

The Mad Cantor of Frosthollow

A Fate's Edge One-Shot of Joy, Dread, and Winter

Folk Horror - Multiple Patrons - Social & Ritual Play

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Premise: Frosthollow's solstice rite, the Feast of the Endless Night, has curdled

Theme: Folk Horror

Focus: Social & Ritual Play

Combat: Low Combat Optional

Length: One-Shot

PREMISE & TONE

Frosthollow's solstice rite, the Feast of the Endless Night, has curdled. The village cantor, Elara Nightweaver, wears a living crown of holly and sings with a voice not wholly hers. Revelers decorate with blood-bright berries and do not sleep. Three Powers lean in: Thrybos (ecstasy and excess), the Pale Shepherd (thresholds and the passage), and the Silent Choir (mercy through silence).

PCs arrive as storm and song rise together. Their choices decide whether Frosthollow remembers joy—or becomes its grave.

HOOK

Offer three clear entries:

- **Shelter in a Storm:** Snow closes behind; bells peal off-rhythm.
- **A Missing Brother:** A hunter's letter begs you to fetch him from the Feast.
- **Ritual Competence:** A nearby abbot sends you to audit a troubled solstice mass.

FRONTS & CLOCKS

Holly Crown's Hold [6]

Advances when Elara sings unopposed or offerings are made.

- **1–2:** Subtle compulsion (1d to resist revelry)
- **3–4:** 1 Position near the square
- **5–6:** Crown roots through flesh; Elara becomes Avatar of Revel

Village Hysteria [6]

Advances when the party indulges, delays, or escalates spectacle.

- **1–2:** Harmless mania
- **3–4:** Harm 1 from exposure/exhaustion
- **5–6:** Stampede, collapse, or freezing injuries (Harm 2)

Storm's Mercy [4]

Advances on time passage or failed shelter efforts.

- **1:** Whiteout pockets
- **2:** Paths vanish
- **3:** Avalanches threaten
- **4:** Outlying homes cut off (people die without aid)

Silent Choir Mandate [4]

Advances when harm spreads or pleas for rest go unheard.

- **4:** Choir imposes Great Silence—speech fails in the square until the rite is resolved

KEY NPCs**Elara Nightweaver — Mad Cantor of Frosthollow****Stat Block**

Tags: Singer-Ritualist, Tragic, Beloved

Approach: Presence 3, Spirit 3, Wits 2, Body 1

Skills: Sway 3, Arcana 3, Insight 2, Melee 1

Talents: Cantor's Gift, Rite Adjudicator, Perfect Pitch

Harm: 4-clock; Armor: 0(2 when Avatar)

Special: Contagious Cheer — nearby NPCs must DV 2 Resolve or gain the Revelry condition

Goal: Save her people by more joy; can't see it's killing them.

Patron Pressures (GM Moves)

| Patron | Pressure / Offer | Cost / Tell |
|---------------|---|---|
| Thrysos | Amplify a scene with music, color, shared breath; grant +1d to any social roll that escalates the revel. | Mark 1 Fatigue or advance Hysteria. Sweet wine tastes of copper. |
| Pale Shepherd | Open a gentler path: safe escort across snow, a sleeping child spared. +1 Position to protective actions. | Accept a memory tithe (lose a detail of your past). A lamb-bell rings once. |
| Silent Choir | Still the panic: cancel one chaotic complication. 1d to hostiles this scene. | Words fail: your next plea can only be gesture. A white filament settles on lips. |

CONDITIONS & ENVIRONMENTAL MOVES

Revelry Condition

You feel wonderful. 1d to resist joining songs, dances, or feasts; ignoring an invitation advances Hysteria. Cleansed by cold immersion, fasting, or a counter-hymn.

Winter Moves

- Whiteout
- Black Ice
- Roof-Load Collapse
- Bone-Chill Seep (Harm 1)
- Lost Lanterns (separate the party)
- Avalanche Shadow (clock tick + forced scramble)

CORE SCENES

1. Arrival: Snow, Smoke, & Holly

Read: Frosthollow's square blazes with lanterns; off-key choirs bellow carols. A crown of holly gleams wetly on the cantor's brow. The bells are late. The storm inhales.

Moves & Challenges

- **Assess the Rite:** Lore + Insight DV 3 — learn the hymn is mis-keyed to force breath patterns (+1 SB to GM if ignored)
- **Resist the Cheer:** Resolve DV 2 — on a miss, gain Revelry
- **Shepherd the Elderly to Shelter:** Command + Athletics DV 3 — on a hit, reduce Storm's Mercy

2. The Bell Tower — Greta's Truth

Read: Greta Frostwhisper, trembling in the belfry, clutches a ledger of the old hymn. "They changed the breathing. Too long. Too fast. They'll fall and never rise."

Moves & Challenges

- **Compare Hymns:** Lore + Craft DV 3 — identify a counter-refrain that resets breathing safely
- **Befriend Greta:** Sway + Presence DV 2 — gain a trusted guide; +1d on village social rolls

3. Elara's House — The Red Thread

Read: Holly cuttings root in bowls; old lyrics are crossed out; a red thread binds prayer-knots to a goblet.

Moves & Challenges

- **Unravel the Charm:** Arcana + Tinker DV 4 — separate the goblet (Thrysos vessel) from the holly. On partial, advance Holly Crown's Hold
- **Quiet the Home:** Shepherd's Bargain — accept a memory tithe to sanctify this space (Choir 1 this scene)

4. Climax: Feast of the Endless Night

Read: Elara raises her hands; the village inhales as one. Snow becomes confetti. The bells strike late.

Moves & Challenges

Choose one or braid them:

- **Counter-Hymn:** Presence + Sway DV 4 — lead a new refrain; on success, reduce Hysteria by 2, stabilize breath; on miss, Holly Hold +1 and Choir advances
- **Sunder the Crown:** Melee/Arcana + Athletics DV 4 — break holly roots; on partial, take Harm 1 (thorns/acid sap)
- **Triune Negotiation:** name each Patron's concession: Insight + Lore DV 5 — forge a pact: short feast, long rest, and a hymn of remembrance. On hit, all clocks freeze; on miss, one Patron takes primacy (GM move)

OUTCOMES

Resolutions

- **Mercy Kept (Best):** Feast becomes vigil; the storm parts; Elara lives, crown withers. PCs gain 2 Boons (Community/Thresholds)
- **Joy Saved but Costly:** Revelry quiets; 1–2 deaths; Elara scarred. PCs gain 1 Boon; choose: spare a life or spare a memory
- **Silence Falls (Grim):** Silent Choir imposes Great Silence; Feast ends forever. PCs gain Favor with the Choir; village loses its song
- **Rapture Eternal (Dark):** Thrysos claims the square; Frosthollow dances into legend. PCs marked with Revelry until exorcised

ELARA AS AVATAR (IF THE CROWN CONSUMES)

Elara

Tags: Elite, Mythic Song, Zone Control

Aura — Crescendo: Each round, all in the square test Resolve DV 3 or gain/advance Revelry

Song-Strike: Presence + Arcana vs. the crowd; on hit, split Harm 2 (breathless) among up to three targets

Roots of Holly: On melee hit against Elara, attacker tests Wits DV 2 or be Entangled

Weakness: Counter-hymn sung by a beloved voice (Greta or a PC who earned the choir's trust) reduces her Position by one step this round

GM DIALS & TOOLS

GM Dials & Options

- **Patron Prominence:** Feature 1, 2, or all 3. For one-shot pace, lead with Thrysos, let Shepherd save, let Choir judge
- **Combat Light or Heavy:** Swap Sunder the Crown to a pure ritual (Arcana + Insight) or to a brawl in the choir loft
- **Hard Mode:** Add Breath Debt: each failed Revelry resist deals Harm 1 (asphyxia) that only the counter-hymn heals
- **Mechanical Rewards:** If Mercy Wins: +1d on future Comfort/Recovery scenes. If Rapture Tempted: bank 1 Joy Token—cash for +1d on one grand celebration later

TREASURE & FALLOUT

Holly Circlet (Relic)

Once/session: Turn a crowd from fear to festivity (+1d to mass morale). Each use risks Revelry. Cleansed if crowned with snow-water at dawn.

Greta's Ledger of Hymns

Advantage (+1d) to Ritual Audit checks; reveals mis-keyed breath patterns used for crowd control.

Casting the Patrons (Optional Flavor)

- **Thrysos:** Laughing hearth-god turned too loud; smells of cider and iron; color over truth
- **Pale Shepherd:** A lantern across snow; speaks in exchanged memories; never hurries
- **Silent Choir:** Frost-haze in candlelight; mercy as cessation; demands quiet means consent

QUICK START FOR PCs

- **Runekeeper (Thresholds):** Bargain with the Shepherd for safe passage; pay in story or scar
- **Cantor / Bard:** Compose the counter-hymn; lead call-and-response to cleanse Revelry
- **Sellsword:** Guard the bell ropes; hold the square against stampede or falling ice
- **Healer:** Replace Cheer with Breath—synchronized breathing drills under the eaves

"When the song is too sweet to end, mercy is a hard hand on the bell rope."
— Greta Frostwhisper