

Kringus vs Atnas

Summary:

Kringus has kidnapped Atnas and plans to defeat him in one-on-one combat at the winter solstice. This will give him all of Atnas' secrets, which he believes will allow him to conquer the world.

Characters:

- Atnas – A minor dwarven deity who produces and delivers gifts to all of the good people of the world on the eve of the Winter Solstice, a holiday called Jolnir (JULE-near). Atnas is described as a portly man with a long white beard whose belly shakes like a bowlful of jelly when he laughs. He travels the world in a fantastical sleigh pulled by 8 giant Irish elk.
- Kringus – A minor elven deity who punishes those who have been bad during the year. He is in direct opposition to Atnas. Kringus is described as an evil evergreen-tree-like being who gives out whippings to those who have been bad. He also fills their bed with dry pine needles.
- Jolgnar (JULE-narr) – magical gnomes who aid Atnas in his duties.
- Rauhen (row-HEN) – magical goblins who assist Kringus.
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Locations:

- Atnas' Forge – Located in the midst of the Northren Wastes, Atnas' Forge is built in a cavern of ice. Atnas and his helper gnomes work the forge during the year to produce gifts which Atnas then delivers during the Jolnir.
- Kringus' Lair – A barren grove in the middle of an ugly, diseased forest that is in bad need of a forest fire.

Hook

One or more of the characters, preferably dwarves or gnomes, have a vision one night where Atnas appears to them pleading for help. He has been imprisoned by Kringus! And Kringus is constructing an arena within which he will challenge Atnas to a fight to the death! By killing Atnas, Kringus hopes to devour the 12 Kingdoms of the Jolnir, thus attaining Atnas' powers and using them to enslave the world! Extra exclamation points!!!

Information

The party will obviously have to learn more about Jolnir, Atnas, and Kringus. A good place to start is a local sage or perhaps a temple. Innkeepers always have good stories.

- Atnas is minor dwarven deity who lives and works at his forge in the Northren Wastes.
- Kringus is a minor elven deity who makes his home in the center of the Witherwood.
- The Witherwood is an evil place.
- Never leave the wide trail in the Witherwood – those who do are never seen again.
- The Witherwood is lies betwixt here and the Northren Wastes

- Kringus is the only being that never receives a gift from Atnas
- Atnas brings gifts to all the good people on Jolnir (JULE-neer) eve.
- Kringus punishes those who have been evil on Jolnir eve.
- Kringus whips people with switches and fills their beds with pine needles.
- Atnas is a jolly dwarf whose belly shakes like a bowlful of ochre jelly.
- Kringus is an evil pine tree.
- The Northren Wastes are covered in snow and unnavigable.
- Kringus' helpers are the Rauhen (row-HEN) – special, magical goblins.
- Atnas is aided by the Jolgnar (JULE-narr) – magical gnomes who aid him in his work.
- On Jolnir eve, Atnas visits every house with a good person in it and gives them a gift.
- Atnas travels in a flying sleigh pulled by 8 giant Irish elk.
- The Witherwood needs to be burned down.
- Nothing lives in the Witherwood.
- To find Kringus' grove, follow the main trail into the heart of the Witherwood.
- Kringus can only be killed with an enchanted axe made entirely from the ironwood tree that grows in his grove.
- Jolnir is a midwinter feast that centers on the winter solstice. It is celebrated over 12 days, the first being Jolnir, followed by:
 - Gifting Day (when one gives gifts to friends and servants),
 - Wren Day
 - Servant's Day (when the masters serve the servants)
 - Hay Day
 - Remembrance Day (when one visits the shrines of their ancestors)
 - Forgiveness Day (when one forgives those who owe them)
 - Midfeast (a feast that occurs in the middle of the celebration)
 - Aleday (when the new kegs of ale are opened)
 - Rat Day (treats are left out for the mice, vermin, and strays)
 - Resters (a day of resting in preparation for tomorrow)
 - Ploughday (the first ground is broken at the winter ends)

Scene I

Convince the party that they should investigate Kringus' lair. It might be on their way to Atnas, it might be closer, or maybe the rumors suggest that it is more likely that they will be there.

Kringus' Lair

In the center of the old Witherwood lies Kringus' grove, a diseased bunch of trees in a clearing. The Witherwood is an ancient forest that has seen better days. It is blighted and diseased and just really needs a good forest fire. The trees sway ominously and seem to randomly reach down and grab onto things.

"Ahead of you lies the Witherwood. A narrow trail enters the tangle of dead brush and fallen trees. The air is still and quiet. It seems that nothing is alive within. Out of the corner of your eye, you catch movement – but nothing is there. As you begin to walk through the wood, the branches seem to reach out and grab you – snagging your clothes, hair, and equipment. The roots do the same, constantly

tripping you, no matter how careful you are. Of course, it doesn't help to look for the roots, as you can barely see your hand in front of your face."

Special Rules in the Witherwood:

- Magic – within the borders of the Witherwood, all spells which are considered beneficial require a concentration check to cast, otherwise their efficacy is halved. Spells which are harmful in nature do double damage.
- While moving along the trails, roots will mysteriously trip people, branches will seem to grab at them or slap them in the face. They should be thoroughly irritated and annoyed by the time they reach the heart.
- The underbrush, while mostly dead, is incredibly thick and will not allow passage. The only routes through the forest are on the trails. Attempting to move through the forest without using the trails will not only be painful, but will result in the characters eventually being caught up in briars and brambles to the point that they can no longer move.
- Leaving the main trails will put the individual on a series of game trails that fade in and out amongst the underbrush. For each round that is spent on the game trails, there is a 3 in 6 chance of becoming lost (feats and skills can be used to mitigate this, but at a +10 to the DC). Once lost, there is only a 1d6 chance of becoming un-lost and finding the way back to the main trail.
- Attempts to move quietly will randomly fail – 1 in 6 chance. The silence will be broken by a loud snap as a stick that wasn't there a moment ago breaks underfoot.
- Random encounters
 - Random encounters occur on a 1 in 6 every turn.

Roll	Encounter
1	10 skeletons rise from the brush and attack
2	Assassin vine grabs a character
3	A brown bear charges
4	10 medium monstrous spiders drop upon the party
5	A phase spider attacks
6	5 fungus zombies attack
7	A twisted treant attacks
8	A centipede swarm moves through

- Fungus Zombie – these undead are controlled by a fungus that propagates through infecting other creatures. They will attempt to attack other creatures, implanting their spores. The resulting infection takes 2 days to kill the target, turning it into another fungus zombie. Treat as a normal zombie for statistics. Fortitude save against each attack, cure disease before dying to cure.

CL

Getting to the Grove

To get to Kringus' grove, follow the trail to the left, then fork to the right.

The Grove

Kringus' grove lies in a small clearing at the heart of the forest. It consists of a bunch of sickly trees, one of which (the ironwood tree) is dead. A stone desk, bookcase, and chest are within the grove, along with a small statue of Kringus.

Desk

The desk has the diary of Kringus on it, though it is weather damaged. The scrawl is childish and mainly contains multiple rants against Atnas, along with some notes about devouring the 12 Kingdoms of Jolnir (this refers to the 12 days of Jolnir). It also has a drawing of the proposed arena (very childlike) with the notes "build neer forge" and "Don't forget!"

Bookcase

Kringus' bookcase is filled with moldering books and scrolls, of which only one is useful – a cleric scroll of 4 spells.

Chest

The stone chest is locked (DC10) and contains an assortment of nuts, dried moss, a wand of magic missiles, a ring of invisibility (minor), and an assortment of coins equal to 500gp.

Statue

A crude statue of a screaming pine tree stands in the center of the grove. It is about 3 feet tall and made of gold (approximate weight – 23,000lb, approx. value – 5,000,000gp as art, 1,000,000gp as gold). Touching it, however, will cause the character to become temporarily insane (1 week) – having an illogical phobia of trees, which will cause him to blindly flee from the sight of any tree, ignoring his own safety or that of others, for at least 5 rounds or until the tree(s) are no longer visible.

Ironwood Tree

The dead ironwood tree (the other trees are only mostly dead, which means that they are partly alive) is in the southern part of the grove. Being ironwood, it is extremely hard. Because of this, any attempt at cutting enough off to make an ironwood axe will take an entire day and will require that the axe or saw be re-sharpened every 10 minutes. It will then take an expert woodsmith (finding one of those is a quest in and of itself!) a month to fashion the ironwood axe. It must then be enchanted by a cleric of Kringus without him finding out what the true use of the axe will be. (Note that killing Kringus is not needed to complete the quest – they only need to aid Atnas in defeating him, which can be done without the axe)

After the Witherwood

The party will need to leave the Witherwood and then determine their next course of action.

Intermission

The party now has to determine where, exactly, Atnas' forge is located; how they will get there; and whether they will have the ironwood axe constructed.

If they speak with a cleric of Atnas and tell him all that they know, he will tell them that the only way to find Atnas' Forge is through the use of the Star of the Midday Sun – a clear gem with a bright glowing "star" in the center - but the last one that they had was stolen about a week or two ago! And the cleric knows that it had to have been stolen by the Temple of Kringus!

Scene II

The Temple of Kringus

The temple is made largely of wood and clay, looking somewhat like a large log cabin. A sign tacked on one of the front pillars says "Temple of Kringus" in a childlike scrawl. Fire is a dangerous thing within the

temple, as there are dry pine needles everywhere and the building is made of old, dry logs. Careless use of fire can turn the search for the Star of the Midday Sun into a recovery effort sifting through the ashes.⁷

- 1) Portico - "The front portico is raised about 5 feet above street level and the roof is supported by raw wooden poles. In the center is a brazier which always has a small fire burning in it. The roof is 15' tall. Two large wooden doors allow entrance to the temple. A sign is tacked on one of the pillars and reads 'Temple of Kringus' in a childlike scrawl."
 - a. There isn't really anything out here. Opening the doors will cause a small bell to sound.
- 2) Temple Sanctuary - "A large pine tree dominates the center of the room, held in a round wooden planter. The floor is covered with pine needles. Near the four corners of the room are braziers, which are burning merrily, keeping the cold at bay. The air is hazy with smoke, making it a little difficult to breathe. An altar can be seen on the far side of the tree. A priest of Kringus (the abbot) stands near the altar berating a young acolyte. Each of them carries a wooden switch and has pine branches stuffed uncomfortably into their robes."
 - a. All servants of Kringus take the name Bob upon swearing their loyalty. They believe that discomfort and pain are a divine punishment that they must bear.
 - b. If attacked, they will fight back with their switches, which do 1d3 damage to exposed skin - and they are good at finding that. Only those who are fully armored will be immune to their attacks. They will call for help, the two acolytes in the refectory will arrive in 1 round, the acolyte in the residence hall and the prior will arrive in 3 rounds (after 20 rounds, a 5th acolyte will return from an errand. He will either join the fray or flee, calling for the guards, depending on what the situation is). As soon as the fight goes against them, they will flee, calling for the guards.
 - c. The large pine tree represents Kringus (and is actually supposed to be part of Kringus). For the purposes of this adventure, it will never turn into Kringus.
 - d. Bob, the abbot, will claim to know nothing about the Star of the Midday sun. If somehow tricked, bluffed, conned, or otherwise convinced to say anything, he will tell them that "the Star is hidden where the sun will never shine!"
 - e. The altar has two brass candlesticks with lit beeswax candles in them. The northern candlestick is worn, as if it has been handled a lot more than the southern one. Lifting it will open the secret door to (8).
- 3) Residence Hall - "5 uncomfortable looking beds, all covered in pine needles are neatly arranged in this hall. A small footlocker sits at the foot of each one. In one of the beds, a young man sleeps uncomfortably."
 - a. There is little of value in this room - a switch or two and some ratty robes. One chest contains 23 sp hidden inside an old sock.
- 4) Abbot's Quarters - "The door opens to show a splendid room, finished with oaken paneling and with a thick carpet of pine needles on the floor. A bed and wardrobe are on one wall, a round table and some chairs in the middle, and a fireplace smoulders on the other wall. The sheets and blankets on the bed appear to be made of the finest cloth, though they are all covered in pine needles."
 - a. A small chest inside the wardrobe contains the Abbot's wealth - 55gp.
 - b. Several brand new switches sit on the table, along with some branches.

- 5) Refectory – “The smell of stew wafts through the door. You hear a voice say, ‘Gads, Bob, squirrel tail and pine nut stew again? Don’t you ever try any new recipes? Howsabout making some chicken and dumplings?!’ A different voice replies, ‘Shut yer gob, Bob. I’m da cook around here and I like squirrel tail and pine nut stew! You’re lucky that you aren’t assigned to the Tanglin temple – all that Bob there knows how to cook is squirrel nut and pine tail stew!’
 - a. This is both the kitchen and the dining area for the temple. There is a table with 7 uncomfortable chairs at one end and a fireplace, prep/serving table, and some shelves at the other end. The shelves contain various jars, sacks, and foodstuffs. A pot of stew bubbles over the fire. Two acolytes are in here.
- 6) Prior’s Quarters – “You hear snoring from within the room. This room is finely decorated with only the finest wormwood paneling and contains a table with three chairs, a bed, a wardrobe, and a blazing fire. The snoring is coming from a mound in the canvas and wool bed. The floor, as usual, is covered in pine needles.”
 - a. The prior, who works the night shift at the temple, is currently sleeping.
 - b. In the wardrobe is a bag with 22 gp.
- 7) Storage – “Firewood is neatly stacked waist high on the south wall of this room. The remainder of the room is filled with pine boughs.
- 8) Inner Sanctum – The secret door to this room is opened by lifting the candlestick on the altar (see 2e). “With a quiet click, part of the wall moves, like a door coming ajar. Once you open the door, you see a dark room with a large table that is covered in a strange liquid, and two chairs. There is also something glowing slightly on the table.”
 - a. The table is covered in pine sap, a religious component of Kringus worship. There is also an empty glass with some sour milk at the bottom and a half eaten cookie, both stuck in the sap.
 - b. If the abbot has not been subdued, he will become righteously angry and will attempt to stop the party from entering the inner sanctum, telling them that they “shall not blaspheme the holy sanctum of Kringus!” and such. None of the Bobs will volunteer to die to protect the sanctum, and they will probably flee if attacked.
 - c. The glow comes from the Star of the Midday Sun, which is sitting on the table. It is held fast by the pine sap and can only be loosed by a solvent. Good choices are alcohol (high proof), cooking oil (from the kitchen perhaps?), or peanut butter (do peanuts exist in this world?). Bad choices are water, soap, and fire (mainly because the floor is sticky and covered in pine needles – kah-pwoof!).

Intermission II

Upon returning with the Star of the Midday Sun to the Temple of Atnas, the priest will tell them that in order to travel to Atnas’ forge, they will need to drill a hole in the center of the gem and pour milk into a glass through the hole. Then whosoever dips a cookie into the glass and eats it will be instantly transported to the Forge.

Scene III

Atnas' Forge

Special Rules in Atnas' Forge

- Magic – within Atnas' Forge, when a spell is cast, roll on the Wild Magic Table I to determine the effect (does not apply to wands, scrolls, or magic items).

Description

Atnas' Forge is carved out of the mountain at the center of the Northren Wastes. It is surrounded by a barren, snow covered landscape that any foolish enough to travel into would soon perish. The top of the mountain emits smoke like a volcano, but that is merely the smoke from the forge. The party will have arrived by using the gem and will be standing before the main entrance.

- 1) Main Entrance – “Two great stone doors are carved into the very living rock. Ancient runes, of which no sage alive knows the origin or meaning, decorate the portals. The wind howls and the cold penetrates to the bone. Snow drifts in front of the doors and there is a curious lump in the snow nearby.”
 - a. The lump is a dead Jolgnar (JULE-narr) gnome. He died from multiple wounds and is now frozen solid.
 - b. The doors can be easily opened and are not locked.
- 2) Stables/Launch Hall – “Upon entering this long hall, you are hit immediately with the earthy smell of manure and hay, followed by the stench of death. The floor is covered in hay, there are stable doors along each side, each with an emaciated giant Irish elk inside. At the far end of the hall is a large, red, sleigh. Flies buzz around some dead bodies near the sleigh.”
 - a. The Irish elk are nearly dead and will barely move. Flies buzz all around them.
 - b. There are 5 dead Jolgnar gnomes near the sleigh. None of them appear to be holding weapons. None of them have any loot.
- 3) Hay Storage –
 - a. “This room is half full of hay, presumably for the elk. You hear a moaning noise from the back of the room.”
 - i. A wounded Jolgnar gnome has been hiding in the hay here. He is nearly dead. He will gasp to the party, “Kring...us... the... prophecy... must... be... stopped” before he expires.
 - b. “This room is half full of hay, presumably for the elk.”
- 4) Present Storage – “You enter a cavernous warehouse with shelves as far as the eye can see. Each shelf is filled with small, medium, and large sacks. You can hear muttering from the far side of the room”
 - a. The sacks are actually bags of holding. The medium and large bags have multiple small bags of holding inside them. Each bag is labelled by country, city, neighborhood, and individual/family. Each small bag contains at least one present.
 - b. In the southeast corner, near the doors, are 5-10 rauhen (ROW-hen)
- 5) Workshop – “This room is slightly smaller than the storage room and contains multiple workbenches with gifts in various stages of completion. From the south you hear a steady ‘hoosh----whoooo----hoosh----whoooo’ noise.”

- 6) The Forge – “The first thing that you notice is the heat. The second thing is that the room is lit by a red glow from within a large forge. A set of steam powered bellows still keep the forge hot. There are racks with different hammers and tongs and other metal working tools and tables with various raw gifts on them.”
- 7) Atnas’ Home – “A large wreath is nailed to the door which hangs on just one hinge. Inside the door you can see smashed furnishings and belongings strewn about.”
 - a. Living room –
 - b. Bedroom –
 - c. Kitchen/Dining – A hole has been bashed in the corner of the kitchen and leads into the mountain.
- 8) Administrative Offices – “Loose papers cover the floors of the hallways and offices.”
 - a. Nice Division – These offices contain lists of everyone who made the nice list. Put members of the party with Good alignments who have been good on here.
 - b. Naughty Division – Conversely, these offices contain lists of everyone who has been bad. There are many envelopes that are stamped and pre-addressed to “Kringus, 1 Witherwood Forest.” Put evil characters on this list. Include the names of many nobles.
 - c. Needs Work Division – The last set of offices contain lists of those who are more neutral. Put names of the neutral party members on there.
- 9) Gnome Housing – “The door to this area is chained shut. You can hear movement on the other side, along with some gnomish voices.”
 - a. The gnomes retreated here and were locked in by Kringus during the initial assault. The chains can be broken, but the doors are held shut by an Arcane Lock spell (cast by Kringus) and Hold Portal spells (cast as needed by the gnomes).
 - b. If freed, the gnomes will help in the fight.
- 10) The Arena – “Crudely carved out of the living rock, the spectator area of the oval arena is filled with cheering rauhen. A large, angry pine tree stands in the center of the arena floor. It shouts, ‘BRING FORTH ATNAS, THAT I MAY DEFEAT HIM!’”
 - a. A wall of force will block the party’s entry into the arena. The gnomes can dispel it with a disintegrate spell, but it will take a while to find a mage with the right spell list.
 - b. There will be a delay while the guards free Atnas. Kringus will whip the crowd into a frenzy while waiting.
 - c. Atnas will be fitted with special shackles and fetters which are inscribed with runes that render him powerless. He will then be brought forth and Kringus will begin to attack him.
 - d. Kringus is enjoying beating his helpless nemesis, like a cat toying with a wounded mouse.
 - e. Then if the gnomes were freed, Once the Wall of Force has been removed, the gnomes will rush in and attack the goblins, leaving the party to aid Atnas and fight Kringus. Otherwise the party will be forced to contend with hundreds of goblins plus Kringus.
 - f. Atnas can survive a lot, and Kringus wants to make him suffer, so the “fight” will be a long one unless the party intervenes. If they leave and return, Atnas will be in bad shape, but can still be helped.
 - g. Atnas’ hands and feet are shackled – the party should concentrate on trying to unshackle him

- 11) Atnas' Cell – "Iron bars covered in strange, glowing runes block the entrance to the end of the tunnel. The walls beyond the bars are also marked with these runes. This appears to be a cell."
- a. If Atnas has not already been brought to the arena, he will be held here. The bars and walls are warded with runes that will not allow Atnas to escape and that render him helpless.
 - b.

Special Creatures

Atnas

Atnas – A Santa Claus knockoff (10d8+10 HD; 90hp; Init +1; Spd 20; AC 20; Att (+5) 1d6 melee (fists), (+3) 1d6 ranged (snowballs); SA Naughty (SV Will neg, paralyze with fear of being caught 2 rds, 5x day), Nice (SV Fort ½, 1d6D from niceness vs evil)

Kringus

Kringus – A giant, angry pine tree (10d8+10 HD; 90hp; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 20; Att (+5) 1d2 ranged (pine needles x6), (+2) 1d6 melee (pine branch); SA Angry Scream (SV Fort neg or cower in fear), Incite Rage (SV Will neg or attack nearest being), Pine Tar (10' area, 2 rds, SV Fort or be stuck); SD +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 5 hp/round; SV F:+6, R:+6, W:+7;

Jolgnar

Jolgnar (JULE-narr) – A magical type of gnome (1HD; 6hp; Init +0; Spd 20; AC 16; Att (+2) 1d6/19-20 melee, (+3) 1d6/19-20 ranged; SA Glitterdust (2x day, 2 rds duration, SV Will neg), Color Spray (Rng 15' cone, SV Will neg), Acid Splash (Ranged touch, 1d3D); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Skills: Hide +3, Listen +1, Spot +1)

Rauhen

Rouhen (ROW-hen) – A magical type of goblin. (1HD; 5hp; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15; Att: (+2) 1d6 melee; (+3) 1d4 ranged; SA: Inflict Light Wounds (touch, 1d8D, SV Will ½, 5x day), Grease (10' area, 2 rds, SV Refl or fall, DC 10 Balance check to move at ½ speed, 2x day), Invisibility (1 minute, 1x day); SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; Skills: Hide +5, Listen +2, Mv Silent +5, Ride +4, Spot +2)

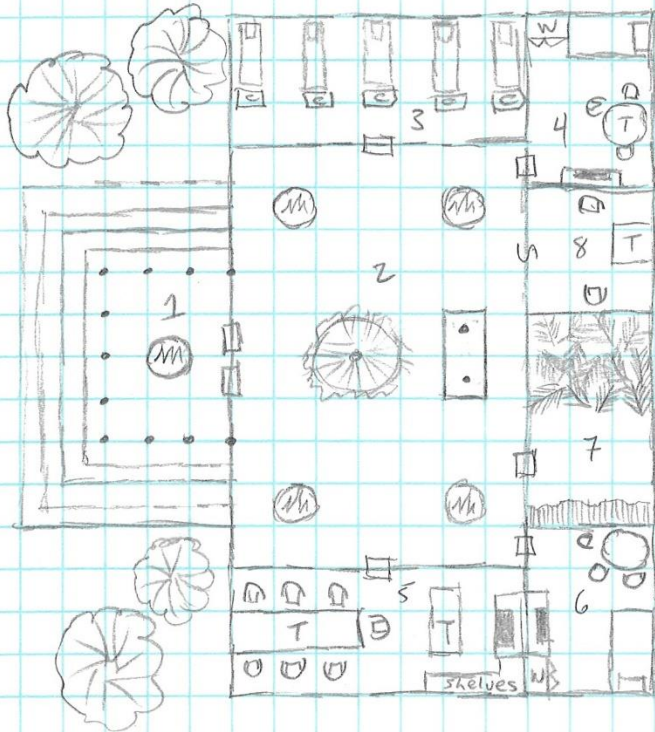
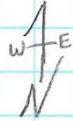
Atnas



Kringus



Temple of Kringus

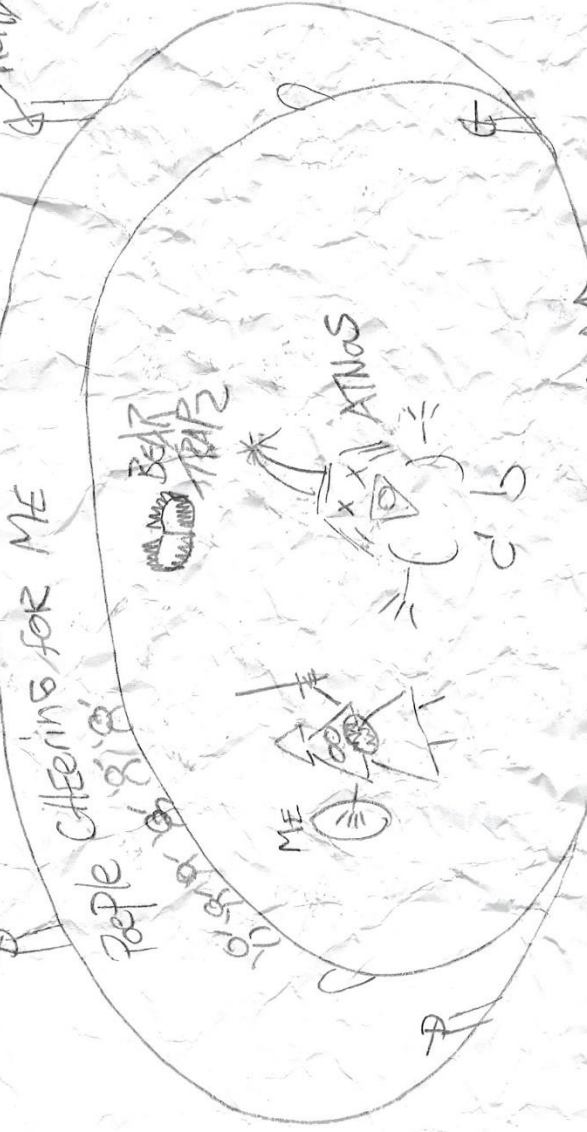


Key

- 5' (in a box) = Brazier
- (circle with wavy lines) = Brazier
- (square with dots) = Altar
- (rectangle with wavy lines) = Wardrobe
- (rectangle with horizontal lines) = Chest
- (square with cross) = Door
- (rectangle with vertical lines) = Bed
- (square with diagonal lines) = Fireplace
- (rectangle with 'T') = Table
- (circle with 'C') = Chair
- (square with 'S') = secret Door
- (circle with dot) = Pillar
- (L-shaped symbol) = Steps
- (rectangle with vertical lines) = Firewood


ARCHERS

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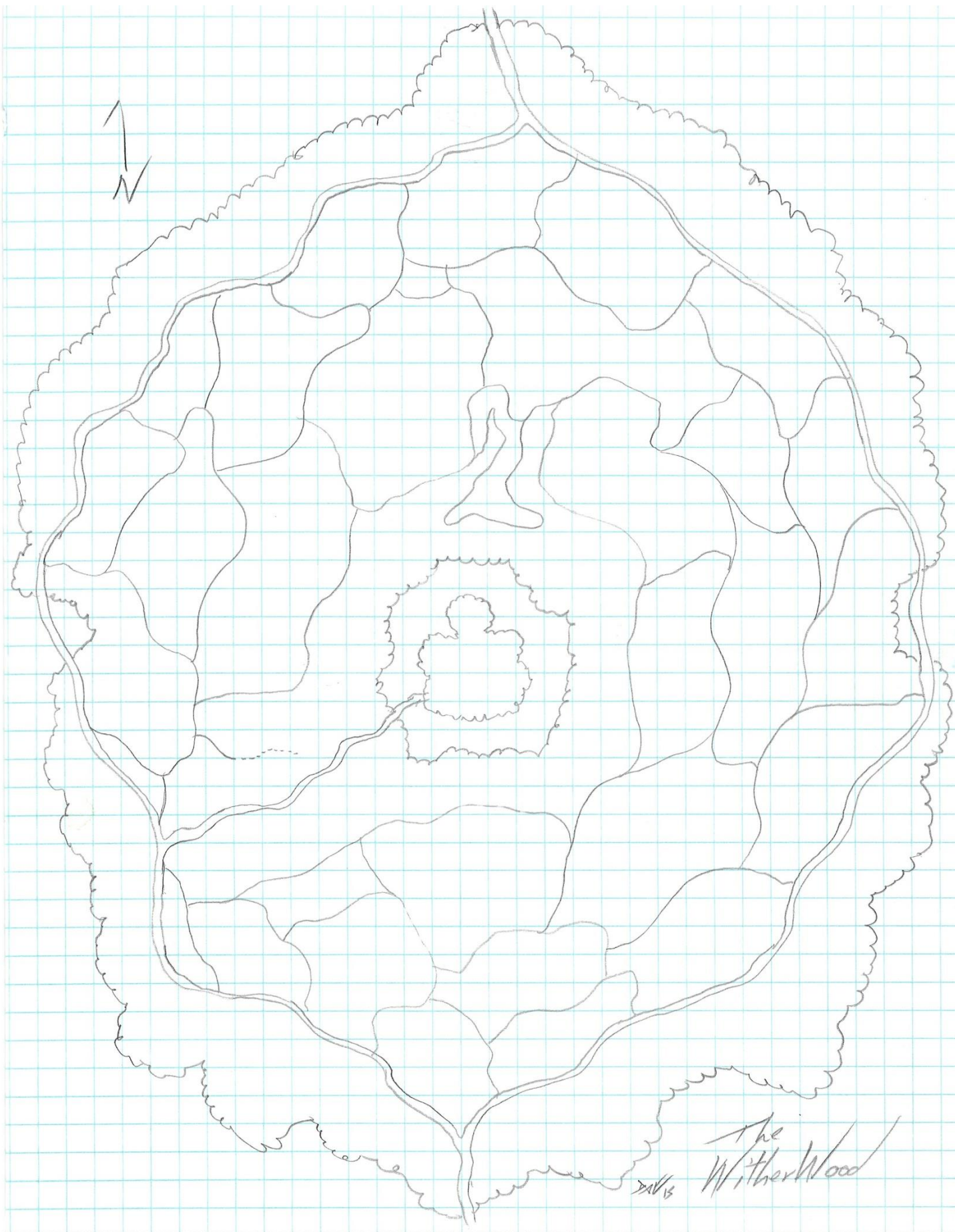


BUILD
NEET
FORGE

DON'T
FORGET



MY ARENA



The
WitherWood
D.V.S.



JAB Kringus' Grove

