He Sees You When You're Sleeping

EXPERT

The Demon Lord's shadow looms over Urth, growing stronger each passing day with every terrible deed and sacrifice that is performed in his name. As winter falls across the lands, old legends stirred by the Shadow come to life once more. Ancient evils that few remember rise again to resume their nocturnal wanderings, spreading darkness, suffering, and death wherever they roam.

Written for a group of expert characters, *He Sees You While You're Sleeping* is set in the small village of Hund, where a terrible monster threatens those among them who are the most vulnerable: their children. A fledgling cult has taken root in an abandoned asylum just outside the settlement, engaging in vile and dark magic to harness the essence of a horrific demon called the Krampus: a malevolent entity infamous for hunting, terrorizing, and killing children all across Rûl.

The group adventure ends when the group defeats the Krampus or at the toll of midnight on Krampusnacht, which is the beginning of the winter solstice.

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BACKGROUND

Each winter, when the snows begin falling across the Northern Reach, the rural folk make offerings to the Krampus, a foul creature who stalks and terrorizes the land during the week just before the winter solstice. The people believe the Krampus seeks to spread misery at a time when people's spirits are at their most hopeful, and they pray their offerings will placate the evil spirit.

The old tales tell that the Krampus sows terror and chaos as it seeks out and punishes *good* children by running them down and beating them with his virgács, a switch made from long branches broken off from a dead hazel or birch tree and tied into a bundle. It is said that he eats some children he catches just for fun, or whenever he is particularly hungry, but he generally keeps most of those he captures alive as prisoners. He collects his victims over the span of several days leading up to the winter solstice, hiding them away until later when he sacrifices them, just before midnight on the solstice eve, which is known as "Krampusnacht," or Night of the Krampus.

What those who tell the old tales don't know is that the Krampus is no mere monster, but a demon who serves the Demon Lord, to whom he makes his awful sacrifices in order to speed his master's arrival. Worse yet: the purest children the demon captures are subjected to an even more terrible fate. Stuffed into his sack, which touches the Void, the Krampus keeps them there for a night, which transforms the children into malign and murderous abominations called "sack-touched" or "**satchelkin**" (see "New Creatures"), which he then releases upon the world.

THE CURSE OF THE KRAMPUS

The stories and depictions of the Krampus vary throughout Rûl, but none are entirely accurate and all miss the fact that Krampus isn't a monster of this world, but rather a demon who manifests within a mortal through the power of an ancient Void curse, gruesomely transforming its victim at sundown for the six nights leading up to the winter solstice. Why one mortal is chosen over another is not known, but those with any affinity or pure love for children are often the most vulnerable to possession. Each dawn, those accursed wake up in strange places, their naked bodies often covered in blood and bruises, having no recollection of anything that transpired the night before.

Although the dread influence of the curse lies dormant during daylight, if the cursed individual is attacked, the demonic spirit is triggered into action, transforming the victim immediately into the Krampus in order to protect itself and slaughter its enemies.

The curse remains in a single village or town for only one season, choosing some other community to terrorize the following year. It does, however, sometimes return to a previous hunting ground after several years have passed, which is the case this year in Hund (see the story of Robart Schwarz in "The Crestfallen Calf" on page 4).

When a creature cursed by the Krampus dies during the six days before the winter solstice, the curse lingers in the place of death for 24 hours. During this time, the curse will attempt to afflict the next living mortal to pass through the area. If no one acquires the curse in this manner before the solstice, it seeks out the nearest, purest adult, and tries to enter the body in their sleep. A creature can resist the curse with a success on a Will challenge roll made with 3 banes. Until the solstice arrives, the curse will continue to seek a victim until one finally succumbs.

THE MONOGRAPH OF GUILT

When the curse takes a victim, they find they have acquired a strange tome entitled *The Monograph of Guilt*. Bound in what appears to be human skin tanned into leather, its bloodstained pages contain the firsthand accounts of those who have been possessed by the Krampus, detailing all of the demon's grisly deeds over the centuries.

The tome begins with an origin tale, explaining how the demon was once a mighty magician who came to Urth from a mysterious realm, seeking to spread peace and happiness throughout the world that would outlast the ages. He was primarily concerned with the plight of Urth's children, and whenever possible, used his magic to alleviate their suffering and bring joy to their hearts.

But, as the tale relates, he was betrayed by a servant of the Demon Lord, a powerful and evil witch who disguised herself as a desperate child in need, who tricked him into thinking his magic had killed her. In the midst of his despair and agony at what he had "done," the witch cast her own spell to enthrall him, transforming him into a demonic spirit, and then cast him into the Void to face her master. Because this happened during the days before the winter solstice, when the barrier between Urth and the Void is at its thinnest, the demon is cursed to return to Urth during that time and—in a bitter twist of the darkest irony—use his powers to possess a victim in order to bring misery and death into the lives of Urth's children.

All those who have been cursed over the centuries have been compelled to add their own experiences for the benefit—or torment—of those damned who will come after them. The curse prevents the possessed from allowing the book to come to harm, to dispose of it, or to reveal its existence to any others.

The *Monograph's* handwriting is in an ancient, indecipherable script, although any creature who knows Dark Speech senses that it is the language in which the book is written. Anyone not afflicted with the curse who attempts to read the *Monograph* must make a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature gains 2d6 Insanity. On a success, the text somehow becomes readable to that creature alone, whether it knows Dark Speech or not, and it can safely read the book until it completes a rest, after which it must endure the Will challenge again.

If the cursed person dies before the winter solstice, the *Monograph* disappears, returning to the Void, reappearing only when someone else becomes afflicted with the curse. If the book is burned or ripped to shreds, its ash or remains dissolve, as the essence of the *Monograph* reforms in the Void and then returns to whoever is currently accursed.

The Daughters of the Dark Winter

A small cult has recently established itself in the east wing of the Hirnschule Asylum just outside of the village. Abandoned and rundown, most villagers avoid the asylum, believing it to be haunted or evil (which it is). The cultists, calling themselves the Daughters of the Dark Winter, worship the Krampus and hope to harness his essence to grow their power.

Well-versed in the nature of the Krampus curse, the cult's leader **Morrighan Conway** predicted that it would manifest in a villager of Hund, hence their recent arrival. With only a few days to work with, the cultists are searching for *The Monograph of Guilt* in order to create a ritual that would enable the transference or reproduction of the curse for their own dark purposes. They have spies in the village and have learned who carries the curse. They plan to break into his home and take the book on the day before Krampusnacht (Day 2).

Morrighan Conway leads the cult, made up of several **apprentice witches** and **cultists**.

The Dark Forest

The Dark Forest surrounds Hund and, while far larger than the group might ever explore in this adventure, the characters are likely to venture into it. Filled with all manner of creatures, the forest assumes an even deadlier aspect as the solstice draws near and the evil influence of the Krampus spreads.

North of the village stands a clearing the Krampus uses as his sacrificial site. Children not eaten or stuffed into his sack wait here, bound, gagged, and stuffed in wicker baskets hoisted high up in the trees. The Krampus returns to this site at least once per night to haul up newly captured children into the trees, as well as to check on his current captives. He returns just before midnight on Krampusnacht to brutally sacrifice all of his captives to the Demon Lord.

If the characters explore the forest, use the following tables to come up with random enemies for them to face.

Day 1 Forest Wandering Enemies

d3	Encounter
1	Crows or feral cats gather into 1d6 swarms (**animal swarm**).
2	A band of 1d6 **wargs** lope through the woods in search of prey.
3	A **wraith**, newly escaped from Hell, searches for people to kill.

Day 2 Forest Wandering Enemies

d6	Encounter
1	Crows or feral cats gather into 1d6 swarms (**animal swarm**).
2	A band of 1d6 **wargs** lope through the woods in search of prey.
3	A band of 1d6 **cultists** and 1 **high cultist** gather to perform a foul ritual.
4	A coven of 1d6 **apprentice witches** perform profane rites.
5	A **wraith**, newly escaped from Hell, searches for people to kill.
6	A gang of 1d6 Void-corrupted children's toys (**tiny monsters**) hunt for people with whom they can "play."

If the characters move through the forest during Day 3, they have a higher chance of running into the Krampus's minions. Replace the wraith with 1d6 satchelkin. Exploring the forest past midnight is even more dangerous, if not deadly: roll twice on the table for encounters any time characters explore the dark forest between midnight and sunrise.

Setting the Scene

As the adventure begins, the winter solstice occurs just after midnight three days hence. The Krampus has already been on the loose, and children have gone missing. The characters either happen upon Hund while traveling or come to visit a friend, relative, or some other person. They might have been tasked with investigating the area after rumors of vanishing children reached the Cult of the New God or some other organization. Even though Hund never suffered its predations before, the locals know the legend of the Krampus all too well.

The people celebrate the solstice with parades, food, drink, and merriment. The happenings ramp up as the seasonal changeover approaches. The eve of the festival before the winter solstice is known as

"Krampusnacht," or Night of the Krampus, a date rich with tales told of the Krampus's darkest deeds—and when most of the Krampus's victims go missing.

Because of the Krampus legend, the children of Hund are often very mischievous or disobedient around this time of year, sometimes because they genuinely are ill-mannered brats who could use a good birch switching, but otherwise for fear of being captured by the Krampus. Their parents are often overprotective and combative with other parents because of the stressful time, or because of their overindulgence during the winter festivities.

Reveal as much or as little about the legend of the Krampus as you like. If the characters come from the region or have been here for a while, they might know some or all of the background information. Or, the group might learn these details by talking with the villagers.

The Village of Hund

The village stands just south of the Dark Forest, reached by any of several trade roads or the nearby river that flows out from the woods. The community consists of about a hundred buildings, mostly homes of brick and wood, but also a blacksmith, inn, sawmill, market, and a few storehouses. The people (**commoners**) here make their living as farmers, fishers, proprietors, or craftspeople.

The Crestfallen Calf

Hund's only inn, the Crestfallen Calf, is a sprawling structure of wood and stone. The main floor consists of a dining area, kitchen, bar, and personal quarters for the innkeeper, an **orc** named Bula. The upper floor holds two dozen rooms, most of which can hold a few guests. The attic is a common room and it's where a bit of floor space can be had for a few bits a night.

As the only orc in Hund, and one who has spent nearly her whole life here, Bula has had to endure the village's derision and scorn in the past. Sold to the original owner of the inn when she was a child, she spent most of her youth doing whatever labor the innkeeper required, from cleaning to kitchen help. While he never mistreat her, he made it clear that she was no different to him than any other service creature he owned, like his horse or dairy cow. People tended to blame her for anything bad that happened in the village, claiming either she was cursed, had the Devil inside her, or that she was faerie-touched. When, in her late teens, the innkeeper died, she was just as surprised as the villagers to discover that he not only released Bula from service but left the inn to her in his will.

As she grew older, the villagers eventually accepted her—it helps that the fare and ale served at the inn are quite good—but she still remains guarded and cautious around most folks to a point just shy of being rude. Like most orcs, she is quick to anger if pushed past that point.

Each day, a regular patron named Robart Schwarz can be found leaning against the bar. He believes he knows the truth about the Krampus and the curse, and will go on and on about it if asked. No one takes him seriously on account of him being a drunk, a habit he developed soon after his son was stolen some fifteen years ago. He insists that he saw his neighbor Heinrich transform into the demon, but at the time he couldn't be sure he wasn't just seeing things, and no one believed him anyway. When his son went missing the next day, he frantically searched the woods, finding only a severed child's leg with his son's shoe still on the foot.

When Heinrich hung himself several days later, Robart knew the truth of what he had seen, and it has haunted him ever since.

Rumors

If the characters spend any time at the inn, they might pick up on any or all of the following rumors.

Tavern Rumors

d20	Rumor
1–2	The Krampus can be warded off temporarily by leaving offerings of warm schnapps for him. (False)
3	Leaving notes describing the better deeds of other children can divert the Krampus from your own. (True)
4	Strangers have been seen around the village lately. (True)
5–6	The Krampus dwells within the abandoned Asylum overlooking the village. (False)
7	Children gone missing and thought dead are sometimes spotted years later, transformed. (True)
8–9	Edmund's a dimwitted boy who got lost in the woods and just hasn't found his way home yet. (False)
10–11	The Krampus is sometimes seen carrying an oddly thick, clasped book. (True)
12–15	The Krampus is a myth created by heretics and cultists to perpetuate children's naughty behavior. (False)
16–17	This time of year, townsfolk are sometimes found naked and passed out in odd places, often blamed for being unable to hold their liquor. (True)
18–19	Robart Schwarz is mad; he killed his own son. (False)
20	A coven of witches sometimes worships the Krampus in the woods, though no one knows who they are or where they came from. (True)

MAX KRAUSE (THE KRAMPUS)

This season's victim of the Krampus curse is a local woodcarver named Max Krause. A dark-haired man of average height in his late fifties, he's retired and spends most of his time whittling wood into small statuettes he sells at the market, or sometimes gives as gifts to the children of the village. He lives alone in a cabin on the northeast side of the village, preferring his privacy. He rarely leaves his home, going out only to gather wood or pick up supplies. He has no idea that he is also slipping out of his house at night as the Krampus to steal children from their beds.

Max is a good and decent man. He even adores children—that might, in fact, be why the curse has afflicted him. Max first transformed into the Krampus the night before the characters arrive, and the demon's hunger at its first awakening of the year drove him to snatch a village boy named Edmund from his bed, carry him into the forest and devour him completely. He awoke just after dawn, naked and shivering by the riverbank, his face and hands covered in blood that he knew was not his own. He quickly washed the blood off in the freezing water of the river, and was able to make it to his house before anyone saw him.

Not only is he worried about how he ended up at the riverbank or being covered in blood, but later that day he discovered some small bones in his stool, and doesn't recognize them from anything he'd eaten in the past few days.

Max has no idea he is cursed, but he is very anxious about what might happen. Adding to that, he also found a bizarre, disturbingly crafted book in his bed, with strange handwriting he doesn't quite understand, although he is slowly beginning to decipher it, and what he's reading is filling with him with dread...

ANJA SCHIMMEL

One person the characters will likely meet while in Hund is the village's mayor, a former soldier (**veteran**) named Anja Schimmel. She came to Hund to be with her lover, who has since left the picture, but remained because she loves the village and its simple lifestyle. Her fighting experience saw the villagers rally around her and make her their mayor. She's working hard to tamp down the worry and fear caused by the Krampus stories, but does not believe the stories about the monster at all. She thinks it's just an excuse for bad parenting, although even she has to admit that the disappearance of Edmund is very worrisome.

In her late thirties, Anja has a trim figure, long auburn hair that hangs to the left from the top of her head, with the rest otherwise neatly shaved in military fashion. She brushes her hair over to cover a particularly nasty and large scar from a war wound on the left side of her face, more for the villagers' sake than out of any vanity. She can always be seen walking about town in her armor, her weapons hanging from her belt, never letting herself be caught without her gear.

DAY STRUCTURE

You have a lot of leeway when running this adventure as it's open-ended and freeform. As they investigate, the characters might bumble around each day, which could result in a bunch of children killed, or they might fast track themselves along. Likely, the pace will be somewhere in between. Each day has an event to drive the story forward, as well as some bulleted items you can use for improvising if you need them.

DAY ONE

The group should arrive at Hund around dusk and find the village filled with villagers celebrating the season. Shortly thereafter, a heated argument breaks out between some of the villagers and the mayor about the safety of the village's children.

Earlier this morning three children—Dimitri, Brigitte, and Karl—went off to play in their tree fort near the river. They have yet to return and with the sun already setting, no one in town is brave enough to form a search party. The parents of the missing

children are too distraught to think clearly, or have younger children they want to keep safe. The rest of the village has made it clear they would rather stay in and keep their families locked up tight.

Anja will approach the characters to placate the worried parents. She offers the group free food and lodging if they will undertake a search for the children and assures them it should be an easy job, convinced the children have likely just lost track of time, or are playing a prank on the village in keeping with the season.

What the characters do not know is that the Krampus will have found the children before they can, and if they are not rescued, he will take them to his sacrificial ground.

DAY 1 HAPPENINGS

- Apprentice witches dressed in common clothes move about the town, using magic to search for the accursed, where he lives, and where he has hidden the book.
- Children about town can be overheard talking about how their toys have started talking to them.
- Haedrig, the village blacksmith, has had some of his tools go missing, and swears some terribly ugly children ran off with them.
- Edmund's mother, Frieda, is hysterical and begging people to go and look for him in the forest.

MISSING CHILDREN

Directions gained from the parents put the tree fort about a half-mile north of town, which takes about a half-hour to reach on foot, longer than it takes the sun to fully set. Travel through the Dark Forest can be difficult, especially at night. Have the character leading the group into the woods make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane to find the fort. On a failure, the characters face a random encounter (see above) and must repeat the roll a half-hour later if they continue to search for the fort.

RESCUE AND CLUES

Once the group finds the place, they see a sturdy tree fort, accessible by a rope ladder sitting some 3 yards up in a birch tree near the river's bank. The Krampus tracked down the children playing in the forest earlier, and has already tied up and dragged Dimitri off to the clearing. If the characters did not fail the challenge roll, they find Brigitte bound and gagged at the base of the tree fort and can locate Karl, who's hidden and frozen in fear, a few dozen yards away.

If the group failed once, only Karl remains and he's sobbing. If the group failed two or more times, no children remain.

Upon rescuing one or both children, they will tell a fearful story. A monster—the Krampus of all the tales they've been told—came and took their friend or friends. The child or children can describe the monster, but in extremely vague terms as they are traumatized by what has happened.

Searching the area for clues requires a success on a Perception challenge roll with 2 banes, which reveals cloven hoof prints amid the damp riverbank soil that lead in all directions, a rough iron bell, and some shreds of filthy burlap cloth with bloodstains (torn from the demon's sack).

If the characters decide to explore the woods further, you can call for a few Intellect challenge rolls and throw another encounter or two their way, but their searching should turn up nothing more this first day.

Returning the surviving children to the town makes heroes of the group, though the celebration is somewhat muted, as at least one child is still lost—and there is still concern about Edmund's fate. If the characters found no children and return, Anja promises to go looking herself in the morning if they're still not back by then. Characters can spend the rest of their evening comfortably with food and lodging at The Crestfallen Calf, paid for by the mayor.

DAY TWO

On the day before Krampusnacht, Morrighan Conway and two of her apprentices make their move to steal the book from Max's home while he's away gathering wood. Morrighan transforms into a crow to inconspicuously enter Max's property and steal the *Monograph* from where he has hidden it, under the floorboards at the foot of his bed.

DAY 2 HAPPENINGS

- The sawmill owner, Lorentz, has gone missing. The witches kidnapped him and took him to the asylum after they caught him suspiciously watching them.
- Tavern patrons complain at the lack of schnapps after it was stolen from the storehouse last night.
- A neighborhood dog was found decapitated with its head placed on the front of a toy train.

STRANGERS IN THE VILLAGE

Some townsfolk come forward to Anja to tell her they spotted several strangers around Max's house early in the day, nosing through his windows, and even trying his door. Anja, always taking anything the villagers say with a grain of salt, seeks out the characters again to enlist their aid since her hands are full with festival preparations as well as leading the search party for the missing child(ren). Anja asks the group to check

out Max and his house. If the characters helped her the night before, she offers them 1 gc each.

Anja believes the villagers are mostly just being paranoid, but if someone did indeed break into Max's house, this someone might also be behind the disappearing children. She also adds the villagers reported seeing some strangers travelling on the north road that leads toward the old, abandoned asylum.

A Meeting with Max

From sunrise until close to dusk, Max can be found at his home tending to his yard, whittling, or on his back porch cooking. He's completely unaware of any suspicious figures that might have been around his home and he has no enemies that he knows of. If questioned, Max thinks it all sounds preposterous; he's not an unkind man, but he doesn't take well to interrogation, particularly with the inner turmoil and worry he is suffering over his nightly activities of which he has. He does not invite the characters inside and answers only questions he feels are necessary. When he tires of the interview, he shoos the characters away, and ignores them if they remain.

Any character with a Perception score of 15 or better notices a few peculiar things about Max. He has bruises on his forearms, an overly earthy smell about him, and cuts and scrapes in unexpected places. Characters watching Max might also spot these clues with a success on a Perception challenge roll made with 2 banes. If questioned about the injuries, Max blames them on a fall he took down a hill while collecting firewood.

Max leaves the house only to gather wood or children, depending on whether it is day or night.

Exploring Max's Home

Some small decorative trees and a wooden fence surround the house. A small covered porch juts out the back and there the characters can find a rocking chair and a spit for roasting meat. Among wood shavings and drippings of meat, just below the bedroom window, searching characters find footprints leading north toward the asylum.

Simple locks secure his home and anyone who knows how to use lock picks can easily open them. Kicking open a door requires a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane as it's stout and sturdy. The window to Max's bedroom is partly opened.

The interior is divided into a living area, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. Common household items can be found throughout as one might expect a man his age and status to own.

Several bookshelves packed neatly with books stand in the living room. One shelf appears disheveled. It was on this shelf that Max kept the *Monograph* until he—or rather, the Krampus—decided it wasn't inconspicuous enough to leave in plain sight, and hid it under the floorboards at the foot of his bed.

In the bedroom stands a simple wooden bed and wardrobe. Soiled, partly torn clothes and a coil of rope lie piled in a corner. A small wooden chest at the foot of the bed holds several blankets, bundles of rope, and a motley assortment of handkerchiefs. Under the chest and beneath the floorboards is a hidden compartment, which can be found by anyone who moves the box. The Krampus kept the *Monograph* here until the cultists stole it.

The Road to Hirnschule Asylum

After reporting their findings to Anja, the characters might decide to head toward the asylum. Anja reminds them this can be dangerous at night and advises they wait until the next morning. Just over 4 miles up the north road leaving the village, it takes about an hour-and-a-half to get there on foot; if the characters decide to go at night, it will take two-and-a-half hours, and you should roll once on the Day 2 forest wandering enemies table for every 30 minutes of travel.

If the group makes it to the asylum during the night of the second day, they get the drop on the Daughters of the Dark Winter and reach Morrighan well before she and her apprentices have had time to craft the transference ritual, let alone perform it.

If characters choose to rest and then head out at dawn, Anja again pays for their meals and lodging, and also offers to restock any ammunition or provide any basic gear they might need before they head to the asylum.

Day Three

Krampusnacht, or Night of the Krampus, the eve before the winter solstice, is notoriously the worst and final night of the Krampus's hunt. Tensions are high in the village as final preparations for the festival are made and nearly everyone's children are all but locked away or tied down.

Characters likely set out for the asylum on this day or have already made it there. If they are still in town, Anja is now convinced that something is going on and that the asylum needs to be investigated. She asks the group to check it out, offering them a house of their own in the village and 5 gc each. She would join them, but she feels she should remain in town for the villagers' morale. If pressed for armed assistance, she offers to hire **2 mercenaries** to help the group, but reduces the characters' payment to 4 gc each to offset her costs.

DAY 3 HAPPENINGS

- The witches set ambushes and stand guard against anyone entering the asylum.
- Morrighan and a few of her cohorts use the kitchen area of the asylum to research the *Monograph* in their attempt to develop and prepare the ritual.
- Anja attempts to control the panic and pandemonium in town, declaring an early curfew and lockdown, and thus an early end to the festivities. This makes the villagers even more unhappy.
- Despite everyone's best efforts, several more children go missing from Hund after the sun sets.

HIRNSCHULE ASYLUM

The Hirnschule Asylum was to be torn down years ago, but the workers tasked with the effort all died under very mysterious circumstances or simply disappeared, leaving the job undone. The villagers have a healthy fear of the place and none ever go there, convinced that it is haunted, or worse.

Abandoned and saddled with a terrible reputation, it has become the perfect base of operations for the Daughters of the Dark Winter.

Four or so miles north of the village, a large paved pathway breaks off into the woods, wending its way into a long, winding loop around a stagnant fountain that sits at the front of the asylum. The entire west half of the building is rubble, where the workers initially began their demolition efforts before they were all chased off by the strange occurrences, accidents, and mysterious deaths that plagued their efforts.

While inside the asylum, characters who spend too long in any one place will encounter the various denizens of this place. Use the following table to determine what sorts of things they encounter.

ASYLUM WANDERING ENEMIES

d6	Enemies
1	A group of 1d6 Void-corrupted children's toys (**tiny monsters**).
2	A knot of 1d6 Daughters (**apprentice witches**) searching for intruders.
3	A **ghastly chorus** from area F exploring the ruin.
4	A group of 1d3 satchelkin up to no good.
5	A pair of **large monsters** attracted by the dark magic.
6	An angry **wraith** eager to kill.

ASYLUM LOCATIONS

The following locations correspond to the asylum map.

A. Lobby: Two open doorframes on the north wall flank a large reception desk. The room is full of dilapidated seating, several tables once filled with vases of fresh flowers. A group of **3 poltergeists** haunt this place, attacking anyone who spends more than 1 minute in this room.

B. Atrium: Once used for dining and activities, this caved-in space is difficult terrain, full of rubble, ruined furniture, and broken glass from the skylights above. The air smells of mildew and rot, and small puzzles and toys are strewn about everywhere. A few desiccated corpses and near-skeletons of former patients still sit slumped in chairs, some of them shackled to them, or lie on the floor. On one of them is a pocket watch (which is an enchanted object) and 2 gc.

C. Administration Office: Rubble covers much of this office area and debris almost blocks the entrance. A Size 1 creature can squeeze past the debris with a success on an Agility challenge roll. Smaller creatures can enter freely, while larger creatures cannot. Clearing the rubble takes 10 minutes of work, triggering a random encounter (see table above).

Only two offices are accessible along the southern wall. A broken desk and a dilapidated couch stand out front of them. The offices are relatively similar, both containing rotting and overstuffed leather chairs parked in front of bay windows looking out over the lawn. The west office's desk contains a pistol with ammunition and powder enough for 10 shots, and a stash of 20 gc. In the east office, a raven-haired girl stands motionless facing the corner. She does not respond if spoken to, but if disturbed, she is revealed to be a **medium demon** and attacks immediately.

D. Central Hallway: The hallway holds paintings of the men and women who founded the place. Unless the characters arrived on Day 2, 5 **apprentice witches** guard a doorway, along with the **animated corpse** of a former patient, to stop any intruders.

E. Visitation & Holding: Filled with chairs, this room holds several small, two-person tables outfitted with manacles attached to one side. Most of this room is still intact as the furniture is mostly made of iron, though somewhat rusty, and bolted to the floor.

F. Lab and Study: Along the east and west walls of this long and narrow room sit several overstuffed chairs and bookshelves still loaded with books covering a variety of topics, such as dissection, preservation, and experimental medicine. At the southern end of the room are two operating tables, and a surgical one used to drain the blood from corpses. Amid the detritus beneath the operating tables is a **ghastly chorus**.

G. Common Area: This in-between area is rough terrain strewn with garbage, broken syringes, and dried bloodstains that mar the carpet. Fresh footprints leading toward the infirmary can be found with a success on a Perception challenge roll made with 1 bane.

H. Treatment: Several chairs sit in a row on a cracked-tile floor. Each chair has hefty leather restraints for arms, legs, and head. Three of them still contain child-size remains. If any of the remains are disturbed, a **wraith** emerges from them and attacks.

I. Isolation Cells: Several rows of small square cells stand here. Roll or choose a result from the following table to see what the characters find inside a cell they investigate.

ISOLATION CELL CONTENTS

d20	Contents
1	A wooden prosthetic limb
2	A hungry **large monster**!
3	A plush toy with a hole torn into it
4	A set of 3 seashells
5	A few (1d3 + 1) Void-corrupted children's toys (**tiny monsters**)
6	A set of manacles
7	Journal filled with ravings about vegetables
8	Several broken teeth
9	Nothing
10	Small shivs made from fingerbones
11	Mold and mushrooms
12	Boots with a secret compartment in the heels
13	Scribbled drawings of an evil orange man
14	A random interesting thing
15	A random enchanted object
16	A corpse
17	An **animated corpse**
18	A **poltergeist**
19	A head cage
20	Petrified feces

K. Infirmary: An iron padlock secures the entrance to the infirmary. Opening it requires lock picks, 1d3 minutes of work, and a success on an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes. The door can be attacked and destroyed (Defense 5; Health 20), though breaking it down makes a lot of noise and triggers a random encounter.

The witches have fashioned a concealed pit that drops away just inside the door, filled with broken syringes, rubble, and iron rebar bent to point upward. Morrighan and her apprentices safely enter and exit via a tunnel burrowed through the rubble from outside. Anyone stepping onto the area triggers the trap, falls

prone 4 yards down, and takes 2d6 damage on landing on the debris. A creature that takes this damage must also get a success on a Strength challenge roll or become diseased. A creature diseased in this way can repeat the roll each time it completes a rest and removes the affliction on a success.

Inside the chamber, The **Morrighan** and 9 **apprentice witches** pore over the *Monograph of Guilt*. Unless the characters have arrived on the second day, the witches have finalized their ritual and have initiated it just as the characters arrive.

Six witches stand around a gurney that holds a bound and gagged Lorentz, the missing sawmill owner. One of the witches holds the open *Monograph* in her hands, and they are all chanting a dead language in unison as Lorentz futilely struggles and thrashes against his restraints. A thin, translucent wall of what appears to be a sickly gray mist surrounds the witches and the initiate. Nothing can pass through the mist, though it can be attacked and destroyed (Defense 5, Health 20). The other 3 witches and The Morrighan attack the intruders.

Breaking the force field and dealing damage to any of the witches disrupts the ritual for 1 round. If any of the witches in the circle are killed, one of the remaining 3 rushes in to take her place.

If the characters manage to defeat the cultists and recover the *Monograph,* they learn what's been going on and where the Krampus will go this evening, as he mapped out precisely where the sacrificial circle is and how to get there inside the book.

If, however, the witches spend 8 rounds chanting, they complete the ritual. Doing so releases Max from the curse, but instead curses the witch holding the *Monograph*—not Lorentz—who immediately transforms into the Krampus. Angered at the unwelcome transference, the Krampus will attack anyone immediately around him or who gets in his way as he attempts to leave the asylum, releasing 1d3 satchelkin from his sack to assist him. If the Krampus is killed, another witch immediately transforms into the Krampus. This continues until all the witches and Morrighan are dead.

THE SACRIFICIAL CIRCLE

Deep inside the Dark Forest, about two hours northeast of the village or three hours east of the asylum, lies the Krampus's sacrificial circle. The Krampus can be found here in the final hours of the day preparing his ritual, which begins one hour before midnight.

The group finds the Krampus exactly where the *Monograph* suggested, and at the center of the site burns a Size 3 bonfire. Hanging high from the branches of a birch trees surrounding the circle are thirteen children, each bound, gagged, and held in crudely woven wicker baskets. The Krampus chants and dances around the bonfire, along with 6 satchelkin (see "New Creatures") capering behind him.

If the characters attack or otherwise reveal their presence, the Krampus hurries to complete the ceremony. He orders the satchelkin to attack the group, while he, each round, moves from one child to the next, severing the ropes from which they are suspended, which drops them to the ground in a broken, dead heap. He throws the heap into the bonfire, before moving on to the next.

The Krampus attacks the characters only if they try to prevent him from cutting the children down or throwing their bodies into the fire. He will, of course, defend himself fully if he is attacked. Once the Krampus is incapacitated, there is a burst of brimstone dust that dissolves into a cloud of sulphuric gas as he transforms back into Max Krause, unconscious and unaware of what's happened. Any surviving satchelkin immediately break off and flee into the forest—they might return to plague the village, or become minions to the witches, if the cult still exists.

Regardless of how the battle plays out, at the stroke of midnight, the Krampus is summoned back to the Void. He departs either with a terrifying, soul-wrenching howl extolling the victory of his offerings to his master, or a rage-filled, profanity-laced scream of promised vengeance at his defeat, which quickly turns to abject terror at the thought of having to face the Demon Lord and explain his failure.

CONCLUSION (DAY 4)

If the group defeats the Krampus, the town rejoices upon hearing the news, assuming the demon has been banished. If the characters spared Max's life, he recovers shortly after the festival begins at dawn. If the characters tell Max the truth about what he's done, he nods grimly, takes his leave, and will take his own life shortly thereafter. If the characters reveal the truth to the villagers, they will seize Max immediately and kill him.

The entire village considers the characters to be heroes, and Anja offers the group a modest but decent house in the village bounds. Provided Max has survived and has not been told the truth, he begins carving life-size statues of the characters to commemorate their heroic deeds.

If the witches completed the ritual, they correct the errors they believe they made before, and begin experimenting on initiates to bring forth more Krampus demons (use the Krampus stats below for all newly created demons). The new ritual works, but with a new major flaw: once the solstice passes, they

are unable to control the power of the curse and their initiates stay permanently transformed as Krampus demons and hunt not just children, but everyone, including the witches, for their sacrifices. A few days after the solstice, 2d6 Krampus demons emerge from the asylum to destroy the village.

If the Krampus was not defeated before he sacrificed all the captured children to the Demon Lord, then the cycle begins anew next year. The grieving villagers thank the characters for their efforts, but it becomes clear very quickly that they are no longer welcome in Hund.

NEW CREATURES

The following new creatures appear in this adventure.

SATCHELKIN

Hideous mockeries of the children from which they're made, satchelkin crawl forth from Krampus's sack, having been tainted by the Void and corrupted beyond redemption. These horrifying figures have pale skin, dead-black eyes, and mouths stretched into wide grins, drooling black spittle. They wear the rags of their clothes and some still carry the toys they had at the time of their capture.

Insane, satchelkin cannot speak, although they do understand whatever language they spoke before they were transformed. The only sound they make is incessant laughter, in horrific child-like peals that border on the hysterical.

SATCHELKIN — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1/2 horrifying monster

Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 26; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 9
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 12
Immune damage from disease or poison; gaining Insanity; diseased, poisoned

ATTACK OPTIONS

Filthy Claws (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 + 2)
Festering Spittle (short range) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 plus Corrupting Poison)
Corrupting Poison A creature must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 damage and becomes poisoned for 1 minute. At the end of this time, the creature gains 1 Corruption. If the creature is already poisoned, it takes 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Tantrum The satchelkin uses its filthy claws to attack the same target twice. The satchelkin makes each attack roll with 1 bane.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Void Crawl The satchelkin uses an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to teleport to an open space it can see within short range. Roll a d6. On a 1, the satchelkin must wait 1 minute before it can use Void Crawl again.

MORRIGHAN CONWAY

Mad, corrupt, and thoroughly depraved, Morrighan Conway believes that she can attain powers beyond reckoning by obtaining control of the essence of the Krampus. She has spent a lifetime mapping the fiend's predations, and can predict where it will appear next. Her time in service to dark powers has ruined her once-beautiful features and left her body twisted and gnarled. She has a cackling laugh, a ghastly smile, and blood-red eyes that constantly roll around, and even back into their sockets.

She speaks the Common Tongue and Dark Speech.

MORRIGHAN CONWAY — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human

Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 13; **Health** 62; **Insanity** 5; **Corruption** 6
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +3 with 1 boon (1d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Counterspell When a creature attacks Morrighan with a spell, she can use a triggered action to impose 1 bane on the attack roll or make the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.
Spell Recovery Morrighan can use an action to heal 15 damage and regain one expended casting of a spell she has learned.

MAGIC

Power 3
Curse *hex* (4), *pain* (2), weakness (1), *swine* (1)
Forbidden *harm* (4), *hateful defecation* (2), *vision's end* (1)
Life *minor healing* (4)
Transformation *mask* (4), *animal shape* (2)

THE KRAMPUS

The demon that is the Krampus stands nearly seven feet tall, with a humanoid shape, clawed hands, cloven feet, and the horns and fur of a goat. The horns themselves add an additional two or so feet in height, massively long and thick as they curl upward and then back toward the demon's head. From his mouth hangs an elongated forked tongue.

Though he is sometimes seen naked, he often travels in a dark, hooded fur suit that wraps around his horns and almost shadows his sunken eyes and conceals his overgrown white beard. The irregular jingle of the iron bells and the incessant clinking of the thick chains wrapped about his body sound his approach, as does the constant swishing of his ever-present virgács—though he can move in perfect silence if he chooses. On his back, he carries a tattered and dirty burlap sack, usually filled with writhing, sobbing children.

The Krampus speaks the Common Tongue and Dark Speech.

KRAMPUS — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 horrifying demon

Perception 14 (+4); truesight
Defense 18; **Health** 80; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 8
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 18
Immune damage from disease or poison; gaining Insanity; dazed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, impaired, poisoned, slowed, stunned
Discordant Jingle The ringing of the Krampus's bells and clinking of his chains impose 1 bane on the Will challenge rolls made by creatures within short range of him. Demons are immune to this effect.
Sense Children The Krampus knows the exact location of any human children with 0 Corruption that are within long range. These children cannot hide or be hidden from the Krampus.
Silent Steps When moving, the Krampus only makes noise if he chooses to do so.
Spell Defense The Krampus takes half damage from spells. He imposes 1 bane on attack rolls made to attack him with a spell and makes challenge rolls to resist spells with 1 boon.
Void Sack A creature placed inside the Krampus's sack falls to the edge of the Void and must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or gain 1d3 + 1 Insanity. At the end of each round, a creature can attempt to escape the sack by making an Intellect or Will challenge roll with 2 banes. On a success, the creature escapes the sack, falling prone in a space within 1 yard of the Krampus. On a failure, the creature gains 1d3 + 1 Insanity. If the creature goes mad while in the sack, it becomes a **satchelkin**, retaining none of its original statistics.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +7 with 2 boons (3d6 plus Kidnap on attack roll 20+)
Tongue (melee) +7 with 2 boons (1d3 plus Transference)
Virgács (melee) +7 with 3 boons (2d6)
Chain (melee; reach 2) +7 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)
Kidnap A creature becomes grabbed by Krampus, who can maintain the grab using a triggered action on his turn.
Transference A creature must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 3 banes or gain 1d3 Corruption.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Savage Attacks The Krampus makes an attack with his claws, tongue, virgács, and chain. He cannot attack the same target more than twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Void Leap The Krampus uses an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to teleport to a space he can see within medium range. Roll a d6. On a 1, The Krampus must wait at least 1 minute before he can use Void Leap again.

END OF THE ROUND

Stuff the Sack The Krampus moves one creature grabbed by him to his Void sack.