



Rite Publishing Presents:

ADVENTURE QUARTERLY

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Dedication: To James M. Ward - Thank you for helping set my expectations for fun and inspiring those expectations to be sky high, and then some. Be well and good, good sir.

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Sample file

“No. Try not. Do... or do not. There is no try.”
– Yoda, Jedi Master.

Welcome back for another exciting installment of Adventure Quarterly!

Our seventh issue is all about deduction, discovery, exploration, and the twisting turns of elemental weather. Within you find tried and true testing grounds for adventurers gone sideways, a wintery land of unknown, and a wager gone sour for someone who simply wants their family back, all presented by *Adventure Quarterly*.

Our staff enjoys a good sandbox, as exploration campaigns—more aptly put, ‘hexploration’—can be a wonderful bits of freedom for a table of players and their PCs. Drunk on freedom and caffeine, all directions are theirs for the taking, or they’ll die trying.

Shattered Dreams in Winter by Bret Boyd is a ‘hexploration’ campaign that invites the PCs to a snow filled land of potential, mystery, and exploration. It is for 1st-level characters and it makes for an excellent starting campaign with the focus on discover, expanding civilization, and making the unknown known.

It is also an excellent tie-in for Steven D. Russell’s further advice on how to construct and shepherd sandbox adventures. One of our regular articles that you’ll also find in this issue of *Adventure Quarterly*.

Mike Welham offers up our next installment of the *Ruins Perilous* series, *The Fractured Storm*, which is an adventure of elemental mystery and mayhem for 5th-level characters. When the best-laid plans meet the most disruptive of residence, shall the PCs be able to restore some

level of order to this proving ground or will the rising storm tear it all down.

Speaking of plans gone awry, Nicholas Milasich brings us an excellent tale of a wager gone sour for a mercantile captain and his family. *The House of Butchered Manflesh* offers up a tale of bad faith, double-dealings, gambling, and a menu that might not live up to its reputation, regardless of all the magic at hand.

Once again, welcome back to *Adventure Quarterly*! We are quite proud of this issue, and we hope that you enjoy the sustenance. May it fill your table, challenge your players, and lay low the unprepared!

Robert N. Emerson

Editor-in-Chief, Adventure Quarterly



Shattered Dreams in Winter

Introduction

“Shattered Dreams in Winter” is an adventure for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* that presents 1st-level characters an opportunity for “hexploration” adventure! It draws on the rules for exploration as presented in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Campaign* but some of the pertinent material is reprinted herein for ease of use. This adventure also utilizes Rite Publishing’s *101 Not So Random Encounters: Winter* to flesh out the area’s random encounters. You need not own that work either in order to enjoy/run this adventure. SDiW pits the novice PCs against the experiments of a long-dead culture that still haunt the frozen north. Mystery and action abound in what should prove to be a great kickoff to your campaign!

Adventure Background

Many centuries ago, a human civilization called the Nee’Qan prospered within a huge fertile valley. This culture was renowned for its magical talent and for the general safety of the territory it occupied. Intelligent monsters learned quickly to avoid the Nee’Qan but not because the humans were particularly violent, but rather because of what they did to captured monsters: experimentation. As a rule, the Nee’Qan were obsessive about controlling everything they could. Their great valley provided the exact amount of food that was needed at any given time. The temperature and rainfall adhered to

strict protocols. Nothing was random in the Nee’Qan territory thanks to their collective magical capability. Monsters were seen as one more chaotic element that had to be controlled. Thus, they dissected and experimented with captured goblinoids, giants, and less humanoid intruders to see what could be done. Kobolds, for example, possessed a resistance to a certain disease of that time and so their blood and tissue were used in antitoxins. Ogre skin made for a durable and strong backing for tapestries. And so on went the harvesting of monster parts for practical uses.

Nee’Qan curiosity and experimentation was not limited to their own land, however, and even stretched into the Outer Planes. A nasty encounter with some devils changed the way their monster studying operated. To protect the kingdom, a flying citadel was constructed in the icy northern reaches to provide maximum isolation. The sub-commander of this facility was a wizardess named Volina, a woman whose reach far exceeded her grasp in terms of ambition. Volina wanted nothing more than to rule her own realm and decided that this secluded northern land was the place to realize that dream. Manpower and materials were diverted into a special task force that she alone commanded (her only superior was constantly distracted by her feminine wiles). Volina’s private group constructed four obelisks that were to mark the mage’s would-be kingdom. These monuments were not just symbolic though. Each was imbued with powerful magics controlled from within their hollow grandness and designed to terraform the land between them into something more livable.

Adventure Hooks

Numerous things might have brought the party together in this frontier town. Maybe one of the PC’s relatives spoke of finding information about the power of the obelisks (like the tengu in [50]) and sent the young adventurers on a quest to confirm his findings. New Larstown might be the largest town around where the PCs grew up (there are several smaller villages scattered to the south). Tales of the Nee’Qan fly freely in the area but many cannot be bothered to suit up and see what’s out there. PCs eager for fortune and glory would find the ruins of the citadel a good place for both, no? Another possible hook is the arrival of a Frostnook barbarian who spins a wild tale about a dog who slew the man’s brother and promised aloud he would return until he found what he was looking for. If a deadly talking dog doesn’t sound like adventure, then nothing does!

Volina's plot was uncovered, however, by an equally ambitious underling who took the details to the commander. The wizard's confrontation with his supposed lover and second-in-command erupted into a battle that destroyed the citadel. The flying fortress literally exploded, its contents either obliterated or condemned to a long deep freeze. The Nee'Qan never mounted a recovery effort for any information or survived magics as their society also met with an unfortunate end not long after this disaster (the cause mysteriously unknown). Today, icy wastes continue to dominate the northland but artifacts and creatures tainted by residual magics

from the citadel can still be found in the snows, untouched since its destruction.

Adventure Synopsis

Since "Shattered Dreams in Winter" is a sandbox exploration adventure, the PCs are more free than usual to go wherever they like and do as they wish. Still, SDiW provides its own plotline within the confines of the presented hexes that the PCs will hopefully discover and complete. This central plot revolves around an experiment of the citadel



Hex Numbers

When a specific hex number needs to be called out, it appears in brackets (e.g. [03]). In this way, a GM can quickly see what is a hex number as opposed to some other information.

that survived its destruction. A hound archon was captured by the mages and turned from rigidly good to utterly evil by Volina simply to see if it could be done. She was certain she'd use the creature during her takeover of the facility but that plan never came to fruition. The hound archon, named Rulgar, was placed in magical stasis and remained that way during the citadel's fall. The spell keeping him in stasis also somehow kept him safe in the great fall from the sky and remained active...until two weeks ago. The enchantment simply unraveled from age and the hound archon was free to escape the wintry lands. However, Volina's obelisks were created with a secondary purpose—to keep all Nee'Qan experiments inside her prospective realm. A stylized "N" rune branded onto all altered creatures of the time acts as a kind of leash that keeps them from leaving the area that the obelisks border. Rulgar wants to be free of this prison and has been performing reconnaissance since his awakening. Unfortunately for the area's inhabitants, the hound archon's appearances are seldom without bloodshed as the frustrated creature tends to lash out in anger before teleporting away.

Rulgar's travel has caused some disturbance in hex 38, where a temple dedicated to the creature now finds itself without its object of veneration. A small tribe of primitive humans unearthed the frozen hound archon from the snows soon after the citadel's fall. They had prayed to their weather goddess for a sign indicated where to settle their families and mistook Rulgar as that sign. In veneration, the humans built a "temple" where they placed the archon's magically frozen form. The tribe quickly learned that this area was no place to settle and most moved on in disgust. But a few of them remained, devoutly insisting that the hound would awaken and then lead them to a better land. Upon release from stasis, Rulgar stayed his hand from slaying the humans and decided instead to spare the acolytes since it was obvious they worshipped him. The hound archon plans to use them to facilitate his escape from the area once he finds out how to accomplish that feat.

But Rulgar has a weakness he does not know about—enter the PCs. The stasis energies that melted away from age can be reformed with special scepters that all guards and magelings from the citadel wore. These amber-tipped rods acted as manipulators of the magics of the citadel, allowing one to open cells/doors, control ambient heat and light, and paralyze creatures bearing the "N" brand by releasing a ray of power. Scepters that survived the citadel's fall lie scattered about the area (designated on the map by

triangles) but at least four are needed to properly reconstitute the stasis field (described in lore the PCs will hopefully uncover in the ruins). Otherwise, Rulgar can be dispatched in the usual way monsters are dealt with by adventurers.

Geographical Overview

Snow-capped mountains form the southern border of the area and one hex on the western edge. (Party speed of 30 feet requires 3 days to explore a single hex; 8 hours to travel directly through one)

Glaciers encroach on 8 hexes in the north of the region. These are treated as very difficult mountains and create nearly impassable barriers for the adventurers. For tactical situations, characters walking on ice must spend 2 squares of movement to enter a square covered by ice, and the DC for Acrobatics checks increases by +5. Characters in prolonged contact with ice might run the risk of taking damage from severe cold (see below). (Party speed of 30 feet requires 5 days to explore a single hex; 16 hours to travel directly through one)

A single hex [01] in the region bears a high-grassed plain, its normal permafrost magically altered by the resident obelisk long ago. (Party speed of 30 feet requires 1 day to explore a single hex; 5 hours to travel directly through one)

The bulk of the land in this adventure is stable permafrost, a cold desert treated as plains for exploration purposes. Due to its slick nature, travel directly through one of these hexes is slightly lengthened. (Party speed of 30 feet requires 1 day to explore a single hex; 6 hours to travel directly through one)

Cold Dangers

Cold and exposure deal nonlethal damage to the victim. A character cannot recover from the damage dealt by a cold environment until she gets out of the cold and warms up again. Once a character has taken an amount of nonlethal damage equal to her total hit points, any further damage from a cold environment is lethal damage.

An unprotected character in cold weather (below 40° F) must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal