

Curse of the Wendigo

By Hogan

Background:

Far out in the woods of Brynwood, three trappers were caught in their cabin by a sudden blizzard, the first of the winter. In several days, the snowstorm swept the area, almost totally burying the cabin, and imprisoning the trappers. As they fast ran out of food, hunger and desperation played on the trappers' mind, and one night as the snowstorm still raged, it became too much for the man called Jack Scapra who went over the mental edge. In the darkness of the cabin, he slew his two fellow trappers and satisfied his hunger by dining on their flesh. As he committed that gruesome and unnaturally act of cannibalism, he was noticed by the gods of nature, and in their rage, they visited upon him the worst possible curse! Jack Scapra was turned into a creature of bloodlust and frenzy, now only living to kill and eat his former kind, Jack Scapra became a Wendigo! In this state he ravaged the interior of the cabin, then burst through the snow-blocked door, into the woods to hunt and eat whatever came in his way!

The first victims were other trappers and woodsmen who entered the forest when the blizzard settled. Their disappearance worried the nearby settlement of High Haspur, and a couple of rangers were sent to investigate. They returned, telling of monstrous footprints, and they went back to the woods to investigate some more, then they too disappeared. As a few woodcutters later on also disappeared, the forest was shunned as haunted, and when one of the missing rangers and a woodsman turned out badly mauled, the village's mayor became really worried and started looking for help.

The Plot:

The players are going to forest in order to hunt a murderous beast that lurks in the woods. Instead of just encountering a rampaging beast, they are beset by the cursed Wendigo!

Scene 1:

As the Players enter the village, they hear moaning and groaning. The bodies of the ranger and one of the woodsmen has just been found and returned to town, to the sorrow of their wives and family. Upon seeing the badly mauled corpses (one arm falls away as they are brought inside the watch's office), the mayor declares the forest off-limit for everybody until the problem has been solved. In the meantime, he will send for help in a larger town to the south, it should arrive within a few days.

Taken into account that players are as most players normally are, they should rush to the forest at once!

Scene 2:

At the edge of the forest lies a small lumbermill. It has been abandoned since the haunting and disappearances in the forest began. As the players close in, they will hear hoof beats from behind, where they will see three watchmen fast approaching with a pony-riding gnome behind. The watchmen (3rd level fighters) will tell the players that the forest is off limit for their own good. If the players insist on going in, the Gnome (Raulken Flintsteel, 1st fighter/advisor) will admit that it might be a good idea to let them go, as they might come up with something useful, but he will remind them that they are doing so at their own risk!

Scene 3:

In the outskirts, the forest is pretty light, but before long most of it will consist of close-growing pines, which will prevent most of snow from covering the grounds beneath them (thereby making it difficult to find tracks).

The players will obviously be looking for tracks and such as they enter the forest, but they will be pretty scarce, mostly because of the constant drifting snow, but also because nobody living nearby has entered the forest for a time. For each hour (remember, it's winter, and that means it will be getting dark pretty soon) spent searching for clues, the characters has a 30% chance each to make a discovery, 50% if they have the tracking proficiency, and are actively using it. What they find is the body of a man (the missing ranger), almost buried by snow, with only a foot sticking out. If dug out, it is obviously, that the man has been mauled by something powerful. Most of his left side has been ripped away by a savage blow, and his left arm is missing (it can be found under the snow about 45 feet away).

For the trained eye (a ranger with tracking proficiency, a faint track can be followed from the body and through the woods. After about an hour of tracking, the tracks abruptly ends at a larger body of pines. Actually, they end very near the body of a deer, which died with its eyes wide-open in terror, squashed by a small tree. The tree seems to have been ripped out of the ground by something of great strength (just in order to give an impression of the strength of the Wendigo).

At this point, it should start becoming dark, but if the players look around, they should be able to make out the outline of a shadowy entrance in a huge pile of snow, at the base of a small rocky hill.

Scene 4:

The shadowy entrance, shows on closer inspection to be the doorway into a small cabin almost completely buried by snow. The door itself lies facedown away from the cabin, half buried in the snow. On the top of the door is a huge clawed footprint (the Wendigo's off course), and the sides of the door seems to have been ripped away...from the inside, so something large could come through (his happened when the Wendigo fled the cabin after its creation). The cabin is a simple one. Upon walking through the door, the visitors enter a small room about 5x4 yards. It contains only a small fireplace made out of stone, an empty cupboard and broken furniture. On the far wall hangs two wolf traps, but empty pecks shows room for more. The room's two windows are boarded shut and covered by snowdrifts on the outside. Behind the fireplace lies a stack of bones including two grinning skulls. This is the remains of the two trappers originally trapped by the snowstorm together with Jack Scapra. A spell like *Speak with Dead* could give some interesting knowledge about the source of the Wendigo.

In the left corner of the opposite wall, is an entrance to a room behind. As with the front door, the entrance has been widened by something powerful, and the door has been ripped off and placed up against the doorway.

The other room is what used to be a small bedroom with sleeping bunks. Now, to the horrors of the players, it has been transformed in to grizzly pantry. Six wolf traps have been forced into the planks of the ceiling, and from the jaws hangs the remains of 6 half eaten humans (the missing trappers and hunters). This scene is advised to be described with as much horror as possible, giving the players and idea of what manner of beast they are up against.

The Wendigo!!

Ever since the players entered the forest, the bestial senses of the Wendigo made it aware of their presence, and it has followed them for some time. If the players didn't reach the cabin before nightfall, and decided to camp in the woods, the Wendigo might wait until most of them were asleep (you can be sure they will have guards out!), then attack the guard and slay the rest of the party. The best way is still to guide them to the cabin before nightfall, so they realize the full savagery of the Wendigo before encountering it.

When the party enters the cabin, the Wendigo is then ready to make its move. If one in the party stays outside, he is the one to be attacked first. Odds are that it will be a totally surprise, and the only hint he will get, is two huge claws descending on him.

If every member of the party entered the cabin, the gruesome faith will befall the first who leaves the cabin again. Anyway, a grim and bloody fight is going to take place, where the DM is advised to play on the sheer strength of the almost unstoppable Wendigo.

As the curse of the Wendigo binds it to the forest, the only way to completely escape the Wendigo, is to get to the forest line and beyond.

Death of the Wendigo

If the players manage to take the Wendigo down on -10 hp and "killing it", it will continue regenerating. It will arise again at a time when the players are not present, in order to sneak away and lurk in the forest. The DM is advised to let the regeneration work with actually closing wounds etc., as experienced players (those who have achieved a level high enough to work out with a Wendigo, got to be experienced!) who sees it regenerate, immediately starts burning it, chopping it up in small pieces and such. Though the Wendigo can still arise, it sounds not as plausible as when only brought down normally.

When the Wendigo arises from its coma like state, all body parts (say, the head!), which has been hacked of and carried away by the players (there will always be some) will change into snow and melt away.

The Conclusion

The conclusion to the plot will most certainly be one of the following:

- 1) The party is completely wiped out by the Wendigo.
- 2) The party manages to fight the Wendigo to a draw, but must flee and are hunted through the forest until they finally escape or conclusion 1 is apparent.
- 3) The party brings the Wendigo down, but must realize that they cannot completely defeat the Wendigo. Hence they must flee the forest, which thereafter is a place haunted and shunned place where people and adventures go in, never to return.

In both conclusion 1 & 2, the players might return someday in the future when they are more powerful, using a full *Wish* to end the curse for good, in order to complete their only failure in their career.

Notes:

The solution to the plot is open. If the players are powerful enough to bring down the Wendigo without breaking a sweat, the grim mood of the adventure is lost,

In most cases the adventure will be used to teach the players humility. They are no all to powerful, and some things cannot be solved at once, maybe later when they have grown in power and wisdom.