depravity.

After this challenge, the players' role-play should shift to the social situation. They can only eat the dead or 'ease the passing' of the dying for so long. During the course of role-play, it should come to light that Brynnjolf, Diggy, and Mr. What have a plan to attack the east end of the ruined outpost: "It ain't pretty or somethin' I relish doing," says Diggy Snorls. "But Gruff and them boys over there have enough meat on their bones to get use through five Winters, let alone this one!"

The players have chosen a side. They should participate in planning the attack.

NO EASY FIGHT

You have resisted your base instincts and are determined to survive without resorting to the flesh of your fellows... at least for now. Returning to the east end of the ruined outpost, you see Gruff and Rakkul. They are drinking and in heated conversation, their voices rising and falling sharply like gusts of icy wind.

It seems the supply of ale is low and most survivors have voted to drink the last of the it and eat the rest of the food. They next morning, they are to strike out for the road. "We may not get far before we freeze but there is a chance a traveler will stumble upon us," says Gruff. "There isn't much hope, but if we remain here the outcome is certain." Nodding, most of the others agree. Around the camp their frozen fingers busy themselves making preparations for a last-ditch effort at escape.

The players at this point may try to change Gruff and Rakkul's mind or come up with their own plan. At any rate, role-play should center around the fact that the east side of the outpost is eating the last of their food, drinking the last of their ale, and preparing to leave in the morning. If the players eat and drink, any penalties should become dormant for the time being. However, they may make a CON Ability Check to shake off the effects of the drink or else suffer the effects of their booze. PCs that fail their CON Ability suffer -1 to Hit in a Winter's Resolve, but add 1d6 temporary Hit Points as liquid courage flows through their veins.

WINTER'S RESOLVE

Are your teeth lose? Does the flesh of your body hang from your bones like dirty drapes? It's been weeks since your last real meal. Sure - you may have filled your belly, but at what cost? Brynnjolf, Nerwig Whal, and Diggy Snorls march into the center of the ruined outpost. In their left hands they wield torches made of tree bark and an oily substance wrapped in rags. "Gruff!!! Rakkul! The rest of you... Come out! We must have a word with you men and women! A reckoning has come! Not all of us will survive this blizzard. We please to you: sacrifice those closest to the end so we may feast on their flesh. We know it is distasteful... But this is the way it must be!! Come out now, fools, or we will come and tear you limb from limb!"

This is the culmination of the players' efforts and machinations. If they have developed a good relationship with a particular NPC, it's likely that character will help them. If they have spurned a particular character, said NPC may prove a turncoat when the time is right and stab the players in the back!

During the final confrontation of the module the GM should let the players know there is a real chance of death and there may be no win/win solution. Along with Nerwig (Page 5), the PCs should face 2d4 Bandits (OSE - Monsters) and at least 2 Bandit Leaders that represent named NPCs.

THE SNOW RUNS RED

As the sound of battle slowly fades and the screams of pain and anguish bleed into the white forest, you can hear freshly falling snow. At your feet are the dead. Blood is pooled beneath them in dark circles and steam rises from the newly slain. In the gloom, as the temperature drops, you see shadowed figures stoop and begin the long process of butchering the dead.

While the expedition was once a friendly and close-knit band of brothers, circumstances have changed. It is not the West End's aim to bargain with Gruff and Rakkul. Quite the opposite: The aim of the matter is to butcher them! No matter the efforts of the players, this last confrontation should come to blows. Wherever the players end up, they should know that the losers in this conflict will pay the ultimate price. The PCs should be matched up against the important NPCs. These are Gruff, Rakkul, Nerwig, Brynnjolf and Diggy. Part of the combat can be narrated for other, less important, NPCs.

As the players tend their wounds and return to shelter, the next morning brings an end to the snow.. The day after, the ice starts to thaw. Finally, one morning when the sun is shining and you can see green on the pines, a scout reports that the roads are once more passable. Knowing the darkness, it is time to return to the light.

If the PCs ate the flesh of the dead, they should make one final WIS Ability Check. Upon a failure, the PC loses 1d4 CHA permanently as the weight of their depravity sets in.

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