

The Setting of Slaðkirk

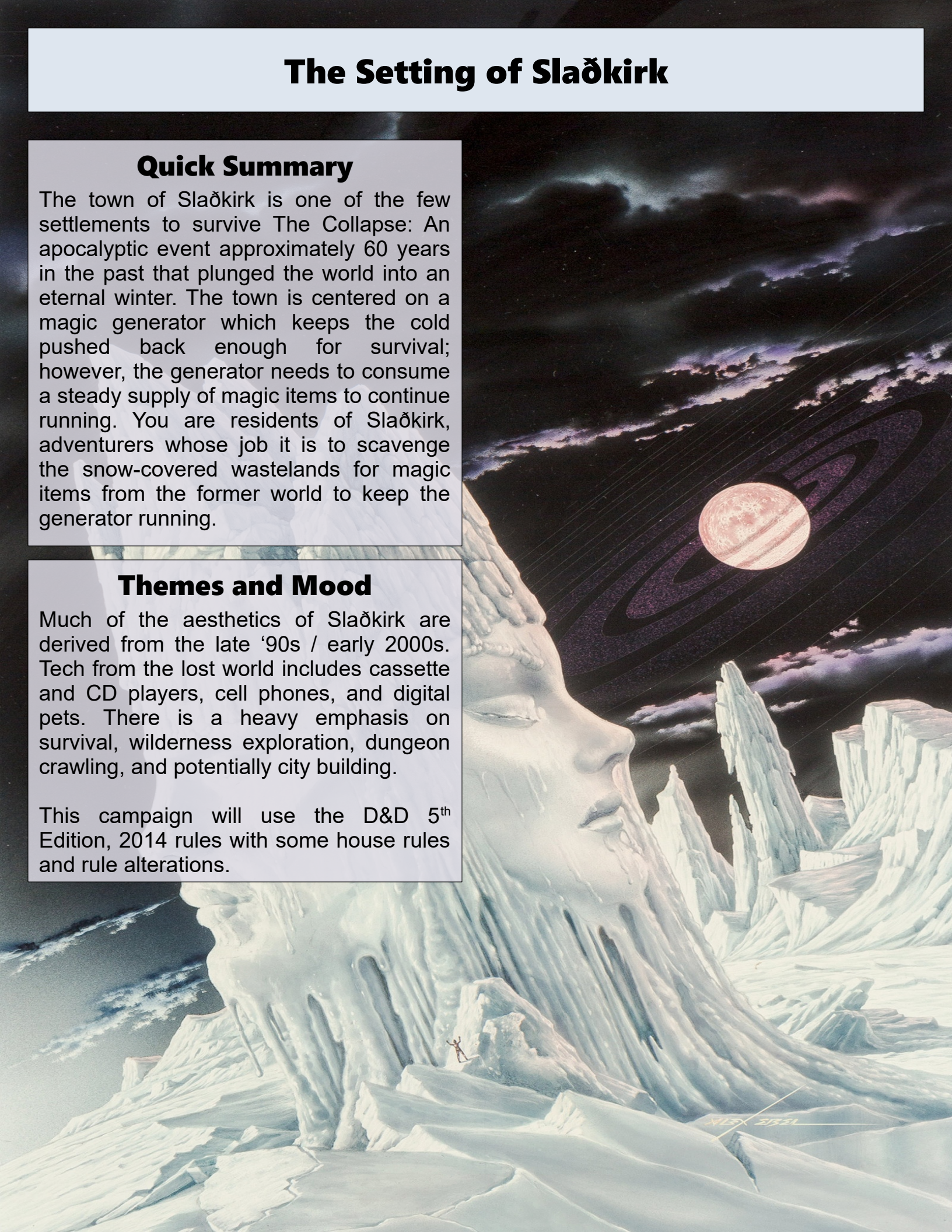
Quick Summary

The town of Slaðkirk is one of the few settlements to survive The Collapse: An apocalyptic event approximately 60 years in the past that plunged the world into an eternal winter. The town is centered on a magic generator which keeps the cold pushed back enough for survival; however, the generator needs to consume a steady supply of magic items to continue running. You are residents of Slaðkirk, adventurers whose job it is to scavenge the snow-covered wastelands for magic items from the former world to keep the generator running.

Themes and Mood

Much of the aesthetics of Slaðkirk are derived from the late '90s / early 2000s. Tech from the lost world includes cassette and CD players, cell phones, and digital pets. There is a heavy emphasis on survival, wilderness exploration, dungeon crawling, and potentially city building.

This campaign will use the D&D 5th Edition, 2014 rules with some house rules and rule alterations.



The World of Yesterday

Prior to The Collapse, the country of Arcadia was prosperous. Not one of the superpowers which dictated the course of humanity, but developed enough to enjoy the benefits of modern technology. Shopping malls and city downtowns were crowded with teenagers with bright-colored hair, torn jeans, and headphones plugged into cassette or CD players. Adults held business meetings over portable telephones of both the “brick” and “flip” variety while sitting on park benches made of the finest recycled plastics. An all of this marvelous technology integrated seamlessly with the spellwork studied by the numerous colleges, trade schools, and indie spell developers who pushed the boundaries of innovation.

The Collapse

No one living in the town of Slaðkirk knows what caused The Collapse. Presumably, it was something to do with one of the superpowers at the time either testing a new weapon or technology. What is known is that The Collapse occurred approximately 60 years ago, though the specifics of the date are a matter of debate. Without the arrival of Spring and Summer, few survivors keep close count of the passing years. The world which emerged after The Collapse was almost unrecognizable. On the night of The Collapse, the entire population of every major city disappeared in an instant, leaving only the rural towns and villages to deal with the sudden and permanent winter which followed. While most such villages quickly died out in the face of this deep freeze, a few such as Slaðkirk found ways to survive. In the case of Slaðkirk, an old train engine was repurposed into a magic generator which could devour objects infused with arcane energy to keep the fierce cold at bay.

The Cosmology of Slaðkirk

Slaðkirk does not exist in a multiverse and does not connect to the myriad planes of most D&D settings. While there may be some who cling to a belief in heaven or hell, there are only two worlds generally believed in by most people: The Mundane World and the Spirit Realm. The Spirit Realm is a plane of eternal twilight that is overlaid on top of the Mundane World; occupying the same space but existing and operating beyond the ken of most mundane beings. Most people know of the Spirit World, though few have ever traveled to it, and fewer still have returned.

The State of Technology and Magic

Because the populations of all major cities disappeared during The Collapse and the remaining towns were forced into a subsistence living to survive the apocalyptic cold, very few people now survive with any real knowledge of how the old technology or the old magic works. A few have taken it upon themselves to try and learn how these things work in recent years, but two forces work to halt these ambitions: First, regarding the study of technology, the scarcity of these items makes them difficult to replace, and thus risky to disassemble. Second, regarding the study of magic, Slaðkirk has survived only by keeping the magic generator running, and thus the town has historically needed to keep a tight

hold on all objects invested with arcane energy as a fuel source. There are still plenty of people who use ancient technology on a daily basis, but the ability to manufacture most of these items is largely lost.

The Region Around Slaðkirk

Few residents of Slaðkirk have ever ventured beyond eyesight of the town's outer walls, but some knowledge of the immediate area is fairly common. The town itself is situated in cold-weather moorlands with rolling hills covered purple with heathers and few trees. A short day's travel north, the moorlands give way to taiga spruce forests. East and west of Slaðkirk the heathers and grasslands are replaced with tundra permafrost and low-growing yellow-brown shrubs, punctuated with the occasional purple of arctic crocus or a patch of green arctic moss. What little water falls on Slaðkirk or the neighboring land flows south to low-lying acidic peat bogs.

Knowledge of the region outside a day's journey is much less informed, but still some general knowledge exists. On a clear day, the citizens of Slaðkirk can just spot the western edge of a mountain range to their east, three or four days' journey across the frozen tundra. Similarly, an unnatural-looking group of self-contained mountains are visible over the treeline of the forests to the north, only a couple days' walk from town. While not as easily-verifiable as mountains in the distance, it is commonly known that a great lake or sea is several days' journey to the northeast. What lies beyond the bogs to the south is largely unknown, as none claim to have journeyed all the way across the icy wetlands.

Until recently, the people of Slaðkirk avoided wandering too far from town, lest they be taken by the cold or wild creatures; however, with the town's final reserves of magic items running low, they must finally send brave souls out into the wider wilderness in search of more magic to feed the magic generator.

The System

This campaign will use the 2014 5th Edition D&D ruleset with several alterations to better suit the setting. Below is a list of the alterations and house rules for this campaign:

1. **Classes and Subclasses:** Artificers are not available in this setting, as many of their abilities do not mesh well with the technological side of the setting. Due to the lack of gods, devils, other planes, etc. anyone wanting to play a Cleric or Paladin should work with the DM to create a character concept that will function within the setting. Any subclasses dealing with divinity, devils, the Shadowfell, etc. (such as the Fiend Patron Warlock or Shadow Magic Sorcerer) are also limited. If you strongly want to play a subclass in this category, work with the DM to find a way to tweak the subclass to align with the setting.
2. **Races:** The playable races for Slaðkirk are limited, and most have been re-worked (narratively, not mechanically) to fit with the setting. The playable races available include Humans, Dwarves, Half-Elves, Goliaths, and Half-Orcs. The changes to these options are listed under Playable Races.

3. **Spells:** To keep the tone of the setting, some standard spells are not available in Slaðkirk, and some custom spells have been added. The Spells category below lists the removed spells. Descriptions of the added spells are available on the campaign's website ([Archive of My Own](#) → Audio).
4. **Flanking:** The optional flanking rules will be in effect during combat. When attacking a creature in melee range, a character has advantage on their attack roll if one of their allies is also within 5 feet of the target and on the opposite side of the opponent. This ally must be a threat to the target and the target must be aware of the ally.
5. **Shattering Shields:** When a creature wielding a shield is hit with an attack that they saw coming, that creature can choose to negate all damage they would receive from that attack by allowing their shield to be destroyed instead. The attack can be a weapon attack, spell, or creature ability; however, it must be a single-target attack with an attack roll, not an AoE effect or an ability that relies on a saving throw.
6. **Wishes:** Wish does not exist as a standard spell in Slaðkirk; however, items capable of granting Wishes exist and are highly sought-after by the powerful and the reckless. In general, Wishes will be interpreted generously and there will not be an attempt to twist the Wish Monkey's Paw-style unless there are specific circumstances to cause such an interpretation (such as pissing off a Djinn just before making your Wish).

Playable Races

The world which Slaðkirk inhabits was exclusively inhabited by Humans in the time before The Collapse; however, in the past 60 years, several distinct strains of Humans have joined the general population. These alternative forms constitute a small minority of the population, but are not so rare as to draw much attention from most people. These alternative Humans generally take one of the following forms:

Dwarves – Dwarven children are often not identified as such until puberty, as in childhood they are barely distinguishable from baseline Humans. Once grown Dwarves tend to be fairly short, rarely over 4' tall. They tend to grow impressive facial hair regardless of sex, though some female Dwarves shave regularly in an effort to fit in. Dwarves are naturally resistant to poisons and have limited darkvision. *Slaðkirk Dwarves can use the following templates: Hill Dwarf, Mountain Dwarf, or Duergar.*

Elves – Sometimes a child is born in Slaðkirk which possesses a deep and special bond with the enigmatic Spirit Realm and its native spirits. Elves are understood to exist with one foot in two worlds, and are generally identifiable due to their pointed ears and strange markings which are unique to each Elf and seem to be somehow connected to the Spirit Realm. *Slaðkirk Elves use the Half-Elf race template.*

Goliaths – Much like Dwarves, most Goliaths do not discover their nature until puberty. A full-grown Goliath is generally between 7 and 7-1/2 feet in height, and can weigh as much as 500 pounds due to being relatively sturdier than smaller baseline Humans. Due to their bulk and the square-cube law, Goliaths are naturally resistant to the cold. *Slaðkirk Goliaths use the standard Goliath race template.*

Orcs – The Orcs of Slaðkirk are generally Human in appearance, but usually have a feature or two which betray their bestial side, such as a pig’s snout, large tusks, or thick hog’s fur over part of their body. Orcs are unfortunately the most likely of the alternative Human forms to experience hostility despite being no more prone to mischievous behavior than any other Human. Orcs have natural darkvision and are able to use their large size to deal critical damage with melee weapons. *Slaðkirk Orcs use the standard Half-Orc race template.*

Spells

The following spells are not available in Slaðkirk:

- Astral Projection
- Commune
- Demiplane
- Legend Lore
- Maze
- Planar Ally
- Plane Shift
- Speak With Dead
- True Resurrection
- Wish