



KRAMPUSNACHT



A 5TH-LEVEL ADVENTURE OF
HOLIDAY HORROR AND DM REVENGE



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KRAMPUSNACHT: A 5TH-LEVEL ADVENTURE OF HOLIDAY HORROR & DM REVENGE

Have your players been naughty this year?
Remember when they robbed the shopkeeper over a low-level magic item?
Or insta-killed the NPC you spent hours working on?
Or burned down that beautiful mountain town before you got to read your painstakingly detailed description?
It's payback time.
It's **Krampusnacht**.

INTRODUCTION

Krampusnacht is a 5th-level D&D adventure designed to be run as a "holiday special" in a long-running campaign.

Inspired by Krampus, the horned half-demon of central European holiday folklore, it's a fun holiday/horror-themed combat that confronts your party with some of the horrible things they did in the past year. It requires a few minutes of prep to brainstorm specific "sins" to punish your players for. Otherwise, it's good to run right off the page.

It was co-written by Peter Chiychowski, the creator of [The Story Engine Deck](#) and [Nat 21 Workshop](#), and Pedro Galicia, the DM behind the [World Walkers D&D podcast](#).

PREPARATION

In the lore of this adventure, the demon Krampus is an avatar of cosmic punishment. He cannot be summoned or controlled, but he attacks and inflicts suffering upon targets "nominated" through the ritual of *Krampuskarten*.

To personalize this adventure for your players and tie the events to the continuity of your existing campaign, you will want to prepare a few notes.

CHOOSING A "NEMESIS"

The "nemesis" is the NPC who nominates the party for punishment by Krampus. In this case, it will be someone the party has crossed in the past year, intentionally or unintentionally.

To nominate targets for Krampus, the nemesis first enchants and sends a number of greeting cards:

- One to Krampus on the Outer Plane of Baator, listing the sins of the nominees.
- One to each of the nominees. These acts as a tracking beacon while Krampus hunts them.

Consider which NPC from the party's past would hate the party enough to sic Krampus on them. It could be the previously unknown relative of someone they killed, or an NPC they stole from, or a member of a town that was destroyed (even inadvertently) through their actions.

It may help to list the major events from the past year of your campaign and brainstorm collateral damage that may have occurred as a result of the players' actions. Who might have been affected?

If you need help brainstorming a nemesis, consider signing up for the [free print-at-home demo](#) of [The Story Engine Deck of RPG story prompts](#), and use an Agent-led prompt to create a new NPC idea with a motivation that connects to the party.

THE "DUNGEON MASTER" AS NEMESIS

If you prefer, you can skip the nemesis character entirely. In this case, the party is nominated by a spirit of the Outer Planes called the Dungeon Master, an omniscient entity that is aware of the characters' every action.

This is your chance to get revenge on the players for things they got away with this year.

Just make sure you check in with your party often to make sure everyone is participating in the spirit of fun. If the attacks become personal, or players feel unfairly targeted, it will be a bad experience for everybody.

RECORDING THE PARTY'S SINS

In the card to Krampus, the nemesis will have recorded one "sin" committed by each party member that makes them worthy of punishment. It is possible that only one party member wronged them, but they discovered the rest of the party's sins by gathering information, scrying, or other means.

Write down one sin for each party member to be included in the card to Krampus. They will find this card later.

PREPARING EVIDENCE

When Krampus attacks the party, he will attempt to entrap them in his extra-dimensional basket, which contains phantasmic objects or people as "evidence" of their sins. For example:

- The bloody cloak of the innkeeper they murdered
- A page from the book they stole from the arcane library
- A weeping child orphaned by their assault on a mining town

The more this evidence helps the players guess who nominated them, the better. Make note of any evidence you may need to describe to the players later if they become imprisoned in Krampus' basket.

If you need help brainstorming items to appear as evidence, consider signing up for the [free print-at-home demo](#) of [The Story Engine Deck of RPG story prompts](#), and use an Anchor-led prompt to create ideas for items connected to the party by story threads.

RUNNING KRAMPUSNACHT AS A HORROR ONE-SHOT

There is an optional "twist" at the end of the campaign where any characters who destroy evidence to escape Krampus' basket are cursed to become Krampus demons themselves.

This twist is not recommended if you are intending to continue with your campaign after completing Krampusnacht. However, it can become the basis for a follow-up quest to break the curse, or as the ending to running Krampusnacht as an out-of-continuity horror one-shot.

THE DELIVERY OF THE CARDS

The *Krampusnacht* adventure begins while the characters are already traveling on the path of their existing quest.

THE MESSENGER

One morning, as they prepare to leave the inn where they are staying, or they are breaking camp in the woods, a liveried messenger approaches.

The messenger clears his throat awkwardly as he approaches. He appears to be wearing some sort of tunic uniform emblazoned with a large letter "H."

"Excuse me," he says. "I have letters for you, delivery courtesy of the the Hollygram company."

He extends a small stack of crisp, red envelopes toward you. Your names are inscribed on the outside of each in black ink.

The messenger works for Hollygram, a delivery company that specializes in delivering holiday greeting cards. Even though he is not consciously aware of them, the demonic enchantments on the card he has been carrying are starting to put him on edge. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals his unease and eagerness to leave.

If questioned about the delivery, he will say that the card was sent anonymously and he does not not have access to the registry of who sent it. However, he will reveal that the delivery center is located in the next town over, which is two days' travel. The players may be able to find out who sent the cards there.

He will leave at the first opportunity he gets, eager to move on to less troubling deliveries.

THE ENVELOPES AND CARDS

If the player's open their envelopes, read the following:

The letter is sealed with the sigil of a goat's head in wax, complete with elaborately curled horns. As the seal cracks, a deep sense of unease grips your chest. Inside each envelope is an identical greeting card on thick red cardstock. On the front of a card is a dancing goat-legged demon with a long, lolling tongue. Inside is a single sentence written in Common: "You have been nominated." It is followed by three words written in Infernal script.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the figure depicted on the outside of the card is a demon of punishment from the Outer Plane of Baator.

Characters who speak Abyssal or read Infernal may be able to decipher the three words: "Greetings from Krampus."

If characters have seen a sample of the nemesis' handwriting, a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the handwriting is familiar. A DC 20 check may reveal the identity of the nemesis. Add +5 DC to each check for every 6 months the players have gone since last seeing their nemesis' handwriting.

Detect Magic reveals that the cards are enchanted with Divination magic.

Identify reveals that the cards were enchanted with a Locate Magic spell, but that significant alterations were made to the enchantment.

Players may refuse delivery, may destroy or discard their cards, or leave the cards behind. Doing so will only delay Krampus' arrival later.

CONTINUING ON

As the party continues on their existing journey, they may feel a sense of growing guilt if they choose to keep the cards.

Whether or not they keep the cards, they may feel they can hear a distant jingling sound on the wind. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the sound of seasonal holiday bells.

If your players do not have an existing storyline or an adventure to follow, you may have the messenger volunteer that if they have a complaint about the delivery, they should visit company headquarters in the next town over. It will take the players two days to reach this destination.

THE ARRIVAL OF KRAMPUS

Krampus will confront the players while they are resting on the road for the night.

If the players are sleeping in watches, he will usually attack at midnight (during second watch). If the players refused delivery or destroyed or otherwise got rid of their cards, he has been delayed tracking them and he arrives during the third watch.

A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will allow the character on watch to detect the sound of bells approaching the camp, giving them the option to wake the other characters if they choose.

Otherwise, Krampus arrives in camp, catching the party by surprise.

A demonic, goat-legged figure steps into view at the edge of camp. His body is covered in coarse hair, and two massive horns curl from the brow of his head. On his back, he appears to be carrying a large wicker basket. In his clawed hands he holds a massive set of heavy chains decorated with bells.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the visitor is the holiday demon Krampus.

Krampus utters a phrase in Abyssal. Players who can understand will understand it as "You have been nominated for punishment. Before we begin, would you like to offer me a drink?"

KRAMPUS

Medium devil, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +8, Perception +7, Religion +4, Survival +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Kringle

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. Krampus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

The Bells of Krampus. Each creature nominated for punishment that is within 120 ft. and is aware of Krampus' presence must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become Frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to The Bells of Krampus for the next 24 hours.

INTERACTING WITH KRAMPUS

A DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that it is customary to offer Krampus schnapps or another sufficiently strong spirit. Any character who offers Krampus an alcoholic drink will drop to the bottom of his priority list when he chooses targets in combat.

If the players do not offer Krampus a drink, he will attack. If they do offer him a drink, he will wait until after he finishes his drink to attack, and will avoid attacking the player who provided the drink.

He will attempt to grapple the party using The Chains of Krampus, and then drag them to the extradimensional space inside his basket, tormenting them with visions of their misdeeds.

Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child. Krampus' specialty is striking naughty and unruly children. He receives a +2 damage bonus against small creatures, +2 damage bonus against chaotic creatures, and a +2 damage bonus against evil creatures.

Actions

Multiattack. Krampus makes two attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

The Chains of Krampus. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The target is then grappled (escape DC 14). Krampus may have two creatures grappled at one time.

Not To Reward, But To Punish... (1/turn). Krampus fiercely pulls one of its chains, in an attempt to throw a grappled creature into the basket it carries. If Krampus' basket is within 30 ft. of it, the target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is flung into Krampus' basket. If the basket is not near Krampus, then Krampus cannot attempt this action.

Creatures inside the basket exist in their own extradimensional space, regardless of how many creatures are in the basket. Trapped creatures are surrounded by objects representing the sins they've committed as an adventurer.

Each round at the end of their turn, trapped creatures must succeed a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to escape the bag. They may also escape by destroying any one of the representations. Each object has an AC of 10 and 5 hit points.

Optional: Creatures that escape by destroying the objects representing their sins are cursed to turn into a Krampus once the Krampus that trapped them is slain.

THE AFTERMATH

When Krampus dies, the basket will release any creatures or objects that were put in from outside and the extradimensional space within it will close. It does not release the phantasmic evidence.

If the players open the basket after Krampus' death, instead they will find an ordinary wicker interior containing the card that their nemesis used to nominate them. Only a player affected by the curse of Krampus (see "Not to Reward, But to Punish" on the previous page) can access the extradimensional spaces inside the basket. Likewise, only a Krampus can use The Chains of Krampus.

If the players inspect the card inside the basket, they will find it an open envelope addressed to Krampus. The card itself contains the following text in Infernal script, which matches the handwriting sample on the cards the messenger gave them earlier:

*Oh mighty Krampus,
I wish to nominate for punishment a party of wicked souls that
have committed many wicked deeds.*

*[Character Name] for the sin of [wrongdoing they
committed].*

*[Character Name] for the sin of [wrongdoing they
committed].*

*[Character Name] for the sin of [wrongdoing they
committed].*

*[Character Name] for the sin of [wrongdoing they
committed].*

*May their flesh know the lash of your switch and the weight
of your chains.*

*Sincerely,
—[Name of Nemesis]*

If the party cannot decipher the Infernal text, they may take the letter to the Hollygram company headquarters for deciphering, or to try to persuade the company to reveal the identity of the sender.

The card will reveal the same properties as the cards they received earlier.

GIFTS FROM KRAMPUS

Optionally, you choose to reward the players with gifts for defeating Krampus.

These can be:

- Hidden amongst the phantasmic objects representing their sins, which can only be obtained while they are in the extra-dimensional space inside the basket, or:
- Retrieved from the basket when Krampus is slain and the enchantment is broken.

ORNAMENT BOMB

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This small, delicate ornament has shades of color based on the holder's alignment. Good-aligned characters provide the ornament with shifting hues of hunter green, while evil-aligned characters give it a more umber brown tone. You can use an action to throw this the ornament up to 60 feet. The ornament shatters on impact and is destroyed, and on a successful hit deals 1 damage. If the target is of the opposite alignment, the ornament automatically hits and deals 1d4+1 magical damage. Those of neutral alignment choose an opposing alignment upon taking possession of the ornament.

THE CUP OF INFINITE HOT COCOA

Wondrous Item, Rare

Each evening this cup fills with delicious hot cocoa. On a particularly snowy night it will have an appropriate amount of marshmallows. It refills after having provided a satisfying cup to the holder of the cup. If held upside down without the intention of consumption, this cup is empty.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peter Chiykowski is the creator of [The Story Engine](#), a deck of endlessly customizable storytelling prompts for DMs and writers. He also is the award-winning creator of multiple webcomics and [Nat 21 Workshop](#), a shop for the funniest tabletop teas, pins, and travel dice towers around.

Pedro Galicia is a GM with over 20+ years of experience building worlds and running games. He is the creator and GM of the [World Walkers D&D podcast](#). He is also an Emmy Award winning father and husband, which can be confirmed by referencing his bio.

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