

Die Wintergarten

Elan Morin Tedronai
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A group of Guild Adventurers went into the far north in an attempt to force winter back from taking over the world.

1. Introduction

Ishamael - A travelling musician with pretension to being a fighter one day. In reality a Dark Celestial.

Motley - The giant.

Lath - Loony lath the air head bimbo.

Liessa - A female Mind Mage and party leader.

Nycto - A Dark Celestial of little talent.

Berik - A witch who should have never emerged from the hedge.

S'Korcha - An orc Fire Mage and front line fighter.

Sabbath - Another orc Fire Mage. A piece of shit, really.

Sullivan - A human Illusionist, new to the Guild.

2. Astrological Readings

Free the Day's black eye, unblinking, If you can find it unerring, 'Neath a river of glass, unsinking, Down from the peaks, uncaring.
Try dancing on a wintersong, Her heart knows not right or wrong, Ever lonely for so long.

Would that time might bring, Into spring and summerlight, Nights when she would sing, The songs of ice and winterblight, Evenings of mortal chillness, Reading the final stars, Go, I now into that quiet illness, Rage spent, bearing despairs scars. All who enter conflicts gate, Victory in the wings doth wait, Even then, thou mayst be too late.

One who gave his heart To the Face in the Frost He who betrayed his art And thus his name was lost

Snowflake upon the peak, Aid in ice you seek, Snowflake upon the hill, Help you when you're ill, All who smite; bite, bite, bite.

First let 'er in, The verse is the one to read, If you would find the truth, And sow the sun's bright seed.

3. Diary

3.1 January 3, 1995 AP

Flew north on a bound cloud with Ice Blade, an Air Mage cloud giant who is hiring us, to his flying castle, which this year has been unable to leave because it has ice half way up the walls. We left at midnight and arrive at about four hours after sundown. It was absolutely freezing with not summer beaches in sight. A group of humans were also staying at the castle, pushed out of their villages by the ice sheet. Ice Blade called their leader useless

but said that the window Quick (an old woman Mind Mage) knows all the gossip.

We meet Clang the smith (a fire giant), Jurgel (an earth giant) and Grant, a faggot of a giant. Jurgel gives us 13 pieces of weybread and Ice Blade says there has been trouble with frost giants lately. In the forge Kokapeck visits and tells us the Face in the Frost is not Kalera, who is hanging around the Granite King. Kokapeck also gives us all Protection from Magical Fire.

First let her in, The verse is the one to read, If you would find the truth,
And sow the sun's bright seed.

Lath and Liessa search the library for information about the area. Liessa then talks to the old woman Mind Mage, the window Quick.

Icemage - Talks about a weather mage of unknown name who was seduced by the Face in the Frost, and turn to Ice. He then seduced the frost giants to the dark side. If his name is known it can be used against him.

Snowsnake - Small furry like critters about 2' long.

Snowflake - Fair folk.

Wintergrave - The place where winter goes to die each year.

Frost giants - Don't like cloud giants.

3.2 January 4, 1995 AP

Ice Blade binds a cloud for us to travel on, lasting 55 hours. Because there was only four hours of daylight a day we camped about three hours after noon. During the night we were attacked by two wolves and a frost giant. After a short fight the wolves were killed and the giant surrendered.

From the giant we got the following information:

Mr Ice has a tower near the Wintergrave and rides around on a 15' critter.

A pack of wolves, some 7000 in number, exist somewhere.

The giant has seen the Face on the Frost as a reflection of a reflection, from the tower.

Mr Ice has few Adepts, some with connections to Illusion and Binding.

The extended winter is caused by the Call Winter Ritual.

We collect a wand from the giant which increases damage and initiative with lightning bolt and may cause the lightning to fork.

3.3 January 5, 1995 AP

While flying north east on the cloud towards the Wintergrave we encounter a Storm Wolf dragging the body of a centaur, heading south. The wolf says they were attacked by a frost giant who killed the centaur and he was taking the body to where there is wood so build a tower so the centaur's spirit can be taken by the wind. The centaur, called Wind in her mane, was looking for her mate, Sky striker, who had come up here 15 years before.

When her spirit leaves, after we had built a small wooden tower, we were harassed by the spirits of winter. Three Maidens of Winter come to us in the forms of a young woman in mist, a black river and a cloud.

From the woman in the mist:

Song killing and stalking From Winter's Keep I came News of the ice I bring
If you can find my name Else in my arms embracing Your quiet death ensuring
Sighless in life effacing Noiseless chains enduring

Silence says there is a pagan graveyard where many adventurers had died and if we are to avoid their fate then we should avoid the bridge of ice.

The darkness cried:

I dance across the waste Chill and yet aflame Of gall and bile I taste And
tern is in my name Find it and you pass my test Fail this and your bones I'll
keep Bringing icy touch to every rest Never easing, slaying sleep

Bitterness says winter is unhappy about being kept beyond its time and we must stop the Call Winter ritual.

And the cloud hollowed:

Through mortal realms I wander Haunting tales of gloom The coin of hope I
squander Spreading frozen doom. Find my name most holy Or brave the Well of
Time Dying every slowly Pining away in rhyme.

Despair tells Motley about the Winter rose, which are flowers. While they are hard to keep alive, if shredded they create the winter midnight effect for two minutes. Their thorns are poisonous, called the Venom of Fatal Beauty.

A while later we camp and see a phoenix coming towards us. I was in fact a Molecular rearranged Mind Mage troll, who brutally crippled Motley before the party killed it.

From the troll we managed to get a belt which gives +6 PS for encumbrance and a vandrace which double the duration of the Force Shield spells and enables the Adept to replace WP for PS while the spell is in effect.

A bearwolf harassed us for a while but Lath put down a windstorm to confuse it. A while later Motley calls his Master. An orchestra of muso demons turns up and plays deathly great music. Motley's master heals him and Liessa shows an interest in becoming packed.

3.4 January 6, 1995 AP

The bearwolf attacks again but gets controlled. We fly on using the cloud, with the bear as a wind break. After a while we see an area, some how reflected in the clouds, which looks like the ice had been hit with a giant mattock. We kill the bear and skin it before flying on towards the broken area, and land on an ice ridge. The ridge is a spine of ice radiating from the center, somewhere north. Between the spines is a thin layer of ice which covers deep valleys. If the ice is broken a strong wind is created, sucking the unfortunate person far down into the valley.

On the ridge we meet a long lived sentient snowflake called Sasha and spend a very cold night there.

3.5 January 7, 1995 AP

Fly north up the ice ridge. Motley eviscerates himself while trying to land.

3.6 January 8, 1995 AP

Fly north again. This time, before we land, Lath breaks the ice layer between our spine and the next out up using Windstorm. We then waited until the pressures equalised and the strong winds abated before landing.

3.7 January 9, 1995 AP

During the early morning we were attacked by two frost giants. We wind walk one and parley with the other. He talks, saying is has met someone who has met the Ice Mage. The Ice Mage was described as a pale, long dark haired human.

Shortstraw, the frost giant's leader, arrives in a patch of darkness. Says that the Adventure's graveyard is in the Wintergarden, south of here as the start of the valley, between the Fangs of Ice, two mountains at the start of each spine. The Wintergrave is to the north and is surrounded by a wall of thorns which is fatal to touch. Apparently the window Quick has been there. The Ice Mage's tower is to the south of the Wintergrave. Also, an ice dragon is suppose to be around, working for the Ice Mage.

Shortstraw takes us down below the ice layer into the valley. We head down til we encounter another ice layer, about two miles below the roof level, which we break through. Within the ice layer runs a volcanic mud and lava flow which creates its own ecosystem. There are apperently various creatures down there, including cold drakes, which are not sentient. We fly south with Shortstraw towards the Wintergarden.

3.8 January 10, 1995 AP

At the end of day, about four hours after noon, we each the Wintergarden. It is situated on a bowl of ice, sitting in a lake of mud. It is about one mile in diameter and there is a narrow bridge to it. The steam coming off the lake is narcotic and hence dangerous to cross. We fly across with Vapour Breathing on and land on in the garden.

The garden has a vast variety of plants but no animals. We find some bodies, all of them extremely beautiful. The area is rich in mana. After investigation find that the bodies died due the Venom of Fatal Beauty, which if poisoned, increases a person's PB by one every five minutes until they reach racial maximum, where upon they fall down the die.

We leave the island and camp some distance away. Berik managed to become infected with Scarlet fever, Yellow fever and Black Plague. Liessa contracted Scarlet fever from him. I cured Berik using a White Goddess healing potion but Liessa was unable to cure herself.

3.9 January 11, 1995 AP

Liessa cures her disease and Berik divinates the loot from the bodies. The rest of us train except S'Korcha, who wallowed in the hot mud all day.

Shortsword, which entraps ``The Lark''.

Red hard leather armour, which if 2500 EP is initially spent, gives the wearer +3 EN (while it is worn).

Blank map which gives a Ranger +1 Rank for calculating base chances.

Winter rose which looks wooden and has three charges nullify the effects of Dehydration.

Winter rose which looks wooden and has three charges nullify the effects of Incinerate.

Winter rose which looks wooden and has three charges nullify the effects of Sinking Doom.

Winter rose which looks wooden and has three charges nullify the effects of Frozen Doom.

Winter rose which looks wooden and has three charges nullify the effects of Whitefire.

Winter rose which looks wooden and has three charges nullify the effects of Whirlwind Vortex.

Nine scrolls of Rank 10 Hellfire (68%)

Scroll with two charges of Mind Empathy (Rank 17, 105%) and two charges of Mind Healing (Rank 17, 115%).

The party decides to make a treasure split at that time.

07	Ishamael	Protection from Whitefire
14	Lath	Leather armour, Wand
18	Berik	Belt (first in line for next item)
26	S'Korcha	Map, Protection from Incinerate
62	Sullivan	Protection from Frozen Doom, Shortsword
71	Motley	Protection from Sinking Doom, Protection from Whirlwind Vortex
83	Liessa	Vanbrace, Protection from Dehydration
00	Nycto	Not present at the time

3.10 January 12, 1995 AP

We Windwalk up the valley to a large, cooler, marshy area, about one and half miles wild. We Windwalk again. Everybody except Liessa gets misdirected up a cul-de-sac and attacked by sabre tooth tigers. We defeat the tigers and skin them. Lath discovers we are in the cul-de-sac so we fly out and back up the correct tunnel.

When we find Liessa we are attacked by an ice demon, but because we were forewarned via a limited precognition from a crystal of vision it does not get to ambush us. Lath claims it is called Grathog. The party flees rather than fights and we continue north.

After flying on for a while we see some things on Starwings. They turned out to be a couple of orcs, one of them a Shadow Celestial. We manage to kill one of them but the Shadow mage Shadow Walked away.

3.11 January 13, 1995 AP

In the morning we Wind Walk north and in the process loose Berik and Sullivan. Lath finds them in a river formed from a fallen star. The broken star enhanced fire damage to excessive amounts when used in quantity. After returning Berik Asks the Future from his semi-sentient tarot cards.

This road is crossed And may pass wide
The flower that's lost may the answer hide.

Two eyes hath the sky
One for day, one for night
The one you need, by and by
The day's eye, fair and bright.

At this point we let Sabbath out of the bag and fly north until we enter a large bulge in the tunnel, about a mile wide, its centre good soil covered by ice. Lath talks to the Winds and discovered that at the Wintergrave there is an air elemental trapped under rock at the centre of the face in the ice. The hair of the elemental is the wall of thorns. To free it spring must come, which can only happen with the death of the Lark. At this time the Lark is not born but will be with the death of an innocent.

Soon after we are attacked by six winter wolves and Nycto gets smeared all over the ground from a TK Rage. Where he died a pool of darkness appeared and Berik planted the daisies there. he daisies quickly grew and dropped black petals over the ground, heating the area up.

We quickly fled the area and headed north. Soon after we discovered the area was spewing out an army of darkness consisting of skeletons made of shadow. The army moved out in all directions in waves so we continued to fly north, landing of ledges at the edge of tunnel.

3.12 January 14, 1995 AP

We continued heading north for the day, well south of the front of the army.

3.13 January 15, 1995 AP

We flew off at midnight to be attacked by a spectre riding a cold drake. After killing the drake the spectre dropped out the sky and we fled north.

We continue on and about seven hours after midnight we land. After an hour we discover three ice devils about to attack so we quickly flee to another place to rest. During the time of travel we learn via Lath that the air elemental is held down by two earth elements. Upon asking the night's sky I get the following:

To find the lark
Find the bightness in the dark.

To find the tower
Search the lip of winter's bower.

3.14 January 16, 1995 AP

About half an hour before dawn we are attacked by a spectre encased in an eighty foot tall earth elemental. Using the stardust Lath managed to blow the elemental to pieces.

After a vicious fight we managed to defeat the spectre and get it's spectral armour. Sullivan cuts himself on the shortshort (which is in fact twin to a choas blade) and died irresurectably.

Dawn finally appears and the Lark is born. We find a body and it turns out to be a reincarnation of Sullivan. We discover through divination that the air elemental was not summoned but was charmed.

We decided to blow a hole through the hedge (the air elemental's hair) and after doing so are attacked by the other earth elemental. The elemental got two swipes at me and I was dead.

After being resurrected by hidden means I found the earth elemental had been destroyed by Lath. The air elemental tells us Mr Ice had an E&E centaur called Victor which charmed him. It then takes back to the healing pools before returning us to the Wintergrave, some miles north of where the elemental was held down. We pass by the tower, which is eight miles south of the Wintergrave. At the time it was been attacked by Bitterness, Silence and Despair.

According to the elemental and the Lark, the Lark and winter fight it out at the Wintergrave and both die in the process, enabling spring to come along. From what we can deduce, Mr Ice wants to kill the Lark before it can kill winter, so that winter cannot die. Mr Ice has assorted followers, including the following below.

- Regiment of goblins.
- Two dozen frost giants.
- Two ice drakes.
- Victor, the E&E centaur.
- Himself.

He had an earth mage who died some 130 years ago. Mr Ice also cut a deal with some spectres so knows some celestial magics.

We head north. Later Mr Ice turns up a ice ship surrounding a bound cloud. After a vicious fight in which Sabbath died, we defeated Otha (Mr Ice) and his minions.

Lath gets cursed with 100 years sleep but after some tricky (down right stupid really) negotiations with a demon, she is awoken and we fly back to the castle.

The castle is besieged by the army of darkness so we use up the remaining star dust to destroy them and break up the ice surrounding the castle.

3.15 January 23, 1995 AP

Get back to Seagate.