

# “Colder Than A Snowman’s Codpiece”

By Roderigo, the Scribe  
(Michael McFadden)  
GM – Struan

Our party be:

**Ravenfrost (Liz)** - A very tall human ice mage woman and be the owner of a scary looking hound who weighs about 300 lbs & bizarrely named “Puppy” when he looks mostly like a horse...

**Mikhail Demitri Kalahnikov or MDK (Mike)** who is a tough looking dwarf of flinty disposition and the kind of stare that freezes vodka (what ever that be). He aint a mage.

**Stardreamer (Kevin)** - a tall elf celestial mage who has been here before. He be declared our military scientist & carryeth a sword & bow.

**Mira Stuart (Emily)** - a she - Caledonian (read barbarian) human earth mage who carries a damned big sword named a claymore and wears that garish clothing they like all covered in large coloured squares

**Robert McLeod** - Another Caledonian. A human mind mage- with a hungry gleam to his eye & inclined to get more & more excitable as the claret floweth from others.

**Ashlon Goodlight (Tom)** - A very well dressed elf e & e mage, (who knows manners that civilised people like me have never even heard of) He is voted leader mainly because he knows the right knives and forks to use at dinner

**Saurus (Ian)** - a human mage who is overly fond of the dead (that is after they are actually dead) and who very strangely he aint no longer the lizard man I met last at the Rose Court adventure.

And there is I **Roderigo (Michael)** , a halfling e & e mage of unquestioned reputation, the kind that makes small children and dogs run howling in the street. I am the scribe.

Our employer is called Goodman Carl of the trading cartel in Artzdorf city. (I always cast an extra careful eye when they describe themselves like that)... anyway it matters not when his money is good. He tells us that trading boats have not been able to get out from the city & the last time he had contact was six months ago.

This be because of an extra cold winter that don’t appear to be quite natural. People are making not surviving out of the cities. Portartz is frozen rock solid all around. The Artz river is flowing under sheet ice. The rule of law has disappeared except in the cities.

He wants us to obtain information about where his boats with winter trade goods & balance sheets for the entire Kingdom of Flugelheim are. He will pay us 10,000 sp

1. He will pay further if we can find out how the winter occurred. 12,000 sp for detailed information as to what caused it.
2. We are to travel around the countryside and visit the nine cities. We get 2000 sp extra for each one we get to.

If we solve the problem we get paid double. The party vote & agree that the scribe military scientist & leader get an extra share of treasure. This is carried unanimously by the scribe, military scientist & leader. The others are silent in their agreement. We will get letters of introduction for the various cities. The representatives of the Cartel in the cities is called a Factor. Arrangements have been made for a Captain to take us to Feleecemouth. He will get us as

close as we can to Port Artz. We will be outfitted with a set of very warm winter clothes made of fur. We are offered lesser enchantments. We get snowshoes. We are off to the Flugelheim area. Astrology readings are done to assist us as to how we get there.

We are advised of two high mana zones- Flugellheim at North east and Maltain where there is a reverse waterfall.. This is on a small lake toward the end of Artz?. It is accessible only by flying. Flugelhiem city has a college of mages and we will have to register with them.

Artzdorf has only been a monarchy for c 15 years when a single kingdom was formed. Artzdorf and Flugelheim are mostly human. Halflings not unknown. Elves are not common. The Western church has not made serious inroads though there are churches. We will leave town tomorrow. It will take one week to Fleecemouth by boat, which has been arranged.

At 6.00 p.m. we meet again with Goodman Carl. He agrees to the revised figures. We can keep any loot. This excludes ships and we are not allowed to rob? We are shown to our boat, which has very stumpy masts and heavily tarred ropes & is called the Ice Maiden

We meet the captain and the first mate who clearly is some form of old salt. We will be under the quarterdeck with a cabin each. We are not allowed to light nay fires as the boat is covered in tar. The Captain, Gerard is an elf & he asks us to dine tomorrow with he. We head out to sea. The boat is slow but powerful. Various of our crew suffer greatly from the seasickness disease.

#### Day2

We dine with the Captain that night decked out in full fig. The food is fairly damned flash & Ashlon being the generous sort provides some whine & cheese\*. The Captain talks very politely which leads me to suspect that he be a sap & an easy mark, but I keep it under me breath (barely) as he has a magic drinks machine that supplies what ever you want. The Captain & Ashlon compete and show off their manners. It is a neck & neck as to who is the best ponce...

\*(In fact Ashlon be more cunning than I suspects fobbing off the Captain with some very old whine while drinking the Captain's good stuff presumeably new....the Captain- he never even notices whats going on...)

Captain Gerard suggest that there be a barrier of artic level storms and he has never known the weather to be so bad. One through the barrier he says it will be merely damnedly cold.

#### Day 3 - Day 7

The weather varies -it is overcast. Most of us decide to train or sleep in our cabins for this period.

#### Day 7

We see land and pull into a large bay called Feelecemouth. It is about 75 miles to Artzdorf. We have to try and find a way in. We will be staying about 1 - 5 days

#### Session 2

Ashton & Star dreamer head off to the Captains pub whcih is posh (read expensive). From their report it sound to me exceeding dull, narry a bedrunken dwarf, saucy wench or scurvy orc in sight. Scant information is passed. The Captain of the Justinian is introduced by Captain Gerard. He tells - it is unusual to find pack ice so late, he arrived 2 days ago. There be no problems with pirates. He could not get to Flugelgheim or Portartz. He knows mostly what we know. The innkeeper has nothing much to say but suggests we talk to a Wiccan - 10 miles out of town, the pilot, the Mayor/Seneshal and Lady Vickner the healer. The Inn closes at 11.00 p.m. to those who aren't members - apparently being merely a jammy toff with lots of silver like Ashlon is not enough for some- outrage!!

At the Travellers Inn, there are tall tales about long winters, wolves etc passed to Robert & Mira - the doughty Caledonians, but nothing of consequence, although they say they enjoyed the beer.

The Sailor Inn closes early as our seafaring companions fall one after another - face first in their spilt beer.

That night MDK the fearsome dwarf, Saurus, Ashlon the well mannered & I Roderigo sneak off unseen to the graveyard. The church is with a symbol of a sword and a stained glass window with an image of a shield. I guard and spend my time casting an eye to the gravesites with the biggest statues, crypts, mausoleums, detailing best approaches, cover, measurements etc - now if any of ye readers would like to be in possession of a map detailed with full professional observations for a fair price in silver contact Roderigo at the guild - and be discrete - The others stair at the grave & Saurus the ex- lizard talks to the dead. The dead tells him that:

*The weather was a barrier. He was in Flugelhiem when it started. It became obvious that the weather was unusual two months ago.. He was attacked on the way out. The group travelled on foot. The horses died from magic. They ate the horses. Storms chased the group. Lost track of where they went. Travelled 50 miles all up. Travelled 20 miles in storms. There were magic users in the party. Was something strange in town before they left. The animals were behaving strangely.*

The other grave is in consecrated grounds that ever that is, but Saurus does not like it. We have not been spotted so we head home before discussing how to make consecrated grounds unconsecrated. Ashlon be against it though, for me it is a good plan.... We sleep well and ponder our next move....

#### Day 10

There is one still at the healer in a coma we understand. Hmm.... a dilemma - what if he stays in a coma & we cannot talk to him? We debate if it be better to sneak in, kill him & speak with him when he is dead through Saurus and his great power in regard to things not living.

We go to the Healer's to explore our options. The Healer, Lady Vichner a middle aged human. She tells us he has been badly bitten by frost, has hypothermia, a wasting disease and something similar to poison has effected him - sounds a damn good one too - probably not wise to ask how we could make it - it has all been caused magically & it effects the soul (?) and body. Poison survived death. They had been two to three days without food. She tells us o come back in three hours and he will talk to us - well that solved one dilemma. Mira casts a DA spell but can get no result cos' he hath been resurectioned...

So we head out to see the Wiccan having hired horses. He is a human called Zachary of about 35 who has a large mysterious cat. He tells us that recently the animals have been stressed but cannot reveal much more than that. He pulls out the magical cards of fortune called tarrow. He says there will be death & destruction - truly perceptive he seemeth, though we all be guild members armed to the teeth & swathed in scars...

He says there is a hemlock tree in Maltain village at the northern end of the Serra Ranges. Maltain has been deserted due to Aim the Demon duke of fire, which makes good sense! On considering our other tarrow reading he says we should consider walking backwards or not sticking to the same path. The person doing this is probably bad. That winter seems to be attacking. Love is involved somehow and the real reason for it all is not clear and much deeper. (I'm surprised he didn't also tell us we will celebrate on feast days,

Stardreamer has been waiting for us at the healers. The woodsman, Sebastian is awake. He tells us.

*They went through the midland pass describing the way. They started catching a lot of whiter furred foxes - unusual - almost as if was further north. The winter coats on*

*animals had come earlier. The trappers took extra horses and supplies. It normally took two weeks to get out. The weather closed in on them. First there was sleet, snowstorms and ice storms. It always seemed to shift to face them. It took about 1 to 2 hours to react when they changed direction. It became a full white out. They could not find fuel for fires. They butchered the horses to eat. It took 14 days instead of 7. They were based in the southern end of the Artz plateau. They noticed different sorts of wolves travelling in packs - might have thought it was a bear attack. There were talks of villagers having had a hard time in Artzdorf. There may be religious crazies on the loose. There was a druidic earth mage in the party who believed the ice storms were poisoned. He does not want to go back. They had shoes for the horse. They did not use spiked shoes. The natural weather had transformed.*

### Session 3

We confirm there be no dogs to haul sledges. We debate robbing the grave of the dead one

#### Day11

MDK, Robert, Mira & I - we head off to talk to the wiccan. He gives us some special herbs that are like food when drunk and some ointment to guard against the affects of frostbite.

Ashlon decides on a different tack & goes to see the Priest at the town church and asks if we might be permitted to dig up the body - highly unorthodox way to "reveal" a grave by actually asking permission I think (being one of some business experience in this craft.....usually by night and certainly without permission ) but, not surprisingly if ye have gazed upon the dark underbelly of society as I have also (from underneath) - he crosses the palm of the priest with a few 100 shekels of silver & the priest he says, aye dig him up tonight, discrete like.

We slip back cunningly by eve - two of our party concealed with a spell of invisibleness. The grave is open and the dead body lies at the bottom of the pit. It is DA'd and it is discovered that the nature of the poison is demonic - !! Time to renegotiate pay - that aint what I signed on for.

The priest puffed up with delight having ripped off Ashlon & thinking no doubt of the new robes he will be buying later in the day and the roast beef he will be dining on for the next long while (& hoping for another handout) waves a magic talisman over the body. Lo & behold he tells us - the poison can be cured as per normal healing & it enters the body through wounds of ice. As guilt overcomes him, seeping through his flesh like the venom of a serpent, distilled and thrice filtered through sulphur paper (not that I would know) - he throws in a vial of holy water each which might help back off the demons. Still later is revealed by Ravenfrost's hound (to his horror & discomfort) that we be blessed, by the priest.

Back at the boat we sleep & prepare to venture forth.

#### Day 12

By the crack of dawn we set sail. By lunchtime, the captain tells us .he is going to head west. We tell him about the poison snow & he is grateful, but not grateful enough mind to whip out his magic grog machine. Ice starts appearing in the sea. It starts to become damnedly cold.

#### Day13

The wind picks up in a line of squalls so we scarper below deck. The ice becomes thicker in the water & we are about 50 miles from Part Artz. Time to leave. We & our sleds are lowered over the side on to the ice with our captain manoeuvring.

There is solid pack ice with occasional lips & cracks. We start pushing our sleds along. After about 15 minutes the storm packs in heading our way to face us. We tack and the storm takes about two

hours to swing around to face us. We make two miles per hour in the cold as we learn to use snowshoes. Ravenfrost makes shelters for us by shaping snow with a spell.

Watches are set overnight & we rest in an ice shelter.

MDK & Saurus

Raven & Stardeamer

Robert & Roderigo

Mirra & Ashlon - Ashlon the magnificent has breakfast waiting for us....

#### Day14

Within two hours of heading off the storm rolls in & starts heading towards us. We tack like a ship on an angle until about lunch time. A wolf call is heard by the perceptive Ravenfrost who has rangercraft for the icy wastelands - & we brace our selves to receive foes... suddenly out of the icy gloom we are attacked by a pack of 7 wolves & a giant white bear moving in unison. We battle them & against the laws of nature they fight to the death. The bear is protected by some most arcane magic thus causing spells to bounce off him and attack the caster. Robert - throwing all of the powers of his mind at the bear discovers that he is in a mind wrestling match with some other power battling for control of the bear. Eventually we triumph.

#### Session 4

The wolf pelts look exceeding good so Ravenfrost's damned hound is dragged off before he eats our loot. We skin 'em & chop them & the bear up into meat & load it on the sleds.

We noticed that when we stopped moving the weather conditions eased. Ravenfrost makes us another icy house which we sleep in. That night Robert has a dream about being trapped in a circle of frozen flames. Others have bad dreams too.

#### Day 15.

It is a nice day. We see a blackbird & can tell that there is land under the ice. We travel.

#### Day 16

We all wake up with bad dreams about ice ..... actually not that bad - it is not as if I dreamed I'd turned into an elf or anything.... The weather clears.

Moving along we can see some masts of ships which we head to. They are all iced in. We decide to sneak up on what appears to be a village. There is no activity on the streets. There is no one on the harbourside. This is Part Artz Port according to Stardeamer who has been here before. We can all draw mana, but the texture is slightly funny.

As we make our way through the streets we find a body. He is a well to do Labourer & has been murdered - (at last a sign of civilisation!!) Saurus does his thing & talks to the dead one who telleth him:

*It was cold. He has been dead a month. The town people had not left before he died.*

*There was a call to arms. Part Artz was not attacked but law & order was breaking down.*

*He did not steal anything. There were no problems with animals. There were unnatural happenings such as it being extremely cold. This happened about five weeks ago.*

We see no other sign of life so we head off to find the Factor's building. We knock & hear no reply, but discover the back door is open - which in my experience means come in, make yourself at home, what is mine is yours..... Inside there are many boxes, packing cases etc. Everything has been opened - about a month ago we would be guessing. There is no evidence of looting. Food has been taken. Bedding and blankets are gone. It appears to have been an orderly removal. Saurus, by wiggling little bits of steel, manages to open the office door. The office has been used. It has not

been ransacked. There are three unfinished & six finished journals and a logbook - last entry - "packed up & shipping out".

There is a hidden room in a back wardrobe. A diary inside reads:

*"The weather is unseasonably cold. Mayor has called up the militia to quell looting. The last entry: "Food reserves low. Will be moving out of town."*

The last entries match - exactly 6 weeks ago. We leave the factor's building and go and a look about. We smell wood smoke and indications that there are signs of life. Across the market square we notice that there are barricades all around made from lumber. There are many tracks in the snow. The smoke comes from a temple.

### Session Five

We skulk about a bit until introductions are made... In the temple a number of people are holding out. We are told by the priest who appears to be in charge that there were originally about 200 but many have been lost through wandering off, suicide, depressions etc. Wounds that break the skin can become infected and even fatal due to some kind of snow sickness.

Many children have been lost & those that wander off from the shelter of the church & the barricades often are never seen again. There are no rats, cats or other animals except for many ravens which have appeared.

Mira does a DA spell and determines that there is a demonic influence. Stardreamer tries it too & tries to figure out who the demon is. The answer comes back but appears to be concealed as if by ice, - very mysterious. There is no answer to what will ritual or magic will remove the effect. We are told that holy water helps the infections.

At night snow is never seen to fall but snow is always fresh on the ground in the morning. The snow will not fall on holy ground. The demonic influence seems to emanate from the Northwest general direction. We are told it is one hour to the tower where the mages dwell. So we elect to travel there going through the more affluent upper middle class area until we come across a tower. The door has a shimmering effect on it. Stardreamer attempts to knock & a figure appear in robes before us and asks us what the devil is going on. Stardreamer explains & we are allowed in. Inside the mage is shorter than his image & clad in blue & silver. His introductions all around. He be called Mee & from the college of illusion.

He tells us he does not know the Demons name. Two mages have tried to get to Flugelhiem - an air and a celestial but they never reported back. At night other mages have vanished. There is only one other mage in the place and he is living on the roof. & is encased in ice and it is not know what this has happened. Most people have left their villages and or died. There are giant white snow bears and vicious wolves patrolling the ice - has been created. Neither they nor the ice can get inside the tower. He tells us that a mind mage went crazy trying mental control.

I ask him to prove his magic powers and lo & behold he turns me into a 6'3" human man with blond hair and blue eyes. With my PB enhanced by 10 to 19 it is too good a chance to miss and I test my new found look & luck in things amorous with Mira & Ravenfrost our lady adventurers. It appeared certain that they be sending me all of the right signals & my ardour increaseth to human sized proportions. Gadzooks! My new & abundant charms appear to be of little effect and their reception is frosty - no doubt a result of the demonic influence.

Up on the roof, it becomes obvious to those who know, I guess that means Stardreamer, that the night sky has changed. There is pillar of ice up there with apparently a mage underneath. In Raven frost's professional opinion this would be the result of a bind ice spell. Mira Da's confirms the ice mage is inside the ice is magic and the purpose is "offering." Robert uses an ESP which reveals

that there are 10 minds, - the party, Mee & the man inside the ice whose mind is very blissful and one very big mind which is below. There are two components to the blissful mind. As we leave Ravenfrost discovers that that she felt really good up on top. That the mind inside the ice is in apparent ecstasy & is thinking very slowly.

As we return below, Mee tells us that the tower is sentient. It exerts and influence and it protects. The tower is meant to have a Mana lock for a mile radius and apparently controls all casting through the city and part of the countryside. He is surprised that the tower appears to have been affected.

He tells us that the netter you are at doing something the more you are affected by the current situation, For example the Master Namer went crazy but the juniors namer only got a headache

### Session 6 Miras notes

#### Day 19.

After an uneventful night at the mage tower - we awake to find all our gear has been cleaned and minor repairs done. Mee the illusionist then shows up and offers us breakfast - whatever we want. Some of us go for a good hot sustaining porridge, while others go for the works - bacon, eggs toast, or hot chillii chicken for Saurus. It magically appears in front of us once we have stated our preference. The only drawback is that if you order something more complex or unusual - you get lees food. Oh well, some of us got huge bowls of porridge, so we share some around to those who got less... There's even a haunch of meat for Puppy. In discussions over breakfast we decide our next stop will be the monastery that the factor was heading for when he left town.

We head out of the city via the West Gate - over a stone bridge. The river is completely frozen, however there is no ice on the bridge - just a dusting of snow. Once we leave the city, we notice that the air is a lot clearer - the haze is still over the city, but not the surrounding countryside. In fact, the opposite is true - we can see a lot further than we can normally - we can even clearly make out the next city which we know is 70 miles away! We admire the view for a few minutes - Stardreamer says it looks very artistic, the rangers in the party say it looks unsettling - not quite natural. In fact we realise that it looks like a landscape painting of the countryside - not reality. It's too tidy and the perspective on some things is wrong. We do a bit of experimenting, and discover that the range on this effect is about 150 feet. If something is closer than, it looks normal, however if it is further away, it appears to be more picture-perfect.

We continue along the road, looking for then turn-off to the monastery. Finding it confirms our earlier observations. From a distance, the turnoff has a neat signpost, and a shapely tree next to it. Once we approach, we see that there is no signpost, just a waymarker, and the tree is not so shapely. Also there is a crude grave next to the turn-off. Saurus (our necromancer) says there is a body in the grave, and the rangers say it's 1-3 weeks old. I DA the grave, and find that there's a magical field covering it. Looking around, I realise it covers everything - the source of the picturesque changes? I ask for the nature of the entity that caused this effect, and get The Most Gracious Lady of the Icy Paintbrush.

We take the path up to the monastery - stopping for lunch on the way. Odd - we feel extremely refreshed after eating - despite all the exertion of the morning's travel. Once we finish lunch, we suddenly see the monastery further ahead of us - despite the fact that none of us noticed it before lunch. We continue along the road and soon reach the monastery - it's a stone manor, looks to hold 20-30 people. However there are no signs of life. We check around the outbuildings - nothing there. Gardens have been untended for approx 3 months. There is no food, animals or fuel for fires in the outbuildings.

We enter the manor through an unlocked back door and start searching. Again - no food, also no knives or utensils in the kitchen or dining room - also no paintings or religious symbols on the walls.

After checking the ground floor, we head upstairs. Here there are garret rooms for the monks, two guest rooms, and an admin office. And there are dead bodies in the beds - we identify 11 monks, one guest and the head of the order in the admin office. All appear to have gone to sleep and not woken up. There is no signs of decay or wounds on the bodies. Saurus casts Speak to Dead on the guest, and a few questions reveal that he is the factor we have been looking for - however the ledgers that we are looking for are not here. Some more questions reveal that he left the ledgers with a ship's captain in Port Artz - the ship used by our merchant employer. Oops - we should have looked there before we left the city. After a few more attempts - Saurus gets Speak to Dead to work on one of the monks. Questioning reveals they all died about 3 weeks ago - 3 days after the factor arrived. We also asked about the body in the grave, and worked out that he was probably a monk of a similar religious order to this one. Also - there were religious symbols and paintings on the walls when they died.

We decide to head back to Port Artz to look for the ship. Only thing of note on the trip back is large spider web on the tree by the crossroads - it wasn't there when we came through a few hours ago. I try to DA the spider and fail, so we decide to leave it alone. When we reach Port Artz, we realise the haze over the city is gone - it now shows the picturesque effect like the countryside. It's about an hour before sunset, so we decide to head to the mage tower to stay the night. However when we reach the tower, we find it is now total encased with ice - and so are the steps leading up to it - they are unclimbable. Rowan experiments with the ice and finds that it is bound to another ice mage. We are just debating what to do next when someone says 'Who are you' behind us. We turn around, and find a patrol from the town militia - a sergeant and 4 soldiers. They politely invite us to the barracks to talk to the captain. Not wanting trouble, we follow them back to the barracks. It looks very military - polished wooden stockade etc, but there doesn't seem to be enough people.

### Session 7 - Me (Roderigo) again

#### Day 22

Breakfast is provided by the militia. There is a blizzard outside until about 9.00 a.m. when the wind picks up. We decide to walk to Rhitzsump. & the militia have told us how to get there. The land is mostly plains probably used for farming but looks bleak and has all gone to tundra. The wind be damned cold but do not impede our progress.

By lunchtime we come across the gravesite. It was probably a knight / holy man of some sorts probably an Urielite at the crossroad. The grave is not covered in frost. Saurus, who no longer is a lizard man, decides it would be nice to have a chat with the dead and it is revealed that:

*He died not of natural causes. He was not killed. He knew he was going to die. He scarified himself. **THERE IS TREASURE IN HIS GRAVE!!!!***

Damn it all that's what we are there for. I drop weapons & start digging. The knight he surely is dead and not needeth what lieth below. Others in the party, particularly Ashlon the polite, look down their noses at my industrious actions.

*He tried to stop the demons & did not succeed. His actions were part of a ritual. The monastery knew of him. He is from this country. He did not pass through the barrier. He knew of the ritual before the weather came. The grave is not consecrated. The effect is coming from the NW - Maltain? If the loot is removed....."*

A strange guilt affects me & I decide to stop the digging. For those of you reading this true account & be disinclined to guilt but love loot particularly that which can be safely and easily obtained - contact Roderigo at the guild & for a fee, again I shall show you a genuine sure-fire map directing you too treasure of tremendous value..

We set off and come across another burnt inn. It has been chopped a bit by axes. The fire was within the month. We keep walking. Again there is 1" to 2" of snow everywhere. By mid afternoon we came across bear tracks that be fresh but heading south & are about 3 hours old. The tracks are much bigger than those of the polar bear we slew.

By 4.30 p.m. we come across another burnt out inn which we seek shelter in. Ravenfrost the exceedingly useful, binds snow to create better shelter.

#### Day 23

The next day it is still. Star dreamer DA's the nature of the entity calling this effect /. He gets the answer of "cease or Stop". It takes will power to just keep walking but is not that cold. There is no air movement whatsoever. We come across another building, two story Inn made of stone with everything taken including furniture and shutters. We kept walking and discover three to four other houses in a similar condition. We shelter the night in a partially destroyed building as it gets to about 4-5 p.m. Again Ravenfrost creates further shelter by patching up the house with ice.

#### Day 24

The next day we get moving. By about 9.30 it seems there is a ripple effect that distorts what we see. We notice spiders everywhere. The effect is DA'd & it is determined that it comes from "Our Lady of the Icy Paint Brush."

By about 4pm again we shelter in a building in a hamlet on the edge of a swamp. There are 4- 5 building in various states of disrepair. All decorations are missing. The hearth and oven are intact. Ravenfrost makes shelter. Night passes. We dream but do not remember.

#### Day 25

It is hazy this day. A DA spell is done and it reveals that the nature of the entity causing the effect is 'Obviscate or Inveigle" After another hour of travel we come across the outskirts of a city. It is built upon "islands" within a swamp. Everywhere in the trees are Ravens. These are DA'd for the nature of the entity causing this effect. The answer is the same as for the day's weather. We come across city walls. The road leads to a gate which is ajar. Inside the town of Rhitzsump it is very quiet with an inch of snow. On every roof there are perched many ravens. We head inwards looking for the sigil of our contact, the Factor. It is about half the size of Port Artz with the town arrayed in a series of rings. Outermost are services, then residences markets, essential service, government, and Town Square. The better part of town is upstream of the river. The doors and shutters of buildings are gone. Windows have been broken.

We smell a strong odour of fish coming from part of town. Following our noses we end up in a small fishing harbour & we can tell where the smell is coming from - a large building which does not appear to have any ravens on it. Smoke comes from the chimneys. This building unlike all the others has no shutters although they do not all match.

Stardreamer hails whoever is inside. After a minute a vocie enquires who we are in course common. They are told we are from the guild in Seagate & we are told to go around the back of the building. A dwarf appears His name is Master Garth. He and 7 other live here off the fish that have frozen. They have scared off the birds. The militia lasted a while but are gone. There are ravens here - with more on the Hazy day. We are told that the Factor has gone for Port Artz. We are give direction for the Factor's house

We swap fish for bear meat & are fed with fish soup.

He has identified 5 types of weather associates with 5 types of animals:

Blizzard - white bear.

Wind - wolves

Pretty- spiders  
Hazy - ravens  
Apathy - no animals.

Different sorts of ice marks can appear on your body. Ice will protect from the effects. We are the third group to come through. There were three Michaeline knights whom attempted to take their food & a group of seamen. Both were scared off.

We investigate the factor's house. No paper work has been left. We then head to the guardhouse on the other side of town. There is no sign of anyone here now although apparently two people have been there recently. We stay the night

#### Day 26

In the morning the weather changes to blizzard. We stay indoors and train. The snow is falling very heavily.

#### Day 27

By 9 am the weather has abated. It is apathy. In spite of this we elect to head for Rhitzdorff. By 4 p.m. we shelter in an old store in a swamp. In the trees there are Ravens but not as much as in Rhitzsump. The building we are in is relatively intact with some tables etc. Apparently it was an inn and has had spells of magical preservation cast on some of the furniture.

#### Session 8

In the Inn the effects of cold are lessened. We find a cool store which works by hanging a box into the marsh. It is has frozen so Ravenfrost with her spells tells the ice to push it up for us. Inside is a spell scroll that is magically trapped & needs an air spell to dissipate.

#### Day. 28

We wake up feeling very refreshed from our time in the Inn. Haze descends by about 9.00 a.m. We soon come across Rhitzdorf which is a town at the end of the swamp with a stone bridge across to it. There is a guardhouse with no guard in it - (I wish it was always so.) The settlement can be seen at the other end of the bridge. In the middle is a guardhouse and what is probably a toll both - at least we get across free, 'cos there aint no one inside. At the other end is what some in our party describe as a full bailey - although I reckon it looks like a damned big castle with a big gate. It don't look like no one is home so I toss up a grapnel & clamber up.. and let everyone in. The town looks like the others. There are a few ravens about. We eventually locate the Factor's office and let ourselves in. Everything be well ordered and it is clear that they have departed. In the inner office a safe is located a safe which upon a little special jigging applied in the right place by myself and Saurus, reveals a small box which contains a set of keys and a small dried flower which has a spell cast to retain it's potency. We locate the Factor's diary & he says he be gone to the capital.

We head for Regelhiem following a paved road that goes by the river. It only takes about three hours until we hit a gatehouse that looks the same as Rhitzdorff.

MDK displaying an unusual degree of politeness for a dwarf knocks on the gate (with his hand only) which causes a terrible screeching and yowling to commence. We see two shadowy figures atop the gatehouse. One is human sized and the other be littler tho' it don't look like it be a relative to your truly or even MDK cos' the damned thing (actually both) have great shadowy black wings. There is a swirling haze around em, they swoop down like dwarves discovering free ale at a wake & the battle is on. And it be truly a grim one to the near death. The littler one hovers and throws spells everywhere, while the big one land and sets to us ferocious like with fearsome weapons, near dispatching half our party. Mirra, Robert & Ravenfrost all shudder before our foes terrible blows. Ashlon sees to his herbs & healing to patch up the fallen. The hoverer explodes after being

peppered with the cunning arrows of Stardreamer. Eventually in a desperate brave act MDK flings himself direct on the blade of the big creature & those standing - I & Saurus overbear. Ravenfrost shaken & stripped (magically) of her armour assists, but not before her damned hound turneth bad (?) & bites the hand that feedeth (i.e. Ravenfrost's hand).

As our foe falleth slain, lo & behold, a Six foot sized raven apeareth. Puppy suddenly changes back to our side. Holy water, which I fling has no effect other than spilling on the ground, 'tho I note Ravenfrost's hound is careful not to step in it... . It be an "Avatar" exclaim Stardreamer. (Hmmm , I thought you only found those near butchers & it don't look like one of them) Magic weapons leave mere coloured streaks of light without harming the giant raven. Puppy is unbothered by all this. The raven speaks in a deep voice - like the orc bouncers in the less better bars & tells us that our purpose would be best served by going straight to the capital.

We climb up onto the gate & find an amulet with a gold chain and a golden snowflake on it. A DA spell reveals the purpose is to give protection of ice armour. We hole up for the night & try to heal up & rest..

### Day 29

We've been barricaded up in the gatehouse. Morning comes and after some serious debate over the reliability of Ravenfrost's hound, it is time to head to Flugelhiem, but we will first check out the city. No bodies are found. No metal equipment is found. There are subtle differences from the last towns. Here about one in three houses has open doors and windows. Three are no signs of life.

By 10.00 am, haze lifts and it is the pretty effect. We find the factors house in the mercantile district. The main door is open and ice has covered everything. Inside there is a damned big cobweb - about 13 feet tall and fifteen feet wide. The strands are 6 feet apart. I invisible myself and sneak up & give the lock to the office (they all have similar floor plans) a good old jiggle with my special tools. There is a lot of stuff up there, including a hidden safe. No diaries or ledgers are found. There are books that aint to relevant. Uh oh, Stardreamer notices an invisible creature in the corner of the room in a web - it is an invisible giant spider! It aint moving and we aint trying to disturb it...let sleeping spiders lie, I say

In the safe, which again is given an artful jiggle by myself and Saurus, there are some personal diaries which say they headed for Flugelhiem about 8 weeks ago and expect to be back in there. There is no record of troubles except it is unseasonably cold. Saurus finds a secret drawer in a desk with some keys in it. We leave a note saying "Beware of Giant Spiders" and leave.

The road to Flugelhiem is marked but not paved. After three hours we notice a knocked down and half destroy building. AT 2.30 we see a group of 5 figures heading from Northwest to South East, or so the Rangers say. Cos of the distortion effect, we cant see how far away they are. They have large wings that Stardreamer in his expert opinion thinks are spells from his college. At the end of the day, 5 p.m. we come across a half busted in which we shelter in.

### Day 30

It is the Chill effect. At lunchtime we come across a cross roads and signposts. South is Flugelhiem. North is Maracksville and Terrenhiem. There is a corpse of a wolf hanging from the sign and an Inn up ahead with smoke coming from the chimney. The wolf is the same as the ones we killed on the ice & is disembowelled. I go invisible and flank around. Using my special ring, I listen in the building. There is whistling and the noises of cooking going on. There seems to be only one person.

The rest of the party hails the Inn. After a minute the door opens and large man comes out. We tell him we are from the guild. He says he is Dirk the In keeper. He has survived the troubles due to his storm cellar and "Bertha", a damnedly enormous arbalest that MDK figures that it would be

too hard even for him to draw. There is food and beer - ye hah!! The Inn has apparently been witch blessed and Dirk has owned it 10 years. He is not happy to tell us where he is from - ahah! A man with a past!!!

He tell us that a few days ago there was a weird group come by. They had no armour or weapons or clothes for the cold. Their horses were light. They said very little, went to bed early and only had a little beer - (they sounded a damned miserable bunch & if it weren't for the unusual weather I'd reckon them for a librarians and coach spotters convention.... )There have been groups flying by every now and then.

We stay the night, after eating and drinking ale. The ale must be stronger than we thought because I find myself speculating out loud, less than discrete - like (while he be in the room sitting at our table) that Dirk might be a cannibal how has lived off travellers to survive the winter... I can't blame him, it is what I would do in his boots and I be sure that others in our party - like Saurus and maybe Robert the Caledonian would concur with.... Dirk says not a thing, but he knoweth that I (perception 7) may be on to him...or may be he just thinketh it a good idea that he never thought of.... anyway I will lock my door tonight and put an extra strong wedge underneath it.

While we drink, I sneak and have a look at Dirk in the kitchen. He be damned quick with a knife and does not want to let anyone in. Hmm... maybe he has a secret like some treasure stolen from dead travellers.... But Dirk looks too strong to find out...so I decide to leave it for another day..

#### Day 31.

We head off - increasingly reluctantly as it turns into an apathy day. He asks for supplies to be sent to him when we get to Flugelhiem. As we leave we notice a human shaped person with long hair framed in the window upstairs - it aint Dirk....I guess we'll never know.

We shelter the night in a half pulled down Inn. We shelter the night there

#### Day 32

A blizzard sets in & so do we. Some of us train. Others sleep.

#### Day 33

It is a chill day. After an hour we come to a big bridge over garage river gorge. There is less snow on the bridge. Across the other side there is paved road with less snow. We pass a number of very nice looking estates with various sigils and signes on them suggesting that they are laden with loot, and according to our brief from Goodman Carl, as long as we do not get busted it may as well be ours. We get into Flugelhiem city. It is very higgledy-piggledy with lots of alleyways and narrow streets. Stardreamer our military scientist suggests it is designed to be defended by infantry.

It is a river delta city. There are 10 ships in the Harbour. Six are crushed and are piles of rubble. Ravenfrost feels a some positive mana. The rest of us who are mages feel there is something different. Stardreamer and Mirra think it might be something good. Over everything in the city is a sheen of ice.

Some doors are open. Where this is the case there is ice all over the inside. The bigger the object the thicker the ice. We find the Factors building. The door is open and ice is everywhere - damned slippery. The room has been packed up. There are still some supplies around. We eventually get into the office and manage to open the sae. There are personal diaries inside - last entry - "removed records to boats"

We go to the boats. It was low tide when it iced over. The ships are trapped in ice. MDK checks out the Harbourmasters office to identify the ships through the name of the pilot. We board the "Saucy Stack" and discover inside an old sea chest there is a Flag of Goodman Carls trading Cartel

and also 4 sets of ledgers. It looks like mission mostly accomplished, but now, how the hell do we get home!?!?!? We stay the night in an icehouse on the dock...

#### Session 9

We search the other boats. It looks like the valuables have all been removed although Ashlon discovers a magic ring that has some fire spells in it.

We decide the only way home is to walk. Damn!!

We see a person walking up on the docks as we search the ships. He is a human wearing some mighty flash robes. Suspecting that he be a powerful mage of some sort I refrain from suggesting that we roll him and steal his possessions. He be Malcan, - Assistant Wizard to the King of Flugelhiem and offers us lunch and hints that he might be able to get us home!! (This is even after we tell him that we are from the guild) He has been living in the palace. As he walks toward the palace, we notice that he snow and ice seems to be repelled from him. Ravenfrost say it be like a "snow plow" ( why any one would try to grow things in snow beats me -= but I swear that is what she said -Snow plow")

He tells us that all of the cities were effected differently. Here it is affected by ice. Everything is covered by ice. The ice on the palace walls is up to 12 inches thick. The statues in the courtyard are not covered in ice. Malcan tells us that that is because he moves them around.

He offers the grog of our choice. He wants us tho get a word to the guild for a strong(er) party to help him on a mission to take on pacted adepts to 5 different demons. He will pay us a small magic item each for sending the message and send us through some special portal back to Seagate. The employer will be Malcan, representative of the King and Queen and he is a binder magician. There will be a promissory note that binds him by a reverse geas which will compel him to pay...The food is brought to us by gollums. He will pay one week's service as a binder and about 10,000 sp per person and looting rights against any badsters... which I have always was a very subjective matter...

Five ice demons have caused the problems. They have locked down the country with magic and it looks like they were planning it for some time. Their names are not known. The fifth animal associated with the apathy day is a snake. He believes the centre of operations for the demons is the Moon Lake area. He only escaped as he was out of the country when this issue cam into being. There could be some association with the fact that Flugelhiem became unknown several years ago. The party will have to transport them selves to where he is. He will try to arrange some special amulets to protect form the effects of the demons weather for the next party.

He Da's our ice marks, which have formed on our bodies, and says that they are associated with the various weather effects & will make the respective demons more powerful against us when we are marked. We can remove it by a get rid of curse spell.

The amulet we found has rank 4 ice armour on it. The ring has charges of dragon flames. We stay the night as he casts some spells . The minor magic items are given to us. We stay the night full of food and in comfortable conditions

#### Day 34

A portal is set up by a gollum spellcaster. We are portaled home to about 15 miles from Seagate landing in a field. A nearby peasant tells us where to go, but refuses to sell me any of his children when I felt sorry for him being a peasant & even though I offered him a fair rate. Peasant scum!!

What a relief. It feels unseasonably warmer and our special garments for the cold weather seem uncomfortable as we head back to what has become a second home to many of our ilk. Ahhh!!! At last - Back to city life, to divide the spoils, to feast in the taverns, tell true tales & sign up for

another sortie into the unknown. But to all ye guild members , if ye have sat across the tavern table from me or anyone from this adventurers party, have heard our tale and contemplate taking up the offer of adventure to be posted by Malcan the binder mage, think again carefully. And as ye sip your ale or rum (if ye be a sailor) & are thinking of all that loot stuffed in your backpack & are imagining a demon worshipper's innards sliding down the length of your blade & his head to be later mounted tastefully pride of place on your living room wall with a gold apple affixed between his jaws, just remember one thing - **IT WAS COLDER THAN A SNOWMANS CODPIECE!!!**

**THE End** . . . . For now