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LAST HERO IN SCANDINAVIA

by Chris Aylott



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RUNE

A RUNE/D20 CROSSOVER CAMPAIGN FROM ATLAS GAMES

LAST HERO IN SCANDINAVIA

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DEDICATION: For my sister Elizabeth, who would make a
great Viking.

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INTRODUCTION: BLOOD & VALOR

The cold blade burned in Osric's side. He leaned against the rock for support and felt it slicken with his blood. Olaf stood a few feet away in the center of the cave, swinging his mace with an easy swagger.

Osric choked back more blood. "Why?" he asked. "Why have you betrayed us?"

Olaf's back-of-the-throat laugh sounded like the growl of a wolf. "Why, my dear brother? Because days of the Aesir are ending," he said. "Our own prophecies tell us the gods will fail! There's no hope, no victory, just year after year of holding our own and hoping our deaths have a little pathetic glory."

Red eyes appeared in the passages behind him. The goblins were coming.

"I watched you try to keep our little village together," Olaf said. "I watched our dreams of a better life get ground into the dust of daily survival. I finally understand — Loki, Hec, they're going to win."

"I've chosen the winning side, Osric. I've chosen to serve them ... and you will serve them too."

"NEVER!" Osric roared and pushed himself off the rock. He raised his axe, charged forward, and the blade whistled as the dying chieftain swung it at his treacherous brother's neck.

Olaf sidestepped easily, spun left behind Osric, and shattered the chieftain's back with one blow of his mace. Goblins surged into the chamber, seizing the fallen Viking by the arms and legs.

"My dear brother," Olaf said. "I didn't offer you a choice."

He nodded to the goblin shaman at the rear of the pack. "Take this meat to the temple chamber and begin the ritual. I have to find the others and tell them they have a new chieftain."

Dual Systems

Welcome to *Last Hero in Scandinavia*! This short campaign takes you to the far north where mighty Vikings battle against goblins and treachery. It features four episodes full of fiendish traps, deadly environments, and vicious new monsters. D20 System

players will find new rules for mass combat and competitive play. **Rune** players also get mass combat rules and new, more powerful foes.

Last Hero in Scandinavia is a sourcebook for both the **Rune** RPG and the D20 System. If you page through this book, you'll see that rules for **Rune** run alongside the D20 System rules you might be more familiar with. You can play using either set of rules, paying attention only to the statistics for your game system of choice.

The statistics for the two game systems in this sourcebook were developed separately, not converted: some material doesn't quite translate properly between the two games. This book is not intended to be a conversion guide between **Rune** and the D20 System. However, where possible *Last Hero in Scandinavia* does try to recreate the flavor of **Rune**'s "Mythic Scandinavia" setting.

To help make it a little easier to follow the statistics you need, we've set them apart with formatting, letting you ignore everything that doesn't concern you.

 Information preceded by the black runestone icon is for the D20 System only — it's Open Game Content. You can safely ignore it if you're playing this campaign using **Rune** rules.

 Information preceded by the white runestone icon is for **Rune** only. You can safely ignore it if you're playing this campaign using D20 System rules.

The rest of the text is formatted like this, and is for both systems. This is the information that is used no matter what rules you're using; things like descriptions of locations or events, or the background and narration for the story.

Overview

The characters are strapping young Vikings living in the village of Aelfdrap. While respected for their budding skills and enthusiasm, they are the most junior adults in the village, and greatness is not yet expected of them. Most of the other warriors treat them like kid brothers and sisters.

As the story opens, a goblin horde is attacking the village. The heroes distinguish themselves in battle, slaying many goblins and rescuing other members of the village from death and worse. They also witness a brief argument between the village chieftain Osric and his

brother, Olaf. Olaf wants to take the war back to the goblins, but the peace-loving Osric still hopes for a diplomatic solution. By the battle's end, Osric has been convinced that the only way to stop the attacks is to hunt the goblins down in his caves. He departs with his brother and a host of his most experienced warriors, leaving the characters behind to guard the village.

In the days that follow, the heroes survive another goblin attack and then rescue the remnants of the war party as it flees the goblin caves. Osric has been killed; Olaf takes over as head of the village. As Episode 1 ends, however, the characters learn that Olaf may have killed his brother to take control of the village!

In Episode 2, new warriors drift into the village, including a savage and rude Viking named Bolgar. Olaf announces plans to visit the Thing — the democratic assembly of Viking village leaders — and recruit an army large enough to end the goblin menace forever. The characters are invited on the journey this time, but if they accept they find themselves tossed out of Olaf's longship and forced to swim for their lives. After surviving or avoiding this peril, the heroes are ambushed by Bolgar, who proves to be in league with dark forces.

While their suspicions about Olaf are all but confirmed, the characters must journey to the goblin caves to discover the true fate of their chieftain. After a lip-smacking encounter with two hungry hags, they arrive at the fortress, overpower the sentries, and survive the outer defenses.

Episode 3 finds the characters delving deeper and deeper into the goblin fortress. After facing lightning bolts, dire bats, and goblins armed with a gigantic flame thrower, they encounter a faction of the goblin community that's eager for peace between the races. This charming moment of diplomacy is soon over, however, as the heroes are guided to a temple full of fanatical goblin cultists.

After dealing with the cultists, the characters are able to speak with and free the tormented soul of their former chieftain. Osric tells them Olaf's plan — his treacherous brother has given his allegiance to Loki and the forces of Hel, and is journeying to the Thing with a plan to destroy all the Viking leaders in one fell swoop. The heroes are too far away from the Thing to reach it by normal travel, but Osric has been used as a conduit to channel power from Hel's realm of Niflheim to the Viking's home in Midgard. By tapping into this connection, he is able to shift the heroes into the land of the dead. As Episode 3 ends, the characters are left wondering if they can survive long enough to find a shortcut to the Thing.

Episode 4 pits the heroes against the strange and hostile realm of Niflheim. The characters wander the landscape, facing starvation and undead trees before discovering a mighty army of the undead poised to strike at the living world. The way back to Midgard lies at the heart of this army, and the heroes must sneak and fight their way through it to return home.

The gateway from Niflheim brings them to the site of the Thing in the nick of time. While making their way up to the amphitheater where the Vikings meet, the heroes encounter an old peddler who provides sharp swords and useful advice. Then they must make their case before the Thing, proving Olaf's treachery by describing the things they have seen and done on their journeys.

The final showdown pits the heroes and the leaders of the Thing against Olaf and near-endless waves of undead from Niflheim. If the characters win, they will have saved all of Scandinavia from a terrible fate; if they lose, then the world of the Vikings may be doomed.

If you're a **Rune** player, you know what to expect from this book. The new rules start in Chapter 2, so skip to them and start reading.



The campaign is for starting Rune characters, but it can handle heroes with up to 200 victory points. More than that and you might have to upgrade the later encounters to match the horde's abilities.

If you're a D20 System Game Moderator, read Chapter 1 — there's some background you need to know.



D20 System characters should start this campaign at 2nd level. Any race, class, or character background is fine — it's more fun if the characters are all Vikings, but they don't have to be.

Most of the usual plot hooks will work for a party of D20 System PCs involved in this campaign. Wanderers might stumble across the village just in time to be caught in the middle of the goblin attack. Mercenaries might be hired to help defend the village. Explorers may call at the village for supplies or be shipwrecked nearby and nursed back to health by the villagers. Local hunters might want to help defend the place where they buy and sell goods, or join with the villagers to help clear out the goblins that are ruining their hunts. No matter where the adventuring party comes from, all it really needs is a reason to be in the village when the action gets going.

CHAPTER 1 VIKING MAYHEM, D20, & YOU

The world of **Rune** is a savage place, full of screaming Vikings eager to win honor and glory by taking on impossible challenges and battling mighty foes. And that's just the players.

Rune is set in "Mythic Scandinavia," perhaps better described as "Vikings The Way We'd Like Them To Be." Historical Vikings were farmers, traders, and explorers who developed one of the world's first and longest-lived democracies. **Rune** Vikings are mead-swilling warriors rampaging through the world in stylish horned helmets.

Scandinavia is a fertile but harsh region. The soil is good, and there is plenty of grazing for cattle and goats. The long summer days are spent gathering crops and journeying to other lands. The long winter nights are spent in the longhouse, basking in the warmth of the fire, drinking and telling tales of other days.

That's when the rest of the world allows such peaceful activity, of course. Scandinavia is filled with dangerous foes, including giants, dragons, goblins, evil dwarves, and mischief-making elves. Most of these races constantly plot and scheme against the Vikings, whose only protection is their weapons and the favor of their gods.

The Vikings follow the Norse gods, a pantheon lead by Odin, the one-eyed All-Father associated with justice and prophecy. Other important gods include Thor (the god of thunder), Njord (the god of the winds), and Freyr (the god of plenty). The gods frequently wander the world of men, but do so in disguise. When they interfere, it tends to be by causing a coincidence or "natural" event such as a thunderstorm.

The gods have their share of enemies, too. The most dangerous is Loki, the evil god of trickery. Loki would like nothing better than to speed up the end of the world — referred to in prophecies as Ragnarok — and destroy his kin among the gods. He has enlisted many powerful allies in this task, including the Midgard Serpent, Fenris the Wolf, and Hel, goddess of the dead. His minions include many goblins and dwarves, but the worst are those Vikings whose ambition or hate have led them to pledge themselves to his service. While living, these Vikings are usually known as "dark Vikings" or "corrupted Vikings." But many of them become dishonored and sark amen —

horrible undead warriors who are nearly impossible to lay to rest.

Loki's best chance of defeating the other gods lies in usurping their power. To do this, he frequently seeks to take control of the runestones at the heart of each Viking village. These tall, intricately carved standing stones channel the gods' power to the Vikings, making them the mightiest warriors in the world. Each stone that Loki captures steals some of that power, strengthening him and hastening the end of the world.

A Viking warrior's life is never easy. It is a struggle against constant waves of monsters, fought knowing that each battle lost brings the world a little closer to destruction. On the other hand, great responsibility leads to great glory. Death comes for everyone, but a warrior's heroic death can be the subject of songs and stories for generations to come.

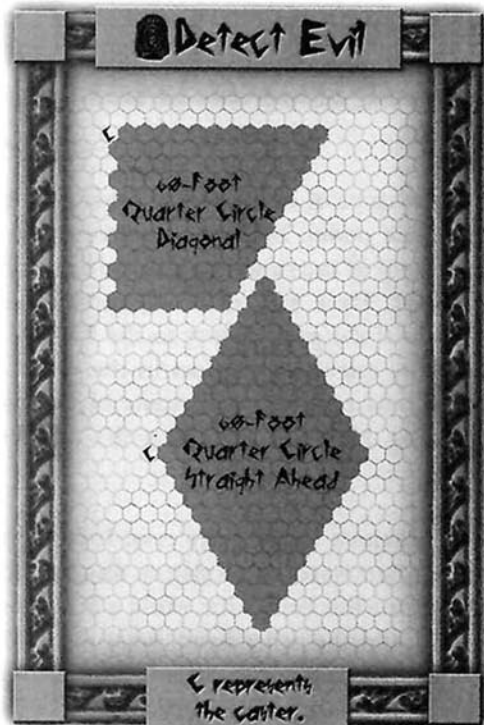
You can learn more about this setting in the **Rune** RPG core book by Robin D. Laws. For a more realistic treatment of the subject, you can also check out *Ultima Thule: Mythic Scandinavia*, a sourcebook for the **Ars Magica** RPG. Naturally, both these fine books are brought to you by your friends at Atlas Games.

The D20 Guide to Viking Mayhem

Rune is a competitive roleplaying game that pits combat-crazed Vikings against goblins, dwarves, mad mechanical contraptions, and the gods themselves. It's based on a computer game by Human Head Studios, and emulates 3rd-person action video games. (You know, the kind of games where you get to play buxom archeologists named Lara.)

All this means that there are differences between **Rune** and the typical D20 System game. Here are some things you should keep in mind while running this campaign.

- **Rune** stresses action over thought. There's lots of running and jumping and hitting things, but not many puzzles. Problem-solving is not a priority.
- **Rune** plots are linear. There are decisions to be made, but players follow the plot rather than determining what happens next. More on this below.



enough to derail the plot, we're sure that you're imaginative enough to adapt the adventure to their actions.

The format of a **Rune** adventure is a little unusual, and D20 System players don't need to pay attention to all of it. Here's what's important and what's not:

- **Rune** is driven by events. The game is organized by what happens next instead of where the characters go. This is why there's no big map for the dungeon in Episode 3.
- **Rune** is anachronistic and mythic. Real Vikings didn't wear horned helmets. **Rune** Vikings wear them with pride, and do all sorts of things real Vikings never did.
- **Rune** characters cooperate, but **Rune** players compete. The PCs are part of a Viking horde, and they must work together to survive their adventures. At the same time, **Rune** players compete to gain victory points by killing monsters and succeeding at skill rolls. **Rune** characters guard each other's lives, but they also steal kills from each other and laugh when their companions get caught in traps. D20 System players don't have to play this campaign as a competitive game, but we've provided the rules to do so later in this chapter.
- The campaign is organized into four **episodes**. Each episode takes 3 to 4 hours to play through, and ends at a convenient stopping point in the story.
- **Encounters** are "acts" within each episode. They're modular and largely self-contained, so you can add additional encounters or side adventures in between any two of the regular encounters.
- **Events** are individual scenes within each encounter.
- **Narration** is what the Game Moderator reads to the players. It describes what their characters see and hear in the world around them and explains anything that needs explaining. You can paraphrase, add to, or improvise as much narration as you like, but make sure you cover all the points brought up in it.
- **Closer Inspection** provides details about things the players might take an interest in. Sometimes they have to make a skill check to get this information, and sometimes they just have to look for it.

Along with these traits, **Rune** has a detailed point-based encounter design system that describes exactly what the characters do and when. Many roleplaying games make a big deal about letting the players take control of the plot. **Rune** says "BAH!" to that, railroads the players, and makes them like it. There are plenty of choices for the heroes to make, but they affect *how* events happen instead of *which* events happen.

This doesn't mean that you have to follow the plot. We certainly don't mind if your players send this adventure in a totally different direction. Because of the nature of **Rune**, however, we're not going to spend much time exploring those options. If your players are imaginative

- **Background** is information the players don't need to know. It may be useful to the Game Moderator, or it may just be one of our many bad jokes.
- **Traps and Gains** are the problems and opportunities that the characters face. Only traps that fit the D20 System definition of a trap are written up with a stat line.
- **Combat Tactics** explains what the party's combat opponents are likely to do in a fight.



- **Terrain** shows what's special about each place the characters fight in. D20 System rules are supplied when needed.
- **Maps** are central to **Rune**'s location-oriented combat scenes. **Rune** uses hex-based maps, and we've kept that convention in the maps for this campaign. It's easy to redraw the maps on a square grid, but you can also play the D20 System version of this adventure on a hex-based map. This will produce some minor differences in play — only six creatures can gang up on a character at a time, and it's also easier to create flanking situations — but most abilities and spells work in exactly the same way. One thing that is a little different is cones and other area effects. The diagrams given above show what some typical D20 System spell effects look like when used on a hex map.

Adapting the adventure is easier than it looks. Each encounter features several decision points — places where the characters have a chance to do something but might decide not to. If this happens, you can usually skip ahead to the next important part of the encounter.

For instance, in the third encounter of Episode 1, the characters can gather information, climb a tower, rescue some fellow Vikings from pursuing dire wolves, talk to a character named Brunli, and encounter a ghost. If the players decide to skip any of these actions, they can just go on to the next action without derailing the plot.

If they skip too many actions, of course, the encounter will be short and they won't get much information or experience out of it. Not doing stuff does have its price.

If you're determined to reproduce typical **Rune** adventuring, then almost all of the PCs should be barbarians, bards, fighters, or clerics. The characters should also be human — most dwarves and elves are



evil in the **Rune** setting, and the other typical D20 System races don't exist. Viking tactics emphasize melee fighting over ranged combat, so your characters should favor swords and axes over bows and aquebuses. (Arquebusi? Never mind — your average Viking has trouble spelling "axe," so let's just not go there, okay?)

If you want the PCs to represent a more typical mix of classes and races, go right ahead. In **Rune**, the attitude of the players is more important than absolute fidelity to the made-up details of life among a bunch of faux Vikings. If the PCs have Norse names like Gunnar or Helga, and the players enjoy a tongue-in-cheek rampage through the conventions of fantasy roleplaying, then you're playing the game the way the designers intended it to be played.

(Everyone still has to wear horned helmets, though. Please report any player who tries to weasel out of this to the Gaming Police.)

The rules that follow show you how to bring the excitement of competitive roleplaying and mass combat to your D20 System campaign. The latter are crucial, because there are 60 goblins in the first encounter — and that's just to get your players warmed up. Now your PCs can fight dozens of goblins and get extra credit for doing it!

Competitive D20 Gaming

One of the hallmarks of **Rune** is its competitive experience system, in which players seek to get the most kills and win the game by racking up the high-

est score. You don't have to play the D20 System version of this adventure this way — but you can!

In a competitive game, players share the experience from defeating monsters and overcoming challenges normally. They also gain additional experience according to the following rules.

EXPERIENCE CHITS

During competitive play, each player gains extra experience by killing monsters, succeeding at skill checks, and taking other special actions. These actions are tracked with experience chits (EC). Experience chits can be represented with poker chips, glass stones, pennies, or any other convenient marker. Chocolate kisses make excellent experience chits, but eating them removes them from the game and prevents them from being exchanged for other benefits.

EARNING EXPERIENCE CHITS

The first time that a character attempts an ability check, a skill check, or a saving throw that is called for in the text of the adventure (or the GM's notes, if there is no fixed text), that character has a chance to win an experience chit. The character must succeed on the first try, and may not take 10 or 20.

It is possible for more than one character to win an experience chit for the same skill check or saving throw. This applies to situations where several characters must succeed at the same roll, not situations where a character merely repeats an action that another character has completed. An explosion that several characters must dodge is worth an experience chit for each character. So is a Balance check made by several characters crossing a bridge in sequence. If, however, one character lifts a portcullis that another character has already lifted — just to prove that he can do it — that action is not eligible for an experience chit.

Note: If an action requires several skill checks, it's possible to earn an experience chit for each check. If a bridge-crossing requires three Balance checks, for instance, each player has a chance to earn an experience chit during the first attempt at crossing each third of the bridge.

DEATH BLOWS

Whenever a foe is killed, the character who struck the killing blow (or cast the killing spell, or otherwise caused the monster's untimely demise) receives a number of experience chits equal to the challenge rating of the foe. If the challenge rating of the foe is less than 1, then the character does not receive a chit.

When dealing with horde creatures (see below), the death blow reward is given to the character who killed the last base creature within the horde. The reward is based on the challenge rating for the entire horde.

Players may only receive experience chits for defeating dangerous opponents that are actively trying to harm them. There is no reward for killing helpless foes, harmless shopkeepers, or any other being that poses no threat to the PCs.

TEAMWORK

Even super-competitive Vikings have to work together. Fortunately, they can still compete at being the most helpful Vikings in their horde.

Once per encounter, any character may claim an experience chit by succeeding at the "aid another" combat action or at a cooperative skill check to assist another character's skill check.

In addition, any character may also claim an experience chit by taking an action to heal another PC. This action may be casting a healing spell, administering a potion, using a special ability, or making a skill roll to stabilize a dying character. This reward may only be claimed once per character per encounter.

Players can lose the opportunity to win points by letting their competitive instincts go too far. If a player character does damage to another PC, the player character doing the damage loses all his accumulated experience chits. If a player character dies during a session, the surviving PCs earn no more experience chits for the rest of the session. Guard your companions well!

WAGERS

One way to get more experience chits is to win them from your fellow players. At any time, a player may

propose a wager and stake one to three experience chits on its outcome.

The wager must involve an action taken by the player characters, and must be described in terms of what the characters do, not the game mechanics involved. Good wagers include seeing who can kill the most foes, who can hit the dragon first, who can dance the longest, or whether or not a character will sidestep a particularly dangerous trap.

Wagers can only be won by one person. If two characters win the bet — whether by doing something equally well or equally fast — then the bet is off. If a player wins a wager, then any other player who agreed to participate must hand over the specified number of experience chits. If the GM is especially impressed by the valor (or foolishness) of the wager, then she may provide a bonus award of one to three experience chits.

Players can never bet more experience chits than they have. When a player accepts a bet, the experience chits bet are put aside in escrow until the bet is resolved or called off. While in escrow, they cannot be spent for bonus points, counted for victory, or cashed in for experience. Any wager can be called off at any time by mutual agreement of the players involved in it.

Example: John bets Robin and Will 2 experience chits that his character will be the first to kill a foe in the next encounter. Robin and Will accept and put aside 2 experience chits in escrow; John puts aside 4. Moments later, the party runs into a swarm of goblins. Robin and Will team up on one goblin, slaying it before John can finish off his own foe. As he pays up, John curses Robin and Will's cunning play and reflects that he might have been better off proposing that "whoever slays the first foe gets 2 experience chits."

USING EXPERIENCE CHITS

Most players save their experience chits to win the game and gain extra experience. However, you can also use chits to generate an emergency bonus. Each chit spent provides a +1 bonus to one die roll, and you may spend up to 10 experience chits on a single roll. You may spend the chits after you have made the roll, but must do so before the GM describes the results of the roll.

WINNING THE GAME!

At the end of each session, the players count the experience chits that they have earned. (Chits that have been spent or lost don't count.) The player who earned the most experience chits wins the session. If more than one player ties for the most experience chits, the tied players all score the win. If nobody has *any* experience chits, all the players win — that kind of catastrophic failure takes talent.

Each player should keep track of the number of sessions he wins. "Sessions won" is independent of the player's character — if a player loses or changes characters, his score remains the same. At the end of the campaign, the player (or players) who won the most sessions wins the campaign. If there is a tie for most sessions won, the player whose character has the most experience wins.

CASHING IN EXPERIENCE CHITS

After the winner of the session has been determined, the players cash in their experience chits for experience points. Each experience chit is worth 25 XP.

Thanks to the narrative structure of *Rune, Last Hero in Scandinavia* is a fast-paced campaign built around a relatively small number of lengthy encounters. It's a good idea to figure experience after every encounter and to allow the PCs to gain any levels they have earned. This helps the characters advance faster and avoid being overwhelmed by the challenges in the later episodes.

BE KIND TO YOUR GM FRIENDS

Unlike *Rune*, the GM does not compete with the players in D20 System games. If you're a player, you should make up this disappointment to your Game Moderator by presenting regular gifts of soda and dice.



Flags are bonuses that the characters can earn that will be used in later skill checks. These are mentioned when earned and repeated when used. In this way, flags mark plot developments in one encounter that affect events in another encounter. Flags may affect either individual characters or the entire party.

Mass Combat

Every Game Moderator loves to throw dozens of foes at his players' characters. These rules let you throw them all at once.

NEW CREATURE TEMPLATE: HORDE

One of the drawbacks of unleashing many foes on a party is the amount of die-rolling and bookkeeping involved. The horde template simplifies combat by reducing these chores. Hordes make fewer attack rolls, and the PCs have the opportunity to kill several members of a horde with one attack roll. The result is more mayhem, more quickly.

Horde templates work with any relatively puny foe. There's no hard and fast limit to how powerful the base creature of a horde can be. However, the horde template becomes less useful with creatures that can use a variety of spells, feats, or special abilities. Most creatures over CR 5 are cumbersome when used in hordes.

Creating a Horde

The "horde" template can be added to any group of identical creatures (referred to hereafter as the "base creatures" or "members"). The template does not combine the creatures into a single organism; it simply treats them as one organism in ways that simplify combat and speed up the game. Hordes use all the base creatures' statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

A horde can have any number of creatures within it, but the most efficient hordes have 6 to 12 creatures. Hordes move as a contiguous group of creatures, but the horde as a whole can take whatever shape fits the terrain and tactical situation.

Hordes use any possessions assigned to them normally. Because a horde is treated as one creature, however, it uses a particular magic item or other special possession only once per round, even if all the members of the horde are equipped with that item and could theoretically use it separately.

Size: As base creatures

Hit Dice: As base creatures, but the horde's hit points equal the sum of its base creatures' hit points.

Loss of hit points is affected by the Multiple Targets special quality below.

Initiative: See below

Speed: As base creatures

AC: As base creatures, but can be affected by the Multiple Targets special quality.

Attacks: The horde retains all the attacks of the base creatures, which can attack individually at the GM's discretion.

Damage: As base creatures

Face/Reach: As base creatures

Special Attacks: The horde retains all the special attacks of the base creatures, which can attack individually at the GM's discretion. The horde also gains the Massive Attack ability below.

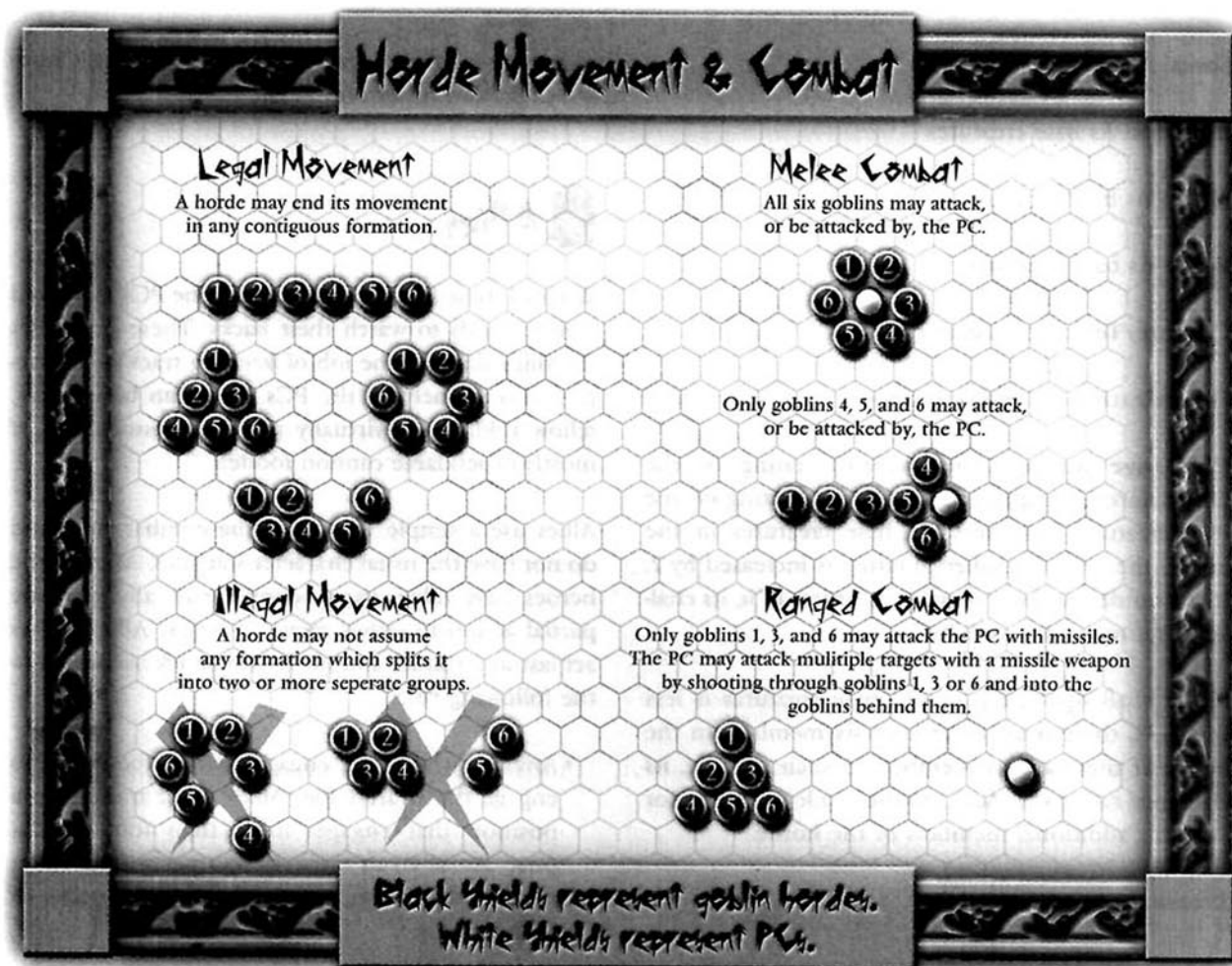
Massive Attack (Ex): The members of a horde may combine several individual attacks into a single attack roll. One attack roll and damage roll is made using the normal bonus of one of the base creatures, but the horde gains a +1 bonus to the attack roll and to damage for each member of the horde that has the target within its threatened area and contributes to the Massive Attack. This bonus stacks with any other bonus the base creatures normally receive.

Hordes may use the Massive Attack ability with ranged attacks, but the maximum bonus is equal to the number of creatures that have an uninterrupted line of sight to the target. In most situations, this is the front row of base creatures in the horde.

Special Qualities: The horde retains all the special qualities of the base creatures, which can use those qualities individually at the GM's discretion. The horde also gains the Fixed Initiative and Multiple Targets special qualities below.

Fixed Initiative (Ex): The result of a horde creature's initiative check is always 10 plus its initiative bonus.

Multiple Targets (Ex): Because the horde is made up of many base creatures, its hit points are spread among the individual creatures. Any attack affecting an individual base creature can only do damage equal to the number of hit points that the creature has. An individual base creature is eliminated when it takes damage equal to its hit points; any additional damage is wasted. However, attacks that affect more than one



creature within the horde can spread the damage among all the affected creatures. The player whose character is responsible for causing the damage chooses which individual base creatures take damage.

Player characters can attack more than one member of a horde with a single melee attack. The player must declare which members of the horde her character is attacking, and the horde gains 1 point of Damage Reduction for each additional base creature that the PC attacks. However, if the player hits she may split the damage however she likes among the members of the horde that she attacked. A PC may only attack those members of the horde that are within that character's threatened area, and the damage that a horde can suffer is limited by the number of creatures within the area targeted by an attack.

Player characters may also make ranged attacks on more than one member of a horde. The player traces a path of attack from the attacking character to the first and subsequent targets. This is a straight line for almost all missile weapons, but unusual weapons may result in a more complicated path. Damage is figured the same way as with melee attacks, with the targets gaining 1 point of Damage Reduction for each additional base crea-

ture attacked and the player able to split damage however she likes among targeted creatures.

Spellcasters target the base creatures within the horde, not the horde as a whole. Area effect spells work normally, as they can affect several base creatures at once. However, the GM makes only one saving throw or damage roll for all those in the area of the effect, and all affected creatures suffer (or avoid) the same effect. It is possible to turn some creatures within a horde against the rest of the horde with spells like *charm* or *suggestion*. These creatures leave the horde while under the effect of the spell, and are dealt with as individuals.

Spellcasters can also use the Multiple Targets quality to target more than one base creature of a horde with a spell. AC is increased and damage is split as above. Other spell effects are duplicated among all the creatures. Rays, *magic missiles*, and other spells that create effects similar to missile weapons can be used to target several foes in a line, just like normal ranged attacks.

Cleave and other feats work normally against single horde creatures. For example, if a PC kills a member of a horde, that PC may use Cleave to launch a follow-up attack against other members.

Saves: As base creatures

Abilities: As base creatures

Skills: As base creatures

Feats: As base creatures

Climate/Terrain: As base creatures

Organization: As base creatures

Challenge Rating: The challenge rating of the horde starts out equal to the challenge rating of one base creature. For every six base creatures in the horde, the horde's challenge rating is increased by 2. If the horde has fewer than six creatures in it, its challenge rating is increased by 1.

If the challenge rating of the base creatures is less than 1/2, there must be at least six members in the horde. If there are six members in such a horde, its challenge rating is 1. Add 1 to the challenge rating for every six additional members of the horde.

Treasure: As base creatures

Alignment: As base creatures

Advancement: As base creatures

Horde Combat Example

Kylee (+6 melee, longsword 1d8+2, AC 16, 30 hp) fights a horde of 6 orcs (+3 melee, greataxe 1d12+3, AC 14, 24 total hp). The orcs have her surrounded and are going first. They launch a massive attack at a +11 bonus (+3 melee, +2 for flanking, +6 for their Massive Attack), which succeeds and does 1d12+9 damage (1d12+3, +6 for Massive Attack). Kylee staggers under a series of blows that do 16 hit points of damage.

Wiping blood from her eyes, Kylee launches a mighty attack of her own. She declares that she will attack 2 of the orcs at once as Multiple Targets, giving them 1 point of Damage Reduction. She also declares that she will do a Power Attack, reducing her attack bonus to +3 and increasing her longsword damage to 1d8+5. She rolls high — a 15 — on her attack, and then gets a 5 on her damage roll to do 10 points of damage. The Damage Reduction reduces that to 9 points of damage.

Two of the orcs drop dead, while the remaining point of damage is wasted. Kylee isn't finished, though —

moments later she whips around to make a Cleave attack on two other orcs in the horde!



With all these hordes on the loose, the PCs may need some friends to watch their backs. These new rules for allies simplify the job of keeping track of characters who are helping the PCs. They can be villagers, fellow soldiers, or virtually any other assortment of mostly-expendable cannon fodder.

Allies use a simple version of the combat rules and do not have the usual character statistics. After all the heroes have taken their actions, each ally gets one partial action to either move or attack. Allies always act last in a round, and move and attack according to the following rules:

- Any ally who is not engaged with a foe moves to engage the nearest foe. Allies never move into a position that engages more than four foes at once. An ally can move 30 feet per round. Allies never provoke nor take advantage of Attacks of Opportunity.
- Any ally engaged with 1 to 3 foes attacks one of those foes. The GM selects which foe the ally attacks and rolls a ten-sided die. On an 8, 9, or 10, the ally deals 10 points of damage to the foe.
- Any ally engaged with four foes retreats. The ally moves until she is engaged with only one foe. If there is no clear path to safety (or the ally can not move far enough to reach it), the ally moves to a location where she is engaged with as few foes as possible.
- After all allies have moved and attacked, the GM rolls 1d10 for each creature that threatens an ally. If any of the dice rolled result in a 10, the ally dies.

Onward to Adventure!

You now know almost all the new rules you need to run *Last Hero in Scandinavia*. You could read the chapter of **Rune** rules that follows, but it's full of scary stuff about Vikings and boss monsters. You're probably better off skipping ahead to Episode 1 and the beginning of the campaign.

CHAPTER 2: NEW RULES FOR RUNE

Want a few new twists for your **Rune** game? Allies, saga rules, flags, mass combat, and boss monsters await!

Allies

Allies are a mixed blessing for both designers and players. These supporting characters can save the heroes from being overwhelmed by endless waves of foes, but they also reduce the victory points that the heroes score. Their main use is to balance out fights or add verisimilitude to an encounter's storyline. ("Verisimilitude" is a fancy word for "so where are the villagers who are allegedly defending this village?")

A designer may add one ally to a combat, plus one more for every ten foes that the heroes face, if he likes. This means that allies are mostly used in mass combat situations. For more information on mass combat, see the rules below.

USING ALLIES IN COMBAT

After all the heroes have taken their actions, each ally gets one action to either move or attack. Allies use a simplified version of the combat rules, and do not have combat statistics. The runner always controls allies.

Allies move and attack according to the following rules:

- Any ally who is not engaged with a foe moves to engage the nearest foe. Allies never move into a position that engages more than four foes at once. An ally has a Move of 15.
- Any ally engaged with one to three foes attacks one of those foes. The runner selects which foe the ally attacks and rolls a ten-sided die. On an 8, 9, or 10, the ally inflicts one wound on the foe. (This kills mass combat foes, which have only one wound each.)
- Any ally engaged with four foes retreats. The ally moves until she is engaged with only one foe. If there is no clear path to safety (or the ally can not move far enough to reach it), the ally moves to a

location where she is engaged with as few foes as possible.

- Allies never create or take advantage of Attacks of Opportunity.

The Saga Option

One of **Rune's** innovative features is the concept of rotating runners during the course of a game session. Unfortunately, that feature is a little *too* innovative for some gaming groups. If your players are more comfortable with puny outlander games that have a single GM, never fear! **Rune** is flexible (it can flex like Charles Atlas); you can use the "saga option" to run an entire campaign with just one runner.

The saga option has three rules:

- The GM does not run a character, and there is no proxy.
- The GM tracks victory points, but uses these points only to score his performance in the game. GMs win sessions by gaining the most victory points, and win campaigns by winning the most sessions in a campaign.
- Any player may take over the campaign to run an encounter or a complete session and receive a 50% victory point bonus for doing so. (The GM also receives this bonus.) Detailed instructions for how to do this are below.

TAKING OVER THE GAME

Any player may take over the role of Game Moderator to become a temporary runner. The player must inform the GM of his plans ahead of time, and may choose to run either a single cushion encounter or a complete session of **Rune**.

The GM must give up control of the game to a player upon request, and may give up control of the game to more than one player in succession. However, the GM may take back control of the game after any player has taken a turn running the game.

Once she is back in control of the game, the GM retains control of it for at least one encounter. If the GM only gave up individual encounters to the players, the GM is only guaranteed control of the game for one encounter. If the GM gave up one or more

complete sessions to the players, the GM is guaranteed control of the game for one complete session. After the period of guaranteed control ends, any player may then request control of the game again.

Each player who takes control the game is responsible for running encounters constructed using the usual rules of **Rune**. The GM may prepare and share an encounter with the player, but is under no obligation to do so.

While a player is in control of the game, the regular GM takes over the player's character and earns victory points based on that character's actions. The GM does not apply these victory points toward improving any character, but tracks them to determine who wins the session. The player running the game receives victory points based on the usual rules for running **Rune** encounters, and may apply those victory points to improve his character as usual.

Most of the rules for running proxies remain the same. The GM does not earn any victory points if the player character she is running is killed, and cannot abuse the character by giving away items or avoiding fights. However, the usual split of the character's victory points does not occur. Instead, both the player and the Game Moderator receive a 50% victory point bonus while the player is in control of the game.

Flag

Flags allow designers to create plot developments in one encounter that affect events in another encounter. Flags record the effects of those plot developments on the character sheet so that they may be remembered and used later.

Flags provide bonuses or penalties to skill rolls. When a designer adds a flag to the game, he designs the effect of the flag according to the normal encounter design rules. The points spent or earned are then split between the encounter in which the flag is set and the encounter in which the flag is used.

Flags are erased if your character is killed; they are not saved when you save your character.

Flags may affect either individual heroes or the entire horde. If the flag affects the entire horde, it can only be erased by the death of the entire horde. A penalty that affects the entire horde costs 10 more encounter points. A bonus that affects the entire

horde earns 10 encounter points. These points are also split between assignment and use.

At the end of every session, players count the number of flags on their character sheets and earn 10 victory points for every flag. The longer a designer lets a flag remain on a character sheet, the more victory points the player earns for it.

Mass Combat

Skirmishes are all very well, but nothing says fun like a screaming horde of foes. These mass combat rules allow you to run battles with dozens of opponents.

Mass combats replace the main combat event allowed in each encounter. (Designers may still include an additional combat event with a total Mix value up to half the number heroes.) Unlike combat events, however, all mass combats require the expenditure of encounter points.

To design a mass combat event, follow the steps below:

STEP 1: SET THE THREAT CATEGORY

Mass combat foes fall into three Threat Categories — Equal, Inferior, and Weak. Their statistics are still based on the Roll of Valor, but mass combat foes have simplified statistics and fewer hit points than regular foes.

Each mass combat foe has four statistics: ATK, DFN, HP, and Res. These work the same way as normal foes. Mass combat foes do not have INIT, DAM, and Soak scores. They do only their Thwack Margin when hitting, resist no damage, and always go last. Mass combat foes do not take wounds — they're either alive or they're dead.

ATK, DFN, and Res are based upon the players' statistics as tallied on the Roll of Valor. HP is a fixed number determined by the foes' threat category. The adjustments are listed on the Foe Maker's Table below.

All mass combat foes are Predictable. They are not crafty, and do not use missile weapons. (If you want to include missile weapon attacks in a mass combat, design them as traps.)

STEP 2: ADJUST THE FOES

All mass combat foes are generic mooks — it doesn't matter whether they are goblins, dark Vikings, or cuddly forest creatures named Bambi. They apply their usual adjusts to ATK, DFN or Res, but they do not receive any special powers. You may also use mass combat adjusts to tweak a foe's specific abilities.

Each threat category of foe has a "Cost per Foe" listed on the Foe Maker's Table below. You can increase a foe's combat statistics by increasing the Cost per Foe, and you can save a point or two by decreasing the foe's combat statistics. If you increase the Cost per Foe by 1, you may add 2 points to the foe's ATK, DFN, or Res. If you decrease the foe's ATK, DFN, or Res, you reduce the Cost per Foe by 1.

You may adjust the foe's combat statistics as much as you like, but the Cost per Foe may never be less than 1. HP is never affected by adjustments.

STEP 3: BUY FOES

Once you have chosen the foe's Threat Category and made any adjustments you'd like to make, decide how many foes you want to have in the fight. Multiply the number of foes by the Cost per Foe to determine how many points this mass combat will cost. You may put as many foes in the fight as you can afford, and most mass combats don't really get rolling until you've got at least two dozen foes.

STEP 4: ADD ALLIES

The designer may add 1 ally to a mass combat, plus 1 more for every 10 foes he buys, if he likes.

STEP 5: TRAPS AND TERRAIN

Traps and terrain work just like they do in regular combat scenes, and are designed in the same way.

STEP 6: FINAL SETUP

This final step should be left until the encounter is run. The runner uses the Roll of Valor, any listed adjustments, and the Foe Maker's Table below to generate the statistics of the foes. She then places the foes and the allies on the combat map.

Foe Maker's Table

Category	ATK	DFN	Res	HP	Cost per Foe
Equal	+0	+0	+0	6	3
Inferior	-1	-1	-1	4	2
Weak	-2	-2	-2	2	1

Adjustments: 1 encounter point = a 2-point adjustment to ATK, DFN, or Res. Cost per Foe may not be reduced below 1. Foes apply their usual adjusts to ATK, DFN, and Res. Adjustments to INIT, DAM, Soak, and HP are ignored.

RUNNING THE FIGHT

Once the battle begins, a mass combat runs according to most of the usual combat rules.

The heroes roll Initiative normally to determine the order in which they act. After all the heroes act, each ally takes an action. After all the allies have acted, each foe takes an action. The GM chooses the order in which the allies and foes take actions.

During their action, the heroes attack foes normally. Mass combat foes are so easy to kill, however, that this is a waste of a good attack. It's much more efficient to slay several foes at once, and the Mass Attack maneuver lets a hero do just that.

Mass Attacks

Any hero who is engaged with more than one mass combat foe may try to hit several opponents with one blow. The hero may target any of the foes that she is engaged with and try to hit all of them with one attack roll. For each extra foe the hero targets, both the DFN and Res of all the foes targeted increase by 2.

If the hero succeeds, she hits all the foes. The hero figures damage normally and assigns the damage however she likes to the targeted foes. As always, victory points are only scored for damage that the foes suffer, so spreading the damage around among different foes instead of "overkilling" a single foe is always a good idea.

A hero may use the mass attack maneuver with any attack, Gift, engagement roll, or other action that is resisted by a foe's DFN or Res scores.

Example: Bjorn (ATK +11, DFN +10, DAM +9) is surrounded by 4 Inferior dark Vikings (DFN +6, 4 HP



each). He decides to attack them all at once, giving the dark Vikings an effective DFN of +12. He rolls an 8 for a total of 19; the runner rolls a 6 for the foes for a total of 18. Bjorn succeeds with a Thwack Margin of 1 and does 10 points damage. Two dark Vikings expire, and Bjorn splits the last two points of damage between two of the remaining dark Vikings. Bjorn gets 10 victory points plus a death blow bonus (see below).

If Bjorn had gone berserk, he would have added his DFN of +10 to the attack and done 10 more points of damage. In this situation, Bjorn obliterates all four of the dark Vikings in one gigantic swing of his axe.

Death Blows

Heroes do not receive conventional death blow bonuses for mass combat foes. Instead, they receive 1 victory point for killing a Weak foe, 2 victory points for killing an Inferior foe, and 3 victory points for killing an equal foe. This bonus is doubled for each mass combat foe that a hero slays in a single blow.

Example: After killing 2 Inferior dark Vikings, Bjorn receives 4 victory points as a death blow bonus. If he had gone berserk and killed all 4 foes, he would have received 16 victory points.

Foe Actions

After all the allies have taken their actions, each mass combat foe gets one action to either move or attack. Mass combat foes move and attack according to the following rules:

- Any foe that is not engaged with a hero or ally moves to engage the nearest hero or ally. If a hero and an ally are equally distant, the foe moves toward the hero. If two or more heroes (or allies) are equally distant, the runner randomly chooses which of those heroes the foe moves toward.
- If the foe cannot reach the hero or ally it has targeted — which happens a lot when the heroes are surrounded by hordes of slaving monsters — the foe moves as close as possible and stops.
- Any foe that is engaged with a hero attacks that hero. If the foe is engaged with more than one hero, it selects one hero to attack using the Foe Target Choice Flowchart in the **Rune** rulebook on page 196. This is a normal attack.
- Instead of each foe attacking individually, the runner may choose for all the foes attacking a hero to combine forces in a single Attack roll. The runner designates one foe to make the Attack roll and adds 2 to the foe's roll for each other foe engaging the hero. (This is in addition to the -2 per additional opponent to the hero's Defense roll.) The hero then makes a Defense roll and the attack is resolved normally.
- Foes may also attack allies who they are engaged with. The runner rolls 1d10 for each foe that is attacking the ally. If any of the dice rolled result in a 10, the ally dies, and each of the heroes loses 5 victory points. Foes prefer attacking heroes to attacking allies.

Clever runners can use the movements of allies and foes to direct the flow of the battle and cause all kinds of trouble for the heroes.

Bigger Foes

So. You've played **Rune** for 44 hours straight. You've got thousands of points of experience and more Divine Gifts than the average god. You're badder than bad, right? You think you can take on anything in Mythic Scandinavia, right?

Think again. You're about to meet the Boss, and he ain't singin' "Glory Days."

BOSS MONSTERS

The three levels of foes beyond "Terrifying" are known as boss monsters. They are — in order of scariness — "Boss," "Legendary," and "Godlike." There can only be one boss monster in any encounter, and smart heroes will run away from it.

The size of a boss monster is determined by the number of victory points the heroes have. If the heroes' average victory point total is less than 500, then the designer may only use Bosses as boss monsters. If the average is 500 to 1000 victory points, then the designer may use a Boss or a Legendary foe. If the heroes average more than 1000 victory points, then the designer may choose a Boss, a Legendary foe, or a Godlike foe. (Most designers sic the toughest foe they can upon the heroes. Killing heroes costs victory points, though, so there are times when it's a good idea to present them with a slightly weaker foe. That way there's a better chance they'll live long enough to wise up and run away.)

Boss monster stats are figured much like regular monsters are, with one exception. The hit points of these foes are based on doubling, tripling, and even quadrupling the hit points on the Roll of Valor.

It gets worse than that — much worse. Boss monsters get Powers, which are bought with encounter design points. These special attacks and defenses are based on various trap mechanics, but have the flexibility that comes with being used in combat by a smart foe.

Boss monsters have a Move of 15 and may use missile weapons. All boss monsters are crafty, but they are not necessarily self-willed. Just like regular monsters, self-willed costs extra.

POWERS

Each boss monster may buy several Powers from the list below — how many is shown on the chart above. You do not have to buy all the Powers that a boss monster is entitled to. You don't have to buy them any Powers at all, actually, but don't be surprised if the players make fun of you for making a lame monster.

The Powers on the list are generic. Be sure to customize their look and feel to fit the monster that uses them. Blast attacks may be fire, diamond shards, ice, or anything else that can harm a Viking. (Hot water and soap might be the worst weapon of all.) Invulnerability might be steel plate or an energy shield. Turn your imagination loose and create amazing special effects.

Powers are bought in levels. If you buy 2 or more levels in a Power, you're still buying one Power.

Example: A Boss foe could take 4 levels of Blast Attack and 6 levels of Explosion Attack, since that's only 2 Powers.

Blast Attack

Cost: 10 per level

Once per round, the foe may take an action to fire a ranged attack at a single target. Determine the target by the normal methods for predictable or self-willed foes.

The attack uses the foe's normal ATK stat. The range of the attack is (10 paces x level). The damage is 1d10 per level, plus the Thwack Margin. Like all die rolls, the damage dice can botch or triumph.



Boss Monster Maker's Table

Category	INIT	ATK	DEF	DAM	Soak	HP	Res	Powers	Self-Willed Cost
Godlike	+12	+12	+12	+12	+6	x4	+6	6	+100 points
Legendary	+10	+10	+10	+10	+5	x3	+5	4	+80 points
Boss	+8	+8	+8	+8	+4	x2	+4	2	+65 points

Explosion Attack

Cost: 10 per level

Once per round, the foe may take an action to do damage to every hero in an area around it. The area affected has a radius of 3 paces per level. The attack hits automatically and does (DAM rating + level) damage.

Extra Move

Cost: 5 per level

Each level of Extra Move increases the foe's Move by 15 paces.

Gift Defense

Cost: 20 per level

For every level of this Power, the foe is completely immune to the Divine Gifts of one god. This works against Gifts that directly affect the foe; Gifts that enhance a hero's abilities or defenses work normally.

There is no Gift Defense against Rune Powers.

Go First

Cost: 30 per level

The foe always acts before any of the heroes, and may act more than once before they act at all. The foe rolls INIT normally to determine how many actions it gets. Its first action always happens at the beginning of the round. If it has additional actions for the round, it gets one more first action for each level of Go First, up to the number of actions it has. Any left-over actions occur in their normal place in the Initiative order.

Example: A temporal demon with 2 levels of Go First gets an INIT roll of 46. It gets 2 actions before any of the heroes act and one more action at 6.

Immobilization Attack

Cost: 20 per level

Once per round, the foe may take an action to freeze a single target in place. Determine the target by the

normal methods for predictable or self-willed foes. That target cannot move or attack for a number of rounds equal to the level of the Power. The maximum range of this Power is (10 paces x level). A foe may never immobilize more than half the heroes in the horde at one time.

Increased Statistics

Cost: 5 per level

Boss monsters are already ridiculously powerful, but if you absolutely *have* to increase their stats even further this is how to do it. Each level of Increased Statistics increases stats according to the usual adjustment formula:

3 INIT = 1 ATK = 1 DEF = 3 DAM = 1 Soak = 10 HP = 3 Res

You may increase several different stats with this Power; it still counts as one Power.

Increased Wound Threshold

Cost: 10 per level

For every level of this Power, the foe's Wound Threshold is increased by 5.

Invulnerability Defense

Cost: 30 per level

For every level of this Power, the foe is completely immune to one form of attack. Possible attack forms include: bows, chain weapons, great weapons, long-shaft weapons, single weapons, thrown weapons, and two-weapon attacks. A foe may never become invulnerable to unarmed combat.

Minions

Cost: 20 per level

The boss monster is accompanied by minions. 20 points buys Pitiful minions; each level of quality above that (Weak, Inferior, Equal, etc.) costs 20 more points. Design these according to the usual combat rules with a Mix equal to the number of heroes.

Designers may purchase mass combat foes to be the minions of a boss monster. This costs 20 points plus the usual points paid for mass combat foes.

A Godlike foe may break the prohibition against more than one boss monster in the encounter and buy a Boss or Legendary foe as its minion — but that's just plain unfair. (Have fun with it.) Bosses are 160 points, Legendary foes are 180 points.



Psychic Attack

Cost: 10 per level

Once per round, the foe may spend an action to blast a single target with a psychic attack. Determine the target by the normal methods for predictable or self-willed foes. The attack uses the foe's normal ATK stat. If the attack succeeds, the hero's INIT, ATK, and DFN stats are reduced by the level of the Power for a number of turns equal to the Thwack Margin.

A foe may use Psychic Attack on a hero more than once. If the attack is successful, the Thwack Margin is added to the remaining duration of the effect.

The foe breaks the most fundamental rule of **Rune** combat: it doesn't fight to the death. While it may be cowardly and weak to flee a fight, this lets the designer save the foe for a later rematch. The foe must spend an action to retreat, unless it is incapacitated (in which case it may retreat instantly).

The retreat may not be prevented, though it is possible for a hero to kill a foe too quickly for a retreat to be possible.

Reflection Defense

Cost: 10 per level

For every level of this Power, 10 points of raw damage done to the foe is reflected back to its attacker. The foe still takes the damage, and the attacker may soak the damage normally.

How quickly the foe retreats depends on the number of levels bought for this Power:

Level	Retreat Time
1	Must retreat when reduced to one-fifth its hit points or incapacitated
2	Must retreat when reduced to one-fourth its hit points or incapacitated
3	May retreat when reduced to one-fourth its hit points or incapacitated
4	May retreat when reduced to half its hit points or incapacitated
5	May retreat whenever the runner wants it to

Regeneration

Cost: 30 per level

Every round, the foe regains 5 hit points per level of this Power. For each level it has in this Power, a foe may spend one of its actions per round to heal a wound.

Teleport

Cost: 10 per level

The foe may spend an action to move via teleportation. The distance the foe may move equals 5 paces times the level of the Power.

Retreat!

Cost: 20 per level

Teleport Attack

Cost: 30 per level

The foe may spend an action to move a target via teleportation. The target must be a single object weighing 500 pounds or less, which may include a hero. (Heroes may not be separated from their gear with this Power). Determine the target by the normal methods for predictable or self-willed foes. The foe may target any hero it can see, and may move that hero up to 10 paces times the level of the Power.

A foe may use this Power to place heroes in inconvenient and uncomfortable places, such as places that trigger traps. A foe may not use this Power to cause falling damage, either by dropping a hero or dropping something on a hero. However, a designer could use the existence of this Power to explain a separate trap based on falling damage.

VULNERABILITIES

If you're feeling merciful toward the players — or more likely, just need to earn some encounter points — you can give a boss monster some or all of the vulnerabilities below.

Decreased Statistics

Earns: -5 per level

The opposite of Increased Statistics, this allows you to reduce stats according to the usual adjustment formula.

Go Last

Earns: -50

Regardless of its INIT score, this slow-moving foe acts after all the heroes have taken all their actions. The foe receives only one action.

Recharge Attack

Earns: -10 per level

Each time the foe uses an Attack Power, it must wait a number of rounds equal to the level of this vulnerability before it uses an Attack Power again. (This applies to using either the same Power or a different

one.) A foe must have at least one Attack Power to take this vulnerability.

Recharge Defense

Earns: -10 per level

The foe's defenses only work some of the time. Recharge Defense works on a 6-round cycle. For each level of this vulnerability, pick one round during which none of the foe's Defense Powers work. The foe may take up to 5 levels of this vulnerability. (Actually, it could take 6, but that would be silly.) The foe must have at least one Defense Power to take this vulnerability.

Example: Jane decides that the fallen valkyrie's Invulnerability Defense only works every other round. That's a -30-point vulnerability. The vulnerability would cost the same if the Invulnerability Defense worked on rounds 1, 4, and 6 or 1, 2, and 3.

Weapon Vulnerability

Earns: -5 per level

For each level of Weapon Vulnerability, the foe takes double damage from one form of attack. Possible attack forms include: bows, chain weapons, great weapons, longshaft weapons, single weapons, thrown weapons, two-weapon attacks, and unarmed combat. A foe can't be vulnerable to a form of attack to which it is invulnerable.

MAKING A BOSS MONSTER

Boss monsters are always unique. You should name them, choose interesting mixes of Powers, and give them as much personality and backstory as a Viking-killing machine needs.

Bosses can be evil Vikings, uber-dwarves, killer mechs, mega-goblins, giants, or other enhanced versions of regular monsters. Legendary foes are usually more powerful supernatural beings such as elves, demons, and valkyries. Godlike foes are world-shattering beings like the Fenris Wolf, the Midgard Serpent, and the gods themselves.

You'll only meet one boss monster in *Last Hero in Scandinavia*. Trust us on this; one is enough.

EPISODE 1: THE CHIEFTAIN'S FALL

In which a treacherous brother's plot bears fruit, but a band of heroes suspects the truth behind his lies.

Encounter 1: Village on Fire

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia

Summary: The heroes defend their village against a goblin assault, but are left behind when the village chieftain leads a mission against the goblins.

Background: Five years ago, two Viking brothers led settlers to a far corner of Scandinavia. They found a sparkling fjord and a fertile valley, and soon the village of Aelfdrap was born. It has grown and prospered, attracting farmers, fishers, and craftsmen — even a visiting Russian fur trader who fell in love with the village blacksmith and settled down.

Life in Aelfdrap isn't perfect, though. Goblins live in the nearby hills, and they have vowed to eradicate the settlers who have invaded their territory. The people of Aelfdrap have defended their village well, but the war has taken its toll in lives and morale.

Osric, the chieftain of the village, has insisted on seeking peace with the goblins. Despite many messages, he has made no progress in this goal. His younger brother Olaf has been driven to despair by the constant struggle. Seeing his brother as weak, he has been seduced by the force behind the goblins: Hel, goddess of death and the underworld.

With Hel's assistance, Olaf has made a pact with the goblins. He intends to betray his brother, take control of the village, and get its inevitable destruction over with. In fact, he thinks (with a little help from Hel), why stop there? Why not bring it all down?

Olaf has a plan. Once he has taken over the village, he will go the Thing — the great assembly of Viking leaders. There, he can obtain the mystical power he needs to unleash Hel's minions throughout Scandinavia. It's a big plan, but it all begins in one small village ...

EVENT 1: THE GOBLIN ASSAULT

Narration: A hawk floats on the thermal updrafts of a burning village.

Looking down, he sees a small collection of buildings surrounded by an earthen wall. A longhouse dominates the center of the village. Scattered around it are a smithy, a small stable, and vegetable gardens. Smoke rises from the smithy's roof.

Shouts of battle ring out. Men and goblins fight and die. The goblins come over the wall, shrieking, and the men meet them with axes and warcries. The men are outnumbered, but valiant. Body parts fly through the air, but still the goblins keep coming!

You are there, in the middle of the battle, fighting for the survival of your village!

Mass Combat — 60 Screaming Goblins

The village of Aelfdrap is under attack from a horde of goblins. The attack began at dawn, just as the characters were getting up and preparing for the mighty deeds of the day. Dozens of goblins swarmed over the embankment surrounding the village and are now rampaging through it!

As the combat begins, the heroes have just emerged from the longhouse in the center of the village. They must fight the goblins, aid their allies, and deal with several situations as they move around the village.

Allies — Fellow Vikings

Six allies are scattered around the village in the locations indicated. These allies are fellow Vikings of about the same age and skill as the characters. Should you need names, the women are Thora, Svana, and Dagmar. The men are Brandr, Hallr, and Justinian (an effete outlander).

There are other Vikings involved with the battle — including Osric the chieftain and his brother Olaf — but their actions do not affect the player characters unless mentioned in the traps and gains outlined below.

Terrain — Multiple Levels

The earthworks around the village and the rooftops of the buildings provide two extra levels of terrain.

The earthworks rise about 10 feet off ground level. The rooftops are between 12 and 20 feet off ground level, depending on where you stand.

 **Points Earned:** -10 (2 additional levels at -5 points each)

Terrain — Sloped Terrain

Two earthworks are visible on the map, and the inner sides are sloped.

 **Points Earned:** -10 (2 areas at -5 points each)

 Any character who is hit while standing on sloped terrain must make a Balance check (DC 10 + the damage dealt). If the check is failed, the character slides down the slope and lands prone at the bottom of the terrain. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.

Terrain — Obstructions to Missile Fire

Several buildings are on fire, and there's smoke everywhere.

 All missile attacks suffer a -4 penalty.

Points Earned: -20 (-4 penalty at -5 points each)

 All ranged attacks suffer a 10% chance of missing due to the smoke.

Gain — To Battle!

Before they leap into combat, the heroes may inspire each other by shouting warcries and making battle boasts.

 **Singular: No-Fault** roll; roll **Leadership** vs. **Difficulty 9**, if successful the heroes gain **1 point of Invigoration** until the end of the combat.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9)

Points Earned: -68 (1 Invigoration at -30 for the combat, 4 rolls to avoid a trap at -5 each, 3 rolls to receive a gain at -5 each, 1 freestanding roll at -3 points); -15 (No-fault roll)

 This is an excellent time to use the wager rules in Chapter 1.

Gain — An Important Conversation

The first time a hero passes through area A on the map, that hero has a chance to see an encounter between Olaf and Osric.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to overhear the Closer Inspection text below.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 The first PC to reach area A may make a Spot check (DC 12). If the character succeeds, read the Closer Inspection text below.

Closer Inspection: As you round the corner, you see the chieftain's brother Olaf engaged in a furious battle with three goblins. He spits two with a vicious thrust of his war-spear, but the third jumps on his back and knocks him down.

Before you have a chance to react, the chieftain Osric dashes out of the smoke and strikes the goblin's head off with his sword. Olaf shakes the dead body off his back and picks himself up.

"The goblins grow ever fiercer," Olaf tells his brother. "When will you agree to lead an expedition against them?"

Osric shakes his head. He says, "We are too few and they are too many. An attack will do nothing but kill our best warriors. We must find another way!"

Olaf clearly disagrees, but before he can respond four more goblins attack. The brothers disappear into the smoke again.

Trap — That's Taking Butchery a Little Too Far

The first hero who passes through area B on the map triggers the following situation:

Narration: As you dash down the path, you hear maniacal giggling and the screams of Hengist the butcher. Looking in his shed, you see that two goblins have tied Hengist to his own worktable. One goblin has Hengist's cleaver held high, and is

about to do something very unpleasant to the butcher with it.

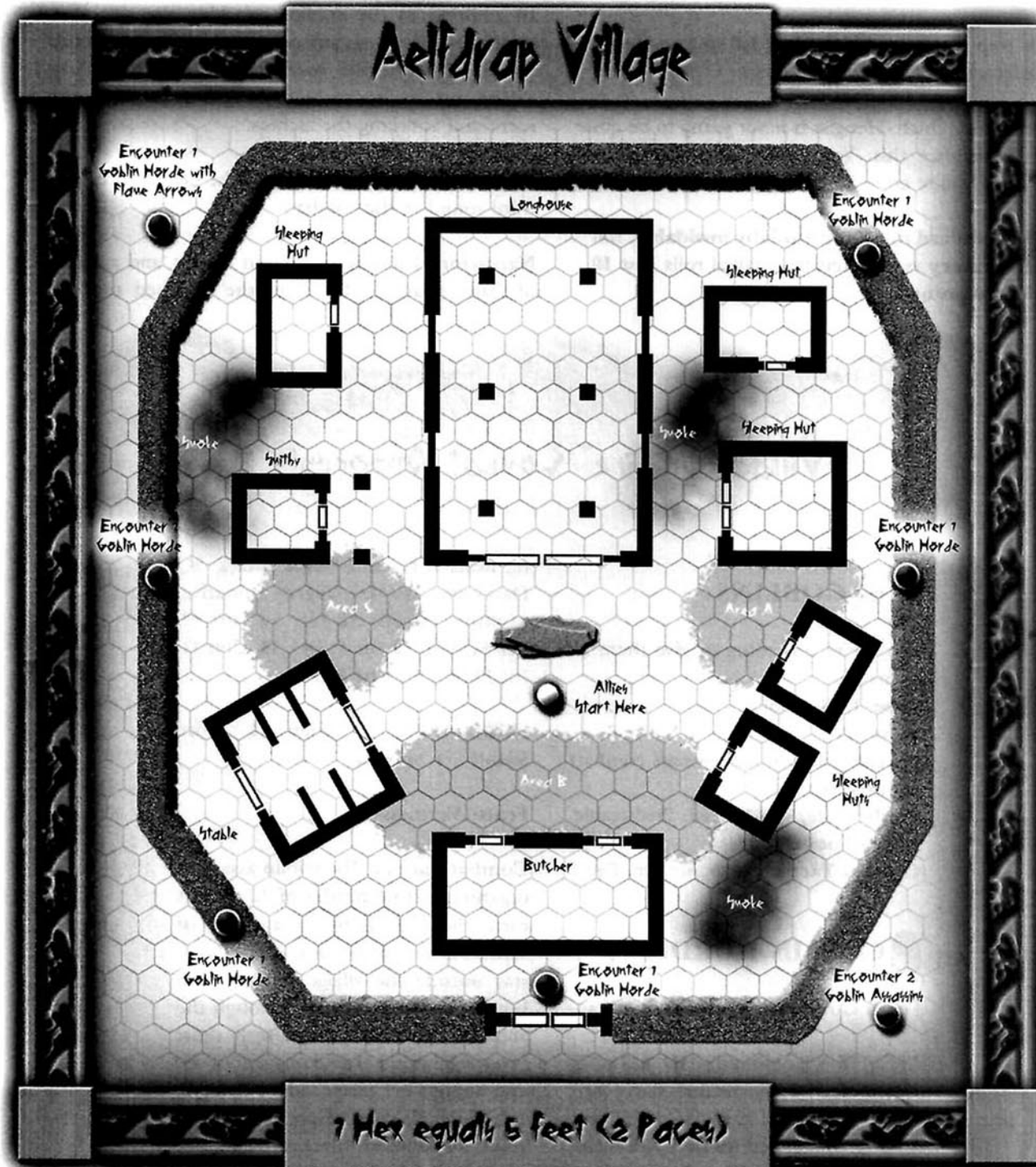
You've got only a moment to save the man who prepares your meat. What do you do?

Singular: Rush roll; Lady or Tiger, roll Sprint or Thrown Weapon or Bows vs. Difficulty 9, a successful roll wins 10 victory points, failure leads to "Ouch!" trap below.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); 10 (Failure leads to trap)

Points Earned: -20 (2 alternate methods at -10 each); -10 (10 victory points at -1 each)

If no effort is made to interfere with them, the goblins act on their initiative and use their cleaver on Hengist. If a player character attacks or uses a spell on them, the goblins drop Hengist and attack the PCs. They may also be distracted and forced to attack with a taunt or threat;



this is a free action and requires an Intimidate check (DC 12). These goblins use the standard D20 System stats for goblins, and are armed with morningstars.

In a competitive game, saving Hengist earns an experience chit.

Narration: Moments later, you slaughter the two goblins. Hengist thanks you with tears in his eye and promises you his best cuts for a year.

Trap — Ouch!

This trap is triggered if the PCs fail to save Hengist. It affects any PC within area B.

Narration: Ouch. Hengist is never going to be quite the same after this. You pause for a moment to decide if you're going to be sick.

 **Standard roll; conditionally avoidable, roll Bravery vs. Difficulty 7, failed rolls cost 10 victory points.**

Points Spent: 10 (Difficulty 7); 10 (10 victory points at 1 each)

Points Earned: -10 (Conditionally avoidable, don't be in area B)

 If the PCs fail to save Hengist, each PC within area B must make a Will save (DC 14) or be shaken for 5 rounds. Shaken characters suffer a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, saves, and checks.

Gain — Flight of Arrows

In addition to the goblins attacking the village, a squad of goblin warriors outside the village is firing flame arrows at the roofs of the buildings. Any Viking can win honor by rushing over the embankment and attacking the archers.

Read the following narration to the players after the third round of the combat.

Narration: There is a shriek in the air, and a flight of flaming arrows lands on the thatched roof of

"Village on Fire" Combat Opponents

60 GOBLINS

(No, we're not going to give them all names.)

Type: Rock Goblins

Move: 15

Threat Value: Inferior (mass combat)

Adjusts: None

Predictable/Self-Willed: Predictable

Points Spent: 120

Combat Tactics: Rush. Scream. Die.

GOBLIN HORDES (6)

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) Hordes

CR 2; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 1d8 (x12); 48 hp (each base creature has 4 hp); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +1 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5

ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Massive Attack; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fixed Initiative, Multiple Targets; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3

Feats: Alertness

Combat Tactics: The goblin assault is organized into 6 hordes of 12 goblins each; the sixth horde is a group of archers armed with flame arrows who stay outside the village proper. Each horde has the above stats, though the archers are instead armed with short bows (+3 ranged, 1d6 damage, crit x3) and daggers (+1 melee, 1d4-1 damage, crit 19-20 x2). See "Flight of Arrows" above for more on these archers.

Runolf the leather worker. Just outside the village, you see a squad of goblin warriors lighting arrows and shooting them at the village.

They think they're smart, sitting outside the village with their arrows and their fire ...

 The archers are no real threat to the heroes; since they can only delay the characters they are represented as a trap instead of another set of foes.

Multiple: Action Sink roll; 3 successes required, roll ATK vs. baseline +3, if successful the heroes who attacked the goblins gain a mutual award of 10 victory points each and a Category C treasure.

Points Spent: 30 (Action sink, 3 successes at 10 each); 20 (Exotic roll vs. baseline +3)

Points Earned: -30 (Category C treasure); -10 (10 victory points at -1 each)

 In the D20 System rules, the squad of goblin archers is another horde creature. There are twelve base creatures in the horde; they are identical to the goblins described previously except that they are armed with short bows (+3 ranged, 1d6 damage, crit x3) and daggers (+1 melee, 1d4-1 damage, crit 19-20 x2).

If the characters search the bodies for treasure, they find a total of 50 sp and 3 blue quartz gems worth 30 gp total.

Trap — The Burning Smithy

The first hero to pass through Area C triggers the following situation. The heroes must endure fire and smoke as they struggle to free a fellow villager.

Narration: With a terrible grinding noise, the roof of Helga's smithy collapses. As sparks swirl thirty feet into the sky, Helga staggers out of the ruins of the building.

"Help! My husband is trapped inside!"

Closer Inspection: Through the smoke, you can see her husband Vanya straining against the beam that has fallen upon him. The broad-shouldered Russian is bent nearly double under the beam, and parts of his black beard are burning.

 Singular rolls; simultaneous rolls, conditionally avoidable, remains in effect, roll Stamina vs. Difficulty 7 to endure the fire, heroes who fail suffer Dam rating 15, and roll Strength vs. Difficulty 7 to free Vanya. Successful heroes win a +3 bonus to Bargain rolls made during the Bargaining Opportunity below.

Points Spent: 40 (2 exotic rolls at -20 each); 20 (2 rolls at Difficulty 7); 15 (Dam rating 15); 15 (Simultaneous rolls)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, stay out of the smithy); -15 (+3 increase at -5 each)

 Any character who goes in to help Vanya must make a Fortitude saving throw each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Getting Vanya out from under the beam requires a Strength check (DC 18). Up to 3 characters can assist with this check, each of which gives a +2 bonus if they beat a DC of 10.

Gain — Treasure

When the Vikings search the bodies of the goblins, they find a few trinkets and silver pennies.

 The player characters' portion of the loot — which they may share among themselves as they like — is 2 Category A treasures and 6 silver pieces. Osric is more generous, and gives the heroes a Category B treasure.

Points Earned: -20 (Category B treasure); -20 (2 category A treasures at -10 each); -6 (6 silver pieces at -1 each)

 The party's share of the treasure is 600 sp, 2 bloodstones worth 120 gp each, and a *potion of hiding*.

EVENT 2: LADY OF HOLLY

Narration: A few hours later, it's all over. The last of the bodies are burning in a great funeral pyre, and all about the village people are picking up debris. Aelfdrap looks almost normal again by sundown, and

Osric calls everyone together to decide what to do next.

"Three times this spring the goblins have assaulted our walls," he says, "and three times we have destroyed them. You have been valiant, my warriors!"

"I had hoped that the goblins would lose hope at unseating us from this wilderness, but each time we drive them off they return in greater numbers. My brother has now convinced me that we cannot simply defend against them. He says he can find their hidden lair, and that we can destroy them with one mighty blow!"

"It will be a dangerous journey, and many of us may not return. But I know you are strong, and together we can drive these goblins to Hel where they belong! Will you come with me?"

His answer is a roar of approval and a furious bashing of spears and shields. Soon, the village is bustling as the warriors prepare to leave. Family members rush around with gear, and there is a loud ringing noise as Helga repairs weapons on a makeshift anvil.

Gain — Bargaining Opportunity

Helga sells common and rare weapons and armor. She has never been a hard bargainer, and if the heroes have rescued Vanya from the smithy she gives the characters the best deal she can.



Opposed roll; roll Bargain vs. a +1 bonus.

Points Earned: -10 (Opposed roll bonus of +1); **-15** (Bargaining opportunity)



Helga is a skilled blacksmith who can make or improve almost any kind of weapon or armor. She usually sells her wares at their normal price, but if the PCs have saved Vanya she gives them a 20% discount. If the characters want to trade in their old weapons and armor for new ones, she buys the equipment at 75% of the listed value.

Narration: As you pack your meager possessions, the chieftain draws you aside and says, "You are fine young warriors, my friends, but I cannot allow you to come on this journey. It is too dangerous, and there is a good chance that none of us will return at all."

He waves aside your objections. "If we fall," he says, "you are Aelfdrap's final hope. If we fail, you must be the bravest of us all. Do whatever you must to protect our little village."

Gain — Shrine to Thor

Before leaving on his mission, Osric visits a nearby shrine to Thor to ask for the thunder god's blessing. The heroes may worship with Osric and gain the benefits of the shrine.



"Village on Fire" Lost Table

POINTS SPENT:

60 Screaming Goblins	120
To Battle!	30
Taking Butchery a Little Too Far	40
Ouch!	20
Flight of Arrows	50
The Burning Smithy	90
Total Spent:	350

POINTS EARNED:

Terrain: Multiple Levels	-10
Terrain: Sloped Terrain	-10
Terrain: Obstructions to Missile Fire	-20

To Battle!	-83
An Important Conversation	-10
Taking Butchery a Little Too Far	-30
Ouch!	-10
Flight of Arrows	-40
The Burning Smithy	-35
Treasure	-46
Bargaining Opportunity	-25
Shrine to Thor	-25
Suspicious Behavior	-5
What the Hel?	-1
Total Earned:	-350



Points Earned: -25 (Shrine to Thor)



Any PC who worships at the shrine gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his first attack roll in the next encounter.

Gain — Suspicious Behavior

Any hero who worships with Osric may notice that Olaf is up to something.



Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10** to overhear the Closer Inspection text below.

Points Earned: -5 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 10)



Any PC who worships at the shrine may make a Listen check (DC 20) to overhear the Close Inspection text below.

Closer Inspection: As you bow your head before the shrine, you hear the chieftain's brother, Olaf, whispering to himself.

"Thy will be done, lady of holly," he mutters. "All will be as you command." You look over to see him staring at the shrine with a crooked smile.

Gain — What the Hel?

The heroes may be able to figure out whom the treacherous Viking was referring to.



Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 14** to remember the Closer Inspection text below.

Points Earned: -1 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 14)



Any PC who overhears Olaf (or is told about the "lady of holly" by another character) may make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) to remember the Closer Inspection text below.

Closer Inspection: The holly is a plant beloved of Hel, goddess of death and the underworld. This cannot be good.

Encounter 2: Casualties of War

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia

Summary: The heroes defeat a goblin sneak attack, but sense that something awful has happened.

EVENT 1: ASSASSINS IN THE MIST

Narration: The next few days are quiet. You go about your business and keep a sharp eye out for marauding goblins. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be a monster within miles of Aelfdrap. How can you prove your valor when there's nothing to prove it against?

After a long day of hunting rabbits and trying to pretend that they're ferocious wyrms, you're ready to turn in for the night. Who's on watch, and who's sleeping in which hut?

Gain — Warm Snuggly Beds

Each of the player characters should choose one of the huts as their home. There's no reason several PCs can't share — each hut will sleep up to four if the residents are willing to snuggle. One or two heroes should be on guard, but how many are on watch and how many are asleep is up to the player characters. Characters on watch may position themselves anywhere in the village.



Any hero who is asleep receives a +3 increase on the Mists of Sleep roll below. Being inside and resting minimizes the effect of the magic that the goblins unleash on the village.

Points Earned: -15 (+3 increase at -5 each)



Any character who is asleep in the huts receives a +2 circumstance bonus to the Fortitude save in the Mists of Sleep trap below.

Trap — Mists of Sleep

Narration: It is the dog hours of the night. It's clear, windless, and cold for the season. If you're on guard, you're probably stamping your feet and blowing on your hands to keep warm.

Then you see something strange. A thick mist flows over the embankment of the village. It reaches you in moments, and it feels like you're wrapped in a reindeer-fur cloak. Your eyes begin to droop.

Those of you in the huts feel the mist tickling your nose, coaxing you deeper into sleep.

 **Standard roll;** roll **Sleep** vs. **Difficulty 12**; heroes who fail suffer **2 points of Impairment** until the end of the combat that follows.

Points Spent: 100 (2 points of Impairment, affecting one combat [30 points], 3 rolls to receive a gain [5 points each], 1 roll to avoid a trap [5 points]); 60 (Difficulty 12)

 Each PC must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or take 1d6+1 points of temporary Dexterity score damage. Temporary ability score damage heals at a rate of one point per day.

Gain — Goblins in the Mists

Narration: There's movement in the mist. A misshapen shadow lopes silently across the path in front of you. You hear a gurgling laugh.

 **Standard roll;** roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6**; heroes who succeed gain +9 INIT in the first combat round.

Points Earned: -15 (+9 INIT at -5 for every +3 INIT)

 Each PC must make a Spot check or a Listen check (DC 20) or be surprised when combat begins. Any PC who worshiped at the shrine of Thor in the previous encounter gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his first attack roll.

Background: The goblins creep over the embankment towards the sleeping huts. They plan to overpower any heroes on guard, then leap into the huts and tear apart the characters sleeping inside. They have no interest in the longhouse (where most of the villagers are sleeping). Noisy oversees the proceedings and helps out wherever he may be needed.



"Casualties of War" Combat Opponents

This table assumes a party of 6 heroes. When adjusting the mix for smaller or larger groups, try to end up with at least one more foe than there are heroes. Noisy should always be among the foes.

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Noisy	Goblin Slayer	1.3	15	Equal	None	Self-Willed
Shrub	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Chain	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Ashes	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Prowl	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Rigg	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Gorge	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable

Points Spent: 15 (Self-willed for Noisy)

Points Earned: -10 (No missile weapons)

Combat Tactics: Most of the goblins have sneaked up to the doors of the huts and leap in to tear apart the Vikings inside. The others fight with the heroes on guard. Noisy oversees the proceedings and helps out where needed. The goblins do not use missile weapons.

The heroes won't learn this until Episode 3, but these goblins were sent by Olaf to wipe out the last possible opposition to his rule.

Terrain — Confusing Mist

The goblins' mists dull the senses and slow reactions. Even the goblins are not immune.

 Both the **heroes** and the **foes** suffer a -3 penalty to **ATK** during **the combat**. Activating the village runestone clears the mists and ends the magic.

Points Earned: -30 (Weird magic, -3 penalty to **ATK** at -10 points each)

 The thick fog obscures all sight (including **Darkvision**) beyond 5 feet. Creatures within 5 feet have one-half concealment (attacks by or against them have a 20% miss chance).

Terrain — Walls and Doors

 The walls and doors of the huts provide **full cover**. The doors of the huts can be opened or closed. Make an **Engagement** roll to open or close a door against another's will.

Points Earned: -36 (Maximum points earned due to many walls and doors)

 The huts have typical wood walls (Break DC 20, Hardness 6, 60 hp) and doors (Break DC 16, Hardness 5, 15 hp). The doors have no locks.

Terrain — Furniture

 The furniture of the huts provides a variety of **barriers**.

Points Earned: -12 (Maximum points earned due to many chairs, tables, and the like)



"Casualties of War" Combat Opponents

NOISY LEADER OF THE ASSASSINS

**Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 3rd-level
Barbarian**

CR 3; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 3d12; 25 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +3 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Barbarian Rage 1/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +5

Feats: Alertness, Dodge

Combat Tactics: Noisy oversees the proceedings and helps out where needed.

GOBLIN ASSASSINS

**Small Goblinoid (Goblin)
1st-level Barbarians**

CR 1; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 1d12; 12 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +1 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Barbarian Rage 1/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fast Movement; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +1, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness

Combat Tactics: There is one goblin assassin for each hero. Most of the goblins have sneaked up to the doors of the huts and leap in to tear apart the Vikings inside. The others fight with the heroes on guard.

 The furnishings in the huts can be used for cover (+2 AC) and as weapons — both uses may be important to PCs caught sleeping in their boxer shorts. Chairs do 1d6 damage and break when used. Tables do 1d8 damage, but all attack rolls with tables are at -2 to hit. Any character standing on a bed or table gains a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls.

Gain — There's a Light

The village runestone has the power to destroy the mists, but the heroes need to figure this out. The stone will begin glowing after two foes have been killed. Any hero who is outside may make a roll to notice the glow.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text below.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 When the stone begins to glow, any hero who is outside may make a Spot roll (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text below.

Closer Inspection: As a goblin falls, a faint glow appears in the middle of the village. The mists grow thinner there, and you can see the hulking outline of

the village runestone. The magic of the stone may be able to remove the mist — if somebody can unlock it!

Gain — By the Power of Odin!

Any hero may place a hand on the runestone and try to activate it. Each attempt requires a combat round of concentration. Any Viking who fails the attempt suffers damage.

 **Singular** roll; **combat action required**, **unlimited extra rolls allowed**, roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10**, if successful all heroes gain **3 points of Invigoration** for the rest of the combat, if failed the hero who failed suffers **Dam rating 30**.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10); 45 (Dam rating 30); 10 (Combat action required)

Points Earned: -105 (3 points of Invigoration, affecting one combat [-30 each], one trap [-5 each]); -20 (Unlimited extra rolls allowed)

 Any player character who touches the runestone may make a Knowledge (arcana) or Use Magic Item check (DC 20) to activate it. If the character is successful, the magic fog is dispelled, ending the obscured vision caused by the fog and instantly healing all the PCs of any Dexterity score damage they suffered from the mist. Any

Flask of Mystic Mist

NEW MAGIC ITEM

When this heavy iron flask is unstopped, a thick fog flows out of it, expanding 20 feet per round to a radius of 200 feet. The cloud persists until it is dispelled or the flask is closed again. The flask may be used once per day.

The fog cloud obscures all sight (including Darkvision) beyond 5 feet. Creatures within 5 feet have one-half concealment (attacks by or against them have a 20% miss chance). It also has a soporific effect. Any creature that comes into con-

tact with the mist must make a Will save (DC 18) or take 1d6+1 temporary Dexterity damage from slowed reactions and fatigue.

The soporific effect only occurs upon initial contact with the mist. Once a creature has been exposed to the mist three separate times, it becomes immune.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, fog cloud, sleep; **Market Price:** 2,000 gp; **Weight:** 2 lbs.

character who fails this check must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or suffer 1d6 electrical damage.

If the heroes successfully ignite the shrine, read the following:

Narration: White light bursts from the stone, shredding the mists. The goblins howl in dismay as your companions draw in deep breaths of clean, refreshing air.

For a moment you bask in the love of the All-Father and the ties that bind you to each and every one of your fellow villagers. Then the light of the runestone flares and goes out.

Trap — Bad Tidings

Just when the heroes think they've got the goblins on the run, a bad portent distracts them and gives the goblins a morale boost. This trap has two possible triggers. It activates when the PCs slay three goblins or activate the runestone — whichever comes first.

Narration: You feel a lurch on your stomach, and a pain in your chest. It is as if somebody reached into your heart, pulled a string taut within it, and cut it with one swift stroke of a knife.

There is a thunderous crack as the top of your village runestone splits in two. As you look towards the runestone in shock, the goblins howl and renew their attack!

 **Weak Link** roll; roll **Quickness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, if failed the goblins gain +9 **INIT** for 2 rounds

Points Spent: 40 (Weak Link roll); 40 (Exotic roll); 30 (+9 **INIT** for 2 rounds at 5 for every +3 **INIT** per round)

 Every player character must make a **Fortitude** save (DC 15). Any character who fails is stunned for 1d4 rounds. Stunned characters receive no **Dexterity** bonus to **AC** and can take no actions. Foes gain a +2 bonus to hit stunned characters.

Gain — What was THAT?

After the fight is over, the characters may try to figure out what happened to their Runestone.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to realize the **Closer Inspection** text below.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, **Difficulty 6**)

 Any PC may make a **Knowledge** (religion) check (DC 12) to realize the **Closer Inspection** text below.

Closer Inspection: A runestone is more than just a symbol of the power of the Aesir. It represents the bonds of loyalty and love between the people of



"Casualties of War" Cost Table

POINTS SPENT:

Mists of Sleep	160
Goblin Assassins: Self-Willed	15
By the Power of Odin!	95
Bad Tidings	110
Total Spent:	380

POINTS EARNED:

Warm Snuggly Beds	-15
Goblins in the Mists	-15
Combat: No Missile Weapons	-10
Terrain: Confusing Mist	-30

Terrain: Walls and Doors	-36
Terrain: Furniture	-12
There's a Light	-10
By the Power of Odin!	-125
What Was THAT?	-10
2 Category D Treasures	-80
9 ounces of silver	-9
Shrine to Odin	-20
Hel Comes to Viking Town	-8
Total Earned:	-380

Aelfdrap. Something terrible must have happened to the chieftain's warriors for those bonds to be broken.

Osric and Olaf and all the others may well be dead — and if they are, you may truly be the village's last hope.

Background: What happened is that while the PCs were fighting their battle with the goblin assassins, Olaf and his cronies betrayed Osric and slew anyone who remained loyal to the chieftain. The evil of Olaf's treachery cracked the runestone.

Gain — Goblin Goodies

 After rifling the goblins' bodies for treasures and small change, the heroes discover two **Category D Treasures** and **9 ounces of silver**.

Points Earned: -80 (2 category D treasures at -40 each); -9 (9 ounces of silver at -1 each)

 When they search the goblins' bodies, the heroes find a total of 300 sp and a *flask of mystic mist*.

Gain — Shrine to Odin

Having been charged with the one-eyed god's mystic energies, the village runestone has shifted from being a shrine to Thor to being a shrine to Odin. The influence of Hel is growing within it, however — see below for more information.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Shrine to Odin)

 Any character who worships at the shrine to Odin for five minutes may receive the benefit of either a *cure moderate wounds* or a *divination* spell (his choice) as cast by a 20th-level caster. Each character may receive this benefit once per day.

Gain — Hel Comes to Viking Town

Any character who worships at the runestone may sense the growing corruption within it.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll Divine Awareness vs. Difficulty 8** to notice the Closer Inspection text below.

Points Earned: -8 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 8)

 Any character worshipping at the shrine may make a Wisdom check (DC 15) to notice the Closer Inspection text below.

Closer Inspection: The runestone looks darker, its edges a little jagged. You bow your head before it, but Odin feels far away. You hear a faint laughter in the back of your mind — a voice that is feminine ... evil ... dead.

Something is rotten in Aelfdrap.

Encounter 3: Many Unhappy Returns

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia

Summary: What's left of the war party returns, and the heroes encounter a ghost.

EVENT 1: DIVINE GUIDANCE

Narration: There's been no word from Chieftain Osric's war party. The more days go by, the more likely it seems that they have met a terrible fate.

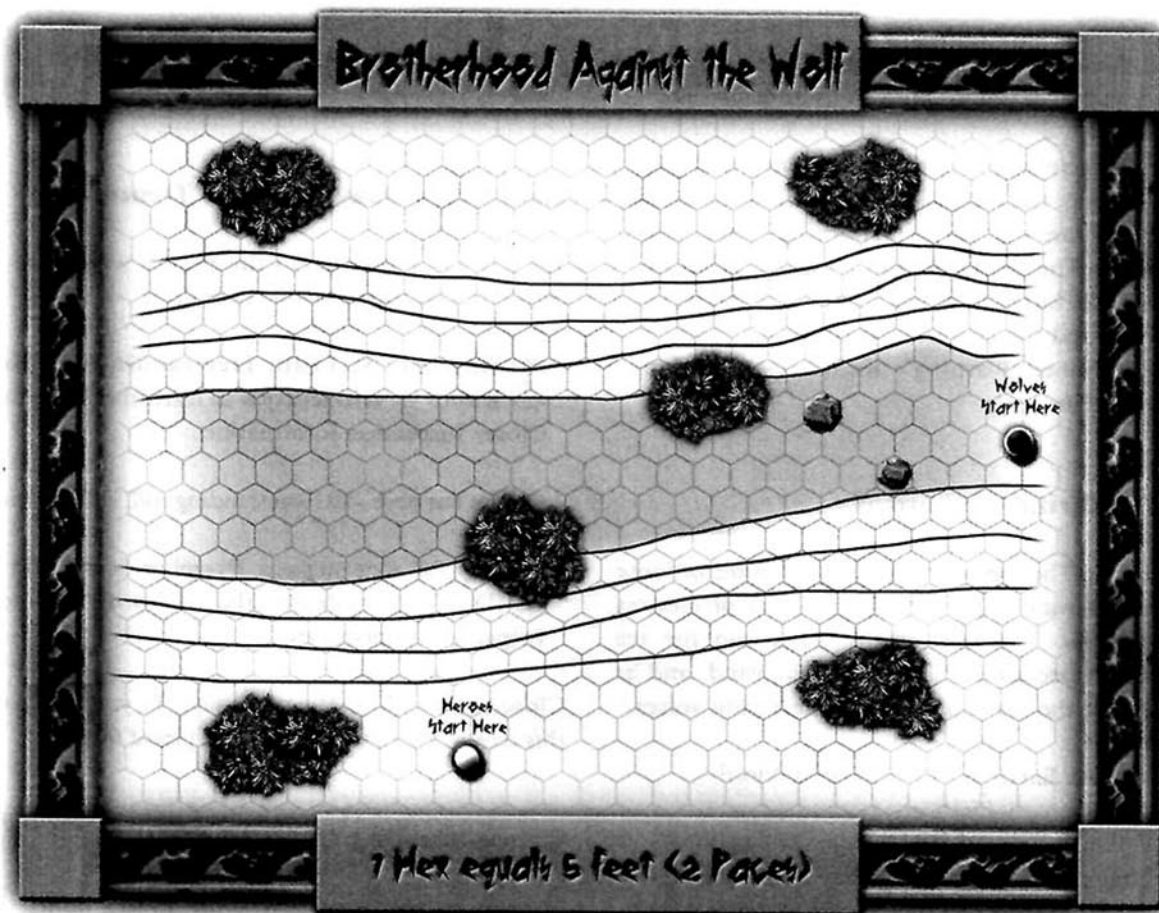
All's quiet in the village. You're still making regular patrols of the valley, but haven't encountered anything more dangerous than stray goats and deer. You have plenty of time to wonder what's happened to the war party and to ask yourselves what you'll do if they do not return.

The village runestone has been no help. Since the goblin attack, the stone has grown cold and unresponsive. No Aesir has answered your invocations for days.

Gain — Another Option

One of the characters may remember that a hermit built a shrine to Njord up in the hills.

 **Singular: No-Fault roll; roll Skald vs. Difficulty 8**, if successful the heroes receive the Closer Inspection information below and a +4 increase to the Divine Awareness roll below. This Skald roll is based on Intelligence.



Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8)

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase at -5 each); -15 (No-fault roll)

Any PC may make a Knowledge (history or local) or Gather Information check (DC 15) to remember or learn the Closer Inspection information below. If any character succeeds, the entire party receives a +2 circumstance bonus to the Knowledge (religion) check below.

Closer Inspection: Many years ago, an old hermit named Tor built a tower to Njord in the hills. It is said that anyone who climbs the tower bearing sea holly and bladderwrack can listen to the winds and learn what they have seen in their passing. Fortunately, there's plenty of both growing on the rocky beaches near the village.

Narration: Your next patrol is in the hills to the north of Aelfdrap. It rained the previous night, and as you walk through the woods cold water drips off the branches and trickles down the back of your neck. The cloud cover breaks around mid-morning, and a shaft of light illuminates a ruined stone structure on a nearby hill.

Closer Inspection: As you draw closer, you remember that this is Tor's Tower, built by a pious hermit to commune with Njord and watch the distant sea. You can probably get a great view from the top, but the slick, sharp stones will make for a perilous climb.

Trap — Up the Tower

Any character who wishes to commune with Njord must climb the tower.

 **Singular roll, conditional (remains in effect);** roll **Climb** vs. **Difficulty 8**, failed heroes suffer **falling damage**, **Dam rating 25/30 (26–30 feet)**.

Points Spent: 52 (26–30 foot fall); 20 (Difficulty 8)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, don't risk your neck climbing the tower)

 The tower is 30 feet tall, and slippery but with adequate handholds. Getting to the top requires a **Climb** check (DC 25), but smart planning and good equipment can make the climb easier.

Any character who gets to the top can throw a rope down, reducing the DC of the other characters'

skill checks to 5. This earns the other characters easy experience points, but counts as teamwork.

The characters can wait for the stones to dry in the sun, but the wind dies down while they do so and they lose the "Advance Warning" opportunity below. The characters can also take 10 on the Climb roll, but there is less wind when they reach the top, and the characters suffer a -2 penalty to the "Advance Warning" Knowledge (religion) check below.

Gain — Shrine to Njord

Narration: The top of the tower is a jumble of loose stones and wind-worn rock, with plenty of crevices and crannies. The view of the valley and the sea beyond is spectacular. There's a light wind, and as you gaze at the sea you think you hear faint voices.

 **Points Earned: -15** (Shrine to Njord)

 Any character who worships at the shrine to Njord may receive the benefit of either a *cat's grace* or a *divination* spell (his choice) as cast by a 20th-level caster. Each character may receive this benefit once per day.

Gain — In Cache of Need

Any character who searches the shrine finds a stone with runes engraved upon it.

 Underneath the stone is **5 ounces of silver** and a **Category D treasure**.

Points Earned: -40 (Category D treasure); -5 (5 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 Underneath the stone is a *wind whistle*.

Gain — It's Okay, Take the Treasure

Tor has left a message to the person who finds his cache. It's eroded but still readable.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Runes** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the following Closer Inspection information.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any PC may make a Decipher Script check (DC 15) to learn the following Closer Inspection information.

Closer Inspection: The runes say, "To you who come this day: if you have need of this, please take it."

Gain — Healing Opportunity

The heroes may rest and heal for up to 3 hours.

 **Points Earned: -10** (Healing opportunity, 3 hours)

Gain — Advance Warning

Any character who listens to the winds has a chance to learn what has become of the war party.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10** to learn the following Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -5 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 10)

Wind Whistle

NEW MAGIC ITEM

This intricately carved whalebone flute allows its user to cast *wind wall* as a divine spell twice per day. The user must play the pipe for one round to activate the spell,

and her alignment must be neutral good, chaotic good, or chaotic neutral.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *wind wall*; **Market Price:** 3,000 gp; **Weight:** —

 Any PC may make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) to learn the following Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: You make your offerings to Njord, stare at the sea, and listen to the wind. The voices become clearer.

You hear battle cries, and the clatter of steel. Your chieftain's voice asks, "Olaf?" A grunt of pain. Silence, and then a thin voice whispers, "Trust the unquiet spirit."

You hear the clop of horse hooves, and the low growl of a wolf. There are shouts, but not enough of them, and familiar voices spur their horses to flight. You suddenly know that what's left of the war party is not far away — and that they desperately need your help!

EVENT 2: BROTHERHOOD AGAINST THE WOLF

Narration: Thunder rumbles in the distance. As you look over at the black clouds gathering on the horizon, you see movement in the trees a couple of miles away. You count one ... two ... six familiar-looking horses and riders moving down a hill at a breakneck pace!

Gain — A Closer Look

Any character may try to learn more about the riders.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to see the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any PC may make a Spot check (DC 12) to see the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: Yes, that's the war party — but so few of them! Over two dozen warriors rode out, but only six return. You see Olaf, Brunli, and Hallr in the lead, but cannot identify the others. The Vikings you can see are dirty, ragged, battered. They look like they've been fleeing for days!

They glance back fearfully over their shoulders as they ride, and as you watch you catch glimpses of what has broken their courage. Dark gray shapes flicker through the woods — dire wolves!

If they continue on their path, the war party is going to lead those wolves right into the middle of Aelfdrap. But they're obviously in no shape to turn and fight.

Cold wind tickles the back of your neck, and you hear your chieftain's voice: "If we fail, you must be the bravest of us all."

Narration: You clamber down the tower and run to intercept the riders. There's a gully ahead that they're sure to pass through — it's the perfect spot to ambush the pursuing beasts. The question is, can you make it in time?

Gain — Ambush Opportunity

 **Weak Link** roll; roll **Sprint** vs. **Difficulty 9** to gain an **ambush opportunity** in the combat that follows. This skill roll uses Sprint instead of the more usual Stealth. The characters are racing to the best fighting position instead of trying to conceal themselves.

Dire Wolves

NEW FOE



Dire wolves are shaggy gray beasts out of a Viking's worst nightmare. They stand five feet high at the shoulder, are nearly eight feet long from nose to tail, and weigh 700 pounds. They run in pairs, or

in packs of five to eight beasts, and are always hungry.

Max Threat: Superior

Benchmark: 7

Adjusts: +6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res

Move: 30

Mix: +0.4

Points Spent: 40 (Weak link roll); 30 (Difficulty 9)

Points Earned: -50 (Ambush opportunity)

Each character who succeeds at a Constitution check (DC 15) may sprint ahead to act in a surprise round against the dire wolves in the combat that follows. This check is modified normally by armor check penalties, encumbrance penalties, and the Endurance feat.

Narration: You arrive at the gully just in time to see the riders gallop through it. A couple of them look over at you and give you an exhausted wave; Brunli begins to pull her horse around to help you fight, but Olaf shakes his head and orders her to keep riding. A moment later, they disappear around a bend in the gully towards the village.

You look north and see the wolves streaking down the gully after the horses. Their massive legs cover yards of ground with every step, and their tongues hang out in anticipation. You're in position and ready to attack!

There are half as many dire wolves as player characters, and they use the standard D20 System stats for dire wolves.

Terrain — Sloped Terrain

The sides of the gully provide sloped terrain in two-thirds of the combat area.

Points Earned: -20 (Sloped 2/3 of area)

Any character who is hit while standing on sloped terrain must make a Balance check (DC 10 + the damage dealt). If the check is failed, the character slides down the slope and lands prone at the bottom of the terrain. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.

Terrain — Multiple Levels

The bottom of the gully provides an extra level.

Points Earned: -5 (One extra level)



"Many Unhappy Returns" Combat Opponents

This table assumes a party of 6 heroes. There should be one wolf for each hero.

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Growl	Dire Wolf	1.0	30	Inferior	+6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res	Predictable
Yelp	Dire Wolf	1.0	30	Inferior	+6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res	Predictable
Yowl	Dire Wolf	1.0	30	Inferior	+6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res	Predictable
Howl	Dire Wolf	1.0	30	Inferior	+6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res	Predictable
Snap	Dire Wolf	1.0	30	Inferior	+6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res	Predictable
Yipe	Dire Wolf	1.0	30	Inferior	+6 INIT, +3 DAM, +3 Res	Predictable

Points Spent: 0

Combat Tactics: Most of the wolves begin the combat running down the gully. One wolf guards the flanks on each side of the gully. Once combat begins, the wolves break off their pursuit of the riders and attack the party. They use their speed to run past the heroes, slashing with their teeth and claws as they go by.

Terrain — Cover

Six large bushes scattered around the combat area provide half cover.

 **Points Earned:** -36 (6 items providing half cover at -6 each)

 One-half cover provides a +4 bonus to AC and a +2 bonus to Reflex saves.

Trap — Collapsing Slope

The sides of the gully are unstable.

 The first time that a hero standing on one side of the gully hits a foe for 10 or more points of damage, that side of the gully collapses. Every hero on that side of the gully or at its bottom risks being buried under the falling earth. (Thanks to their speed and strength, the wolves easily avoid this trap.)

Standard roll, conditional, first exposure only; roll **Balance** or **Dodge** or **Sprint** vs. **Difficulty 10**, heroes who fail are immobilized by a **grabber trap** made up of the loose earth they're buried in. This trap has a **positional modifier**; the zone at the bottom of the gully imposes a +2 increase to the Difficulty of the roll, while the zone running halfway up the gully imposes a +1 increase to the Difficulty of the roll.

Any hero trying to escape the grabber trap must spend an action and roll **Climb** vs. **Difficulty 8** to get out. (No climbing equipment is required.) Another hero may spend the action and make the roll for a trapped character. A grabber trap prevents the hero from moving or making Engagement rolls as well as imposing a -3 modifier to both ATK and DEF.

Points Spent: 60 (Grabber trap, Difficulty 8 to escape); 40 (Difficulty 10), 10 (Positional modifier, +2 maximum increase at -5 points each)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditional, don't be at the bottom of the gully or on the side that's collapsing); -20 (2 alternate methods to avoid); -5 (First exposure only)

Gain — For the Strong of Stomach

Any hero bloody-minded enough to cut the wolves open and look for treasure finds a mostly digested hand in one wolf's belly.

 The hand clutches the tattered remains of a purse with **9 ounces of silver** and a **Category C treasure**.

Points Earned: -30 (Category C treasure); -9 (9 oz. of silver at -1 each)

Collapsing Slope (CR 2)

NEW TRAP

This trap is triggered the first time a PC standing on either side of the gully hits a foe for 8 or more points of slashing or crushing damage. When this happens, the slope the character is standing on collapses from the force of the mighty blow. This trap only happens once (the other slope remains stable).

Any PC or NPC on that slope or at the bottom of the gully must make a Reflex save (DC 15). Characters with 4 or more ranks in either Balance or Tumble receive a +2 bonus to the save.

Characters at the bottom of the gully receive a -2 penalty to the save.

Any character who fails the save is swept to the bottom of the gully and buried in earth. The character is not pinned — the dirt is too loose — but is entangled until she can make a Climb check or Escape Artist check (DC 16) to escape. Entangled characters suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -4 penalty to effective Dexterity.

No. attack roll necessary (character is entangled); Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid; Climb or Escape Artist check (DC 16) to escape entanglement

 The hand clutches 30 gold pieces and a *ring of protection* +1.

Gain — Healing Opportunity

The heroes may rest and heal for up to one hour before making their way back to the village.

 **Points Earned:** -5 (Healing opportunity, 1 hour)

EVENT 3: OLD AND NEW CHIEFTAINS

Narration: You return to Aelfdrap to find a crowd gathered in the village square. The other villagers are helping Olaf and the rest of the war party off their horses. They're removing gear, accepting food, washing days of sweat and dirt off their faces with buckets from the well.

Olaf addresses the crowd. "I bear heavy tidings," he says. "Our attack upon the goblins has failed. We fought mightily, and slew many, but their numbers were too great. They would have overwhelmed us but for my brother, your chieftain."

"I was ready to fight and die by his side, but he pushed me away and turned to face the hordes alone. 'Go,' he said, 'go and prepare our village to fight another day. You are their leader now.' He bought all of our lives with his sacrifice."

Olaf pauses, wipes sweat from his brow, and continues. "You know the strength of my arm, the sharpness of my sword. I am but half the man my brother was, but I hold my share of honor."

He places his hand on the village runestone. "By the gods we follow, will you have me as your new chieftain?"

There is a shout of agreement from the crowd, and a bright green light bursts from the stone. Olaf looks over at it and says, "Our protectors confirm your choice. Let us go to the longhouse and feast, and take counsel on what to do next."

Gain — The Man Behind the Curtain

Insightful members of the party may notice a few things amiss in this uplifting scene.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Insight** vs. **Difficulty 6** to see notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any PC may make a Sense Motive check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: That was a stirring speech, but it felt calculated to you. Olaf seemed to know the runestone would light up when it did. The runestone has never glowed green before, either.

There's another false note. Most of the people with Olaf cheered enthusiastically in all the right places. They almost seemed to be leading the crowd into its approval. However, one of the warriors didn't look so happy. Brunli and Olaf have been in and out of love for years. She should be his greatest supporter, so why does she look like she just drank sour wine?

Narration: As the villagers enter the longhouse, Brunli falls behind the crowd. She glances in your direction, looks over at the runestone, and then ambles just a little too casually out of sight behind Helga's rebuilt smithy. What do you do?

Flag — Brunli's Story

If the heroes follow Brunli, she tells them what she saw at the goblins' lair — until she's interrupted by a terrifying ghost.

Closer Inspection: When you round the corner of the smithy, Brunli is waiting for you. "Be quiet," she says. "We cannot afford to be seen."

"All is not as Olaf says," she explains. "There were many goblins, but we were fighting well and cleaving many skulls. Olaf and Osric were fighting side by side at the front. Olaf had sent me and the other warriors who returned to act as the rearguard."

"Something happened between Olaf and Osric. I don't know what ... I don't *want* to know what it was ... he told us that Osric had fallen and the goblins had taken his body."

Suddenly her eyes grow wide. "It's ... it's him!" Her face pales, her voice rises into a shriek, and she collapses. As you wheel around to see what she was staring at, you see — a few feet above the ground, glowing with a pearl-white light — your dead chieftain, Osric.

 Any hero who hears Brunli's story and sees the ghost gains a **Flag** that gives a +2 increase to the "Explain Yourselves" Skald roll made before the Viking Thing in Episode 4.

Points Earned: -5 (Flag: +2 increase at -5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use)

 Any PC who speaks with Brunli and sees the ghost receives a +2 circumstance bonus to his "Explain Yourselves" Diplomacy check when facing the Viking Thing in Episode 4.

Trap — A Terrifying Apparition

Any hero who sees Osric's ghost must make a Bravery roll or risk collapsing from fright.

 **Standard roll, conditional, first exposure only;** roll **Bravery** vs. **Difficulty 10**, failed heroes suffer **7 dice of armor-ignoring random damage**

Points Spent: 43 (Random damage, 7 dice); 40 (Difficulty 10); 10 (Ignores armor)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditional, don't go talk to Brunli); -5 (First exposure only)

 Any character who sees Osric must make a Will save (DC 15) or flee in panic.

Narration: Osric's thin ghost hangs before you, a deep wound bleeding endlessly in his side. His eyes roll in their sockets, and you can feel his cold rage in your bones.

The chieftain lets out a mighty groan, but the sound comes to you like a far-away whisper. "Murdered!" he cries. "Betrayed! Olaf turned on me, struck me down, dealt death to my best warriors!"

He stretches his pale arms out to you. "Avenge me and your kinsmen! Save our village from Olaf, and bring him to justice!"

There is a flash of green light from the other side of the smithy, and Osric's shade is shredded as if by a thousand claws. As he disappears, he cries out again, "Justice!"

A moment later, Olaf and a couple of other warriors round the corner. He looks at you, the quivering form of Brunli, and the empty space where the ghost was standing.

"What happened?" he asks. What do you tell him?

Background: The player characters are in a quandary here. They *could* accuse Olaf of murder, but their evidence is the testimony of a ghost and a catatonic woman. Olaf won't even bother to argue the possibility with them.



"Many Unhappy Returns" Cost Table

POINTS SPENT

Gain: Another Option	20
Trap: Up the Tower	72
Gain: Ambush Opportunity	70
Trap: Collapsing Slope	110
Trap: A Terrifying Apparition	93
Trap: Lying to Olaf	35
Total Spent:	400

POINTS EARNED:

Gain: Another Option	-35
Trap: Up the Tower	-20
Shrine to Njord	-15
Treasure: Category D Treasure	-40
Treasure: 5 ounces of silver	-5
Gain: It's Okay, Take the Treasure	-10

Gain: Healing Opportunity	-10
Gain: Advance Warning	-5
Gain: A Closer Look	-10
Gain: Ambush Opportunity	-50
Terrain: Sloped Terrain	-20
Terrain: Multiple Levels	-5
Terrain: Cover	-36
Trap: Collapsing Slope	-45
Treasure: Category C Treasure	-30
Treasure: 9 ounces of silver	-9
Gain: Healing Opportunity	-5
Gain: the Man Behind the Curtain:	-10
Flag: Brunli's Story	-5
Trap: A Terrifying Apparition	-25
Trap: Lying to Olaf	-10
Total Earned:	-400

Some players may want to attack Olaf. The power of linear gaming makes this impossible in **Rune**, so there's no problem there.

D20 System players *can* attack Olaf. If they do, use his game statistics from Episode 4. After he's mopped the floor with them, he'll step over their unconscious bodies and continue the scene as if nothing happened.

Trap — Lying to Olaf

The heroes' best bet is to put Olaf off for now with a soothing lie. That may be difficult — he's an accomplished liar himself and nobody's fool.

 **Singular:** **Dogpile** roll, **Lady or Tiger**; roll **Deception** vs. **Difficulty 8**, if any hero fails the roll the entire party gains a **Flag** giving them a -4 **penalty** to the "Sorry, I've Got Other Plans" Bargain roll in Episode 2, if all heroes succeed the entire party gains a **Flag** giving them a +2 **increase** to the "Sorry, I've Got Other Plans" Bargain roll in Episode 2.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 10 (Flag: -4 penalty at 5 each, split 10/10 between assignment and use); 5 (Flag affects entire party)

Points Earned: -5 (+2 increase at 5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

 Any character who wishes to try to deceive Olaf must make a **Bluff** check (DC 18). If every character succeeds at the check, the entire party receives a +2 circumstance bonus to the "Sorry, I've Got Other Plans" Diplomacy check in Episode 2. If any character attempts the check and fails, however, the characters receive a -2 penalty in that Diplomacy check.

The characters can avoid this check by telling Olaf the truth. It's up to the characters how offensive they want that truth to be. Olaf will ignore even an outright accusation of murder — he knows the characters have no evidence yet — but the characters suffer a -4 penalty to the "Sorry, I've Got Other Plans" Diplomacy check if they do this.

Narration: Olaf grunts. "Gather her up and bring her to the longhouse," he says. "You don't want to miss my first feast as chieftain of this village." With that, he turns on his heel and walks away.

EPISODE 2 THE SEARCH BEGINS

In which changes come to the village, and the heroes go in search of Osric's body.

Encounter 1: Red Wolves

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia

Summary: New faces appear in the village as Olaf prepares to attend the Viking Thing. The new chieftain has plans for our heroes, though.

EVENT 1: OLAF'S NEW PLANS

Narration: A week goes by, and the shock of the failed mission sinks into the village. Everyone goes about their tasks as if they were sleepwalking.

Brunli remains catatonic. She lies in her hut staring into space, muttering to herself. Her long hair has turned snow-white.

Olaf doesn't like the mood. After a few days of glowering, he goes from hut to hut giving the other villagers orders. A semblance of industrious normality returns — smoke rises from the forge, and hammering sounds echo from the shores of the fjord.

You have spent the last few days keeping your mouths shut and your eyes open. There have been no opportunities to find out more about what happened at the goblin caves, but your instincts tell you that the time for action is drawing near.

Gain — Talk to the Blacksmith

If the heroes visit Helga the Blacksmith, they may learn some useful information.

 **Singular:** **No-Fault**, **Freestanding** roll; roll **Demeanor** vs. **Difficulty 6** to discover the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)



Any PC may make a Gather Information check (DC 12) to discover the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: You drop by Helga's smithy with a pail of cold river water just at the time of day when she likes to take her break. She smiles when she sees you, puts her hammer down, and plunges her head into the pail.

After staying under for an alarming period of time, she pulls her head out and shakes it vigorously. "Thanks," she says. "I needed that."

"Olaf's got me making the strangest weapons," she says, pointing at a row of miniature black maces. "Even with those nasty flanges and spikes they wouldn't do much harm to a goblin's head. I can't think what he wants them for."

She picks up one of the maces and twirls it meditatively between her fingers. "At least they're quick to make," she says.

Gain — Talk to the Shipwright

The hammering noises on the shore may also lead to some information.

Narration: You walk down the shore to see Svein the Shipwright working on the village's largest longship. He hails you and shouts, "Here there! Give me a hand with this spar!"

Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Seamanship** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the Closer Inspection information.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

Any PC may make a Craft check (DC 12) to learn the Closer Inspection information.

Closer Inspection: You give Svein a hand and chat as the work moves along.

"Olaf's got me hopping," he says, "there's no denying that. Wants the biggest longship fitted with a dragon prow and wants it tomorrow too. Can't imagine what he wants to do with it — it's not the proper season for viking, not with the Thing coming up next month and all."

He gives you a grin as he hammers at a plank. "You younglings have never been to the Thing, have you? It's a grand occasion, the biggest gathering in Scandinavia. All the villages send their greatest warriors, and they stand and speak and debate the laws of our people all day for a week. Then at night there's feasting, and trading, and you can find the best weapons and tools and maybe the love of your life to boot."

"Of course," he says with a gap-toothed smile, "sometimes it's more fun to find your love of this week!"

Narration: As you walk through the village, you see some new arrivals. Six big Vikings are climbing off horses and throwing their packs to the ground. They have ugly faces, with bristly black hair sprouting from their scalps, their chins, and more often than not their ears. They look more like trolls than men.

One of the new Vikings looks around and rubs his hands. "Oy!" he shouts. "Where can a man get a half-decent mug of mead in this flea-bitten town?"

Background: These Vikings are the first of a small army of dark Vikings who have come to serve Olaf. For the moment, however, they're keeping quiet about the whole dark Viking thing.

Trap — Wrestling Match

If any of the heroes assert themselves in front of the newcomers, the one who shouted for mead takes offense. The hero or heroes who offended him can either wrestle him or try to talk their way out of the situation.

Narration: The Viking turns and glares at you. "Who are you, you simpering elf? No matter — I am Bolgar, and I'll teach you to fear my name!"

He drops into a wrestling stance with surprising grace for a man of his bulk. "Who among you thinks he's tough enough to take me? I'll take you all on if you like!" He roars with laughter and even from six paces away his breath smells like a three-day-dead seal.

 **Standard roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only);** roll **Brawling** or **Demeanor** vs. **Difficulty 9**, heroes who fail suffer **Dam rating 15** and **lose 15 victory points** from being embarrassed before the tribe.

Points Spent: 30 (Combo trap); 30 (Difficulty 9); 15 (Dam rating 15); 15 (Loss of status)

Points Earned: -10 (Alternate method); -10 (Conditionally avoidable: don't annoy Bolgar); -5 (First exposure only)

 This challenge is best resolved as a short unarmed combat. Because there is less risk than usual in the confrontation, treat this challenge as if it were CR 1. Olaf stops the fight when either fighter falls below 10 hit points.

Bolgar does not use his *medallion of Hel* in this fight.

Narration: "Enough!"

Olaf walks through the crowd that has gathered. "I am disappointed by this foolish scuffling," he says. "These are our new allies against the goblins, and the safety of our village rests with them."

He turns to address the crowd. "I have made a decision!" he says. "I have recruited fine warriors like Bolgar to aid our village, but even they are not enough to win this war. I have decided to go to the Thing, seek council with our fellow Vikings, and return with enough warriors to end the goblin menace forever!"

After pausing for the cheers to subside, Olaf continues:

"Bolgar and his men will guard the frontiers of the village from the goblins. As for you," he says, looking in your direction, "I will need your swords and your voices at the Thing. Pack your bedrolls and be ready to leave with the morning mists."

Background: Olaf is indeed going to the Thing, but not to seek counsel. He plans to slay the leaders of the Vikings as a service to Hel. He also has no intention of taking the PCs with him, and is arranging a watery ending for them.

Trap — Sorry, I've Got Other Plans

There are several reasons the heroes might not want to go on this trip. They may want to keep an eye on the village or investigate what really happened at the goblin caves. If the heroes can persuade Olaf to let them stay, they avoid the drowning trap that follows. If they fail (or don't try), they end up swimming for their lives.

Olaf is already suspicious of the heroes, and will be even harder to persuade if he knows the PCs suspect him of murder.

If the heroes succeed, read the Closer Inspection text below:

 **Singular: Dogpile roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only);** roll **Bargain** vs. **Difficulty 9**, failure leads to "That Sinking Sensation" trap that follows, success reads Closer Inspection below then skip to Event 3. **Flags:** the party has either a -4 **penalty** or a +2 **increase** to the roll, depending on whether they failed or succeeded at deceiving Olaf in the "Lying to Olaf" trap in Episode 1.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); 10 (Failure leads to trap); 10 (Flag: -4 penalty at 5 each, split 10/10 between assignment and use); 5 (Flag affects entire party)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable: go along with Olaf's plans); -5 (First exposure only); -5 (Flag: +2 increase at 5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

 Any of the characters may make a Diplomacy check (DC 18) to convince Olaf to let them stay. If all the characters who attempt the check

succeed, read the Closer Inspection text below then skip to Event 3. The characters receive a +2 circumstance bonus to this check if they successfully deceived Olaf in the "Lying to Olaf" trap in Episode 1. They take a -2 circumstance penalty to this check if they failed before, or a -4 circumstance penalty if they accused Olaf of murder in the "Lying to Olaf" trap.

Closer Inspection: Olaf listens intently to you, then shrugs. "Fine," he says. "I'm sure Bolgar will know what to do with you in my absence."

EVENT 2: A THREE-HOUR TOUR

Narration: Olaf's party leaves shortly after dawn the next day. More mercenaries have arrived in the night, and the longship is full of burly Vikings and their gear.

The villagers come down to the water to see the expedition off, but it's a quiet leave-taking. Bolgar and his fellows hoot and holler and wave their weapons, but the only other noises are the dripping of water off the oars and the cawing of a raven. As the last of the morning mists burn off, the longship rounds the headland and makes its way into the open sea.

Trap — That Sinking Sensation

If the heroes go along with Olaf, he tries to get rid of them once the longship is a few hours away from the village. The heroes can't avoid being thrown into the water, so their survival depends on their ability to swim to shore.

Narration: It's crowded aboard the ship. Each of you is seated between two large Vikings, which at least makes the rowing a little easier.

Olaf is cheerful, whistling and singing bawdy songs to encourage the men, who join in enthusiastically on the choruses. After a few hours, though, he pauses and puts his hand to his brow as if in thought.

"This boat is too heavy!" he declares. "Men! Lighten the load!"

Gigantic grins split the faces of the Vikings around you, and they seize you with their meaty hands. They pull you out of your seats and heave you over the side of the boat!

 D20 System players may want to fight back. They're welcome to do so, and may kill off a dark Viking or two. However, the tight quarters and force of numbers should quickly overwhelm them.

There are 24 dark Vikings on board (use the game statistics for dark Vikings below in Event 3), including Olaf. The PCs are scattered about the boat, with each character sitting on a rowing bench flanked by two dark Vikings and surrounded by others. None of the characters have any reason to have weapons out, and each PC must make a Sense Motive check (DC 18) to avoid being surprised for the first round of combat.

The dark Vikings aren't trying to directly kill the PCs. They use grapple attacks and aid another actions to grab and pin the PCs. Any PC who gets pinned is thrown into the water (and out of the combat) at the end of the round.

Olaf will defend himself but avoid unnecessary fighting or spellcasting. His game statistics are given on pages 107 and 108.

The boat pulls away as you struggle in the water, and you hear Olaf's mocking laugh. He shouts, "So long, fools! When you give your bones to the fishes, give them my regards as well!"

 **Standard roll:** roll **Swimming** vs. **Difficulty 7**, heroes who fail suffer **6 points of armor-ignoring escalating damage** from drowning until rescued.

Points Spent: 60 (Drowning trap, choppy water [30] with mild current [30])

 Every PC must make a Swim check (DC 15). Any character who fails suffers 1d6 damage from cold and exhaustion before arriving safely on shore.

Narration: You pull yourself ashore and lie gasping on a rocky beach. As you recover your strength, questions tug at your mind. What does Olaf want? What does he plan to do at the Thing? What really happened between him and Osric?

Looking around, you realize that this beach is not that far from the goblin caves. Perhaps you can find some answers there ...

Gain — Healing Opportunity

The PCs may rest as long as they want before continuing their adventures.

 **Points Earned:** -30 (Healing opportunity, unlimited)

EVENT 3: BUSHWACKED BY BOLGAR

Read the narration below if the heroes remained behind instead of joining Olaf. You can also use this narration if the heroes return to the village after being thrown off the boat, otherwise skip ahead to the next gain.

Narration: The village remains quiet after Olaf's departure. There is a sense of resigned waiting in the air.

A few hours later, Bolgar sees you in the village square. He swaggers towards you and says, "If you're going to stick around here, you had better make yourself useful. Go patrol the woods for goblins to

the south of the village. I don't want to see you back here before sundown."

Gain — Following Instructions is for the Weak!

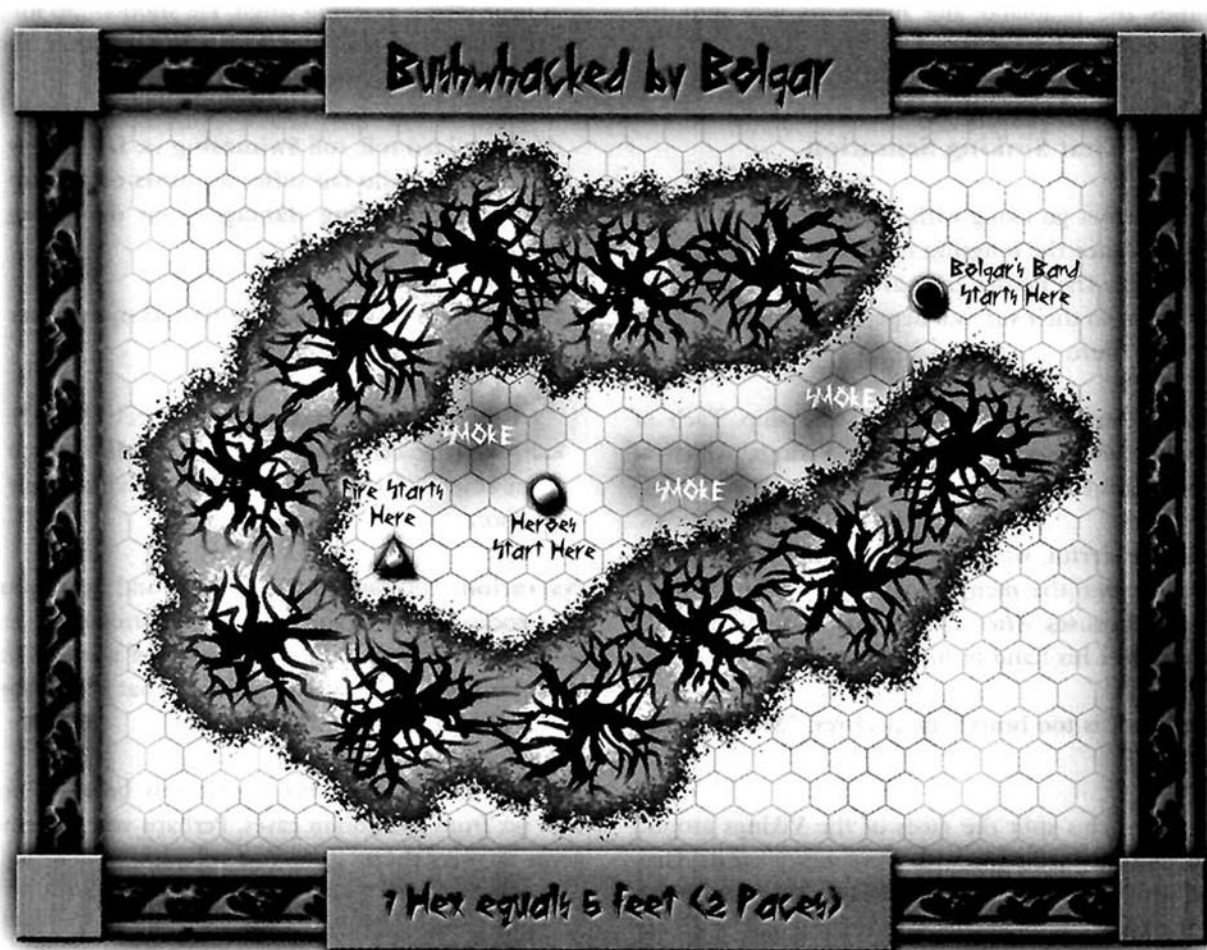
Even not-so-bright Vikings can figure out that this is a trap waiting to happen.

 The heroes receive a +3 increase to the Awareness roll to avoid the ambush Bolgar has planned if they pretend to follow his instructions but take precautions.

Points Earned: -15 (+3 increase to the Awareness roll below)

 D20 System players who take precautions gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the "Bolgar's Ambush" Spot check below.

Precautions include going in a different direction, watching for traps and ambushes, or anything else the players think of.



The players also receive this bonus if they go with Olaf but are thrown off the boat. In this version of events, Bolgar discovers them and sets up the ambush, but is not as well prepared.

Finally, the heroes may confront Bolgar and have the big fight with him right there in the village. If this happens, use the village map from Episode 1 to stage the fight and skip the ambush. The ambush still happens (Bolgar's men are hidden behind various buildings on the map), but the heroes receive the bonus to avoid it.

Trap — Bolgar's Ambush

While the heroes are in the woods, Bolgar stalks them and prepares an ambush for them.

 **Weak Link** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10**, if any hero fails the party suffers the effects of an **ambush**.

Points Spent: 50 (Ambush opportunity); 40 (Difficulty 10)

 Each PC must make a Spot check (DC 18) or be surprised for one round when combat begins.

Narration: The woods are dark underneath the overcast sky, and you must pick your way carefully among the roots and branches. Avoiding the trips and snags

keeps you busy, and you don't notice the rumbling in the distance until it's almost too late.

Green lightning splits the sky, and the blast of thunder almost knocks you to your knees. The lightning strikes just behind you, and a pine tree explodes in green fire. Then the trees on either side of it catch, and you realize this is no ordinary flame.

Tree after tree ignites, and within moments you're surrounded by a ring of fire. Only one small passage lies open at the far end, and shadowy figures are moving through it. Bolgar and his men walk into the ring, smiling, with axes held high.

"Now," Bolgar says, "we kill you!"

 Bolgar's statistics are below. The other enemy Vikings use the dark Vikings statistics below. Bolgar does use the *medallion of Hel* in this fight.

Terrain — Limited Exits

The ring of fire is too hot to pass through. The only way out is through the small open area at the far end.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Limited exits)

 The ring of fire is equivalent to a *wall of fire* cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. It is 20 feet high, and does 2d6+20 points of fire damage to any

"Red Wolves" Combat Opponents

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Bolgar	Dark Viking	1.3	15	Equal	None	Self-Willed
Thorgrim	Dark Viking	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable
Ingunn	Dark Viking	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable
Ottar	Dark Viking	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable

Points Spent: 15 (Self-willed)

Points Earned: -10 (No missile weapons)

Combat Tactics: Bolgar and his men do their best to stay between the heroes and the exit. They fight aggressively but take advantage of any opportunity to slow the heroes down or knock them into the fire. They are armed only with axes, so they do not use missile weapons.

creature passing through it. Any creature within 10 feet of the inner side of the wall takes 2d4 points of fire damage per round. Any creature between 10 and 20 feet of the wall takes 1d4 points of fire damage per round. If any 5-foot length of fire wall takes 20 points of cold damage or more in 1 round, that length goes out.

Terrain — Damaging Place

An eldritch breeze spreads the fire from one side of the ring towards the other. This fire is less intense than the ring itself, but is still dangerous.

 This **damaging place** has **Dam rating 25**. (It doesn't spread outside the ring.)

Points Earned: -30 (Damaging place, Dam rating 25); -20 (Expands to adjacent hexes, each hex is 2 paces across)

 Any character within the area of fire must make a Reflex save (DC 15) every round to avoid catching on fire. Any character who catches on fire takes 1d6 damage per round. The character may make a Reflex save (DC 15) each round to put the fire out. Rolling on the ground or smothering the fire with cloaks gives the character a +4 bonus to the save.

Each round, the area of fire expands into each hex that it is touching. This produces a progression that slowly fills the ring with fire.

Terrain — Obscured Vision

Three big clouds of smoke from the burning trees make it hard to see and breathe.

 Any character within the cloud suffers a -3 **decrease** to all rolls based on Strength, Dexterity, Quickness, Perception, Communica-



"Red Wolves" Combat Opponents

BOLGAR

Human 4th-Level Fighter

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d10+4; 26 hp; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 chainmail); Atk melee +8 (1d12+4, greataxe); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +8, Ride +6, Swim +8

Feats: Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack

Possessions: Medallion of Hel

DARK VIKINGS

Human 2nd-Level Fighters

CR 2; SZ M (humanoid); HD 2d10+2; 13 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 chainmail); Atk melee +6 (1d12+4, greataxe); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +6, Jump +6, Ride +5, Swim +8

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack

Combat Tactics: Bolgar and his men do their best to stay between the heroes and the exit. They fight aggressively but take advantage of any opportunity to slow the heroes down or knock them into the fire.

tion, or Presence. This includes rolls that use INIT, ATK, DFN, and DAM.

Points Earned: -15 (-3 decrease at -5 points each); -15 (3 areas of obscured vision at -5 each)

 Any character within an area of smoke must make a Fortitude saving throw each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

The smoke also obscures vision, giving one-half concealment (20% miss chance) to characters within it.

Gain — Burning Brands

Any hero with at least one hand free may grab a burning branch from one of the many small fires scattered around the battlefield. This requires some dexterity to do safely, but the improvised weapon provides a substantial combat bonus. Heroes wielding two weapons, two-handed weapons, or a weapon and a shield may not benefit from this gain.

 **Singular:** Scramble roll, Lady or Tiger, combat action required; roll Balance vs. Difficulty 6, any hero who succeeds gains a +2 increase to ATK rolls for the rest of the combat, any hero who fails suffers a **flame exposure hazard** (see page 152 of the **Rune** rulebook). Any hero who fails may make **unlimited extra attempts** at this gain.

Points Spent: 16 (Flame exposure hazard); 10 (Combat action required)



Medallion of Hel

NEW MAGIC ITEM

A *medallion of Hel* is a piece of amber carved with tiny designs of evisceration and cannibalism, then strung on a human-leather thong and hung over the wearer's heart. It can only be created by a priest of Hel, and it can only be used by a character who has vowed eternal service to the dark goddess.

The *medallion* provides potent benefits at a high price. Once per round, as a free action, a character may receive one of the following benefits:

- Three hit points of healing for every character level the character has.
- A +5 luck bonus on any attack roll made that round.
- A doubled critical threat range on one attack roll (this bonus stacks with *keen* weapons and other threat-doubling feats or enchantments)

Each time the character activates the *medallion*, the character must make a Will save (DC 20). If the character fails, the character permanently loses one point of Wisdom score.

Most characters who die wearing a *medallion of Hel* rise one day later as dishonored warriors (see the dishonored template in Episode 4). The only way to prevent a character from making this transformation is to burn the body and scatter the ashes over water.

Some *medallion* users attract the attention of Loki and are transformed into fearsome sark amen warriors (see the sark amen template in Episode 4). This may happen when a character is killed, and always happens if the *medallion* reduces the character to a Wisdom score of 0. There is no way to prevent this transformation.

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *divine power*; **Market Price:** 2,000 gp; **Weight:** —

Points Earned: -20 (+2 increase to ATK at -10 each); -20 (Extra rolls allowed, unlimited)

 A burning brand is a club (1d6 damage, critical x2) that does an additional 1d4 fire damage. A character may pull one out of the flames as a free action, but must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or suffer 1d4 fire damage.

Trap — Hel Claims Her Own

Hel and Loki have special plans for Bolgar. If and when any hero kills him, the earth opens up and a blast of deadly green flame engulfs the place he was standing.

(Don't worry, Bolgar fans. He'll be back.)

 **Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only);** roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 8**, heroes who fail suffer **Dam rating 19, armor-ignoring** and **equipment damage** from the blast of green flame. After the flame burns out, there is nothing left of the dark Viking but ashes and a **Category F Treasure**.

Points Spent: 40 (Equipment damage); 34 (Dam rating 19, ignores armor); 20 (Difficulty 8); 10 (Combo trap surcharge)

Points Earned: -75 (Category F treasure); -20 (Conditionally avoidable: don't kill Bolgar); -5 (First exposure only)

 Any hero within 10 feet of Bolgar when he dies must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or take 2d6 fire damage. After Bolgar is incinerated, there is nothing left behind but the *medallion of Hel*.

Gain — Dark Viking Treasure

 If the heroes search the bodies of the other dark Vikings, they find a **Category B Treasure**, a **Category D Treasure**, and **5 ounces of silver**.

Points Earned: -40 (Category D treasure); -20 (Category B treasure); -5 (5 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 The other dark Vikings have the following treasure: 150 gp, gold rings and jeweled bracelets worth 500 gp, and 3 more *medallions of Hel*.

Narration: That takes care of Bolgar. Olaf's still on his way to the Thing, however, and it's now certain that he's up to no good. Waiting around in the village doesn't seem likely to bring any answers — and there's still only one place where you can find out what *really* happened between your chieftain and his brother ...



"Head Wolves" Cost Table

POINTS SPENT:

Wrestling Match	90
I'm Sorry, I've Got Other Plans	55
That Sinking Sensation	60
Bolgar's Ambush	90
Bolgar's Band: Self-Willed	15
Burning Brands	26
Hel Claims Her Own	104
Total Spent:	440

POINTS EARNED:

Talk to the Blacksmith	-10
Talk to the Shipwright	-10

Wrestling Match	-25
I'm Sorry, I've Got Other Plans	-35
Healing Opportunity	-30
Following Instructions is For the Weak	-15
Bolgar's Band: No Missile Weapons	-10
Terrain: Limited Exits	-20
Terrain: Damaging Place	-50
Terrain: Obscured Vision	-30
Burning Brands	-40
Hel Claims Her Own	-100
Dark Viking Treasure	-65
Total Earned:	-440

Encounter 2: Attack of the Cronen

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia

Summary: An encounter with a lovely nymph turns into a battle for survival against two vicious hags.

EVENT 1: BATH TIME!

Narration: The path toward the goblin caves turns westward, winding down into a little dell. You hear the babbling of a brook up ahead.

Gain — A Little Warning

The characters may notice that they are being watched.



Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -5 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 10)



Any character may make a Listen roll (DC 20) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: You hear a rustling in the bushes ahead, as if something large and heavy just tiptoed away.

Narration: A few minutes later, you hear a waterfall and a lilting voice singing one of the old songs.

Gain — Approaching on Tiptoe

The characters can sneak up on the singer if they like.



Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Stealth** vs. **Difficulty 6** to sneak through the bushes. If everyone rolls and succeeds, read the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)



Any character may make a Move Silently check (DC 12) to sneak through the bushes. If everyone rolls and succeeds, read the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: You creep silently along the path, making your way around the bend before anyone can notice you. A few feet closer ... and then you see her.

Narration: A waterfall splashes down twenty feet into a glittering pool. The air feels hot and heavy, and there is a droning of insects. A young woman with long black hair and ivory skin bathes in the pool. After a moment she turns, and calm brown eyes appraise you.

"Well," she says. "What brings you here?"

After waiting for your reply, the woman introduces herself as Lia and says that she is a nymph, the spirit of the local waters.

Background: That's not quite true. Lia is one of a pair of hags who have taken up residence in the area. She's looking to catch dinner as safely and easily as she can.

Narration: "You seem bent on important deeds," she says. "Perhaps I can help — I know some prophecies and small magics that may assist you in your quest. Tell me about it, and I will provide what aid I can."

Flag — A Little Help

If the heroes tell Lia about their plans to investigate the goblin caves, she provides a little useful advice.



This advice is a **Flag** providing the entire party with a +2 increase to the "Take Out the Sentries" roll in the next encounter.

Points Earned: -5 (Flag, +2 increase at -5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

Narration: After thinking carefully, Lia says, "I know something that may help you. There's a stream running past the entrance to the goblin caves, and the water has carved out a small overhang. If you stay under it as you approach the gate, you should be able to get very close without being seen."

"Now," she continues with a sly smile, "who'd like to scrub my back?"

Trap — Scrub a Dub Doh!

Any hero may volunteer to scrub her back — but when the hapless character gets into the water with her, she returns to her regular form and grabs the character. If no hero volunteers, Lia chooses one at random. Roll a die to determine who the lucky object of her affections is.

 **Singular:** Rush roll, limited targeting; roll **Stamina** vs. **Difficulty 10**, if failed the hero suffers **Dam rating 25**; Lia automatically succeeds at grabbing the character, so this traps determines how well the hero survives the embrace of her claws.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10); 35 (Dam rating 25); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only)

Points Earned: -15 (Limited target: one target)

 Lia's games statistics can be found in Event 3. What's important for this game situation is that she is of Medium size, has a Strength score of 19, and a +13 attack bonus. Before encountering the PCs, Lia casts *change self* and *water breathing*, then drinks a *potion of maximized bull's strength*. This gives her the appearance of a nymph, an escape route, and an effective strength of 24.

Lia targets a PC as above and grabs the character without warning, probably catching the character flat-footed. If successful, she grapples the character. The next round, she uses her *weakness* special ability — the target must succeed at Fortitude save (DC 13) or take 2d4 temporary Strength score damage — and drags the character underwater. Assuming nobody stops her, she escapes through a hole in the pool's floor on the 3rd round with the captured character.

If the characters offer resistance, Lia fights and tries to escape with the character. However, she abandons her prey and flees if the battle starts going badly against her. Defeating Lia completely earns her full experience value; causing her to leave her prey behind is worth half the normal experience value. (If the characters then pursue her, they can earn her full experience value defeating her in Event 3.)

Narration: "Now now," she says after giving her prey a squeeze, "we can't have you leaving just yet, can we? Why don't you come into my parlor and chat?"

With a shriek of laughter, she drags your companion further in, dives, and vanishes into a dark hole at the bottom of the pool!

Gain — Shame About Sven, Let's Leave

The heroes have a choice to make. They can dive into the pool, swim an unknown distance into mortal danger, and try to save their friend, or they can write him off and skip the rest of the encounter. If they choose this cowardly course of action, they're going to have some explaining to do when they tell the tales of their adventures — but at least they'll live to lie about their companion's fate.

Any characters who leave do not participate in the rest of the encounter. If no characters go to rescue their companion, the captured character must escape the hags in Event 3 alone. (This is difficult but possible.)

 Any character who leaves must make a **Demeanor** roll to determine his future reputation as a Viking hero.

Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only); roll **Demeanor** vs. **Difficulty 9**, heroes who fail lose **30 victory points**.

Rune designers should note that this is one way to stretch the limits of Glorious Linear Roleplaying. At least one character is guaranteed to be present for the essential events of Event 3; everything else is conditional on the rest of the party coming to rescue their fellow hero.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); 30 (-30 victory points at -1 each)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, go down the hole already!); -5 (First exposure only)

 D20 System characters have a little more latitude here. They may have prevented Lia from grabbing one of their companions, or had a run of amazing luck and killed her. If this is the case, they can leave the area and skip the rest of this encounter. They can also skip the rest of the encounter if they choose to leave a captured companion behind, without penalty to their reputations. Of course, if they do that, they miss out on the experience and treasure they can get from exploring the hag's lair. And if they decide to leave their friend behind, they're just wusses.

Gain — The Heroic Thing To Do

This bonus rewards quick action by making it easier to follow the hag's trail, reducing the amount of time the heroes have to spend in the water. The characters

lose this bonus if the players spend more than a minute discussing what they want to do next after the hag disappears.

 If all the characters leap into the pool and follow the hag immediately, they gain a **+2 increase** to each of the three Swim rolls in the next event.

Points Earned: -30 (+2 increase to 3 different Swim rolls at -5 each)

 D20 System characters receive a +4 circumstance bonus to the Fortitude check in Event 2 for following the hag immediately.

EVENT 2: A LONG SWIM THROUGH A DARK TUNNEL

Narration: The hole in the bottom of the pool leads to a twisting underwater passage. It turns and branches, but you are able to follow the trail of the hag by spotting the faint glow of phosphorescent algae that was disturbed when she swam by it.

It's a long swim, and your lungs begin to burn. Every now and then you are able to gulp a precious breath from an air pocket, but the distance between pockets is getting longer and longer ...

Trap — And Fish Call This Fun?

It's impossible to drown in this situation, and it's assumed that the Vikings can pull themselves along the rock of the tunnel and find their way to the lair.

What this trap tests is the heroes' strength of limb and lung — can they get to the lair without flopping on the beach like half-drowned rats?

 The heroes do not have to attempt all three rolls, and can return to the waterfall safely at any time by abandoning their attempt to conquer this trap. However, any character who does this cannot participate in Event 3.

Multiple roll, endurance test, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect); roll **Swim vs. Difficulty 9**, 3 rolls required, each failure does **Dam rating 15, armor-ignoring**. Characters who succeeded at "The Heroic Thing to Do" receive a **+2 increase** to these Swim rolls as they follow the fresh trail of disturbed algae.

Points Spent: 90 (Difficulty 9 [30], multiplied by 3 for multiple rolls); 75 (Dam rating 15 [15], ignores armor [10], multiplied by 3 for multiple rolls)

Points Earned: -30 (Conditionally avoidable [10], be carried by the hag or don't try to swim through the tunnel, multiplied by 3 for multiple rolls)

 Each character who attempts the swim through the tunnel must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 2d6+2 subdual damage. Characters receive a +4 circumstance bonus if they followed the hag immediately in the last event.

This check can be avoided with a *water breathing* spell or any other assistance that prevents drowning. Magic items that provide bonuses to Swim checks provide bonuses to this save, as does the Endurance feat.

Green Hag

NEW FOE



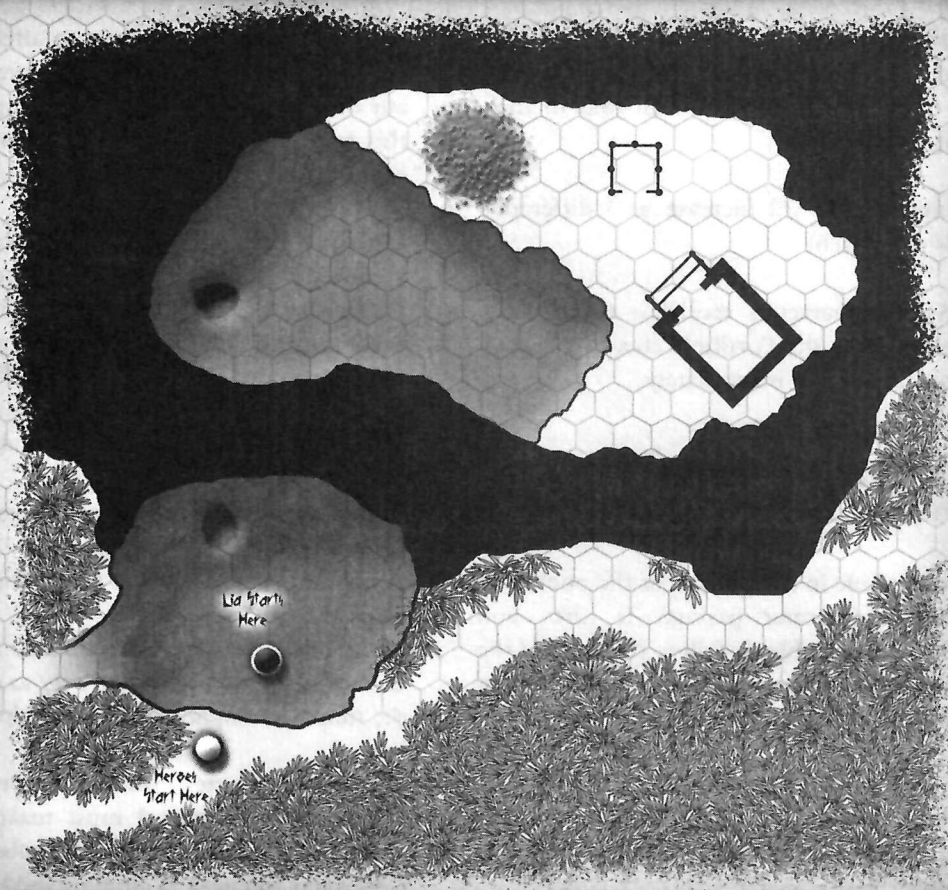
Green hags are tall, muscular crones with stringy hair and warty noses. They haunt swamps and forests, always making their lairs near water. Many hags are solitary, but some gather in pairs or trios known as coveys.

Hags prefer to trick their food into approaching close enough to be grabbed

and easily subdued. Their spells are mostly deceptive and protective — they can change their shape to a more pleasing appearance and spend hours underwater. However, their strength and speed also makes them powerful fighters.

Max Threat: Terrifying
Benchmark: 15
Adjusts: INIT +3, RES +3
Move: 15
Mix: +0.2

Attack of the Crones



1 Hex equals 5 feet (2 Paces)



"Attack of the Crones" Combat Opponents

The table below assumes a party of 6 heroes. The hags' abilities are figured based on the total number of characters in the party, not the number who made their way into the cavern.

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Lia	Green Hag	3.2	15	Exceptional	+3 INIT, +3 Res	Predictable
Kalu	Green Hag	3.2	15	Exceptional	+3 INIT, +3 Res	Predictable

Points Spent: 0

Combat Tactics: The hags fight with vicious enthusiasm, using their strength to knock the heroes around like ninepins.

The hag swims to her lair so quickly that the hero she grabbed automatically avoids this trap.

EVENT 3: HAG MIDDEN

Narration: Your head comes out of the water in a small cavern, and the stench makes you want to pop it right back under again.

You see a large rock ledge in front of you. A rude hut has been built on the far end, and you can hear the song that drew you to the waterfall from within. The near end is a heap of old bones and smelly garbage. In the middle is an oversized birdcage with your companion sitting within it.

Background: Lia returned a few minutes ago and stashed her captive in the cage with a pat on the head and a cheery, "I'll be right back!" She is now rattling pots and singing in her hut.

Gain — At Least It's Quiet

 If no other characters have come to rescue the captured hero, the captive receives a +2 increase to the Stealth roll below.

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 If no other characters have come to rescue the captured hero, the captive does not have to make the Move Silently check below, and may take 10 on the Open Lock check that follows.

Gain — Are You Sneaky?

The lock on the cage is easy to pick. What's difficult is picking it quickly and quietly. If the heroes can do both, they'll get an edge on the hag; if they can't,

she'll either notice them or finish her dinner preparations before they're ready to run.

Not every member of the party has to participate in the attempt to free the captive. Any character who does not participate begins the combat in Location A on the map. The captive and any rescuers begin the combat in Location B.

 **Singular:** **Dogpile** roll, **Lady or Tiger**; roll **Stealth** vs. **Difficulty 9**, if all heroes succeed then the party receives +6 INIT in the first round of the combat that follows, if any hero fails then the party receives -6 INIT.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); 10 (-6 INIT at 5 per -3 INIT)

Points Earned: -10 (+6 INIT at -5 per +3 INIT)

 This encounter should be run in combat rounds. Any character who leaves the vicinity of the entry point at Location A must make a Move Silently check (DC 12) to avoid alerting the hag; if a character fails a Move Silently check the hags emerge from the hut two rounds later. The captive does not need to make this check.

Gain — How About Fast?

The second step in freeing the captured hero is getting the lock open. Again, it's assumed the heroes will succeed. The question is: how fast?

 **Singular:** **Rush** roll; roll **Pick Lock** vs. **Difficulty 9**; if successful the party receives +3 INIT in the first round of the combat that follows, if failed the party receives -3 INIT.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); 5 (-3 INIT)

Potion of Maximized Bull's Strength

VARIANT MAGIC ITEM

This potion has the same effect as a maximized *bull's strength* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, Maximize Spell, *bull's strength*;
Market Price: 2,500 gp

Points Earned: -5 (+3 INIT)

 Escaping the cage requires a Open Lock check (DC 20). If the check is successful, the hag appears immediately after the lock is opened but the party gains a surprise round. The lock still opens if the check fails, but the hag appears immediately afterwards and receives a surprise round against the party.

Narration: You hear a creak as you ease the cage door open. Fortunately, it's not the cage. Then you realize that the creak is from the door of the hut.

The hag is standing in the doorway of the hut, tapping a ladle the size of your head in her hand. Another figure looms behind her in the hut itself.

"Oh, somebody is being a bad dinner," the hag says. "You just get right back in that cage!"

 The two hags Lia and Kalu have identical base stats; use the standard D20 System stats for green hags. However, Lia is still under the effects of the *potion of maximized bull's strength* she drank earlier, and has an effective Strength of 24. This increases her attack and damage bonuses by 3.

Possessions: Lia has another *potion of maximized bull's strength*. Kalu has a *potion of haste*.

Terrain — Sloped Terrain

The rocky shore slopes downward to the water.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Sloped terrain, two-thirds of area)

 Any character who is hit while standing on sloped terrain must make a Balance check (DC 10 + the damage dealt). If the check is failed, the character slides down the slope and lands prone at the bottom of the terrain. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.

Terrain — Slippery Ground

The rocks are also slippery.

 **Points Earned:** -15 (Slippery ground, two-thirds of area)

 Any character moving across or fighting in a slippery area must make a Balance check (DC 10) every round to avoid falling prone. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.



"Attack of the Crones" Cost Table

POINTS SPENT:

Scrub a Dub Doh!	95
Shame About Sven, Let's Leave	60
And Fish Call This Fun?	165
Are You Sneaky?	40
How About Fast?	35
Treasure: 5 oz. Liar's Silver	5
Total Spent:	400

POINTS EARNED:

A Little Warning	-5
Approaching on Tiptoe	-10
A Little Help	-10
Scrub a Dub Doh!	-15

Shame About Sven, Let's Leave	-25
The Heroic Thing to Do	-30
And Fish Call This Fun?	-30
At Least It's Quiet	-10
Are You Sneaky?	-10
How About Fast?	-5
Terrain: Sloped Terrain	-20
Terrain: Slippery Ground	-15
Terrain: Limited Exits	-20
A Solo Escape	-30
Loot Cache	-40
Treasure	-125
Total Earned:	-400

Terrain — Limited Exits

There's only way out — the hole back down into the underwater tunnel.



Points Earned: -20 (Limited exit)

Gain — A Solo Escape



If the captive is abandoned and succeeds in escaping alone, the captive receives a **singular award of 30 victory points**.

Points Earned: -30 (30 victory points at -1 each)



Escaping alone wins a hero who was abandoned by the party an extra experience chit.

Gain — Loot Cache

The cave is a secure place to stash loot; the characters can come back for it later without hauling it along for the rest of their adventures.



Points Earned: -40 (Loot cache, recovery Difficulty 4)

Gain — Treasure



If the heroes search the hut, they find **5 ounces of silver, 5 ounces of liar's silver, a Category C Treasure, a Category D Treasure, and a Category E Treasure**.

Points Spent: 5 (5 oz. of liar's silver at 1 each)

Points Earned: -50 (Category E treasure); -40 (Category D treasure); -30 (Category C treasure); -5 (5 oz. of silver at -1 each)



If the characters search the hut, they find 100 sp, 50 gp, and a pair of intricately carved silver bracers worth 250 gp.

Narration: Eager to taste fresh air again, you dive into the water and begin the long journey back to the surface!

Encounter 3: Barbarians at the Gates

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia

Summary: The heroes reach the goblin caves and must penetrate the outer defenses.

EVENT 1: ACROSS THE BRIDGE

Narration: At last, you've reached your destination. A cliff face looms in front of you. A tall gate stands open, exposing a tunnel leading into the cliff. A stream runs along the cliff, and a rude bridge spans the stream in front of the gate.

Two squat goblins stand guard on the bridge. You smell the harsh tang of the tobacco they're smoking and hear the guttural sounds of idle conversation.

Gain — The Sporting News

Any Viking may listen carefully and try to figure out what the goblins are saying.



Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)



Any character who speaks Goblin may make a Listen roll (DC 12) to learn the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: The larger goblin seems to be advising the smaller one on the proper betting odds for some kind of arena sport with wild animals. "Oh sure," the portly sentry says, "Old Yellow-Eyes is tough, but he doesn't see so well out of that left eye anymore. Someone will find that weakness and put paid to him, you mark my words."

Background: No, this has nothing to do with anything else in the campaign. But why tell the players? It's so much more fun watching them try to figure out the Important Clue ...

Gain — I'll Guard the Rear

The heroes must eliminate the sentries on the bridge, a task that's represented by the "Taking Out the Sentries" trap below. There are choices the heroes can make that affect the workings of the trap, though.

 Any character who remains hidden instead of sneaking up to the sentries receives a **+4 increase** on the trap's **Stealth roll**, but may only use ranged weapons for the combat roll. Any character who sneaks up to the sentries receives a **+2 increase** to the trap's **combat roll** and may use either melee weapons or ranged weapons.

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase to Stealth roll at -5 per); -10 (+2 increase to combat roll at -5 per)

 Any character who remains hidden must make a Hide check (DC 12) to avoid alerting the sentries.

Trap — Taking Out the Sentries

The sentries are no match for the party, but the heroes must take them out quietly before they call out a warning. One thing that may make this easier is the slight overhang of the streambed pointed out by the "nymph" in the previous encounter.

If the characters fail to silence the sentries, they scream a warning and alert the other goblins within the fortress.

 **Simultaneous Rolls, Lady or Tiger:** roll **Stealth** vs. **Difficulty 10** as a **Weak Link** roll, and roll **ATK** vs. **baseline +5** as a **Singular**:

No-Fault roll, failing either roll triggers the "Gas!" Trap and the "Old Heave Ho" Trap below, succeeding at both rolls gives the heroes **+6 INIT** during the first round of the combat in Event 3. Any character may use ranged weapons for the **ATK** roll, but only characters who choose to sneak up on the goblins may use melee weapons. **Flag:** any member of the party trying to sneak up on the goblins receives a **+2 increase** to this **Stealth** roll if the party has the "A Little Help" flag from the previous encounter.

Points Spent: 40 (Stealth roll, Difficulty 10); 40 (ATK roll, baseline +5); 20 (Failure leads to 2 traps at 10 each); 15 (Simultaneous rolls)

Points Earned: -15 (No-fault roll); -10 (+6 INIT at -5 per 3 INIT); -5 (Flag, +2 increase at -5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

 Any character sneaking up on the sentries must make a Move Silently check (DC 15). If all the party's checks are successful, the goblins are surprised. If any of the checks fail, the goblins are alerted to the characters' presence and shout out a warning to their fellow goblins. (This is a free action that takes place as soon as the goblins are able to act.)

Using the stream to sneak up on the sentries, as suggested by the "nymph" in "A Little Help," provides a +2 circumstance bonus to the Move Silently check.

Narration: The sentries drop with a squawk and a whimper. The gate looms in front of you. You hear nothing but water running under the bridge.



Goblin Sentries (2)

Small Goblinoid (Goblin)
2nd-level Warriors

CR 1; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 2d8; 12 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +3 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE;

SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness

EVENT 2: INSIDE THE GATES

Narration: The sound of the stream echoes around you as you step through the gates and into a large tunnel. The tunnel is rough-hewn for the first few steps, but then the floor and walls become smooth and straight.

Gain — Fine Dwarven Workmanship

Astute characters may notice that the architecture of the fortress is dwarvish.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

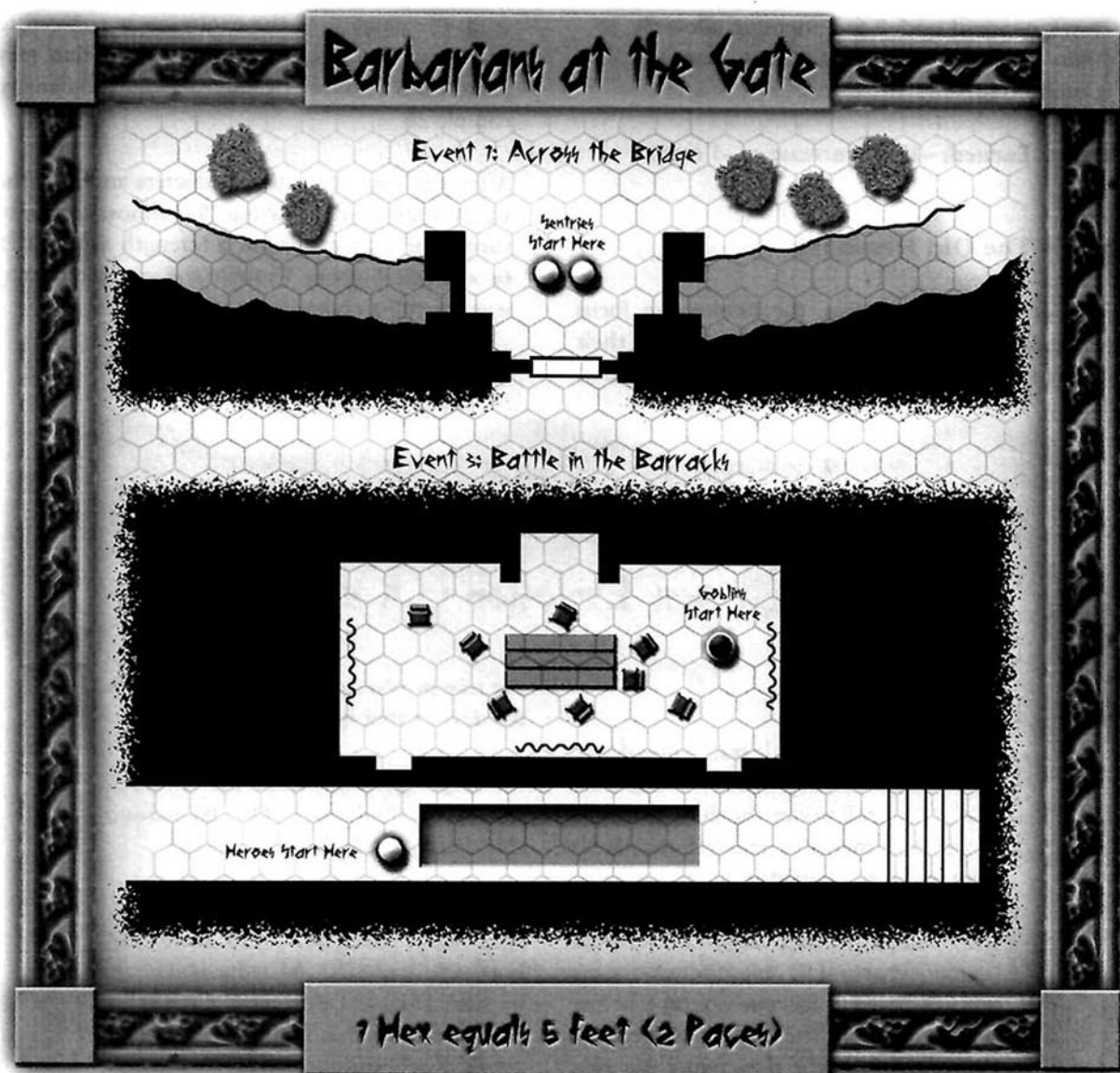
 Any character may make a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: These flagstones and tunnel walls are too well made to have been shaped by goblins. This must have been a dwarven fortress before they took over — which is not a comforting thought. The combination of elaborate dwarvish deathtraps and howling goblin warriors is enough to make even the bravest Viking just a little bit nervous.

Trap — Gas!

Ignore this trap if the heroes succeeded at the “Taking Out the Sentries” trap above.

Narration: There’s a grinding noise as you continue down the corridor, and the sounds of the stream are cut off as a large stone slab slams down behind you. A similar wall falls to block the way forward, and you



hear a hissing noise from little holes in near the bottom of the floor. Some kind of gas is filling the room!

Background: The gas is methane, which will be ignited by flint strikers that are triggered when the room's air pressure is high enough. If the characters look around, they see scorch marks on the walls and ceiling. The strikers are hidden low on the walls near the gas jets.

 The characters receive a **+2 increase** to their Traps roll if they figure out that the trap involves an explosion and search for devices that ignite the gas.

Multiple Rolls: Countdown, roll Traps vs. **Difficulty 8**, the heroes have **two attempts** to get half as many successes as there are characters in the party, if the heroes fail they suffer **Dam rating 40** and **equipment damage**.

Points Spent: 80 (Difficulty 8, times 2 for successes required and 2 for attempts allowed); 65 (Dam rating 40); 40 (Equipment damage); 40 (Combo trap)

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

Trap — The Old Heave-Ho

After surviving the gas trap, the heroes can focus their energies on escaping. They must stretch their muscles and ruin their manicures pulling up one of

the stone slabs blocking the corridor. As usual, the heroes inevitably succeed in this effort — the question is whether they hurt themselves doing it.

 **Singular:** No-Fault roll; roll **Strength** vs. **Difficulty 8**, if nobody succeeds then all characters suffer **Dam rating 10**, **armor-ignoring** from the strain.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only); 20 (Dam rating 10, ignores armor)

Points Earned: -15 (No-fault roll)

 Lifting either of the slabs requires a Strength check (DC 25). Up to three characters may cooperate on this effort, the two helpers using aid another actions to each add a +2 bonus to the roll if they beat a DC of 10.

The characters may only make one attempt to lift a slab before the explosion occurs. If they succeed, the damage of the explosion is reduced to 4d6. Any character not holding up a slab may make a Reflex save (DC 16) to avoid the damage completely.

After the explosion, the characters may lift the slab at their leisure. (Taking 20 is almost certain to succeed if a character has a Strength score of 20 or enough helpers, though the characters may want to roll a check if time is an issue.)



Gas Explosion (CR 4)

NEW TRAP

When the walls of this trap come down, each character may make a Reflex save (DC 25) to roll under the falling slabs to safety. Any character who fails the save is trapped in the corridor.

Disarming the trap requires a Disable Device check (DC 20); the characters only have time for one attempt before the gas ignites. The characters receive a +2 insight bonus if they figure out that

the trap involves an explosion and search for devices that ignite the gas.

If the gas ignites, it does 6d6 fire damage. A Fortitude save (DC 16) reduces this damage by half.

No attack roll necessary (6d6 fire damage); Reflex save (DC 25) to avoid trap, Fortitude save (DC 16) reduces damage by half; Disable Device (DC 20), searching for devices that ignite the explosion provides a +2 insight bonus

Narration: You continue forward. The tunnel soon takes a sharp turn to the right. The passageway ahead is filled with shadows, but a stairway leads downward a few dozen paces away. The floor is dusty, and you see the tracks of goblin feet.

Background: Assuming the sentries were able to warn their fellow goblins, here's what's been happening. One goblin peeked around the corner, saw the heroes coming, and pulled a small lever in the wall that triggered the gas trap.

After the heroes defeated the trap, the goblins retreated to their barracks to prepare an ambush. They observe the heroes' progress through peep-holes, and attack as the PCs either negotiate the pit or come in through the secret door (see below).

If the heroes succeeded in removing the sentries, the goblins in the barracks are simply going about their normal business of eating, sleeping, and cheating at pinochle.

Gain — The Pattern of Little Feet

There's a bit of passage that the goblins don't use, and with good reason — it's a pit trap. They go around it using a pair of secret doors that lead into a barracks.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: As you look at the goblins' tracks, you notice that there's a stretch of pavement where the dust is undisturbed. The tracks swerve away from the center of the corridor and stop at a wall.

Background: If the characters examine the wall, they find a secret door and the small lever that operates it. The pit trap is also easy to find once the heroes know to look for it.

Trap — Small Hole, No Worries

This is a simple pit trap with a short fall and hard slab of rock at the bottom.

 **Singular** roll, **conditionally avoidable**, **remains in effect**; roll **Jump** vs. **Difficulty 4**, any hero who fails suffers **Dam rating 5/10 falling damage**.

Points Spent: 17 (Dam rating 5/10, 10–15 foot fall)

Points Earned: -20 (Difficulty 4); -20 (Conditionally avoidable, don't jump the pit)

 The hole is a basic 20-foot-deep pit trap (CR 1): No attack roll necessary (2d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; automatically found if searched for; Disable Device (DC 20).

Any character looking for the trap after succeeding at the Spot check above automatically finds it.

EVENT 3: BATTLE IN THE BARRACKS

Background: If the characters open the secret door, they encounter the goblins in the barracks.

If they ignore the secret door and jump the pit trap instead, one of two possible variations happens: if the PCs failed to silence the sentries in Event 1, the goblins burst out of the secret doors and attack on both sides while the PCs are leaping over the pit; if the PCs silenced the sentries, a goblin wanders out through one of the doors, sees the party, and flees shrieking back into the barracks to warn his fellow guards.

Narration: The door creaks open, and the air is suddenly filled with battle cries and whistling arrows. The room on the other side is filled with goblins, and they don't look like they're in a very good mood.

 Succeeding at both "Taking Out the Sentries" rolls in Event 1 gives the heroes +6 **INIT** during the first round of this combat.

Terrain — Barriers

Eight chairs are scattered around the room.

 **Points Earned: -12** (8 chairs, 4 of which are counted as barriers at -3 each, barriers don't count against the limit of three terrain features)

 The chairs provide one-quarter cover for one character each (+2 AC).

Terrain — Cover

 A heavy oak table provides **half cover** for up to two characters. Each of the two secret doors provides **full cover** to one character hiding behind it.

Points Earned: -24 (Full cover for 2 characters at -12 each); **-12** (Half cover for 2 characters at -6 each)

 The heavy oak table in this room provides one-half cover (+4 AC) for two characters, and the two secret doors each provide nine-tenths cover (+10 AC) for one character.

Terrain — Damaging Place

 A roaring fire on the hearth is a **damaging place** that does **Dam rating 20**.

Points Earned: -20 (Damaging place, Dam rating 20)

 The fire in the hearth of this room does 1d6 fire damage per round to characters who touch it.

Terrain — Limited Exits

There are only two ways out of the area — down the stairs or back out the passage to the valley.

 **Points Earned: -10** (Limited exits, two exits)

Gain — Yoink!

 Any hero who pulls down one of the tapestries in the trap detailed below receives a **+2 increase** to the Dodge roll required to avoid the trap.

"Barbarians at the Gates" Combat Opponents

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Zik	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Yolly	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Xerxes	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Wimbul	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Vinik	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Ulek	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Predictable
Tahn	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Self-Willed
Siggy	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Self-Willed
Rochester	Goblin Warrior	.7	15	Inferior	None	Self-Willed

Points Spent: 30 (3 Self-willed opponents at 10 each)

Combat Tactics: Most of the goblins rush the heroes and try to keep them from advancing into the room. As the heroes push the goblins back, the goblins retreat in directions that lead the heroes into the tapestry trap below. Tahn and Siggy hang back and pepper the heroes with missile fire. Rochester moves in with the other goblins and gangs up on any hero who seems vulnerable.

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 Any hero who pulls down a tapestry receives a +2 bonus to the Reflex save triggered by that action.

Trap — Heavy Tapestries

Three faded tapestries decorate three walls of the barracks. Any hero or foe in a space adjacent to a tapestry (or who can otherwise reach a tapestry) may pull it down and attempt to entangle every character in the area the tapestry covers. Pulling down a tapestry requires a combat action.

Any foe who pulls down the tapestry automatically succeeds at the roll to avoid the trap. (So does any other foe within the affected area.) If a hero pulls down the tapestry, then all foes and heroes within the affected area must roll to avoid the trap. The hero

who pulled the tapestry must roll as well, but receives the bonus listed above.

 Foes and heroes within 6 paces of a tapestry when it's pulled down must make the following roll. Foes use their Res stat to avoid and escape this trap.

Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect); roll Dodge vs. **Difficulty 6**, each character who fails is caught in a **grabber trap**, and must **spend an action** and roll **Strength + Traps** vs. **Difficulty 6** to escape.

Points Spent: 40 (Grabber trap, Difficulty 6 to escape); 10 (Combat action required)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable; don't be within the area of effect); 0 (Remains in effect; this trap can be triggered a total of 3 times, though each individual tapestry can only be pulled down once)



"Barbarians at the Gate" Combat Opponents

GOBLIN WARRIORS (6)

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 3rd-level Warriors

CR 2; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 3d8; 17 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +4 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Combat Tactics: Most of the goblins rush the heroes and try to keep them from advancing into the room. As the heroes push the goblins back, the goblins retreat in directions that lead the heroes into the tapestry trap below.

TAHN, SIGGY, AND ROCHESTER

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 4th-level Warriors

CR 3; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 4d8; 21 hp; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +4 (1d8-1, morningstar), or ranged +7 (1d8, light crossbow); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Combat Tactics: Tahn and Siggie hang back and pepper the heroes with missile fire. Rochester moves in with the other goblins and gangs up on any character who seems vulnerable.

 When a PC or goblin pulls down a tapestry, any character within 10 feet of the tapestry must make a Reflex save (DC 15). Any character who fails is entangled (-2 to attack rolls, -4 to Dexterity, movement is halved) until the character makes an Escape Artist check (DC 15).

Gain — Wrapping with the Goblins

 After a tapestry has been pulled down, any hero may spend a half-action to throw it over a goblin. This gives the entire party a +3 increase to ATK rolls and DFN rolls against that goblin for 2 rounds. The affected goblin can move, and should probably stumble around the room wailing piteously.

Once the goblin escapes the tapestry, any hero may spend another half-action to pick the tapestry up and use it again.

Points Earned: -30 (+3 increase to ATK for 2 rounds at -5 each); -30 (+3 increase to DFN for 2 rounds at -5 each)

 Any PC may throw a fallen tapestry over a goblin as a ranged touch attack. If successful, the goblin is entangled as in the trap above.

Gain — Flying Vikings

 Any Viking who jumps off a table to attack a foe receives a +2 increase to the ATK roll.

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 Any character who leaps off a table and attacks a foe receives a +2 circumstance bonus on the attack roll.

Gain — Not Sneaky Enough

After two goblins have been killed, one of the remaining goblins — presumably Tahn or Siggy — conceals a key near a hearth. This key is essential to getting past a trap on the next level. The heroes have a chance to spot the key being concealed.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll;** roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.



"Barbarians at the Gates" Cost Table

Points Spent:

Taking Out the Sentries	115
Gas!	225
The Old Heave-Ho	60
Small Hole, No Worries	17
Self-Willed Goblin Warriors	30
Heavy Tapestries	50
Goblin Treasure	3
Total Spent:	500

Points Earned:

The Sporting News	-10
I'll Guard the Rear	-30
Taking Out the Sentries	-35
Fine Dwarven Workmanship	-10
Gas!	-10

The Old Heave-Ho	-15
The Pattern of Little Feet	-10
Small Hole, No Worries	-40
Terrain: Barriers	-12
Terrain: Cover	-36
Terrain: Damaging Place	-20
Terrain: Limited Exits	-10
Yoink!	-10
Heavy Tapestries	-20
Wrapping with the Goblins	-60
Flying Vikings	-10
Not Sneaky Enough	-10
Goblin Treasure	-152
Total Spent:	-500

Closer Inspection: You glance over towards the hearth for a moment to see one of the goblins bending over it. A moment later, she returns to the fray.

Gain — Goblin Treasure

If the heroes search around the hearth, they find hidden treasures underneath a floor tile. One of these treasures is a small golden key.

 **Singular:** No-Fault roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 4**, if successful the heroes find a **Category D Treasure**, two **Category C Treasures**, 7 oz. of silver, and 3 oz. of liar's silver. **Flag:** retrieving the key gives the party a +4 increase to the Traps roll in the "Shock Treatment" trap in Episode 3.

Points Spent: 3 (3 oz. of liar's silver at 1 each)

Points Earned: -60 (2 category C treasures at -30 each); -40 (Category D treasure); -20 (Difficulty 4); -15 (No-fault); -5 (Flag, +2 increase at -5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); -7 (7 oz. of silver at -1 each); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

 The tapestries in the room are faded and now much abused, but are worth 250 gp each. Each tapestry weighs about 50 pounds.

If one of the players who made the previous Spot check investigates the hearth, he finds underneath the floor tile a gold bracelet worth 75 gp and a handful of amethysts worth a total of 120 gp, in addition to the golden key. Any other character can also find this stash with a Search check DC 12.

Narration: Axes and swords at ready, you stride down the stairway. You don't know what lies ahead, but the answers that you seek are not far away!

EPISODE 3 THE GOBLIN FORTRESS

In which the heroes fight their way through the goblin caves.

Encounter 1: The Gauntlet

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Underground

Summary: After penetrating the gatehouse, the heroes must overcome the goblins' primary lines of defense.

EVENT 1: DON'T SAY YOU WEREN'T WARNED

Narration: You step into a circular chamber with a dais in the center. The walls were once painted in an ornate pattern of burgundy and gold, but they have faded with age. As you enter the room, the stern face of a dwarven warrior appears in the air before you.

The image of the dwarf says, "You! You are not ..."

It freezes for a moment, and a high, squeaky voice says "goblins." The dwarf face reanimates and continues.

"You have made it this far into our fortress, but the defenses beyond this room are vicious and deadly." A hand appears, and points down at the dais. "We have left you a fine treasure in this room. Take it in the name of your most generous god Freyja, and leave this peaceful community of" — the squeaky voice returns for a moment to say "goblins" — "in peace. If you do so, you will have our blessings. If not, you will suffer a terrible curse!"

Gain — The Fine Treasure

 There is a **Category D Treasure** on the dais.

Points Earned: -40 (Category D treasure)

 The treasure on the dais is a +1 *longsword*.

Trap — Leave or Else

There is no trap on the treasure itself, but there is a curse attached to taking it. If the heroes take the treasure and continue to attack the fortress, they may fall victim to the curse.

 **Standard roll, conditionally avoidable;** roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 8**, all heroes increase the Difficulty of their roll by their **divine connection** to **Freyja**, any hero who fails suffers **1 point of Impairment** for the rest of the encounter.

Points Spent: 58 (Impairment: 1 point for 1 combat [30], 4 traps [5 each], 1 gain [5], and 1 freestanding roll [3]); 20 (Difficulty 8); 10 (In defiance of the gods: Freyja)

Points Earned: -10 (Conditionally avoidable, don't take the treasure)

 If the characters continue to attack the fortress, then any PC who handles the +1 *longsword* above must make a Will save (DC 20). Any character who fails the save suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks as per a *bestow curse* spell cast by an 8th-level sorcerer.

The curse remains until it is removed or the characters make peace with the goblins in Encounter 2.

Narration: You continue down the tunnel to another chamber. This one is square, and the walls are covered with strips of what looks like tin. There are four metal pillars in the room, each topped with a large steel ball.

On the far side of the room is an iron door with two keyholes. One keyhole is gold, the other is silver.

Gain — Examining the Trap

Exploring the room and examining the door reveals some facts about the trap.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll;** roll **Traps** vs. **Difficulty 10** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -5 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 10)

 Any character may make a Search check (DC 20) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: Looking at all the metal in the room and the positions of the pillars, you suspect that whatever trap you are facing involves lightning bolts jumping back and forth between the exposed metal in the room.

Examining the door, you see a few scratch marks on the silver lock.

Gain — The Right Lock

 If the characters insert the key from the last event into the silver lock — *not* the golden lock, dwarves are tricky that way — they gain a +2 increase to the "Shock Treatment" roll below.

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

Lightning Room (CR 7)

NEW TRAP

If triggered, this trap sends electrical energy arcing across the room between the metal-covered walls and four steel balls atop metal pillars. Characters can avoid this trap by staying out of the

room or using the key correctly as described above.

No attack roll necessary (7d6 electrical); Reflex save (DC 20) does half damage; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

 The characters may avoid the trap below by inserting the golden key from the last event into the silver lock.

Alternatively, if they don't have the key they can find the trap mechanism with a Search check (DC 28) and make a Disable Device check (DC 28) to bypass it safely; see the trap stats below. Once the device is disabled, the door unlocks automatically.

Trap — Shock Treatment

The characters can avoid this trap by inserting the golden key in the silver lock. Otherwise, lightning bolts arc through the room. Individual characters can avoid the lightning by staying out of the room.

The door unlocks whether or not the trap is sprung.

 **Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only);** roll **Traps** vs. **Difficulty 14, equipment not needed**, if failed all heroes suffer **Dam rating 38, armor-ignoring. Flag:** the party receives a **+2 increase** to the Traps roll if it retrieved the golden key from the previous encounter. The flag increase is in addition to the +2 increase possible from "The Right Lock."

Points Spent: 80 (Difficulty 14); 73 (Dam rating 38, ignores armor)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable: either don't be in the room, or use the key correctly); -5 (First exposure only); -5 (Equipment not needed); -5 (Flag, +2 increase at -5 each, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

 If the players don't have the key but successfully make their Disable Device check for the trap they bypass the trap and the door opens on its own. Otherwise they trigger the lightning room trap below.

EVENT 2: FIRING LINE

Narration: You open the door, stride up the corridor beyond — and are greeted by a whistling hail of arrows!

Trap — Goblin Archers

A squad of goblins hides behind a bunker at the end of the corridor. As soon as all the heroes are in their sights, they unleash a rain of arrows.

The goblins retreat as soon as a hero advances on their bunker. This will probably happen after the first flight of arrows, but if the characters insist on standing around to be shot at, who are you to object?

 **Standard roll, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect);** roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 11**, heroes who fail suffer **Dam rating 12**.

Points Spent: 50 (Difficulty 11); 12 (Dam rating 12)

Points Earned: -10 (Conditionally avoidable, stay in the previous room)

 Any character in the leading edge as the party advances down the corridor is attacked by arrow fire. Each character suffers a +7 ranged attack with light crossbows (1d8, 19-20/x2 crit).

Gain — Screaming Vikings

 Any Viking who reacts to the attack by immediately charging the goblins gets **10 victory points** for valor. If any Viking charges the goblins, the heroes find a **Category A Treasure** dropped by a fleeing archer.

Points Earned: -10 (10 victory points at -1 each); -10 (Category A treasure)

 Any PC who immediately charges receives an extra experience chit. If any character charges, the goblins leave behind a purse with 50 gp in their hurry.

Gain — Healing Opportunity

After the archers have departed, the heroes can rest for as long as they want.

 **Points Earned:** -30 (Healing opportunity, unlimited)

EVENT 3: THE GRAND CAVERN

Narration: As you continue to follow the corridor, you begin to feel a breeze moving past your head. You hear a rush of wind that grows louder and louder, to the point that you have to shout to be heard.

Then the corridor opens out into a vast cavern. The ceiling and floor are lost in the shadows — it must be a hundred feet deep and nearly as high. The wind howling through it makes you think that it could be miles long.

The far side of the cavern is about 80 feet away, and the only way across seems to be a stone bridge only 6 inches wide. There aren't any handrails, either. There is a metal ring sunk into the wall on each end of the bridge, and a scrap of hemp suggests that the goblins recently removed a rope that was strung across the cavern.

Trap — Crossing the Bridge

Any hero who wishes to cross the bridge must brave the winds howling through the cavern.

 **Multiple roll, Endurance Test, conditionally avoidable, remains in effect; roll Balance vs. Difficulty 8, 3 successes gets the hero across the bridge, failure triggers the "Falling!" trap below. Characters who fall and catch themselves may make unlimited extra attempts to continue crossing the bridge.**

A flight of dire bats attacks as soon as a hero has succeeded at two rolls to cross the bridge. During the combat, any attempt to cross the bridge may be made as part of normal movement — each time a character moves across a third of the bridge, that character makes a Balance roll as above. Moving across less than a third of the bridge counts as moving across a third of it.

Points Spent: 60 (2 extra successes); 20 (Difficulty 8); 10 (Failure leads to trap)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, don't get on that bridge); -20 (Extra rolls allowed, unlimited)

 The bridge is 80 feet across and 6 inches wide. Crossing requires a Balance check (DC 15) each round. Success allows the character to move

Dire Bat

NEW FOE



Dire bats are gigantic bats that hang in caverns waiting for tasty prey. Their bodies are the size of a man, and their wingspan is often 10 feet or more. They are covered with fine black hair, and are difficult to see in all but the best lighting conditions.

The bats fly past opponents and make hit-and-run attacks. This makes them hard to hit in melee combat. The only way to do so is to use the "Wait for Opportunity" maneuver and interrupt the bat's action. Bats can charge their opponents for the usual +2 attack bonus.

A dire bat's greatest weakness is its wings. Any hero may attempt a called shot upon a dire bat's wing. The attempt gives the bat +2 DFN, but if successful the attack does +2 damage. If the bat suffers a wound from an attack on its wings, it loses its ability to move and falls to the ground. The bat then suffers -3 ATK and -3 DFN, just as if it were in a grabber trap.

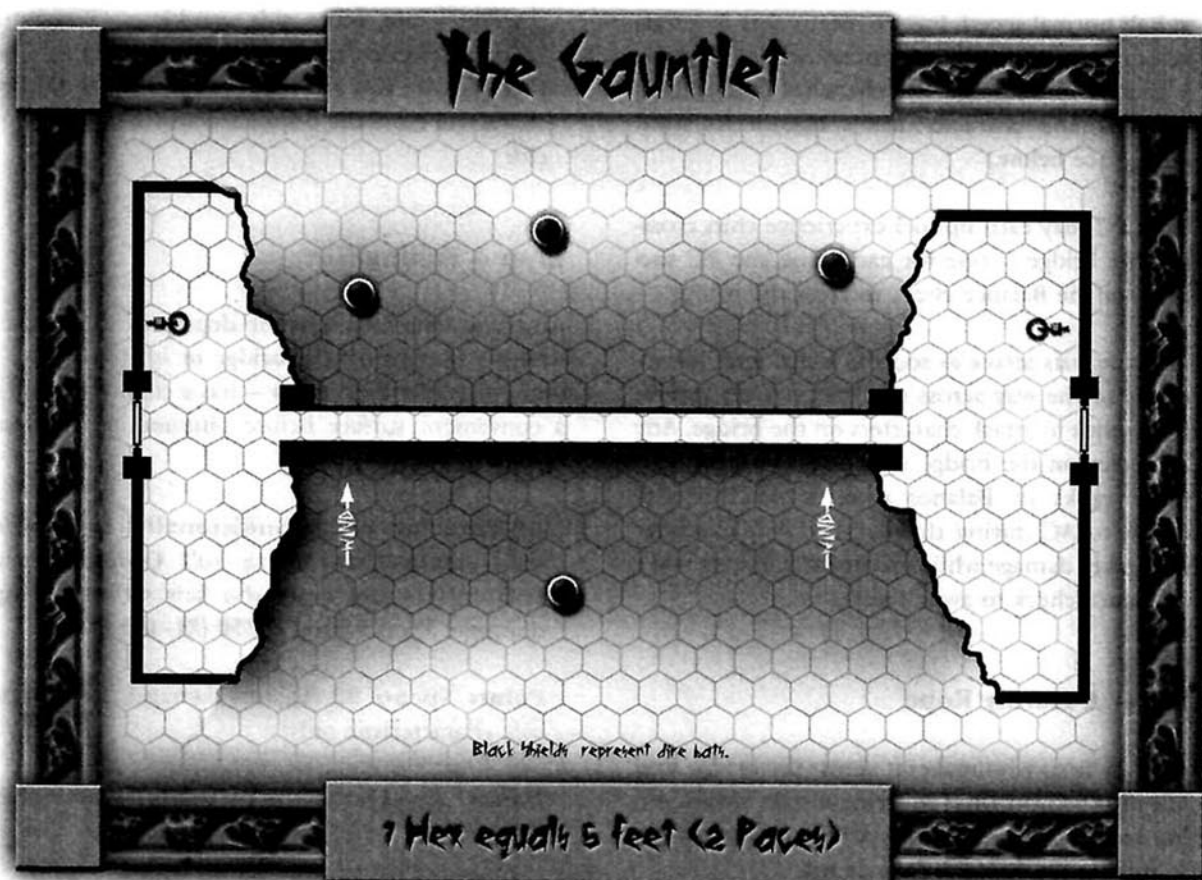
Dire bats are crafty and have night vision, but do not use missile weapons.

Max Threat: Superior

Benchmark: 9

Adjusts: +3 INIT, -1 ATK, +1 DFN, -1 Soak

Move: 30



"The Gauntlet" Combat Opponents

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Speedy	Dire Bat	2	30	Superior	+3 INIT, -1 ATK, +1 DFN, -1 Soak	Predictable
Fliedier	Dire Bat	1.3	30	Equal	+3 INIT, -1 ATK, +1 DFN, -1 Soak	Predictable
Nips	Dire Bat	1.3	30	Equal	+3 INIT, -1 ATK, +1 DFN, -1 Soak	Predictable
Bruce	Dire Bat	1.3	30	Equal	+3 INIT, -1 ATK, +1 DFN, -1 Soak	Predictable

Points Spent: 0

Combat Tactics: The bats depend on their speed and ability to make hit and run attacks. They swoop past to bite and batter the heroes with their wings. They knock their opponents into the cavern if necessary, but prefer to make the kill themselves rather than eat smashed prey.

Due to the strong wind, the bats prefer to attack from upwind and then circle around for another pass. The wind doubles their movement speed when they fly with it and halves their movement when they fly against it. They can only charge when moving with the wind.

at half normal speed. Failure means that the character cannot move for one round, while failing by 5 or more means that the character falls. (If this happens, the character has a chance to avoid falling; see below.)

Each PC may earn up to 3 experience chits crossing the bridge — one for each time the PC succeeds at the Balance check to cross the bridge.

The dire bats attack as soon as a character is two-thirds of the way across the bridge. They receive a +2 bonus to attack characters on the bridge. Any character on the bridge who does not have 5 or more ranks in Balance receives no Dexterity bonus to AC during this combat. Any character who takes damage while on the bridge must make a Balance check to avoid falling.

Gain — A Handy Rope

Any hero who makes it across the bridge may use the iron rings to string a rope across, giving any Viking who follows a +4 increase on the "Crossing the Bridge" Balance roll.

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase at -5 each)

Ropes and other aids provide a +5 circumstance bonus to the Balance rolls above. The first PC who rigs a rope or aid to help the other characters cross the bridge receives an experience chit.

Trap — Falling!

Any hero who falls into the depths of the cavern — whether he falls off the bridge or is knocked off by one of the dire bats below — has a chance to land on a convenient surface before plummeting to almost certain death.

Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect); roll **Quickness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, any hero who fails suffers **falling damage**, **Dam rating 45/50 (81–100 feet)**.

Points Spent: 92 (Falling damage); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, don't fall!)



"The Gauntlet" Combat Opponents

DIRE BATS (4)

Large Animals

CR 5; SZ L (animal); HD 8d8+24; 60 hp; Init +6 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 20 (-1 size, +6 Dex, +5 natural); Atk melee +9 (1d8+6, bite); Face 10 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Spot +11

Combat Tactics: These advanced dire bats are worth more experience points than usual due to their size and the difficult environment.

The bats depend on their speed and ability to make hit and run attacks. They swoop past to bite the PCs and batter the heroes with their wings. They knock their opponents into the cavern if necessary, but prefer to make the kill themselves rather than eat smashed prey.

Due to the strong wind, the bats prefer to attack from upwind and then circle around for another pass. The wind doubles their movement speed when they fly with it and halves their movement when they fly against it. They can only charge when moving with the wind.

 Any character who fails one of the Balance checks above by 5 or more must make a Reflex save (DC 20) to avoid falling. If the character fails this save, he falls and suffers 8d6 falling damage.

Any character who falls to the bottom and survives may climb up either side of the crevasse. Of course, there's no guarantee the bats won't attack as soon as the character is near the top again.

 The distance from the bottom of the crevasse to the top is 34 paces.

 The crevasse is 85 feet deep, with rough stone walls. To get out of it, a PC must succeed at a Climb check (DC 15).

Narration: This doesn't look so hard — but then you hear a shriek from above, and dark forms dive at you from the roof of the cavern!

Terrain — Howling Wind

 This strong wind blows at about 25 miles per hour.

 The wind imposes a **-4 penalty** on all missile fire.

Points Earned: -20 (Obstruction to missile fire, -4 penalty at -5 each)

 The wind imposes a **-2 penalty** on all ranged attacks.

Terrain — Limited Exits

 There's just one easy way out of the cavern — the way the heroes came in. (The exit on the other side of the bridge requires ability checks to reach, and so doesn't count as accessible for the purposes of limited exit.)

Points Earned: -20 (Limited exits, one exit)

Terrain — Multiple Levels

In addition to the bottom of the cavern and the ledges where the heroes are, there are two small ledges on the sides of the cavern. These ledges are located 40 feet and 60 feet below the heroes.

 **Points Earned: -15** (Multiple levels, 3 additional levels)

 Scaling the rough rock surface requires a Climb check (DC 15).



"The Gauntlet" Cost Table

This is an advanced plot set-up encounter for Vikings with an average of 500 victory points.

Points Spent:

Leave or Else	88
Shock Treatment	153
Goblin Archers	62
Crossing the Bridge	90
Falling!	112
Total Spent:	505

Points Earned:

The Fine Treasure	-40
Leave or Else	-10
Examining the Trap	-5

The Right Lock	-10
Shock Treatment	-40
Goblin Archers	-10
Screaming Vikings	-20
Healing Opportunity	-30
Crossing the Bridge	-40
A Handy Rope	-20
Falling!	-20
Terrain: Howling Winds	-20
Terrain: Limited Exits	-20
Terrain: Multiple Levels	-15
Yee-Haw! Ride'em Viking!	-80
Treasures Among the Bones	-105
Loot Cache	-20
Total Earned: -505	

Gain — Yee-Haw! Ride'em Viking!

 Any hero can try to grab and ride a passing bat (this does not take an action or the "Wait for Opportunity" maneuver). If successful, the hero gets a **+4 increase to ATK** against this bat for up to three rounds, as well as **20 victory points** for stylish play.

The bat automatically shakes the hero off after 3 rounds, but the hero lands somewhere safe when this happens. If the hero kills or cripples the bat, the hero is able to jump free to a safe place as the bat crashes.

Singular: Rush roll, roll **Jump** vs. **Difficulty 6**, if successful the hero gains **+4 increase to ATK** for 3 rounds and **20 victory points**.

Points Earned: -60 (+4 increase to ATK at -5 per point of increase, times 3 rounds); -20 (20 victory points, singular award)

 Any PC may use a grapple attempt to grab and ride a bat. If successful, the character may take the usual grapple actions (including dealing damage or attacking with a light weapon), as well as direct the bat's movement. While the character is riding, the only action the bat takes is to attempt escape.

This tactic only works once. After that, the bats wise up.

Gain — Treasures Among the Bones

If the heroes climb (or fall) down to the bottom of the cavern, they find it strewn with the bones of goblins, humans, and unidentifiable creatures.

 If they search these bones, they find a **Category E Treasure**, a **Category C Treasure**, a **Category B Treasure**, and **5 ounces of silver**.

Points Earned: -50 (Category E treasure); -30 (Category C treasure); -20 (Category B treasure); -5 (5 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 The dire bats have no treasure in the D20 System version.

Gain — Loot Cache

The bottom of the cavern is a good place to hide loot; the characters can come back for it later at their leisure.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Loot cache, recovery Difficulty 6)

Encounter 2: Women & Children

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Underground

Summary: The heroes reach the heart of the goblin fortress, and must decide how great their thirst for vengeance is.

EVENT 1: APPROACHING THE HEARTSTONE

Narration: A spiral stair leads you from the bridge cavern down to another level of the fortress. There are directions engraved in the walls; if you're reading them correctly, you're about to reach the central chamber.

Gain — The Lay of the Land

Smart Vikings may know useful facts about dwarven architecture.

 **Singular:** **No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to remember the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 12) to remember the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: The chamber ahead is known as the Heartstone — it's the dwarven equivalent to your village square. Most dwarven clans live in warrens — long strings of connected chambers that open out into the Heartstone. It's a way of living that goblins are comfortable with, so they probably use this part of the fortress for their own warrens.

As the center of dwarven life, Heartstones are also the best-defended parts of a dwarven fortress. The tunnel in front of you slopes upward; that's so the defenders have the high ground. Dwarves love building choke points and traps into the approaches to a Heartstone — and while goblins do not build elaborate traps, these goblins are obviously maintaining the traps the dwarves built.

Gain — Signs of Trouble

The heroes soon come across clues to a trap up ahead.

 **Singular:** No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: The corridor is narrower, forcing you to walk in single file. This is the perfect place for a trap, and you soon spot signs of one: old splatters of blood around head and shoulder height on the walls.

Gain — Sneakier Signs of Trouble

The obvious trap at head level should distract the Vikings from the more dangerous trap below. Heroes who fail the roll notice only the grooves at neck level.

 **Singular:** No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Traps** vs. **Difficulty 12**; failure notices only the first Closer Inspection text, while success notices both.

Points Earned: -5 (No equipment necessary); -3 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 12)

 Any character may make a Search check (DC 24) to notice both of the Closer Inspection paragraphs. A failure notices only the first.

Closer Inspection: There's a slight groove on both sides of the tunnel at neck level.

Closer Inspection: There's also a second pair of grooves around groin level and another pattern of splatters. (This pattern has been scrubbed almost into oblivion, and is very hard to see.) Based on the direction of the spray, you'd guess that there are two blades in the trap — one that comes toward you at neck level while another one catches you from behind.

Trap — Duck! Or Else!

Any character who does not duck low while walking through this part of the corridor risks a nasty gash from the slow-moving blade that swings across it.

 **Singular** roll, **conditionally avoidable** (first exposure only); roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 4**, any hero who fails suffers **Dam rating 10**.

Points Spent: 10 (Dam rating 10)



Swything Blades (CR 6)

NEW TRAP

A blade comes up from below the characters to catch them unawares.

No attack roll necessary (6d6); Reflex save (DC 24) avoids; Search (DC 24); Disable Device (DC 25).

Points Earned: -20 (Difficulty 4); -20 (Conditionally avoidable, duck low to avoid the trap); -5 (First exposure only)

 Any character who does not duck low must make a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid 1d6+2 damage.

Gain — No, Don't Duck!

 Any character who does not duck to avoid the trap above receives a +4 increase to the roll to avoid the trap below.

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase at -5 each)

 Any character who does not duck to avoid the trap above receives a +4 circumstance bonus on the Reflex save that follows.

Trap — Jump! This is the Real Trap!

The blade coming from below is faster and deadlier than the one above.

 **Standard** roll; roll **Jump** or **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 14**, heroes who fail suffer **Dam rating 48**.

Points Spent: 83 (Dam rating 48); 80 (Difficulty 14)

Points Earned: -10 (Alternate method, one extra method)

Gain — Healing Opportunity

The heroes may rest for up to three hours.

 After three hours the heroes are menaced by wandering goblins.

Points Earned: -10 (Healing opportunity, 3 hours)

EVENT 2: UNDER FIRE

Narration: You round a last bend in the passage and look up the corridor. You can tell it opens out into the Heartstone chamber a few dozen feet ahead. There is a faint scent of burning pitch, and you notice some scorch marks on the walls.

A crude trap has been set up in front of you. It was obviously placed by the goblins, and consists of little more than a large pile of pots and pans. Presumably it's intended to alert them when you approach, but you might be able to pick your way through it without setting it off.

Gain — Crashing Pans

If the heroes step carefully through the pans, they can sneak up the tunnel, see the flame gun in the next chamber before the goblins fire it at them, and attack the goblins before they're ready to fend off the heroes' assault.

 **Weak Link** roll; roll **Stealth** vs. **Difficulty 6**, if successful the heroes gain a +2 increase to the "Flame On!" roll below and an **ambush opportunity** in the combat that follows.

Points Spent: 40 (Weak link roll); 40 (Combo gain)

Points Earned: -50 (Ambush opportunity); -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 Each player character must make a Move Silently or Jump check (DC 12). If every character succeeds, then every character gains one-half cover (+2 Reflex save bonus) against the first attack of the flame thrower below.

Narration: Just before you get to the chamber's entrance, you see a large metal device with a long nozzle that points at the tunnel you're in. Two misshapen goblins catch sight of you in that same moment. Shrieking with laughter, they pull a red lever on the back of the device, and it belches a long stream of fire at you!

Trap — Flame On!

The heroes must leap out of the way and into the chamber or be covered with dwarven napalm. Any hero who catches on fire can put the fire out by diving into a fountain located in the chamber.

The combat in Event 3 begins immediately after this trap is sprung.

 **Standard** roll; roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 10**, any hero who fails suffers the effects of **raging fire**.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10); 36 (Raging fire)

Points Earned: -20 (Water source within 20 paces)

As with the lightning room trap, those PCs who hang back when the others advance are safe from the flame thrower. Those in the front must make a Reflex save DC 15 or take 4d6+4 fire damage. See the stats for the *dwarven flame thrower* artifact below.

EVENT 3: FREAKS AND THE MEEK

Narration: The Heartstone is a vaulted chamber with busts of dwarven lords staring down from above. The center is dominated by the Heartstone itself, a jagged hunk of obsidian split in half by some ancient blow. A spring rises from underneath the stone and pools in a fountain around it. Six ornately carved doorways mark the entrances to the warrens, and you can see red eyes glowing from within.

Four slaving goblin freaks — also known as goblin berserkers — stand in the middle of the chamber, while two more goblins pull levers and turn dials on the dwarven flame thrower. They swing the weapon around to fire again!

If the heroes succeeded at the “Crashing Pans” Stealth roll in the previous event, they gain an **ambush opportunity** in this combat.

If the player characters succeeded at the Move Silently or Jump checks for the “Crashing Pans” gain above and attack immediately after the “Flame On!” trap is sprung, they gain a surprise round against the goblin freaks within.

Terrain — Cover

The Heartstone provides full cover for up to three characters. It provides cover from the flame thrower crew as well as the goblin freaks.

Points Earned: -36 (Full cover for 3 characters at -12 each)

The Heartstone provides three-quarters cover for three characters (+7 AC, +3 to Reflex saves). It provides cover from the flame thrower crew as well as the goblin freaks.

Terrain — Slippery Ground

The old fountain leaks in several places, creating a large area of slippery ground.

Points Earned: -10 (Slippery ground, half of area)

Any character moving across or fighting in a slippery area must make a Balance check (DC 10) every round to avoid falling prone. A PC may

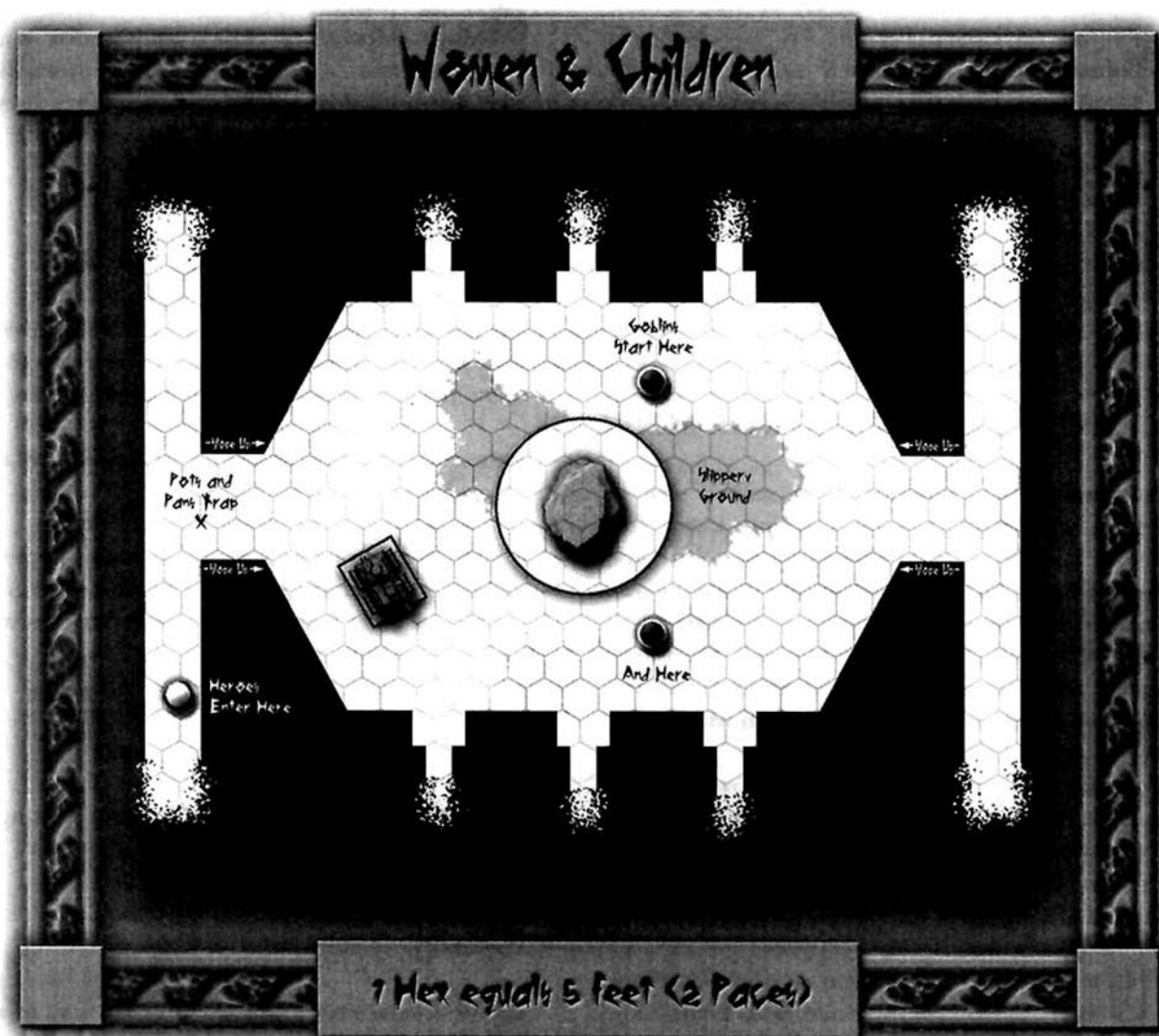


“Women & Children” Combat Opponents

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Bluk	Goblin Freak	1.3	15	Equal	+6 INIT, +1 ATK, -3 DFN, +3 DAM, -1 Soak	Self-Willed
Marg	Goblin Freak	1.3	15	Equal	+6 INIT, +1 ATK, -3 DFN, +3 DAM, -1 Soak	Self-Willed
Gork	Goblin Freak	1.3	15	Equal	+6 INIT, +1 ATK, -3 DFN, +3 DAM, -1 Soak	Predictable
Klak	Goblin Freak	1.3	15	Equal	+6 INIT, +1 ATK, -3 DFN, +3 DAM, -1 Soak	Predictable

Points Spent: 30 (Self-Willed)

Combat Tactics: Each self-willed freak partners with a predictable freak to flank and overwhelm a PC. Two other goblins running the flame thrower keep the other PCs busy without acting as combat opponents.



"Women & Children" Combat Opponents

CRAZED GOBLIN FREAKS (6)

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 4th-level Barbarians

CR 4; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 4d12+4; 35 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +4 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Rage 2/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fast Movement, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL

NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Power Attack

Combat Tactics: Two goblins man the flame thrower; the other four charge the heroes and engage in melee combat.

gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.

Terrain — Multiple Levels

The fountain, the Heartstone, and the platform the flame thrower is mounted on provide three additional levels of terrain.

 **Points Earned:** -15 (Multiple levels, 3 additional levels)

Trap — More Flame Thrower Attacks

The goblins keep firing the flame thrower at the heroes, randomly targeting the characters who are not engaged with freaks.

 **Standard roll, repeat shots, limited targeting:** one hero rolls **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 7**, if failed the hero suffers the effects of **raging fire**, the heroes may end this effect by succeeding at **2 ATK** vs. **baseline+0** rolls. These attack rolls can be melee attacks if the heroes are on the platform with the flame thrower, or ranged attacks elsewhere. The flame thrower fires once each round.

Points Spent: 36 (Raging fire); 25 (Repeat shots, limited targeting); 10 (Difficulty 7); 20 (Action sink)

 See the information on the flame thrower below. In the D20 System version, the flame thrower fires once every other round.

Narration: The last screams of battle die away. The red eyes continue to glow at you from the darkness

Dwarven Flame Thrower

NEW MINOR ARTIFACT

This dangerous contraption is the product of long-forgotten dwarven engineering. Once every other round, it fires a jet of flame 10 feet wide and 80 feet long. Any character within the path of the flame takes 4d6+4 fire damage; a Reflex save (DC 15) avoids this damage.

This device is powerful but not convenient. It requires two humanoids of Small or Medium size to operate the controls, and is so large as to be almost immovable. The operators must both use a full-round action on the same initiative to use it. It also has a limited amount of fuel — when the combat in this encounter begins, there are only 80 charges left (enough for 80 more shots). Recreating the fuel requires at least two weeks research, and an Alchemy check (DC 30). In addition, the fuel costs 50 gp of materials per charge.

The flame thrower explodes if it takes 25 or more points of damage from a

single attack; the explosion occurs one full round after the attack, on the same initiative as the attack that did it in. It does 1 point of damage for each charge remaining in the machine in this instance, dealing full damage to everyone within a 5-foot radius. Those farther away from the explosion get a break: every 5-foot increment reduces the damage by 5 points. A Reflex save (DC 15) halves this damage. This is a burst effect, so the explosion doesn't go around corners.

For example, Thurid deals the machine a mighty blow, destroying the dwarven contraption. Since the goblins have used half its charges when it explodes, she takes 40 points of damage — let's hope she makes that Reflex save! Ragnar fares slightly better 20 feet away — he takes only 25 points of damage.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 2,000 pounds.

of the passageways. Then, one by one, the hulking bodies of six goblin matriarchs emerge of from the tunnels.

One of them speaks. She says, "I am Lurna, oldest of the goblin mothers. I speak for the goblins you see and goblins you do not see."

"We are tired of the war between our two peoples. We are tired of the deaths of our children, of the waste of life and meat. We wish to put an end to this war, to make not-war with your village."

Background: Lurna may not be sure what peace is, but she is sincere in her wish to end the war. As she explains to the PCs, she makes this offer now because the heroes have killed off the war-loving goblins within this part of the complex.

There is still a faction of war-loving goblins that must be eliminated if the peace is to last. These goblins are sworn to the service of Hel, and are conducting foul rites in a temple several levels below the Heartstone — a fact that gives us a plot for the final encounter of this episode.

Gain — A Rare Moment of Diplomacy

If the heroes can overcome their natural tendency to hit goblins with axes, they can strike an accord with

the goblin matriarchs. (Then all they'll have to do is slaughter the remaining horde of war-loving goblins and find a way to stop Olaf. Easy!) The deal wins honor for the heroes, and the goblins will provide them with assistance.

 **Singular:** Dogpile roll, roll **Demeanor** vs. **Difficulty 6**, if all heroes succeed then the party gains a **mutual award** of **30 victory points**, a **Category D Treasure** (a gift of goodwill from the goblins), and a **Flag** that provides a **+4 increase** to the Bluff roll in the "Password, Please" gain in Encounter 3.

Points Earned: -40 (Category D treasure); -30 (30 victory points); -10 (Flag: +4 increase at -5 each, split -10/-10 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

 Any character may make a Diplomacy check (DC 12). If all the checks are successful, the goblins make peace with the heroes and give them a *gem of brightness*. They are willing to share food and up to 300 gp in equipment with the PCs. The heroes also receive a +4 circumstance bonus to the "Password, Please" Bluff check in the next encounter.

If the characters fail the check, then the goblins' agreement is unenthusiastic. They promise not to



"Women & Children" Cost Table

This is an advanced plot development encounter for Vikings with an average of 500 victory points.

Points Spent:

Duck! Or Else!	10
Jump! This is the Real Trap!	163
Crashing Pans	80
Flame On!	76
Self-Willed Goblin Freaks	30
More Flame Thrower Attacks	91
Total Spent:	450

Points Earned:

The Lay of the Land	-10
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Signs of Trouble	-10
Much Sneakier Signs of Trouble	-8
Duck! Or Else!	-45
No, Don't Duck!	-20
Jump! This is the Real Trap!	-10
Healing Opportunity	-10
Crashing Pans	-60
Flame On!	-20
Terrain: Cover	-36
Terrain: Slippery Ground	-10
Terrain: Multiple Levels	-15
A Rare Moment of Diplomacy	-85
Oh, Let's Just Kill Them	-111
Total Spent:	-450

attack the characters or their village, but they do not provide help or gifts to the PCs.

Narration: "We are pleased to make this agreement with you," Lurna says. "However, there is still much to do. Many of our community have sworn themselves to Hel, fiendish goddess of the underworld. Most of them are performing rites to her in an ancient temple three levels below this chamber."

"We do not know what Hel's plans are, but I have been able to learn a few small scraps of information. I shall teach you the passwords that the guards use, so that you may penetrate their defenses and destroy them."

Gain — Oh, Let's Just Kill Them

The heroes may decide they'd rather hack the goblins. They may even decide to do it after making peace with them. (It's a cold, cruel world.) If they succeed, they clean out every warren and take the goblins' possessions for themselves.

If the heroes choose this course of action, the goblins don't fight very hard to defend themselves. They're not skilled warriors, their heart isn't in the fight, and we've got better uses for the characters' time anyway.

 **Singular:** Dogpile roll, roll **ATK** vs. **base-line +0**, if the heroes succeed then they gain a **Category E Treasure**, a **Category D Treasure**, **1 ounce of silver**, and a **loot cache** with **recovery Difficulty 6**.

Points Earned: **-50** (Category E treasure); **-40** (Category D treasure); **-20** (Loot cache, recovery Difficulty 6); **-1** (1 ounce of silver)

 The PCs may decide to slaughter the goblins, but the resulting "fight" isn't worth playing out. (If the players insist on the fight, use about 50 unarmed goblins that cower and scream a lot. Yee ha.) The characters gain no experience from killing the goblins.

The goblin treasure includes the *gem of brightness* mentioned above, a dozen potions of *cure moderate wounds*, a *rope of climbing*, and all the provisions the PCs can carry.

Encounter 3: The Temple of Hel

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Underground

Summary: The heroes attack the temple of Hel, learn the fate of their chieftain, and begin their most perilous journey yet.

EVENT 1: BIG DOOR, NO WELCOME MAT

Narration: This tunnel leads to a ten-foot-tall steel door. A green light shines out around its edges. In the distance you can hear a thumping noise. It sounds like a gigantic war drum playing a ragged heartbeat.

There's a sentry slot positioned in the center of the door. It's open, and you see the occasional flash of red eyes as a goblin peers out of it.

Closer Inspection: After looking at the door more carefully, you decide that you can force it open if necessary. Doing so is slow and noisy work, though. If you want to get the advantage of surprise, you're better off convincing the sentry to let you in.

Gain — A Cunning Disguise

It's easier to get past the sentries if the heroes can successfully disguise themselves as goblins. Luckily, goblin guards aren't known for their intelligence.

 **Singular:** No-Fault roll; roll **Disguise** vs. **Difficulty 9**; if successful the heroes gain a **+2 increase** on the Bluff roll below.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9)

Points Earned: **-15** (No-fault); **-10** (+2 increase at -5 each)

 Any character may make a Disguise check (DC 18); if successful the PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on the Bluff check below.

Narration: As you approach the door, the goblin on duty stares out at you. "Password," he croaks.

Gain — Password, Please

The heroes must give the correct password to the sentry and convince him that they are goblins. They can skip this trap and force entry into the temple, but if they do they give up any chance of ambushing the goblins and have to face the "Force the Door" trap that follows.

Singular: Dogpile roll, Lady or Tiger; roll **Bluff** vs. **Difficulty 12**, if successful the heroes receive an **ambush opportunity** against the combat opponents in Event 2, if failed the heroes must face the "Force the Door" trap below. **Flag:** if the heroes succeeded at the Demeanor roll in Encounter 2's "A Rare Moment of Diplomacy," they receive a **+4 increase** to this Bluff roll.

Points Spent: 60 (Difficulty 12); 10 (Failure leads to trap)

Points Earned: -50 (Ambush opportunity); -10 (Flag: +4 increase at -5 each, split -10/-10 between assignment and use); -5 (Flag affects entire party)

Any PC may make a Bluff check (DC 20) to trick the goblins into letting them in the door. If all the characters who attempt the check succeed, the goblins let them in and the PCs gain a surprise round against them. The heroes also receive a +4 circumstance bonus to this Bluff check if they succeeded at the "A Rare Moment of Diplomacy" check in Encounter 2.

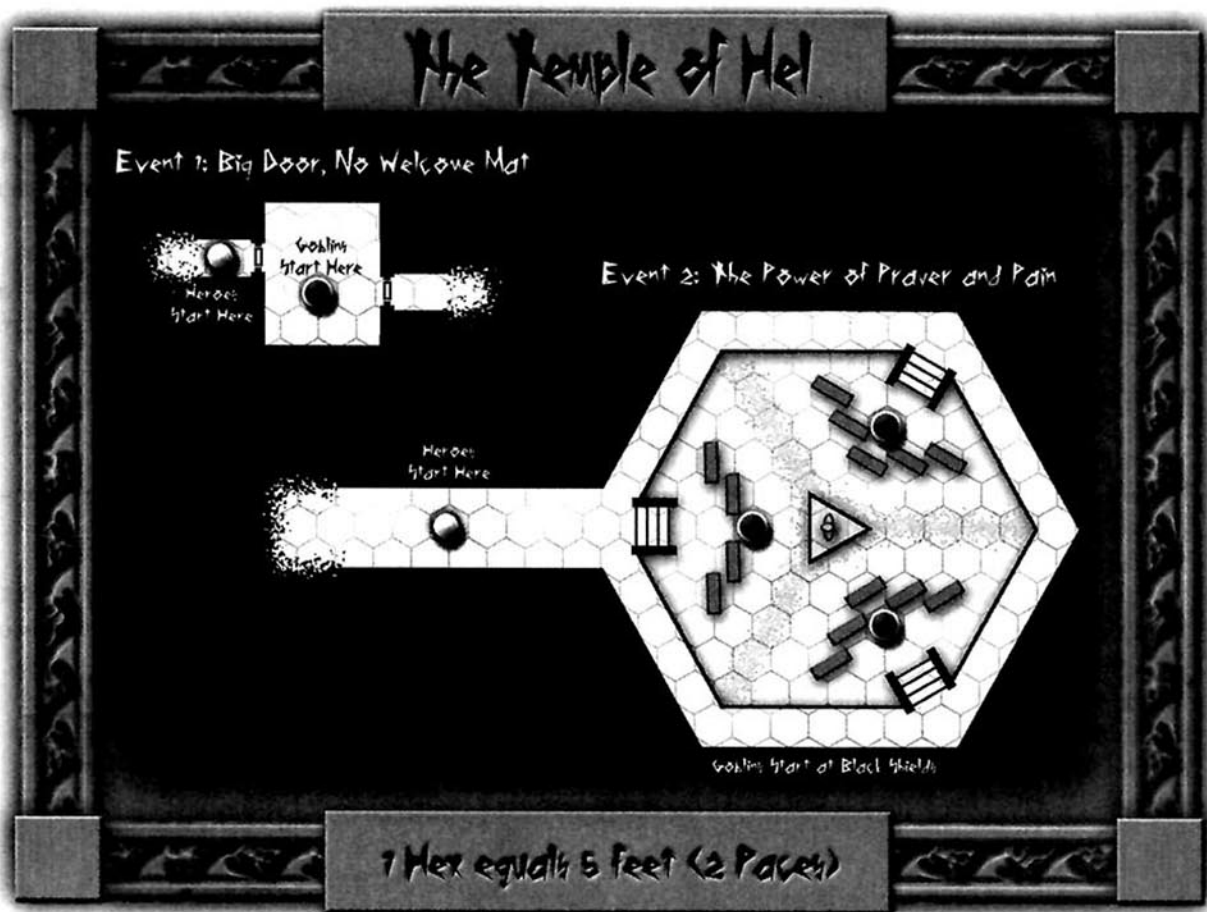
If any of the characters fail at the Bluff check, the goblins refuse to open the door. The heroes then have to force it open, which may give the sentries time to warn the other goblins in the temple.

If the heroes wish to attack the goblins through the sentry slit, the door provides nine-tenths cover (+10 AC, +4 to Reflex saves).

Background: Just in case you're curious, the password is "giblets."

Trap — Force the Door

If the heroes can't or won't convince the goblins to let them into the temple, they must pull the door up — it's



rigged like a portcullis — and get under it fast enough to eliminate the sentries. If the characters can't get through the door fast enough, the goblins will have time to prepare a defense.

It takes two heroes to lift the door, and the players can choose who attempts the roll.

 **Singular:** Dogpile roll, **limited targeting**; two heroes roll **Strength vs. Difficulty 10**; if either hero fails then the heroes suffer **-6 INIT** for two rounds in the Event 2 combat that follows.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only); 20 (-6 INIT at 5 per -3 INIT, for 2 rounds)

Points Earned: -10 (Limited targeting, 2 heroes)

 The iron door has hardness 10 and 60 hit points. Breaking down the door requires a Strength check (DC 30); so does lifting it up (DC 25). Up to two characters may assist the PC making the Strength check by using aid another actions; helpers each add a +2 to the primary roll if they make a Strength (DC 10) check.

If opening the door takes more than two rounds, the goblins flee and reinforce the other goblins in the center of the temple.

Gain — The Sentries' Treasure

 Once the heroes are through the door, they automatically eliminate the sentries. If they search the bodies they find a **Category A Treasure** and **9 oz. of silver**.

Points Earned: -10 (Category A treasure); -9 (9 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 The sentries have 50 sp and a gold-inlaid dagger worth 30 gp.

Narration: Once the door is open and the sentries are dealt with, you advance into the temple. It's hot, and the green glow is painful to your eyes. You find your steps slipping into synch with the thunderous heartbeat sound around you.

Trap — Miasma

The Hel-energies channeled by the temple are inimical to human life. The Vikings must dig into their reserves of endurance or suffer debilitating headaches and blurry vision.

 **Standard roll;** roll **Stamina vs. Difficulty 10**, heroes with **Divine Connections** to **Heimdall** add that connection to the Difficulty of the roll, since heroes who are guided by this perceptive god are particularly susceptible to the forces around them; any character who fails suffers **1 point of Impairment** for the rest of the encounter.

Points Spent: 54 (1 point of Impairment, applied to one combat [30], 2 traps [5 each], 1 gain [5 each], and 3 freestanding rolls [3 each]); 40 (Difficulty 10); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only); 15 (In defiance of the gods: Heimdall)

 Each character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). Any PC who fails suffers 1d4 temporary damage to their Strength score. Temporary damage returns at a rate of one point per day.



Rough Goblin Sentries (2)

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 2nd-level Fighters

CR 2; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 2d10+3; 18 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +2 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.;

AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +3, Jump +1, Listen +2, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Toughness

EVENT 2: THE POWER OF PRAYER AND PAIN

Narration: The green light has grown brighter. It pulses with the heartbeat that threatens to deafen you. It's so loud that you can barely hear the guttural voices chanting in the chamber ahead.

You draw closer. There's no sign of sentries; the goblins must be busy with their ceremony. You take a few more steps onto a balcony, and then you can see what writhes on the temple floor below.

Thirty goblin warriors bow and chant before a pillar of green fire. A goblin shaman dances around it, waving his brazier and feeding his disciples' frenzy. The fire is ten feet across; it pulses with the rhythm of a heartbeat, and jerking madly within it is your chieftain, Osric.

You can see him clearly despite the flames. His limbs hang at unnatural angles. He has been disemboweled, and cracked and splintered bones protrude from what once were his joints. He is in agony.

Gain — Rivers in the Flame

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: The room is filled with glaring green light, but as you look around you see polished steel mirrors positioned in corners and along the walls. The light seems strongest there, reflecting in bright lines between the mirrors and the pillar of fire.

Gain — What Happened to Osric?

Clever heroes may be able to piece together the mystic significance of the scene.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to realize the Closer Inspection information.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection information.

Closer Inspection: Osric can't possibly be alive with those injuries, but he is obviously aware of what is happening to him. His soul seems to be trapped within this body, harnessed to fuel the infernal engine of this temple. His suffering and the chanting of the goblins seems to pull in magical energy from another realm — perhaps the land of Hel herself!

Gain — The Perfect Ambush

If the heroes attempted and failed the "Force the Door" trap, then the goblins are aware of their arrival and prepared to fight.

 If the heroes failed the "Force the Door" roll then the heroes suffer -6 INIT for two rounds in this combat.

Alternately, the heroes may have a chance to ambush the goblins.

 Any hero who succeeds at a Move Silently check (DC 20) gains a surprise round against the goblins. This check may only be attempted if the heroes successfully bluffed the sentries in "Password,



"The Temple of Hel" Combat Opponents

30 FANATICAL GOBLINS

Type: Goblin Warriors

Move: 15

Threat Value: Inferior (mass combat)

Adjusts: None

Predictable/Self-Willed: Predictable
Points Spent: 60

Combat Tactics: Surround the Vikings and tear them apart!

Please" or forced the door open in two rounds or less in "Force the Door."

If the heroes were successful at the "Password, Please" roll in Event 1, they receive an **ambush opportunity** against these combat opponents.

In addition, the heroes may also have a chance to creep into particularly good combat positions before combat begins.

Singular: Scramble roll; roll **Stealth** vs. **Difficulty 10**, any hero who succeeds gains a **+9 increase** to **INIT** for the first two rounds of the combat that follows and may begin the combat in any location on the balcony; all other heroes begin the combat at the door. This gain may only be attempted if the heroes succeeded at either the "Password, Please" gain or the "Force the Door" trap.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10)



"The Temple of Hel" Combat Opponents

GOBLIN HORDES (5)

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 2nd-level Fighter Hordes

CR 4; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 2d10+3 (x6); 108 hp (each individual has 18 hp); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +2 (1d8-1, morningstar); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Massive Attack; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fixed Initiative, Multiple Targets; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +3, Jump +1, Listen +2, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Toughness

Combat Tactics: The 30 cultists are organized into 5 hordes of 6 goblins each.

GURG, GOBLIN SHAMAN

Small Goblinoid (Goblin) 7th-level Cleric

CR 7; SZ S (goblinoid); HD 7d6+14; 45 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk melee +5 (1d6-1/1d6-1, staff); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Rebuke Undead 2/day, Spells, Spontaneous Casting; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8

Skills: Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Scribe +3, Spellcraft +3

Feats: Combat Casting, Leadership

Spells: (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1) Gurg worships the goddess Hel and has chosen the Death and Destruction domains. These domains allow him to use Death Touch once per day and Smite once per day (+4 attack bonus, +7 damage bonus). The DC to resist his spells is 13 + the spell level. Gurg has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 level — *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light, mending, read magic*

1st level — *command, divine favor, doom, inflict light wounds*, protection from good, sanctuary*

2nd level — *blindness/deafness, bull's strength, death knell*, hold person, resist elements*

3rd level — *blindness, contagion*, dispel magic, magic circle against good*

4th level — *inflict critical wounds*, unholy blight*

Combat Tactics: Gurg casts *sanctuary* on himself, then powers up with *divine power, bull's strength*, and *protection from good*, if possible. (Exactly which spells Gurg casts depends on how well the PCs are doing against the goblins.) Gurg enters combat after that, casting *unholy blight* if the opportunity presents itself.

Points Earned: -30 (+9 increase to INIT at -5 points per +3 INIT, multiplied by 2 rounds)

Mass Combat — 30 Goblin Cultists

The combat begins when the goblins spot the party. They immediately cease chanting and attack, swarming up walls and pillars to reach the heroes as quickly as they can.

The goblin shaman remains on the dais while the others attack. His name is Gurg, and he is not considered to be one of the fanatical goblin cultists.

 Gurg is represented by the "Gurg Strikes!" trap and the "Kill Gurg!" gain below.

Terrain — Limited Exits

The only way out — at least for now — is the door the heroes came in.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Limited exits, one exit)

Terrain — Weird Magic

Hel's power makes armor weaker and blades more likely to strike true.

 All heroes and foes suffer a -3 **penalty** to Soak for the duration of this combat.

Points Earned: -30 (Weird magic, -3 penalty at -10 each)

 The critical threat range of all weapons is increased by one.

Terrain — Damaging Place

 The pillar of fire is a damaging place that does **Dam rating 25**.

Points Earned: -30 (Damaging place, Dam rating 25)

 The pillar of fire does 1d6 damage per round to those touching or within it.

The heroes might try to rescue Osric from the fire. If they do so, he'll warn them away and struggle to remain

where he is. (He has a reason, which is revealed after the combat; he can't be removed from it by mortal means.)

Terrain — Barriers

The four long pews the goblins are kneeling and chanting on can be used in combat. Three characters can fit behind each one.

 **Points Earned:** -12 (4 barriers at -3 each, does not count as terrain feature)

 Any character who hides behind a pew gains one-quarter cover (+2 AC, +1 Reflex save).

Terrain — Additional Features

The balcony, the temple floor, and the raised altar count as different levels of terrain. The various stairs between the levels are sloped surfaces.

 Due to the limit of 3 terrain features, none of these features count for earning encounter design points.

 Any character who is hit while standing on sloped terrain must make a Balance check (DC 10 + the damage dealt). If the check is failed, the character slides down the slope and lands prone at the bottom of the terrain.

Trap — The Light! It Burns!

Several bright beams of light cross the altar. The Vikings must avoid this energy when approaching the altar or be burned by it.

 **Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect);** roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 10**, any character who fails suffers **Dam rating 20, armor-ignoring**.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10); 25 (Dam rating 20); 10 (Ignores armor)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, don't cross the beams)

 Any character crossing the beams must make a Jump check (DC 15) or a Reflex save (DC 15). Any character who fails this roll suffers 5d6 fire damage.

Any character may take 10 on this check by moving at half normal speed. For example, a character with a speed of 30 feet may take 10 on the check/save by moving only 15 feet during a move-equivalent action.

Trap — Gurg Strikes!

When 12 goblins have been killed, Gurg the shaman places his diamond-tipped staff in the path of the energy beam passing over his head, using the refraction of the facets to direct a ferocious blast of Hel-energy at the warrior who has killed the most goblins. (If there's a tie for most goblins killed, choose randomly among the characters who are tied.) This action burns out the diamond on the staff and ruins it.

 **Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only), limited targeting;** roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 10**, if failed the character suffers **Dam rating 20, armor-ignoring**.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10); 25 (Dam rating 20); 10 (Ignores armor)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, either kill Gurg before he strikes or don't be the character who killed the most goblins); -15 (Limited targeting, only one target); -5 (First exposure only)

 The character who killed the most goblins must make a Reflex save (DC 20) to avoid 6d6 fire damage.

If Gurg is killed before he has the opportunity to blast a character, the diamond on the staff is worth 1000 gp.

Gain — Kill Gurg!

 Any Viking may kill Gurg by succeeding at an attack action.

Singular: **Rush** roll; roll **ATK** vs. **baseline +0**, if successful the hero gains a **singular award of 15 victory points**.

Points Spent: 10 (Combat action required)

Points Earned: -20 (Extra rolls allowed, unlimited); -15 (15 victory points at -1 each)

Gain — Treasures Obvious and Hidden

 The goblins are carrying a total of one **Category A Treasure**, 4 ounces of silver and 6 ounces of liar's silver. There is a **Category C Treasure** on the altar. If the heroes search the altar, they find a compartment with a **Category D Treasure** and a **Category F Treasure**.

Points Spent: 6 (6 oz. liar's silver at 1 each)

Points Earned: -75 (Category F treasure); -40 (Category D treasure); -30 (Category C treasure); -10 (Category A treasure); -4 (4 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 If the PCs search the goblins, they find 200 sp and a collection of gold nose rings and silver ear rings worth a total of 150 gp. Two silver candlesticks worth 150 gp each decorate the altar. If they make a Search check (DC 15), they find a divine scroll inscribed with *flame strike* and *righteous might* hidden within the altar; the caster level of the scroll is 9th.

Gain — Loot Cache

If the heroes leave their treasure here, they have a good chance of being able to retrieve it later.

 The **recovery Difficulty** for this loot cache is 6.

Points Earned: -20 (Loot cache, recovery Difficulty 6)

Gain — Examining Osric

The heroes may want to learn if Osric can be healed.

 This Healer roll can be made during or after the battle, and is based on Perception.

Singular: **No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Healer** vs. **Difficulty 6** to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Heal check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: After studying Osric's wounds, it's clear that they cannot be healed. He is a dead man, and only magic holds his soul within his body.

Osric gives you a pained smile as you examine him. "No," he says. "There's nothing you can do but set me free. Soon you shall do so, but I have things to tell you. I have seen many things ..."

His eyes close for a moment. "Hurry. Gather your companions. We don't have much time."

Flag — Osric's Gift

Narration: After the goblins are dispatched, the pillar of fire begins to flicker. The thunderous heartbeat softens and stutters a little. Osric gestures weakly to you, bidding you approach him one last time.

"My beloved kinsmen," he says. "You came for me, and I thank you. I grieve that I can only reward your loyalty with greater perils.

"You know most of what has happened, I think. Olaf betrayed me and made a secret pact with a goblin shaman. He took control of our village; the shaman used my soul to channel Hel's power into this world. The flames around me exist in two realms, our world and the dank domain of Niflheim.

"Oh, my poor kinsmen! My thoughts had wings within the fire ... I could see all of Hel's terrible plans. Olaf is but a few days from the Thing. He and his followers will infiltrate it, strike the great chieftains down in one blow, open a ... gateway from Niflheim into the heart of our lands."

Osric's head lolls for a moment. He pulls it up again, and fixes you with the bleary gaze of his remaining eye. "You must stop Olaf," he says, "but you cannot reach him in time, not traveling through this world. You must journey through Niflheim, where distances and times have less meaning. You must reach the Thing and stop Olaf ... you are our people's only hope!"

The pillar of flame flickers again for a moment. Osric sags, but speaks a few more words. "Move quickly. Step into the flame with me, and cut off my head. When the flames fall you will be in Niflheim.

"Your journey will be difficult, but do not fear. I have one last gift to give you, my thanes." He stretches out his hands to you. "When the time comes ... when you face your greatest enemy ... strike your mightiest blow in my name."



"The Temple of Hel" Cost Table

This is an advanced plot development encounter for Vikings with an average of 500 victory points.

Points Spent:

A Cunning Disguise	30
Password, Please	70
Force the Door	80
Miasma	129
The Perfect Ambush	40
Mass Combat: 30 Goblins	60
The Light! It Burns!	75
Gurg Strikes!	75
Kill Gurg!	10
Treasures Obvious and Hidden	6
Total Spent:	575

Points Earned:

A Cunning Disguise	-25
Password, Please	-65

Force the Door	-10
The Sentries' Treasure	-19
Rivers in the Flame	-10
What Happened to Osric?	-10
The Perfect Ambush	-30
Terrain: Limited Exits	-20
Terrain: Weird Magic	-30
Terrain: Damaging Terrain	-30
Terrain: Barriers	-12
The Light! It Burns!	-20
Gurg Strikes	-40
Kill Gurg!	-35
Treasures Obvious and Hidden	-159
Loot Cache	-20
Examining Osric	-10
Osric's Gift	-15
Osric's Tale	-5
Mercy	-10
Total Spent:	-575

Osric shudders. "Now, act quickly! I feel my soul unraveling!"

 Any hero present for Osric's speech gains a **Flag** that provides a **+6 increase** to all his attacks during any one round (player's choice) of the final combat in Episode 4.

Points Earned: -15 (Flag: +6 increase at -5 per, split -15/-15 between assignment and use)

 Any PC who is present for Osric's speech may use the Smite Evil paladin supernatural ability once during the final combat in Episode 4. Characters who already have this ability receive an additional use.

Flag — Osric's Tale

 Any hero who hears Osric's speech also gains a **Flag** that provides a **+2 increase** to the "Explain Yourself" Skald roll in Episode 4.

Points Earned: -5 (Flag: +2 increase at -5 per, split -5/-5 between assignment and use)

 Any PC who hears Osric's speech also receives a +2 bonus to the "Explain Yourself" Diplomacy check in Episode 4.

Gain — Mercy

 The hero who strikes off Osric's head receives a **singular award of 10 victory points**.

Points Earned: -10 (10 victory points at -1 each)

 The PC who slays Osric gains an experience chit.

Narration: As Osric dies, the flames collapse around you. Suddenly you are somewhere else! A bleak landscape of dead plants and choking green clouds stretches out around you.

You are in Niflheim, and you do not know how you will get home.

EPISODE 4: JOURNEY TO DESTINY

In which the heroes brave the dangers of Niflheim, find a gate back to Midgard, and force a showdown with Olaf.

Encounter 1: The Forest of Bones

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Niflheim

Summary: The heroes must survive the environment of Niflheim and figure out where they're going next.

EVENT 1: THE CHOKING WIND

Narration: You stand on a vast featureless plain of rotting vegetation. There is no sign of life, but the bones of small animals are scattered on the ground around you. An acrid wind burns your nostrils.

A heavy green fog is being carried towards you by the wind. What do you do?

Gain — Preparations Help

The fog burns eyes and lungs, but the heroes can protect themselves from it.

 A wet cloth over the face provides a **+2 increase** to the Stamina roll that follows, and there may be other ways of gaining this bonus, at the runner's discretion.

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 The PCs can gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the Fortitude save below by putting wet cloths over their faces or taking other preparations.

Trap — The Choking Cloud

The fog is highly acidic, and the characters must endure it as best they can.

 **Standard** roll; roll **Stamina** vs. **Difficulty 10**, any hero who fails suffers **Dam rating 22**, **armor-ignoring** and **1 point of Impairment** for the rest of the encounter.

Points Spent: 78 (1 point of Impairment to one combat sequence [30], 4 gains [5 each], 2 traps [5 each], and 6 free-standing rolls [3 each]); 32 (Dam rating 22); 40 (Difficulty 10); 30 (Combo trap); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only); 10 (Ignores armor)

 Each character must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or suffer 1d6+3 temporary Constitution score damage. Temporary ability score damage returns at a rate of one point per day.

Gain — Healing Opportunity

After the cloud passes, the heroes may recover as long as they like.

 However, they receive a +2 increase to the "Supply Management" Survival roll that follows if they rest for less than one day.

Points Earned: -30 (Healing opportunity, unlimited); -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 Keep track of the characters' supplies — if they spend a day or more resting here their supplies are reduced accordingly.

Gain — Help Wanted

The characters could use a little help finding their way, and this hint should help them get it.

 **Singular:** No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll Lore vs. Difficulty 6 to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: Niflheim is a trackless realm of shifting geography and distorted time. The landscape is without landmarks, there's no sun, and you have nothing to indicate where you should go next. Wander long enough and you can get almost anywhere, but your supplies are limited. Your party could use some guidance, but it would take the wisdom of Odin to figure out exactly what direction to go in ...

 If the players still seem stumped after this hint, any character may make an Intelligence check (DC 12) to realize that it's possible to gain Odin's

help by constructing a shrine to him. Any character in this setting automatically knows how to construct a shrine, though only a divine spellcaster can cast *consecrate* upon it.

If the heroes decide not to construct a shrine to Odin, skip ahead to the "Time Enough" gain.

Gain — Calling Odin

The characters may assemble a shrine to Odin and activate it by inscribing mystic runes upon it.

 **Singular:** No-Fault roll; roll Lore vs. Difficulty 6, unlimited extra attempts allowed, if successful the heroes gain a shrine to Odin and a +2 increase on the "Which Way?" Divine Awareness roll that follows.

Points Spent: 20 (Combo gains)

Points Earned: -20 (Extra rolls allowed, unlimited); -20 (Shrine to Odin); -15 (No-fault); -10 (+2 increase at -5 each)

 The characters may construct a shrine to Odin (this takes one day) and then cast a *consecrate* spell upon it. If they do so, any character who worships at the shrine may receive the benefit of either a *cure moderate wounds* (which heals 2d8+10 hit points) or a *divination* spell (PC's choice). Each character may receive this benefit only once per day.

Gain — Divine Aid

If the heroes construct a shrine to Odin, any character may worship at it and ask for strength in the journey to come. Odin rewards those who are strong of heart.

 **Singular:** Scramble roll; roll Bravery vs. Difficulty 12, successful heroes gain 1 point of Invigoration for the rest of the encounter.

Points Spent: 60 (Difficulty 12)

Points Earned: -43 (1 point of Invigoration, applied to 1 combat [-30], 1 trap [-5], 1 gain [-5], and 1 freestanding roll [-3])

 Any character worshipping at the shrine may also make a Will save (DC 24) to gain the benefits of a *lesser restoration* or *remove curse* spell (PC's choice) once per day. A cleric may intercede for the charac-

ter and make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) in lieu of the Will save.

Gain — Which Way?

By worshipping at their shrine to Odin, the characters may also gain a better idea of where to go. If they succeed, the sky brightens to their left and they hear the caw of a raven.

 **Singular: No-Fault** roll; roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10**; if successful the heroes gain a **+2 increase** on the "Supply Management" **Survival** roll that follows. Heroes who were successful at the "Calling Odin" Lore roll get a **+2 increase** on this roll.

Points Spent: 40 (Difficulty 10)

Points Earned: -15 (No-fault); -10 (+2 increase at -5 per)

 Almost any divination spell will reduce the supplies required while traveling in this realm (see "Supply Management" below) from 14 days to 7 days. This includes the spells provided by worshipping at the shrine.

Narration: You set off across the plains and hope for the best. The journey that follows is eerily quiet. You're not sure how long you walk; you find yourself stopping and eating in an almost dreamlike state. Time must be passing — your food and water supplies are rapidly dwindling — but you're barely conscious of it.

Gain — Time Enough

Days are passing for the characters, but time moves much slower back in Midgard. Any character who chose to worship at the shrine to Odin earlier may attempt to realize this.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: You still have a tenuous connection to Odin, a little tickle in the back of your mind. You feel

a sense of confidence, a feeling that you are making good time despite the days that seem to be going by.

Background: Another sign that the flow of time is distorted is that despite having to stop and eat regularly, the characters never need to sleep. They can sleep or meditate whenever they choose to, they just never feel a physical need to do so.

Gain — Here, Take My Share

 Any Viking may take a **-2 penalty** to the **Survival** roll that follows to give another Viking a **+2 increase** to the roll. This generosity earns the giving character a **singular award of 10 victory points**. Any Viking may give or receive this bonus up to two times, but no Viking may both give and receive the bonus.

Points Spent: 10 (-2 penalty at 5 each)

Points Earned: -10 (+2 increase at -5 each); -10 (10 victory points at -1 each)

 Any character may eat fewer rations to increase the rations available to other characters. Characters who go hungry make rolls for starvation sooner, while characters who get extra food make starvation rolls later; see below.

Trap — Supply Management

The Vikings' supplies dwindle quickly, and they must ration what remains or suffer starvation.

 **Weak Link** roll; roll **Survival** vs. **Difficulty 10**; if any hero fails then all heroes suffer **Dam rating 20, armor-ignoring**. Heroes who took less than a full day to rest in the last "Healing Opportunity" receive a **+2 increase** to this roll. Heroes who were successful at their "Which Way" Divine Awareness roll also gain a **+2 increase** on this roll.

Points Spent: 40 (Weak link); 40 (Difficulty 10); 25 (Dam rating 20); 10 (Armor-ignoring)

 The character use 14 days' worth of supplies while traveling. (This can be reduced; see "Which Way?") They risk starvation if they run out of food. It's assumed that they won't run out of water — there are brackish pools scattered around the landscape, and most clerics can create water.

A character can go without food for 3 days and suffer only discomfort. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) each day or sustain 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Characters who have taken subdual damage from lack of food are fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity scores, can't charge or run). This damage cannot be recovered until the character gets food — not even magic that restores hit points heals this damage.

Narration: You trudge forward for days, but the landscape never changes. The chasm appears in front of you so suddenly that you almost stumble into it.

EVENT 2: WHISPERS IN THE BONES

Narration: A deep gash splits the plain in two. There's no slope, and no sign of hills or erosion. This is an unnatural fracture in the landscape, about 200 feet across and stretching to the horizon in either direction.

There's no sun in the sky to cast shadows, so you can see the depths of the chasm perfectly in the greenish light that suffuses this realm. The walls are jagged but climbable, and there seems to be some kind of forest below. A light fog shrouds spindly tree branches, concealing the ground below.

Gain — Looking Closer

The heroes may be concerned about the fog below. If they stare at it for a while, they can learn more about it.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection information.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection information.

Closer Inspection: After watching the fog for a while, you decide that it's not the same kind of cloud that choked you earlier. It's a lighter shade, and the thin tendrils curl around the trees in a way that's very different from the thick banks of fog you encountered before.

You notice something about the trees, as well. The leafless branches are short and bend at unusual angles. You

realize why they look familiar after a few moments — they're bones.

Background: The heroes don't have to go down into the chasm, but there's nowhere else to go. They can traipse back and forth along the side of the pit until you get tired of it and threaten them with wandering monsters, but sooner or later they're going to have to go down.

Gain — Well-Equipped Vikings

 If any Viking has climbing gear, then the entire party receives a **+2 increase** to the Climb roll below. If every member of the party has climbing gear, the party receives an additional **+1 increase** to the roll, for a total of +3.

Points Earned: -15 (+3 increase at -5 each)

Gain — The Well-Placed Piton

If the characters find a good place to climb down the chasm walls, they avoid exhaustion and have an easier time defending against the bone trees. If the heroes fail this roll, the climb down is long and difficult, leaving them exhausted at the end.

 This roll tests the planning behind the climb; no roll is necessary for the climb itself. As a result, it uses Intelligence + Climb instead of Strength + Climb. **Equipment isn't necessary**, but having it provides a bonus.

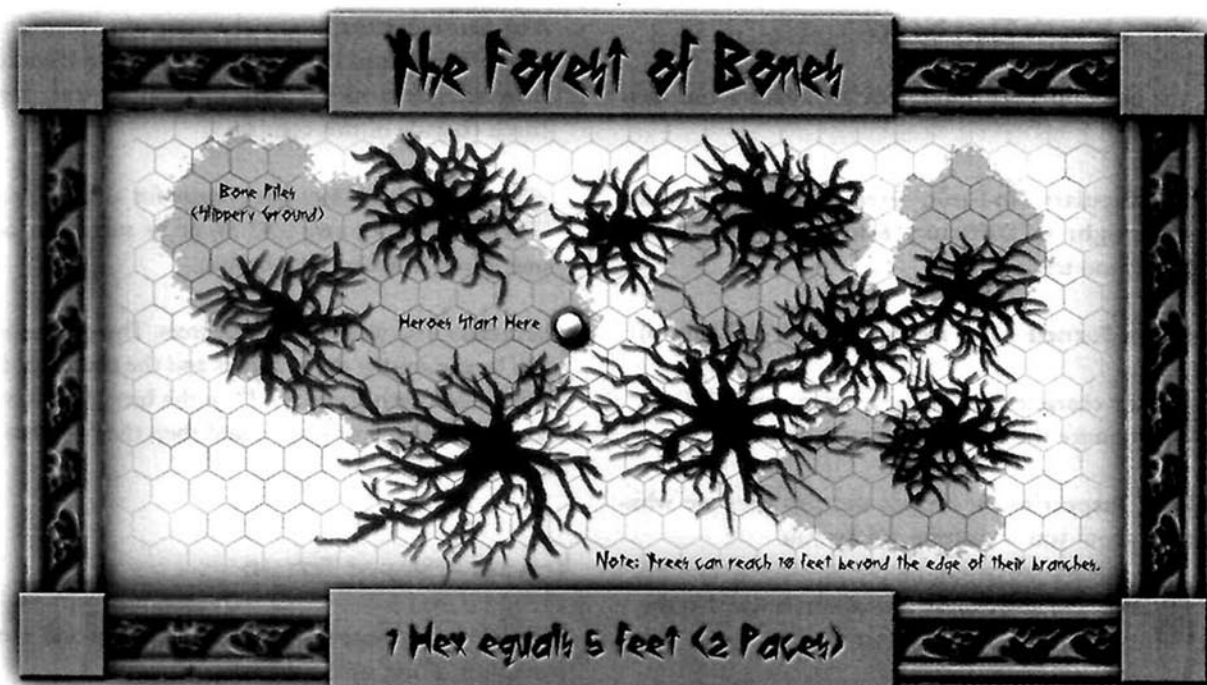
Singular: No-Fault roll; roll **Climb** vs. **Difficulty 8**; if any character is successful then the entire party receives a **+3 increase** to DFN for the first **three rounds** of combat. (The advantage disappears after a few rounds as the heroes tire from combat and the trees step up their attacks.)

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8)

Points Earned: -45 (+3 increase at -5 each for 3 rounds); -15 (No-fault); -5 (Equipment not needed)

 Each character must make a Climb check (DC 25) or be fatigued during the combat that follows.

Narration: It's cold at the bottom. The ground is white with a mixture of tiny bones and snow. Finger bones and toe bones are piled up in drifts like leaves.



Bone Trees

NEW FOE



These monstrous plants take the form of familiar trees, but are made entirely of human bones. They are animated by the spirits of unlucky travelers who died of exposure in the woods, and they hate all living things.

Bone trees are rooted to the ground. They cannot move, and they cannot be knocked over or moved by the player characters. The trees can move the PCs around, though, and they make up for their lack of mobility by pushing the characters into difficult positions.

Bone trees occupy more than one hex. One hex (usually the central hex, though the exact position can vary) represents the trunk, and cannot be occupied by other characters. The other hexes represent the branches of the tree, and can be occupied by other characters. The tree can attack or be attacked by any character within one of its hexes.

There is no limit to a bone tree's size, but only the largest and most dangerous trees are more than 20 paces in diameter. Any two bone trees can overlap as long as the area where they overlap is six or fewer hexes in size.

Because they cannot move, bone trees have their own approach to the Foe Target Choice Flowchart (**Rune** rulebook, page 196). When deciding which foe to attack, the trees take into account only those heroes who are within the area they themselves occupy. Heroes outside the area of the tree are ignored.

Bone trees can see in the dark. They are not crafty and do not use missile weapons.

Max Threat: Exceptional

Benchmark: 8

Adjusts: -4 DFN, +10 HP, Res +9

Move: 0

Mix: 0

Gain — What's That Noise?

If the heroes pay attention, they get a hint about their next foe.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Insight** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Listen check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: It sounds like the trees are whispering about you — plotting against you!

 *Detect evil* and similar divinations reveal that the trees have an evil alignment.

Gain — Be Prepared

 If the heroes get out their weapons and prepare to fight, they gain a **+6 increase** to INIT in the first round of combat.

Points Earned: -10 (+6 increase at -5 per +3)

Also remember that if any character was successful at the "Well-Placed Piton" Climb roll then the entire party receives a **+3 increase** to DEFN for the first **three rounds** of this combat.

 Any hero who does not prepare for a fight must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or be surprised for one round when combat begins.

Narration: You walk among the trees. The only sound is the breeze among the branches and the crackle of the bones underneath your feet. Then the breeze dies away. There is a moment of silence, and then the branches of the trees stab at you!

Terrain — Sloped Terrain

Each tree is positioned on a hillock of bones and snow. Two-thirds of the area is sloped.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Sloped surfaces, two-thirds of area)

 Any character who is hit while standing on sloped terrain must make a Balance check (DC 10 + the damage dealt). If the check is failed, the character slides down the slope and lands prone at



"The Forest of Bones" Combat Opponents

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Oak	Bone Tree	1.3	0	Equal	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Ash	Bone Tree	1.3	0	Equal	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #1	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #2	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #3	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #4	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #5	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #6	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable
Sapling #7	Bone Tree	.5	0	Weak	-4 DEFN, +10 HP, Res +9	Predictable

Points Spent: 0

Combat Tactics: The outlines on the map depict the areas each tree occupies. Whenever possible, the trees use their branches to push the characters down slopes (gaining the high ground) or into the areas where two trees overlap (setting up flanking situations). Saplings try to "feed" characters to the larger trees, and all the trees push the characters away from their vulnerable trunks.

the bottom of the terrain. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.

Terrain — Slippery Ground

Thanks to piles of snow and loose bones, approximately half of the battle area is slippery.



Points Earned: -15 (Slippery ground, half the area)



Any character moving across or fighting in a slippery area must make a Balance check (DC 10) every round to avoid falling prone. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.



"The Forest of Bones" Combat Opponents

NEW CREATURES: BONE TREES (7)

Huge Undead

CR 4; SZ S (undead); HD 4d12; 26 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 0 ft.; AC 14 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk melee +5 (1d8+5, slam); Face 15 ft. x 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Branch Sweep; SQ Damage Reduction 30/+2, Darkvision 60 ft., Undead Immunities; AL N; SV Fort —, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 8

Branch Sweep (Ex): This tree may take a move-equivalent action to push an opponent with its branches. This is similar to a bull rush, but does not require movement and does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The tree and the defender make opposed Strength checks. The tree receives a +8 bonus for size, while the defender receives a +4 bonus for each size category above Medium size and a -4 penalty for each size category below Medium size. Any defender with more than two legs or other exceptional stabilizing factors receives an additional +4 bonus.

If the tree wins, it pushes the defender back 5 feet plus 1 foot for each point by which it exceeded the defender's check result. Nothing happens if the defender wins.

Damage Reduction (Ex): The tree's Damage Reduction applies to its branches, which are so numerous that it is almost

impossible to do significant damage to them. The tree's trunk has no Damage Reduction.

Combat Tactics: These saplings are led by the Oak and Ash trees detailed below. They try to "feed" characters to the larger trees, and all the trees push the characters away from their vulnerable trunks.

OAK & ASH

Gargantuan Undead

CR 8; SZ S (undead); HD 8d12; 52 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 0 ft.; AC 16 (-4 size, +3 Dex, +7 natural); Atk melee +9 (1d8+9, slam); Face 30 ft. x 35 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Branch Sweep; SQ Damage Reduction 30/+2, Darkvision 60 ft., Undead Immunities; AL N; SV Fort —, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 28, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 8

Branch Sweep (Ex): See bone trees stats.

Damage Reduction (Ex): See bone trees stats.

Combat Tactics: These two bone trees are advanced versions. Any bone tree with 8 or more hit dice is Gargantuan.

The outlines on the map depict the areas each tree occupies. Whenever possible, the trees use their branches to push the characters down slopes (gaining the high ground) or into the areas where two trees overlap (setting up flanking situations).

Terrain — Obstructions to Missile Fire

 Most arrows do nothing but strike glancing blows against the swaying bone branches. All missile fire suffers a **-4 penalty**.

Points Earned: -20 (Obstructions to missile fire, -4 penalty at -5 per)

Gain — Trash the Trunks

 Any hero who attacks the trunk hex of a bone tree gains a **+4 increase** to the ATK roll.

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase at -5 each)

Gain — Treasure

 If the heroes search the area, they find some tattered remains near the bone tree that looks like an oak. Among those remains are a **Category C Treasure**, a **Category B Treasure**, and **7 ounces of silver**.

Points Earned: -30 (Category C treasure); -20 (Category B treasure); -7 (7 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 Among the remains of a human at the foot of the large oak tree is a *sword of subtlety* and a +2 *amulet of natural armor* made from a single, large dragon scale. 250 gp are scattered around the tree.

Narration: So much for the bone trees. You pause to catch your breath, and a new sound reaches your ears: the cheerful sound of a stream.

The sound grows louder as you walk, and soon you are standing before the stream. The water looks clean and fresh. It emerges from a small spring, tumbles down some rocks, and vanishes into a gap in the rock wall of the chasm.

Gain — Cool, Clear Water

Suspicious heroes may want to check the stream.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll;** roll **Survival** vs. **Difficulty 6** to decide the Closer Inspection text applies.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)



 Any character may make a Wilderness Lore check (DC 12) to decide the Closer Inspection text applies.

Closer Inspection: After sniffing and tasting a few drops from the stream, you decide that it's exactly what it appears to be: fresh, clean water. As you look down the stream at the gap in the rocks you hear the call of a raven, so soft that it could be just a memory.

Gain — Healing Opportunity

The heroes may stay by the stream and rest for as long as they like ...

 **Points Earned:** -30 (Healing opportunity, unlimited)

Trap — Swimming and Gone

... but they're going to have to swim through the gap to get out of this encounter. The water is slightly choppy.

 **Standard roll;** roll **Swim** vs. **Difficulty 4**, any hero who fails suffers **drowning**.

Points Spent: 30 (Drowning, choppy water)

 Each character must make a **Swim** check (DC 10) or suffer 1d6 damage.

Encounter 2: Hel's Campground

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Niflheim

Summary: The heroes discover an encampment of undead Vikings poised to invade Midgard.

EVENT 1: FIRES IN THE DISTANCE

Narration: There's been a glow on the horizon for the last hour. You hear drumbeats in the distance, and a low chanting. As you reach the top of a hill of bones and peer into the darkness, you see fires a few hundred yards away.

Gain — Look, Listen, Shudder

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll;** roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to see the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a **Spot** check (DC 12) to see the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: You count almost a hundred campfires scattered around the landscape. They surround a strange metal arch that rises almost twenty feet in the air. Green fire ripples around and inside the arch; even at this distance it holds your eyes with an almost hypnotic effect.

The fires silhouette figures moving in front of them. It's hard to be sure, but they look human. They're dancing and singing in guttural tones.

Gain — What's That Song?

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll;** roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10** to hear the Closer Inspection text.



"The Forest of Bones" Lost Table

This is an advanced plot set-up encounter for Vikings with an average of 500 victory points.

Points Spent:

The Choking Cloud	210
Calling Odin	20
Divine Aid	60
Which Way?	40
Here, Take My Share	10
Supply Management	115
The Well-Placed Piton	20
Swimming and Gone	30
Total Spent:	505

Points Earned:

Preparations Help	-10
Healing Opportunity	-40
Help Wanted	-10

Calling Odin	-65
Divine Aid	-43
Which Way?	-25
Time Enough	-10
Here, Take My Share	-20
Looking Closer	-10
Well-Equipped Vikings	-15
The Well-Placed Piton	-65
What's That Noise?	-10
Be Prepared	-10
Terrain: Sloped Terrain	-20
Terrain: Slippery Ground	-15
Terrain: Obstructions to Missile Fire	-20
Trash the Trunks	-20
Treasure	-57
Cool, Clear Water	-10
Healing Opportunity	-30
Total Spent:	-505

Points Earned: -5 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 10)

 Any character may make a Listen check (DC 20) to hear the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: After listening carefully, you are able to make out some of the words:

*Axes slashing, heads on spikes
Tearing screams from tiny tykes ...*

It's an old lullaby from your childhood, but the words are horribly changed. There's an army of Vikings up ahead, and you have a sickening suspicion you know exactly what kind of army it is.

Dishonored. Undead Vikings who love nothing more than to wreak havoc on the living. And that many dishonored can wreak much havoc indeed ...

Gain — Why Here? Why Now?

Thoughtful Vikings may want to consider the situation before rushing in with axes held high.

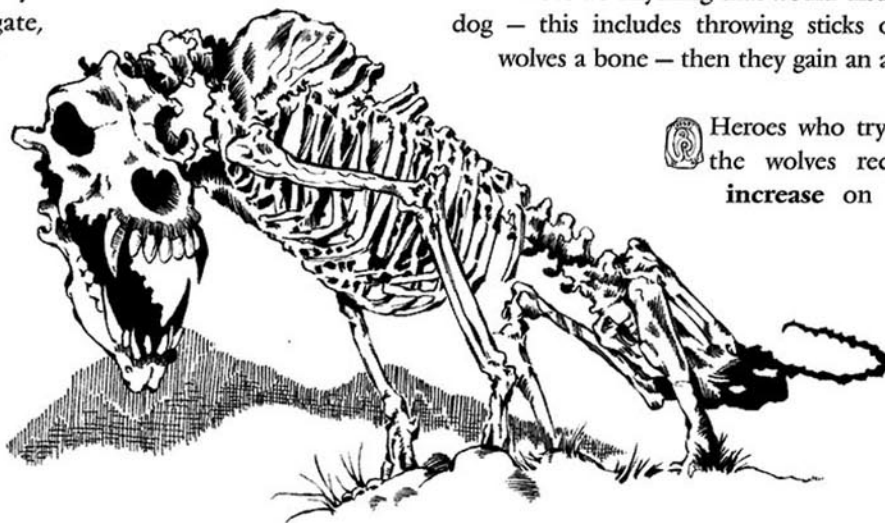
 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll;** roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make an Intelligence check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: Why has the All-Father guided you here? There must be thousands of Hel's minions down there — even you can't defeat them all at once.

Then again, maybe you don't have to. That archway is obviously a gate of some kind, probably not too different from the fire that brought you to this realm. If you can shut down the gate, you can foil the army — and if you can get through that



gate back to Midgard in the process, so much the better!

Of course, there is the minor problem that you have no idea how to shut down the gate. Hopefully you'll figure that out once you get there.

Flag — Hel's Army

 Any hero who sees the army and the gateway gains a **Flag** that provides a +2 increase to the "Explain Yourselves" Skald roll in Episode 4.

Points Earned: -5 (Flag: +2 increase at -5 per, split -5/-5 between assignment and use)

 Any PC who sees the army and the gate receives a +2 bonus to the "Explain Yourselves" Diplomacy check later in Episode 4.

Narration: You move forward carefully and quietly. You can't afford to have anyone in that camp noticing you and raising the alarm. Unfortunately, fate has other ideas for you.

You hear a low growling noise and a clicking of bones. Several skeletal figures advance out of the shadows towards you. They're wolves, long-dead, with only a few shreds of meat hanging off their naked frames.

They advance with heads low, yellow points of light glaring in their eye sockets. Their hackles would be raised if they still had hackles.

You can almost certainly take these creatures — they're just bones, after all — but what if they begin barking and howling? What will you do then?

Gain — Give the Dog a Bone

If the heroes do anything that would distract a normal dog — this includes throwing sticks or giving the wolves a bone — then they gain an advantage.

 Heroes who try distracting the wolves receive a +1 increase on either the

Animal Handling roll or the ATK roll that follows, whichever they try first.

Points Earned: -5 (+1 increase)

 PCs who try distracting the wolves receive either a +2 circumstance bonus on the Handle Animal check that follows, or a +2 bonus to Initiative for the entire combat scene if they decide to attack the wolves instead, whichever they try first.

Trap — Make Friends ...

The heroes can try to befriend the wolves. If they do so, the wolves follow them around, making it easier for the heroes to pass as just another horde of dishonored warriors roaming around the camp. If they fail, then the barking wolves attract the attention of the sentries posted around the camp.

 **Singular:** Dogpile roll, Lady or Tiger, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only); roll Animal Handling vs. Difficulty 9, if successful then the heroes gain a +2 increase to the Stealth roll that follows and the wolves dig up a **Category C Treasure** for the heroes, if failed then the heroes suffer a -2 penalty to the Stealth roll.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); 30 (Combo gain); 10 (-2 penalty at 5 each)

Points Earned: -30 (Category C treasure); -20 (Conditionally avoidable: attack instead of making friends); -10 (+2 increase at -5 each); -5 (First exposure only)

 Any PC may make a Handle Animal check (DC 18) to befriend the wolves. If all the checks made succeed, the characters gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the Move Silently check that follows, and one of the wolves presents the heroes with an ivory scroll case. The scroll case is worth 200 gp and contains an arcane scroll with the spells *slow* and *confusion*; the caster level of the scroll is 7th.

If any character fails the check, the wolves attack. The entire party then suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to the Move Silently check that follows.

No matter what the result of this attempt is, skip ahead to Event 2.

Trap — ... Or Fight!

The heroes can also try to destroy the wolves. If they fail, the wolves bark and alert the sentries as above.

 **Multiple:** Countdown roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only); roll ATK vs. baseline +3. the heroes must get successes equal to half their number in 1 attempt, if failed the heroes suffer a -2 penalty to the Stealth roll that follows.



Skeletal Wolves

NEW CREATURES (12)

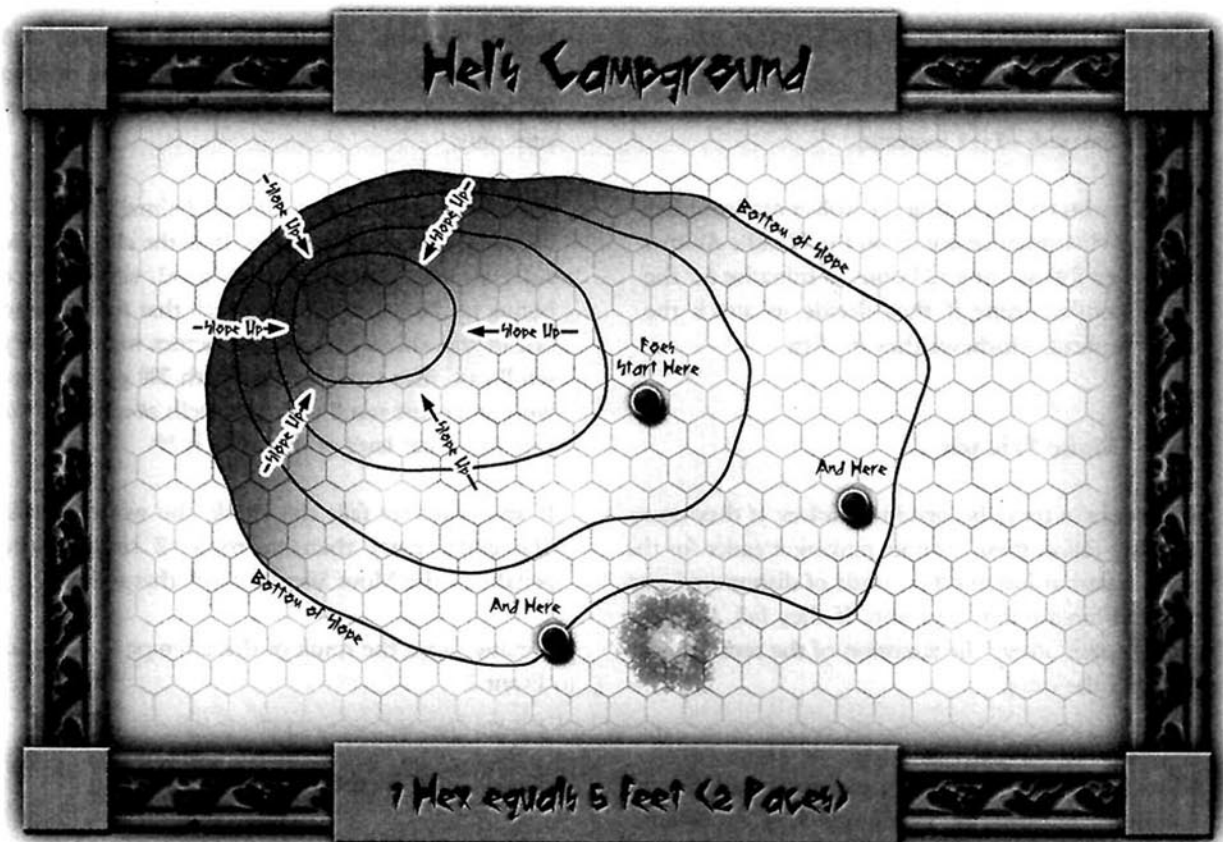
Medium-size Undead

CR 1; SZ M (undead); HD 2d12; 13 hp; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk melee +3 (1d6+1, bite); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Immunities, Undead Immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite), Improved Initiative

Trip (Ex): A skeletal wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

Immunities (Ex): Skeletal wolves have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.



The heroes can try to make this roll after failing the "Make Friends ..." roll if they like.

Points Spent: 60 (20 base cost times 3 for 1 attempt); 10 (-2 penalty at 5 each)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable; make friends instead of attack); -5 (First exposure only)

The characters may attack the wolves instead of befriending them; they may also attack the wolves after failing the Handle Animal check above. In either case, the heroes must destroy the wolves within one round or suffer a -2 penalty to the Move Silently check that follows. This penalty stacks with the penalty from failing the Handle Animal check above.

EVENT 2: THROUGH THE LINES

Narration: You approach the outer sentries. From this distance, there's no mistaking the fetid smell of the dishonored. Bile rises in your throat; it's hard to keep from choking at the stench.

Trap — Bad Time to Choke

It's hard to sneak past sentries when your eyes are watering and your nose wants to take a long vacation.

Standard roll, roll **Stamina** vs. **Difficulty 8**, any hero who fails suffers a -2 penalty to the Stealth roll that follows.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 20 (Exotic roll, characteristic only); 10 (-2 penalty at 5 each)

Every character must make a Fortitude save (DC 20). Any character who fails suffers a -2 penalty to the Move Silently roll that follows. (This is cumulative with any penalty from the encounter with the wolves above.)

Trap — Sneaking Time

The heroes must get past the sentries unnoticed. If they fail, they are chased into the combat that follows.

Weak Link roll, Lady or Tiger; roll **Stealth** vs. **Difficulty 8**; if the heroes fail they suffer the effects of an **ambush opportunity** in the combat that follows and must face the "Pursuit!" trap below, if they succeed they gain an **ambush opportunity**

in the combat that follows. If the heroes were successful at the "Make Friends ..." roll above, then they gain a **+2 increase** to this roll; if they failed that roll, they suffer a **-2 penalty** to this roll. If they failed the "... Or Fight" roll, the heroes suffer a **-2 penalty** to this roll. Also remember the "Bad Time to Choke" **-2 penalty**.

Points Spent: 50 (Ambush opportunity); 40 (Weak link roll); 30 (Combo trap); 20 (Difficulty 8); 10 (Failure leads to trap)

Points Earned: -50 (Ambush opportunity)

 Each character must make a Move Silently check (DC 14). If any character fails the check, the entire party must face the "Pursuit!" situation below. If every character succeeds at the check, the party avoids the "Pursuit!" situation and gains a surprise round against Bolgar and his minions.

If the characters succeeded at the "Making Friends ..." check above, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to this check; if any character failed the check the entire party suffers a -2 circumstance penalty now. If the characters attacked but didn't destroy the wolves within one round, they now suffer a -2 penalty to this check. Also remember the -2 penalty from the "Bad Time to Choke" situation above.

If the characters want to fight the sentries, they're certainly welcome to do so. (Use the dishonored warrior statistics below.) They still have to make this Move Silently check, though.

Trap — Pursuit!

If the heroes are detected, the sentries shout an alarm and search for them. Fortunately, the sentries are neither smart nor fast. The heroes escape automatically; this trap determines how unprepared they are when they enter combat with the dishonored a few moments later.

 **Standard** roll; roll **Sprint** vs. **Difficulty 4**, any hero who fails suffers a **-2 penalty** to **DFN** for two combat rounds.

Points Spent: 20 (-2 penalty at 5 each, multiplied by 2)

Points Earned: -20 (Difficulty 4)

 If any character failed at the Move Silently check above, each character must make a Will save (DC 12). Any character who fails this save is surprised for one round when the characters encounter Bolgar and his minions in the combat below.



"Hell's Campground" Combat Opponents

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Bolgar	Sark Amen	2.8	15	Superior	None	Self-Willed
Unn	Dishonored	1.0	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Hunbogi	Dishonored	1.0	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Gudrid	Dishonored	1.0	15	Weak	None	Predictable

Points Spent: 25 (Self-willed, superior foe)

Points Earned: -10 (No missile weapons)

Combat Tactics: Everyone but Bolgar attacks with great enthusiasm and little strategy. The sark amen leaps around the heroes, contributing his axe wherever it will do the most damage. If one of the other dishonored is struck down but not permanently killed, Bolgar moves to defend his fallen companion while the undead warrior regenerates.

Narration: You hurry away from the sentries and stumble down a small hillock into a circle of firelight. Several dishonored warriors stare at you. A gigantic sark amen warrior staggers forward for a closer look — and you realize that what's left of his face is familiar.

"Well," Bolgar hisses with half a tongue, "some old friends from the world of the living! Jarls! What should we do with our visitors?"

As one, the dishonored croak, "Eat them!"



Remember that "Sneaking Time" gave either the heroes or their foes an **ambush opportunity**.



PCs get a surprise round if they succeeded at the "Sneaking Time" check.



"Hell's Campground" Combat Opponents

DISHONORED WARRIORS (3)

Medium-size Undead 4th-Level Fighters

CR 5; SZ M (undead); HD 4d12; 26 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+1 Dex, +5 chainmail, +4 natural); Atk melee +11 (1d12+8, greataxe) or melee +10 (1d6+9, slam); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fast Healing 5, Undead Immunities; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 22, Dex 13, Con —, Int 4, Wis 9, Cha 9

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

Skills: Climb +10, Jump +10, Swim +10, Spot +0

Combat Tactics: The dishonored attack with great enthusiasm and little strategy.

BOLGAR, A SARK AMEN

Large Undead 4th-Level Fighter/ 4th-Level Sorcerer

CR 10; SZ M (undead); HD 8d12; 52 hp; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +6 *mithral shirt* +2, +4 natural); Atk melee +13/+8 (1d12+8, greataxe) or melee +13/+8 (1d8+12, slam); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Fast Healing 10,

Incredible Leap, Summon Familiar, Undead Immunities; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 26, Dex 15, Con —, Int 10, Wis 1, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +12, Concentration +4, Jump +42, Ride +6, Spellcraft +4, Swim +12

Feats: Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack

Spells: (6/7/3) Bolgar knows the following spells. The DC to resist his spells is 11 + the spell level.

- 0 level — *clamor* (see below), *daze*, *flare*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
- 1st level — *cause fear*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*
- 2nd level — *see invisibility*

Summon Familiar: Bolgar does not have a familiar.

Possessions: In addition to his +2 *mithral shirt*, Bolgar has a ring of *counterspell* with a *magic missile* spell placed within it, and a non-magical jade ring shaped like an asp worth 500 gp.

Combat Tactics: Bolgar leaps around the heroes, contributing his axe wherever it will do the most damage. If one of the other dishonored is struck down but not permanently killed, Bolgar moves to defend his fallen companion while the undead warrior heals.



Dishonored Warriors & Dark Amen

NEW TEMPLATE: DISHONORED WARRIOR

Dishonored warriors — also known as forsaken warriors — are the undead remnants of Vikings who have pledged their service to Hel. Most of their minds have been consumed along with their souls; there's not much left other than rage and a deep satisfaction with killing things.

"Dishonored warrior" is a template that can be added to any humanoid who has died fighting in the service of dark gods (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to "undead." It otherwise uses all of its original statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size: As base creature

Hit Dice: Change to d12, and adjust bonus hit points for ability score modifications.

Initiative: As base creature

Speed: As base creature

AC: The base creature's natural armor improves by +4.

Attacks: A dishonored warrior retains all the attacks of the base creature, adjusted for ability score modifications. The dishonored also gains a slam attack if it didn't already have one.

Damage: A dishonored warrior retains its old damage rating, adjusted for ability score modifications. It also has a slam attack. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the damage values in the table below. Creatures with natural attacks retain their old damage ratings, adjusted for ability score modifications, or use the values below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium-size	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Face/Reach: As base creature

Special Attacks: A dishonored warrior retains all the special attacks of the base creature, and also gains Stench.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding the dishonored is sickening. Any character within 10 feet must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be wracked with nausea, suffering a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks, saves, and skill checks for 1d6+4 minutes.

Special Qualities: A dishonored warrior retains all the special qualities of the base creatures, gains the qualities listed below, and gains the undead type.

Darkvision (Ex): A dishonored warrior can see 60 feet in total darkness.

Fast Healing (Ex): The dishonored heal 5 points of damage per round. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a dishonored collapses to the ground and is helpless. However, it is not destroyed unless it is damaged again. It continues to heal unless destroyed, and returns to action as soon as its hit points are above 0.

Saves: As base creature, Fortitude adjusted for no Constitution.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +6, Int -6. As undead creatures, dishonored warriors have no Constitution scores.

Terrain — Sloped Terrain

The campfire is in a hollow at the bottom of a small hillock. Two-thirds of the combat area is sloped.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Sloped surface, two-thirds of area.)

 Any character who is hit while standing on sloped terrain must make a Balance check (DC 10 + the damage dealt). If the check is failed, the character slides down the slope and lands prone at

the bottom of the terrain. A PC may gain no more than one experience chit from these Balance checks.

Terrain — Damaging Place

 The fire is a **damaging place** that does **Dam rating 20**.

Points Earned: -20 (Damaging place, Dam rating 20)

Dishonored Warriors & Sark Amen, Continued

Skills: As base creature, adjusted for ability score modifications.

Feats: As base creature

Climate/Terrain: As base creature

Organization: As base creature

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1

Treasure: As base creature

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: As base creature

NEW TEMPLATE: SARK AMEN

Sark amen — also known as spawn of Loki — are dishonored warriors who have been improved upon by Loki. At twelve feet of height, they tower over their fellow undead, and their powerful legs let them leap across the battlefield slaughtering everything they see. Sark amen can make standing jumps of almost 30 feet and running jumps of 50 feet or more, so they're always much closer than they seem to be.

"Sark amen" is a template that can be added to any humanoid who has had his Wisdom reduced to 0 in the service of dark

gods (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to "undead." It otherwise uses all of its original statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size: The base creature's size changes to Large; if it is already Large size or bigger, it increases one size increment.

Hit Dice: Change to d12, and adjust bonus hit points for ability score modifications.

Initiative: As base creature

Speed: As base creature

AC: The base creature's natural armor improves by +4, and its AC is adjusted for size change.

Attacks: A sark amen retains all of the attacks of the base creature, adjusted for ability score modifications. The sark amen also gains a slam attack if it didn't already have one.

Damage: A sark amen retains its old damage rating, adjusted for ability score modifications. It also has a slam attack. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the damage values in the table below. Creatures with natural attacks retain their old damage ratings, adjusted

 The fire does 1d6 fire damage per round.

Terrain — Weird Magic

Bolgar mutters a magic spell under his breath as the combat begins, and a terrible shrieking sound fills the area. Bolgar is sounding an alarm to rouse the rest of the dishonored army, but the noise also ruins concentration and distracts everyone who hears it.

 All heroes and foes suffer a **-3 penalty** to DEN until Bolgar is killed and the spell is broken.

Points Earned: -30 (Weird magic, -3 penalty at -10 each)

 Bolgar uses an action to cast *clamor*, a variant on the *ghost sound* spell. The spell affects both the PCs and their foes with a **-2 penalty** to Concentration checks and Will saves. It can be *dispelled* normally and ends in four rounds or with Bolgar's death.

Dishonored Warriors & Sark Amen, Continued

for ability score modifications, or use the value below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: A sark amen retains all the special attacks of the base creature.

Special Qualities: A sark amen retains all the special qualities of the base creatures, gains the qualities listed below, and gains the undead type.

Darkvision (Ex): A sark amen can see 60 feet in total darkness.

Fast Healing (Ex): Sark amen heal 10 points of damage per round. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a sark amen collapses to the ground and is helpless. However, it is not destroyed unless it is damaged again. It continues to heal unless destroyed, and returns to action as soon as its hit points are above 0.

Incredible Leap (Ex): A sark amen's powerful legs can carry it amazing distances. Sark amen receive a +30 racial bonus to Jump checks and are not limited to the maximum distances listed under the Jump skill. Sark amen can take a full-round action to

use their Incredible Leap ability and attack an opponent once in mid-flight. The opponent must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or be caught flat-footed.

Saves: As base creature, though sark amen gain a +5 bonus on Will saves, counteracting the -5 ability modifier for poor Wisdom.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +8. Set Wisdom score to 1. As undead creatures, sark amen have no Constitution scores.

Skills: As base creature, adjusted for ability score modifications. Hide checks for Large creatures are at a -4 penalty, and another -4 penalty is taken for each size increment bigger than Large.

Feats: As base creature

Climate/Terrain: As base creature

Organization: As base creature

Challenge Rating: As base creature +2

Treasure: As base creature

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: As base creature.



Gain — Stupid, Stupid Minions

Some undead Vikings are dumber than others. If a hero who is fighting Unn tries to shout over the noise of Bolgar's spell, the dim-witted dishonored stops fighting, leans forward, and says, "Unh? What did you say?"

 The hero gains a **+4 increase** to his next **ATK** roll against Unn. The hero also gains a **singular award** of **5 victory points** if he stops to *explain* what he said.

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase at -5 each), -5 (5 victory points at -1 each)

 The character receives a **+2 circumstance bonus** to her next attack roll against Unn, and gains an experience chit if she *explains* what she said before attacking.

Background: The best way to set up this gag is to stress how hard it is for the characters to hear each other over the noise and encourage the players to shout their communications to each other. This only happens once; even Unn's stupidity has its limits.

Narration: As the last of this group of dishonored falls, you hear shrieks and screams. Shadows rush towards you; it looks like the entire camp is converging upon you!



Clamor

NEW SPELL

Illusion (Figment)
Level: Brd 0, Sor/Wiz 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: Deafening sounds
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: No

This spell produces loud, frightening noises that can be heard a mile away. Any creature within 100 feet of the center point finds the noises painful and distracting. Any creature that fails its Fortitude save suffers a -1 penalty to Concentration checks and Will saves for every two caster levels of the caster.

Material Component: Two plugs of wax. The spell works fine without them; the wax is for the caster's ears. (Properly inserted, the plugs provide a +2 bonus to the Fortitude save.)

There's no chance of destroying the portal now — your only hope is to run for your lives and try to escape through the portal before they catch you!

Gain — No Time for Treasure!

 If the heroes don't stop to search the dishonored for treasure, they gain **+4 increase** to the Sprint roll that follows.

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase at -5 each)

 If the party flees without searching the bodies, each character gains a +4 circumstance bonus to the Reflex save that follows.

Gain — There's ALWAYS Time for Treasure!

If the heroes successfully search the dishonored for treasure, they find several items.

 **Singular: No-Fault** roll; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, if any hero is successful then the heroes receive a **Category D Treasure**, a **Category B Treasure**, and **5 ounces of silver**.

Points Earned: -40 (Category D treasure); -20 (Category B treasure); -15 (No-fault); -5 (5 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 Bolgar's treasure is detailed in his stat block. The dishonored have nothing but their weapons and armor.

Gain — Run for Your Lives!

The characters must run for the portal as if all the minions of Hel are after them. Fortunately, the minions of Hel are slow and poky.

 **Standard** roll; roll **Sprint** vs. **Difficulty 6**, any hero who fails suffers **Dam rating 15**. Remember the **+4 increase** from "No Time for Treasure."

Points Spent: 15 (Dam rating 15)

 Each character must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or take 2d6+2 damage from a series of brief melees with Hel's minions. Remember the +4 circumstance bonus from "No Time for Treasure."

Narration: You race through the portal and find yourself fleeing through the cool night air of Scandinavia. After 15 minutes of hard running, you become convinced that you've lost your pursuit. You stop, your chests heaving as you pull air back into your aching lungs.



"Hel's Campground" Cost Table

This is an advanced plot development encounter for Vikings with an average of 500 victory points.

Points Spent:

Make Friends ...	70
... Or Fight!	70
Bad Time To Choke	50
Sneaking Time	150
Pursuit!	20
Self-Willed Foe	25
Run for Your Lives!	15
Total Spent:	400

Points Earned:

Look, Listen, Shudder	-10
What's That Song?	-5

Why Here? Why Now?	-10
Hel's Army	-5
Give the Dog a Bone	-5
Make Friends ...	-65
... Or Fight!	-25
Sneaking Time	-50
Pursuit!	-20
No Missile Weapons	-10
Terrain: Sloped Terrain	-20
Terrain: Damaging Place	-20
Terrain: Weird Magic	-30
Stupid, Stupid Minions	-25
No Time for Treasure!	-20
There's ALWAYS Time for Treasure!	-80
Total Spent:	-400

You recognize the hills around you; you're not far from the meeting place of the Thing! Glancing at the sky, you see that the moon has waned a little, but only a few days have passed here as you wandered through Niflheim. You've survived a perilous journey — now all you have to do is make your way to the Thing and convince your fellow Vikings that your new chieftain Olaf is bringing down the forces of Hel upon them!

What could be easier?

Encounter 3: Justice & Rage

Type: Plot Encounter

Hook: Niflheim

Summary: Our heroes arrive at the Thing, only to discover that Olaf is already there and ready to strike!

EVENT 1: WORDS ON THE RISE

Narration: You're almost there! You're climbing up a seaside path to the top of the bluff where the Thing meets. Gulls swoop around you, and despite your exertions the salt air helps keep your senses sharp.

A bent man in a gray cloak shuffles down the path towards you, carefully braking the small handcart that rolls along behind him. He appears to be some sort of peddler.

Gain — A Suspicious Resemblance

Mythically-aware Vikings make a habit of checking the features of any wandering old men they encounter. You never know when one of them might turn out to be the one-eyed All-Father Odin.

 **Singular:** No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: As the peddler draws closer, you notice that he is an old man with one brilliant blue eye. The other is covered with ragged black patch.

Narration: The peddler gives you a cheery wave and continues towards you. You meet at a wide, flat spot a few minutes later, and the peddler sits down with a sigh of relief on a rock jutting out from the cliff face. He pulls a goatskin flask out of his cart, takes a swig, and offers it to you.

"Late to the Thing, are you?" he says. "Well, sit and rest a spell. They're just getting started up there, and you won't be missing anything just yet. Tell me of your travels ... your treasure ... what poor trinkets I may be able to sell you ..."

Gain — Bargaining Opportunity

The heroes may buy and sell goods with the peddler.



Points Earned: -15 (Bargaining opportunity)

Background: Is this peddler Odin? Maybe, maybe not. He's not telling and neither are we. Either way, the peddler does enjoy making people wonder if he's Odin, so much so that he coyly refuses to give his name if asked.

"Oh, it doesn't matter what *my* name is," he says. "You know me well enough by what you see, and that's the truth."

Trap — Don't Annoy Old Peddlers

The peddler may enjoy teasing curious heroes about his identity, but he doesn't like to be browbeaten or pressed for answers. Any character who gets pushy and annoying may suffer bad luck in the big combat with Olaf and his minions.

Mind you, that doesn't prove anything.



Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect); roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 8**, any hero who fails suffers **2 points of Impairment** during the final combat sequence.

Points Spent: 60 (2 points of Impairment applied to one combat [30 each]); 20 (Difficulty 8)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable: don't pester the nice peddler about being Odin)



Any character who annoys the peddler must make a Will save (DC 25). If the save is failed, the character suffers a -2 penalty to all attack and skill rolls during the final combat sequence.

Gain — The Players Figure it Out

If the heroes ask about Olaf and the contingent from Aelfdrap, the peddler tells them the information in the Closer Inspection box below. This gives the players a chance to figure out Olaf's fiendish plan.

Closer Inspection: "Aye," the peddler says, "Olaf is there — arrived last night, I think. I've heard the jarls saying they're going to appoint him Runekeeper today, have him protect and ignite the runestone for the duration of the Thing."

Oh, no. The pieces of the puzzle are starting to fall into place.

 One hero may gain a **singular award** of **20 victory points** by correctly explaining Olaf's plan to the other characters.

Points Earned: -20 (20 victory points at -1 each)

 One character may earn an experience chit by correctly explaining Olaf's plan to the others.

Gain — The Characters Figure it Out

If the players can't figure out what's happening, maybe their characters can.

 **Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding** roll; roll **Insight** vs. **Difficulty 6** to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a **Knowledge (arcana)** check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: When Olaf became chieftain and laid his hand on the village runestone, he corrupted it to the service of Hel. If he gets his hands on the runestone of the Thing, he'll corrupt that as well, and that will put a huge amount of power into Hel's hands. It would be enough power to send an entire army of dishonored through that gate you discovered, possibly even enough power to pull parts of Midgard right into Niflheim!

Narration: You take your leave of the peddler and continue up the trail. You're almost at the top when a stolid Viking sentry steps out in front of you and says, "The Thing is no place for weapons. Place yours in my keeping, or do not enter."

Trap — No Weapons Allowed

The heroes may either convince the sentry that they should be allowed to keep their weapons, or knock him on the head to get him out of the way. They may still enter if they are unable to do either, but the sentry's loud protests prejudice the Vikings at the Thing against the player characters.

 **Singular: No-Fault** roll; roll **Leadership** or **Brawling** vs. **Difficulty 8**, **1 extra attempt allowed**, if the heroes fail then they suffer a **-2 penalty** on the "Explain Yourselves" **Skald** roll that follows.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 10 (-2 penalty at 5 each)

Points Earned: -15 (No-fault); -10 (Alternate methods, one alternate method); -5 (Extra rolls allowed, 1 extra roll)

 The PCs can keep their weapons by making a **Diplomacy** check (DC 15) or an **Intimidate** check (DC 15). If they fail, they can easily shoulder the sentry aside, but they receive a **-2 penalty** to the "Explain Yourselves" **Diplomacy** check that follows.

EVENT 2: CONFRONTATION

Narration: You push past the sentry and rush into the Thing. Hundreds of Vikings sit on the grassy sides of a natural amphitheater. Olaf and his minions are on the left side — he looks over at you and breaks into a cold smile. A 20-foot-tall stone spire leans crookedly over the bluff towards the sea; this is the Thing's runestone. In front of it is a large, flat rock, the traditional place for speakers to address the crowd.

Standing on the mossy speaker's rock is Rogarr, eldest of the Viking chieftains. He stops in mid-sentence and stares at you in confusion. "You're not expected," he says. "Who are you, and why are you here?"

Trap — Explain Yourselves

This is the heroes' chance to make their case against Olaf. They have a wild tale to tell, but it's hard to deny the sincerity of their eyewitness testimony. Every hero who speaks up must be convincing, though. If the characters fail, the other Vikings are not persuaded, the heroes are embarrassed, and Olaf demands a duel to prove his honor.

(The heroes don't have to make their case now. If they choose not to act, however, the Thing goes on with its business and appoints Olaf to the position of Runekeeper. He takes control of the runestone, triggering the final combat sequence below.)

 **Singular: Dogpile roll, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only);** roll **Skald** vs. **Difficulty 14**, if any hero fails then the heroes lose **20 victory points** and the "Duel with Olaf" trap is triggered. **Flags:** any hero who heard Brunli's story in Episode 1 gains a **+2 increase** to the roll; any hero who heard Osric's speech in Episode 3 gains a **+2 increase** to the roll; any hero who saw Hel's army and the gateway in Episode 4 gains a **+2 increase** to the roll. The heroes take a **-2 penalty** now if they failed the "No Weapons Allowed" roll earlier.

Points Spent: **80** (Difficulty 14); **40** (Combo trap surcharge); **20** (Loss of status, 20 victory points at 1 each); **10** (Failure leads to trap)

Points Earned: **-20** (Conditionally avoidable, don't accuse Olaf); **-5** (First exposure only); **-5** (Brunli's story flag: +2 increase at -5 per, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); **-5** (Osric's story flag: +2 increase at -5 per, split -5/-5 between assignment and use); **-5** (Hel's army flag: +2 increase at -5 per, split -5/-5 between assignment and use)

 The characters must make a Diplomacy check (DC 30) to convince the other Vikings. One PC makes the attempt, with the others using the aid another action to each add a +2 bonus to the roll on a successful Diplomacy check (DC 10). If the check fails, the delegates are not convinced and Olaf challenges the party (see below).

Any PC who spoke with Brunli and saw the ghost in Episode 1 receives a +2 bonus to the check. Any PC who heard Osric's speech in Episode 3 receives a +2 bonus to the check. Any PC who saw Hel's army and the gateway in Episode 4 receives a +2 bonus to the check. The characters take a -2 penalty if they failed the check and shouldered the sentry aside in "No Weapons Allowed."

Trap — Holmgang!

If the heroes fail to convince the other Vikings of Olaf's misdeeds, Olaf challenges them to the ritual duel known as the *holmgang*. This is what the Vikings expect him to do, and it gives him an opportunity to activate and corrupt the Thing's runestone.

Olaf rises, strips off his shirt, and offers an unarmed battle to the party. Either one PC must take up the challenge or the entire party must apologize to Olaf. If the characters back down, Olaf goes to the stone, cuts his hand, and smears blood upon it in the ceremony that swears him in as Runekeeper. The forces of Hel break loose moments later. (This could also happen because the heroes convinced the other Vikings of Olaf's evil intentions, or they kept quiet and allowed the ceremony to proceed without interruption.)

Otherwise, someone's in for a fight. This trap assumes that the hero fighting Olaf is unarmed, but it's possible for him to attack with weapons as well. Simply alter the descriptions to fit the actual fight situation.

 **Multiple Rolls: Scoreboard, conditionally avoidable (first exposure only);** roll **ATK** vs. **opponent's roll + 10**, **3 successes needed**, a hero who fails suffers **Dam rating 20**, a hero who succeeds gains a **singular award of 10 victory points**.

Points Spent: **80** (Difficulty +10); **80** (2 extra successes needed); **25** (Dam rating 20)

Points Earned: **-20** (Conditionally avoidable, apologize to Olaf); **-10** (10 victory points at 1 each); **-5** (First exposure only)

 If Olaf challenges the characters to single combat, the party must choose one PC to face him. They can avoid the combat by apologizing to Olaf — which is not a good idea.

Olaf's stats are below. He fights until either he or the character he is dueling has suffered 25 points of damage. At that point, he activates the runestone as described below.

Note that when this confrontation begins, Olaf has already cast *bull's strength* and *undetectable alignment* upon himself.

If the fight goes in Olaf's favor, the hero involved is soon bruised and bleeding. The fight ends when Olaf slams the hero into the runestone.

If the fight goes against Olaf, he's the one covered with blood. He laughs, goes to the runestone, and places a bloody palm print on it.

No matter how the blood gets on the runestone, there is a tremendous rumbling sound, and green fire covers the stone. A gap opens up in the air in front of the stone, and hordes of goblins begin spilling out.

Dishonored warriors lurch into the amphitheater and begin attacking the crowd.

Narration: Dishonored warriors pour out of the air in front of the runestone, just as Olaf's companions leap out of their seats brandishing tiny maces. The maces grow to full size in an instant, and they begin battering the unarmed Vikings around them.

"Fools!" Olaf shouts. "With the power from this stone, I have opened gateways throughout Scandinavia! Dishonored and sark amen are already rampaging through your villages, and you are powerless to do anything but die!"

"Despair now, for soon all of Scandinavia will writhe beneath the forces of Hell!"

Background: The dishonored flooding into the amphitheatre ignore the player characters (who should be busy with Olaf and his men) and attack the other delegates. Many of those Vikings die, but you don't get to be a respected elder without knowing how to deal out a

little mayhem in a tight situation. The elders grab up benches, flagons, and anything else they can find and proceed to give the dishonored a righteous whacking. Their struggle for survival is exciting, but it's just the backdrop against which the heroes deal with Olaf and his minions.

Flag — Osric's Gift

 Any hero who was present for Osric's speech in Episode 3 may apply a **+6 increase** to all their attacks during any one round (player's choice) of this combat.

Points Earned: -15 (Flag: +6 increase at -5 per, split -15/-15 between assignment and use)

 Any PC who was present for Osric's speech in Episode 3 may use the Smite Evil paladin supernatural ability once during this combat. Characters who already have this ability receive an additional use.

"Justice & Rage" Combat Opponents

OLAF

Type: Boss Monster

Move: 15

Threat Value: Boss

Adjusts: None

Predictable/ Self-Willed: Predictable

Powers: Olaf wears a golden necklace with seven spheres hanging from it. Each time he throws a sphere, he performs a Blast Attack that has a range of 20 paces and does 2d10 damage + the Thwack Margin if it hits. Olaf never uses this power more than once every three rounds.

Olaf's second power is his minions. The 24 dark Vikings who brought him to Aelfdrap leap from their seats and attack the player characters as soon as the combat begins.

Points Spent: 20 (Blast Attack, 2 levels); 20 (Minions, 1 level for mass combat foes)

Points Earned: -20 (Recharge Attack, 2 levels)

Combat Tactics: Olaf hangs back when possible to use his Blast Attack, but otherwise follows the usual rules for predictable foes. As boss monsters go, he's not very bright.

24 DARK VIKINGS

Type: Dark Vikings

Move: 15

Threat Value: Weak (mass combat)

Adjusts: None

Predictable/ Self-Willed: Predictable

Points Spent: 48 (24 dark Vikings at 2 each)

Combat Tactics: The dark Vikings clump into groups of four and try to surround the player characters.

To use this ability, add your character's Charisma modifier (if positive) to your attack roll. If the attack is successful, you deal one extra point of damage for each character level you have.

Terrain — Damaging Place

It's unhealthy to be rubbing elbows with undead Viking warriors, even if they are scenery. The dishonored start in one hex of the amphitheater and spread out quickly.

“Justice & Rage” Combat Opponents

OLAF, SERVANT OF HEL

**Human 8th-level Fighter/
4th-level Cleric**

CR 12; SZ M (humanoid); HD 8d10+16 + 4d6+8; 94 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 chainmail); Atk melee +13/+8/+3 (1d8+2, heavy mace); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Rebuke Undead 6/day, Spontaneous Casting; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17

Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +6, Climb +8, Gather Information +6, Jump +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Ride +4, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +4, Swim +5

Feats: Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Spells: (5/4+1/2+1) As a cleric, Olaf worships the goddess Hel and has chosen the Death and Evil domains. These domains allow him to use Death Touch once per day cast evil spells at +1 caster level. The DC to resist his spells is 11 + the spell level. Olaf has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 level — *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light, read magic*

1st level — *cause fear*, divine favor, entropic shield, magic weapon, protection from good*

2nd level — *bull's strength, death knell*, undetectable alignment*

Possessions: Olaf wears a Type V necklace of fireballs with seven spheres on it. One sphere creates a fireball that does 9d6 damage. Of the remaining six spheres, two do 7d6 each, two do 5d6 each, and two do 3d6 damage each. He also has 300 gp, a ring of protection +1 and 2 potions of cure moderate wounds that restore 2d8+4 damage each.

Combat Tactics: Olaf prepared for his attack by casting the following spells upon himself before the PC's arrived: *bull's strength* and *undetectable alignment*. He casts *entropic shield* upon himself as the combat begins.

DARK VIKING HORDES (4)

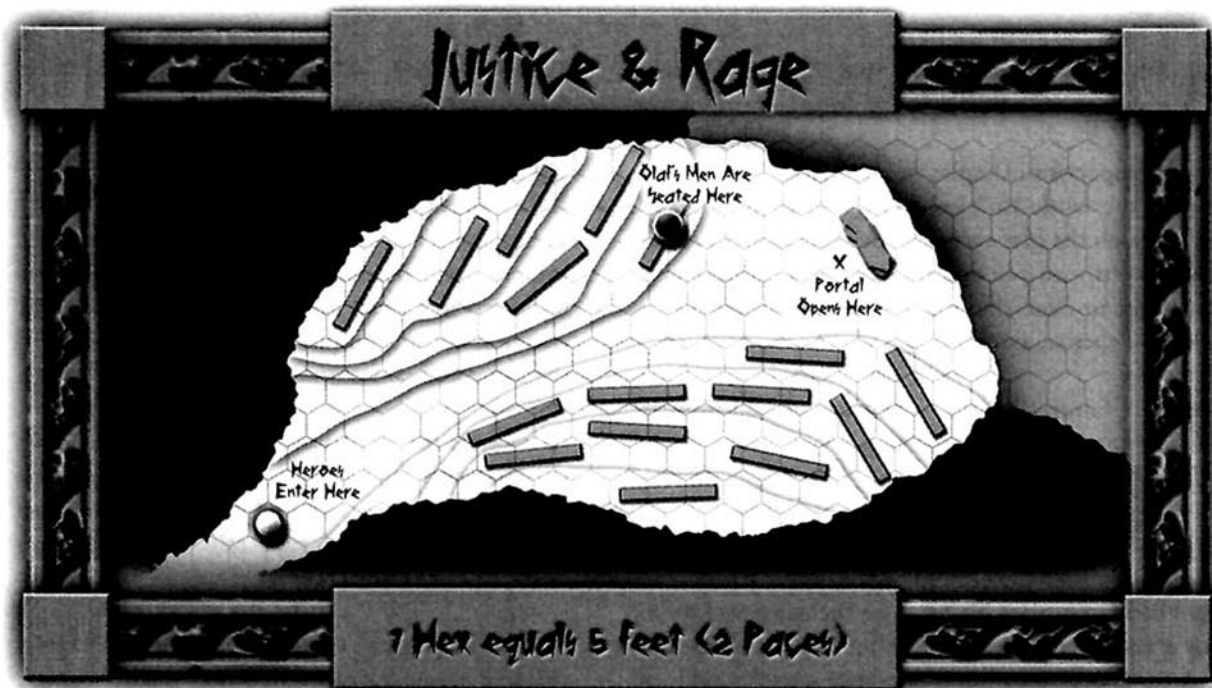
Human 2nd-Level Fighter Hordes

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 2d10+2 (x4); 52 hp (each creature has 13 hp); Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 chainmail); Atk melee +6 (1d8+4, heavy mace); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Massive Attack; SQ Fixed Initiative, Multiple Targets; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +6, Jump +6, Ride +5, Swim +8

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack

Combat Tactics: There are four dark Vikings in each horde.



The area they occupy expands to all adjacent hexes each round. It continues growing until the heroes break Hel's influence over the runestone.

 The area the dishonored hold is a **damaging place** with **Dam rating 25**.

This damaging place does not harm Olaf or his minions unless a hero pushes them into the area with a successful Engagement roll. This represents the hero pushing the foe into the path of a dishonored warrior's weapon.

Points Earned: -30 (Damaging place, Dam rating 25); -20 (Damaging place expands, each hex on the map is 3 paces)

 Each turn that a character is within the area occupied by the dishonored, that character must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or take 1d4 damage. A player may only earn one experience chit from succeeding at this save.

Terrain — Limited Exits

The amphitheater has a great view, but any character who doesn't want to take a fatal dive into the sea can only exit down the path the heroes came up.

 **Points Earned:** -20 (Limited exits, one exit)

Terrain — Multiple Levels

The floor of the amphitheater is ringed with natural terraces that serve as seating areas and can be used to gain higher ground. Each terrace is about 1 foot above the previous one.

 **Points Earned:** -15 (Multiple levels, 3 or more levels at 5 each)

Terrain — Barriers

The rough-hewn benches and low seats on the terraces are barriers. There's enough room for three characters behind each of them.

 **Points Earned:** -12 (Barriers, 4 or more at 3 each, doesn't count against limit of 3 terrain features)

 Any character who hides behind a pew gains one-quarter cover (+2 AC, +1 Reflex save).

Gain — Strategy and Tactics

If the players can't figure out what's happening, maybe their characters can.

 **Singular:** No-Fault, Freestanding roll; roll Lore vs. Difficulty 6 to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding roll, Difficulty 6)

 Any character may make a Spot check (DC 12) to realize the Closer Inspection text.

Closer Inspection: Despite your ferocious hacking and hewing, the battle isn't going well. More dishonored spill through the gate every second, and sooner or later they'll overwhelm you and the members of the Thing. You've got to close the gate — and that means taking control of that runestone!

Olaf took control of the runestone by touching it. Maybe you can do the same thing ...

Gain — Taking Back the Runestone

Any Viking may place his hand on the stone and try to turn it back to the service of Odin. This is not too difficult for a great hero, but it does take several rounds of struggle to achieve. Olaf notices any attempt to take control of the stone, and focuses his attention on crippling and killing the characters making the attempt.

 **Multiple Roll:** Action Sink, roll Divine Awareness vs. Difficulty 7, 3 successes necessary, if the heroes succeed then they gain 2 points of Invigoration for the rest of the combat.

Points Spent: 30 (Action sink, 3 successes required); 10 (Difficulty 7)

Points Earned: -60 (2 points of Invigoration, applied to one combat [30 each])

 Wrestling control of the stone away from Hel requires three successful Will saves (each DC 15) in three different combat rounds. The saves do not have to occur in consecutive rounds, and different characters may make the saves. To make the save, the character must spend a full-round action touching the stone and concentrating upon it.

As soon as the third Will save succeeds, the entire party receives a +1 bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saves, and skill checks, while all foes suffer a -1 penalty on such rolls. This effect lasts until the end of the combat.

A player may receive up to three experience chits for this action, one for each successful "first try" at one of the three Will saves.

When the heroes succeed at breaking Hel's control, the gate closes, cutting several emerging dishonored in half. A great shout rises up from the delegates to the scene, and they fight on with renewed morale and vigor.

Gain — A Well-Earned Reward

Narration: The last foes fall as you help the delegates smash what's left of the dishonored warriors. The sur-



Bad Pennies

NEW MAGIC ITEM

These pennies are magical and radiate chaotic evil aura when the appropriate *detect* spells are used upon them. However, they are extremely resistant to magical analysis; the pennies have Spell Resistance 30. Unless this resistance is overcome, divination spells like *identify* and *analyze dweomer* indicate only that the pennies are enchanted with powerful magic.

The pennies are also cursed so as to be impossible to destroy or lose. After their creator has given them to a character, the pennies always return to that char-

acter within 1d6 hours of being disposed of. The curse can be ended by *remove curse* and similar spells, but the spells must overcome the pennies' Spell Resistance. The worst part of the curse is that the character can't even spend them — the pennies disappear whenever it's time to pay for something, and can never be found until it's too late.

Aside from this, the pennies do nothing. They were created just to annoy adventurers.

Caster Level: 4th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*; **Market Price:** 375 gp; **Weight:** —

vivors cheer and hug each other, then kneel and begin tending the wounded and dead.

After binding wounds and identifying bodies, Rogarr calls the assembly back to order. He says, "Today has been a tragic day — but it would have been far worse if not for the timely arrival of these heroes from Aelfdrap. Your valor has saved all Scandinavia, and brought great honor to your families. Please accept these gift as tokens of thanks."

With that, he begins pulling rings from his fingers. There is a shout of approval, and the delegates stream forward bearing whatever they have to give.

 The heroes receive a **Category F Treasure**, a **Category E Treasure**, a **Category D Treasure**, a **Category B Treasure**, 8 ounces of silver and 2 ounces of liar's silver.

Points Earned: 2 (2 oz. of liar's silver at 1 each)

Points Earned: -75 (Category F treasure); -50 (Category E treasure); -40 (Category D treasure); -20 (Category B treasure); -8 (8 oz. of silver at -1 each)

 The heroes receive rings, bracelets, and earrings worth 1250 gp. The most interesting piece is a sinuous silver dragon bracelet with ruby eyes that stretches the length of tall man's forearm. It's worth 500 gp all by itself, with the other pieces making up the remainder.

Also among the wealth are two silver pieces with leering faces on them. These are *bad pennies*.

Narration: The last gift is a pair of silver pennies, and it comes from a shifty-looking Viking with flaming red hair. He leans forward and hisses at you, "You may have bested us this time, but we will return another day. Never forget that Ragnarok is coming!" Then he turns and vanishes into the crowd.

After the gifts have been distributed, Rogarr raises his voice again. "Tomorrow we will grieve for our dead. There will be lives to rebuild and the remnants of Hel's minions to destroy. But tonight we celebrate, for we are alive and free!"



"Justice & Rage" Lost Table

This is an advanced plot development encounter for Vikings with an average of 500 victory points.

Points Spent:

Don't Annoy Old Peddlers	80
No Weapons Allowed	30
Explain Yourself	150
Holmgang!	185
Boss Monster	40
Mass Combat Opponents	48
Taking Back the Runestone	40
A Well-Earned Reward	2
Total Spent:	575

Points Earned:

A Suspicious Resemblance	-10
Gain: Bargaining Opportunity	-15
Don't Annoy Old Peddlers	-20
The Players Figure it Out	-20
The Characters Figure it Out	-10
No Weapons Allowed	-30
Explain Yourself	-40
Holmgang!	-35
Boss Monster	-20
Osric's Gift	-15
Terrain: Damaging Place	-50
Terrain: Limited Exits	-20
Terrain: Multiple Levels	-15
Terrain: Barriers	-12
Strategy and Tactics	-10
Taking Back the Runestone	-60
A Well-Earned Reward	-193
Total Earned:	-575



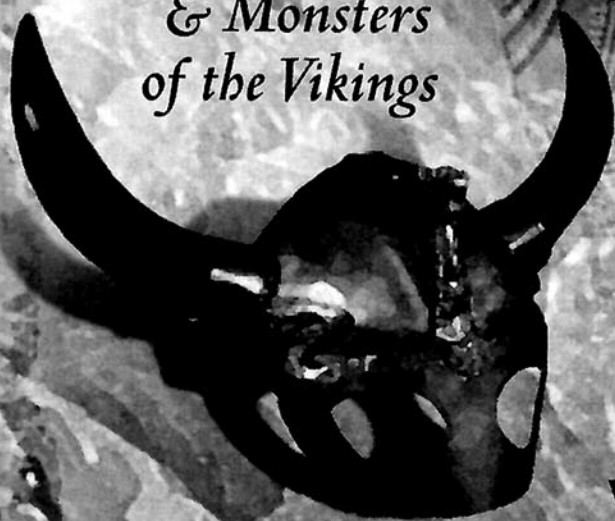
Experience Table

This chart assumes that four PCs start off at 2nd level and progress at a reasonably normal rate, finishing the campaign in the middle of 7th level. Note that the normal experience rules apply and the characters do not have to slay every monster that they encounter. (Though they probably will.) The experience chit figures are estimates, and may vary according to choices the characters make during each encounter.

MIGHTY DEED	CR	EL	XP EACH	XP TOTAL	MIGHTY DEED	CR	EL	XP EACH	XP TOTAL
<i>Episode 1, Encounter 1 – Level 2 (Experience chits available: 18)</i>					<i>Episode 3, Encounter 1 – Level 4 (Experience chits available: 30)</i>				
Slay 6 goblin hordes	2	7	600	3600	Avoid lightning room trap	7	—	3200	—
Slay 2 goblins	1/2	1	150	300	Slay 4 dire bats	5	9	1600	6400
<i>Episode 1, Encounter 2 – Level 2 (Experience chits available: 12)</i>					<i>Episode 3, Encounter 2 – Level 4 (Experience chits available: 30)</i>				
Slay Noisy	3	—	900	—	Avoid scythe trap	6	—	2,400	—
Slay a goblin assassin	1	Variable	300	Variable	Slay 6 goblin freaks	4	9	1200	7200
<i>Episode 1, Encounter 3 – Level 2 (Experience chits available: 15)</i>					<i>Episode 3, Encounter 3 – Level 5 (Experience chits available: 37)</i>				
Slay dire wolves	3	Variable	900	Variable	Bypass 2 goblin sentries	2	4	500	1000
Avoid collapsing slope	2	—	600	—	Slay 5 goblin hordes	4	9	1000	5000
<i>Episode 2, Encounter 1 – Level 2 (Experience chits available: 17)</i>					Slay Gurg the shaman	7	—	3000	—
Wrestle Bolgar	1	—	300	—	<i>Episode 4, Encounter 1 – Level 5 (Experience chits available: 57)</i>				
Slay 3 dark Vikings	2	5	600	1800	Slay 7 bone trees	4	10	1000	7000
Slay Bolgar	4	—	1350	—	Slay Oak and Ash	8	10	4500	9000
<i>Episode 2, Encounter 2 – Level 3 (Experience chits available: 16)</i>					<i>Episode 4, Encounter 2 – Level 6 (Experience chits available: 38)</i>				
Slay or escape from Lia and Kalu	5	7	1800	3600	Slay or befriend 2 skeletal wolves	1	2	300	600
<i>Episode 2, Encounter 3 – Level 3 (Experience chits available: 50)</i>					Slay 3 dishonored warriors	5	8	1200	3600
Slay 2 goblin sentries	1	2	300	600	Slay Bolgar (again)	10	—	7200	—
Avoid gas explosion trap	4	—	1350	—	<i>Episode 4, Encounter 3 – Level 6 (Experience chits available: 50)</i>				
Avoid pit trap	1	—	300	—	Slay Olaf	12	—	14,400	—
Slay 6 goblin warriors	2	7	600	3600	Slay 6 dark Viking hordes	4	9	900	5400
Slay Tahn, Siggy, and Rochester	3	6	900	2700					

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Something's Rotten in Scandinavia ...

Your chieftain's treacherous brother has struck down your valorous leader, ghosts roam the land, and dark forces are gathering. Do you:

- A. Stand around wearing black, worrying about your life in a series of whiny soliloquies?
- B. Grab your axe and **WREAK BLOODY VENGEANCE ON THE FORCES OF DARKNESS!**

If you correctly answered "B," then *Last Hero in Scandinavia* is for you! This action-packed campaign contains rules for both the D20 System and the *Rune* roleplaying game. It features ferocious goblins, dangerous steamtech weapons, and a plot that could destroy the entire Viking civilization. That's not all, though. Inside you'll find:

- Competitive scoring rules that let you play D20 to win
- Fast and furious mass combat rules for both *Rune* and D20
- New monsters like the undead bone tree, and rules for creating *Rune* boss monsters
- Saga rules for single-GM *Rune* campaigns
- 20+ hours of non-stop bonecrunching action!

So grab your axe, Viking warrior!

CORIOLIS

Last Hero in Scandinavia contains complete game statistics for both the D20 System and the *Rune* roleplaying game. To use the D20 System, this book Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, Published by Wizards of the Coast®.



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