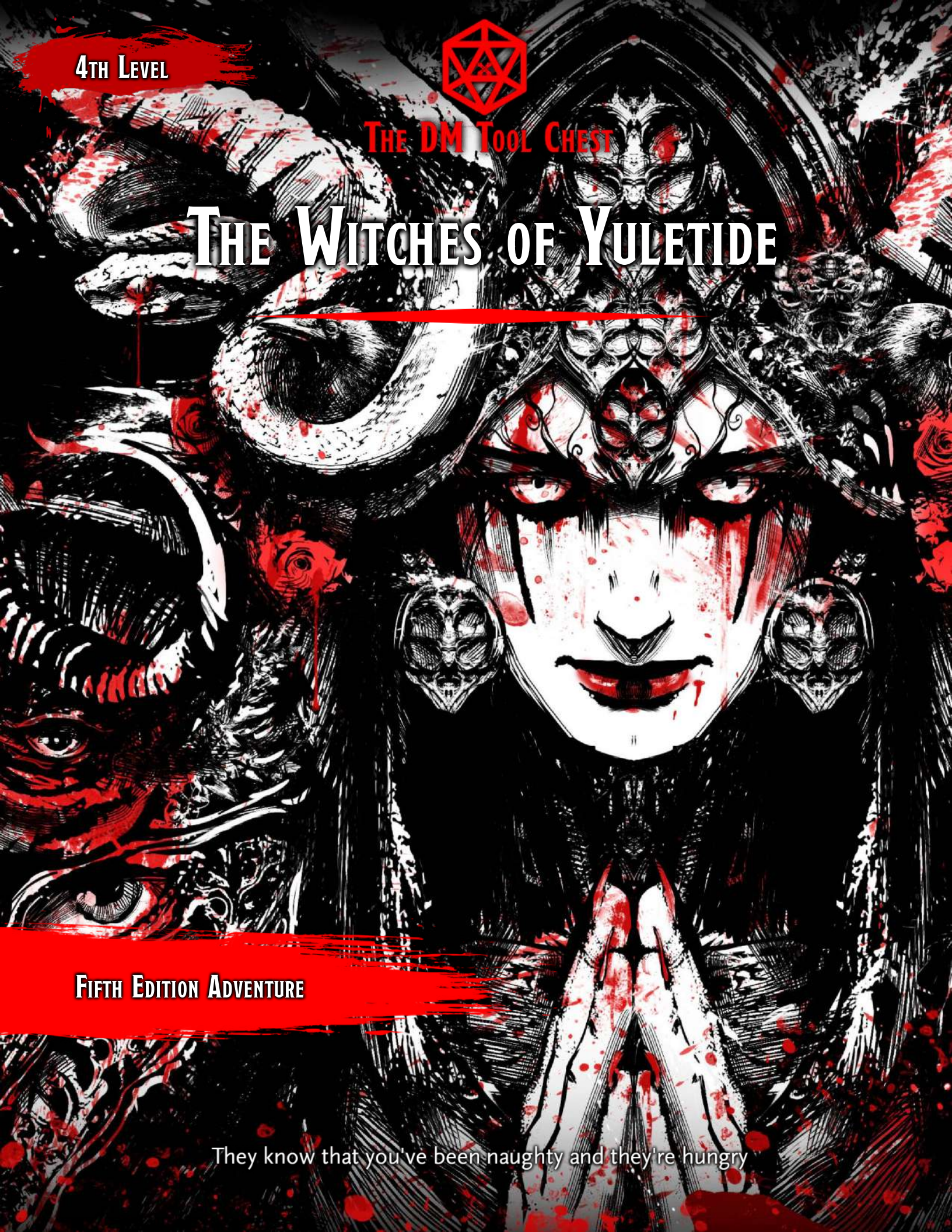
4th Level

The DM Tool Chest

The Witches of Yuletide



Fifth Edition Adventure

They know that you've been naughty and they're hungry

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About this Adventure

This is a "fun-shot" adventure that introduces the adventurers to a couple of classic Icelandic yuletide monsters and gives them a chance to rescue a Santa-like character from their clutches. It is designed to fit into any campaign setting or even just to be played by itself!

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Credits

This adventure module was created with the help of all of these talented people:

Production & Design: The DM Tool Chest
Cover Illustration: Dreamstime
Maps: TJ Phoenix, Forgotten Adventures
Interior Illustrations: Dreamstime

Thank You! To all of the awesome patrons who supported this work!

Running This Adventure

In order to run this adventure, you will need the Fifth Edition core rulebooks.

> Boxed text like this present descriptions meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. These are just prompts and may be used or not at the DM's discretion.

In this adventure you will come across references that point to information that is presented outside of this module.

Magic Items, Spells, and *Equipment* will be italicized and will be found described in either the core DM guidebook or the core player's rulebook.

Monster names will be in bold and the appropriate stat block will be found in the core fifth edition monster guidebook if not already presented in an attached Appendix.

Abbreviations

Common abbreviations used in this adventure:

pp - Platinum Piece(s)	LG Lawful good
gp - Gold Piece(s)	CG Chaotic good
ep - Electrum Piece(s)	NG Neutral good
sp - Silver Piece(s)	LN Lawful neutral
cp - Copper Piece(s)	N Neutral
NPC - Nonplayer Character	CN Chaotic neutral
DC - Difficulty Class	LE Lawful evil
AC - Armor Class	NE Neutral evil
xp - Experience Points	CE - Chaotic evil
hp - Hit Points	



Adventure Primer

The Witches of Yuletide is an adventure made for a party of **three to five adventurers of 3rd to 5th level**; it's optimized for **four adventurers with an average party level (APL) of 4**. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to almost reach level 5. The renowned toymaker Kristof Klaus and his retinue of elven apprentices are being held captive by the witches Gryla the Giantess and her neighbor, Mother Perchta, who plan on making Yuletide meals of them. This adventure is designed to easily fit into any campaign setting that has a snowy forest during winter solstice. The adventurers should be prepared for a tough battle with each of the witches.

Background

A renowned dwarven toymaker, Kristof Klaus, and his elven apprentices are known throughout the local area for giving gifts to village children during Yuletide. Their distinctive red wagons travel the roadways as they sing holiday songs and bring cheer to every village they ride through.

This year while traveling to their last village, the cheerful troupe was beset upon by the wicked giantess Gryla and her wicked pet Yule Cat. Dragging them to her cavern home, she gifted Kristof to her neighbor, a witch named Mother Perchta who has a penchant for luring children into her cave and turning them into her zombie pets. They intend to make meals out of their fresh new captives.

About Kristof

Kristof is a renowned toymaker who lives in the village of North Paule and travels the area with his elven apprentices from village to village during Yuletide to give gifts to all the children.

The sight of his brightly colored wagons and the sound of the joyful singing of the elves has been a treat for many years.

Much stouter than the typical dwarf, Kristoff is known for his long white beard and his cheerful and boisterous nature. Famous in the region for the quality of his toys, Kristof is even better known among his dwarven brethren for his Yuletide Whiskey (see sidebar in Aftermath), a potent dwarven liquor whose recipe is known only to him.

Going against the typical dwarven attitude of distrust for elves, Kristoff purposefully takes orphan elven children under his tutelage and into his workshop. For reasons known only to him, he has made it his life's mission to give them a meaningful life and a chance at success that no one else was willing to give them.

Adventure Hooks

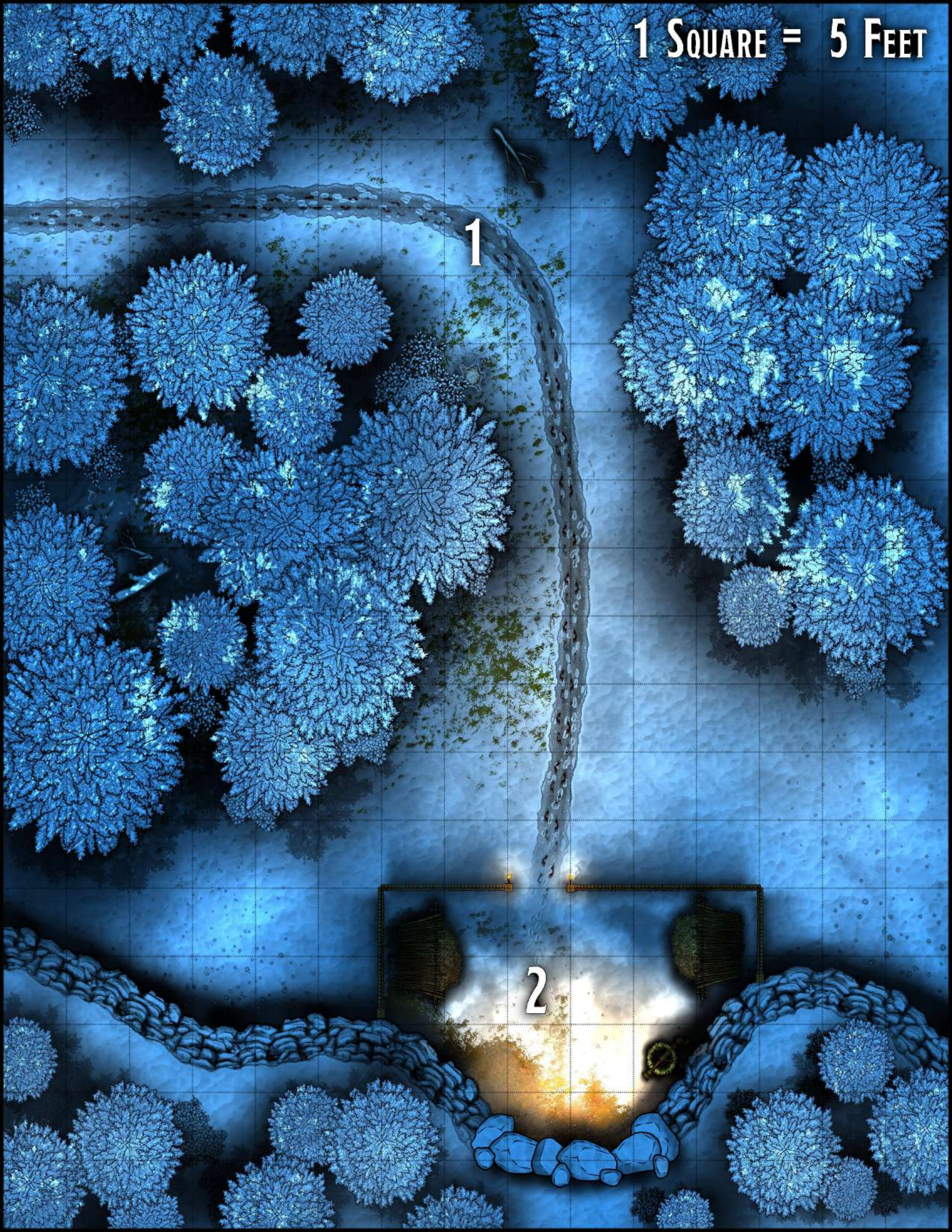
Here are a few ways to get your adventurers hooked:

A Bloody Wreck

While traveling the snowy roadways through the forest at dusk, the adventurers come across the bloody wreckage of a pair of brightly painted red wagons. Lying destroyed on the side of the road, there are drag marks leading deeper into the darkening woods. Bloody claw marks and footprints in the snow show a group of people headed down a path away from the wreckage.

The Missing Toymaker

Snow is falling on the quiet town of Downey the evening just before Yuletide and a young elf named Trinket, bleeding from wounds to his head and neck, bursts into the tavern in which the adventurers are enjoying a drink and meal. Frantically he tells the story of being attacked by monsters on the roadway north of town. They dragged his master and the other apprentices off and he barely escaped with his life.


1 Square = 5 Feet
1
2



The Concerned Brother

Markus, a prominent local dwarven merchant, is concerned about his missing brother. Kristof is a toymaker who travels the area giving gifts to the local children but he was scheduled to arrive back in town last night and has not arrived. With a brewing snowstorm about to hit, he's offering a small reward if the adventurers will check the roadway from Downey, the last village Kristoff was supposed to come from.

Common Features

Recommended Ambiance: Fantasy & World Music by the Fiechters - Dark Winter Music

Ceilings. The ceilings in the cave are filled with stalactites and range from 15 to 20 feet high.

Floors and Walls. The cave is well travelled and the floors are hard packed earth. The walls are rough and solid stone.

Lights. The forest is dimming with the oncoming night and visibility is low due to snowfall. The cave is well lit from torches along the walls.

The Yuletide Forest

After finding the site of the attack the adventurers find the wagons hidden in the underbrush off the side of the road. They are empty of goods but clear footprints and bloody claw marks lead away and into the forest.

Snow begins to fall on the evergreen trees of the forest and the setting sun casts long shadows, filling the spaces with ever-increasing darkness. The crunch of the snow underfoot is the only sound that can be heard other than the wind blowing in the treetops; the entire forest has gone deathly silent.

1 - Death From Above

With the increasing darkness, adventurers without the aid of additional light sources or darkvision have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Encounter: No New Clothes. The **Yule Cat** (see Appendix) is hiding in the trees above the path leading to the Cave Entrance and will gain surprise on those adventurers failing a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) Check.

2- Yule Cave Entrance

A break in the treeline opens into a small clearing at the base of a sheer rocky cliff. Ice has formed along the cliff face and giant icicles jut ominously over a cave entrance like fangs. Surrounding the entrance is a makeshift pen made of roughly hewn timber and rope. The sound of bleating goats can be heard coming from the pen.

Encounter: Gryla's Goats. There are four blood-crazed **giant goats** guarding the entrance of the cave. They remain calm and docile until the adventurers get within 5 feet of them at which point they will attack them in a frenzy. The teeth of these goats have been filed down to sharpened points and their eyes will glow red when they go crazy.

Trap: Icicle Tripwire. A tripwire is set across the cave's mouth and set to break the hanging icicles above and cause them to fall. The wire can be noticed with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. Triggering the trap causes the icicles to fall on anyone beneath them and a failed DC 15 Dexterity check will result in 2d8 bludgeoning damage with a successful check resulting in half damage.



The Witches Cave

The two witches Gryla and Perchta live as neighbors together in a cave hidden deep in the forest. They share the children and victims they capture, delighting in their mutual love of torture and despair.

3 - Gryla's Cave

Despite the wet and cold outside of the cave, the interior is surprisingly warm and dry. The change in temperature is obvious once crossing the threshold of the entrance. The living space is sparse with a large fur bed and roughly made wooden furniture. Shelves line the walls and are crammed full of cooking supplies of all kinds. There are a few human skin bound cookbooks piled into a corner as well.

A large cauldron sits on a fire, boiling and bubbling with a delicious scent coming from it. A pair of terrified elves in bright green clothes are hanging from the ceiling over it, gagged and bound tightly with rope.

Encounter: Gryla. If the Icicle trap in Area 2 was set off, Gryla (**hill giant** with additions as described here) is aware of the adventurers' presence. Otherwise, stealthy adventurers can take her by surprise as she is distracted by reading through a cookbook and stirring her cauldron. She will use her massive wooden spoon (*+1 greatclub*) to attack and also speaks Common, delighting in cackling at the adventurers while calling them "naughty children" and trying to convince them to jump in her pot. She'll also call out for her husband, wondering where he is and calling him a lazy buffoon.

Treasure: The Spoon & Broach. The adventurers can loot *+1 Gryla's Spoon* after defeating her and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover the *Mistletoe Broach* (see Appendix).

Tinsel and Pepper

The two young elven apprentices will be profusely grateful for their rescue. They are twin brother and sister named Tinsel and Pepper, respectively, who tend to end each other's sentences, often talking in a rush over each other. They beg the adventurers to continue further into the cave and rescue their mentor, Kristof the toymaker. Gryla gave him to a witch named Perchta who lives further into the cave. They'll hurriedly leave the cave, telling the adventurers they're headed to Downey for safety.

The tunnel leading further down into the cavern starts to descend the deeper it goes. The temperature quickly fades from the warmth of Gryla's cave to a much colder level.

Gryla the Giantess

With an insatiable appetite for the flesh of mischievous children, Gryla loves to hunt the nearby towns for her snacks and meals. She has the innate ability to sniff out those who have been naughty and prefers their taste to those who have been good. Her husband Leppaludi has been kicked out of the cave for being lazy and is hunting fresh children for her.



4 - Pet Cemetery

The wooden door to this part of the cavern is slapped together with wooden planks held together with rusted iron nails and hinges. The door frame is decorated with totems made from tied together bones, feathers, and dried pieces of animal flesh and fur.

Opening the door produces an ear-splitting creak from the rusty hinges that echoes down the cavern and it reveals a set of creaky wooden steps leading down into an immense torch-lit cave. The stairs lead down to two rows of three wooden beds each on either side of the cave. At the foot of each bed is a large darned sock; each one is filthy and stuffed with coal.

At the far end of the cavern stands a shack built in the same style of broken boards and rusted nails as seen in the doorframe and stairs. Light can be seen through the filthy glass on the windows coming from inside. More totems of bone and fire decorate the doorframe of the shack.


1 Square = 5 Feet
3
4
5

Lying on each of the beds is a small child tucked in and appearing to be asleep. They will not respond to any noises or attempts to get a reaction from them but as soon as the adventurers step off of the stairs, they will all sit up in bed like puppets who had their strings pulled.

Encounter: Bad Little Children. These six children are **zombies** that have been turned by Perchta. Because they were turned as children so they have the *small undead*. Their bellies have been split open and stuffed with straw and pebbles that tend to fall out when they move around.

5 – Mother Perchta

Drifting from the shack is the sound of a lovely woman's voice singing Yuletide songs in a lilting soprano. This is Perchta using her *mimicry* ability to Nothing can be seen through the dirty windows of the hut except for shifting shadows.

Trap: The Dark Forest. There is a 10-foot wide *spell glyph of warding* trap directly in front of the steps leading up to the shack that can be discerned with a *detect magic* spell and disarmed with a *dispel magic* spell. If it is triggered, the cavern will disappear to leave the adventurers in what appears to be a small clearing in a forest at night time. Fog will drift upwards, obscuring the ground and the ceiling of the cavern becomes a night sky filled with starlight. At the edges of the clearing are snow-covered trees fading off into the distance. Defeating Perchta will cause the Dark Forest spell to disappear and return them to the cavern.

Encounter: The Belly Splitter. The witch Perchta (**green hag**) is a master of illusion and trickery and uses her illusory appearance and mimicry abilities to make herself look and sound to be a beautiful young woman (see sidebar). She will use the distraction of her apparent beauty to calm and lull the adventurers into a conversation where she tries to convince them to leave and let her continue her work in peace.

If the Dark Forest spell is active, she will appear to the adventurers by stepping gracefully out from between the trees and into the foggy clearing. If the illusion was dispelled, she will appear inside the ramshackle hut sitting on a stool and spinning wool into thread, her beauty in stark contrast to the interior of the hut which is filled with witchcraft totems, a boiling cauldron, and a cage containing a very large dwarf in a bright red and white cloak, seemingly asleep.

With a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurers will notice two **zombie** children sneaking up behind them. On a failed check, the zombies will surprise the adventurers from behind. Either way or if her illusions are all broken, Perchta will drop her beautiful illusion in favor of her hideous appearance and attack with her vicious mockery spell.

Treasure: Stocking Stuffers. Inside of Perchta's hut is a small chest containing a 21 gp, 7 ep, 22 sp, 11 cp, a small emerald (25 gp), and a small ruby (25 gp). Mixed into the chest is an assortment of sticks of hard peppermint candies that have been half-eaten and cause everything else in the chest to be sticky to the touch.

Perchta

This witch hides her hideous visage behind the illusion of a beautiful young woman with long blonde hair, smooth pale skin, and shining bright green eyes. She is known to appear in this form wearing flowing white gowns to those of good nature while displaying her true form of haggard and a wrinkly old woman with a hook nose to others. The one thing that remains constant is that she has one foot that is noticeably and abnormally larger than the other.

Aftermath

If the adventurers are able to defeat Perchta, any remaining illusions will dissipate. Kristof can be found unconscious inside of a cage with the key being on Perchta's body. He can be shaken awake easily and he'll come to with a splutter as he regains his bearings. He'll be extremely grateful for the rescue and once they reach the town of Downey, he will celebrate with the town by pulling gifts from his strangely large and bright red *bag of holding*. This will include gifts catered to and specific to the adventurers including a bottle of his famous *Yuletide Whiskey* (see Appendix). This could be any number of things from fun items, useful items, pets, or even mounts!

If the adventurers were unable to defeat the dreaded witch Perchta or her Giantess neighbor Grayla, Yuletide is forevermore changed with the passing of Kristof. Children weep the next morning as they receive coal in their Yule stockings; those that were not stolen away during the night to be eaten, that is. The witches will continue stealing them away and putting them into their pots for a tasty snack.

Thank you so much for playing **The Witches of Yuletide**! If you want to check out more of our content, please visit www.theDMToolChest.com!



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Appendix

The Yule Cat

A freakishly large black cat, the Yule Cat is the pet of the Giantess Gryla. It prefers the colder climates and typically hunts around villages during Yuletide. It has a particular appetite to swallow whole anyone who did not receive new clothes for Yuletide.

Yule Cat

large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Cat; understands Common and Giant but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 xp)

Stalker. The Yule Cat has advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Keen Smell. The Yule Cat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the Yule Cat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the Yule Cat can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (3d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Swallow. The Yule Cat makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Yule Cat, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the Yule Cat's turns. The Yule Cat can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the Yule Cat dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.



Mistletoe Broach

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

A silver and gold broach worked in a pattern of a leaf of mistletoe and a sprig of spruce, the broach allows the wearer to cast *Pass Without Trace* 1/day



Bottle of Yuletide Whiskey

Made from a secret recipe known only to Kristof Klaus, this whiskey has a high alcohol content and tastes of a mixture of apples pie and Yuletide spices. A creature can use its action to have one drink. Each drink restores 1 hit point, and the drink provides enough nourishment to sustain a creature for one day. A bottle contains 20 drinks.