

COLD MOUNTAIN

BY JASON NELSON

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A mother's love is stronger than death, but love and death walk hand in hand when mortals cross paths with the immortal fey. This adventure designed for 4th to 5th level characters offers the chance to earn additional experience within a Kingbreaker Adventure Path campaign as they explore the unforgiving lands of a savage frontier and find them not uninhabited. Can they find a way to peacefully coexist with clans of the lonely hills and the frightening powers of nature that threaten to rise up and devour barbarian village and new-founded kingdom alike.

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Credits

Author: Jason Nelson

Artist: Frank Hessefort

Design and Layout: Liz Courts

Cartography: Todd Gamble

Legendary Games Team Members:

Clinton Boomer, Liz Courts, Crystal Frasier, Matt Goodall, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Rob Lazzaretti, Neil Spicer, Russ Taylor, Greg Vaughan, and Clark Peterson.

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“Old Mountain” is an adventure set in the backcountry of the rugged frontier lands that PCs are in the process of exploring and claiming as their own. It is designed for characters of 4th to 5th level and can easily be placed in any portion of their hex map where they have not yet done much scouting, such as

the sprawling Gnarled Forest to the west or the cloven hill country of the Kammel Hills rolling south and east as far as the Eastern Tors. While the latter location among the southeastern hills and mountain foothills of the Lost Lands is the default location for this adventure, any location that is suitably remote and isolated can work with the

adventure’s themes and provide a more substantial opportunity for adventure to balance the sometimes thin prospects for adventure that come along with gradual exploration. This adventure is intended to occur just as winter turns to spring, as rivers are thawing and kingdom exploration may be resuming after a hiatus for the weather.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The southern reaches of the PCs' chartered lands are far from pleasant in terms of establishing their new dominion. The Gnarled Forest is a place of tangled and ancient patriarch trees and silent groves of hardy spruce, stately pine, and dusky fir, and the Kammel Hills rolling eastward are windswept and lonely, ranging from badlands to high prairie to scrublands to well-forested hills and valleys scarcely less dense than the Gnarled Forest itself. Few outsiders come here apart from prospectors and trappers, plus the occasional treasure-hunter searching for a lost elfhold, dwarven delve, or forgotten bandit cache. However, these are the lands granted in the PCs' charter, and if they are to stake their claim to rulership they will need to do more than just vanquishing the Bandit Lord who once terrorized his lands. Their new land will be only as strong as its rulers, and any stability they create is tenuous at best until they subdue the wild things that abound and discover who and what already lives in the hexes they would claim.

At the fringes of the lands the PCs have adopted dwell the Ughar clans, insular barbaric villages eking out a harsh living under the forest eaves and remote hills and having little truck with the outsiders who have ventured now and then into this savage land trying and failing at the task the PCs have set for themselves: taming the wilderness and establishing a lasting kingdom. Perhaps the Ughar are long-lost kin to the Tiger Nomads to the northwest or the tribes of the Ibar Plains to the east, or refugees from the centuries of civil unrest

in the Broken Kingdom or some fallen petty state of the Riverlands. Or perhaps they have always been here, keeping to themselves in the forlorn wild, paying homage to the fey as their gods and keeping to the old ways as the world moved on without them. With the advent of the PCs and the foundation and expansion of their kingdom, however, that isolation cannot endure forever, and when a tragic accident turns the heart of a fey "goddess" cold, she unleashes a bitter vengeance that threatens to spread into the civilized lands beyond, destroying the PCs kingdom while it is still in its cradle. Ancient legends and folkways there stay forever much as they always have, always with a watchful eye on the natural world and the spirits that dwell therein, for life is not easy, is not meant to be easy, and no true Ughar would wish it so. But sometimes the spirits of nature become angry, from cold to cruel, and at those times the ancient ways may not be enough.

As winter comes to an end, as the valleys begin to blossom, terror stalks the land. Traders, trappers, and prospectors from the PCs' kingdom have been found horribly mauled. It may be some savage beast that walks unseen, but no tracks have been found at the scene of any attacks, not even a sign of a flying creature landing to feast. For that matter, the bodies have not been eaten at all, simply torn apart. Bandits seem unlikely, as nothing has been taken from the victims, though possessions have been torn apart or destroyed seemingly at random. Some settlers point their finger at the mysterious Ughar hillfolk, but those

pointing fingers were surprised when unbidden and unlooked-for emissaries have come from the Ughar villages into the PCs' lands carrying tales of the same predations among them and looking for aid from outsiders, an unheard-of request from such insular people.

According to the Ughar messenger, the tribe's wise woman believes that Istria, the goddess of the mountain, is angry. While some of the PCs' advisors scoff at the Ughar superstitions, at least two other hunters' reports describe strange rumblings from the same mountain where she is said to dwell. The Ughar emissaries report that a delegation was sent with an offering to appease Istria, to try to find her 'palace of glass and gold' if they could, or if not just to leave the offering and burn the sacred incense to her at the ancient dolmen at the mountain's foot, near the waterfall where the goddess is known to walk. That delegation never returned. The villages are considering their last resort, a lottery to choose a sacrifice from each village to be bound to the dolmen and offered up to the Istria's wrath. However, these emissaries come from Ganec Trom, the elder of Gloym, the village nearest Istria's mountain, who has gone against tribal custom and sent out a call for heroes from outside the tribe to seek out the goddess, thinking that perhaps outsiders of great skill and daring might succeed where the Ughar, raised in the shadow of the mountain and reverence of the goddess, could not.

GM'S BACKGROUND

Priya Nizolek was disconsolate when her only daughter, Fanya, took sick with a fever that would not abate, no matter how she prayed to the goddess of the mountain for healing. Long days and nights she prayed, but the village healers could do nothing and Fanya's life slipped away. Pioska, loyal Pioska, ever her dutiful son, had sworn he would take an offering to the Istria's mountain, imploring the goddess to restore his little sister, but she forbade him. Drowned in her grief, however, Priya never even noticed Pioska steal away to Istria's Dolmen... not until three days later when a hunter brought back his garments, torn and bloodied where a wild beast had fallen upon him in the wood. Mad with grief, Priya seized her daughter's dead body and her son's bloody clothes to take them the goddess' mountain, to demand satisfaction. The goddess would answer to her! She would answer for abandoning her faithful servant Priya in her greatest need, leaving her desolate and alone. Delirious from hunger and exhaustion, Priya deposited her grisly burden upon Istria's Dolmen, barely clinging to sanity in her grief and anger. As Priya started to pray, a raven circled down from the rocks, alighting on Fanya's corpse. Appalled as the carrion bird began to feast, Priya leaped up in a blind rage and hurled herself at the raven, in heedless pursuit as it flapped wildly trying to escape. In her headlong rush, Priya scarcely noticed when the snow-shrouded scree atop Falls of Istria gave way and she plummeted to her doom. But sometimes a mother's grief and rage are stronger than death...

Byard Mager, the spirit of the waterfall, came to investigate the sad village woman who had plunged into his waterfall, and Priya's tormented spirit rose up as a ghost and possessed him. Unfortunately, even having transcended death she was trapped. As a ghost, she could not leave the place of her death, and her stromkarl host could not stray far from his waterfall. She has thus been trapped here for most of the winter, stewing with rage and frustration that even in death her longing to face the goddess and demand justice cannot happen. The best she can do is tend to her broken body and hope that, should the goddess show herself, she will at least be presentable.

Little did Priya realize that in fact she has met the goddess; really not knowing what she would look like, she did not recognize Istria when she came to the waterfall in person. Istria, the 'goddess' of the mountain, is a stern-hearted fey who was quite displeased at seeing her stromkarl lover carefully and lovingly tending the dead body of a village woman. Not only did he fail to meet her for their usual trysts, but when she came to confront him he did not respond to her calling his name in the Sylvan tongue (which Priya, inhabiting his body, did not understand). "He" behaved rudely and cursed her with the vile village speech when she tried to approach him. She even tried magically charming him into loving her, but to no avail, as Priya's deathless spirit could not be swayed with such magic.

Istria's anger was kindled against the village folk, blaming this village woman

even in death for her sorrow and loss, and therefore she has unleashed a terrible curse in revenge. Since she doesn't know from which village the woman came, she has decided to punish them all in a petulant act of spite. As the villagers have made her suffer, she has now brought suffering to them. She cares nothing for other travelers through the rugged lands she claims, but certainly she would do nothing to spare them if they got in the way of her vengeance. Since she is the spirit of the mountain and cannot venture far from it to punish the villages herself, she has called upon the icy heart of the mountain to transform the animals of her domain into a ravaging, terrifying scourge of hunger and pain-wracked madness: wiitikowan!

CONNECTIONS TO THE ADVENTURE PATH

“Cold Mountain” helps fill in some of the blank hexes on the map, but perhaps more importantly it offers the chance for a sustained adventure scenario during a time in the campaign where players may be beginning to tire of one-encounter-per-day “hexploration.” It rewards characters who are skilled in the wilderness as well as those willing to apply diplomacy and negotiation over attacking first and asking questions later. It also presents additional kingdom-level resources for PCs to acquire as they expand their kingdom.

Thematically, “Cold Mountain” also offers some foreshadowing of their ultimate antagonist in this Adventure Path, the nymph queen who has lost the capacity for love. Istria offers both similarities and differences with the nymph queen, in that she believes she has lost her love and has become cold and bitter and vengeful in return, just as she has. Unlike the nymph queen, however, her pain is smaller and ultimately something the PCs can remedy;

in fact, one of the key elements in the adventure is the PCs talking to Istria and helping to melt her frozen heart. If they succeed, the PCs will have gained a powerful ally, albeit one whose range of activity is very limited.

Istria can serve as a source of information on the ancient cyclops empires who once ruled the Eastern Tors and the Ibar Plains beyond. Hence, when PCs need to investigate the vanishing of their neighbor colony to the east in the third adventure of the AP, they may consult with Istria to learn more about the hazards of the mountains, both modern and ancient.

Another function that Istria can serve is as a patron for some of the incidental quests listed on the inside covers of each issue of the AP. Verisimilitude can sometimes seem stretched when seemingly random NPCs begin offering rewards of money or magic to perform certain tasks. You could revise some of these quests a bit to incorporate the rewards as gifts from the “goddess of

the mountain” or her contacts among the world of the fey. Don’t overuse this tactic, of course, but attaching a few quests to her, or to the Ughar of the villages, will give a greater personal connection to the quests and make them feel more connected to the PCs specifically.

The Ughar could also become a resource for aiding the PCs’ exploration of the eastern lands, whether serving them personally as guides or as scouts sent out by royal edict to explore the land and bring back reports of what dangers or resources lie within. For that matter, befriending the Ughar could obviate the need for personal exploration of a section of the eastern Kammel Hills. At a time when hexploration may be becoming a bit stale for the PCs, you can use the Ughar as a narrative device for filling in the PCs’ map, especially the “empty” hexes with no special resources or set encounters, and pointing the PCs towards the more interesting locations that might require their personal attention.

CHAPTER 1: INTO THE WILD



Characters wishing to investigate the rumored killings in the high hills near the Ughar villages must first track down the source of the rumors, as few people visit the Ughar or know precisely where their villages lie. A DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that most of the rumors are second and third-hand accounts passed among travelers, but a vagabond named Trindon Mosley is still in town and has regaled several ale-sodden audiences with his tales. Trindon can easily be found with a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check.

Trindon begins with an indifferent attitude, though his attitude is unfriendly if he is aware PCs are part of the government, both because he mistrusts nobles and rulers in general and because he is irritated that he dropped off a package to be delivered to the leaders and they never contacted him about it. A DC 15

Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nobility) check with 1d4 hours of investigation reveals that Trindon's tale is true, as the officious guard lieutenant who talked to him dismissed him as a shiftless vagrant and deemed whatever he had to say or deliver unimportant. He took the package and sent him on his way but dumped the package into a storeroom for some lesser soldier to inspect later and then promptly forgot about it.

The package can be recovered from the guardhouse storeroom. It contains a wolverine pelt wrapped around a red-painted arrow, to which are bound seven eagle feathers. Trindon says the chieftain of the village of Gloym gave it to him and said it signified dire danger, and a great reward. The superstitious Ughar wouldn't stand for one of their own to be sent to beg aid from outsiders, but they hoped this would make clear their need for heroes to deal

with a situation they could not themselves. Furthermore, should this tribal fetish be displayed by outsiders, it would be accounted a good omen by the Ughar, making them more likely to be forthcoming in conversation and accepting of their intrusion.

If made friendly, Trindon can grant the listed boon for PCs seeking the village of Gloym and allow them to automatically find the proper hex where you wish to place the Ughar villages. If made helpful, he offers to accompany them as a guide, obviating the need for Knowledge (geography) or Survival checks to locate Gloym (though they are still necessary to avoid becoming lost in bad weather, gather food in the wilderness, or for other purposes), though he requests a stipend of 5 gp per day of such service.

TRAVELING THE HILL COUNTRY

The adventurers begin their journey to Gloym from any of their towns, either in company with Trindon Mosley on their own, following his directions. The adventure is intended to occur during the latter stages of winter just as spring is breaking forth but before a full thaw. Mornings remain frosty and chill, with ice riming water buckets in the PCs camp,

and the low sun does little to warm the landscape though it is enough to cause the trees to slough off their coats of winter white, often in noisy cascades of slush. In any case, the well-used roads and wagon tracks of settled hexes should soon give way to haphazard trails and natural landmarks whose descriptions have been provided by the Ughar messenger.

Check for random encounters once per day prior to reaching the Ansit Ford, and twice per day thereafter (once during the day, once at night). You may use the tables provided for hill terrain in the second chapter of the Adventure Path or you may use **Table 1-1: Hill Country Random Encounters** (page 6).

TABLE 1-1: HILL COUNTRY RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

| % | | | SENSES ¹ | PERCEPTION | STEALTH ² | ATTITUDE ³ |
|-------|----|--|---------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| ROLL | CR | ENCOUNTER | | | | |
| 01-50 | — | No encounter | — | — | — | — |
| 51-60 | — | Noises in the distance (animal calls, ice cracking or small landslides, the scream of an animal killed at the end of a hunt, mysterious fey music) | — | — | — | — |
| 61-65 | 5 | 2d4 <u>bandits</u> led by a <u>poacher</u> | — | -1 | +2 | Hostile |
| | | <u>poacher</u> | — | +7 | +7 | Hostile |
| 66-68 | 5 | 2 <u>trappers</u> | — | +7 | +8 | Indifferent |
| 69-70 | 5 | 1 <u>satyr</u> with a charmed <u>poacher</u> | LLV | +18 | +17 | Unfriendly |
| | | <u>charmed poacher</u> | — | +7 | +7 | Unfriendly |
| 71-75 | 5 | 1d6 <u>wolves</u> | LLV, scent | +8 | +6 | Unfriendly |
| 76-78 | 5 | 1d6 <u>river elk</u> | LLV, scent | +8 | -2 | Indifferent |
| 79-83 | 4 | 1 <u>ogre</u> | DV | +5 | -9 | Hostile |
| | | 1d4 <u>orc barbarians</u> | DV | -1 | -5 | Hostile |
| 84-86 | 3 | 2d4 <u>sprites</u> | LLV | +6 | +19 | Unfriendly |
| 87-91 | 5 | 1 <u>troll</u> | DV, LLV, scent | +8 | -2 | Hostile |
| 92-95 | 5 | 1 <u>wereboar</u> mounted on | LLV, scent | +7 | +0 | Unfriendly |
| | | 1 <u>dire boar</u> | LLV, scent | +12 | -4 | Unfriendly |
| 96-98 | 4 | 1 <u>griffon</u> | DV, LLV, scent | +12 | -2 | Unfriendly |
| 99-00 | 6 | The Bloody Beast ⁴ | LLV, scent | +13 | +13 | Hostile |

¹ DV indicates darkvision 60 feet, LLV low-light vision.

² To determine the Perception DC to notice an encounter before it occurs, you may roll Stealth checks or assume an average Stealth check of 10. Average encounter distance is 2d6 x 10 feet, increasing the Perception DC by 1 per 10 feet of distance.

³ Indifferent creatures ignore the PCs unless the PCs attempt to interact with them. If made friendly or helpful, they may be able to provide information or a boon of some kind. Unfriendly creatures adopt a threatening pose and may challenge PCs, demanding to know their business in these lands, as well as their destination. They may also demand gifts or tribute in exchange for passage. PCs can attempt to calm them with Diplomacy or bluster their way past with Intimidate, but a failed check in either case usually results in an attack by the unfriendly creature. Hostile creatures typically attack on sight.

⁴ If met as a random encounter, the Bloody Beast behaves as described in the Late Frost encounter (page 9).

ANSIT FORD (CR 6)

The first major landmark is Ansit Ford, which can be found automatically with the Ughar guide. If no guide is present, PCs must make a DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or DC 15 Survival check to locate the ford. Each failed check results in a half-day delay and a check for wandering monsters. The river runs fast and cold here, flowing downstream at 40 feet per round. Creatures attempting to swim must make a DC 15 Swim check to avoid being pulled downstream, but creatures wading at the ford can resist being pulled along with a DC 10 Strength check. Any bonus to avoid bull rush or drag combat maneuvers can be applied to this Strength check, and creatures gain a +2 bonus per size category larger than Medium and take a -2 penalty per size category smaller than Medium.

Walking through the waters and slippery rocks of the ford functions like moving through a shallow bog within 10 feet of the shore, and a deep bog in the center of the stream, and creatures crossing the ford are denied their Dexterity bonus. Large creatures move normally within 10 feet of the riverbank and treat the deeper waters at midstream as a shallow bog.

Creatures unable to take actions, including creatures that are dazed, stunned, or unconscious, are automatically swept downstream, though an adjacent ally can try to grab a creature being swept away as an immediate action by making a Reflex save (DC 10 if the creature has both hands free, DC 15 with only one hand free; a creature can drop held items as a free action to try grabbing a creature). Creatures

unable to take actions can still hold their breath. Dropped items end up 1d10 feet downstream if they are metallic items, 10d10 feet downstream if made of wood or other buoyant material.

Note: When the PCs are traveling toward Gloym, the only creatures present are described below. There is an additional encounter in this location in the adventure Epilogue (page 34), as the PCs return home.

Creatures: With the spring melt, a number of creatures are coming out of hibernation, and a voonith lurks here in the shallows at location V, catching fish in its jaws, though it is intrigued by larger prey coming nearby. It will wait stealthily (+12 Stealth bonus) until PCs are partially across the ford before uttering its blood-freezing howl, hopefully as part of a surprise round. While opponents are dazed and/or shaken, it will rush in to pounce on a Small target if available (if not, the smallest of the Medium PCs). If multiple PCs converge on its position, the voonith will swim away and dash in again to pounce upon stragglers or any creature isolated from its allies. The voonith will stay in the water when it attacks in order to gain cover against opponents on shore (see aquatic combat rules). If brought below 10 hit points, it swims away and does not return.

In addition, the voonith's shrieking cry attracts the attention of an owlbear that is roaming the thickets on the east side of the river and arrives 3 rounds after the voonith attacks. The owlbear is not particularly stealthy; however, the distance and the

sound of the river gurgling over the ford masks its approach. On the first round of its approach, PCs notice something moving in the trees about 150 feet away on the far side of the river with a DC 25 Perception check. On the second round, they can notice that it is Large and furry less than 100 feet away with a DC 20 Perception check. On the third round, they catch a glimpse of the creature 30 feet away in the blackberry bowers on the far shore with a DC 15 Perception check. The owlbear happily plunges into the river, as its strength and size allow it to easily withstand the current.

Rewards: The wandering voonith has no treasure; however, if the owlbear is tracked for 10 minutes (DC 12 Survival check), PCs discover a well-gnawed corpse with a darkwood breastplate, masterwork light wooden shield, and masterwork scimitar lying nearby. A DC 15 Perception check reveals lying a bit farther away a bone scroll tube containing scrolls of aspect of the falcon and shillelagh, along with scattered and somewhat corroded and muck-encrusted coins totaling 92 cp, 27 sp, and 43 gp.

Development: Beyond the ford, the party enters little-traveled lands beyond, which are considered rough hill terrain, reducing their overland movement, and each day of travel requires DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or DC 15 Survival to keep on the trails; if the check is failed, the PCs treat the terrain as trackless that day. If the result of the Survival check is less than 10, the party becomes lost. Each failed check to find their way results in a half-day delay and a check for random encounters. Becoming lost results in a full day's delay and three checks for random encounters.

Ansitt Ford

10 FEET

TREES

FORD

TRAIL

BEACH

TRAIL

BEACH

10 FEET

V

20 FEET

10 FEET

ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET



A LATE FROST (CR 5)

In addition to the rugged terrain, the PCs must face the lingering chill of winter. While the evergreen trees and shrubs remain lush and thick and the first bright shoots of foxglove and snowberry are blooming, the weather in the hills is cold. In addition, the day after crossing the fords, they are caught in a spring snowstorm lasting 4d6 hours that deposits a foot of snow. The bitter winds accompanying the storm also carry severe cold, while the poor visibility increases the DC to avoid getting lost by 4. Overland travel speed is halved for the day of the snowstorm and the day following; in tactical situations, treat all squares as difficult terrain. PCs can predict the storm's onset with a DC 15 Survival check, granting them enough advance warning to construct rudimentary shelters that grant a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws or Constitution checks related to the cold weather as long as they remain stationary.

Creatures: While the snowstorm rages, a hungry grizzly bear as recently awakened from its hibernation nearby and is looking to fill its belly after its long sleep. Allow PCs trained in Knowledge (nature) to make a DC 15 skill check (no action required) to notice scratched patterns on tree bark and interpret it as evidence that they are in bear country.

If they succeed by 5 or more, however, they also notice that some of the claw marks seem unusually high up on the trees, and where those marks are seen the trees are blackened, as though both blighted and burned.

If PCs press on through the storm, they encounter the bear at a distance of 2d4 x 10 feet, as the bear has caught their scent and begins following them. The Perception DC to notice the bear is 7, +1 per 10 feet of distance. If PCs remain at least 20 feet from the bear, its attitude is threatening but it will do nothing but bellow at them and try to frighten them off; however, it will follow them as stealthily as it can, hoping to raid their food stores at night or attack and eat a pack animal. If PCs take shelter through the storm, the encounter distance is the same but the Perception DC to notice the bear increases by 5. Allow pack animals a Perception check to notice the bear; animals not trained for combat become shaken as long as the bear remains within 60 feet. The bear will move in to attack a random pack animal if one is available, and if not will try to force its way into one of the PCs' tents looking for food.

If PCs move closer than 20 feet, the bear becomes hostile, attacking immediately if any creature moves adjacent to it or remains

within 20 feet for more than 1 round. The bear focuses its attacks on a single target, in the hope of killing and eating it. If reduced below 10 hit points, the bear flees. However, its wounds heal naturally and the PCs may encounter it on their return trip and must avoid or neutralize it again.

If the bear is made indifferent or better, such as with wild empathy or charm animal, it loses interest in the PCs and wanders off; the wild empathy DC to make the bear indifferent is 15 if the bear is threatening, 25 if it is hostile.

Development: If any creature is killed or dying as a result of this encounter, the bloodshed attracts the attention of the Bloody Beast (page 29). It does not attack directly but instead approaches by stealth during the snowstorm, using its nightmare stalker ability against a random PC before retreating, allowing its madness to work its way into the psyche of its target. Once the nightmares have begun, it will seek out its quarry and swoop in to bite its victim and inflict wendigo fever, turning gaseous and wind walking away without a trace other than the bloody wounds it has left behind.

BLOODY VICTIM (CR 5)

As the path wends its way higher into the cloven hills, the rock face to your right splits in a narrow cleft, with signs of being worked into a crude stair onto the shelf above. At the foot of the cleft, clearly visible in the frozen lumps of snow not yet melted, is a booted foot.

A DC 15 Perception or Survival check reveals faint spatters of old blood on the rocks of the cleft. If the PCs climb up (DC 5 Climb check through the cleft, DC 20 to climb the 15-foot-high rock face), the party comes upon the grisly remains of a prospector (A) that was set upon by one of the wendigo and torn apart.

Scattered beneath the boughs of a moss-shrouded pine tree, you find pots, pans, mining gear and camp supplies shredded and scattered, and amid the detritus dozens of bloody gobbets of some poor unfortunate, torn limb from limb, with human remains as well as those of some pack animal evident.

They find the bloody gobbets of this unfortunate scattered beneath the boughs of a pine tree, ripped to shreds as he slept along with a pack mule. A DC 20 Heal or Survival check discerns that whatever killed this man apparently did it with jaws and fangs

alone, and that the creature was no larger than Medium. A DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check can identify within the frozen blood and dismembered bits of flesh a strange foamy residue (now frozen), combined with the nature of the attack, as possibly being the work of the wendigo, a fell spirit of the frozen north, which walks on feet of mist and would explain why no tracks were seen at the scene.

The PCs are not the only creature to have discovered this grisly site; however. A pair of moss trolls happened upon this site and, unimpressed with the quantity of meat, decided to use it to bait other creatures into their clutches. They lurk in tree shape, disguised as pine trees, one atop the cleft near the prospector's remains, the other at the base of the cleft (B). They will wait to see if the party separates, or if they leave pack animals at the base of the cleft while they climb up, springing from ambush to attack whichever targets seem most vulnerable.

Creatures: 2 moss trolls (hp 30)

Rewards: Besides investigating the victim's remains, if the party sifts through the remnants of her camp they can find what is left of her equipment, though most has been broken, shredded, or

otherwise ruined. A DC 12 Search check will turn up an iron pot, a small box of 20 fishhooks, flint and steel, a hammer, a set of masterwork mining tools (pans and sluice grates, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Profession (miner) checks when panning for gold), and a small pouch of tiny bits of gold worth a total of 85 gp. If Trindon Mosley is with the PCs, he can identify the prospector as Old Meg Maces, an acquaintance of his that he saw a few months earlier, at the beginning of winter, and who said she was going to hunker down in the mountains while she checked on a number of gold-panning sites.

The moss trolls left no obvious footprints nearby, as they traveled by climbing through the trees, though a thorough search of the area (DC 20 Survival check) reveals several spots where they left the trees to cross a clearing or area of rocky scree. The two were wanderers and had no established lair. Between them, the trolls carry 595 sp intermixed with 12 pp (Appraise DC 10 to notice the platinum), 2 green spinels (50 gp), a brown garnet (80 gp), a large aquamarine (550 gp), a potion of *cure light wounds*, and a divine scroll of *tongues* (CL 7th).

Bloody Victim

TRAIL

B

15 FT CLIFF

TRAIL

A

B

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



THE VILLAGE OF GLOYM

The village before you is surrounded by a low palisade of rough-hewn logs. Within this simple protection lies a small cluster of crude huts, barely more than a dozen of various sizes. A modest corral holds goats, sheep, and a few ponies, while barking in the distance suggests a kennel, with several clapboard lodges adjacent to it. A high-beamed longhouse dominates the center of the village, butted up against an embankment behind it. On this rise stands a circle of standing stones surrounding a bonfire, and beyond that a second gate in the palisade, giving egress into the dark woods beyond the wall.

The overland journey to Gloym should take about a week, possibly longer if the party becomes lost. Once they arrive, they are looked on with some suspicion by the Ughar. The Ughar's initial attitude is unfriendly, and few if any are interested in talking to the outsiders. For that matter, most Ughar speak only their tribal language, a dialect of the Halat tongue, though a DC 15 Linguistics check allows rudimentary communication. If Trindon Mosley is with the PCs, he can translate for them and provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy or Intimidate checks used to improve reactions with the Ughar of Gloym.

GLOYM

N Hamlet

Corruption -2; **Crime** -6; **Economy** -2;

Law -2; **Lore** -2; **Society** +4

Qualities Superstitious

Danger -5

POPULACE

Government Council

Population 57 (57 human)

NOTABLE NPCs

Speaker Ganec Trom (N male human ranger 5)

Doomsayer Lysis Redav (N male human adept 3)

Elder Arin Scliswe (N female human bard1/rogue2)

Elder Leal Phars (N male human commoner 2)

Elder Woula Stepan (N female commoner 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,000 gp

Spellcasting none

Minor Items *potion of aid, potion of lesser restoration, scroll of cure moderate wounds, scroll of remove fear*

Gloym



ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

10 FOOT HIGH BANK

LOG PALISADE



CORRAL

KENNEL

3

11

1

16

17

2

5

5

5

4

5

5

5

6

5

8

7

15

14

13

9

10

12

TOWN KEY

1. **Palisade:** A 10-foot log palisade of 6-inch logs surrounds the village (Climb DC 15, Break DC 27, hardness 5, hp 60).
2. **West Gate:** A heavy gate made of the same logs offers entry into the central village lawn.
3. **Corral:** Several dozen goats are penned here. If PCs have horses or mules, a section of the corral will be roped off and their mounts will be lodged there.
4. **Village Lawn:** This is the public meeting place of Gloym, where visitors are met and pronouncements are made.
5. **Simple Hut:** These small huts, 10 to 15 feet across, each host a lone tribesman or a pair of pig farmers, though the latter keep goats more often than pigs. These huts have simple wooden doors (Break DC 13, hardness 5, hp 10).
6. **Phars Lodge:** This wooden building, shaped liked a rounded cone about 25 feet across, holds the family of Speaker Leal Phars, a pig farmer, his wife and five children (treat all as farmer thugs; the children have the young simple template). The lodge has a good wooden door with a simple lock (Break DC 18, hardness 5, hp 15, Disable Device 20).
7. **Scliswe Lodge:** This building is identical to area 6 and is the home of Arin Scliswe, a wanderer and tribesman husband, Bardi (both are middle-aged) and their three children (statistics as above).
8. **Redav Lodge:** This building is identical to area 6 and is the home of Lysis Redav, a doomsayer, and his wife, Tabba, a farmer (farmers). Both are old and have no family living with them.
9. **Stepan Lodge:** This building is identical to area 6 and is the home of widow Woula Stepan and her three children (statistics identical to Elder Leal Phars and family).
10. **Trom Lodge:** This building is identical to area 6 and is the home of Ganec Trom and his sons, Barruk and Truni. Their statistics appear in the Chapter Three of the adventure.
11. **Kennel:** This open enclosure contains the hunting and working dogs used by the people of Gloym. At any time, the kennel contains 1d6 riding dogs and 2d6 dogs in the kennel.
12. **Smokehouse:** This building is filled with hanging preserved meats which are smoked here when game is plentiful and stored here for the long months when game is scarce.
13. **Cistern and Barrelhouse:** This building contains a well for keeping good access to fresh water even in harsh weather. Lined with hay bales and always cool, it is also used for fermenting casks of mead and ale and for pickling barrels of ice peppers.
14. **Storage Shed:** This building stores spare tools, plows, carts, and is used as a workshop during the cold months. At any given time during the day, 2d4 villagers are usually at work here on various crafts.
15. **Longhouse:** This great hall is the meeting hall for the village elders and for any events of great import to the village as a whole, including storytelling and religious observances. The longhouse is built set into the embankment on the northeastern end of the village. A great firepit runs down the center of the hall, with long trestle tables to either side. The council sits in a raised platform on the northeast end of the building, where a small good wooden door provides egress to 16.
16. **The Goddess' Garden:** Tradition holds that the goddess of the mountain stood upon this spot and blessed the first builders of Gloym, and that with her aid a small stone cromlech circle was raised. Considered sacred ground, no houses are built here and this part of the village is maintained as a pleasant garden, redolent with alpine flowers in summer but even now with the first few blossoms bursting into bloom. A stone-ringed firepit within the stone circle is used for solemn ceremonies, such as marriages and the blessing of children or the dead.
17. **East Gate:** This gate leads opens onto a forest path that leads toward the Falls of Istria and the Goddess' Dolmen, sacred to all of the Ughar.

THE TEST

Within a few minutes of their arrival in Gloym, the PCs are confronted by the village elders of Gloym. While their faces remain impassive, a DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals barely concealed hostility from most of them, not only directed towards the party but also towards the man who steps forward as their spokesman. Speaking Common with passable fluency though a heavy accent, **Ganec Trom** introduces himself and thanks the PCs to replying to his request for aid.

I would say you are welcome here, but you can see that is not so. The others, they think it is a bad thing I have done. If the goddess is angry, we must accept it. We cannot speak ill of the goddess. They think you will make her even more angry. You are not us. But there is a way to make them accept you. If you ask for *ipsanaio*, they may think you mad, but they cannot refuse you. If you succeed, it shows your strength of body, mind, and spirit as it purifies you, and they must accept that you may walk among us as brothers until the next turning of the moon.

If asked exactly what *ipsanaio* is, Ganec explains that *naio* it is the Ughar name for the “ice peppers” that they sometimes trade. A DC 15 Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), or Profession (cook) check reveals that ice peppers grow in the foothills of the Eastern Tors during the late summer and early autumn months. They are harvested after the first snows and are pickled in clay jars with a mixture of brine, alcohol, and



certain herbs and packed in ice throughout the winter, during which their color leaches out and their flavor intensifies, leaving them nearly bone-white and unendurably spicy by the end of winter. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals that *ipsanaio* is the “test of the ice peppers,” a sort of initiation rite practiced among the Ughar as a ritual of purity and toughness, though sworn by some trappers (including Trindon Mosely, if present) to simply be a sadistic prank the Ughar play on outsiders.

PCs do not need to accept the challenge to gain acceptance; they can also earn it by

improving the attitude of at least 3 of the 5 village elders (other than Ganec Trom) to indifferent or better, requiring a DC 21 Diplomacy or Intimidate check. Each time the PCs use Intimidate to improve an elder’s reaction, it increases the DC of subsequent Diplomacy checks in Gloym by 2.

IPSANAIO (CR 4)

If PCs demand *Ipsanaio*, the village elders are at first incredulous but then begin laughing among themselves and chattering with amusement. Within a few minutes, a table is set up and a barrel of ice peppers is brought, and the PCs are seated at the table. Every PC (and Trindon Mosley, if he is present) must eat at least one whole ice pepper, and in order to pass the test at least one PC must eat five whole ice peppers within one minute without passing out from the pain. Each ice pepper eaten requires a Fortitude save to avoid becoming wracked with pain, nausea, and cramps from the awful gastrointestinal burning caused by the ice peppers. The Fortitude save begins with a DC of 12 and increases by 2 for each ice pepper after the first. The first failed save causes the eater to become sickened for one hour. A second failure leaves the eater nauseated for one minute, and a third failed save causes the eater to fall unconscious for one round. Any saving throw bonuses that apply against ingested poison or against pain, nausea, or sickening apply to this save; however, the effect is not actually poison and thus *delay poison* and similar effects are of no help in enduring the pain.

Using magic to pass *Ipsanaio* is considered cheating. **Elder Lysis Redav**, a *doomsayer* (replacing *touch of fatigue* with *detect magic* and having a fox rather than a toad familiar) uses *detect magic* to watch for signs of spellcasting. Any spellcasting automatically makes Lysis hostile, and he loudly denounces the offending PC. He demands they be cast out of the village unless they personally can prove their purity by completing *Ipsanaio* (even if another PC has already completed the ritual). If the PC fails, they are not allowed to sleep in the village unless Lysis can be placated (DC 26 Diplomacy or Intimidate check).

If at least one PC passes the *Ipsanaio*, the party is accepted as worthy to act on the tribe's behalf. If none of them can complete the ritual, however, they can still attempt to adjust the reactions of the elders with Diplomacy, with a +2 circumstance bonus for having been willing to endure the ordeal. If at least three are made indifferent, the elders grudgingly agree that while the PCs did not demonstrate themselves the equal of a true Ughar, they made a noble effort for a group of soft-skinned

warmlanders, and besides they provided an opportunity for laughter in the tribe at a time of much sadness. In either case, they are invited to stay as the guests of the elders in the village common lodge and may join in a feast of welcome, though the elders will apologize for the fare being somewhat meager here at the end of winter, and with the ravages culling the game and killing several hunters in the forest.

If both the ritual and Diplomacy fail, Ganec Trom steps in to argue that the elders have offered the PCs food and are therefore obliged by custom to extend their hospitality for three days. They grudgingly admit this is so but demand the PCs be lodged in the smokehouse next to the dog kennels and locked inside at night (a simple lock, DC 20 Disable Device check) so that they do not get out and cause mischief.

Rewards: Award XP as a CR 4 encounter if the PCs successfully complete *Ipsanaio*. Award half XP if they attempt the challenge but fail to complete it.

INVESTIGATIONS IN GLOYM (CR 3)

If PCs have completed *Ipsanaio* successfully, the attitude of the villagers in Gloym is improved to indifferent. Some villagers speak and understand more Common than others, but if any PC is fluent in Halat (or if Trindon Mosley is available to translate), if magic is used to communicate, or if a DC 15 Linguistics check is made with each attempt to gather information, the PCs can gather information using Diplomacy checks (DC 15) following information can be learned with successful Knowledge (local) and/or Diplomacy checks to gather information.

DC 15: The goddess of the mountain is named Istria, and she has a sacred dolmen just above the Falls of Istra, named for the river that comes down the mountain. She is said to live in a palace of gold and glass high atop the mountain, at the river's source, in a sacred valley none have ever seen.

DC 20: Some in the village elders, when asked what happened to the victims of the attacks, say that it was the "breath of the goddess" that killed them—that when she is angry, her breath becomes alive as a spirit of her vengeance that they call the *wiitikowan*, the 'mist-walker.' They say the mist-walker can take different shapes, or perhaps no

one sees it the same way, or perhaps there is more than one if she is truly angry, but it walks on the mist and cloud and leaves no trace. It is spirit so it does not eat and it does not steal, but it can kill, and so horribly does it mangle its victims that legends name it 'The Bloody Beast.'

DC 25: The eldest in the village say that the legend of the wind-walker is close to the truth, but that truly the breath of the goddess is not alive by itself. Instead, it freezes and withers the soul of whatever she breathes upon and awakens within it the raw hunger and emptiness of the whistling mountain wind and the cold rage of winter's heart. This poor creature, be it man or beast, ceases to live as it once did and becomes 'wiitikowan,' the mist-walker. It is said to fear fire, as its heart is cold within it, but it can taste fear and blood on the wind from afar and hunt both waking and dreaming.

This investigation can answer the question of what is doing the killing, but not the why. A separate Knowledge (local) check mostly turns up pieties about the villagers not being faithful enough, about the winter sacrifices of sweet cakes, ice carvings, and holly wreaths being blemished or of

insufficient quality to please the goddess, or grousing about the presence of lowlanders in the forest stirring up the goddess' wrath. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) check, however, reveals Priya's story in the GM's background above. No one in the village knows Priya's fate, but they know of the time and nature of her children's deaths, and how she went mad with death and was overheard cursing the goddess' name and muttering that she would go to the goddess and demand justice. On asking around about Priya's disappearance, it certainly precedes the onset of the attacks, so the potential connection is there. Those wishing to investigate Priya's fate are advised to look toward Istria's dolmen.

Rewards: Award the party XP for their investigations in Gloym as a CR 3 encounter.

PCs may choose to simply investigate the forest on their own, hunting for signs of the killer creature. Each day they spend exploring the wild lands around Gloym, they have a 10% chance of encountering the Bloody Beast (page 28) in addition to the chance of other random encounters. If encountered, the Bloody Beast behaves as described in the Late Frost encounter.

CHAPTER 2: THE MOUNT OF SORROW

THE FALLS OF ISTRIA (CR 6)



The trail from the village to the Falls of Istra is well-known and well-worn by the passage of generations to give offerings to their goddess. A mountain bird circles lazily overhead as the tumbling stream pools a bit in the steep-walled valley above the falls, as the first spring shoots and blossoms break through the last clumps and crusts of snow. A great peaked dolmen spans the river just above the head of the falls, just before the river tumbles noisily more than 60 feet down to a rocky shelf and deep pool before gathering and flowing around a rocky islet at the far side and flowing away westward.

The dolmen itself is a crude structure of massive stony slabs, marked with a handful of petroglyphs naming the Ughar villages (DC 15 Linguistics check) and the vows of the Ughar to serve the goddess and follow her wisdom and for her to heed their cries and shelter them from fire, storm, and danger (if the Linguistics check was successful, or if the writings are read magically, interpreting these passages requires a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check).

If the PCs spend more than 1 minute examining the Dolmen, including making efforts to read the inscriptions and/or climb over the dolmen to cross the river, they attract the attention of a mountain raven afflicted with the wendigo curse. In fact, This is the selfsame carrion bird who drove Priya to her fateful madness, and she was the first creature upon whom Istra's anger fell when she decided to wreak her vengeance

upon the uncouth villagers. The raven feels strangely bound to this place, however, caught up by the dying mother's curse that caused Priya to rise again as a vengeful ghost. If Priya is killed, the wendigo raven will be freed from his spiritual binding, and its cunning and hateful nature will impel it to spread its awful affliction. It is thus important for the party to destroy this creature, even though it has not been the creature directly responsible for the killings.

PCs scanning the area for enemies have little chance to spot the raven clinging to the cliffs 100 feet above, as it constantly takes 10 on Stealth checks (Perception DC 35, including distance modifier).

WITIKOWAN MOUNTAIN RAVEN (VULTURE) CR 3

XP 800

CE Small fey (cold)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 25 (3d8+12); regeneration 5 (fire)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; +4 vs. disease

Immune cold, mind-affecting effects;

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +7 (1d8+2/18-20/x3 plus disease)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks bloody bite, disease (DC 15), nightmare stalker (DC 12), savage transformation (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 1, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 3

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** +7

Feats Flyby Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Fly +15, Perception +13, Stealth +15, Survival +13

SQ taste of terror, wind walker

Development: The passing winter has long since obliterated any footprints Priya had left behind en route to her tragic fall, but a DC 20 Perception check reveals fragmentary remains of a human child atop the Dolmen (Priya's dead son), and a DC 20 Survival check discovers faint traces that indicate the passage of some creature from the dolmen toward the falls. PCs climbing down or even standing at the cliff's edge can see the pale corpse of a woman, frozen and rimed with ice (Perception DC 10) and may

hear a distant moaning cry echoing over the roaring of the falls (Perception DC 20).

If any living creature touches the remains atop the dolmen, or if blood is shed in or adjacent to the dolmen or the river (including any hit with a piercing or slashing weapon against a creature in those locations), a haunt is triggered. The haunt also triggers if a creature begins to climb up or down the cliffs within 30 feet of the waterfall.

WATERFALL OF TEARS CR 5

N haunt (60 ft. wide by 60 ft. high waterfall, 10 feet from top and bottom, or within 10 feet of the dolmen)

Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 18 (to hear anguished shrieking and weeping mixed with the sound of the river and falls)

hp 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect When this haunt is triggered, the roar of the waterfall seems to shift higher in pitch to the mournful wail of a mother in absolute suffering. Any living creature within the haunt's area is affected as *crushing despair*, and if they fail their save by 5 or more they are overcome with hopelessness and seek to end it all. Climbing creatures let go and fall to the bottom of the falls, while creatures atop the falls hurl themselves over the edge. After taking falling damage, creatures must make an additional Will save each round at the beginning of their turn or become dazed with anguish and hopelessness, unable even to move. Creatures falling at the base of the waterfall take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per round from the pounding rush of waters and must make a Fortitude save or begin



drowning. If they make two consecutive successful Will saves, they regain the will to live and can voluntarily leave the base of the falls and swim to shore.

Destruction Priya must be allowed to confront Istria with her grievances, and she must be convinced to forgive the goddess.

Getting Down

Climbing down the 60-foot cliffs is not tremendously difficult (DC 15 without a rope, DC 5 with a rope), though if PCs climb within 30 feet of the falls the rocks are wet and even icy in places, increasing the DC by 5. However, the rocks atop the cliff are icy and treacherous, requiring a DC 10 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping and

falling whenever a PC moves within 5 feet of the cliff's edge (DC 15 is moving more than half speed). This check is automatically successful if a PC is crawling.

Alternatively, PCs can search for an alternate portage trail that bypasses the falls, requiring a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Survival check and 1 hour of time to find the path and return to the base of the falls.



BELOW THE FALLS (CR 4)

The Falls of Istria plunge down onto a bed of rocky spires and shallows, spilling into a deep sapphire pool. The waters churn more strongly along the pool's southern edge, collecting into a stream flowing westward past a pair of flat islets split by a narrow watery cleft. Upon the smaller islet lies a woman's body, clearly frozen stiff and bruised and broken, yet with her hair freshly braided and her clothing newly mended.

Priya floats aimlessly in the pool below the falls, sometimes tending to her frozen body and plying her seamstress skills out of habit, at other times simply sitting below the pounding waters, trapped inside the body of the spirit of the falls and thwarted in her efforts to reach the goddess. Her grip on sanity is tenuous at best, as she realizes that she is dead but cannot figure out what to do next.

This encounter features three stat blocks, one for Priya as a ghost, one for the stromkarl Byard Mager, and one for Byard while he is possessed by Priya's ghost. This final stat block is the one most likely to engage with the PCs, as breaking Priya's possession is probably beyond their power and Priya herself does not know how to end the possession.

BYARD MAGER (POSSESSED BY PRIYA) CR 3

XP 800
 N Medium fey (aquatic)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, tremorsense

60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 13 (2d6+6)
Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6
DR 5/cold iron; **Defensive Abilities** waterfall spirit; **SR** 12 (16 in splashing water)

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee masterwork longspear +4 (1d8+3/x3)
Ranged masterwork longbow +6 (1d8+2)
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)
Special Attacks frightful moan (DC 13), malevolence

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15
Feats Iron Will
Skills Craft (tailor) +5, Perception +13, Profession (cook) +5, Stealth +10, Swim +10
Languages Halat
SQ amphibious, waterfall spirit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Waterfall Spirit (Su) A stromkarl is bound to a waterfall or place of rushing waters as a dryad is to her tree, and if it ventures more than 1000 feet for longer than 24 hours, it dies. However, within 60 feet of its waterfall it gains a +4 deflection bonus to Armor Class, fast healing 5, and its spell resistance is increased by 4. A stromkarl cannot be bull rushed, dragged, repositioned, or tripped while within 60 feet of its waterfall, and its melee attacks are never impeded by water (as *freedom of movement*).

If PCs devise some means of successfully banishing Priya from Byard, she manifests as a spectral village woman in soaked rags, bearing the body of her child in her arms. Unlike most ghosts, she lacks a corrupting touch and has no effective melee attack, but her wailing cries function as a frightful moan and she is able to possess creatures. Her every effort is directed towards seeking out the goddess and demanding satisfaction for abandoning her. She will attempt to possess one of the PCs and use their body to ascend the goddess' mountain, violating their strictest taboo to confront the goddess herself in her palace of gold and glass. She has already lost everything, even her very life; she has literally nothing more to lose.

PRIYA NIZOLEK CR 3

Female human ghost commoner 2
 XP 800
 N Medium undead (incorporeal)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 deflection)
hp 13 (2d8+4)
Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Melee -
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.
Special Attacks frightful moan (DC 13), malevolence

STATISTICS

Str -, **Dex** 11, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Iron Will

Skills Craft (tailor) +5, Fly +8, Perception +13, Profession (cook) +5, Stealth +10, Swim +10

Languages Halat

SQ rejuvenation

If freed from Priya's possession, Byard is angry and disoriented after his long possession, acting as if confused for 1d4 rounds, raving that the PCs are out to get him or trying to control his mind. He calms down after this, and conversation with him is described below.

BYARD MAGER, STROMKARL NIXIE

CR 3

XP 800

N Medium fey (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 13 (2d6+6)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

DR 5/cold iron; **Defensive Abilities** waterfall spirit; **SR** 12 (16 in splashing water)

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee masterwork longspear +4 (1d8+3/x3)

Ranged masterwork longbow +6 (1d8+2)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 6th, concentration +10)

3/day—*hydraulic push* (CMB +12)

1/day—*control water*, *hydraulic torrent* (CMB +12), *minor wish*

Special Attacks captivating song (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha**

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness

Skills Bluff +8, Handle Animal +8, Perception +8, Perform (sing) +9, Perform (string) +9, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +7, Swim +14

Languages Aquan, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, waterfall spirit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Captivating Song (Su) This works like the harpy's ability of the same name. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Minor Wish (Sp) This works like the bog nixie's ability of the same name.

Waterfall Spirit (Su) see above

Development: Priya ignores PCs investigating the dolmen or the upper cliffs, but every round any creature spends climbing down the falls she makes a Perception check to notice them. If they come more than halfway down, she swims over to them and uses her frightful moan to try scaring them away and then dives back underwater, as she just wishes to be left alone in her hopelessness. They are clearly not the goddess, and in her twisted thoughts they can offer nothing but misery to her.

Talking with Priya: If the PCs try speaking to Priya, her attitude varies. If they speak any language but Halat, she is hostile, for she understands no other tongues. If they speak in Halat, she is instead unfriendly, but if they mention her name or succeed on a DC 22 Diplomacy check she becomes indifferent (if both apply, she becomes friendly). While she may be willing to converse, however, she is not entirely lucid and a DC 15 Sense Motive check is required when conversing with her to cut through

her more tangential ramblings and discern her real meaning. If her mood can be improved to helpful through Diplomacy, Intimidate (DC 20), or even a Bluff check (DC 20) that the party can help her heal her pain, she will relate her entire story, as noted in the DM's background, including describing the creatures who have come to visit her, though she does not think any of them are the true goddess. She will be remorseful for having to possess the spirit of the waterfall, but she did it almost on instinct, she did not know what to do.

A DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that Priya has most likely become a ghost, and also that many ghosts have the power to move from body to body using their malevolence ability and can enter a new host without causing lasting harm, and a successful Bluff check opposed by Priya's Sense Motive check (+0 modifier) convinces her that it is possible. However, she must be convinced that she should and that the PCs are willing to help her find the goddess and speak to her, requiring a second Bluff check opposed by her Sense Motive; she gets a +5 bonus to her Sense Motive check unless one of the PCs volunteers to serve as her host. If the Bluff check agrees, she transfers her spirit into the willing PC. This frees Byard from her control, with consequences as noted above.

Once Priya enters the PC's mind, the PC's own personality is mostly subsumed within Priya's addled mind. The host PC is aware of her surroundings and can communicate with Priya but cannot move or speak to others. The player of the hosting PC could be allowed to role-play the half-mad ghost-

woman inhabiting his or her character, retaining her own physical ability scores, hit points, natural abilities, and automatic abilities while using Priya's mental ability scores, level, class, base attack bonus, base save bonuses, alignment, and purely mental abilities. Alternatively, you might allow the PC within to try to wrest control of herself temporarily, with a DC 20 Will save allowing the host to act as if confused for 1d4 rounds rather than remaining wholly in Priya's charge).

If the PCs cannot figure out how to transfer Priya's spirit or fail to convince her to do so willingly, they do have the option of killing Byard, which will automatically release Priya's spirit; however, if this happens the haunting of the waterfall intensifies, increasing its dimensions by 100% and increasing the save DC by 2. There is also a 50% chance that Byard's dying spirit

is driven mad by dying while possessed, transforming him into an allip.

The PCs can also ask Priya if she knows the way to the goddess' valley. While she does not know its exact location, she knows enough of the ancient tales of the goddess to give the PCs a reasonable sense of where to look and how to get there.

Talking with Byard: When Byard comes back to his senses he is initially unfriendly toward PCs. He is not at all certain what happened to him, but he is dimly aware of having been mentally controlled, and his first suspicion is that the characters have something to do with it. A DC 18 Intimidate check or DC 24 Diplomacy check calms him enough to reveal that Istria, the goddess of the mountain, is his lover. While he cannot lead them to her sacred valley, as he has never been there (it is too far from his waterfall), she has

said enough in conversation with him that he could give the party reasonably good directions as to how to get there (DC 10 Survival check to avoid getting lost) and a braided ring of his hair; if cast into the waters pouring forth from Istria's valley, it will cause the waters to recede as if using control water, allowing them to enter her valley through the streambed. Priya is very much in favor of this approach, seeking the goddess' palace of gold and glass upon the mountain.

Rewards: Byard has a small store of treasure accumulated over the years from discarded votive offerings to Istria as well as things he himself has acquired. His trove includes 225 gp, 3 chrysoberyl (90 each), a large aquamarine (550 gp), a wand of alarm (36 charges), a vial of silversheen, an elixir of tumbling, and an iron rope.

ASCENDING THE SACRED MOUNTAIN (CR 8)

Following either Priya's or Byard's directions will lead the party up the mountainside. The way is difficult, taking 8 hours. Each hour, characters must make Climb and Acrobatics checks, beginning at DC 10 and increasing by 1 each hour thereafter. Each failed Climb check indicates that the character has fallen at some point during that hour, taking 1d6 points of damage (which may be mitigated with a DC 15 Acrobatics check). Each failed Acrobatics check means that the character has slipped and fallen on jagged rocks and ice, as if attacked by caltrops.

In addition, at the halfway point of their climb, the PCs ascend high enough up the peak that the air begins to thin. PCs become fatigued (DC 15 Fortitude save negates, with the DC increasing by 1 for each hour after the first) as long as they remain at this altitude. The Endurance feat and Survival skill can assist with this save.

Avalanche: Finally, during the last hour of their ascent, Istria (through her charmed animal spies) notices the party drawing near to her home and tries to drive them away by creating an avalanche with her *transmute rock to mud* and *move earth* abilities. The avalanche is 200 feet wide and is a mix of rock, earth, ice, and snow, moving at 300 feet per round. The party can first notice it with a DC 20 Perception check when it is 1000 feet away. Those who fail to notice the avalanche may check again each round thereafter, and the DC for either check is reduced by 5 per round. When the avalanche forms, the party is approximately at its center. Characters able to fly or levitate

can avoid the avalanche if they are more than 20 feet off the ground, while those on the ground can shelter behind large trees and boulders, granting a +2 cover bonus to the Reflex save, or they can try to move uphill or downhill out of the path of the avalanche. Those within the middle 100 feet of the avalanche are in its bury zone; those within 50 feet to either side are in the slide zone.

One round after the avalanche strikes, Istria sends her pet giant owl, **Bardiu**, down the mountain to observe the PCs directly.

Creatures: Bardiu (giant owl, hp 57)

Bardiu simply circles overhead, watching the PCs and using one round of his piercing gaze to ascertain what we can about them and judging their character and intentions. He will circle and watch them for 2d4 rounds before flying away back up the mountain. While Bardiu cannot speak, he understands Sylvan (a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals this), and if a PC hails him in that tongue he will flutter down 20 feet from that PC and listen to what is said, considering their words and what they might mean for his mistress. Attempts to Bluff Bardiu are opposed by his +14 Sense Motive modifier. After listening to PCs, Bardiu flies back up the mountain path, pointing the way for PCs to follow.

If PCs attack Bardiu, he swoops down to disarm that character. If attacked again, he drops the weapon he has taken from them and attacks in earnest. He attacks lightly armored characters or creatures able to fly with beak and claw, but against an armored

foe he will use a drag combat maneuver to pull them into the air above the downslope of the mountain path and then drop them 2d4 x 10 feet. A fallen character will need to make DC 15 Climb checks to ascend back up to the path. If brought below 15 hit points, Bardiu flees.

Developments: If PCs survive the avalanche, Istria is impressed with their tenacity and her attitude shifts to indifferent. If they attack Bardiu, she becomes unfriendly, or hostile if he is killed or reduced below 0 hit points.

PCs can follow Bardiu up the final traverse of the mountain or can find their own way (Survival DC 10 following Byard's directions, DC 15 using Priya's), following a winding path a quarter-mile before approaching a narrow freshet gushing forth from a high crack in the rocks ahead, with no apparent method to pass by it. If they have Byard's token, they can toss it into the water, causing the stream to abate and allowing them to walk up the watercourse with relative ease (Climb DC 7 to clamber over the wet rocks left behind for 100 feet before passing into the goddess' garden.

If PCs lack Byard's token, they can swim upstream (Swim DC 20) for 100 feet, or they can climb up and over the cliffs (DC 20 Climb) to reach the valley beyond. If Bardiu returns to Istria and indicates that the PCs spoke to him in Sylvan, Istria comes herself via *passwall* to offer PCs a method to get through the mountain.

Award XP for the ascent of the mountain as a CR 8 encounter.

VALLEY OF THE GODDESS (CR 5/10)

This high-walled garden is bedecked with exuberant growth of flowering shrubs, berry bushes, and alpine flowers and is well-treed besides. A massive roosting perch stands in a small clearing, while beside a clear stream pebbled with crystals (some worn and dull, others faceted and sparkling) stands a curious crystalline pavilion seemingly twisted and woven together from veins of natural crystal, growing almost like a living thing. Rocky pillars of sparkling stone hold up gossamer-thin sheets of crystal plate for roofs. Gold tracings decorate every crystalline surface, and in places tiny teardrop globes and rough nuggets of gold sprout from crystalline flowers like tiny clusters of berries. The pavilion lies beside a large pool reflecting the uppermost peak above as well as the unusually verdant vegetation. Standing before the pavilion is a coolly regal woman with dark hair, draped in garments of crystal.

Istria maintains the pleasant valley for her own pleasure and rarely if ever has visitors, though she is served by Bardiu and also by a pair of charmed spriggans, **Gram** and **Garna**, that she caught snooping around her valley and decided to keep as servants and has found amusing as jugglers. The two spriggans are obsequious toward Istria but crude and occasionally surly towards her guests, covering up any verbal missteps with protests of only wanting to make sure guests respect their mistress as she is due.

In conversation, Istria should be played as distant and aloof. She may come off as intentionally mysterious, but it should be apparent that it is her essential nature to be distant and aloof; she is literally the spirit of the mountain, and her heart is as a heart of stone. Ideas or perspectives that might seem alien or strange to ordinary folk are a matter of course to one who has lived for untold years looking down on those around her. At the same time, the implied social niceties of community and society may not be obvious to her, and even if explained may leave her more baffled than sympathetic. She is logical and matter of fact about the necessities of life. Nature is a harsh but ultimately fair mistress, delivering bounty and privation in equal measure.

At the same time, Istria is not truly emotionless. Her love for Byard is genuine, and her creation of the wiitikowan was an act of pure emotion; a combination of jealousy, wounded pride, spurned love, and vengeful hate. The PCs have earned her respect in braving her mountain, and she is amenable to conversation and persuasion by them. It is the players' task to appeal to Istria's mind and heart, convincing her to relent in whatever curse she has laid upon the villagers and to help them stop the rampage of the Bloody Beast.

The DCs to convince Istria to assist them are fairly high for this level, but they also assume that PCs will be aiding a primary negotiator. In addition, remember to reward players with circumstance bonuses to Diplomacy checks for making cogent, eloquent, heartfelt, or even humorous

arguments, especially if one of the players has allowed Priya's ghost to possess his character and is role-playing that experience well.

Talking with Istria: A DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check identifies Istria as being an orruol, a mountain fey with great power over the very living rock of her alpine domain, but tied to it as a dryad is to her tree or a stromkarl to his waterfall. It also indicates that orruols tend to be lawful in alignment, and not as given to caprice and impulsive behavior as most fey.

If Istria remains unfriendly or worse, she demands to know the PCs' business, interrogating them as to their reasons for violating her mountain home and revealing very little of herself.

If she is made at least indifferent, she invites the PCs to dine with her on nuts, berries, and eggs from the alpine birds that nest here in abundance. She speaks only Dwarven, Sylvan, and Terran, so conversation may be difficult if PCs lack facility in those languages. Still, she will share her version of the tale and admit that she unleashed the terrible curse upon the villages.

Istria can be made friendly through continued Diplomacy (DC 26), with PCs spending 1d4 hours in conversation. Mentioning Byard Mager results in a -2 penalty to Diplomacy checks for the party unless they brought some token from him and make apologies on his behalf, in which case it provides a +2 circumstance bonus. If PCs make up an apology without having actually spoken to Byard, they must make



Bluff checks opposed by Istria's and Bardiu's Sense Motive checks.

If made friendly, Istria agrees to listen to Priya's tale of woe, though despite living among the Ughar for centuries she is not fluent in their Halat language, never having bothered to learn more than the rudiments of the tongue. If PCs help translate and interpret, Istria agrees that as someone the Ughar have adopted as their goddess, she does have a certain responsibility to them, to protect them. She admits that the source of her anger was misplaced, and she should not have loosed her vengeance upon all of the villages, or really on any of them. She apologizes to Priya for not answering her call, though to save her child was beyond her power. Though it may be small consolation, she invites Priya to fetch her body and the remains of her child, that they may be interred here in the goddess' valley. Having been able to plead her case to her goddess, Priya is content and willing to be laid to rest here, which will end her ghostly existence as well as purging the haunt from the Falls of Istra.

Developments: By the end of her conversation with the PCs, Istria is likely to express deep regret for her actions. She wonders aloud whether having Gram and Garna nearby has tainted her judgment, as she knows that the spriggans are quite cruel and heartily encouraged bloody vengeance against all the villagers when she was in the throes of her anguish at what she believed was Byard's betrayal. She does not blame them for her own decision to unleash the wiitikowan curse, but upon reflection decides to dismiss them from her service.

She sends them away privately but informs the PCs of it later. If the PCs ask why she released two dangerous creatures, she states simply that they had amply fulfilled her need for punishment for their crime of trespassing and she had no compelling reason to keep them bound. She reassures the PCs that, should they encounter Garna and Gram at some later time and the two get into mischief and come to a bad end, she would shed no tears nor hold any grudges.

Istria can tell the PCs about the powers of the wiitikowan, especially its bloody bite, disease, nightmare stalker, and savage transformation special attacks. She warns that it is able to regenerate but that fire can suppress its healing powers, and that if sorely wounded it will fade into mist and try to flee, and they must do all they can to prevent its escape. If they find victims left alive from its attacks but that are showing signs of madness, she recommends a swift and painless death followed by burning the body as the surest method of ensuring the taint does not spread. While it may be possible to heal both the curse, the disease, and the madness that come upon the victim, she herself lacks that power, and this far in the wilderness she doubts that anyone else could eradicate the taint before it progressed to its awful conclusion. Harsh and cruel as it may be, she suggests it is the most effective solution to the problem.

In terms of hunting the Bloody Beast, she states it was once a great wolverine that was attainted by the mountain raven upon whom she laid the curse initially. The wolverine's natural cruelty and cunning have made it a deadly killer, though it avoids

Istria's mountain in favor of roaming the hills and wooded valleys where it can find easy prey. Istria describes how PCs might be able to use the wiitikowan's taste of terror ability to lure it into an ambush. It can sense both blood and fear up to a mile away. If they have some means of creating fear, whether upon one of their own number or even a captive animal, it may be enough to lure the Bloody Beast. If Priya has not yet been laid to rest, she volunteers that she could delay her repose and continue in possession of one of the characters in order to use her ghostly powers to induce fear if that would be helpful.

Istria can *teleport* up to 5 PCs to her dolmen at the base of the mountain to collect Priya's remains and those of her child and then return to her valley to have Priya select their final resting place. If Priya is temporarily remaining with the PCs, Istria states she will return at sunset each day to meet them and to take Istria to her final rest whenever she is ready.

Rewards: Istria provides PCs with as many *goodberries* as they wish while in the valley, and gives each of them a dozen more *goodberries* to take with them when they leave. If PCs are lacking in magical capabilities, she can provide them with a pair of magic wands to use in hunting and confronting the Bloody Beast, a *wand of produce flame* (5 charges) and a *wand of cause fear* (8 charges).

In addition, Istria is grateful to PCs for showing her the error of her ways and offers them a gift, a +1 *elysian bronze longsword* (or select another weapon appropriate for a PC) and matching Medium-sized +1 *stanching*

elysian bronze breastplate. Both are relics of some long-ago tribal hero. He was a man of the south, taken by the villagers in battle with an invading army that tore through the Lost Lands centuries ago (DC 15 Knowledge (history) check reveals these are antique arms and armor of the once-great Taldarius Empire to the south, which briefly occupied the Lost Lands at the height of its growth). She does not know if they will be of any particular use in hunting the wiitikowan, but she has no particular use for them and is happy to bestow them upon those that have proven themselves worthy.

Attacking Istria: Conversing with Istria is not intended as a combat encounter. As a CR 10 fey with allies, attacking her is likely to be suicidal. If PCs do choose to attack, you should treat the gazebo as a set of four linked *falling portcullis traps* that entrap the PCs in the space between, though Istria can easily pass through them with her earth glide ability. She declares that she will decide their fate in her own good time. She uses her altitude alteration to increase the severity of altitude sickness, and each day she will place a *major curse* (either a standard curse or one of the GM's devising, such as the curse that created the wiitikowan) on one of the PCs while charming the others, relenting only if they beg for mercy and offer suitable recompense for their offense of attacking her. Accursed characters may be released back into the wild, hauled down the mountain by Bardiu and deposited at her dolmen, while charmed characters may be kept as her pets for years under a constantly renewed charm until she tires of them.

CHAPTER 3: HUNTING THE BLOODY BEAST

After returning from Istria's mountain, PCs may choose to return to Gloym or may simply begin their hunt. If they return to Gloym, they find that Ganec Trom has left the village with several hunters to talk with elders at the village of Voll a half-day to the south. PCs trying to recruit aid from the village will find the villagers generally terrified of anything to do with the Bloody Beast. However, a character fluent in Halat can attempt a DC 20 Intimidate or Diplomacy check to entice one foot soldier to assist them for 24 hours, plus an additional foot soldier for every 2 points by which the character beat the DC. The superstitious villagers take a -2 penalty to saves vs. fear and to their saving throws against any of the wiitikowan's special attacks.

Since the Bloody Beast moves constantly through the air, either in mist form or in flight, it cannot be tracked in the conventional sense. However, given the hints from Istria about how to attract its attention, they can make Survival checks to lure it to them. Treat this as a DC 26 Survival check taking 2d4 hours, with the

bonuses listed in **Table 3-1: Tracking the Bloody Beast** (page 29).

If the PCs wish, they can hunt for some of the local river herd animals that roam the hills. A DC 16 Survival check taking 1d4 hours allows the PCs to locate 1d3 rams or river elk at an encounter distance of 2d6 x 10 feet. If PCs can capture one or more of these animals, they can be panicked or slaughtered to assist in attracting the attention of the Bloody Beast.

No map is provided for this encounter, as the PCs can choose the place they wish to try attracting the Bloody Beast's attention. The villagers of Gloym are horrified and appalled if the PCs suggest trying to draw the creature to the village, and will bolt the doors of their homes, hiding inside until the PCs leave. If the villagers are forced into the open, they flee in panic into the woods if they see the Bloody Beast or hear its awful cry. If they scatter in this fashion, 1d4 of them are killed by the Bloody Beast if it escapes the PCs while there is a 50% chance one more is injured but survives infected with wendigo fever.

More likely, PCs will choose to confront the Bloody Beast in a natural setting away from the village. Have players describe the

kind of terrain, including slope, tree cover, and the like, appropriate to hilly terrain, and allow them to find an appropriate place to encamp and unleash fear and blood that will call out to the Bloody Beast.

The PCs can use the area around the goddess' dolmen and the Falls of Istria if they like, but if Istria is present (a DC 21 Diplomacy check persuades her to come with them and wait for the creature) the beast can sense her presence and will not come. After one fruitless Survival check, Istria reasons that the beast can sense her and that her presence is spoiling their chance to lure it to them.

Creatures: If the Survival check succeeds, the Bloody Beast arrives at some point during the PCs' stakeout (during the period of bleeding and/or fear, if those modifiers are being used). It arrives by stealth, wind walking to within 2d6 x 10 feet; be sure to adjust Perception check DCs by +1 per 10 feet of distance. If the Bloody Beast notices the PCs without being seen itself, it uses its nightmare stalker ability on a random PC that is not currently affected by fear. However, while it would normally fly on, it cannot resist the feast of blood and fear the PCs have provided, and it swoops

in to attack with great savagery, flying into a rage after taking damage. If it is brought below 10 hit points (or under 20 hit points if it has been wounded by fire since its last turn), it flees by wind walking.

If the Bloody Beast escapes, PCs can attempt to lure it in with the same trick again. However, although its accursed nature drives it to respond to fear and blood, the cunning remnant of its mind becomes progressively more suspicious of such attempts. As a result, the DC for the Survival check is increased by 2 for each attempt after the first, and the Bloody Beast gains an equivalent bonus to Perception checks to notice the PCs when it approaches the area.

THE BLOODY BEAST (WITTIKOWAN DIRE WOLVERINE) CR 6

XP 2,400

CE Large fey (cold)

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 66 (7d8+35); regeneration 5 (fire)

Fort +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3

Immune cold, mind-affecting effects;

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +10 (1d8+9/18-20/x3 plus disease), 2 claws +8 (1d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks bloody bite, disease (DC 18), nightmare stalker (DC 14), rage, savage

transformation (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 21, **Con** 21, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27 (31 vs. trip)

Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Fly +13, Perception +13, Stealth +13, Survival +12

SQ taste of terror, wind walker

Rage (Ex): When this creature takes damage during combat, at the beginning of its next turn it becomes enraged for the remainder of the combat: **Str** 27, **Con** 25, **AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 13, **hp** 78, **Fort** +12, **Melee** bite +12 (1d8+12/18-20/x3 plus disease), 2 claws +10 (1d6+4)

TABLE 3-1: TRACKING THE BLOODY BEAST

| BONUS | CONDITION |
|-------|--|
| +2 | Survival check undertaken at night |
| +1 | per creature taking bleed damage (including dying) |
| +2 | per creature freshly killed (bonus lasts 1 minute) |
| +2 | per creature shaken |
| +4 | per creature frightened |
| +6 | per creature panicked or cowering |



RETURN TO GLOYM

When the PCs return to Gloym, they find the villagers hiding in their homes for fear of the Bloody Beast. They cheer lustily if PCs bring the scorched body of the beast into the village and call for the elders to honor them. Ganec Trom has returned from Voll with his sons, Barruk and Truni, having visited there to confer with the elders of that village about the Bloody Beast and how to stop its rampage if the PCs were not able to destroy it. By his report, the villagers of Voll were terrified of the goddess' wrath and unwilling to stand in alliance against her will, especially with outsiders. Ganec Trom had returned to the village in frustration, but now his anger has turned to delight at the PCs' triumph. He congratulates them on their victory and plans a great feast for the next night in their honor. However, the celebration is chilled when Lysis the village elder and his wife Tabba found bloodily murdered in his home, their heads hacked off and hearts cut out and their flesh gnawed and mangled. Bloody human handprints are everywhere in their home, but no tracks are seen. The villagers, if anything, are even more distraught than before, seeing now that the Bloody Beast was not their only worry.

What he does not reveal, since he does not even remember it, was that he and his hunters encountered the Bloody Beast several days ago on their way to Voll. It attacked them briefly and then moved on, content to sow its crop of misery, and all three now suffer from wendigo fever. He has been struggling with the disease and with pervasive nightmares ever since, but shortly

after arriving home he was overcome by a bloodthirsty rage while he slept and awoke in a fevered haze, stealthily making his way to Lysis' nearby lodge and convincing him to let him in, overpowering and murdering him once they were safely inside and then fleeing into the wild for several hours before he came to his senses. Awakening covered in blood, he bathed in the river and was able to sneak back home and returned to his bed. He was awakened again when the PCs returned to Gloym.

PCs investigating Lysis' lodge may discover some clues as to the identity of the killer. There were several arrows found on the floor of the longhouse of a kind typical to the village's hunters, though Lysis himself did not hunt. A DC 15 Perception check indicates that there appear to be two different sets of handprints, as some are a bit larger than the others and appear to have claws at the end of each finger; however, a DC 25 Perception check raises some doubt and indicates that perhaps the handprints were actually made by the same hand, either wearing a strange bestial glove or perhaps swollen and transformed in some bestial fashion. If PCs can convince village elders or hunters to place their hands near the bloody handprints (requiring a DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check), they will find a half-dozen men whose hands are close enough to the size of the normal prints and one or two whose hands are close to large enough to be the larger set to be reasonable matches, but all claim they had nothing to do with this horrible atrocity. Each claims to have been at his home or working at their

various crafts earlier that night. Ganec Trom was asleep in his lodge, resting from his trip back from Voll, and witnesses did see him return and report to the other elders and then return home. Lysis returned home later and no one saw Ganec Trom leave his house afterwards. Lysis did not come out of his house all afternoon, but he often spent long hours indoors consulting his sacred powders and bowls, looking for omens. A DC 15 Heal check indicates that most of the bite marks on the corpses appear to have been made by human teeth.

If closely examined, a DC 15 Heal or Sense Motive check reveals that Ganec Trom appears to be somewhat feverish and ill, and if confronted with this fact he grudgingly admits that his trip to Voll was not only to consult with the elders about the Bloody Beast but also to seek the herbal skills of Old Redavel, their shaman and healer, to deal with a lingering illness he has battled on and off all winter and which he fears may be the wasting palsy that claimed a number of villagers in the late autumn and early winter (such as Priya's daughter). A DC 25 Heal check identifies his illness as wendigo fever, but a DC 18 Diplomacy or Intimidate check is required to make him realize it.

BLOOD IN THE VILLAGE (CR 6)

The following night, Ganec Trom's bloodlust comes upon him again as the wendigo fever continues to do its work. On this occasion, however, his two sons also succumb to the bloodlust of the hunt and begin their own prowl. This encounter may happen in one of several ways. If statistics for villagers are required, treat them as farmers or guides, though they automatically become shaken if they witness the transformation of their village folk into hideous monsters.

Beginning the Encounter: When the encounter is ready to begin, the riding dogs in the kennel begin barking madly as they sense something terribly wrong with their usual masters as they begin to reek of animalistic rage and feral hunger.

Creatures: 4 *confused riding dogs*.

Adjustments: The encounter may play out in several different ways, depending on the party's actions and preparations.

- If Ganec Trom's wendigo fever is identified and he is convinced of its reality, the strain on his mind causes him to spontaneously undergo a savage transformation (see the wiitikowan template for details). Witnessing his transformation, Barruk and Truni are likewise transformed 1 round later. Upon transformation, each pounces upon the nearest available target, whether the PCs or other villagers if they are present. Ganec Trom prefers to use his bow, while his sons fight in melee.
- If PCs can compel the villagers to all shelter together in the village longhouse (a DC 23 Diplomacy or

Intimidate check), Ganec and his sons climb up onto the building's roof and break their way in through the roof.

Ganec perches above and rains arrows down on the PCs and screaming villagers alike, using Shot on the Run to avoid return fire, while his sons break through and leap down into the longhouse to begin killing.

- If villagers sleep in their own homes, you should choose one of the sons to attack first, drawing the PCs' attention. Meanwhile, Ganec Trom can stalk the PCs when they respond the first cry for help, while the other hunter is drawn to the sound of bloodshed.

The greatest threat at the moment is Ganec Trom himself, who is now far gone into the grip of wendigo fever. In another night or perhaps two, he will devolve completely into a wiitikowan. The village is considered hills terrain for the purpose of Ganec Trom's favored terrain.

GANEC TROM CR 4

Male human ranger (guide) 5

N Medium humanoid

Init +1 (+3 in mountains and hills); **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +5 (+7 in mountains and hills)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 42 (5d10+15)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will -2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk battleaxe +8 (1d8+2/[TS]3) and gore +7 (1d6+2 plus 1 bleed/19-20)

Ranged mwk longbow, composite +8 (1d8+2/[TS]3) or handaxe +7 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks blood rage, ranger's focus (2/day, +4 attack and damage)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12 (8 points of Wis damage currently), **Cha** 11

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 19

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Endurance, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run

Skills Skills Climb +10, Craft (traps) +7, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (geography) +5 (+7 in mountains and hills), Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +5 (+7 in mountains and hills), Profession (trapper) +5, Ride +7, Stealth +10 (+12 in mountains and hills), Survival +5 (+7 in mountains and hills), Swim +7

Languages Common, Halat

SQ favored terrain (mountains/hills), track +2, trackless step, wild empathy +5

Combat Gear masterwork composite

longbow (STR 14) with 20 arrows, masterwork battleaxe, 2 throwing axes;

Other Gear masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, climber's kit, masterwork tools (Craft (traps)), 2 *potions of cure light wounds*

Ganec Trom's two sons, **Barruk** and **Truni**, are also afflicted, each currently with 5 points of Wisdom damage. These two barbarians are treated as cannibals in addition to the savage transformation brought on by their disease; however, rather than growing antlers and having a gore attack like him they have different natural weapons:

Barruk gains an enhanced bite attack; it becomes a primary natural weapon and he gains the bloody bite special attack of a wiitikowan, which he uses in conjunction with his greatclub. **Atk** bite +6 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 bleed/18-20). Barruk has Power Attack and Cleave as feats instead of the normal cannibal feats.

Truni gains a pair of primary claw attacks and uses these or grappling (equal chance of either) in preference to his greatclub. **Atk** 2 claws +6 (1d4+4/19-20).

Note that for all three NPCs, their blood rage that triggers when they first take damage is cumulative with their barbarian rage, providing an additional untyped +2

bonus to Strength and Constitution and an additional -2 penalty to their Armor Class.

Development: Ganec Trom and his two sons are not completely beyond hope. They fight until knocked unconscious or killed, but at that point their savage transformation fades and their humanity returns (though their memories disappear). Curing the wendigo fever is difficult but not impossible, but as long as it endures they are liable to transform and seek out human flesh to devour even if their ability damage is cured.

It is almost impossible to negotiate with Ganec Trom and his sons during combat. However, if Ganec Trom can be forced to spend a round losing his actions, including being fascinated, dazed, or stunned, or if he fails a saving throw against calm emotions, he must make a DC 15 Will save or fall prone to crushing despair for 1d4 rounds as some vestige of his conscious mind realizes what is happening and he struggles to regain control. During this time, a DC 23 Diplomacy check made as a full-round action allows a PC to keep Ganec Trom's natural mind in control. If this check can be made in three successive rounds (with a cumulative +2 bonus for each round after the first), his savage transformation abates and he returns to himself, this time with shadowed memories of what he has done and what he is becoming.

If calmed in this fashion, Ganec Trom offers his thanks for the PCs trying to redeem him, and if they believe they can cure his disease he will accompany them, but will insist upon being manacled every night for fear of what he might become. In any event, he abdicates his position as village



elder, declaring himself unfit to lead. If his madness cannot be cured, he states that he must be put to death and his body burned lest his tainted flesh carry on the legacy of blood. Barruk or Truni survived, they follow him in whatever fate he chooses.

If PCs suggest giving himself up to Istria, he willingly places himself in the hands of the goddess. While she is unable to undo the effects of the curse she bestowed, she honors their spirit of sacrifice and takes them to her hidden valley atop the mountain to end their misery and inter them with honor.

Rewards: Whether Ganec Trom dies or abdicates, his departure along with Lysis the doomsayer leaves the village of Gloym is left without its two most experienced elders and the Ughar in some turmoil.

The surviving elders, sorrowful but also thankful to the PCs for ending the scourge of the wiitikowan, pledge their loyalty and allegiance to the PCs and their growing kingdom. Whenever they claim the hex containing the Ughar villages, they can claim the hex without having to spend a Building Point, and their hex remains self-sufficient and does not add to the resource consumption of their kingdom. In addition, the hex is treated as though it contained a village, a special resource (ice peppers), and a monument (Istria's dolmen). However, the Ughar insist that they be left to live as they always have and that the PCs promise not to bring their "civilization" in the form of farms, mines, quarries, and the like (and certainly no actual cities) into their hex.

The PCs are each sent home with a small cask of ice peppers worth 100 gp, and 1 month later they receive a shipment from the Ughar of enough ice peppers to be worth 1d6 Building Points for the kingdom's treasury. In addition, at their departure Bardiu brings a gift from Istria for each PC of a single gemstone of each PC's favorite color, personally cut by her hand. The gemstone is worth 500 gp, but it also bears the mark of her favor and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skill checks with creatures of the earth subtype if openly displayed. Bardiu also extends his mistress' invitation to return for a future visit whenever the PCs wish.

EPILOGUE: THE ROAD HOME (CR 6)

On the road home, PCs may encounter Gram and Garna once again, desolate at having been discharged from the goddess' service (they had become quite besotted with her while charmed). The surly spriggans have taken up with a third of their kind, Oobi, and her warg friend Ungip, who have encouraged them to turn to banditry now that they are free of Istria's thrall.

The three spriggans have set up a crude ferry at **Ansit Ford** to lure people into the water during the runoff season, with the plot to have one of their number on each side of the river and a third on the ferry itself, all posing as gnomes. At midstream, the spriggan on the barge will then enlarge himself, capsizing the ferry and dumping passengers into the water and using Combat Reflexes to attack creatures trying to flee, while the two spriggans on the shore fire crossbows, all gaining sneak attack damage against creatures wading or in deep water or failing their Swim checks. Ungip hides in the underbrush near Oobi (Stealth +9) and attacks creatures trying to climb out onto shore, or provides flanking for Oobi.

Creatures: 3 spriggans (hp 22 or 34), 1 warg (hp 26). Oobi wields a ranseur (Atk +4 melee (2d3-1) in small form, Atk +8 melee (2d6+7) in

large form) rather than the usual morningstar. Ungip wears masterwork studded leather barding, granting him a +3 bonus to his Armor Class compared to a typical warg. In addition, Oobi and Ungip have worked together for some time, and both have the Coordinated Maneuvers teamwork feat (replacing Weapon Focus (morningstar) for Oobi and Run for Ungip). Oobi tries to disarm opponents while Ungip trips them. Oobi will use tanglefoot bags to trap creatures able to evade her reach. Unlike most spriggans, Oobi is fluent in Common.

Development: Oobi and Ungip are on the near side of the river when PCs approach (**O** and **U** on the map), while Gram and Garna are on the far side with the ferry (**G** on the map). Oobi asks for a gold piece each for each traveler, and she can ferry over only two at a time because of their small ferry and the swift waters. She will allow PCs to bargain her down to half her asking price. PCs can identify that she is actually a spriggan and not a gnome with a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check. When the ferry arrives, PCs can also attempt a DC 15 Perception check to recognize Gram and Garna from meeting them on Orual's mountain. If they converse with him in Aklo or Gnome (the only tongues they understand), they claim they are trying to turn over a new leaf as honest

businessmen, but PCs can see through their lies with a Sense Motive check opposing the lower of their two Bluff checks (-1 modifier on each). If PCs call the spriggans out on their lies, they go mad with rage and enlarges and attacks immediately, cursing the PCs for separating them from their true love. They try to use drag combat maneuvers to separate opponents and force small or physically weak opponents into the rushing waters. Oobi and Ungip reluctantly join the fray, but each flees if brought below 10 hit points. Gram and Garna, however, fight to the death.

Rewards: Gram and Garna carry no wealth but their gear, having yet to succeed at any banditry since being discharged from Istria's service. However, Oobi carries a considerable amount of spoils with her, including 2,285 sp, 497 gp, 19 quartz crystals of various sizes and colors (worth 1d10 gp each), 2 tanglefoot bags, 5 bottles of fine wine, a green velvet dress sewn with freshwater pearls and a red silk topcoat embroidered with golden thread (each is a noble outfit and slightly damaged and bloodstained, reducing their sale value to 10 gp each; a DC 15 Craft (tailor) check or make whole spell can repair them to full sale value), and a Medium-sized suit of half-plate armor. All of Oobi's wealth is carried in a handy haversack.

Ansit Ford

10 FEET

TREES

U

FORD

O

TRAIL

BEACH

TRAIL

BEACH

G

10 FEET

G

20 FEET

10 FEET

ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET



CREATURES

ORRUOL

This slender but solid woman has an air of distance and cold aloofness, her eyes glinting like cut gemstones. Her skin is smooth yet has a faint sheen, with jewels bedecking her throat. Her clothing, of a simple and even primitive tribal style, seems to flow into a weave of spun crystal before coalescing into a clinking cascade of faceted stones trailing behind her as she walks and briefly sprouting from the ground where her feet alight before crumbling away.

ORRUOL **CR 10**

XP 9,600

LN Medium fey (earth)

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision, tremorsense 120 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 102 (12d6+60)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

Immune altitude effects, cold, disease, petrification, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., earth glide 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +9 (1d6+3)

Ranged 3 *magic stones* +13 (1d6+4)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +18)

At will—*ghost sound* (DC 16), *magic stone*, *soften earth and stone*

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 20), empowered *calcific touch* (DC 20), *transport via stone*

(as *transport via plants*, but only through natural stone within 1 mile of the orruol's mountain)

1/day—*commune with nature*, *earthquake*, *major curse* (DC 22)

Oracle Spells Known (caster level 12th; concentration +18)

6th (4)—*move earth*, *stone tell*

5th (6)—*control winds* (DC 21), *stoneskin*, *transmute rock to mud*

4th (7)—*grove of respite*, *screaming* (DC 20), *spike stones* (DC 20), *wall of stone*

3rd (7)—*call lightning* (DC 19), *meld into stone*, *plant growth*, *sleet storm*, *stone shape*

2nd (8)—*barkskin*, *chill metal* (DC 18), *eagle eye*, *frigid touch*, *gust of wind* (DC 18), *stone call*

1st (8)—*call animal*, *charm animal* (DC 17), *frostbite*, *faerie fire*, *goodberry*, *speak with animals*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*, *resistance*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 22, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 25

Feats Blind-Fight, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*calcific touch*), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10, Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Climb +24, Craft (traps) +10, Craft (gem cutting) +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +18, Perform (sing) +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +21, Swim +10, Use Magic Device +18

Languages Gnome, Sylvan, Terran

ECOLOGY

Environment any mountain

Organization solitary

Treasure standard (double gems or jewelry)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alter Altitude (Su) As a full-round action, an orruol can adjust the effects of high altitude within 120 feet by one step, either making altitude conditions more severe (maximum of high peak conditions) or less severe (minimum of normal/low pass conditions). This aura moves with the orruol and lasts until she dismisses it.

Mysteries of Stone (Ex/Su) An orruol casts spells as a 12th-level oracle of the stone mystery but selects her spells from the druid list rather than the cleric list. In addition, she gains the following revelations: crystal sight (12 rounds/day, see through 12 feet of earth and stone or 12 inches of metal), mighty pebble (3/day, +12 ranged attack, 6d6 damage to target, adjacent creatures take half damage (DC 22 Reflex negates)), shard explosion (3/day, 6d6 damage in a 10-foot burst, DC 22 Reflex half), and steelbreaker skin (1/day, 12 minutes, weapons striking take 12 points of damage; if the weapon is destroyed, it deals no damage).

Spirit of the Mountain (Ex) An orruol is tied to her mountain as a dryad is tied to its tree. An orruol away from its mountain becomes fatigued immediately, becoming exhausted after 1 hour. If an orruol spends more than 24 hours away from its mountain, it dies.

Stone Step (Ex) An orruol's land movement (including climbing) is never impeded by natural or magically-created rubble, scree, slopes, or similar rocky difficult terrain, nor by snow, ice, or wind effects. They can still be impeded by liquid water, vegetation, or

other types of difficult terrain.

Stone's Throw (Sp) When an orruol uses its *magic stone* spell-like ability, it can hurl all three stones as a standard action. A creature is affected as *calcific touch* if struck by two stones in the same round, or empowered *calcific touch* if struck by all three.

An orruol is a powerful fey that embodies the spirit of a great mountain. As befits their high and lofty home, orruols are aloof and cool towards lesser beings, considering themselves mistresses of all they survey. Some primitive tribes worship them as goddesses, venerating them for their power, their beauty, and their seeming immortality. Orruols may or may not acknowledge this worship; some enjoy the attention and may manipulate their “worshippers” to serve them in whatever ways they wish. Others may disdain this adulation, ignoring the cries of the faithful and their pathetic rituals or appearing to collect their offerings with diffidence and mysterious silence before returning to their lonely mountaintop haunts.

Orruols are often friendly with other fey that live on or near their mountains, and many cultivate the services of animals or magical beasts as servants, especially giant eagles, giant owls, griffons, and rocs. While most orruols live above ground in cultivated gardens and wild meadows, some delve into the stony heart of their mountain homes in search of isolated cysts and geodes and veins of crystal, and these orruols often have pack of 5-10 *pech* as servants. If orruols choose not to delve in their own mountain, however, they are typically very displeased with other creatures that do so and may

choose to collapse their tunnels or seal them inside the mountain with their magic, or may curse or charm them as punishment. Delving an orruol's mountain does not injure the creature physically, but it may be that for most orruols it causes some kind of sympathetic spiritual discomfort that compels them to halt any disruption to their mountain's natural state.

Orruols enjoy the natural beauty of their mountain homes, but they often amuse themselves devising clever stonework traps that they craft with their magic to capture or kill those that violate their sacred refuges. Orruols are not cruel so much as they are largely without pity, seeing themselves merely as part of the harsh order of nature that embodies life and death, creation and destruction, beauty and ugliness. They are not wild and capricious as many fey can be, preferring to rely on logic and reason, though their tempers can be kindled by those that fail to show proper respect and their wrath can be terrible when aroused.

Orruols are 6 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds.



STROMKARL (WATERFALL NIXIE, VARIANT)

Always male, stromkarls are human-sized nixies that dwell in and around waterfalls and rushing whitewater. A stromkarl's musical voice mingles with the sound of the waters, often accompanied by a stringed instrument like a harp or fiddle. Their music is enchanting, and some stromkarls are blamed for luring women and children to their doom. Stromkarls can be kindly, and are said to grant gifts to creatures they favor or who can perform a service for them. Some stromkarls may become patrons of heroes, aiding them or even tutoring them into a greater destiny. More whimsically inclined stromkarls sometimes set brave

seekers of their aid on embarrassing tasks for their own amusement, while malicious ones may set rather cruel requirements, using their powers as a lure to inveigle lovers into their arms or setting up a tragically ironic fate for those who ask their aid one too many times.

Stromkarls are treated as nixies with the giant simple template. They typically wield longspears and longbows, though they can also use magic to fight, as they can use *hydraulic push* 3/day, *control water*, and *hydraulic torrent* 1/day each as spell-like abilities (caster level 6th). Stromkarls gain the captivating song and minor wish

abilities that *bog nixies* possess, as well as the following special quality:

Waterfall Spirit (Su) A stromkarl is bound to a waterfall or place of rushing waters as a dryad is to her tree, and if it ventures more than 1000 feet for longer than 24 hours, it dies. However, within 60 feet of its waterfall it gains a +4 deflection bonus to Armor Class, fast healing 5, and its spell resistance is increased by 4. A stromkarl cannot be bull rushed, dragged, repositioned, or tripped while within 60 feet of its waterfall, and its melee attacks are never impeded by water (as *freedom of movement*).

WIITIKOWAN (LESSER WENDIGO) (TEMPLATE)

A wiitikowan is the result when a living creature is spiritually consumed by a raw and hungry spirit of nature. Most common in cold, harsh lands where humanity and its kin sometimes teeter on the edge of relapsing into savagery and even cannibalism in order to survive, a wiitikowan may also arise as a result of a powerful curse. In any case, its appearance is wild yet haggard, its hair, fur, or feathers matted and its skin scarred and tattered (or, in rare cases, completely falling out and leaving the victim utterly bald), scarcely hiding its bulging muscles within. Its mouth is always bloody as though continually in the midst of a feast of carnage. Its eyes hold a feral supernatural gleam and its feet end in bloody stumps or sometimes bony claws, the flesh melting away into a cold mist. Wiitikowan is an acquired template that can be applied to any animal, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid.

Challenge Rating: As the base creature +2 for base creatures without class levels, spells, or spell-like or supernatural abilities.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Type: The creature's type changes to fey. Do not recalculate the creature's HD, BAB, or saves.

Armor Class: As the base creature, with a +2 bonus to its natural armor bonus to Armor Class.

Hit Dice: As the base creature +2.

Saves: As the base creature.

Defensive Abilities: A wiitikowan gains immunity to cold and mind-affecting effects.

Speed: A wiitikowan gains a fly speed of 60 feet (perfect maneuverability) and loses all other movement types. If its fly speed is faster than 60 feet, it retains that speed.

Attacks: A wiitikowan gains a bite attack if it does not already possess one, and its bite deals damage as a creature one size larger than its actual size, adding 1-1/2 times its Strength bonus to its bite damage. Any other natural weapons it has become atrophied and withered, being treated as secondary natural weapons and dealing damage as a creature one size smaller, adding 1/2 its Strength bonus to damage.

Special Attacks: A wiitikowan retains any special attacks of the base creature. In addition, it gains the following special attacks:

Bloody Bite (Ex): A wiitikowan's bite has a critical threat range of 18-20, dealing triple damage and 1d6 points of bleed damage on a confirmed critical hit. This bleed damage stacks for multiple critical hits.

Disease (Su): A wiitikowan's bite carries the disease of wendigo fever. *Wendigo fever:* bite; *save* Will DC = 10 + 1/2 the wiitikowan's Hit Dice + its Constitution modifier; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1d3 days; *effect* 1d3 Wis damage plus savage transformation (see below); *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Nightmare Stalker (Su): As a full-round action, a wiitikowan can mark one creature within 120 feet as its quarry, allowing it to move at full speed while tracking that creature, with an insight bonus equal to 1/2 its Hit Dice to Perception and Survival checks made against its quarry. As long as that creature remains its quarry, the

next time the target sleeps it is affected as *nightmare* (Will DC = 10 + 1/2 the wiitikowan's Hit Dice + its Wisdom modifier), though each time the target fails its saving throw against this *nightmare* it takes 1d3 points of Wisdom damage (and does not heal Wisdom damage naturally that day) in addition to the normal effects of *nightmare*. A wiitikowan will typically stalk a victim for 1d4 days trying to wear down its target's mental reserves before attacking and trying to spread its wendigo fever. A creature that has failed a saving throw against a wiitikowan's *nightmare* automatically becomes shaken whenever the wiitikowan is within 30 feet and for 1d4 rounds thereafter, even if it cannot see the wiitikowan. A creature that has failed two saves against its *nightmare* is frightened rather than shaken, while a creature that has failed three saves is either panicked or cowering (equal chance of either).

If the target succeeds on its saving throw three nights in a row, the wiitikowan abandons its quarry. Any Wisdom damage remains but the nightmares and their side effects do not recur. It may have only quarry at a time.

Optional Rule: If using the alternate Madness system from *Tomes of Arcane Knowledge*, a failed save adds 1d3 Madness points to the target rather than dealing Wisdom damage.

Savage Transformation (Su): On any day an infected creature takes Wisdom damage from wendigo fever, the target must make a Will save (same DC as wendigo fever) or be overcome with an insatiable hunger for the

flesh of its own kind, being compelled to stalk and kill the nearest creature of its own race and feast upon its flesh. After the first bite of its victim, the afflicted creature gains blood rage, low-light vision, and trackless step special qualities and may experience a temporary physical transformation. If the afflicted creature normally has a bite attack, it gains the bloody bite special attack described above. If the creature is a humanoid or similar creature lacking natural weapons, it may gain one or more primary natural weapons:

| d% | Result |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| 01-25 | no additional attack gained |
| 26-50 | bite attack gained |
| 51-70 | gore attack gained |
| 76-95 | 2 claws gained |
| 96 | bite and gore |
| 97 | bite and 2 claws |
| 98 | 2 claws and gore |
| 99-00 | bite, 2 claws, and gore |

These natural weapons deal damage appropriate for a creature of its size with a critical threat range of 19-20 and dealing 1 point of bleed damage (which stacks with bleed damage from any source) on a critical hit). This transformation, including the

blood rage and natural weapon, last for 1d4 hours, after which the afflicted creature returns to normal with no memory of events that transpired while affected by this effect.

When an afflicted creature's Wisdom damage equals its Wisdom score, the savage transformation becomes permanent. It gains this template and becomes a wiitikowan forever. Its Wisdom damage disappears when this occurs.

Abilities: Str +4, Dex +4, Con +4, Int -4 (minimum 1), Cha -4 (minimum 1).

BAB: As the base creature.

Skills: A wiitikowan gains a +8 racial bonus to Stealth and Survival.

Feats: As the base creature.

Special Qualities: A wiitikowan gains the following special qualities:

Regeneration 5 (Ex): Fire suppresses a wiitikowan's regeneration for 1 round.

Taste of Terror (Su): A wiitikowan can sense the presence of fear, becoming aware of the direction and approximate distance of any creature affected by a fear effect within 1 mile. If it is within 60 feet, it can pinpoint a shaken creature's exact location

as if it had blindsense; this is doubled if the creature is frightened, tripled if a creature is panicked, cowering, or paralyzed with fear. If the creature is also taking bleed damage (or bleeding while dying), all of the above distances are doubled. If a wiitikowan deals damage with its bite to a creature suffering from a fear effect, the wiitikowan can sense that creature for the next 24 hours as if it had blindsight rather than blindsense.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals do not approach within 30 feet of a wiitikowan unless the animal's master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check.

Wind Walker (Su): A wiitikowan may wind walk at will, requiring only a move action to transform between solid and gaseous form. In addition, a wiitikowan's movement, attacks, and senses are never impeded by wind or by natural or magical weather effects, including fog cloud, obscuring mist, and sleet storm.









