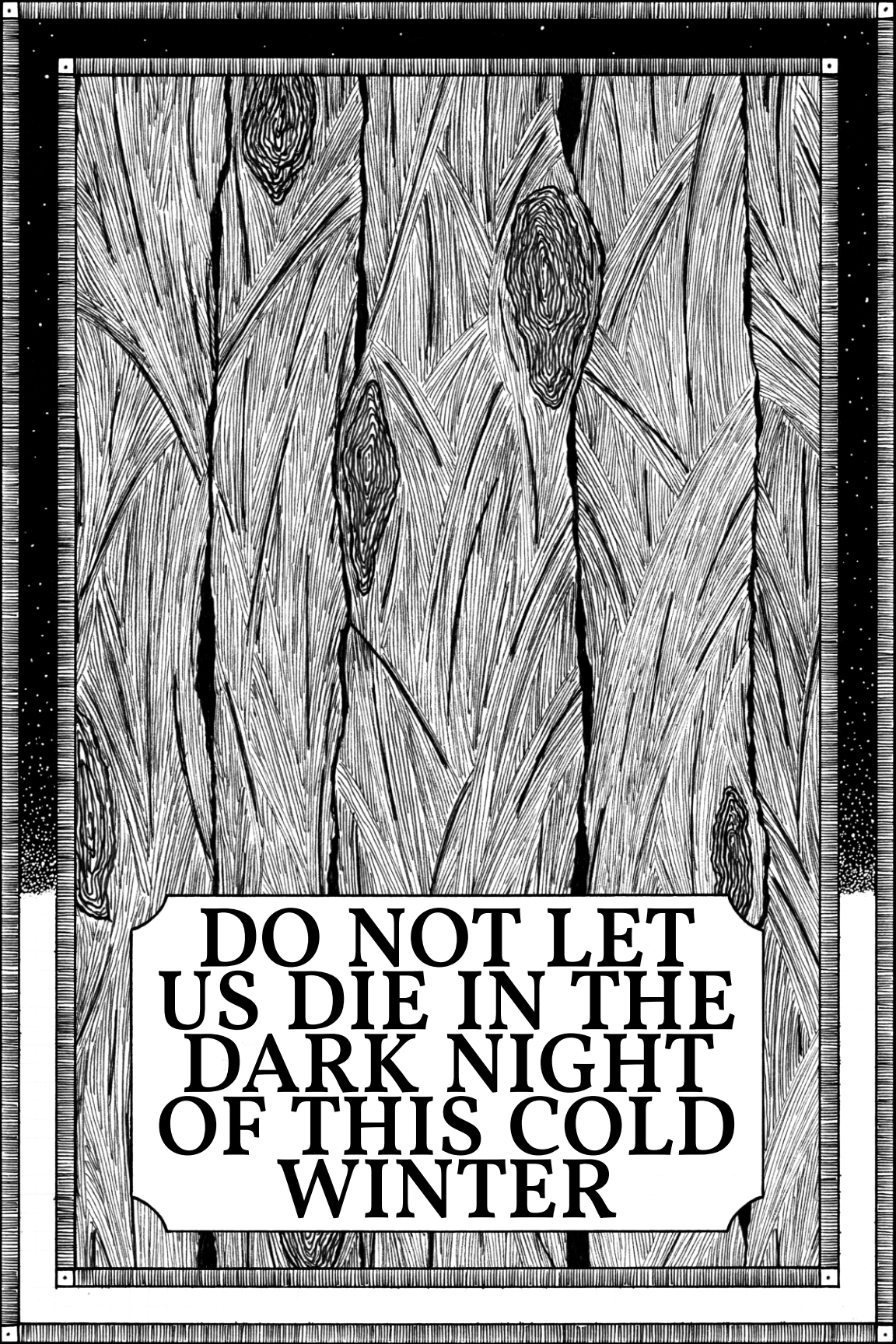




**DO NOT LET
US DIE IN THE
DARK NIGHT
OF THIS COLD
WINTER**

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DEAR READER,

DO NOT LET US DIE IN THE DARK NIGHT OF THIS COLD WINTER came to be after an internet friend asked out loud if anyone knew of any downtime rules for building a village. He wanted his players to spend the winter of their campaign attracting new people to a village, building new structures, and turning it into a productive mark on the countryside. Something that not just name level characters could do; something level one folks could pull off.

I got to thinking about winter in fantasyland and how hard it would be to make it through the season before you could even make a village into something better. After that I set out to make an adventure where players had to keep a village going through some wintry nightmare and at the same time in the back of my head I kept thinking about Dag-Nab-It from *Quest For Glory*, or The Gauntlet Pass side quest from *Neverwinter Nights*; these were great mini-games to pass some time and potentially hone some skills for your player. But mini-games in CRPGS are way easier to pull off because there is a computer doing all the hard work in the background, and as a player you just have to have fun. I wanted to melt the shitty winter thing and the mini-game thing together but for the tabletop. It was also important to me that this work with lots of games, because I don't think I know any two people playing the same game.

That's how this turned into a mini game instead of an adventure: I wanted to make something that was a break from the regular rules of play, but didn't require some ultra complex calculations in the background. After I decided how this thing would be, I decided I wanted the look to be minimal, slightly-less-than-elegant, and sync up thematically with something I think of first when I think of a desperate winter: sad post rock music. If you're looking for a good soundtrack to listen to while playing COLD WINTER, I suggest *Hymn To The Immortal Wind* by MONO, or *He Has Left Us Alone but Shafts of Light Sometimes Grace the Corner of Our Rooms...* by Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra & Tra-La-La Band.

I hope you have a good time playing COLD WINTER. I look forward to hearing about your villages and I especially am curious about what games you play this with, so please, get a hold of me on the internet and let me know how it goes!

LOVE,
cecil, 2016

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"In the spring or warmer weather when the snow thaws in the woods the tracks of winter reappear on slender pedestals and the snow reveals in palimpsest old buried wanderings, struggles, scenes of death. Tales of winter brought to light again like time turned back upon itself."

- Cormac McCarthy, Child Of God -

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

DO NOT LET US DIE IN THE DARK NIGHT OF THIS COLD WINTER is a downtime activity, or mini-game, with a focus on helping an ill-fated frontier village survive a terrible winter season. Participants collect and manage supplies in an effort to keep the village folk alive despite the bleak, frightful conditions. It is designed to work inside of your regular fantasy role playing system and campaign with a slight separation of mechanics. As the game manager you become the village elder; tasked with setting the dour mood, keeping players on track, offering advice or strategy, and taking stock of the available supplies. Player characters become the adventurers; collecting and managing supplies while ensuring each villager receives what is needed most. The ultimate goal of COLD WINTER is to keep the highest possible count of village folk alive as spring finally peeks from under the blanket of snow.

While COLD WINTER is mechanically separate from your regular role playing system, a measure of abstraction is utilized to keep the two games working as one. This chapter will explain those abstractions and provide basic adventuring hooks to begin the game.

TIME AND MEASUREMENTS

The passage of time is tracked as the number of turns needed to survive the winter. As the village elder, it is your job to determine how this is measured as time in-game. Turns can be days, weeks, or even months. *COLD WINTER* is meant to be played in a single session, similar to an adventure or side-quest, yet spans a particularly dreadful winter season. You must decide before the game begins and in terms familiar with your system, what amount of time each turn represents. If your campaign world has a climate much like Earth's then turns may represent weeks. In a more fantastic world where winter can last years, a turn may be expressed in months.

Just as turns are bent to fit within the campaign, so are measurements of weight. Rather than expressing the number of supplies collected with a known convention of weight, such as pounds or kilograms, the number collected is simply a number of units. Units represent the amount of supplies needed to satisfy a single use of that supply.

ADVENTURER CLASS

Each adventurer's role in *COLD WINTER* is directly tied to the role of their character from your regular campaign or system. With most role playing games, players will pick a specific class as the basic ingredient in the complex recipe that is a player character. In the absence of definable classes many games include a system of skill or ability choices that define a character's job. *COLD WINTER* runs with the assumption that all classes or jobs can be boiled and reduced to that of a **fighter, wizard, or thief**.

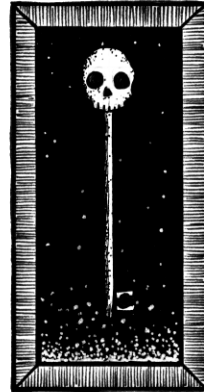
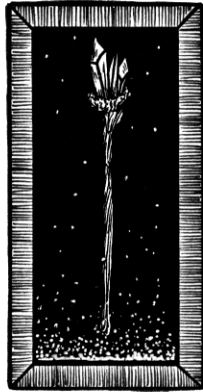
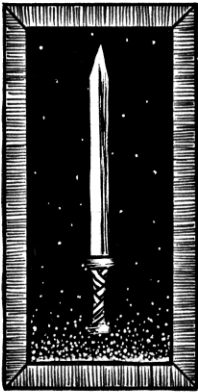
Some wonderful nature grants a fighter to press route, bestows great patience on a studious wizard, and gives the thief a shadow to hide in broad daylight. These same traits will give the

adventurers bounty while searching for supplies despite being clutched in the whited-out hell of winter's grip. Adventurers will need to know which of these three classes is best suited for their character if not implicitly stated. If you or an adventurer are unsure of which COLD WINTER class to drape over their character, use this guideline:

Strength or brute force based character's are to count as fighters.

Arcane or faith based characters are to count as wizards

Stealth or agility based characters are to count as thieves.



SKILLS AND ROLES

COLD WINTER presents a halt in the regular machinations of your current campaign, but it should not be seen as a means for pausing regular role play. The role of the villager elder is played much like a non-playing character in usual capacities. Adventurers should be encouraged to interact with the village elder in the same way their player characters would interact with any other characters. Assigning names to villagers and giving the village a place in the campaign world will go a long way towards immersing the players in the environment.

Throughout COLD WINTER the abilities and skill of each adventurer are passive, or automatically assumed to be activated. As mentioned in the adventurer class section, each adventurer's job gives a specific bonus when gathering supplies. This bonus, explained further within Chapter 2, is the amalgamation of an adventurer's skill put to use. A wizardly adventurer may have spells that reveal hidden objects or create food from thin air; rather than rolling the dice appropriated in your chosen set of rules, these abilities are the cause of supply gathering bonuses.

THE LONG AND TERRIBLE WINTER

The winter at hand is miserable to say the least. Oppressive snowfall and the hazardous environment make travel impossible. Once the adventurers land in the village, they will be unable to leave until winter ends. Dangerous scenery is very important in COLD WINTER; nightmarish whiteout and below-freezing temperatures drive many of this game's mechanics. A proper description of such desperate conditions will serve as a means to build immersion and tension. Opportunity to describe the harsh detail and set a flavored scene can be found in between turns or events.

Examples:

A villager wrapped in tattered clothes sits on a low tree stump, picking at her frozen, black and green toes.

This morning a large icicle dropped from the baker's roof and nearly killed a villager walking by.

The snow falls so thick that the sun is nearly hidden, and the villagers pray that one day their skin may feel the warm touch of her kiss.

THE VILLAGE

As it is the centerpiece of play, the creation of a village should be given careful thought. While the layout of the small settlement is intimately tied to the rules of COLD WINTER, a bit of planning in the way of lore should be completed before the game begins. Choose a location in the campaign world where a village in such great need of help would likely be found. A good candidate will have a forested backdrop not located within any realistic travel distance from the closest village or town. You should prepare a reason for this isolation in the event that it comes into question during play.

Examples:

Religious groups, or exiled refugees may have traveled as far as possible to escape conflict in their homelands, and have mistakenly settled a treacherous location.

A deep valley and unending mountain have hidden a village for decades, but recent events in the world have unearthed the location.

Witchcraft, sorcery, or other arcane treatment has upended a village from some far off land and deposited it in this new spot.

A memorable village will also have a name indicative of the location, founder, or geographical feature.

Examples:

Barlov, Havers, North Wholn, Riversplit, March End, Gwennen, Pine Beak, Pearce's Rest, Knutley, South Craen, Matlow, Hender, Sparrow's Home, Hidden Rock, Grove Point, Satferd, Kiln, Cliffboot, Fetburrow, Haredtown

Be sure to record these details with your campaign notes in the event that your players wish to return to the village.

THE HOOK

Much like an adventure in any other game, some sort of hook will be needed to cajole your players into participation. Use elements from the extant campaign to build a hook that will make the most sense for your group.

Examples:

A sleepy village in a quiet valley has played victim to the thrust of a goblin raid, has felt the crushing blow of a bandit cadre, or has lain host to the parasitic flank of a passing military force. Now the storehouse is empty and those able bodied enough to replenish the stock have perished or fled.

One of the adventurers has been beckoned to their far-off childhood home to help prepare for the winter. Many of those who grew up with the adventurer have left the village as well. Those few remaining need a hand in surviving one last winter, and plan to move after the thaw.

The adventurers have traveled a long distance with a host of retainers, and the onset of winter has forced the caravan to take up residence in an abandoned village. A bitter winter looms, and the adventurers must work hard to keep their retinue warm and fed until spring.



THE REWARD

Remuneration will certainly be in order at the end of winter. Much like the adventuring hook, the reward must fit neatly within your campaign and also return on a sliding scale, dependent on the number of living villagers.

Examples:

As the first flower blooms, the village elder reveals a hidden cache of gold and treasures acquired over the years. It will be offered to the adventurers as a token of gratitude.

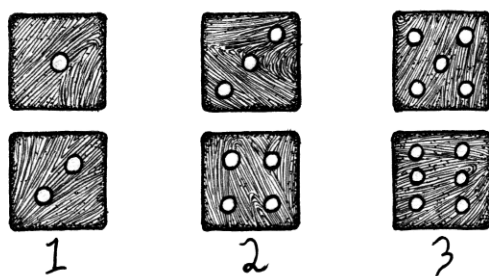
The children of the village lead the adventurers to an oft overlooked and much overgrown area of the forest. Through the tangled branches and fallen trunks, a stone building can be seen. This small keep is in decent repair and completely abandoned. It is possible that riches lie beneath the squat structure. Enterprising adventurers may seek to refurbish the ruin and use it as an operation base for further adventures.

The village may lack in pecuniary offerings, but will certainly compensate in knowledge and wisdom. Village folk will willingly teach the adventurers new spells, learn them forgotten fighting techniques, or impress upon them some fact instrumental in bringing an unresolved quest to closure.

HANDOUTS AND MATERIALS

Chapter 3 of this manual houses several handouts to be used in play. The village storeroom sheet is for you, the village elder, while the building worksheets are for the adventurers. These sheets are vital in tracking supplies as well as the condition of each villager. Pencils or tokens can be used to note how many supplies are in the storeroom and which villagers are hungry or sick. A quick reference sheet is also provided in Chapter 3 to easily keep track of game mechanics.

Along with copies of the handouts, *COLD WINTER* requires two six-sided dice (D6), pencils with healthy erasers or tokens that fit within the supply slots illustrated on the handouts. A three-sided die (D3) is also needed, but a six-sided die can be used for these rolls by dividing D6 rolls into thirds. Results of one or two on a D6 become one on a D3, three or four on a D6 become two on a D3, and five or six on a D6 become three on a D3.



ADVANCED CONCEPTS

COLD WINTER is designed to share a bed with as many fantasy role playing games as possible, especially those that are of a grim, low magic and low power nature. There will, however, be situations where players may not be able to pause the mechanics from the regular system; some players will find it difficult to not simply magic the village to safety. If your game has characters that can physically move mountains or sail the empyrean without effort, you will need to accommodate accordingly. Chapter 4 of this manual contains hooks for occasions where you may need to prepare for higher magic and higher power games, a collection of read-aloud texts to set the mood, and a guide for crafting your own occurrence tables.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

Only one rule exists that can not be broken or changed; all players must know exactly how the game works, and fully understand that all COLD WINTER rules should be utilized before the rules from your regular role playing system are used. DO NOT LET US DIE IN THE DARK NIGHT OF THIS COLD WINTER can be prepared and played in a single session, but before play starts be sure to explain the activity to all participants. A game with 4 adventurers will last about two hours.

The provided handouts are meant to make tracking each element of COLD WINTER easy and as without work as possible. In Chapter 3 you will find blank worksheets and examples of how each handout will look during play. Take some time to familiarize yourself with each worksheet before reading this section, and have them handy as you read the rules.



SETTING THE DIFFICULTY

Before a game of **COLD WINTER** can begin a village is required. Naming and placing your village is covered in Chapter 1, but there is one more step in building this settlement. The village must be populated with village folk, domesticated animals, and buildings. These initial attributes are the core of **COLD WINTER**'s sliding difficulty; as the number of each attribute changes, the difficulty changes. This section explains what can be thought of as the default difficulty and a guide on raising or lowering the difficulty can be found in Chapter 4.

For each adventurer there should be one **building**. Each player, except the village elder, has control over one building, and each building starts with five villagers.

The starting **population** of your village is the number of buildings times five. For example, if you have four players then your starting population is twenty.

When food becomes scarce, **domesticated animals** can be slaughtered for extra units of food. To start there will be one animal per adventurer. These animals are not beholden to any specific player and must be slaughtered as a group decision.

The number of turns that are spent before winter ends is the final factor of difficulty. **Winter's length** is the measure of turns before the pale colors of early spring begin to show. Begin with a winter's length of ten turns, and add one turn for every two adventurers.

Turns

As explained in Chapter 1, each turn represents the passage of time you decide upon before the game begins. Each turn has a succession of steps for resolving actions during that time. With the exception of the first turn, these steps are repeated each turn for the duration of winter's length. Steps 01 and 02 are skipped during the first turn, as it is implied that the storeroom contains the bare minimum to ensure that the village folk can survive from turn one to turn two.

Before each turn starts, an adventurer must be activated to make certain rolls. The **active adventurer** can be decided by your game's built in mechanic for tracking order, or you can simply rotate around the table.

STEP 01 – COUNT THE DEAD AND FORECAST THE WEATHER

Death is dealt as a preamble to the action of **COLD WINTER**. The first stage in each turn is determining the number of villagers who have died as a result of the previous turn. For example, if there is only enough fuel for three of the four buildings at the start of turn two, then during Step 01 of turn three a villager in the building without fuel will have died. Death is caused by a lack of supplies or detrimental occurrence.

After the dead are counted, you must roll a D3 to determine the current turn's temperature. The **temperature** determines how much fuel is needed to keep villagers from dying of exposure in their own homes; the result of the temperature roll is the number of fuel units needed on a given turn for each building.

AN EXAMPLE OF STEP 01:

Village Elder: *"Okay it is the beginning of turn four, does anyone have villagers with two 'Is Hungry?' boxes or three 'Is Sick?' boxes checked?"*

Adventurer 1: *"My villager Jesiah got a second hunger check mark in the last turn."*

Village Elder: *"Sadly Jesiah has died, clutching her stomach in agony; you should cross her name out from your sheet. Continuing on, which buildings went without heat during the last turn?"*

Adventurer 2: *"My building only had 2 units of wood but we needed 3 because of the temperature."*

Village Elder: *"One of your villagers has died, frozen to their bed. Cross one off your list. I rolled a 2 for the temperature, so each building needs 2 units of fuel this turn."*

STEP 02 – RATION THE SUPPLIES

The next step is resupplying the villagers and buildings. At the start of this step, you should let the adventurers know how many of each supply is held in the storeroom. Adventurers may then decide how best to divide the extant supplies among the villagers. This may mean letting some villagers go hungry for a turn, or slaughtering a domesticated animal for food.

Each supply removed from the store room and moved to a building must be removed from the storeroom record. Adventurers who have villagers that do not eat must check one of the 'Is Hungry?' boxes next to the villager's name on the building worksheet. Likewise, sick villagers who remain as such must have another check added to the 'Is Sick?' box. When a villager who is hungry or sick receives food or medicine, erase

all checks they may have in their respective boxes unless an occurrence says otherwise. Some occurrences will leave a villager or building with permanent check marks; these are not to be erased at all. At the end of Step 02 the adventurers will have an outlook on which villagers are likely to die at the start of the next turn, but there is a chance some of these villagers will be saved during Step 04.

AN EXAMPLE OF STEP 02:

Village Elder: *"You have 16 units of food but 20 villagers."*

Adventurer: *"We can each let one villager go hungry this turn and feed the rest, but we should make sure that the hungry villagers get food during the next turn."*

Other Adventurers: *"That sounds like a safe plan."*

Village Elder: *"Okay, I erased all of the food from the storeroom, and each of you should put a check in the 'Is Hungry?' box next to the villager's name who doesn't eat."*

Other Adventurers: *"Done, what next?"*

Village Elder: *"You have a remarkable 22 units of fuel, everyone will need two, so we will remove 8 from the storeroom and leave 14. Does anyone have villagers who are sick?"*

Adventurer: *"I have two sick villagers, one has two 'Is Sick?' boxes checked and the other only has one."*

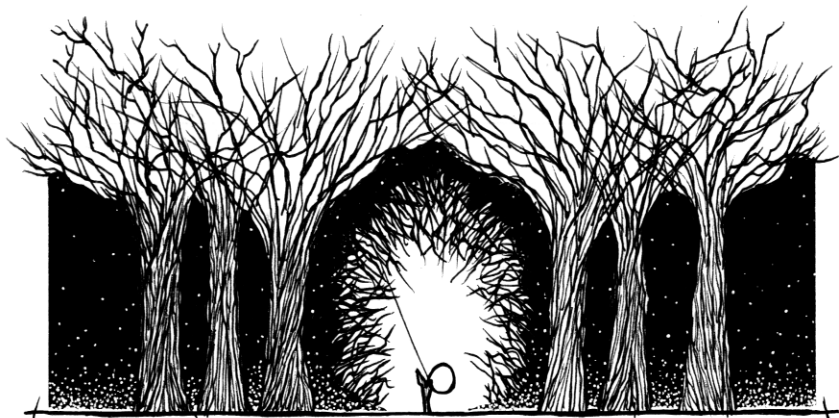
Village Elder: *"There is only one unit of medicine in the storeroom. You can only choose one villager to cure, and if the villager with two boxes checked is not given medicine, then he will die on the next turn."*

SUPPLIES

The village storeroom holds the three supplies most important to the settlement's survival: medicine, food, and fuel.

Medicine includes herbs and roots prepared to stave off sickness. Likely some of the village folk are knowledgeable of the local remedies and the best practices in using local ingredients. Illness is a constant, objective threat in such

miserable conditions, and a number of villagers will become sick at the end of each turn. Sick villagers require a single unit of medicine to become well again. Any ill villager who passes three turns without medicine welcomes a somber death. This includes the turn in which they become sick.



Food is scarce throughout the winter, and what little of it that can be found comes in the form of forest tubers, small game, and fish. Stomachs may never completely fill to satisfaction but even meager portions are enough to deflect the maladies of starvation. Any villager who passes two turns without food succumbs to a miserable death. Keep in mind that a domesticated animal can be slaughtered and converted to two units of food. When a hungry villager is fed, the adventurers can erase any checked 'Is Hungry?' boxes.

Fuel, which is chopped or found wood, is essential in deflecting the frigid death-touch of a long winter night. A roaring fireplace keeps the blood flowing and warms chilled bones. If a building passes a single turn without heat, then a villager will die frozen to their bed, clutching a blanket to their chin. The number of fuel units needed to heat buildings each turn is equal to the temperature rolled in Step 01. Villagers will take as much fuel as possible, even if there isn't enough to match the temperature.

STEP 03 – GATHER NEW SUPPLIES

In Step 03 the adventurers must elect to gather only one of the three supplies. In the harsh winter it is unwise to split party for many reasons: a single adventurer is unlikely to return a useful amount of supplies, or even return at all. The winter nights are disastrously long and days are exhaustively short; supply collection should be concentrated to maximize return.

When the adventurers have decided on the supply to collect, the active adventurer must roll 2D6 for the number of gathered units. **Gathered units** are the base number of units collected by the adventurers. After the adventurers have had a chance to describe their foraging, you must record the gathered units in the village storeroom. Once the gathered units have been added to the stock, adventurers will get two more chances to gather more supplies.



Bonus units are awarded based on an adventurer's class, as designated in Chapter 1, and the supply being gathered. Each of the three supplies is related to the three base classes: fighters value strength and stamina, thus gathering more fuel by chopping more wood. Thieves excel at trapping and tracking, gaining more food. A wizard's study gives them knowledge of reagents and will spot more medicinal flora.

The first bonus comes in the form of additional units rolled by adventurers whose class matches the supply chosen to gather. Each adventurer who's class matches the supply rolls 1D6 in **additional units**. Record any supplies collected this way on the storeroom worksheet.

It is likely that adventurers out gathering wood might spot a snow hare or trip over some root known to sway a fever. This brief glimmer of luck arrives in the form of gratuity units. Any adventurer who did not roll for additional units may roll 1D3 in gratuity units that match their class supply. Be sure to record these gratuity units on the storeroom sheet as well.

AN EXAMPLE OF STEP 03:

Village Elder: *"Adventurer 1, you are the active adventurer so you need to roll 2d6 for the gathered units. You've all decided to search for fuel this turn."*

Adventurer 1: *"I rolled 8."*

Village Elder: *"Okay, noted, now any fighters in the group should roll 1d6 for additional units."*

Adventurer 1: *"I rolled a 4."*

Adventurer 2: *"I only rolled a 1, I'm sorry guys."*

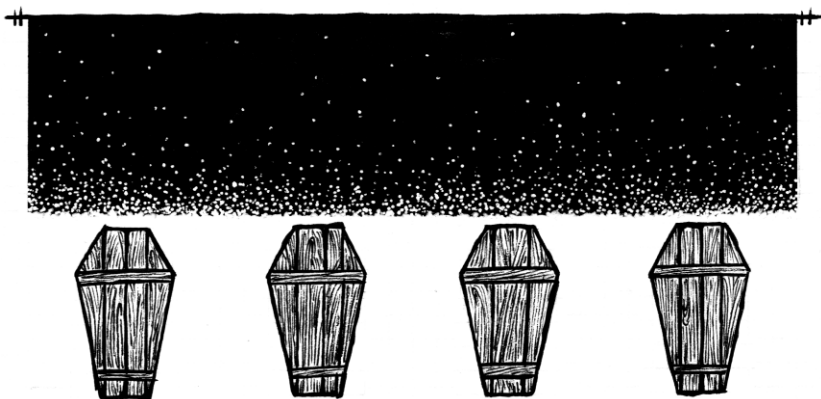
Village Elder: *"The sweat freezes as it drips from under your caps, but the work is hard enough that you do not notice and your haul is decent. Adventurer 3 you are the only one left to roll, and you are a thief. Roll 1d3 for gratuity food units."*

Adventurer 3: *"I rolled a 3! As we were pulling the fuel back to the village I noticed the tracks of a small animal, followed it, and slayed it. We eat just fine tonight!"*

Village Elder: *"Excellent! You set out into the wood and returned with 13 units of fuel and 3 units of food. I'll mark this down."*

STEP 04 – OCCURRENCES

The winter on hand is the worst in known or recorded history, and with that desperate fact comes a tide of near unimaginable grief. In these hard times, it is often that misfortune looms and rare that luck bodes well. Extreme weather, seemingly impossible accidents, and the occasional charm will beset your village. In COLD WINTER these situations are referred to as occurrences.



Occurrences come in the form of negative or positive events, the latter of which are few. After the supplies are gathered in Step 03, the active adventurer will roll 1D6 TWICE on the occurrence tables in Chapter 3. The first result is the table used, 1 through 6, and the second result is for the entry on that table. As each entry is encountered it must be marked off the list; no occurrence may happen twice.

Some occurrences will have no eligible victim or relevance. For example a setback might apply to a sick villager, but if no sick villager exists in the village then the occurrence is ignored. In this case, do not cross the setback out or even read it aloud. If an occurrence results in a loss of supplies, but not enough supplies are on hand to cover costs, then you must remove as many as possible.

All occurrences effect the active adventurer first and lingering effects are absorbed by the previous active adventurer. For instance, if an occurrence applies to a sick villager but the active adventurer has none, then a villager in the building of the previous active adventurer becomes the occurrence's target. Some of the occurrences will present opportunities to make decisions that may change the outcome of the situation. Adventurers are encouraged to make these decisions in character and as a group.

AN EXAMPLE OF STEP 04:

Village Elder: *"Adventurer 1, you get to roll for the occurrence this turn. Roll 1d6 twice."*

Adventurer 1: *"I rolled a 4 and a 6."*

Village Elder: *"One of the sick villagers has greedily stolen and consumed the entire cache of medicine, and has died as a result. Adventurer 1, you need to cross out a sick villager as dead, and I will subtract all the medicine from the store room."*

Adventurer 1: *"I actually have no sick villagers, the last one died at the start of this turn."*

Village Elder: *"Then adventurer 3, one of your sick villagers has died from an overdose."*

STEP 05 – ILLNESS

The final step in COLD WINTER is determining the number of village folk who become ill. Sickness is an inevitability in these conditions and can only be avoided through an occurrence from Step 04. Unlike most other rolls each turn, the active adventurer does not roll for the number of sick; as the village elder this is your responsibility. Roll 1D3 to determine the number of sick villagers. You may distribute the sick villagers among the buildings to your liking.

CONSOLIDATION INTERLUDE

At any point during any turn, the players may invoke a consolidation of buildings. **Consolidating buildings** is a move where two adventurers can combine their villagers into a single building to save on fuel. The total number of villagers involved with the consolidation can not exceed five, and there must be at least one spare unit of food available for each villager involved in the consolidation. Villagers will spend a great amount of energy moving furniture and heirlooms through the snow and will refuse to move without full bellies. Be sure to subtract all required units of food from the storeroom afterwards.

AN EXAMPLE OF CONSOLIDATION:

Adventurer 1: *“Adventurer 3 only has two villagers, and I have three. We would like to consolidate into a single building to save on fuel.”*

Village Elder: *“There are only 7 units of food in the storeroom and you need 5, if you do this there will only be two left.”*

Adventurer 3: *“I think it is worth the risk, let's consolidate.”*

WINTER'S END

Eventually a warm breath will whisper through the air. Vestiges of color will speckle the fingertips of trees, and the crow's clamor will hush in favor of the jay's song. The riverbank will swell with snow melt, and a sense of normalcy will cover the village. When the first child runs barefoot down the road, spring has arrived. But spring is not the concern of this game, and one final front of terrible, wintry hell looms on the horizon. **Winter's end** is a period in equal length to a turn, at the very cusp of spring, wherein the weather blows in with such severity that no work can be completed and no one can safely leave their homes.

If each turn of **COLD WINTER** is thought of as chapters in a novel, then winter's end would be the epilogue. After the last turn has been played, you must make a final account of deaths akin to Step 01 in a normal turn. For example, if at the end of the final turn a building goes without enough fuel then one villager will perish during winter's end. If a villager has three 'Is Sick?' boxes checked on a building worksheet at the end of the last turn, they too will die in winter's end, as will any villager who ends that turn with two 'Is Hungry?' boxes checked.

After you have counted the dead during winter's end, take the time to give the adventurers a recap of the winter, and describe the oncoming of spring.

REWARDING THE ADVENTURERS

Likely the adventurers were promised a reward of some kind at the onset of this jaunt, and now that winter's fury has subsided it is time to pay forth. As written in Chapter 1, your prepared reward should scale based on the number of villagers alive at the end of the game. For example, if all or more villagers live through the winter then the adventurers deserve the highest possible award. If the promised prize was a map to some ancient artifact then you may instead hand over the actual artifact rather than the map. With half or less villagers remaining the adventurers should expect a paltry sum in return; the map is torn in half or missing an important piece. If little or no villagers survive the adventurers should not expect much in the way of reward at all. Do not abandon the award completely, however, as the adventurer's time is not worthless.

At this point, *DO NOT LET US DIE IN THE DARK NIGHT OF THIS COLD WINTER* has come to an end and the adventurers can move on to the next adventure. The village you created can serve as a base for launching adventures into the surrounding countryside, or the adventurers may choose to help bring the village back to working strength and attract immigrants to bolster the numbers. Any number of adventuring hooks may exist to continue the adventure. In the event that your adventurers choose to stay in the village longer, a blank map can be found in Chapter 5. This map comes with buildings and features you can print, cut, and paste onto your map to build a permanent village.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter contains the occurrence tables, quick reference sheet, worksheets, and other materials needed to play COLD WINTER.

Permission is granted to photocopy or print these items for personal use only.

OCCURENCE TABLE 01

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Help arrives from the sleeping forest; a shy dog has wandered into the village and will bring 1 extra unit of food each turn. This dog counts as a domesticated animal. |
| 2 | Much of the food has gone rotten. Adventurers can choose to destroy the entire cache of food, or any villagers who become sick this turn get 2 'Is Sick?' boxes checked rather than 1. |
| 3 | The roof of the storeroom has given way to the weight of the snow. In the tumult 3 units of food and 3 units of medicine have been destroyed. The roof can be repaired with 5 units of fuel, or 1 unit of food and 1 unit of medicine is destroyed every turn due to unsafe storage. |
| 4 | A domesticated animal rooting around the base of a tree has been impaled by a large, falling icicle. Remove one domesticated animal from the storeroom worksheet and add 1 unit of food. |
| 5 | Some foul thievery is at hand; a single unit of food has gone missing from the store room. |
| 6 | Madness in this cold hell has driven a villager screaming and naked into the forest. This villager will die of exposure and if wanted, the corpse can be converted to 5 units of food. |

OCCURENCE TABLE 02

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- #
- I An elderly woman, nearly frozen and quite lost, has been found in the woods. She can be invited to stay in the village, and room can be made in any building. When she is added to a building worksheet she is sick and hungry; check one each of the appropriate boxes beside her name. If she is not given a place to stay, one of the villagers will give her 1D3 units of food and 1D3 units of medicine.
 - 2 Two men were met in the woods, one large and one small. The large man wore furs and a cloak of blue; he helped collect 1d6 extra fuel units. Hiding under a gray cloak, the smaller man helped collect 1D3 units of food and 1D3 units of medicine. They disappeared soon after they were met.
 - 3 A villager trying to clear snow from a roof has slipped and fallen onto a pile of sharp tools. His wound is so severe that the adventurers will have to use all of the available medicine to keep him alive, if they choose to do so.
 - 4 Much of the food supply has spoiled beyond edibility; remove 1D6 units of food from the storeroom.
 - 5 The domesticated animals were left outdoors through the night, becoming sickly and frostbitten. Slaughtering these animals will only yield 1 unit of food each.
 - 6 Desperate seclusion has driven the settlement to anger. Village folk accuse one of their own of using dark magic to cause calamity, and are to burn them on the stake. This will end in the death of the villager and the use of 5 units of fuel.

OCCURENCE TABLE 03

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- ✱
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | While returning to the village with supplies, the adventurers were beset upon by a blinding flurry of snowfall. Some of the supplies were dropped and lost in the storm; remove 2 units of each supply type gathered on this turn. |
| 2 | Two villagers from separate buildings have been caught having an affair; the village is calling for the exile of one of the villagers. The adventurers can convince the villagers to not exile one of their own, but no villagers will be willing to consolidate buildings afterwards. If the villager is exiled, they are to be considered dead. |
| 3 | A nearby tree has bloated with ice and fallen. Add 5 units of fuel to the storeroom. |
| 4 | An untimely birth has occurred in the village; room can be made in the mother's building but the child requires the same amount of supplies as any other villager. If this child becomes sick, check two 'Is Sick?' boxes instead of one. |
| 5 | Desperate crows attacked a villager walking from the storeroom to their building, stealing 2 units of food. |
| 6 | A wild pack of family dogs came running into the village. The adventurers can rally the villagers to fight off the dogs, but 3 villagers will be injured and require a checked 'Is Sick?' box. If the dogs go unchecked, they destroy 1D6 units of food. |

OCCURENCE TABLE 04

#	#
1	Frostbite has taken a villagers leg, requiring emergency amputation. If 4 units of medicine are available, they may be used to ensure a successful surgery. In the absence of the needed medicine, the villager will permanently have one 'Is Sick?' box checked.
2	Domesticated animals have broken into the storeroom and made a mess of the food supply. All but 1D3 of the food is destroyed.
3	A biting wind cuts through the village with such veracity that even the building hearths have trouble staying aflame. Each house requires 1 extra unit of fuel to heat this turn.
4	One of the villagers whispers the location of a few jars of food that were buried for pickling, but there is a chance animals have gotten to it first. Add 1D3 units of food to the storeroom. If a 3 is rolled, roll an additional 1D3.
5	Villagers, in an act of despondency, have wasted 1D6 units of fuel to light a fire while the sun was still up. Remove these units from the storeroom.
6	In a fit of grief, one of the villagers has given all of the available medicine to a villager stricken with illness; the sick villager has died from an overdose as a result. Remove all medicine from the storeroom, and cross one villager off of the building worksheet.
#	#

OCCURENCE TABLE 05

1	One of the villagers has contracted a parasite from eating old food. This villager can no longer go a turn without eating; one 'Is Hungry?' box and one 'Is Sick?' box must be checked at all times, regardless of whether they eat or receive medicine.
2	Some of the fuel has turned out to be quite rotten. Remove half of all units of fuel from the storeroom.
3	A building window has been shattered during an adventitious snowball fight. This building will permanently require one extra unit of fuel each turn to stay warm. The friendly battle has lifted the spirits, if only for a moment, of the villagers in that building; all sick and hungry villagers become well.
4	The village elder has dropped a torch in the storeroom, igniting 3 units of fuel before the fire is extinguished.
5	Especially clear weather has made supply gathering far easier than normal; nearly a pleasant experience. Adventurers may choose one supply type and add 1D6 to the gathered amount.
6	Severe accumulation of snow has caused a roof to cave in during the night. When the snow and debris are cleared one villager is found dead, their face contorted and mouth full of snow. The roof can be repaired at a cost of 3 units of fuel. No villagers will choose to consolidate into this building.

OCCURENCE TABLE 06

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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Animal skulls, charred black from burning, have been found attached to each door in the village. Placed inside the skulls are various herbs, rocks, and pine cones. The eye sockets are stuffed with slugs, and the entire decoration smells of animal dung. No one knows anything about the skulls, but a sickness has taken the whole village. Any villagers with no illness becomes sick, and must have one 'Is Sick?' box checked. |
| 2 | Tracks coming from the woods were found outside the windows of each building one morning. 4 units of food and 4 units of medicine have been stolen from the storeroom as well. Adventurers can choose to go looking for the lost materials instead of gathering supplies in the next turn. If such a choice is made, the adventurers will recover all missing supplies, and may all make a 1D3 gratuity unit roll for additional resources found. They do not make rolls for gathered units, or additional units. |
| 3 | A trail of blood has been found going from the woods to the store room, along with dozens of tracks. The entirety of the supply of medicine is missing. |
| 4 | 1d3 units of fuel have been taken from the store room and set aflame at the edge of the woods. On the next turn, there will be no roll for an occurrence. |
| 5 | The domesticated animals are all found violently slaughtered and strewn around the village. The adventurers recover 1 unit of food per animal. |
| 6 | A villager previously thought to have died of fever has clawed from their shallow grave and returned to the village. |

QUICK REFERENCE

FIRST THINGS FIRST: PLANNING

Give the village a name and a place in your world then decide which COLD WINTER class each adventurer is. Develop the hook and reward.

SECONDLY: SET THE DIFFICULTY

Decide the number of buildings, people, and animals; mark these on the storeroom worksheet. Mark the original population; 5 villagers for each building. Winter's length is the number of turns that will be played.

PLAY COLD WINTER

Ignore steps 1 and 2 for the first turn. Play through each step of each turn until winter's length is exhausted. Between turns and steps set the scene with descriptions of the weather and environment.

REWARD THE ADVENTURERS

Reward the players for their work in the village based on the number of surviving villagers.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Fighters match fuel, wizards match medicine, and thieves match food.
- Villagers need 1 unit of food per turn, and 1 unit of medicine to become well if sick.
- If a villager has a 'Is Hungry?' box checked and receives food, uncheck the box. For sick villagers who receive medicine, uncheck all 'Is Sick?' boxes.

THE STEPS OF EACH TURN

Step 01 – Death And Weather

Count the dead; any villager with 2 'Is Hungry?' or 3 'Is Sick?' boxes checked dies. Unheated buildings lose 1 villager as well. Roll 1d3 for the temperature.

Step 02 – Ration Supplies

Adventurers will divide supplies among the villagers and buildings.

Step 03 – Gather Supplies

Active adventurer rolls 2D6 for gathered units. Adventurers whose class matches the chosen supply roll 1D6 for additional supplies. All other adventurers roll 1D3 for gratuity units.

Step 04 – Occurrences

Active adventurer rolls 1D6 twice for the occurrence; the first result is the table number and the second is the table entry.

Step 05 – Villagers Get Sick

Village elder rolls 1D3 for the number of sick villagers.

- Buildings need the same amount of fuel as the temperature to count as heated.

- Villagers can be consolidated into less buildings if enough food exists to make the transfer.

- Villagers will still die as a result of the very last turn during winter's end.

- Occurrences apply to the active adventurer first. The elder will arbitrate lingering effects.

NOTES:

STOREROOM WORKSHEET

TURN
MARKERS

TURN
MARKERS

VILLAGE NAME

	I	2	3	
--	---	---	---	--

CIRCLE THE TEMPERATURE
CURRENT TEMPERATURE

POPULATION

DEATHS

BUILDINGS

WINTER'S
LENGTH

MEDICINE UNITS

**DOMESTICATED
ANIMALS**

FOOD UNITS

FUEL UNITS

NOTES:

TABLE 1

[illegible]

F V I

CURRENT TEMPERATURE

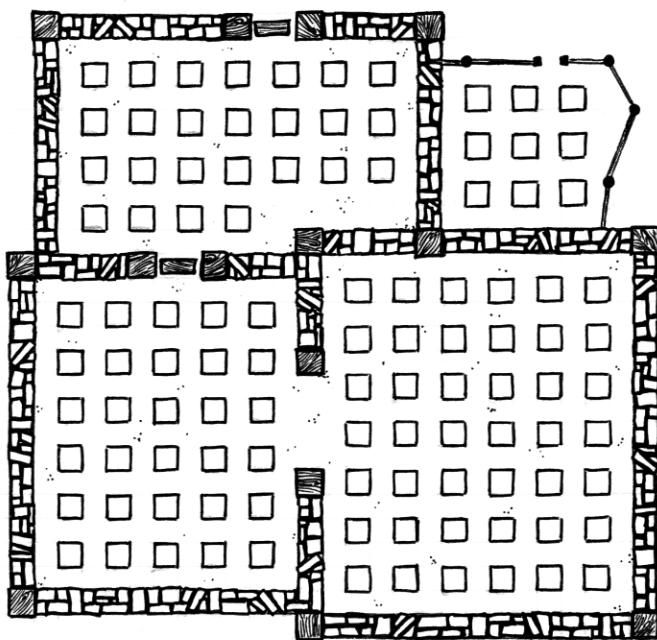
100

[illegible]

[illegible]

STOREROOM WORKSHEET

	I	2	3	
CURRENT TEMPERATURE				
POPULATION			DEATHS	
BUILDINGS →			← WINTER'S LENGTH	



NOTES:

BUILDING WORKSHEET

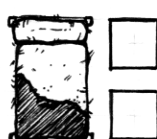
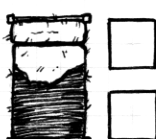
F W T			I 2 3		
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ADVENTURER CLASS

CURRENT TEMPERATURE

☐
☐
IS HUNGRY?

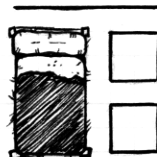
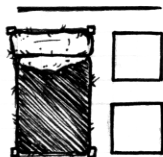
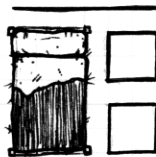
☐
☐
IS SICK?



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NOTES:

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 is a collection of advanced concepts and ideas to implement in your game of *DO NOT LET US DIE IN THE DARK NIGHT OF THIS COLD WINTER*. You will find additional hooks to accommodate higher power groups, extended scenery descriptions that can be peppered between turns, as well as a few rule variations. There is also a short guide on crafting customized occurrence tables to better suit your world, and ideas for scaling the difficulty.

Before implementing any optional rules or customized occurrence tables it is recommended that you play through the game as is. Many of the concepts in this chapter were included in the original *COLD WINTER* development draft, but were removed during review and playtesting.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

If your group is at a high level of power in your world, the abstractions of *COLD WINTER* may seem too weak. You can, however, change the adventuring hook to accommodate these players.

ADVANCED HOOK 1 – THE SNOW GLOBE OR MAGICKING

The adventurers have been trapped in a snow globe; to escape this trap they must complete the task of aiding the village. You can strip the adventurers down to their most basic powers and abilities with the understanding that they will be restored in full upon completion of the game.

The snow globe can be a metaphor for a similar, arcane or fantastic situation. A cursed or magicked village can take the place of a snow globe and work the same way; adventurers are unable to leave the boundaries of the area until the winter has ended.

ADVANCED HOOK 2 – REPLACING THE CAROUSING TABLE

Many fantasy role playing games come with a carousing table or mechanic baked into the rules. These subsystems serve as a way for characters to pass downtime during the campaign and usually offer an entertaining way for players to quickly gain money, sniff out hooks for future adventures, or even get into trouble.

Rather than rolling on your carousing table, take a session to play *COLD WINTER* and use the number of villagers alive to judge how well the players carouse. If the group manages to keep a large amount of villagers alive then their carousing is more successful. If they fail the village their carousing is fruitless or even dangerous.

Advanced hook 2 is intended to be played with adventurers that are new or local to the village, not the characters your players would normally use. There is no actual connection between the new adventurers and the regular characters, as this hook is meant to take place at the same time that your players would be carousing. In short, COLD WINTER becomes a true mini game where the result effects your campaign world without the intervention of the players.

ADVANCED HOOK 3 – THE BOARD GAME

COLD WINTER can be played on its own, rather than an adventure or task in your campaign. It can be used during sessions with missing players or be a break from your regular game. Participants need only to come up with a character and pick a relevant adventuring class. This can also be an opportunity for the game manager to get a chance to enjoy time as a player.

SCENERY DESCRIPTIONS

In between occurrences, steps, and turns, you will have the opportunity to give adventurers a description of their surroundings. Scenery descriptions give an opportunity to set the tone, and present minor role playing scenarios. Be sure to prepare some descriptions before you game starts.

As the sun rises, the village erupts in a clatter of windows being opened and shutters being slammed aside. Arms snake out of these windows and brush aside the large drifts of snow that have been built high enough to block the view.

A villager stands shivering at the edge of the village, her head wrapped in thin cloth her coat tied shut at the neck. She stares into the woods for over an hour before returning home. Flecks of blood are left in her steps as she makes her way towards the village.

A patch of ice has been the cause of many slips and several minor injuries. One of the villagers attempted to throw boiling water onto the ice to break it up, but the frozen air turned the water instantly to snow.

Some time in the early morning, an animal climbed a snow drift onto a roof and has become stuck.

One of the sick villagers was seen pacing on their porch this morning, coughing into a towel heavily stained with blood.

Hunger has driven many of the villagers to fill their bowls with snow, fearing they may somehow forget to eat during this frozen hell. They wince in pain as the snow hits their throats, but continue to eat.

Villagers scramble from building to building, looking for old furniture or useless barrels to break up and burn. The trash they find to fill their stoves barely burns hot enough to melt ice.

Some of the villagers have been carrying lighted candles around to warm their hands while outside.

Homes with the sick and ill have had black crossed bars painted on their doors to warn visitors of contagion.

From the edge of the forest the sound of trees freezing and cracking is as loud as it is terrifying. The villagers who've fought in past battles liken the sound to that of a shield cracking under the heavy blow of a sword.

On a clear day, the amber glow of the sun refracts through the thick icicles and illuminates the village in blinding rays of false warmth. In better times, this would be a beautiful time of day; now the sunset is a simple harbinger of the death that night brings.

The air is so cold that breathe exhaled outdoors turns instantly into a million, minuscule daggers of ice.

CUSTOM OCCURRENCE TABLES

If you are playing *COLD WINTER* in a world with high magic, or a world heavily under siege by the occult then you may wish to fine tune the occurrences for a better fit. While crafting the occurrences follow these guidelines:

All double entries (table 1 entry 1, table 2 entry 2, etc) should be formidably positive occurrences. You can add more positive occurrences but there should be a minimum of one per table. Setting these positive events in the table as the double roll gives your players something to aim at when rolling the occurrence.

There should only be one entry per table that results in the outright death of a villager. More than that will give the game an even more sense of hopelessness, and leave players with the thought that no matter the gathering strategy they use, there will be many deaths.

The table should be filled with a mix of entries that cause minor disturbances and minor positive occurrences. These occurrences work best when there is an option for the players to receive something good while also receiving something bad.

Avoid table entries that result in harm to the adventurers. This game should be seen as a no-risk adventure to player characters. Occurrences that are resolved through a combat encounter can be fun but swiftly lead to a breakdown in *COLD WINTER* game play.



OPTIONAL RULES

TEMPERATURE ROLL ALTERNATIVES

If you find that the temperature roll in step 3 of each turn is soaking up too many fuel units, you can alternatively require that when a villager dies their body must be burned at the cost of 1 unit of fuel. Neglecting to burn the body will lead to other villagers becoming sick.

Rather than temperature or funerary pyres, you may also choose to simply require each building have a single fuel unit per turn to count as heated. Lack of this single unit of fuel would result in a villager death all the same, but lower the difficulty of the game overall.

INDEPENDENT SUPPLY GATHERING

If your players are not in love with the idea of collecting supplies as a group, you can implement a change in supply gathering. Rather than rolling gathered units, additional units, or gratuity units the players can all roll 1D6 to find the supply associated with their COLD WINTER adventuring class. Keep in mind that this will remove an aspect of strategy that is at the core of COLD WINTER game play.

DIE-DROP VILLAGE CREATION

In Chapter 5 you will find a tiles for making a map of your COLD WINTER village. You can also use these assets to randomly generate your village by turning the tiles and border into die-drop tables. Begin by printing the last four pages of this book; the first three are the tiles and the fourth is a border for your map.

Decide how large you want your village to be and use a pencil to divide the interior of the border into a number of spaces divisible by six. Large villagers will have 18 sections and small villages will have 12.

For every three spaces on the map interior drop one D6 onto the page and mark the result of each die in the section it lands. Repeat this process twice for each D6 used; if your map has 12 sections then you would drop 4D6 twice and mark the results. When a die lands in a section that already has a number, you can either roll again or move the result to an empty, adjacent section. Repeat this process until all sections have a result marked.

To place terrain features you will drop the same number of dice from the previous step on the second tile sheet to match a terrain feature to the sections on the map interior. If a D6 lands on a pond with a result of 3, place the pond on a section of the map that is numbered with a 3. Repeat this process until you are happy with the terrain of your villager.

To place buildings you must drop the same number of dice from the previous steps on the first tile sheet and match the tile and result to a section on the map. If a die lands on a small cottage with a result of 6 then the cottage must be placed on a map section that is labeled with a 6. This process is repeated 1D3 times for each player and this is the number of buildings your game of COLD WINTER begins with.

Some tiles will be larger or much smaller than the sections on the interior, be sure to trim the tiles so everything fits neatly together before making the village permanent. After terrain features and buildings are placed, use the tiles from the third sheet to finish out the roads and additional terrain features of your village.

DIFFICULTY OPTIONS

OPTIONS FOR A MORE DIFFICULT GAME:

Remove all domesticated animals, or only begin with one animal per two adventurers.

Increase the number of buildings each adventurer has: start COLD WINTER with twice the number of buildings and villagers.

Raising the number of turns needed for winter's length can make for a more difficult game. A lengthier game will, however, drastically lower the life expectancy of each villager.

You can also randomize the initial difficulty with a few dice roles: roll 1D20+10 for winter's length, roll 1d6 for the number of domesticated animals, and roll 1d3 for the number of buildings each adventurer controls.

OPTIONS FOR A LESS DIFFICULT GAME:

Increase the number of domesticated animals by two for each player, for a total of three animals each.

Lower winter's length to an even 10 or less turns; this will leave the game just as difficult yet increase the life expectancy of each villager.

The dice rolled for gathering units can also be raised to decrease difficulty. Change gathered units to 3D6, additional units to 2D6, and gratuity units to 1D6.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a set of tiles for constructing a unique COLD WINTER village map. If the adventurers plan to stay in the village after winter, or you envision their return at a later point in time, having a map can become very useful. These tiles can be opened in image editing software to create your map, or they can be photocopied then cut and pasted onto the border page to design your map.

A die-drop table can also be made from these assets to create a more randomized village; details on this process are in Chapter 4.

Permission to print or photocopy the artwork in this chapter is granted for personal use only. Completed, custom maps can be shared freely for personal use; however, distributing art assets individually or as a tile set is prohibited.

VILLAGE NAME

EXAMPLE MAP

SCALE

