

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

Trials of the Toy Makers

2014 HOLIDAY MODULE
A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE
BY STEVE BEAN



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2014

Trials of the Toy Makers

A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



his adventure is for 6-8 2nd-level characters. It is helpful for the party to have a cleric and a wizard. The climactic battle is a spell duel with a demigod. Judges should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the spell duel rules (core rule-book, p. 98-103). The party will struggle with this final encounter without a spell caster or two with some of the counter-spells listed in the area 4-14 description.

This adventure is a murder-mystery with a detailed back story and a complex web of clues to what has happened and what the PCs need to do to set things right. Judges should make sure they understand the material and are very familiar with the module before running it.

BACKGROUND

It is winter in a far northern region of semi-arctic steppes. The adventurers could be there headed for another adventure (e.g., *DCC #72: Beyond the Black Gate*) or they might be searching for the gateway into the underworld that is reputed to exist in these lands, hoping to rescue a fallen comrade from the clutches of Death incarnate. In any event, the party happens upon an enclave of semi-nomadic, wild elves called the Makarhu. These proud, fierce people welcome them as guests and the PCs are able to observe an important annual event. Every night for three nights, fey gnomes called Konhengen secretly visit the Makarhu village encampment and leave a gift of a brightly painted miniature model of a common object or animal for one child. Strangely, this year, the gifting abruptly stops about four nights before solstice eve. Never in living memory has the gifting ended any time other than after the night of the solstice has passed. When village children go missing, the PCs are recruited to rescue them – and are then thrust into a larger drama, as well.

THE KONHENGEN'S SACRED MISSION

The Makarhu are unaware that there is a reason other than generosity behind the Konhengen's gift-giving – one with profound mystical importance.

All year long the sun – called Kivas Kota or “fiery eagle” in the Makarhu language – flies through the heavens. Each night it alights in the dark underworld to rest. Over the course of the year the eagle grows increasingly fatigued and rests for longer and longer periods.

Long ago, Tuwonatar – the God of Death – grew to hate the sun as life-giver and because its eternal nature defies him. Every year on the solstice, when the sun takes its longest rest in the underworld, Tuwonatar sends forth an army of spirits to try to trap the sun in the layer of necromantic energy that enshrouds the lands of the dead.

The god Sakanta set his will to opposing Tuwonatar and sought a worthy people on whom to bestow the sacred mission of protecting the sun. He found a noble gnomish race called the Konhengen and placed a geas on them.

To help them with the mission, Sakanta gave them a Sammas: an enchanted version of a portable mill for grinding grain, coffee, etc. The Konhengen use the Sammas for an immense magical working: the mill creates new constellations and enables these constellations to function together as the component parts of a heavenly artifact that can pull the sun out the underworld.

Unsurprisingly, Tuwonatar is constantly trying to sabotage the Konhengen's work. So over the years the gnomes have developed strategies for keeping their artifact designs secret. They select common objects and animals on which to base their manufactured constella-

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“Murder! Foul murder!” These are the only words that describe the scene inside the underground complex of the toy-making gnomes called the Konhengen.

Murder is not what you had hoped to find, but you’re not surprised, either. Your introduction to these fabled, reclusive toy-makers had ominous overtones from the outset. First, there was the abrupt and unceremonious end to their nightly gift-giving visits to the village children. Then, three children snuck off into the Taboo Lands, convinced that evil had befallen the Konhengen.

And so you’ve travelled to a great island on the eve of the Winter Solstice to find the missing children. Instead you’ve found mass murder. But you’ve also found evidence of a secret agenda behind the gift-giving of the toy-making gnomes. Now you must unravel the mystery of the gnomes’ true purpose — or the world will suffer consequences on a cosmic scale!



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