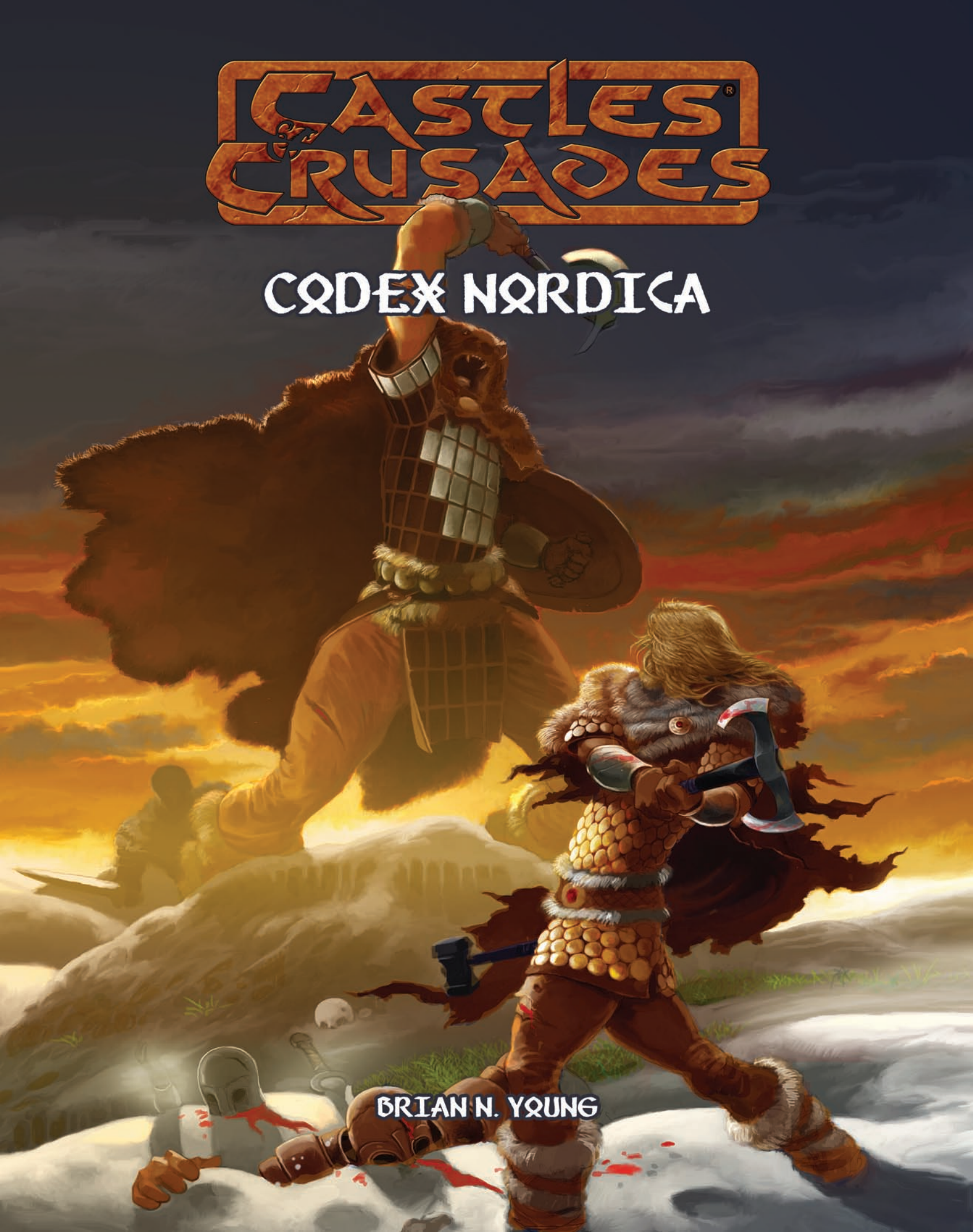


# CASTLES CRUSADES<sup>®</sup>

## CODEx NORDICA

BRIAN N. YOUNG



# CASTLES CRUSADES®

## CODEx NORDICA

### ADVENTURE AMONG THE AISIR

By BRIAN N. YOUNG

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# CODEx NORDICA



In this Codex, the Nordic cultures are explored from a gaming perspective. The peoples that comprise the Nordic groups are the Swedish, Danes, Norse and the other peoples of Scandinavia. From their mythical and historical perspectives, the Castle Keeper and players can delve into new concepts and ideas that can expand their campaigns in new directions.

The northern Germanic peoples, classified as the 'Vikings,' entered into history by the 8<sup>th</sup> century, not long after the Migration Era tribes swept out of eastern and Central Europe. They gained a viler reputation for their raids and bloody deeds across a plethora of peoples from as far west as Newfoundland in the Americas to Byzantium in the east in later history's eyes.

In this Codex, several new character classes will be introduced (Berserkers, Seiðkona, Völva and Giant Killer) as well as countless new monsters, races and beings from Nordic mythology. The Nine Worlds from the mythologies of the Vikings will be explored and playable for the first time.

As with each Codex in the series, a little of every character class is represented (when possible) and, in some cases, expanded on given the cultures involves. The materials provided in this book

will enable CKs and players to jump into a Viking universe or to take piecemeal aspects and elements and insert them into their games.

The Castle Keeper will be able to create Nordic sagas of their very own after reading through this Codex. Perhaps it will help to inspire research into the full gamut of tales, poems and histories and engineer elaborate Viking-like campaigns. This Codex is a perfect fit with the *Codex Germania* because of the two regions' shared cultures, myths and histories.

The more mythologized and glorified perception of the Vikings is the focus in this book, and this is for many reasons. First, it is generally what most people think of when they hear and read the word 'Viking,' and, second, because it is easier to play if the CK wants a dramatic and epic story that conforms with the Nordic style. On the other hand, the CK could take a more factual and serious route with the Scandinavian peoples, agreeing with history and known evidence, using the data in this to add that supernatural touch to things.

Take up your sword, grab your lucky charm, don your Hammer of Thor, jump aboard a longship and set sail for adventure. Take your gaming to new places with a Nordic twist in this exciting Codex.

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# THE VALIANT VANIR

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# CHAPTER 1: HISTORY & COSMOGRAPHY



his section gives both a factual history of the Nordic peoples and one from their mythical perspective. The history section is brief but still fairly detailed enough to describe the many different nationalities and how they explored Europe and the New World and the many influences they gave in their passing. The Nordic influence on the Medieval world was a mixture of positive and negative both, and the line blurs between the two in many of the consequences that will occur later.

The Mythic Cosmography is the world view seen through the eyes and in the minds of the Nordic peoples and derivative from the Eddic sources regarding data, primarily. The Christian influence in this data is very clearly possible (Ragnarök is very similar to the Biblical Apocalypse, for example). The creation and formation of the universe, according to Nordic sources, is both a complex and stunningly simple matter.

The geographical name, Scandinavia, is difficult to pin down exactly as far as meaning or origins. Presumably, it derives from a Common Germanic root word that means 'Shadow'. To the Goths, it was *Gothiscanza* (Sweden specifically), and to the other Germanic peoples on the mainland of Europe, it likely was a region of the world that represented the Underworld and the Land of the Dead, but this is not certain. The Anglo-Saxons called the region *Scani* or *Scandenige*, the Langobards claimed their origins came from the land of *Scandan* while the Franks named it *Sconaowe*.

## THE MURKY BEGINNINGS

The history of the peoples of Scandinavia prior to the infamous raid in 793 CE is spotty, at best, but can be understood through a corroboration of multiple sources: archaeology, linguistics and outside documentation. Nordic Scandinavia was mentioned early in history by Classical explorers and historians under many names but all roughly similar. Skaði's Island, or Scandinavia, possesses a unique history all of its own.

Because the early peoples of Scandinavia did not record their own experiences or histories, everything before the 8<sup>th</sup> century is simply a mystery. The Classical world is the only source for hints, and these are through misunderstood tribe and place names from, usually, secondhand observers. Rarely did travelers from the Celtic or mainland Germanic world make references to the northerners in their dealings and trade to the Romans or Greeks. The Roman perception of Scandinavia was, generally, that it was one of a series of islands beyond the northern coasts of Germania but related to it distantly by culture.

Pomponius Mela in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE wrote about the land of *Codannovia* which was, apparently, a Roman designation for the North Sea beyond Denmark. In this description, he wrote that a tribe called the *Teutoni* dwelled in this land. Pomponi-

ous made the connection between the northernmost peoples of Scandinavia and those Germanic groups on the European continent long before the later Medieval scholars in Scandinavia and the Germanic regions of Europe had done so.

Another early Classical mention was Pliny the Elder who mentioned many 'islands' to the north in his *Natural History* in 77 CE. Foremost of these islands was the land of *Scatinavia*. In his passages, he refers to animals and a route in which to take to find a way to this mysterious island. Pliny wrote about a tribe called the *Hilleviones* that occupied this land. Pliny writes, though hardly from firsthand observation, "*Leaving these, we come to the nation of the Ingævones, the first in Germany. In their country is an immense mountain called Sevo, not less than those of the Riphæan range, and which forms an immense gulf along the shore as far as the Promontory of the Cimbri. This gulf, which has the name of 'Codanian,' is filled with islands; the most famous among which is Scandinavia, of a magnitude as yet unascertained: the only portion of it at all known is inhabited by the nation of the Hilleviones, who dwell in 500 villages, and call it a second world: it is generally supposed that the island of Eningia is of not less magnitude.*"

The Roman historian Tacitus makes a mention that the tribes *Suinones* and *Sitones* lives beyond Germania in the sea in his important and crucial ethnographic study of *Germania* written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The *Suinones* are an early form of the ethnonym for the Swedish.

Claudius Ptolemy, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in his *Geographia*, surmised that the region was just one of many islands or of the *Scandiae* north of Jutland. The largest island, Ptolemy conjectures, is *Scandia* where seven great tribes live, one of which he mentions is the *Gauts* (more than likely the Goths).

The 6<sup>th</sup> century writer Jordanes from the eastern Byzantium Empire, who wrote the famous *Getica* but was greatly influenced by the earlier, twelve volume *History of the Goths*, in his own version used the name *Scandza*. Jordanes made the Swedish-Gothic connection in ancestry and his own personal heritage, as well, in his writing. Jordanes preserved the lost works of Cassiodorus about the Goths and their origins through *Getica* and gives a greater understanding of the relationship between the Scandinavians and Continental Germanic peoples at such an early date.

Native sources later recount lists of kings and movements of tribes across the region and to the Continent. These can be taken at face value as they are given, or viewed with caution since dynastic sources are always reinvented histories meant to support the present ruling monarchy. Whichever way they are seen, there is some element of truth in it as the migration of peoples out of Scandinavia is not doubted and supported by genetic and linguistic evidence.

## CHAPTER 1 -

But for all of the outside observation in Antiquity, the goings on of the peoples within the region of Scandinavia is still completely in the dark. It is not understood what forces (political, cultural, environmental, etc.) drove entire groups of peoples like the Goths, Langobards and others from Scandinavia before the rise of the 'Vikings' in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Regardless, what comes to pass will again change the course of history and Europe after brave ship loads of adventurers set forth from the icy north. This will usher in a new era that will live more in historical infamy than in actual academic truth.

### THE SUDDEN EMERGENCE

Mysterious boatmen were sighted near the coast by Dorset in Britannia in 787 by Saxons and were thought to be traveling merchants by the royal official. The royal official attempted to take these strangers inland to be taxed for their goods on their ship only to be slain by them instead. It was later surmised that these strangers were exploratory Vikings who, possibly, had plunder aboard their vessel.

By 793 CE, the first unexpected raids were done on Anglo-Saxon Britannia by more Germanic peoples from farther north. These peoples were Norse and attacked a monastery for plunder. By this time, the Anglo-Saxons and much of Germanic Europe were now Christian, but these raiders were not. The monastery of Lindisfarne was the target of the attack, leaving the monks massacred and their wealth plundered.

What the impetus was that caused the Norse raids and attacks in Europe (and eventually beyond) is not absolutely certain, but the attacks became more intensified in time. They sailed on dragon shaped longships from Sweden, Norway and Denmark, ever more daring and bold in their attacks. These Northerners were culturally related and identical to the earlier Germanic tribes in central and Eastern Europe, but unlike their relatives who were now converted to the new faith of Christianity, they remained pagan.

By the 790's, attacks were now happening in Ireland, off the coast of Scotland and were occurring on the Continent as well. Each attack was decisive and sudden, causing a major terror and an even faster retreat with captives, loot and death in their wake before the authorities could stop them. Many churchmen spoke of the impending Apocalypse being heralded by these murderous raiders.

Francia was now under the strong grip of the Carolingian (Charlemagne) dynasty and, the weapon of the Church in Rome, he opposed the Vikings with fierce vigor. For the zealous defense of their kingdom, the Vikings still managed to sail the Seine and bring fire and death on Paris and other settlements in their path many times, often unhindered in their attacks.

While most of the native Celtic peoples in the British Isles resisted the ever-increasing attacks better than their Saxon neighbors, the Vikings were slowly getting involved in local politics. By the year 800 CE, Danish attacks on Anglo-Saxon Britannia intensified until settlers came to push the Anglo-Saxon peoples and any surviving Britons out of their way. In 867, York was captured by two mighty Danish brothers, Halfdan Ragnarsson and Ivor the Boneless, who forced the Saxon king, Æthelred of Wessex, to act to save their possession of the land.

The king of Northumbria, Osberht, was defeated previously by the two Norsemen, forcing Æthelred and other Saxon kings to react. The other kings were too weak to oppose the Norse occupation of York and Northumbria and eventually surrendered the territory to them after the bloody defeat at the Battle of Edington in 878. Saxon chronicles mention the region now under their sway as the *Dena Lagu*, or 'Dane's Laws'. This period of Danish dominion lasted from 886 to 956 and established the Anglo-Saxon held regions as being 'Anglelunda', or England. This was the first time the notion of the 'Land of the English' came into usage.

Eric the Bloodaxe was driven out of York and the region in 956 after ruling and attempting to conquer the peoples of Scotland (Picts, Welsh and Saxons). The Danes did not give up on their plans to take England after this lengthy period of possessing a portion of it. They held the region defensively and fiercely fought off any opposition as it came.

Cnut the Great ruled over a unified Anglo-Saxon kingdom in 1016 to 1036 as a Nordic ruler. He was followed by many other rulers in his monarchy that tried to keep ahold of Saxon England, but this gave away to the Norman ruler, William. The Harrying of the North (1069 to 1070) occurred during the winter, and with Gaelic, English and Viking allies, King William fell upon Edgar Ætheling. Edgar was largely responsible for the continued Saxon resistance to Norman control after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, and it had to be stopped.

In Ireland and the Scottish isles, the Viking presence was even more intrusive. Initially as plundering raids with female captives taken into the possession of chiefs, the matter grew to one of shared bloodlines on both sides of the North Sea, called Gall-Ghàidheil (Norse Gaels), with one side in native Scandinavia and the other now in Celtic lands, dividing the spoils and lands. Many Vikings now took on Gaelic names and had a fusion of culture that was also seen in the Norman (French and Viking descendants), Anglo-Norse and other groups in Europe.

Viking lords also began to rule over Slavic populations in the country that will inherit their nickname, Russia. So named because of their ruddy complexion in the cold air, the foreign rulers establish a new dominion that would grow into powerful, native Slavic kingdoms. Swedish kings would create a kingdom among the Wends, or Slavs, and try to hold it with an iron-hand.

## 8 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The last significant battle against the Vikings occurred in Ireland at Clontarf in 1014, led by the Gaelic warrior king, Brian Boruma. This ended the Norse monopoly in the land, although by this time, the many urban areas today derived from their time spent in the land. The Kingdom of the Isles, in the Scottish Isles, persisted a hundred and a little more in years afterward until the Treaty of Perth in 1266 when the Kingdom of Scotland was officially brought into being. Scotland was now ruled by Gaelic dynasties controlling a mixed population of Picts, Welsh, Gaels and Scandinavians.

Many brave and stalwart captains and their ships sailed the whale's path westward to Iceland and Newfoundland, exploring and settling only to discover the native peoples, the Skrælingjar. They settled in Iceland, Greenland and in the north eastern regions of Canada. Various bold and heroic captains dared to sail further, seeking the route to Miðgarðr or the Edge of the World, but their efforts have never been revealed or known or their fates. It is said that many ships and their adventuring crews journeyed deep into the heart of North America by waterways, but this is not certain and speculative.

## THE MYTHIC HISTORY

### THE NOTHINGNESS OF THE MIST-WORLD

The universe existed in nothingness, devoid of life or any presence of the elements. The universe was a Mist-World and little more, but in it sprang the well Hvergelmir in which was the source of the world's rivers. The waters flooded the Mist-World out of the great well.

Sparks and flames erupted from the southern realm of Múspellsheimr, first of the Nine Worlds. It was an impassible and dangerous world guarded by the Eldjötunnar (Fire Giant) named Surtr with his flaming sword and wife Sinmara. Surtr reigns as king over the Fire Giants of Múspellsheimr, and he zealously protects his world of ashen skies and fiery earth from those that trespass.

Second were the frozen wastes of Niflheimr in the universe. Snow and ice with shrieking winds followed the formation of this world. Massive ice waves surged from the streams out of the well Hvergelmir forming frothy, solidified forms and cooling until a world of constant snow and ice congealed.

A rime was formed from the misty and rainy freeze in Niflheimr, and this seeped over into the divide that now spanned the first two worlds. The fog from the rime brought life from where there was once a venomous secretion. These mists and showers met across the Great Chasm, the Ginnungagap. This Yawning Void was filled with drifting mists from Niflheimr and the showering sparks from Múspellsheimr.

### THE GIANT OF GIANTS

Life giving forces were at work in the drops from both worlds, working like a yeast, and created the great being known to the Rime Giants as Augelimir. He was called Ymir as well and spanned the Yawning Void with his indomitable size. Pale skinned, white haired and bearded, Ymir emerged from the frozen ice as the life giving drops eroded away the sheets of ice.

*All the witches | spring from Witolf,*

*All the warlocks | are of Willharm,*

*And the spell-singers | spring from Swarthead;*

*All the ogres | of Ymir come.*

Ymir was the ancestor and creator of the Frost Giants (Hrímþursar) who quickly populated Niflheimr. This was the beginning of the Age of Giants when the Jötunn ruled the two worlds of fire and ice. The giants flooded both worlds of fire and ice after Ymir's appearance and quickly set up their brutal kingdoms, but with little to rule over except each other, the Age of Giants fell into a destructive gloom.

Following Ymir's entrance into the universe was the gigantic cow Auðumla. The beast nourished Ymir and also licked at the ice in the surrounding chasm. Ymir's existence brought about the creation of many other life-forms by connection to being around him. Although a giant and not so well-seeming, he brought change to the universe in everything he did, unknowingly.

The Age of Giants saw the rise of many kingdoms between the two worlds. This was not a harmonious growth of like-minded beings but was just as chaotic because both groups were at odds and battled many times. When the two races of giant clashed, violent storms and changes occurred in the universe. Fire and ice rained down around them and in the Yawning Void, creating a strange environment that hung heavy over the universe.

On the first day, Auðumla's licking brought to the surface of the ice hair. By the second day, it was his head, and on the final third day, the whole man was revealed. His name was Búri who fed from Ymir's cow and grew to become strong. It took him no time to find a wife from amongst the Frost Giants and beget a son named Borr.

Borr found a wife from among the Jötunn as his father had – she was Bestla, daughter of Bölthorn, one of the Hrímþursar of Niflheimr. From their union, three sons were born into the universe that would change the fate of all contained within it.



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### THE SONS OF BORR & YMIR'S FATE

The three sons were Oðin, Vili and Vé. They grew tired of the reign of the giants under their kings, Ymir and Surtr, and conspired to end this tyranny before it became worse. Knowing that they alone represented a different race from their relatives who were subject to the cruel whims of the kings, the plot was simple.

The Sons of Borr, skilled in the arts of war and slaying giant-kind, attacked Ymir with such fury that the Skalds sang of it in future ages. Ymir's death was brought about by blade and swift hammering and pummeling. Ymir's blood formed a flood that drowned all of the Rime Giants in the worlds but one, Bergelmir, who sailed away in a ship with his wife and family. He is considered rare among the Jötun because of his wisdom. All other giants are descended from him except for the Fire Giants.

In the slaughter of Ymir, the Sons of Borr ripped his gigantic corpse asunder to construct the rest of the universe. Sparing the Jötun of Múspellsheimr the same extinction as the Rime Giants, the three victorious sons began their work.

Ymir's body was lain out in the Yawning Chasm. His flesh became the earth underfoot, his blood the seas and waters, his bones the rocks and, from his teeth, the stones and gravel. A ring of the ocean was formed around the land as Ymir's skull formed the skies above.

Sparks from Múspellsheimr were set in the ceiling of the skull to illuminate it and bring about the stars and the celestial firmament. Festering and squirming deep within Ymir's rot were the Dverggar-kind, the Dwarfs, who writhed as maggots. Oðin and his two brothers planned to enlighten these Dwarfs, soon to have their aid in their tasks of constructing the universe.

The Dwarfs were given the world Svartálfaheimr, or Niðavel-lir, as their own to rule by the Sons of Borr. To the Light Elves (*Ljósálfar*) and Dark Elves (*Dökkálfar*), they allotted the realm of Álfheimr to them each in order to keep the two opposing races apart but close enough together.

Using their skills of stonework and crafts, the Sons of Borr gave the giants, by force more often, the lands that lie outside of the World Sea and then built the many lands nearer to the middle for all other races and animals. This world is called Miðgarðr because it rests in the middle of all the Nine Worlds, being constructed from Auðumla's corpse.

Ymir's brow was the buttress in which Miðgarðr was built to secure it from the Jötun who are ever-ready to invade and spread chaos and destruction after Ymir's death. Surtr vowed to consume the worlds in fire if he can be released from his realm of Múspellsheimr, now his prison as given by Oðin.

The destruction of Ymir, however, was not complete. The giant's brains were thrown into the skies, back where they once belonged within Ymir's skull, to form the clouds. From the giant of giant's

corporeal form, the Sons of Borr brought about the formation of each of the Nine Worlds in their splendor and harshness.

### CREATION OF MANKIND

One day whilst walking along the sea strand, the Sons of Borr found two trees, and it humored them to craft peoples, Man-kind, so that they could rule over them with the authority of kings from their new world of Ásgarð. These two people, a man named Askr and a woman named Embla, were given the lands below in Mannheimr to inhabit, east of Miðgarðr to dwell in. Oðin gave them life, Vili their brains and emotions and Vé their senses. Without the Sons of Borr, there would be no mankind, and this is a bond and genesis that would never be forgotten.

Askr and Embla's would populate the world of Mannheimr in time with their children named Istaev, Ing and Irmin. The many tribes of Man would descend from these three sons who would drive their peoples over the forested and mountainous lands of northern and central Europa. They would be among the chosen of Man and closest to the gods.

Oðin, Vili and Vé then decided to distance themselves from Man, to watch over them and guide their futures from afar. And so they built the abode of Hlidskjálf in Ásgarð for Oðin to rule from. Oðin placed this atop the World Tree Yggdrasil to view all under him. Ásgarð became the refuge for the Sons of Borr's kindred, the Æsir, divinely gifted immortals that no Human, Dverggar, Elf or Giant could equal.

Oðin married Frigg, daughter of Fjörgvinn, and thus gave birth to their first child named Ása-Thor (Thor) who would grow to become a famous giant killer. It is because of Oðin's vision and all-seeing abilities and caretaker over the many worlds and its peoples that he is given the title Aldrfaðr.

Even with the Æsir to help rule the Nine Worlds under their fathers and uncles, Oðin, Vili and Vé, the giants, monsters and dark forces still press down upon the universe. Many of the plots stem from the fiery and unstable bitterness of Surtr and his Fire Giants who wish to consume the worlds in their wrath for the deeds of the Sons of Borr.

### THE MAKING OF THE DAY AND NIGHT

Oðin, realizing that the sparks of Múspellsheimr in the firmament of Ymir's skull were not enough to illuminate the many worlds, sought after a giant in Niflheimr. Nörfi, one of the Jötun, had a daughter named Night who was married three times and had given many offspring. But of the many children by many fathers, it was Dayspring that was the most important.

The Aldrfaðr decided to grant Night and Dayspring each a chariot with horses to pull them and send them into the skies to circle the worlds every two half days. Night's steed, Frosty-Mane, brought

the earth its dew early morning from its bit while Dayspring's steed, Sheen-Mane, illuminated the air with its mane.

To bring more light beyond the glow of the stars and comets that Night and Dayspring created, the need for more was demanded by the Sons of Borr. Amongst the Æsir were the two beautiful and shining children of Mundilfari named Sun and Moon. Because of their beauty and glorification by many, the other peoples were jealous and had Óðin cast them into the sky.

The boy, Sun, was given a chariot that held a sun disk made from the flaming essence of Múspellsheimr to course across the sky and bring a bright illumination to the shadowy worlds. His sister, Moon was also given a chariot to ride the moon in the sky, racing his brother along on their track as designated by the gods. Their horses were named Early-Wake and Allstrong and had windbags placed under them to bring an iron coolness to the air where ever they traveled.

In spite of this, the siblings were not fond of their accursed new occupation and had to be forced into maintaining their course. Two wolves are set on their path, always trying to overtake either sibling if the chance is given. Moon is their target more often with Sköll chasing behind her and Hati Hródvitnisson before her, each trying to catch her. When they briefly do, the worlds fall into shadow (Eclipse), but the chase continues.

These wolves are two of numerous spawn of the Old One, Angrboða, a witch that dwells in Järnviör. She and her ilk, troll-women or Iron Wood women, live in Jötunheimr to the east in the swamps and fens. Her children (giants, monsters and wolves) are foul natured and dire and can be found in many of the Nine Worlds.

### ÁSGARÐR - THE HOME OF THE GODS

The world of the gods is a secure realm where the many Æsir can procreate and train for their eventual and likely war against the Jötun. It is inevitable that the wrath of the giants will be felt for the betrayal and slaughter of their king, Ymir, by the Sons of Borr.

Óðin, in his wisdom as a young god, deemed it wise to deny outsiders access to his world and so he had a burning bridge made, Bifröst. It was constructed from the colors of a rainbow, three of them, to give the illusion that it is just a part of the sky and nothing more.

Bifröst, or the Shimmering Path, is also called Ásbrú or the Æsir's Bridge, for they alone can traverse it. It is said that if Surtr's brood and kin should ever cross it, they will do so and bring its destruction in their wake.

Showing more wisdom, Óðin chose from among his own brood a guardian, Heimdallr, who shall blow upon his magnificent horn, Gjallarhorn, for the alarm if the time of Surtr's arrival

comes. Heimdallr resides in his fortress, Himinbjörg, where he brews and drinks his fine mead, the finest among the Æsir.

Within Ida-field, the chief son of Borr built a court with the twelve seats to house the Lords of the Æsir and a golden throne for himself. Richly constructed of gold sits Valhöllr. From within and without, it honors the Battle Slain. This hall was constructed in the realm of Gláðsheimr. A second hall for the goddesses was built beside it, called Vingólf, to fulfill the same function for Frigg's court. Between these halls of splendor is a smith's forge where the Dvergar can shape the endless veins of gold and iron for their masters.

Óðin gave the Dvergar their independence and complete consciousness to function. No longer were they the maggots of Ymir's flesh but intelligent artificers and workers of the earth and the riches within it.

### YGGDRASIL - THE WORLD TREE

The Ash tree Yggdrasil spans the Nine Worlds and holds them together as the axle. This giant tree can be seen in nearly all worlds except Miðgarðr because it is obscured by the mists and clouds of the mountains and sky.

Yggdrasil's three roots hold the massive tree upright. One root is in Ásgarðr, another in the Yawning Void and the third in Niflheim. The root that stretches closest to the Yawning Void feeds out of Mímir's Well, watched over by Mímir himself. Óðin was denied a drink from the well unless he gave a sacrifice for the wisdom within the waters. The Son of Borr gave an eye for a drink from this well, but that is told later.

The World Tree is not safe, however, not even for its size and guardianship by the Æsir, for many beasts dwell within its leaves and branches and gnaw on its trunk and roots. A great eagle named Ari sits among its branches possessing much knowledge about the Nine Worlds. A hawk, Veðrfölnir, is perched on the eagle's brow wherein its eyes can view the many worlds and impart such findings to the greater bird.

Four harts dash between the many branches and bite on the leaves as they go, always eating away at the greenery but not enough to completely have them, and by dawn of the next day, the leaves are again renewed. These four harts are named Dáinn, Dvalinn, Duneyrr and Duraðrór. Tangled in the roots and branches are many serpents that slither and hiss. They are so named Góinn, Móinn, Grábakr and Grafvölludr.

### ÓFNIR AND SVÁFNIR.

Running from root to crown and back again is the squirrel Ratatoskr which imparts gossip and rumor between the eagle above and the hungry, devouring wyrm below, Nidhöggr. The wyrm continually eats away at Yggdrasil's roots as it grows, ever seeking to devour the Ash tree if it slows. If the roots are eaten away enough,

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Nidhögg will be free to ravage the Nine Worlds. Only its master, Hel, can control it if this happens, for she alone can rule over it.

Another root of the three rests at the Well of Urdr to feed its voluminous size. This well is where the steeds of the Æsir drink when they have entered Ásgarðr from the Bifröst Bridge. Beside this well is a hall built to house the Three Norns, Urdr, Verdandi and Skaldi, that determine the length of men's lives. The elves and dwarfs also choose Mortals to judge over. There is one for each living man.

Many places dwell near the Well of Urdr that are unique and special abodes. Álfheimr, the world of the elves, rests around the well. The Light Elves are fairer than the sun to look upon, almost blinding, while the Dark Elves are as black as pitch and must live underground. The unimaginably beautiful hall of Bridablik shines there as well near to the red-golden halls of Glitnir. Heimdallr's hall, Himinbjörg, sits on the edge of the world where Bifröst rests.

Oðin's sheer silver hall, Valaskjálf, also is found here. This is the hall where his throne, Hlidskjálf, is placed to enable him the ability to look over the many worlds. Sitting near to Oðin's hall is Gimlé, a radiant hall that outshines the sun and will remain even if Surtr's brood destroys the Nine Worlds.

A couple of more realms exist near to that under Yggdrasil. Andlandr is one and Vandbláinn a second realm that is now inhabited by the Light Elves.

### ODIN'S KINGSHIP OF THE ÆSIR

Due to his many deeds since the slaying of Ymir and his building of the universe, Oðin rose above his brothers Vili and Vé. The Æsir, huddled in Ásgarðr, praised their lord's name for his generosity and patronizing of their well-being.

Oðin has dominion over the souls of the slain, and thus, he became the King of the Dead and Battle Slain (Einherjar) and appointed a hall to them called Valhöll where the dead can feast and live out their time in the afterlife in pleasant company.

The many Æsir under the God of Gods, Oðin, had been assigned their functions in his kingdom. Many remained in Ásgarðr to dwell near him, but others sought out places in the Nine Worlds for their own. One of the main rulings of the Thing of Ásgarðr among his retinue was to ensure that Surtr and his ilk do not endanger the other worlds and its peoples in their plots and designs to bring fiery destruction in revenge for Ymir's death.

Not all of the Æsir agreed to the ascension of Oðin in this time. Many let it be known, sometimes overtly and not so much, while others simply left Ásgarðr altogether and sought dominions of their own where they could rule over Mankind, trolls, monsters and other uncouth folks. Chief of those who oppose Oðin's reign is Loki Farbautison from Járniviðr in Jötunheimr.

The Vanir of Vanaheimr did not accept Oðin and his children's rule as the chief gods and wished to openly challenge this verdict, being gods themselves. In an act of war, the Vanir confronted the Æsir on the field of battle, but neither side could defeat the other without losing something in turn. After much struggle and bloodshed, a truce was given in which an alliance was made between the Æsir and Vanir with an exchanging of oath rings. Where the Vanir came from, no one in the universe can say.

It was clear that no enchantment or blade could ultimately defeat the other and so it was agreed that the Nine Worlds would be shared with Oðin being the Allfather still, his singular rule as King of Kings was not threatened or reduced in stature by the Vanir. This truce made both sides content and a mightier alliance of rulers to oppose the dark forces that always fester, conspire and plot beyond the Pale.

### THE MANY ADVENTURES OF THE ÆSIR

Oðin's brood had many adventures of their own in the Nine Worlds that built up the reputation of the Æsir in the minds of the common folk and races. These adventures are countless and could not be given here in detail, but they more often were the result of or in opposition to the secretive schemes of Hel or Loki. If they were not the cause then it was the Jötun and their spiteful vendetta to the Æsir.

Chief among the children of Oðin is Thor who became an infamous giant slayer. He would hunt them down if he heard of their cruelty toward innocents and kill them outright, or he would cross paths with them and do them a fated act of slaughter. Thor was a protector of the common folk and spent much of his time among them in Miðgarðr and Mannheimr, away from his own hall of Birskirnir in the land of Thrúðvangar in Ásgarðr (see Chapter 5, 'Thor').

From his hall of Breidablik, the second born son of Oðin, Baldr, set forth on the seas of the worlds in his ship, Hringhorni, to adventure. Hringhorni is the finest ship ever built in the Nine Worlds, without comparison, and was the center of his quests and his home away from home in Ásgarðr. His fate, however, will not be so glorious later, brought about by the deceptions of Loki.

Njördr, Heimdallr, Týr and the many other children of Oðin, Vili, Vé each were given a land and hall of their own to use. Each of Oðin's brood had many adventures, grand and epic, too many to list here, but their adventures shaped the universe further than their Allfather's original design and improved upon it.

### THE FINAL WINTER

It has been prophesied by many in the Nine Worlds that a time will come in the future that certain events will send the universe into chaotic destruction. Whether this is brought about by the



plots and schemes of Loki, son of Farbauti, or the machinations of Hel or the wrath of the angry giants of Surtr in Jötunheimr is unclear.

What will precede this will be a Great Winter, or *Fimbulvetr*, that will fall upon all worlds alike, covering them in a pallid blanket of white snow and ice. An *Aldar Rök*, or End of the World will transpire and bring about the clash between god and giant, Æsir and Jötun, man and monster and earth and sky if this Great Winter occurs.

Two dreaded monsters are being held by the force of spells and magical restraints by the Æsir – Jörmunganör (the World Serpent) and the giant wolf, Fenrir. Once this event occurs, their bonds will break, and they will fall upon the worlds in destructive rage and rally by their allies against their ancient foes (see *Ragnarök in Chapter 5*).

Talk has it that the Æsir and Vanir are both aware of their demise if this happens, and not even their skills and charms can withstand it. In his far seeing wisdom gained by the loss of his eye, Oðin knows this will transpire and already has designs on fighting his foes on the plain of Vígríðr in Miðgarðr. Heimdallr has been given the order to blow his horn, the Gjallarhorn, to signal across the Nine Worlds that the Twilight of the Kings (Ragnarök) has come and to assemble his armies for the dreaded battle of battles.

Madmen, witches and seers all agree that Ragnarök will indeed occur someday, and their words are heeded by most when given. It is a fool that denies or ignores these warnings and visions, but most do, in fact, and regard the words as doomsaying and fearmonger talk.

### THE AGE OF MEN

Since the time of Askr and Embla, the many children of the first Mortal couple spread themselves over Mannheimr to all four points in the Skull of Ymir, creating nations. The many colors of man are due to their angle to the chariot path of Sun as he travels the sky, but above the Chosen of the Allfather, it sojourns just right.

The Æsir still return to the many worlds, often on errands and adventures, while stemming the tide of the vengeful Jötun and the monstrous offspring of Hel who seek to undo the works of Oðin and his kin. Sitting on Yggdrasil, the Allfather decreed that mankind shall be responsible for themselves but must also appease him and his kindred by sacrifice, prayer and worship for what he has done for them.

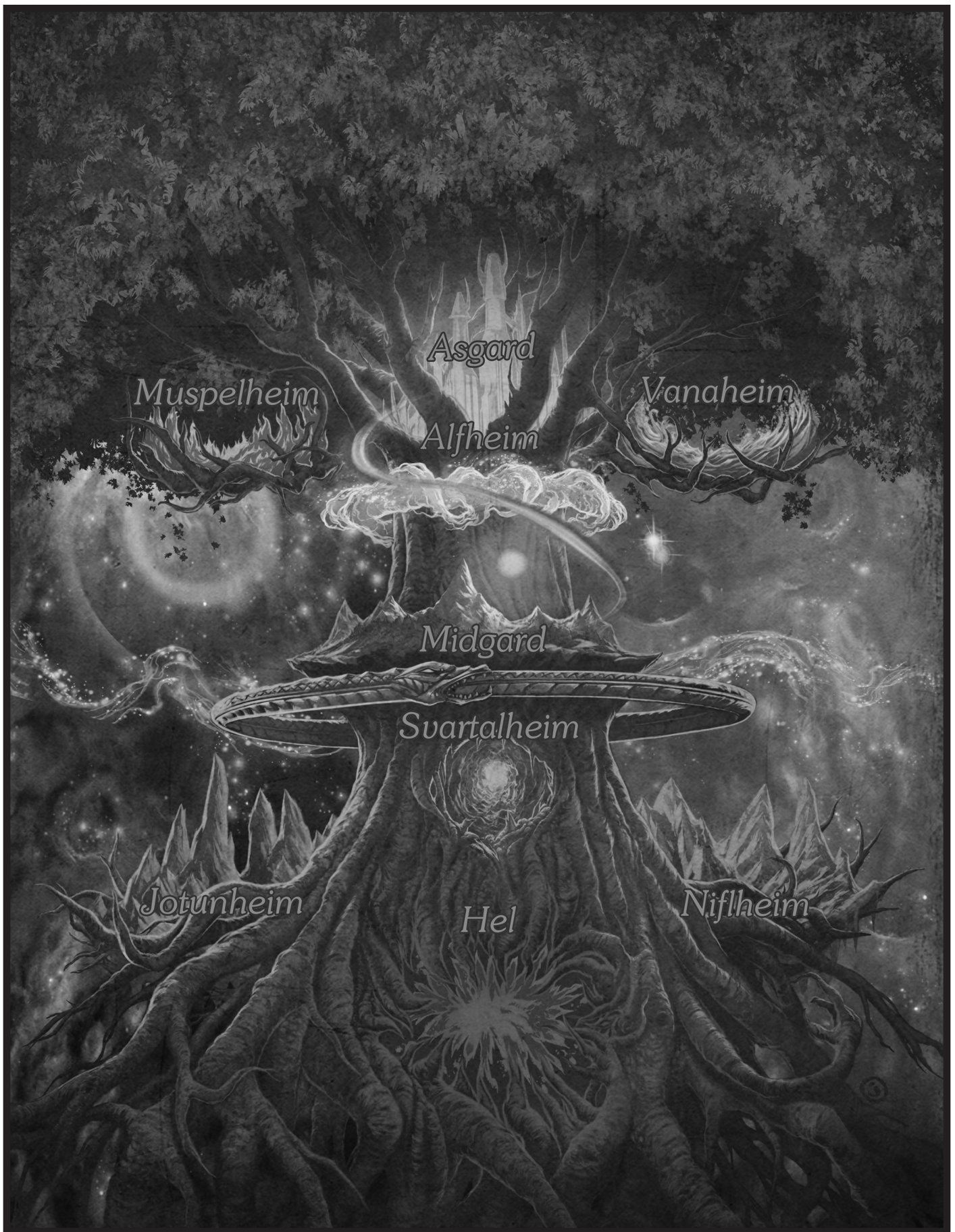
Among the many peoples of Mannheimr, they have lost their way with the teachings and wisdoms of Oðin Allfather or have never known of it altogether. The Secret of the Runes and its sacrifice that the Allfather made onto himself is unknown to them. Other beliefs and gods have crept into the

world under Ymir's skull, in time, and have begun to threaten it with their own corruptions and perversions.

Mankind has traveled to the other worlds beyond Mannheimr many times, sometimes willingly and, other times, not so much. Explorations by brave bands of adventurers on horseback or in longships have broadened the minds of Askr's Brood, giving them a greater awareness of the universe and of the wonders and horrors that lie within.

The universe is a place filled with plenty of opportunities for adventures and epic events, and the only way such deeds can be accomplished is by the bravery of those bold enough to journey into the Nine Worlds and all of the realms inside them with no fear.







## CHAPTER 2: THE NINE WORLDS



his chapter defines, in gaming terms, the Nine Worlds (*Níu Heima*) of Nordic mythology in a manner that is playable. This requires not taking certain locales as being so literal as described in the sources but embellishing them in a mild way to allow endless gaming adventures.

It is hoped that with the maps and details given here, Castle Keepers can formulate fantastic adventures, battles and quests in the Germanic tradition. Exact locations of halls, fortresses, topographical features and other locales from the Germanic sources are given, but the surrounding regions are surmised and deduced from the limited descriptions extant.

In the end, the Castle Keeper can embellish or take away from whatever lands or locations they see fit in the course of their gaming to suit their needs. There are no boundaries except for the imagination in this vast cosmography.

The Nine Worlds vary in the early sources, plus or minus a few, and so there had to be a compromise of sorts to define them better in this Codex. Where there was doubt or the sources were thin or contradictory, several similar worlds were compounded or combined to make sense of the varied sources from Antiquity.

### MÚSPELLSHEIMR

This is one of the first worlds of the primal beginning where the Fire Giants (Eldjötnar) dwell and seek to consume the rest of the universe by their intense heat, fire and sparks. The landscape is mountainous and ashen with lava flows cutting across the bleak world in all directions, making travel for beings lesser in stature than giants difficult.

Because of the intensity of the constant heat, everything flammable brought into the Múspellsheimr will gradually become so warm that it may combust or simply wear away into ruin. Thundering volcanoes rage from the thousands of miles of mountains in all directions, except for the rim nearest to Ginnugagap. (*All combustible items taken to this world risk igniting with a 1 in 6 chance on the first day with a level higher in odds per each day until, after six days, there is a guaranteed chance that everything will ignite*).

The land falls away to the Yawning Void with fast flying, smoky clouds sliding down into the void followed by random showers of fiery sparks from the volcanoes. The rest of the world's rim or edge is high with wall-like mountains forming a barrier that even the Jötun cannot easily traverse. King Surtr could cleave the barrier with his flaming sword, but it sits elsewhere, being held by his foes.

Fire Giants and other monsters are found here with nothing pleasant or harmless by nature; only tough and brutal beasts can

exist in this harsh world. The Fire Giants have built a society around their king, the dreadful Surtr, in his fortress surrounded by a moat of lava. *Surtrskáli* ('Surtr's Castle') or *Surtrhöll* ('Surtr's Hall') is a magnificent, if crudely constructed, stone fortress that is built to accommodate only the Jötun. Surtr's Hall rests deep in Múspellsheimr on the opposite side of the world at the edge of Ginnugagap where giants, dragons and other harsh monsters can be found.

The air is barely breathable because of the heat and ash that blow about its turbulent winds. At times, terrible fiery sparks will shower down from the volcanoes or plumes out of the cracked and broken earth (*2 in 8 chance per hour spent. If so, the adventuring party will get showered by 1d6 sparks, each doing 2d12 damage and possibly igniting the clothes, etc. of the victim*). Black clouds fill the gloomy skies and cast shadows from the sun's travels above. It is a rare sight to witness the sun in a clear patch of skies in Múspellsheimr, but it has been seen by those few who care to look.

The Fire Giants live primarily in the caves that pepper the many mountains where they collect slaves for food and stockpile their armaments for the day of Ragnorök when their king and master, Surtr, will brandish his fire sword again. It is rare that the Eldjötnar take prisoners unless they deem them important enough for one of their chiefs or petty kings or, even more rarely, their great king Surtr.

Surtr's kingdom of Fire Giants rules over this world from end to end with a brutal iron hand. There are multiple lesser kingdoms that center on Surtrskáli, each populated by the Eldjötnar, Dvergar and other less than appealing peoples of many races.

The instability of the world of Múspellsheimr, due to its volcanic nature and being on one side to the Ginnugagap, causes terrible quakes and sinkholes often. Cracks and rifts form and fall away forever changing the general landscape, leaving only a few distinctive features remaining over time. Only the fiery mountains, Surtrskála, the many massive rivers of lava and the shores of the sea where the grim ship Nagalfari rests remain after thousands of years. There are very few permanent building dwellings or features in this world.

Great treasures do await the bold and courageous adventurer in this world, however. They are hoarded by the Fire Giants and dragons that populate this harsh landscape. Though the Fire Giants usually cannot leave the confines of their world, they can plunder travelers and, rarely, other worlds. Dragons possess the freedom to fly beyond the smoky, ashen realm to other worlds, if they so choose, to take what loot and wealth pleases them and return to their lair. The wyrms and dragons that dwell here are more feisty than the usual of their kind, and this is due to the environment's harshness.

Many Dvergar-folk populate this world for a myriad of reasons. One reason is the availability of the molten metals and fires for forging and smithing their goods for Surtr, his giants or other



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patrons. A second reason is that many are under the employ of King Surtr and construct for him his fortress, walls and other projects. They work tirelessly in the grime and char, sweating and creating for their king his many items and weapons.

Múspellsheimr is also called Eldjötunarheimr because of the large population of native Fire Giants, for they dominate this blazing world from brim to brim, and they do not let the other inhabitants forget it.

Sitting on the shore of the bleak sea of boiling, blackened water is the dismal ship Naglfari. The ghastly vessel is constructed from the untrimmed finger and toe nails of the dead that have come to Helheimr. This ship is a massive dragon-ship with a prow constructed of a skull and spinal cord of a dragon, and its wings spread over its front behind it like a figurehead. Dvergar work on it, seemingly perpetually, adding to its massive size. Naglfari’s purpose is singular – to sail once Surtr and his ilk storm the worlds after the Great Winter comes.

If adventurers dare coming to this world, they will be guaranteed to encounter any range of its awful natives along the way. The Castle Keeper can decide what they need for encounters, but if they wish to consult this basic table below, it can give a starting point.

*Because a large part of Múspellsheimr is wide open, infernal lands and because there are no trees or foliage to obscure or hide behind, strangers are easily seen. Every hour adventurers spend here raises the initial chance of an encounter. The basic chance of an encounter is 1 in 6 +1 level higher every additional hour they remain out in the open. If so, use this table below:*

D6	ENCOUNTER
1	1d10 Fire Giants
2	2d8 Dvergar
3	1d4 Trolls
4	1d10 Dark Elves
5	1d4 Wyrms
6	One dragon angry and seeking sustenance and extra wealth.*

\* The dragon’s category can be rolled or picked. 1d6: – 1 *Young Adult*, 2 *Adult*, 3 *Mature*, 4 *Seasoned*, 5 *Old*, 6 *Ancient*.

Múspellsheimr is a vibrant land regardless of its appearance and climate, but it is not a world where unassuming and peaceful creatures dwell. Ferocious monsters prowl the wastes seeking prey day or night in this land.

NIFLHEIMR

This is the second world of the primal ages before the birth of Ymir and the Age of Giants. It lies to the north of Múspellsheimr

and is bitterly frozen. Just as the other world is torn asunder by fire, quakes and molten lava, so Niflheimr is blanketed in ice, snow and blizzards.

The Jötun of the ice, the Hrímpursar, and descendants of Bergelmir chiefly inhabit these frozen wastes. They are called the Ymirfólk and despise the Æsir, mankind and the Vanir and want nothing more than to see Oðin’s Nine Worlds collapse into ruin in vengeance for their great father’s, Ymir’s, death at his hands in early times.

The land is frozen tundra where there is earth and thick ice and high snow drifts. Glaciers sit high in the mountains, dominating the horizons in all directions except near the rim where the Yawning Void sits. Shrieking icy winds cover the harsh world, and ice storms fall often from above in the overcast skies.

Just as sandy deserts have miles of sand dunes, Niflheimr is covered in vast tracts of snow drifts. Frozen lakes of ice are common across the world and free flowing waters are rare, but there are many waterways that cut through the land in all directions. The birth of all of the rivers in the Nine Worlds springs from Niflheimr and the Well of Hvergelmir.

Hvergelmir is a gigantic stone well in the frozen earth that floods the land in all directions, creating the many rivers. Svöl, Gunnthvá, Fjörm, Fimbulthul, Slídr, Hríd, Sylgar, Ylgr, Við and Leiptr. These rivers, together, pour and drain into the many other worlds out of Niflheimr. Steam rolls from the rushing waters and out of Hvergelmir as the warm waters flow in the frozen land.

Helheimr, the world of Hel, lies close to this freezing world, and foolhardy travelers that wish to reach Helheimr by another means could brave Niflheimr’s icy wastes to do so. One large, roaring river, Gjoll, divides the two worlds like a moat, but few can cross it without being caught in its strong currents and being pulled under to fall in its waterfall, Franagr, into the void.

Another route that crosses over a small part of Gjoll is the road to Helheimr, called Helvegr. Snow and ice may cover its long, stone trail, but it remains evident in the land as it cuts through the many hills and plains. Where it begins is not certain, but it ends at the massive black gates of Helheimr. The Hrímpursar prowl the edges of Helvegr, seeking travelers to accost for plunder and food. Hvelgr cuts through thousands of miles in Niflheimr, seemingly without logic. It is thought that the road was built by Ymir’s people, but it is not certain.

On the desolate island of Lyngvi in the lake of Amsvartir can be sought the dwarf Lyngvi, a reputable craftsman that works ropes, cloth and other fabrics for a price. Lyngvi was set to a task by the Æsir to construct an unbreakable cord that would restrain the Hel-Wolf Fenrir. Lyngvi is very selective in his choosing of customers since he chooses them, but his price for such legendary work can be impossible for some.

Elsewhere in Niflheimr sits the dreaded wolf Fenrir, held and contained by the Æsir for all time or until the Great Winter comes over the Nine Worlds. Held by Lyngvi's thin, silken fetter, Gelgia, Fenrir is moored on a heavy rune enchanted stone called Gioll. The Æsir did not feel that this was enough to hold the ferocious monster wolf, and they further anchored him to a stone slab called Thviti. A magical sword was thrust into his mouth by Týr to keep him from biting or gnawing at Gelgia or others in his prison.

The frozen, rocky valley where Fenrir is kept lies deep in the mountains of Niflheimr, and few people travel there to confront this giant, black beast. Packs of wolves dwell around Fenrir serving the monster, recognizing it as the Alpha leader and obeying its wishes. Fenrir's muffled and agonizing howls echo in the frozen world, at times eerily, followed by a chorus of wolves – the sound of which can cause nightmares in strangers to this bleak world of frigid misery.

King Þrymr of Jötunheimr holds influence in Niflheimr, and some say he even rules over much of the giants here as he does in his own world. The Æsir dread an alliance exists between Þrymr and both the Jötun of Múspellsheimr and Niflheimr since they are all kindred of similar origins. It is well known already that contempt exists among the giants since Óðin, Vili and Vé's deeds against Ymir so long ago bringing the Age of the Giants to an end.

Niflheimr, also, is the foundations of one of the roots of Yggdrasil. The colossal Ash tree root digs and dips deeply into the mountains and can only barely be seen from out of the mists and overcast gloom above. The whole of Yggdrasil can be occasionally viewed from Niflheimr when the conditions are right and skies clear enough. Quakes stir around the root and its many smaller, entwining tangles from the continual chewing by the wyrm Niðhöggr. The closer to the root of Yggdrasil one risks getting in Niflheimr, the better chance that dangerous wolves and serpents will be encountered. These beasts are not the usual kind one encounters in Miðgarðr or Mannheimr but supernatural and vile.

Niðavellir, or 'Downward Fields', is found here in the primordial frozen wastes as well. This region is the 'birth' place of the Dvergjar after the Sons of Borr slaughtered Ymir and gave them a soul, mind and body. These mist covered, rocky fields slope downward near to the edge of Ginnugagap. At the present, they are just rubble covered mounds where dwarven-kind was first pulled from the corpse of Ymir as festering maggots. The majority of the Dvergjar have long since migrated to their assigned world of Svartálfaheimr, but a large population still remains in the mountains and underground of Niflheimr.

Unlike Múspellsheimr, this primal world has plentiful wildlife. Fierce cave bears, dire wolves and other rugged animals able to endure the extreme climate are here (as one would uncover in

the furthest of northern regions of the world of Miðgarðr. The many stone fortresses of the Hrímpursar dot the white and grey landscape, sometimes skirting the mountains or standing alone in a plain or valley, always visible on the horizon.

Perhaps worst of all is the presence of Hel herself in Niflheimr after Óðin cast her here from Jötunheimr realizing that this spawn of Loki could not remain with her other two siblings, Fenrir and the World Serpent. Although Hel reigns over her own world in Helheimr across the watery border of Gjöll, she also has a walled, dark fortress here.

Queen Hel's hall, Éljúðnir, sits as the most ominous of all things in this brutal land. The fortress has tall, black, stone walls and an impenetrable gate with a shadowy court of monsters and dark souled beings that serve her needs. The threshold into the dreadful hall is an illusionary floor that is a pitfall, called *Fallandaforad*, and will let those of Good Alignments fall to their peril (*the fallen will suffer 1d100 damage in a lightless pit of stone to linger, starve and die over time*).

Hel's hall is a morose place where misery exists to the senses. The tortured and interrogated are put on display in her court amidst the feasters and guests who often are served illusionary plates of food at her whim or need. Wolves prowl the chambers, sniffing out the weak to feed upon, and troll-wives drag the unwilling into the kitchens to be prepared for the feast as the actual food.

Hel's chief servant is Ganglati and maid Ganglot. They are obedient troll-wives that serve her without question as to her intent which is, more often, grim. It is rare enough that Hel chooses to satiate her lusts, but when she so does, her chosen lover will be taken to her canopied black bed, *Kor* ('Sick Bed'), and will not likely return to the land of the living again. Her bed chamber is stark and tomb-like with haunting, ghostly shadows and dreary grey curtains, *Blikjandabol* ('Gleaming Disaster'). Hel's lusts often take the lives of many men to satisfy before it subsides, and woe to the chosen to be with her.

The Frost Giants must appease Hel during the holidays or when she has taken court in her hall by blood and wealth, for she acts as a ruler over them in place of Ymir's absence. They resent her but cannot oppose her and so must be content. Only when their true king, Þrymr, comes to visit do they ignore her – much to their dismay later.

The Castle Keeper can use this random encounter table to aid in the travel of their adventuring party, if they wish. The chance of an encounter while traveling in the wide open spaces per hour is 1 in 8, day or night, but closer to the mountains, these odds increase due to the availability of shelter and become 2 in 6 per hour. If an encounter happens, this table below can help determine what the nature of it is:

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### D10 ENCOUNTER

1	1d10 Frost Giants
2	2d8 Dvergar
3	3d6 Pack of Dire Wolves
4	3d6 Cave Bears
5	1d4 Ice Trolls
6	1d4 Giant Eagles
7	1d6 Witches
8	1d4 Wyrms
9	1d6 Raiders
10	A Dragon*

\* The dragon's category can be rolled or picked. 1d6: – 1 *Young Adult*, 2 *Adult*, 3 *Mature*, 4 *Seasoned*, 5 *Old*, 6 *Ancient*.

### GINNUGAGAP

It is a misty gulf that rests between the two primal worlds of Múspellsheimr and Niflheimr that is abysmal in size. Fiery sparks shower over one side on the south from the land of the Fire Giants while rolling fog and snow pours over the other from Niflheimr into the Yawning Void. Without the inclusion of the two elements, Ginnugagap would be devoid of any presence at all.

This is a chaotic realm where drizzling rain and gusts sweep across its heavy volume, stirred and influenced by the heat and cold it sits in between. Thick rime is formed on its two barely visible walls of earth from the instability of the atmosphere. The mystery lies in not knowing how Búri, the grandfather of Oðin, Vili and Vé, was ever deeply buried in the ice before the cow Auðumla licked him free. The wise in the Nine Worlds ponder on this mystery of many.

Except for the walls, obviously, this void is not habitable or populated by any races. Only deep caves can be found in the walls of the Yawning Void (if one can get passed the thick sheets of rime and tundra). Many rumors abound that say the walls of Ginnugagap are riddled with Dvergar, Dark Elves and other dark races that have been there since the slaying of Ymir and the making of the races. No one is certain because few adventurers ever dare to journey here willingly.

Dragons often soar in the stormy skies between the two worlds and even engage in fierce battles, raining fire and death down into the Yawning Void. There are a few bold or foolish adventurers that dare to make passage between the two worlds of Múspellsheimr and Niflheimr by leaping on a dragon and clutching tightly until they reach the other side over the Ginnugagap's abyss.

### JÖTUNHEIMR

The edge of this brutal world is encircled by the colossal walls and towers of Útgarðr, meant to pen the giants within so they do not wander among the Nine Worlds and cause havoc or destruction. Jötunheimr is a wilderness of extremes and harshness well-suited for the giants that are native here.

Many places of paramount importance are in Jötunheimr, starting with Þrymrheim, the royal fortress and court of King Þrymr of the giants. This hall, as with all places built for and by the giants, is monumental in scale and not for the smaller races. King Þrymr's fortress is an intimidating fortress of cyclopean scale stones, deep dungeons and full larders and coffer.

Dvergar-kind are commonly here underfoot serving the Jötun with their skills in stone and metallurgy or assisting them in managing the doomed captives. Massive torches, whole trees in size, sit in wall sconces and a massive fire pit sits in Þrymr's main hall, but the shadows run deep and dark here. It is a well-known fact that Þrymr's treasury is one of the finest in the Nine Worlds, stocked with more than plentiful gold, silver and other usual sources of wealth, but it also houses a mind-numbing array of magical weapons and items that could make any peasant a champion or stage magician a powerful wizard by simply plundering it (*Treasure Type 15 in Monsters & Treasure*).

There are always an average of fifty giants present in Þrymr's hall and surrounding fortress if the king and his personal retinue are not present. Among the other races in the Nine Worlds, only the beer brewed in Þrymrheim remains unequalled. Þrymr's man, Olvalde, possessed the secret of the brew alone, and it was thought lost when he was slain, but his sons, Gang, Ide and Thiatsi, took over his trade for the king.

The giantess Þórgerðr resides here. She can call upon the storms by her magical powers, if the king desires, and send them down to other worlds (except Ásgarðr which is protected by the Æsir). She is very troll-like by nature and may be half-blooded, but her ancestry is unknown. It is assumed that she was born in the reeking fens of Járnvíðr and one of the troll-witch Angrboda's brood.

Another fortress is Gastropnir, the fortress dedicated to warring against the Æsir. It is located on the closest point toward Ásgarðr and populated by an army of ferocious giants. If they are not attacking worlds or lands where the Æsir reside, they are under attack. Warriors come and go beyond the blasted frontier of the walls to assault their rivals and often never return from the ravages of their divine enemies. The Æsir will hurl flaming balls of destruction or lightning down upon Gastropnir periodically. This is the fortress that the Jötun resort to if they retreat from an enemy world or land. There are always hundreds of battle hardened giants present within its battered and shattered walls.

Menglóð is the resident healer here in this war-torn fortress, bringing aid to the injured. Unlike the rest of her kind, however,



she has a good heart and will assist any race so wounded, but they must first reach her in this extremely dangerous place. It is told that she can heal any wound or malady. One of Menglöö's handmaidens, Eir, is second only to her in healing ability.

Two massive hounds, Gif and Geri, watch outside the foreboding gates, rarely letting any in or out. This war-shattered fortress forms the front line in Jötunheimr's defense against large scale attacks or invasions (if there ever were any, beyond that of the Æsir, brave enough or able).

Another fortress is Gymirsheim, the residence of Gymir, the father of Gerda (Aurboða's handmaid in Járnvíðr). This is a typical Jötun fort, like so many in this world, populated by scores of giants and dwarfs. The forest of Gálgviðr ('Gallows Wood') stretches over a large part of this world. Of the many forests that are dangerous and wrought with evil, this region is not so cursed, but it does have the distinction of being seen in the visions of the seers as the place that the red rooster Fjalar will crow upon the start of Ragnarök. Gálgviðr is home to more reserved and calm Jötnar and beings which is in contrast to the foretold future that is spoken about here.

One of the most dreaded and vile region of Jötunheimr is the Járnvíðr, or 'Iron Wood', a troll haunted, swampy forest shrouded in thick mists. It is called so because of the nature of its trees. They are unable to be easily cut or affected by the blade of an axe. Tough and dark wooded, the trees of this region are as strong as the metal it is named after. Giant wolves prowl this gloomy forest but that isn't the worst threat, for troll-wives dwell here and, it is rumored, spawn monsters to send out to the worlds to cause havoc and horror. This is in homage of their chief witch, Angrboða, who gave birth to the universe's most ferocious and fearsome monstrosities, Hel, Fenrir and the Jörmangandr, by her involvement with Loki. Angrboða's husband, the foul giant Farbauti the Cruel Striker, is a chief that rules the forest. He is capable of summoning terrible lightning down on his enemies and is most proud of his offspring. Angrboða was raised from the dead by Óðin for her knowledge, but she was never put back, and since then, her influence over Járnvíðr has continued to grow.

Angrboða's sister, Glut, and her two daughters, Eisa and Einmyria, are mighty witches in their own right and manage the witches. They work over new potions, curses and charms for their many dark masters in this world and others to undermine the Æsir. Angrboða is one of the many goddess-like witches that have remained since the allotment of the Nine Worlds by Óðin and the Æsir.

There are no Völva in Járnvíðr, only practitioners of dark rune magics, but the plethora of the Dark Arts is here in this swampy forest, and magic seekers and rune masters can discover many hidden secrets here. Unfortunately, travelers here would have to avoid encounters with the witches, trolls and giants to get the

knowledge they seek. Monsters haunt the shadowy woods and fens, their horrors untold by any since few have survived their trek here. Einharjar populate these gloomy woods and mists and seek the living to draw life from, if they can find it.

Hidden somewhere in the wilds of Jötunheimr is the millhouse of the half-giant sisters Menja and Frenja where they first used their enchanted millstone. This richly decorated building is called Grótte and, in its day, had generated gold dust by the grinding of fresh corpses under the stone. The wealth was given to Prymr and other rulers in Jötunheimr before the two sisters were exiled into Mannheimr to live in the court of King Fróði of Denmark. It is said this millhouse is haunted by the spirits of the slain that the two sisters used to grind up into wealth, but there is also talk of a hidden store of their gold somewhere in the grounds of Grótte.

In the high mountains, distantly beyond the intrusive influence of King Prymr and the others in Jötunheimr, is a cave where a giantess named Hyndla lives. She is one of the Völva and can use her abilities of seeing into the future to strangers' advantage, if she is rewarded well. Unlike the rest of her kindred, Hyndla is amicable and pleasant company and beautiful as well.

One of Yggdrasil's roots is located in this world, dug deep in the mountains as with Niflheimr. But unlike Niflheimr, this root has no dragon gnawing on it but, instead, a magical and sacred well, the Mímisbrunnr. The Jötun Mímir once had owned and controlled this holy well but has since lost his head. It is said that great wisdom and visions of the future can be taken from the well if one were to drink from it. One has to reach this well under the root and rocks first and that journey is difficult with obstacles and monsters in the way. Before Mímir's well can be used, a personal sacrifice must be made and not something mild either. Óðin left his eye and Heimdallr his ear, but the answers given are well worth it.

Another forest, called Gálgvið, stretches across a large plain but is more akin to the woodlands that the Mortals know from their homes in Mannheimr near Miðgarðr and the least dangerous in this world by far. The harper and Skald, Eggðr, lives here in peaceful seclusion with the dwarf Fjalr, the murderer of the giant Gilling and his wife. Fjalr and his brother, Galar, once tricked the foolish giant Gilling and his wife into drowning themselves in a lake out of mischievous spite, but their son, Suttungr, sought revenge on them, only letting them live if they revealed the secret of the dwarfs' magic mead. It is not known where Galar went after he was set free, but Fjalr's whereabouts are said to be in this forest.

The island Allgröen sits upon a lake near the forest of Gálgvið and is ruled by the giant lord Fjölvar and his tribe. Óðin left this island with a bad impression as he once came here after boasting about his combat and sexual skills to the giants and proved himself true, much to their dismay. Now, Fjölvar seeks personal revenge upon Óðin or his followers for what was done here in the past.

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Among the many forts and halls in this world, the massive and dreadful Útgarðar sits in the mountains, the lair of the god Útgarða-Loki. The scale of the fortress is so immense that mortals and all smaller folk cannot even grasp its size and do not realize that they are even standing where they are. All forts and halls of the giants are imposing by nature, but this one more so. A dank, wretched smelling cave within is where Útgarða-Loki dwells, not a glorious court as he once did in earlier days. Foul monsters and demonic beings linger in his court for his company at all times. Many say that his fort has secret portals to Ásgarðr and Miðgarðr, and these make their way up and down the inside of Yggdrasil.

It is rumored by outsiders to Jötunheimr that a shimmering plain exists in this land, Glæsisvellir, which has the ability to renew youth and failing health. The Æsir suspect it is a real place that has been the secret weapon of their foes since the time that the Sons of Borr killed Ymir. This 'Glistening Plain' is rumored to be in a territory called Údainsakr but has never been found nor its magical healing properties. Tales are told of the giant ruler of the region, Guðmund son of Höfund, who is unusually amicable for being a Jötun.

Adventurers from other worlds seek the high risks and challenges in Jötunheimr if they manage to find a way here. They can return to their respective homes and worlds quite wealthy and doing well if they can survive the dangers of this wilderness.

The Castle Keeper can use this encounter table below to assist in the adventuring their players are doing in this exciting and dramatic world. Traveling in the open hills and plains, there is a 2 in 6 chance of an encounter. At night, it becomes 4 in 6 per hour. While in the mountains, the odds remain the same, but in, the forests it is a 4 in 8 per hour, day or night.

D10	ENCOUNTER
1	2d12 Giants
2	3d6 Dire Wolves
3	2d4 Giant Eagles
4	2d6 Trolls
5	3d6 Kolbolds
6	2d4 þurisaz
7	1d4 Badalisc
8	A Dragon*
9	3d6 Witches
10	1d4 Náin

\* The dragon's category can be rolled or picked. 1d6: – 1 *Young Adult*, 2 *Adult*, 3 *Mature*, 4 *Seasoned*, 5 *Old*, 6 *Ancient*.

## HELHEIMR

Helheimr is the dismal world given to Hel, the daughter of Loki and Angrboða. Helheimr is cast in twilight with no light from the sun above. The realm is haunted by the Einherjar and the Undead. This is a world that few are willing to go to alive and have no choice when they are dead.

Oðin gave Hel the dominion over the souls of the dead in the Nine Worlds, but only those of the wicked. The most direct way to physically enter Helheimr is to seek out the thunderously loud Gjoll River and cross its bridge, the Gjallarbrú, to reach the dreadful gates. The weapons from those that had used them or perished by them are in the dark waters of the Gjoll. They number in the millions and increase daily. It would take a CL: 18 to spot them from the bridge. If, however, a weapon is taken from the dark waters, there is a good chance that it is cursed and linked to its former owner or victim (3 in 6).

Hel's guards of the main gate, the Helgrind, are the two giantesses Listvoer and Bigvoer who aggressively patrol the dark, doom-filled gates. By an enchantment given by Oðin, the gates revolve and change every day, never staying in the same location. This is meant to deny foolhardy travelers from going to Helheimr for treasure, meeting or finding dead relatives or any other questionable reasons.

If one can manage to make their way into the Helgrind and past the two giant guards, they must walk the stone road that leads to the tower of Mórðguðr, a fierce giantess that questions every traveler, dead or alive, as they cross into Helheimr. She will not let any pass that do not answer her two, simple questions: 1. *Who are they?* 2. *What did they do in life that led them here to Helheimr?* If she is unhappy with their answers, she will turn them away, at the least, or destroy them utterly, at the most.

Any who slip past the guards and commit serious offences to Queen Hel's dominion will find the giant, black eagle, Ari, seeking them. Ari will drop them to their deaths, a second time if possible, beyond the walls of the world.

Helheimr's landscape is a dreary wasteland with little foliage or fauna, and what life is present is dreadful, fell and foul. The skies are perpetually dark with heavy clouds, and only a scarce trace of light from the sun and moon can be seen. Helheimr is the 9<sup>th</sup> World in the cosmic hierarchy.

The realm of Helheimr is a ghost haunted world where the dead of the wicked and evil seek a way to live again. They are drawn to the presence of the living and warmth of others and will attack them and drain their lives if given a chance. Their moans and spectral voices echo in the lonely hills and regions of this furthestmost of worlds.

Hel will often make her inhabitants fight mock battles for hours, knowing that they cannot be slain, but she allows them to feel





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the injuries and suffer the wounds, and then the next time, they are as they once were. This is a world of ghosts most angry and hateful by the nature of their wickedness in life, and they will waste no time attacking living strangers (*'Ghosts' in Monsters & Treasure on page 38*). These spirits are from among the Untoten and Náin.

One location that the living and dead try to avoid in Helheimr is the hall of Náströnd, the lair of Niðhogg, the dragon that gnaws at the roots of Yggdrasil. Corpses are taken to the dragon to be given as food, often in large wagons pulled by ghastly giants. It is best that Niðhogg's food supply is not interrupted or stalled, or he will thrash about and cause havoc in the Nine Worlds by chewing on Yggdrasil fiercely more than before.

Queen Hel's palace, Éljúðnir, is also present here as it is in Niflheimr and changes its place from world to world on different days. Helheimr is not a world that the inexperienced or completely selfish should visit as its inhabitants are more devious and vile than outsiders are used to dealing with.

Buried deep in the mountains is another of Yggdrasil's three roots. The massive Ash tree appears ghost-like in the gloom of Helheimr from all over the world's boundaries. Tremors shake the world from the continual gnawing of the dragon Niðhogg occasionally, sending the dismal realm into chaos. The eagle, Ari, is among the many beasts that dwell in the branches of the great tree.

### MIDGARÐR

This world is the 'Middle' world of the Nine in the Universe as set in place by the Sons of Borr. This world sits midway down the length of Yggdrasil and was given several defenses against the threat of the Jötun. Outmost from the center is the World Serpent Jörmangaðr, devouring its own tail, while inward is a sea that is nearly endless.

To the east of Miðgarðr are the many lands inhabited by mankind, the descendants of Askr and Embla, called Mannheimr (*the Nordic lands are detailed later in this chapter*). The many tribes of the Sons of Tuisto live from eastern to western Europa and explore the boundless seas looking for the many worlds beyond.

Miðgarðr is essentially 'Earth' and so much more. It is roughly identical to the world mankind knows but also is inhabited by supernatural beings and monsters and a place where the Æsir can be found or plenty of bands of rogue giants, Dverggar, elves and other races. As it is the middle world, the inhabitants from the other eight worlds commingle here more often than anywhere else in the cosmos in their migrations and travels.

One region, the Úlfðalr, or the Wolf Dales, an area of wild, forested hills and highlands is populated by packs of Dire Wolves and werewolves. It is not a region for the meek to travel or to get lost in, but there are some who brave its environs to live a secluded life, assured that the wolves will deter any too curi-

ous. One of these hermits is the prodigious blacksmith Völundr, or Weland to the Saxons, who has forged many weapons and items of great power for the gods and great heroes in many worlds even after he was taken and hamstrung by King Níðruð. The few that have visited Völundr have recounted that he was of elfin blood and not of the races of men or Dverggar, but the stories are unclear and contradictory.

The small bay or inner sea that is near to the Wolf Dales, the Úlfssjar, or 'Wolf Sea', is a dangerous place. Not only do the wolves from the region roam here in packs, but roving bands of berserkers also can be found. Ships rarely dock here if they know the nature of the sea. The closest flatland to the sea is a place of great slaughter where ferocious battles have been waged between the berserkers and others. This plain is called Valland ('Slaughter Land').

Myrkviðr is a lengthy forest that covers thousands of miles of Miðgarðr around Úlfðalr and embodies the ideal wilderness. Rugged and savage, this land is untamed by any peoples and native to elves, monsters and other exotic inhabitants from the Nine Worlds. Travelers who are brave enough to make their way here are cautious to do so with hired protection or an escort of warriors.

Primitive beasts roam over Miðgarðr that date to primordial times in the universe's history. Herds of woolly mammoths, giant wild tigers and hounds from an earlier era can be found in the savage wilds of Miðgarðr among other primitive animals. This world is a primal garden of life that remains as it once was in the time when Oðin made it.

Ysetur is a fortress of the Æsir that rests in this world, always occupied by the warriors of the divine race, meant to keep an eye on the activities and movement of the Jötun between the worlds. It is often under assault by the brute or magical forces sent by the angry giants, usually from Gastropnir in Jötunheimr, in retaliation. Outsiders are never allowed into the massive stone fortress as they are not trusted, likely being agents of the giants or the other enemies of the Æsir in some way.

Ysetur was Thor's fort and charge for a time, but it was given over to Ivalði, the Ælf King. Ivalði and his elves run the fort with an iron-hand of authority and make sure no threats cross the salt water river of Elivgr to the north, and if so, they are attacked by the might of Ysetur.

One plain in this world is haunted even though there is yet a reason to cause it, and this is due to prophecies spoken by the Völva and Halirúna – Vígríðr. Visions have been seen that show the plain of Vígríðr as the site of the final battle between the Æsir and the Jötun. This has been confirmed by the mutterings of Mimír's head. Common people are wary about traveling here while the Halirúna wish to exploit its potential for the bloodshed and souls that will be sacrificed there.

A vast sea separates Miðgarðr and Mannheimr and appears endless to the traveler who dares to take it. It is said by many captains that this expanse can take a couple of years or more to travel, but no one is certain. Miðgarðr lies to the far west of Mannheimr across the Great Sea, beyond Iceland, Greenland and the lands of the Skrælinjar in Thule where few boat lords have ever gone. Sailors must endure the wild seas, pirates, monsters and the Jörmunganðr, either way, or the lands of Thule and its savage inhabitants.

## ÁLFHEIMR

This world, given to the Elves by the Sons of Borr, is a forested wilderness. Fantastic and magical, Álfheimr is more akin to the Celtic Otherworld of Faery by nature. Very few coherent or tightly organized political groups are in power here, however, leaving the stranger unsure as to the alignment of the natives. Such notions as kingdoms and tribes are ambiguous here in this realm, but they surely exist since there are designated ‘kings’ of the elves.

Niðavellr is one of the larger regions in Álfheimr – dark mountains inhabited by Dvergar and Dark Elves. The region is also known as Niðafjöll, or the ‘Dark Fells’, and is a less favorable or auspicious territory for those of good dispositions and is rumored to cross over into the underworld of Svartálfaheimr, as well, with its many caves. The Dvergar are grumpy and rude while the Dark Elves are scheming and sneaky, leaving little to no room for honest and noble outsiders. This shadowy and questionable region of Álfheimr is where the dragon Niðhöggr was born before being taken to the Ash tree of Yggdrasil.

Among the Vanir, it is Freyr that is Lord over Álfheimr and rules from his golden and richly decorated palace in the woods of the faery realm. As Óðin Allfather is the head of the Æsir in Ásgarð, so Freyr is the leader of the Vanir and rules in Álfheimr. Freyr accepts any visitors to his hall if they have a purpose that is just and heroic; no thieves or shady types are given his audience.

This world has no passage of time, like Faery, and is perpetually locked in a season of spring, but its human inhabitants are few and far between since Freyr dictates that it is natural for mankind to suffer mortality. To do otherwise would undermine the flow of spirits in the universe and deny Óðin his Battle Slain (*Eiðherjar*) and Hel her *Náin*, or less-than-honorable dead spirits. So the presence of humans and other mortals in Álfheimr is rare, and those present are either visiting or granted a rare privilege of citizenship.

Large forests, inhabited by magical folk and animals, cover most of the world. By night, Álfheimr is lit by the glow of fireflies, phosphorescent fungus and creatures and faery-folk. Peaceful glades, groves and waterfalls are scattered and a common sight in this wondrous world. There are dangers present in

the world, and they can devour and destroy those who tread their path. Not all is as blissful as it seems in this realm.

Light Elves, Ljósálfir, primarily populate this blissful and idyllic world from border to border. Amidst their populations are many other magical folk and beasts that can only be found here. Another name for this world is Vidbláin (‘Wide-Blue’) for the open, clear and blue skies that are above this beautiful realm. The only realm that rivals this is picturesque Ásgarðr, but its perfection and imagery is unmatched by the other worlds by far.

Deep in Álfheimr, nestled in a place as one of the first locations built, is Ýdalir, the hall of Ullr the Wizard, son of Sif. Ullr is the one spell caster in the universe that the Allfather considers an equal and worthy of his own stature. Before Freyr cut his first tooth as child, Ullr granted him this world, seeing in the youth someone that was ideal for the task of ruling over such a powerful place. Ýdalir is hidden by magics and protected but in pristine condition from the time that Ullr left the world in Freyr’s ownership and had retired in the mortal kingdom of the Sverige.

In the days when Ullr lived in Álfheimr, his hall was a special place for masterful archers who were chosen to be in his ranks and army. Skillful hunters and rangers, these men and women from many worlds represented him when in the wilds, and it is hoped by many that, someday, this will again return. It is thought that if the *Veidimaðr Ullr* (‘Ullr’s Huntsmen’) return, the magic cloak that hides Ýdalir will be lifted, and the era of his order can renew its ancient vows.

Lying underground from the surface is the world of the Dark Elves and dwarfs, Svartálfaheimr. This dark, subterranean realm is only lit by the torches brought hither or by the glow from mushrooms and creatures and is the place to find the finest artisans and blacksmiths in the Nine Worlds.

Dvergar tribes populate Svartálfaheimr, each running and maintaining their separate crafts as masters and guilds, lording over the crafts of gem crafting, forging and other many arts that make the smithing trade. The Dvergar tribes have an uneasy peace and only are allied through the want of more wealth and power, a situation that not one, single tribe can hold alone.

Their many regions of Svartálfaheimr are filled with the smoke and fires of smiths and artisans and with the ringing of hammers, grinding of files and the cracking of stones. It is a continually industrious world where great items and weapons are forged for many heroes, kings and gods.

The Dark Elves, or Dökkálfar, in this underworld are secretive and sinister. Their skin is as black as pitch like the stones of the earth they live, and their souls are equally as foul. Their region of this world is unknown and not well traveled. It is believed that great herds of trolls, ogres and other monsters share the region with the Dark Elves.

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Just as mysterious is the goddess, Niorun, who resides in this underworld. She is goddess over the dreams of all in the Nine Worlds and does so from her hall deep in the dark earth. Niorun's power will remain so long as the world she stays in remains dark and unlit. No one has ever trod in her hall while awake, it is said.

In the many worlds where the Dvergjar live, there are two hallowed ancestors they praise nearly with as much vigor as they do the Sons of Borr, and they are Durinn and Mótsognir. These two dwarfs were the first brought to life by Oðin, Vili and Vé from Ymir's corpse. Durinn, the second one created, has his hall deep in this underworld where even his own descendants never go. Durin and Mótsognir are the oldest dwarfs in the universe, their age forgotten, but known to be hundreds of thousands of years old each. While Durinn's hall is in Svartálfaheimr, Mótsognir's is in Niðavellir, hidden in the mountains high and impossible to find. Mótsognir is the Father of the Dwarfs.

Near Durinn's hall is the Rune Master Dvalin's. It was the master Dvalin that first taught the Dvergjar the secret of the runes and their capabilities as Dáinn had for the elves and Oðin for the Æsir. But his knowledge came at a price for all Dvergjar-folk, for they are vulnerable to the sun's rays and will turn to the stone that they dwell in. Dvalin's mastery over the runes for the Dvergjar is without equal in his race – even Durinn and Mótsognir had to learn the knowledge and skills from him.

Located on the surface of Álfheimr is the sacred spot of Aurvangr, the place where the Dvergjar first sought to live in the earth. It is a modest hole in the rubble of the mountains but holds holiness for the descendants of Durinn and Mótsognir. Runes protect it from harm or desecration by others, and to a traveler that is unaware, it is only a deep hole in the ground and nothing more.

### VANAHEIMR

This world is the home of the Vanir, the gods of the earth, fertility and sun and makes the spectacular Álfheimr seem only its garden in comparison. Mortals and other races are not often allowed or welcome here as it is the home to the many Vanir and their families.

Except for Ásgarðr, Vanaheimr is one of the safest worlds of the Nine to be in, assuming that the Vanir do not maltreat their guests. The world is near to the top of Yggdrasil, only second to that of the Æsir above them.

The many Vanir that live in this idyllic world are devoid of any personal dangers or threats, knowing that the magics and might of their clans will protect them from harm. Surtr, Loki and others in the Nine Worlds that seek various malicious agendas cannot penetrate Vanaheimr's defenses no matter how hard they try.

The goddess Freyja's hall of the slain, Fólkvangr, is here. It is almost identical to Oðin Allfather's hall Valhöll in that it takes the spirits of the warriors slain in battle. Freyja only allows in the Einherjar to the grand golden and amber hall which sits in a meadow. As one of the heads of the Vanir, Freyja possesses great power in Vanaheimr, and even though Oðin also fulfills the same role as collector of the dead, she was able to retain her function after the Æsir-Vanir War. While she is in Vanaheimr, she resides in this hall, but while she is in Ásgarðr, she has a hall named Sessrúmnir amongst the Æsir where she keeps her most valued possessions.

Freyja and Freyr's father, Njörðr, has a wondrous palace by the sea, Nóatún, where he can be found. The seaside hall is a glorious structure built from the wealth in the sea and land. Gifted and chosen captains who have risked sailing the seas of the Nine Worlds and have discovered the hidden paths between the worlds find themselves in Njörðr's docks, rewarded for their skill in some way.

The scenic world looks to be the finest and best of vistas with lush forests, scintillating waterfalls and beautiful plains. The beauty of Miðgarðr and Álfheimr is a reflection of Vanaheimr's and that is clear if one could observe it. Unlike the other Worlds, there are no dark dangers or threats here. It is a completely safe realm.

### ÁSGARÐR

Topmost on Yggdrasil, this is the home of the shining and brilliant Æsir. The other Nine Worlds are 'below' it in the cosmic plan of the Sons of Borr so that all others must look up to the world of the Æsir. There are many hidden pathways and routes to Ásgarðr from most of the other worlds, but these often only go one way – from the world of the Æsir to those places.

Oðin Allofaðr placed the shimmering rainbow bridge Bifröst between Mannheimr and Ásgarðr as the one direct method to enter and exit. The world was engineered to be a more than idyllic place in which to live by the gods. The finest builders, architects and crafters were put to work by Oðin, Vili and Vé to perfect this world.

Oðin and his wife, Frigg, are the sole rulers of this world with their brood. There are many halls here, as with the Vanir in their own world, and gods. Oðin's chief place of residence is the famous Valhöll, the larger-than-life feasthall of the Battle Slain, the Einherjar. He sits amidst the burly, battle toughened warriors at the tables while drinking, eating, laughing and telling stories of valor and glory. The roof-tree, Læraðr, stands taller than the great hall itself, its leafy boughs twisted and tangled in the rafters and woven around the ceiling and outside, reaching for the sun.



Oðin's goat, *Heidrûn*, trims the branches from the rafters and floor while the stag, *Eikþyrnir*, does so as well from the roof. Each animal aids in the pruning of the tree, and intuitively knows where to do so when the time comes. A magical mead runs from the udders of the goat, and this is dispensed in the hall for the Battle Slain. It is said that if it is drunk by the living, it can grant the powers of the gods, the divine Berserker, and make them one of the *Úlfhéðnar* ('Men Garbed in Wolf Furs') of Oðin.

In *Valhöll*, the slain are honored for their deeds in their life and for upholding their warrior's ways in the face of foes. Special mead is given to them to drink from and to celebrate their life. Only the *Eiðherjar* are allowed in this splendid hall. It is rare that others are let inside. *Valhöll* is located in the region of *Glaðsheimr* which is also Oðin's separate hall dedicated to holding his assemblies with his male *Æsir*. The meetings he holds in *Glaðsheimr* concern gods and men and their fates which are later discussed with the Norns at the Well of Urd below *Yggdrasil*.

When the male gods meet in *Glaðsheimr*, the goddesses gather in *Vingólf* to do the same. Both halls, for each gender, are found in the region of the same name of *Glaðsheimr* where many of the most important buildings are: smithies, shrines, etc. Righteous and virtuous men's souls will be taken to the hall of *Gimlé* to live unlike the Battle Slain who are given the hall of *Valhöll*.

The gods meet in the plain of *Íðavöllum* often when they are planning battle and other events that involve the participation of all of the *Æsir*. When these meetings are held, no one else is allowed. These meetings are said to determine the fate of troublesome or unique individuals in the Nine Worlds that interest the *Æsir*.

*Freyja's* hall of *Sessrúmnir* is nestled safely in this world. Her most valued possessions are kept in this hall of hall among her *Æsir* allies, and she holds a private court often here, away from *Vanaheimr*.

*Ásgarðr's* wall, a collection of mountains so large and wild in design that even the giants will have difficulty crossing them, is partially complete due one of the giant *Hrímþurs* riding his stallion, *Svaðilfari*. One in particular sought the hand of *Frejya* in return for the work, a deal struck with *Loki*, but the *Æsir* found out and sent *Thor* to settle it. Quickly, *Thor* slaughtered the giants and shattered the skull of the one seeking the hand of the goddess with his hammer. Though these walls of *Ásgarðr* were made well, there is a weakness somewhere in them from this time that has not yet been exploited.

## YGGDRASIL

*Yggdrasil* is the divine Ash tree that binds together all worlds in its length from roots to crown. If the tree shakes or suffers any malady of any kind, the Nine Worlds will feel the effects

in subtle or obvious ways. To the Saxons, this is *Irmensul*, the Great Pillar, and each tribe erected a local reflection of it for their blessings and influence in the form of a real (or stone) copy of the tree.

When it was just a seed, the giants were the caretakers, but as it grew and the Age of Giants came to a close, *Yggdrasil* fell into tending by the *Æsir* and *Vanir*. Its growth was rapid and spread high into the universe, weaving and twisting its branches and roots deeply in the Nine Worlds.

*Yggdrasil's* dew rains on the worlds every morning, giving each world its daily dosage. Showers on a sunny, cloudless day are caused by the shaking of the tree's branches by many denizens. *Yggdrasil* is plagued by many beasts and suffers from the agonies of their gnawing and burrowing at all times. Their involvement and attempts at harming the tree has its effects on the Nine Worlds.

Many serpents and wyrms twist and tangle in its branches and roots below: *Góinn*, *Móinn*, *Grábakr*, *Grafvölluðr*, *Ófnir* and *Sváfnir*. These fire-breathing and venomous monsters chew and devour at *Yggdrasil's* roots. By spring, the serpent population grows out of control, and these wyrms and dragons spill out over into the Nine Worlds and plague them with destruction. The fiery monsters spawn newer generations of themselves and endanger innocents everywhere.

These are not the only beasts which dwell and feed upon the Ash tree. There are four harts that sprint, leap and climb the length of the World Tree: *Dáinn*, *Dvalinn*, *Duneyrr* and *Duraþrór*. These harts eat and gnaw on the boughs at the top of *Yggdrasil* ferociously. Each stag eats at the tree at some point in the day or night, even if the others are stopped or somehow prevented.

A giant squirrel beast, *Ratatoskr*, dashes from the dragon, *Níðhöggr*, at the roots to the eagle, *Ari*, at the crown with messages occasionally from amidst the thick branches. A hawk, *Veðrfölnir*, rests on the brow of the eagle.

Another well, *Urðrbrunnr*, where the Norns live, is found in the deepest roots, and its waters are thrown on the tree by the three Norns to keep it from getting dry or decaying. The water from this well is so holy that it makes anything it touches turn white and blessed by extension.

Another well, called *Hvergelmir*, lies directly under *Yggdrasil* and is the source of all cold rivers in the Nine Worlds. Its waters rush from the earthen spring outward in a wild flood in all directions around the dragon, *Níðhöggr*.

The image of the complex and important tree is seen in the artwork across the many worlds except for those in which the bitter giants dwell and where no trees are present (*Múspellsheimr*, *Helheimr* and even *Niflheimr* has rare trees in its frozen wastes).

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Yggdrasil is the backbone in which all worlds rest and depend on. Without it, the universe will fall into destructive chaos.

There are brave adventurers from the Nine Worlds that have dared to scale Yggdrasil's colossal size in hopes of finding shortcuts to the divine worlds of Álfheimr, Vanaheimr and Ásgarðr at the top and to the riches and magical secrets held within those realms, but they have always ended in tragedy. It is rumored that there are 'Beast Paths' that lie on Yggdrasil that can make the near impossible travel between the worlds quicker, but they have not been found.

Yggdrasil is also given the name Mímameiðr ('Mimi's Tree') by the common-folk. Where ever its shadow falls across the worlds, it brings a blessing to everyone. Its fruits can assist the pregnant in childbirth and make it successful (if the rare and hard to find fruit can be discovered to cook). Perched high on its boughs is the golden, shining rooster, Víðópnir. The rooster shimmers like a thunderstorm and guards the integrity of the universe at all times and is a protector of sun and fire. Víðópnir is a symbol of light over darkness and the returning life. The rooster is the flash of lightning that sometimes appears in the dark skies above where no thunder follows.

It is said that if Yggdrasil quakes and does not stop, it heralds the beginning of the end of the Nine Worlds, and nothing living will be unafraid. Not the Jötun, Æsir or even the Vanir are bold enough to deny the doom that this entails. Although the gods continue to battle the giants and the monsters that threaten the universe, they cannot prevent Yggdrasil from falling if it ever does. There is no amount of magic or herculean strength between the Æsir and Vanir combined that can stop the great tree's collapse or destruction.

### THE NORDIC LANDS

Initially, the 'Viking' peoples emerged from several Scandinavian regions when they first set sail: Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Kvenland. These lands each retained an older Germanic culture that is in common with the Continental groups and had, thus, perpetuated ancient customs, beliefs and ideals that were lost to the rest through invasions by other cultures and religions.

This section gives a brief description of each Nordic region and those that became influenced and settled by them in time before the Viking Era ended.

#### DENMARK

This region's history was in the dark prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> century when the first raiding and exploratory parties set out in Northern Europe. Its ancient history and peoples are fairly well known through contact with other peoples, chiefly the Romans and Saxons in sources.



During the Roman era, two massive raiding tribes swept out from this region into Celtic Gaul, the Cimbri and Teutones, from 100 to 113 BCE. Many suspect that these two tribes were more Celtic in culture than Germanic, but there is no certainty. Personal and place names both are Celtic, but there were many other 'Germanic' characteristics in the material culture.

Among the Vikings, it was the Danish people that first emerged from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and became quickly ensnared in the politics of the peoples of the British Isles, specifically the Angles and Saxons. Unwillingly, the Danish peoples were impinged upon on their southernmost borders by the Frankish kingdom of Charlemagne in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and had an uncertain period of diplomacy with both this growing empire and the Saxons in Britain.

Diplomatic relations with the Franks failed to surface in a positive way between the Franks and Danes in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The first documented Danish king, Gudfred, and Charlemagne failed to reach peace by 809, and this resulted in continued attacks on the Frisian Isles by the Danes.

Because the Danes are closer to the continent of mainland Europe, they traveled the rivers and waterways and had better access during their raids and exploration, giving them a doorway to other territories. France and Netherland were targeted in their attacks fairly consistently after the first shiploads of adventurers set out in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

They were converted into Christianity by Harold Bluetooth in 965 CE whose kingdom was quite vast and powerful. Bluetooth's realm gained in momentum in time and was ensnared into Anglo-Saxon politics and, ultimately, the throne of King *Knútr inn ríki* (Cnut the Great) by 995 CE. Danish affairs in Anglo-Saxon Britain, or 'Angloland', were so involved that a unification occurred between the Angles, Saxons and Frisian groups to oppose the northern Dane dominated territory called the Danelaw.

The Danelaw was established by Guthrum in 886 after keeping an iron grip over York and the northern regions of England and lower Scotland. The previous conquests and settlements of the Danes Halfdan Ragnarsson and Ivar the Boneless in 867 had claimed the region from the Saxon kingdom of Northumberland and laid the groundwork for Guthrum later. The Danelaw fell between the Humber River in the north and in the kingdom of Anglia, but it never gained Mercia or Wessex successfully.

There are over 1,400 islands that surround the peninsula of this generally flat land. Unlike the other, more northerly Nordic regions, Denmark does not have icy mountains and harsh tracts of lands. Winters are less fierce and harsh in this region but do have the shorter days at the height of the winter season.

Rolling hills, peat bogs and woodlands cover the Danish countryside with constantly shifting coastlines due to tidal erosion. Denmark is ideally suited for maritime travel and adventures since it lies in the middle of northern Europe. Boatloads of brave raiders can reach out to the British Isles, continental Europe, Scandinavia, Baltic Europe and across the Atlantic in this middle region.

After Harald Bluetooth's reign and conversion to Christianity, Denmark gradually lost most of its pagan traditions and customs by the Middle Ages. This, however, strengthened the political ties with the Holy Roman Empire and Charlemagne's Frankish empire and gained them leverage on many occasions against their Nordic rivals.

In the experience of the rest of Europe with the fury of the Vikings, it was the Danish raiders they first encountered and, therefore, identified with being a 'Viking.' Many languages in the British Isles of Celtic origin designate the Danes with being troublesome, bringers of havoc and hostile strangers.

By 1085, England finally shed Danish control after Cnut's reign and resumed Saxon royal lineage through King William I. In

response to this, Cnut IV sent a massive but failed fleet of ships and warriors to England in 1086, unable to regain control. The Danelaw was already gone in the north by 954, leaving England completely out of the Danes' hands once and for all. King Gunthrum lost the Danelaw to the Battle of Edington in 1085 but retained many of the Danish legal systems and traditions long after its fall.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Denmark fell into a position of religious primacy over the other Nordic regions with the formation of the Archbishopric, but this did not persist for too long as the other Nordic regions eventually gained their own independence from under Danish control and instigated their own archbishoprics, each one by one.

In this century, the Danes were involved in many religious crusades throughout Europe and eventually in Arabia and no longer participated in the 'Viking' era raids and plundering or other ancient, pagan era traditions. By this time, Denmark had fully embraced the ideals and politics of a Christian Europe.

## ICELAND

This land of contrasts of ice and lava flows became an enclave of Irish monks not long before the arrival of Norse explorers. Nododd is said to be the first Norseman who stepped ashore in the mid 880's and, seeing the heavy snow and ice, labeled it *Snæland* ('Snow Land') but did not stay. His discovery was followed by another Norseman named Garðar Svarvasson who sailed the circumference of the land but never stayed or named it.

Flóki Vilgerðarson, or Hrafn-Flóki, arrived in Iceland next, sometime in the 9<sup>th</sup> century possibly near the end of the century. Stories say that he was master over three ravens that helped him find his way around the island. He let the three ravens fly and was guided by their flight but only went where the last one flew as it went toward Iceland – the first returning to the ship and the second first to the air and then back to his ship.

Flóki's time in Iceland was brief, but he was able to fix a settlement near Faxaflói and stay for a time. His livestock perished from the harsh, cold weather, crippling his efforts at staying, and he named the land, officially, Iceland, due to the intolerable weather. Not giving up, he moved to another region and eventually left back home to Norway. Hrafn-Flóki finally decided, after some time in Norway, to settle once and for all in Iceland as his home.

By 874, the Norseman Ingólfur Arnarson, with his slaves and followers, left Norway after a blood feud to find Flóki's alleged land as a place of retreat until the feud died down. He and his people found the Bay of Smoke (called so because of the black clouds of smoke emitting from the hot springs in the region) and made an abode of their own in Reykjavík in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century.



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Ingólfur's son, Þórsteinn, formed the first Þing, or parliament, in Iceland in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and ruled as a chieftain. This land is still largely unexplored and its contents unknown with only the southwestern part inhabited by the Norse settlers that followed Ingólfur. In this influx of eager settlers from Norway, over 15,000 came to grab up all of the usable land. This took barely sixty years before the year 930 comes about, leaving the rulers of Iceland in the hands of the Allthingi.

### KVENLAND

This obscure region, also called *Finmark* and *Kainuu*, is a Finnish Nordic kingdom much referred to in the sources and documents from the other nearby nations. Many times, Kvenland and Finland are not mentioned in the same location or context, and there is a hint that possibly both regions are not the same.

Its exact location is roughly somewhere around the *Sea of Bothnia* to the east of Sweden and Norway. Kvenland's interaction and involvement with the other Nordic peoples is through trade and commerce and sometimes battle.

The peoples of Finmark are known by the other neighboring regions as being unrelated by culture and language, and some rumor them to be a strictly Amazonian Finnish kingdom. True facts about Kvenland are lacking by outsiders who tell many stories of monsters, fleets of the dead (Druagr) and other horrors.

A mountain range divides Kvenland (Cwenland) from Norway in Scandinavia, but the sea does not, and just as the Vikings raided and caused havoc on other peoples, the Kven did the same to their regions, coming from out of the east.

Random, brief periods of early Medieval history hints that the Kven have ruled over Sweden more than once and, likewise, the reverse as well was true, but how and when is not understood. It was a part of the pride of Swedish kings to have claimed to rule over Kvenland when they had and was emphasized in documented history (for example, King Charles IX in the 17<sup>th</sup> century).

Because the actual data on Kvenland is murky and vague enough, the CK can approach this land anyway they wish to make their game what they want. It could be a Finnish region where many of the Nordic gods are still worshipped (as given in some sources), a wild land filled with Finnish Amazons who raid and plunder their neighbors or a savage realm of monsters and supernatural horrors – the possibilities are endless.

### NORWAY

This mountainous, icy land is home to a powerful portion of the Viking world. The earlier history of this region, like Denmark, is not documented well and completely misunderstood by later generations as truth and factual.

By the 8<sup>th</sup> century on, Norway was a mix of small kingdoms and petty chiefdoms with continually changing borders due to endemic warfare and feuds. At the time of the first expeditions beyond the borders of Norway, these many, small kingdoms merged and were unified. King Harald Fairhair is said to be the one that had achieved this rare task in the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century.

Norwegian history is largely mythical in nature during the Viking Age, taken from various sagas written hundreds of years later and much romanticized and embellished. Facts are hard to come by, and the few that are discovered are even harder to substantiate with additional evidence.

As real or legendary as Harald Fairhair might be, later Norwegian kings and nobility claimed to be descendants of his lineage for hundreds of years. Placing his name in the ancestry validated, in the Norwegian peoples' minds, their legitimacy simply by having it, true or not.

For the greater part of the Viking Age, Norway remained pagan and, eventually, had small connections with Christianity over time until the early 12<sup>th</sup> century when a complete conversion occurred under the direction of St. Olav. Haakon the Good did not force his subjects to accept the new religion during his reign (934 to 961) but allowed his people to coexist.

This changed with the reign of the ruler after Haakon – Olaf Haraldsson ('St. Olav'). After Olav Trygvasson's time as king of Norway following Haakon, Olaf Haraldsson began a campaign of religious conversion across Norway. Olaf's time spent as king extended the power of Norway and broadened its international relations in a manner that few other Viking nations shared.

In 1030, King Olaf died in the Battle of Stiklestad against Swedish foes, leaving Norway in a period of turmoil and instability. This weak state allowed Danish rulers to assume control over the country and place religious authority in Denmark for a time not including regal control.

King Knut took control over Norway in 1016 after a series of hard fought battles. Knut integrated this territory into his North Sea Empire that also included Anglo-Saxon England, Denmark and some selected Swedish regions. He ruled, effectively, a Germanic North Sea empire that had powerful military and economic strengths. Knut's empire was ruled with an enlightened sense of morality between the related Germanic peoples.

After King Knut's death in 1035, the Norwegians regained control of their kingdom through Olaf Haraldsson's son, Magnus (the Good), and kept foreign control out of the territory from this time on. Magnus' kingdom brought stability back to Norway and regained local control over religious matters again.

It was Magnus' son, Harald Hardrada, that not only gave Norway its last glory but also the end of the 'Viking' age. Harald was a mercenary for most of his younger years, serving among

the Rus and in Byzantium as a soldier, hiding his royal identity. His adventurous life eventually lead him back home and to the North Sea where he attempted to regain much of Magnus' and Knut's legacy for his own.

Denmark was on his list for reconquest, but this was a losing battle in time, and he was unable to completely restore that claim to his agenda or power. With a peace treaty, Harald left Denmark and traveled to his long abandoned home in Norway. Convincing the Norwegian nobles that he was worthy of ruling over Norway due to his ancestry and talents, he quickly married into a powerful family and started to assume his royal lineage by the early 1060's.

Because he had to be brutal often, Harald gained the title 'Hard Ruler' (Hardrada) due to his policies and authority. Ambition, however, led Harald to seek to regain the country of England because of his relations, thinly, to the throne and because of the former King Knut's reign.

Harald built a fleet full of warriors and dedicated men, nearly 300 ships and 15,000 men, and set off for England. Marching into the mainland with his ally, the brother of the King of England, Tostig, Harald fought near York at the bridge of Stamford in 1066 but lost terribly to English forces. Their army was decimated and reduced to such a small remainder that only mere remnants of the once mighty force of Vikings fled back to a handful of ships and sailed back to Norway. This loss created the end of the Viking age almost universally across all Scandinavian regions and those they held as it created the break that was needed in the various nations from that period of terror.

With Norway now losing its grip on the North Sea, the other Scandinavian nations followed suit, one by one, and new peoples soon were to gain a foothold of power in Europe – the Normans. The Normans were a fusion of Norse settlers and Gallo-Roman natives in Northern France that crystalized as a mighty nation by the 10<sup>th</sup> century as Normandy. In a short time, the Normans managed to set their religiously zealoted armies onto Italy, the Eastern Roman Empire of Byzantium and England. The fallout from Harald Hardrada's failed invasion of England led to the Norman's advantage in 1066 when they assaulted the Anglo-Saxon realm, now weakened from contending with the Norwegians.

## **SWEDEN**

Sweden's early history, like all of the Scandinavian nations, is vague and not well documented. Legends speak of the Yngling or Scylfing dynasty ruling from the earliest Antiquity, descended from the gods. Small kingdoms set up on Continental Germanic models divided up the Swedish region for untold centuries.

Unlike their neighbors, the Swedish peoples traveled eastwards into Rus, Finland and Byzantium and, by the 9<sup>th</sup> century, had settlements across the Baltic Sea. They mingled with Finish, Slavic and other peoples as they expanded in all directions while maintaining their local native power bases in their various small kingdoms.

In their travels to Byzantium, they were in service as guards and warriors to the empire under the name of the Varangians while others raided and controlled the waterways into Slavic territories and the surrounding regions close to the Eastern Roman Empire. The Varangians were deeply involved in the politics of the Rus, Greek regions and the other peoples of Eastern Europe.

Eventually the Varangian centers of power, Kiev and Novgorod, grew steadily more Slavic in nature and, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, had lost all Swedish and Scandinavian connections.

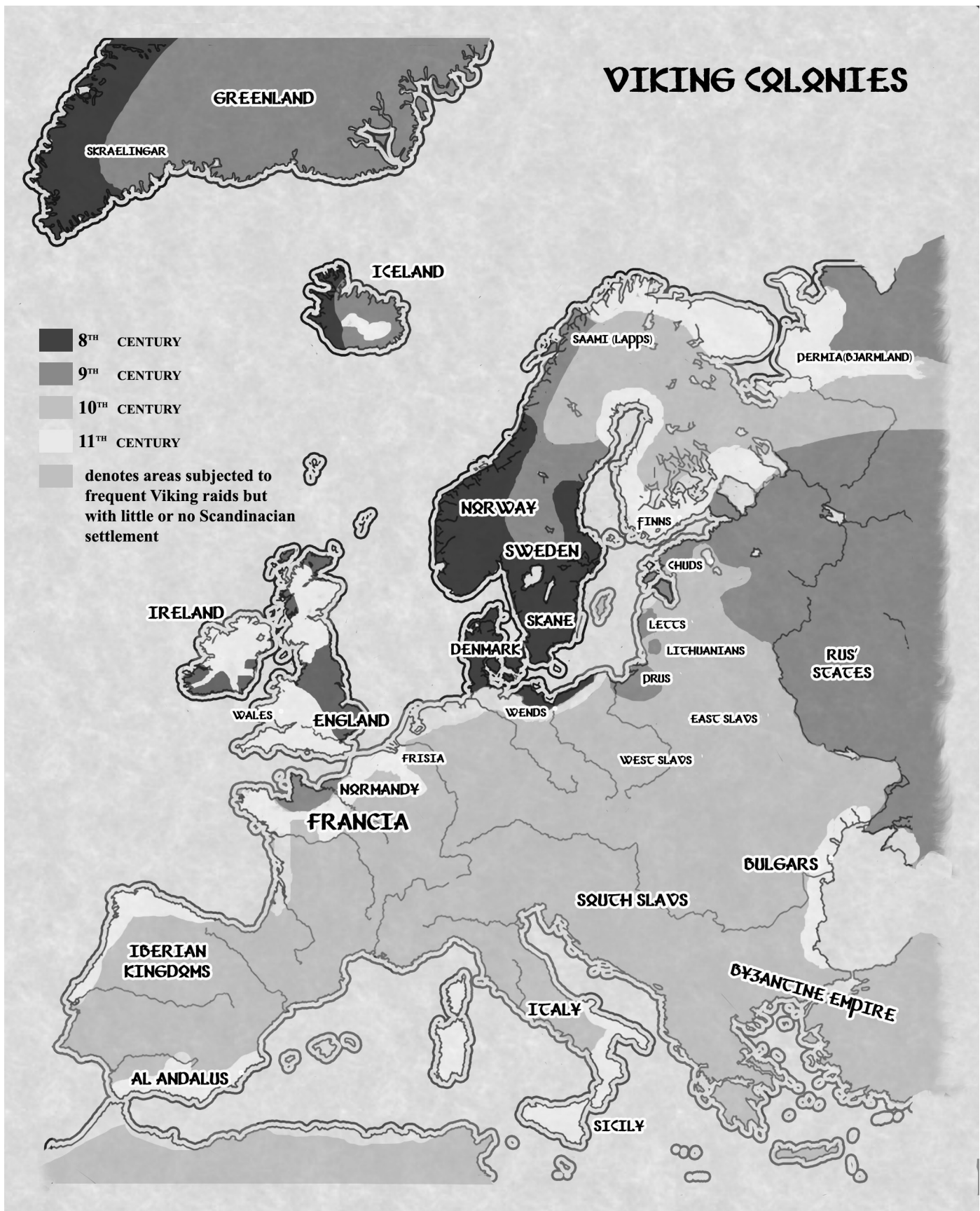
The lists of Swedish kings remain all doubtful and suspect until the one verified and well documented ruler, King Eric the Victorious, in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century appears. Eric ruled from Uppland in Sweden, and although information is scarce about him, it is known that he withstood an invasion from the south against the legendary Jomsvikings of Styrbjörn in the 980's.

Eric controlled a portion of Denmark for a time after bringing defeat to its king, Sweyn Forkbeard, and had considerable influence around the Baltic Sea, but the true extent of his kingdom is not known. Eric was followed by his son, Olaf, in 995 who established the kingdom as a Christian realm.

Olaf Skötkonung, or Ericsson, fought against the Wends (Slavs of Lower Saxony in Germany), allied himself with Sweyn Forkbeard to bring a war of conquest to Norway and maintained a strong, Christian faith until his end in or around the years 1021 to 1022. His time as king integrated Sweden into European affairs with more than just the bloody legacy of the Viking raiders and havoc.

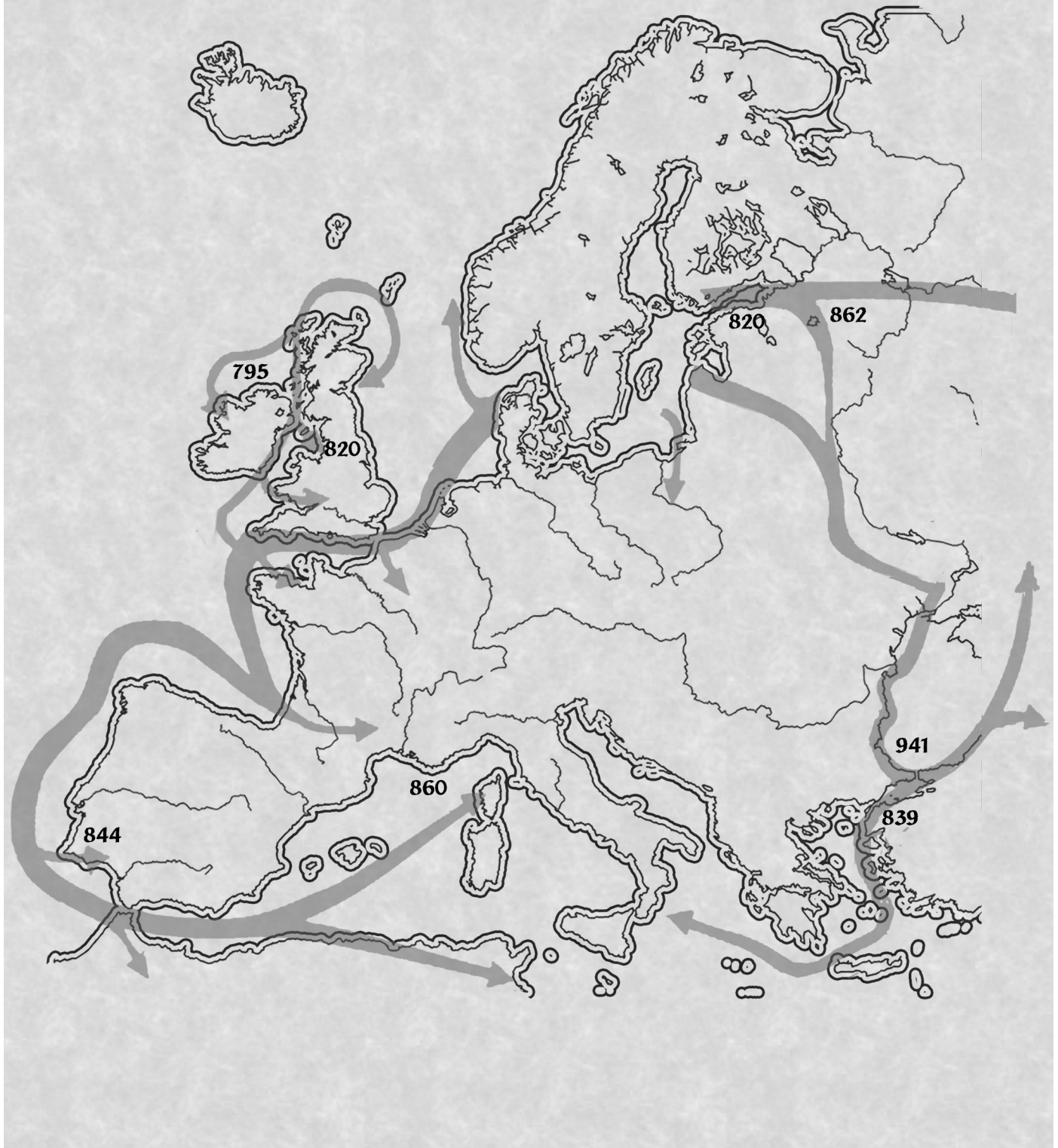
Sweden's continuation in the Viking Age was not over with, however, and persisted for another one hundred fifty years until the Christian king, Eric (the Saint), in 1150 led a crusade across Sweden and Finland and placed a cathedral in Uppland. This brought a decline in the native beliefs of Odinism and eventually led the end to the Viking traditions of raids and adventuring. Officially, the end of this era in Sweden was made when the Archbishopric for the country was established in 1164 when Uppland became the location of the Church of Sweden.

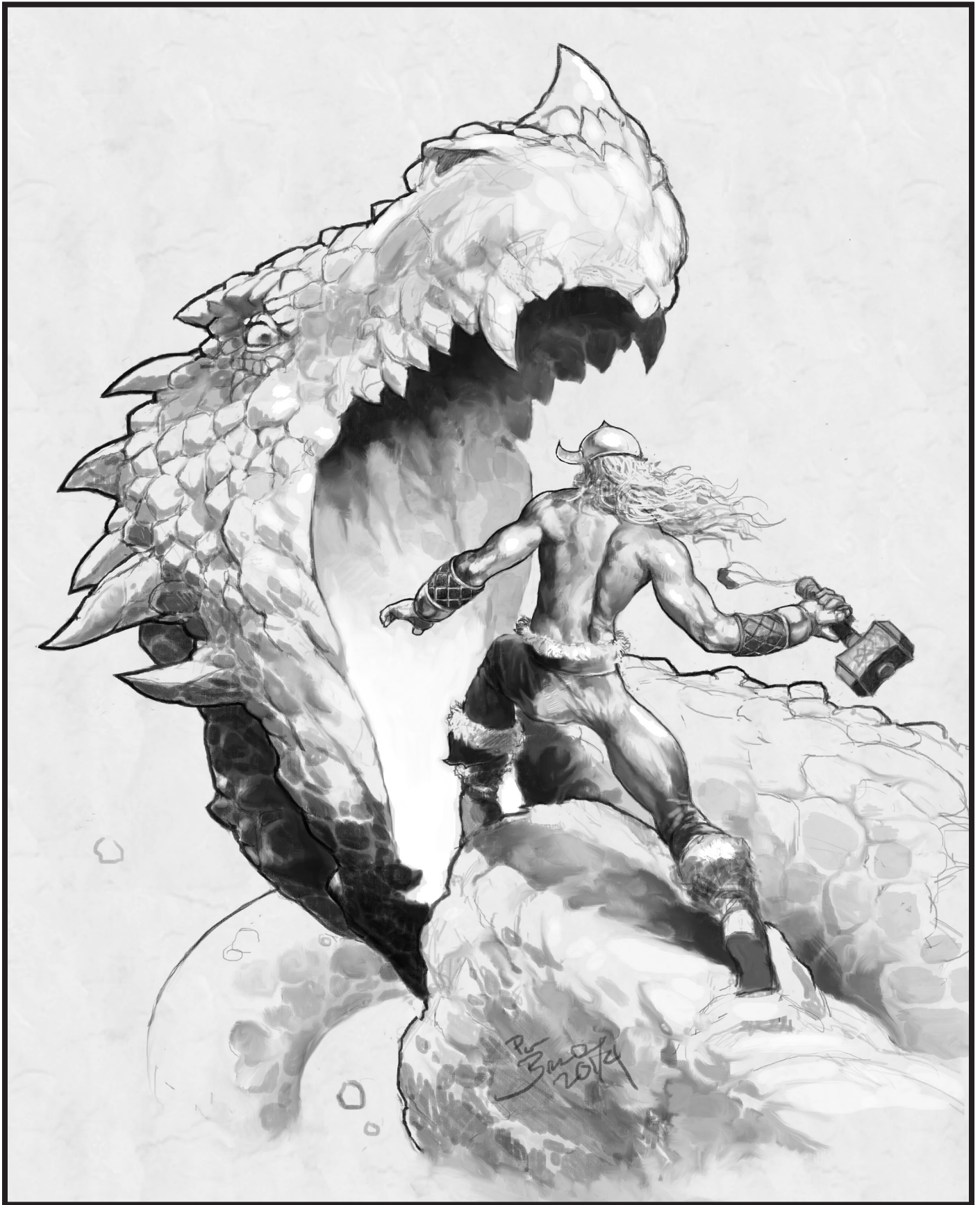
After this time, the original pagan inspired motives and agendas that caused the Viking adventurers to seek fame and wealth abroad was now in disfavor and had ended. The country was brought into a more medieval model of government and direction, leaving its Viking heritage behind once and for all.





## VIKING ROUTES : 9-10TH CENTURY







## CHAPTER 3: MAGICAL BEINGS & MONSTERS



ordic myths and folklore are filled with a plethora of enchanting and horrible beings. These creatures and races inhabit everywhere in the natural world, from high to low, in rock, water, tree, fire and ice. It would be impossible to travel in the

Nine Worlds and not encounter any number of them at any time.

The reader will notice that many of these included in this chapter are similar, if not identical, to those included in both the *Codex Celtarum* and *Germania*. This isn't due to redundancy but because the close and intricate interactions between the Celtic and Germanic worlds was a long going event. The exchange of ideas, fears and cultural themes crossed borders many times, encouraged by intermarrying and political involvement.

The CK can mine this chapter for plentiful ideas to add in their campaigns and make the experience of adventuring in the Nine Worlds memorable and exciting. Great research and study have gone into the many unusual and mostly obscure beings and creatures that populated the Nordic universe within this chapter. Sadly, gaming has never been quite faithful or accurate to ancient traditions in its many facets of portrayal over the years, and this section should redeem some of that.

As with all rules, the CK can make adjustments or modifications as they see fit in the process of incorporating them into their adventures. It is expected from Viking heroes that monsters are slain in their many adventures. It builds the credibility and validity of their fame and recognition.

As mentioned in the *Codex Germania*, the early conception of monsters and supernatural beings was one devoid of genetics and continuity from the same parents. These beings and, any others like them, could be brought about by evil parents in childbirth or transform over time into something horrible in nature. Their evil ways, it was assumed, twisted and reshaped them into an entirely new being.

All of the Nine Worlds are heavily populated by these beings and many more not documented in recorded mythology and lore. While most of these beings are malign or passive in their evil ways, there are beneficial ones that can be encountered by adventurers as well. Many the CK and players all know well enough – dwarfs, dragons and elves – but there is a greater number collected here that will be completely unfamiliar, and these are the gems in the CK's treasury to use sparingly.

Using the format found in *Monsters & Treasure*, this chapter keeps that consistency, making everything harmonious between books for easy use. Read it, have fun and explore the unusual, often dark and always imaginative beings and monsters of the Nordic universe.

### ÁLFAR

(Medium Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10+

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Elf Shot

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Any

**EXP:** 45+2

The Álfar are, essentially, the 'basic' elf found in the Nine Worlds. They are mostly ambiguous in their behavior and treatment of others and related to the more sinister Alp but also uninvolved in the epic struggle between Light and Darkness.

Elves can be from the smallest in size to human-like and have a wide range of traits and personalities similar to the Continental Germans' Kobolds. Often, the two races blur and the line between them is difficult to establish by outsiders.

Mostly, they are fair, don white garb and live in seclusion in the wilderness never aging and celebrating life by dancing and feasting. These elves are not the usual fantasy fare but a more spectral and ghostly breed.

Elves are careful about attracting too much attention by others but will make an effort to drive strangers away to remain isolated and separate. Because of their ambiguity, they can side and join with any powerful being or entity, if pressed, holding a small allegiance to Freyja, Freyr and the Vanir.

Obviously, they populate Álfheimr in seclusion and do not involve themselves in the affairs of the Light or Dark Elves nor the animosity between the Æsir and Vanir.

Only half-elves can be considered sociable and good company in comparison to the full-blooded elves who are mysterious and eccentric. Half-elves adventure and travel the Nine Worlds as other races do, possessing the human urge of exploration and fascination.

*The Castle Keeper can use the Faery Abilities in the Codex Celtarum to give the elf special abilities beyond the initial ones given. if they choose.*

**COMBAT:** Elves do go to war and battle, but it is rare. They are feared for doing so because of their unpredictability and different way of thinking. When they do fight in combat, they use swift and decisive methods of stopping the enemy and do not care to linger.



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**ELF SHOT:** The elf can throw or hurl a small object as a dart at another being to wound it. The object is magically imbued and can cause paralysis and pain. If hit, the target must make a Magic Resistance of lose feeling in the afflicted body part for 1d4 hours.

### ASKRFROA

(Medium Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** Slam, Claw 1d8

**SPECIAL:** Ash Tree Bond

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 0

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**EXP:** 50+2

The Askrfroa are the faery guardians of Ash trees made by the gods to watch over the sacred trees wherein mankind was first crafted by the Sons of Borr after Ymir's death. They appear like Light Elves but smaller and with leaves and twigs in their long, dark hair. Their green eyes shine and look hypnotic.

Not every Ash tree in every forest in the Nine Worlds has its Askrfroa, but there is a good chance that most do (3 in 6). If the tree is harmed in some way, the resident faery guardian will retaliate on those who did harm.

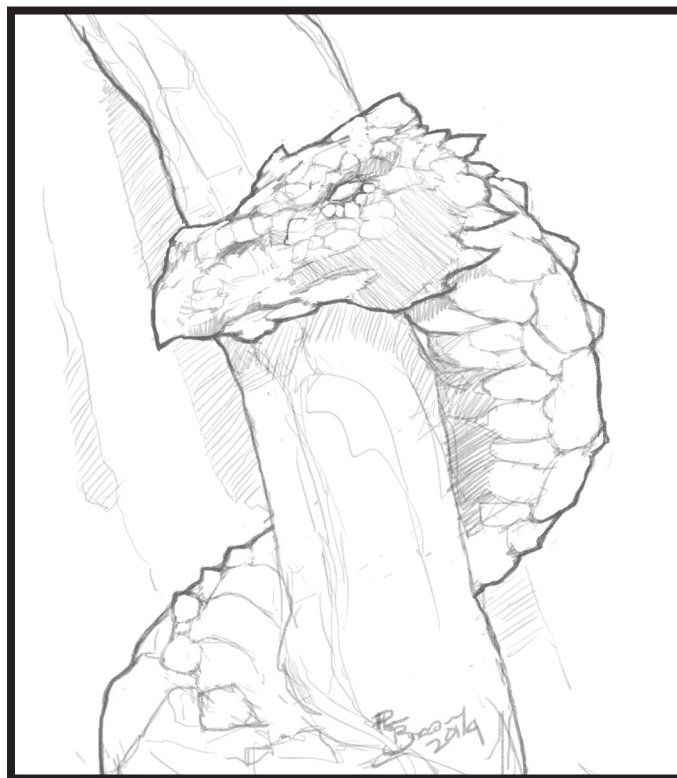
The Askrfroa are considered a close relation to mankind because of the common tree that both share in their origins. It is left to wise humans to avoid harming these trees, if possible, resorting to using others for their needs.

Most often, they can use spells (up to 4<sup>th</sup> level spells of Castle Keeper's choosing) to affect the thoughtless fools that dare to harm their home. They can be appeased, however, just the same and asked for blessings (by magic) by others.

It is the usual practice to pour water over the Ash tree's roots and say, 'Now I sacrifice so that you do us no harm.' The Castle Keeper can decide if the Askrfroa is appeased or not and if it grants the worshipper a gift or not.

**COMBAT:** Askrfroa do not get confrontational if they can help it and will avoid all chance of threats physically. They would rather dash to another Ash tree than be cornered and made to defend themselves or fight. If they were trapped somehow and made to fight, they would use their sharp fingernails to rip into the enemy.

**ASH TREE BOND:** Each Askrfroa is magically bound to their tree. It is a weakness that if the tree is burned or cut down, the beautiful faery will wither away and die in a few days' time.



### BØYG

(Large Creature)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 3d12

**MOVE:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** Bite 3d10

**SPECIAL:** None

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Low

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 500+3

The Bøyg is a monster related to the trolls, but unlike them, they are slimy, serpentine creatures by nature. They are fond of controlling passes through mountains and other thoroughfares in the wilderness. By doing this, they can devour and rob any unfortunate travelers that dare to cross their paths.

The Bøyg's physical form is more akin to a large, dragon-like serpent without wings or limbs. These monsters can grow to impossible sizes in time if not slain or sleeping dormant in some wild place. They may be related to Níðhögg in some way.

Unlike the other races of trolls, the Bøyg cannot heal swiftly in a matter of minutes. These monsters are on the fine line between a dragon and a troll but neither completely.

These monsters are rare in the Nine Worlds, even in the worst of places, and are more easily found (after extensive searching) in the Iron Wood in Jötunheimr amidst the swamps and dark woods.

**COMBAT:** *Bøyg will constrict their foes, several at a time if possible, before gnawing off their heads with their fanged, serpent-like head.*

## BYSEN

(Small Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Small

**HD:** 1d10

**MOVE:** 35 ft.

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Axe 2d8

**SPECIAL:** Lead Astray, Blindness

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**EXP:** 55+1

The Bysen are a race of forest gnomes that are well known for being woodcutters. They are often dressed in drab, grey or red clothes with a woven cap and beard. They are always carrying an axe and take it upon themselves to tend to the woods of their choice.

They are meticulous about the boundaries and borders of other peoples and races in the woods and will doggedly work to set those lines by wooden stakes.

As axe men, the Bysen are deadly for their size and lethal. Bysen are known to take down dragons and other giant beasts with the combined force of their many axes.

**COMBAT:** Their weapon of choice is the wood axe. The Bysen are masters of its usage and how to properly cleave things into pieces.

**LEAD ASTRAY:** If pestered or bothered by strangers, the Bysen can temporarily charm the person and make them lose their way completely. The target must make a charisma save or fall to the effects of this ability. If they are lead astray, they will suffer this for 1d4 hours and cannot find their way in the woods unless helped by others.

**BLINDNESS:** A Bysen can look into someone's eyes and blind them temporarily, giving the gnome a chance to leave. With this blindness, the victim cannot find that certain Bysen again until the duration period is over. A charisma save is needed, or the victim will not be able to find the gnome in question for 1d6 hours.

**(Player Character Info:)** +1 charisma, -3 strength. *Typical Classes:* Any.



## DI SMA UNDR JORDI

(Tiny Beings)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-100+

**SIZE:** Tiny

**HD:** 1d4

**MOVE:** 15 ft.

**AC:** 18

**ATTACKS:** Spear 1d6, Bow 1d4

**SPECIAL:** None

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**EXP:** 50+1

The Swedish named 'Small People Under the Ground' are minute faery folk that tend to farms and gardens and often assist those Humans so chosen with theirs as well. The Di Sma also help take care of the livestock unless they are angered or slighted.

Although incredibly small in scale and unable to harm others physically, the Di Sma can ruin and cause mischief to those that bother or threaten them. Their society resembles the same as humans and, by all appearances, is the same except for the slight faery touch to their ears, eyes and other features.

The Di Sma are nonintrusive and can be barely seen on an average day. They are only concerned with tending to their farms and livestock and feeding their families and, by extension, any humans they adopt.

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**COMBAT:** Di Sma will use stinging spears and sharp arrows to hurt their enemies if needed. They will become violent, using great numbers to overwhelm the larger foes, but otherwise, they will sabotage and cause ruin to the possessions, animals and lives of those they target without relenting.

**(Player Character Info:)** -5 strength, +3 charisma.  
*Typical Classes:* Any.

### DÖKKÁLFAR

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-20

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 12

**ATTACKS:** Sword 2d6, Spear 1d10

**SPECIAL:**

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral/Evil

**EXP:** 50+2

The Dökkálfar are the 'Dark Elves' in the Nine Worlds in contrast to the Light Elves, or Ljósálfar. The Dark Elves are darker than pitch in color and live underground and are master smiths and artisans, but they use their skills to forge items and weapons of malevolence and malice.

They live underground, primarily in the world of Svartálfaheimr, and create their devious items to unravel the universe. It was among the Dark Elves that Loki went to have the cursed ring Andvaranaut forged that led to Fafnir's transformation and the Nibelungs' predicament.

The Dark Elves are also called Svartálfar ('Black Elves') by others who rarely see or meet them. They are secretive and scheming of the elfin races, not trusted by others. It is said that the black of their skin reflects the black of their souls.

These elves are stealthy by nature and receive a +5 to hide checks when moving in caves and underground. By nature, the Dark Elves can sense (wisdom check) hidden doorways with a +4 bonus. Their listening ability is superior due to their long time spent in the underworld, giving them a +3 on all checks.

Dark Elves have Nightvision at a range of 150 ft. and a natural spell resistance of 4. Most of their race are smiths and artificers that forge objects and items that are always magical in nature. It is likely that any member of their race possesses some limited knowledge of the arts of blacksmithing and enchanting objects.

Sunlight is a mild distraction to Dark Elves, giving them a -2 on all skill rolls because of the blinding light and its distractions.

**COMBAT:** Dark Elves are a force to be feared in combat, though rare it is that they will ever be encountered in such a capacity. They use magical weaponry and spells and have careful strategies when they confront their foes. In the earliest of times, when the elves were first given life by the Sons of Borr, a war was fought between the Elves of Light and Dark over supremacy of Álfheimr. When the war was over, the Dark Elves lost and were cast into the underworld. Since those days, it is rumored that their army still remains intact, ready for another chance of supremacy.

**(Player Character Info:)** +3 charisma, -1 strength, +1 intelligence. *Typical Classes:* wizard, illusionist, fighter, cleric, assassin, knight, paladin, bard.

### DRAGON

(Special)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-4

**SIZE:** Special (See Red Dragon)

**HD:** Special (See Red Dragon)

**MOVE:** 40 ft. (land), 150 ft. (... )

**AC:** Special (See Red Dragon)

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claw 1d8, Wing 1d10, Tail 1d10, Bite 4d10

**SPECIAL:** Breath Weapon, Spell-like Abilities, Immunity to Fire (full)

**SAVES:** M & P

**INT:** See Table

**TREASURE:** See Table (hoard)

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** Special

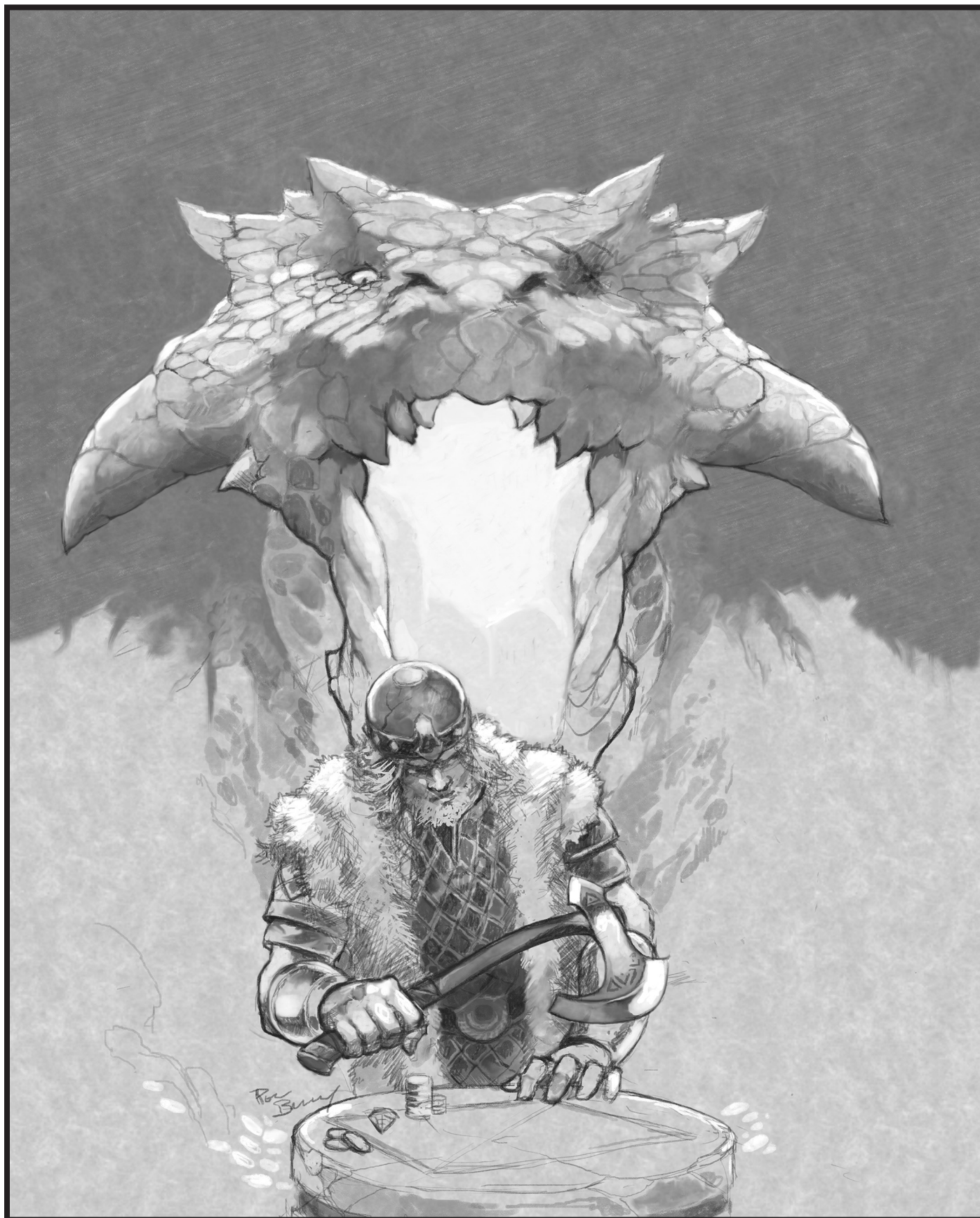
Venomous and foul tempered, the Germanic dragon is a fire-breathing monstrosity that preys on the innocent and seeks to acquire a collection of wealth and magical items. In the *Monsters & Treasure* book, this dragon is equal to the Red Dragon (pg. 23).

These massive beasts are called *Lindworms* or *Linnormr* (Old Norse) and can make life difficult for an entire region or kingdom if allowed to age in time. They prefer to dwell in deep caves and underground in steamy environments and gather their collection of loot taken from villages, temples and palaces by force or tribute.

Many brave hopefuls throw their lives away hoping to slay them and gain the fame and right of ownership over its wealth, but the task isn't so simple. Because a dragon will often lay for days to years on its treasure and the stones, a weak spot maybe found in its scales. A critical attack on the dragon may reveal the bad scale (1 in 6). If so, then the damage given is twice the critical damage suffered.

Many of the dragons have only a lengthy, serpent-like form with wings (or without), while others are bipedal or quadruped.





## CHAPTER 3 -

dal in anatomy. They can appear similar to the lesser species, called the Wyvern, but it will quickly be apparent that this is not the same species.

The dragon is a direct descendant of the Jörmunganðr, making it related to the ravenous Niðhögg under Yggdrasil. Its presence is poisonous, causing the flora and fauna near to it to wither and perish in a short time. A dragon will seek to devour the flesh of virgin women from the nearby towns if offered and it will temporarily calm its terrorizing, but this will not keep its predations from happening.

The death of a dragon can be more beneficial than it seems. The heart, if eaten, and blood, if bathed in, can instill the slayer with special properties. A charisma save must be done for each and, if successful, will gain the slayer +1d4 AC all over their body and +1d6 strength. One spot, however, (chosen by the Castle Keeper) does not possess the potency. Eating the dragon's heart can also gain the slayer other magical abilities that the Castle Keeper deems suitable for the game.

Dragons do not, specifically, have to be born from others of the same species but can be transformed from the sinister influences of curses and magical items (i.e. Fafnir, who was once a Dvergar, stricken by the accursed ring of Loki, Andvaranaut). The dragon itself represents greed and the poison of gluttony, and any being could, over time, be slowly transformed into one from its corruption.

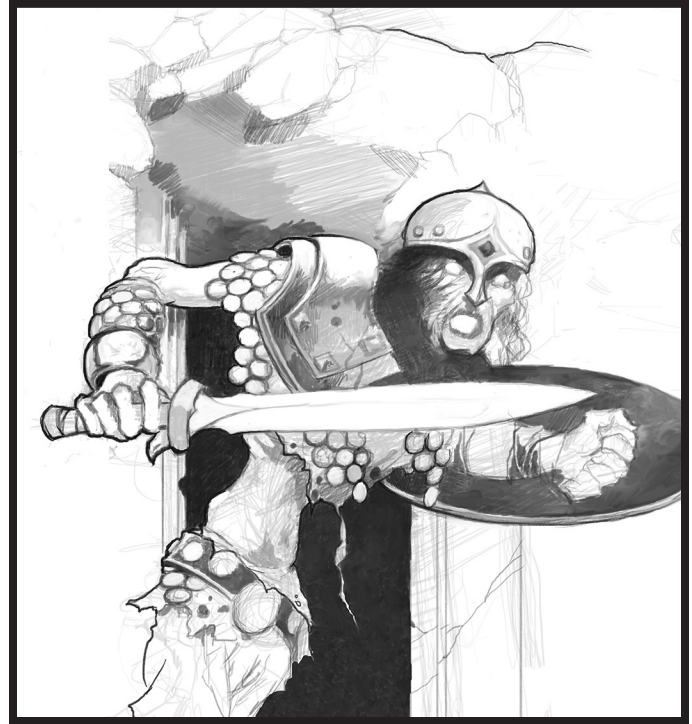
**DRAGON MAGIC:** See *Dragon – Languages and Magic*, in *Monsters & Treasure pg.20*.

**COMBAT:** Ferocious in battle, the Germanic dragon will use whatever means it can to gain leverage on its foes and display a clever, if crude, intelligence. They will gloat over their presumed superiority over their foe and make the combat worse than it already is. They will be utterly ruthless and show no mercy in the heat of the struggle.

**OTHER SPELL-LIKE ABILITIES:** See 'Red Dragon' in *Monsters & Treasure*.

**LOCATE OBJECT:** A mature or older aged dragon can sense and find any object. These objects can be either from its treasure or not yet in their possession. The ability functions the same as the spell of the same name and can be used once per day.

**BREATH WEAPON:** A cone of flaming spittle and smoke issues forth from the beast's mouth and does 1d10 damage per hit die. If a dexterity save is made, the damage is halved as the target dodges out of the way of the blast. The dragon can breathe fire three times a day with an additional time for each age level above adult. It can only do this once a turn.



### DRAUGR

(Medium Beings)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-20+

**SIZE:** Medium to Tall

**HD:** 3d10

**MOVE:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** Sword 2d6, Axe 2d8, Slam 1d10

**SPECIAL:** Super Strength, Mist Form, Vampirism, Cause Insanity, Shapeshifting

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average to Low

**TREASURE:** 3-5

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 45+3

The Draugr are undead warriors who often are cursed into being so by a wizard or god or have made a pact to protect their loot or personal possessions into death itself. Draugr are feared by all, especially the Undead Berserkers that appear at times. There are two types of Draugr: Sea Draugr and Land Draugr.

No weapon, unless magical, can harm them, and once they are set to a purpose, they are unstoppable. Their original height and weight increases through the process of becoming undead, and through mortification, they appear hideous and rotten. On command, the Draugr can increase its size by 1d4 feet.

The mere presence of a Draugr within its tomb can drive people and animals insane. These undead warriors have been



known to change their shape, if needed, and possess the dark magic of wizards and gods. They are not simply *just* warriors raised from the grave.

Draugr can bring blight and famine to the lands they inhabit within a short time. Ravenously greedy, they aggressively guard their own personal wealth or haunt rich lands to obtain more. There are stories of whole crews of longships being Draugr, forever at sea raiding as a Viking as they once did in life.

If they are too close to the living, dreams can be influenced and minds shaken by them. Nightmares will spring forth from their presence, showing images of bloody war, slaughter, burning villages and the horror of raiding. Only blessings and charms by clerics can block the terrible dreams.

Many Draugr will seek out their friends and family from their former life, unaware of the new difficulties. In appearance, they are usually pale or blue in complexion and look more like an evil aberration of the warrior they once were in life.

At night, their tombs or 'homes' will shine from the magic of the undead occupant within, or in the case of the Sea Draugr, their ship will eerily glow a pale light.

There is no definitive method to slay the Draugr except to slow them by battle and spells. Even after their hit points are reduced to zero, they can return to their normal strength by the next night and continue what they were doing. There are many tricks that can slow them in their graves or ship-tombs, but only beheading them and burning their bodies to ash or allowing the spell casters to do a rare spell called 'Doom Door' can stop them.

Doom Door (*see next chapter for spell*) will trap the Draugr in whatever place the spell was worked, denying them a means to leave it again. Rune Masters, witches and Völva possess the secrets of this spell and know what it takes to work.

In Niflheimr, the ship Naglfari will be crewed by hundreds of Draugr with Loki as a captain if the day of Ragnarök comes to the Nine Worlds. Not all Draugr are from the warrior class, however, and can come from any strata just the same.

Sometimes, a victim to a Draugr can be made to turn into one as well, taking a full day before it occurs.

**COMBAT:** If a warrior, the Draugr will fight as one using its added abilities to enhance its damage and lethality. If no weapons are in hand, they can use their giant-like strength and crush their foes' necks and break their bodies.

**SUPER STRENGTH:** A Draugr can increase its strength by 1d12 points for 1d4 minutes several times a day or night. This strength can be used to shatter and break whatever their iron hard hands touch or to crush the life out of victims.

**MIST FORM:** The Draugr's body can go to mist and only be harmed by magical items and spells for its duration. The mist form ability lasts for 1d10 rounds at a time.

**VAMPIRISM:** *This ability works the same as the basic Vampire in Monsters & Treasure.*

**CAUSE INSANITY:** One Draugr's radius is 150 ft. and can spark madness in those living that are within it. Animals will go mad and sentient beings must make a charisma save or be unable to think straight for .. 6 hours afterwards. Horses will flee, birds will fly away, etc. if the Draugr gets too close. Even sleeping or resting in its tomb or spot aboard a ship can cause this effect in the living. Once a save is made for one particular Draugr, it does not need to be made again unless it is encountered again or another is near.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** Draugr can transform into a myriad of beasts: a seal, a bloody, flayed bull, a grey horse with a broken back and lacking a tail and ears, and a cat-like creature. They can do this three times a day, and it will last for as long as needed so that they can lure in their victims or acquire their wealth.

### DVERGAR

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-12

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 1d12

**MOVE:** 45 ft.

**AC:** 15

**ATTACKS:** Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Dvergar Traits

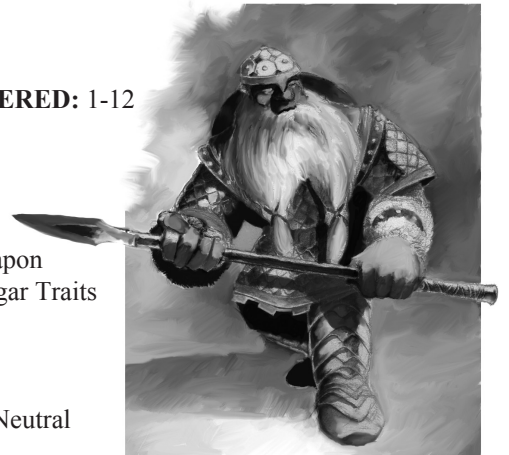
**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 3

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**EXP:** 10+1



Dvergar, or Dweorg to the Saxons, are the magical folk first brought into life by the Sons of Borr from the body of Ymir. These are not the short, stocky 'dwarfs' of normal fantasy but magical beings that are nearly human-sized in height. They live underground and, like the Dark Elves, forge and craft items of magnificence but do so for the gods and heroes.

Dvergar resemble small, human-sized versions of Ymir by their physicality. Inherently strong limbed, hairy and with giant strength, they are a hardworking race that still work for the giants in the Nine Worlds because of their ancient bond of blood.

These beings are found in many worlds, Svartálfaheimr and Jötunheimr being the favorites, and can find their way between worlds by way of the earth itself. Dvergar-kind, when not crafting priceless objects, seek to be in the company of greatness. Giant or Æsir, it doesn't matter to them so long as they can re-



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main important. Males often will lust after the affections of goddesses, married or not, and devise methods of being in their bed chambers.

As warriors, Dvergar are bold and extremely brave to the point of foolhardy and rarely retreat. Armies exist in the Nine Worlds but have rarely been called upon by their masters or own leaders for fear of letting it get out of control. Only the Dvergar, however, can equal a giant or even some of the gods in their ability to handle large amounts of alcohol, putting other races to shame.

*Castle Keepers can chose to portray the Dvergar as short dwarfs as per fantasy literature norms, if they wish, or can retain the Germanic view in their game. It is suspected that the image of the short, bearded dwarfs of later Nordic and Germanic lore is merely a watered down, satirical version strained through the influence of Christianity. There is no evidence that the Dvergar were portrayed as small in the early myths at all.*

Dvergar are both pale and pitch black skinned in complexion and possess dark eyes and hair (with some variation due to mixing their blood with elves and humans). These magical beings are clearly not Human or elfin and this can be seen by their giant-like physique and stature.

**COMBAT:** Dvergar warriors and armies are dreaded. They use Berserkers and enchanted weaponry and storm the front line fiercely. They employ strategies and careful schemes to defeat their enemies, using the whole gamut of Germanic tactics.

**DVERGAR TRAITS:** *Akin to the fantasy Dwarf in so many ways, they possess these traits: Determine Depth & Direction, Defensive Expertise (Giants/Ogres), Resistant to Arcane Magic, and Resistant to Fear.*

**(Player Character Info:)** +2 strength, -1 dexterity, +1 charisma. *Typical Classes:* fighter, rogue, barbarian, giant slayer, dragon hunter, wizard.

### EINHERJAR

(Medium Spirit)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-15

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 12 (d8)

**MOVE:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 20

**ATTACKS:** Slam, Sword 3d10, Spear 2d8, Axe 2d12

**SPECIAL:** Touch of Death, Frightful Moan, Telekinesis, Incorporeal

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 5

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful Neutral

**EXP:** 1950+12

The Einherjar are the spirits of the 'Battle Slain' that have lived and died serving Oðin Allfather and are destined for the grand Vallhöll where they will feast on the meat of Sæhrímnir the boar. The Battle Slain are essentially *Ghosts* in *Monsters & Treasure* but a little tougher.

The Einherjar serve Oðin ultimately and must be first taken by the Valkyrja from the battle and can be encountered before being taken to the Hall of the Slain. There are many Einherjar that have never found their way to Vallhöll for various reasons or curses and wander the Nine Worlds eternally seeking their 'rightful' place at Oðin's side. These Einherjar fail to understand that they are already dead and will seek to continue the fight in some way to die gloriously in battle but never finding it. Though terrible and rare, they often accompany Draugr, both two sides of death.

Oðin's Einherjar train daily for the day of the Great Winter and Ragnarök with their weapons they had in life. When they are not drinking the mead of Oðin and partaking in this feast at the crowded tables, they are being entertained or fighting battles to prepare for the Great Winter.

Each Einherjar possesses a golden ring given to them by Oðin that an oath has been made on for their loyalty (*See 'Ring Oaths' in Chapter 4*). Einherjar are grim and joyous at the same time, and their company is not desirable among the living because of their disturbing behavior and ghastly presence.

There are, however, Human warrior groups dedicated to complete worship of Oðin and his Einherjar and one tribe, the Harii, that live to fight by his side in death someday. It is the goal of a Berserker of the Harii warriors to be slain only in battle to become one of the Einherjar – anything less is damned and doomed.

When Oðin leads his Wild Hunt, he populates it with his Einherjar. They raid, pillage and do as they once had in life but now in the company of their Allfather and King of Kings.

### ELDJÖTNAR

(Giant Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 2-12

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 12d8

**MOVE:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 23

**ATTACKS:** 2 Fist 2d8, Weapon 5d6

**SPECIAL:** Rock Throwing, Immunity to Fire (full), Twilight Vision, Vulnerability to Cold

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 9

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful Evil

**EXP:** 2450+12

## 40 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Eldjötnar are the Fire Giants of Surtr in the burning world of Múspellsheimr. Ugly, hateful and cruel natured, the Fire Giants are rarely neutral and beneficial to others.

They dislike all other races, even their own giant kin in the other worlds, and are as unpredictable as the fires they dwell in. Like all Jötun, they can often possess several heads (2-3) and are fond of eating other races – often.

Fire Giants have been training for the final war that will consume the Nine Worlds, hoping that Ragnarök will indeed come as prophesied. They know that when the time comes, it will be by their fiery presence alone that the worlds will burn.

Being one of the first to live in the universe under the authority of Surtr, they hate and loathe all others with disgust and find no wrong in slaying, enslaving and destroying them if given the chance. Use *'Fire Giant'* in Monsters & Treasure.

Fire Giants can use and manipulate fire as though it was a physical tool but choose to do so in a destructive manner. The presence of the Eldjötnar can ignite anything flammable close by given time (1d6 minutes, 3 in 6 chance) if their enormous size and damaging nature doesn't first.

The Fire Giants are proud that their king and god, Surtr, is bold enough to challenge Oðin and that they will be the ones personally responsible for Ragnarök more than any other race in the universe.

**COMBAT:** Eldjötnar fight with awful ferocity and destructive force. They will bash, chop and mangle their foes, taking advantage of the size difference. With their strength and fiery nature, the Fire Giants will be brutal and incinerate the remains of their enemy if they do not devour them alive first.

## ELLEPIGER

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-4

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** None

**SPECIAL:** Lure, Drain Life

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral/Evil

**EXP:** 45+3

Ellepiger are faery-folk that live in Alder trees and, with their families, are called *Ellefoket* ('Alder Folk'). The women are extremely beautiful with long, fair hair and slender forms garbed in glistening dresses. They dance and play around the Alder tree wherein they live. Though they are entrancing in the front, they do not possess a back and are hollow instead.

The alluring Ellepiger women attempt to prey on lonely and gullible menfolk nightly. They do this by dancing and frolicking and using their natural born ability and then promise to make love to the man of their choice. Once weakened and vulnerable, the Ellepiger will consume the victim's body and soul.

The men of the Elleföket are ugly and opposite of their women-folk in every way. They are peaceful, nonconfrontational and choose not to harm others. If able, they will stay inside their trees and not intrude on others who wander too close. They will emerge by day and stare at travelers as they go by eerily but do little more.

The women try to always keep their backs away from strangers to hide their hollowness and secret. Once a victim is lured, they will quickly make them immobile and then take the opportunity to feed on them.

**COMBAT:** Ellepiger and Elleföket do not openly enter into battle and avoid it at all costs. They are not a violent race of beings.

**LURE:** The Ellepiger can emit a pleasant perfume scent from their form into the air that instantly will make any males in the radius who fail a charisma save follow her every word. The Lure will last for 1d6 hours and turn the male into a sexual slave. The allured target will not be able to do what they wish while under the sway of this power.

**DRAIN LIFE:** Once the Ellepiger has its male target in a vulnerable place, she will drain life by merely holding her hand on the man's chest or head. 1d20 damage will be done per hour until the hit points are completely gone, leaving the victim as only wrinkled, empty clothes in the grass.

## FINFOLK

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 40 ft. (land), 80 ft. (water)

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Immortality with Mortals

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 5

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral/Evil

**EXP:** 75+3

Finfolk live in and on the seas in Finfolkaheim or Hildaland and dwell near humans, if they can, for symbiotic reasons. Finfolk are not liked by many other races because of their strange and sinister tendencies.

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Male Finfolk are tall, gloomy faced and silent more often, showing a harshness and dislike of other races. They are human-like but with hard features and a touch of the sea. Their ships can become invisible to hide from others or to attack them.

Women begin life like a mermaid in form and seek a Mortal husband to support them and do labor and chores. Without one, they will age quickly, so they secure a young man. Both genders will simply abduct an appropriate counterpart and take them to Finfolkaheem to live out their days.

The Finfolk will disguise themselves and hide even to take who they want by force. Many speak rumor that the reason why the Finfolk do this is a curse given by one of the gods on the Finfolk for some long forgotten past ill deed. Whatever the origin, it is clear that both genders will appear beautiful and ageless so long as they have a human spouse and not each other.

Silver is a weakness of theirs that will distract them and lure them away if given, but it must be more than simple coins in size. If tossed something made of silver, the Finfolk will let down their guard and aggression toward taking people against their will.

Finfolkameer, or Hildaland, is a crystal and stone richly made palace under the ocean lit by the glow of sea animals and covered in wealth taken from the ocean depths. Massive seaweed gardens are in the palace and plenty of room for its thousands of inhabitants. The king of the Finfolk rules from his ornate and grand throne room, commanding his people and, if need be, his armies.

**COMBAT:** Finfolk use the same range of weaponry that other races do and can do so underwater without difficulty. They

fight precisely and with tactics. As an army, their invisible fleets of ships and swimmers are unmatched in the Nine Worlds.

**IMMORTALITY WITH MORTALS:** Having a Human spouse denies the Finfolk from aging and becoming ugly. Women of the Finfolk risk turning into a Sea Hag in time without a mortal spouse, with every year equal to eight. So long as they have the correct spouse, they will remain extremely beautiful and, for lack a better word, 'perfect' in appearance and behavior. Abducting a human for a spouse is a priority or the race will perish.

### FYLGJA

(Medium Spirit)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d6

**MOVE:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 20

**ATTACKS:** None

**SPECIAL:** Fated

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 0

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 100+2

The Fylgja are spirits, sometimes summoned by the gods or wizards and witches, that will stay by the side of an individual that is certainly doomed to die. The Norns will often send a Fylgja to accompany a hero during his or her last moments.

Sometimes their form is in disguise as an animal (cat, bird, etc.) and will shadow the individual, or they will make themselves





be better known and reveal their true, woman-like form. They are ghostly and non-corporeal and will appear faint to the eye.

There are times when a Fylgja will take part in events around the individual to speed up or slow down matters as their summoner wishes. It isn't common, but the Fylgja can interfere to cause their intended target harm in order to dictate a change of direction in events.

**COMBAT:** Fylgja can only be harmed by magical weapons and spells 5<sup>th</sup> level or higher. Ideally, they never become confrontational and threatening, but if their singled out individual is being endangered by another force that risks the Fates, they will jump in and get involved.

**FATED:** By the will of the Norns or the gods, the Fylgja is bound to the individual they have been placed. Their place and existence in the Nine Worlds depends on that of their targeted person. Once their fated individual dies, they fade and return back to the realm of spirits.

## HAUGBUI

(Medium Undead)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d8

**MOVE:** 20 ft.

**AC:** 12

**ATTACKS:** Slam 1d8

**SPECIAL:** Slow

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** None

**TREASURE:** 1

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral Evil

**EXP:** 15+2

The Haugbui are undead that are bound to stay within their own tomb but will guard it with their might from robbers or the daring that wish to enter. They are weaker than the Draugr and more akin to zombies.

Haugbui can be found in barrow mounds if the Draugr cannot, and they were more often prominent individuals in their former lives cursed by their evil ways to remain undying.

Haugbui can stay within the confines of a mausoleum so long as they do not leave but will turn to crumpled dust and dry bones if they ever leave. Like the Draugr, they seek to keep an iron-hand over their wealth from their former life and out of the pockets of others.

**COMBAT:** Haugbui attack mindlessly and without fear. They do so to kill intruders in their tombs and nothing more.

**SLOW:** Unlike regular zombies, Haugbui can go as everyone else per round but will get a -1 on initiative rolls.



## HILDISVÍNI

(Giant Animal)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-3

**SIZE:** Giant

**HD:** 4d12

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** Trample 2d8, Gore 2d10

**SPECIAL:**

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Low

**TREASURE:** 0

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 250+4

These giant 'Battle Swine' roam the forests of the Nine Worlds foraging for food and jealously guarding their young. Named for the goddess Freyja's own boar, these giant beasts are sacred and symbolize the strength of warriors.

One such giant boar is at the feast of the Battle Slain in Vallhöll cooking over the fires on a spit, daily. These boars do not, generally, show any intelligence higher than the normal sized cousins, but there are many that were cursed by the gods or powerful magicians for various reasons.

Warriors put the image of the Battle Swine on the top of their helmets to channel the power and might of the animal in their combat skills. The Hildisvíni is also put on shields and other decorative places in the aesthetics of the many peoples of the

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Nine Worlds and especially among the many tribes of the descendants of Tuisto.

**COMBAT:** The Battle Swine charges down their foe and tramples or gores them fiercely, as many times as they can. They go wild with the taste and smell of blood and can become berserk (charisma save), adding an additional 1d8 damage for the duration of the battle.

### HRÍMPURS

(Giant Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 2-8

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 1d8

**MOVE:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 20

**ATTACKS:** 2 Fist 2d8, Weapon 4d6

**SPECIAL:** Rock Throwing, Immunity to Cold (full), Twilight Vision, Vulnerable to Fire

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 8

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful Evil

**EXP:** 1950+11

From the icy world of Niflheimr, the Hrímpurs are the fierce Ice Giants of Ymir. The frigid and terrible frozen snow and ice does not affect them in any way.

They share the same temperament as their other giant kin and do not seem to be capable of being civil or decent in the company of strangers. They have a personal grudge against Oðin and the Æsir for the slaying of their great king and ancestor, Ymir, and wish to avenge him.

Rime Giants are crude and often simpletons but do not lose their cruel sense of humor or violence when under the influence of others. The Hrímpurs despise the Nine Worlds and its inhabitants, seeing them as the rotting and festering remnants of Ymir.

Just as their relatives, the Eldjötnar, long for the time of Ragnarök, the Rime Giants lust for the Fimbulwinter that will sweep out from Niflheimr to the other worlds and cover them in disastrous snow and ice. This will be the time in which the Hrímpurs will thunder forth from Niflheimr and siege the other worlds.

Like with the rest of Jötnar, the Hrímpurs can have more than one head and look ferocious, rarely beautiful or fair. Use *'Frost Giants'* in *Monsters & Treasure*.

**COMBAT:** Hrímpurs fight like the rest of their kind, violent and brutal with little cleverness or careful thinking.



### HULDRA

(Medium Spirit)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Slam, Knife 2d6

**SPECIAL:** Glamour, . trength, Luck, Shapeshifting

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 200+3

Huldra women are extremely beautiful faeries that are imperfect because of their fox tails and tree bark covered backs. They are ravenously lustful and will seduce and lure men deep into the forest to make love with them. If they are pleased, they will spare the man, if not, they will kill him.

Their original creation from the forest is not something easy to hide among non-sylvan folk and is always an awkward point of contention. When Freyja and Freyr both created them from the woods of Álfheimr, they did not discard any traces of that origin and left it.

Huldra do not like to be told about their strange, animal-like tails and unusual backs, and if so, they will focus their anger and attentions on the person who mentioned it. A Huldra can make someone's life a living hell by her magical influences, if they choose.

They are native to the forests and never prefer to wander into largely populated towns or cities if they can help it. Occasionally, they marry and try to live as humans as other races do, but it won't last long due to the Huldra's unusual nature. The males are Huldrkall or Huldru, and they tempt and lure females of other races just the same.

These beings are the dark denizens of the forest that will act harsh to those thoughtless people that harm their home. Huldra do not gather in large numbers and choose to live solitary. It is extremely rare that more than one Huldra will come together, but it is told that when the Great Winter comes, the Huldra will amass into a sylvan army and march on the enemies of the woods.

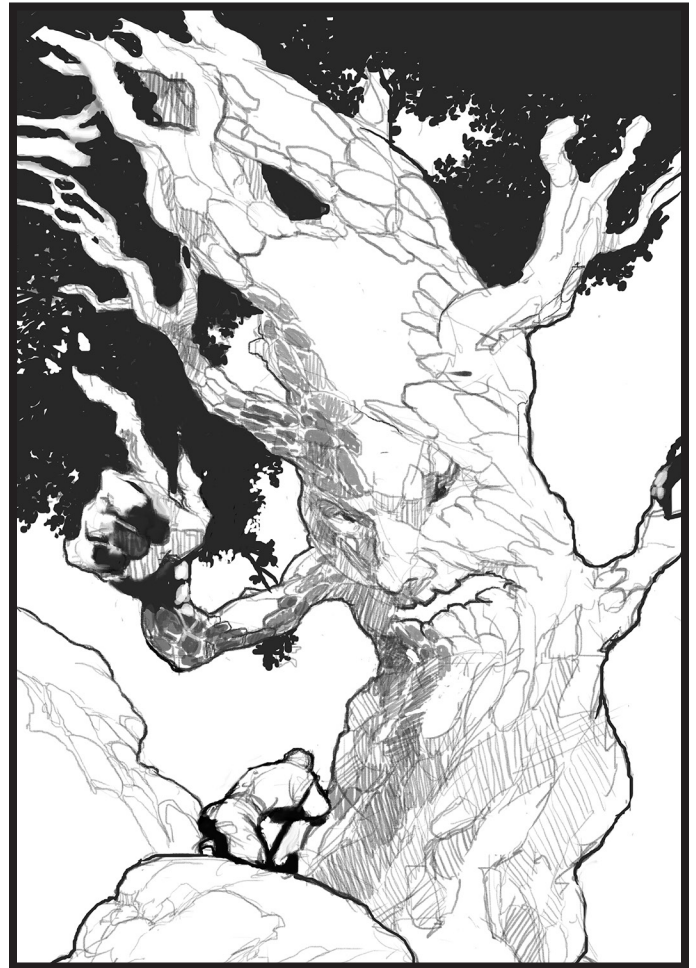
**COMBAT:** The Huldra and Huldrkall will use their giant-like strength to pin down and hold their enemy before killing them with a knife or by bashing with a heavy object.

**GLAMOUR:** Magical faery glamour is used to hide the animal tail and tree bark backs when around beings that are not Huldra. This glamour can be used to disguise and change the appearance of other things around the Huldra, if so wished. It takes a charisma save to not be deceived by the glamour. Once the save is made, the illusion fades, and its reality is plain to see.

**STRENGTH:** In a burst of extra strength, the Huldra can gain some might over their foes (1d20) for 1d4 minutes. The Huldra can use this ability three times a day.

**LUCK:** Huldra can use their inherent magic to jinx others if they wish. This can be used twice a day by the Huldra, and they merely have to touch whatever object they plan to jinx. Once this is done, the user will have a -8 on it for hours equal to 1d12. If a fumble is rolled after it is jinxed, terrible consequences will be suffered worse than normal, often ending in damage.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** If needed, the Huldra can alter its shape to another, similarly beautiful person to hide its strange nature. Only in close contact can strangers have a chance to break through the illusion (charisma save) and see that things are not what they appear to be. Suspicious physical traits will be apparent once the save is made.



## HYLDEMOER

(Large Tree Hag)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 8d8 +40

**MOVE:** 20 ft.

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** Branch 1d10+6, Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Tree Bond

**SAVES:** M, P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** None

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 450+8

The Hyldemoer are Elder tree beings that protect and guard them. Humans and other races call them 'Elder Mothers' and Elder Witches. They can move about as the large Elder tree by uprooting or free themselves from the tree and moving about as a hideous hag.

The Elder Mother can live among people without any knowing of her origins, for a time. Their magical abilities are presumed to



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be like a sorceress, healer or Völva. Hyldemoer have tempers and can be easily insulted or angered.

Hyldemoer can cast curses on those they feel deserve it or even see into the future with Second Sight. Their advice is often taken for granted or ignored by the foolish who find out later that they should have listened.

It is best to avoid the Elder trees in the woods and let the blessings fall where the Mothers decide most reasonable. The twigs and leaves fallen from them are considered blessed and able to cure toothaches and other ailments.

Elder Witches possess 5<sup>th</sup> level spells and can cast the same spell several times a day (2-3) if needed. Their magic is usually harmful and threatening to those they target.

**COMBAT:** Elder Mothers can become ruthless and blood-thirsty if attacked. They can grab any weapon and become as deadly as a Berserker, massacring their foes in a manner that resembles the cutting down of trees.

**TREE BOND:** Each Hyldemoer is linked to an Elder Tree and will perish if its tree is destroyed. Finding the one tree in the woods that the Elder Witch belongs would be near impossible. If it is discovered, the Elder Witch can be bargained with as she will be desperate to save her own life.

### IRRBLOSS

(Small Energy Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-3

**SIZE:** Small

**HD:** 6d8

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 25

**ATTACKS:** Icy Touch

**SPECIAL:** Immunity to Magic, Mist Form

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 5

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral/Evil

**EXP:** 1200+6

The Irbloss are very similar to the Will O' Wisps by nature except they vaguely appear in ghostly form, revealing a hint of their origins as once living beings. Their spectral lights dart and flutter in the fens and swamps by nightfall eerily.

It is said that the Irbloss are the lost wandering spirits of those people who have perished in mired and boggy places that now seek to be freed from their prison or wish ill to others out of personal vengeance.

These ghostly presences will lure people out to difficult to traverse spots, trap them and then swoop in to help them die.

At times, they can make faint voices begging and pleading for help and flicker their light enough to appear as though they were someone holding a candle or lamp.

**COMBAT:** Irbloss have no corporeal form and so cannot directly attack others except by touching them with their spectral glow, doing 1d8 damage in iciness each time. Little can harm them except for divine intervention or simply leaving them alone by retreating.

### JÖTUN

(Giant Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 9d8

**MOVE:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 17

**ATTACKS:** 2 Fist 1d8,

Weapon 3d8

**SPECIAL:** Rock Throwing,

Twilight Vision

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 7

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 600+9

The Jötunar are the giants that populate the Nine Worlds, all descendants of Ymir. Unlike the Fire and Rime Giants, the basic Jötun can vary in appearance and behavior, showing a diverse range. *Use 'Hill Giant' in Monsters & Treasure for reference.*

Many of the giants are as beautiful as the gods and even good company among other races, but there are many that are foul, bitter and hideous. They can be mainly found in Jötunheimr, a rugged and savage world where Óðin placed them to keep them away from other peoples.

The giants are also called *Eoten*, or 'the Eaters', because they are fond of devouring people as easily as humans would bread and cheese. All other giant-kind that are not Fire or Rime are of this race in the universe. Another name for them is *Entas*, amongst the Saxons, for their height.

Most giants are deformed with claws and wretched abnormalities. Giantesses are the *Gýgjar* or *Iviðjur* and more often are pretty in comparison to their male counterparts. Many have even managed to earn a place of trust in other societies as good people, but they all fall to Thor's hammer if he finds them in his travels.

One phobia of the giant-kind is lightning and storms. Even though there are Storm Giants, they are still afraid of it, thinking it to be none other than the mighty Thor himself. The giants assume that he is close by and will slay them with his dreadful hammer, Mjölnir.

There are many among the giants that are kind hearted and passive and are more often the brunt of the wrath of the gods or others, innocents caught in the moment. Chief among the Jötnar is Þrym who rules Jötunheimr and is vehemently against the Æsir, but there is one giant that gods do not find intolerable or worth slaying, Ægir, the god of the seas. Ægir holds grand feasts for the gods in his hall annually and is given respect by all of the gods.

**COMBAT:** Their strategies go from simple and overly violent to organized and calculated. There is a large range of variation between the many types of giants in the Nine Worlds.

## KETTA

(Large Cat Beast)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Large (10')

**HD:** 3d10

**MOVE:** 100 ft.

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** Bite 3d10,

Claw 2d12

**SPECIAL:** Poisonous

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 150+3



The Ketta is a giant, demonic cat beast that is foul of behavior and manner. These giant monsters leap on unsuspecting victims as cats do their prey and will cause agonizing death to their victims.

The Ketta beasts have come from the steaming swamps of Järnviðr and the witches that live there that plot against the worlds and gods. Just as cats are varied in appearance, the Ketta resemble their smaller counterparts.

Unlike the smaller species, the Ketta are demonic and venomous in nature. They possess a devilish cunning and insidious intelligence that normal cats do not – a near sentence.

Ketta are solitary creatures, but once in a while, they will be found with their brood, and this makes situations worse if they are encountered.

**COMBAT:** Ketta engage their enemies like wildcats combined with intelligence. Their attacks are sudden and fast. They will happily disembowel or behead their foe with their claws or teeth or use their venomous nature to be rid of the threat.

**POISONOUS:** Ketta's hair and claws are soaked in a powerful poison (Level IV in *Player's Handbook*) that can immobilize any living thing touched by it.

## KETTHONTLA

(Tall Monster)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-2

**SIZE:** Tall

**HD:** 5d8

**MOVE:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 15

**ATTACKS:** Club 3d6, Bite 2d8, Slam

**SPECIAL:**

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 5

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 500+5

Ketthontla are large ogresses that have cat's eyes, fangs and temperament. They are typically ugly and plodding. By relation, the Ketthontla are Jötun by race, if a little different overall.

They live in Järnviðr amidst the other monsters and beasts and serve the witches. They often will act as bounty hunters for the Halirúna, traveling to far off lands and worlds to find, capture and bring the prey to their masters.

There is some link between the Ketthontla and Jötnar that is not well understood, but the innocent who encounter the Ketthontla do not care, only that they survive.

**COMBAT:** Ketthontla battle with giant tree trunks converted into clubs and dotted with iron spikes and other lethal extras. They will continually bash and hit their foes with the club or rip out the eyes with their claws.

## KLABAUTERMANN

(Small Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-5

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 1d6

**MOVE:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** Knife 1d4, Club 1d6, Axe 1d8

**SPECIAL:** Sea Jinx

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 0

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral to Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 30+1

The Klabautermann are gnome-like beings that live at sea. Their role in things is muddled by sailors. Some say the little sea-gnomes only show when the ship they are on is doomed, and others say they are the cause of that doom. The truth is unclear, but their presence does create a stir aboard longships and other craft.

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They will dress identical to the crew and help with the chores, but the question is how much are they truly aiding or hindering the voyage in the end. Every ship they make an appearance on will indubitably crash, sink or suffer disease before reaching its destination.

These sea-gnomes have been known to rescue men tossed in the sea and other favorable acts, but no one who is lucky at sea will ever see them. These little men (and their families more so) are a mystery and captains dread ever seeing them because it foretells a fated voyage.

**COMBAT:** Klabautermann warriors will use their sea worthiness to face their foes, sabotaging ships around the enemy as they fight (cutting ropes, sails, etc.) to gain advantage. They are fierce and clever when they attack and even more when they defend themselves against landlubbers.

**SEA JINX:** The Klabautermann can place a jinx on various ship equipment to have it fail in the end. If a ship is being used, sails will fall, oars snap, ropes tangle, etc. giving the crew a -3 to skill rolls.

### KRAKEN

(Giant Squid)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Giant

**HD:** 17d8

**MOVE:** 20 ft. (water)

**AC:** 20

**ATTACKS:** 8 tentacles 1d10, Bite 5d10

**SPECIAL:** Constrict, Capsize, Spell-like Abilities, Darkvision (60 ft.), Ink Cloud, Twilight Vision

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** High

**TREASURE:** 11

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral Evil

**EXP:** 11,700+17

These massive squid roam the seas eager for prey above or below the surface and will lash out with its tentacles to pull them into its toothy maw. *This is identical to the Kraken (Leviathan) in Monsters & Treasure.*

Kraken are feared by boatmen everywhere. Not even a warband of Vikings and Berserkers wish to invite an attack if they can help it. Only mighty beings like the Draugr or giants can withstand them for long.

It takes a rare brand of hero to slay one, and the legends of those that have are not many in the Nine Worlds. Long sea voyages can draw their attention over time, making them shadow the seafarers and wait for the opportune time to strike.

If endangered, the Kraken will grab many foes and drag them

under as it retreats to a safer place. They will not fight to the very end.

### LJÓSÁLFAR

(Medium Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 12

**ATTACKS:** Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Glow of Light

**SAVES:** M & P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

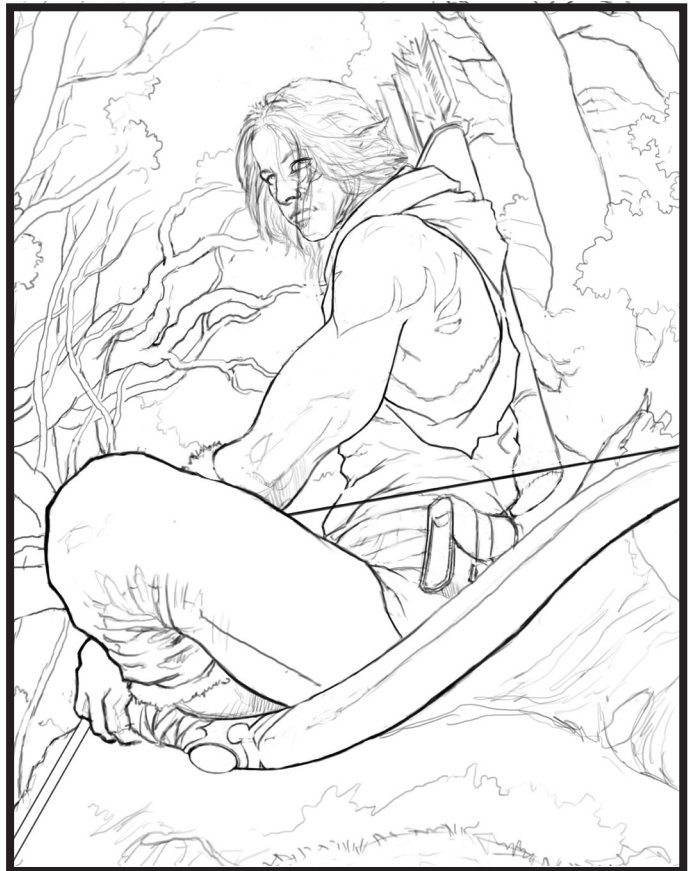
**ALIGNMENT:** Good

**EXP:** 50+2

Light Elves, the inhabitants of Álfheimr, are the beautiful and glorious opposite to the Dark Elves, both races that were brought into being by the death of Ymir.

These elves are highly skilled in magic and enchantments, being able to place charms and runes on anything they touch to combat evil and darkness. They are ethereal by nature and seem distant to others because of their loftiness.

Light Elven society is one built on reason and logic and a hier-





archy from the king at the top to citizens at the bottom, rejecting the peasant and serf class entirely.

The Ljósálfari exist to thwart their rivals, the Dark Elves, who try to undermine the gods and the stability that holds the universe together. They will help heroes in trouble if it is plausible and heal the sick and wounded if it will assist in the war against evil.

As elves, they are fairer than all other beings in the universe, except the Æsir and Vanir, and any Light Elf that dares to appear more beautiful is often stricken with a wrathful curse to keep it in its place by the gods. Unlike the general Álfar, these elves are righteous and will not harm good peoples.

The Light Elves zealously serve their lord and god Frejya and Freyr in Álfheimr before anyone else, even the often arrogant and bellicose Æsir.

**COMBAT:** Ljósálfar are strong and capable warriors and do not let their beauty hide from their skills as competent killers of evil and foul beings. They fight with strategy and cleverness and will use magic if needed to gain an upper hand in battle.

**GLOW OF LIGHT:** Because the Light Elves are so pure of heart and soul and close to the company of the Vanir, they can shine from their skin. A glowing, blinding, white-gold light will emit from them, casting a glow in a 30 ft. radius for 1d10 hours (if needed) three times a day. This light can drive away lesser beings of evil nature (i.e. goblins, kobolds, etc.) without a spell resistance.

*The Light Elves are the Norse equivalent to the basic elf in Monsters & Treasure and in the Player's Handbook for purposes of character creation.*

## MARMENNILL

(Medium Sea Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 2-8

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 15 ft. (land), 30 ft. (water)

**AC:** 12

**ATTACKS:** Bite 2d6, Sword 3d6

**SPECIAL:** Second Sight

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Good

**EXP:** 80+3

Marmennill are the male counterpart to the female Margygur sea-folk. They are the merfolk that dwell in the many seas of the Nine Worlds and crowd the underwater court of Ægir. Marmennill can prophesize events in the future naturally. Sometimes it is at will, and at others, they are at the mercy of it. They are

ambiguous in their allegiances but do not openly harm others.

Physically, these merfolk are typical from head to fin. They do not mingle with land-folk often, but when they do, it is for the benefit of both. They appear more human-like than faery and have the scaly, slimy tail end of a fish from the waist down.

**COMBAT:** The merfolk will use spears, swords and other weapons, stabbing, cutting and impaling their foes from all sides. They use the advantage of being water-folk against enemies that are not and swim in circles and use the three dimensions in their favor.

**SECOND SIGHT:** The merman can view tantalizing images of the future often not in a way that much can be read or understood. This ability can sometimes be channeled (wisdom save) or instead be random and flash in the mind of the merman.

## NÄCK

(Medium Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-5

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 40 ft. (land), 60 ft. (water)

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** Slam 1d6

**SPECIAL:** Lure, Shapeshifting

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 3

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 100+3

Known by many names, the Nökk, Neck, Nix and Nyx are water-folk that are devious and enchanting. Like most races in the Nine Worlds, they run the gamut of good and evil, beautiful and horrific.

Unlike the Finfolk and others, the Nix is fond of rivers, ponds, lakes and watery places inland but does occasion the sea often. Because of their ability to change shape, no one is certain how they appear.

Nyx men play the violin and other instruments with such divine skill that they can draw in anyone. Children and women are most vulnerable to their musings. Often, the Nyx will play just to entertain others and even wish to teach a select individual, but more often, they will tempt people out to the waters to drown. As victims die in the waters, the faery feeds on the suffering and soul.

The women will swim playfully in the waters, naked, and tempt men to join them, often making them leap from ships to do so. Few are able to resist the Näck's lure and even the most venerable and experienced person can give in to them.

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In Mannheimr, Näck are common. They are eager to prey on the gullibility of humans and can be found in great numbers in Germania. In the waters of the Rhine, they can be seen tempting sailors and vessels. They are called *Rheintöcher* in these regions.

Many Nyx fall in love with other races and live with them but need to be in regular contact with a water source, or they will grow emotionless and quiet over time. When they appear human, they might show a hint of their watery and otherworldly origins (thin gills, webbed hands, etc.).

**COMBAT:** Nyx will avoid combat if possible and even surrender to threats by others. This is in hopes of using their magical charms later to get what they want and be free. A Nyx will only take a life by their own normal means.

**LURE:** A Nyx can magically lure others through song, poetry and dance three times a day. Their radius is 150 ft., and it will last for 1d8 hours until they get victims. A Magic Resistance must be made, or the victim will be lured to follow the Nyx into the waters and not resist or try to swim or breath.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** Nyx can change into any animal or another humanoid form so long as it deceives the intended victim. Common forms are fish, wyrms, snakes and other water animals. If they change to appear humanoid, the hems of their clothes will be wet, never able to be hidden well (onlookers need to make a sight skill roll CL: 15 to spot it.)

### PUKI

(Medium Faery)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-3

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Bite 2d8, Claw 3d4

**SPECIAL:** Shapeshifting, Faery Lights

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 50+3

The Puki, or Puck, is a shape-changing faery that can be both beneficial and terrible to strangers. In their natural form, they are goat-legged and hairy with horns and a sardonic grin.

Many Puki can aid families or chosen individuals by helping with their chores, or they can equally ruin and sabotage things as well. These beings are woodland beings and fall under the classification 'Víðvættir' (Forest Spirits) in the eyes and minds of the peoples.

The Puki will play pranks and jokes on people it singles out or that bother it in some way. These practical jokes and mischievous acts will not often harm the victim but will make life difficult.

In the woods of Álfheimr, they are the most hedonistic and flamboyant of faeries, living with no abandon since time does not exist in the world in comparison to Miðgarðr and Mannheimr. Their wit and humor is dark and always clever with plenty of bawdiness. Often, their humor is more than what most races can handle.

Many Puki will transform into horses or other animals to lure an innocent target onto them long enough to dump them into water, mud or other inconveniencing places while others can be sneaky and evil-spirited toward strangers. The Saxons call these beings *Púcel* and can also mean troll or goblin as sometimes these races blur.

**COMBAT:** Puki are known to be bowmen and spear users when in battle and will use their speed and agility to dodge and take swift attacks. They are not well known for enduring long conflicts and will break off when the advantage is in their hands.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** Puki can transform into an animal or a humanoid being for 1d6 hours at a time three times a day, if needed. As an animal, they can stay the same size or shrink (i.e. human-sized eagle).

**FAERY LIGHTS:** A Puki can create magical, moving lights that flutter about and glide around them. These lights can go as far as 150 ft. in a radius around the faery and be guided and moved in a very deceptive manner to lure people. This will last 1d20 minutes and can be used three times a day. Onlookers will have to make a Magic Resistance or be drawn to them for 1d6 minutes mindlessly.

**(Player Character Info:)** +2 intelligence, +3 wisdom. *Typical Classes:* rogue, wizard, illusionist.

## SKRØMT

(Medium Spirit)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 10d8

**MOVE:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 20

**ATTACKS:** Slam

**SPECIAL:** Touch of Death, Frightful Moan, Telekinesis, Incorporeal

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 8

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful Evil

**EXP:** 1750+10



The Skrømt, or Deildegast, is a spirit that guards the sacred border stones between tribes.

These violent spirits will terrorize an area around the stone (if moved) until it is set right. This is usually an impossible task and will entail fighting off the Deildegast, or 'Border Stone Ghost', the whole time.

This undead danger is classified, along with the Draugr and others, as a *Gjenganger*. It can be harmed by magical weapons and spells but little else. The Skrømt will wail and shriek, letting its call echo in the countryside, sometimes creating nightmares and sleeplessness.

The Deildegast can transform into a ghost white owl and haunt the radius of 200 ft around the border stone on a limited basis (once a night). It will be frenzied and extremely violent toward anyone that dares to come near it.

How the Skrømt spirit is bound to the stone varies from tribe to tribe, but many were sacrifices and criminals put to death by the tribe for their evil deeds. The Goði and wizards would bind their spirit to the stone to bless and protect the tribe in that direction (east, west, north, south) and react if the marker stone was moved or broken.

As a cautionary means to keep vandalism under control, the tribe will tell its youth to not tamper with the deilde

or they will be cursed to be its next spirit guardian. In Germania, most peoples abide by these warnings, except for outside peoples.

**COMBAT:** The Deildegast will look like a normal person, except for ripped and bloodied clothes, and then attack the unsuspecting victim. It can choose to become corporeal at will to cause more damage or remain misty in form. These angry spirits will not stop until they have killed or driven far away the cause of the troubles.

**TOUCH OF DEATH:** A Deildegast's touch drains the life energy of the victim, whether through pure fear or by sucking in the victim's psychic force into its insatiable, ectoplasmic gullet. This touch literally takes years off of the victim's life. Humans and half-orcs age 1d4 decades, halflings and half-elves 1d6 decades, and dwarfs and gnomes 3d4 decades. Elves are immune to this form of Deildegast attack as their life force is eternal, and they do not fear death.

**INCORPOREAL:** Deildegast exist only partially within the mortal realms. Most of their essence resides in the ethereal. A creature on the mortal realms cannot attack a Deildegast except with magical weapons, though a creature in the ethereal can attack the ghost's manifestation there with normal weapons.

**FRIGHTFUL MOAN:** Deildegast can wail their eternal grievances, evoking the darkest and most morose sentiments. This horrific moan causes a cacophonous noise that unsettles the mind. Any creature hearing this noise must succeed a wisdom save or suffer the effects of fear. A successful save grants that individual immunity to that particular Deildegast's moan for 24 hours.

**TELEKINESIS:** Deildegasts are able to acutely focus their rage, allowing them to manipulate the physical realm. This ability is identical to the *telekinesis* spell.

## FURISAZ

(Large Giant)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-5

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 17d8

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 27

**ATTACKS:** 2 Fist 2d8, Weapon 7d6, Long Spear 5d6

**SPECIAL:** Spell-like Abilities, Spells, Freedom of Movement, Immunity to Electricity (full), Twilight Vision, Water Breathing

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Superior

**TREASURE:** 10

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral/Evil/Good

**EXP:** 8400+17

The Storm Giants of Niflheimr and Jötunheimr are the mightiest of the Jötnar and one of the most dreaded. Of the many giants slain by Thor, these are his preferred targets.



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The *purisaz* are as destructive as the rest of their kind but do so with violent, thunderous force instead of fire and ice. These giants are fond of terrible storms, and their presence is said to bring dark clouds, fierce lightning and hail where ever they go in the Nine Worlds. Somehow, these giants manage to traverse the many worlds without any barriers except for the top three worlds of Ásgarðr, Vanaheimr and Álfheimr.

Use 'Storm Giants' in *Monsters & Treasure* for basic information on the *purisaz*. These terrifying giants are generally the most horrific in appearance and manner compared to the rest of the Jötnar, and beautiful and peaceful individuals are unlikely.

**COMBAT:** Like the rest of the giants, the Storm Giants fight with intensely aggressive force, using terror and shock while they bash, chop and crush to death the foe.

### TROLL

(Small to Large Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Small to Large

**HD:** 6d8 (8d8)

**MOVE:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claw 1d4, Bite 2d6, Weapon +3

**SPECIAL:** Rend, Darkvision (60 ft.), Twilight Vision, Regeneration 2

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Low

**TREASURE:** 58

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral/Evil

**EXP:** 360+6/1200+9

The trolls of the Nine Worlds are hard to classify, like many races. Their definition blurs the lines between many races in many worlds and run from short to large and ugly to fair in appearance.

The trolls that live in the mountains are usually brutish creatures that hunt other races and are called *trolldfolk*, *bjergtrolde* and *tusser*, but there are many small, fair beings that have no evil intent toward others in the troll race.

Because of the larger and more aggressive variations' infamy, the word 'troll' is used by the peoples of the Nine Worlds in scorn. It is an insulting term that is directed at giants and other monsters, too, further confusing the meaning.

Trolls can heal quickly and are capable of calling upon their innate magical abilities for other things. *For more use 'Troll' in Monsters & Treasure.*

Found among the more monstrous of trollkind is the fatal flaw that turns them into stone (as with some Dverggar) if they are in



direct sunlight. Many trolls are frightened by lightning flashes, fearing that it is the arrival of Thor to smite them with his hammer, Mjölnir.

There are times when the more malicious minded of the trolls steal babies from other races and replace them with their own, bringing about a Changeling. The trolls, meanwhile, raise the stolen child as their own, for whatever purposes, and the affected family is stuck with an irritable and ugly offspring.

One famous and dreaded troll that plagued King Hroðgar's hall was Grendel, the terrible and gigantic fiend born of the trollwife (*Trollkjerringer*) from the swamps in Denmark. The beast and its mother was slain by the Geatish warrior hero, Beowulf.

Aggressive trolls will sometimes invade and overtake a human or other race's settlement or land (*bergtagning*) by force. In Mannheimr, these acts and deeds are common in Germana, but troll hunters come and rid them of the menace. Due to the fury and might of Thor, trolls frighten easily when there is lightning, assuming that the giant slaying son of Oðin is near.

Many trolls rule from their keeps and vastness of subterranean or mountain dwellings. The popular image and possibility of the Mountain King, or *Dovregubben*, pervades in Germana and is the topic to many songs and poems.

**COMBAT:** The small and fairer trolls do not battle or wish to have a confrontation, but the larger and disgusting variety have no issue with doing so. They fight as giants do in combat and do not find retreat an option.

## VALKRYJA

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1+

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 15d8

**MOVE:** 150 ft. (air)

**AC:** 25

**ATTACKS:** Spear 8d10, Axe 12d12, Sword 10d8, Bow 6d8

**SPECIAL:** Find Battle Slain, Battle Victor

**SAVES:** M & P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Castle Keeper's Decision

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful Good

**EXP:** 5000+15

The Valkryja are special, divinely appointed women by Oðin Allfather that seek the worthy Battle Slain (*Einherjar*) and takes them to Ásgarðr to feast, fight and prepare for Ragnarök in Valhöll. Only the *Skjaldmö* ('Shieldmaidens') were eligible for this honor.

They are given a second life, an immortal one by Oðin, to serve him and can even marry and have children. They are given honor and a divine, enhanced beauty. Many of Oðin's Valkryja ride flying wolves to do their sacred duty and appear grim and foreboding. Ravens fly around them and always stay close, their squawks are death knells to those that hear them over the rabble and noise of battle.

The Valkryja are granted magical abilities and rune knowledge to assist in certain battles and events that the gods deem significant enough. They can bind warriors and deny them freedom to move or fight and cast cleric spells as a 10<sup>th</sup> level cleric, if they choose.

Many Valkryja can watch over an individual, if given the word by the Allfather or other gods, to bless or even curse them in order to influence matters in a direction they wish. Those observed would never be aware of this due to the divine magic that is behind the Valkryjas.

These divinely appointed women of battle are also called *Sigewef* ('Victory Women') and *Wælcyrjan* by the Anglo-Saxons in Britannia. Others, in Germania, call them the *Idisi* as well. In northern Germania, they are given the titles *Oðins meyjar* ('Oðin's Girls'), *Óskmey* ('Wish Girl') and *Valmeyjar* ('Death Maidens').

**COMBAT:** Feared as much as facing the gods themselves, the Valkryjas are invincible forces in battle. Blessed by Oðin, they are far superior to any giant or other monster in the Nine Worlds, on average. They will use strategy and tactics against their foes, flying, if necessary, or on foot. They never will do this to change the odds of an important battle unless the Allfather himself deems it crucial.



**FIND BATTLE SLAIN:** Valkryja can find those that have been slain honorably in battle amidst the many dead. The Valkryja will know who was cowardly, devious and false in their life and pass them over for the worthy of Valhöll and becoming an Einherjar. Only a god or a rare wizard or witch could deceive them with this ability.

**BATTLE VICTOR:** Valkryja in battle can attack ten times a round against multiple opponents, if need be, and possess a small portion of Oðin's skills. They can fire ten arrows in a round with a bow and pick targets for each arrow.

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### VARDØGER

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** See Below

**MOVE:** See Below

**AC:** See Below

**ATTACKS:** See Below

**SPECIAL:** Doppelganger

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** None

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 1500(+Victim's HD)

The Vardøger is a magical and malicious being that can copy another's appearance and abilities down to the smallest detail. They were born in Niflheimr and are the servants of Hel and other powerful, evil beings.

At the very least, the Vardøger is only an innocent foreshadowing of its chosen target and will appear before its victim by seconds to cause confusion and panic. At the most, this shapeless being will completely replicate its target in every way to bring misfortune and sabotage their life down to the smallest detail.

If it comes to bring destruction to another being's life, it will try to ultimately cause their demise in the end. Halirúna, Drude and other malign spell casters must have some physical trace from the target to give to the Vardøger from which it will channel and transform into a Doppelgänger.

The Vardøger is only out to make trouble. Their form before replication is unknown, but it is assumed by many that they are ghastly looking beings before they take on the image of their target.

**COMBAT:** Doppelgängers will fight and possess *the exact* hit points and abilities of the person they are copying which means that the target will result in fighting themselves. In effect, the target will be battling them to the end. It will use the same tactics and strategies as its victim.

**DOPPELGÄNGER:** Either by the act of a divine nature or the spell cast by malicious beings, the Vardøger will be an exact copy of who it is told to replicate. Not even the close friends and family can tell the difference and will be fooled. Unless the spell is dispelled or the victim dies, the Vardøger will retain the replication of the victim until the end.

### VARGR

(Large Beast)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-6

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 4d8

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** Bite 2d4

**SPECIAL:** Darkvision (60 ft.), Twilight Vision, Scent, Track

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Low

**TREASURE:** 3

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**EXP:** 70+4

Vargr are demonic wolves, kin to Fenrir, that live, hunt and feed in the Nine Worlds. They are dark colored with glowing red eyes and drooling, toothy mouths.

These hellish wolves function as mounts for many beings and gods, like horses, and are forever ravenous, seeking food. Use *'Worg' statistics* in *Monsters & Treasure*.

Vargr are unpleasant beasts, quickly dominating all lesser breeds of wolf and dog if not outright lashing at them to eat them. They serve Fenrir obediently and can sense the hidden trails and pathways between the worlds. What they do for the great evil wolf is unknown, but it is assumed to be malicious and devious in nature.

**COMBAT:** Vargr use their mouths full of terrible teeth and fangs to the greatest extent, hoping to rip out arteries and mangle their enemy. Several will gang up on one target at one time to tear them into pieces.

### VÆTTIR

(Small to Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-8

**SIZE:** Small to Medium

**HD:** 4d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 15

**ATTACKS:** Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Evade Detection

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**EXP:** 50+4

Vættir, or Wichts, are fluttering little beings that can be beneficial or a jinx to those that cross their paths. Few have seen them well enough to describe them, but those that have, describe them as looking like fair little faery beings.

Stories from the Nine Worlds vary on them, as with trolls and many other mysterious beings, but many observers say they are mean and hateful spirits that plague others. Vættir have mastered the art of existing in the universe where their presence is scarcely known.

Wichts are described as being like pale, ghostly spectres by some and like elves by others. No one is certain which story is true about them.





**COMBAT:** Wichts can become dangerous if they are forced to defend themselves but that is if the attackers can keep their eyes on them long enough. They fight with precision and forethought and do not act impulsively.

**EVADE DETECTION:** The Vættir have been given the ability by the gods of Álfheimr to be hard to focus on. Only staring directly at them can one know they are present, but if they slip into the peripheral vision of those around, then they will 'vanish.' A wisdom save is needed to keep them in sight, or they vanish.

## VOGEL GRYFF

(Large Animal)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-4

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 7d10

**MOVE:** 30 ft. (land), 80 ft. (flying)

**AC:** 17

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claw 1d4, Bite 2d8

**SPECIAL:** Darkvision (60 ft.), Twilight Vision

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** High

**TREASURE:** 5

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**EXP:** 270+7

The Vogel Gryff is, for lack of a better word, a Griffon and lives in the high mountains in the Nine Worlds. Use 'Griffon' in *Monsters & Treasure* for reference on other statistics.

These animals have the ability to fly between worlds with ease but are nearly impossible to tame. Only the gods can instantly demand their service, if needed. It requires a CL. 20 to tame them.

Vogel Gryff rarely take a part in affairs that involve evil and scheming beings or plots, sensing the harm and hardship it will cause innocents. They can be made to act threatening to others by holding their young hostage or threatening their eggs.

**COMBAT:** Vogel Gryffs attack by aerial attacks with swoops and dives on the heads of the victims at high speeds. If they are doing so for protective and defensive reasons, they will be fiercer and more dangerous than usual.

## WULVER

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-2

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 4d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claws 2d8, Bite 2d12, Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Wolf Empathy

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 3

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**EXP:** 150+4

Wulver are rare, wolf-headed humanoids that are mainly found in Mannheimr in the Hjaltland Islands (Shetlands). Unlike werewolves, they do not transform or change shape but remain the way they are from birth.

Wulvers are solitary and slightly eccentric beings that are harmless unless cornered and made to fight. They do not involve themselves in others' lives or affairs and choose to be hermits in the wilderness, avoiding towns and other social places.

A short, brown hide covers their skin, like a wolf pelt, from head to toe. Wulver skins are sometimes wanted by hunters and sorcerers who believe them to be enchanted and able to impart charms if worn.

**COMBAT:** Wulvers will fight with weaponry initially and, failing that (to drive off their foes), will resort to using their natural teeth and claws. Even though sentient, they will fight only to preserve their life and flee if in too much danger.

**WOLF EMPATHY:** Wulvers can communicate with wolves and have a sense of them, knowing where they are and how to find them. They can find other Wulvers and wolves by scent.





## CHAPTER 4: WIZARDRY & ENCHANTMENTS



s with all peoples, the Nordic cultures believed a powerful, invisible force of magic compelled and influenced the universe. The magic, or *Seið*, is in everything and everyone and only a special few can influence it in turn.

The magic that the Viking world followed and believed in was inherited from a common ancestry deriving from the Germanic peoples of Europe with some traces of Celtic, Slavic, Finnish and other elements borrowed over time.

This chapter sets into writing a playable and complete system of the supernatural from a Viking perspective that conforms to the Castles & Crusades system. Included is also several new magical character classes that each have their own spin on magic and its usage, and stand alone, although they do use the same lists of spells in the *Players Handbook*.

Nordic society deemed magic a feminine art and quickly ousted and often executed the male participants when discovered. All spellcraft and associated skills were the exclusive domain of women, even though Oðin himself was capable of performing great magic. The majority of this chapter is very similar to its counterpart in the *Codex Germania* since both groups of peoples are the same in origin.

Rune magic, ring oaths and charms are also a part of this chapter and can give those many extra aspects to the game for the CK, carrying it deeper into traditions and myths with each element. It is hoped that the CK can find this chapter a valuable resource in their games and take what it gives to new heights and unexpected places.

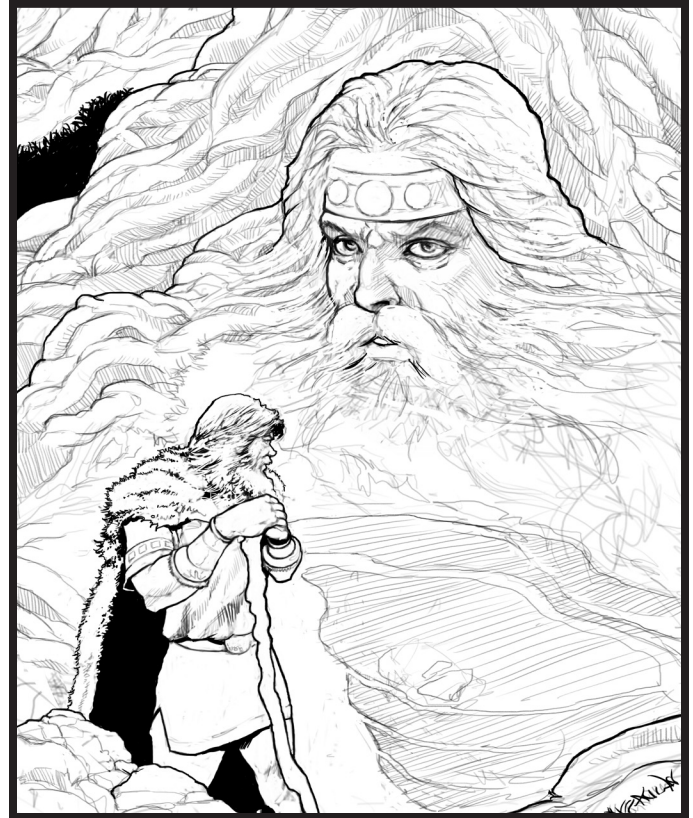
### THE SEIÐR

Magic was in the Universe when only the two worlds of Múspellsheimr and Niflheimr existed and the Yawning Void was betwixt the two, but no one could harness its potential. Only the Frost Giants under Ymir and the Fire Giants of Surtr inhabited this primal and bleak Universe at that time, and they were no sorcerers by craft.

It wasn't until Oðin Allfather, with his two brothers Vili and Vé, struck down Ymir and used his body to construct the Nine Worlds that magic was freed. The mystery of the runes was one of Oðin's many marvels accomplished, and it was that act alone that enabled all races to use the essence of the Universe together.

Because men built the universe and go to war, leaving the women-folk to raise children, do chores and little more, the magic was given over to them to master first and foremost. This sorcery is called Seiðr and forms the essence of what makes everything in the Nine Worlds function.

The Seiðkona and its other practitioners are consulted by all alike and sacred for their wisdoms. There are many who use the Seiðr,



for good or ill. This profession is predominantly occupied by women. Men who are outcast and rejected from society because of the crime of being secretive or unmanly were also capable of using the Seiðr like women, but they did this in privacy.

Because women are often at the loom weaving their cloaks and other articles of clothing, the use of Seiðr magic works in the same manner. The user spins charms and enchantments as she would thread from a loom. The 'rock', or *distaff*, symbolizes the magic that the Seiðkona weaves and is not just an object used for creating cloth.

The ever present charge of the Seiðr is in all things. From the gust of the breeze to the noise made by wildlife, the magic that binds the Nine Worlds together creates, together, the Song of Nature. Possessing the sight of the hidden, the Seiðkona can read these signs and portents, knowing what is in the future.

Even though the Allfather unlocked the magic that was held in the confines of Ymir, he knew nothing of how to use it nor did the other Æsir in Ásgarðr. It was first introduced to them by Freyja who already had taught the other Vanir and inhabitants of Vanaheimr and Álfheimr.

The spells and enchantments wielded by the wise who know of this are varied but powerful. Wizards are taken from among the ranks of men that are considered *ergi* – the non-warriors and unmanly in Scandinavia. It is scorn and disdain that male spell casters are shown by the majority of male society who deem them weak and cowardly, less than thieves and grave robbers.



## CHAPTER 4 -

*Eiris sazun idisi  
sazun hera duoder.  
suma hapt heptidun,  
suma heri lezidun,  
suma clubodun umbi cuoniouuidi:  
insprinc haptbandun,  
inuar uigandun.  
  
Once sat women,  
They sat here, then there.  
Some fastened bonds,  
Some impeded an army,  
Some unraveled fetters:  
Escape the bonds,  
flee the enemy!*

The Seiðr is inescapable in the Nine Worlds; there is perhaps only one place that is devoid of it – the Gunnagagap. Little magic is found here because it is a complete void of all (*there is a 3 in 6 chance that any spell cast here will fail*). Magic here is not quite what it seems and is spotty at times.

Spells, for good or evil, can be cast through circular dances around blazing fires or by sexual energies and through *gal-dralag* ('poetic spell metres'). Each spell is called a *galdr*, and it is the hope of each learner of the Seiðr-craft that they master as many of these *galdrs* as possible in their life.

*The Castle Keeper can choose to change the Spell Preparation and Component basic rules and make the few Nordic 'components' in evidence a part of the process. This can be done for each spell or galdr as they go along in gameplay, or it can be mixed together to create a more diverse range of possibilities. Spells that are 'Spoken' could simply be performed by galdralag.*

Technically speaking, each *galdr* is cast by reciting a careful poetic metre that initiates the desired effect, but the Castle Keeper can play with this as they see fit. Wizards do not openly speak their *galdralag* in the company of other men if they are warriors due to the societal taboos they are given, but this can be forgiven in the company of close friends or family.

Oðin Allfather was master over eighteen *galdrs*, a mere insignificant number compared to many high level spell casters in role-playing games today. It is not impossible for the adventurer to master more than even him throughout their gaming career. The sorcery of Oðin is minute compared to that of Ullr, and it was never written how many *galdr* he mastered, and he was one of the few beings in the Nine Worlds that was more powerful than the Allfather in the arts of spellcraft.

## SEIÐKONA – THE SORCERESS (INT)

The woman master of the Seiðr is called the Seiðkona, Visendakona or Volur. She is not a priestess but a sorceress capable of great magic and usually for positive ends. The Seiðkona represents the idea and belief in the Seiðr at its fullest and will give aid of their abilities to kings, heroes and even gods, if asked, but often with a price.

They usually carry a distaff (*seiðstafr*) on them, sometimes small and other times its normal scale for sewing, which is enchanted. This object acts as a wand for the Seiðkona and can be protected from others by alignment wards to guard its secrets from others. This is also a common practice with the holy Völva in Scandinavia.

Among the Saxons, the sorceress is called *Wicce*. This character class is on one level, a female wizard or illusionist in the standard rules, but on another, she is capable of divination and many other traits that a normal spellcaster does not have. The Seiðkona are not treated with dislike or hate by the peoples of the Nine Worlds. They are respected, and their presence admired. The male counterparts, however, the Seiðmaðr, are not.

Rune magic is a lesser art for this class since the practitioners are using the manipulative powers of the Seiðr. It isn't impossible for the two to be double-classed, wielding both forms of magic at once. They will use runes in their stitchery and sewing regularly but not always with the element of magic embedded within.

Unlike the normal wizard class wherein the spells are kept in a book to be memorized each day, the Seiðkona usually possesses each spell inscribed on their distaff or sigil staves and can call upon them. These spells can be woven into the fabric of their sorceress' dress or cloak, as well, in time, forming part of the complex artwork and decoration.

## ABILITIES

**SPELLS:** Seiðkona cast arcane spells as wizards do in the normal rules. This number is limited to each spell level per day in the same manner. Use the *'Wizard and Illusionist Spells Per Day'* table in the *Player's Handbook* to find the limit. If the character has a charisma of 19-20, they gain the ability of a Seer (See *'Second Sight'* in this chapter).

As a wizard must spend time each day preparing to cast spells by studying the incantations and ingredients, the Seiðkona must trace the outlines to the spells on their items and clothing each morning. In doing this, they must quietly recite the *galdr* to themselves with their eyes closed. Note that if their clothing or distaff is not present for some reason, they will not be able to use the magics inscribed until it is returned.

**ENCHANTED STAFF:** The Seiðkona can turn a normal spinning distaff into their casting object. It requires the sorceress remaining in constant contact with the item for an entire day – sleeping with it and carrying it everywhere to magically imbue it with their power. Once enchanted, this is the sorceress' lifeline as it harbors the total sum of their magic, if not spells. If broken, the Seiðkona will be rendered unconscious for 1d4 hours and without the ability to cast until another is in its place. Wooden staves can be used in place of a distaff for the same purpose.

**INSCRIBE CLOTHING:** The mastery over sewing and the use of the distaff allows the Seiðkona the knowledge to imbue spells into clothing for later usage; this replaces the wizard's spell book. The complex threading and stitching behind each pattern is unique and individual, only allowing the sorceress who made it to know it. The magical patterns must remain in good shape or their enchantments will be broken in which case it must be re sewn.

**BONUS SPELLS:** *This works the same as the wizard class in addition to being able to include the other spell lists (druid and cleric) in their repertoire.* Since Nordic pagan religion did not have an outright priesthood (See 'Goði' in this chapter) like the Celtic druids or holy men of other peoples, the magic in the Nine Worlds is both 'Arcane' and 'Divine.'

**PRIME ATTRIBUTE:** Intelligence

**ALIGNMENT:** Any but Evil

**HIT DICE:** 1d4

**WEAPONS:** Staff, dagger, spear, axe

**ARMOR:** Padded, leather, chain

**SPECIAL:** *Spell Casting, Enchanted Staff, Inscribe Clothing*

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	d4	0	0
2	d4	+1	2,601
3	d4	+1	5,201
4	d4	+1	10,401
5	d4	+1	20,801
6	d4	+2	42,501
7	d4	+2	85,001
8	d4	+2	170,001
9	d4	+2	340,001
10	d4	+3	500,001
11	+1 HP	+3	750,001
12	+1 HP	+3	1,000,001
13 and up + 250,000 per level			



## CHAPTER 4 -

The player of a Seiðmaðr must bear in mind the lack of respect that other males who do more ‘manly’ occupations will give them during gameplay. Men who work hard labor jobs in the Nine Worlds might show a slight more tolerance for the male wizards in comparison to the warriors, kings and nobles they encounter. Even Oðin was chided by Loki for his knowledge and use of Seiðr.

When the sacred Blóts are done throughout the Nine Worlds, they will require the services of the Seiðkona if there are no Goði or Gyðja present in the region to shed the blood, say the chants and direct the rites to attract the attention of the gods.

### THE RUNIC SECRETS

Before Oðin sacrificed himself to himself on the tree of Yggdrasil, the inhabitants of the Nine Worlds did not know of the runes. The notion that one could inscribe ‘words that remain’ was unknown to the peoples of Scandinavia and beyond.

Although other peoples in other lands used writing, it was not blessed by the magic of Oðin Allfather. This, however, was and could harness great power if used in the right hands.

The Allfather impaled himself by his spear, Gungnir, onto Yggdrasil and hung for nine days and nights, a sacrifice to himself to learn the hidden secrets of the universe. In this self-imposed torture, he was given the enlightenment of the galdrs and runes.

*I know that I hung on a windy tree  
nine long nights,  
wounded with a spear, dedicated to Odin,  
myself to myself,  
on that tree of which no man knows  
from where its roots run.*

*No bread did they give me nor a drink from a horn,  
downwards I peered;  
I took up the runes, screaming I took them,  
then I fell back from there.*

*Rúnatáls-þáttur-Oðins*

Eighteen galdrs and runes were learned by Oðin in return for his sacrifice. These secrets he then used to reign over the Nine Worlds with, making his dominion unquestioned and without a rival to challenge it. Added to this empowerment, he also gave an eye to Mímir’s Well for the wisdom of Ages. There would be no giant, Dverg or elf that could confront him or even face him against such odds. These were the Runes of Power (*Ginnuruno*) and were not mere shapes or symbols but capable of encapsulating great magic and secrets in each line, pattern and form.

Each rune represented a certain concept and type of magic. This knowledge was distributed amongst the Æsir and, gradually, the Vanir and found its way down to all races in the Nine Worlds in time. Those that mastered this secret knowledge were called *Heidruno* (‘Rune Master’), and they could manipulate the many runes for many things and purposes.

The many *Heidruno* in Scandinavia, originally few in number, gave out their secret wisdoms to a select few. Each tribe of the descendants of Mannaz obtained this, in time, and were able to enchant their possessions and objects. These first *Heidruno* are honored by others as venerable ancestors and akin to the gods for their contributions.

Rune Masters developed, in time, the skills to carve detailed and elaborate standing stones, which had the runes embedded in them, for blessings and protection. Their magical skill was used heavily to create the border stones that sat between tribes.

Each rune that he obtained for the Nine Worlds holds untold powers, and their full potential is only realized when Oðin uses them, but it is rare that he does so since he has so many other talents and skills. The rune was a symbol, each one, of the link between men and the gods, but only the Rune Master could fully comprehend their worth.

To the users of lesser magic, the runes can be used for the casting of lots in divination, but to the *Heidruno*, it can be so much more. They have acquired the hidden nature of the symbols and can place words into form that also can give latent spells, if needed.


Many forms of the runes became common practice by the peoples of Germania and the Nine Worlds, over time, until it was not just the original eighteen of Oðin Allfather that were in use anymore. The Rune Masters uncovered more, be they Dverg or elfin or even human. Exactly twenty-four runes were now in use, but there are variants in Scandinavia, each similar but a little different in places.


Seven forms of rune magic were now in the hands of the Rune Masters and those fortunate enough to comprehend their secret shapes and wisdoms. These seven are: *Ólrunr* (Ale Runes), *Biar-grunr* (Birth Runes), *Brimrunr* (Wave Runes), *Limrunr* (Branch Runes), *Malrunr* (Speech Runes), *Hugrunr* (Thought Runes) and *Sigrdrífumál* (Victory Runes). There are many variations within each grouping (these are based on the particular spell(s) inscribed).


*Note, these runes listed below are the ‘Young’ Elder Futhork. Academically, the subject of runes in early Germanic/Nordic society is thinly understood in places, and there are not absolutes or hard-set rules. Runes, as given in Neo-Pagan literature, is purely fantasized and conveniently categorized for consumer ‘need,’ whilst, in reality, the subject is poorly understood. The system portrayed here is a combination of the typical ‘Norse’ Futhork into one usable system. CKs and players can use the Rune Lore book to enhance this section and the Erilaz class in the Codex Germania to create characters capable of manipulating the runes.*





## THE RUNES OF ODIN


 **Fe** – ‘Wealth/Cattle’. This rune forms the symbol of mobile wealth and the vital life that exists in the agricultural community. This rune corresponds with the letter ‘f’. *Ale Rune.*


 **Ur** – ‘Auroch’. This is the large ox found in Germania and in many of the Nine Worlds that symbolizes ‘strength’ and ‘manliness.’ This is the letter ‘u’. *Ale Rune.*


 **Þurs** – ‘Giant’, ‘Thorn’. This is called ‘Thor’s Rune’ by many because of its connection to giants and, indirectly, his name. This rune corresponds with the letter ‘d’. *Victory Rune.*


 **Ás** – ‘the God or prince of Ásgarðr and Valhöll’. This symbol honors the Æsir that reside in the realm of the gods. It is also the letter ‘a’. *Speech Rune.*


 **Reiðh** – ‘Riding’. This rune is the embodiment of taking a journey and going to another place, not just physically but spiritually. This is the letter ‘r’. *Thought Rune.*


 **Kaun** – ‘Torch/Ulcer’. The fire and flame element is represented by this rune. Kaunan represents the letter ‘k’. *Branch Rune.*


 **Gyfu** – ‘Gift/Spear’. This is the run that symbolizes the sacrifices given to the gods and what they return back to the worshippers. Gebō represents the letter ‘g’. *Speech Rune.*


 **Wen** – ‘Joy’. This rune also means ‘glory’ and is tied in with the Wizard God Ullr. Its shape is meant to bring peace and a lack of suffering, hardship and sorrow to those who view it. It is the letter ‘w’. *Birth Rune.*


 **Hagell** – ‘Hail’. This rune represents the icy weather that showers down on the many worlds from the chill of Niflheimr. The letter it symbolizes is ‘h’. *Wave Rune.*


 **Naud** – ‘Need/Necessity/Constraint’. This rune is about distress and the plight of people. It is the letter ‘n’. *Branch Rune.*


 **Is** – ‘Ice’. This is the ice that forms from Niflheimr and settles on the Nine Worlds. This rune is the letter ‘i’. *Wave Rune.*


 **Ár** – ‘Year/Harvest/Fertile Season’. The fertile time of the year is symbolized by this rune. It signifies the span of one year from each harvest season. This is the letter ‘j’. *Branch Rune.*


 **Eoh** – ‘Yew Tree’. The wood of choice for archers, although not an Ash tree, this rune also symbolizes the World Tree Yggdrasil. The Eihwaz is the letter ‘e’. *Victory Rune.*


 **Perþ** – ‘Peach Tree’. This unusual rune is one that aids in causing a pleasanse and happiness and is commonly paired with the Wunjō rune. Together, their magic brings a positive and optimistic air about them. The letter ‘p’ is what this rune represents. *Birth Rune.*


 **Yr** – ‘Elk’. This rune is one of defense and protection for its user. The elk is strength and speed, and the three points are the antlers of the animal. This is the letter ‘z’. *Victory Rune.*


 **Söl** – ‘Sun’. This is the light and life-giver and capable of storing the sun’s light within. This rune and the Ehwaz are paired often. The letter is ‘s’ for this rune. *Birth Rune.*


 **Týr** – ‘T. r’. Óðin gave this rune to his grandson, Týr. It is a victory rune used by warriors to give them benefits and blessings for battle. This is the letter ‘t’. *Victory Rune.*


 **Bjarkan** – ‘Birch Tree’. This rune is for fertility and childbirthing. It is a healing rune and for prosperity. This is the letter ‘b’. *Birth Rune.*


 **Eh** – ‘Horse’. With the sun rune, this brings speed and movement, a journey from one place to the next. This rune is the letter ‘e’. *Ale Rune.*

 **Madr** – ‘Man’. This rune was crafted for the progenitor of Humanity, Mannaz, and his descendants. It is the most human of runes and serves them the most. This is the letter ‘m’. *Victory Rune.*

 **Lagr** – ‘Lake/Water’. This embodies the watery realm and meres in the Nine Worlds. The magic of the elemental forces of water are within this rune. The letter ‘l’ is this shape. *Wave Rune.*

 **Yng** – ‘Ing’s Rune’. Just as the Allfather gave a rune to Týr and to the Æsir, he also granted Ing one of his own. Ing is also Freyr by another name, and this rune is for him as well. This is the consonant and letter ‘ng’. *Branch Rune.*

 **Odal** – ‘Inherited Property/Possession’. This rune represents land and ownership over it. This is the letter ‘o’. *Thought Rune.*

 **Daga** – ‘Day’. This rune symbolizes the fruitfulness and prosperity of the day when the sun is out. This is paired with the Söl rune often by the *Heidzruno*. This is the letter ‘d’. *Branch Rune.*

These runes, with the spell lists provided in the *Player’s Handbook*, are categorized under a system to define them for use by the Rune Master. Some of these groupings are arbitrary and needed to have a ‘home’ while others clearly fit their designated rune and spell group. The CK or player can adapt any other runic system they desire in gameplay, however, as required for gameplay.



## ODIN'S RUNES

As is known, the Engale were a tribe of men who dwelt in the shadow of the Kingdoms of the Dwarfs for an age of the world and more. As all the giants and men wandered far and wide, the Engale remained and learned of the All Father's favored peoples. Their father's grew in skill and wisdom, and they carried that wisdom with them into the wilds where they were harried by gods and monsters.

The All Father saw them through the darkness and guided them on their long journeys, and through him came the power of Odin's Runes, and these are part of the Aihrdian Runes that are called the Four Pillars.

### FE ~ WEALTH IN VITALITY (CHR)

Farmers call rune marks to use wealth and vitality to bring health to their herds of cattle, horses or deer or as a blessing upon their crops and fields, for it is the blessing Odin that brings out the inner strength of all things.

The rune has greater applications. When this rune is cast directly upon an animal, it temporarily imparts greater strength and stamina to the beast. The target animal gains 1d8 hit points and can travel twice its normal distance before tiring. The effect lasts for roughly 10-14 hours (1d4+10). After the rune wears off, the beast must rest for 24 hours, or each time the rune is cast upon it, it must make a successful constitution save, or the rune's effects are reversed.

### UR ~ AUROCH (CHR)

The auroch rune symbolizes the ox, a beast the Engale hold above all other creatures, for it is upon its back that they traveled the world – from the Sea of Erun in the south to the Gal-Land of the north. It is a beast known for its power and strength and worshipped for it.

Casting this rune upon a target temporarily increases the target's strength by 1d4. The target must be a human, demi-human or humanoid. It cannot affect more than one target at a time. The effect only lasts for a number of rounds equal to the caster's level.

### PURS ~ LANGUAGE OF THE GIANTS (INT)

This is the giant's rune. When the Engale came to Gal-Land, they found there a land of giants. Though they are distant kin of the all men – the Engale included – their language was wholly different, for they left the seat of the All Father long before he spoke to the dwarfs. For this reason, the languages are complicated as the giants are a passionate people and their languages filled with sudden emotions.

Purs' rune allows one to communicate with the giants. When cast by a rune mark, it reveals the language of any giant it is directed toward, allowing the caster to speak freely with the target. It only works on giant or giant class creatures but cov-

ers any communication – verbal, emotive, physical and responsive – that the giant uses. More than simple translations, the rune mark can, upon a successful intelligence check, correctly gauge a giant's emotional response, knowing, for instance, if it is going to attack or not.

The effect lasts for 1 hour + 1 hour per level of the caster.

### AS ~ VALHOLL (CHR)

Valholl is a battle song. It is cast when one seeks the blessings of Odin. The rune honors all the Æsir, carrying with it the echo of their past deeds and future promises. The rune mark must vocalize this rune; it cannot simply be scribed or etched. So long as the rune mark sings the praises of the gods through the rune, he can call upon the blessings of Odin. If the rune is successful, the caster gains the attention of Odin and his blessing.

Odin is a fickle god and desires men to walk their own path without the aid of the gods, so the power of the blessing depends largely upon his mood. The rune mark must roll on the following table:

- 1 +1 to all attribute checks
- 2 +1 to all dice rolls
- 3 +2 to all attack rolls
- 4 No effect

The rune only affects the rune mark or one designated target of the rune mark's choosing, and it lasts only so long as the rune mark sings the rune. He can cast other runes while singing.

### REIDH ~ RIDING (CHR)

This is a powerful incantation that allows the rune mark to cross over upon the Arc of Time and there see into the mind of Odin. The rune mark must be near a crow or a murder of the birds to successfully complete the journey. When successfully cast, the rune gives the rune mark insight into how Odin sees a particular event, whether it is following a path that leads to Valhalla, the Stone Fields, or one that leads to Hel, the Endless Pools.

In effect, the rune mark may determine, upon successfully casting the rune, whether a single action is leading him in a good or noble direction or whether the action is leading him or her in a wrong or ignoble direction. This allows the rune mark to judge if the path is righteous or not. The Castle Keeper need not divulge any major plot points but must reveal to the character where their current course of action shall lead them – to the desired end or one less desired.

As any rune mark knows, the information is fickle and may change as the circumstances change.



## CHAPTER 4 -

### KAUN ~ TORCH

The journey of the Engale was long and brought them to the uttermost ends of the world where the cold remained all year long. In Gal-Land, there stand vast forests, but they are, as often as not, covered in snow and hard to burn. By scribing kaun upon wood, the wood ignites, burning in almost any condition. The rune further softens and ages the wood, allowing it to burn hotter and brighter, if a little shorter, than normal.

The fire lasts as long as there is combustible material to burn.

### GYFU ~ GIFT/SPEAR

This is a powerful rune that requires a sacrifice to the gods. When an item, treasure, beast or man is chosen for sacrifice, they are marked with the gyfu rune. The rune mark then chooses when to activate the rune by speaking its magic. The sacrifice is immediately given to the gods and consumed. The response of the gods depends upon the value of the sacrifice. Its value is set not necessarily by its worldly value but more by its value by the one offering the sacrifice.

The rune mark can offer the sacrifice or anyone else. If someone else, they are simply using the rune mark as an intermediary. Once the sacrifice is taken, the one making the sacrifice can ask for a gift from the gods.

The gift given in return for the sacrifice can be great or small, have a direct effect or an indirect one. It can affect the outcome of a battle, a simple attribute check, combat roll, NPC interaction, etc. The Castle Keeper must adjudicate the gift and how it is given.

Examples of sacrifices and possible gifts:

Sacrifice	Gift
10gp	Finding food, reroll one die
Food	Finding directions, bonus on attribute checks
Animal	Blessing of +1 on rolls for next actions, such as a battle
Lesser Magic Item	Additional hit points, bonus for combat
Greater Magic Item	Resurrection

### WEN ~ JOY

This rune is tied to the god Ullr, and it brings peace to the suffering, heals wounds and relieves the stress of hardship. Once the rune mark inscribes the rune, anyone within the area of the rune is healed 1d4 points of damage +1 per level of the rune mark. Any temporary attribute damage they have suffered from combat, spells or simple exhaustion is relieved. Furthermore, anyone under the effects of a fear spell or effect (excluding dragon fear) may make a charisma save, and if successful, the fear is removed.

The spell affects a 20-foot radius sphere centered on the rune mark.

### HAGELL ~ HAIL (CHR)

This rune represents the icy weather that showers down on the many worlds from the chill of Niflheimr. With it, the rune mark summons a storm of hail down upon the target area. The rune last for 1d4 rounds. However, during that time, anyone within the area of effect suffers 1 point of damage per level of the rune mark.

The range of the rune is the rune itself. For this reason, the rune is most commonly used as a static rune, set in conjunction with other runes to activate and pummel a given area. Some rune marks choose to call the hail down upon themselves, knowing that the hail will not affect them but will affect everyone else within the area of effect, be they friend or foe. The area of effect is a 40-foot radius sphere.

### NAUD ~ CONSTRAINT (CHR)

Like a light in the darkness, naud calms the wayward spirit, reminding all in earshot of the rune mark that the gods watch over men and women and all their doings. Naud is cast upon the rune mark or any one target they designate. The rune laces the target's voice with magical visions, visions that are passed over to any who can see or hear the speaker.

Anyone thus affected is calmed as if they have seen a light in the darkness. Normal stress and fear are removed, and they calm immediately. This affects people suffering from a diverse number of effects – from low morale in battle to fear brought about from crop failure to loss of loved ones in battle or through normal occurrences. It removes magical effects so long as the rune mark's initial attribute check overcomes the opposing caster's level (*see Rune Lore page 18*).

### IS ~ ICE (INT)

This is the ice that forms from Niflheimr and settles on the Nine Worlds. With this rune, the rune mark is able to freeze the moisture in the air and on the ground, creating a field of ice. The rune affects a single target or a 5' x 5' area of effect +5' per level of the rune mark. The air within the area of effect drops to 10 degrees Fahrenheit, freezing all moisture so that a blanket of ice covers everything. Clothing freezes stiff, armor becomes blisteringly cold, water and food freeze and so on.

The ice does not extinguish fire or light or have any similar effects. It does, however, cause damage as per the chart below. Furthermore, anyone passing through or over the ice must make a successful dexterity save (CL equal to the rune mark) or fall for 1d4 points of damage.

If cast directly upon a weapon, it imparts the breath of cold air to that weapon, so that when it strikes, it deals an extra 1d6 points of damage, double that against fire based creatures. If inscribed upon a person, they freeze. The freezing is not magical, however, nor does it receive a magical to hit bonus or damage.

Consult the following chart for range, damage to other individuals the rune is cast directly upon and area of effect. Always add level to damage. After 12<sup>th</sup> level, continue to expand range and area of effect, but the damage remains at 8 plus the level.

Lvl	Dmg (+lvl)	Dur (=lvl)	Range (10xlvl)	Area of Effect (5xlvl in sq ft)
1	1	1	10	5x5
2	1d2	2	20	10x10
3	1d2	3	30	15x15
4	1d4	4	40	20x20
5	1d4	5	50	25x25
6	1d4	6	60	30x30
7	1d6	7	70	35x35
8	1d6	8	80	40x40
9	1d6	9	90	45x45
10	1d6	10	100	50x50
11	1d8	11	110	55x55
12+	1d8	12	120	60x60

**EXAMPLE 1:** Tolvar, a 4<sup>th</sup> level rune mark, inscribes it upon the base of Ki's sword. A cold breath encases the blade making it an ice sword for the next four rounds. This sword, as per *Monsters & Treasure*, deals 1d6 points of extra damage upon a successful hit and double that against fire based creatures.

**EXAMPLE 2:** Gregor, a 10<sup>th</sup> level rune mark, enters a long hallway. The hall is dark, but he sees torch sconces upon the wall. Being able to vocalize the runes, he speaks the words and the torches light. He is only able to affect an area 50 x 50 feet, so the torches for the first 50 feet of the hallway ignite. It is important to note that Tolvar, from the example above, does not have the ability to vocalize the runes. To ignite the torches, he would have to write each rune on the torch itself.

## ÁR ~ HARVEST

The fertile time of the year is symbolized by this rune. It signifies the span of one year from each harvest season. To use this rune, it must be written and cannot be vocalized. The rune is used to mark the passage of time or by farmers in asking the gods to grant their fields greater fertility, but it has greater uses as well.



The rune mark can scribe it upon the belly of a woman or man, making them fertile, able to produce children. The CL for successfully casting the harvest on an infertile person is equal to the severity of the infertility (CK must choose). If the rune is successfully scribed, the recipient of the rune must make a successful constitution check (CL equal to the first) in order to become fertile.

The rune has greater applications. If tattooed upon one who has suffered from unnatural aging, it can restore years equal to 1d4 plus the rune mark's level.

A rune mark can use this rune on the same individual only once per year.

## EOH ~ YEW TREE

This is a simple rune that, when carved upon a wooden staff, imparts a magical strength to it. All bows, spears, clubs and staves with the yew rune set upon them gain a +1 to hit and damage. The rune lasts for 1d4 rounds +1 per level of the rune mark. The magical bonus does allow the user to strike creatures that need a +1 weapon to hit them. This rune must be set upon the wood – it cannot be vocalized.

## CHAPTER 4 -

### PERÞ ~ PEACH TREE

The road of the Engale was long and arduous, and their peoples were set upon the tyranny of the world. In order to guide them through the dark days, they inscribed the Perþ, an unusual rune that brings pleasure and happiness to those who are exposed to it. Once successfully inscribed, everyone within earshot of the rune mark gains a +1 to all morale checks and saving throws. The run can turn men back from fleeing upon a battlefield or lift the spirits of those suffering through defeat.

### YR ~ ELK

This rune is one of defense and protection for its user. Anyone using yr enjoys a +2 to their AC. The rune mark must physically scribe the rune upon the target, himself or another. It cannot be vocalized. The elk is strength and speed, and the three points are the antlers of the animal. For this reason, the rune only offers protection for one's front and flanks, never the rear. In this way, it strengthens the recipient, keeping them from turning their backs and fleeing from an enemy.

### SÖL ~ SUN

This is the light and life-giver and capable of storing the sun's light within. This rune must be scribed during the daylight and in full view of the sun. When so scribed upon an item, the rune captures the light of the sun as it appeared during the casting. The rune harnesses that light and casts it back in a manner desired by the rune mark.

The light can be used as a simple light source, in which case it casts light as per the chart below. The light lasts 1 turn per level of the rune mark. However, the rune mark can channel the harnessed power and strike a victim with a bolt of light.

Time of Day Rune Cast	Light Source	Weapon
Gathering Light of Dawn	20 feet	2-5+1/lvl
The Cool of the Morning	30 feet	1-6+1/lvl
Mid-Day	40 feet	2-8+1/lvl
The Hot of the Day	60 feet	2-12+1/lvl
Failing Light of Dusk	15 feet	1-4+1/lvl

### TÝR ~ TYR

The Engale have ever been a warlike people, fighting alongside the dwarfs in all their conflicts, including the Kinship Disputes, and for this, Odin offered them tyr, the rune of warm which he had before given to his grandson, Týr. It is a victory rune used by warriors to give them benefits and blessings for battle.

When inscribed, tyr emboldens all those affected, giving them a temporary insight into battle. They can see just beyond the moment they are in, allowing them to anticipate their foes, to avoid their attacks or to deliver one. For this reason, each affected individual automatically wins initiative in any combat. They are also able to turn, block or avoid blows so that damage is halved (this does not include area of effect spells, breath weapons, etc.). Those under the tyr rune also are able to strike with much greater care – any unmodified roll of 19 or 20 is considered a natural 20.

Tyr lasts as many rounds as the rune mark has levels. It can affect only one individual.

### BJARKAN ~ BIRCH TREE

This rune is for fertility and childbirthing. It is a healing rune and one for prosperity. The rune is most used to safeguard women in childbirth. When successfully inscribed upon a woman in labor, the rune imparts a +5 to any constitution check. The rune remains, however, as a small tattoo wherever the rune mark set.

The rune may also be used to bring someone back from the dead, to give them life anew. If the rune mark attends the fallen within 4 melee rounds, they can inscribe bjarkan upon the fallen (they must be -10 or less). If the rune is successful (meaning the rune mark makes a successful charisma check), the recipient of the rune must make a constitution check. The CL is equal to the negative hit points. The recipient does not add his level or attribute bonuses to his roll. He does, however, add a bonus equal to the rune mark's level.

For example, Dolgan has been struck with a hammer and knocked to -12 hit points. Dolgan is dead. Tolvar, a 7th level rune mark, casts bjarkan upon him. Dolgan must roll a constitution save, CL. 12. Dolgan has constitution as a primary attribute. Therefore, he needs a 24 to succeed. He rolls an 18. With Tolvar's level added in Dolgan's roll, it is 25, and he returns to life.

Those reborn by the bjarkan rune return with full hit points, however, they have no memory of the previous 24 hours up to and including their death.

### EH ~ HORSE

With the sun rune, this brings speed and movement, a journey from one place to the next. This rune the Engale used to give their steeds greater speed. When cast upon a horse, it doubles the beast's speed. Terrain and other obstacles affect the beast's speed. They cannot move through physical items.

The effect lasts for roughly 10-14 hours (1d4+10). After the rune wears off, the beast must rest for 24 hours, or each time the rune is cast upon it, it must make a successful constitution save, or the rune's effects are reversed.



## MADR ~ MAN

This rune was crafted for the progenitor of humanity, Mannaz, and his descendants. It is the most human of runes and serves them the most. It was given to the Engale that they must wander the earth and learn its mysteries, and it was known that there were many things evil or indifferent in the world. Man would have to face all of these, so they crafted the madr rune. This rune set man apart from the beasts and allowed a greater understanding of the world and all of its many parts.

Madr affects anyone within 20 feet of the rune mark, granting them a magical shield against mind-based attacks and illusions. The recipient gains a bonus save against all mind-based attacks as follows:

Rune Mark Level	Bonus
1-4	+1
5-8	+2
9-12	+3
13-16	+5
17+	+7

## LAGR ~ LAKE/WATER

This embodies the watery realm and meres in the Nine Worlds. The magic of the elemental forces of water is within this rune. It is used to grant secret knowledge of the meres to an item it is scribed upon. The Engale used it in their ship making as they do even today. The item becomes "aware" of the water and reacts to it, gliding over the water and through it far faster and easier than before.

Any craft with the rune cast upon it moves 1/3 faster than its normal speed. The boat gains a +3 on its saving throws against all naturally occurring damages such as waves, reefs, wind, etc.

## YNG ~ ING'S RUNE

Just as Odin gave a rune to Týr and to the Æsir, he also granted Ing one of his own. Ing is also Freyr by another name, and this rune is for him as well. The yng rune slows time and brings everything into sharp focus, allowing those affected to clearly see, feel, hear, smell and experience the world around them.

Anyone affected by the yng rune gains a +1 per every 5 levels of the rune mark on all sensory based checks: spot, hear noise, scent, etc. The bonus does not apply to class abilities such as move silently.

Ing lasts as many rounds as the rune mark has levels. It affects anyone within 20 feet of the rune mark or static rune when it is activated.

## ODAL ~ INHERITED PROPERTY/POSSESSION

This rune represents land and ownership over it. The successful odal rune binds one individual to a place. Once bound, the individual possesses a connection with the land. Not only does it mark that land and all the wealth it may produce as theirs, but it gives them a greater understanding of its nuances, of the ebb and flow of it.

Those bound to the land are enhanced by it. While on the land, their primary attribute is enhanced by 1. Furthermore, they are able to live off the land as a first level ranger, using the survivor skill. After they have occupied the land for six months, they possess nature lore for their land as a 1<sup>st</sup> level druid.

This is a permanent rune and may only be broken by death or a rending rune (see Rune Lore). Ownership of the land is defined by that land which the recipient can hold secure against foreign attacks or threat of monsters. It is, generally, only a few dozen square miles, but for Kings and Lords of men, it can be greater by far.

## DAGA ~ DAY

In the darkness and cold, all men dream of warmth, of the sun. So it ever was with the Engale, for of all the tribes of men, their road was the darkest and took them to the cold lands at the end of the world. When the cold of winter's blanket settled upon them in the Gal-Land that they called home, and the darkness blotted out the sun for months on end, they brought hope and warmth with the daga rune. This rune symbolizes the fruitfulness and prosperity of the day when the sun is out.

When successfully scribed upon the ground, the rune creates warmth in a 10-foot diameter circle, centered on the chosen spot. The temperature increases to 75 degrees Fahrenheit within 1d4 rounds. Each round after that, the warmth spreads out from the target at 1 foot per round. The higher level the rune mark, the greater the circle. For each level, the rune mark adds 1 foot with each intelligence bonus increasing that by 1 more foot per level. A 3<sup>rd</sup> level rune mark with 17 intelligence would create a sphere 19 feet wide (base 10 +3 for level, +6 for attribute bonus).

The heat is warm enough to thaw the ground or any cloth or wood items. It can melt snow and ice and warm anyone in the affected area.

Unlike many runes, the daga rune acts completely differently when used as a static rune. If cast upon an object, the daga rune acts as a static rune (see Rune Lore for Static Runes and how they are made) contained within the object and is activated only upon the chosen reactive rune, whatever that may be. Once the power is unleashed, the wielder is flooded with warmth and all the comfort and hope that that entails. They are able to withstand extreme temperatures both worldly and otherworldly. The daga rune acts as an endure elements as cast by a 3<sup>rd</sup> level cleric, grants a bonus equal to the casting rune mark's level against all cold based attacks and grants damage reduction per round (cold based attacks only) equal to half the casting rune mark's level.

## CHAPTER 4 -

### VÖLVA - THE PROPHETESS (CHA)



Or called the 'völva', these select women possess the ability to see the future. They are similar to the Seiðkona in regards to magical skill but fulfill the function closest in Scandinavia as priestess. Their abilities are very distinct and stand apart from the many other forms of female magic users in the Nine Worlds.

Typically, they don white robes and are called upon to do human sacrifices to the gods. This is usually done by cutting the throats of the victims over large cauldrons in large ceremonies. Their cloaks are usually colored blue or black, and they wear warm animal furs and rich jewelry.

Just like the Seiðkona, the Völva use a distaff at times for their magic as they can wands to focus their spellcasting. Their name translates as 'wand carrier' or 'carrier of a magic staff', and it is a symbol for what they do and, essential, for what they do.

They are given high esteem where ever they go in Scandinavia and the Nine Worlds and handed the best of foods, finest of places to rest and sit and the central location of importance, almost more prominent than the king or chief.

Among their magical tools are drugs and sex, both of which they use for whatever ends they need and know personally. The Völva serve Freyja in her courts in Vanaheimr and represent her in Miðgarðr. Their presence reminds everyone of that link.

Unlike the other groups of magic casters in Scandinavia, the Völva can use the tying of knots and special magical dances to make

things happen or to see into the future. Völva take part in battles and wars by the use of their wand, and their presence is feared among those on the enemy's side.

While many years of untold experience helps the Seiðkona to see the future, it is one of the specialties of the Völva. They will sometimes travel from hall to hall, selling their services of seeing into the future for chiefs and lords and make a living on it. In this capacity, they are called *spækona* or *spæwife* or 'She that Sees'.

When Völva visit towns, they usually attract a lot of attention and interest because of their reputation and powers. Young women are assigned to tend to them and sing magic songs to assist them when they need an aid for summoning the spirits in divination.

It is a normal practice in Scandinavia that older women, past the age of fifty, became Völva since their obligations to their brood and clan are now over. It is not unheard of that younger women possessing great ability and no ties or obligations to others (through marriage, etc.) take on the sacred cloak and wand of the Völva to do their duties.

### ABILITIES

**KNOT OF FETTERS:** The Völva is able to bind another through the use of their magic knot. The more powerful they are, the stronger their binding becomes. Each experience level is the number of people the Völva can tie in fetters at a time. (*For example, a 3<sup>rd</sup> level Völva can use this on three 1<sup>st</sup> level targets, or one 2<sup>nd</sup> level and one 1<sup>st</sup> level, or one equal level target*). This knot is made from well made threads and cloth carefully crafted on the loom by the Völva. This Knot of Fetters can be used on any chosen target(s) regardless of how far away they are so long as they are in the same world. That target must make a Magic Resistance check or be bound for a duration equal to 1d10 plus experience level in minutes at a time. The Völva can use this in a number of times equal to their experience level per day. 10<sup>th</sup> level Völva can use this ability against foes in other worlds as though it was their own, but this is rare.

**PROPHECY:** There are many ways in which the Völva can see into the future – by looking into the fire, water, through meditation, chanting mantras and by many other means. However she chooses to peer, the effect will generally be the same. The Castle Keeper must be able to provide some vague but definite vision of what future event(s) could be for each time this is done. While describing the vision, the Castle Keeper will have to find a way of doing so that does not give away important story details for the adventure but hints and creates anticipation of them more than before the vision was seen. The Völva can read the future in times per day equal to her experience level and choose to give one large and deep vision or break it into several smaller, quick glimpses (*for example, Frea is a 4<sup>th</sup> level Völva. She can do either four small visions or two larger ones each day*).

**SMALL VISION:** This vision is just a mere glimpse, a shimmer of something (place, person, event, sensation, etc.), that amounts to a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer once it is seen.

**LARGE VISION:** Hints of a future event are visible to the Völva in a way that few others can ever witness. These hints will show or imply the perimeters of what is to be but not the obvious and complete outcome since that is likely to change through events preceding it. The Castle Keeper must be very clever in giving nuances of the future in such a way that brings mystery and unanswered questions from the glimpse.

**WAND CASTING:** The Völva’s magic is focused in a wand or a distaff, held and used like a scepter. This object is how the Völva can create and summon her spells. Without it, she is almost powerless. Regardless of the spell type, she can only focus it through this object. The Völva can forego most spells’ components in place of using this wand, but if she does not possess it, she must find a way to summon the same spell in a more difficult way, resorting back to those components and having to memorize them in the ‘traditional’ gaming way. If this wand is broken, the Völva will have to make an intelligence save or go unconscious for 1d6 hours and appear sick for a time.

**SPELLS:** Völva cast from the cleric list and, by 5<sup>th</sup> level, can pick another list (arcane or divine) to add to their repertoire. Once at this level, they can divide their additional gained spells (per level) between the two. *Use the cleric and druid Spells Per Day table.*

**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE:** Charisma

**HIT DICE:** 1d8

**ALIGNMENT:** Good or Neutral

**WEAPONS:** None

**ARMOR:** Leather, hide, chain

**SPECIAL:** *Knot of Fetters, Prophecy, Wand Casting*

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	d8	+0	0
2	d8	+1	2,251
3	d8	+1	5,001
4	d8	+2	9,001
5	d8	+2	18,001
6	d8	+3	35,001
7	d8	+3	70,001
8	d8	+4	140,001
9	d8	+4	300,001
10	d8	+5	425,001
11	+3 HP	+5	650,001
12	+3 HP	+6	900,001
13 and up	+ 250,000 per level		

**PREPARING SPELLS:** Every morning, the Völva must meditate with wand in hand or lap for prior use of spells. Each spell is ten minutes of concentration time spent during this preparation period.

## GOÐI - CHIEFTAIN OFFICIATES

As has been mentioned, the peoples of Scandinavia and the Nine Worlds do not have a priesthood that oversees the religion of the tribes – not in the same way that the Celts had the druids. Chiefs and community leaders, when there is no Völva or Seiðkona present, will officiate to handle sacrifices, ceremonies and other rites.

When in this capacity, they are called Goði or Goðar (plural), or ‘God People’. When there is a need for women in the rituals or situation, they call upon the Gyðja or priestess. The territory or domain they hold influence over, as leader and religious officiate, is the *Goðorð*.

For the sake of Castles and Crusades, the Goði is classified as a cleric and only half-class, second to another class or profession. This class is a community leader, whether chief or clan leader, but will stand aside if a Völva or Seiðkona is present. The Goði’s job is to consecrate and make hollow or holy whatever is required of them by the local community.

Unlike the male practitioners of magical craft, the Goði are not looked down upon by their peers purely because of their religious function in society. What they do is not magic but divine interaction and mediation.

## THE BLÓT

‘Sacrifice’. This is a holy, ritualized event that is either in the form of a feast or sacramental meal, in the least, or a blood sacrifice, at the most.

The feast has meat taken from sacrificed pigs, horses and other livestock animals cooked in a cauldron on a fire with beer or mead passed around to those involved. The feast is a bonding ceremony among strangers

The blood from the animals (or, more rarely, sentient beings) would be sprinkled on the participants and statues to bless everything. Those holy people performing the Blót would ask the gods and greater powers for a good life, health, and peace between everything and everyone for the next year during this ceremony.

This special ceremony would be held three times a year: mid-January (*Álfarblót* or ‘Elf Blót’), mid-April (*Disablót*) and mid-October (*Haut blót*.or *Völsi blót*).

These ceremonies could be held for the smallest number of people (i.e. adventuring party) to the whole kingdom in size. This is performed for the blessing of kings and their fortunes in battles and their power.



CHAPTER 4 -

- 1 ÁLFARBLÓT:** ‘The Elf Sacrifice’. This holiday occurs in the first month of the year (‘January’) to honor the elves and their magical influences on daily life. This is a highly secretive sacrifice and held privately. Contact with other people during the night when the ceremony is held is restricted. Beer is drunk and deeply involved. The *Ölvir* maintain the peace. Oðin Allfather is prayed to, making the worshippers afraid of incurring his wrath if things go wrong. The blessings they seek are for continued prosperity of their livestock and survival until Spring from the harsh weather. Another Blót that is performed in this time is the *Freyjrblót* in honor of Oðin’s wife. *The humans of Mannheimr follow this Blót since the elves of Álfheimr have no need to pray and sacrifice to themselves.*
- 2 DÍSA BLÓT:** ‘Disir’s Blót’. This spring pre-harvest sacrifice is to honor the Valkryjas, or the Disir. This blot was performed exclusively by the Völva and Seiðkona and at night, often at the vernal equinox, and involved blood sacrifices. This is held during the *Vetrnætr* (‘Winter Nights’) and marks the end of the season and start of the next. This time was to honor the gods and the dead and to thank the divine for a good previous harvesting year, hoping for another to come. This blót is jointly held in conjunction with the gathering of the *Thing* and other political and mercantile events to signify the start of a new year. This also honors the goddess Ostara (*Ostara blót*) when held at the end of April and at the start of May. For the sacrifices in honor of Ostara, sword dancing, baking and fertility rites and celebrations were performed by the people.
- 3 SIGRBLÓT:** ‘Victory Sacrifice’. Held and performed in the summer to signal the beginning of summer, this summer sacrifice is meant to empower the warriors for the war season that includes summer and early autumn.
- 4 HAUST BLÓT:** ‘Autumn Sacrifice’. This Sacrifice is the final one of the year before the Yule celebrations, and it is held with the hope of receiving sufficient blessings to survive the coming winter. In some regions of Germania, this Blót is akin to the Celtic celebrations of Samonios (Samhain – Halloween).
- 5 YULE BLÓT:** *Jiuleis* to the Goths, *ýlir* with the peoples of Scandza and *Jéola* with the Saxons, this winter celebration honors Oðin’s Wild Hunt and seeks to empower the king and his realm. It lasts three days, each with sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood. The Saxons have another name for this time, *Mōdraniht*, or ‘Mother’s Night’, and honors the mother goddesses. Each Yule is elaborate, generally, but Yule is the largest and most organized of events. Several toasts are given – the first to Oðin, the second to Njörðr and Freyjr and the third to the lord or king.

These toasts are then followed by others to honor ancestors and the dead. People fast from eating meat the day before Yule, so they can partake in the feasting that is held.

The Castle Keeper can add more detail or less to fit their campaign with the Blóts as needed. The blessings by the sprinkling of blood and its effects can be as simple as a divine (if temporary) bonus toward certain skills or other factors in the lives of the characters who are so blessed.

RING OATHS

It is a pagan Nordic custom to swear oaths and vows by the passing of a ring. This ring is the bond to that event and is a powerful symbol. One example of this are the rings of the Nibelungs in the Continental Germanic tale. Warriors would often have their loyalty ring(s) fixed into their weapon’s handles or scabbards or worn on fingers, ears or by a pendant.

Either the ring is just made by smiths and artisans for the oath, specially customized, or they are recycled. The ritual is a system that, first, is an exchange of words between the oath maker and the one that the oath is sworn to and, then, the passing of the ring onto the oath maker. This can be elaborate as a ceremony or impromptu if needed. These rings can be large for the arm or small in size, but they are rarely plain or generic.

There is a magic involved in the bonding between oath makers and the rings given. Depending on the level of the oath, the after effects can be severe if broken. Listed below are examples of how this can transpire:

LEVEL	OATH	EFFECT
1	Service/Duty	-2
2	Marriage	-4
3	Service to Noble	-5
4	Oath to King	-6
5	Vow to a God	-8

Warrior oaths to their lords are more detailed (and a better documented matter) and are better described in Chapter 6 ‘*Warfare and Battle*’. The length of the ‘power’ of the oath depends, obviously, on the words and deed(s) it is sworn under. This can be for days, months, years or life in length.

This is not a deed taken lightly and is respected greatly in Scandinavia and throughout the Nine Worlds. The magic in the oath is an event that one does not ignore or forget. They are bound by it in a way that cannot be avoided and will haunt them if they disobey or break it.

A vow can be made to a lord or service or even a master hiring the adventurers for a quest to ensure it sees its completion.

These oaths can be used against the oath maker just the same and force them into doing things that are questionable or against their character or alignment, creating a dilemma.

If the oath is broken, however, there are very few ways it can be fixed or redeemed. Coming to some agreement or concord with the giver of the oath can solve the after effects to come but also the blessing of the gods (if isn't already divine in nature) or powerful magic by the Völva or Seiðkona.

## CHARMS

Another additional ability that magic users and holy figures can do is to impart a charm for another. This is placed into an object, typically either a small, metallic item (i.e. pendent, ring, etc.) or by some other physical means.

The means to do this is, essentially, the same way that Rune Masters create rune objects. The magic on this and its effects are very different, however, from the craft of the rune masters but similar in places.

The blessing's strength is based on the caster's experience level, as shown in the table below. This charm's effect is permanent and constant, and it does not go away unless the charmed item is gone or broken. How this charm works is simple. Its bonus is added to all rolls made by the charmed. Whether in battle or for skill roles or for anything else the charmed actively gets involved in, this charm affects the possessor of the item.

EXP. LEVEL	CHARM BONUS
1-2	+1
3-4	+2
5-6	+3
7-8	+4
9-10	+5

This charmed item must be in the possession of the charm maker for a day and in contact with them unbroken for that time. Once the appropriate prayers and rituals are done over this object and the time has passed, it is blessed. *Note that a player character can only possess one charmed item (with bonus) at a time – unless the Castle Keeper chooses to give them more.*

This charm is not apparent at a glance and would appear as a trinket unless a *See Magic* spell is cast over it. Its glow would shine if seen through magical means. The charm only works for its owner, however, since it was custom made for them by the maker. There are charms so constructed that can be generally charmed and able to used by all alike, but these are rare.

A powerful magic user or holy figure can dispel the effects of a charm if they find one. To do this, they need to declare the

action. Determine the SR of the charm (*if the caster's level or skill is not known, then its SR level is 12*).

## ADDITIONAL MAGIC

The many magical beings listed in the previous chapter can also be given assorted Faery abilities to enhance them if the Castle Keeper wishes to add that extra exotic spice to the game. These can be found in the *Codex Celtarum*, and the two codices are easily interchangeable in this way.

Nordic myths do not have a plethora of spells described, but there are a few that have been written about. These spells are mighty and a little beyond the normal experience levels of the average player character. The following three offer a sample.

**FRODI'S PEACE:** This is a 5<sup>th</sup> level spell (wizard) that allows the caster to magically force a non-violent and peaceful aura in their range (caster's experience level in miles radius). All who are in this spell range are unable to fight or harm another in any way for its duration (caster's experience level in hours) if they fail their Magic Resistance. Weapons can be touched but not used, although the urge is there. All who fall victim to this can speak threatening and harmful words but little more.

**ODIN'S FETTERS:** This is a spell that can hold and bind its targets, denying them all movement. It is a 5<sup>th</sup> level wizard spell that takes only a handful of straw and, once thrown on the breeze, holds the enemy if they fail their Magic Resistance. It will last for the caster's experience level in minutes and has a radius of 150 ft. The targets within the radius cannot move in the slightest, not even their lips.

**DOOM DOOR:** This is a rare spell only taught by elders to the chosen who can successfully make it a reality and survive the dangers. Doom Door is a spell that traps a Draugr in its tomb permanently once cast, but this procedure is not so simple as it seems. It can only be learned and cast by a spell caster that is 5<sup>th</sup> level or higher. anything less is not powerful enough to contain the undead draugr). The spell caster must first learn this ritual in a period that takes no less than a week from a master and then gather the components. The components are a mix of herbs, stones and incense that has to be gathered in a cauldron near the tomb in question. A chant and mantra that will take an hour to complete and cannot be broken once the process starts must be recited. In the meantime, the Draugr must be present in the tomb while the spell is being cast, or it will not work. The dangerous part of this is surviving the draugr while casting the spell to trap it within the tomb.

*More on the gods and how they are served is in the following chapter. The myriad of methods of worship and offerings will be detailed and how blessings and curses apply .. in this next section.*





## CHAPTER 5: THE GODS AND GIANTS



Within the hierarchy of the Nine Worlds in the universe, there exist at the top the divine beings – the gods who rule over all others. Among the gods were the two groups, the *Æsir* and *Vanir*, that ruled over the other peoples, dispensed justice, blessings, curses and other alterations to the universe as they saw fit. These gods behaved very human-like at times, some joyful and others dark and dreadful, but they ascended to power rapidly and hold the monopoly on the Nine Worlds.

These gods were not alone in their control of the Nine Worlds. The *Jötnar* were first to rule when the universe consisted of the two primal worlds *Múspellsheimr* and *Niflheimr*. After the Sons of *Borr* challenged their might and dominion and slew their greatest leader, *Ymir*, this reign was over abruptly. Jealous of this loss, the giants steamed with jealousy and bitterness, seeking a return to their former place or the complete destruction of the Nine Worlds if they cannot have it again.

The universe is caught in between the two forces, the gods and giants, forever locked in a fierce battle to control the Nine Worlds as their own. Many races and peoples, unfortunately, are often the casualties in this war while others contribute and aid either side to survive this conflict.

Much of what happens in the universe is a result of this dichotomy. If traced to its origins, one can find either the hand of the gods or the schemes of the giants behind it all. This chapter details the many gods, spirits and giants that rule over the Nine Worlds and cause events to transpire and adventurers to journey.

This chapter also includes the rules to have divine aid or ‘god calls’ and how blessings, miracles and curses from these gleaming beings come about. Prayers, offerings and sacrifices and how they benefit the worshipper are explained in this section of the *Codex Nordica*.

Nordic holy sites are explained and able to be used in gameplay as well in this chapter. They have been simplified for a quick and speedy use in the scope of a game for reference.

### THE *ÆSIR*

Chief among the gods, although newer in comparison to the older *Vanir*, are the *Æsir*. Their name derives from the word *Óss/Áss*, or ‘god’, and defines their role in the Nine Worlds. The word is used to signify a place, person or thing as being ‘divine’ and used by the gods.

Examples of this are *Ás-Briú*, or ‘rainbow’ (‘Gods’ Bridge’), and *Ása-Thor*, or ‘Thor of the *Æsir*’. The peoples of Germania and the Nine Worlds designate many things around them as being



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touched and influenced by the Æsir in Ásgarðr, the highest world on Yggdrasil's dark trunk.

This large family of gods and goddesses are the result of the efforts of their founder and leader, Oðin Allfather. They are kin to him and his wife, Frigg, who rule from their thrones in the gold guilt halls of Ásgarðr. Since Ymir's slaying and the Æsir-Vanir War, the Æsir won supreme control of the universe, uncontested since their victories. By blood, many of the Vanir are now considered a part of the Æsir and included in gatherings, feasts and other functions as family.

To the Saxons, they are called the *Ōs*, and among the Goths, they are called the *Anses*, but to all of the peoples of Germania, they were the same – powerful and capable of great feats no one else could ever achieve and worthy of respect and fear. The Æsir took no time to gain superiority over mankind, but they did struggle at times to dominate the giants.

Twelve gods rule among the Æsir and fourteen goddesses, with many others that are distantly related and connected by remote means in this pantheon. The first three gods are Oðin, Vili and Vé, each a state of mind and spirituality (manic/frenzied, conscious desire and the sacred and numinous).

Once a year, the gods gather in a large feast to partake in a special event that enables them to continue possessing their powers and immortality. Each year, this is done and with heavy ritual to make sure the gods do not lose their special divine traits. If one element is lost in this, the gods may never regain the divine powers that set them apart from the rest of the Nine Worlds. It isn't impossible that the giants and the other enemies of the gods have plotted to deny or sabotage this special ceremony to disable and weaken them.

Listed are the twenty-six Æsir, their details and their roles in the universe and among the gods themselves are explained. Those listed are according to the *Gylfaginning* in the *Prose Edda* of Snori Sturluson from the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Iceland. After them are included more deities and not-so-positive entities such as the giants, monsters and wizards that are divine in their own right.

### ODIN ALFÖDR

He is *Woden* to the peoples of Germania and Oðin to the tribes of Scandza. One of the three Sons of Borr, born from an ancestry of giants, he initiated the uprising from the dominion of the cruel and brutal Jötnar. Famously, the Sons of Borr conspired and slew Ymir and, by Oðin's vision of things to come, constructed the universe and its Nine Worlds from the slain giant's corpse.

Oðin was quick to victory and aggressive in his progression from architect of the universe to master of all. He brought war to the giants and put them in their place through many battles

and, eventually, gave them a world of their own, Jötunheimr, so they could dwell and not threaten Oðin's reign.

These early victories were not his only ones to be remembered, for he accomplished many other deeds, each gaining him hidden secrets and powers no one else in the universe was privy to. One of which was the sacrifice of his left eye at Mimír's Well under Yggdrasil to gain the wisdom of the Ages. This wisdom prepared the Allfather for knowing all there is to know in the manner of common sense, proper cause of action and more.

In disguise, Oðin saw the sorrow and troubles that the gods and men will suffer through the loss of his eye. He knew instantly this and gained the vision of the future and prepared. Thousands of years of experience were gained in that one sacrifice, but this was not his only sacrifice.

The loss of his eye and its wisdom was for his own personal gain, with little to impart to the peoples of the Nine Worlds, but it was his self-sacrifice, pierced by his own spear, Gungnir, upon Yggdrasil for nine days and nights that Oðin discovered the secrets of the runes. This brought the magic that holds the universe together out from its hidden place and enabled the peoples of the Nine Worlds to share in it.

In his many adventures, he would take on many guises (gaining him most of his other names) to get what he wanted from giants, gods and men. Through his adventures, he was able to acquire many magical weapons, items and bring a large family into the Nine Worlds. With his wife Frigg, he had many sons, but these were not his only children. Oðin lusted after many beautiful giant and human women and, by deception, sought them out.

He rules from three halls primarily: Valhöll (where he draws in the souls of the BattleSlain, the Einherjar), Gladsheim and Valaskjálf. He sits atop Yggdrasil in his high seat, Hliðskjálf, above the Nine Worlds where he watches over everything that passes and transpires in the universe. If he really wants to see it, nothing escapes his gaze. Hliðskjálf sits atop the silver roofed hall of Valaskjálf with his two ravens, Huginn and Muginn (Thought and Memory).

Huginn and Muginn fly about the Nine Worlds, gathering information about everything and everyone that concerns the gods and the stability of the Universe and then return to his seat above Yggdrasil. Although he relies on them for their data, Oðin does dread that someday the two ravens will not return. Usually, they follow where ever their master goes and are always present with him in portrayals and artwork.

Among his other animals are his two wolves, Geri and Freki, that sit by him on his throne and hunt for him. They are forever ravenous and fierce by nature, so fierce that the Bererkers in Germania idolize and try to emulate them when they go into the rage and frenzy (*See Berserker character class in Chapter 6*). It is both an honor and a shame to be torn apart and devoured

by Geri and Freki, if they are sent from the Allfather. Their presence in the Nine Worlds is rare but not impossible to witness.

Prized and just as heavily relied on is Oðin's eight legged steed, Slepnir. Considered the 'best of horses,' this spawn of Loki and Angrboða is often described as being 'wolf-like' and stronger than any steed in the Nine Worlds. Slepnir is the Allfather's only mount of choice to ride into battle or across the Nine Worlds. This magical horse has many spawn of its own ridden by kings and heroes, some sharing aspects of its powers and others possessing nothing more than a vitality and virility that can only be seen as divine. On its own, Slepnir is formidable in battle and cannot be outran or bettered and, with Oðin, is unstoppable.

Oðin will more often cause wars and great battles for his own personal benefit, much to the despair of those who must fight it. Sometimes it is for his own enjoyment and others to achieve some hidden plan, but he will throw his spear, Gungnir, over the peoples he wishes to instigate the furious change of affairs. This act is emulated by the peoples of the Nine Worlds who want to tell their foes to expect conflict.

Another side to his behavior is being the master of deception and trickery. Oðin will take another disguise or form, if it suits his needs, to get what he seeks from others. He does this to not reveal what his aims are to his own family of gods or the Vanir and certainly not the giants who always seek to find his faults and weaknesses.

Sacrifices are made to Oðin Alföðr by his loyal worshippers during the many Blt celebrations across the Nine Worlds. Warriors will dedicate their slain enemies up to him for blessings and recognition, and commanders and captains aspire to have his presence of influence in their forces during war. Death by a spear is the preferred method to sacrifice an animal or person to Oðin. In battle, it is a part of the turmoil and clatter to be expected in death by a spear, but even a warrior denied such a fate would find a way to perish by a spear's blade to be sent to Valhöll and be in the god's company.

The Allfather's temperament is dodgy, however. At times he will show great compassion and concern for his peoples, but at others, he will be foul-tempered and cruel, making his consistency doubtful. Oðin is a master of cunning and will not stop using his wiles until he obtains whatever it is he seeks from others. One would think that such demands would be so simple for the Allfather of All, but he does so for reasons only known to him. Moody and brooding, Oðin seems accursed with his wisdom of the Ages, gained from the loss of his eye, but he does what is needed to see the realization and reality to those endless visions in his head.

Oðin travels among the peoples of the Nine Worlds in his many guises and forms to spy and stir them up toward whatever ends he desires (*See 'Oðin's Many Names' in Chapter 7*). It is

usually too late when people discover that they have been deceived or met him. One result of his cunning and clever guises was obtaining the Mead of Poetry ('*Skáldskapar Mjaðar*'), a drink that turns its drinker into a skald or scholar. This mead was given to the rest of the Æsir and to those gifted in poetry as his gift. Those so blessed or gifted are said to be handed the 'Rhymester's Share.'

Another gift from the Sons of Ivaldi is the magical ring Draupnir. It is capable of reproducing itself each ninth night. Rings will drip like hot wax from the metal and form nine more rings for Oðin to use in his oaths. His oath bound, whether in Ásgarðr, Miðgarðr, or any other world, the ring bearers must keep to their vows. Breaking Oðin's oath is the worst thing to do in the universe, for his wrath and justice will be swift or devious.

In the arts of war, he is without equal, only barely rivaled by one of his own sons, Týr. Oðin can fire twenty arrows in one pull of the string, cause armies to be held by invisible means ('fettters') and storm through forces as though they were air. His frenzied manner can be cast over others, sending them into a berserk state, or stripped from them at a whim if it suits him. Oðin Alföðr's presence in a battle would be a mixed blessing for all sides to the conflict. His spear, Gungnir, was forged by the Dverggar Sons of Ivaldi and the master smith Dvalin, its wood taken from the wood of Yggdrasil and its head covered in runes. The weapon can hit any target it is aimed at with precision and return to him in a flash.

Grim is his inclusion into any battle or war, especially if it is one that he himself started. Grimmer still is his knowledge through his visions about his own fate at the clawed and toothed fury of the devil wolf Fenrir once Ragnarök occurs. He placed the many safeguards to hold the spawn of Loki in Niflheimr even though he has knowledge of the many events that must transpire before Fenrir is freed.

Oðin Alföðr leads the Wild Hunt ('*Wuotis Heer*') at certain times in the year, during certain holidays and, more often, at random. His hunt is followed by a fierce storm and is a crowded affair involving many beings, monsters and spirits. The Wild Hunt is always in the forests, rarely elsewhere, and follows designated paths and roads and will not deviate or change direction for any one thing. Woe be it to those who lie in his path during these hunts on those nights. For more information on Oðin's Wild Hunt, see *The Wild Hunt* in Chapter 6.

The triple joined symbol called *Hrungrnishjarta*, or 'Hrungrnir's Heart', represents Oðin's fate intertwined with the Nine Worlds. Each is a triangle weaved in another with all three together in one chain. Each corner of each triangle represents one of the Nine Worlds in the universe. Oðin places this symbol on his armor, spear and his halls. To see it reminds the viewer of the Nine Worlds and Oðin's dominion over them all.



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### THOR

He is the first son of Oðin and a famous slayer of giants with his Dverggar forged hammer, Mjöltnir, a weapon that can turn mountains to rubble and dust. Thor is a mighty, supernaturally strong, red-haired, bearded warrior. His strength does not match his already intimidating height but is equal to or greater than any giant's.

He is a friend of mankind and spends much of his free time in Miðgarðr and Mannheimr among humans. When he is not, he is hunting down and slaying the defiant and troublesome giants in the Nine Worlds, righting their wrongs as he goes, and aiding his father, the Allfather.

Where Thor goes, storms are sure to follow him. Lightning and fierce winds and rain escort his arrival or departure. Giants fear his many names when heard, afraid he will arrive any minute to shatter their skulls by his hammer.

His three most prized possessions are the Járngreipr ('Iron Griper') gauntlets, Megingjörð ('Power Belt') and Mjöltnir ('Crusher'). These combined more than double his mighty strength to a level that few giants or gods can rival. Thor also owns a staff, Griðarvöl, a chariot pulled by two goats, Tanngrisnir ('Snarler') and Tanngrjóstr ('Teeth Grinder'), and three halls of his own to rule over as Prince of the Æsir.

His wife is Sif, the goddess over wheat and the Rowan, from whom he had several prodigious children with. Like his father, he also has had many lovers in his years and other children from them along the way. One lover was a Jötun named Járnsaxa, the most unusual and unlikely of races he would be involved with intimately.

Thor's doom will come, as foreseen by his father and the Norns, after the time of Ragnarök by the coils and fangs of the Jörmangandr. As with all of the Æsir, he knows of his fate if the final battle occurs between the gods and giants, but he does not cower or show fear, only an urgency to complete his many tasks before that time.

Among the gods and other beings in the Nine Worlds, his appetite is massive. He can eat and drink the supplies empty himself, if given a chance. His two goats can be slain and eaten whole by Thor and others and restored to full life the next day with a touch from his hammer. So long as he does not break or lose a bone, the goats will return intact. Otherwise, defects will show from the sloppy and clumsy handling of the animals.

As with many of the Æsir, he has had many adventures in the Nine Worlds battling giants, slaying monsters and rescuing people in distress. He is a god of the common man and supports the homeless and starving. Unlike many of the other gods, he is not pompous or pretentious but humble and down to earth.

Thor's many names are *Ásabragr* ('Æsir Lord'), *Ása-Thor* ('Æsir Thor'), *Atli* ('The Terrible'), *Björn* ('Bear'), *Einriði*/*Eindriði* ('The One who rides/rules alone'), *Ennilangr* ('The One with a Wide Forehead'), *Harðvéurr* ('The Strong Archer'), *Hlriði* ('The Loud Rider'), *k-Por* ('Cart/Driving Thor'), *Rymr* ('Noise'), *Sönnungr* ('The True One'), *Véþormr* ('Protector of the Shrine'), *Véuðr* ('Hallower'), *Véurr* ('Guard of the Shrine'), and *Vingþrr* ('Battle-Thor').

The peoples of Scandinavia and Germania have praised his name for as long as Oðin's and will continue to do so until even after the Great Winter and Ragnarök have come. Thor will protect and defend the peoples of the Nine Worlds and slay giants for as long as he can and champion them against all evils.

### BALDR

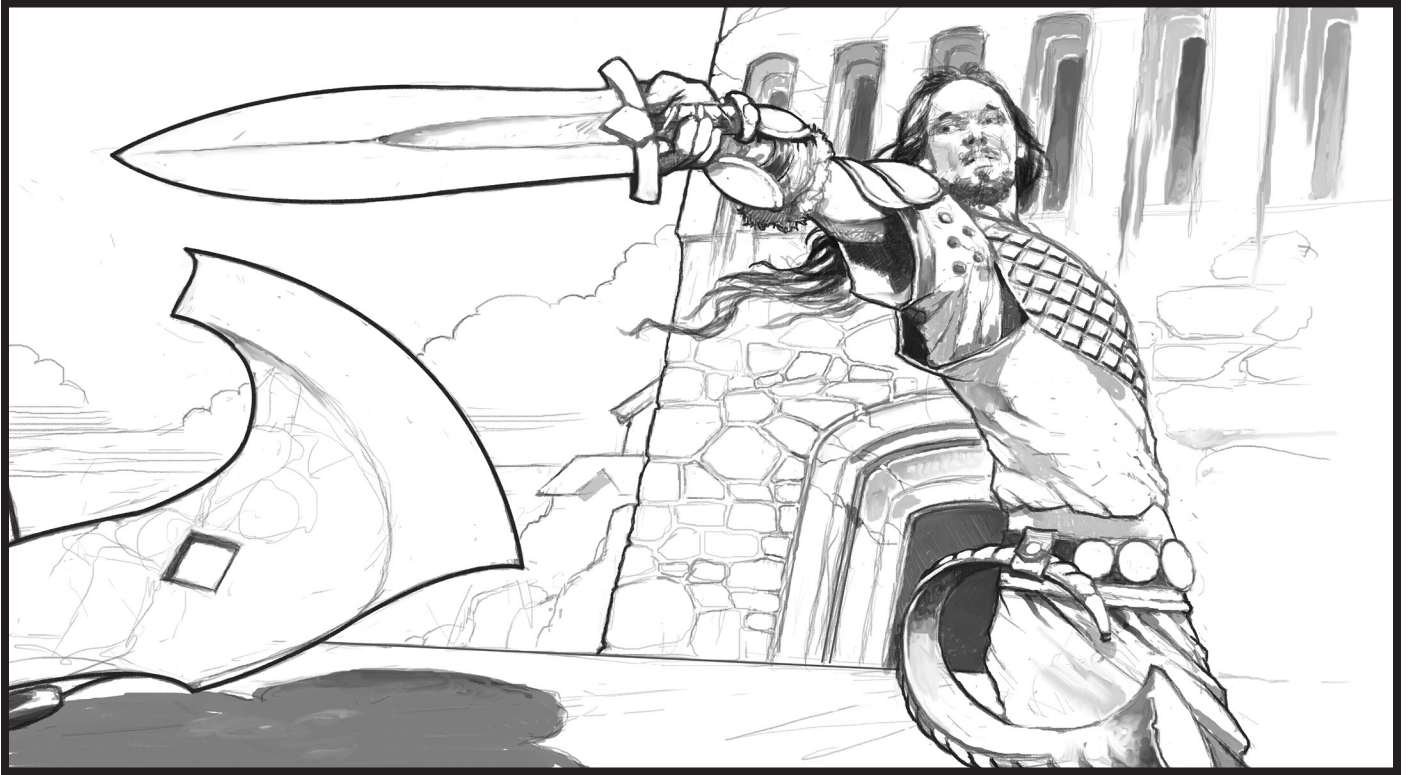
He is the second son of Oðin Alföldr and the most fair and shining of them. Baldr glows with beauty, and his bravery is unmatched, even among the other Æsir. Baldr's skill as a warrior would be first and foremost within their ranks if his younger brother, Týr, hadn't been born.

Part of his bravery is due to his invincibility since birth. No normal iron can harm him in anyway over his body. Any arrow, spear or other weapon cast, swung or lunged at Baldr would either miss or bounce off of him entirely because of his nature. Added to this is his well spoken manners and words and wise judgements among the Æsir. His council is welcomed by the other gods.

His hall, Breiðablik, is one of the most gleaming and fair in Ásgarðr and is where his family dwells. His wife is Nanna and one of the more famous of his offspring is Forseti. Because of his beauty and unusual wisdom (inherited from his father), most of the gods are jealous of him in some way. His hall is a place of purity where no evil can dwell or be present, or it will be consumed into fire.

If his perfection wasn't already overwhelming, Baldr also possesses a great ship, Hringhorni – a ship so wondrous and beautiful that none others in the Nine Worlds can compare. Golden and white, Hringhorni is the finest designed sea vessel ever made and can travel between the worlds with ease and hold Baldr's court and family.

Unfortunately, Baldr's fate is woven into the sword of the troll Miming, Mistletoe – his one weakness. The sword was forged by the master smith Völundr for another but ended up in the hands of the troll. The time has yet to come when the sword will be used by Höðr, one of Baldr's brothers, in a plot devised by Loki to have him slain over the hand of Nanna. This will begin the slow process of Ragnarök when it occurs. Baldr has been denied knowledge of his own fate and how it revolves around the final battle between gods and giants.



### **NJÖRÐR**

One of the Vanir but accepted fully among the Æsir, Njörðr reigns his dominion over the seas from his hall of Nóatún in Ásgarðr. He is the father of Freyja and Freyr and married to Skaði.

He has nine daughters and many sons in his family and was one of the hostages given over to the Æsir during the Æsir-Vanir War. From those turbulent days Njörðr has prospered and acquired great amounts of land and wealth.

For worshippers of him in the Nine Worlds, he gives them prosperity in their fishing and life by the shores of the sea if they appease him. On his chariot, he can ride atop the waves and land both equally and is considered the god of the chariots.

Among his populace are the Sea People, or *Havmennsker*, the many races that dwell on or under the seas. They crowd his court at Nóatún in Ásgarðr and do his work for him in the other worlds if asked, happily.

Although relaxed in recent times since the Æsir-Vanir War, he is a very capable warrior and feared. The Skalds use his name as a kenning for 'warrior' in their poems and sagas. It has been seen through visions by the Völva and Óðin himself that, after the terrible battle of Ragnarök, Njörðr will survive the aftermath.

He and his wife Skaði made an agreement to share time in their two halls each week. Skaði wished to stay in her father's hall of Þrymheimr in Jötunheimr more than near the sea where Njörðr desires to live at Nóatún. The two agreed that they

would reside at Þrymheimr for nine nights and three at Nóatún. This arrangement lasted for a time but has since fallen apart with each staying at their choice of residence.

### **TÝR**

Of the sons of Óðin, it is Týr that is famously the best and most able warrior, only rivaled by his father. He is one of the chief gods of war in the Nine Worlds, and where ever he and his forces go, death and destruction will follow and, assuredly, victory.

Warriors in all worlds that honor and praise the Æsir use his symbol, the rune, on their accoutrements of battle. Victorious warriors praise him and assume that he has aided them in their gory results.

But among the gods and others in the Nine Worlds, Týr's ancestry is in question. It goes without saying to most that Óðin is his father, but many question this and believe that Hymir the giant is, in fact, his true father.

Hymir and his kin are considered by many to be Týr's as well, even in the ranks of the Jötnar. Most justify this belief due to the strength and furious skills of battle of Týr and how similar they are to the giants.

In one incident involving the binding and restraint of the Hel-Wolf Fenrir, Týr had his right hand and forearm bitten off in the struggle. One-handed, Týr is still a formidable warrior and a victorious hero. His amputation gives other fighting men hope

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in the Nine Worlds, helping them see that their lifestyle is not impossible to maintain.

To the Saxons, he is Tiw, and the Goths call him Teiws and Tyz, and many of the peoples of Germania honor him above all other gods. He dispenses justice and wisdom to the Thing (assembly) and Folkmoets. Another kenning for him among the Saxons is Sæxneat, or the 'Sword Companion'.

When the gods go to war, they follow Týr and his directions. He often surpasses the skill and feats of his father, Óðin, causing some tension and minor animosity between the two. Another point of contention is the use of his runic symbol during funeral rites and on urns more often than any other god.

Unlike Thor, Týr does not require magical aid to be as strong as he is, and this makes his brother jealous, even more because of the one hand. This was put to the test when Hymir's great cauldron had to be lifted, and in the long term, Thor won out but only due to his enchantments.

Týr's fate is bound up with Hel's hound, Garm, at Ragnarök. The 'Hound's Leaving', as one kenning of him is worded, is prepared for that doomed day and his fated demise.

### BRAGI

Of the sons of Óðin, Bragi is the brilliant and inspired poet, a Skald, and represents them in all worlds. His ability can silence any hall or conflict by a few notes of his lyre and words spoken.

He is married to Iðunn and is often mocked by Loki for his poet's ways, not wanting to fight or go to battle. By the power of his words and mastery of kennings, he can reduce a great man to nothing. His skill is used in Valhöll to greet newcomers, and he is one of the first to do so to the Einherjar before they are seated and given their horn of mead and food.

People refer to him as Beard-Bragi because of his braided and distinctively styled beard. Skalds in the Nine Worlds try to emulate him and his poetry and even name their sons after him with hopes that they can gain some of his skill in the poetic arts and become a master Skald.

The *bragafell*, or 'Promise Cup', used during the feasts shares his name as words are spoken over it (see 'The Feast' in Chapter 6). Anyone that possesses a great fluency of words, eloquence and skill is called a *Bragrman* or *Bragrwoman* after him due to his divine mastery of the skaldic arts.

The gods and all others in the Nine Worlds have learned their skill of kenning from him (see 'Kennings: Words of Description' in Chapter 7). The word the northern peoples of Scandza use for poetry is *bragr*.

A mysterious formula that only Bragi and his father know is the engraving of certain runes on the sun, the sun horses,

Slepnir, a bear's paw, an eagle's beak, wolf's claw and even on Bragi's tongue. Once this is done, the magic is absorbed and then all of the runes are shaved off and put into special mead before being given to the Æsir, Vanir, elves and man. What is drunk by all are the secrets of the Beech, Birth, Ale and Magic runes that will enter into their dreams and become a reality.

### HEIMDALLR

Heimdallr is the bringer of culture and civilization to the peoples of the Nine Worlds, and he illuminates the world through his arts. He is one of the most diverse and pure of the gods.

One of his chief possessions and responsibilities is the ownership of the glorious horn, Gjallarhorn. He is to sound this horn, heard across the Nine Worlds, when Ragnarök is on the verge of happening. His task is a sacred duty that all other gods depend on.

With his horn, he also has a magnificent golden-maned steed, Gulltoppr, and his teeth are golden as well. To emphasize his golden shine is his extremely white skin. He is considered the 'whitest' of the Æsir and the most radiant of the gods.

Heimdallr's hall, Himinbjörg, sits at the point where the burning Bifröst rainbow bridge meets the mountains of Ásgarðr where he sits as watchman for the gods. Heimdallr will stop any unwelcome visitors that are lucky enough to make it on the rainbow bridge and at the gates of Ásgarðr, and he will slay any giants outright that dare to come close.

He has several names – *Gullintanni* ('One with Golden Teeth'), *Vindlér* ('One Protecting against the Wind') – and other kennings. When he is not attending to the various feasts of the other gods or watching Bifröst, he is in his own hall and drinks from his mead, the finest in the Nine Worlds.

Óðin left his eye in Mimir's well whereas Heimdallr sacrificed an ear to be able to hear all and know when events are in motion to bring about the Great Winter and Ragnarök.

Heimdallr's birth is the most unusual among all of the gods and races in the Nine Worlds, for it took nine maidens to bring him about. Gjalp, Greip, Eistla, Angeyja, Ulfrún, Eyrgjafa, Imðr, Atla and Jámsaxa are their names, each one of his mothers. What makes this more unique is that the nine are beautiful giantesses who bore him on the edge of the worlds over the side of the abyss.

The earth, ice-cold seas and the blood of swine were fed to him to make him strong and healthy by his mothers before he was sent off to Ásgarðr to serve the Æsir. From his origins, he does not need to sleep scarcely more than a bird, his sight at night is greater than even during the day (he can clearly see a hundred leagues distant) and his hearing is so keen that he can hear wool grow on sheep and grass grow from the earth (a benefit from his sacrifice at Mimir's Well).



Heimdallr's sword is named *Høfuð* ('Man's Head') and is capable of slaying and stopping any threat that dares to cross the Rainbow Bridge or, at least, stall them long enough for the rest of the *Æsir* to assist him.

By the time of Ragnarök, Heimdallr will face and confront Loki. The two will slay each other in the battle to come at the end. Only an *Ás* as pure as Heimdallr could slay someone as dark and despicable as Loki, and this thought makes Heimdallr more determined to succeed.

### **HÖÐR**

Blind since youth, Höðr is one of Baldr's brothers and normally unable to harm another. In *Ásgarðr*, he does little but sit in the feasts of his fellow gods and joyously involve himself in the poetry of the skalds, the flytings of the warriors and the drama of the gathering, but if he does any action, it comes with serious consequences.

Little is known about Höðr, his history or what he does and what his part is in the Nine Worlds. Unlike the other gods, he is the only one with this distinctive and crippling flaw that has given him a great difficulty and is exploited by the likes of Loki, Hel and the giants, to their advantage.

Höðr's fate is bound not in the act of being made to slay Baldr by Loki's hand but by the hand of his brother, Váli, for the killing of his own kindred. The accursed demon wolf Váli will seek out Höðr after Ragnarök to slay him.

### **VÍÐARR**

As Höðr is blind, Víðarr is silent. Unlike his brother, however, Víðarr is a vengeful *Ás* and seeks to bring vengeance to Loki for what was done to Baldr. He is a mighty warrior, as most of the *Æsir* are, but he is sworn to not speak a word until his vendetta is concluded.

Víðarr is a regular in the court of the sea giant *Ægir* and, before his vow of vengeance, was a skilled sport at flyting with the rest. His strength is as great as his brothers' and is called upon when even Thor cannot lift, pull, push or carry something.

Seen in visions by a mere few in the Nine Worlds is his fate. He will survive Ragnarök with Váli but will be the slayer of the beast Fenrir, using his strength alone. He is destined to do this deed after his father, Oðin, is slain and eaten by the wolf-son of Loki, however, and cannot save him. He has not been told, as many are not, about his role in the great final battle between the gods and giants.

Unconsciously, Víðarr collects remnants of old shoes and adds them to his own, just one, and gradually will have a thick shoe sole. He does not know that this thickening shoe will be used in the slaying of Fenrir when the time comes. He will step on

Fenrir with his thick shoe and press him down to the ground and, with his other hand, rip and break the upper jaw off of Fenrir, killing him. Víðarr will then stab Fenrir's heart through his opened mouth using his sword.

### **VÁLI**

Another son of Oðin, Váli was conceived to bring vengeance for Baldr's death. The giantess Rinda conceived him and he will grow to adulthood in one day, ready to bring vengeance for Baldr's slaying.

Later that night, after his birth and following growth to adulthood, Váli will hunt down Höðr and kill him. Another act of his vengeance will be to Narfi, a son of Loki, for his crimes against the gods. Váli will be transformed into a wolf and tear Narfi apart.

Narfi's entrails will then be used by the rest of the *Æsir* to bind Loki to a stone until the Great Winter. Loki will be bound by his shoulders, loins and thighs and these bindings will turn to iron. It is Váli's vengeance that will make this possible, for without it, Loki will remain unhindered and out of control.

When Ragnarök does occur, Váli will survive it with few others to live in a universe where the gods, giants and monsters are less in number, and their power wanes where it was once strong.

### **ULLR**

Ullr is a step-son of Thor and a masterful archer, spell caster, and hunter unmatched in the Nine Worlds. He is swift on skis and able to move on the snow and ice in a way that few can. Ullr has the characteristics of a warrior although he is more than one and is capable of many skills and feats.

His magical ability is far superior to Oðin, his grandfather, but there are some evidences that Ullr was around before his 'birth' from Sif's womb. He is a paradox and difficult to explain. One great paradox of his existence is his granting *Álfheimr* to Freyja and Freyr before the time of the *Æsir-Vanir* War and his own conception. Many say that he was reborn in another age, but this is not certain.

In the wilderness of *Álfheimr*, Ullr's hall of *Ýdalir* sits, protected by magic, safe by the passing of ages. At one time, Ullr had scores of hunters in the Nine Worlds that worshipped him and wanted to emulate him and then they faded from memory, but his *Veðimaðr Ullr* ('Ullr's Hunters') have begun to return. Skilled hunters, rangers and scouts from the many worlds are coming forward in his name.

Ullr's hunters are capable of skiing and firing their bows skillfully at their prey or enemies, an action that Ullr can do with eyes closed. His beauty is second to his skill as a ranger and hunter, however.

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Ullr's ship, a grand vessel for fishing and hunting, is called *Skjöldr* ('Shield') as are the skis used by he and others on the snow. The Ring Oath is sworn with his name often by hunters, warriors and archers. Ullr's magic is seen in his ability to travel the seas after taking a bone, enchanting it and using it as vessel instead. His spellcraft is not viewed as *ergi* or unmanly but a natural and perfectly accepted aspect of who he is.

Kennings are used with Ullr's name aplenty in the Nine Worlds. A shield is called 'Ullr's Ship', while a ship at sea is 'Ullr's Shield' in turn. Skis are also his 'shields', while warriors are his 'bow strings' and 'blades'.

When Oðin was exiled from Ásgarðr, Ullr took over and ruled over the Vanir in their occupation of the world. He did so with the same foresight and vision that the Allfather showed but with more compassion and morality. Ullr's reign was long spoken about after his time because of its prosperity and optimism in comparison to the grim and unpredictableness of Oðin's.

A decade was spent with Ullr ruling Ásgarðr, and once the Allfather was able to be reinstated as King of Kings and Lord of the Æsir, Ullr retreated from the upper worlds of Yggdrasil to live in the land of Sweden. An army of Danes invaded and slew Ullr in a great battle, as the stories go, but this is not certain. Rumors say that he is healing somewhere from his wounds, tended to by elves in his hall of Ýdalir, waiting for the day to give vengeance back to the Danes for what they did to him.

### FORSETI

The son of Baldr and Nanna, he is chosen from among the Æsir to preside over assemblies and gatherings to reconcile disputes and diplomatic difficulties. His hall, Glitnir, is a shimmering and brightly shone palace with a roof of silver and pillars of gold.

Before his death, Baldr resided here with his son. Those among the Æsir and Vanir who to resolve their disputes will either go to Forseti's hall or have him present as a mediator.

In matters of extreme delicacy and when troubles have come to a point between the gods and men, they will resort to Glitnir. These occasions are rare, but when the time comes, select people are chosen to represent mankind and must take a perilous journey from Miðgarðr to Ásgarðr for the talks in Forseti's hall.

In Germania, Forseti's approach to finding a peaceful resolution to conflicts is, sadly, not taken seriously enough, but his laws are. It is thought that most laws in the tribes are descended from him and his influence in Glitnir.

Judgements and oath bound witnesses are sworn under Forseti's name before court is held. In his time, he has never made a false or bad judgement among the gods and other races in the Nine Worlds.

### LOKI

This god, in the ranks of the Æsir and Vanir, has a place no others can equal. Loki is a deceiver and instigator of troubles in the Nine Worlds. At times, he can show a benevolence and compassion toward others, but more often, he is plotting and scheming against the other gods and races for his own personal ends.

His father is Farbauti and mother Laufey, and he was born in Jötunheimr. Almost from the beginning, Loki was saying and doing things that undermined the other gods, making their lives difficult and endangering the many races of the Nine Worlds.

He is a shapeshifter and very fond of fire. Loki is also knowledgeable about the other gods and their private secrets and uses this against them on many occasions. He sought to tear down and have slain the beautiful and perfect warrior Baldr and, having done so, pitted the Æsir against each other.

Loki's plots and doings have ever brought the giants close to invading and taking Ásgarðr many times, but the other gods have managed to trick him in turn or use brute force to undo his efforts. Because of his dark origins in Járnvíðr, he has bred monsters into the Nine Worlds by various women. These monsters are spawned from the swamps and woods of the mysterious and dangerous land.

Loki is married to the nymph goddess Sigyn and, with her, had many children. Narfi is one of the most famous. With the witch Angrboða, he gave birth to Hel, Fenrir and the World Serpent Jörmangandr – all three beings and monsters sent out to curse and cause the Nine Worlds terrible trouble. Most monsters are attributed to be of his doing and children in some way in the universe.

While in the form of a mare, Loki gave birth to Oðin's mighty steed Slepnir with its father, the Jötun horse Svaðilfari. There was a time when Loki and Oðin adventured together in the Nine Worlds and were close friends in the feast hall, sharing mead and boasting, but those days have since faded. He and Thor have adventured together many times as well although the two are at odds about everything, never agreeing.

Loki's history is not one spent purely of malice and cruelty, but it is his many questionable deeds that are remembered and spoken about. The Æsir have planned to restrain Loki and deny him his ability to disrupt the rulings and influences of the rest of the gods someday. Due to his aid and strange friendship with the gods, Loki is considered a 'companion' of theirs.

They will bind him to a stone, with the entrails of his own slain son Narfi, and then in iron while the acidic venom of the serpent drips on him from above, punishing him for his many evil deeds. The Æsir have told Loki of their plan on many occasions to warn him of his fate, and he mocks them all, not bothered by it.

His many deeds have been lost in time because of the frantic complexity of life, and Loki prefers it this way; it obscures his current plans and goals well. Loki's part in Ragnarök is quite

complicated since his many actions will bring it about together. Once he is bound by the other gods and left to agonize over the venom from the serpent, his escape will herald the start of the final war. The chaos and destruction that will shower down on the Nine Worlds, wrought by Loki and his allies, will be unlike any seen before by the giants of Surtr. He will meet his fate at Heimdallr's hand who he will, likewise, slay in turn.

## THE ÁSYNJUR OF ÁSGARÐR

The Æsir are split up between the male and female, the gods and goddesses, in the upper three worlds at the top of Yggdrasil. The Ásynjur, or goddesses, are as headstrong as the gods and use their wiles and powers to change the events in the Nine Worlds as needed.

More often, they use their abilities and cunning to correct or solve problems that the Allfather might make in his erratic and temperamental manner. None reign as supreme as Oðin's wife, Frigg, but they look up to her and follow her lead when undermining or fixing the Allfather's deeds.

### FRIGG

The wife of Oðin and daughter of Fjörgyn, she is the Queen of Ásgarðr and the only one allowed to sit on the high throne of Hlidskjalf atop Yggdrasil aside from Oðin. She is capable of great visions of the future, but unlike the Völva or others, she does not speak of them. She only directs events silently toward those ends to see them happen.

Her hall is the graceful and wondrous Fensalir in Ásgarðr where she and her servants, Hlín, Gná and Fulla, reside. Frigg's hall sits in the marshes, surrounded by waters and other difficulties as protection. Her magic is the greatest of all women in the Nine Worlds, unequalled even by the worst and most sinister of witches and hags.

Oðin's two brothers, Vili and Vé, had at one time after Ymir's death and the construction of the universe, divided it all between them, including Frigg herself, while Oðin was away for a long time. After his return, he reclaimed his wife for his own and sent his brothers away to find their own wives.

Many times Frigg has cleverly snuck around her husband to set things right and in a course toward greater and more optimistic ends. She has her dark side and often rides in a wagon with her husband during his Wild Hunt across the Nine Worlds. To the peoples of Germania, she is given many names: *Frau Goden*, *Frau Frekke*, *Frau Bercht*, *Striga Holda* and, most commonly, *Frau Holle*.

Her presence in the Wild Hunt is one of a glowing, specter-like leader and usually leads it by herself without Oðin. She holds court inside a mountain in the region of Hörselberg in Germania in Mannheimr. She will issue forth from the mountain court





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during the night and have the witches of the region follow her, flying on their distaffs. She is called *Holda* by many of the tribes and the grim spinner of fate and magic.

The witches throughout the Nine Worlds follow her and her magical ways, as do the *Völva*, even though the two groups are diametrically opposed. Frigg is the master of the use of the distaff. With her divine skill, she is able to thread and create or uncreate flora and fauna. She is seen during her visits to *Miðgarðr* in two forms: white, glowing and beautiful or foul and hideous.

One of her other names is *Perchta*, the guardian of the beasts and animals of the wild. Frigg's hunts are random in nature, as is her appearance and nature on those nights. In this capacity, the *Hulda*-folk will join with her with the witches and many other beasts.

Frigg, through the name of *Holda*, was the first to weave linen from flax (among many of her other accomplishments). The winter season is one of her favorites, and she is seen by mortals often in this time. It is said by the common-folk that she is emptying out her pillows of its feathers when snow falls on the worlds from above.

Frigg possesses a magical cloak covered in falcon feathers that enables her to fly anywhere in the worlds. She is fond of jewelry and owns enchanted rings, necklaces and armbands guarded by a *Dvergar* servant and her sister, *Fulla*.

### SÁGA

The seeress of the gods openly, *Sága* is consulted when there is a need to see clearly the future by all. Frigg's powerful and accurate visions of future events are well known, but she does not discuss or mention them, keeping such important knowledge to herself.

She resides in the hall of *Sökkvabekkr* in *Ásgarðr* and serves her queen when not engaged in divination and consultation. *Oðin* is often with her, discussing the visions while drinking the mead of immortality and relaxing to the sound of the waves rolling around her large, beautiful palace.

*Völva* and *Seiðkona* look to her for their direction in their divination and the art of consulting others over their futures. Where Frigg is silent and mysterious in her knowledge of the future, *Sága* is not, although her ability is a few slight degrees less.

### EIR

A valkyrja and a goddess of the *Æsir*, *Eir* is a healer and also functions as one of the *Norns*. Her powers of fate are woven around the lives of children in all worlds, for better or worse.

When the gods fought in the *Æsir-Vanir* War, *Eir* mended the wounds and healed the hurt, eventually on both sides in the con-

flict. Her place among the gods is complicated by her servitude to the giantess *Mengloð* in her fortress of *Lyfjaberg* where she is one of the *Jötun*'s nine maidens.

### FULLA

She is the younger sister of Frigg and her personal servant and confidant in *Ásgarðr*. All of Frigg's deepest secrets and thoughts are known by *Fulla*. As with *Gefjon*, she is a virgin goddess.

*Fulla* sits in the famous feasts of the giant *Ægir* amidst the other goddess and gods so chosen. She is noticeable by her golden snood headgear and her long, fair hair bound by a golden ring.

*Fulla* silently tends to her sister and accompanies her nearly at all times where ever she goes, except in the capacity of *Holda* during the nights of her Wild Hunts in *Mannheimr*.

Her other name is *Volla* in *Germania*, and it is known that she heals animals and livestock with her purity, if appeased. Her place of importance in the great halls of the gods and goddesses is fourth in her own right, not just because she the attendant to her older sister who is the Queen of the *Æsir*.

She is fond of gold and dons many items that are pure, shimmering golden. Even her eyelashes are of the same color and stand out prominently on her beautiful face.

### FREYJA

She is the Queen of the *Vanir* and has a place of power in the hierarchy of the gods, nearly the same as Frigg. *Freyja* receives half of the *Battle Slain*'s souls while *Oðin* possesses the rest. She is the only one in the universe that is granted the privilege. She has a golden, magnificent boar called *Hildisvíni* that she rides often on the battlefield or in *Ásgarðr*.

Her hall is the beautiful and sensational *Sessrúmnir*, able to hold a gathering almost as large as the *Allfather*'s halls, and it is located in the region of *Fólkvangr* in *Vanaheimr*. Women usually end up in her hall – *Shieldmaidens* and nobles that perished in battle in the Nine Worlds. The entrance to her bower in the hall has the special property that it will only open when she allows, and no one, divine or not, can force it open.

*Freyja* is a concubine of *Oðin* and daughter of *Njörðr* and a goddess of wanton pleasures at times. Her beauty is unmatched among all of the goddesses, Frigg included, and her lustful needs sometimes can be excessive. Men from all races lust after her and want her. Even if they wish to slay all others of the gods and peoples of the Nine Worlds, they desire to keep her only.

She is married to *Óðr*, thought by many to be another aspect of *Oðin* in a different guise. One of her prized possessions is the sparkling, golden necklace *Brisingamen*, an item she obtained from four *Dvarger* (*Dvalin*, *Grer*, *Berling* and *Alfrik*) by

spending a night with each in exchange for the magical piece of jewelry. This necklace embodies her secrets and power and symbolizes who she is, in essence. There have been many who sought her necklace. Only Loki managed to steal it, but it was returned by the efforts of Heimdallr during one occasion.

Freyja rides in a chariot pulled by two cats and owns a falcon feathered cloak that grants flight between worlds. She is fond of love songs and will put her full attentions to who ever performs it before her. Some say it is because she has so many affairs with gods, giants and other races.

Two of her daughters are Hnoss and Gersemi, but she has had many more from other affairs across the Nine Worlds over time. After birth, she will often place the child in the hands of its father and his family to raise and move on.

Freyjr travels the many worlds looking for her husband Óðr and, in her travels, is seen in many places, sometimes in Germania. In her sadness looking for her husband, she weeps drops of red gold where ever she goes. Freyjr's Tears are rare to find in the Nine Worlds but are said to be capable of containing great magic. Veins of her tears are found in stones at times and gathered by miners and prospectors.

In the magical arts of Seiðr, Freyjr introduced it to the rest of the Æsir as a gift from the Vanir. She taught them the secrets and spells of the craft and Óðin, personally. During the Æsir-Vanir War, Freyjr and her father officiated over the sacrifices and the slain on behalf of both sides.

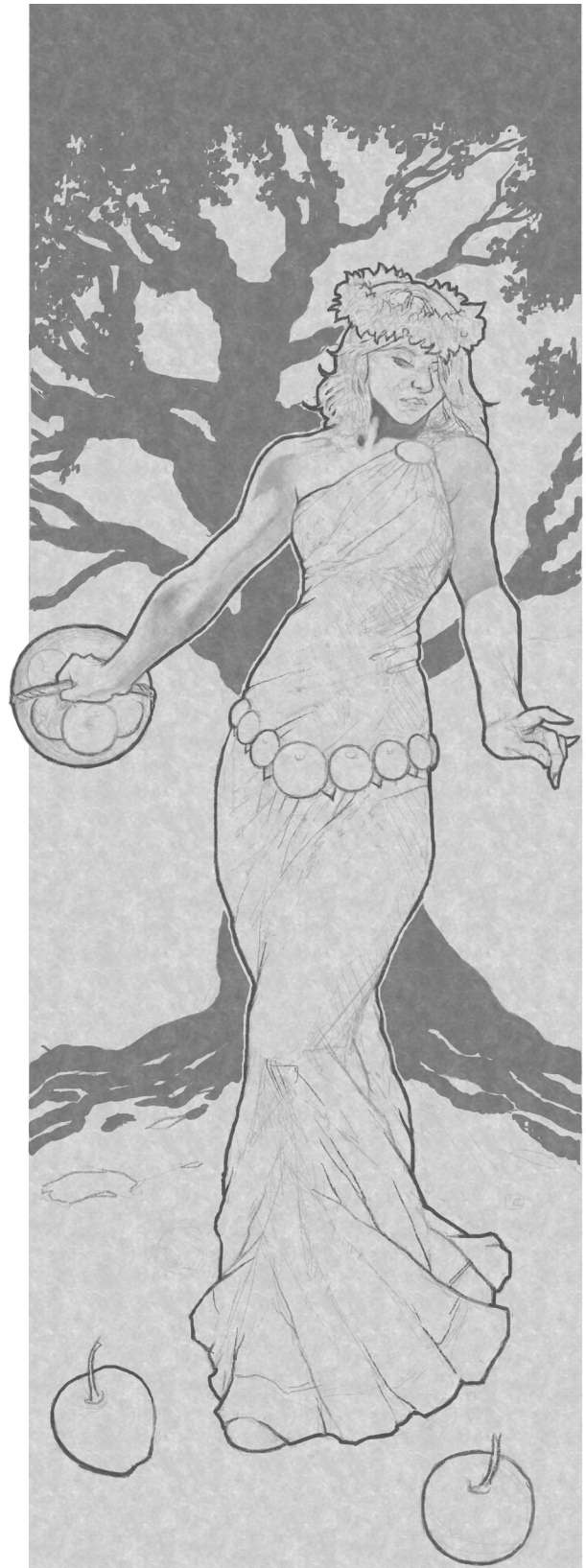
Freyjr's fame as a lady in the courts of the gods has inspired the men of Miðgarðr to use her name for the noble ladies of their courts, calling them *frúvor* ('Ladies'), *freyjr* (a mistress with property) and *húsfreyjr* ('Lady of the House').

Freyjr has many names used in kennings and in general conversation among the peoples of the Nine Worlds. Her names are *Gefn* ('the Giver'), *Hörn* ('Flaxen-haired One'), *Mardöll* ('Sea Sweller'), *Skjälfr* ('the Shaker'), *Sýr* ('Swine'), *Thröng/Thrungva* ('Throng'), *Valfreyjr* ('Lady of the Slain') and *Vana-dís* ('Dis of the Vanir').

## GEFJON

The goddess of ploughing and agriculture, she can plough the most impossible terrain and leave it fertile and usable in the end. Gefjon took the rough but already fertile lands of Ásgarðr and made them idyllic for the gods.

Gefjon is a virgin goddess, as many are, and travels the Nine Worlds with her four Jötun oxen to plough tracts of unworkable territory. Her power over the normally immutable earth is far beyond that of any person.



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She is the goddess of the earth, and all who work it must appease her with their offerings and prayers before she permits them to delve into it with their hoes and ploughs or other tools.

Women who die a virgin will become one of her followers and attendants in the afterlife. Gefjon's symbol is a plough, and it is used by farmers in the Nine Worlds just as the distaff is used for Frigg.

Gefjon is one of the goddesses that attend the feast of the sea-giant Ægir and the gatherings of Frigg. Her appearance in lands is at random and will benefit those she offers her plough toward. Unfortunately, her plain and aloof demeanor drives others away from her, and they do not know who she is until it is too late.

This occurred with the King of Sweden, Gylfi, who challenged her to plough one area of his kingdom to see if she could do so with her four oxen. In jest, he did not believe she was capable of such a task, and when she was done, she had ploughed so deeply in the hard earth that she dug toward the sea and uprooted the land itself. After doing so, she moved the land out to sea to become Zealand. Gylfi was speechless and amazed by her skill and realized her divinity and Æsir origins.

### ÍÐUNN

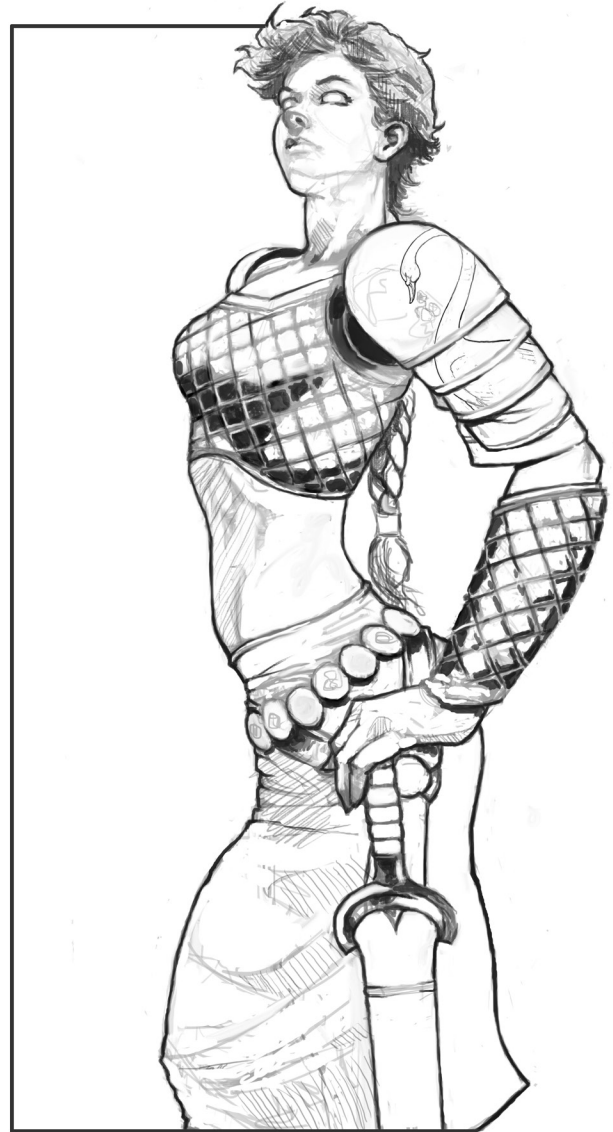
She is the wife of Bragi and the possessor of the Apples of Immortality among the many gods in the Nine Worlds. Fair of hair and startling in her beauty, although unassuming in character, she is one of the most crucial of the gods as well.

Her importance was emphasized when the Jotūn Þjazi kidnapped her and took her from Ásgarðr for his own. Not long after her absence, the immortality of the gods began to fade, and old age and other ailments set in, causing a panic and revealing their weakness to the giants and other foes.

Quickly, her rescue was organized while the gods were in decline from her absence. Loki used enchantments to hide her as a nut in form and he as an eagle to fly away from Þjazi's fortress. Furious, the giant pursued them in the guise of a massive eagle. Their chase spanned the Nine Worlds until the other gods were able to burn the giant's feathers by an enormous bonfire.

Íðunn's presence empowers both the Æsir and Vanir, and her apples are only distributed within those circles, but there are rumored to be many stray apples that have fallen to other worlds and could find themselves in the wrong hands. The goddess has power over the fertility of beasts and beings all, as well, which remains strong so long as she is present in Ásgarðr.

She is soft spoken and delicate, and her beauty reflects the blessings and gifts she imparts on others indirectly. Her role in the Nine Worlds is nearly not replacable, and her death or absence would create a chain reaction that would affect all beings alike.



### SIF

The beautiful wife of the famous giant killer Þór, Sif's vanity was great and her famously long, blonde hair its symbol. Although it would appear to be just hair, her long strands represented and bolstered the grasses and golden grains of the earth; to not possess one would deny the other. Her hair was precious to her and was well-kept and maintained.

One day, she woke to find her head shaven and her glorious hair missing without a trace. Without a culprit to blame, Þór took his hammer and quickly sought the one responsible. Loki was the one the Storm God felt was the perpetrator and hunted him down in rage. Rather than being caught by the wrathful god, Loki evaded him cleverly and tried to hide but was uncovered. Þór nearly strangled the life out of the devious son of Hel before he pleaded to find a way to fix the problem. Using



his allies among the Dark Elves and Dvargar, he asked the smith Dvalin to fashion an enchanted replacement.

Sif's hair is as before, but now more enchanted and of greater magic and connections to the Nine Worlds. Peace was made between Loki and the other gods after this event, even though the location of her missing hair has not been found nor the intention. To this day, her missing tresses remain undiscovered and their true properties not understood. It is believed by the mortals of Miðgarðr that her hair and the crops in the fields are bound together, and the fortunes of men rest on her golden, long hair.

### **SJÖFN**

This goddess is obscure and resides somewhere in Ásgarðr or Vanaheimr but controls the thoughts of men and women concerning love. Her influence in this area does not just deal with the lesser races in the Nine Worlds but the gods as well. Mostly, she uses her powers for good, but they can be twisted and warped to cause terrible circumstances and bring many lives to ruin.

Her name is used by the Skalds as a kenning for 'woman'. Sjöfn's influence in the minds of others comes when it is not expected and with good intention, but evil beings and entities, such as Loki, manipulate her efforts toward evil ends. Her innocence and purity about love is also her flaw.

### **LOFN**

Arranger of relationships and marriages, even forbidden ones, Lofn is the goddess of unions. She and Sjöfn work in tandem often, leading their intended targets toward fated marriages that might not seem beneficial at first.

Lofn's name is another kenning for 'woman' and also the word for 'praise'. Lofn has been given permission by Óðin and Frigg to make these unions. Lofn is able to place in the minds and souls of selected people the want of being with another and set events in motion to see them come together, and no one would be aware of this.

### **VÁR**

The making of oaths and vows is a sacred task in the lives of all who dwell in the Nine Worlds. Vár is the goddess under which these oaths are made bonded in the magical power of words.

Such oaths (*varar*) are her domain, and she will punish those who do not uphold their word by various means. The punishment will fit the level of the magnitude of the oath made.

She presides over the oaths made among the gods, and her presence makes their every gathering for such purposes official. Rarely does she make an appearance in other worlds within

the universe, but she will, at times, during the most important of events to sanctify them. Her appearance is cloaked and disguised when not in the company of the gods and will likely appear as a Völva or Seiðkona.

### **VÖR**

Her knowledge of secrets is the most profound in the universe, none can compare to this ability. Vör embodies the female intuition that enables women to find out secrets kept from them by men and others.

When the Æsir and Vanir need to know the secrets of the whereabouts, plans and schemes of others, they turn to Vör. She informs, without struggle, to find the facts she needs; they come to her in a natural flow.

### **SYN**

Syn's job as a goddess is to have the power to refute and deny legal matters (when needed) during the Things and other gatherings when held. Her word makes any motion that is negative final.

She has the power to close the doors to any hall, and they cannot be broken or picked by another, no matter how great their skill. Syn's presence among the gods is mysterious but her power is not. Syn is not one of Frigg's handmaidens but is also in control of the doors and those who are allowed in her hall.

Syn defends the weak and accused and will hear their prayers, if given often. If there is any doubt or blemish in those who ask her aid, she will know and deny them, thus her name.

### **HLÍN**

Another handmaiden of Queen Frigg, she is the one chosen to provide refuge and protection for any that Frigg wishes to aid from harm and danger. Hlín's function in the Æsir is to go to those chosen, anywhere in the Nine Worlds, and give them safety, even when they are not aware of it being sent by Frigg herself.

Her powers of protection can range from shelter to magical charms and blessings temporarily and can work on any race in the universe, good or evil. In her despair, she knows one person she cannot provide protection for when it will matter the most – Óðin during the battle of Ragnarök when he will meet his fate at the hand of Fenrir. She cannot help him regardless of the divine ability she has or the wishes of her mistress Queen Frigg.

### **SNOTR**

With many others, Snotr is a handmaiden of Frigg but also the goddess of wisdom and manners. As one of the divine matrons of Ásgarðr, Snotr dictates the protocols and rules of eloquence for the gods.

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Anyone who is wise and shows great thought is called ‘*snotr*’, after the goddess herself. With her divine powers, Snotr can grant sudden insight and wisdom on those she or her queen deems in the Nine Worlds.

### **GNÁ**

When Frigg needs an errand and cannot go herself, she sends the goddess Gná. Gná rides on her magical steed, Hófvarpnir, that can ride and fly between the worlds as needed.

The sight of her riding in the skies beckons the omen that great events are about to happen. As beautiful as the rest of the goddesses, Gná tends to Queen Frigg as one of her handmaidens when there is little need for her errand running abilities. She can find anyone anywhere in the Nine Worlds, no matter how hidden or tucked away they think they are.

With her steed, she can ride on the waves of the sea as though it were the earth. There is little that can deny her the person she seeks.

### **GIANTS, MONSTERS AND EVIL BEINGS**

The Æsir and Vanir do not solely rule over the Nine Worlds alone. There are many other forces that challenge and threaten them and what they hold dear. Fundamentally, the giants are their greatest of enemies and will always contest them, but there are many other beings and beasts that endanger the universe.

The gods alone cannot stop this plethora of foes; it is a task that heroes can also assist in as allies. The universe is populated by fierce and venomous monsters. The giants and beings that were slain by the gods or heroes or have little source material are excluded from this list (and there are many), but the events in the Nine Worlds in this Codex ‘take place’ before the binding of Loki by the gods. The Castle Keeper can decide for themselves if they want to change this, but allowing Loki his freedom gives the game story more possibilities in a campaign.

### **ANGRBOÐA**

Angrboða is a witch that lives in the shadowy and mysterious Järnviðr and gives spawn to monsters and ferocious wolves. She did not just give life to any breed but the demonic Vargr, the lesser species under her own, chief son, Fenrir.

She is dark, hideous and foul natured without any pity or remorse. Many consider her a troll-wife and give her the kenning Iárnvidia (‘She of the Iron Wood’).

As the more or less designated queen of the Iron Wood, her troll-wives and other dark women subjects are called the *Iárnvidjur* (‘Iron Women’). She is married to another giant, but she has had Loki as a lover and, through him, bore three of the Nine Worlds’ chief terrors: Fenrir, Hel and Jörmangandr. Her magics

are great and unrivaled by most of the rest of the Jötnar. Her own kindred dread coming to her to ask for services and aid in their many schemes.

In her visions and those of other seers in the Nine Worlds, a glimpse of another one of her spawn, Mánagarm, has been seen. This wolf will devour the moon when it is able and was born from her venomous loins. This time is near but not certain except that it will herald the chain of events that will eventually lead to the Great Winter and Ragnarök.

If the unfortunate who wander into her woods manage to survive the many dangers, they are brought to her. Their fate is usually awful and worse than any gory death given by monsters. They will often end up as sacrifices or ingredients in her potions around the cauldron.

Worse, though, is Angrboða’s undead state. She was slain in earlier times and is said by many to haunt the woods and swamps as a spectre. Her condition upon encountering could vary widely, but either above the ground or ghostly, she is a monstrous and frightening giantess.

### **BERGELMIR**

The only frost giant to survive the floods that followed in Ymir’s death, Bergelmir and his wife waded in seas of gore to drift on a wooden fragment of a ship, coffin-shaped, and waited the crimson floods out. Once the deluge subsided and the Sons of Borr had constructed the universe, stringing Ymir’s remains up and down the length of Yggdrasil, he sat and plotted how to exact revenge.

From his survival, the Ice Giants of Niflheimr were born, all of them instilled with Bergelmir’s hatred and bitterness. Bergelmir still lives deep in the icy wastes of Niflheimr as a hermit and could take Þrym from his throne if he chose. Instead, he wishes to be distant from all societies and peoples so he can remain in rage undisturbed.

Bergelmir’s yell can shake the mountains, cause quakes and avalanches and haunt the minds of those who hear it (and survive). He is the son of *Þrúðgelmir*, the son of Ymir who drowned in his own father’s blood after being slain by the Sons of Borr.

### **BESTLA**

The Æsir could not have been if it wasn’t for Bestla’s Brood, Óðin, Vili and Vé. This giantess and her husband, Borr, gave birth to the three sons that would eventually turn against the Age of the Giants in the two worlds and rebuild a new universe. The giants loathe her and are repulsed by her mere name from the children she conceived.

Her father is the fierce giant Bölþorn, a brother of Mimír. After her sons’ rebellion against the giants, Bestla went into hiding, somewhere in Niflheimr, out of shame and fear of the wrath of

the other Jötnar. Little is known about her except that she was brutal by nature with a rare compassionate side.

### **EGGTHÉR**

This giant is Angrboðr's harpist, and when she needs to be relaxed and lulled into slumber, he plays powerful chords from his lyre by the firelight, and slowly, it calms her. Among the giants, harpists are not uncommon but not as uniquely gifted as he. His skill is almost without equal in the Nine Worlds, but he keeps his skills exclusive to his mistress of the Iron Wood.

Unbeknownst to him, he will be playing the first song on the eve of Ragnarök. Eggthér will strum his harp on a hillock in the leafy greenery of Gálgvíðr at that moment, playing a joyful strain, accompanied by the rooster Fjalar.

### **HATI HRÓÐVITNISSON**

With Sköll, Hati chases the celestial lights in the skies. Both are from among the spawn of Fenrir and are giant, ravenous wolves that are fierce and hateful. Hati hunts the moon and forever hungers after it, occasionally catching it in its jaws (eclipse) but never really holding it to swallow.

Hati will finally catch and devour the moon during the early times of Ragnarök and, with Sköll, destroy the day and night. Perpetually, Hati is chasing the moon across Ymir's skull, and this game will only end during the final battle.

Another name for Hati is Mánagarmr ('Moon Hound'), and this black wolf cannot be seen by normal eyes. To view him across the night would herald many forboding and ominous things: sickness, death, war or Ragnarök.

### **HRÆSVELGR**

He is a Jötun that can transform into a giant, monstrous eagle when needed and has a predilection for eating corpses. With each flap of his massive wings, winds blow across the Nine Worlds, causing chaos and disruption.

Hræsvelgr perches on the edge of the Nine Worlds near the top of Yggdrasil and looks far below across the worlds for food. The eagle, Ari, is related in some way to Hræsvelgr, although how is unclear.

### **HYRROKKIN**

Hyrrokin is among the greatest of the giantesses in strength in the Nine Worlds. She can lift, push and pull more than even the mighty Thor, much to his dismay.

When the Prymsursars need strength greater than their own, they call upon her. She dwells in Jötunheimr with no fixed abode,

only traveling when she requires. Hyrrokin can be found most often in King Prym's fort, but few seek her out.

As giants go, her appearance is hideous beyond measure and appears blackened and shriveled. Thor has a private animosity toward her and seeks to slay her, as he has done the other giants, someday; it is just a matter of time and waiting for the right moment.

### **JÖRMUNGANDR**

One of the spawn of Loki, this 'World Serpent' grew to such impossible proportions in time that it encircled the world of Miðgarðr and bit on its own tail, thinking it another beast.

Jörmungandr is ravenously hungry and fierce, always twisting and turning, causing the worlds to shake and rattle out of control. All other serpents and wyrms in the Nine Worlds do not compare to Jörmungandr in size, invincibility and destructive power. All wyrms and dragons are dwarfed by the World Serpent.

It is well known by those who can see the far future that the World Serpent will meet its fate at the hands of Thor during Ragnarök. The two will find each other in the chaos and be locked in battle to the end. Thor will slay Jörmungandr only to succumb to its poison moments after.

During the time of Ragnarök, Jörmungandr will poison the skies with its venom, killing all life in the Nine Worlds from its deadly rain. The showers of poison will cascade down from the utmost world of Ásgarðr to the lowest level of Niflheimr.

### **KRÁKA**

She is the daughter of Sigurd the Dragonslayer, also known as Aslaug. Worried about her safety after the death of her parents, Sigurd and Brunhilde, her uncle, Heimer, rescued her.

Heimer hid Kráka in a large harp and traveled the lands of Mannheimr to keep her safe as they traveled. It was unfortunate that Heimer chose to stay the night at a friends' home as he was betrayed by them out of jealousy. The wife of the household, Grima, suspected that great wealth was stored inside Heimer's harp and convinced her husband, Áka, to murder him.

Having slain Heimer, they opened the harp and found the young, beautiful girl, Aslaug, within it. Quickly, Grima and Áka enslaved her and forced her to work for them day and night. They were unaware of the girl's royal lineage.

Eventually, Aslaug met Ragnar Loðbrók, and the two wed and had children. Her skills of prophecy and astuteness of matters were ignored, much to Ragnar's regret in his doomed trip to Britannia in 840. Ragnar's fate was in a snake pit of the Saxon king, Ælla, ending his many years of raiding and plundering his kingdom.



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### FORNJÓT

The ancestor of the royal line of Yngling from Sweden and the father of the sea-giant Ægir, Kári, Frosti and Logi, Fornjót is a Jötun with a reputation. Fornjót's progeny is wide spread and infamous more than he.

Fornjót's first grandchildren intermarried with the first grandchildren of Ing, Freyr and Gerðr and created a long, royal line that will rule over Sweden in time. There are not many giants that can claim and give their blood to a line of kings in Human lands.

For a time, Fornjót ruled over the lands of Gotland, Kvenland and Finland before the gods and Human heroes put a stop to it. His children ruled over the very elements in the world around the mortals: Ægir the seas, Logi the fire and Kári the winds.

### HEL

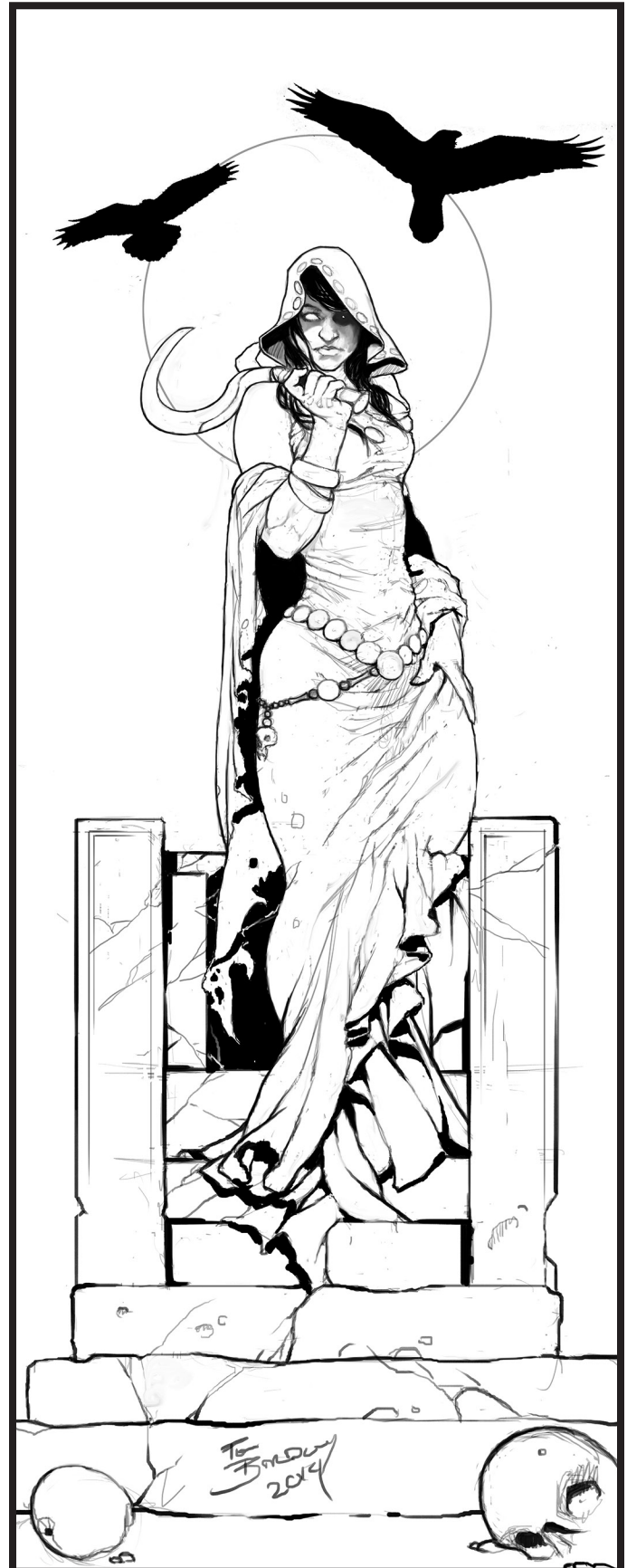
She is the daughter of Loki and Angrboða and queen over her own designated world of Helheimr. When she was born, Oðin tossed her from Jötunheimr into her own realm to rule over. He gave her the spirits of those who perished by sickness and age, the most disliked manner of death to be suffered in the Nine Worlds.

The spirits she rules over are mean-tempered and bitter because of their dishonored fates, and they cannot be reasoned with except by Queen Hel's influence. All of those who have not died in battle or in a manner that is honorable or worthy of Oðin or Freyja's halls go to Hel. Because of this, she rules a world that is dismal and brooding, filled with the less-than-joyous dead.

Hel is partially flesh colored and blackened with a perpetual downcast and dismal look about her. Her presence can break the brave and bold without an utterance of a word spoken by her. Hel's court is filled by spirits, giants and monsters that are allowed to freely dwell with her and feed upon the slain or unwelcome guests. Rare it is when she wishes to take a lover into her forbidden bedchamber to satisfy her lusts. When she does, they are consumed by her lusts or by the presence of her blight and sickness.

Her gloomy hall is called *Éljúðnir* and causes sickness and disease in those living who dare to enter it. Hel's place among the gods and giants is more respected than the others in this list because from out of Oðin's mercy, she was allowed to rule over a world of her own and reign over the rest of the souls he doesn't claim.

Hel rides often on her dark horse to seek the souls of victims that perished in plagues and disasters. She frequents Miðgarðr more than any other realm because of the frailty of the mortals that dwell there. It is hoped, amongst the gods, that she is



kept busy and satiated by the constant influx of souls. Rumor comes that says that Hel has been building an army with ambitions to rule the other Nine Worlds. Using her many allies, she seeks to topple the Æsir from their thrones of power and place other rulers in their seats.

The mortal peoples use one of their elderly matrons in funeral ceremonies to be dressed as Hel, the ‘Angel of Death,’ which will aid the dead or dying into their next life. This designated leader guides the rituals and ceremonies to their end and has the power over life and death for those closely involved in the deathly individual (slaves, concubines, etc.). It is believed that Hel possesses the Angel for a time and, by this channeling, can see the funeral to its end.

### **NÓTT**

She is the wife of Delligr and rules the night in the Nine Worlds. She rides the steed Hrímfaxi across the sky, guiding the night as her sibling Dagr does with the horse Skinfaxi. She is born of giant blood and related to the Æsir.

The Dvergar call her the Dream-Goddess (*Dream-Njörun*) because she enables the sleeping to dream while she rides high in Ymir’s Skull above the Nine Worlds.

To better blend in with the night, she is black and swarthy skinned in color, and her steed’s foamy lips brings the dew that one finds every dawn across the land. Her father is the giant Narfi, but due to Oðin’s kindness, she and her sister were allowed to maintain the night and day. Unfortunately, however, this is a perpetual matter, never letting them have rest, and they are stuck doing this task for an eternity.

The giants call her the ‘Unlight’, while the Humans named her ‘Night’. ‘Darkness’ she was named by the gods and the elves the ‘Joy of Sleep’. Her function in the celestial system put into place by Oðin is essential – without her, only Dagr would remain, and the universe would fall into chaos quickly.

### **SKADI**

This giantess is a goddess of skiing, the mountains, bowhunting and the winter season. Her place among the Jötnar is delicate because she is favored by the peoples of many of the Nine Worlds for her blessings and assistance, yet her own kindred try to encourage her violent tendencies. Another name for her is *Öndurdís* (‘Ski Lady’) because of the frequency of finding her on her skis in the snowy mountains.

She is the wife to Njörðr and more often dwells in the court of Þrymheimr seated in the feasts of King Þrym and the sea-giant Ægir. Her father is Þjazi and family infamous in the Nine Worlds for their deeds of cruelty and violence.

Of the giants, she has an honored place among the Æsir and was invited to find a husband in Ásgarðr. She was hoping to be with Baldr by locating his beautiful feet but instead found Njörðr. They wed, but she refused to be with him and bear his children and had intimate relations with Oðin in his place, giving birth to many children. She did not want to stay with her husband for too long in his hall of Nóaatún but in her father’s court, so the two made a deal and split the time in each.

Skaði will be the one responsible for placing the venomous serpent over Loki’s head when he is bound and tied by the gods and kept from interfering in the lives of the inhabitants of the Nine Worlds. Thought a giantess, she is worshipped as a god by many peoples for her skills and abilities.

### **SKÖLL**

The black, demonic wolf sibling to Háti, Sköll chases the sun, eager to devour it whole. Occasionally, he comes close and causes a solar eclipse, but he can never keep a hold of the sun-wagon.

He and Háti are some of the children of Fenrir, sent to swallow the sun and moon together and bring about the end of the worlds. If they ever succeed then the dreaded Ragnarök begins.

### **ÞJAZI**

Þjazi Olvaldison is among the more troublesome of the giants. The father of many infamous children, Skaði is one of the most famous. Þjazi has the dislike of the gods. Their reasons for not being fond of Þjazi are sensible and logical.

He kidnapped the goddess Iðunn, denying the gods their immortality granting apples and, eventually, causing them to age and suffer from the loss. Loki had to aid the Æsir in finding her and the giant in his realm of Þrymheimr.

For punishment, Oðin took out his eyes and threw them into the night sky, forming the stars, but he left Þjazi alive to suffer for his crime. Rumor has it that the Allfather killed him when he took out his eyes, leaving Þrymheimr desolate until his daughter, Skaði, came to claim it.

### **ÞRYM**

He is the King of the Jötnar and rules from his hall in Jötunheimr. He is always scheming and plotting against the gods with a sworn vow to destroy them if possible. The giants in the Nine Worlds look up to him when causing chaos and destruction is in mind.

Although he has his queen and concubines, he lusts after Freyja and seeks to have her for his own someday. Þrym has had many plots, but they all have been foiled one way or another over the years.

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King Þrym and Surtr have plans involving undermining the gods and have set their spies, assassins and scouts out in the Nine Worlds to see it undertaken. One of King Þrym's current plans is to steal Thor's hammer, Mjölñir, and disarm the famous giant slaying god.

Þrym has trained his sons to help him rule over Jötunheimr as his princes and lords with hopes that they can use the same talents to do so in the other worlds if they conquer them. His eldest son is Bergfinnr, who has aims to rule Jötunheimr like his father.

### ÚTGARÐA-LOKI

Of the many lofty and immense giants in Jötunheimr, he is one of the tallest and greatest infamy. Útgarða-Loki's hall is *Útgarðar*, an imposing and threatening fort so massive that few can comprehend its size. He stands over thirty feet high or more and makes even Thor appear a dwarf.

He is a rank smelling giant, unwashed and disgusting, able to kill instantly others that smell him if they are too close. His hairs are longer than spears and just as dangerous. Of the giants, Útgarða-Loki is one of the most foul. His foulness is both by nature and presence, two traits that he uses to his advantage against the gods.

His fort (as with many of the giants') can teleport to other worlds temporarily if needed by his magic. Like with most of the Jötnar, he seeks to slay Thor for personal and racial reasons, putting an end to the giant killer's reign in the Nine Worlds. Many times has he tried to outsmart and trick the Son of Óðin, but he was thwarted and fooled in turn and managed to escape the wrath and hammer.

### SURTR

The chief of the Fire Giants in Múspellsheimr that will bring Ragnarök to the Universe in the end with his fiery sword, Surtr is the leader among the Jötnar for insurrection against the gods. He is the protector of the flaming world from any of those daring and strong enough to threaten the Eldjötnar.

Surtr's sword, if it is ever unsheathed from its scabbard, will shine brighter than the sun. Its heat and light are beyond any that exist and will consume the Nine Worlds. Surtr's wrath toward the Sons of Borr and their descendants knows no bounds, and he constantly plots and schemes with the designated 'King' of the Giants, Þrym, in Jötunheimr against his enemies.

Only the massive mountainous, volcanic walls around Múspellsheimr keep him in, otherwise he would wage an open war with the gods the moment he leaves. He is obsessed with seeing the destruction of the Allfather's creations and descendants and does not change his focus from day to night.



The moment that Ragnarök occurs as foreseen, Surtr will lead the armies out of Múspellsheimr, causing flaming and terrible destruction where ever he travels. No weapon can withstand his and will melt into raw metal on contact, as will any armor or other forms of protection.

He is black skinned and charred from his love of becoming enveloped in flames and lava and has flaming eyes that spew fire at times. When he leads the giants of Múspellheimr on the final ride toward Ragnarök, the burning rainbow bridge of Bifröst will shatter underfoot and sever the link that binds Ásgarðr to Miðgarðr forever.

Freyr's fate is in Surtr's hands during that final battle between the gods and giants. Both know it already, but only Surtr finds a glee in the idea that he will slay the Lord of Álfheimr.

### PAGAN RELIGIOSITY

To live in the Nine Worlds, it is impossible to ignore the influence of the gods and other powerful beings. Their hands are dipped in everything no matter where one goes, and mostly, it isn't obvious. It is wise to have them on one's side when confronting hellish and monstrous forces that seem overwhelming and defeat likely at every turn. Praying to them and asking some blessing or divine aid is not unheard of but expected. To not have the gods on one's side is viewed as pure folly and foolishly suicidal.



For the common folk who do not live exciting lives of adventure and danger, they wish only to have the blessing of the divine to assist them in their crops, fertility and health, essentially. Offerings and prayers for these blessings are a must, and there are many holy places that this is done.

In the previous chapter, the many Blóts were given a quick look over. Those were, for the most part, the holidays in Germana and the northern regions in Scandinavia, but these sacred times and events go deeper than the brief details given. If the Castle Keeper or player wishes to learn more about them, there are many good, academic studies out on the Viking and, more specifically, the 'Nordic' deities to refer to.

To gain the divine support of the gods, or a 'God Call' as my players have always called them, it begins with the character's charisma score. If this is not their primary attribute, the base chance of being heard by a deity is obviously going to be difficult (starting at 18 or higher).

The process can be as simple as a prayer with head lowered to the deity and a roll made, but the more elaborate and detailed the process becomes, the more likely the vanity of the deity will be appeased. Depending on how the gods are 'called', the base chance they will hear will be modified along the way until there is a final number to be rolled.

A successful roll means that the deity in question has heard and will give a blessing (CK's call on what this exactly is) while a failure designates that the deity is not wishing to help at that time. A critical roll, however, grants the player a miracle on the part of the divinity, and this event can be as magnificent as they want or as subtle. These are the results that all worshippers aspire to, but there are the opposites to this which can doom them as well.

A failed roll simply means that the deity does not wish to aid the worshipper or does not have the inclination to do so at that moment. More serious, though, is a fumbled roll. This means that somehow the worshipper has blasphemed and angered the deity, causing them to bring wrath and scorn by curses or worse on the follower. The Castle Keeper can use this to their advantage in the game and find many avenues of creative angles in which the offended god troubles the player(s).

Only the aid of another deity or the help of a Seiðkona, Völva or Goði can address the wrath of a god, but this is no guarantee. Depending on the entity angered, the wrath may be only stopped by confronting it in person and dealing with the consequences. An angered god could provide plenty of material for a campaign or a portion of one, and the Germanic gods were infamous for their spite and scorn toward Mortals.

The times of prayer/worship one gives to the gods has no limits (i.e. Islam's five prayers a day). The Castle Keeper is the ultimate decider on how often the gods intervene in the affairs of



the adventurers since too much of it can risk game balance and create a dependency on divine assistance. During the process of adventuring, the players can take the simple method to appealing to the gods, and that is by prayer alone, but there are many other methods used by the peoples of Germana and the Nine Worlds that involve a greater chance of success.

Listed are the many methods of appealing to the gods according to the Nordic sources. Most will notice that these are nearly identical to what is shown in the *Codex Celtarum* and that is because the Celts and Vikings shared many views on the gods and their worship. With each form of worship given, the modifier to the base 'God Call' rolls (charisma) is shown.

- 1 SACRIFICE:** Animals would be the lowest of chosen methods to appease the gods. These would be dogs, horses, livestock or other various sorts. If they are beheaded, they are gutted and bled. However it is done, a -3 is given to the God Call. Human sacrifice is a higher ranking form of sacrifice and can take many forms. Sometimes the chosen are led to bogs, strangled, stabbed and/or drowned, or at oth-

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ers, they might be tied to a sacred tree in a grove and have arrows or spears aimed at them. Many Human sacrifices are led in a procession in robes and have their throats cut by a Völva over a cauldron. However it is performed, this is a major act and not taken lightly. A sacrifice of this nature will give the worshipper a -5 to their base chance. One common method of sacrifice to Oðin is to hang animals or people in a grove since he is the God of the Gallows.

- 2 PRAYER:** The simple act of reciting the name or aliases of the deity in a mantra, poem or song could be enough. This might be a few verses in length or long in size, but doing so will gain the worshipper a -2 on their call.
- 3 OFFERINGS:** The Viking peoples were small on their offerings when compared to other peoples like the Celts, but they did offer food during the Blóts, which itself derived from the initial animals sacrificed. These offerings will give a -3, but it is after much ceremony and procedure.

Divine magic is the same as ‘Arcane’ to the Nordic mind; the two are not exclusive from each other. The role of wizards and holy figures were identical when it gets down to it.

Once the gods become involved in the lives of the characters, they will not easily go away. Their interests will be invested in some aspect of the adventurers due to either imparting a blessing or miracle in some way. Most pagan peoples honored and feared their gods, wishing to live a good life and have it blessed while wanting to keep them at a distance.

In a universe where the gods walk amidst the peoples, common-folk are cautious to be good hosts to strangers, afraid that they might be the gods in disguise. Thor travels in Miðgarðr aiding the common peoples in their plight and difficulties often, rarely in disguise. Oðin, however, uses hundreds of disguises and will spy in on his populace in the Nine Worlds, testing their loyalties, faith or scheming to obtain something from them in a clever game.

Many people worship the giants, witches and other significant beings in the upper (and lower) worlds on Yggdrasil. The giants prefer such praise and gloat on it when they are given a chance, and remind the gods that they were first to rule the universe before Ymir’s death by the Sons of Borr, and it is not forgotten.

It was deemed a more intimate and personal form of worship with feasts involving fewer people rather than the impersonal nature of large events. Large festivals and ceremonies in honor of the gods were held often, usually presided over by a king or nobles, but felt impersonal.

## SACRED PLACES

Holy places in Scandinavia and amongst the Nine Worlds varied but were similar to the Celts in Europe. These were in places deemed ‘hollowed’ or sacred and made holy for various reasons. Tribes and kingdoms centered on these locations and the local Goði took care of them and maintained their well-being.

**GROVES** – Like the druids of the Celtic peoples, the peoples of Scandinavia would plant and raise or designate a grouping of trees as holy and filled with the presence of the divine. Although there were many types of tree that were made into such places, it was usually the Ash tree that was common, due to the holiness of the World Tree Yggdrasil. Superstitions dictate that silence reigned in these trees and many had odd taboos (not leaving with back turned but as one entered, or if one has fallen, one must roll on one’s side on the way out, etc.).

**HÖRGR** – Sacred stone mounds or cairns, called *hearg* to the Saxons, they were heaped in sacrificial blood at times. These sacred places became so for various reasons: purported battle or divine event occurring on the spot, divine sighting, etc. They lie scattered across the countryside without any sense of reason and logic and can be spotted by the stain from sacrificial blood on the stones or the very pile of stones themselves. Many have the statues of the gods or runestones planted atop them. Some of the most ancient and well used Hörgr are transformed into large shrines or temples by the local peoples and tended to by the Goði.

**HOF** – The ‘house’ of a god, Hofs are large, elaborate temples. They are massive and richly decorated with the images and statues of their god(s). Seating for the elect and elite line the inner walls while the middle is for the common worshiper (who has to pay a ‘temple fee’). In the main part of the sanctuary sits a bronze or golden blood bowl (*hlautbolli*) where the sacrificial blood rests. The Völva or Goði takes a sacred sprig or branch (*hlautteinn*) and splashes the statues and worshippers with the blood, or *hlaut*. The finest wealth and work went into these holy places to honor the gods. Many Hofs have Ash trees planted within or had the building constructed around it as it grew. Events and gatherings or Things held at Hofs are never a minor affair. Hofs have one section of the wall, usually in the north, that is an elaborately designed ‘portal.’ It was believed that through these portals, the worshippers’ prayers and pleas would be heard and seen by the gods. Any kingdom of worth has several Hofs within its borders and represent their patrons and gods well in Scandinavia and the Nine Worlds. These are the spiritual centers of the kingdoms with one chief Hof out of many. A golden, sacred ring is placed in each Hof on an altar to swear oaths and vows by between the people and the gods.

**VÉ** – These sacred spots are enclosures often shaped out of the natural landscape (hills, rocks, etc.) or aided by some limited construction. Like the Hörgr, they are visited by travelers often in their peregrinations.

### FUNERAL PRACTICES

Varied across Scandinavia, these different methods were used to honor the dead. They changed over time, but not uniformly, leaving many regions to use older methods alongside the new. The funeral rites and methods were performed with the hope that the spirits of the dead would find their way to the Otherworld(s) if done correctly.

**CREMATION:** The ashen remains are placed inside urns, if it could be afforded by the common people. Others will scatter the ashes on the winds in watery places or any location wished upon by the deceased. Warriors and nobles will do so on large pyres or in their dragon-ship in solemn ceremonies.

Cremation is a time old system that keeps the dead from being corrupted by pests and the environment, placing their souls into the very elements that they once sprang from. *This manner of funeral rite denies the dead from returning as the Undead to haunt the living again.*

**BURIAL:** As with many societies, the poor and common classes are placed in shallow graves with limited ceremonies and goods interred. The rich and powerful will construct barrow mounds, fairly elaborate, at the minimum but, at the most extreme, entire ships (goods, captain/king, slaves, etc.) will be placed into the ground. These ceremonies are the same as what is performed for cremations. These burials are the source of the undead terrors that haunt the moonlit lands of Scandinavia and beyond if not maintained well or blessed.

### THE END OF THE WORLD

The most dreaded event to transpire will be the chain of smaller events that will lead inevitably to the destruction of all. The balance that holds the universe together is precarious and many times over runs close to collapsing. Between the Æsir and the Vanir alone, they keep the tide of monsters and giants from destroying this balance, but it more often falls upon the deeds of mortals or Mankind in Miðgarðr to perform the required deeds.

Through a delicate set of events, the infamous Ragnarök could occur, and if so, it will spell the doom of gods and monsters alike with Man caught in the middle. Heralding this is the Great Winter of *Fimbulwinter* in which a series of three successive winters will occur down on the Nine Worlds from all directions. The bonds of blood and kin will dissolve between peoples in this long period of frozen hell, and this will also push into motion the many other pivotal actions strewn across the worlds that will cascade into Ragnarök.

A simplified sequence of events that will transpire is given below. These each must happen for the dreaded end of the worlds to succeed.

- Fimbulwinter begins as well as the break down of the bonds of peoples that tie societies together.
- The sun and moon will both be devoured by the wolves of Fenrir and, with them, the disappearance of the stars, casting the universe into darkness.
- Massive quakes will shake the worlds, freeing trees and toppling mountains and, in this chaos, all restraints, letting loose the dreadful wolf Fenrir.
- Jörmunganðr will then finally grip the worlds tight enough to cause rifts and chasms in the earth and the seas to surge, causing all sea passage impossible.
- Due to the surging seas, the Ship of the Dead, Naglfar, will be loosed from its moorings in the underworld and let free to be guided by the giant Hrym.
- Fenrir will then bite upon the sky and earth as Jörmunganðr sprays its venom as rain down from the skies.
- The skies will then split into two and the vengeful giants of Múspellheimr will pour forth, led by Surtr and his blindingly bright sword. Bifröst will collapse from the skies as they cross to Ásgarðr in vast armies.
- Heimdallr will blow his deafening horn *Gjallarhorn* to alert the gods of the invasion of the world of the gods.
- The giants will gather on the sparkling plains of Vígríðr to wage war with their age old enemies. Yggdrasil will shake, sending worse quakes across the worlds.
- Óðin and the gods will dress and arm for war, leading the Einharjar into their long promised battle, taking them from Valhöll.
- The battle will commence as the two forces meet with monster slaying god, god killing giant and many other combinations, each set by the Fates.
- Surtr's flames will consume the worlds in the chaos of the war but only two mortals remain, Lif and Líþrasir, who hide in the woods of Hoddmimis Holt. The morning dew will sustain them, and they will repopulate the world from what remains. 99% of the gods, monsters and giants will be slain at the end.

The CK can decide how to fit this into their campaign, if they do, and make the most of it. There are many variant sources to this in Nordic texts and some contradictory, but it is up to the individual CK how they wish to direct it in its entirety.





# CHAPTER 6: WARRIORS & BATTLECRAFT

*“A Furore Normannorum Libera Nos Domine.”*



redominately masculine and aggressive, the peoples of Nordic are warrior cultures by nature. The role and function of the warrior is the next highest level on the hierarchy under the nobility itself. While the farmers, fishermen, hunters and other intensive labor occupations form the backbone of society, it fuels the warrior groups. The spoils of war and victories of conquest feed back into basic society in a cyclical manner, the bond being the lord or king.

It is a man's place to be among the laborious occupations or warriors only, with only a few exceptions being the Goði or Skalds. Stressed many times in this Codex is that the magic arts are seen as a feminine function and specialty and not for men. There isn't a god that isn't capable on the battlefield even though they may sit in their richly gilded halls.

This chapter provides a brief but detailed description of the warrior class and its 'world' in early Scandinavian societies. The many mechanisms that make it work and function are detailed along with two new character classes (Giant Killer and Berserker). Warrior terminology is given and the explanation of just what makes a 'Viking' so.

The Viking arts of war from Antiquity to the early Medieval period are also in this invaluable chapter. After a good study of this section, a player should be able to play their fighter or barbarian classes with a more Nordic gusto.

The many battle feats in the *Codex Celtarum* can be plugged into what is in this chapter for even more possibilities. The surviving sagas in Icelandic and other Nordic literature speak of the warriors doing amazing feats in battle to defeat their foes and that can be employed using both Codices.

The average warrior character from fantasy role-playing games shares a few common traits of the *ðegn*. They seek loot, fame and a high kill count, but unlike the typical *ðegn*, they do not serve a lord or king (often).

## THE BASIC WARRIOR

In Scandinavia, generally, there were two main sorts of warrior: those levied from the populace and those that had a more elite status fighting for their lords.

The warrior, as such, was culled from the population, from families of farmers, fishermen and other occupations to serve a lord typically. There was little call for 'professional' warriors (i.e. Roman soldiers or Spartans) in daily society in Scandinavia. Usually, a large enough force could be called upon in times of need, and these warriors were experienced enough to present a threatening army to an enemy.



In Nordic regions, tribes could muster large armies numbering in the thousands and send them to raid or attack enemies.

There were, logically, many free fighting orders or warbands that drifted errant from tribe to tribe, serving a lord for a time but never settling down for too long (*Gestir*, or 'Guests'). One example is Beowulf and his band of Geats. Another example of this are the Cimbri and Teutones that traveled out of Denmark to raid and pillage Gaul and terrorize Rome (113 to 101 BCE). These drifting groups were described as 'tribes' but were likely wandering bands of warriors seeking fame and loot. They had accumulated Celtic assistance and many of their leaders bore Celtic names but were Germanic still in culture.

In time, these guest armies would have families along for the expeditions as well, increasing the numbers and perhaps creating a 'tribe' in the usual sense.

It was required by all freemen that they serve in the military of their people in Scandinavia. The Anglo-Saxons called this a *Fyrd*, or a levy, and it was expected that the warrior provided his own weaponry and armor. This was expected for three months out of the year in the summer. Not everyone could be effective in combat and were placed on tasks that required them to build ships or arms for the rest, but it was just as important that this was done.

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When the arrival of a threat came to the land, the kings would call a Fyrd or a *leiðangr* (Norse) to muster and prepare. The *Leiðangr* would require the local farmers (of each district) to not only provide the timber and supplies for a ship but also build them too. The Ship Levy, or *Skjipreiða*, was expected to bring a standard twenty-four oar ship into being, a quiver of twenty-four arrows and bow per each bench in the ship as well. This manner of mustering could escalate the output a kingdom had greatly if called and from a larger realm.

Many districts required only one ship built during the levy, but there are variations. Some ask for two to four per region, increasing the fleet quickly. Each levied district had to supply a steersman or captain as well (*styrimaðr*) for each ship when defense was needed.

Aside from the summer months when the military requirements were expected from the populace, only the king could call for levies and musters for extra warriors and ship crews. Normally, the many warbands under his control throughout the country could handle whatever the task might be. These warbands were the elites and were less in number than a levied force from the countryside, but they equaled ten men or more alone.

Warriors sought items, habits and people that they believed imparted luck on them (*gaefa*). If they saw or thought that certain things could emit luck, and they could use it to their advantage, they would acquire it and add it to their collection or company. Many warriors had charms and blessed totems on them. Either these objects were tied and bound to their weaponry or accoutrements, or they were fitted and fixed into them so that their magic would be in contact with them at all times.

### THE ELITE WARRIOR

On a more personal level, however, bands of loyal, oath bound men served their lords and fought in battle for and with them on demand and were called a *þegn*. These groups went by several names across the tribes. These warriors lived to serve their lord by any means and did so with a full belly of mead and food (as part of their payment).

These elite warriors were hardened and tough, even ruthless, but they were extra concerned about the community's respect and opinion for them. They worked hard to foster good sentiments from the populace while they served their lord. It was important that they made the bond of protector and the protected stronger instead of one based simply on necessary dependence.

The typical warrior who did not serve a lord as a retainer, only gathered into an army when the time was needed and dissolved away with the army after its bloodied time was done. They would then return home to their family and occupation. Typically, a warband would remain in the service of their lord for years at a time, only severing their bond when one of the two dies.

In the Nine Worlds, the model for warrior culture is seen in the peoples of Scandinavia and their organization. The glue that held society together was found in the ring bound oath between Lord and *þegn*. The many *þegns* that served under a lord would protect his property and power on command and travel where ever needed and fight whatever foes required to satisfy their lord's needs. They were the elites of the lord and king whereas the levied forces were the grunts and expendable.

The members of the warband were always in their master's hall partaking in his sustenance as part of their payment for their servitude. All members of these warbands swore a vow of complete loyalty and servitude by a ring, or several rings – the *Stallahringr*.

A *þegn* was a freeman, a retainer and attendant. He would acquire property in time and not have to pay for certain taxes in the kingdom, unlike the other classes. Originally, the role of the *þegn* was a military one, but it evolved over time into a retainer for all royal and religious classes that was less militaristic in nature and more of one of a courtly assistant.

One hundred warriors gathered (*Hundafaþs*) were often grouped with others of varying number to make an army. Spears and axes were commonly used in battle as they were easier and quicker to forge. Swords were handed out to oath bound retainer warriors by the presiding lord once their Ring Oath had been spoken. A sword was worth more, in metal and symbolism and, therefore, was only in the hand of the most important warriors.

In Scandinavia, a warband was called, simply, a *Drótt* and led by a *Dróttin* ('warlord'). These warbands served their *Dróttin*, some on land and others as a ship crew (in which case they would be counted as a *Drengr*). It was important that each member of the warband followed the code of honor of the order to maintain the rules and structure. This was called *Drenskapr*, and it was similar to a chivalric code.

The *Dróttin* was second in power to a noble lord or leader, a *Hirð*, who would have royal authority over the warband. If a noble was in charge, the *Dróttin* was usually designated to the rank of *Stallari* who was also the king's champion and sometimes head and organizer of the many *Drótt* that served under him. In times of war, the *Stallari* would coordinate with the nobles and king to attack their enemies.

The Vikings from Norway were led by the *Hersir*, a chief born from usually the common Jarl class that was initially landowners and often independent freemen. They had leadership over warbands and shiploads of men and served under greater rulers with an element of independence but, by the 9<sup>th</sup> century, were integrated deeply into the court and servitude of the king. The *Hersir* is the same as the *Dróttin* essentially (by job and function).

These warriors would be in the *Hird*, or the private guard, or retinue of a lord. Berserkers would often join them to protect



the nobles or king as well. To be a part of the Hird, or ‘family/household’, of someone of this stature was an honor and not taken lightly.

This Ring Oath of a warrior into a warband, on the basic level, covered these oaths:

- 1 To take glory from their foes.
- 2 Avenge their lord if he is slain and fight to the death to do so if needed.
- 3 To enter battle before their lord does so.
- 4 To not flee one step from battle.
- 5 Never forget the wealth and goods given to them by their lord.

The nature of these oaths varied from lord to lord, kingdom to tribe in Germania depending on the purpose of the formation of the warband. If a lord was building a warband to hunt giants or dragons, their conditions of the oath could greatly vary. More commonly in earlier times, warriors swore their oaths on a sword’s hilt (with rings fitted into the handle), but they since changed their ritual to do so on a ring and with a sword present in some degree.

Once an oath bound warrior joined a warband, he was now a part of it, and there was no going back until death or the leader chose to disband it. Honorably, it was his job now to be a crucial part of the whole and fight as the rest. To falter or fail to achieve this was a great shame (*Niðr*) and must be avoided, or it would haunt the warrior where ever he went. The rings of his oath into the warband would be donned in some manner (on sword, necklace, ear, etc.) and remind others of his place in the order of things for all to see.

To follow the Drenskapr, the warrior would devote his life, literally, to seeing that his oaths were fulfilled and lord appeased. No injury or wound would deny them continued servitude, if possible, in the warband. The Drengir was expected to show honor, good reasoning, fair play and the strength of what was right. Their presence was meant to be one of positivity and strength to those around them. Their servitude to their lord was reflected on them by their actions and words.

Wanton killing of innocents was not acceptable except among the more questionable Dróttir – in which case they would be dishonorably exiled from the kingdoms and be classified as *Niðingr*. The warriors in these bands were the murderers and bloodthirsty ‘Vikings’ that have outlived their living counterparts. The Draugr that haunted the seas and coasts were believed to be these accursed, dishonored groups in origin.

There were times when the leader of a warband would become too out of control and difficult for even his own men to follow, and when that time came, they would have to come to some plan. Often, at the lowest level, the warriors would slay

their own leader. If done right, the warriors would not suffer dire consequences from the other lords or king in the kingdom, having done a good or honorable deed. This could also backfire and give the warriors dishonor and a bad reputation throughout the kingdom, black marking them. There were many cruel warlords who abused their power and sent their warbands out to harass, make war and generally disrupt affairs in the realm. They would often lead men that had more honor than themselves, and this created a complication.

Having no restraint or self-control, the warband could lose its honor quickly during a raid or other action for their lord. These *Niðingr* (‘Shameful Ones’) were given a chance to surrender themselves to the lord or king by laying down their weapons and taking off their rings, but if they refused, they would be hunted by the more respectable Dróttir.

Vengeance, on the other hand, could be exacted with little worry from punishment by the laws. If the warrior could not take revenge on the individual personally, he could do so on their family by murder or rape or simply taking their possessions with no fear of retaliation by the kingdom. This was only possible being one of the elite warriors in the lord or king’s retinue and was not common. Lesser warriors from the peasantry and allied guest warriors could not do this and get away with it. The laws would still apply to them as with the other peoples in the realm.

It was dishonorable and deemed bad luck to take the weaponry and former possessions of slain warriors as they could be cursed and carry on the wrath of the former owner. The lack of fortune to keep the owner alive would be shared by the taker if they were foolish enough to take it. This didn’t prevent the warriors from defending themselves if needed just to survive if disarmed already.

The warrior would use insults and taunts toward the foe to break their concentration and focus, as well, during the heat of battle. They would mock the actions, appearance and other personal details of their enemy with cleverly worded and funny insults. One of the worst insults to give a warrior was to claim he was womanish or feminine. This would raise his ire quicker than threatening his lord or his own family.

To be called womanish or to have another man take advantage of another in a homosexual manner gave the offended the right, by law, to kill the other. No trial or court was held to deem these offenses anything less than what they were, and the warrior could take his revenge on the spot if he wished.

If the warriors knew they would meet a certain foe and had time to prepare, they would sometimes make a Scorn-Pole, or *Niðstöng*. An animal skull, cloth and other items would be placed atop it and waved in view of them to distract them. It would be carefully made to mock and bother them by adding personal elements that only they would understand.

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### THE DUEL OF HONOR

If one warrior was dishonored or wrongly insulted publicly, he could ask for a duel. This *Einvígi*, or ‘Single Combat’, would be a set event with certain rules. First, it would be publically announced that such an event was going to be held. Second, a designated spot would be chosen and a single, large cloak would be placed on the spot. This was the location that both warriors would stand and fight, to fall off of it would make the opponent a *Níðr*.

Each opponent was given three shields to use and their choice of weapons. The first warrior to bleed on the cloak would lose the duel, but there were many other ways to leave the combat. If one had wealth, they could offer to buy their way out of the confrontation and suffer no injury. Dying in battle was another way to leave the duel, but it would often cause animosity with the warrior’s kith and kin.

To run a duel, the Castle Keeper can state that each warrior must make their attacks as normal in the rules but with the exception of two things: 1.) Bleeding would be caused by any cut or stab normally, and to reflect this, for each wound suffered, there is a 1 in 6 chance that it drips onto the cloak (for example, Ingvald has taken three wounds from the duel so far, his chance would be a 3 in 6 now) and 2.) Staying in the cloak would be a matter of agility and dexterity. If the attacks are simple and straightforward then few roles need to be made, but if both are moving about while fighting, this will take some coordination and a dexterity save for each movement beyond standing still.

Duels, as with all battles, are also a matter of endurance, and one opponent can attempt to wear down the other in time. To simulate this, constitution rolls can be made as often as the Castle Keeper requires based on the actions of the duelists. For each failure, the participant could suffer a -1 on rolls, and this can accumulate over time.

### A HEROIC DEATH

The ultimate death that a warrior seeks is to do so in battle – any other means are not appropriate or proper. Whether in a duel, on the battlefield or during a raid, death must come from an enemy. This death is the only means in which the afterlife is spent in *Valhöll* with *Oðin* and his *Einherjar*. To be one of the Battle Slain, or *Einherjar*, in the end is what matters the most.

The dying warrior hopes to see the *Valkyrja* in the skies, swooping down from the heights of *Yggdrasil* and grabbing them up to be placed on the back of their ferocious wolf or beautiful steed. They imagine the endless feasts, fighting and fornication that are daily done in the Hall of the Battle Slain. Death by old age is not honorable and deserves only *Hel*’s hall as a reward or, if the gods have mercy, in *Freyja*’s hall.

As seen in the basic warrior’s code, the *ðegn* will fight long after his lord is dead to restore his honor and exact vengeance. Even if the battle itself is lost, they will continue to serve their master into the afterlife. The oath bound warriors will not flee or flinch from the battle, even if the odds are against them, once their leader has fallen.

Warriors have been known to remain fighting and serving lords even with terrible disfigurements and crippling wounds. They ignore and endure the wounds out of loyalty and honor and on a practical level because they would not find another occupation in society that would comfort or satisfy an invalid or cripple. They remain in the warband if able and allowed by their leader or lord until they die a warrior’s death.

The warriors will also not simply throw their lives away either. They will choose a smarter and more careful line of action if the odds are completely against them in a confrontation. Honor and bravery are fine but so is victory or surviving to achieve it. Facing an opponent with far superior numbers or means can enable the warriors to devise sneaky and clever means to succeed.

### THE SHIELDMAIDENS

Although Scandinavia is a predominantly male ruled region of *Miðgarðr*, allowing only the men to participate in politics and the higher levels of society, there are select women that can gain the skills of battle, too. These women are the *Sköldmö* and are found in many other lands to the south in Germania as well.

One of the most famous is Queen *Brynhildr Buðladóttir* who sought to marry the hero *Sigurd the Dragonslayer*. The Shieldmaiden is able to take part in the courts of lords with the rest of the men, join a warband and even become a Berserker if they are so blessed by the gods.

*Sköldmö* occupy a special place in society that brings envy from all other women. This is because of the freedom they have and the upholding of honor. Status and property do not matter much to them as they seek only the glory of battle and the fame it brings for achieving great deeds or defeating powerful foes.

They are seen by peoples as the *Valkryja* on earth incarnate, and they are not incorrect as *Oðin* and *Freyjr* both will choose from their slain and designate them into one of the *Dísi* or *Valkryja*. To be a Shieldmaiden is an honorable occupation, giving many women opportunities to become chieftainesses or even queens in time – if they choose.

Shieldmaidens have powerful personalities because they must endure prejudice in a man’s world where ever they go, not because of the gruesome nature of battle or the foes they must face. One would never find a meek warrior woman, and if she is silent, she has good reason.

## THE METHODS OF BATTLECRAFT

The usual arms and armor of a warrior from the Nordic region are quite straightforward. The spear or axe was the common weapon of choice for the average warrior (with the sword being infrequent and worth more and, therefore, rarer). Chiefs, champions and kings wore helmets and chain more often while the rest only possessed leather jerkins. A shield for all classes was common. These would be round and fitted with metal bosses for physical combat as well as just defense.

The Shieldwall (*Scildweall* in Saxon, and *Skjaldborg* in Old Norse) was a common tactic used by the Germanic tribes. It required the warriors to be standing shoulder to shoulder with shields overlapping forming a defensive wall. This wall's purpose was to deflect missile weapons and any close attacks. The Shieldwall was used in the opening moments of a large battle and at moments throughout the course of the bloodshed but never to win the outcome since it was prone to failure if many of the participants were wounded or dead.

The Shieldwall was a strong initial defense but would quickly crumble apart once its members started to fall. The morale would be great at the beginning and inspire the warriors; it would be able to withstand much assault if the members were doing their job well. This would be used to endure the initial volleys of missiles and allow their own to return fire. Charging mobs of warriors could be held back often. Spears would jab and axes would cleave during the jostling and confrontation.

If the enemy could shatter the defensive line of the Shieldwall then, usually, the battle's end was determined at that moment with the members of the defensive line failing to regain control. They developed a specialized attack to penetrate the enemies' wall and then plunge inside it and separate its men.

This tactic was called the Arrow by some sources, and it would thrust itself into the shields and swinging blades and then charge deeper into the throng of the foes. Once the enemy force had done so, they would try to split the defending force into two or more groups and cut them down. The Berserkers would be sent in the lead to hack and hew their way into the thick of the foe while the rest of the warriors would thunder and charge into the weakened members of the attacked force.

Scores of predatory warrior bands would ravage and threaten nearby lands and peoples, ever hungry for the loot, women and power that might be available to them if they persisted. These warbands were not usually in league with lords or kings or were 'allowed' to do what they are doing and threatened the well-being of the rest of their peoples. They certainly were not guest armies, unless relations between other peoples were strained enough that their bloody, undisciplined forces were needed.

A charismatic leader was the only means to keep such a vast army together. He would promise great loot and plunder, good



Many tribes have warbands of Shieldmaidens led by great leaders and praise a goddess or giantess of patronage that is attuned to their own objectives. These warbands are usually Amazonian in nature and exclude men, only allowing them to be servants and lesser functions and will do what they wish serving queens.

Unlike the rest of their gender, Shieldmaidens are more often ruthless and with no remorse. There are tales of them slaying their own children and family to protect them from the hands and wrath of foes, if needed. Men should not expect them to show the same compassion and weaknesses that other women display, for they do not possess it often.



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times for his men and success. It would bring out the highly energetic, restless, younger portion of the population from the tribe. The enemies knew well that if this paramount leader was slain in the course of a military campaign, the horde would crumble quickly.

Dissention and whatever feelings of unrest that were in the army, and there always were, would be fired up by the death of the leader. Ambitious and ruthless warriors of lesser rank would swiftly try to assume control. Chaos would erupt in the army unless another leader of equal power and charisma took control before too long. Every army or warband had its share of politics and competition, and this is one of the weaknesses of them. If this was exploited by the foe, victory would come.

The order of combat typically seen by a Viking army or warband, as understood best from the sources, is thus:

- 1 Battle lines are placed in order as warriors assemble on both sides. Inspiring speeches by leaders are given and meant to cause a *Heil*, or ‘spirit’, to rise in the participants.
- 2 The throwing of Oðin’s Spear. One, or both, of the army’s leaders (or chosen warriors) will hurl a spear over the heads of the foe to signify that the Allfather has chosen them to be slain on this day.
- 3 Closing in of both sides. Shieldwalls are formed and missile weapons are fired, hurled and flung at the opposing side. Battle cries will be beginning and the Berserkers will make themselves become frenzied before the forces meet.
- 4 Both sides clash shield to shield and begin the melee exchange. This is fast and with the intent of breaking each other’s lines as soon as possible. The Berserkers will lunge into the shieldwall frenzied. Both sides will continually pound each other until something gives, either a banner is taken or a leader slain.
- 5 One side’s defense breaks eventually. Once this event does occur, a chase and slaughter will follow of the retreating force. Depending on the whim of the leaders, this can be merciless or simply a way to end the conflict. Warriors will fight individual combats without having to deal with larger numbers anymore.

The Castle Keeper can establish some quick and deadly rules for missile fire during these larger confrontations that can make these battles more realistic. Perhaps every round that the two forces are closing in one another but have not directly met in melee combat, there is a chance for arrows, javelins, spears and axes to hit them. This basic chance could be a 2 in 6, 8 or 10 each round.



If a character is hit by the volley, now it is a matter of determining how many and from what they are pummeled. The number of missiles the character gets hit by in the heat of battle could be determined on a 1d4 to a 1d10 (depending on the size of the enemy). The damage for each impact can be figured based on the standard damage that weapon does normally plus the level of the army (1<sup>st</sup> level, etc.). An experienced force could shred the foe with their volleys alone, and this was not unheard of and occurred often in ancient warfare. Viking sources do not emphasize the importance of archers during combat, but they do mention them present.

The Castle Keeper can use this table below to determine the nature of each missile that hits the player character or NPC:

1D6	MISSILE WEAPON/DAMAGE
1	Arrow (1d6 to 1d8)
2	Spear (1d6)
3	Javelin (1d4)
4	Rock (1d4)
5	Axe (1d6)
6	Sling Stone (1d2)

THE ACCOUTREMENTS OF WAR

Iron Age Viking era Europe’s technology remained the same, with little change. Rome’s influences came but in small degrees and not

in siege machines or other grand designs but, instead, in the arts of war concerning strategic matters, if fleeting and uncommon.

Listed are the weaponry and armor that the peoples of Germania would have used (as found in the *Player's Handbook*) below:

**ARMOR:** *Padded Armor, Leather Coat, Leather Armor, Ring Mail, Hide, Studded Leather, Leather Laminar, Mail Shirt, Scale Mail, Cuir Bouille, Bronze Chestplate, Brigandine, Mail Hauberk, Greek Ensembles 1 & 2, Banded Mail, Splint Mail, Full Mail Suit, Roman Ensembles optional (if the Castle Keeper wishes to include the Roman aspect).*

**SHIELDS:** *Buckler, Small Steel Shield, Small Wooden Shield, Steel Medium Shield, Wooden Medium Shield, Large Steel Shield, Large Wooden Shield.*

**WEAPONS:** *Battle Axe, Bearded Axe, Hand/Throwing Axe, Piercing Axe, Two Handed Axe, Cestus, Cleaver, Club, Dagger, Fist, Spiked Gauntlet, Hatchet, Knife, Lances, Sap, Sickle, All Spears, Staff, Broad Sword, Long Sword, Short Sword, Two-Handed Sword.*

**MISSILE & RANGED:** *Arrows (all), Bolas, Bolts, Long Bow, Long Composite Bow, Short Bow, Short Composite Bow, Light & Hand Crossbows, Dart, Javelin, Rock, Sling, Whip.*

**TRANSPORT & TACK:** *Chain Barding, Full Plate Barding (if Roman), Leather Barding, Padded Barding, Studded Barding, Bit & Bridle, Long Boat, Row Boat, Skiff Boat, Small Boat, Coracle (canoe), Cart, Coach, Mule, Heavy Horse, Light Horse, Ox, Pony, Raft, Wagon, Heavy Warhorse, Light Warhorse, Warpony, War Chariot.*

During the many wars against Rome, Germanic tribes would often adapt Roman weaponry, such as the javelin, but likely followed the taboo of never choosing to use a dead man's possessions because there was a reason why he failed. By the end of the 'Viking' era, European military and fortification technologies evolved due to the Crusades, and the Medieval period was established. This change brought an end to the earlier post-Roman methods of warfare and combat, and those who remained in such a system were quickly overwhelmed in time.

### To Go A-Viking

Predatory warbands thrived on the lawless opportunities that raiding others could provide, but this was not the marauding behavior that the popular imagination claims it is.

The term *Vikings* means someone that is going on an expedition distantly down the river, near or far, for trade, exploration and, ultimately (by the 8<sup>th</sup> century on), raiding as well. This tradition is not something exclusive to the Nordic peoples of Scandinavia but documented amongst all Germanic

peoples in the Late Roman Empire and Migration Period. Thus, the Migration Period could not have happened without these adventuring warriors.

The Saxons called this *Wicing*, but the basics are the same. The Germanic peoples going on these expeditions did not consider themselves 'Vikings,' and their cultures were not Viking peoples. The adoption of the word by the victims of their later predations and invasions simplified their nationalities by calling them Vikings.

These groups went (most often) from trading to raiding over time, tempted by the wealth and lands of other peoples. Saxon, Vandal, Gothic and Nordic raiders used their longships, *Knár* (Norse) or *Keel* (Saxon) to travel up and down waterways, across the Channel or North Sea. Their attacks were sudden and unexpected, leaving people slain, structures burning and loot plundered.

To go 'a-Viking' meant adventuring afar by the 9<sup>th</sup> century on. Ambitious lords and leaders would prepare their warriors for extended journeys beyond their homelands with the expectation of acquiring untold wealth and opportunities. They would leave for months to years at a time, and if they were lucky, they would return with a shipload of newly taken wealth, women and stories to tell.

Academically, the term 'Viking' has been under heated debate and scrutiny in some circles of academia. Its etymology and usage is not completely understood. There is clear evidence that the equivalent term was used by other Germanic peoples – primarily among the West Germanic tribes. The Frisians, Western Goths, Franks, Angles, Jutes and others were sea-bound raiders and explorers.

In popular usage from the 10<sup>th</sup> century on, the Vikings were seen as violent, pagan warriors in dragon-prowd longships that came for plunder and destruction. The Nordic *Knár* was a merchant ship able to hold a large cargo (24 tons) and was not built for war or too swift on the waves. These ships formed the majority of the initial explorers and remained long after the violent upheavals of raiding and invasions were over.

These merchant vessels could travel across the Atlantic to Iceland, Greenland and the North American continent. The Nordic peoples had other ships that served other, similar functions, all smaller in size. The longship, *Drekar*, is the culmination of Germanic ship design. Well-built, it was able to serve several functions at once for raiding, mercantile and passengers. *Drekar* are richly decorated ships, large in size and always possessed elaborately made dragon and serpent-like prows.

Smaller in size is the *Snekkjar* that are built for war. These longships are able to hold forty benches of rowers at one time. They can traverse the deep fjords and do not need ports to land at a coast or shore. The raiders will come ashore fast, leap out

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and charge toward the targeted land and its peoples (*for more on the ships in Scandinavia, see Chapter 7*).

### THE JÓMSVIKINGS

This legendary mercenary band of pagan warriors served only those that paid well for their services and based their headquarters at Jomsborg in an unknown location on the Baltic Sea. They chose to remain strongly loyal to their native gods, following Óðin and Thor, and rarely used their deadly skills to aid Christian rulers. Harald Bluetooth was reputed to be the founder of this elite fighting order during the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Recruitment into the fighting order was very limited and required the candidate to be between the ages of 18 and 50 and have proven their talents for combat to catch their attention. Once offered, the candidate had to go through further tasks to earn a permanent place in the Jomsvikings. This could vary between personal duels to raids elsewhere.

Like with most fighting orders, the Jomsvikings had strict rules and enforced them rigidly. If broken, depending on which rule it was, punishment could result in a duel to first blood, or even death, or, at the worst, expulsion from the order.

Jomsvikings remained inside the walls of Jomsborg when not in battle serving an employer. In the field, they had many strict rules that were sacred and could not be broken. Several of these rules were:

- Never show fear of the enemy.
- Never speak badly or negatively of a fellow warrior in the order.
- Avenge the slaying of another brother in the order.
- Never stay away from Jomsborg for more than three days at a time – unless the order says it is fine.
- Whatever spoils of battle and payment the order receives is divided equally among the entire order.
- Never take women captive or allow them inside the walls of Jomsborg.
- Kinship is not a consideration upon acceptance into the order.
- The leader has the final say on matters of kinslaying and other disputes outside the brotherhood, if it happens.

Many Nordic rulers from all over Scandinavia and Viking settled Europe employed their services against foes and for purposes of political leverage (if they could pay the high fees). Unlike their founder, who converted to Christianity, they remained strongly pagan and loyal to the native gods, never willing to change their

ways. This issue with regards to religion sometimes got in the way of who employed them or who they chose to be employed by, but in war-torn Europe, there was never a lack of their bloody services.

The exact size of the Jomsvikings is not known and a well kept secret among the officers and chiefs. At the most, their fleet has been recorded being as large as 300 ships and their numbers possibly nearing 20,000 or more. Just as secret is kept the hierarchy of the order and the chain of command, but it is known that the warbands were structured similarly to the basic Drótt with a captain and officers that preside over them in authority. Who the officers answer to is not known, not by name or title.

Jomsborg's land was given by the Wendish King Burislav and the structure built and founded by the great chief Pálmatóki, son of Harald Bluetooth. The only leader's name of the Jomsvikings ever documented was (Stryr)björn Olafsson who, unfortunately, led the army to the beginnings of its final defeat against the Swedish King Eric the Victorious. The Jomsvikings' defeat was devastating during this battle – the Battle of Fýrisvellir in the 980s.

This battle was just one of several to follow that would bring the order into its decline in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century and onto the 11<sup>th</sup>. In 986, they met another defeat against the forces of Haakon of Norway that hastened their end, but this was matched by their crucial hand in the later Battle of Svolder around the year of 1000. It was a conflict between Danish and Norwegian forces in an attempt by King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark to gain control over the country. Religion was also at stake in this conflict as the two forces were mixed between Christian and pagan. The Jomsvikings aided the Danes during a crucial moment when they abandoned their employer, the Norwegian King Olaf, to surprise and destroy his own fleet under the leadership of the Danish Jarl Sigvald.

Jomsvikings were afield in England, participating in many battles and political events between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings, even during their declining years, and were still a considerable threat. Their end came by the hand of King Magnus of Norway in 1043 who attacked them at Jomsborg and razed to the ground the stronghold, killing all of the members he could find and then executing the survivors later. Magnus looted their acquired wealth and assumed that the Jomsvikings were finished, never to be involved in Scandinavian affairs again in any form.

It isn't impossible that many of the order survived beyond King Magnus' assault elsewhere in Europe and relocated to another stronghold to regroup. The CK can decide to run the Jomsvikings during their peak in the middle to late 10<sup>th</sup> century or as another incarnation in the 11<sup>th</sup> for possibilities.



## THE BERSERKER (CHA)

In the midst of the levied warriors and elite members of the many warbands in Scandinavia, other groups exist, too – fiercer ones that cause dread where ever they go. These sacred warriors are chosen by the gods and do not abide by the rules or laws of others. They are the *Úlfhéðnar*, or ‘Men (Who Wear) Wolf Pelts’, and are possessed by the wrath and fury of Oðin.

These groups of warriors are found throughout Scandinavia and the Nine Worlds and take on many variations in appearance and even titles, but their role in society is the same – to cause havoc and slaughter on the foe in the name of the gods. Mentally unstable before they were ever inducted into the fighting order, the Berserker learns to hone the frenzy to its greatest extreme.

They are so lethal and seemingly unstoppable that all others who confront them fear them greatly. Luckily, their numbers are small in the whole of tribes and kingdoms, but they make a difference in battle by taking part no matter how small their numbers. Somehow, fire and iron are unable to affect them once they are in their frenzied state, and this puzzles and bothers their foes.

Berserkers swear to only bathe in the blood of their enemies and not in water. They let their hair grow wild and remain unkempt, but this isn’t for some sense of fashion; it is because their minds are too far gone to pay attention to those details. These warriors are ‘touched’ and given a sacred purpose by the Allfather to commit great slaughter in his name anywhere they go.

The Berserkers do not follow any rules or laws and can wander aimlessly throughout Nordic regions, as they wish, seeking work with their deadly skills for any willing lord. If they want food and alcohol, they take it. If they want a woman or two, they can claim them from the local populace without reprisals. A Berserker possesses the ultimate freedom in the Nine Worlds and abides by no king or lord. It is rare that they ever agree to the Ring Oath because they are so fickle in their daily lives and go where ever their bloody urges take them.

Many kings and nobles have their ‘house’ Berserkers on hand that have been serving for generations in the same way for the same line of royalty. The Berserker is the special warrior that is the last option for any lord wishing to gain victory if his other warriors have failed. The erraticism and unpredictability of the Berserkers makes the decision delicate because they do not follow orders well.

In their frenzied state, they only lust for the blood and slaughter of others and do not mentally have the facilities to think things through carefully. Berserkers commonly are armed with a spear and don a wolf pelt, regardless of where they come from in Scandinavia or the Nine Worlds. This is to symbolize the source of their inspiration, Oðin.



Once in the frenzy, the Berserker cannot distinguish friend from foe and must be set loose to cause havoc until everything is over. They see only red, literally, as they hack and impale their way through the throng of foes.

Oðin has the divine power to send others into a Berserk frenzy at a whim, if he so chooses. Likewise, he can also dispel the fury and rage others have just the same. The Berserker does not wear any armor aside from the animal pelt and uses their inner rage to fend off the damage by others.

Observers of these wild men say that they chew and gnaw on their shields and growl and snarl like beasts as they get worked up into their frenzy. The frenzy that overtakes them, when it does, enables them to cause and suffer more damage than the average

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warrior. Each time they go into the frenzy, they lose a trace more of their sanity when they emerge. Many can reach the frenzy with the aid of drugs or other means, but the true 'masters' are those that can reach Oðin's Fury on their own.

A Berserker believes he is not only touching on Oðin's fury but that he is also channeling the beast of the wolf pelt he wears – that he is transformed into a wolf-like man, half both but also divine in nature. When given the chance before battle, the Berserker will swallow burning embers and shout aloud like rabid beasts, showing the world that they are invincible.

Even though the members of a warband won't normally retreat from battle because of oath-bound honor, the levied warriors will if overpowered and seeing defeat, but the Berserker absolutely will not stop slaying the enemy until either a.) The battle is over, b.) They are dead themselves or c.) The enemy is slain. Retreat is never an option for the *Úlfhéðinn*.

Men are not the only gender that can be among the Berserker-kind. Women can too earn this difficult place. Shieldmaidens have been known to possess the fury, the *berserkergang*. Those who have the Berserkergang are as strong as five to ten men and can lift, pull, hit or push with a mighty strength akin to the gods or giants.

The more powerful and older Berserker's abilities are truly divine-like in nature. As a player character, the Berserker can easily be intimidating and awkward around the rest of the party. Their mental state is never certain and any excitement could send them into frenzy.

### ABILITIES

**ODIN'S FURY:** The Berserker can call upon the legendary rage and fury of the Allfather, when needed, to bring them to a higher state of physical being. Once this ability is mastered, the Berserker can control it and not require extra stimulæ to encourage it. This is called berserkergang, or *Öðr*, and means 'furor, excitement and fury.'

This ability is similar to the barbarian's *Primal Instincts & Will* except that is only two of the functions this ability grants. Before battle or an event that causes great excitement, the Berserker must either try to control their urges or be a victim to them. To do this, the player must make a charisma save or slip into the mindless rage. If the charisma score is a secondary attribute, the Berserker will have to take measures to try to bring the fury out. These can range, but not be limited, to these modifiers:

- A) Eat Red Cap mushrooms: +2 on save roll.
- B) Gnaw shield and growl like a beast: +1 on save roll.
- C) Swallow burning embers: +2 to save roll.

- D) Suffer being hit by another: +1 per each time hit by another, either in combat or not.

Once the Fury is summoned, the Berserker gains these basic advantages for its duration:

1. +5 strength. This counts for the damage caused by the Berserker and any strength related actions they do.
2. The Berserker can endure more damage during combat. These are exactly *half* of their total number more onto what they already have at the time. The Berserker cannot feel the wounds they suffer in the duration; they are numb to the injuries, no matter how awful they really are. Their original hit points will return after the battle and Fury is over minus the number of points taken during the combat.
3. The Berserker will be unable to be harmed by any fire or bladed cutting attacks but is vulnerable to all others (blunt, ice, water, etc.).
4. The Fury will last for as long as the battle is happening or they are dead or unable to fight.

Unfortunately, every time this ability is called upon, it weakens the Berserker's mind and sanity. If the Berserker manages to survive the Fury, they must make a wisdom check. If they fail, they lose one point each time from that attribute. A fumbled save takes two points away. Gradually, the Berserker will lose their sanity and reasoning when they summon the Fury of the Allfather. One way or another, they cannot keep ahold of their sanity *and* be able to possess the Fury of Oðin.

At 5<sup>th</sup> level, the Berserker can shatter any bladed weapons that come their way while they are in this state. Swords, axes, knives and all other bladed weapons made from metal will break if they are struck in this heightened state of the Fury.

While at 10<sup>th</sup> level, the Berserker will gain their hit points twice in number for the duration of the Fury and battle, but once the battle is over, their hits will return to normal (minus whatever is lost in the battle).

**CLEAVE FOE:** The Berserker can call on this ability *only* if Oðin's Fury is already active. With this ability, the enraged warrior can shatter the enemy's shields and weapons during battle. To use this, after an attack on an enemy (or a failed one), the opponent must make a dexterity save or their weapon or shield is destroyed by the mighty Berserker. Magical items can only be shattered by another enchanted weapon; otherwise they cannot shatter them so easily.

Cleave Foe can be used as often in combat as the Berserker wishes, but the same chance of their own weapons or shield be-

ing destroyed applies on the reverse. For each time they strike an enemy and manage to shatter their armaments, they must also make a dexterity save unless their weapon or shield is magical. The Berserker can shatter a weapon if it hits their shield in the event of a failed attack on them with this ability.

**DISARM ENEMY:** The Berserker can use this against opponents for defense. They must designate to the Castle Keeper beforehand before being attacked that they want to try to disarm their enemies. To make this ability work, the Berserker must not be hit by the enemy first, meaning that the attack failed against them with a failed roll. The attacker then must make a strength save, or they will lose their grip on the weapon, sending it 1d10 feet away in whatever direction the Castle Keeper decides.

**THE HEAT OF TYR:** Once the Berserker reaches 3<sup>rd</sup> level, they are capable of possessing such an intense rage that their body heat becomes too unbearable for others. To call on this ability, the warrior must make a charisma save, but they can only do this while in combat. It is the rage and aggression that they feel from the struggle that creates this effect.

In a ten foot radius, a powerful steam seethes from the Berserker making all flammable objects potentially burst into flames around them. There is a 2 in 6 chance that each item on others ignites and quickly burns – this means clothing, wooden items and hair. It could quickly escalate and make the enemies unable to attack as they pat out the many fires around them.

Once the Berserker reaches 6<sup>th</sup> level, this ability grows in power. Not only does it cause flammable items to ignite (now a 4 in 6 chance), but it can burn those enemies who dare to come close, doing 1d6 damage a round to them and placing a -5 on their rolls for attacks. It only takes an enemy to leave the raging radius to not be affected.

**THE ALLFATHER'S SPEED:** The Berserker is able to attack their foe twice per round because of their rage, but this can only happen while they are in Oðin's Fury. This is similar to the barbarian's *Whirlwind Attack*, in essence, but works a slightly different way. This ability can only work on one opponent at a time.

At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the Berserker can add one more attack to their bloody barrage toward an enemy. While at 8<sup>th</sup>, one more additional attack is gained, and the Berserker can lay four attacks on each enemy.

Alternatively, the Berserker can also fire a bow with speed in a manner similar to the Allfather. Oðin is able to fire twenty arrows in one pull of the string, and his sacred warriors try to imitate this in their frenzy. They can fire one more arrow per experience level plus any bonus taken from their dexterity score. This ability ends its additional arrows fired at 10<sup>th</sup> level.

**PRIME ATTRIBUTE:** Strength

**HIT DIE:** 1d12

**ALIGNMENT:** Any

**WEAPONS:** Any, preferably spear or axe

**ARMOR:** None

**ABILITIES:** *Oðin's Fury, Cleave Foe, Disarm Enemy, the Heat of Týr and the Speed of Oðin.*

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	d12	+0	0
2	d12	+1	2,101
3	d12	+2	4,701
4	d12	+3	9,401
5	d12	+4	20,001
6	d12	+5	40,001
7	d12	+6	80,001
8	d12	+7	170,001
9	d12	+8	340,001
10	d12	+9	600,001
11	+5 HP	+10	800,001
12	+5 HP	+11	1,000,001

13 and up + 200,000 per level

## GIANT KILLERS – THE BOLD HUNTERS (STR)

Ever since the slaying of Ymir by the Sons of Borr during the Age of the Giants, there has been a tradition by many races in the Nine Worlds to do the same. Many types of Jötun are found throughout the worlds, mostly malicious and cruel, and being the enemies of the gods, many of the faithful choose a life of crusading against them. This is where the Giant Killers enter into the worlds.

Gaining their inspirations from Oðin and Thor, Giant Killers, or *Jätte Baneman*, hunt them for many reasons. For some, it is personal, perhaps giants ravaged their home or people and caused terrible damage, or for others, it is a matter of faith in the gods and loyalty to the Æsir. Whatever the catalyst, the Giant Killer is resolute in making a living in slaying them.

Populations of giants are found in fewer numbers outside of Niflheimr, Múspellsheimr and Jötunheimr, but they live in enough numbers to bring havoc and turmoil. They are generally denied entrance into Álfheimr, Vanaheimr and Ásgarðr, but there are many that are friends and allies within the ranks of the gods.

The Giant Killer can make an art out of hunting and slaying the giant menace from a region or do it humbly; it is their decision. There is no certain or absolute way to do this hazardous occupation except that the giants must be slain in the end. As with the



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dragonslayers, this is varied by its participants and could be done singlehandedly or by a team.

Many giants tower close to twenty feet in height, and these are difficult enough, but there are many that loom even higher. *Útgarda-Loki* is one of many giants that are so massive in size that their smallest movements can render a land destroyed and ruined. It is the ambition of many Giant Killers to someday be able to slay these monumental Jötun and to do so as easily as Thor with his hammer.

Just like the dragonslayer, Giant Killers can do this as work and serve as mercenaries as they go land to land or do it out of some noble cause. The possibilities are just as varied as to what motivates them to seek out the enormous giants and slay them.

The giants of Niflheimr are all the descendants of Bergelmir who, with his wife, survived the deluge of Ymir's blood after the slaying. Giant Killers roam the frozen wastes as willingly as they would the seering hot and ashen land of Múspellsheimr to look for Jötnar. The one land they are sought, however, is in Jötunheimr. If any suspicious beings that are not of the giant-kind are found wandering the land, they are assumed to be a Jätte Baneman and killed on sight.

Giant Killers are found in many kingdoms within the retinue of the king or lords and are often on retainer like dragonslayers and Pegns. When they are not searching for and slaying giants, they are in the halls of their chiefs. Just the mere presence of a Jätte Baneman is enough to intimidate others. Although giants can be slain by any peoples and classes, the Giant Killers make a living out of it, and it shows their toughness and strength.

### ABILITIES

**SWIFTNESS & AGILITY:** The Jätte Baneman has learned the skill of moving swiftly in the presence of looming giants and can flip, roll and dive out of the way when needed. With this ability, the Giant Killer can avoid attacks with fluidity from towering threats by sensing the moves of the lumbering threat. The Giant Killer uses the difference of scale against his enemy and takes advantage of it with expert timing.

If the Giant Killer's dexterity is high enough, a bonus is given in addition to this ability's own:

13-14: +1	17-18: +3
15-16: +2	19-20: +4

From 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the Jätte Baneman is given a +2 to their AC when attacked by opponents larger in size. From 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level, a +3 is gained while from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> level, a +4.

This ability can *only* apply to facing large foes that are clearly greater in size and scale the Giant Killer. Otherwise, the ability's bonus does not aid during combat.



**MJÖLNIR'S POWER:** In a called and planned strike once during combat, the Giant Killer can lay a blow on the enemy that is worthy of Thor himself. In the many encounters against giants, the Killer has gained the ability to vent out their bottled up strength. For characters at 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level, this can only occur once during combat. For 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> level, it can be twice.

What the ability enables the Killer is a mighty blow that will take down a giant, if not kill it outright. The Giant Killer's damage is multiplied by 1d6+2 from levels 1-5 and 1d10+3 for levels 6-10 in one strike with their weapon. Tremendous force and power is channeled into the giant in this one attack. A critical roll will double the damage done, further causing awful hits on the giant. Doing so will likely leave the Giant Killer winded from the experience (constitution save) for a round.

The Giant Killer keeps this special talent to themselves, never revealing the secret.

The Jätte Baneman must plan this special attack and do so when the time is right, or it will be wasted. The giant must be weakened enough to lay this coup de grâce on them, or it won't matter, and the defeat of the giant will be a matter of luck and attrition.

**KILLER'S FORTUNE:** Because the Giant Killer's life is so dangerous, just skill alone does not mean that there is a guaranteed victory with each encounter of a Jötun. Many Giant Killers have gained the ability of fortune to aid them – perhaps the gods or Norns have chosen them to be so blessed, no one knows.

At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, their fortune ability gives them another 'chance' to be rolled if they failed an attack or action. They can roll a second time and disregard the first completely once a day in anything they choose. Normally, Giant Killers save their luck for their confrontations against the foes in battle when it matters the most, but it can be used for other actions.

A Giant Killer at 6<sup>th</sup> level or higher can have fortune on their side twice, enabling them to make the roll twice in one day. A failed roll, however, is still a failed roll, and this fortune does not ensure that things will go as planned.

This luck is often named *Oðin's Blessing* because of the advantage it gives in the act of slaying giants and is only found among the Jätte Baneman and no one else. Onlookers to the activities of the Giant Killers are perplexed about the fortunes of them and how they manage to remain alive and intact after the terrifying encounter, but the secret is never told.

**TRACK PREY:** A well-honed skill after years of hunting giants, the Jätte Baneman can identify the tracks and presence of giants in the landscape. To others, the wilderness appears as it always had, but to the Giant Killer, it is an opportunity that gives clues and traces. Disturbed boulders, debris, crushed vegetation, broken trees and many other features are usually signs of a giant's passing.

Human sized beings or less would be unable to identify the tracks of giants because of their scale, but a well experienced Giant Killer can locate them. This ability requires an intelligence check (+5 for the Giant Killer) to spot the evidence of giants in the region they are traveling.

The Giant Killer can track giants in any environment skillfully and with accuracy, able to know the length of time the giant(s) were in the area, how big they are in size and how many. This ability allows the tracker to find and follow any Jötun except for, perhaps, those that are near divine in power.

**PRIME ATTRIBUTE:** Strength

**HIT DICE:** 1d12

**ALIGNMENT:** Any

**WEAPONS:** Any

**ARMOR:** Any

**ABILITIES:** *Swiftness of Agility, Mjöltnir's Power, Killer's Fortune, Track Prey.*

Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	d12	+0	0
2	d12	+1	2,101
3	d12	+2	4,701
4	d12	+3	9,401
5	d12	+4	20,001
6	d12	+5	40,001
7	d12	+6	80,001
8	d12	+7	170,001
9	d12	+8	340,001
10	d12	+9	600,001
11	+5 HP	+10	800,001
12	+5 HP	+11	1,000,001

**13 and up + 200,000 per level**







## CHAPTER 7: CASTLE KEEPER INFO



his chapter gives the CK a lot of extra info that is useful for those extra touches in their games that might be overlooked but are crucial elements in keeping true to both realism and the mythic Nordic sources. Details about sea voyages, poetry, Nordic society, naming and many other aspects of realism and details are highlighted in this penultimate chapter of the Codex. These additional aspects can provide just the right facets to the campaign that can make the game truly Nordic or 'Viking' in character.

### NORDIC SOCIETY

The societies of the many peoples of Scandinavia were Germanic in their original design, patterned after the earlier relations on the European continent, but after interaction and involvement with outside cultures and peoples, they changed greatly in time. Across the Scandinavian landmass, the Swedish, Norwegians and the Danish all generally shared the same system.

Essentially, three strata were found in Nordic society, all of them dependant on the other but all answering to the noble Jarls and the king. These strata are:

- Konunger (King)
- Jarl (Noble)

- Ceorl (Freeman)
- Þræll (Slave)

The king is not a separate social strata of its own but a title for a position that controls the others below it. The main driving force of the society is found in the king, or **Konrungr**. He was traditionally elected by the freeman, the **Ceorl**, into power. These electors all must come from families that have a direct ancestry to the gods and divine founders. The king was the judge, ultimate lawgiver and military warmaster. As with most kings in societies, his word is law and cannot be challenged by the lesser man since it was believed that the king was divinely appointed to rule.

Weaker rulers stayed in their courts and fortresses and let their people do all of the work. Historically, many of these kings were shown as feeble and cowardly. Others tried to remedy this by taking part in their kingdom's affairs all the same (i.e. *Æthelred the Unready*). All kings, however, sought oaths of fealty from their chiefs and lords under them who swore to serve their every need.

Whether Swedish, Danish or Norwegian, the king's function remained generally the same. Until Christianity's appearance, there was no one higher in society but the king and queen. The rule of the king was modeled on Oðin and gave no room for dominating priests since the Allfather also was the high reli-

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gious official of the gods and man. Once Christianity assumed a place in Nordic society, the Bishop and other positions in the Church could now step in before the king and dictate affairs and events. The sacredness of the old order was disrupted greatly.

The king would establish monarchies, if they could, and this was a decision given often if the current king seized power. They would plant a dominance of their bloodline and weed out the threatening nobility and other members without haste ruthlessly. Powerful ruling kings would manage to claim dominance over a foreign populace (for example, the Gallo-Romans in what became Normandy).

Opposite to the king was the *Ceorl* who made up the majority of the population in number and did agricultural occupations primarily for their livelihood. These freemen owned property. They owed services and paid taxes to their leaders, and when the mustering came, they were among the first to build, supply and occupy the levied force. The vast number of the *Ceorl* class were loyal to their rulers and did as required but many did not and would be troublesome.

The *Rígs*mal accounts the origins of the three classes as deriving from the god *Ríg* who gave to mankind the knowledge of the divisions and their purpose. As he traveled and rested in the households of various people in his journeys, he slept with the wives of each and, in turn, conceived the classes as he went along.

The first class he sired was the *Þræll*, or 'slave', born from a darker haired and swarthy skinned woman. These people were Great-Grandfather and Great-Grandmother by name. The lodgings, food and surroundings were rough and simple, illustrative of the class that was born. Slaves occupy a large place in Germania and the Nine Worlds and do the bulk of the lowest and thankless work for the other classes. As with slaves everywhere, their worth was only as property and little else and had no rights.

The second class that *Ríg* conceived from another household became the *Ceorl* class. Their abode and food were clean and well made. They were ruddy in color and dark haired but fairer than the first household, and they were Grandfather and Grandmother in name. Their first child was named *Smiðr* (Smith), and all that followed were the laborers and craftsmen in the *Ceorl* class. Mentioned earlier in this section, the *Ceorl* makes the majority of the populace in numbers and functions for society.

*Ríg's* travels were not over. Another stop in his journeys (in Norway, it is said) brought him to the house of an immaculately kept home with expertly made food. These people were blond haired and beautiful in appearance, and they had a grace about them. These two were Father and Mother in their names. Impressed greatly, he stayed the night and sired another class who became the *Jarl*, or nobles. *Ríg* saw that these children were astute in hunting, rune

lore and the other high levels of knowledge and advised them to become lords over the other two classes. There are many nobles in Germanic territories, and they can bully the other classes into their way of thinking easily by their wealth and power.

His journey being over, he left *Miðgarðr* behind and returned back to *Ásgarðr* – some say to return to the Rainbow Bridge (many think he was *Heimdallr* in disguise). *Ríg* came and took *Jarl* into his custody and raised him and groomed him into being a king. But *Ríg's* work was not over, for his children under the *Jarl* had many children as well, and the most influential amongst them was *Konr*. In time, *Konr* the Younger One ascended to true lordship as the first king among men, the *Konrungr*.

*Konrungr* went to the court of King *Dan* in Sweden and fell in love with his daughter, *Drótt* ('warrior'). Their eldest son was *Dygví* who was the first among mortals to be called *Konrungr*, or 'King'. Their court was named *Drót*, or 'warband', and thus the origins of the bands of oath bound warriors in Scandinavia. *Konrungr's* children are called *Yngvi*. *Konrungr's* sons were given the title and name *Dróttin* ('chieftain').

### THE ASSEMBLY OF LAWGIVERS

It was common practice amongst the Nordic peoples to hold regular gatherings to dispense with legal matters and other pressing situations important to the tribe. These were called a *Begn*, or 'Thing'. These were guided by the Freemen – the community leaders that made an effort to suppress any violent animosity and keep the peace in the tribe.

Things were held in public areas of importance, a *Thingstead*, sometimes in temples such as *Hofs* or markets, and the Lawgivers were available to hear cases of injuries, grievences and other problems between community members. On a higher stratum of society, Things were held by the nobles and even the king to hear the more important cases and matters and weigh the decisions of going to war or not. The judgements in the higher Things would more often affect the lesser one in the kingdom if a new law was dictated that would involve others.

The Thing among the *Jarls* and royalty was more of a parliament over time, and special places were built to accommodate them. These places were the centers to the kingdom, important to the tribes' histories and religious ideas and designated indirectly that judgements made there were divine in origin and could not be questioned.

One person from among the population in each hierarchical Thing was chosen for life the job of *Lagaman*, or 'Lawmaker'. He was required to memorize all of the laws and create new ones when needed. His word was literally law and the nobles, and even king, had to answer to him in the end – a rare privilege. The Lawgiver's jurisdiction only applied to his province,

or '*Lagsaga*', and does not hold sway in others unless it is the higher Thing wherein the king and his Jarls preside.

The fate of any criminal, high or low their status and law broken, is normally judged at a Thing. They were partway a public spectacle and partway governmental function. The common folk gathered to people watch and see the unique situations and drama that would unfold and spoke about it for days to come.

With all of these gatherings, the action toward or against a law or calling was voted upon by those in the Thing. Each man provided a vote, and it was calculated. It was here that the Weregild was also decided and paid.

Nordo-Germanic laws followed the system of the 'Man-Price', or Weregild (*as mentioned in the previous chapter under 'The Basic Warrior'*). How the Weregild worked was based on compensation for the said crime toward the individual or family, and this was estimated from the victim's social standing multiplied by their crime. The total was what was due by the criminal in money or the equivalent in goods.

It was the job of the injured or wrong party to seek justice; it wasn't assisted by the kingdom or the king's men. The wronged or his family had to seek the local authorities and hold the hearing at a Thing. If the Lawgiver and assembly deemed the case worth the court's time, they would hold it and incorporate it into a session.

If, however, the compensation for said crime was not agreeable with the Weregild, another method was chosen to decide its outcome. In the Nine Worlds, it wouldn't be impossible that many peoples and races used a system similar to the Ordeal to seek resolution in unusual crimes and hearings. The Lawgivers could call upon the intervention of Óðin or the other Æsir and Vanir to give an answer.

## SEA VOYAGES

Since the earliest of times, the Nordic people were famed sailors able to traverse the rocky and dangerous coastlines of Europe, Africa and beyond. Common memory of them 'remembers' them as the Vikings – marauding pirates that hit and ran and vanished back into the waves, burdened down with plunder and screaming women captives. This is partially fact and an exaggeration but not unheard of in history and did occur at the height of the Viking era.

The Scandinavian peoples were documented (and archaeologically evidenced) as constructing well-built sea craft from the earliest times. These vessels are likely similar to the later *Knars* or *Karve* in form and function. It is unknown what type of ships exactly the peoples of Scandinavia used in the Roman and Migration eras, but it was no doubt that the sea lanes were busy with their traffic.

Tales speak of finding the exit out of Miðgarðr, the edge of the world, by sea travel if one looked long enough. The ocean currents were the roads of the whales and the thoroughfares of the gods who know the secret paths. Viking travelers would sail often worrying about finding the edge of the world and falling into oblivion. Monsters and strange lands lay somewhere in the oceans, and only brave adventurers sought them.

Nordic history and myths are filled full of bold and daring adventuring heroes that travel far beyond the known world; this is the essence of gaming in its core. This section of the chapter details some of the basic Nordic ships for use in gameplay and provides tables for events at sea, encounters and other elements of naval adventures. The information given on ships is greatly simplified because these crafts are steeped in ancient tradition and complicated with much about it written, documented and still in use today.

An average, and sensible, range of miles covered by a longship would be a little less than a hundred miles a day. The ship's speed would vary between 4 and 10 knots if the conditions were favorable. A crew would try to go ashore before night and camp on solid ground, choosing not to navigate at night unless no other choice was given. In five days of sailing, for example, barely five hundred miles would be traversed.

Highly romanticized but not accurate, a 'Viking' crew was never perfect in its sailing and destination to and from the targeted land. One out of five ships that set sail would return from their long distance voyages (based on a deep study of the sources and evidence). Although the Scandinavian peoples were famed for their ability to travel by sea, realistically, Norse seafarers were still at the mercy of the waters, environment and other variables. Viking fleets would begin mighty and threatening but return less than so, and this is not just because of the enemy.

Navigators would rely on the flight of sea-birds, paths of whales, weather, the stars above and simply following the coastlines to get to where they had to go. Landmarks and memorization of many territories were essential for a crew to get to where it needed. There were many recorded instances of longships overshooting the British Isles and finding themselves far into the Atlantic by mistake.

Larger ships would sometimes have an 'After-Boat', or *Skips-båt*, to tug behind them. This would be a smaller sized boat, possibly a Færing or a little larger, for a spare vessel in case of disaster or for extra cargo storage.

By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, many of the larger ships had shelters built onto the rear top deck, a *castel*, to protect the rowers and crew from harsh weather or missiles from warfare. These would be hardened rooms where even the most threatening of missiles and dangers would be stopped.



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### THE SHIPS

#### FÆRING

These smaller oar and sail driven boats are clinker built with a keel and can have 3, 4 or 5 pairs of oars. There are some that have been found to hold 8 pairs; these are called *âttring*. The keel is the foundation of the whole vessel where the planks of wood were fitted and jointed. The name comes from the number of oars once used in the vessel and means ‘four oars’. Each different grouping of oars is given a different name. For example: *trerøring* (‘three rowers’), *firkeiping* (‘four rowers’), *femkeiping* (‘five rowers’) and *seksring* (‘six rowers’) as well as the eight that sometimes are involved. These boats can be crafted by an axe from Oak, Ash or Spruce wood in a short time and even be given a rudder.

They are usually for small range, limited travel because of their extremely limited size and crew. In the larger ships, they can even be used as a dingy or rowboat and loaded aboard. These boats were used for seven hundred years – from the Migration Period to the Middle Ages in Northern Europe. Raiding and marauding can be performed in these small boats, but on a short term and small scale.

#### FERJE

This is the ‘ferry’ boat that has one oar and takes a small group of people with items across small waterways (lakes, rivers, etc.). Level and sturdily built, the Ferje could bear the weight of horses, livestock and other goods.

This ship is not meant for any long term voyage and could not endure trips out to sea or beyond. It is only for traffic across land and waterways and nothing more.

#### KNÖRR

Also called *Knar*, these are the classic ‘Viking’ ships that are capable of long voyages out to sea. These larger vessels took their crews across the Atlantic and afar to the Eastern Roman Empire in their wide birth form. Typically, they are an average of fifty-four feet long by fifteen feet wide with a deep birth able to hold twenty-four tons of cargo.

With this large inner space, they can hold livestock and horses on the long voyages with sometimes questionable comfortability. The captain of this type of ship is a long term leader that takes lengthy journeys beyond their homeland and with great expectations of carrying plentiful cargoes. In one stretch of a voyage, it could reach 75 miles or more on average before being maintained or the crew gaining their bearings. At their fastest, these ships could go up to 15 knots if the conditions were ideal.

This manner of ship is a ‘longship’ in essence and will often possess a fierce, dragon-headed prow as a figurehead. This is used to not only intimidate the enemy but to symbolize the World Serpent as well. Knars are not ‘warships’ technically, but they can carry a Drótt into new lands to raid, create havoc or simply trade. This was a heavily used and manufactured vessel that the peoples of Scandinavia used in their traffic between lands. It is a clinker built ship, as most were in this time, and was able to hold a crew of 20 to 30.

A smaller and almost identical vessel to this is the *Karve*. These smaller versions can sail into shallower waters with rocks and greater uncertainty and were used for the sudden attacks more often. The raiders would feel their way ashore amid the rocks and shallow water to ready it for a quick departure once the goods were acquired. This would have from 13 to 16 rowing benches aboard and is the smallest of the longboats.

#### BYRDING

Slightly smaller than the Karve, these freight vessels have a dozen or more rooms inside to hold cargo and take it to and from Nordic regions, never intended for long voyages (perhaps the farthest being from Norway to Iceland). Byrding would carry the bulk of goods for war to aid in battles.

Sources record that they would hold water and food stores for eager warriors in the field. Though burdened down with heavy supplies, they would travel fast on the waves going possibly as fast as 9 knots or so.

#### SNEKKJA

This is a slender hulled longship with room for twenty rowers and is usually from fifty-four feet long to eight and a half feet wide. These were the most commonly used longboats in warfare and assaults by the peoples of Scandinavia and Germania. They are swift, sailing at an average of a little over 15 knots.

The Snekkja can hold a crew of 40 and did not need a port or dock. It was able to go ashore and easily back to sea again with some pushing and ease of the waves. This was the driving force of ‘Viking’ and Saxon kings in their fleets and once covered the North Sea, the Channel, the Baltic and regions of southern Europe.

#### SKEI

The Skei is a larger version of the Snekkja and can hold a crew of 80 or more in its 30 rowing benches. This Germanic warship was made to cut through the waves, thus its name. Evidence has been found that shows that these ships were between ninety-eight feet to one hundred twelve in length.

This ship would hold enough warriors and supplies to enable enterprising warlords very ambitious ventures beyond their

lands for a prolonged period. Skei are made from Oak primarily because the wood is strong enough to handle the scale and the tension from the waters combined with the weight of the crew, supplies and other items.

## BUSSE

The Busse is a longship constructed to hold large tonnage for sea voyages. Not graceful or swift as the others, this ship can haul plentiful weight and goods across long distances. These massive ships can be used for war just as easily with the room converted into space for warriors.

Many leaders of fleets would use these as their flagships because of their size and capacity to hold larger crews and store supplies. They would sail at a speed of nearly 5 to 8 knots on average.

## DREKER (ORM)

This literally means 'Dragon-ship' and only has a place in the sagas and myths as no true dragon longship has been discovered archaeologically. According to the tales, these massive, dragon prowed vessels loomed threateningly over the enemy as they approached a targeted land.

Enchanted, these longships are the ultimate in idealized design with powers and abilities of their own. Unlike their other counterparts, the Dreker are covered in highly detailed carvings and artwork, elegant and yet threatening. Serpents, dragons, warriors locked in battle and other scenes out of the myths and lives of heroes, gods, monsters and giants cover the hull.

The fierceness of the ship could scare away sea monsters and lesser men by its presence alone. Draugr crews are in these supernatural vessels, and because of their varied size and power, there is no certain dimension to them. Some Dreker are reputed to have 60 oarsmen or more on the benches, and even though its size is not normally likely to achieve this feat, it could be beached if needed.

This is a warship, cargo carrier and slave vessel all in one. These are special vessels not seen on average except in the case of major events or wars. The peoples that deploy these Orm never do so fleetingly. They are to topple the advantages of the foe or to spearhead an invasion and cripple the boldness of the victims.

## ENCOUNTERS AT SEA

Once on a voyage, any number of things could happen – the longer the trip, the more likely an encounter with something or someone. Depending on the Castle Keeper's campaign, the encounters can be mundane and less dramatic to contrast the ones at land that the adventurers may experience. This table is an option that can be used to spice up the adventure and make it exciting if needed.

These are guidelines that can be followed or modified as needed in the game. For daily chances of an encounter, the odds could be a 1 in 8 chance, for example. This could be done once or so a day for as long as the voyage is happening. The longer the trek across the sea, the more likely something will occur. This would increase the odds, perhaps a 1 in 6 or less. If an encounter is rolled or decided, this table can be used:

### D12 ENCOUNTER

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | A shipload of Draugr raiders (1d20+10) crosses the adventurers' path on the waters. This won't end well as the Draugr are continuing their raiding and marauding they had once done while alive.  |
| 2  | A maelstrom roars in the sea pulling in everything around it. The crew will have to avoid this with a CL: 17 or be carried into oblivion. Where they end up is the Castle Keeper's decision (Niflheimr, Helheimr, etc.).  |
| 3  | Dense fog covers the sea making vision impossible. A strange island or land that is not known on the maps or by other seafarers lies before them. This place arrives unexpectedly and in their face, possibly causing a shipwreck. What lies here is up to the Castle Keeper.   |
| 4  | One hungry Kraken seeks out the crew and savagely attacks the ship. It won't quit until it is slain or all of the members of the crew are devoured.   |
| 5  | On the horizon, a terrible storm sweeps over the waves bringing winds, biting rain and churning tidal waves. The captain will need to maintain the vessel upright and not capsize with a CL: 18 and ride the storm for 1d4 hours with periodic rolls for safety. If capsized, the ship has a chance to shatter and fall into pieces (3 in 6).   |
| 6  | The mysterious Finfolk appear in a small fleet (1d8 ships with 1d20 per ship) looking for trouble, not wanting trespassers in their waters.   |
| 7  | Due to a god's whim, the sea dumps out over the edge, dangerously emptying into another world of the Nine unless the crew is able to quickly prevent it (CL: 16). Their resulting impact in whatever world is the Castle Keeper's decision. They could crash on a hard surface into a thousand pieces or land in another watery spot, upright or not – the possibilities are endless as to their outcome. |
| 8  | Klabautermann (1d10) take attention to the traveling adventurers in the ship and begin to prey on all who are present.  |
| 9  | 1d4 Näck/Nix trail the ship and start to lure the men from the vessel, distracting them. They will try to cause the ship to crash on the rocks or bottom out and then take advantage of them all.   |
| 10 | A Dreker full of Jötnar (1d12) is near and will cross the adventurers' path. These giants will bring only trouble at sea and attack them on sight.  |

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Another boat (or more) of raiders, probably from a rival tribe, kingdom or people is encountered. 2d20 warriors will try to prey on them and take their plunder and enslave, if not kill, them in the process.

12

Dreadfully, a dragon either rises from the steaming seas or is flying overhead when it discovers the adventurers. It will attack them aggressively, causing fire and death.

It is in my experience that if the Castle Keeper can provide interesting sea voyages during a game that players will be more inclined to take them. Many games do not make those long trips fun and entertaining, and Castle Keepers will skip that part of the game to avoid boredom and move on to the rest of the story. This table is to simplify and possibly give ideas for more in the story.

### THE POETS OF COURT

The peoples of Scandinavia have their own professional poets and song masters. In the North among the Nordic peoples, this profession was a *Skald*. The poet would construct alliterative verses and colorful language or *kenning* in their sagas and recount monumental events in the courts of nobles and in the company of renowned warriors.

Kings and lords would always have a poet present; it was a requirement. The poet would entertain and remind those present of their fame, deeds and glories, inspiring them to do more of the same. Poets were, to some extent in the Nordic world and all of the Nine Worlds, akin to rock stars if they were really masterful in their craft.

Skalds performed two forms of their art. One is the *Edda*, a heroic and mythologically inspired set of works that is simple in form. The second is the *Skaldic* and a more complex series of measures and poetic devices. In *Castles & Crusades*, the Skald is the *bard* class perfectly defined. Every poet has their style and themes and is respected for their abilities. Their word and the power of it is not so feared as it is in the Celtic world.

Skaldic poetry was for the nobility and in their honor and was spoken aloud with a great projection while the Eddic form could be chanted or even sung. Skalds have a range of styles they can compose and perform for their lords and company. These are:

- **MANSÖNGR** – Erotic Verse. Love stanzas and lengthy works meant to attract or extol the beauty of a woman.
- **LAUSAVÍSA** – Impromptu poem usually in single verse forms strung together with themes.
- **NÍÐVÍSUR** – Satirical poems meant to be insulting to the intended target. These poems would shame them for misdeeds, dishonor or other questionable actions.
- **DRÆPLINGR/FLOKKR/VÍSUR** – Stanzas, short in number, which go without a refrain or break in flow.

- **DRÁPA** – Complex poetry using many devices in meters and timing with heavy alliteration and will have breaks between sets of stanzas.

If the warriors or lords do not bring infamous and cowardly deeds to the attention of others, it is the job of the poet to do so. They will declare publically the so incriminated as a *Níþingr* ('One Below(others)'). This is called a scolding, thus the word used today for confronting the troublemakers for their deeds.

The so accused will lose all dignity and respect by society, unable to show their face. Unless they declare what is named a *holmgang*, or an ordeal by a duel, to show their innocence, they will be stigmatized.

The poet has many linguistic tricks and play of words to dance images and bring to life stories and far away places in their works. It requires many years to train and become a Skald and show their craft.

### KENNINGS

The use of kennings was common in Nordic cultures as a clever wording in reference to a person, object or place. The structure is a combination of the base word and the determinant. By a combination of these words, one can poetically or profoundly refer to something without naming it directly. One example is 'narrow-hall' meaning, simply, a shield. Snorri Sturleson listed many kennings in his *Edda* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The Castle Keeper can master some of these poetic devices to make the dialogue of the NPCs colorful and even riddle-light during the game. Kenning wordage shows a skill with the language and a different thinking than usual. A sword is not just a sword to a kenning master, it is a *Glaive and Hrotti, Useful, Dragvandil* ('drew-wand'), *Groa* ('Grower'), *Gram* ('Angry'), *Screamer, Clamourer and End-scored, Scythe and Polisher, Honour, and Glimter*.

This section lists plenty of examples of Scandinavian kennings that can be used by Castle Keepers in their game. The greater part of this derives from the *Edda* as it has a large collection of Skaldic examples (thankfully listed by Snorri for posterity). These kennings are categorized on objects and themes and are in English (a Germanic language itself related to the Norse group).

### EXAMPLES OF KENNINGS

**BATTLE** – Row, Tumult, Clangor, Spear-Fight, Spear-Grab, Strife, Clamour, Shield-Violence & Stir, Unrest and Onslaught, Victory, Campaign, Fray.

Scrap, Murder, Slaying, Attack and Action, Enmity, Threat, Tussle, Broil, Affray, Battle & Doom, Storm and Pugnacity, Host-Taker, Thunder.

Spear-Din, Slaughter-Dew, Battle-Sweat, Wound-Sea.





**SWORD** - Servent, Clanger, Cutlass, Skrymir, Laufi, Ale-Tarry, Long-Beard, Worm-Borer, Legbiter, Leifnir's Hurt, Host-Striker, Hneitir, Hafrakan.

Lotti, Shover, Thruster, Mækir, Aimer, Hand-Waver, Mistletoe, Metal, Thriver, Striker, Mid-Decorated, Broad-Tracker, Gate-Flame, Life-Quencher.

Wavy, Threaded, Corpse-Pain, Werewolf, Corpse-Maker, Wind-Bright, Pain-Wader, Edge-Sharp, Flitter, Ugly-Flitting, Hall-Fence, Grip.

Keen, Head-Sharp, Skull-Crusher, Corpse-Gaut, Host-Shining, Flesh-Mimir, Wound-Strip, Deceiver, Flickerer, Rivet-Failer, Heaper.

Mimung, Feller, Symbol-Wolf, Ringed, Corpse-Enclosed, Twist-Borer, Millstone-Biter, Wolf, Overcomer, Wall-Damager.

Terrifier, Pale-Maker, Router, Notcher, Shooter, Trembler, Polished, Tearer, Breaker, White One, One Will Come Across the Night-Bringer.

Flame & Hand-Ringer, Long-Keen, Eagle, Frightener, Jabber, Ram, Diminsher, Long-Neck, Exciter, Inciter.

Feller, Fafnir, Piercer, Battler, Offspring, Scythe, Cutter, Moor-Guest, Mockery, Crasher, Mean-Striker.

Blood-Band, Wound-Knuckles, Blood-Grip, Blood-Warp, Blood-Eddy, Blood-Waker, Lying Striker, Eddy-Warp, Edge-Strip.

Olrod's Gift, Battle-Rim, Mis-Hit, Under-Drawer, Kaldhamar's Gift, Corpse-Bast, Shoulder.

Clench-Plate, Victory-Knob, Hand-Grip, Blow-Polished, Mid-Stick, Blood-Worm, Icicle-of-Blood, Wound-Hoe, Leek-of-War.

**AXE** - Iron-Sparth, Scraper, Bearded, Power-Span, Gnepia, Giantess, Frightener, Spiked, Whiskered, Battle-Bright, Hewer, Soft-Horned, Blood-Ember.

**Arrow** - White-Mouth, Noisy Mover, Claw, Gain-Flying, Stormer, Shaft-Quick.

Flight-Bright, Flight-Swift, Lion's Tooth, Gusir's Gift, Whizzer. Double-Wood, Noisy-Clanger, Arrows & Strikers, Irons, Spears.

**SHIELD** - Hall-Blinder, Lee-Edge, Buckler, Fight-Bend, Storm-Bright, Battle-Bright, Wide.

Clamourer, Dew-Scraper, Jewel-Shelterer, War-Light, War-Shelterer, Protector, Double-Boarded.

Battler, Ever-Protector, Fair-Dark, Mid-Life-Protector, Circle, Handland of Swords.

**HELMET** - Hropt's Hood, Gold-Colored, Coverer, Slaught-er-Rimy, Stone-Rimy, Hollowed and Protection, Life-Protector, Fine-Looker, Eager-Brown, Battle-Boar, Top, Army-Crest, Warmer, Mask, Terrifier, Gleamer, Dome.

**BYRNIE (MAIL)** - Arriver, Helm-Ringer, Coat & Close, Cold, Finn's Legacy, Battle-Goer, Pliable, Hindrance, Blood-Played.

**SEA** - Ever-Lying, Salt, Wetness, Flat One, Dead Calm, Re-sounding, Overhang, Emptiness, Brawler, Rocker, Maelstrom, Whale's Road, Whale's Way.

Good Passage, Fluid & Expanse, Tempest, Rumbler & Unquiet, Fishing-Ground, Fishing-Bank, Lifting, Plunderer, Heaven-Bright, Sweller, Bloody-Haired.

**CHIEFTAIN** - Bringer of Rings.

These kennings are a small example of hundreds or thousands that were used in the early Norse poems and stories. From the *Edda* to even the Saxon poem *Beowulf*, kennings are a crucial part of the descriptive art of storytelling and still well-suited after a thousand or more years for gaming.

## FLYTING

This is an exchange of boasting and belittling that would take place in a feast hall. It would normally involve warriors or nobles that would verbally attack, through poetic verse, each

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other's bravery or sexual perversions. Nordic society used this as a means of keeping the warriors on their feet mentally.

The Norse sagas have many countless examples of Flyting between heroes and gods. In a simplistic way, these are limericks that are meant to raise one's self up and lower the other and be funny and hard-hitting at the same time.

By custom, if one is challenged through a Flyting, they must return a retort in the same way. Not doing so will lose one's reputation and respect and be a sign of weakness. Loki was mocked once as he entered Valhöll by the gods through Flyting, and he not only returned the gesture, but he did so to all present cleverly and put them in their place.

Many times, warriors will enter into Flyting contests before fighting ensues; this is to work them up into a fervor. Whatever animosity they had before would be amplified afterward by this verbal exchange. Once the Flyting is over, battle would occur between the two, angrier than before.

In the feast hall, the reactions of the onlookers during the exchange determined the winner of the match, and this, then, allows the successful Flyter to drink from the chief or king's own mead. This is similar to the Celtic system of boasting in the hall of a lord which would often result in a bloody fight with even one of the two slain.

The Castle Keeper can use Flyting in clever ways in their adventures, putting the players in an awkward place and forcing their hand to react and endure the challenge. One example given here is from the Norse Edda *Hárbarðsljóð* ('Lay of Hárbarðr') wherein Thor is wanting to travel across the water in a ferry, but the ferryman *Hárbarðr* (Oðin in disguise) harasses and mocks him, trying to get a rise out of his own son and test him. Although not as cruel as some Flyting, it is none-the-less the same.

**THOR.**

*What Ferryman is he who stands,  
By his Boat on yonder sands?*

**HARBARD.**

*What man is he, on yonder side,  
Who sends his voice across the tide?*

**THOR.**

*O'er the ferry bear me hence;  
I'll an ample meed dispense.  
In my basket, lo! I bear,  
Cates I've cull'd with nicest care.  
Ere I left my homely shed,  
On oats and herrings long I fed:*

*But viands on a toilsome way,  
The trav'ler needs more choice than they.*

**HARBARD.**

*Improvident! Thy basket store,  
Why praise for nourishable power?  
And little prescient of the road,  
Know'st not to prize the precious load.  
Hark! Death invades thy distant home!  
Heard'st thou not thy mother's groan?*

**THOR.**

*Well I know thee - thou hast said,  
Hark! thy distant mother's dead;  
Because thou knewest, I believe,  
How my soul the news would grieve.*

**HARBARD.**

*Grief had been none, if some estate,  
Had reconcil'd thy mother's fate.  
That thou art poor, thy legs declare,  
And weeds that strolling jugglers wear.  
Naught do I see - so mean thou art,  
To hide thy most inglorious part.*

**THOR.**

*Hither ferryman, I pray,  
Push thy vessel on its way.  
Who the owner, tell beside  
That bade thee o'er these banks preside?*

**HARBARD.**

*Hildolf is the owner's name;  
Far thro' these lands, has spread, his fame.  
In Radseyia's bay he lives,  
And thence this strict injunction gives -  
Let not the base-born press thy keel,  
Nor vagabonds, that horses steal:  
Be honorable men thy freight,  
And on the worthy trav'ler wait.  
Across the Frith thy name unfold,  
If on thy way thou wish to hold.*

**THOR.**

*With other views, this morn I came -  
Yet freely I profess my name;  
And all my pedigree unfold,  
In archives of the Gods enroll'd.  
Odin's paternal care I prove;  
Meili claims a brother's love;  
Me Magni's filial mind reveres -  
Stern dynast of the starry spheres.  
With might Thor discourse you hold -  
Ferryman! Thy name unfold.*

**HARBARD.**

*Harbard I! and 'tis my pride,  
Never from man my name to hide.*

**THOR.**

*Why should'st thou wish to hide thy name,  
Except opprest with guilty shame?*

**HARBARD.**

*Did I such guilty terror feel,  
'Tis true my name I would conceal;  
When such a virtuous God were by,  
Unless I madly wish'd to die.*

**THOR.**

*Among the mis'ries of my life,  
With thee I deem this verbal strife:  
Forc'd as I am, to seek thy shore,  
And wet my garments with thine oar:  
But villian! Know some other day,  
Thy words sarcastic I'll repay.*

**HARBARD.**

*I my rightful power use,  
And hither all approach refuse:  
Since bold Hrugner went below,  
Thou never found'st so fierce a foe.*

**THOR.**

*Those words to memory recall,  
Hrugner's unlamented fall.*

*On him my fatal mallet sped -*

*The Giant with the rocky head:*

*He trod no more the ways of men -*

*What, Harbard! thine achievements then?*

**HARBARD.**

*In Algrona's fertile isle,  
Five winters I endur'd the while:  
With brave Fiolvár there I liv'd,  
And hospitable cheer receiv'd.  
With him the battles brunt I bore,  
And dy'd the meadow flower with gore:  
There did I every danger prove;  
And largely too indulg'd in love.*

**THOR.**

*Didst thou in that happy isle,  
The maidens easily beguile?*

**HARBARD.**

*They were wise, as wise I've seen;  
But tainted with virago spleen:  
They were fair, as fair could be;  
But all their pastime, cruelty.  
They twisted once with dexterous hand,  
A rope of untenacious sand;  
And fill'd a valley's vast profound,  
With many a mountain summit round.  
Happy I their love to gain,  
Revell'd with them on the plain.  
Oft encircled in their arms,  
I woo'd their smiles and won their charms.  
What the mean time didst thou do?*

**THOR.**

*I the race of Píaz slew:  
Above I hurl'd their glaring eyes,  
And stars illumin'd all the skies.  
There all mortals ever read  
The records of the glorious deed.  
What meantime did the fates decree,  
Harbard! For thy destiny?*



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### HARBARD.

*To Gigantean dames I bore,  
Philtres of seductive power -  
Strong was the spell, and tender flame,  
Shot unresisted thro' their frame.  
Helibard was great of mind,  
And chief among the Giant kind;  
He gave a wand, by magic made,  
And I with guile his gift repaid.*

### THOR.

*Good with evil to requite,  
Has ever been the knave's delight.*

### HARBARD.

*What you approve, may me displease -  
A different soil to different trees:  
Let each his own misdeeds reform.  
What meanwhile did Thor perform?*

### THOR.

*I in eastern climate's rode,  
Near a Giant's drear abode:  
There, the crafty dames to spite,  
I sent the chief to shades of night.  
Had he liv'd, fair Midgard's zone,  
A wild and joyless waste had shown.  
Meanwhile Harbard what thine aim?*

### HARBARD.

*Bent on war to Gaul I came:  
Chief I stir'd with chief to fight,  
Nor cared I which was wrong or right.  
Odin's heroes boldly dare,  
The fierce arbitrament of war:  
A servile, cringing, coward race  
The banners of vile Thor disgrace.*

### THOR.

*Had'st thou the power to divide,  
Honor's meed to either side;  
Unjustly would'st thou sink my fame,  
And lift on high my rival's name.*

A Flyting match can take a few minutes to an hour or more in length – there are no limits to how long these matches can go. The greater the individuals involved, the mightier their Flyting will be in scope.

## THE NAME-GIFT

Without getting into a deep, academic study on the different methods used by Scandinavian peoples over time for names, this section gives the starters on how to name a character. Swedish, Norwegian and Danish names are given here in one, unified manner but split into both genders; this can be used as a starting point.

The systems used by the Nordic peoples do not dramatically differ from that of other European peoples and, in some cases, were likely influenced by them. All of the individuals named in the Cimbri and Teuton warbands that raided Gaul, Spain and Northern Italy were Celtic names, for example. This may have been for many reasons. 1.) The sources of information about these two armies came from Celtic peoples who simply Celticized their data to the Romans, or 2.) The intermarriage and cultural interaction between the Germanic and Celtic peoples was so close that both peoples shared each other's names and material culture.

During the infamous 'Viking' Age (8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century), several documents exist that explain the naming ceremony of a child. Names were not chosen lightly by ancient peoples. They always had significance and power and were meant to perfectly suit and symbolize the person. This ceremony involved a baptizing of sacred water and swearing on the Hammer of Thor on and over the baby. This was called '*Ausa Vatni*' and was the Name-Gift ceremony.

The Name-Gift occurred not long after the newborn is able, and the child is placed on the ground to be watched by all for any signs of malady or ill-health first. Once this phase is over, the officiant takes the child into his arms and with a sprinkle of water on the child's face, declares the name. After this is done, a waving by a symbolic 'hammer' of Thor is done for protection and a blessing.

Someone never given the Name-Gift is without a soul to others; they are devoid of the blessing of the gods and empty inside. In the Nine Worlds, it is likely that all races and peoples name their children in a similar manner as this 'Pouring of Water' ceremony. It is a custom to give the newborn child the name of a deceased, close relative, if possible. This would be an aunt, uncle, forefather or mother (if it is an option). Doing this honors them and keeps their name in use in the family.

With the patronymical naming come other additional ones that can be added in time based on certain factors. These are nicknames and shorter ones and can take their origins from these elements:

- 1 Inherited Byname
- 2 Personality
- 3 Habits
- 4 Place of Origin
- 5 Biographical
- 6 Occupation
- 7 Physical Trait

These additional names are more often derogatory and insulting, stemming from enemies and rivals. There are countless historical figures in Viking history that have less-than-desirable nicknames because of their behavior or actions. This is not always the rule, however, and many people earned their extra name because of their deeds, heroism or character.

In the Scandinavian languages and groups, the suffix *-son* is given to designate that the person so named is the 'son' of the name it is tagged onto. One good example of this is the famous 13<sup>th</sup> century Icelandic writer Snorri Sturluson. Snorri's father is named Sturla, but by tradition, his paternal origin is fitted with the stem *-son* so that any who hear his name knows. This system is called *patronymics* and is similar to the Celtic system.

Rarely used is the matronymic system, tagging the word *-dóttir* ('daughter') at the end of a name. There are many recorded names that do have this, however, and it is done to proudly show the mother or father of a female individual. Icelandic records show that matronymic names were more often there rather than back in Scandinavia or the Continent.

Another pattern seen in Nordic naming practices is placing a god's name somewhere in the individual's own name in hopes that this will bless them with luck and fortune. Before Christianity really took hold in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, deities' names were incorporated into the child's own. Examples of this are seen in the prefixes and suffixes *Goð-* ('god'), *Þór-* ('Thor'), *Freyr-* ('Freyr'), *Ás-* ('Asgardian/god'), etc.

## MALE NORSE NAMES (SWEDISH, DANISH & NORWEGIAN)

Abbe	Arnulfr	Dagr
Abjörn	Arta	Drengi
<i>Ádiarfr</i>	<i>Ásbjörn</i>	Drengr
Aðalbert	<i>Ásgautr</i>	Edmundr
Aðalbrandr	<i>Ási</i>	Efi
Aðalbrikt	Askur	Egill
Aðalmærki	<i>Áslákr</i>	Eiðr
Aðalráðr	<i>Ásli</i>	Einarr

Aðalríkr	Assar	Eiríkr
Aðalsteinn	<i>Ásti</i>	Eitri
Aðalvaldr	Atli	<i>Éldi</i>
Aðisl	Atsur	Elfráðr
<i>Áfastr</i>	Atti	Erlendr
Afi	Baggi	Eyarr
Afaldr	Bak	Faði
<i>Ágautr</i>	Baldi	Faksi
<i>Ágeirr</i>	Balkr	Faraldr
Agge	Banki	Farmann
Agmundr	Barðr	Fasti
Agnar	Barni	Finnr
Agni	Bassi	Folki
<i>Águti</i>	Beinir	Folkvar
Agviðr	Belgi	Folkvarðr
Ailmær	Beli	Gandálfr
<i>Áki</i>	Bergfinnr	Guðbrandr
<i>Álarr</i>	Bergulfr	Gunnar
Alboðr	Billigr	Hákon
Aldúfr	Birgir	Halfdanr
<i>Álæifr</i>	Bissi	Halldórr
Alfarr	Bjálfi	Hjortr
Alfgautr	Bjarki	Hringhorni
Alfketill	Bjarni	Hróaldr
Alflakkr	Bjartmárr	Hrókr
Almóðr	Bjólan	Ingimarr
Ambi	Bjólfr	<i>Ívarr</i>
<i>Án</i>	Björn	Koli
Andsvarr	Bjórr	Logmar
Anki	Björnsteinn	Oddr
Anundr	Bláfótr	<i>Önundr</i>
Api	Blákári	Ormr
Ari	Blakkr	Rúni
Arnbjörn	Blanda	Sigfrøðr
Arn	Blesi	Sigmundr
Arnaldr	Blængr	Stígr

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Arnfastr	Boddi	<i>Þórrákr</i>
Arngrímr	Böðvarr	<i>Þórbjörn</i>
Arnhallr	Bogi	<i>Þórbergr</i>
<i>Árni</i>	Bói	Tryggr
Arnkell	Boli	Ulfr
Arnlaugr	Boltr	Váli
Arnljótr	Brandr	Vermundr
Arnriðr	Dagfinnr	Yngvarr

### FEMALE NORSE NAMES

<i>Ætta</i>	Eir	Nessa
Alþrúðr	Eydís	Nauma
<i>Álfhildr</i>	Finna	<i>Ósk</i>
Alfsigr	Fjötra	Rafnhildr
Amma	Frakokk	Ragna
Arnfastr	Freygunnr	Ragnfriðr
Arnkátla	Friðr	Róta
<i>Áslaug</i>	Gauthildr	Salbjörg
<i>Ástriðr</i>	Geira	Sefa
<i>Ásta</i>	Gillaug	Sibba
Auða	Ginna	Sif
Begga	Gísla	Sigrún
Bergdis	Gríma	Skauld
Berghildr	Guðlaug	Snotra
Berna	Halla	Solveig
Birna	Halldís	Sóma
Bolla	Hælgá	Svala
Borga	Hulda	Svanhildr
Borgunna	Hulð	Tóla
Brynja	Inga	Tonna
Busla	Ingigunnr	<i>Þórbjörg</i>
Dagmar	<i>Ísgerðr</i>	Tyra
Dagný	Jórunnr	Uðr
Dísa	Jutta	Una
Dómhildr	Káta	Unnr
Dóta	Kelda	Valdis

Drífa	Kenna	Valka
Dýrfinna	Lifa	Végunnr
Edda	Ljót	Ynghildr
Eðný	Magnhildr	Yngvildr
Esja	Mjöll	Yrsi
Eyvör	Nanna	<i>Ýri</i>

### ODIN'S MANY NAMES

#### (THE ALLFATHER'S MANY GUISES)

**Aldaföðr** (Father of All Men), **Aldagautr** (Gautr of All Men), **Alföðr** (All Father), **Algingautr** (Aged Gautr), **Angan Friggja** (Delight of Frigg), **Arnhöfði** (Eagle's Head), **Atriðr** (Attacker Rider), **Asagrim** (Lord of the Æsir), **Auðun** (Friend of Wealth), **Bági Ulfs** (Enemy of the Wolf), **Baldrsfaðr** (Baldr's Father), **Báleygr** (Flaming Eye), **Biflindi** (Spear/Shield Shaker), **Bileygr** (Wavering Eye), **Blindi** (Blind One), **Brúni** (Brown One/Bear), **Böðgæðir** (Battle Enhancer), **Bölverkr** (Evil Worker), **Bragi** (Chieftain), **Bróðir Vilis** (Vili's Brother), **Burr Bors** (Borr's Son), **Byrlindi** (Bilflindi), **Darraðr** (Spearman), **Draugadróttinn** (Lord of the Undead), **Ein Sköpuðr Galdra** (Single Creator of Magical Song), **Ennibrattr** (High Forehead), **Eylúðr** (Ever Booming One), **Faðmbyggvir Friggjar** (Dweller in Frigg's Embrace), **Faðr Galdr** (Father of Magical Song), **Farmagnuðr** (Journey Empowerer), **Farmaguð** (God of Cargoes), **Farmr Arma Gunnlaðar** (Burden of Gunnlöð's Arms), **Farmr Galga** (Gallow's Burden), **Fengr** (Catcher), **Fimbultýr** (Mighty God), **Fimbulþulr** (Mighty Truth Teller), **Fjallgeiguðr** (God of Shapes), **Fjölfnir** (The Wise One), **Fjölsviðr** (Very Wise), **Fjörgynn** (Earth), **Foldadróttinn** (Lord of Earth), **Forni** (Ancient One), **Fornölvir** (Ancient Ölvir), **Fráriðr** (The One who Rides Forth), **Frumverr Friggjar** (Frigg's First Husband), **Fundinn** (The Found), **Gagnráðr** (Counsel of Advantage), **Galdraföðr** (Father of Magical Songs), **Gangari** (The Wanderer), **Gangráðr** (Journey Adviser), **Gapprosnir** (The One in Gaping Frenzy), **Gautatýr** (God of the Geats), **Gautr** (Gautr), **Geiguðr** (Dangler 'from the Gallows'), **Geirlöðnir** (Spear Inviter), **Geiröfnir** (Spear Charger), **Geirtýr** (Spear God), **Geirvaldr** (Spear Master), **Ginnarr** (Deciever), **Gizurr** (Riddler), **Gestumblindi** (Blind Guest), **Glapsviðr** (Swift Tricker), **Goði Hrafnblóts** (Raven Offering's Goði), **Goðjaðarr** (God Protector), **Göllnir** (Yeller), **Göndli** (Wand Bearer), **Gramr Hliðskjálfar** (King of Hliðskjálf), **Grímnir**



(Masked One), **Gunnblindi** (Battle Blinder), **Hag-virkir** (Skilled Worker), **Hangadróttinn** (Lord of the Hanged), **Hangaguð** (God of the Hanged), **Hangi** (Hanged), **Haptabeiðir** (Commander of Leaders), **Haptaguð** (God of Prisoners), **Haptasnytrir** (Teacher of Gods), **Haptsönnir** (Fetter Loosener), **Hárbarðr** (Grey Beard), **Hárr** (High), **Hávi** (High One), **Heimþinguðr Hanga** (Visitor of the Hanged), **Helblindi** (Hel's Blinder), **Hengikeptr** (Hang Jaw), **Herblindi** (Host Blinder), **Herföðr** (Father of Hosts), **Herjan** (Warrior), **Herteitr** (War Merry), **Hertýr** (God of Hosts), **Hildolfr** (Battle Wolf), **Hjaldrgegnir** (Engager of Battle), **Hjaldrgoð** (God of Battle), **Hjálmberi** (Helmet Bearer), **Hjarrandi** (Screamer), **Hléfreyr** (Barrow Lord), **Hnikarr** (Overthrower), **Hoárr** (One-Eyed), **Hötter** (Hatter), **Hrafnaguð** (Raven God), **Hrafnfreistuðr** (Raven Tester), **Hrammi** (Fetterer), **Hrjóðr** (Roarer), **Hroptatýr** (Sage), **Hrosshársgrani** (Horse Hair Moustache), **Hvatmóðr** (Courage of the Whet-Stone), **Hveðrungr** (Weather Maker), **Itreker** (Splendid Ruler), **Jafnhárr** (Even Ruler), **Jálg** (Gelding), **Jarngrímr** (Iron Mask), **Jolfr** (Horse Wolf), **Jölfuðr** (Yule Father), **Jörmunr** (Mighty One/Cosmic One), **Kjalarr** (The Keel), **Langbarðr** (Long Beard), **Löndungr** (Shaggy Cloak Wearer), **Niðr Bors** (Borr's Kin), **Njótr** (Needed One), **Ófnir** (Inciter), **Olgr** (Protector/The Hawk), **Óski** (God of Wishes), **Rauðgrani** (Red Moustache), **Reiðartýr** (Wagon Rider), **Rögnir** (He That Reigns), **Rúnatýr** (God of Runes), **Runni Vagna** (Mover of Constellations), **Sanngetall** (Sooth Finder), **Síðhöttir** (Broad Hat), **Sigðir** (Victory Giver), **Sigföðr** (Father of Victory), **Sigrúnnr** (Victory Tree), **Sigtýr** (War God), **Skollvaldr** (Ruler of Treachery), **Sonr Bestlu** (Bestla's Son), **Spjalli Gauta** (Friend of the Goths), **Sviðurr** (Wise One), **Svipall** (Changing One), **Þekkr** (Welcome One), **Þrasarr** (Quareller), **Þundr** (Thunderer), **Váfuðr** (Wanderer), **Váfuðr Gungnis** (Swinger of Gungnir), **Váði Vitnis** (Foe of the Wolf), **Vakr** (Wakeful), **Valdr Galga** (Ruler of Gallows), **Valdr Vagnbrautar** (Ruler of Heaven), **Valföðr** (Father of the Slain), **Valgautr** (Slaughter-Geat), **Valkjosandi** (Chooser of the Slain), **Valtýr** (Slain God), **Valþognir** (Slain Reciever), **Veratýr** (God of Men), **Viðrir** (Stormer), **Viðurr** (Killer), **Völundr Rómu** (Smith of Battle), **Yggr** (Terrible One), **Ýjungur** (Stormy One).



## THE EDDAS AS SOURCES AND HOW TO USE THEM IN GAMING

### (AND OTHER NORDIC MYTHS)

*‘Odin had second sight, and his wife also; and from their foreknowledge he found that his name should be exalted in the northern part of the world and glorified above the fame of all other kings. Therefore, he made ready to journey out of Turkland, and was accompanied by a great multitude of people, young folk and old, men and women; and they had with them much goods of great price. And wherever they went over the lands of the earth, many glorious things were spoken of them, so that they were held more like gods than men. They made no end to their journeying till they were come north into the land that is now called Saxland; there Odin tarried for a long space, and took the land into his own hand, far and wide.’*

*Prose Edda, Snorri Sturluson, IV*

Aside from the extant folkloric tales (in the many other sources) and lingering elements that have been passed down in the Nordic and Germanic regions of Europe, little of well-understood substance remains as source material for the pagan Norse re-

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ligions. Much academic speculation and scholarship has been surmised and published for centuries on this, attempting to understand it all. Today, every piece of it has been thoroughly analyzed and put through rigorous methodology to understand its relationship to other, related European cultures.

The *Eddas*, more the prosaic and less the poetic, take these old beliefs, refocus them through a Christianized lens and retell them in a manner that also is contrary to other sources. From a gaming perspective, this can be confusing. A great deal of material can be gathered, however, and channeled into one's campaign and carefully translated into handy information without having to be a scholar in Old Icelandic or Norse mythology.

This section is a brief breakdown of these works and how to use and understand some of it for the sake of gaming. Before such a matter can be put to use, a little explanation of the *Eddas* and the purported author, Snorri Sturluson, has to be examined early on if one is to ride the 'Whale's Back' (a kenning for sailing on the seas). Snorri is the author of the prosaic *Edda* text whilst the *Poetic Edda* is more shadowy, with a possible author in the name of Sæmundr fróði (the 'wise'). He, too, will be explained in some detail in this section.

Snorri Sturluson was a 12<sup>th</sup> century historian, author and law-giver from Iceland who allegedly not only composed the Eddic sagas, but possibly the *Egilsaga* as well. His life was fairly well documented for the time, and even his thinking was ahead of it as well in his work. Snorri made a profound hypothesis stating that the gods of his people, as well as giants, were simply earlier war leaders and famous kings of the forgotten past. This hypothesis was not simply guided by his own Christianity, which was apologetic in tone, but was an intelligent theory on its own.

The major works labeled as the *Prose Edda* are embodied in three books: the *Gylfaginning*, *Skáldskaparmál* and the *Háttatal*. This set of texts store a large collection of Nordic pagan religious belief and pseudo-history that was structured around Skaldic methods of verse, alliterative primarily in style and utilized a form known as *Kenning* (See 7.3, *The Poets of the Court*). Kenning speak is one Nordic technique that can provide extremely useful in role-playing, giving a very colorful language to use. More of this will be explained and elaborated upon in this section at the end.

Snorri begins the *Prose Edda* trying to explain that the Norse gods were Trojans originally, much in the same manner that Geoffrey of Monmouth had done concerning the native Celtic Britons in his *Historia Regum Britanniae*. This gave them a Classical, more human place of origin, thereby humanizing them by denying their godhood from the beginning. Regardless of this, Snorri did not restrain himself too much with the retelling of the many stories and foundation tales in the rest of the books.

*'XLII. "Why is gold called Fródi's Meal? This is the tale thereof: One of Odin's sons, named Skjöldr,--from whom the Skjöldungs are come,--had his abode and ruled in the realm which now is called Denmark, but then was known as Gotland. Skjöldr's son, who ruled the land after him, was named Fridleifr. Fridleifr's son was Fródi: he succeeded to the kingdom after his father, in the time when Augustus Caesar imposed peace on all the world; at that time Christ was born. But because Fródi was mightiest of all kings in the Northern lands, the peace was called by his name wherever the Danish tongue was spoken; and men call it the Peace of Fródi. No man injured any other, even though he met face to face his father's slayer or his brother's, loose or bound. Neither was there any thief nor robber then, so that a gold ring lay long on Jalangr's Heath.'*

The three books of the *Prose Edda* together are over 90,000 words in length, a very impressive and substantial work for its time, and was intended as a learning tool for the Skalds. It wasn't just about the acquisition of the mythic history or lore but the verse and poetic nuance and style. The court poets in the Nordic world needed more than just a pure oral tradition, Snorri felt, and this work was his attempt at that contribution.

The so-called *Poetic Edda* is a collection of early Germanic and Nordic pagan legends and poetic myths put into written form in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and first discovered in the *Codex Regius*. Snorri even quotes from this source in his own work which reveals that it has earlier textual copies that were available to him in Iceland.

The original country (or countries) of the *Poetic Edda's* sources is not well understood. Many of its poems are vague in their descriptions of fauna and flora or too general and could have easily been written in Iceland by the hands of many scribes later since the land was settled in the middle to late 9<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, this is the common issue faced when dealing with most early manuscripts. Knowing their true origins or author(s) is never completely certain, and when a native religion is being documented by the new, conquering one, it becomes even cloudier.

The *Poetic Edda* has within it a large collection of ballads, historical lays and other assorted works that were likely and logically in the repertoire of the Nordic (and on the Continent Germanic) Skaldic court poets. For those familiar with the Celtic regions of Western Europe, this collection is similar to the Welsh *Y Goddodin*, *Llyfr Taliesin* and the many other countless manuscripts that exist that give examples of the bardic craft of the Early to Late Medieval periods in Britain and Brittany.

Without getting into the highly technical side of the Medieval art of Icelandic and Old Norse poetics, these works can be a valuable resource for players and CKs. For players, if a bard/skald class is being played in a Nordic campaign, they

can be the basis for how to, in English at least, structure some heroic or praise poetry. J.R.R. Tolkien was inspired from Norse and Finnish poetry to create his own, showing how such things are possible.

It has been alleged that *Sæmundr fróði* ('the Learned/Wise') composed this large poetic collection, but this is not certain nor accepted academically presently. Sæmundr was a scholar educated in Franconia who lived in the middle 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries in Iceland. It was understood that he wrote a very thorough history of the kings of Norway – a valuable resource at one time but, sadly, now lost. Snorri referred to his works in his own a century later and had shown clout as a venerable scholar.

The crafty player or CK can take an existing poetic source and rework it to their own liking to fit their character(s) and NPCs to color their game. One example of a very dramatic scene from an Old Norse poem (from the *Poetic Edda*), the *Sigurðarkviða hin skamma*, or 'A Short Lay of Sigurd', perfectly fits in a game setting:

*In vengeance the hero  
rose in the hall,  
And hurled his sword  
at the slayer bold;  
At Gotthorm flew  
the glittering steel  
Of Gram full hard  
from the hand of the king.*

*The foeman cleft  
Asunder fell,  
Forward hands  
and head did sink,  
And legs and feet  
did backward fall.*

These two verses describe a scene in which King Sigurd hurls the sword Gram, given by Óðin after thrusting it into Barnstokkr, at his opponent Gotthorm. With clever economy of words in Icelandic, no doubt borrowed from an earlier Germanic language poem, Sigurd's foe's fate is described well. Illustrative of this, in the original language, it flows in this manner:

*Réð til hefnda  
hergjarn í sal  
ok eftir varp  
óbilgjörnum;*

*fló til Guthorms  
Grams ramliga  
kynbirt járn  
ór konungs hendi.*

*Hné hans of dolgr  
til hluta tveggja,  
hendr ok höfuð  
hné á annan veg,  
en fóta hlutr  
féll aftr í stað.*

The original names of the warriors (and victim(s)) can be altered to fit the game by the player or CK when needed, and it can be a poem told by Skalds in the court of kings after a successful adventure.

In the case of gaming, the more heroic the Nordic sources, the better for sources if used for a basis for one's own praise poetry of fighters, giant slayers or berserkers. One important cultural issue to remember, however, is the taboo over men practicing the magical arts. It was regarded as a feminine profession and males could even be executed for being caught practicing it, so Skalds composing poems or even prosaic works in honor of their own adventuring party *must* be wary whilst performing them in Nordic countries.

To continue the idea, drawing from the Nordic sources in fleshing out one's characters, origin stories and tales are a necessity. Any gaming group of a decent history with many years and campaigns behind it and steeped in depth should have a thorough background for each character. This is identical to the old sagas in every way, and that is not an exaggeration.

Storytellers of old would have a wealth of tales behind each character with poems and songs to bring levity and realism to the mythic world for the audience. To use another example from the *Poetic Edda*, this is from the *Helgakviða Hundingsbana*, or 'First Lay of Helgi Hundingsbane'. This wondrous Lay tells the origin story of the hero Helgi and the Valkyrie Sigrún in their next life. The opening verse from this is a very modest and yet informative start to his story:

*In olden days,  
when eagles screamed,  
And holy streams  
from heaven's crags fell,  
Was Helgi then,*



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*the hero-hearted,  
Borghild's son,  
in Bralund born.*

It is sadly unfortunate that the cinema and television series based around the 'Vikings' are the farthest thing from the facts and evidence when they often purport to be themed about the culture. Usually, they hide behind the veil of 'for entertainment only,' but it does Old Norse civilization a disservice by providing terrible misinformation to the masses in this guise. On the other end, languages such as Old Norse and Old Icelandic are rumored to be 'very difficult' to acquire and learn and so few attempt such efforts. A Codex like this was made as a compromise, a sort of middle ground where a large portion of the work has been done (by the author!) so that players and CKs do not have to themselves.

Examples of misinformation about Norse culture derived from the cinema can be seen in horned helmets and tacky fur vests. In the present trend of 'Viking' based films, this wild interpretation can be easily witnessed with the unusually clean-shaven Nordic warrior types, beardless and lacking the many cultural traits and essential elements that are the hallmarks of early Scandinavia. Such a contemporary vision of these early Medieval cultures is bizarre and confusing and is contrary to history and our sources.

One clear example of how this 'vision' speaks contrary to Nordic civilization regarding the donning of facial hair and beards can be found in these early sources. There were incidences of shaming of men by the forceful cutting of their well-grown, braided and lengthy beards and hair. It was a matter of pride and honor to have grown such personal expressions of beauty, and it was a reflection of the gods. Yet in the cinema and certain television series, the Viking warriors are clean-shaven and usually barely have little hair on top. This is not what one would discover in any description of kings, warriors, heroes or gods in our sources, and this is our most precious resource for 'all things Viking.'

Grooming and a personal care of appearance was a major factor in the daily life of the Nordic peoples – it was only logical to be hygienic and sanitary. Northern European peoples all shared this aspect of personal adornment in addition to jewelry and other touches.

*Great-grandmother bore a swarthy boy;  
With water they sprinkled him; called him Thrall,  
Forthwith he grew, and well he throve,  
But rough were his hands and with wrinkled skin,  
With knuckles knotty and fingers thick,  
His face was ugly, his back was humpy,  
His heels were long...*

Rígsþula

Although lengthy and connected to a treasure trove of many other textual sources, these many sources can be useful for inspiration when needed. Especially handy is the *Hávamál* ('The Sayings of the High One') in which the gnostic wisdom of Óðin is given in a rare extant manuscript. This was one long string of poetic dialogue by the Allfather concerning his thoughts on love, magic, charms and relations to his many other situations from tales. The CK can find these Odinic words of wisdom extremely useful to insert into a game or campaign or even structure a story around. It is from this source that we discover how Óðin discovered the Secrets of the Runes while on Yggdrasil in great detail. Other Nordic sources and archaeological data provide and confirm the belief in this theological tenet prevalent in Germanic/Nordic Europe, but the *Hávamál* clarifies it, underlying this fundamental notion.

*I hung on that windy Tree  
nine whole days and nights,  
stabbed with a spear, offered to Óðin,  
myself to mine own self given,  
high on that Tree of which none hath heard from what roots it  
rises to heaven.*

*None refreshed me ever with food or drink,*

*I peered right down in the deep;  
crying aloud I lifted the Runes  
then back I fell from thence.*

*Nine mighty songs I learned from the great son of Bale-thorn,*

*Bestla's sire;  
I drank a measure of the wondrous Mead,  
with the Soulstirrer's drops I was showered.*

*Ere long I bare fruit, and throve full well,  
I grew and waxed in wisdom;  
word following word, I found me words,  
deed following deed, I wrought deeds.*

*Hidden Runes shalt thou seek and interpreted signs,  
many symbols of might and power,  
by the great Singer painted, by the high Powers fashioned,  
graved by the Utterer of gods.  
For gods graved Óðin, for elves graved Dain,*

*Dvalin the Dallier for dwarfs,  
All-wise for Jötuns, and I, of myself,*

*graved some for the sons of men.  
Dost know how to write, dost know how to read,  
dost know how to paint, dost know how to prove,  
dost know how to ask, dost know how to offer,  
dost know how to send, dost know how to spend?*

*Better ask for too little than offer too much,  
like the gift should be the boon;  
better not to send than to overspend.*

.....

*Thus Oðin graved ere the world began;  
Then he rose from the deep, and came again.*

This portion of the text forms the basis for what, on the religious side, is called ‘Odinism’ and the basic tenet to the whole of the faith. Without Oðin’s self-sacrifice to gain the knowledge of the Runes and the magic secrets within, Mankind would be bereft of this in everyday life. The same heavy dependence on the Allfather is also clearly shown in his defeat of Ymir and the scattering of the great giant’s remains to create the known universe in which all live and dwell. Without his deeds, as selfish and brave as they are, no living being could claim to be content or even be at all.

Through Oðin’s initial grand deeds for all living creatures’ and beings’ benefit in what one could consider his benign duties, he also later appears to be quite the opposite, thus his two hundred names (and corresponding forms and aliases) all with a questionable and shady history in contrast. One would wonder why such a profoundly mighty and powerful deity would show this duality to his own dependent creations. When the universe already is inhabited by the hellish spawn of monsters and vengeful giants bent on destroying the universe, why the Allfather seemingly wants to malign his own followers is one of many unanswered questions the *Edda* cannot give us.

One point to be reminded of again is the origin of the *Prose Edda* and its non-pagan author. Whatever original theological structure that was behind Norse religion that, to modern observers, appears contradictory, was edited out or lost entirely by the time of their recording by Snorri. The other *Edda* and Nordic sources share very likely similar origins excepting a handful that managed to survive the filtering process that was common in that age.

From a gaming perspective, unless the group seeks to delve deep into the religious aspect, it only has to remain superficial and be given the needed glimpses. Anything more would become too complicated or slow the gaming process down and surely be tangled in complication as the CK attempts to unravel

the many variations in the present day versions of the Old Norse pagan religion (and there are several). It is wisest to get on with the gaming and create brilliant characters and an epic story and let the magic of storytelling happen on its own, as it should.

In the *Nine Worlds Saga* module series, which is a companion to this Codex, the wondrous and clearly pagan *Rhymes of the Charms* spoken by Oðin forms the underlying theme behind the Fimbulvinter Runes. How these tie into each rune and into the story will be revealed slowly, step by step, as each module in the series is published. Each corresponding ‘Fimbulvinter Rune’ shall be shown as well.

One example of these charms, as given by Oðin in the *Hávamál*, is below:

*Þat kann ek it níunda:  
ef mik nauðr of stendr  
at bjarga fari mínu á floti,  
vind ek kyrri  
vági á  
ok svæfik allan sæ.*

-

*A tenth I know: when at night the witches  
ride and sport in the air,  
such spells I weave that they wander home  
out of skins and wits bewildered.*

It takes practice in the application of using these ancient sources in gaming for one’s own purposes, and there should be no fear in doing so. It requires some bravery to adapt, even to take an English translation of a source and present it to the gaming group. Simply trying it out a few times is the best measure of how well it will work or not; there is no other way to know for sure truly. As with art, only the artist is the most critical of their own work while others will be more impressed and inspired.

Modern Fantasy has depended on earlier cultural sources for inspiration from its inception and remains that way to this day. At times, it isn’t obvious to the observer or one so deeply involved in the hobby, but it is there resonating clearly. The trick is to reverse engineer Modern Fantasy to its original sources of inspiration and rediscover it with new eyes. Too many are caught up in the contemporary Fantasy tropes and clichés to look beyond the obvious.

One of the most common remembrances of Oðin in Nordic and Germanic Europe was that of a wandering traveler, garbed in a long, grey robe and large brimmed hat, bearded and using a staff to walk – sound familiar? Tolkien used this as his definition of the preeminent wizard in his stories. Tales that took place no

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less in Middle Earth were derived from the Nordic and Germanic name and general concept for our world: *Miðgarðr*.

Tolkien was not by any means the only author to find inspiration in the earlier cultures, but he was among the earliest in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Robert E. Howard found plenty of refuge in Norse myth and culture as well. This is found in his stories of the Irish hero Turlogh Dubh O' Brien and his involvements with the Vikings in Ireland during the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

*After this they arrayed them for combat. Egil came forward with helm on head, and shield before him, and halberd in hand, but his sword Dragvandill he suspended from his right arm. It was the custom with those who fought in single combats so to arrange that the sword should need no drawing during the fight, but be attached to the arm, to be ready at once when the combatant willed. Atli had the same arming as Egil. He was experienced in single combats, was a strong man, and of a good courage. To the field was led forth a bull, large and old 'sacrificial beast' such was termed, to be slain by him who won the victory. Sometimes there was one such ox, sometimes each combatant had his own led forth.*

*And when they were ready for the combat, then ran they each at the other, and first they threw their halberds, neither of which stood fast in the foeman's shield, but both struck in the ground. Then took they both to their swords, and went at it with a will, blow upon blow. Atli gave no ground. They smote fast and hard, and full soon their shields were becoming useless. And when Atli's shield was of no use, then he cast it from him, and, grasping his sword with both hands, dealt blows as quickly as possible. Egil fetched him a blow on the shoulder, but the sword bit not. He dealt another, and a third. It was now easy to find parts in Atli that he could strike, since he had no cover; and Egil brandished and brought down his sword with all his might, yet it bit not, strike he where he might. Then Egil saw that nothing would be done this way, for his shield was now rendered useless. So Egil let drop both sword and shield, and bounding on Atli, gripped him with his hands. Then the difference of strength was seen, and Atli fell right back, but Egil went down prone upon him and bit through his throat. There Atli died.*

### *Egilsaga*

A lengthy and rich resource is found buried in the sagas. The example shown above is action-packed and told as well as any modern story today with a nice and contemporary (for the time period) understanding of battle. Even though they are filled with magic and the supernatural (excellent for gaming, however), they were likely all based on real historical figures in their time. Egil was many things according to his rather generous saga. He was obviously a warrior of skill, a sailor, a shapeshifter (*hamrammr*), farmer and skald. Egil went on many Viking

raids and was an adventurer, earning his reputation and fame as well as rivals such as Atli (and many others).

The sagas are filled to the brim with great ideas for enterprising players and CKs wishing to capture the feel embodied in that 'world.' It cannot be stressed enough that a good reading of just some of these sagas within the *Edda* would arm a gaming group with enough Nordic know-how (combined with this Codex) to make for some years of memorable and one-of-a-kind role-playing experiences.

There is simply too much that this Codex alone cannot cover or detail about Nordic culture or myth that must be explored. This volume is a starting point into that much larger world, in some cases tearing back some of the cultural (and linguistic) barriers to ease the process. Nordic honor and law, for example, is only glimpsed at in this Codex, but it is handed over to the players and CKs as a place to begin when duels or other matters occur.

*Lörd verr siklingr sverdum.*

*Sundr riúfa spiör undir.*

*Lind skerr í styr steinda.*

*Stökkkr hauss af bol lausum.*

*Falla fólk á velli.*

*Fremr mildr iöfurr hildi.*

*Egg bítr á lim lýti.*

*Liggr skör snidin hiörvi.*

-

*The king defends the land with swords.*

*Spears tear wounds open.*

*The colored shield is cut in battle.*

*The head flies from the separated body.*

*Hosts fall on the field.*

*The generous prince wages war.*

*The edge bites blemishes on limbs.*

*The scalp lies cut by sword.*

The poetic sample above is not only illustrative of the typical life from the 'Viking' age in Northern Europe, but it is in what is classified as an áttmælt, or 'eight sentenced' verse technique, a Norse *Haiku* one could say. There is no room in this Codex to delve deeply into Norse poetics, but these tantalizing samples can give players and CKs alike an idea of what they can create when they devise them for their heroes, or play a skald.

To close this section, also in very brief, is the art of *Kenning*, the skillful linguistic use of replacing one word for another poetically or artfully. Many examples of this are shown near the end of this Codex (see '*The Poets of Court*').



This was not just a Nordic/Germanic phenomenon but found in many cultures around the world. The Nordic peoples, however, are the most famous for this use and thus the name of its technique was coined to define it globally. *Kenning* isn't always a simple art. It requires a play on words and, in the Norse languages more often, careful syllabic rhyming and other elements of cleverness.

Here, the *Codex Nordica* will prepare you for some beginning skill in the art of *Kenning* for role-playing. Throwing in phrases using this crafty language can give the game a 'Nordic' touch and make the mindset a little easier in time, especially when doing some research and reading the sagas or other early Old Norse materials at hand.

Snorri Sturluson included a section in his *Edda* about what he considered the rules of *Kenning* for Skalds. He listed many of the commonplace examples used in his time and those centuries before in the many great works, and this serves as a useful tool for people today wishing to integrate them into other avenues of usage.

This is an example below of speaking in a *Kenning* to describe the coming of a god to battle. Read it and try to decipher it *before* the translation and see how it works afterwards:

*From the Wind-Hall fell Hangatýr atop the back of the Wave-Swine. The Balanced One rested in his grip as he prepared to bring a Weather of Weapons to all.*

Translated from conventional *Kennings*, this phrase translates as 'From the sky fell Óðin atop the deck of the ship. Gungnir rested in his grip as he prepared to bring war to all.' It would be advised to research the sample *kennings* provided in section 7.3 of this Codex, print it out, pass it around the group for use and make it a habit to refer to those alternative poetic references when the need comes to say a certain word. Online, there is a resource of other lists of *Kennings* and the lengthy examples Snorri Sturluson wrote in the *Edda*.

The *Kenning* system of Norse/Germanic poetics is colorful and dramatic and will enhance the game experience many times over if implemented – it is guaranteed.

Skaldic poetry, as evidenced in the literature written in the sources, displays a wonderfully complex art filled with intricate rhyme and measure in syllable. As with any culture steeped in oral craft, Norse society possessed a well-developed and diversified range of poetic arts. *Kenning* was but just a small portion of this once thriving linguistic art.

*"But now one thing must be said to young skalds, to such as yearn to attain to the craft of poesy and to increase their store of figures with traditional metaphors; or to those who crave to acquire the faculty of discerning what is said in hidden phrase: let such an one, then, interpret this book*

*to his instruction and pleasure. Yet one is not so to forget or discredit these traditions as to remove from poesy those ancient metaphors with which it has pleased Chief Skalds to be content; nor, on the other hand, ought Christian men to believe in heathen gods, nor in the truth of these tales otherwise than precisely as one may find here in the beginning of the book.*

II. Now you may hear examples of the way in which Chief Skalds have held it becoming to compose, making use of these simple terms and periphrases: as when Arnórr Earls' Skald says that Odin is called Allfather:

*Now I'll tell men the virtue*

*Of the terrible Jarl;*

*Allfather's Song-Surf streams;*

*Late my sorrows lighten,*

-

*Here, moreover, he calls poesy the Song-Surf of Allfather:*

*Hávarðr the Halt sang thus:*

*Now is the flight of eagles*

*Over the field; the sailors*

*Of the sea-horses hie them*

*To the Hanged-God's gifts and feasting.*

*Edda, Snorri Sturluson*

While the example above is given in English in this Codex, it obviously loses its intended purpose that Snorri aimed to convey. He was displaying through Norse pagan religion how the Skaldic craft or poesy functions. Snorri wanted to never simply discard his peoples' old beliefs entirely or cast them in shame but show how they flowed in the intricate workings of poetry.

Even skaldic origins cannot escape the Allfather, however, in Norse belief. One would imagine that with the diverse plethora of deities and characters that populate the tales and Nine Worlds that another figure would have been the originator to the skaldic arts, but even this delicate and highly specialized craft finds its birth with Óðin Alföðr. In several mentions, he is referenced as being a poet and mighty of 'word-craft' and skill.

Snorri explicitly stresses this in his *Edda* and leaves no mistake that the Allfather in Ásgarðr fathered the entire poetic tradition. He also makes the point to the naming of the many other terms in use in his day (from a 'Viking', to a 'Groom', etc.):

*"Skáld heita greppar, ok rétt er í skáldskap at kalla svá hvern mann, er vill. Rekkar váru kallaðir þeir menn, er fylgðu Hálfri konungi, ok af þeirra nafni eru rekkar kallaðir hermenn, ok er rétt at kalla svá alla menn. Lofðar heita*

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*ok menn í skáldskap, sem fyrr er ritat. Skatnar váru þeir menn kallaðir, er fylgðu þeim konungi, er Skati mildi var kallaðr. Af hans nafni er skati kallaðr hverr, er mildr er. Bragnar heita þeir, er fylgðu Braga konungi inum gamla. Virðar heita þeir menn, er meta mál manna. Fyrðar ok firrar ok verar heita landvarnarmenn. Víkingar ok flotnar, þat er skipa herr. Beimar, svá hétu þeir, er fylgðu Beimuna konungi. Gumnar eða gumar heita flokkstjórar, svá sem gumi er kallaðr í brúðför. Gotnar eru kallaðir af heiti konungs þess, er Goti er nefndr, er Gotland er við kent. Hann var kallaðr af nafni Óðins ok dregit af Gauts nafni, því at Gautland eða Gotland var kallat af nafni Óðins, en Sviþjóð af nafni Sviðurs. Þat er ok heiti Óðins.”*

In this passage, Snorri, from Norse tradition, makes the long-winded connection as well between the mainland Goths, who originally left southern Sweden, as springing from Óðin or Gauti. The Norse term for skald-craft is *skáldskap*, similar in English to *bardship* in analogy.

Useful in the gaming setting are the many Norse terms for ‘men’. This is handy for referring to them in groups or more and can be thrown into gameplay often by players for realism.

*Drengir heita ungir menn búlausir, meðan þeir afla sér fjár eða orðstír; þeir fardrengir, er milli landa fara, þeir konungsdrengir, er höfðingjum þjóna, þeir ok drengir, er þjóna ríki mönnum eða bóndum. Drengir heita vaskir menn ok batnandi. Seggir eru kallaðir ok kníar ok liðar, þat eru fylgdarmenn. Þegnar ok höldar, svá eru búendr kallaðir. Ljónar heita þeir menn, er ganga of sættir manna. Þeir menn eru, er svá eru kallaðir: kappar, kenpur, garpar, snillingar, hreystimenn, harðmenn, afarmenni, hetjur. Þessi heiti standa hér í mót at kalla mann bláðan, veykan, þjarfan, þirfing, blotamann, skauð, skræfu, skjáð, vák, vóm, læra, sleyma, teyða, dugga, dási, dirokkr, dusilmenni, ölmusa, auvirð, vílmögr. Örr maðr heitir mildingr, mæringr, skati, þjóðskati, gullskati, mannbaldr, sælingr, sælkeri, auðkýfingr, ríkmenni, höfðingi. Hér í mót er svá kallat: hnöggvingr, glöggvingr, mælingr, vesalingr, feniðingr, gjöflati. Heitir spekingr ráðvaldr. Heitir ok óvitr maðr fífl, afglapi, gassi, ginningr, gaurr, glópr, snápr, föli, ærr, óðr, galinn. Snyrtimaðr ofláti, drengr, glæsimaðr, stertimaðr, prýðimaðr. Heitir hraumi, skrápr, skrokkr, skeiðklofi, flangi, slinni, fjósnir, slápr, drótt. Lýðr heitir landfólk eða ljóðr. Heitir ok þræll kefsir, þjónn, önnungr, þirr.*

*Young men not householders are called Drengs, while they are acquiring wealth and glory: sea-faring Drengs are they who voyage from land to land; King’s Drengs are they who serve rulers. They also are Drengs who serve wealthy men or franklins; valiant and ambitious men are called Drengs. Warriors are also called Champions and Troops: these are soldiers. Freeholders are called Thanes and Yeomen; those men who go about reconciling men are called*

*Day-Men. These men are they who are called Champions, Kemps, Men of War, Brave Men, Valiant Men, Hardy Men, Overpowerers, Heroes. Over against these are the following terms: Soft, Weak, Unleavened, Leavenless, Melting One, Sheath, Coward, Skulker, Weakling, Qualmish, Caitiff, Scamp, Vile One, Dog, Lout, Feeble One, Paltry One, Imbecile, Bungler, Son of Wretchedness.*

*A good man of his hands is called Munificent, Illustrious, Towerer, Mighty Towerer, Towering Gold-Giver, Prince of Men, Wealthy One, Prosperous, Heaper-Up of Riches, Mighty Man, Chieftain. In contrast to these are they who are called Niggard, Miser, Calculator, Wretched One, Wealth-Hiding, Gift-Tardy One. A man wise in Counsel is called Wielder of Counsel. A witless man is called Clown, Oaf, Gander, Dupe, Boor, Idiot, Dolt, Fool, Madman, Maniac, Moon-Struck. One who thinks much of dress is called Gaudy, Dreng, Glittering One, Careful of Attire, Tricked-Out. A noisy fellow is called Shark-Skin, Braggart, Sheath-Cleaner, Fawner, Brawler, Good-for-Naught, Worthless One. Common-folk are called Country-folk or People. A thrall is called Kept-Man, Serf, Laborer, Servant.*

*“Each one singly is called man; tis twain if they are two; three are a thorp; four are a group; a band is five men; if there are six, it is a squad; seven complete a crew; eight men make a panel; nine are ‘good fellows;’ ten are a gang; eleven form an embassy; it is a dozen if twelve go together; thirteen are a crowd; fourteen are an expedition; it is a gathering, when fifteen meet; sixteen make a garrison; seventeen are a congregation; to him who meets eighteen, they seem enemies enough. He who has nineteen men has a company; twenty men are a posse; thirty are a squadron; forty, a community; fifty are a shire; sixty are an assembly; seventy are a line, eighty are a people; one hundred is a host.*

*Beside these there are those terms which men prefix to the names of men: we call such terms epithets of possession, or true terms, or surnames. It is an epithet of possession when one names a thing by its true name, and calls him whom one desires to periphrase Owner of that thing; or Father or Grandfather of that which was named; Grandsire is a third epithet. Moreover, a son is also called Heir, Heritor, Bairn, Child and Boy, Inheritor. A blood-kinsman is called Brother, Twin, Germane, Consanguine; a relation is also called Nephew, Kinsman, Kin.*

Lengthy, this list is one of many that Snorri provides for many topics for educating skalds. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, his intention for composing the *Edda* was to create a textbook for skald poets-in-training. For what had likely been a long standing oral tradition beforehand, Snorri was now attempting to establish in Iceland a school of Skaldic Art with its key being literature and literacy at its heart. Christianity gave

the impetus to educate by literacy many who had never before gained the ability in Europe. Snorri sought to carry on this need not through the customary Latin, Hebrew or Greek but his native Icelandic.

It has to be stressed, if it hasn't already, that the players and CK *do not* have to become Old Norse scholars to acquire the knowledge and use of the poetics and language to enhance their gaming experience. Using it is only an option that can bring that extra touch and color to the story one bit more. I have known very few gaming groups in my thirty years that have done any amount of hard work in these areas, as I have, to enhance their games. Usually, they have spent the same energies on creating characters or, in the case of the GM, crafting and devising mega-dungeons.

If a Nordic themed campaign is going to be designed and run, however, using these aspects of actual Norse culture is logical. It is the icing on the cake in the end. Snorri didn't realize so long ago that he also armed players and CKs today with the means to create, modify and develop their own skaldic styled fun. Obtaining a physical copy of Snorri's works is not difficult at all and is suggested if the group is contemplating harnessing those verse forms and poetics.

To divert the topic a little but still remain on the *Edda*, within the vast and impressive work by Snorri, we return back to the *Havámal* section. This is the long stretch of different poetic metre forms that stem from Óðin himself – his tenets of religion, philosophies and magical charms. It is quite an astounding section of the *Edda* given that this entire run of poem could be said to form the core of what we know and understand of Odinism. To better guide the actions and players, one small portion of the *Havámal*, usually considered the 'Maxims for Men,' are verses of wisdom meant to aid men in their daily lives. These stanzas each are, simply put, Óðin's 'Words of Wisdom.'

*Praise day at even, a wife when dead,  
a weapon when tried, a maid when married,  
ice when 'tis crossed, and ale when 'tis drunk.*

*Hew wood in wind, sail the seas in a breeze,  
woo a maid in the dark, — for day's eyes are many, —  
work a ship for its gliding, a shield for its shelter,  
a sword for its striking, a maid for her kiss;*

*Drink ale by the fire, but slide on the ice;  
buy a steed when 'tis lanky, a sword when 'tis rusty;  
feed thy horse neath a roof, and thy hound in the yard.*

*-The speech of a maiden should no man trust*

*nor the words which a woman says;  
for their hearts were shaped on a whirling wheel  
and falsehood fixed in their breasts.*

*-  
Breaking bow, or flaring flame,  
ravening wolf, or croaking raven,  
routing swine, or rootless tree,  
waxing wave, or seething cauldron,*

*-  
Fying arrows, or falling billow,  
ice of a nighttime, coiling adder,  
woman's bed-talk, or broken blade,  
play of bears or a prince's child,*

*-  
Sickly calf or self-willed thrall,  
witch's flattery, new-slain foe,  
brother's slayer, though seen on the highway,  
half burned house, or horse too swift —  
be never so trustful as these to trust.*

*-  
Let none put faith in the first sown fruit  
nor yet in his son too soon;  
whim rules the child, and weather the field,  
each is open to chance.*

*-  
Like the love of women whose thoughts are lies  
is the driving un-roughshod o'er slippery ice  
of a two year old, ill-tamed and gay;  
or in a wild wind steering a helmless ship,  
or the lame catching reindeer in the rime-thawed fell.*

These maxims were the basic ideas that guided the Norse men at the height of the so-called 'Viking Age' it could be said. They are heroic, a little noble, yet very chauvinistic (clearly negative toward women of all classes and kinds) and yet practical as well. If studied, Óðin's wisdoms are quite sneaky and conniving, too, but given his history and several hundred guises, this is no surprise. He says it is wisest to 'woo a maid' in the dark



## CHAPTER 7 -

because there are fewer watching. This could be out of modesty or for secret liaisons; the language isn't clear in what context.

As misogynistic as Oðin's wisdom appears, in the next stanzas he is in contrast, however. This might be Snorri's own interjection to soften the harsh tones that the Allfather exhibited, or it was in the traditional sources, but it is in stark opposite character and mood, even poetic language. Even in Ásgarðr, he did not rule with singular authority over his queen and High Goddess, Frigg, who more than had equal power in the Nine Worlds.

*Now plainly I speak, since both I have seen;  
unfaithful is man to maid;  
we speak them fairest when thoughts are falsest  
and wile the wisest of hearts.*

-

*Let him speak soft words and offer wealth  
who longs for a woman's love,  
praise the shape of the shining maid --  
he wins who thus doth woo.*

-

*Never a whit should one blame another  
whom love hath brought into bonds:  
oft a witching form will fetch the wise  
which holds not the heart of fools.*

-

*Never a whit should one blame another  
for a folly which many befalls;  
the might of love makes sons of men  
into fools who once were wise.*

-

*The mind knows alone what is nearest the heart  
and sees where the soul is turned:  
no sickness seems to the wise so sore  
as in naught to know content.*

Not that there is much call for romance in the average role-playing game to warrant using even the great Oðin's advice, but these very sensible and smart verses can be helpful. Players and CKs both can study these, even quote

them during gameplay, reminding others of the Allfather's words if they become misguided or foolish in their relationships. It could lead to some very interesting circumstances that itself stem from Nordic sources.

Oddly, even in the depths of the *Edda*, lies two examples of a type of Nordic erotic poetry called '*Mansöngur*' that are Oðin's sixteenth and seventeenth Charms near the end of his *Havámal*. In the whole of Snorri's work, this is the only instance of such erotic work. It isn't vulgar or scandalous or even bawdy, especially by modern standards, but it fits into a tradition of poetry that carried through the Medieval period and into a later age.

*Þat kann ek it sextánda:  
ef ek vil ins svinna mans  
hafa geð allt ok gaman,  
hugi ek hverfi  
hvítarmri konu,  
ok sný ek hennar öllum sefa.*

-

*Þat kann ek it sjautjándá  
at mik mun seint firrask  
it manunga man. Ljóða  
þessa  
mun þú, Loddáfáfnir,  
lengi vanr vera;  
þó sé þér góð, ef þú getr,  
nýt ef þú nemr,  
þörf ef þú þiggr.*

-

*A sixteenth I know: when all sweetness and love  
I would win from some artful wench,  
her heart I turn, and the whole mind change of  
that fair-armed lady I love.*

-

*A seventeenth I know: so that e'en the shy maiden  
is slow to shun my love.  
These songs, Stray-Singer, which man's son knows not, long  
shalt thou lack in life,  
though thy weal if thou win'st them, thy boon if thou obey'st them  
thy good if haply thou gain'st them.*

## WHAT COMPRISES THE PROSE EDDA

Snorri's massive 90,000+ word composition was well-structured and envisioned when he designed it and wrote it. He did not simply throw its many components together at random completely even though many elements seem to be compiled due to having a theme or no other place to go. Snorri put together a fair summary of Norse paganism in the guise of a skaldic workbook in the *Prose Edda*.

To this point in this massive section, several examples of how Norse poetry and traditional culture could be placed into gaming were shown with some illustration. Many derived from all over the *Edda* and a few sources are linked but not directly taken from out of the text itself. This portion of the section breaks the entire *Prose Edda* down into its individual parts in summary and explains them in a better focus. Players and CKs can better sift through the text and find what they need. An effort has been made to put these many different sections in the *Edda* into gaming terms. This will aid in knowing where to look for certain themes and tropes.

**GYFAGINNING:** This tale is of King Gylfi from Sweden, taken by one of the fair goddesses of the Æsir to Ásgarðr for questioning by three lofty beings: *High*, *Just-As-High*, and *Third*. The three in their questioning make Gylfi speak of the creation and destruction of the gods through dialogue in poetic form. After their fairly long session and his correct answers, he is left alone on desolate earth to gather his senses and return home whereupon he will retell this. *Scholars deduce that Snorri chose to modify whatever the original Norse source(s) may have been to place them in a more Christian framework out of his own religious safety (to not show any loyalty to the old former religion).*

**SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL:** In this second book within the *Edda*, a poetic dialogue between the Sea God Ægir and Bragi discuss the most relevant topic to Snorri's work – skaldic poetry. Its name, kennings and the origins of the poetic arts are covered in this exchange of artful words between the two gods as they converse in an entertaining way. By discussing the very nature the skaldic arts, they also use it in a very high degree in their own language cunningly. Back and forth they use kennings to describe many things, people and to convey ideas. Compared to the first book, Snorri left this likely in its original state from where ever he derived it, tampering little with it.

**HÁTTATAL:** This is Snorri's treatise on poetic composition. This was his more instructional section of the *Edda*, leaning toward a methodical approach that, by scholars' reckoning, is Classical influence more than traditional Norse. The 'Classical' aspect is not from Rome or early Greece from the ancient writings of the poets or playwrights, but from Snorri's own Christian education in Franconia. The mythology and former pagan leanings that Snorri wrote about in the other two books are not in this book in the same emphasis, although many familiar names are given for examples.

## THE POETIC EDDA'S COMPOSITION

Whoever put together this collection, whether one author or many, made a wondrous gathering of Norse and Continental Germanic myth and Pseudohistory. Everyone from Attila the Hun to Brynhildr and Sigfried the Dragonslayer are in this large selection. As mentioned earlier in this section, they are primarily housed within the *Codex Regius* manuscript. Below is the listing of these many poems and the *Dvergatal*, or 'Catalog of Dwarfs', from the *Völuspá*.

**VÖLUSPÁ:** The Seeress speaks, after silencing the Sons of Heimdallr, to tell of the Creation of the Nine Worlds from the slain body of Ymir by Óðin, Vili and Vé and the End of the World. She then speaks of its rebirth. In this, she reminds Óðin that she knows many of his secrets and that the many mystical secrets of the universe are known to her while in this trance. This is perhaps one of the most useful for gaming in that it reveals a large gamut of Norse pagan data with little tampering from Christianity overtly.

**HÁVAMÁL:** These are Gnostic wisdom verses attributed to Óðin and in, essentially, five different parts: *Gestapáttir* ('Guest Section') involving hospitality rules, the *Faithlessness of Women* is combined with his rules on seduction and other semi-related material, *Loddfáfnismál* ('Loddfáfnir's Sayings') is dedicated to handling rules of morale conduct and ethics, *Rúnatáls-páttir-Óðins* ('Óðin's Rune Song') is, perhaps, the most well-known of all Norse poems and describes the Allfather's gaining of the Secrets of the Runes on the tree of Yggdrasil, and *Ljóðatal* ('Charms') embodies Óðin's many magical Charms in verse form.

**VAFPRÚÐNISMÁL:** This poetic dialogue is both between Óðin and Frigg and the Jötun Vafprúðnir and largely concerns the Nine Worlds and the surrounding universe. Through this poem, more of the workings of the Norse cosmography is understood and explained. In the process of the dialogue, Óðin, in disguise as a wayfarer, tricks the giant eventually and wins over him, taking his life. It shows more of the Allfather's cleverness and his ability to *hamrammer*, or 'shapeshift', to get what he wants from others.

**GRÍMNISMÁL:** A very smart and clever poem whereupon Óðin and Frigg, atop Yggdrasil, both notice their foster children are comparatively not prospering as well, being that Geirröth is now king while Agnarr is less well off. Frigg feels that King Geirröth will be cruel toward too many guests while Óðin disagrees, so the two bet on this. The Allfather prepares to visit the king in disguise as Grímnir, but Frigg sends word to the king that a strange magician will appear and to be careful. Óðin is indeed taken and tortured by this king who places him between two blazing fires for eight nights, forcing him to speak and reveal his identity. He speaks of the Nine Worlds, his deeds, rune magic and more before being set free, but in the process, the king slips and impales himself on his own sword, making his son, Agnarr, rule in his stead.

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**SKÍRNISMÁL:** A romantic but initially tragic poem that tells of the love story between the god Skírnir and the giantess Gerðr. Boldly, aided by Freyr, Skírnir travels to Jötunheimr to woo and seek her hand however possible. The story does not end tragically, however, and the two do remain together. There are many examples of Æsir/Vanir and the Jötnar falling in love without tragedy in the end.

**HÁRBARÐSLJÓÐ:** In this poem, a good example of *flyting* is given (see the example taken from this Lay in Section 7.3). Flyting is a witty form of banter between foes verbally that is both satirical and clever. This poem sets a classic display for players and CKs alike on how to best attempt such an act during role-playing.

**HYMISKVIÐA:** The many Æsir wish to hold their feasts in the company of Ægir's palace in the sea, but he places one condition – they must give to him a cauldron grand enough to handle such a number of guests. Týr knows that Hymir possesses such an item but none but Þór can take it. This poem is fragmentary and thrown together in its extant form but does hold some value and relation to the many other sources. Although a little minimalistic, Þór's slaying of many giants is described in this poem and can give players ideas or the CK for the Giant Slayer class.

**LOKASENNA:** This is an essential poem about the flying between Loki and the gods during a feast at Ægir's hall. Loki accuses the Æsir of infidelity and questionable moral conduct, and for a time, he is winning in the dialogue but Þór arrives ready to crush Loki's head with Mjöllnir. This complex and important poem leads into Ragnarök without the binding of Loki occurring, going against other sources.

**PRYMSKVIÐA:** Stealing Mjöllnir, the Jötun King Þrym demands the goddess Freyja as payment to make her his wife in Jötunheimr. Enraged, Þór devises a means to gain his hammer back while talking, convincing the giant king the bargain is being made. It is decided by the gods that Þór will go to the king's palace in disguise as the goddess (in wedding gown and wig with Loki garbed as his bridesmaid). Comically, Þór does many awkward, unladylike things while in the giant king's court during the ceremony but never fully reveals who he is. Fortunately, Mjöllnir finds its way into his hands during the wedding ceremony and this is when he strikes down the giants and leaves the land with his hammer and countless slain.

**VÖLUNDARKVIÐA:** A tale common in Germanic pagan Europe, this is the tale of the divine blacksmith Völundr. The poem version tells of how his many years spent married to a Valkyrie were abandoned by her only to be later captured by a Swedish king. The king then hamstringing him and binds him to servitude, forcing him to forge great items and weapons for him under duress. After years, Völundr's revenge comes, however, in

many gruesome ways. He makes drinking cups from the king's sons' skulls, rapes his daughter and then flies away to freedom, never to be seen again.

**ALVÍSSMÁL:** The sneaky dwarf Alvíss arrives at Þór's hall demanding the hand of his daughter as was promised, but the Thunder God is doubtful and suspicious. To test the dwarf, Þór asks him a long list of questions of which the dwarf more than replies back properly to each. By the end of Þór's questioning, it seems as though Alvíss will win his daughter's hand after all, but the dawn's light rises in the east and turns the dwarf to stone.

**HELGAKVIÐA HUNDINGSBANA I:** This poem is the origin story of the hero Helgi, his birth and formation as a warrior, Viking hero and his first successful flyting against a foe. He wages war on an enemy family with the advice and foresight of a Valkyrie.

**HELGAKVIÐA HJÖRVARÐSSONAR:** Helgi's saga continues on in more of this poem meant to be continuous. The background story of how Helgi's parents met is handled in this strand as well Helgi's death and story around his fate. Oddly, this portion of the poem is loosely focused on him and more on another character.

**HELGAKVIÐA HUNDINGSBANA II:** In this section of the Helgi saga, his clan is given more focus as well as his many battles and struggles against foes. The primary piece of this third section of the Helgaviða is his fateful death at the hands of Dagr. *Scholars have broken this into the three sections due to several reasons for convenience in handling the confusing manner in which it was written in the extant document.*

**NIFLUNGRSAGA:** This is the Norse variation to the Continental Germanic tale of Sigmund and Brynhildr. This version has many variants but is not too radically different as to astound the reader and provides plenty of useful data about curses, magical items, dragons, dwarfs and warring kingdoms. It is epic in the finest degree. The *Niflungsaga* is fifteen separate poetic tales which, together, form the epic saga. Read together, it could inspire many ideas for a CK creating a similarly themed campaign. The fifteen different poems in this saga are so named:

- 1 Frá dauða Sinfjötla
- 2 Grípisspá
- 3 Reginsmál
- 4 Fáfnismál
- 5 Sigrdrífumál
- 6 Brot af Sigurðarkviðu
- 7 Guðrúnarkviða I
- 8 Sigurðarkviða hin skamma



- 9 Helreið Brynhildar
- 10 Dráp Niflunga
- 11 Guðrúnarkviða II
- 12 Guðrúnarkviða III
- 13 Oddrúnargrátr
- 14 Atlakviða
- 15 Atlamál

**JÖRMUNREKKRVIÐA:** ‘Jörmunrekkr’, or the early Gothic king Ermanaric, passed into a Pan-Germanic legend and thus found his way into Scandinavia in time. These two Lays are remnants of earlier mythic and semi-historical tales that are filled with smoky feast halls, magic swords and brutal murder. These two Lays, the *Guðrúnarhvöt* and *Hamðismál*, are the final two poems in the *Poetic Edda*.

## THE DVERGATAL

In the *Völuspá* Creation story, an intriguing break in the narrative is made after the Sons of Borr have slain the World Giant Ymir. What had been a flow in the telling of the story about the process of how Oðin took apart Ymir and created the Universe and Nine Worlds from the decomposing corpse now becomes a separate catalog of the first dwarfs brought into existence.

This has been rightfully assumed as deriving from another source that was strung together with the literary copy of the *Völuspá*. It dates from a period that may be older than the *Edda* text it sits in but when is not certain. There are seventy-six dwarf names in the list, many are also used as aliases by Oðin or can be found in other sources. Fans of J.R.R. Tolkien will recognize many as the dwarfen company and a certain wizard leader that seek out to reclaim their home at Erebor in *The Hobbit*, as he borrowed from this source.

The meaning and purpose behind this long list has been conjectured many times and ways by scholars over the decades, but there are no absolute certainties in what the *Dvergatal*’s purpose was.

This text gives small detail to some of the dwarfs and their life or what purpose they served in the Universe. *From the gaming perspective, this data can be extremely useful for the CK in providing the Nine World’s most ancient and venerable dwarfs since Ymir’s demise – you never know when it will be needed.*

What can be best divulged from the vast sources but taken directly from the *Edda* verbatim are the first three dwarfs in Norse creation. These three also function as the great leaders and rulers of the dwarfen-kind: *Dvalin*, *Durin* and *Modsognir*. There appear to be other tripartite divisions in the *Dvergatal* but

without explanation. The name *Lofar* is mentioned as being the progenitor to the dwarf race which either means that he was the first to fall from Ymir’s corpse and feed on his remains or there was another version of the tale unrecorded.

The figures in this name list show little correlation with other sources or even a logic, but they are nonetheless interesting. Fifty-two of the names are aliases of Oðin. One-fifth are not found in the rest of the *Völuspá* text. There are seventy-four variant spelling versions in other manuscripts (as first discovered in the *Codex Regius*); thirty-seven of these have entirely different meanings from the *Codex Regius* version. This list was clearly passed down by generations by memory and has managed to mostly remain intact remarkably even in the many variant texts.

The player and CK both can plunder from this list for naming ideas that are separate from that given later in this Codex when an ‘authentic’ dwarf name is needed from the Norse sources – it would only make sense. Because the original intentions behind this ancient list is no longer known, it seems best suited today to fall into the hands of modern storytellers to continue the tradition.

## DVERGATAL LIST

Mosognir	Nori	Kili	Haugspori
Durinn	Óri	Fundinn	Hlévangr
Nyi	Onarr	Nali Váli	Glóinn
Nidi	Óinn	Hepti	Dóri
Nordri	Mjöðvitnir	Sviðr	Óri
Sudri	Veigr	Billigr	Dúfr
Austri	Gandálfr	Bruni	Andvari
Vestri	Vindálfr	Bildr	Skirfir
Althjof	Thorin	Buri	Virfir
Dwalin	Thror	Frór	Skafiðr
Nar	Þráinn	Hornbori	Ai
Nainn	Þekkr	Frægr	Alfr
Niping	Litr	Loni	Yngwi
Dain	Vitr	Aurvangr	Eikinskjalði
Bifurr	Nyr	Jari	Falr
Bafurr	Nýráðr	Eikinskjalði	Frosti
Wili	Reginn	Draupnir	Finnr
Bömburr	Ráðsviðr	Dólgþrasir	Ginnr
Harr	Fili	Haurr	Lofarr



## CHAPTER 8: THE PRECIOUS WORKS

### NORSE ENCHANTED WEAPONS AND POSSESSIONS FROM LEGEND

“Þat var dómr þeira, at hamarrinn var beztr af öllum gripunum ok mest vörn í fyrir hrímpursum, ok dæmdu þeir, at dvergrinn ætti veðfæit.”

*“This was their decision: that the hammer was best of all the precious works, and in it there was the greatest defense against the Rime-Giants; and they gave sentence, that the dwarf should have his wager.”*

*Skáldskaparmál*, 13<sup>th</sup> Century

As with any civilization, the Scandinavian peoples had plentiful stories of magical weaponry and items in the possession of their heroes, gods and kings. This gave them an even larger than life presence, and it was expected that mighty and clever deeds would come from them once they entered the tale.

In Norse pagan belief, the greatest of smiths in the universe were the dwarfs (in comparison to the other races in the Nine Worlds). This has been borrowed into modern fantasy literature and other related media since and is considered a ‘normal’ and accepted idea, but in earlier ages, it was spoken in hushed tones. The average person living in Scandinavia or an offshoot region settled by a ‘Viking’ colony hoped to someday discover a secret cache of dwarfen wealth or riches heavily enchanted and prized with no strings attached.

The dwarfs themselves are the mere ‘maggots’ left from Ymir’s corpse after his defeat by the Sons of Borr to create the Nine Worlds. They were feisty and not easy to deal with by other peoples. It was far better to obtain their handiwork than to meet and be personable with them, if possible. It was an act of heroes and gods to force them to create great items.

Not all of the mighty smiths in Norse legend were of dwarf-kind, however, as this section will detail. It required a very talented and divine touch to forge items of power and cleverness to use in the Nine Worlds and not just any smith could aspire to this level.

Only Óðin could demand from the dwarfs what he wanted outright, and he did not do this often or lightly. The Æsir and Vanir were among the first to equip themselves from the dwarfs’ capable skills. By chance, as gifts, through a complex series of events or by deception, one by one they obtained their enchanted items. Dwarfen hammers and forges were kept busy in the earliest of days since the beginning by the gods.

This section is broken into parts, first detailing the dwarf smiths that famously constructed the weapons and items of yore and then the various items themselves and the various owners. The players and Castle Keepers both can use the information in this section as a resource for their Norse inspired adventures and

pluck these items and artifacts and place them in their tales or create their own with a Scandinavian style. Clearly there were scores of enchanted items and weapons from Norse mythology and tales that never found their way into documentation from earlier ages, and this is tragic, but from the scant remains of what is extant by mention, this section embellishes such knowledge. Either such documentation gives us just a name or description or, if we are fortunate, both. These have been used to great effect, and where lacking either, I had to fill in the gaps myself using realistic means until even those who study these sources may not be able to separate it from the data – that is my hope.

### THE DWARF SMITHS

Usually residing in the world of *Svartálfaheimr*, deep inside mountains or within the earth, the conniving and shifty dwarfen smiths possess the rare gift of the secrets of steel. The most famous in Norse myth and legend and, ironically, without any extant surviving sources giving their names were the Ívaldasynir (‘Sons of Ívaldi’). These prolific and highly skilled four dwarfs were able to forge for Óðin and Thor from their smithy. Their handiwork can also be seen in the hands and possession of many other gods as well and was not purely weaponry alone.

To seek out the Ívaldasynir would be a nearly impossible task as their whereabouts are a carefully guarded secret by the gods and other beings who are given the privilege to know. Meeting these dwarves is hard. One must overcome the dangers as set by the sons of Ívaldi as well convince them to work with total strangers.. Convincing them to forge items or weapons is the next difficulty. *The Castle Keeper could create an epic adventure centered on these mysterious dwarf sons or integrate the forthcoming adventure module series into their campaign.*

Since the Norse sources do not name or give other details about the Sons of Ívaldi, it can be assumed that they still remain where ever they formerly resided in the world of the Dark Elves. For their legendary skill, they are likely protected by Óðin in some way, if not personally. The Castle Keeper can assign the Sons names as required. One interesting theory or idea for their names could be derived from their enchanted items/weapons. This, if arranged in any combination of four (rhyming), would be: *Gundnir, Skidbladnir, Draupnir* and *Mjöltnir*.

Loki tried to sabotage their efforts many times, particularly in the creation of Þór’s items. He had, instead, altered them in their final size and form in minor ways but nothing that bothered the mighty giant slayer and adventurer too greatly.

This is not to give the cliché of dwarfs acting solely in the capacity of mysterious smiths and enchanter as one would find in fantasy literature or in general gaming. Dwarfs are mentioned more often in the Nordic and early Germanic sources as possessing the knowledge of smithing in this capacity, but they are



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also cunning, vile and full of deceit and *nothing* like what gaming has portrayed them as being in the forty years of the hobby. In fact, due to this interesting and overlooked aspect, dwarfs, if presented in their original Scandinavian/Germanic perspective, would provide a new area of story opportunity and idea never given before, forcing the players to keep wary.

*“Answer me, Völund, | greatest of elves,  
What happed with my boys | that hale once were?”*

*Völund spake:*

*“First shalt thou all | the oaths now swear,*

*By the rail of ship, | and the rim of shield,*

*By the shoulder of steed, | and the edge of sword,*

*That to Völund’s wife | thou wilt work no ill,*

*Nor yet my bride | to her death wilt bring,*

*Though a wife I should have | that well thou knowest,*

*And a child I should have | within thy hall.*

*“Seek the smithy | that thou didst set,*

*Thou shalt find the bellows | sprinkled with blood;*

*I smote off the heads | of both thy sons,*

*And their feet ‘neath the sooty | straps I hid.*

*“Their skulls, once hid | by their hair, I took,*

*Set them in silver | and sent them to Nithuth*

*Völundarkviða*

Völundr the Smith

Possessed of unusual talent, Völundr, the Prince of the *Ælves*, was a smith of highly regarded skills sought out in many worlds. One of his prized and most prolific creations, according to the limited sources, was the sword. There were over a dozen of them, many of them dating to earlier ages of Man and to other peoples and all capable of great slaughter and magic.

Völundr’s talents were so sought after by others that deception was used to obtain his creations or, ultimately, him in the end. A small portion of his somewhat tragic story can be found in the poem *Völundarkviða*. Until his betrayal by a Swedish king (Nithuth), he lived among the Valkyrie as a master of his own craft without a ruler. It was through his smith craft that he reigned over the elves and was made their prince (*Visi Álfa*), presumably in their world of *Álfheimr*.

Even after his tragic captivity with King Nithuth, Völundr managed to still remain alive and even returned home or by, some



accounts, to another place entirely to begin another life. His fame is widespread in the Germanic world under many names and guises for his craft and cleverness. As with the dwarfs, one would be wise to be wary in dealing with Völundr if one seeks a gift or weapon forged from his skill if one is dishonest. One’s own dire secrets and plots will return to haunt them through the Smith’s own creation or, worse, by the Smith himself.

He and his two brothers, Egil and Slagfiðr, all once married to Valkyries, were forsaken by these sparkling and deadly beauties, but only Völundr passed into legend for his story was steeped in tragedy and epic deeds.

## ITEMS AND WEAPONRY OF ENCHANTMENT

This section is broken down to the individual deity, character and giant from Nordic legend. Piece by piece, as far as it is given in the early primary sources, such enchanted artifacts and weapons will be detailed and given statistics here. It is completely up to the Castle Keeper, however, in any particular game session or campaign to agree on accepting these mighty and overwhelming elements as they will quickly throw the game mechanics out of balance. *Many of these mythical items had to be given names in Icelandic and/or given more elaborate details beyond their extant source material for want of more.*

There can be devised a clever backstory or even a destined future story involving these items in the game that will ring familiar to readers of the Norse sagas and older Northern European myths if handled correctly. Not just anyone uses or touches Mjöltnir or Gungnir, for example. These are wielded by very specific deities and are never found apart from them. It would be too easy for a game to be thrown out of balance by the inclusion of these weapons and items incorrectly.

One of the finest examples of how enchanted weaponry from Nordic myth can be intertwined into an adventure without destroying the delicate balance or integrity is by using the adventure module series derived from this Codex. A few selected items listed here and others specifically created for the series are carefully placed in the modules where needed. The *Nine Worlds Saga* series explores these many Nordic worlds, its inhabitants and places of dark and light in a mad race for time against terrible odds and enchantments to hold the universe together, and this Codex is a reference source for that series.

## THE ÆSÍR AND VANÍR

### BALDUR

In his possession it is known that he owned the finest ship ever conceived in the Nordic universe called *Hringhorni* ('Ship with circle on its stem'). Sadly, no details of Hringhorni survive to know exactly how ideal this 'greatest' of all ships would have been envisioned by a seafaring peoples such as the early Scandinavians.

Hringhorni would have been the *Orm*, or 'Dragon' ship, from Nordic legend (if any in its make and form) and guided magically by Baldur's control. It would have possessed more chambers and passageways in its many decks in its hold than its already enormous size displayed as well. Without aid, none are able to move Baldur's ship on shore or the waves. His vessel is unrivaled at sea, as is his seasoned crew. Without Baldur, they are not present to man it, leaving its heavy and cumbersome mass where it sits permanently.

Those fortunate few that can gain control over Hringhorni can guide it over the worst of seas and waves and out of the most

terrible of storms and maelstroms with grace and ease. Its hold can house a million tons of goods and supplies, if needed, and a combination of crew, passengers and warriors of ten thousand without crowding or complaint. Hringhorni's weaknesses are few and only a few malicious and sinister beings know them. Although the ship's fate is with Baldur, its rival that could sink it, if they ever met, is the corpse ship *Naglfar*.

Hringhorni is beautiful to behold covered in elaborate decorations intricately carved into the ashen wood (from Yggdrasil), inlaid with ivory, precious metals and jewels. All other longships and Mortal made craft cannot compare to its glamor and sensational appearance. If they were in its path, they would be crushed under its weight and destroyed – mortal, giant or otherwise as few could withstand Baldur's ship.

### BRAGI

One of Óðin's many sons conceived under deception, this son, born from giants, gained the skill of musical knowledge and wisdom and its very soul, becoming the symbol of the skalds. Although never given a direct name in the tales, Bragi's choice instrument was a harp or lyre. He was the god of the harp and music among the gods and proceeded to be the chosen leader for all needs regarding song and poem in the halls of the Æsir and Vanir.

**GJAFARALAGIÐ** ('Giver of Song') is Bragi's golden, elf made harp strung with the hairs of Freyr's magical boar *Gullinbursti*. This carefully crafted instrument can change the mood of those who listen to its notes by each delicate strum or pluck and is never out of tune. Bragi can even alter the seasons using *Gjafaralagið*'s powers, if he chooses, or summon mighty storms and darken the skies. The atmosphere about him can change according to the color of his music produced from within the harp. Plants and animal life can bloom and grow by its influence with each strum and play.

Bragi's harp shimmers with a pure, golden light that can be blinding to some (mostly the impure and questionable by nature) but can illuminate the grandest and darkest of halls and fill it with his song. *Gjafaralagið* can make any unskilled stranger sound like an expert musician with it in hand so long as it is being played, granting a +5 on checks relating to musical skill.

### FREYJR

Magnificent and wondrously beautiful, the goddess Freyjr is sought after by many lustful giants for wedlock and lesser beings, but more than that, she shares from the spoils of the Battle Slain, or *Einharjár*, and rooms many in her hall of *Sessrumnir*. In her possession are several items that only the most powerful in all of the Nine Worlds attempted to steal, chief among them Loki.

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**BRISINGAMEN** ('Jewels of Fire') This highly prized necklace of Freyjr's was made by the dwarfen brothers Dvalinn, Alfrik, Berling and Grer. *Brisingamen* glimmers like the sun out its amber gems, each taken from her tears and held in gold clasps. It was magically bound to Freyjr so that in her possession, the Nine Worlds will continue to experience fertility and abundance, but if she is ever separated from it or it is destroyed, drought and famine will follow.

**HÚÐFUGLA** ('World Skin') This cloak is constructed from feathers and heavily enchanted. It is capable of transporting the wearer to any other world on command in a matter of hours, transforming them into a raven or falcon. There is no limit to where this cloak can take the wearer so long as it is donned on the shoulders and clasped by its brooches. Loki stole this item from Freyjr (as he had many of her other items for his own personal, devious plans) in the past only to meet the wrath of Þór and his hammer sooner or later.

### FREYR

The twin to the goddess Freyjr, Freyr shares the love of the wilderness and of the elves in the world of *Álfheimr*. Chief among the Vanír, Freyr is fair, and his fondness and love for others sometimes has no limits, much to the other gods' dismay. Given in the sources, he has several highly powerful possessions that are extremely potent, useful or unique and without equal in the Nine Worlds.

**LÆVATEINN** ('Twig/Wand of Damage') Forged by Völundr, this immeasurably mighty sword is one of the greatest in all of the Nine Worlds, perhaps ever made. It was incapable of failure in the hands of 'one that is true', able to sever anything it is in contact with easily. The blade will transform into a roaring flame and incinerate its targets on contact with a fiery demise. Freyr had to give it up to win the hand of the giantess Gerðr, and the sword eventually fell into the hands of the most dreaded of giants, Surtr, who plots to use its might to sever the roots of Yggdrasil when Ragnarök comes and consume the Nine Worlds with its fire. *Lævateinn* is a +10 sword and cannot fumble even if a 1 is rolled – *it will still be considered a hit*. Unless the armor is divine in origin, the sword will cleave through it in one attack leaving only destroyed pieces. Each attack does 1d100 damage per strike. If so commanded, *Lævateinn* can fight on its own for its master in the air and defend them with its own AC 25. *It is the Castle Keeper's decision whether this sword is still in the possession of Freyr, Völundr or Surtr or somewhere in-between.*

**GULLINBURSTI** ('Golden Bristles') Fabricated by the dwarfs Eitri and Brokkr, this large boar was thrown into the fires of the forge and worked with their astonishing skill. Once completed, they brought forth from the flames a glowing beast that shimmered from its sharp hairs as though it was literally crafted from out of the air-brushed embers and coals golden and

red. This gift was handed to Freyr to guide him as he traveled through dark and murky lands, for *Gullinbursti* shined and glimmered with each breeze and gust of air about its supernatural hide. As with most beasts made for specific masters, this boar is *only* obedient to Freyr and his wishes but exceptions could be made or twists in the story (for example, *Gullinbursti's* own children or a coercion of the dwarfen brothers that made the boar could be done to control the boar, etc.). *Gullinbursti's statistics can be the Hildasvini in Chapter 3.*

### HEIMDALLR

He is the guardian of *Ásgarðr* who stands watch upon the glistening Bifröst Bridge with his sword in hand. His senses are heightened more than any other of the gods and can hear grass grow from any world below or the breeze stir in the woods. Foremost, his duty is to watch for any signs of the enemies of the gods, the giants, attempting their siege or attack on *Ásgarðr*. Unlike most others in the Nine Worlds, Heimdallr does not require sleep in his perpetual sentry position and will remain so until the time comes when the Final Winter heralds Ragnarök. From the few items known he is in contact with, they are significant – one above all else.

**HOFUD** ('Head') is Heimdallr's sword, always by his side. Presumably crafted by the dwarfs or Völundr, it must be a mighty blade to be in the hands of *Ásgarðr's* constant guard. Shaped from gold with bejeweled eyes in the form of a head, *Hofuð* is a +5 Giant Slaying Sword and shimmers a white fire when they are near, alerting him to their presence. The sword will cause 10d20 damage and triple if a critical is rolled during combat.

**GJALLRHORN** ('Yelling Horn') Carried and protected by Heimdallr, this ivory and gold chased horn of wondrous design has the power to be heard in every corner in the Nine Worlds if blown. It is entrusted in Heimdallr's hands to be the signal once the first sign of Ragnarök truly comes (*See Chapter 5.3 'The End of the World'*). The raw might from *Gjallrhorn* can lay low the weak, deafen those leagues away (or even worlds distant) and cause quakes in response. There is no meek or mild manner in which to blow this horn because its power is so great – that is why it is placed in Heimdallr's hands. It is said that he hides the horn rather than risk it falling in the hands of clever thieves. Some say this location is in the roots under a magical tree near his hall of *Himinbjörg* where only he knows in secret.

### ODIN

The Father of the Gods who, with his lesser known brothers, toppled the giant Ymir to construct the present Nine Worlds from the bleeding remains. Sacrificing himself only to himself to gain the insight into hidden wisdom and knowledge, he discovered the secret of the Runes upon the storm swept trunk of Yggdrasil. Because of his stature and importance, he was able to procure exclusive enchanted items and weaponry unlike any-



one else, and before anyone else in the Nine Worlds. He is not only wise but skilled in the arts of battlecraft equally, and his possessions show this. *Oðin is capable of firing twenty arrows from any bow at one time in an action during combat as well, meaning that his volley will cause 20d8.*

**DRAUPNIR** ('The Dripper'), this golden enchanted ring was forged by the dwarven brothers Eitri and Brokkr. It has the property of being able to copy itself every ninth night and make eight duplicates by dripping its golden form into perfect replications. Each ring is able to hold ten spells if so used in this manner by a spell-caster, or be a source of storing additional enchantments other than basic magic. They are unbreakable and absolutely perfect in design, smooth and flawless worth about 20,000 gold pieces of sold. Unfortunately Oðin is able to locate each ring that is derived from his own Draupnir anywhere and can choose to reclaim them at any time if he wishes, an unknown detail that those who possess the copies are ignorant of often.

**GUNGNIR** ('Swaying One'), this special war-spear required both the dwarf smith Dvalin and the Sons of Ivaldi to fabric it. Its haft was taken from the wood of Yggdrasil and worked down to a perfect balance, the most perfect in the universe. *Gungnir* was a gift by Loki given to Oðin, from their days as adventuring partners, before Loki's more troublesome times later. Runes were etched on the spearhead to further enchant it by the dwarfs, granting it blessings to never miss its target.

## THOR

Oðin's eldest son and protector of Ásgarðr and Miðgarðr, he is the patron of the homeless and poor and the ruthless hunter and slayer of giants. Thor's might and natural strength are legendary enough but with the aid of dwarfen craft they are enhanced even more so giving him untold power to destroy giants and monsters in the Nine Worlds where ever he travels.

The dwarfs were instrumental in providing Thor with his items and weapons to aid him in his daily adventures. Without them he would still be mighty, but vulnerable, and no doubt the giants, Loki and other beings from the Nine Worlds have attempted to separate him from his items but failed miserably in the end with bloody deaths at the end of this hammer. There was a clever master plan behind the crafting of each granting *only* Thor use of them, meaning no one else can wield or hold them at all. *This is a fundamental stumbling block for a Castle Keeper wishing to include them in a game, but as these old beliefs and tales were told by generations of believers, they can be 're-written' by new storytellers just as well.*

**JÁRNGLEIPR** ('Iron Glove') or *Járnglófar* ('Iron Gauntlets'), these specially devised iron gloves must be worn to hold the hammer *Mjöltnir*, without them and no one could even lift the impossible weight. Combined with the belt *Megingjörð* can

someone wield the hammer only, otherwise the gloves only grant the wearer the ability to lift *Mjöltnir* and little more. They add a +10 AC to the wearer and can deflect missile weapons like a shield. Intricate Nordic patterns are etched on the surface displaying *Pór* battling giants, each bound by intertwining ropes and threads. As with the other items in his possession, this was forged by the brothers Eitir and Brokkr in Svartálfaheimr and are unbreakable. Dragon skin ties bind them and the teeth from the venomous dragon Nidhögg holds them.

**MEGINGJÖRD** ('Power Belt'). This very cleverly constructed dragon-skin belt grants its wearer double its Strength (and all of its benefits). Embossed in metal is the scene of *Pór* locked in battle with the World Serpent *Jörmungandr* as foretold by the Seers. This belt, the gauntlets, with the hammer are the 'Three Crucial Possessions' of *Pór*. When Eitir and Brokkr devised these three items, they did so as a set, chiefly due to the sabotage by Loki throughout the process. This belt is very similar to the girdle worn by the Queen *Brynhildr* of Iceland from the *Völsunga Saga* in its capabilities.

**MJÖLNIR** ('That Which Smashes'), the prized weapon and item of *Pór*. Eitir and Brokkr would have crafted it to be a two-handed hammer were it not for the constant annoyance by Loki in the guise of a gadfly biting and flying about the process. In the end, its handle became too short, just long enough for one hand, but heavy and dense so that no one could just lift it or attempt to wield it easily. Many runes of enchantment were etched into its metal to ensure that the hammer did not go anywhere that *Pór* did not choose. Added to this, it took his gauntlets and belt to complete the triad. Without any of the three, the hammer could not be used. *Mjöltnir* is a +10 weapon, and Giant Bane, granting the wielder a sense of giants within a hundred miles at any time. It will do 10d20 damage and can be thrown at foes at any distance, so long as the wielder is aware of the enemy, and the hammer will return to the hand in minutes. Thor can summon lightning from the hammer is he needs as well, calling powerful storms down from the skies in d6 Combat Turns. *Mjöltnir* can call upon d12 bolts of lightning/turn, each causing 5d20 damage to the target(s). The hammer can also shatter and destroy all lesser weapons and armor that stands in its way, if blocked or parried, during combat with a 7 in 10 chance. The hammer is capable is shattering hills and even mountains impossibly with an epic smash head on. *This smashing ability can also be used to great effect against structures, stones and other objects as well.*

**ELDURBRÚNR** ('Fire's Edge'), his trusty war-ax used from his youngest age by his father's side. Unlike his hammer, this ax can harness fire and incinerate its targets to ash quicker. *Pór* was more well-known among the mortals of Miðgarðr for his ax long before the creation of his famous hammer *Mjöltnir*; and many cults remain who remember that age still. The symbol of the ax still reminds many of the early exploits of *Pór* when he swept through the thick woodlands with his ax and

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monsters and giants with his deadly blade. Its origins are unclear, but it seems likely that Völundr may have forged it in the hazy days early before the Æsir-Vanir War. *Eldurbrúnnr* is a +5 two-handed axe that bursts into flames on command, able to cut a full grown tree in half in one swing and deal 1d50 damage, granting its wielder immunity to fire. *Eldurbrúnnr* is able to also hurl massive fire balls onto the foe, throwing 1d8/Combat Turn and causing 10d6 damage each.

### TYR

A war god made less important by the rise of the Ásgardians and ascendancy of Óðin but not forgotten completely, his part in the scheme of things within the Nine Worlds is crucial, for it is his hand that was lost by the fierce bite of the Loki spawn *Fenrir* in the attempt to bind and capture the wolfen beast in the cave. More so, his fame or, rather, infamy is gained from a special enchanted sword forged and granted by Dwarfs Dvalin and Durin under duress, made to resemble his own by a selfish mortal king centuries later. What is remembered in the myths and in the remnant sources about Tyr is his sword and its dwarfen curse.

**TYRFING** ('Tyr's Finger') This enchanted but accursed sword was made by the dwarfen brothers, Dvalin and Durin, forced to do by Svafhlami, a Great Grandson of Óðin. In vengeance for being made to do this, the brothers gave the sword an awful curse. This curse had several elements, all of which would come true:

- It would kill every time it was drawn from its scabbard, no exceptions.
- Svafhlami would perish by it, and he has.
- Eventually, Tyrfing would commit *Three Great Evils* in its time, and it has.

Even though the *Three Great Evils* were committed and are now over with, *Tyrfing* still possesses the unavoidable curse of forcing the wielder to slay another once it is drawn. The sword will always find a way to force the hand of the present user to do so, not always for battle, to keep its curse alive. *In a fantasy gaming context, this weapon is the forerunner of a 'Vorpal Blade' in a minor sense. Tyrfing* shines like fire and splits stone like cloth from its fine edge. The wielder of *Tyrfing* must resist its power each day if no battle or need to shed blood presents itself, however, and this requires a charisma check. Failing this, the wielder will unknowingly take the gleaming blade out from its richly decorated sheath, and it will cause a death – never mundane and always tragic. King Svafhlami gained a fairly enchanted weapon for his troubles but one that was not worth the troubles or its namesake, for the god Tyr himself would have never handed over his sword to a mortal man or its secrets to the smiths who made it. This accursed copy is a +3 Bastard Sword doing 1d10 damage and

has a fine blade that counts as *Armor Piercing* (halves the foe's AC) when being attacked by *Tyrfing*.

### ULLR

In the wilderness, Ullr lived free and was praised by the common peoples as a Hunter God and one of Skiing and the Bow for his many talents. Because he was so wise and possessed great power, when Óðin could not function as the Allfather in Ásgarðr, Ullr took his place for that brief time – such was his stature. Humbly, Ullr returned back the wilds and his life before ruling in Vallhöl and atop Yggdrasil.

**AFTURHVALURER** ('Whale's Back') Ullr, by his many enchantments, took a whale's vertebra bone and gave it the ability to carry him on the seas anywhere in the worlds on its back. It is covered in runes, marked almost haphazardly over its surface deeply in the bone. On command, *Afturhvalurer* can find and take its one passenger to that location in hours.

**YBÓGI** ('Yew Bow') Constructed from a Yew tree by a knife intricately, Ullr's special hunting bow is unlike any other in the Nine Worlds. Ullr's bow is capable of turning any arrow-like object into one if placed onto the string and sights, giving the user a +5. Its range is in miles, not in feet or yards, and no obstruction can stand in its way once fired. Ullr is able to draw and fire multiple arrows with lightning speed personally, nearly as well as Óðin himself. *Ybógi* does 5d20 damage per shot and enables a user an additional 1d10 arrows per Combat Action.

**KJÓLL ULLR** ('Ullr's Garb') Sewn from various stitched hides and elf enchanted threads, the long, robe-like garb of Ullr is comfortably warm in a freezing, wintry environment and armor-like against dangers. This richly decorated garb grants its wearer an AC 18 in addition to any other armoring they may don or carry. *Kjóll Ullr* denies its wearer any opportunity to become wet or cold, regardless of the conditions.

**SKIPID ULLR** ('Ullr's Ship') This is hardly a ship on appearance, but instead, Ullr's enchanted skis. Large and with many purposes, its name is a kenning (as with many in Nordic practice). These wide, Yew wood skis can take its user up snowy and ice covered hills with ease, without poles or effort, on command and is able to traverse over water as well if rivers are to be forded. The *Skipid Ullr* can also function as a shield in battle due to its large size, granting the wielder a +5 AC while in hand (*only one*) and deflecting nearly anything thrown at them in battle. It is able to resist the most powerful threats and dangers equally. One more and obvious trait, due to their kenning name, is their ability to transform into a ship and house Ullr if needed. Chanting a special phrase over them, Ullr changes them into a wondrous ship, a *Snekka*, to take him to the other worlds on command. Inside there are plenty of rooms for all of his needs and a crew of elves to man it and tend to his needs on the voyage. Another name for *Skipid Ullr* is the *Skjöldr* ('Shield').

## THE JÖTNAR & ALLIES

### ÆGIR

Although not among the vile and deceptive Jötnar that scheme and devise means to destroy the Nine Worlds, Ægir, or *Hlér*, is a friend of the gods. He holds the annual feast for them deep in the sea whereupon they partake on the special mead that grants them their immortality, its secrets only revealed then. Ægir's family is large, mainly populated with daughters who tempt sailors and cause his wrath in turn. During his feast, however, he uses a special gift to heat and serve his brew and food in for his guests.

**SKÁL HAF** ('Sea's Bowl/Toast') Given to Ægir by Þór and Týr as a gift for his kindness, this massive, one mile wide cauldron can feed thousands at one time. It was taken from the giant Hymir, Týr's father, for the brewing of beer originally but passed to Ægir out of kindness. Its metallic form is shaped from dwarf and elf crafted plates, gilded and bejeweled, with scenes glorifying the Æsir and Vanir and the Nine Worlds with the center piece being Yggdrasil. Its properties rest in being able to make edible anything placed into its interior once it is cooked over roaring flames. Only the strength of the gods, giants or hundreds of mortals can lift and convey it, otherwise it weighs a thousand tons.

### ANGRBOÐA

The infamous Witch of *Járnviða* often personified in the guise of a monstrous wolf and mother to Fenrir, Hel, and Jörmungandr by Loki, Angrboða is a terrifying force. In her time alive, she led a large circle of witches whose influence spread over many worlds but, ultimately, led to her own demise. She was the mother to monsters, trolls and the creator to wolves. Her other name was *Járnvidia*. She is entombed in the dark earth below the Iron Wood where her spirit speaks and dreams to Loki and others through nightmares. Many dread her return, knowing it will occur after Ragnarök.

**SVARTUR VENDI** ('Black Wand'), also her *Gambanteinn* ('magic wand'), is formed from blackened human femur bones and etched with runes. This dreaded item houses her focus of power. When Angrboða died, its location was lost, assumed to be buried with her in her tomb somewhere in the Iron Wood. The *Svartur Vendi* is full of temptation for the weak willed and draws them to it against their control or knowledge (requiring a charisma check for anyone near her tomb or the Wand). Angrboða's wand will make its user commit evil deeds, if they are not by nature, with no preference to their Alignment, slowly turning them to that life over time. The *Svartur Vendi* is a 10<sup>th</sup> level Illusionist/Wizard capable wand holding these Illusionist spells: *Ghost Sounds*, *Change Self*, *Charm Person*, *Darkness*, *Hypnotism*, *Minor Dark Chaos*, *See Invisibility*, *Dark Chaos*, *Eyes of Fire*, *Illusionary Wolves*, *Scare*, *Suggestion*, *Charm*

*Monster*, *Confusion*, *Fear*, *Major Dark Chaos*, *Phantasmal Killer*, *Shadow Conjuration*, *Dream*, *False Vision*, *Greater Shadow Conjuration*, *Nightmare*, *Shadow Evocation*, *Cloak of Dark Chaos*, *Feeble Mind*, *Greater Shadow Evocation*, *Shades*, *Veil*, *Awe*, *Insanity*, *Power Word Stun*, *Shadow Walk*, *Dreaming*, *Mind Blank*, *Weird*. The Wand also permanently has these Wizard spells: *Mage Hand*, *Burning Hands*, *Change Self*, *Magic Missile*, *Shocking Grasp*, *Protection from Arrows*, *Ray of Enfeeblement*, *Scare*, *Shatter*, *Web*, *Dispel Magic*, *Fireball*, *Gust of Wind*, *Lightning Bolt*, *Ice Storm*, *Shout*, *Wall of Fire/Ice*, *Animate Dead*, *Bind Elemental*, *Cloudkill*, *Cone of Cold*, *Wall of Iron*, *Antimagic Shell*, *Chain Lightning*, *Disintegrate*, *Mass Suggestion*, *Transmute Flesh to Stone*, *Delayed Blast Fireball*, *Finger of Death*, *Mass Charm*, *Trap the Soul*, *Disjunction*, *Imprisonment*, *Power Word Kill*, *Time Stop*. The Wand can call upon 15 charges/day by the user, and if a life is sacrificed to it and its blood shed over it during the ceremony, it can draw upon 10 more charges. The gods dread the *Svartur Vendi* and desire to see it destroyed if it is ever recovered, for its use can lead to awful things in a short time.

### EGGTHÉR

He is a lesser known, unassuming giant from Jótunheimr that unknowingly possesses a special, enchanted harp crucial to the penultimate moment before Ragnarök. He drifts between the halls of the many giant lords with his instrument, never allowed to play his beautiful harp, a gift given by Angrboða. Situations would arise that would prevent him from playing it or even tuning it and so he only carries it slung on his back. Cheerful, though, his mood is given in his origins. Eggthér is the father to the famous mortal hero, Beowulf, known by another, similar name, Ecgtheow, during his brief travels and adventures among the Geatish tribes in Miðgarðr.

**DIMMALAG** ('Gloom Song') This wondrously luxurious harp made from gold and the finest gems, was a gift from Angrboða with a sinister purpose. Before the giant witch was cast into her grave, she foresaw the Final Winter and Ragnarök, the sequence that must lead to it and how a certain strum from an enchanted harp will set it in motion. This strum of notes will stir a rooster, Fjalarr, into crowing, signaling the Song of Ragnarök which will be heard by Heimdallr in Ásgarðr who will then blow Gjallarhorn. It was *this* harp that Angrboða designed. With careful enchantments, she ensured that Eggthér, or anyone for that matter, will never play from it until that day comes. *The Castle Keeper can maintain a clever series of events to deny that this harp ever is played if it enters into the story. This is part of Angrboða's enchantment. Dimmalag's sole purpose is to be played on that one day when Eggthér is distraught after decades of never being allowed to use his wonderful instrument. Unbeknownst to him, the red rooster Fjalarr will be nearby, a normally silent bird. Upon hearing the harp, he will be quickly agitated and sent into a song of crowing from his mound in Gálvgiðr.*



## CHAPTER 8 -

### FÁRBAUTI

The father of Loki, he is a wild, fiery giant famous for causing forest fires in his furious rages. Like his infamous offspring, he plots the downfall of Ásgarðr and Vanaheimr with the other Jötnar. Of the giants, Fárbaui is very intellectual in his approach to his scheming but terribly brutal when forced to be. The Dark Elves crafted for him many items in his war against the gods to put him on par with Þór.

**LOGIGREIPR** ('Flame Gloves') Forged by the Dark Elves, these black, iron gauntlets give Fárbaui the ability to create fiery blasts with his hands on command. From the hottest fires in Múspellheimr, the essence of the element of fire is captured within the metal. The wearer is immune to all sources of fire while donning these gloves, magical or otherwise, and can hurl fire at frightening distances. Merely touching with these gloves on can cause 10d20 damage with a 7 in 10 chance of igniting flammable objects it contacts. These gloves can throw a *Fireball* with a distance up to a mile, doing 1d50 damage with each blast and has a 75% chance of igniting everything around it into flames instantly or melting.

**HVÍTT BOLTINN** ('White Bolt') This deadly long spear has captured the mighty lightning inside its sleek form, a deed the Dark Elves are proud of greatly. Fárbaui is not as frightened innately of the storms as his kindred (because of Þór) and so has turned it back on the other peoples of the Nine Worlds in a destructive manner. Runes are carved deeply into every inch of the wood and metal encasing the energy until it is about to burst, causing it to glow. *Hvít Boltinn* is a +5 weapon that causes 5d20 damage in addition to its lightning charge per strike of 2d10. The spear can also hurl deadly lightning bolts at the foe with a range of 500 ft. doing 10d8 per Combat Action with a 6 in 8 chance of paralyzing its target for 1d10 turns.

**VÖRÐUR DÖKK** ('Dark Guard') This Dark Elfen, smoky shield protects Fárbaui from attack and the sight of others. Initially, the *Vörður Dökk* appears as nothing more than a disk shaped, metallic piece of armor on the forearm over the *Logrigreipr*, but on command, it summons a black, cloudy shroud that covers the wearer. This smoky shield blends the wearer into the surroundings if there is a fire or other smoke as a cloak in one turn and defends them against attack on another, giving them an AC +10.

### FENJA AND MENJA

They were two sisters descended from mountain giants, once famous in past battles for their glorious deeds as Shieldmaidens, and, in Sweden, captured by King Froði. The king led them to a mill by force to produce much wealth for his realm. By this time, they were both too weak to resist him and did as he commanded. King Froði's want of what they could create by their magic stone could not be sated and increased by the weeks until the sisters' health and conditions worsened.

**SYSTURSTEINN** ('Sisters' Stone') Built and enchanted by Fenja and Menja but taken by King Froði, the millstone is capable of wondrous feats. The king first forced the sisters to grind it endlessly to produce wealth from its use creating gold, silver and gems on an immeasurable scale. Quickly, the king used this advantage, and his kingdom prospered, but the sisters started to lose their health. Next, he realized that through their enchantment they could produce ready-made armies from the stone, and the king pushed the sisters to create massive forces to begin invading his rivals beyond the borders of Sweden. This broke the king's legendary period of peace in the process and forced the stone to shatter as well. *If fixed, the Systursteininn could churn out untold wealth with each grind and even magically animated warriors depending on the Castle Keepers' need for it in the story.*

### HEL

She is the daughter of Loki and troll-wife Angrboða cast into the dark, abysmal realm of Niflheimr by Óðin (to be named Helheimr in her honor). She claims the souls of the dead who have not perished in battle but by disease, age, treachery and other weak and frail means. The wicked are sent to her exclusively where she gathers them and prepares them into a massive army of the Dead to attack the other worlds on the day of Ragnarök.

**NAGLFAR** ('Corpse Boat') Moored on the dark seas of Helheimr, this massive *Dreker* vessel is formed from the discarded finger and toe nails of the dead. Its size grows daily because death continually occurs in the Nine Worlds. When Gjallrhorn is sounded and the chaos of Ragnarök begins, Loki will navigate while King Þrym will command it. Inside the hold will be hordes of the Dead, armed for battle and filled with vengeance, ready to fight for their evil masters. Queen Hel will set the ship free from her docks before she sets out on her steed to the uplands of Helheimr and beyond to undertake her part in the war to come. Draugr berserkers man *Naglfar* at King Þrym's orders and will terrorize and plunder any in their path as they reach the seas of other worlds toward Vígríðr to confront the gods. *Naglfar* is invincible and cannot be destroyed by other vessels – only the floods caused by the death of Jörmungandr will capsize it in the end. *It would be extremely unlikely that any player character could control or even command Naglfar alone without awful consequences. Queen Hel would send her Draugr and other Dead to stop such an action and to severely punish the thieves.*

**DÓMUR** ('Judgement') is Hel's long, metal staff enchanted with her terrible magic, able to determine the Dead's fate brought before her. With but a tap to the Dead's head, *Dómur* can send the slain to one of several fates: to the infernal pits to be devoured by worms, to *Naglfar*, to attend her feasts within her palace (or one of them) perpetually, to be transformed into a monster (or another malicious being) to serve her diabolical needs or to be transformed into a Draugr or another Undead

being to serve her with evil intent. It is not known where Hel had this staff wrought, but it is crucial to her court. She is never separated from it if she can help it as it aids her in ruling her vast, dismal kingdom.

### HARÐGREIPR

She was a giantess that possessed magic and an empathy toward mortals. She was fond of mortal men and used her magic to change her size, when needed, to remain among her own kind and to fit in better with mortals. Harðgreipr seduced a refugee prince of Norway, Hadingus, and used her abilities to aid him in his return to power but, in the end, sacrificed herself as the vengeance from her own kind returned, and she was torn apart by giants while in human form.

**DAUÐUR TALARA** ('Dead Talker') Harðgreipr possessed a spell that enabled her to imbue a wooden stick with the ability to make the dead speak one time if placed under their tongue. Runes must correctly be etched as the spell is incanted before this is done. Once under the tongue, the dead will speak and answer all questions for 30 minutes, if needed, and even foresee events in the future if they are dire and involve one or more of the player characters or NPCs present. *How the player character(s) arrive at acquiring the secret of Dauður Talara is up to the Castle Keeper and the nature of their particular game.*

### ADDITIONAL ENCHANTMENTS

**Etir** ('Venom') This poisonous essence is what remains from Ymir's demise. It is the origin of all things in the universe. After Ymir's death and the creation of the Nine Worlds, *Etir* can only be found in the blood of monsters (dragons, trolls, etc.) and is generally rare to extract or locate. It is a black liquid able to kill any life around it on contact and remains one of the most potent poisons in the universe. In the rules, it counts as Level VI poison in just one drop. Only the most vile and diabolical possess *Etir* and use its properties, knowing that it cannot be reversed. It can slay the mightiest of giants, gods or beings with no hope of resurrection (*unless it is a fated death*).

**ELDHRÍMNIR** ('Fire Sooty') is the cauldron used only in Valhöl during the feasts for the *Einhjarjar* and guests of Óðin. Gleaming, elaborately ornate and massive, it hangs over the hearth fires and is used by the chef, *Andhrímnir*, every evening in the glorious hall. The great boar *Sæhrímnir* is slain, prepared, cooked, eaten and then repeated each day by the enchantment combined of this cauldron and other blessings. *Sæhrímnir*'s size is plentiful enough to feed Valhöl's large tables of guests with plenty to spare. It was forged by the dwarfs of Svartálfaheimr for Óðin in early ages.

*"Gleipnir, at last,*

*By Dark Elves cast,*

*In Svartalfheim, with strong spells wrought,*

*To Odin was by Skirmir brought:*

*As soft as silk, as light as air,*

*Yet still of magic power most rare."*

*Vahalla, J.C. Jones*

**GLEIPNIR** ('Open One') This is a silken ribbon made by the Dark Elves to hold and bind the devilish wolf Fenrir after no other plan by the gods worked. As it was an impossible task to bind and control this demonic beast within the cave tucked away in Niflheimr, the dwarfs, likewise, had to undertake six impossible criteria to make it work:

- A bird's spit.
- A fish's breath.
- A bear's sinew.
- A mountain's roots.
- A woman's beard.
- The sound of a cat's step.

**HELKÓR** ('Hel Shoes') These special made shoes have *two* meanings in the Nine Worlds. The first regards mortal warriors who normally shod their feet in special boots or shoes that prepare them for their journey to Valhöl. Once there, they take them off to hang them from the branches of a Lindon tree near Óðin's hall as they are escorted inside among their fellow slain brethren to feast. The *second* meaning to this refers to the enchanted and rare horse hooves that must be made and placed onto a steed's hooves if they were to ever tread in Helheimr. Without them, they would be incinerated by the fiery and dangerous environment. Only a few dwarfs, Dark Elves and even fewer other beings in the Nine Worlds know the secrets of how to forge *Helskór*. Once made, they only last for a single trek to Hel's realm before being disintegrated.

**SKÁLDSKAPAR MJAÐAR** ('Mead of Poetry'), also called *Suttungmjaðar*, this is the rare mead concoction devised by the two dwarfs *Fjalar* and *Galar*. They had slain *Kvasir*, a crucial element to their formula, mixed with a rare honey and prepared in an enchanted pot named *Boðn*, *Són* and *Óðrerir*. Whoever survives this mead either becomes a scholar or poet from its gifts (*granting any player character or NPC a +10 to charisma or intelligence*).

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