

## Lonelywood Quest Rewrite

The party will trek through the woods for about an hour before hearing a faint voice say “help me.” Following it, you’ll find a small clearing with several dead hunters. Each one is in a different state of mutilation, with limbs severed, entrails strewn out, and snow stained with blood. One hunter is barely alive, their entrails ripped out and lying around them, one leg severed. They’ve obviously been here a while, as their beard is covered in ice and their face is beginning to show signs of frostbite. With their last breaths, the hunter is able to utter “That’s no moose,” before dying.

Near the clearing, they can pick up a set of tracks. A DC 12 survival check shows that they’re hooved, likely belonging to a moose or large reindeer. A DC 17 Survival check reveals that some hoof imprints seem to have been made atop claw imprints.

The tracks can be followed with a DC 13 Survival group check. On a successful check, the party follows the tracks for an hour. On a failed check, the party loses the trail after 20 minutes but can backtrack a bit to pick them up again. During this time, they may hear scampering and skittering in the woods behind them. They may also see what looks to be a moose standing a ways away, but if you approach, they’ll find it’s just shrubs and trees creating the illusion.

After following the tracks for an uninterrupted hour, the party hears a bleating a little ways ahead, towards where the tracks lead. A DC 12 survival check identifies this as the frightened or pained bleating of a deer. Following it, you find the upper half of a dead deer hanging from a tree by its entrails. However, it’s clearly long-dead: it’s frozen over, with icicles made of blood reaching down to the ground, and its limbs frostbitten. If the party muses aloud the strangeness of hearing it make noise while dead, they’ll hear a soft giggle from the woods nearby.

Whether or not they hear that, they hear another faint voice say “help me.” If the party begins to follow it, have them roll a DC 14 Perception check. A successful roll makes them realize this is the exact same voice they heard earlier. Same voice, same cadence, same faintness. If they share this info with the party and they stop following the noise, they’ll hear the call again, but this time distorted. If the party stays still or begins to move away, they’ll hear something large coming towards them from the sound of the call. Moving through snow, snapping twigs, smacking into branches. They can make out a vague silhouette: large, hunched over and walking on four legs, but like a gorilla, two hind legs and two arms. It has lanky, long limbs and is very thin. You can tell it has large antlers, not unlike a moose, and from its face you can see a faint blue light.

As it approaches, it moves behind a tree, and the noise stops, and you don't see the creature come from behind the tree. A moment later, you each feel a hot breath on your neck.

Turning around, you see the creature clearly. It's now standing on its hind legs, about 10 feet tall. Its feet are large hooves with claws on the end, attached to digitigrade legs. Its arms are long, lanky, with skin pulled tight across bone, ending in long, wicked claws. Its body is little more than an exposed ribcage with black, frostbitten flesh clinging to the bones and a distended belly popping from below. And finally, its head is a bare moose skull twisted in a grotesque grin, with a faint blue glow coming from its eye sockets. It opens its mouth and the distorted "help me" from before comes from it.

Roll initiative. <https://homebrewery.naturalcrit.com/share/ILXYHzfplxMr>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZuVjR4i8sQ>

At half health, the wendigo will disengage/use its legendary action to move, duck behind a tree, and flee. As it does, however, it'll continue to do the distorted "help me," giggles, and other voices crying out for help.

Slowly following the direction of the cries, you can pick up a trail leading further into the woods. The tracks lead to a large clearing before disappearing into thin air, but ahead of them is the Elven Tomb (Pg 83), with the party approaching from the south.

On the tomb in E4 is the shed husk of human flesh. It's missing bones, just a frostbitten flesh suit with a large slit down the back where the spine would be. This is the remains of the person that would become the Wendigo. By the sarcophagus is a water stained backpack. Within are moldy gloves, a pair of cracked goggles, and a waterlogged journal. Most of the journal is unreadable due to water damage, but the later pages briefly recount the ship he sailed on, the Dark Duchess, wrecking, getting caught in a blizzard, and eventually resorting to cannibalism. His final entry says he's going to try to walk to Ten Towns, and if he dies, he deserves it.

E6 is a sunken barrow filled with the scent of blood and rot. Within are tons of various carcasses, including reindeer, birds, and a few humans. They're all in various states of mutilation and consumption, with bites being taken out of several, teeth marks here and there, and limbs, blood, and innards strewn about. There's also plenty of clumps of moss, tree branches, etc. In this room, you can find the twig, pinecone, and human hand (still attached to corpses) for the brazier. You can also find feathers on some dead birds here.

While investigating the tomb, the party can occasionally see the wendigo in the treeline, watching them or slowly circling the treeline. It may give the impression that it cannot approach the tomb, and may play up this misconception to lull the party in a false sense of security, but nothing prevents it from approaching.

In E9, instead of Ravisin being present, she will have left a note on the sarcophagus, reading:

“From this day onward, I curse Ten Towns.

My sister was raped and murdered by hunters, and her defiled body lies here. I pledge myself to Auril the Frostmaiden and will bring about the destruction of Ten Towns with my army of awakened animals and dark beasts. The spirit haunting Lonelywood, the beast lurking in Maer Dualdon, the polar bears around Kelvin’s Cairn, all serve me and my intentions.

If you are reading this, you have defiled the final resting place of my dear sister, Vurnis, and you will die a more gruesome death than the rest of Ten Towns. You will become victims of Auril the Frostmaiden, frozen in the stark tundras. The last word uttered from your frigid, blue lips before you die will be my name:

Ravisin.”

The letter also has a symbol drawn on it, perhaps simplified or stylized:



In this room are the normal things, plus a discarded backpack containing an immovable rod and a blue chili pepper in a jar (eating it lets you use the dragonborn's breath ability, specifically blue dragonborn), and a small brass case with some old (but smokeable) tobacco. Also in here is the awakened shrub, who's afraid, but being treated kindly will make it friendly.

The mirror doesn't show the Wendigo, but instead shows an image of Grimskalle. The image is "live," with the wind blowing and the Aurora moving. It shows Grimskalle because the mirror was "attuned" to Ravisin, but she has since pledged allegiance to Auril. It also doesn't *really* need to make sense, as this is more a cool, mysterious moment than anything.

Upon leaving the area and returning to E5, the wendigo will be present, just standing there. It will have 60 HP. It will now fight to the death.

Upon death, its body shatters into ice shards. In the pile of ice, you'll hear a faint thumping. Within is a black, shriveled, but still beating heart. It is immune to damage except fire, taking no physical harm from weapons. This heart must be cast into a fire within 24 hours, or the wendigo will regenerate from the ice shards, and the heart, if removed from the ice, will magically disappear and return to the regenerated wendigo. Upon burning the heart, the party will be surrounded by howling wind kicking up flurries of snow, before subsiding, indicating the Wendigo is dead for good.

Writer's note: in my campaign, Ravisin is going to be built up to be a minor antagonist in Chapters 1 & 2. I really liked how eastern Ten Towns had a lot of Duergar references, and western Ten Towns had a lot of Ravisin stuff. An awakened polar bear (likely the same one from Foaming Mugs mentioned above) will have a small role in "Mountain Climb," defending the party against the yetis if the polar bear was freed from the Goblin caravan in Foaming Mugs. will also have Ravisin stage a large assault on the party sometime in Chapter 2, using a small army of controlled beasts & Fey creatures.

After the campaign-note: I ended up having Ravisin attack the party en-route to another town during the Chardalyn dragon attack, really just slowing them down, as the dragon was doing everything Ravisin wanted it to.