

The Cold Wind Comes

By Shaun Hately & Rhain Bedwyr

A Dragon Warriors game
for 4 - 6 players of 7th Rank

The Feast of St. Stephan is about to begin. You have returned to the village of your birth for the winter, the first Feast since seeking adventure with your friends. These twelve days promise to be a time of fine food, warm ale, and good fellowship.

But the winter is proving to be colder than usual, or as the cottars would say:

*“The cold wind comes
and death is often its companion.”*

The Cold Wind Comes

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INTRODUCTION

As you ride through the cold, thick snow, your mind is wistfully drawn back to the summer; to the warmth and to the events that have ultimately led to this trip. For Lord Tarquin, this journey is bittersweet, as he rides to the village of his birth, Springdale. For he is to assume the mantle of Baron of Springdale, a responsibility that will call an end to his days as an adventurer. A “reward” for his assistance to the new King and to Baron Aldred during the summer months.

Springdale is a small village, renowned for the mineral springs and the wonderous healing properties they are said to possess. During Summer, Springdale becomes home to many people seeking the chance to soak in it’s healing baths. In fact, Tarquin’s family would often take their summers in Springdale. Come winter though, the town is left to the residents.

Leaving the forest behind, you notice just how cold this region has become. It is bitterly cold, colder than you feel it should be. Maybe it’s just that this side of the forest is further north than the open land to the south; yes, that must be it. Besides, you are much closer to the mountains now.

Your arrival in Springdale is warmly welcomed, despite the bitter cold. As you settle into the Manor house, and later in the Inn, you hear of the hardships that the townsfolk have endured. What promised to be a bountiful harvest ended up lost due to an unseasonal cold snap that hit before the harvesting was due, leaving very little. And the winter itself has been extremely harsh, far more so than any of the townsfolk can remember.

With the Feast of St. Stephan fast approaching, the concerned villagers are elated when Lord Tarquin announces that he will provide the feast for the entire village! A feast every night for 12 nights, with the biggest of them all held on the 12th night.

At this point, allow the players to see the players map of Springdale, and make arrangements for the coming feast, and settle into the village. Once the players have familiarised themselves with the village, it’s time to move on.

Three nights pass before the night of the first feast, and apart from a few wagons filled with supplies both for the feast and for the enlarged household, along with other items required for the normal running of the Manor House, the days pass quietly, if rather coldly. Snow falls, the wind blows, and life goes on as normal, with a growing anticipation for the coming festivities.

SECTION 1 : FROZEN CORPSES

Each night for the duration of *The Feast of St. Stephan*, one village resident will end up dead, killed by a **Mere-Gaunt**. This is not just a normal mere-gaunt, as it is also a Mystic, equipped with a *Ring of Teleportation* and a special whip, which freezes the victim and steals the soul. If the victim is thawed before the Mere-Gaunt returns to the Sufiriad (allow 1 hour for this), the soul returns to the body and the victim is saved. After that time, there is no hope for the victim at all. If the corpse is allowed to thaw (by being placed near a fire), it begins to rot immediately thus hiding any clues.

The Mere-Gaunt uses the well in the Village Square to enter the village, and leave again afterwards. The well is fed by an underground stream, which runs from the springs at an old abandoned pagan temple in the mountains to the north, feeding several springs in the hills as it runs under the village to the well, and then on into the ruins of the old Selentine Baths located in the forest to the south of the village. The mere-gaunt travels via the stream to the temple, where the soul is delivered to the Sufiriad that lairs in the temple. Once 12 souls have been collected, the Sufiriad will be able to use them in an ancient ritual on Midwinter Night.

SPRINGDALE VILLAGE ROSTER

INN

Innkeep: Penrhyn
Innkeep’s Wife: Halley
Barmaid 1: Nathalie
Barmaid 2: Deirdre
Barmaid 3: Dawn
Stable Boy: Anson

MANOR HOUSE

Head of House: Congal
Maids: Mennefer, Sibyl
Head Cook: Audrey
Asst. Cook: Arabella*
(Arabella’s Daughter: Tamara*)
(Arabella’s Son: Artie*)
Stable-master: Kendrick
Servants: Elvin, Tim
Men-at-arms: Rhys, Barry
*Not in residence at Manor House

OTHER SIGNIFICANT VILLAGERS

Constable: Aidan
Money-lender: Strachan “Rustyguts”
(not to his face)
Drunk: Howarth the Topheavy
Baker: Kieran
Blacksmith: Otho
Blacksmith’s Daughter: Irina
Priest: Markahm
Rector: Faraday
Midwife/wise-woman: Grandma Silvia
Midwife’s patient: Gladys
Patient’s husband: Bertil
Dairyman: Gwyn
Dairyman’s Wife: Rhona
Carver: Craig
Store Owner: Selwyn
Store Owner’s Wife: Tessa
Store Assistant: Jocelyn
Potter: Jolan
Potter’s Wife: Belle
Furrier: Alain
Vet: Kendall
Tanner: Colin
Miller: Daron
Miller’s Wife: Gwen

At first, there will be no clues as to the cause of these deaths. However, as the nights pass, and the Mere-Gaunt gets bolder, clues will start to emerge that points to the well being the source of the attacks. Of course, as more attacks occur, the townsfolk start to become upset and angry. Why isn't their new Baron catching the killer? This didn't happen before they arrived. Suspicion and anger will escalate daily until the identity of the killer is discovered.

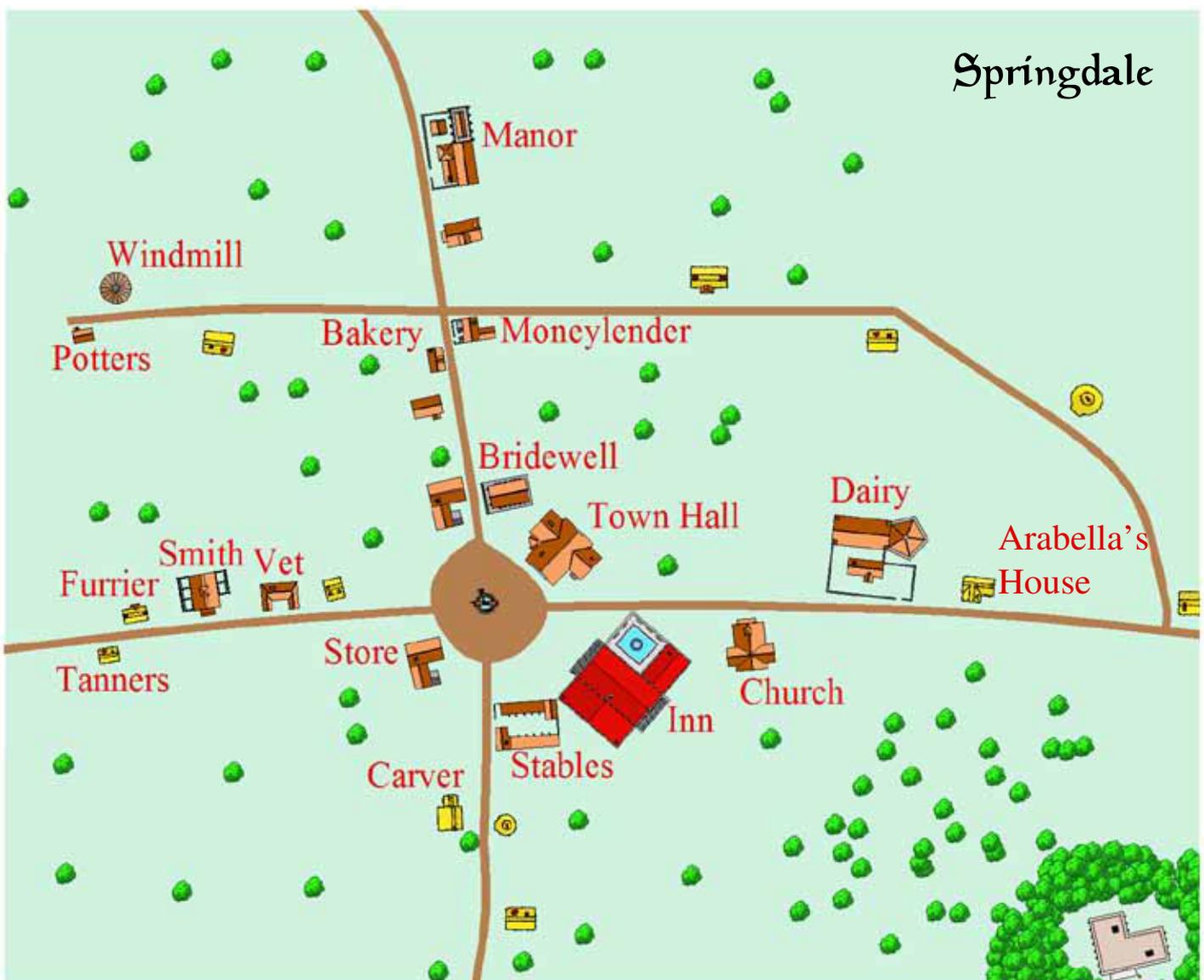
Only the first seven nights are detailed herein. If after the seventh night the players haven't worked out that the well points the way, then have the Manor House become the target of the Mere-Gaunt, with staff first and the one or two characters attacked. If after the 12th night they still haven't cottoned on, then start making it obvious that whoever or whatever is responsible might be hiding in one of the ruins that dot the forest and hills around the village.

The First Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

The day is spent in final preparation of the first of the feasts.

First Night – the First Feast

The townfolk stream into the Town Hall as the time for the feast approaches. It looks like the whole town is present for the First Feast! Many toasts are made to Lord Tarquin, and some tales are told by the older townfolk who remember the days when the young Lord summered in the village. It seems that everyone in town is quite pleased to be the seat of a new Baron, well almost. There is one empty chair in the hall, on one of the foremost tables that had been set aside for Strachan the Money-lender, and richest man in town. Strangely, most people, on noticing that he is not present, seem quite pleased that "old Rustyguts" is not in attendance. Talk around the tables this



night is that he was most put out to learn that he was no longer going to be the most important man in the village! Many apologies are made on his behalf for his rudeness in non-attendance.

After a night of feasting and merry-making, everyone returns to the homes, and a quiet night ensues.

The Second Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

You are awakened the next morning by the staff, informing you that Constable Aidan has arrived with some grave news. Strachan “Rustyguts” is dead.

Strachan “Rustyguts” is dead.
Body located at rear of Moneylender’s house

Once the party are ready, let them make their way down the hill towards the home of the money-lender. It is not a very long walk.

Strachan is lying out the back of his house, dressed only in his indoor clothes. His body is lying in the snow, with a light sprinkling of flakes on his body, frozen solid, a look of terror etched into his frozen face.

Inspection of the body is difficult, as the corpse is like a solid frozen block. Thin and spindly, any effort to bend his arms back to his body could cause them to snap. There is no sign of blood or injury at all. Inside, the house is undisturbed. The fire has gone out, some lamps are still on, and the rear door is open, allowing snow flurries to blow into the back of the building.

No amount of mundane investigation will reveal anything. Considering how unlikely he was in town, and that most of the locals owed him money, well, most people don’t seem that unhappy when they learn of his death.

Second night – the second feast

The second feast is almost as festive as the first one was. Most of the townsfolk are making a token gesture of mourning the death of “old Rustyguts” but considering the fact that only his nickname is mentioned, it’s obvious that no-one is really upset, and they aren’t going to let the death of the most disliked man in town ruin the festive season.

Again, as the evening wears on, people start to depart for their homes, again with many toasts made to Lord Tarquin and his friends.

If the players have arranged for some guards to patrol, they will not notice the Mere-gaunt, nor will they see it attack the next victim. They won’t notice the victim for a few hours, until around 6am or so. Otherwise, he will be found by a woman heading to fetch water from the well around 7am.

The Third Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

Early the next morning, you are again awakened by the news of yet another death. The constable leads you to the Village Square, where the frozen body of Howarth the Topheavy lies, propped up in a sitting position against a post. Again, he is frozen solid, but he is dressed in his heavy coats. An empty wineskin lies alongside him.

Howarth the Topheavy, town drunk, found dead in the village square.

“Howarth the Topheavy” is the village drunk. A good man, he just likes his drink way too much. He was last seen enjoying the feast last night; in fact, he had to be shown out the door at the end of the previous 2 nights of feasting! It was often said that if a vampire was to bite into him, he’d end up drunk after his first sip!

On investigating the body further, it will be seen that the left arm has strange indentations in the coat sleeve. These appear to form one furrow that snakes its way around and up his arm!

Word spreads quickly throughout the village, with people wondering what is happening, and who or what is responsible. Could it have something to do with the arrival of the new Baron and his entourage?

By now, the players should be considering having patrols through the night. However, the mere-gaunt uses its Ring of Teleportation to elude the patrols, and considering that the only light comes from windows and lamps, lanterns and candles, it easily goes undetected. If a permanent guard is placed on the well, the mere-gaunt will just use a spring near the village to emerge from, and will walk into town (delaying any attack by a couple of hours). However, if guards are stationed around the square where they can watch the well without being seen, the mere-gaunt will emerge as usual from the well. If the mere-gaunt is attacked by the guards, or by the party, it will attempt to teleport back to the well and escape. If it cannot, then it will fight.

Third night – the third feast

The crowd attending the third feast of St Stephan are rather subdued tonight; all the town wondering about the two deaths that have occurred. Howarth's absence is especially noticed, as he was usually the most jolly (and loudest) at the feast. There are less toasts made and people are either paying too much attention to the host table, or not paying any attention at all. However, it is still an enjoyable evening, even if some of the merriment seemed strained.

You hope that there won't be a repeat performance of the previous two nights, but alas, you are awakened again in the early hours by voices raised in anger, with the Constable trying to calm things down. Another death!

The Fourth Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

This time you are led to the town bakery, where the village baker Kieran lies sprawled face-up, across the table in the kitchen, frozen. Considering the heat emanating from the oven, you wonder how anything could become a block of ice, and stay that way. Frozen to his hand is a rolling-pin, held as if he planned to use it as a weapon maybe?

Kieran, the Baker, found frozen in his Bakery kitchen.

The body is sprawled across the table, lying in flour and dough. It is easier to examine the corpse this time, as he is only wearing a shirt, trousers and an apron. A look of horror forever upon his face, he had spun around as the door opened, allowing him time to grab the nearest object to use as a weapon (a knife will be found outside the rear door if anyone searches in the snow). There are marks visible on the exposed areas of his chest, looking like burns that run in almost straight lines across the chest where his shirt was open.

Again, with no clue as to who or what is responsible, the characters should be feeling helpless by now.

Fourth night – the fourth feast

It hasn't been a good day in the village. Now that a well-respected member of the community has been slain, what has been worrying in nature has escalated into something that has now affected everyone in the village. There was no bread available this morning, and the evening feast is being held without any of the wonderful pastries that Kieran was known for.

The atmosphere in the Town Hall during the feast was tense. Forced smiles are visible on the faces of everyone. You just know that the entire village is only in attendance tonight because Markahm, the Village Priest, has been reminding people that to miss a night of the feast would be wrong.

The villagers aren't showing signs of open hostility...yet, but there are whispers overheard that show a growing discontent amongst the populace.

You are almost glad when the evening comes to an end, and you dread the coming morning.

The Fifth Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

Sure enough, you are awoken by Congal, informing you of the apparent death of non-other than Constable Aidan himself.

As you make your way down the street you can see Aidan up ahead. Surely there has been a mistake made, for Aidan appears to be making his way towards you. It is then that you notice why the mistake has been made, for Aidan is not moving at all!

Constable Aiden found frozen mid-stride on road just past Bridewell on way to Manor House

Aidan is dead, another frozen corpse. This time though, it appears he froze in mid-step, whilst running up the street. Where he had been running from isn't exactly clear, as there are no visible tracks. From the small piles of snow on his head, shoulders and arms, it's obvious that a brief snowfall has covered his tracks, and those of his killer.

Any investigation of his body will prove fruitless.

Open hostility can be seen in the faces of some of the villagers on this day. General unease is the order of the day.

Fifth night – the fifth feast

Everyone is in attendance again for the feast, but there is no pretence of merrymaking on this night. The room is almost silent, with only whispered conversations here and there. An occasional grumble is heard at times, which is quickly shushed by those near-by. The only time anyone even addresses your table is when courtesy dictates, and even then only the minimum requirement is met. What began as a celebration is slowly becoming a farce; even a wake is more lively than the meal tonight.

People leave as quickly as courtesy allows, which brings the feast to an early end this night. You begin to wonder what you did wrong to end up here.

It will take the staff a while to clean up, as usual. Due to the early finish of the meal, the kitchen staff get to head home earlier than they have on previous nights, which is why the mere-gaunt will be disturbed in its attack tonight.

Arabella's house attacked.
Daughter Tamara frozen.
Son Artie missing.

One of the cooks from the Manor, Arabella (a widow), arrives home from the Town Hall to find her front door open. Rushing in, she finds her daughter Tamara frozen in the main room. Screaming out in terror, her cries call attention from a near-by patrol.

Arriving at the Manor, you quickly settle in for the night, discussing your current predicament. It's not long, however, before one of the guards rushes in calling out "There's been another attack!" You quickly rush to the scene of the crime, hoping that this time there may be some clues as to what is going on.

You arrive at the home of one of your own cooks, Arabella. She is sitting in the main room of her small house, being looked after by her neighbours. Lying on the floor is her 12 year old daughter Tamara, frozen, whilst the fire blazes in its hearth only 2 feet away.

Arabella looks up as you enter. "My Lord" she whispers. "Where is Artie?"

When the Mere-gaunt broke into the house, Tamara hid her younger brother Artie in the pantry. Artie witnessed everything that ensued. Currently, he is still in the pantry, too terrified to call out to anyone. No-one has yet bothered to even search the house, thinking that someone already has. Once the pantry is checked, Artie will be found. However, the only description that he will be able to give is of the "BOOGEYMAN", which will be of very little help.

If anyone bothers to check over Tamara, they will discover that she is not as frozen as the previous victims. The mere-gaunt had only just attacked her when Arabella arrived home, and teleported across the village to avoid being seen. Magical intervention can still save Tamara, but only within one hour after the

attack (15 minutes will have passed by the time the party arrives). If they don't save her, the rest of the night continues as normal, with no other attack. If they do save her, they will get a much better description of her attacker.

This section only applies if Tamara is saved:

Otho the blacksmith returns home to find his daughter Irina as the next victim of the mere-gaunt.

Once they begin to save her, the mere-gaunt will be aware that its captured soul has slipped its bonds, and will have to seek another target. Considering all the activity happening around Arabella's house, the mere-gaunt strikes on the other side of the village, taking the daughter of Otho, the blacksmith. If this happens, read the following:

It takes a while, but finally Tamara regains consciousness. The patrolling townsfolk slowly depart, quite happy that someone has finally been saved, and that tonight will be freezing-death free. Whilst still concerned about the "Boogeyman", the spirits of the townsfolk have been lifted.

Allow the players to talk to Tamara at this point. They only get to ask a couple of questions when Otho walks into the room, carrying the frozen corpse of his daughter Irina. There will be no hope in saving her, as too much time has passed and the mere-gaunt has successfully returned a soul to the Sufiriad.

The door suddenly opens! Standing in the doorway is Otho, the village blacksmith. In his arms is the frozen body of his 8 year old daughter Irina. Tears streaming from his eyes (which really appear out of place on such a burly man) he just utters one word. "Why?"

Otho had been helping with the search around Arabella's house. He had lost his wife to illness 2 years ago, and doted on his only remaining link to his wife. He will be able to tell them that he had arrived home to find the place torn up, with his daughter frozen in her bed.

The Sixth Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

Amend the following depending on whether Tamara was saved or not.

Five townsfolk are now dead, a victim of the Boogeyman (the name has spread quickly around town). The saving of one life did not prevent the villain from still claiming another soul. What has hit even harder is that a child has now been lost. Suspicion seems to have been shifted away from your party; too many witnesses had seen you whilst the attack occurred last night. Still, some breakthrough needs to be made, and soon!

Sixth Night – the Sixth Feast

Whilst still somber, the mood tonight isn't as hostile as it was last night. Parents are observed keeping their children close by, and Otho is looking rather unsteady (judging by the way his immediate friends have been feeding him drinks, it's no wonder!).

Again, the feast breaks early, though there was a parting toast made to the Baron of Springdale, and to those who had passed on, before people started to leave.

The Seventh Day of the Feast of St. Stephan

You are awakened in what now is a familiar way; to a report of another death in the village. Father Markahm, Priest of the True Faith, has been killed.

The body of Father Markahm was discovered this morning by his assistant Faraday. Again, the corpse is frozen through. He is still in a kneeling position facing the altar, a crucifix thrust out in front of him, as if trying to ward off something evil. The altar has been disturbed, with frozen algae and weeds strewn on and around it.

Father Markahm had proven to be a staunch supporter of the party over the past week, so this should be quite a blow.

Father Markahm, Priest of the True Faith, found dead in the church.

Seventh Night – the seventh feast

With no Priest to conduct the blessing of tonight's feast, it is left to Lord Tarquin to lead the blessing. Pause here so that Tarquin's player can do so if he wishes.

Despondancy seems to be the menu for tonight's feast. It looks as if the townsfolk are becoming resigned to the fact that someone will die tonight. You have even heard that some of the less wholesome members of the community are running book on whom is most likely to go next! Another question that is starting to wind its way around the tables is "why isn't the manor being attacked?"

Again, the feast quickly draws to an end, and people quickly return to their homes.

It is on this night that the players will receive their biggest clue. The local midwife / wise-woman, whilst on her way to an imminent birth, is attacked as she draws water from the well. Being a mystic in her own right, she puts up quite a fight!

The Eighth day of the Feast of St. Stephan.

The now familiar wake-up call leads you to the Village Square, which is in quite a shambles! The frozen body of the local midwife, Grandma Silvia, lies near the well. It looks like she put up quite a fight, with obvious wounds visible on her body. Around her lies churned up snow, stained with blood, and littered with the remains of what appears to be a bucket. A bloodied short sword is still held in her right hand.

Grandma Silvia, midwife and mystic, fights the mere-gaunt, but loses.

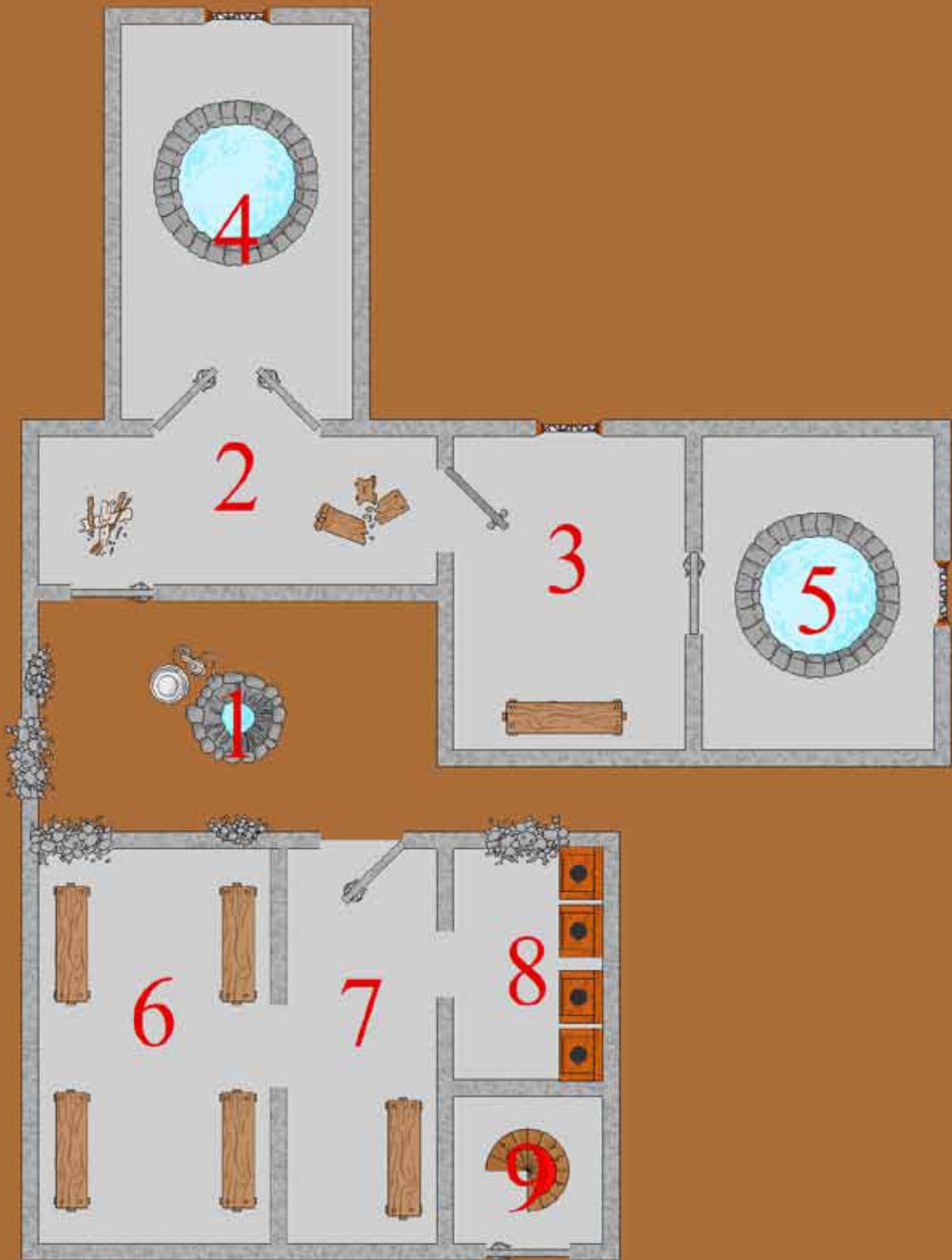
Weeds and algae are strewn everywhere. The well itself also bears marks from the battle, with yet more weeds caught on the lip of the well.

The party should, by asking around, learn of the underground stream (if they haven't already) and the fact that there are several springs in the area fed by the stream. If they ask about any ruins in the area, almost anyone will mention the old Selentine Baths out in the forest. This should give them the idea of heading out that way.

If they decide to search the well, they will discover the stream feeds into and out again under the water level in the well. If they decide to check all the way down to the bottom, they will find the treasure the mere-gaunt has left there. Check the description of the Mere-gaunt for details of its treasure.

The players have a choice here. They can head to the Selentine Baths, or they can wait till the mere-gaunt emerges from the well later that night.

The Old Selentine Baths



SECTION 2 : The OLD SELENTINE BATHS

It's a short walk to the ruins in the forest. What was once a road leading to the baths has been reduced to a winding game trail. The bath house is in ruins, with the two pools both being cold. Whilst being a "red-herring", it's also the home of a Manticore.

At first, the ride through the snow was easy, along a wide track between the trees. But the further into the forest the track went, the narrower and more winding it became. What was once a typical Selentine avenue has become little more than a winding game trail, with trees and bushes reclaiming a lot of the former road.

Eventually, you reach what was once a wide clearing, housing the bath-house. What was once a magnificent structure is little more than a series of walls and partially roofed rooms. It looks like the building partially surrounded a central courtyard. Snow covered grass and small bushes have reclaimed the courtyard, almost hiding the well in the centre. Collapsed walls in some parts of the building provide additional entry points to the two buildings.

1: Central Courtyard

The well appears serviceable, with a rotting bucket lying in the weeds nearby. The wall joining the 2 buildings has almost completely collapsed. A door can be seen on both the north and south sides of the courtyard, leading into the buildings.

The players can investigate the ruins. The courtyard has nothing of interest. The well does tap into the stream.

2: Changeroom

The tiling in this room must have once been magnificent, but time and the elements have taken their toll. A part of the ceiling has collapsed in the west, but otherwise the room is still intact. Piles of wooden remnants lie on the floor along the walls. A double set of doors, standing partially open, lie to the north, whilst a door to the east can also be seen partially open.

The door to the north leads to the former Cold Bath room (4) whilst the door to the east leads into the former Cold Room (3). There is a chance (**PERCEPTION CHECK**) that a path between rooms 3 & 4 might be spotted. This is the path the manticore follows between its nest (5) and the exit it uses (ceiling of room 4).

3: Cold Room

This room is completely intact.. Whilst the elements have penetrated through the broken window in the north, a tree has sheltered it from the weather. Again, the walls are tiled, though the frescoes are fade, worn, and chipped. It is hard to tell what is hidden under all the grime. A sagging wooden bench sits against the south wall. Another door lies to the east. It appears closed.

The door to the Warm Bath (5) is not closed, only closed over. The manticore keeps this door as closed as possible. Any loud voices in here will alert the manticore of their presence, thus putting it on its guard.

If anyone sits on the bench, it will break, as it has almost completely rotten away inside.

4: Cold Bath

This room has been exposed to the elements, as the northern half of the roof has collapsed. Dominating this room is a large pool. Snow lies on the floor around it, with large scuffmarks scratched into the snow on the south side of the pool. Something may have emerged from the pool!

Nothing has actually emerged from the pool; rather the manticore uses this room to fly in and out through the collapsed roof. The pool here is continually filled by a waterpipe near the top of the pool wall. A drain opening at the top opposite the inlet pipe carries overflow away.

Manticore

ATTACK: 20 Claws (d10,6)
or Sting (d6, 3, & venom)

DEFENCE: 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE: 11 **EVASION:**
5

STEALTH: 11

PERCEPTION: 8 (panoptical)

Armour Factor: 4

Health Points: 29

Movement: 12m (30m)

Rank-equivalent - 8th

Treasure:

612 Silver Florins

84 Gold Crowns

(scattered across the bottom of the pool)

There is nothing of interest here.

5: Warm Bath

Pulling the door open, you can see another intact room. You can see that this room is also dominated by a pool. What immediately grabs your attention though is not the pool. It is the beast on the opposite side of the pool! And it's not happy. It rises and attacks!

This room is the lair of the Manticore. It will defend its home and treasures to the death. The pool here is fed in a similar manner to the other pool.

6: Hot Room Sauna

The first thing you notice is that part of the floor has given way, revealing another room underneath. Rotting benches lie around where the floor is still intact. Parts of the walls have collapsed as well.

Visible beneath this room is the remains of the furnace. There is nothing of interest in this room.

7: Warm Room

This room is still intact! However, time has taken its toll on the benches and the frescoes in this room. The only door here is in the north, leading to the courtyard. Openings to the east and west lead further into the building.

There is nothing of interest in this room.

8: Latrines

Passing through the entrance to this room, you immediately notice the row of wooden box-seats along the east wall. There are holes in the seat part, which informs you that this is the latrine! There is a closed door in the south wall.

There is nothing of interest in this room.

9: Cellar Entrance

Upon opening this door, you find a set of wooden stairs leading down into the darkness.

These stairs are not safe. Anyone attempting to use them will cause them to collapse, carrying the unfortunate party member to the cellar floor. It is no longer possible to use the passage that leads to the furnace under room 5. The rest of the area is traversable under rooms 7 and 8, but with the partial collapse of the floor in room 6, it can be tricky getting around the furnace.

There is nothing of interest in this room.

SECTION 3 : THE WELL & THE BOOGEYMAN

This event takes place when the party stake out the Village Centre, lying in wait to ambush the Mere-gaunt as it climbs up out of the well. It can take place either before or after the trip to the bath house. This also assumes that the characters are in hiding whilst observing the well.

It is cold, dark, and you have been keeping watch on the well for a few hours now. <PERCEPTION ROLL> No modifiers. Those that pass will see. It is well after midnight when you notice some movement from the well. Something is climbing out of it! It's the Boogeyman!

The creature has two arms and legs. The arms are very long, and seem to have more than one elbow on each arm. It seems to be wearing matted reeds and swamp grass like clothing. It's face appears to be a mask of overlapping chitinous plates; with macabrely rolling, slimy yellow orbs visible where the eyes should be. It begins looking around as it climbs onto the grass, as if searching for something.

The mere-gaunt will use its ESP ability to make sure the coast is clear before moving across the village green. It has a 17% chance of picking up the thoughts of party members.

If the fight is close to the well, the creature will attempt an escape by jumping into the well when close to death. Otherwise, it will teleport (using the ring) back to the well and leap in.

If the mere-gaunt does manage to escape, it will return to the temple and inform the Sufiriad about the party.

If they haven't already, the party should be asking about the underground stream and maybe about the location of the springs in the area. The ruined bath-house may be mentioned (especially if they haven't visited it yet). The other springs to the north will also be mentioned, and the villagers can give the party directions if they wish. One of the villagers, almost as an afterthought, will then mention that there was one spring way to the north that is rumoured to be in one of those old devil-shrines, a pagan temple, though no-one seems to know its exact whereabouts. Just that it is somewhere further up, following the line of springs into the mountains.

SECTION 4 : THE GIANTS IN THE FOREST

The characters will have to travel through the snow and woods. There are no roads here, though game trails lead to each spring (which are each a couple of miles apart).

Following the villagers directions, you arrive at the first spring, a few miles to the north. It is in a small glade, where a small pool sits. Something is wrong though. The pool is completely frozen over, and you can see the row of ice which runs down the rocks into the pool. Nothing could emerge from this place.

The second spring is a small, protected grotto, where the spring is inside the pool itself. Whilst the grotto is relatively snow free, the spring again is completely frozen over. You can even see small fish trapped in the ice.

You approach the third spring. As you enter the grove, you can see the frozen pool in the centre. Stepping through the trees on the opposite side of the grove are two giants, both with fair skin, but one has red hair and the other has white hair. They both are wearing thick fur cloaks. The red haired giant raises a battleaxe, whilst the white haired one is wielding a sword. They both let out a fearsome battlecry, and charge around the pool.

Red charges counter-clockwise, whilst White charges clockwise. These giants fight to the death.

White's bonuses for his +2 sword are already included in the stats. The giants are under the command of the Sufiriad.

Mere-gaunt (4th Rank Mystic)

ATTACK: 20 Bite (d10+1, 7)

DEFENCE: 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE: 12

EVASION: 6

STEALTH: 12

PERCEPTION: 7 (darksight)

Movement: 10m (20m)

Armour Factor: 4

Health Points: 18

Rank-equivalent - 8th

Treasure:

found at bottom of well, except where noted.

72 Silver Florins (scattered)

10 Gold Crowns (scattered)

Gold Ring, with fine engraved tracery (50 F)

Finger-sized deep red ruby (40F)

Thin silver chain (10F)

Gold necklace, with a large aquamarine setting (90F)

Large polished bloodstone (30F)

Scroll of *Vorpal Blade*

(in wax-sealed bone tube)

Ice Whip (carried)

Ring of Teleportation (worn)

Frost Giants (2)

ATTACK: 19/21 Battleaxe (d8+2, 8), or Sword +2 (d8+4, 6)

DEFENCE: 11

MAGICAL DEFENCE: 7

EVASION: 4

STEALTH: 9

PERCEPTION: 6 (normal)

Armour Factor: 4

Health Points: 26, 29

Movement: 12m (20m)

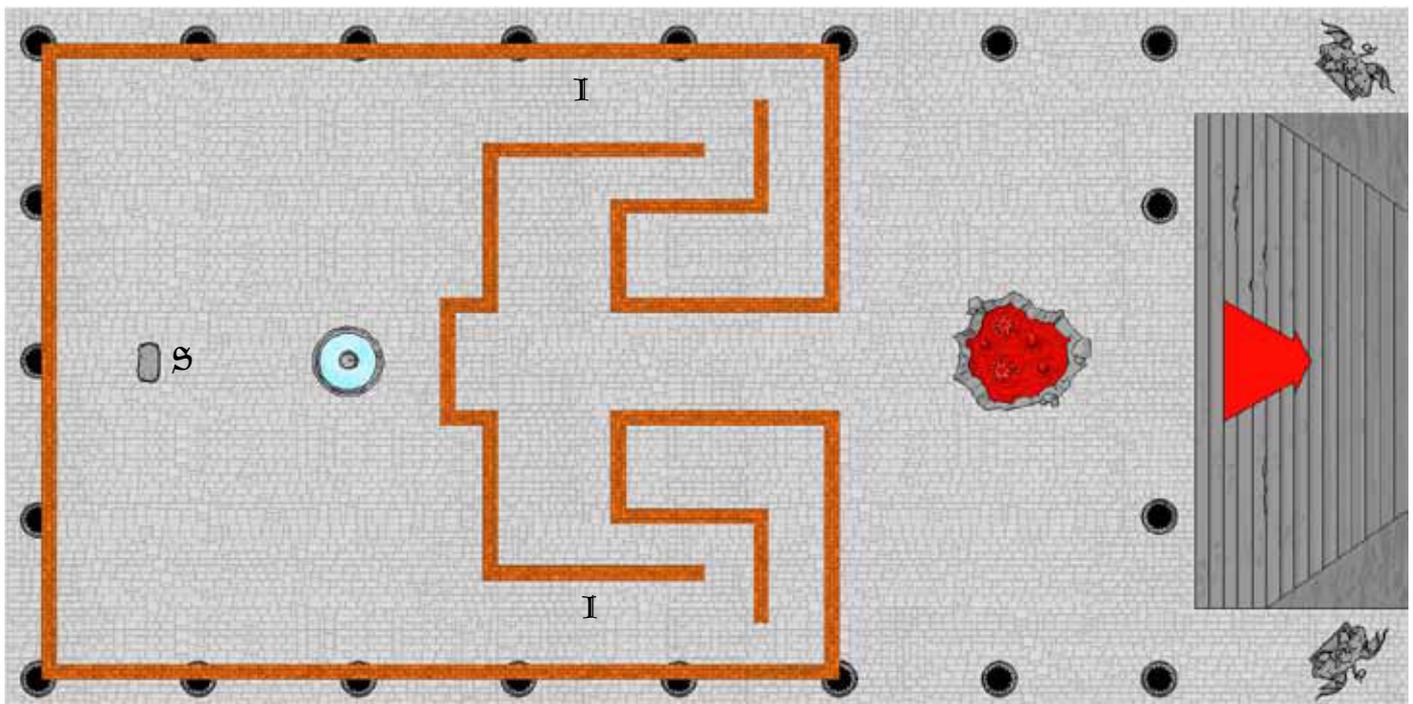
Rank-equivalent - 5th

Treasure: (combined)

148 Silver Florins

12 Gold Crowns

+2 Sword (used by white Giant)



SECTION 5 : THE OLD PAGAN TEMPLE

It's been a long, cold trek through the snow covered forest, but it looks like you have finally reached your goal. In a small glen ahead of you lies the tumbled down ruins of what was once a magnificent temple complex. Now, all the remains intact is what appears to be the main temple building itself. Cracked stairs lead up to a columned landing, where some kind of pool dominates. A dark passageway leads into the building.

The pool is a hot mud pool, which steams and bubbles away. It will burn bare flesh, and quickly heat up metal. The passageway leads to a small hallway, with winding passages leading off it. Each passageway is guarded by an Ice Spectre. The description below fits no matter which passage is chosen.

You proceed down the dark tunnel. The walls are lined with faded mosaics, depicting various ritual activities, some of which seem quite debauched in nature. This was definitely a temple to some pagan god or goddess of a very immoral nature. You come to a branching of the ways, left and right.

The passage turns back on itself and then you find yourself with yet another decision, You can turn and head towards the front of the building again, or further into the temple itself.

<PERCEPTION ROLL> Success indicates the frozen puddle on the floor will be noticed. The first person in line will be attacked by the Ice Spectre.

As you proceed further into the temple, a pair of spectral arms reach out from the ice, grabbing at you!

The Ice Spectre (one in each passage) will attempt to absorb enough health points to be able to congeal and then keep attacking. The arms start with 10 Health Points and add to their total whatever they manage to drain from a victim. The more the Spectre hits in combat, the more health points it will possess, thus making it stronger as the victim weakens. They will fight to the death, or until the party flee the temple, whereupon it will return and take a guard position.

After defeating the Ice Spectre, the party will be able to move on.

You emerge from the passage into the main area of the temple building. The columned walls are again tiled with elaborate mosaics, depicting much debauchery. Near the far wall is a stained altar block, the stains appearing

Ice Spectre (2)

ATTACK: 19 Icy Claws, treat as Magical Attack.

Chill claws clutch at the victims heart and cause damage as shown below

DEFENCE: 9

Attack SPEED: 14

MAGICAL ATTACK: 19

MAGICAL DEFENCE: 9

EVASION: 4

STEALTH: NA

PERCEPTION: NA

Health Points: 10 (+HP from victim)

Armour Factor: 0

Rank-equivalent - 6th

Treasure: None

Ice Spectre will congeal in the icy air and attack after it has drained 10 health points from a victim. Drained Health Points are transferred to the Ice Spectre's Health Point Total.

Damage Table: Roll 2d6

Roll	Dmg	Roll	Dmg
2	1	7	5
3	1	8	6
4	2	9	7
5	3	10	8
6	4	11	9
		12	Death

to be ancient. A pool quietly bubbles away nearby. Green matted weeds and algae stain the side facing the centre of the temple. This looks like the destination of the mere-gaunt after all.

Dominating the centre of the room is a swirling whirlwind. With a terrible screeching, moaning wail, it begins gliding towards you!

If anyone manages to see beyond the visible spectrum, the following description applies.

Coming towards you is a rather macabre and disturbing sight! An ultraviolet, ophidian body and a head, wreathed in cold white fire, resembling a horned but human skull.

The whirlwind descends upon < chosen victim >. You are immediately buffeted by hammer-like blows from all sides, whilst the screaming fills your head with excruciating pain.

The treasure lies in 4 chests behind the altar:

- 2814 Silver Florins
- 340 Gold Crowns
- Silver sacrificial dagger, with gold and diamond dust trceries and a large golden topaz as the pommel. (1000F)
- Golden Candlestick (200F)
- Polished Mahogany Rod, topped with a cluster of 5 rubies (500F)
- Silver and gold censer (700F)
- small silver bowl (200F)
- silver 3-tier candelabra, with diamond dust and gold filigree (1000F)
- Shortsword +2
- Scroll of *Enslave*
- Mail Armour +2
- *Potion of Occult Acuity*

With the Sufiriad now dead, the danger to the village is over. The long trek home awaits, as does some warm mead and a hot meal, and your new life in Springdale.

Sufiriad

ATTACK: - Whirlwind.
DEFENCE: 0
MAGICAL DEFENCE: - (see below)
EVASION: 4
STEALTH: 7
PERCEPTION: 16 (panoptical)
Health Points: 42
Armour Factor: 5
Movement: 10m
Rank-equivalent - 10th

Treasure: See main text

Whirlwind Attack: Moves up to character and implodes the freezing whirlwind. Character takes 1d10 HP damage (less Armour Factor), and must make a Strength Check (equal to or less) or die! Survivors have a 10% chance of having shattered eardrums due to the monsters scream.

Fire scores +2HP damage.
Immune to direct-attack magic