



# WINTER'S GRIM TIDINGS

AN EVENING'S ADVENTURE FOR 4-5 MID-LEVEL CHARACTERS



MARK HART & MATT EVERHART





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*Thank you to all who supported this project!*

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# INTRODUCTION

According to legend, the days surrounding the longest night of the year belonged to Jolfadr, the Yule-Father. Stories described how he, accompanied by the Great Hunt, scoured the lands of Baennor of the undead, evil spirits, and other fell monsters. The Yuletide holiday lasted three days, culminating with a feast on the longest night to celebrate Jolfadr, who in turn bestowed his blessings upon those who feasted in his honor and respected traditions. Those who committed evil acts repented of their sins and offered penance to the Yule-Father out of fear that they, too, would run afoul of the Great Hunt.

Over time, larger towns and cities turned Yuletide into nothing more than an excuse for drinking and celebration. Venerating Jolfadr fell by the wayside as mere superstitious nonsense. Among smaller, isolated rural communities, however, many folk viewed the festival as sacrosanct; no one wanted to risk invoking the Yule-Father's wrath or bringing the Hunt down on their heads.

In the village of Bayraith, the Yuletide festival and its purpose long ago became conflated with legends of the Great Witch of the Woods, Ninfa. The people of Bayraith believe they must celebrate Yuletide to honor the crone, providing food and grain as tribute. Her dark servant, the Krampus, would come to collect the tithe on the darkest night of the year. Failure to show proper respect or to pay this offering meant the Krampus would take what he deemed worthy, whether that was food, their valuables, or even their children.

Last year an outsider from the capital came to the town and convinced the town to abandon their superstitious ways. He regaled them with stories of how the Rynmarki celebrated Yuletide and noted that the Krampus never came for their children. The people of Bayraith were fascinated by the stories of the big city and did indeed celebrate Yuletide without the trappings of an appeasement ceremony. They drank and feasted without offering tribute to Ninfa. They paid a terrible price for their insolence.

Late that night, the Krampus exacted its vengeance against the community by kidnapping five children from three prominent households and murdering two of the town elders. Seven souls was the price paid by the village for turning their backs on the elder fey, Ninfa.

This year, as the Yuletide Festival approaches, the townsfolk nervously ponder what to do. Do they pay tribute to the mythical Great Witch of the Woods in spite of a poor harvest, or do they conserve their resources for the coming winter and risk another visit from the Krampus? Perhaps more worrisome, can they do anything to appease the Krampus, or are more children doomed to a sinister fate no matter what the village does?

"Winter's Grim Tidings" is a Fifth Edition Fantasy game adventure designed for five 6th-level characters. Although the adventure takes place in the village of Bayraith, it can be easily modified to fit any fantasy locale. This village lies at the edge of the vast Tela'tethadyr Forest.

## IN THIS ADVENTURE

It has been nearly a full year since "Father" Vaendersen moved into town, proclaiming that he, and he alone, was able to pierce the veil of Aetherspace and communicate with the gods of the Radiant Realm. He proclaimed their practices to be heretical and misguided; that their tributes to the witch angered the true gods. Of course, the townsfolk really had no concept of Aetherspace and knew almost nothing of the way things worked in the big cities of the Commonwealth.

However, many in the town, anxious to be more cultured and contemporary, agreed to forsake tradition and celebrate in a more modern way - with drink and dance, gifts and decorations. They paid a heavy price. Vaendersen was not dissuaded, however, and continues to espouse the ways of high-society. This year, however, the town is far more split on whether or not they should continue their attempts at modernization, or return to their old ways.

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The party has received an anonymous request for help in the town of Bayraith. When the party arrives, a palpable dread rises with the approaching Yuletide Festival. They are told stories of murder and children kidnapped during the Yuletide last year. Many believe this to be the work of Ninfa, the Great Witch of the Woods and her dark arbiter, the Krampus.

Many of the townsfolk are very concerned of a repeat of last year's horrifying events and implore the party to protect them. As they investigate, the characters learn about how the town has historically celebrated Yuletide and that their celebration and, more importantly, the tithing was changed for last year's festival. If the characters research the Krampus they discover that on those occasions he does kidnap children, legend says he transforms them into evil little fey to do his bidding.

On top of the cries for help, there is also Father Vaendersen to deal with. He has gathered quite a following in town and none of them want to return to the old ways. The Krampus keeps tabs on the town and knows of the adventurers they have brought to stop him. That does not stop its attack, but it does make it more cautious.

When it does enter the town two nights prior to the Yuletide, the Krampus focuses its attack again on the five elder families and the mayor - the leaders of the town. Like the year before, it will extract seven souls from the town in retribution for their insolence. The Krampus manages to escape on its dire reindeer, racing back to its lair with three children stuffed in its bag, and likely others dead in its wake.

The party must find a way to track the monster back to its lair and rescue the children before their ghoulish transformation, putting an end to the threat of the Krampus once and for all.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

If the GM is not interested in sending the party to Bayraith as a stand alone assignment, there are several other hooks that could lead the characters there. A few other adventure hooks to draw characters include the following:

Many **wilderness adventure opportunities** present themselves throughout the Tela'tethadyr Forest, and the village of Bayraith represents one of the few isolated islands of civilization to be found in the region. The characters may, while recuperating or gathering supplies in town, learn about the impending arrival of the Krampus.

ADVENTURE HOOKS	
WHERE	WHO
Nearby City	A magistrate in the nearest large city has hired the characters to investigate stories about a zealot and false prophet causing problems in Bayraith. Multiple warrants exist for the arrest of "Father" Vaendersen.
Bayraith	A character grew up in Bayraith and has heard stories about a sinister event during last year's Yuletide Festival.
Nearby Wilderness	A merchant trading coster employs the characters to find out why shipments of mead and other goods have ceased flowing from the Bayraith region.
Bayraith	Several folks from Bayraith are overhead chatting in a bar in Besmelba about how they will never go back to that cursed village. The people there are doomed!

## THE VILLAGE OF BAYRAITH

Bayraith is a village of 1,750 souls situated at the edge of Tela'tethadyr, a vast forest and home to ancient fey creatures known as the aos'si. Although isolated from much of the rest of the countryside by geography and the long winter, the people of this community have prospered even through the harshest of times.

Most people of Bayraith earn a living by fishing on the nearby lake, farming wheat and corn, harvesting amberwood trees (a highly prized commodity), or brewing a wonderful mead that has become increasingly popular throughout the region.

The folk of this community are friendly to visitors, but it often proves difficult for outsiders to settle here and gain true acceptance from the locals. Bayraith is a tightly-knit community where people depend on one another. Due in part to their isolation from the rest of Eryphir, the townsfolk seem less open and outgoing, almost as if they are part of a communal secret they do not wish to share. Nonetheless, there is nothing sinister about these people or their town.

While the town falls within the borders of the Commonwealth, there is no Ustren presence here. They do have an Aethergraph station, but it is so rarely used the town does not even have a dedicated operator. A mayor, elected every four years, leads the community. He answers to a town council consisting of members from the five oldest, most influential families.





Artist - Phil Stone

## PERSONALITIES

### Council Elders

There are five elder families in town, each with representatives on the town council. Of the five, children from three of the homes were victims of the kidnappings last Yuletide Eve. One of the unaffected houses did not have any children in the household at the time, but the daughter of the elder just gave birth to a baby boy three months ago. The last of the five houses does not have any children under the age of 20. Combined among the other three houses are another eight children.

### Father Vandersen

A snake-oil salesman from Besmelba who has convinced many in the town he is a prophet of the "Lost Gods". While Vaendersen has stories of the gods of the Radiant Realm (i.e. Aesa, Ashir, Whybjorn, etc.), he actually knows very little about them. In fact, he is a follower of Dalosi, the

demi-god of the crafty and of trickery. While Vaendersen will not admit to it, a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check will detect something amiss in his stories.

Ultimately, his goal is to collect as much wealth from the town as he can before leaving back to Besmelba - preferably before being run out of town. Vaendersen lacks combat skills. When it comes to social interactions, he has the following Charisma checks: Intimidation +9, Performance +9, Persuasion +9, with a Charisma ability score of 20.

### Mayor Eyern

The long-time mayor of the town is a typical politician who just desperately wants to keep the peace. He panders to whomever is talking with him at the time. If asked about the kidnappings he tells the characters he does not know what happened to the children last year, but he does not believe it is some "silly witch". He does fear for the town's future and the changes in influence that will likely occur now that three of the five elder families have lost children.



## Ranald Rittersbane

One of the town elders, well-known for his fireside stories at the local bar and his giving nature. He has been a vocal opponent to Father Vandersen since the day he arrived and refuses to buy into the “ridiculous fabrications” the good father espouses.

## The Krampus

An evil fey and henchman of Ninfa, the Great Witch of the Woods. When Ninfa is displeased, she sends her Krampus out to enact justice against those who have besmirched her name. One of the favorite tactics of the fey is to steal children and use its unseelie magic to morph them into changelings—horrid monsters under the control of the Krampus.

This year, the Krampus will target seven new souls for its mistress - the children it will kidnap, the adults it will murder.

The Krampus is said to dye its hat and coat with the blood of those it has murdered. It often rides the woods on a gaunt, sinister looking reindeer. Rumors of this animal pulling a sleigh through the forest have also been heard.

It has a lair, perhaps inside a cave, off in the forest nearby, but none of the villagers have ever found it - or so they believe.

## Environment

The town of Bayraith is situated at the edge of a vast plain that gently slopes up from the midlands of Eryphir. To its back is the vast Tela'tethadyr forest - home of the Aos'Si Court in Mirasandoral. The town is remote and just above “small” in size with 1,700 people. There are very few of the metropolitan conveniences here. It is the dead of winter and cold. There is a fresh snow on the ground as the season approaches the Winter Solstice in just two days.

# ACT I

The following events occur in whatever order the GM feel appropriate, based on the actions of the characters and their interactions with the villagers.

The party arrives in Bayraith to find a community apparently untouched by the rapid pace of advances found in more civilized regions of the Commonwealth. The homes and farmhouses are neat and tidy. A



Artist - Rick Hershey

handful of shops are situated around the town square, including a cozy tavern and what passes for an inn. Although the locals seem a bit surprised to see outsiders, they otherwise offer smiles, waves, and other greetings of welcome.

## EVENTS

### 1. Fiery Orator (Required)

A handsome man with trimmed beard and bald head stands atop a crate. He waves his arm and handing out pamphlets to bystanders while imploring people to attend his Yuletide festival at his lodge two days hence. He has 1d4 villagers with him at any given time, fawning over him and parroting his talking points. If the characters approach, he welcomes them with a smile and open arms.

He practically begs the party to join him and his followers on Yuletide Eve for the festivities. If rebuffed, he turns somber and regrets to inform the party their invitation has been revoked.



## 2. Strange Offer (Required)

Ranald Rittersbane walks down the street, carrying a crude box filled with straw and several small wax paper pouches. He offers each character one of the pouches in urgent, almost desperate tones. When asked what they contain, he proudly informs them “pig’s blood, of course!” After hinting at a donation, he explains to the characters they should use the pigs blood to mark their doors on Yuletide Eve - “It will keep Krampus at bay!”

A DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) check will remind the characters this practice is called Warding and is usually accomplished during Mordtide - the time of Harvest - not Yuletide. It is thought to keep Mordraint, the Frozen Lord of the North, at bay for a few more weeks until the harvest can be completed.

## 3. Mourners (Optional)

A procession of villagers in mourning garb passes through the town square carrying five wreathes of holly, evergreens, and meadowsweet. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies this as a local funeral tradition for situations with no body available for burial.

If characters inquire with locals, they learn that five children were taken from their homes last year during the Yuletide holidays.

## 4. Somber Mood

Whether the characters check out the tavern or visit the inn, they notice the villagers seem under a cloud of worry and fear. The characters can glean info by talking with the locals.

Tonight begins the first of three days of the Yuletide Festival, culminating in a feast the evening of the Winter Solstice

In the past, people paid homage to Ninfa, the Great Witch of the Woods, during the festival. They offered tribute to earn her blessing for the coming year. The villagers don’t worship Ninfa but rather give her fearful respect

Some villagers believe that failure to give tribute brings a visit from Ninfa’s fell servant, the Krampus—an evil fey that steals and corrupts children.

Early last year, Father Vandersen arrived and opened his worship hall in the village. He immediately went about winning people over to his more modern ways and insisting he was a prophet of the gods of the Radiant Realm. Although many folk don’t particularly care for him, they are nonetheless reluctant to incur his wrath.

Last Yuletide, Father Vaendersen, convinced the mayor

and town council to cease their “superstitious pandering” to Ninfa claiming she was nothing more than a myth.

On the Winter Solstice last year something or someone kidnapped five children from the homes of three different prominent families. No one saw who did the deed and the children have not been seen since.

That next morning, two of the town councilors was found murdered and on display outside the courthouse.

## 4. Run-in with the Fian (Optional)

Felorna is an aos’si fian, an aos’si who has been touched with wanderlust - leaving the court of the aos’si and journeying out into the world. She lives in Bayraith and fears how the population has been steered astray by Vandersen. At some point before the eve of Yuletide, she will approach one of the characters to warn them about the reality of their situation.

While she does not know what the Krampus is, she does know how elder aos’si behave. She has searched for the ancient witch before, but has never been able to locate her in the forest. She tells the adventurers the creature sent to collect the tithes from the town is probably her loyal henchman and will undoubtedly return again. She also tells them the seven victims last year were no accident, as that is a sacred number to the Unseelie Court and the number seven is often used when the court issues its punishments.

If there is an aos’si in the party or one of the characters is particularly nice to her, she offers them a cold iron dagger +1 that, she says, should be very effective against any evil fey they might encounter.

# ACT II

## 5. Reckoning (Required)

As is tradition, near midnight on the first night of the festival the Krampus ventures into town with the intent of collecting the tithes owed to his mistress. This year, however, the Krampus knows full well the townsfolk of Bayraith have been working to thwart its obligation to its mistress. The Krampus begins the evening by first visiting the town square where the tithes should be offered. While there are some offerings there, it is clear to the evil fey that the town of Bayraith is again dishonoring the Great Witch of the Woods.

The Krampus moves from the center of town and heads first to the mayor’s house. On his way to the house, he encounters Meloff, the town’s Lamplighter. A brief scuffle



ensues and before Meloff becomes the first victim of the evening. Unfortunately for the Krampus, it has no time to perform its ritual magic on the dead hedge wizard and must move on.

Once at the mayor's house, if there are no characters present, the Krampus takes his second victim of the evening and uses the blood of the mayor to perform the sanguine ritual necessary to call forth its minions (see Twisted Revelry below).

If the adventurers do work to protect the mayor, the Krampus will look elsewhere for its second victim - but the players do receive an achievement\* for protecting the mayor who will therefore survive to see the sun rise.

## 6. Twisted Revelry (Required)

Once the Krampus has slain its second victim, it bathes in the creature's blood in order to evoke its ritual magic. In doing so, it pulls its five twisted changelings (NE; AC: 14, HP: 38; 5) from its magical bag and sets them loose on the town. It tasks them first with assaulting the Haldbrooke family home - one of the elder families - and slaying the two senior family members there.

Amid the commotion and blood-curdling screams from this attack, Krampus sneaks into the home of the Reinhardt family and makes to kidnap three of their children, stuffing them into its bag. If successful, he leaves the town, telepathically instructing its changelings to find the last child and escape.

## 7. A Cornered Fey (Optional)

A cherubic creature dressed in some mockery of a child's overalls stalks across the courtyard. Its red eyes glow malevolently in the darkness; a wicked smile shows two rows of sharp teeth. Ahead of it, a man screams in fear, trying to run, but endlessly bumping into something or tripping over his own feet. The creature has a wicked smile on its face and a curved blade in its hand.

The adventurers come across one of the twisted changelings chasing after one of the townsfolk. The creature pays no attention to the character(s) until it is damaged in combat. At that point it will turn to attack them. 1d3 additional twisted changelings will arrive to aid the creature if the combat lasts longer than four (4) rounds. If the party is able to subdue one or more of the creatures, they could use the creature to find out where the lair of the Krampus is located.

# ACT III

Krampus has made off with at least three children and one or more of the townsfolk have been slain. However, if the number is not seven, then Krampus must return on the following night to finish the deed, lest he fail his mistress. Should the players be counting bodies, they should come to the conclusion the Krampus was not successful and will likely return to finish what it started.

If the Krampus was successful, the next step for the adventurers should be to try and track the creature down and save the children. How to find it remains a mystery, however.

## 8. Rampaging Prophet (Optional)

After the mayhem, Father Vandersen and his followers parade through the streets with weapons and torches looking for someone to blame for the previous night's events. When they encounter the party, their initial reaction is to pin the guilt on them. The characters are willing to negotiate, they can either attempt to intimidate the group or persuade them to walk away. If they fail a DC 13 check for either Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion), the "prophet" leads the charge against them. If not slain, he is also the first to flee when things do not go well for the group. Either way the town will be rid of the prophet for good.

## 9. Snowy Pursuit

A heavy snowfall begins falling before dawn, accumulating a little over an inch per hour. Winds blow from the north, filling the air with swirls of flakes and a deep, bone-biting cold.

At first, the characters can follow the runner tracks from Krampus's sleigh and reindeer team with ease. As the snow accumulates, however, they need to make a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check in order to follow the trail the first hour after the snow begins. The DC raises to DC 16 the second hour and thereafter. For each successful check, roll 1d3 - the results of which are the number of hours they have to follow the trail. Once they have made two successful checks, they find the lair of the Krampus.

If they fail a check, they lose sight of the trail due to heavy snowfall and blowing drifts.

Each hour they search, they must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. If they fail, they suffer 6 (2d6) hit points of cold damage. If they are wearing cold weather gear, they may roll advantage on the saving throw.



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If they follow the trail to the end, they come to a hole in the ground that leads straight down. Upon further inspection, they can see it was a well at one point, complete with stone walls leading down into darkness. If they investigate the area further, they can tell this was once a homestead of some sort, long, long ago.

## 10. Laying the Trap

Alternatively, if Krampus was unsuccessful in his mission and failed to collect seven souls for his mistress, he will have to return to the village and collect the remaining lives before twelfth bell tolls on Yuletide (two nights after the first attack).

They will need to be fairly clever to outsmart the evil creature and get it to fall directly into a trap, but if they are paying attention they will realize that all of the attacks on the first night were against the leadership of the town. That might be a good place to start.

If Krampus is cornered, it quickly summons its twisted changelings to help in any fracas. After 1d4 rounds of combat, the evil fey's reindeer makes its way into the combat as well.

Regardless of the outcome of the battle, during the three nights of Yuletide the Krampus cannot be slain outside of its lair. If it dies in town, it comes back to life in its lair within just a few hours.

## 11. There is still Hope (Optional)

If the adventurers fail to follow the trail, all is not lost. While they are wandering the woods, the Krampus takes advantage of the discord and lays an ambush for them. As with the Event #10 "Laying the Trap" above, should the Krampus fall during this ambush, it will be revived in its lair within just a few hours.

The benefit of this event is that the Krampus and his Unseelie reindeer make new tracks in the snow that are easily followed back to its lair. This event is only necessary if the party gets lost in the woods.

## 12 A Sleigh and its Reindeer

From the trees nearby, you hear a rustling sound and the snap of a branch. Emerging from seemingly nowhere is a huge, shaggy deer. Its horns are jagged and covered in moss, and its black eyes seem to bore into your soul. It snarls as it approaches exposing a mouth full of sharp teeth. As you watch, several other deer materialize from the gloom, all heading your direction.

When the party arrives at the old farmstead, it is quiet with only the soft sound of snow falling. There are 2d3

Unseelie reindeer (NE; AC: 13, HP: 60; 2d3) skulking in the area at any one time. They use their shadow veil ability to remain hidden from intruders. They will stay near the well until the portal to the Krampus' lair closes at midnight on Yuletide. If it looks as though the party is going to venture down the well, the reindeer will charge them from different directions.

# LAIR OF THE KRAMPUS

Krampus uses a trio of connected caves as its lair. This series of caves, located within the Tela'tethadyr Forest, is three and a half hours from Bayraith by foot, or less than an hour if mounted. The forest is very difficult to traverse with any kind of vehicle.

The lair of the Krampus is located at the bottom of a 50' well-shaft. Dropping down the well finds the adventurers in the middle of a large cavern with two passages heading off into darkness. The room here has 20-foot tall ceilings, but the passages are 10-foot wide hallways and 9-foot ceilings.

## 1. Entrance Cavern

The ripe odor of decay weighs heavily in this area. There is a great deal of debris in the area, but the characters also see a pile of treasures and trophies; a number of them laid out on display with obvious pride. Most of the treasures are creepy if not downright disgusting, including shrunken heads, eyeballs kept in jars of clear liquid, large spider husks, a shriveled heart.

Lying on top a small pile of stones sits a clay pot with a cork stopper. Popping out the cork unleashes a loud, ear-shattering scream such as a humanoid male might give in terror and pain. The scream can be heard out to 150 feet away. It does not cease until the stopper is put back in place.

A huge swarm of centipedes materializes and attacks the party when any of the treasure is disturbed.

## CENTIPEDES

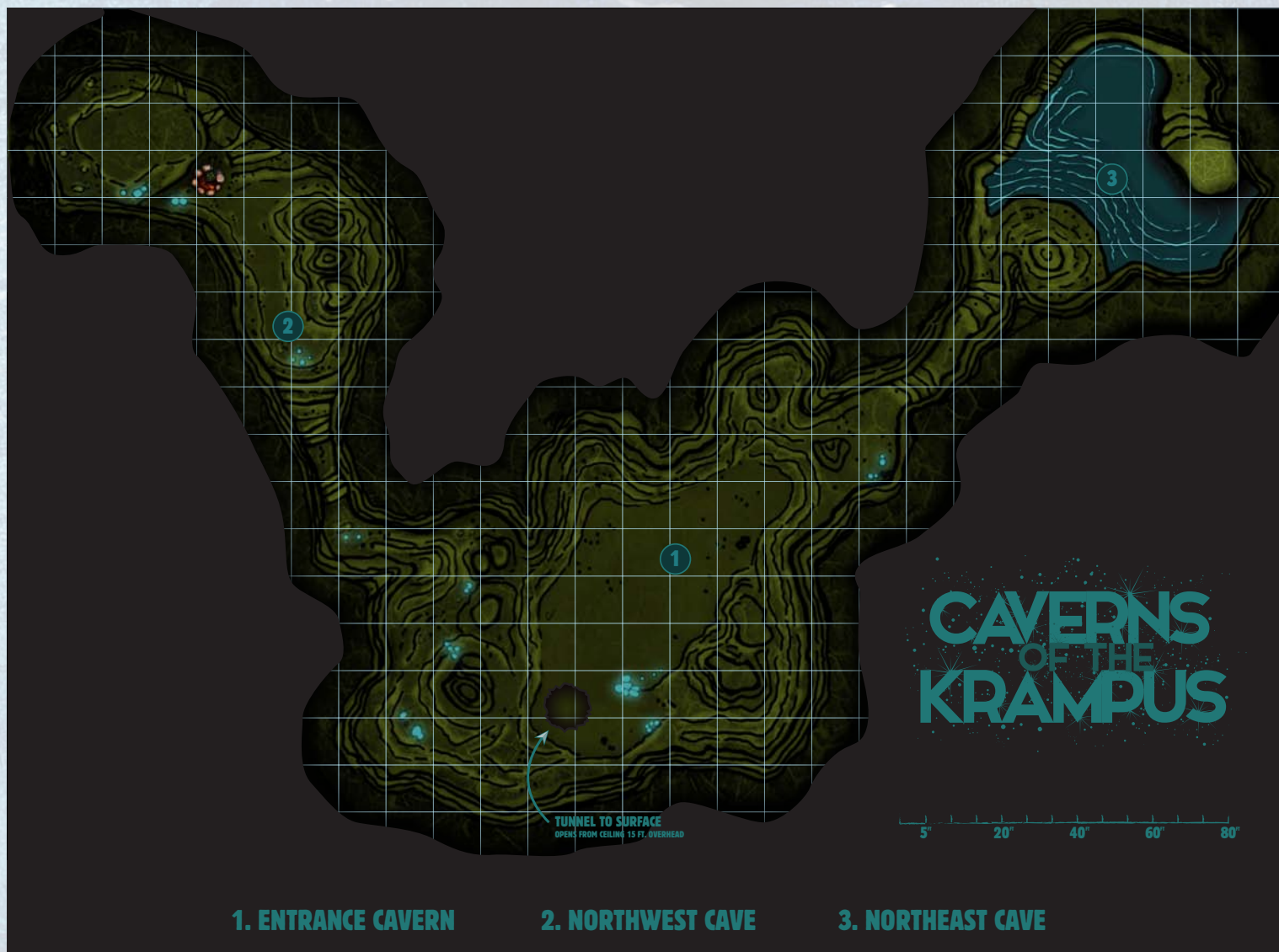
(N; AC: 10; HP: 110; 1)

Other items of interests here, stuffed into the northern end of the cave, include the following, taken from victims over the years:

1,123 cp, 1,855 sp, and 798 gp scattered across the floor

- *Two potions of greater healing*
- *An alabaster chess set and board worth 150 gp*
- *6 bloodstones worth 50 gp apiece*
- *A tan bag of tricks*





- *A wand of wonder*
- *Sword of wounding, short sword*
- *Boots of the winterland*

## 2. Northwestern Cave

In sharp contrast to the rest of the caves, the tunnel leading this direction smells of cinnamon and other spices. The air feels comfortably warm in this direction.

Each creature entering the northwestern tunnel must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or fall under the effect of a potent suggestion spell. A creature that fails becomes convinced that something horrible, sinister, and hungry awaits them at the other end. That creature will not willingly enter the tunnel for 8 hours.

The cave itself holds a number of blankets and dirty furs strewn across the floor. The three bedraggled children from the village sit huddled near a small campfire at the far end of the cave. An iron cauldron, suspended over the fire,

bubbles and pops with some substance, filling the air with the delicious, mouth-watering aroma of venison and onion stew.

**Stew Pot:** The muck in the pot is what Krampus feeds to children that will eventually transform them into twisted changelings. As long as a creature ceases eating the stew before three days of meals, the process remains reversible.

Several hidden bear traps sit on the floor between the characters and the children. These traps can be located with a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the characters do not see the Animated Bear Traps (AC: 15, HP: 48; 1 per character), each trap gets a single attack against one PC as a surprise action.

The animated bear traps do not attack the children or risk harming them.

The children have been charmed by the Krampus and will not willingly leave the area unless the charm is broken.



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### 3. Northeastern Cave

This tunnel bends northeast, descending at a 15° slope before entering into a large cavern with a ceiling height of 50 feet. The stench of decay permeates the air the closer one approaches the cave.

A pool of brackish, slime-coated water occupies the cave's center, approximately 30 to 35 feet in diameter and nine feet deep. Bits of fur, patches of flesh, and other debris floats on the scummy surface. A creature that ends up in the pool must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. Krampus is immune to this effect.

A strange, pentagonal arrangement of skulls occupies the ledge at the north side of the pool. Each skull has a lit wax candle stuck atop it. At the center of this arrangement sits a fist-sized green agate of nearly spherical shape. The stone feels cold to the touch, and a layer of rime coats the floor beneath it. A DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies this as a magical device allowing communication between two distant creatures, similar to sending stones but with greater range. The other stone remains in the possession of Ninfa some twenty miles away. Also unlike standard sending stones, these can be used up to three times before the next dawn.

Piles of small bones, skulls, and gnarled lumps of hair and bone litter the floor here; this is where Krampus assembles his gifts for his bag of presents.

When the party arrives, the Krampus is here sitting near the rear of the cavern, sharpening its blade. When the party enters, he lets loose a booming laugh and prepares for the final confrontation. When the battle begins, the Krampus will summon any of the remaining Twisted Changelings to its side, as well as utilizing any of its lair actions to defeat the party.

### FURTHER ADVENTURES

Assuming the characters defeat Krampus and rescue the children, they've solved the village's most pressing concern. That being said, other problems beset Bayraith. The evidence suggests the witch Ninfa truly exists, and that she will react badly to the slaying of her favorite minion. What revenge does she exact next year? Does her existence threaten the entire community? If Ninfa has powerful allies among the aos'si, she may unleash an all-out war of vengeance against the village.

### KRAMPUS' SACK

If the party is able to search Krampus' sack they will find a strange assortment of contents. How strange is up to you. The following list gets a bit absurd and many of the items are left for you to define or not. Many of them will leave the party scratching their heads.

STUFF IN KRAMPUS' SACK	
RARITY	WHAT?
Common	Bazilisk Wings, Butter, Butterfly Fuzz, Horse Eyeball, Drumstick, Fishhead, Frog Tongue, Hunting Horn, Honey-pot, Rancid Meat, Flower Bulb, Phlegm, Nectar, Royal Jelly, Azure Feather, Purple Gem, Rocks
Uncommon	Mandrake, Dead Dogfish, Poison Dartfrog Legs, Dragon Fruit, Dead Rainbow Jellyfish, Spider Gland, Airship Parts, Obsidian, Venom Gland, Infused Iron
Weird	Spark Berry, Leaf Meat, Mandrake, Comet Moth Wings, Mantrap Stalk, Eye of the Tiger Shark, Dead Robster, Tentacle Spots, Rocket Feather, Magic Seal, Glass Grass, Kraken Shard, Shroom Skin, Orkupine Quill
Super Weird	Acid Milk, Doom Goop, Blueblubber, Charcoal Beard, Living Fog, Scare Gas, Fragments of Noshema, Lightning in a Bottle

### INCREASING THE DIFFICULTY

If the party includes more than five members, or if during the course of the adventure they have too easy time of things, the GM can adjust several encounters for greater challenge as follows:

Add two or three twisted changelings to the "Twisted Revelry" encounter. These could be children taken from another village.

Increase the Unseelie reindeer guarding the entrance to Krampus's lair to 3d3.

Add two giant wolf spiders or, for an even more difficult challenge, add two giant spiders. Note: If you add both types of spiders, the encounter difficulty increases from "hard" to "deadly."



# NEW MONSTERS

## KRAMPUS

Medium fey, neutral evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 133 (14d8+60)

**SPEED** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)

**SAVING THROWS** Str +9, Con +9

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +7, Athletics +9, Intimidation +3, Perception +6

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical attacks

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, frightened

**SENSES** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 16

**LANGUAGES** Common, Fey

**CHALLENGE** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Blood-Soaked Cap.** Krampus dips its cap or coat in fresh blood (such as from a bleeding creature) as a bonus action, healing 10 (3d6) damage or gaining 1d6 temporary hit points.

**Grisly Gift.** As a bonus action, Krampus pulls a gift from its bag and presents it to one humanoid it can see within 30 feet. The target creature must succeed a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed. The charmed creature uses its reaction to move up to its speed towards Krampus and take the proffered gift. The creature refuses to part with its gift under any circumstances. The charmed creature regards Krampus as a friend to be obeyed and protected. It accepts Krampus's requests in the most favorable light possible.

If Krampus or one of its allies inflicts harm to the charmed creature, it can repeat the Wisdom save, ending the charm on itself with a success. Otherwise, the charm lasts 24 hours or until Krampus dies. A creature succeeding at its Wisdom save sees the gift for what it truly is: a gnarled mass of hair, dried blood, and bone fragments twisted into a crude shape. That creature thereafter becomes immune to the *Grisly Gift* for the next 24 hours. Creatures immune to charm are immune to this power.

Krampus can have up to three humanoid creatures charmed at one time, although creatures with a Wisdom score of 10 or less don't count (i.e., children) against this limit. Krampus can release a creature from its charm as a bonus action or if it gives a gift to another creature in excess of its limit.

**Iron-Shod Boots.** Krampus suffers disadvantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

**Magic Resistance.** Krampus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Squeeze.** Krampus can move through any opening 1 foot or larger without squeezing.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Krampus makes two scythe attacks and one bite attack.

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage and the creature bleeds heavily. The bleeding creature must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turn or suffer 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and continue bleeding. A successful save means the creature takes no necrotic damage and the effect ends. A creature cannot suffer more than 10 (3d6) necrotic bleeding damage in any given turn.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check as an action or any magical healing stops the bleeding. This bleeding power does not work on constructs or undead.

## KRAMPUS (CONT'D)

**Scythe.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

**Bag of Holding.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one Medium-sized or smaller target. On a hit, the target creature must succeed at a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be stuffed into Krampus's oversized magical bag. A bagged creature is blinded and restrained and has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the bag. Each round inside the bag, the creature must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or fall paralyzed. If a creature succeeds at this save, it becomes immune to the paralyzation effect for the next 24 hours. Krampus can only have two Medium-sized or four Small-sized creature in its bag at a time.

If the creature stuffed inside the bag inflicts 20 or more damage from within, it plops out of the bag and falls prone in a space adjacent to Krampus. If Krampus dies, a creature trapped in its bag is immediately discharged and lands prone.

### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), you may take a lair action to trigger one of the following effects. You can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

**Fey Fright.** A wave of fey magic washes outward from Krampus. Each creature within 30' of it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature can attempt another save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect if successful.

**Charming Stare.** The Krampus stares at one creature within 60'. If that creature fails a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, they become charmed for 1 minute. While charmed, an affected creature must use its action at the start of its turn before moving to make a melee attack against another adjacent creature of Krampus's choice. If no other creatures are adjacent, the charmed creature can act normally that turn. A charmed creature can attempt another save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect if successful.

**Red Shift.** Krampus switches position with one creature it can see within 60'. Krampus teleports to that creature's space and that creature teleports to Krampus's former space. The creature suffers 10 (2d6+4) necrotic damage in this shift. There is no saving throw for this effect.

**Bring down the Roof.** The cavern suffers a brief earthquake. Each creature standing on the floor of this cave must succeed at a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and suffer 15 (3d6+6) bludgeoning damage. A creature at the edge of the pool that fails this save falls into the water.

### NOTES

This fey entity was once a hateful, bloodthirsty creature known as a redcap before swearing its service to Ninfa, the Great Witch of the Woods. Now, it serves as her messenger, enforcer, and collector of tribute. Krampus takes any insult against the crone personally, but at the same time he enjoys any opportunity to unleash his love of blood and violence.





Artist - Rick Hershey





Artist - Rick Hershey

## BAELBOG (UNSEELIE REINDEER)

Large beast, neutral evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 16 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 84 (12d10+24)

**SPEED** 60 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**SKILLS** Perception +3, Religion +2

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** cold

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**LANGUAGES** understands Common and Fey but can't speak

**CHALLENGES** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Charge.** If the baelbog moves 20 feet or more straight towards a target and hits with a gore attack on the same turn, the target suffers an additional 7 (2d6) damage. A Medium or smaller target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Relentless Advance.** The baelbog is unaffected by difficult terrain, and can ride over water and other liquid surfaces.

**Shadowy Veil.** The baelbog is treated as invisible to any creature more than 15' from it while in any woodland environment.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The baelbog has two attacks. One with its gore and one with its hooves.

**Gore.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Hooves.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

### NOTES

These creatures serve Krampus as guards outside its lair and as mounts when necessary. At a distance, a baelbog appears similar to a large if somewhat gaunt stag deer. Closer examination, however, reveals this creature has deep-set red eyes, barbed and moss-covered antlers, jagged hooves, rows of sharp teeth, and fur covered in patches of mange.



## ANIMATED BEAR TRAP

Small construct, unaligned

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 48 (12d6+12)

**SPEED** 30 ft..

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	22 (+6)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +3

**SKILLS** Perception +5, Stealth +8

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical attacks

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** necrotic, poison, psychic

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**SENSES** blindsight 30 ft.; passive Perception 14

**LANGUAGES** –

**CHALLENGE** 5 (1,800 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 saving throw or fall prone.

**Trap.** When an animated bear trap knocks a Medium or smaller target prone, it immediately makes a second bite attacks against the same target and automatically grapples its target if this attack hits.

### NOTES

These traps have been animated through the Krampus' magic. It resembles a normal bear trap, albeit one with especially wicked sharp teeth.



## TWISTED CHANGELING

*Small fey, neutral evil*

**ARMOR CLASS** 13

**HIT POINTS** 38 (7d6+14)

**SPEED** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

**SKILLS** Athletics +3, Perception +3, Stealth +5

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** cold

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**LANGUAGES** Common, Fey

**CHALLENGES** 2 (450 XP)

**Frightening Presence.** Any humanoid or beast starting its turn within 10 feet of the twisted changeling must make a DC 11 Wisdom save or become frightened until the start of that creature's next turn.

**Light Sensitivity.** The twisted changeling suffers disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight whenever it is in bright light.

**Pouncing Leap.** As a bonus action, the twisted changeling makes a standing long jump up to a distance of 20 feet. If it lands in an occupied space, its first attack that round has advantage.

**Overwhelm.** The twisted changeling has advantage on any attack roll against a creature if at least one of its allies is within 5 feet of the target and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The twisted changeling makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be pulled prone.

**Claw.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution save or become poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned creature can repeat this save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

**Rend.** If all three of the twisted changeling's attacks hit a target, it tears at the target dealing horrific wounds as a bonus action. The victim takes 9 (2d6+3) slashing damage and is poisoned for 1 minute.

### NOTES

After Krampus steals a child, it takes them to its lair. It feeds them a magical slurry that slowly transforms the child into a mutated, corrupted monster. The five changelings enslaved to Krampus were the children kidnapped from Bayraith the year prior. The change is irreversible.

## MAGIC ITEMS

### REDCAP MUSHROOMS

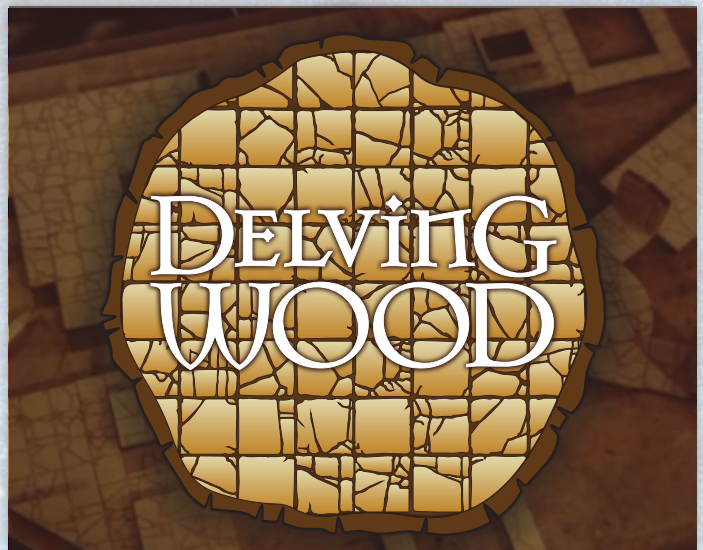
Fungus (potion)

Category: Nature

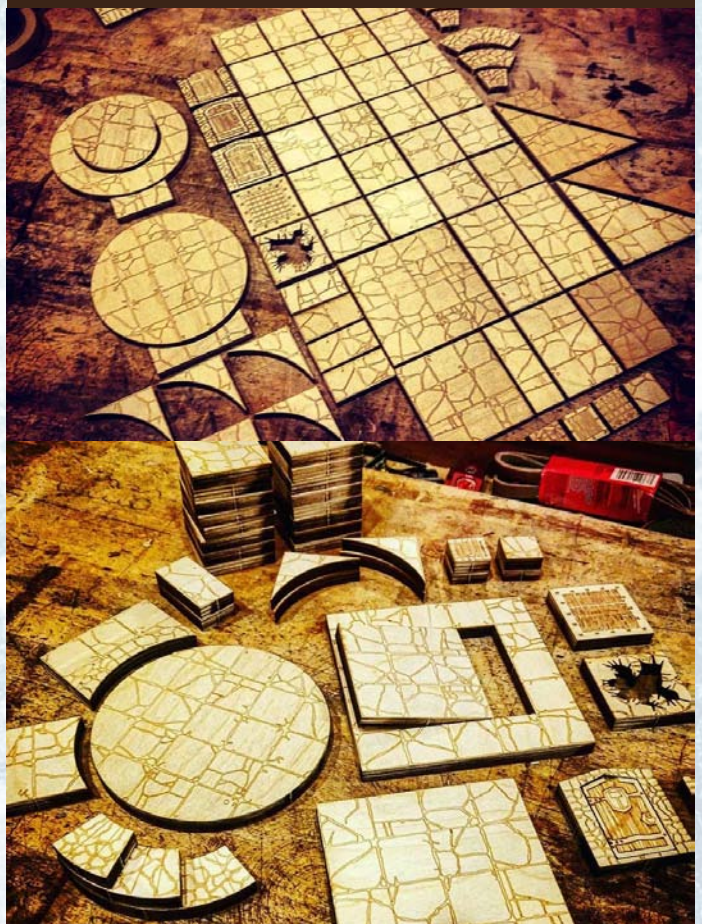
Item Rarity: Uncommon

This large, red speckled mushroom can be found growing in underground caves in the local area. The person who steeps this mushroom fruit body or spores in bark tea can see and hear anything the Krampus, or the wearer of the redcap, can see and hear. The imbibor must make a Constitution saving throw DC 14 or temporarily lose d2 points of Wisdom.

A single point of Wisdom can be recovered with each long rest. Magical means can also be used to restore these lost points per the spells description.



DETAILED, LASER-ETCHED TERRAIN



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