

Mad Cantor of Frosthollow

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

Folk Horror

Multiple Patrons

Social & Ritual Play

Low Combat Optional

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: **Thrysos** (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

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).

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*.

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 (see below).

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

Patron Pressures (Use as 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 <i>Hysteria</i> . 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 <i>gesture</i> . A white filament settles on lips. |

CONDITIONS & ENVIRONMENTAL MOVES

Lore & Signs

Condition — Revelry: 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

Scene

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

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

Scene

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

Scene

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

Scene

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)

Stat Block

Elara, Avatar of Revel

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 <i>quiet means consent</i> . |

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