

Cilith: Fall of The Old Gods

The first in a series of books set in the fantastical universe of Cilith - a boggy, marshy land whose fate hangs in the balance during various moments in history. Cilith is a world trapped between water and dense fog, forming an almost endless labyrinth of rivers, floodplains, swampy forests, and thousands of ponds. In the current era, this land has taken the form of treacherous, icy deserts, where the boundary between land and frozen depths blurs beneath a thick layer of snow...

CHAPTER I: The Land and the Mystery of the Pulse

CHAPTER I: THE LAND AND THE SECRET OF THE PULSE

1.1 The Labyrinth of Frosty Mists

Cilith is a world trapped between water and thick fog, forming an almost endless labyrinth of rivers, floodplains, marshy forests, and thousands of ponds. The geography of this land, inspired by the wild nature of the wetlands, causes land and water to intertwine in unpredictable ways. In the current era, Cilith has taken the form of treacherous, icy deserts, where the boundary between safe ground and frozen depths blurs beneath a thick layer of snow. This place is not merely a silent backdrop for events; it is a living, responsive organism, inextricably linked to the forces flowing from its depths.

1.2 The White Silence and the Echo of the Future

The winter currently gripping the land, known as the **White Silence**, is not a natural season. It is an unnaturally harsh and terrifyingly long phenomenon that seems to seep from the very cracks of time. According to the dark accounts of the priests, this frost is an echo of cataclysms from a distant future – a spectral "nuclear winter" that seeps into the 11th century through rifts in the fabric of reality. This unnatural aura makes survival in Cilith require more than just physical resilience; it demands understanding and respect for the forces that wield the frost. Every pivotal and tragic moment in the history of this land always occurs during such a harsh winter.

1.3 The Pulse – The Underground River of Power

Beneath the surface of frozen waters and treacherous marshes pulses the **Pulse** – an underground river of pure energy, known as Mana. It is the ultimate source of all life and magic in Cilith. However, the Pulse carries with it a peculiar curse: it causes time in this land not to always flow in a straight line. In places where this energy flows closest to the surface, reality becomes fluid, and the boundaries between the past, present, and future begin to tremble.

1.4 The Circles of Solstice

Key points on the map of Cilith are the **Circles of Solstice**. These are ancient megaliths erected in places where the energy of the Pulse breaks directly to the surface. In the 11th century, they serve as sacred sites for pagan cults, where the old gods still respond to the prayers of their followers. For invaders, however, these stone monuments are primarily strategic targets – gateways to absolute control over the energy of the land, which must be seized or irrevocably destroyed in the name of the new faith.

1.5 The Invasion of the Kingdom of Light

In the heart of the White Silence, the punitive legions of the **Kingdom of Light** have marched into the borders of the marshes. They bring with them a new religion based on iron discipline, fanaticism, and hatred for all that is wild and untamed. Their mission is ruthless:

- **To crush the old faith** and eradicate those who still offer sacrifices to the marsh gods.
- **To destroy pagan strongholds** that have served as sanctuaries for the inhabitants of the marshes for centuries.
- **To seize control of the Pulse**, subjecting the magic of Cilith to the rigors of the inquisition.

The invading forces, clad in heavy armor and supported by fanatical inquisitors, systematically push deeper into the land, turning vibrant settlements into smoking ruins.

1.6 The Fall of Mglisz

The last bastion of free Cilith remains **Mglisz** – a powerful fortress built at the confluence of the largest floodplains. It is here that the last priests, warriors, and refugees from other burned settlements have taken refuge. The story in which you participate begins at a tragic moment: the walls of Mglisz tremble under the blows of battering rams, and the sky above the fortress turns crimson from the fires. You are the last defenders of this place, and your decisions will determine whether the legacy of Cilith survives or is forever frozen under the ice of the new faith.

***Analogy for understanding the world:** Life in Cilith under the rule of the White Silence resembles an attempt to run across a frozen pond. Every step must be measured, for beneath the thin layer of ice flows a powerful and unpredictable river of the Pulse. If you move too confidently, the ice will crack, pulling you into the icy depths of history from which there is no return.*

CHAPTER II: Marshland Heroes

CHAPTER II: SWAMP HEROES

In the face of the White Silence and the approaching legions of the Kingdom of Light, the fate of the land rests in the hands of a few brave souls who can survive the deadly frost of Cilith. The heroes of this tale are not just warriors, but the last living vessels of ancient knowledge and connections to the Pulse. Character creation in the Nano Dungeon Engine system is a quick process, focusing on their role in the world and unique predispositions that will allow them to survive in the labyrinth of frozen marshes.

2.1 Paths of Destiny (Role Selection)

Each player chooses one of three roles that defines their starting potential and how they interact with the surrounding frost and the steel of the invaders. The role determines which attribute dice you will roll during tests:

- **Shieldbearer (Warrior):** An unyielding defender of the Misty Keep, trained in fighting in dense formations and repelling charges on slippery ice. Shieldbearers rely on their physical strength and iron-clad oak shields.
 - **Attribute Dice:** Strength **d10**, Dexterity **d6**, Magic **d6**.
- **Swamp Hunter (Rogue):** A shadow moving silently across fragile ice. They are masters of the bow and stealth, knowing every hidden path in the marshy forests of Cilith.
 - **Attribute Dice:** Strength **d6**, Dexterity **d10**, Magic **d6**.
- **Invoker (Mage):** A guardian of knowledge forbidden by the inquisition, able to listen to the heartbeat of the Pulse beneath the ice. Invokers do not cast spells in the traditional sense – they compel the land to turn against the invaders.
 - **Attribute Dice:** Strength **d6**, Dexterity **d6**, Magic **d10**.

2.2 Attributes and Dice Mechanics

Your character is described by three key attributes that define their proficiency in various areas:

1. **Strength (S):** Governs melee combat, forcing gates, carrying weights, and overall endurance against the hardships of winter.
2. **Dexterity (D):** Determines the precision of bow shots, reaction speed, balance on ice, and stealth ability.
3. **Magic (M):** Represents the spiritual connection to the Pulse and the ability to invoke special effects that transcend natural laws.

In this system, you always use one die assigned to a given attribute. The larger the die (e.g., **d10** instead of **d6**), the statistically greater the chance of achieving success against a designated Target Number (**TN**).

2.3 Life and Power Resources

Survival in Cilith is measured by two key indicators:

- **Hearts (5):** Represent your vitality and will to fight. Losing Hearts occurs as a result of retaliation from an opponent in combat or exposure to extreme conditions, such as the "Breath of Frost." When you drop to 0 Hearts, you are knocked down and eliminated from action until an ally tends to you.
- **Mana (3):** This is the fuel for your supernatural abilities. You spend it to tap into the energy of the Pulse and invoke magical effects. Once spent, Mana is lost but can be regained during a safe rest by the campfire.

2.4 Swamp Talents

Heroes in Cilith possess unique predispositions known as Talents. The player selects two that best describe their character. Each allows the Game Master to lower the Target Number (TN) by one degree (e.g., from 8 to 6) when the character performs an action directly related to that talent:

- **Child of Ice:** You are accustomed to harsh winters. You do not suffer penalties for moving in deep snow and can gauge the thickness of ice by sight.
- **Cold Blood:** Your will is as hard as a frozen lake. You have an easier time resisting fear and the hypnotic glimmers of inquisitorial wonders.
- **Pulse Expert:** You can sense the pulsing Mana beneath the ground. You regenerate your strength more easily near ancient Stone Circles and places of power.
- **Scout:** A master of survival in the wild. You have an easier time tracking opponents and finding safe spots for a campsite in the heart of a blizzard.

2.5 Equipment and Gear

In the realities of Cilith, equipment is not just a collection of statistics, but a "permission" to undertake specific actions. At the start, each character possesses:

1. **Main Weapon:** E.g., heavy axe (S), long spear (S), or yew bow (D).
2. **Armor:** A padded coat and leathers that can serve as armor (armor token for the scene, allowing you to ignore one loss of Heart).
3. **Three useful items:** Chosen by the player (e.g., a supply of tinder and flint, strong rope, a flask of honey, or snowshoes).

Remember that lacking appropriate gear in the face of the White Silence (e.g., lacking fire during rest) means that heroes only regain half of their lost Hearts and Mana.

Analogy for the player: Creating your character is like forging the tip of a spear: you must choose the right material (Role), temper it in icy waters (Resources), and sharpen it for a specific task (Talents) so that the weapon does not break when it strikes the cold steel of the Kingdom of Light.
