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Monsters of Winter

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Mari Lwyd

This odd creature has the face of a horse's skull and is covered in white robes decked with colorful ribbons. Closely associated with Wassailing and singing carols door to door this creature is only seen in winter. While it roams the snow and cold with ease, it is attracted to warm fires and the scent of food. Upon approaching a camp, hut or home the Mari Lwyd will sing in rhyme to announce its presence and begin pwnco, a kind of rhyming battle. If you do not engage with Mari Lwyd in the way it desires it will get more and more irritated until it lashes out and attacks. Participating in the rhyming battle will please it. If your rhymes are clever and insulting enough it will concede and leave. It is believed to bring good luck to invite the Mari Lwyd to eat with you after the battle of rhyming whit but be warned that it may behave mischievously. The Mari Lwyd has been known to nip playfully or chase after young looking girls when it is in a good mood. When it is irritated it has a whinny that inspires fear and will magically fling stones, snowballs or sticks at you.

MARI LWYD

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM FEY

Perception +15, low-light vision

Languages Sylvan, *Rhyming Tongue*

Skills Diplomacy +17, Occultism +15, Performance +20, Survival +13

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +6

Rhyming Tongue The Mari Lwyd can speak with any creature that has a language as if they were constantly under the effects of a tongues spell, except it is an innate ability, and anything it says rhymes.

AC 24; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +18

HP 115

Speed 45 feet

Pwnco Each party takes turns offering challenges and insults in rhyme to the other, and after a while, either the Mari Lwyd goes away, or if invited in, stays. It does this in good nature, and will generally be jovial in nature. Although, if threatened, or if the other party does not participate in pwnco, then it will get agitated, and attack.

Luck on the Household after being invited into the house or to join the camp or gathering, the Mari Lwyd will be jovial and possibly mischievous. After an hour, all other creatures get a blessing that lasts until the next winter's new year, or the blessing is used, whichever comes first. You can not be granted this ability more than one time in a year. After failing, or critically failing any check, you can use the Luck on the household to turn it into a success. Or you can turn any success into a critical success. Lastly, if a character has run out of hero points, and would die, this ability automatically activates and prevents the character from dying. They seem to be dead by all who wish ill will upon the character, but are at 1 hp and will not wake up until several hours have passed.

Melee ♦ Bite +16 (agile), **Damage** 2d10+9 bludgeoning

Fear Whinny ♦ if the Mari Lwyd gets agitated it will typically whinny loudly, causing fear in those who hear it. Each creature in a 30-foot emanation centered on the Mari Lwyd must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or be frightened 1 (and fleeing for one round on a critical failure).

Throw Object ♦♦ The Mari Lwyd can cast Telekinetic Projectile as an innate cantrip

CREATURE 7



Pwnco

Pwnco is a kind of battle of wits using rhyme. The goal is not necessarily to win, but to have fun. This would be best if it is role-played out, with the GM coming up with rhymes, and the party responding in kind.

Optionally, you can forgo this kind of role-play, and instead roll-play using the following rules. Any individual can either try their best or beat the Mari Lwyd.

Try their best: The character uses Perform to try and beat a moderately challenging DC at their level (so a level 5 character would need to beat a DC 20).

Beat the Mari Lwyd: The character uses Perform to try and beat the Perform DC of the Mari Lwyd.

When one or more characters tries their best and succeeds, that Mari Lwyd is satisfied and will not attack the party unless provoked. If a character is able to beat the Mari Lwyd it is impressed and instantly grants Luck on the Household to that individual, without being invited in. If the character critically succeeds in beating the Mari Lwyd, they can use Luck on the Household twice in a year, instead of once.



For more information on this old Welsh folk creature search it on wikipedia or visit <http://www.folkwales.org.uk/mari.html>

The Yule Lads

These thirteen brothers are mischievous and love to gang up on people. Some are tall and thin and others are short and fat. The tallest is as tall as an elf and the shortest is as short as a dwarf. Each of them wears a long cap and has white hair and a longer white beard and wear brightly colored winter coats. Especially adept at navigating in the snow these brothers are always on the look out for people to prank and things to steal. While each lad has his specialty they are all attracted to and steal food, especially in containers, pots, bowls or bags. It is said that you really can't ever kill a Yule Lad but when they have taken enough damage they will disappear in a puff of sparkles leaving behind everything they had on their person.

Stekkjarstaur (Sheep-Cote Clod)

Sheep-Cote Clod is only slightly impaired by his stiff peg-legs. Because of this he is slower and not as sneaky. He harries and harasses creatures - but most especially sheep - by being generally loud. His Stealth is only +7

Harass ♦ Sheep-Cote Clod harasses you by getting in your face, touching you, poking you, making annoying voices and so on. You must make a DC 22 Will save with the following effects.

Critical Success you are unaffected.

Success you are flat-footed to Sheep-Cote Clod until the end of his turn.

Failure you are flat-footed to Sheep-Cote Clod and his allies until the beginning of your next turn.

Critical Failure you are flat-footed to Sheep-Cote Clod and his allies until the end of Sheep-Cote Clod's next turn.

Giljagaur (Gully Gawk)

Incredibly good at hiding in gullies, Gully Gawk hides and waits. His favorite food is fresh milk, straight from the cow. He is able to conjure milk, but unfortunately it is always sour and undrinkable.

Create Milk ♦♦ creates a stream of sour milk that deals 2d12 damage to injure and sicken his opponents. The target must make a DC 19 Reflex save with the following effects:

Critical Success the target takes no damage.

Success the target takes half damage.

Failure the target takes full damage and is sickened 1.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage, is sickened 1, and is pushed back 5 feet and falls prone.

Stúfur (Stubby)

Stubby is abnormally short, being a bit shorter than some of the shortest dwarves. Armed with a rolling pin, he will attempt to steal any pans with food in them - even if it is only the crust - and eat the food in it.

Melee ♦ Rolling Pin +15, **Damage** 2d8+4 bludgeoning

Þvörusleikir (Spoon-Licker)

Armed with a wooden spoon, and will lick yours! He is extremely thin, probably due to malnutrition. While a wooden spoon may seem less effective against steel arms and armor, it is actually surprisingly painful and durable (it has HP hardness like steel).

Melee ♦ Wooden Spoon +17, **Damage** 2d6+6 bludgeoning

Pottaskefill (Pot-Scraper)

Pot-Scraper will steal the leftovers from pots if necessary. He is also surprisingly skilled with wielding the large pot he carries around to either put extra food into, or hit people with.

Melee ♦ Pot +15 (sweep) **Damage** 2d10+6 bludgeoning

Askasleikir (Bowl-Licker)

Quite often found hiding under beds waiting for someone to put down their "askur" - a type of lidded bowl - so he can steal and lick them. He will also simply wait until you are not looking to steal and lick your plates or bowls. He can conjure magical bowls that are obviously used to throw at people.

Ranged ♦ Throw Bowl +16 (thrown 45 feet) **Damage** 2d6+3 bludgeoning

Hurðaskellir (Door-Slammer)

Door-Slammer enjoys slamming doors, screaming, banging pots and pans, or generally making other loud noises unexpectedly. These are distracting and slightly frightening.

Loud Noises ♦♦ (sonic) Using items at hand, Door-Slammer makes some really loud and startling noises. This deals 2d6+6 sonic damage and all creatures in a 30-foot cone must make a DC 19 Fortitude save, with the following effects:

Critical Success No effect; and you are immune to the frightened effect from Door-Slammer's Loud Noises ability.

Success You take half damage and are frightened 1.

Failure You take full damage, are frightened 1, and deafened for 1 round.

Critical Failure You take double damage, are frightened 2, and are deafened for 10 minutes.

Skyrgámur (Skyr-Gobbler)

A lover of all fermented food, especially skyr - a yogurt like food - Skyr-Gobbler will attempt to steal skyr, yogurt, cheeses, wine and ale first, before going to other foods. He has a lot of old, inedible skyr left over that he throws at people to distract them (also grossing them out).

Ranged ♦ Old Skyr Balloon +16 (thrown 45 feet) **Damage** 3d4+3 plus sickened 1.

Bjúgnakrækir (Sausage-Swiper)

Sausage-Swiper hides in rafters where sausages are being smoked to better steal them, or other high places so he can steal food. Armed with a whip of sausages he uses to great effect.

Melee ♦ Sausage whip +16 (finesse, reach 10 feet, trip) **Damage** 2d6+4 slashing

Gluggagægir (Window-Peeper)

He is extra perceptive and good at spying the things that are most valuable. He instead has a +17 Perception and +15 Thievery.

Stolen! ♦♦ (attack, manipulate) Window-Peeper attempts to steal an object that is currently held, worn, or closely guarded. Window-Peeper makes two Thievery checks; first against the targets Perception DC, then another against the targets Reflex DC with the following outcomes:

Success or better on both the item is stolen without the target realizing it (until they attempt to use the item, like swinging their sword; or you realize there is a cool breeze as your pants were stolen). Reactions that trigger from manipulate actions do not go off.

Success against Perception, failure against Reflex the target retains the item, but does not realize there was an attempt to steal it (and reactions that trigger from manipulate actions do not go off).

Failure against Perception, success against Reflex Window-Peeper gets the item, and the target instantly knows the item was stolen (and reactions trigger normally).

Failure or worse on both the target is aware that Window-Peeper attempted to steal the item, but retains the item (and reactions trigger normally).

If Window-Peeper gets a critical success against either it brings the other up by one step (critical failure to failure; failure to success; success to critical success). Likewise, a critical failure against one brings the other down by one step.

Because Window-Peeper is prideful and likes to rub it in peoples faces, he will typically spend an action or two gloating the round after using his Stolen! ability.

Gáttapefur (Doorway-Sniffer)

Doorway-Sniffer has an abnormally large nose that is able to smell bread and other food from a long way away. His favorite food is leaf bread (laufabrauð) but will use his nose to find food for him and his brothers. He gains Scent (food) along with being able to wield stale bread as a deadly weapon!

Melee ♦ Stale Bread +17 **Damage** 2d8+3 bludgeoning

Ketkrókur (Meat-Hook)

Meat-Hook has, well, a meat hook that he uses to steal meat (usually from rafters or trees). He is extra good at climbing, and thus has a climb speed of 20-feet.

Melee ♦ Meat Hook +17 (deadly d10, reach 10 feet) **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing

Kertasníkir (Candle-Stealer)

Sneaks up on people and steals their candles, lanterns, lamps and torches, possibly eating them. Unless the item made from some edible substance he spits them out (candles are occasionally made from tallow, which is edible). Candle-Stealer also has darkvision, to better see and steal after all light sources are gone.

Eat Light ♦ (manipulate) Candle-Stealer grabs and eats one unattended source of light within reach, or one he is already holding. If the item is not edible he regurgitates it 1 round later as a free action. Unless it is magical, the light is extinguished.

Breathe Fire ♦♦ Candle-Stealer can breathe a 15-foot cone of fire that lights up the area. It deals 6d6 damage, and each creature in the area needs to make a DC 20 basic Reflex save. Candle-Stealer can't use Breathe Fire again for 1d4 rounds.

THE LADS

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM HUMANOID LADS

Perception +12, low-light vision

Languages Common, Jotun

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +11, Stealth +13

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

Snow Walker Snow and ice covered terrain are never considered difficult terrain or greater difficult terrain.

AC 21; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +9

HP 75

Eat Food ♦♦ (interact, manipulate) when adjacent to any food or meal, the lad eats an entire meals worth of food, or all of it if less. This reduces the amount of food the meal can feed by one person. Whenever a Yule Lad eats in this manner, they gain 2d10+10 HP.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ punch +13 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+3 bludgeoning



JólaKötturinn; The Yule Cat

This house sized house cat is black as night and sharp of nose. It stalks the woods mostly at night in the dead of winter seeking for people who do not have new clothes to wear. Anyone wearing old or tattered clothing without so much as a new sock is liable to be gobbled up by this peculiar and giant cat. Where this cat came from or where it lives is up to speculation. There are stories that it is the pet of the Yule Lads and lives with their mother away in the distant woods. Why will it only eat people who do not possess new clothes? Is there only one? Why does it only come out around the winter solstice? We may never know...

JÓLAKÖTTURINN

CREATURE 16

RARE **CN** **GARGANTUAN** **FEY**

Perception +30, low-light vision, no new clothes scent (imprecise)

Languages Sylvan (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +32, Athletics +30, Stealth +32, Survival +30

Str +8, **Dex** +10, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

No new clothes scent The yule cat can smell if someone lacks new clothes. The clothes themselves don't have to be new, the clothes must be new to the owner, but they must have received the clothes within the past 3 months or so.

AC 38; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +30, **Will** +25

HP 350

Speed 60 feet, climb 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +32, **Damage** 3d10+16 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ claw +32 (agile), **Damage** 3d8+16 slashing

Maul ♦ The yule cat makes two claw Strikes against a creature it has grabbed. Both count toward its multiple attack penalty, but the penalty increases only after both attacks are made.

Bat ♦ The yule cat makes a claw Strike against a creature 2 size categories smaller than itself or smaller. On a hit, the creature must make a DC 34 Reflex save or be batted 2d4 squares in a direction of the yule cat's choosing, falling prone at the end of the movement.

Fling ♦♦ The yule cat flings a creature it has grabbed up to 40 feet into the air, and makes a claw strike against the target. The creature is considered flat-footed during this attack and takes damage from the fall normally. If the creature gets hit by the claw attack, they take the falling damage regardless of feats or abilities like cat fall.

Play The yule cat can choose to play with its target, instead of killing them. Maybe to make a point? Maybe because it's bored? The yule cat can choose to do one or more of the following; never take the -2 penalty for making a lethal attack non-lethal, can choose to do one die size smaller of damage, make its claw attacks deal bludgeoning instead of slashing,

Pounce ♦ The yule cat Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. If the yule cat began this action hidden, it remains hidden until after this ability's Strike.

Sneak Attack The yule cat deals 2d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



Icelandic Folklore

According to old stories The Yule cat is the pet of Gryla is a giantess who lives in a faraway cave out in the lava fields.

Gryla lives with her third husband, Leppaluthi, and her thirteen sons, the Yule Lads.

Gryla has an appetite for the flesh of misbehaving children. She will spirit away children who are disobedient and cook them up in her large pot. She is described as a hideous looking woman, sometimes appearing as a troll or a beggar depending on the source of the tale. Whatever happened to her previous husbands has been lost to time. All we know about her third husband is his name and that he prefers to stay at home.

While some tales say that Gryla has dozens and dozens of children the only ones that remain are the Yule Lads. These Thirteen mischievous men have a gruesome history but over time their behavior has become more tame. Nowadays they content themselves with specific mischievous behaviors.

While Gryla and her children where tales told to children to inspire good behavior, the Yule Cat was a tale used to inspire fast work in those who process wool. As a gift for processing the autumn wool, farmers would reward their employees with new clothes. Those who received no new clothes would be preyed upon by the monstrous cat.

Later tales regarding the Yule Cat say that the cat would only eat all of your food rather than you.



The Belsnickel

The Belsnickel is dressed in mismatched, worn brown furs and sports a long beard. He will often be seen wearing a strange mask with a long tongue. He stalks the winter woods and towns in search for misbehaving individuals. He carries goodies in his coat pockets and sack for those who are in their best behavior; for everyone else he has a whip. He is a corrective figure, seeking to discipline, not kill, those who have not been good. While his demeanor is generally grumpy, it is said that if you apologize you may be able to escape the Belsnickel's whip and receive something good from him. But be warned, if you are not true in your apology or you try to escape the whip he will most certainly chase after you. It is reported that moving too quickly in the Belsnickel's presence may get you a smack across the back, so even if you have been good it is wise to move carefully in his presence.

THE BELSNICKEL

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON LN MEDIUM FEY HUMANOID

Perception +25, low-light vision

Languages Sylvan, *Gifting Speech & Scolding Tongue*

Skills Athletics +12, Diplomacy +25, Survival +24

Str +4, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

Goodie Bag A belsnickel carries a bag that has treats and potentially gifts, which they can pull out as an interact action with the manipulate trait. The bag never lacks treats, for the belsnickel to pull out. The bag itself is not magical, and if a creature takes the bag from the belsnickel, it is empty, even if a moment before it seemed full.

Gifting Speech & Scolding Tongue A belsnickel has the ability to speak with any creature it gives treats to, or has gifts for. This ability also allows it to scold any creature in their mother tongue.

Walloping Whip This is an especially painful item that Belsnickels have that deals a base of 1d8 damage.

AC 30; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +25, **Will** +22

HP 270

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Dodge ➤ Trigger a creature attacks the belsnickel. Effect The belsnickel gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Dodgy Movement The belsnickel has a +2 circumstance bonus to AC on its turn while it is moving.

Quick Reactions At the beginning of each enemy's turn, the belsnickel gains a reaction they can only spend on Attack of Opportunity.

Speed 35 feet

Melee ♦ Walloping Whip +28 (agile, finesse, reach 10 feet, trip) **Damage** 3d8+7

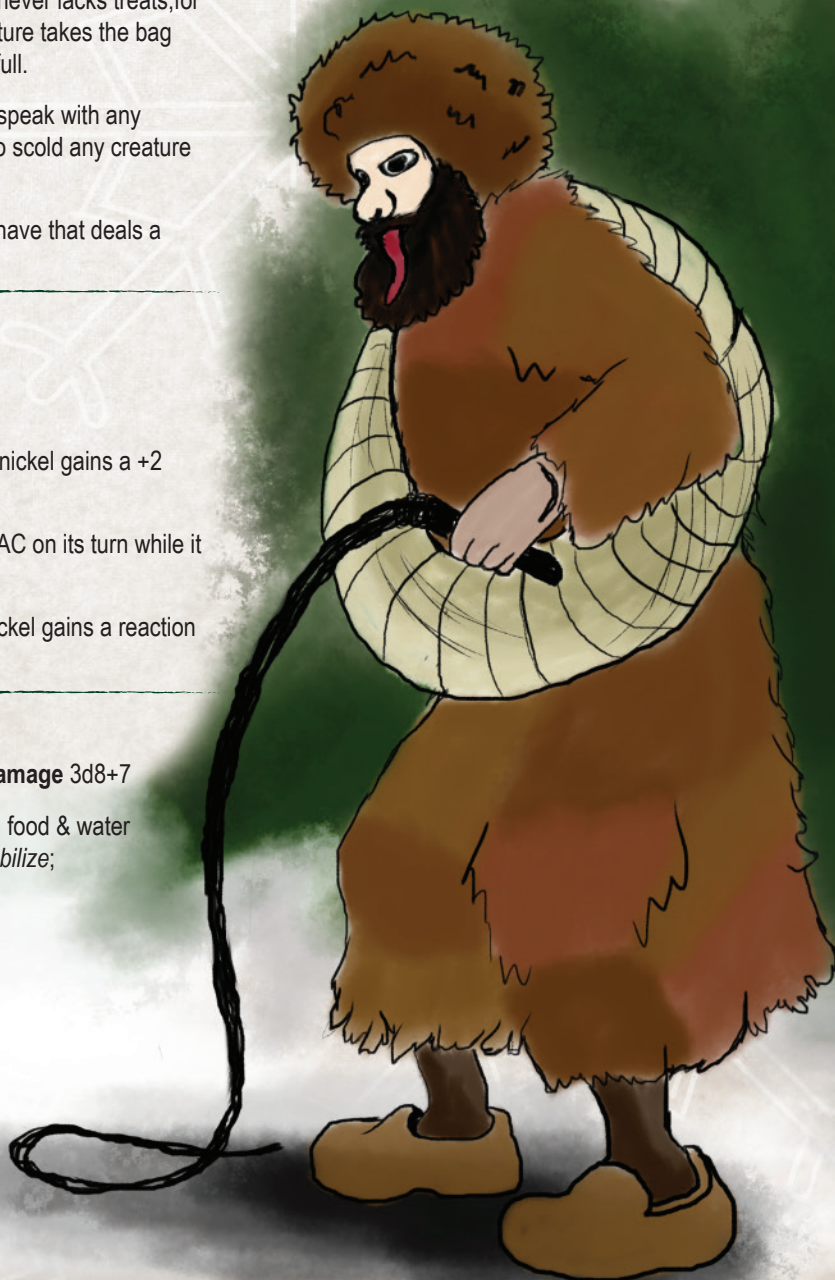
Primal Innate Spells DC 29, attack +21 **6th** *enhance vitals* (both food & water simultaneously); **3rd** *fear* (at will), *haste*; **1st** *fleet step*; **Cantrips** *stabilize*; **Constant** **4th** *freedom of movement*.



Alternative St. Nick

The Belsnickel (*belsen* - German for to wallop, *Nickel* - a derivative of Nicholas) is a crotchety bearer of gifts whose tales hail from Germany. This Walloping Nick isn't as popular in the country he comes from anymore but the stories have been preserved by German immigrants around the world. The stories and traditions of the Belsnickel are now more commonly found among the Pennsylvania Dutch and Brazilian-German communities.

In the communities that tell his story The Belsnickel is their Santa Claus and typically no other Santa type celebrated.



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