

COLD STEEL

By FRED BEDNARSKI

THE WITNESS

Tomek Zbyski, a junior machinist in the Ostrowiec Steel Mill. Even that the work is hard, and the pay is poor, he stays here in hopes in joining the Polish underground that is said to somehow operate on the premises under the watchful eye of the Nazis. His strength is *athletic* and his personality trait is *proud*.

OTHER CHARACTERS

- ◉ *Magda Saska*, an ex-history teacher in a local school, now a journalist for the underground gazette. The resistance does not appreciate her short temper, but relies heavily on her network of anonymous informants around town.
- ◉ *Great Tobar*, a charismatic animal tamer with a background in both veterinary and botany. Because of his “undesirable” (by the Nazi occupation) romani descent lives in a dugout away from the main circus camp. This doesn’t stop him from providing herbal healing to those in need.
- ◉ *Sevi Eckstein*, an old, skilled Jewish blacksmith living near the industrial complex. The Nazis let him be because he seems both harmless and useful. He is restoring a broken linotype machine and constantly has lead boiling in his forge.
- ◉ *Obergefreiter Helmut Vogst*, a short but stocky Nazi corporal overseeing the steel mill. Will happily accept bribes to look the other way and will pay anyone who delivers him any information that can lead to a promotion.

LOCATION AND ERA:

February 1940, Otsrowiec Swietokrzyski (in the area commonly called simply Ostrowiec, pronounced Ostrovietz) is an industrial town in south-central Poland occupied by the Nazi forces. The lack

of resources for the populace, combined with the harsh winter is making the locals take drastic steps towards survival.

OTHER LOCATIONS

Steel mill and smelting complex: Once the centre of Ostrowiec's industry, the complex is a shadow of its former self after Nazis confiscated majority of the heavy machinery. The remaining workers are forced to produce steel and send it by train to Germany. The Polish underground is producing weapons and munitions for the resistance here.

Gracja Circus Camp: Few carts, some animals and less than a dozen people is all that is left from this travelling circus after the Nazi invasion. They are waiting out the winter in a wooded area away from the occupant's gaze. Many desperate and hungry locals have taken up consumption of horse-meat, and selling the slowly dwindling stock of circus horses has therefore provided an income needed to survive in those harsh times.

Krzemionki Neolithic Mines: A short drive north-east from Ostrowiec is a vast underground maze of prehistoric flint mines. This land stood unused since the 1600s, but recently there are reports of lights and human silhouettes at night.

CARDS

- ⊙ A Hostile Group
- ⊙ Reprisals

COLD STEEL: SAMPLE CLUES

- ⊙ The air filled with a strong metallic smell, strong enough to almost taste it.
- ⊙ A certain dark hue and mesmerizing glint of the newly produced steel.
- ⊙ People unable to remember the cause of scratches and cuts on their arms and legs.
- ⊙ Some kind of oddly shaped metal tool. Seems new, but not made to be used by human hands.
- ⊙ A frozen naked body of a stocky woman with an uneven, coarse gray skin.
- ⊙ Bloodied pieces of flint, arranged in an intricate pattern.
- ⊙ Jug filled with cloudy liquid. Inside it a rock too big to fit in through the opening.
- ⊙ Metal parts covered with a thick and unnaturally geometric layer of ice.
- ⊙ Footprints in the snow, where footprints should not be.
- ⊙ A dog with an unnatural grayish growth on one side.
- ⊙ A modern diagram using ancient-looking symbols instead of writing.
- ⊙ A rock cut in half, exposing a living, fleshy interior.