

WINTER-BEAST SCENARIO

WHAT THE PLAYERS KNOW

Pendor is the northern-most town in the kingdom of Elb. It lies very near a particularly dangerous part of the Northern Mountains, however, it is protected by the Pendor River. The river is shallow, but swift and wide. No bridges cross it. The river keeps creatures from the mountains away from Pendor. In the Winter, the river freezes solid, allowing wild creatures from the mountains to cross into town. Many people retreat to the south for the summer, and hire brave, adventurer types to guard their property.

Occasional, a wild animal will come into Pendor with a particularly vicious attack. These attackers have fire red eyes, and fight without fear or pain, to the death. These creature have a bright red glow in there eyes. Local residence have come to believe that it is a demon that possesses these animals, and they refer to the demon as "The Winter Beast".

Several years ago, a wizard called Thadeous III, son of the town wise-man, and several retainers set off to slay the beast. He returned alone, and wounded, but said that he had found the beast. He vowed to slay it and return with it's secret. The mage never returned, but neither did the beast. He is worshipped in the town as a hero.

Thadeous the second is a very old man who lives in a dank tower at the end of the town. He's rumored to be a sorcerer, but no one has ever seen him work a spell. He occasionally comes down from his tower to give the town warnings, prophecies, or friendly bits of advice.

Recently, a hunter crossed the frozen river with a pack of dogs. The next day he returned, with a good deal of game. However, one of his dogs was acting strangely. That night his dog attacked him, tearing him limb from limb. Several town guards were injured before the dog was finally put to rest.

A week later, a grizzly bear entered the town. It quite purposefully sought out two members of the town guard and killer them. A fierce battle followed, leaving the bear dead, and several more town guardsman injured.

At the annual winter festival, Thadeous II made a rare appearance. In a grim speech, he confirms the towns worst fears. The Winter Beast has returned!!

WHAT THE PLAYERS DON'T KNOW

The Winter Beast of old, was not a demon. It was a mage who got a kick out of killing people using animals as a cover. He developed a powerstone strong enough to let him maintain animal possession for long periods of time. However it was flawed, his own body became weak and shrivelled. To survive, he had to kill more and more people in beast form.

Thadeous III defeated this mage, but soon fell under the control of the powerstone. After taking several years to gain strength and perfect his craft, Thadeous III is the new Winter Beast.

Thadeous II does not know this, but he does suspect it. He is torn between his son's life, and the good of the town. He will not help the party, and will try to discourage them from hunting the beast.

WHAT HAPPENED

The game session had 3 PCs. Two strong fighter types, and one particularly intelligent mage. They arrived in Pendor on the night of the winter festival to hear Thaddeous II's remarks about the beast. They asked around and found out most of the "What the players know" section. The mage used his spells to influence Thaddeous II's mage, snuck into the tower, and confronted him for information. Of course, the old man refused, telling him he would do more good for the town if he stayed to fight, than if he got killed trying to hunt the beast. "Wait 'til spring and everything will be O.K." said the old man repeatedly.

Meanwhile, Teran, one of the fighter types picked a fight with a bunch of goblin traders in town for the festival. He took out about four of them before he was over run, luckily the town guards arrived just in time to save his life. He was badly wounded.

The next day, while Teran was recovering, the other two went on a patrol. They encountered the beast in the form of a bear. They easily defeated the bear, however, the fighter-type had the GURPS disadvantage Berserker. He deliberately went into a rage to fight the bear, but failed to get back into control when it was over. He went running through the woods, killing everything he could get his hands on. Eventually he reached the river. In the center of the river was an island with a tower. He crossed the frozen water, but was attacked by the towers guardians: zombies hideing in the snow drift.

The mage, who had followed behind, tried to use fire spells to fight off the zombies. Rolling a critical failure, he melted the ice, and sent his poor companion plunging into icy depths. Luckily (by devine intervention from the GM himself :-)) the zombies were turned away by the fire, the mage was able to rescue his companion, and the two were picked up by a town guard patrol. (talk about bending over backwards to keep inept players alive!!!)

After resting for a week, the trio returned to the island. They defeated the zombies, by luring them off the ice before the fighting began. Then they very carefully crossed the ice.

I won't bore you with details over what happened inside the tower. It suffices to say that they defeated Thadeous III.

AFTERMATH

I'm left with three seeds from which to build the next adventure. One, Teran has made enemies of the goblin traders. Two, the PC mage took the winter-beast powerstone. It's cursed and very powerful. Three, does the old man hold the players responsible for killing his possessed son?

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In the last few weeks I started threads called "The Death Artist" and "Hackers on Ice" to get ideas for a GURPS adventure that I ran. Thank you to all who responded. The game session turned out to be very good. A lot of those who responded requested that I let them know what happened so I'm posting the adventure that I created, and a summary of what happened.

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