

A Midwinter's Nightmare

Everyone knows that you should stay indoors on Midwinter's Eve, but some desperation or bad luck has you travelling through the deep woods to the nearest town tonight. A howling storm broken occasionally by dazzling borealis signals the beginning of the **Wild Hunt**, led by the fey lord **Herne**, and all the creatures of faerie coming out to join. Can you make it through the forest in time?

One encounter per hour. Successful wilderness navigation leads to the next encounter, failure leads to a random encounter. After 8 encounters the Final Chase begins. Each hour of travel risks a cumulative -1 Cold penalty.

1. Twinkling Ice

- Six **Snow Sprites** hide in circling snow flurries, half will turn visible at a time to attack then disappear.
- **Poison arrows** can put prey to sleep, then the faeries will get distracted and flutter off.

2. The Huntsman's Cairn

- 12 foot stag skull on top of a pile of stones. Antlers are decorated with feathers, bones, and bits of fur--all dripping with blood.
- Touching or attacking the skull **curses** a target--they take on traits of a predator (natural weapon attack and tracking) but in combat risk a fight-or-flight response (willpower test every round; on failure must attack or move away from nearest creature)

3. Barrow Hill

- Blue fire on a barren hilltop--on a magical night this means the treasure of a dead person is buried there.
- Howling wind is deafening. Barrow mound is guarded by **Cobweb the Whisper-Elf** and his **Grave Worm**, risen from the barrow to join the **Wild Hunt**. Uncovered grave has a golden torc and a chieftain's bronze sword.

4. The Elf Knight

- **Sir Alberich**, and his **Griffon** mount who joined the Huntsman's hunt willingly. He flies in front of travellers and commands them to stop.
- Searching for **Benedick the Giant**, who he wounded earlier in the night. He's not interested in other prey but is easily goaded. His **Adder's Fork** lance weakens enemies on a hit.

5. Sawney Tok's cabin

- An elderly man offers shelter in his warm cabin but dried blood on farm tools hints at danger.
- A **Redcap Goblin**, **Sawney Tok** is starved for blood and weak. If travellers stay long enough to warm up (remove one Cold penalty), or if they are hostile, he attacks. Every time he spills blood he gets stronger in battle.

6. Wounded Giant

- Bloody footprints follow a half-frozen stream through the woods, leading to a patch of recently broken ice.
- **Benedick the Giant** was wounded by **Sir Alberich** and is cold and exhausted from trying to cross the stream. He's terrified of the elf knight but will be friendly if offered healing or warmth.

7. Huntsman's Hounds

- A clear horn signals the arrival of a pack of white-furred **Blink Dogs** with red ears and eyes. Normally noble creatures, they are caught up in the **Wild Hunt** and are searching for humanoid prey.

- They can feystep towards or away from an enemy in the same round they attack.

8. Frozen Lake

- A single small island with a blooming shrub is in the middle of the lake. The ice groans but is strong enough to hold travellers.
- The **Pixie Ariel** resists the **Wild Hunt's** call and protects her lake from her lair inside the island. She will offer to help **Benedick the Giant**, and can offer travellers warmth if treated well (remove one Cold penalty).

The Final Chase: group checks to overcome each obstacle. Five successes before three failures means the travellers get out of the forest and within sight of town before the **Herne the Hunter** catches up with them, weakening his power.

Obstacles (ability):

1. Ground is covered in slippery ice (agility)
2. Wind blows snow into everyone's eyes (toughness)
3. Disorienting borealis and echoing horns lead you astray (alertness)
4. Fallen trees block path, move them or climb over (might)
5. Territorial **Owlbear**, calm it down or you'll have to backtrack (social)
6. Identify a patch of thin ice before crossing it (knowledge)
7. Stamping elk, any individual failure results in damage (any reasonable)
8. Open ground offers chance to gain a lead if not spotted (agility or clever idea)

Herne the Hunter and his Hounds

Tall bearded man in fur cloak and antler helmet, wielding a spear that shocks like lightning. He rides a spectral horse that flies around, waiting for his blink dogs to corner a target before moving in. If the party got out of the forest before the chase ended he doesn't have his steed, and recklessly attacks.

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