



ROBIN D. LAWS

RUN



BY ROBIN D. LAWS



ROLL OF HONOR

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AUTHOR DEDICATION

Dedicated to my most stalwart jarls: Paul Jackson, Troy Duffy, and Joel LeBlanc.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin D. Laws has long pillaged the naked shores of the hobby game market, often under the blood-red banner of the Atlas Games longship. His victories for them include the *Feng Shui* roleplaying game, extensive contributions to the *Over the Edge* line, and the novels *The Rough* and the *Smooth* and *Pierced Heart*. His missions under other chieftains include the cruel and devious *Pantheon* and *Other Roleplaying Games* (Hogshead Publishing), as well as principal design work on *Hero Wars* (Issaries Inc.) and *The Dying Earth Roleplaying Game* (Pelgrane Press). The Valykries sing of his work on the *King of Dragon Pass* computer game. Robin recently made a devastating incursion into the pages of *Dragon Magazine*, seizing the twin mantles of columnist and contributing editor.

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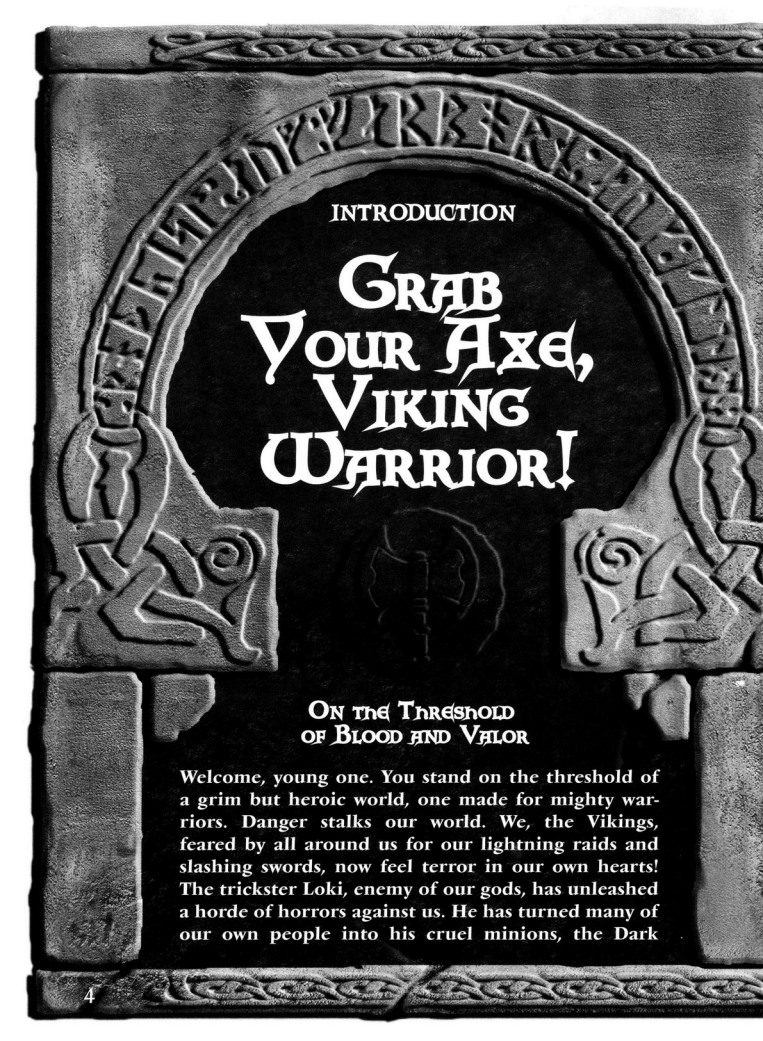
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INTRODUCTION

GRAB YOUR AXE, VIKING WARRIOR!

ON THE THRESHOLD OF BLOOD AND VALOR

Welcome, young one. You stand on the threshold of a grim but heroic world, one made for mighty warriors. Danger stalks our world. We, the Vikings, feared by all around us for our lightning raids and slashing swords, now feel terror in our own hearts! The trickster Loki, enemy of our gods, has unleashed a horde of horrors against us. He has turned many of our own people into his cruel minions, the Dark

Vikings. They have declared grim and blood-spattered war upon us. Wave after wave of cruel attacks have we weathered. Our greatest warriors have fallen on the field of glorious battle. Now they reside in Valhalla, feasting, fighting, and perhaps looking down to watch those they left behind. If they could speak to you, young warrior, they would tell you that it is now your turn to stand and fight. Against Loki you will battle, against Dark Vikings, and against the other denizens of our mythic world. You will battle treacherous goblins and mysterious dwarves. You will fight your way to the temples of Loki, where you will hack down our foes and put an end to this war.

As you do this, you will rise from your present station as a scrawny youngling into the ranks of our mightiest heroes. You will win the favor of the gods, deities like wise Odin and battle-loving Thor. As you prove yourself in battle, they will gift you with ever-greater abilities, allowing you to stand against the most powerful of Loki's demonic brood, the Sark

Amen. Your flesh will harden,
to withstand axe blows that
would cut a lesser man in
two. The
speed of

lightning will fill your veins, so that you may leap forward and slash your sword through a raindrop before it hits the ground. Your thews will become like unto the gnarled roots of the world tree, Yggdrasil, granting superhuman strength to the swings of your all-hewing battle-axe. And when the dread day comes when you, too, are felled in battle — for, like our gods, we Vikings are all doomed — you shall stride proudly into Valhalla, where the greatest fighters ever will gather around you. They will precisely measure your deeds, so that your ranking among them might be proclaimed to all. Of your great accomplishments in a world of blood and valor, there will be no doubt.

So step forward, young warrior. Seize this sword by the hilt. Place this helm upon your head. Ready yourself for your hallowed destiny. For in mere moments, you will be smiting our foes.

A GAME FIT FOR VALHALLA'S FEASTING HALLS

Rune is a roleplaying game. Depending on how you came to pick up this book, that term may mean one of several things to you. Or it might not mean anything at all. Computer gamers, and complete novices, should read the next section, and then skip the section headed "Introduction For Experienced Roleplayers." Experienced roleplayers should read that section, after first checking out the one immediately below.

COMPUTER GAMERS, READ THIS

You may have this book in your hands because you played and enjoyed the computer game of the same name from Human Head Studios. The **Rune** computer game takes you on the first-person adventures of the young Viking warrior Ragnar, who, when its action begins, has just come of age. Unknown enemies have launched terrible raids against neighboring villages; even the women and children have been slain. Ragnar's people know who is responsible: the cruel chieftain





SUPPLIES BEFITTING A WARRIOR

In order to play this game, you will need **one ten-sided die** per player. These specialty dice can be found at any hobby games store — like the one where you probably bought this book. They can also be ordered by mail over the Internet.

You will also need **pencils, scrap paper, and blank hero sheets**. Take the hero sheet at the back of this book and make as many photocopies of it as you need.

On very rare occasions, we'll ask you to perform calculations. For example, you might need to average together four or five numbers in the single or low double digits, or reduce a two-digit number by 25, 50, or 75 per cent. One player should bring a **calculator** along to speed things up.



Conrack, who has pledged himself to Loki. Ragnar accompanies the experienced warriors of his village to battle Conrack's minions. A strange twist of fate places young Ragnar in a mysterious network of caverns and passageways. He fights his way through them, hacking his way past countless enemies, until he finally confronts Loki himself.

The computer game industry divides games into several categories, one of which is called an RPG, or roleplaying game. The term is confusing because it hijacks the name of another type of game played without a computer. You are holding one of those games in your hands right now. Some people call our type of game a pen and paper RPG, a face-to-face RPG, or a tabletop game, to distinguish it from the computer game category. Those of us in the pen and paper roleplaying field tend to snarl and froth like angry berserkers when forced to make this distinction, because our kind of game came first. The first computer RPGs drew their inspiration from the original wave of face-to-face roleplaying games that sprang up in the 1970s. For the rest of this book, any reference to RPGs is to tabletop gaming.

When you play the **Rune** computer game, you take on the role of Ragnar. You decide where he goes and what he does, within parameters created in advance by the game's programmers. They've created countless encounters for Ragnar in a variety of stunningly modeled 3D environments, complete with thundering music and bone-crunching sound effects. You control Ragnar's actions manually, by hitting keys or manipulating a game pad. You never know, when you try to have Ragnar do something, if he is going to succeed. His success or failure is determined by the speed and precision with which you manipulate the game controls.

When you play the **Rune** RPG, you create a hero of your own, using rules laid out in this book. You gather together with one or more players. Together, you recreate the world of **Rune** in your imaginations, visualizing its strange vistas, talking in the voices of your characters, and even supplying your own sound effects as you pound down a door or loose a crossbow bolt at a monster. You control your hero by describing his actions to the other players. When he attempts to do something, like slay a ferocious goblin, you use the basic rules described later in this section to see if he succeeds. Usually you roll a special ten-sided die (available at any hobby game shop, like the one where you found this book) to see how lucky or unlucky your hero was in using his Abilities. These dice are numbered 0 through 9. Always read 0s as representing the number 10.

Numbers we call game statistics govern your hero's chances of doing things, his present state of health, the damage his weapons deal out, and many other important factors. The game statistics appear on your hero sheet, a handy piece of paper allowing you to keep track of your hero's status. In the computer game, the terrain you fight in, the creatures you battle, and the various tricks, traps, and puzzles that confound you are built right into the program. Here, you and your fellow players must swap off duties creating maps of encounters, populating the maps with creatures, and building in other interesting elements. The game provides extensive rules for doing this, so that the person running the game doesn't take unfair advantage.

When you are the runner in charge of an encounter, you will control other supporting char-

acters, mostly enemies for the other players to fight. You design them and place them in encounters of your devising. During the encounter, you determine what they do.

This is important because the **Rune** RPG is different from other roleplaying games in that it is competitive. You gain victory points for killing monsters, uncovering traps, finding useful information,

seizing powerful magical artifacts — but mostly for killing monsters. At the end of every game session, you determine who the winner is, by seeing who has gained the most hero points. You also keep track of an overall winner from one session to the next.

A session is one gathering during which you play the game. Your session might last for an afternoon or

IMPORTANT TERMS

Because this game cruelly smashes down the simple distinctions found in other RPGs, leaving them in a bloodied heap on the longhouse floor, it requires a few more terms than usual to keep things straight. If you take a few seconds to learn these terms now, the rest of the game becomes much easier to understand at first glance.

Player is the all-encompassing term for everyone who sits down together to participate in a game of **Rune**. Whether you're taking charge of your hero or running the encounter, you're a player. Players read this rule book, roll dice, gain victory points, and choose Divine Gifts for their heroes.

Heroes, unaware that they're fictional characters in a role-playing game, swing swords, slay foes, gain glory in the eyes of the gods, and win their magical boons.

When a player directs his hero's actions in the struggle to avoid traps, scoop up treasure, and cleave enemies in twain, he is called a **pillager**. A group of pillagers is called a **Horde**.

The **runner** is the player who, for the length of the current encounter, turns over control of his hero to one of the pillagers (the **proxy**) so he can take charge of the action, as a sort of referee. The runner has read the encounter in advance and knows its secrets. He springs them on the Horde as they charge through it. The runner can win the encounter, although he is subject to a different scoring method than the Horde. Other games might refer to the runner as the Game Moderator or Game Master (GM), but here he's also a player — and competitor — so we've created a special term to avoid confusion.

The **designer** is the player who devised the encounter in the first place. Detailed rules for encounter design start on p. 85; they're the biggest part of this book and the main element differentiating **Rune** from other games. If you design an encounter, you will also act as its runner — assuming it

actually gets used in your game. However, runners don't always have to design their own encounters. They can use encounters by designers from other groups, by trading for them on the Internet. Or they can use pre-fabricated encounters, like the sample ones that make up Chapter Seven of this book. You can never be a member of the Horde during an encounter you designed.

The runner always enjoys a competitive advantage using encounters he's designed himself. That way, he can be sure that none of the Horde will be prepared for his encounter's surprises.

The **proxy** is the member of the Horde who controls the runner's hero while the runner takes charge of the encounter. So, during play, a group of six players will include one runner and five pillagers, one of whom will also be the proxy.

During **encounters**, heroes will meet **supporting characters**. Some will be friendly, or at least not violently hostile, but most will be foes. They're created by the designer, and controlled (according to the limits imposed by the rules and encounter notes) by the runner.

Collectively, heroes and supporting characters are called just plain **characters**. An **opponent** is any other player. A **foe** or **enemy** is a supporting character with whom the hero will likely do battle.

During an encounter, both the runner and the pillagers do things that may earn them victory points. Pillagers get points when they maim or kill foes and when they succeed at actions taken outside of combat. Runners get points when the heroes are badly hurt without being killed, and when heroes fail in non-combat actions. (Both can win points for other things, too, as you'll see when you get to the full rules for victory points.)

an evening. The average period of play is about three and a half hours. But you can play for short periods of time if you want, perhaps running one or two fights over the course of a lunch hour. Likewise, if you want to schedule a day-long **Rune** marathon, we will lift our mead flagons to your courage and endurance.

Each scene, usually involving combat, is called an encounter. Once you've all gotten used to designing and running encounters, your group can start running adventures. Each adventure has a beginning, middle, and an end, supplied by the runner/designer designated as plotter. (This is described in greater detail in Chapter Four.

A saga is all of the sessions or adventures that you play as part of a larger whole. As the saga progresses, your hero grows progressively more capable, ready to smite ever greater threats to all Odin holds dear. Each session has a winner, as does the saga as a whole. Throughout a saga, you will vie for first place with your fellow players.

Here you may have some advantage over seasoned roleplayers. They're used to seeing roleplaying games as some kind of weak-livered cooperative storytelling nonsense, in which players



who like killing monsters and taking their stuff are forced to suffer through all kinds of plot development and play-acting before they get to haul out their battle-axes. But, by Odin's frosty beard, this is a Viking game!

Some of you will, after introducing yourself to the roleplaying form through the **Rune** RPG, want to try injecting some plot development and characterization into your diet, despite the disapproval of the Vikings of old. If that day comes, you can investigate other fine RPGs, such as Atlas Games' **Ars Magica** (a game of medieval wizardry from which **Rune's** basic rules derive).

If the basic concept of roleplaying still seems fuzzy to you, skip ahead to the "Example of Play" at the end of this chapter.

EXPERIENCED ROLEPLAYERS, READ THIS, TOO

Did I hear outraged cries of heresy from some quarters as you read the above explanation? Let's repeat: as Thor's thundering hammer, this is a Viking game! **Rune** is about spirited competition with your fellow players, and about swinging incredibly large axes to hew down goblins and demons. This is not to say that other roleplaying games which do not enjoy Valhalla's seal of approval are somehow invalid. They're just not this game.

Anyone with any lengthy experience of roleplaying games knows that gamers display a wide variety of different tastes. Some people like to carefully simulate the cause and effect of real forces in an imaginary world. Others like to cooperatively create thrilling adventures like those they know from TV, movies, and fiction. Still others use roleplaying as a vehicle for detailed psychological exploration of the characters they create. And a whole lot of players just like to tromp through mazes filled with dangerous creatures and hack down anything that moves. You don't have to be one of the all-seeing Norns of Viking mythology to have guessed by now that **Rune** caters to this last group.

The problem you face as a hack & slash player in a conventional roleplaying game is that your Game

Master will eventually get bored with the style before you do. Players can have a grand old time undergoing fight after fight, gradually building up the power of their characters, but this style of play pales for most GMs after a while. All they get to do is draw endless maps, play the role of hapless monsters who do little more than attack and get slain, and resolve rules disputes. Sooner or later most of them yearn to introduce interesting supporting characters and grand storylines to justify their presence. If you don't humor them, they'll quit, or start playing another game that does something completely un-Viking, like de-emphasize combat. So as you go along, you sit in your chair, spending more and more of the session waiting for the chance to hit something.

Rune solves that problem for you by distributing the GMing duties to multiple runners throughout the course of an evening. You can band together with like-minded gamers to hack and slash to your heart's content.

Gamers who prefer other styles can still enjoy **Rune**, though. It can provide a fun change of pace in between more story-oriented games. After all, most current members of the other groups started out as enthusiastic goblin-slayers. Come on, admit it: some nights, especially after a hard day of classes or an unending barrage of brain-deadening meetings at work, there's nothing you need more than a little harmless excursion into an imaginary world of howling demons and blood-spattering weapons.

Because it is completely episodic, and because you can create encounters as you go, you can substitute **Rune** for a session of your regular game if people fail to show up. For the same reason, **Rune** makes a great pick-up game at conventions, or in other situations where you decide on the spur of the moment to play a game.

As an experienced roleplayer, you may be expecting the typical arrangement whereby each player chooses from an array of very different, but complementary, character types, and each jealously guards his own unique specialties. Forget that errant nonsense! Here we will all play stout and well-armored warriors, our abilities all honed in the forge of bloody combat! Stealthy thieves? Cowards, we say! Clever wizards? Bah! No right-thinking player would

want to play a robed, gray-bearded fop! Clerics? What need have we of god-talkers, when the bravest of warriors are already blessed by the gods? Warriors, we say! Warriors, warriors, warriors!

You may also have been trained to think of the word "linear" as an abomination against all that is good and right. The term refers to an adventure in which the heroes are railroaded along a single path to a certain conclusion. Many gamers prefer stories that can branch in any number of directions, depending on the decisions they make on their characters' behalf. Well, in **Rune** we clout this time-honored preference upside the head with a big old battle-axe. **Rune** is fanatically linear, and proud of it! Here, adventures don't branch at all. If I, as designer, go to the trouble to create an encounter featuring a fiery ship, a sea serpent, and a whirlpool, the heroes are darn well going to meet up with a fiery ship, a sea serpent, and a whirlpool! The idea of encounters constituting a story is one we Vikings accept only grudgingly, with narrowed and suspicious eyes. Although advanced **Rune** adventures have set-ups, developments, and climaxes, individual scenes are almost better seen as an obstacle course through which your heroes must barrel, bloody axes held aloft. Runners can even take momentary control of your hero's decisions in order to lead you smoothly to the next event in their encounters. This approach is essential to the competitive aspect of the game.

While we're throwing our preconceptions about the inferiority of non-linear adventures off the side of our dragon-headed longship, we might as well deliver a few stout blows to the concept of real-world logic. The biggest part of this book is our "Encounters" section, which provides you with a long list of elements you can build into your encounters, from piles of treasure to fanatical opponents to nasty traps. Each element comes with a specific cost. In order to create and run **Rune** encounters, you must adopt its curious system of logic. If you want to build in an effect or situation that the rules don't cover, you can't do as you would in one of those namby-pamby other role-playing games and just fudge something that seems reasonable. You're competing against the other runners, and you all have to agree on what costs what. If everybody agrees beforehand, you can add your own rules to cover the situation we didn't

think to cover. Or you can bend your concept in order to express it within the structure we give you. Otherwise, you're just screwed. We don't have special rules for steaming hot mud pits in this book. You can either create your steaming hot mud pit so that it conforms to the general rules for traps, or you can skip it. Life's tough, isn't it? Have we mentioned Ragnarok yet?

Don't confuse the rules with the world. The world of **Rune** might be chockfull of steaming hot mud pits that work the special way you want them to. It's just that the heroes will never run into them. Not until we release our steaming hot mud pit supplement, at any rate.

THE WORLD OF RUNE

The world of **Rune** offers both danger and glory to young Viking warriors such as yourselves. Enormous serpents infest the seas, ready to wrap their tails around

longships to drag their crews down to watery graves. Giants stride through mountain passes, their noses hungry for the smell of manflesh. Elves both light and dark dwell in woods too deep for men to live in. Deep in the mountains lie trackless miles of caverns and passageways, infested with all manner of creatures, from lowly but devious goblins to massive wyrms who can devour an entire raiding party without filling their monstrous bellies.

Men are but pawns in a war between gods, a battle that will reach its catastrophic climax when the day of Ragnarok comes. The chieftain of the gods dwells in Asgard, where he rules over two joined families of gods, the Aesir and Vanir. He is Odin, also called the All-Father, who cast out an eye and hung himself from the cosmic ash tree to gain

divine wisdom. His son, Thor of the thundering hammer, is our warrior god, spurring us on to win glory in battle.



Balder is Odin's fair-haired and glowing son of innocence and light. The prophecies of the three weird women, called the Norns, tell us that someday Balder will be slain by his half-brother, the cruel and ambitious Loki. Loki now writhes in chains in a secret chamber far below the earth, imprisoned by Odin and Thor in an attempt to stave off this predicted murder. For when Balder dies at Loki's hand, the final battle between giants and gods will commence. The grim ship Naglfar, made from the nail parings of the dead, will lose its anchor as the sea monster Jormungandr, one of the monstrous spawn of Loki, makes its way for the shores of Asgard, the godly realm. Loki's other progeny, Fenrir the wolf and Hel, queen of the damned, head an army to fight our gods. The prophecies tell us that the forces of both good and evil shall be utterly destroyed in this inevitable conflict, and, with it, our mortal world.

You see that our legends are as dark and gloom-enshrouded as the cold and foggy fjords in which we make our homes. We believe in no ultimate victory of good. Destruction is the ultimate fate of man and god alike. The best we can do is forestall this inescapable doom, by keeping Loki's forces in check. This we do with axe and sword, felling those who serve him, and those who stand in the way of this goal. The winding caverns and passageways beneath the mountains and fjords connect our mortal realm to the realms of the gods. Those who fight well will win the favor of the gods, gaining the superhuman powers needed to cross over to those mythic places and thrive despite their many perils.

The world we live in, the place of births and harvests and feast days, is called Midgard. We have explored it widely, having raided the homes of many other peoples who share the world with us. They are ignorant of Ragnarok's approach, and worship gods unknown to us. Though their beliefs are foolish, it is not for us to convert them to our ways. They will be but bystanders in the ultimate battle between light and darkness.

On the edges of these distant realms are found the places of myth and story, which border between Midgard and the lands of the gods. To the east is Jotunheim, the mountainous place where giants stride. Further north than even we dare to dwell is

Nidavellir, the underground realm of the Dwarves. Svartalfheim is the dense and woody domain of the Dark Elves, who will march in Loki's armies in the final battles. Though they can be reached by arduous far-travel, shortcuts exist to each of these realms, and more, by following the network of caves and passageways beneath the earth. Only those who enjoy the blessings of the gods may use these faster — and more hazardous — routes. This shadowy domain is known by many names, but we call it the Underground.

As you delve through the Underground, your exploits will come to the attention of the many gods of the Aesir and Vanir. They will gift you with great powers that ordinary men can only envy. But beware their machinations. Not all of the gods believe that Ragnarok brings all-encompassing doom. Many of them scheme to position themselves to rule the existence they believe will follow Ragnarok. Perhaps these ambitious gods are correct; if so, it would be wise to accept their Gifts, in preparation for the rewards of this unknowable new day. But if they are wrong, they play merely into the hands of Loki, and hasten our rush towards destruction. At any rate, there are few Gifts that do not come with a price. The more Gifts you accept from a single god, the more his puppet you become. At times you will find your sword hand moved, or stilled, by your patron god, as he uses you to advance his scheme of the moment. It is best to take Gifts only from gods you can trust, or to take but a few Gifts from each god. And though it is possible to earn the dark Gifts of Loki and his monstrous kin, the perils of such greed are vast.

RULES BASICS

You are one of the pillagers. Your hero is deep in the underground, in a strange cavern that seems to swallow up and feed upon the light from his torch. He steps carefully forward. Suddenly, a net falls upon him! Can he avoid the net, or will he be trapped?

Of course he can avoid the net! He is a hero, and heroes make their own luck by the strength of their backs, the speed of their feet, and the quickness of their wit.

Looking at the hero sheet at the end of this book, you can see that your character's game statistics include Characteristics, Abilities, and Gifts. Characteristics measure his innate mental and bodily talents, including the strength to wield an axe, the speed to hit an enemy before the enemy hits him, and the wit to gather information before he enters a fight. Abilities are the everyday, non-magical skills the hero has learned in the course of his upbringing, from sparring to shipbuilding. Gifts are extraordinary powers granted him by the various gods. They allow him to do things that ordinary people can't, but may from time to time cause him to fall under the control of the god to whom he owes the greatest debt.

When you try to do something in the game, and the outcome of your attempt is uncertain, you roll a ten-sided die and add it to your bonus, a number derived from some combination of your hero's Characteristics, Abilities, and Gifts. The runner then compares it to a Difficulty number listed in his encounter notes. The tougher the task, the higher this number will be.

TARGET NUMBER CHART

Degree of Challenge	Difficulty
Very Easy	3
Average	6
Tough	9
Very Tough	12
Nearly Impossible	15
Superhuman	16+

Various circumstances set out in the rules may change your die roll either upwards or downwards. A number added to your die roll is called an increase. A number subtracted from your die roll is a decrease.

Sometimes something bad will happen to your hero and he will suffer a decrease to every roll he makes until the problem is rectified, either by your actions or through the simple passage of time. This state is known as Impairment. Each point of decrease is called an Impairment point.

Often the difference between your roll total and the Difficulty becomes important.

So, that net was falling on your hero. The runner has decided that it is Tough to evade — that is, that your bonus plus die roll must equal or exceed a target number of 9. The runner tells you which Characteristics, Abilities, or Gifts to derive the bonus from; you can use the rules to remind him of other applicable game statistics he may not have thought of. In this case, you get your bonus from your Quickness Characteristic (which is 3), plus your Swiftmess of Sleipnir Gift (which is 2). Thus you add a total of 5 to your die roll. You roll a 3, 5 plus 3 is 8 — one less than the target number of 9. Looks like your hero will indeed fall prey to that net. But don't despair — a mighty-thewed Viking has more than one way of overcoming the Underground's dangers.

Almost any action undertaken by a warrior in the heroic but doom-laden world of **Rune** carries with it the potential for both overwhelming achievement or devastating misfortune. Whenever you roll a 10, you score a triumph. Reroll, take the result and add it to the 10 you already have. Unless, that is, that result also comes up as a 10, in which case you reroll and add that, too.

Junie rolls a 10. She rerolls, getting a 3. She adds it to her original 10, for a result of 13.

Janie rolls a 10. She rerolls, getting another 10. She rerolls, getting yet another 10. She rerolls, getting a 6. Her result is a 36.

However, if you get a 1 on your initial roll, you suffer a botch. Reroll and make the result a negative number. If you get a 10 on the rerolled die, it becomes part of your negative total, and you keep rolling. Further 10s are also rerolled and added.

Junie rolls a 1. She rerolls and gets a 4. Her result is -4.

Junie rolls a 1. She rerolls, and gets a 10. She rerolls, getting a 7. Her result is -17.

Botches don't always bring on disastrous consequences; it all depends on the situation.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Roleplaying games proceed through conversation. The runner describes what's going on. Players tell the runner what their characters are doing in response. When the heroes try to do something concrete, they or the runner roll dice and use the rules to see whether they succeed or fail.

Runner: Okay, so you're deep in the Underground, near the realm of the goblins. You hear a weird whooshing sound.

Paul (playing Bork the Stout): Bork listens hard to see if there's anything special about the sound.

Runner: Roll your Awareness.

Paul: Darn, I don't have that skill.

Runner: Well then you'll have to take the penalty for using an Ability you don't have.

Paul: What is that again?

[Runner flips through rulebook.]

Runner: -3.

[Paul rolls a die, subtracts 3 from the result.]

Paul: I got a 2.

Runner: The Difficulty was a 6, so you fail. I add 4 potential victory points to my tally for the difference. Okay, so all of a sudden a great rushing flood of water comes barrelling down the narrow passageway.

Troy (playing Asgrim the Obstreperous): Holy snot! There's got to be a way we can avoid this!

Runner: There are sturdy-looking stalactites above your heads. If you make Jump rolls, you can leap up and grab onto them long enough for the flood of water to pass by. Everybody make your rolls — Difficulty 6.

Troy: 7! I made it, and chalk up a victory point!

Paul: 4! Curses!

Runner: [tallying up another 2 victory points] Okay, you suffer the hazard's effects. Anyone else?

Joel (as Skarp-Hedin): I got an 11, so that's 5 victory points for me.

Troy: And you're dangling from a stalactite.

Joel: You got a problem with that?

Lynne (as Gunnhild): I got a 7, so that's a victory point for me.

Runner: So only Bork the Stout gets hit by the oncoming wave and smashed repeatedly up into the sharp stalactites. The hazard has a Damage rating of 30, so add that to the difference between the difficulty and your total ...

Paul: Does this ignore armor?



Runner: No.

Paul: Good! Okay, so that's 32 points, minus Bork's Soak of 6, so he takes a total of 26 damage. Ouch! That's over my Wound Threshold, so it counts as a Wound.

Runner: So he suffers a point of Impairment.

Paul: I hate Impairment.

Runner: Okay, now, on the heels of the wall of water, these weird little bent-over creatures come into the corridor. They have webbed feet and fins and they look sort of translucent.

Joel: Hey, these aren't in the book!

Runner: Heh, heh. Everybody roll for Initiative.

Paul: 9.

Joel: 17.

Lynne: 7.

Troy: Oh, man, I flubbed the roll! Oh, man, I got a lousy 2!

Runner: Okay, the creatures go on 16, 9, and 15. So Joel goes first.

Joel: I step forward with my mighty battle-axe and slash at the closest one. My attack roll is 20.

Runner: The creature's defense roll is an 11, so you hit him.

Joel: The difference is 9, my damage is 12, so that's a total of 21.

Runner: Its Soak is 5, so you do 16 points actual damage.

Joel: Yes! Another 16 victory points. And it's probably wounded, right?

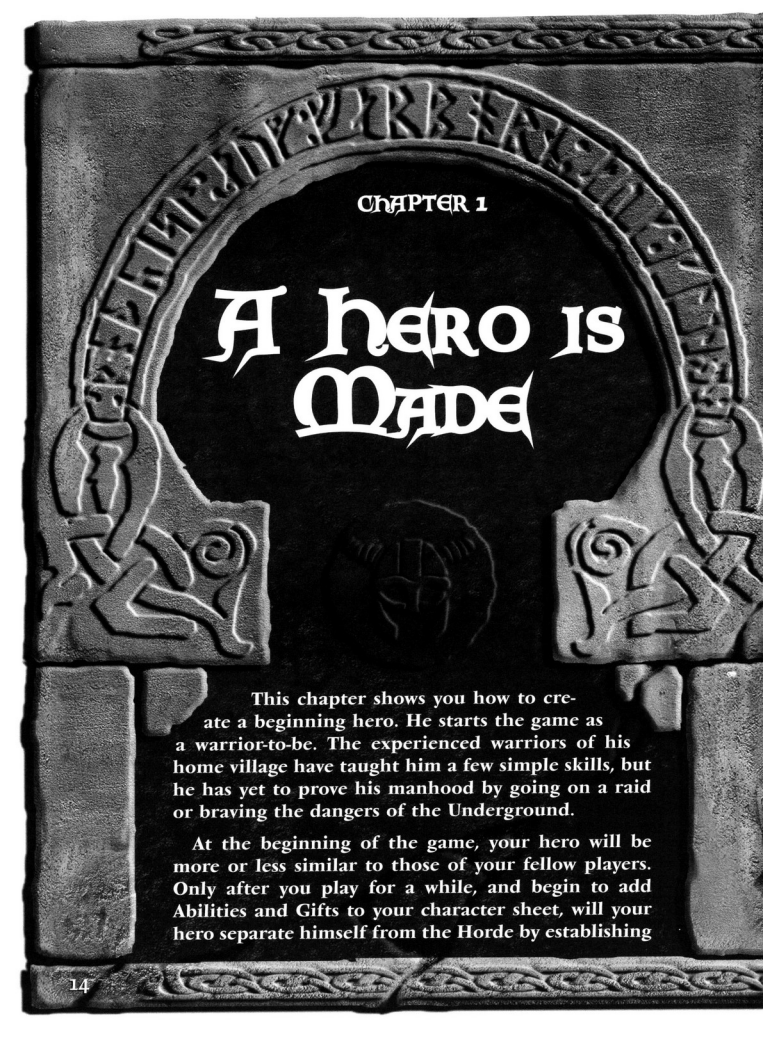
Runner: Uh-huh.

Joel: Yes!

Runner: Okay, now it swings at you ...

Joel: Hah! I mock its puniness.

... and so on ...



CHAPTER 1

A HERO IS MADE

This chapter shows you how to create a beginning hero. He starts the game as a warrior-to-be. The experienced warriors of his home village have taught him a few simple skills, but he has yet to prove his manhood by going on a raid or braving the dangers of the Underground.

At the beginning of the game, your hero will be more or less similar to those of your fellow players. Only after you play for a while, and begin to add Abilities and Gifts to your character sheet, will your hero separate himself from the Horde by establishing

his own distinctive qualities. Experienced roleplayers will note that this pattern is different from most other games, in which each character starts out conforming to a particular stereotype with a matching set of unique gimmicks.

Because all players create heroes, this chapter is addressed to everyone. "You" means any player.

BUILDING YOUR WARRIOR

The hero creation process is as follows:

STEP 1: NAME YOUR HERO

Your hero needs a suitably Norse name. Odin will not smile upon a Fred or Jimbo. He must be a Thorleik or Ansgar to earn the favor of the gods.

STEP 2: BUY CHARACTERISTICS

In this step, you'll juggle the numbers to give your hero the talents you desire.

STEP 3: BUY ABILITIES

Here you'll do the same for skills.

STEP 4: CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

Outfit yourself with as many weapons as you can carry. On second thought, you should perhaps leave some space in your pack for other useful items. Still, it is good to have a great many weapons.

STEP 5: OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Certain other game statistics are derived from your combined Characteristic, Ability, and weapon choices. These are figured here.

STEP 6: START PLAYING!

To restate our point, character differentiation in **Rune** happens in play, not at the start. The sooner your character gets out into the world of adventure, the sooner you can make him the envy of all of your opponents.

SUITABLE NAMES

You can find suitable names for Viking heroes by consulting histories or Viking sagas such as *Njal's Saga* or the *Eyrbyggja Saga*. You can find these in well-stocked bookstores or libraries (in paperback as part of the Penguin Classics series.) Texts of many of the sagas can also be found online. As of this writing, The Online Medieval and Classical Library at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL> is a good web source for the sagas.

Or you can simply take a name from the list on the following page.



AXE-WIELDING WOMEN

The Viking women of real history played a powerful role in their societies, often dictating the length and nature of feuds and imposing their considerable strength of will on local politics. However, they egged their men into battle instead of picking up sword and shield themselves.

Since *Rune* presents a fantastical version of the Viking world designed to entertain its players, we have no problem allowing you to play female heroes. Female heroes are still an exception from the norm in our fantasy Norse society, but face no impediments to an adventuring career. Your character's parents and family may at first disapprove of her risk-taking and rule-breaking, but as soon as she demonstrates divine favor, she'll face no impediments to her continued career. When the gods anoint a warrior, no mortal may question their choice.

Female characters face no particular rules disadvantages. However, because the default warrior is male, we use the male pronoun throughout this book. We certainly don't intend to offend any six-foot tall, sword-swinging warrior princesses who happen to be reading this book.



MALE NAMES

Alf	Hardbein	Sumarldi	Thorod
An	Helgi	Svein	Thorolf
Ari	Hjaltri	Sverting	Ulfar
Armod	Hord	Thangbrand	Unn
Arnel	Horik	Thorarin	Vandrad
Arnor	Hoskuld	Thorbjorn	Vermund
Asgaut	Hrapp	Thorfinn	Vigfus
Asgeir	Hrolf	Thorgrim	
Audun	Hunbogi		
Bard	Ingolf		
Beinir	Isleif		
Bersi	Ketil		
Bjorn	Kjallak		
Bolli	Kjari		
Eirik	Kjartan		
Eldgrim	Knut		
Eyvind	Magnus		
Ganger	Odd		
Geirmund	Olaf		
Gest	Orm		
Gisli	Ospak		
Gizur	Osvif		
Gorm	Ottar		
Gudlaug	Rognvald		
Gudleif	Runolf		
Hakon	Snorri		
Haldor	Stein		
Hall	Strigandi		
Harald	Styr		



COGNOMENS

Your hero needs a cognomen to separate himself out from everyone else who shares the same given name. At the beginning of his career, this may not matter so much. He might be the only Hunbogi or Ganger in his village. So you can leave this entry on your hero sheet blank.

A beginning character hasn't done much to distinguish himself. It is likely that his cognomen will be his father's name. A male character adds "-sson" to any male name to get a cognomen.

A female adds "-sdottir." So a male hero might be Geirmund Thorkelsson, Helgi Vilfusson, or Kjallak Olafsson, while their sisters might be named Alfdís Thorkelsdottir, Helga Vilfusdottir, or Ósk Olafsdottir.

Most cognomens appear after the given name, but they can appear as adjectives, too. You can be Thangbrand Long-Legs or Long-Legs Thangbrand.

Individuals nicknamed Killer always get it as an adjective, as in Killer-Hrapp. (This name indicates that you're a murderer, not a heroic slayer of goblins and dark elves.)

A beginning hero with a descriptive cognomen probably has an uncomplimentary one, like the Whelp, the Feeble, or Bent-Leg. If he came to his village from somewhere else, he may be known by his original homeland, as in Gizur of the Dales or Hakon the Easterner.

Like any nickname, cognomens are chosen by those around you; you can't become known by a complimentary name like The Strong or The Good just because you'd like to. You have to do something to earn your fame-name. Your hero might go by several names as his exploits establish his character to the people of his area. Norse nicknames are often

FEMALE NAMES

Alfdís	Groa	Hild	Osk
Astrid	Gudny	Hrefna	Thorgunna
Aud	Gudrid	Ingibjorg	Thorunn
Berghthora	Gunnhild	Ingunn	Thurid
Gerreid	Helga	Jorunn	
Gjaflaug	Herdis	Melkorka	

cruel, singling out unflattering physical traits or well-known character defects. However, it isn't necessarily fun to play a character with an insulting cognomen, so we've left this matter out of the hands of the rules. If you want to be Knut Flat-Nose, that's up to you.

Even though realism dictates that you, as a fledgling warrior, hold off on a colorful cognomen, we encourage you to pick one if you think it suggests something interesting about your hero that sets him apart from his rivals. The **Rune RPG** doesn't trouble itself with characterization as much as some other roleplaying games do, but if you enjoy playing Hrolf the Troublesome Poet or Eldgrim the Gossip, more power to you.

Fine-Hair	Sleekstone-Eye	The Good
Flat-Nose	The Bald	The Gossip
Fringe	The Black	The Hot-Head
Gray-Cloak	The Deep-Minded	The Lean
Killer	The Dueller	The Learned
Long-Legs	The Easterner	The Noisy
Of the Dales	The Feeble	The Peacock

CREATION POINTS

Naming your character doesn't cost you anything. For the next steps, though, you'll need to spend **creation points** to purchase Characteristics and Abilities. **You start the process with 60 creation points.**

CHARACTERISTICS

As previously mentioned, Characteristics are basic talents resident within a hero's body and mind. There are eight of them: **Strength, Stamina, Dexterity, Quickness, Perception, Intelligence, Communication and Presence.**

Each Characteristic ranges from -3, the absolute worst possible score for any living human being, and +3 as the apex of mortal possibility. The vast majority of people from your home village have a score of 0 in most of their Characteristics; it is the human average. Through Divine Gifts, you may be able to increase Characteristics beyond the human limit of +3.

Each Characteristic is associated with a particular Norse god. Heroes with many Gifts boosting a particular Characteristic are apt to owe a great debt to that patron deity.

Strength (Str)

Strength is muscle power, which you use to lift, shove, push, manhandle, and — above all — hit those things in need of lifting, shoving, pushing, and hitting. You use it to smash down doors and to increase the damage done to your foes when you strike them.

Thor the Thunderer is the patron god of Strength.

Stamina (Sta)

Where its twin Characteristic measures the damage you can dish out, Stamina shows how well you can take it. Stamina allows you to push yourself past the point of exhaustion, to resist diseases and poison, and to keep your head above water where weaker men would drown.

The brave, suffering god Tyr, who lost a hand in battle, grants Gifts of Stamina.

Dexterity (Dex)

Dexterity measures the grace and precision with which your hero moves. Most importantly, it determines your accuracy when wielding close-combat weapons. It also allows you to pick locks and stay on your horse when it rears back.

Ull, god of the hunt, is patron to the dexterous.

Quickness (Qik)

If your hero has a high Quickness rating, he runs fast and reacts quickly to sudden dangers. It allows him to strike first in battle, to dodge blows, and to accurately fire missiles.

Njord, enigmatic god of the wind, extends Quickness to those who please him.

Intelligence (Int)

Intelligence measures your hero's memory and Ability to reason his way through problems. He might use it to recall the exact pattern of a series of runes he saw several encounters ago, or to figure out the answer to a riddle posed by a menacing bridge troll.

Intelligence is sometimes seen as suspect, for it is the trickster Loki who, of all the gods, possesses it in abundance.

Perception (Per)

If your hero has a high Perception rating, he is good at noticing fine details in the world around them. His intuition allows him to sense dangers his conscious mind may not be aware of. He might use Perception to see the telltale glint of light that reveals a sword being drawn in the woods up ahead, or to eavesdrop on a conversation between a priest of Hel and one of her undead minions.

Watchful Heimdal, who guards the Bifrost Bridge linking Asgard and Midgard, is the god of Perception.

Presence (Pre)

Presence measures a hero's Ability to make an immediate positive impression on others of his kind. A high score means that he is considered handsome, according to the standards of his people, that he walks with confidence, and that he attracts the rapt attention of others. In some cases, Presence might indicate a strong negative impression that nonetheless commands obedience: a fearsome warrior might be big, mean-looking, and speak in a deep, booming voice shot through with menace.

What impresses humans will have a lesser effect on a goblin, dwarf, or elf, but even beings of these other races can tell a man with a strong Presence from one who lacks it.

Presence is the trait of chieftains and leaders, so it is fitting that Odin, chieftain of the gods, grants it to the heroes he favors.

Communication (Com)

Communication allows a hero to speak clearly and persuasively. It determines his talent not only for talking, but for listening to others, so as to best understand how to convince them to do what he wants.

Freyr, the god of growing crops and bulging purses, blesses his favored heroes with the powers of Communication.

PATRON DEITY REFERENCE CHART

Characteristic	Patron Deity
Strength	Thor
Stamina	Tyr
Dexterity	Ull
Quickness	Njord
Intelligence	Loki
Perception	Heimdal
Presence	Odin
Communication	Freyr

BUYING CHARACTERISTICS

In a world of clashing swords and cruel battles, not all Characteristics are of equal worth. The following chart shows you what it costs to buy each possible rating in each Characteristic. The negative ratings for Characteristics below zero mean that you actually gain creation points by picking a lower than normal rating. You may spend these on other things. Be warned, though, that competing players, when they act as runners, can trip you up by exploiting your weaknesses. Extremely low ratings can mean big trouble!

Characteristic	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Strength	-12	-8	-4	0	4	8	16
Stamina	-16	-10	-6	0	4	8	16
Dexterity	-12	-8	-4	0	4	8	16
Quickness	-12	-8	-4	0	4	8	16
Intelligence	-6	-4	-2	0	2	4	8
Perception	-6	-4	-2	0	2	4	8
Presence	-2	-2	-2	0	2	4	8
Communication	-2	-2	-2	0	2	4	8

Note that selecting especially atrocious ratings in the less-used Characteristics of Presence and Communication yields you no special benefit. We don't imagine too many players will want to do so, but you always have the option to play a foul-breathed social outcast or mumbling buffoon if that's your idea of fun.

Note to Beginning Players: Don't try anything fancy until you know the game well. Ratings less than 0 in the first four Characteristics, or less than -1 in the latter four, are recommended only for experienced players attempting tricky concepts in hero creation.

ABILITIES

After purchasing Characteristics, you buy your Abilities with the points left over. You are limited to a rating of 3 in any single Ability. Abilities divide into two categories: **primary** and **secondary**. Primary Abilities appear in play much more often than secondary ones. The categories determine the cost of the various possible ratings in each Ability. Each point of a primary Ability costs 2 creation points. Each point of a secondary Ability costs 1 point.

You might not want to spend all of your creation points in the Ability stage, though, because you can also use them to purchase **hit points**, which increase the number of injuries you can take before things really start to get serious.

In almost all cases, you can try to succeed at any activity even when you do not have the relevant Ability. **However, your roll faces a substantial -3 penalty.** So don't short yourself on Abilities when designing your character.

Each Ability has a **Governing Characteristic**. This is the Characteristic the runner will most often ask you to pair with that Ability when you roll for success. Runners may call for other Characteristics when they deem it appropriate. Some Abilities may encompass a number of common tasks, each of which draws on a different Characteristic. When this is the case, examples of tasks are provided for each Characteristic mentioned.

Many Abilities also come with their own **Equipment**. This entry describes the gear you need to properly perform the tasks associated with the Ability. You can't ski without skis, or make a map without parchment, ink, and a quill pen. At the beginning of any adventure, unless you specify otherwise, you are automatically assumed to have on your person all of the listed gear. Some pieces of gear include a **Load value**, reflecting the fact that

you can only carry so many things at one time. Load values are explained in greater detail later on in this chapter; for now all you need to know is that high numbers denote heavy items.

Unless you lose it or otherwise dispose of your equipment in the course of the adventure, you will always have it with you when you need it. **Without it, you suffer a -2 penalty to all die rolls on the Ability in question.** (Exceptions sometimes occur. If you're using Intelligence + Ski to look at a snow-capped mountain and determine whether it's about to send an avalanche caroming down at you, your answer doesn't depend on having your skis handy.)

You can increase Ability ratings during play; see the chapter on "Improving Your Hero" for more on this.

RECOMMENDED ABILITIES FOR BEGINNING HEROES

The Abilities most used in **Rune** will vary by group, and change over time. When you design an encounter, you may find it profitable to call on the heroes to use Abilities few of them have. If everybody begins to call on these Abilities, they'll all get added to the heroes as they progress, making them less useful to designers, who will then pick on other Abilities, and so on.

Before that vicious cycle begins, however, you'll find that certain Abilities tend to crop up repeatedly in basic encounters. These especially useful Abilities are *italicized* in the Ability List.

The various Abilities are as follows. For ease of reference, they are divided up by sort of activity.

FIGHTING ABILITIES

There is no set of Abilities more important in **Rune** than those that allow you to hew, smite, and otherwise slay your monstrous opponents.

Equipment is not listed for Fighting Abilities. Instead, you'll choose from a vast list of weapons and armor a little later in the character creation process.

ABILITY LIST

Here's a list of all of the Abilities, in alphabetical order, for quick reference. The Load column gives you the weight of the equipment associated with the Ability, if applicable.

Ability	Category	Set	Characteristic	Load	Page
Animal Handling	Secondary	Exploratory	Presence	NA	22
Awareness	Primary	Exploratory	Perception	NA	22
Balance	Secondary	Exploratory	Dexterity	NA	23
Bargain	Secondary	Interaction	Communication	NA	27
Bows	Primary	Fighting	Perception	NA	21
Bravery	Secondary	Exploratory	Stamina	NA	23
Brawling	Primary	Fighting	Dexterity	NA	21
Carouse	Secondary	Interaction	Stamina	NA	28
Chain Weapon	Primary	Fighting	Dexterity	NA	21
Climb	Secondary	Exploratory	Strength	2	23
Deception	Secondary	Interaction	Presence	NA	28
Demeanor	Secondary	Interaction	Presence	NA	28
Disguise	Secondary	Interaction	Intelligence	NA	29
Divine Awareness	Primary	Miscellaneous	Presence	NA	30
Dodge	Primary	Exploratory	Quickness	NA	24
Gamble	Secondary	Interaction	variable	0.5	29
Great Weapon	Primary	Fighting	Dexterity	NA	21
Healer	Primary	Exploratory	Dexterity/Perception	1	24
Insight	Secondary	Interaction	Communication	NA	29
Jump	Secondary	Exploratory	Strength	NA	24
Leadership	Secondary	Interaction	Presence	NA	29
Longshaft Weapon	Primary	Fighting	Dexterity	NA	22
Lore	Secondary	Exploratory	Intelligence	NA	24
Map	Secondary	Exploratory	Intelligence	0.5	24
Music	Secondary	Interaction	Communication	3	29
Pick Lock	Secondary	Exploratory	Dexterity	1	25
Pursuit	Secondary	Exploratory	Perception	NA	25
Repair	Secondary	Exploratory	Dexterity	1	25
Ride	Secondary	Exploratory	Dexterity	NA	25
Runes	Secondary	Interaction	Intelligence	NA	29
Seamanship	Secondary	Exploratory	variable	NA	25
Sing	Secondary	Interaction	Stamina	NA	30
Single Weapon	Primary	Fighting	Dexterity	NA	22
Skald	Secondary	Interaction	Intelligence/Presence	NA	30
Ski	Secondary	Exploratory	Dexterity	4	25
Sleep	Secondary	Exploratory	Stamina	NA	26
Sprint	Secondary	Exploratory	Strength	NA	26
Stealth	Primary	Exploratory	Dexterity	NA	26
Survival	Secondary	Exploratory	Intelligence	0.25	26
Swim	Secondary	Exploratory	Strength/Stamina	NA	27
Thrown Weapon	Primary	Fighting	Perception	NA	22
Traps	Primary	Exploratory	Dexterity	0.5	27
Two Weapons	Primary	Fighting	Dexterity	NA	22

BOWS

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Perception

You can hit targets with long-range missile weapons, like a crossbow or bow and arrow. (Make sure you take Brawling, or you'll face a serious disadvantage when someone tries to hit you with a close-combat weapon.)

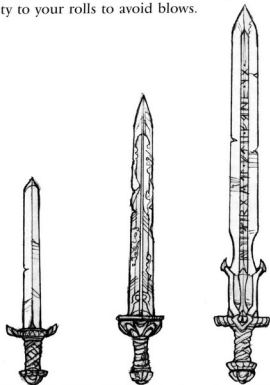
BRAWLING

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

You are adept at unarmed combat. With fist and furious kick, you smash your foes. This is the best combat Ability to use during drunken melees between community members and other friends. You can smash one another around, establish who is the superior man, yet still have each participant in fair shape by the morning, ready to fight the village's true enemies.

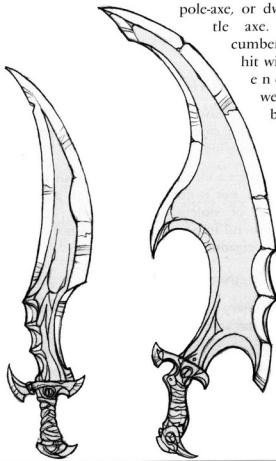
This Ability is a must for missile users; you use it as the basis of your defense from close-combat attacks. Without it, you face a nasty penalty to your rolls to avoid blows.



VIKING SHORT
SWORD

ROMAN
SWORD

VIKING BROAD
SWORD



DWARVEN WORK
SWORD

DWARVEN BATTLE
SWORD

CHAIN WEAPON

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

There is no arguing with the mystique of the chain weapon. Whether you fight with morning stars, flails, or another flexible weapons, the distinctive clank of the chain links that grant its pummeling head additional force is in itself nearly as satisfying as the sound the weapon makes when it impacts with a goblin's skull.

GREAT WEAPON

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

If you need two hands to wield it, and it rains down on its foe in a great slashing arc, it's a great weapon, whether it be a greatsword, pole-axe, or dwarven battle axe. Although cumbersome, any hit with such an enormous weapon can be devastating to a foe.

LONGSHAFT WEAPON

Category: Primary**Governing Characteristic:** Dexterity

You can wield spears, pikes, and other long-hafted weapons intended to be held two-handed and jabbed into a foe.

SINGLE WEAPON

Category: Primary**Governing Characteristic:** Dexterity

You fight well with comparatively small weapons meant to be wielded with one hand, including short swords, clubs, daggers, maces, and battle hatchets. And what do you do with your other hand? Use a great honking shield, of course. Skill with single weapons also assumes that you've learned to interpose a heavy shield between the foe's incoming blows and your own precious hide.

THROWN WEAPON

Category: Primary**Governing Characteristic:** Perception

You can ably hurl missiles at your enemies, whether they be rocks, sling stones, or special daggers or axes balanced for throwing.

This Ability makes a nice supplement to your wreaking of mayhem, but is not to be relied on as a primary method of violent self-expression. Thrown weapons are useful in odd situations but not nearly as deadly as a gigantic sword or axe.

TWO WEAPONS

Category: Primary**Governing Characteristic:** Dexterity

You can fight with a single weapon (see above) in each hand, forgoing the protection of a shield for additional opportunities to strike your foe. The two-weapon combinations are the fastest in the game, and thus the most likely to give you multiple attacks during each round of combat.

EXPLORATORY ABILITIES

A Viking warrior does not establish his reputation through combat alone. When he leaves the safety of his village, he must be prepared for a range of situations that might deprive him of life and limb. Exploratory Abilities provide that preparation.

ANIMAL HANDLING

Category: Secondary**Governing Characteristic:** Presence

You can tame wild horses and train commonly domesticated animals like dogs to perform their traditional tasks. When confronted with wild animals, you know how to behave to avoid arousing them to attack you.

AWARENESS

Category: Primary**Governing Characteristic:** Perception

You are highly attuned to the world around you. This is the Ability you use to spot the telltale clues alerting you to danger. In the Underground or wilderness, any unusual sight or out-of-place sound can alert you to the presence of hidden enemies. You can spot hidden doors, sniff out the first hints of poisonous vapors, notice trip-wires and other indications of traps.

Even when your mind is occupied by other things, your senses are continually on the alert for hidden dangers. However, if you want to be even surer that you and your allies aren't walking into ambushes or booby traps, you can focus your attention fully on scanning the path ahead for trouble. This increases your Awareness by +3 for up to ninety minutes. Unfortunately, this level of sustained concentration is mentally wearying. After you drop your concentration, you rub your bleary eyes and allow your mind to wander. You suffer a -3 penalty to Awareness for the same amount of time you maintained your concentration.

Sometimes the runner will secretly roll your Awareness for you. Otherwise, the mere fact that he asks you to make a roll would tip you off to the fact

that something is awry, even if you fail the roll. Clever runners keep records of the Awareness ratings of all other players' heroes.

BALANCE

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

You are blessed with a natural sense of balance. You can walk across narrow beams suspended over raging rivers, fight confidently on the edge of a cliff face, and avoid slipping in muddy or snowy terrain.

The chart below shows you the maximum distance in paces you can move in a single round, if the surface you're navigating is tricky enough to require a Balance roll. (Actions and half actions are explained in the next chapter, on p. 47.)

Your Balance Ability	Half Action	Full Action
0	3 paces	6 paces
1	5 paces	10 paces
2	7 paces	14 paces
3	9 paces	18 paces
4+	9 + 2 paces for each point over 3	18 + 4 paces for each point over 3

BRAVERY

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Stamina

The difference between a mewling babe and a Viking warrior is that you have trained yourself over many years to ignore the natural feeling of terror that grips a man in the face of danger. Like animals, ordinary people operate under the compulsion of powerful survival instincts. They may think that their minds exercise control over their actions, but, in the face of danger, realize that these instincts, rooted deep in the body, prevent them from doing as they promised themselves they would. Even though they may wish to stand and fight in the course of a deadly battle, they are often seized with the irresistible urge to flee. Under such terrible stress, the ordinary man fights only when cornered. You, however, have

worked to suppress your survival instinct, and can wade unmoved into situations that would cause an ordinary man's conscious mind to seize up completely. You never need to roll in order to stay in a run-of-the-mill combat, even when your comrades die like flies around you. However, your extreme Bravery can still be tested by supernatural manifestations, the presence of malign deities, or other gruesome sights. Successful Bravery rolls allow you to keep your free will in the face of these mind-crushing influences.



CLIMB

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Strength

You can climb cliffs, walls or rocky surfaces without falling. You can find and tightly grip available handholds in all but the sheerest surfaces.

The chart below shows you how far, in paces, you can climb during a single combat action. This assumes movement up a sheer face with plenty of handholds. (Actions are explained in the next chapter, on p. 47.)

Your Climb Ability	Half Action	Full Action
0	7 paces	15 paces
1	10 paces	20 paces
2	13 paces	25 paces
3	16 paces	30 paces
4+	16 + 3 paces for each point over 3	30 + 5 paces for each point over 3

Equipment: 50 feet of rope, pitons, grappling hook. **Load:** 2; Assuming

a surface with reasonable handholds, you don't need equipment to climb any distance equal to or less than that listed above for your full action.

DODGE

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Quickness

This Ability allows you to evade blows, rolling rocks, bolts of arcane energy, and other swiftly incoming threats to your continued existence. Chief among these threats are missiles like arrows and crossbow bolts. Although you're not a total sitting duck for missile users if you forgo your Dodge skill, you may find yourself gazing enviously at your Dodge-adept comrades at the end of a fight, as you pull one arrowhead after another from your bruised and lacerated flesh.

HEALER

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Perception (to diagnose an illness); Dexterity (to bandage a wound or set a splint)

Wounds, from the merely vexing to the spectacularly gaping, are a part of life for the Viking warrior — and, unless a man trained in their repair is at hand, a part of death. With this skill, you can identify illnesses, stop wounds from bleeding, find healing herbs, brew primitive medicines, and otherwise save the lives of your companions. You can even patch up your own minor injuries.

For rules on healing injuries, see p. 54.

Equipment: Bandages, splints, grain alcohol, poultices, catgut, needle, and a variety of medicines.

Load: 1

JUMP

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Strength

You can leap high in the air, or a great distance forwards. This allows you to move around in the Underground, crossing its many raging rivers or leaping from one level to another. In the dangerous world of **Rune**, a missed jump can result in injury or even death.

The chart below shows you the maximum distance in paces you can jump on a successful roll.

Your Jump Ability	Jump Upwards	Jump Forwards
0	1 pace	2 paces
1	2 paces	5 paces
2	3 paces	10 paces
3	4 paces	15 paces
4+	4 + 1 pace for each point over 3	15 + 5 paces for each point over 3

LORE

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

You listened carefully to the stories told by the older warriors of your village when they returned from their raids of foreign lands and forays into the dank and dangerous underworld. As a result, you know all sorts of odd and interesting facts about the hazards that await explorers. It isn't book learning by any means, but that sort of nonsense is for the pillaged, not for the pillager. You know practical things, like the ways and wiles of your people's usual enemies.

MAP

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

You can make reasonably accurate sketch-maps of areas you explore. This Ability is especially useful in the Underground, a maze of underground passages in which it is easy to get lost. You can use the maps you create to find your way home when you would otherwise lose your way.

If you come to **Rune** as an experienced roleplayer, you may find the way we handle maps a little bit different. In most games that use maps, the player's skill at making the map is what counts. Here you, the player, don't produce a map that exists in the real world. Instead, your hero makes a map that exists only in his game world. Sometimes he isn't even doing that; he's using his skill at spatial relationships to keep track of where

he is by making a mental map that exists only in his imagination.

When there is a chance that your hero will become lost, he must make a Map roll to stay on track. Otherwise, he'll become convinced of an incorrect route and lead his party off in the wrong direction. (Detailed rules on this situation are found in the Encounters chapter, on p. 152.)

A good map of an Underground section is a coveted and valuable item, not only to other Vikings, but also to dwarves, elves, and even giants. If you specify that you're making a map, and make a successful roll during the Aftermath of each encounter, you'll be creating an item of value which you can barter for treasure, information, or favors. Or you can take them back to your home community, to increase its store of valuable knowledge.

Equipment: An airtight, greased hide tube containing a piece of parchment, bottle of ink, and quill pen. **Load:** 0.5

PICK LOCK

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

If equipped with a few strong iron pins or wires, you can, with time, open even sophisticated locks of mundane manufacture, whether they be on doors or guarding tantalizing chests which are surely full of valuable booty. Some locks are trapped though, and you may be in for a disturbing surprise if you do not first use Awareness to detect them and Traps to remove them.

Equipment: A selection of small, metal picks and saws. **Load:** 0.5

PURSUIT

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Perception

Escaping foes won't outdistance you for long. You can follow the trail of an enemy through snowy wilderness, rocky foothills, or even the moister chambers of the Underground. You can guess his planned route and figure out the best way to lay an ambush for him.

REPAIR

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

When important gear, including your armor and weapons, is damaged, you are able to repair it in the field. You know how to sharpen dulled blades, straighten bent swords, and reattach stray axe heads. You can patch leather, sew scales back onto armor, and reliably knot frayed rope back together. Your repairs might not be pretty, but they extend the life of damaged equipment until you can replace it.

Equipment: A hammer, pliers, glue, thread, needles, and scrap leather. **Load:** 1

RIDE

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

You are a skilled rider of horses, and can avoid being thrown when your mount leaps a gorge or rears up in terror when it sees a snake. You know how to preserve your mount's health, sensing when he is tired and needs a rest. You can fight from horseback.

Equipment: A saddle, bridle, and reins. **Load:** none; your horse bears the weight.

SEAMANSHIP

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Stamina (avoid seasickness); Intelligence (navigation); Dexterity (repair damage to a vessel)

Norse longships are terrors of the seas, serving as launching platforms from which hordes of screaming Viking warriors rush ashore to lay waste to a town, village, or monastery. You know your way around a longship, having performed duties ranging from repair to piloting.

SKI

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

The best way to travel down a wintry slope is on skis. You can execute daring maneuvers on skis, especially when giving chase — or being chased yourself.

Equipment: Skis and leather thongs to tie skis to boots. **Load:** 4

SLEEP

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Stamina

You guffaw now that you see Sleep listed as a skill, but when you end up in a bone-chilling dungeon, your eyes gummed over with mucus and your head swimming with near-hallucinatory exhaustion, you'll realize that the Ability to fall asleep quickly and remain in deep slumber is one any explorer covets. You can grab revivifying naps even in the direst of surroundings, and can drift off to dreamland even when you haven't been awake for long. In this way, you can store up your sleep, remaining bright-eyed when your companions' eyelids begin to droop all around you.

If you want to fall asleep when you shouldn't be tired, roll Stamina against a Difficulty equal to 16 - the number of hours since you last woke up. You may remain happily asleep for a number of hours up to the difference between the Difficulty and Sleep total after rolling.

Like any character, you can automatically fall asleep once you've been awake for sixteen hours or more.

This Ability also helps you to wake up quickly after being knocked unconscious.

SPRINT

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Strength

You can run very quickly for short distances. This Ability is best used to outdistance pursuing foes, or to leap upon enemies foolish enough to try to escape your wrath. You may also have occasion to outrun other things, such as cascades of boulders or eruptions of red-hot lava. Being able to run quickly is also an offensive advantage; without this Ability, you can't properly charge into your opponents' midst, hacking and slaying as you go.

The following chapter shows you how far you can action in one round if that's all you're doing (full move) and how far you can move and still do something else, like attack a foe.

Heroes never have a move lower than that given for a Sprint rating of 0.

Your

**Sprint
Ability**

**Half
Action***

**Full
Action****

0	8 paces	15 paces
1	10 paces	20 paces
2	12 paces	25 paces
3	15 paces	30 paces
4+	15 + 2.5 paces for each point over 3 (drop fractions)	30 + 10 paces for each point over 3

* Distance You Can Move and Still Take an Action

** Distance You Can Move By Forgoing All Other Actions

STEALTH

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

By carefully placing one foot in front of the other, and moving with painstaking slowness, you can advance into enemy territory without attracting the attention of those who wish to slay you. You can step on a twig without breaking it, slosh through water without splashing, and swat at a marauding biting fly so that even it doesn't know you've killed it.



SURVIVAL

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

You are well versed in a variety of practical techniques to keep yourself and your companions healthy, dry, and relatively comfortable outdoors or underground. You can keep torches dry, find safe places to camp, and tell beneficial plants and fungi from poisonous ones. Your crafty ways keep yourself and your allies from suffering various minor complaints that can dull the edge of your preparedness for battle. With this skill, you can feed yourself and your companions during journeys

through the surface world. You know how to locate game animals and, after you've used a fighting skill like Bows to kill your prey, butcher them.

Equipment: Flint, three days' worth of dry sticks suitable as torches, magnetic compass, and a small knife for butchery. **Load:** 0.25

SWIM

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Strength (to cross a river or lake); Stamina (to tread water for long periods without going under)

Whether tossed by the raging storms of the Nordic oceans or dumped into the icy pools that dot the cavernous passageways of the Underground, the Ability to swim keeps you from drowning.

The chart below shows you how far you can swim during a single combat action. This assumes a body of water with a tranquil surface, at a temperature that will neither scald or freeze you. (Actions are explained in the next chapter, on p. 47.) Mildly choppy waters reduce these numbers by 50%; raging waves or strong current by 25%.

Your Swim Ability	Half Action	Full Action
0	7 paces	15 paces
1	10 paces	20 paces
2	13 paces	25 paces
3	16 paces	30 paces
4+	16 + 3 paces for each point over 3	30 + 5 paces for each point over 3

TRAPS

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Dexterity

The byways of the Underground are laden with booby traps meant to maim or even kill unwary intruders. The forest homes of the elves are similarly larded with traps. This skill allows you to safely proceed through areas your enemies wish to bar you from. Once you or an ally have spotted a trap (usu-

ally with Awareness, above), your supple fingers and knowledge of trap construction pair up to allow you to dismantle the trap without triggering it.

You can also build traps. This becomes useful when you're hiding your loot in a hostile locale for later pickup; your spikes, blades, and falling rocks deter others from disturbing your treasure caches.

Equipment: Rudimentary pliers, scissors, hammer, and pick. **Load:** 0.5

INTERACTION ABILITIES

Sometimes success is not so easy as merely descending into the hostile depths of the Underground to shatter the foe's bones. On certain occasions, you will have no choice but to interact with others in search of information or assistance. Once you've used interaction Abilities to gain equipment, knowledge of your route, or clues as to the nature of your foes, *then* you can return to the hewing and hacking for which you were born.

BARGAIN

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Communication

Use this Ability when negotiating any reciprocal arrangement, whether you be dickering with a smith over the cost of a battle axe, convincing a dwarven chieftain to lend his forces to a sally against the dark elves, or trading political favors with the chieftain of a neighboring village.



The Viking era considerably predates a time of printed catalogues and comparison shopping. Although people know whether an item is common or rare, no one has memorized a list of exact prices that pertains throughout Midgard. The precise value of any given item can be determined only in the course of a haggling session between a prospective seller and an interested buyer.

When exchanging equipment for treasure, or vice versa, you engage in a contest (explained on p. 57) in which you pit your Bargain roll against that of your negotiating partner. If the buyer wins the contest, he gets a price on the upper end of the range for an item of its availability category (either common or rare). If the seller wins, the price is on the lower end of the range. The range for common items is from 1 to 4 oz. of silver; rare items are from 5 to 20 oz. of silver.

The degree of difference between the victor's and loser's rolls determines the price. The chart below shows the price of any item in ounces of silver, depending on who won the contest and by how much. The loser is never obligated to go through with the transaction.

Availability of Item

Common *Rare*

Buyer Wins By 6 +	1 oz. silver	5 oz. silver
Buyer Wins By 2-5	2 oz. silver	10 oz. silver
Buyer Wins By 1	3 oz. silver	15 oz. silver
Seller Wins By 1	4 oz. silver	20 oz. silver
Seller Wins By 2 - 5	5 oz. silver	25 oz. silver
Seller Wins By 6 +	Difference between totals in oz. of silver	Difference between totals x5 in oz. of silver

CAROUSE

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Stamina

Vikings are impressed by a prodigious capacity for food and alcohol, which this Ability allows you to demonstrate. Use it to ingratiate yourself with Vikings from other villages or lands. It is also useful to win contests of drinking or eating, on which

heavy wagers might be placed. Use it also when you need to quickly shake off the leaden-bellied after-effects of a feast to engage the enemies who burn your steeds.

DECEPTION

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Presence

Like the trickster Loki, warriors with this skill have made careful study of the art of lying. They know how to present themselves as kindly and sincere individuals who have only the best interests of others at heart. They speak with conviction, looking into the eyes of those they address, as they tell outrageous lies.

DEMEANOR

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Communication

You know how to present yourself to others in the manner most likely to create a favorable impression. In most cases, this is accomplished by adopting an attitude of confidence in yourself and respect towards those you address. You speak clearly and boldly, with a sense of passion. You defer to your betters without mealy-mouthed flattery. Naturally, your sense of decorum is that of a Viking. The Difficulty of most Demeanor rolls is the subject's Communication + Insight. This will be modified according to the subject's knowledge of your reputation and actions. If you just killed a chieftain's son, the Difficulty goes through the roof. If you just saved his son from otherwise certain death, the Difficulty decreases to 1.

When dealing with foreigners or the inhuman races, you find that your forthrightness and pride may not be as well-received as among your own kind. You face +6 Difficulty when trying to follow the rules of decorum in a culture you're not familiar with. Each time you succeed for that particular culture, the Difficulty penalty decreases by 1 for subsequent attempts. So after three Demeanor successes in dealing with goblins, say, your Difficulty will be +3. You can't reduce the Difficulty penalty below 0. If you don't keep track of your successes, your Difficulty remains at +6.

Eccentric individuals may reject the usual rules of decorum for their cultures, adding a Difficulty penalty determined by the designer. You can reduce or eliminate this penalty by first making a successful Insight roll to see how the supporting character's preferences depart from the norm. Each point of difference between Difficulty and Demeanor total after rolling reduces the penalty against the subsequent Demeanor roll by 1.

DISGUISE

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

You can disguise your appearance so that you appear to be someone other than a Viking warrior. Disguise gets harder as the difference between your true appearance and the one you wish to adopt increases. Also, it is extremely difficult to impersonate a specific person if the people you want to fool are even slightly familiar with him.

GAMBLE

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Intelligence (to win honestly-run games in which skill is involved); Perception (to spot cheaters); Quickness (to cheat yourself). Use without a contributing Characteristic if the game is determined purely by luck.

You are good at winning non-physical games, including die-rolling, stone-dividing, and board games. Card games don't really exist yet. Typically you contest (see contest rules on p. 57) against other characters' Gamble Abilities.

Equipment: A set of bone dice and a game board with pieces. **Load:** 0.5

INSIGHT

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Communication

After spending a few moments in conversation with an individual, you gain a sense for his character and motivations. You can predict how he will react to hypothetical situations, and what sorts of things he wishes to hear from you. A successful use of Insight

on a particular person can often increase your chances of success when you then go on to use other interaction Abilities on him. This increase is determined by the designer of the encounter.

LEADERSHIP

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Presence

You can convince others to follow your instructions. Your chances of success increase if the people you use your Leadership Abilities on already know and trust you, or if you hold some legitimate authority over them.

Minions of Loki and other villainous characters exert Leadership by making others fear them, and you may on occasion be forced to resort to crude intimidation against potential followers who can't or won't respect your heroic qualities.

MUSIC

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Communication

You can play the lyre, a stringed instrument which often accompanies the rude and boisterous songs the warriors sing as they carouse. Your spirited (or, on occasion, soulful) playing can win the hearts of hard-hearted battlers and dewy-eyed maidens alike.

Equipment: A lyre. **Load:** 3

RUNES

Category: Secondary
Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

Unlike most of your people, you can read. Your alphabet is composed of runes, no doubt handed down to you by wise Odin.

If your rating at Runes is 3 or more, you can also read Latin, a language shared by many of the peoples you periodically raid. You may have noticed some similarities between the runes and the Roman alphabet.

Unlike all the other Abilities in this chapter, you can't try to use this Ability if you have no rating in it.

SING

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Stamina

A foreign visitor to Scandinavia once described the singing of the Norse as hoarse and barbaric yowling fit for no civilized ears. Your singing skill permits you to uphold that proud tradition. Spirited, passionate singing may create a favorable impression among your own people, or frighten away spirits and goblins.



SKALD

Category: Secondary

Governing Characteristic: Presence (to impress others with poetry performance, or to deliver stinging satire against a rival); Intelligence (to remember myths, historical facts, and laws)

The Viking people are heirs to a great tradition of poetry. Poetry, passed down orally from one generation to the next, is the means by which your people remember their history, recount the deeds of the gods, and preserve their ancient laws. You not only recite the poetry of the past, but create your own. Poems are often expressed as kennings, brief and rhythmic phrases using strange metaphors. Kennings can damage your rivals; if you compose a suitably scalding satire of another Viking and perform it ably, you bring dishonor and ridicule upon him. He can erase this shame only by composing a better kenning aimed at you (or hiring another skald to do so for him), or by besting you in a duel. Beware: Viking duels have few rules, and are often fatal to the loser.

MISCELLANEOUS ABILITIES

The following doesn't fit neatly into the other categories, and so it set off by itself.

DIVINE AWARENESS

Category: Primary

Governing Characteristic: Presence

A few people are especially attuned to the workings of the gods. You are one of them. When the gods are watching you, or their handiwork is nearby, you can tell. Perhaps the hair on the back of your neck stands up. Maybe you feel a chill, or smell burning metal in the air. When this happens, you know that those among your raiding party who have been blessed by the gods are soon likely to pay the sometimes terrible price their Gifts exact.

Divine Awareness also reflects your general luck, or favor of the gods. When an encounter designer can't think what the heck might help you in a given situation, but needs you to roll something, Divine Awareness is the handy-dandy Ability of last resort.

HIT POINTS

A fight where a Viking warrior does not get bloodied is hardly a fight at all. Your hero begins the game with a number of hit points, which represent his ability to keep going even while injured.

Your starting hit points are determined by your combined Strength and Stamina Characteristics, as per the chart below.

Strength + Stamina	Starting Hit Points
-4 or less	37
-3 to -1	40
0	44
1 to 3	48
4	52
5	56
6	60

You can buy additional hit points by spending creation points. The number of extra hit points you get for each creation point spent varies according to your Stamina rating.

Stamina	Extra Hit Points
-3	+1 hit point
-2	+2 hit points
-1	+3 hit points
0	+4 hit points
1	+5 hit points
2	+6 hit points
3	+7 hit points

A word of warning: the hit points of the enemies you face are determined in relation to the hit point ratings of the heroes. So if everyone buys huge numbers of hit points, no one benefits: you just make your enemies tougher. (Students of game theory will recognize this as a variant of the "prisoner's dilemma," where it is good to be the only person claiming a benefit, but bad to be one of many.)

Injuries can temporarily reduce your hit points below your normal, or maximum level. Most injuries you receive are purely picturesque punctures, abrasions, and contusions which make you look appropriately courageous but do nothing to impair your actions. That is, unless you receive a Wound, an especially nasty hit described immediately below.

The specifics of the various conditions, and ways to recover hit points, are covered in the next chapter.

WOUND THRESHOLD (WND)

With a few battles under their belts, young warriors will soon realize that the precise effect of being clouted by a gigantic battle axe, or skewered with a rusty-headed crossbow bolt, can vary considerably from one instance to the next. One hit might be a mere scratch, where another leaves you groping downwards to grab up your exposed and looping

bowels in an instinctive, yet hopeless, attempt to stuff them back into your body cavity. Especially nasty hits are called Wounds. Wounds make it harder for you to keep fighting, and are tougher to heal than the run-of-the-mill cuts, bruises and contusions you get from lesser hits. You suffer a Wound when the damage you take from a single blow, after your Soak has been taken into account, equals or exceeds your Wound Threshold. The value of your Wound Threshold depends on your Stamina, as per the chart below.

Stamina	Wound Threshold
-3	2 hit points
-2	4 hit points
-1	6 hit points
0	9 hit points
1	12 hit points
2	15 hit points
3	18 hit points

Further details on Wounds and their delightful consequences appear in the next chapter, starting on p. 54.

WEAPONS

A mighty warrior's weapons become an extension of himself. Your warrior begins the game equipped with a selection of common weapons created by his village's smith. In the course of his adventures, he will gradually accumulate even more powerful weapons. Some are so large that he'll be able to use them properly only through the blessings of the gods.

Weapons, just like heroes, have game statistics. These are as follows.

Initiative Rating (Init)

The bigger the weapon, the shorter the distance between its killing surface and the skulls of your foes. The shorter the distance, the sooner you act. The faster the weapon, the higher the **Initiative rating**.

Attack Rating (Atk)

Some weapons are wielder than others. The easier it is to hit your foe with a weapon, the higher its **Attack rating**.

Defense Rating (Dfn)

Most close-range weapons can be used to parry incoming blows. The more useful the weapon is when avoiding the attacks of others, the higher its **Defense rating**.

Damage Rating (Dam)

The **Damage rating** lists the amount of injury a weapon can do when it hits your foe. A bigger weapon equals bigger hurt.

Load

Load measures a weapon's weight. You can only carry so much, and your weapons contribute to the total Encumbrance you suffer when lugging all of your gear around. See p. 36 for more on Encumbrance.

Ability

The chart below notes the Ability you must use in order to wield the weapon. For example, you'll see that a shortspear falls under the Single Weapon Ability, while a flail calls for the use of Chain Weapon.

Availability

Weapons are either **common** or **rare**. Common weapons are made by the smiths of your home village. Rare

weapons can only be gained in the course of play, either through trade or by looting the corpses of the slain.

CHOOSING YOUR WEAPONS

At the beginning of the game, you may pick up to 3 common weapons.

ARMOR

Although you, as an eager warrior yet to be blooded, may have visions of running shrieking into combat, protected only by your screaming blades and the valor of your heart, veteran Vikings will tell you that there is no substitute for good armor protection. Someday a treacherous foe will jab past your parrying sword or blocking shield, and on that day you will be glad you wrapped your hide in as much protective gear as you could muster.

You can start the game with any one type of common armor, and one common shield of your choice.

Protection Rating (Prot)

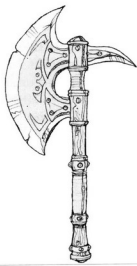
Each armor configuration, as you'll note from the chart, carries two values. The Init rating has already been explained. Armor doesn't affect your attacks or defensive moves, so it doesn't have ratings for these. The



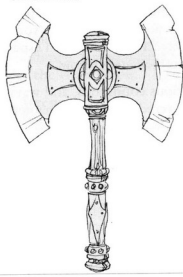
HAND AXE



GOBLIN AXE



VIKING AXE



DOUBLE-BLADED
AXE



DWARFVEN BATTLE
AXE

MISSILE WEAPONS: RANGE AND AMMO

The range of each missile weapon equals ten paces times its Damage rating. You can still hit things past that range, but do so at a penalty of 1 to your Damage rating for every 10 paces between the target and the weapon's standard range. Missile weapon targets must always be at least 5 paces from you.

The range of thrown weapons is 4 paces per point of Damage rating. As with missiles, you can hit objects past range at a Damage decrease of 1 per 10 paces outside range. Your targets must be at least 3 paces away from you.

The Load value of every missile weapon includes a dozen pieces of ammo. For each additional dozen pieces of ammo, add a Load equal to 25% of the original Load value. When traveling without ammo, decrease the Load value of your melee weapon by 25%. You may start the game with any amount of ammo you desire.

Sling users are assumed to be able to pick up suitable rocks wherever they go, at least while on land. Users of other missile weapons will have to find ammo during their encounters if they run out in the midst of an adventure.

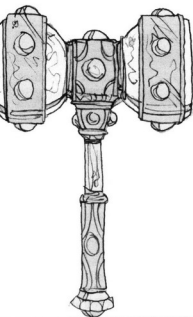
Protection rating is taken into account when calculating **Soak**, a score described in the next section. It allows you to shrug off blows that would injure a warrior wearing lesser armor.

No one willingly goes into battle without at least an outfit of padded, quilted cloth, supplemented by a collar of fur to deflect blows from the vulnerable neck area. Hardened leather armor is even better. If you stud that leather with metal, you increase its capacity to absorb the force of enemy blows. Better yet, a skilled leatherworker can sew hundreds of flexible leather scales together into a suit; the scales further deflect the impact of blows.

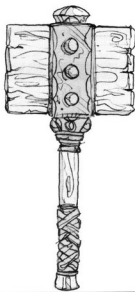
A metal counterpart to leather scale mail is unknown in your village, or in Viking lands in general. However, there are other places in Midgard where it is manufactured, and suits of such armor may be found in the Underground or other dangerous locations.

SHIELDS

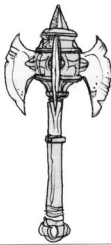
Shields add their Init, Atk, Dfn, Dam, and Load ratings to the ratings of the single weapon with which they are paired.



**DWARVEN BATTLE
HAMMER**



**DWARVEN WORK
HAMMER**



**FOUR-BLADED
MACE**



**GOBLIN SPIKED
CLUB**



MACE

WEAPON TABLE

	Init Rating	Atk Rating	Dfn Rating	Dam Rating	Load	Ability	Availability
Barb-net	-4	+0	+4	special*	2	Brawling	Rare
Billhook	+5	+6	+1	+8	1.5	Longshaft	Rare
Chair	+2	+2	+3	+1	N/A	Brawling	—
Composite Bow	-1	+1	n/a	+8	0.5	Bows	Rare
Dagger	+2	+1	+2	+3	0.25	Single	Common
Double-bladed Axe	+6	+5	+7	+12	3	Great	Rare
Dwarven Battle Axe	+8	+7	+8	+14	4	Great	Rare
Dwarven Battle Hammer	+8	+8	+10	+14	3	Great	Rare
Dwarven Battle Sword	+8	+6	+10	+12	1	Great	Rare
Dwarven Work Hammer	+6	+6	+8	+10	2	Great	Rare
Dwarven Work Sword	+6	+4	+6	+8	1	Great	Rare
Fist/Kick	+1	+0	+0	+0	NA	Brawling	—
Flagon**	-1	+0	+0	+2	0.25	Brawling	—
Flail (2 handed)	+2	+7	+1	+7	0.5	Chain	Common
Four-bladed Mace	+4	+4	+3	+7	0.5	Single	Rare
Gauntlet	+1	+0	+1	+1	0.25	Brawling	Rare
Goblin Axe	+4	+2	+2	+7	1	Single	Rare
Goblin Spike Club	+3	+2	+3	+6	0.5	Single	Rare
Hand Axe	+3	+1	+2	+6	0.5]	Single	Common
Heavy Crossbow	-10	+2	n/a	+14	1	Bows	Rare
Light Crossbow	-6	+2	n/a	+12	0.5	Bows	Rare
Long Bow	-1	+1	n/a	+10	1	Bows	Rare
Mace	+3	+2	+3	+5	0.5	Single	Common
Morningstar (2 handed)	+1	+5	+0	+8	0.5	Chain	Rare
Net	+0	+4	+2	+0	0.5	Chain	Common
Pike	+6	+4	+1	+6	1.5	Longshaft	Rare
Polearm	+6	+3	+5	+9	1.5	Great	Rare
Puny Knife	+1	+0	+1	+2	0.15	Single	Common
Quarterstaff	+6	+4	+8	+3	1	Great	Common
Rock	+4	+0	n/a	+2	0.0	Thrown	Common
Roman Sword	+3	+1	+4	+4	0.5	Single	Rare
Sap	+1	+0	+1	+2	0.15	Single	Common
Severed Arm	+1	+1	+1	+1	NA	Great	See p. 52
Short Bow	+0	+0	n/a	+6	0.5	Bows	Common
Shortspear	+5	+1	+2	+3	0.5	Single	Common

* On a successful hit, the barb-net encircles the subject and remains there. The subject suffers 20 points of damage each time he takes an action. He can free himself by rolling Str vs. a Difficulty of 6 + the difference between the attacker's ATK score + roll and his own DFN score + roll. Each attempt to free himself, naturally, counts as an action and causes him to take the damage.

**Prepare to be mocked if you carry a flagon around with you for the express purpose of increasing your Brawling damage. This is listed for its usefulness in impromptu, drinking-table altercations between (relatively) friendly Vikings.

	Init Rating	Atk Rating	Dfn Rating	Dam Rating	Load	Ability	Availability
Shortsword	+4	+2	+3	+3	0.5	Single	Common
Shortsword + Dagger	+6	+5	+6	+5	0.75	Two Weapons	Common
Sling	+2	+2	n/a	+3	0.1	Thrown	Common
Spear (thrown)	+0	+2	+0	+6	1	Thrown	Common
Spear/Lance	+5	+6	+4	+6	1	Longshaft	Common
Throwing Axe	+1	+1	+0	+4	0.5	Thrown	Common
Throwing Knife	+1	+1	n/a	+3	0.2	Thrown	Common
Two Hand Axes	+4	+5	+3	+7	1	Two Weapons	Common
Two Short Swords	+6	+3	+5	+7	1	Two Weapons	Common
Viking Axe	+5	+3	+4	+10	1.5	Great	Common
Viking Broadsword	+5	+3	+4	+6	1	Single	Common
War Maul	+5	+2	+5	+10	1.5	Great	Common
Whip	+0	+6	+0	+2	0.5	Chain	Common

SHIELD TABLE

	Init Rating	Atk Rating	Dfn Rating	Dam Rating	Load	Ability	Availability
Buckler	+0	+0	+2	+0	0.25	Single	Common
Round Shield	+0	+0	+3	+0	0.5	Single	Common
Kite Shield	-1	-1	+4	+0	2	Single	Common
Tower Shield	-2	-2	+5	+0	3	Single	Rare

ARMOR TABLE

	Prot Rating	Init Rating	Load	Availability
Quilted/Fur	1	-0	1.0	Common
Heavy Leather	3	-1	1.5	Common
Studded Leather	5	-3	2.0	Common
Chain Mail	7	-5	2.5	Common
Steel Scale Mail	9	-7	3.0	Rare

ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

Strength	Light	Loaded	Over- loaded	Better Put Something Down	No One Will Take This Much Encumbrance
-3	Less than 0.5	0.5	1	2	4
-2	Less than 1	1	2	4	6
-1	Less than 2	2	4	6	8
0	Less than 4	4	6	8	10
1	Less than 6	6	8	10	12
2	Less than 8	8	10	12	14
3	Less than 10	10	12	14	16

4 + — Add 2 per additional point —



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Before you wade into combat, you need to calculate some more game statistics and note them on your hero sheet. Each of the following numbers plays an important role in the smiting of your enemies, and you'll do well to have them handy at all times.

ENCUMBRANCE (ENC)

Although many young warriors dream of being able to carry every weapon they come across, veterans know that there is a limit to what even the strongest man can lug about. **Encumbrance** measures the degree to which the weight and bulk of the things you carry slows you down. There are five degrees of Encumbrance. From best to worst, they are: Light, Loaded, Overloaded, Better Put Something Down, and No One Will Take This Much Encumbrance. To determine your level of Encumbrance, use the chart on page 35 to compare your Strength with the total Load of everything you're carrying.

Loss off any fractions attached to your Load value after you total it up. As soon as you hit the number given for a degree, you suffer its effects, if any.

Thurid's Strength is 3. Her total Load is 9. She has yet to hit the threshold of 10, and so suffers only Light encumbrance. As soon as her Load reaches 10, she's Loaded. When it hits 12, she's Overloaded, and so on.

When you are Loaded or worse, you suffer an **Encumbrance Decrease** to all rolls (including Atk, Dfn, and Engagement), in which Strength, Stamina, Dexterity, or Quickness are components. This includes Ability rolls in which one of the above is a governing Characteristic. The decreases are as follows:

Degree of Encumbrance	Decrease
Light	0
Loaded	1
Overloaded	3
Better Put Something Down	5
No One Will Take This Much Encumbrance	8

When you pick your weapons and armor, as you'll do in a moment, you'll need to keep the Load value of all of your weapons in mind. Unless you want to periodically decide whether to leave gear or loot behind, you should also leave a bit of extra room for treasure you'll pick up along the way.

INITIATIVE SCORE (INIT)

It is always good to hit your enemies before they can hit you. A high **Initiative** allows you to do this. Calculate your INIT score for each of your attacks using the formulae below. Note that you have a different INIT score for each weapon you use, and that it changes whenever you add or discard items in your pack, which changes your Encumbrance. Also, armor only affects your INIT score, not your ATK or DFN scores. Unarmed INIT is determined using Brawling in place of a weapon ability.

INITIATIVE SCORE (ARMED):

Qik Characteristic + Weapon Ability + Weapon's Init Rating + Init Ratings of Armor & Shield - ENC Decrease

INITIATIVE SCORE (UNARMED):

Qik Characteristic + Brawling Ability + Fist/Kick Init Rating + Init Rating of Armor & Shield - ENC Decrease

INITIATIVE SCORE (NON-COMBAT):

Qik Characteristic + Sprint Ability + Init Ratings of Armor & Shield - Your ENC Decrease

ATK SCORE (MELEE WEAPONS):

Dex Characteristic + Weapon Ability + Weapon's Atk Rating + Atk Rating of Shield - ENC Decrease

ATK SCORE (MISSILE WEAPONS):

Per Characteristic + Weapon Ability + Weapon's Atk Rating + Atk Rating of Shield - ENC Decrease

ATK SCORE (UNARMED):

Dex Characteristic + Brawling Ability + Fist/Kick Atk Rating + Atk Rating of Shield - ENC Decrease

If a character is not trying to attack during the Initiative phase, but instead will be doing a non-combat move such as Healing or changing position, he makes a non-combat INIT roll. His non-combat INIT score is figured using the non-combat initiative formula.

Remember that if you don't have the appropriate ability (like Brawling, Sprint or weapon abilities), you'll need to take a -3 penalty for using an Ability you don't have (see p. 19). The same goes for figuring the ATK and DFN scores discussed below.

ATTACK SCORE (ATK)

A high **ATK** score increases your likelihood of actually hitting your foe in combat. Again, each weapon grants you a different ATK score. You can find the equations for ATK scores at the bottom of page 36. Missile weapons (those with range greater than Close) have their own formula.

DEFENSE SCORE (DFN)

Your **DFN** score measures the degree to which you can avoid being hit by opponents, either by getting out of the way of their blows, or parrying them with your weapon or shield. Missile weapons don't confer DFN scores; if you're holding one when attacked, use your Brawling Ability (as modified by the fist/kick statistics on the Weapons Chart) as the basis for your DFN score.

DAMAGE SCORE (DAM)

Hitting your opponent is all well and good, but once you've done it you'll want to know whether you've just scratched his hide, or delivered a disemboweling death blow. Your **Damage** score tells you how much harm you do to your foe. Once more, it varies by weapon. When

using a melee or thrown weapon, use the formula below.

Missile weapons use the straight Dam rating of the particular weapon.

SOAK

Although even the bravest Viking prefers not to be hit in the first place, he knows that eventually a foe's blade will taste of his flesh. When that time comes, it is good to be tough, and have the capacity to shrug off some of the damage. Your **Soak** score allows you to do that, and can be found at the bottom of this page.

MOVE

Your **Move** is derived from your Sprint Ability (or lack thereof). To save you some page-flipping, we've repeated the relevant portion of the chart given in that Ability's description. Note your full Move on your hero sheet.

Your Sprint Ability	Full Move
0	15 paces
1	20 paces
2	25 paces
3	30 paces

RESPONSE (RES)

Your **Response** score is used by runners in creating game statistics for your foes. You'll need to write it down for the runner at the beginning of each encounter. It is your highest overall modifier (that is, both governing Characteristic and Ability rating) of any of the following: Awareness, Balance, Bravery, Dodge, Sprint, or Engagement. For this purpose, **Engagement** is your Str + best melee weapon Ability.

DFN SCORE (ARMED):

Qik Characteristic + Weapon Ability + Weapon's Dfn Rating + Dfn Rating of Shield - ENC Decrease

DFN SCORE (UNARMED):

Qik Characteristic + Brawling Ability + Fist/Kick Dfn Rating + Dfn Rating of Shield - ENC Decrease

DAM SCORE (MELEE WEAPONS ONLY):

Your Str + Your Weapon's Dam Rating

SOAK SCORE:

Your Sta + Your Armor's Prot Rating

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION

1. NAME YOUR HERO

Our character will be named Ragnar, after the hero of the **Rune** computer game.

2. BUY CHARACTERISTICS

We start with 60 creation points.

Our first step is Characteristic purchasing. Given that **Rune** is about combat, we want to focus on the first four Characteristics, which matter in battle. Dexterity is the governing Characteristic of most combat skills, so we decide that Ragnar will be as dexterous as any mortal. Getting the price from the chart on p. 18, we spend 16 creation points to give him a Dexterity of 3. That leaves us with 44 points. We see him as a tough guy who can take plenty of punishment, and so buy him maximum Stamina as well: a rating of 3, costing us another 16 points. We buy him ratings of 2 in the other two physical Characteristics, Strength and Quickness. That costs us another 16 points, all told. We're down to 12 creation points. Uh-oh! We'd better get some points back by giving Ragnar below-average scores in the less important Characteristics. We give him -1 in each of these, giving us back 8 points for a total of 20 creation points left.

3. BUY ABILITIES

We now have 20 creation points to buy Abilities and extra hit points, should we want them. We start by picking a weapon Ability, Great Weapon, which we buy at the maximum, 3. It's a primary Ability, costing us a total of 6 creation points.

Because it is much better to have a rating of 1 in an Ability than a rating of 0, we decide to get as many other Abilities as we can, never buying more than 1 rating point in any single one. We select the following primary Abilities: Dodge (to avoid traps and missiles), Bows (to have missile capability when necessary), and Sprint (very useful in allowing you to move about a battlefield). A rating of 1 in each costs us a total of 6 points. We're now at 8 creation points left, and we want to save 3 points to buy hit points, giving us 5 left to spend on secondary Abilities, which cost 1 point for a rating of 1. We choose Balance, Bravery, Climb, Jump, and Swim. When it's appropriate, we write down the half and full action values of our skills in the notes column.

Now we spend our last 3 creation points on extra hit points. Checking the chart on p. 31, we see that, with a Stamina of 3, each character point gets us 7 more hit points. So our bonus will be 21 hit points. Looking at the chart on p. 30, we see that the standard hit points for a character whose Strength and Stamina add up to 5 is 56. $56 + 21 = 77$.

Next we make note of Ragnar's Wound Threshold. The chart on p. 31 tells us that a Viking with Stamina 3 gets a Wound Threshold of 18.

4. CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

Now we pick our weapons. We can have three common weapons. We want weapons which match Ragnar's Abilities — a great weapon and a bow. Common bows are hard to find; the short bow is really our only choice. As far as common great weapons go, we have

three choices: a quarterstaff, a war maul, or a Viking axe. The axe is by far the coolest choice, so we take that without even looking at its game statistics. We also take a war maul, just in case we come across something we want to bash instead of slash. And, of course, there's always our fists if we end up in unarmed combat.

Now on to our armor choice. We can pick one common shield and one common armor type. The trade-off here is that our Init goes down as our Prot goes up: the less damage we take from enemy blows, the less likely it is that we can score multiple attacks against our foes. Our choice, heavy leather, strikes a balance between these two things. We don't bother with a shield, because Ragnar needs both hands for his great weapon.

RUNE HERO SHEET	
1 HERO'S NAME: Ragnar	
4 DEX:	TOTAL VP: SWIFT VP: FREE VP:
2 CHARACTERISTICS	
STRENGTH (STR) 2 STAMINA (STM) 3 DEXTERITY (DEX) 3 QUICKNESS (QCK) 2 INTELLIGENCE (INT) -1 PERCEPTION (PCR) -1 POWER (POW) -1 COMPREHENSION (COM) -1	HIT POINTS (Dexterity) 77 (Current) 18 (Wounds)
3 FIGHTING ABILITIES	
Balance (Bal) 1 Bravery (Brv) 3 Climb (Clim) 1 Jump (Jmp) 1 Swim (Swm) 1 Stamina (Stm) 1 Strength (Str) 1 Wound Threshold (WT) 18	
4 EXPLOITORY ABILITIES	
Balance (Bal) 1 Bravery (Brv) 1 Climb (Clim) 1 Jump (Jmp) 1 Swim (Swm) 1 Stamina (Stm) 1 Strength (Str) 1 Wound Threshold (WT) 18	
5 COOMBAT SCORES	
ATTACK Init 9 Def 9 Prot 9 Swift 12 Wound 12 Wound 12 Wound 12	DEFENSE Init 9 Def 9 Prot 9 Swift 12 Wound 12 Wound 12 Wound 12
6 IMPORTANT NUMBERS	
Encumbrance (ENC) 5 Climb (Clim) 1 Jump (Jmp) 1 Swim (Swm) 1 Stamina (Stm) 1 Strength (Str) 1 Wound Threshold (WT) 18	
7 INTERACTION ABILITIES	
Balance (Bal) 1 Bravery (Brv) 1 Climb (Clim) 1 Jump (Jmp) 1 Swim (Swm) 1 Stamina (Stm) 1 Strength (Str) 1 Wound Threshold (WT) 18	
8 DISC. ABILITIES	
Balance (Bal) 1 Bravery (Brv) 1 Climb (Clim) 1 Jump (Jmp) 1 Swim (Swm) 1 Stamina (Stm) 1 Strength (Str) 1 Wound Threshold (WT) 18	

5. IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Encumbrance: Now we figure out Encumbrance. Together, Ragnar's gear has a Load value of 5. His Strength is 2, and we see by the chart on p. 35 that as long as the stuff he's lugging has a total Load less than 8, his Encumbrance is Light. He suffers no Encumbrance Decrease.

Initiative Scores: Now we calculate Ragnar's Initiative score for each weapon he wields. Initiative is Qik + weapon Ability + your

To find Ragnar's unarmed INIT score, we take his Oik + Brawling +

For the war maul, it's 3 (his Dex) + 3 (his Great Weapon Ability) + 2 (the war maul's Atk) + 0 (for having no shield) - 0 (his Enc Decrease), for a total of 8.

Unarmed, Ragnar gets 3 (Dex) + 0 (Brawling Ability) + 0 (fist/kick Atk rating) + 0 (since he has no shield) - 0 (his Enc Decrease), for a total of 3. But he also takes the -3 penalty for not having Brawling, so he ends up with 0.

For the Viking axe, this is 2 (Ragnar's Qik) + 3 (Great Weapon Ability) + 4 (Viking axe's Dfn rating) + 0 (he has no shield) - 0 (Enc Decrease), which totals to 9. For the war maul, this works out to: 2 (Ragnar's Qik) + 3 (Great Weapon Ability) + 5 (war maul's Dfn rating) + 0 (rating for no shield) - 0 (Enc Decrease), or 10.

Unarmed, Ragnar has $2 + 0 + 0 + 0 - 0 = 2$. Then he subtracts 3 for not having Brawling, which gives him an unarmed DFN score of -1 (we're really wishing we'd taken Brawling at this point).

The missile weapon, the short bow, uses its Damage rating alone. It happens to be 4.

Unarmed, he gets his Strength of 2 + 0 Dam rating for fist/kick, which equals 2.

Other Important Numbers: Now figure Ragnar's Soak rating, which is Stamina (in Ragnar's case, 3) + his armor's Prot rating (again, a 3), for a total of 6.

Ragnar's full move is based on his Sprint Ability, which is 1. Looking on the chart on p. 37, that gives him a Move of 20 paces. His highest overall modifier (governing Characteristic + Ability rating) is his Engagement modifier of Str + Great Weapon, which equals 5. That means that his Res is a 5.

TOTAL LOAD: 5

Dutty	Rating	Dutty	Rating
Allegation	⊖	Odor	⊖
Assault	⊖	Tabor	⊖
Facult	⊖	Trim	⊖
Facult	⊖	Ull	⊖
Deborah	⊖	Urid	⊖
Proctor	⊖		
Look	⊖		
Nord	⊖		

And lastly, his non-combat INIT score is $Qik + Sprint + armor/shield$
Init ratings - Enc Decrease. That comes out to $2 + 1 - 1 - 0 = 2$.

CHAPTER 2

COMBAT

AND

Other Rules

This chapter shows you how your hero fights, and also how he does the other things that bring him to the attention of the gods. It is addressed to “you” in your capacity as a pillager.

DIE-ROLLERS VERSUS NARRATORS

How your group handles combat is a matter of taste.

Some Hordes don't want to let a bunch of fancy descriptions get in the way of their hacking and



slashing. They're content to call out numbers, roll dice, and rack up their point scores. They may be vividly imagining goblins flying left and right as their implacable heroes wade through columns of cave-dwelling enemies, but they keep such images to themselves. For these players, elements of play-acting are just a distraction from the game.

Other groups find it more entertaining to share their play-by-play of the action, describing dashing maneuvers, devastating blows, and the agonizing cries of the wounded. They want to do with narration what the computer game does with 3-D animation: create an intensely imagined experience in which they control the action. These groups will want to supplement

each die roll and damage allocation with detailed narration.

We're not here to tell you that one approach is right and the other wrong. Who are we to instruct you in the proper way to have fun? Decide for yourselves what you best enjoy. You'll show which type of players you are by what you do in the course of the game. You'll either naturally gravitate towards lots of description, or to a by-the-numbers approach.

In fact, what will most likely happen is that, in each group, some runners will use plenty of description and others will not. Don't let one faction pressure the other to conform. Find a middle ground.

When a description-oriented player dons the runner's mantle, the limbs will fly and the halls of the Underworld will echo with the battle cries of furious Vikings. When a die-rolling enthusiast replaces him, numbers will take center stage. Don't blame yourselves for failing to live up to someone else's standard of proper gaming fun.

LET THE BATTLES BEGIN!

Fights are played out according to the following combat sequence. They are broken down into rounds, which occur as a series of steps.

ANATOMY OF A ROUND

A **round** is an approximate chunk of time in which each character gets to do one interesting thing, like rain a flurry of blows upon a cringing goblin, throw a spare axe to a disarmed ally, slide down a rocky slope to dive upon enemy reinforcements as they join the fray, or rummage through a stuffed pack in search of the perfect weapon for the job at hand. A round is about five to twenty seconds long. That's all the precision a true Norseman needs!



STEP ONE: Who Goes First?

Every character on the battlefield gets a roll to see who goes first. Pillagers roll for their heroes. The proxy rolls for the runner's hero. The runner rolls for all foes. Each player applies the character's Initiative score for the weapon they plan to use (or their unarmed INIT score if they want to just beat someone to a pulp) to this roll as a bonus. In some cases, the runner will declare further modifiers on various characters' rolls. See the Initiative Situational Modifiers sidebar for examples, and p. 36 for an explanation of how to figure out INIT scores.

Characters who intend to engage in an activity other than combat roll their non-combat Initiative score to determine the order of action. This is also discussed on p. 36.

Each character gets to act in the order of his Initiative total, from highest to lowest. Even if you botch and get a negative result, you still get to act. You probably stumble on a paving stone or slip on a patch of wet grass first, though, no doubt provoking hearty guffaws from your hero's comrades.

If a hero ties with one or more supporting characters, he goes before they do. If two heroes tie, the one with the most Divine Gifts (as explained in Chapter Four), goes first. Where two or more heroes



INITIATIVE SITUATIONAL MODIFIERS

If your hero did nothing in the previous round except jockey for a superior position from which to charge, leap into action, or otherwise join the fray with a great advantage, add his Perception rating as a further bonus to Initiative. Obviously, this is not a good strategy for heroes with negative Perception ratings.

If he started the round on high ground, or in another advantageous position, his Initiative increases by 3. If he started on low ground or in a bad position, his Initiative decreases by 3. The runner decides if he's on high or low ground.

have the same number of Gifts, they roll tiebreaker dice. The runner decides ties between supporting characters, according to their order of appearance in his encounter notes.

EXTRA ATTACKS

Especially high Initiative totals allow characters to attack more than once. (You can just as easily take additional non-combat actions, but what fun is that?) For each time that you can subtract 20 from your result and still have a positive number, you get an extra action. Your first action occurs on your normal Initiative roll; your next 20 Initiative steps later, your next (if you get one) twenty steps after that, and so on.

Ragnar's player rolls a triumph; he's also using a potion that boosts his Quickness. Ragnar gets an astounding Initiative total of 45. He can subtract 20 from 45 twice and still have a positive number: $45 - 20 - 20 = 5$.

He's got the highest Initiative roll by far, and acts first on Initiative step 45. He next acts on Initiative step 25 (his original step minus 20). He'll act for a third time another 20 steps later, on step 5.

STEP TWO: Who Does What?

When your turn comes up in the Initiative order, the runner asks you what you want to your hero do. You can answer by following the flowchart.

A. TO HIT, OR NOT TO HIT?

If your hero is trying to hit a target, you must specify who or what the target is, and which weapon will be employed in the smiting. Go to Question B.

If you want your hero to do something other than hit a target with a weapon, you must specify what this other action might be. Skip to Question G.

B. IS YOUR TARGET WITHIN RANGE?

If your target is already within range of your hero, he has some extra time in which he can make other choices. Go to Question C.

If your target is not within range, go to Question E.

C. IS YOUR WEAPON READY?

If your hero's weapon is not ready, he has no choice but to ready it. Then he hits as normal.

If his weapon is ready, he has more options available to him. Go to Question D.

D. HOLD GROUND OR DUCK AND WEAVE?

If your hero started his action already in range of the target, and with an appropriate weapon already in hand, you can choose between two advantageous maneuvers.

By **holding ground**, he readies to strike from a position of maximum leverage. Add 1 to your ATK score for the duration of the round.

By **ducking and weaving**, you make it harder for others to launch counterattacks against your hero for the duration of the round. Add 1 to your DFN score for the duration. The higher your INIT, the more advantageous it is to duck and weave.

Once you've gained an advantage from either option, your hero can't switch to an incompatible maneuver or attack form later in the round. He's stuck with your previous declaration.

These options are available only to heroes.

E. CAN YOU MOVE WITHIN RANGE?

This step is necessary if your hero begins his action with a foe out of range.

With the runner's assistance, you must determine whether it is possible to move within range as part of your hero's action. The number of paces he can move and still attempt to attack someone depends on your Sprint Ability rating. Refer to the second column in the chart below. (This is the same chart found in the Sprint Ability description, repeated here for your convenience.) Heroes never have a move lower than that given for a Sprint rating of 0.

Your Sprint Ability	Half Action*	Full Action**
0	8 paces	15 paces
1	10 paces	20 paces
2	12 paces	25 paces
3	15 paces	30 paces
4+	15 + 2.5 paces for each point over 3 (drop fractions)	30 + 10 paces for each point over 3

* Distance You Can Move and Still Take an Action

** Distance You Can Move By Forgoing All Other Actions

If the distance between hero and target is equal to or less than the number of paces he can move, go to Question F.

If not, your proposed attack is impossible. Select a new opponent, or forego an action this round.

A pace is about 30 inches, or three quarters of a meter, give or take, kinda sorta.

F. ONCE WITHIN RANGE, IS YOUR WEAPON READY?

If you must move your hero to get within range of an enemy, you must have an appropriate weapon already at hand. Otherwise, you can't hit him and must either select an opponent who is already within range, or forgo your action this round.

G. WHAT IS YOUR NON-COMBAT ACTION?

If you choose not to have your hero try to hit something, you have a number of choices available to you.

Seizing Ground: Your hero can move to any presently unoccupied spot. Most often, you will

do this in order to move your hero within range of a particular enemy. You might also want him to seize high or advantageous ground, which gives you combat bonuses for as long as he occupies it. Your hero can make a full move while seizing ground.

Seeking Cover: This is exactly the same as seizing ground, except that you're looking for a good hidey-hole, not an advantageous position for further battle. You may simply wish to protect your hero from enemies by rushing behind a barrier of some kind. In order for this to work, obviously, there has to be a suitable barrier available. Your hero can make a full move towards the barrier.

Withdrawing: You back your hero carefully back away from the fight. Your DFN score increases by 3 as he does this. Assuming normal terrain, he travels

ENGAGEMENT ROLLS

You may make an Engagement roll whenever you wish to make a *slight* change in your hero's position to gain an advantage over an enemy. You may want him to jump up onto the lip of a platform, or move to the dry, stable paving stones bordering a section of muddy ground. **Add your Str + weapon Ability to a die roll to get your Engagement total, and compare that against a similar roll by your opponent.** If you're Engagement roll is against a supporting character, compare your total to a Res roll made by the runner on its behalf. If you're acting against an inanimate object, use the default Difficulty of 6, unless the encounter designer pays for a higher one.

Engagement rolls do not require an action; they're just a part of the give and take of a combat exchange which you, for rules purposes, need to determine separately from the roll to hit. You can make them either on your Initiative, or prior to an enemy ATK roll.

When you contest Engagement with an enemy, you're trying to jostle, body-check, shoulder, shove, and otherwise manhandle him so that he either gets out of your way or remains in his present inferior position. (Picture a basketball player blocking the guy with the ball.) Don't let the fact that we require just one roll fool you into thinking that the Engagement contest is a discrete thing that occurs and is then resolved, with the loser meekly accepting his loss. The

Engagement roll represents a whole series of moves the combatants make throughout the round.

You may make one, and only one, Engagement roll per round. It will be difficult, for example, for your hero to keep the high ground when fighting off multiple opponents.

You must make an Engagement roll even when your opponent cannot or will not do so. If you botch and get a negative result, you've still done worse than the non-resisting opponent's default Engagement total of 0, and he will still prevent you from making your desired move. However, if your result is positive against a non-resisting you always succeed.

On a successful Engagement roll, you can force your adversary backward in a direction of your choice. He always travels in a straight line. **The distance you can shove him equals 1 + (your STR x 2) paces.** You can move him less than this distance if you want. If you put his back to a solid object, he stops, even if the distance you've shoved him is less than your maximum.

Sometimes you'll find yourself wanting to move your hero past one or more of his fellows to get to a favored position or be the first to perform a particular task. The runner determines who wins by requiring all contesting pillagers members to make Engagement rolls against one another.



up to 15 paces backwards. (This supersedes the normal movement rules, because you're cautiously backing away.)

Withdrawals are most often tactical. You'll usually use them so that your hero can temporarily duck out of the fight in order to return to it with a positional advantage of some kind. With this kind of cautious backing-off, you'll find it hard to permanently escape from a foe who truly wishes to continue bashing your hero.

Fleeing: Your hero turns tail and runs from the fight. He travels a distance equal to twice his normal maximum for a full move, allowing every enemy he comes within range of the opportunity to make a free attempt to hit him during your action (See "Attacks of Opportunity" on p. 46). Taking the free shot does not prevent them from completing their own actions later in the round. Nor does it stop enemies who have already taken their actions from attacking. Any enemies Engaged with your hero when he turns and runs are most definitely included in the list of foes who get that free shot. So are any missile users on the field. He must travel in a straight line and may not take the time to maneuver around foes waiting to smack him. Unengaged foes may freely move up to ten paces to intercept his flight.

Fleeing supersedes the usual movement rules.

Your hero cannot flee in a direction that would take him through, or leave him in the middle of, another Engagement.

"ENGAGED"

If your hero is within 3 paces of an enemy, he is considered to be **Engaged** with him, whether or not either has yet tried to hit the other. Heroes can be Engaged by multiple enemies at the same time.

Reckless Move: A hero can travel a distance equal to twice his normal full move, taking no precautions to stay out of the range of enemy blows. He travels in a straight line only, and cannot maneuver around traps or other terrain obstacles. As in the case of fleeing (above), every enemy he comes

within 3 paces of at any point during his reckless move gets a free ATK roll against him during your own action. (See above for further details, and "Attacks of Opportunity" on p. 46.) You must make a Fatigue roll after moving recklessly, adding 5 to the Difficulty (see p. 12). He may not take additional actions during a round in which he makes a reckless move.

Administer Healing: Your hero can try to use his Healer Ability to patch up an injured ally. If you are not within range of him, you may make a half move to get there.

Changing Weapons: Your hero may put a weapon in its scabbard or in his pack, and withdraw a new one, ready for use. He can combine this action with a half-move, or can duck and weave.

He can carelessly chuck a weapon on the ground and grab another one at his belt without taking an action. Heroes can have only one weapon on their belts at any one time.

Wait for Opportunity: You can forgo your action when your Initiative turn comes up. Then, after any other character completes his action, you may interrupt the Initiative order and then have your hero take any action.

(If an Initiative total over 20 has given an extra action, you can't delay your first action past Initiative step 20 without losing your second. Likewise, if you have three actions you can't delay the first past step 40 or the second past step 20, and so on.)

You score an Initiative total of 32. You decide that your hero, Ragnar, will wait for a goblin freak to crawl down from its perch before whacking it. The goblin finally moves on step 25. On step 24, Ragnar takes the action he would normally have gotten on step 32. He may still take a second action 20 steps later, on step 4. If the goblin had come down on step 18, and Ragnar had acted on step 17, he'd have lost the second action.

Other: Special circumstances may motivate you to try some other action — trigger a rock slide, set a fire, sing a demoralizing battle song, or whatever. The runner must judge whether your

ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

If a hero passes within three paces of any foe with a ready weapon while moving across the field of battle on the way to doing something else, the enemy can take a free shot at him, regardless of Initiative order. If he has yet to take his action this round, he can forgo that action in order to make a careful strike at you. In this case, your DFN score is treated as 0; you still get a roll to add to it, though. If he has already acted or chooses not to forgo his action, your DFN score is treated as normal. If you are Engaged with a foe and then disengage with him to go hit someone else, he may always make a careful strike at you.

MINIATURES AND OTHER GAME PIECES

Because position matters greatly in many fights, your group may find it useful to stock up on visual aids to represent the combatants and terrain. Many hobby game shops sell a range of figures and terrain especially for this purpose. Metal figures can be a hobby in themselves; they're fun to paint and modify to represent your own hero. If you don't care so much about exact representation of your hero's appearance, you can use other, cheaper figures to work out positions, like the plastic green army men or cowboys available at most dollar stores.

Runners can represent encounter terrain with reusable plastic sheets marked off with squares or hexes (sometimes called "battle mats"), also available from hobby game shops. Using dry erase markers, runners can make scale representations of their encounter maps on which your lead or plastic figures can glower and cavort. Or the group might invest in a whiteboard from any office supply store and lay it flat on the floor or a table, for the same effect. If all of your figures are to scale, runners can use a ruler to compute the number of paces that combatants can move. If not, they can just sort of wing it.

On the other hand, some people prefer to lay back comfortably in their sofas and chairs, cheese puffs and mead conveniently at hand, rather than spend the evening hovering over a map and miniatures. Detailed maps and painted minis are not a necessity! All the runner needs to do, when distances become important, is to make a few marks on his sketch map. Even groups who use minis rarely employ them with mathematical precision; they're just a visualization tool. When runners use just a map, it may be a little imprecise, but then the players are less likely to notice, so it even out.

hero has a chance in Hel of actually doing the thing you've specified. He decides how hard your proposed move is, what Characteristic and Ability combination best applies to it, and whether the hero can complete it in the course of a single action.

The runner may also decide that special circumstances affect your chances of success at the standard actions listed above, or prevent them altogether. Using the encounter rules from Chapter Five, he has prepared a map of the area in which the encounter takes place. He may check the map to see if there are impediments, such as crevasses, stands of vegetation, walls of flaming fire, and so forth, which prevent you from reaching the object of your ire. If so, you may have to forgo your desired action in order to overcome them. For example, you might have to devote this round to the non-combat action of jumping a fence, so that, in the subsequent round, you can trounce the Dark Viking lurking on its other side.

It may be the case that you can perform the desired action, but that circumstances render it harder than you might think. You might want your hero to hit an enemy with a crossbow bolt in an underground chamber while a troop of distracting imps throws handfuls of sparkling light up into the air all around you. In such cases, your runner should warn you when you propose the action that its chances of success will be less than normal. That way, you can either choose to go ahead with the desired action, or pick another one more likely to succeed.

Or it may simply be that the runner considers your chosen action impossible. You might say you want to jump through a six-foot brick wall, but the runner knows not only that your hero is incapable of doing such a thing, but that he ought to know he can't. In this case, the runner tells you the declared action is impossible and asks you to pick a different one. If you still want to go ahead and knock your hero against the wall, you can do so, but the runner has warned you.

This is important because a runner is the ultimate arbiter of reality. If you and he have radically different mental images of the situation, you need to iron these out before you can make sensible choices.



The runner's map provides an excellent visual aid in showing you the possibilities for movement and action. He should show it to you when asked, and explain which of his squiggles represent which features of the encounter area.

ACTIONS, HALF ACTIONS, AND FREE ROLLS

When your hero gets to act, he normally gets to perform a single action, such as an attack. We sometimes call this a **full action**.

Sometimes he can do things that take up only half an action. If he is already Engaged with a foe, he

can perform a **half action** and still make a plain, old, ordinary, unmodified attack roll, as well.

Sometimes you'll be called upon to make rolls, usually in reaction to another character's action, which don't cost you time or otherwise cut into the actions your hero can make. Usually we say "this does not require an action." If we wanted to come up with yet another game term, we could call them **free rolls**. But who wants that?

The following chart lists some common rolls heroes make in combat, and tells you which of the above categories they fall into.

ACTIONS AND HALF ACTIONS

Activity	Type of Action
Change weapons carefully	Half
Carelessly drop current weapon, seize new one on your belt (only 1 weapon fits on your hero's belt)	None
Climb	Full or half, depending on distance; see chart, p. 23
Disarm trap	Full
Disarm trap hastily (-5 to your roll)	Half
Jump half your maximum distance, either upwards or laterally	Half
Jump your maximum distance, either upwards or laterally	Full
Move on tricky surface requiring Balance rolls	Full or half, depending on distance; see chart, p. 23
Provide Healing to an ally (hero can also heal himself)	Full
Read Runes	Full
Scan the battlefield for interesting hidden details	Half
Spot an obvious danger, using Awareness	None
Scan the battlefield for subtle hints of divine presence, using Divine Awareness	Half
Sense powerful divine aura, using Divine Awareness	None
Swim	Full or half, depending on distance; see chart, p. 27
Take full move	Full
Take half move	Half

STEP THREE: PERFORMING ACTIONS

In the order of their Initiative totals, from highest to lowest, the characters now attempt to perform their declared actions. They are resolved as follows.

MISSILE ATTACKS

To hit a target within range of your missile weapon, you contest your ATK versus your target's Dodge. (Foes have a catch-all game statistic called Response, or Res, and will use this in place of Dodge.) Add the following Attack condition modifiers to your roll. It does not cost your foe an action to dodge your missile. If he chooses not to dodge your missile, you're rolling to beat a flat Difficulty of 6.

Target Condition	Attack Modifier
Target is within 3 paces	No firing possible
Target is obscured	-3
Target is behind one-third cover	-3
Target is behind half cover	-6
Target is fully covered, more or less	-12
Target is holding ground	0
Target is ducking and weaving	-3
Target is taking half or full move	-6
Target is fleeing or recklessly moving	+6
Target is Withdrawing	+3
Target caught in grabber trap (p. 153)	+3
Target is Dodging with shield in hand	-shield's Dfn Rating

If your ATK + roll equals or beats either your opponent's Dodge + Qik + roll (if he has chosen to Dodge) or the base Difficulty of 6 (if he has not), calculate your Raw Damage (your

DAM score for that weapon added to the Thwack Margin; see sidebar). The opponent subtracts his Soak from the Raw Damage; if the result is positive, he loses that number of hit points. (For more on the results of hit point loss, see p. 54.) The formulae are as follows:

MISSILE ATTACKS:

$$(((\text{Attacker's Roll} + \text{ATK Score}) - (6 + \text{Attack Modifiers})) + \text{DAM Score}) - \text{Soak} = \text{Hit Points Lost}$$

MISSILE ATTACKS (DODGED):

$$(((\text{Attacker's Roll} + \text{ATK Score}) - (\text{Defender's Roll} + \text{Dodge} + \text{Qik})) + \text{DAM Score}) - \text{Soak} = \text{Hit Points Lost}$$

Ragnar looses an arrow at a goblin named Meelu. The basic Difficulty is 6. The goblin is ducking and weaving, adding 3 to the Difficulty. So the Difficulty is 9. Ragnar's ATK score with the bow is now 2 (he's gotten better since character generation). It's a tough shot, but Ragnar tries nonetheless. You roll a 7, which combined with his ATK score is exactly as much as Ragnar needs to hit! The Raw Damage is 0 (the Thwack Margin) plus 4 (the short bow's DAM score), for a total of 4. The goblin's Soak is 1, so he loses 3 hit points.

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

If a hero fires into a pitched melee involving both friend and foe, he might well hit someone he didn't intend to skewer. Add 3 to the Difficulty for each other character within five paces of your target, and for each character in your hero's line of fire.

(To determine line of fire, use miniatures or lay out tokens on a surface. Any other character standing in the midst of any straight line that can be drawn between you and your target counts as being in your line of fire.)

If you miss your intended target, and the Difficulty modifier for firing into melee (or having another character in the line of sight) made the difference between success and failure, your hero has hit one of the characters who added to that modifier. The runner uses a random die roll to choose the



victim of the hit. Determine damage as usual, ignoring the 3 added Difficulty points.

Later, Ragnar fires another arrow at Meclu the goblin, who is now warily facing off against one of Ragnar's fellow Vikings, Thurid Blonde-Braids. She is much closer to the goblin than five paces, and so will also be a possible target for Ragnar's shot if it goes astray. A second goblin, Vreck, is scampering towards Ragnar's other comrade, Thorleik. The runner can draw a straight line on the miniatures map between Ragnar, Vreck, and Meclu. Thorleik is more than fifteen paces away, and is not in danger of being hit by a possible misfire. The Difficulty, originally 9, now goes up to 15; +3 for Thurid

and +3 for Vreck. Your ATK total is a 9, just as it was when Ragnar first pierced Meclu's gobliny flesh. In other words, without the 6 points of additional Difficulty for firing into a melee and having another character in the line of sight, his hit would have succeeded. Either Thurid or Vreck could take the hit meant for Meclu. The runner rolls a random die to pick the unfortunate victim. An odd roll will mean Vreck; even, Thurid. The runner rolls a 6, meaning that Ragnar hits his friend Thurid! When calculating the damage, he uses the 9 Difficulty, not the 15. His Damage total is therefore 4, as before. Thurid's Soak is 3, so she loses only 1 hit point. However, she grimaces meaningfully at her recklessly ally as she turns to

HITTING AND MAIMING AT A GLANCE



The following steps determine the results of an attacker's attempt to hit a defender. For the purposes of this example, let's say that the attacker is a hero and the defender is a foe. (It works the same if the roles are reversed.)

1. The attacker's player rolls and adds his ATK score and any attack modifiers to the result. We call this the **ATK Total**.
2. Determine the defender's **DFN Total**:
For melee attacks the runner rolls for the defender, adding his DFN score to the result.
For missile attacks which are not dodged, the runner adds any Attack Modifiers to the default Difficulty of 6.
If the defender opts to dodge a missile attack, the runner rolls and adds the defender's Dodge and Qik scores to the result.
3. If the attacker's total equals or exceeds the defender's, the attacker has hit the defender.
4. Subtract the defender's total from the attacker's. The difference between the two numbers is called the **Thwack Margin**, or **TM**.
5. Add the TM to the DAM score the attacker has with his weapon. The result is called the **Raw Damage**.
6. Subtract the defender's Soak from the Raw Damage. The result is the number of hit points the defender loses. Now compare that to the defender's Wound Threshold to see if he gets a Wound.
7. When we put everything together the process looks like this:

MELEE ATTACKS:

$$[(\text{Attacker's Roll} + \text{ATK Score}) - (\text{Defender's Roll} + \text{DFN Score})] + \text{DAM Score} - \text{Soak} = \text{Hit Points Lost}$$

MISSILE ATTACKS:

$$[(\text{Attacker's Roll} + \text{ATK Score}) - (6 + \text{Attack Modifiers})] + \text{DAM Score} - \text{Soak} = \text{Hit Points Lost}$$

MISSILE ATTACKS (DODGED):

$$[(\text{Attacker's Roll} + \text{ATK Score}) - (\text{Defender's Roll} + \text{Dodge} + \text{Qik})] + \text{DAM Score} - \text{Soak} = \text{Hit Points Lost}$$

HANDY DIE-ROLLING HINT

Every group has a different tolerance level for die rolling. Some players feel you can never have too many dice rolls; others feel you can never have too few. You'll need to find a balance that suits the tastes of your own group over time. Our basic assumption is that people who want to play a competitive Viking RPG want to roll lots of dice.

One handy way to cut down on the die rolling is to have the pillagers roll two dice of different colors when they make ATK and DFN rolls. One color always represents the hero; the other always represents the enemy of the moment. (If you like, you can see the hero's die as positive and the enemy's as negative.) The player, equipped with the enemy's game statistics as well as his own, does all the math, reporting only final results to the runner.

Other groups may wish to make DFN static. In this method, you simply add 5 to all Dfn ratings in the game. ATK rolls become standard rolls, not contests, against that set number. In our opinion, this sacrifices too much fun for the benefit, because it decreases by half the chances that something remarkable (that is, a botch or triumph) will happen.

Especially bloodless runners may wish to use a computer program to generate pages full of die results, and simply go through the list crossing them off as rolls are called for throughout the evening. This seems most un-Norse to us, but your tastes may vary.

cleave the goblin in twain. Ragnar shudders. He knows he'll face Thurid's fiery temper when the battle is done.

In some cases, you are more likely to hit your actual target if you fire at your friend next to him. Except for this rule right here, which states that any such attempt to hose the rules automatically fails.

Remember that your character is doing more in the course of a round than engaging in the split-second action of loosing a missile at a target. He's following the foe's movements with his eyes, waiting for the best moment to fire. He's keeping an eye out for the other combatants, making sure that none of them come crashing into him. Although he's not concentrating exclusively on dodging, he is on the lookout for incoming missiles and weapon blows.

MELEE COMBAT

If you want your hero to attack an enemy with a melee weapon, roll a die, which is modified by your ATK score. The runner responds with a die roll, modified by the enemy's DFN score. The enemy gets the DFN score associated with the weapon he's carrying when attacked. Situational modifiers may adjust either combatant's relevant score. If your total matches or exceeds his, you've hit him. Add your DAM score to this Thwack Margin. To get the number of hit points the enemy loses, the runner subtracts its Soak rating from this Raw Damage total. Results of less than zero are ignored; characters can't gain hit points by soaking damage. See the "Hitting and Maiming at a Glance" sidebar for more discussion on the formula for hitting foes.

MELEE ATTACKS:

[[(Attacker's Roll + ATK Score) - (Defender's Roll + DFN Score)] + DAM Score] - Soak = Hit Points Lost

Anxious to prove himself to Thurid, Ragnar drops his bow and rushes into the melee to Engage another goblin which is advancing on his friend. You roll a 2, adding 9, the ATK score for his Viking axe. The goblin's DFN score is 3. The runner rolls a 2. Ragnar's attack total of 11 is better than the goblin's defense total of 5. The goblin is hit. You combine the Thwack Margin (6) with his Viking Axe's DAM score (12), for 18 Raw Damage. The goblin subtracts his Soak of 3, losing a total of 15 hit points.

For a melee combatant, a round represents more than a single swing with a weapon, which either connects or doesn't. You'll be spending the round circling and watching your foe. Damage your hero deals may represent the results of several pinpricks, or a single decisive blow amid a flurry of feints.

GOING BERSERK

When your hero attacks, you may choose to have him go **berserk**, provided his current hit point total is at least 21. (He isn't consciously making this decision, but you are.) You may add your DFN to your ATK score for a single attack. However, once that attack has concluded, the enemy (should he still be standing) gets the chance to make a free additional attack against your hero, as part of your action. In fending off his coun-



terattack, your DFN is 0. You can never take advantage of any additional increases, whether from other tactics like charging, or from various Divine Gifts, when going berserk. You can't do anything but attempt to deal good, honest, Odin-approved damage to the foe. You get your ATK score plus your berserk modifier, and that's it.

Only heroes can go berserk.

CHARGING

If your hero must travel more than 20 paces towards an enemy to Engage him in melee combat, consider charging him, especially if you won Initiative or the enemy is holding off and waiting for you to act. The +3 Attack increase for charging more than compensates for the time he's had to stand his ground or duck and weave. However, if he braces with a longshaft weapon, a charge might not prove fruitful.

Characters can only charge when the path towards their foe is as the raven flies — that is, more or less straight.

FOG OF WAR

When allies are within 3 paces of your hero, there is a small chance you'll hit them when you miss your target. If you botch, reroll; if the rerolled total would have been good enough to hit your target, you instead hit one

of the other heroes. If more than one ally qualifies for this dubious privilege, the one with the lowest INIT total suffers the hit. (The runner rolls randomly when all candidates share the same INIT total.) Your ally takes damage equal to your straight DAM score with that weapon, with no additions or subtractions for your ATK roll. He may apply Soak to this, as usual.

If an ally stands directly between your hero and a target who is otherwise within your weapon range, your hero can take a shot at that target, but the penalty to avoid hitting your ally is -6. If you take no precautions against hitting him and fail your ATK roll, your hero hits him when the difference is less than or equal to 6.

THE DREADED RIPOSTE

On a very bad ATK total, a combatant not only fails in an embarrassing manner, but opens himself up to an opportunistic return blow from his adversary. The adversary gets a free attack against him, which does not count as an action and occurs regardless of the adversary's Initiative status. The riposte does not permit him to take additional actions, moves, or Engagement rolls.

The defender becomes eligible to make a riposte when the Thwack Margin is -20 or lower. If it is -40 or lower, he gets two ripostes. At -60, he gets three ripostes, and so on.

MELEE MODIFIERS TABLE

The runner applies the following additional modifiers to attack or defense rolls made in melee.

Situation	Modifier	To Which Roll?
Using a single weapon held in off-hand	-3	Both
Combatant has the high ground or another terrain advantage	+2	Both
Combatant is mounted and his opponent is not	+3	Both
Combatant has staged a successful ambush	See "Hiding Places", p. 171	
Combatant is charging — during the current round, he had to sprint 10 paces or more to Engage with his foe	+3	Attack
Combatant is jumping from a height (risking falling damage on a failed Jump roll) onto a foe	+3	Attack
Armed with a longshaft weapon, combatant braced against a foe who had to move 20 paces or more to Engage him	+3	Defense
Combatant is caught in a grabber trap (p. 153)	-3	Both
More than one opponent is currently close enough to defending	-2 per opponent*	Defense

* after the first combatant to hit him with its melee weapons. No more than 4 opponents can ever gang up in melee combat on a single human-sized defender.

STEP FOUR: BACK TO STEP ONE...

If there are still combatants on each side willing and able to fight, a new round now begins. Go back to step one, and Initiative determination.

SPECIAL CASES

Ask any slain warrior now carousing in Odin's great hall: battle is replete with surprises and special situations. A few of the most common are described in this section.

BRAWLING MANEUVERS

Heroes can use fists and kicks to fatally bludgeon foes. They'll do so only when they have no better weapons at hand — or perhaps because some weird magic is at play, rendering normal weapons useless. In such cases, just use the fist/kick entry on the weapon chart and employ the standard combat rules.

However, in some cases heroes set aside weapons in pursuit of a goal other than the immediate death of their foes. This is where brawling maneuvers become important.

Sometimes you'll want your hero to stop a foe from moving, escaping, or otherwise acting, without actually dealing serious harm to him. There are two ways to do this. You can put him in a **hold**, grabbing onto his neck or one of his arms so that he can't move without injuring himself. Or you can attempt to **pin** him, using the weight of your body to hold him against a wall or down on the ground.

In either case, use the Brawling Ability to make a normal unarmed attack. However, instead of doing damage, you make a second roll to determine the effectiveness of a successful move. For a hold, roll Dex + Brawling; for a pin, Str + Brawling. The Difficulty is your opponent's DFN score. If you meet or beat the Difficulty, you've held or

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH BEATING YOUR OPPONENT WITH HIS OWN SEVERED ARM

If a hero ever delivers post-Soak damage equal to twice his foe's Wound Threshold with a sword or axe, you may specify that he's severed his enemy's arm. The runner rolls a die; on an odd result, the foe is, uh, disarmed. That is, you've lopped off his weapon arm. The maimed character will flee unless the runner makes a Res roll for him, at the default Difficulty of 6, in which case he keeps fighting. To do so successfully, he must retrieve his weapon. His ATK score decreases by one-half as he fights with his off-hand.

As you'll see on p. 100, you normally gain victory points equal to 1/2 a foe's Might rating when you deliver the final

death blow to him. If you are able to dispatch him with his own severed arm, you gain points equal to his *full* Might. Just as a reminder, you can find the weapon stats for a severed arm in the table below.

The severed arm is a weapon of opportunity, not something you carry around with you. Characters who try to do so lose a trillion gazillion victory points.

Arm severing is a benefit enjoyed only by heroes; your foes can't do it back to you. Is this blatant favoritism? You bet! Players buy game books; creatures don't.

	Init Rating	Atk Rating	Dfn Rating	Dam Rating	Load	Ability
Severed Arm	+1	+1	+1	+1	NA	Great

pinned your opponent. Keep track of the Thwack Margin, if any. This is added to your victim's Difficulty if attempts to break free. In the case of a hold, you may force your opponent to drop his weapon. If he carries an object in each hand — two weapons or a weapon and a shield — you may force him to drop both.

(Foes making Brawling maneuvers do so with their Res ratings, which are explained on p. 99.)

The victim may take no further actions until he breaks free or the other combatant releases him. The successful brawler may release him at any time; doing so does not cost an action. If you want your hero to keep his foe pinned, you must devote all of his actions to the effort. Your hero can't both pin and pummel his enemy, for example.

Heroes restrained by enemies may not jockey for Engagement, move, or do anything else before countering the restraint. Breaking free requires an action.

If your hero is in a hold, you can break him free by rolling Dex + Brawling, plus the Dfn rating of his weapon or shield, if he still has one in hand. (Be sure to subtract his Armor Dfn rating and his Encumbrance Decrease, as well). If his is pinned, you can break free by rolling this same formula, but substituting Str + Brawling.

In each case, the Difficulty is 6, plus the Thwack Margin originally scored by your opponent when he put you under restraint.

Allies can try to hit an opponent your hero has in a pin or hold; the enemy's DFN score is halved. A risk awaits the unlucky: each miss is counted as a hit against your hero. He suffers damage equal to your ally's weapon DAM score, plus the difference between his failed total and the opponent's DFN total.

COVER AND BARRIERS

Characters who take cover make it harder for missile-wielding enemies to hit them. Anything a person can hide behind works as cover, provided that missiles can't pierce it. The effectiveness of the cover is determined by how much of a combatant it covers: a third, half, or almost all. Cover increases the

Difficulty levels suffered by missile users, as seen in the Melee Modifier Chart, p. 51.

If a hero jump outs from behind cover in order to fire missiles of his own, enemies may ignore his cover advantage by waiting for opportunity until immediately after he makes an attack. If more than one enemy is waiting for the opportunity to fire at the exposed hero, all of them get to do so during his split-second of full exposure.

If no solid cover presents itself, a hero can still make himself harder to hit in missile combat by occupying an area where the vision of missile users might be confused. He might hide in a useful patch of fog, position himself so that enemies are blinded by the rays of the sun, or stand under branches that continually shift in the wind, casting ever-moving shadows that confuse the eye. In such cases, heroes are **obscured**. The benefits of being obscured equal those of one-third cover.

In melee combat, it can also be helpful to put barriers between your hero and his enemies. Barriers provide an advantage to the defter combatant. If your combined ATK score + DFN score exceeds the combined ATK score + DFN score of your opponent, you gain a +1 bonus on both ATK and DFN rolls made against that opponent fighting you across a barrier. If your opponent's ATK score + DFN score are better than yours, he gets the bonus.

Examples of barriers include barrels, crates, piles of driftwood, fallen logs, small streams, gullies, pits, and monster carcasses. Your runner will decide how a barrier might be neutralized. For example, a boulder can be easily ignored — your opponent just goes around it to get at you. A trough blazing with unearthly fire might be a more difficult barrier to ignore.

FALLING DOWN

It is never good to slip or get knocked down in combat. This can happen to combatants fighting on sloped or slippery ground (p. 126), or victims of the Divine Gift Buffeting Gale (p. 66). Combatants who fall down in mid-combat can't get up again until their next actions. Then they must make

Balance rolls (Difficulty 6) to regain their footing. If they fail, they must wait until their next actions to try again. They can still make ATK and DFN rolls while fallen, but suffer a -4 penalty against both types of roll. Those wielding longshaft weapons don't suffer the ATK roll penalty.

INJURIES

As you learned during character creation, your hero sheet boasts two crucial numbers measuring his hit points and his Wound Threshold.

When your hero suffers damage over and above his Soak, temporarily reduce his hit points by that number.

When that damage is also equal to or greater than his Wound Threshold, he not only temporarily loses that number of hit points, but also gains a Wound.

He can take more than one Wound in a single hit. If the damage is equal to or greater than twice his Wound Threshold, he takes two Wounds. Unless, that is, it also is equal to our greater than three times his Wound Threshold, in which case he takes three Wounds, and so on.

For each Wound he suffers, he takes 1 point of Impairment. As you'll recall, you decrease every single roll you make by your hero's current Impairment rating.

So, as his state of health gets worse, his hit point total temporarily decreases, and his Wound total increases.

When his Wound total reaches 4, he becomes Incapacitated. He's still conscious, but in so much pain that he can't move (except to writhe in pain), think (except about the incredible agony he's experiencing), or speak (although horrifying groans are permissible).

The instant that his hit points reach 0, or his Wound total reaches 5, the character is in danger of immediate death. Unless healed instantly (see below), you cough up some blood, utter a final curse against your foes, loll your tongue out of your head, collapse like a sack of rocks, and die.

RECOVERING FROM INJURIES

Heroes heal up between every encounter; they also shed any Impairment points they've gained due to circumstances arising from the previous encounter. However, sometimes heroes will find themselves sufficiently injured in mid-encounter that they'll want to crawl off somewhere and heal before continuing.

Superficial injuries heal on their own, given time and the consumption of food and drink. Unwounded heroes return to maximum hit points after eight hours of sleep and eight hours of rest. They can't gain partial hit point recovery by spending only part of that time. (Although it might seem more realistic to introduce some graduated system for hit point recovery, we curse the idea as a craven complexity only a machine-added dwarf would propose.)

A Wound is an injury too horrible to recover from by merely sitting up against a tree for a while and giving voice to the occasional manly grunt. If your hero is wounded, a character with the Healing Ability must get to work on him with his kit of splints, bandages, medicines, and poultices. Bleeding characters can also benefit from a healer, but can, if needed, heal up purely via the aforementioned manly grunt method.

In any case, the healer makes a Dexterity + Healer roll, the Difficulty of which is determined by the patient's number of Wounds, like so:

Number of Wounds	Difficulty	Period Between Attempts
0 Wounds	4	1 hour
1 wound	5	3 hours
2 Wounds	6	12 hours
3 Wounds	8	24 hours
4 Wounds	10	3 days
5 Wounds	12	1 week



Ignore all botches when making this roll (it's a quality die roll). When you roll a 1, just add it to your rating as you would with any other die result. Although medical malpractice was probably worse in the real Viking world than in our own, it really bites to die just because another character screwed up his healing roll, so a healer working on a patient other than himself is immune from botches. Yeah, we're a bunch of sentimental old softies.

A healing attempt takes one round in combat, or about a minute otherwise.

Recovery works differently for the wounded and unwounded. Upon a successful a Healing roll, unwounded characters regain hit points equal to (1 + the difference between the roll total and Difficulty) x 4.

Thorleik has lost 29 hit points, none of them from Wounds. His healthy hit point total is 76, but now he has only 47. Ragnar tries to heal him. The Difficulty, as we see from the above chart, is 4. You roll for Ragnar, with a result of 6; a success that totals 10 when his Heal of 1 (which he's raised from the 0 he chose in character generation) and Dex of 3 are added. The difference is 6; to which you add 1 before multiplying by four, getting a 28. Thorleik gets back 28 hit points. He goes from 47 to 75 hit points.

Healers can instead choose to remove Wounds. If the healer exceeds the Difficulty on the chart above, the patient is cured of a single wound. He also regains a number of hit points equal to his Wound Threshold, or the margin between the Difficulty and the healer's total, whichever is greater.

It is possible, if unlikely, for a healer to cure multiple Wounds at the same time. Where the margin is equal to or greater than twice the patient's Wound Threshold, he is cured of 2 Wounds. Where it is equal to or greater than three times the Wound Threshold, the patient is cured of 3 Wounds, and so on.

Ragnar tries to heal Thurid, who has a maximum of 76 hit points, and a Wound Threshold of 21. Right now she's suffering from 2 Wounds, and has only 21 hit points. The runner checks the above chart and determines that the Difficulty of Ragnar's roll is 6.

Your roll for Ragnar triumphs, with a total of 24 when his Dex is added and 5 subtracted for not having the Healer Ability or equipment that goes with it. Although greater than Thurid's Wound Threshold, the result is not twice the Wound Threshold. Thurid is cured of 1 Wound and regains 24 hit points. Her hit point total is now 45.

Heroes may attempt to heal themselves, but should remember that their healing rolls will take place under Impairment penalties. It's generally better to have an unimpaired healer bind a hero's Wounds.



After a healing attempt, successful or otherwise, the healer must wait for a period of time before he can fruitfully try again. That period depends on the patient's Wound count *after* the most recent healing attempt. Only one healer may attempt to patch the patient up for each interval. If one fails, another can't immediately step up to make his own attempt.

In the above example, Thurid is left with 1 Wound at the end of the healing attempt. She must wait 3 hours before anyone can attempt to heal her again.

An exception occurs if the patient suffers further damage while waiting for the next healing opportunity. A healer may then immediately attempt to treat the new injuries. Heroes can't, however, deliberately injure a patient simply so they can try to heal him again right away.

Before the 3 hours expire, Thurid is mauled by a rabid wolf. She loses 6 hit points before she and her allies beat the thing off. Ragnar may immediately attempt to heal her.

Simple potions that boost the Healing Ability (see descriptions of potions on p. 159) allow you to make consecutive healing rolls, ignoring the usual intervals between attempts.

Healing attempts are subject to the following Difficulty modifiers to the healer's die roll.

Situation	Modifier
Healer and patient are in a wilderness or hostile environment	0
Healer is making his attempt as an action during combat	+3
Healer and patient are in a warm, safe, sheltered environment	-3
Patient is inhuman (for example, a dwarf or goblin)	+3
Patient is undead	+6

REVIVING THE DYING

A character who is dying, either because he's lost all his hit points or gained 5 Wounds, can still be saved if a healer acts quickly. The healer must administer healing during his first available action after the patient suffers the mortal blow. (More than one healer can try to do this.) He makes a roll against a Difficulty of 12. If he succeeds on a patient reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, the dying character gains 4 hit points. If he succeeds on a patient who suffered a fifth wound, the victim still gets back only 4 hit points, but is now at only 4 Wounds.

Eyrbyg's Wound threshold is 18. He suffers a fifth Wound and is dying. Thurid makes a healing attempt to stave off immediate death, and delivers. Eyrbyg regains only 4 hit points, but is now considered to have suffered only 4 Wounds.

Heroes hit by blows that would take them below -20 hit points can't be revived. The final blow decapitates them, pounds them into paste, or otherwise renders them fit only for Valhalla. (This is the only situation in which **Rune** can be said to have negative hit points.)

OTHER RULES

The following rules are as important as rules not exclusively related to fighting can be.

USING ABILITIES YOU LACK

Rune's Abilities are many and beginning characters can't afford to buy a point in each. Sometimes you'll have to roll to use Abilities your hero doesn't have.

You can use any Ability your hero lacks, at a penalty of -3 to your roll.

If the Ability requires equipment, and you don't have it, the standard -2 penalty applies, for a total of -5. Ouch!

The Runes Ability provides an exception to this rule. You can't even try to use this Ability if you have no rating in it.

The lack of certain innate Abilities, like Awareness or Sleep, indicates that you're worse than the average person at the tasks associated with them. Incompetence at more complicated Abilities, like weapon Abilities or Runes, is closer to the norm for your society. This rationalization saves us from the additional level of complexity we'd have to introduce if we wanted to give each skill its own, separate, "realistic" penalty for unskilled use.

MULTIPLE ROLLS FOR THE SAME ACTION

Any single roll you make represents all of your hero's attempts to perform a task. If you fail, you can't try again unless your hero does something to change the situation.

Thorleik attempts to pick the lock on a brass door in Thorstadt. His player, Joel, rolls and fails. No matter how long Thorleik stands there sticking little pieces of metal into the lock, he can't get its tumblers to move. The longer he stays in this Dark Viking stronghold in futile struggle with the door, the more likely it is that he'll be found out and forced to fight. Accepting defeat, he skulks away into Thorstadt's grimy shadows.



He finds his friends, Ragnar and Thurid. Thurid has something for him — a special potion that can be poured into a lock to assist in its opening. Thorleik, grumbling that she should have provided it to begin with, heads off to the lock to try again. This change in circumstance gives him one more try. Joel can roll again. If he fails it, Thorleik must either give up or seek yet another new advantage before a third attempt.

This rule does not apply to actions undertaken in combat. If you miss your opponent with a sword, you can always hack at him again the next time you get a chance to act in combat.

Another exception to this rule occurs when the hero must act in a short period of time to stave off a disaster of some kind. In this case, the runner may specify, in designing his encounter, the number of consecutive tries allowed before the bad thing happens. Usually he will get one try per round, often during a combat situation.

If Thorleik has to pick the lock in order to pop behind the door before a torrent of acid comes crashing down the corridor at him and reduces him to a collection of bones, the runner may allow multiple

tries. He gets, say, three attempts at the lock. If he fails all three, the acid burns him.

CONTESTS

Although deadly combat is clearly the best, most important, and most heroic form of conflict in which your hero might become involved, it is not the only kind. Sometimes he will need to overcome the active resistance of foes or opponents in non-violent situations. When this happens, the runner specifies the Ability each participant will contest with.

The elfin queen offers a mighty sword to the Viking warrior who convinces her he'll do the most to bring peace between the Norse people and hers. Thorleik the Shrewd will speak up for the heroes of his home village. Contesting against him is Osk, a treacherous Dark Viking. Thorleik knows that if she gets the sword she will simply take it and sacrifice it to Loki, as part of her sinister plan to summon a host of Sark Amen to ravage Norse and elfin lands alike. The runner says that this will be a contest of Demeanor.

A contest consists of a single roll. You roll and add your Ability and its Characteristic, trying to beat the total the runner gets rolling for the other contestant, a supporting character. The character with the highest total wins.

The difference between your results indicates the degree of success.

If your results are exactly the same, the tie goes to the hero.



Joel rolls and gets a total of 8 for Thorleik after his Demeanor and Presence ratings are added. The runner rolls and gets a total of 7 for Osk. Thorleik wins.

Designers can't build contests between heroes into their encounters. However, pillagers may choose contests between heroes as a way of resolving disputes. They might, for example, arm-wrestle for coveted magical items, in a contest of Brawling rolls. Ties between heroes are resolved by rerolling until somebody wins.

More Than Two Contestants

Contests can include multiple participants. Everybody rolls; the character with the highest total wins. Ties between supporting characters are resolved with rerolls.

Thurid and Thorleik gamble with two dwarves, Casin and Foldo, for the right to smash down a door and confront the creatures inside. The game is an honest one, so each rolls and adds his Intelligence + Gambling. Joel rolls for Thorleik; Paul, for Thurid; and the runner, for Casin and Foldo. Their totals are as follows: Thurid 8, Thorleik 10, Casin 13, and Foldo 13. Thurid and Thorleik are easily out-played by the two dwarves, who are no doubt relying on their advanced mathematical skills. Now the contest is between the two of them, so they reroll. Casin gets an 8, while Foldo scores a 12. Foldo is the winner, and may lay first claim on any treasure possessed by the creatures behind the door.

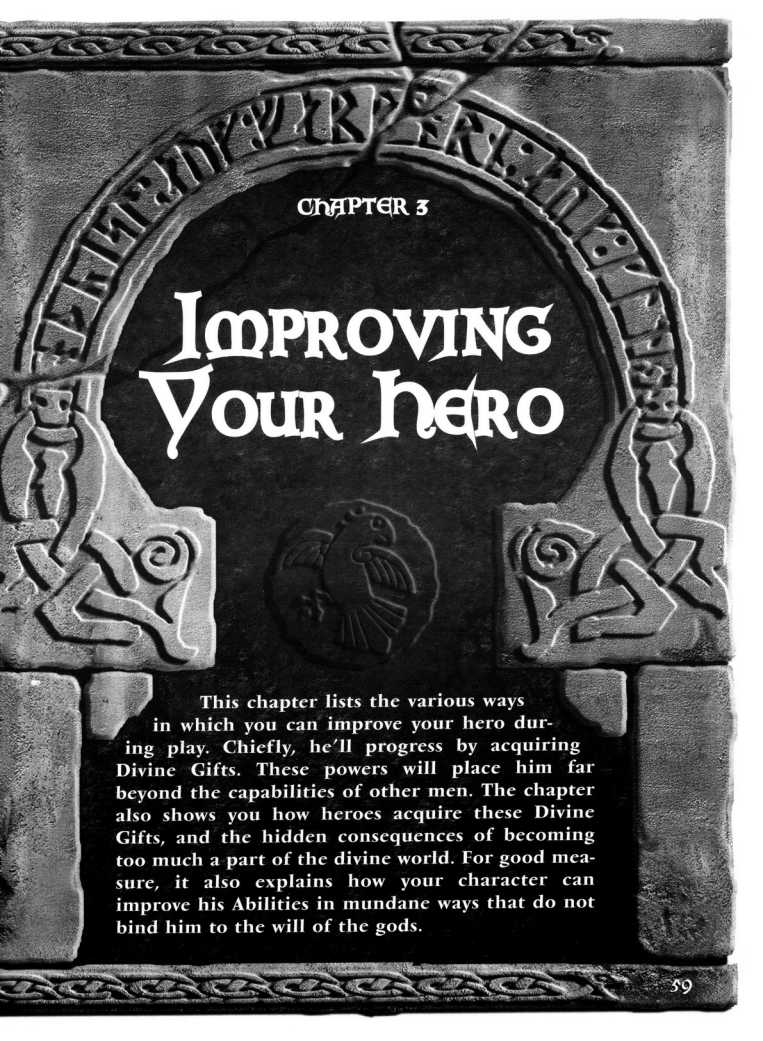
MOUNTED COMBAT

Mounted combat is rare in Rune. You'll spend most of your time crawling around a dank network of underground passageways no sensible horse would even consider entering. You may find yourself fighting on horseback during the occasional wilderness encounter, though. If mounted, you gain +3 to

both ATK and DEF rolls made against pedestrian opponents. Add your Ride skill as a further bonus to Initiative. The full move of a steed is 200 paces.

For more information on horses and mounted combat see page 182.





CHAPTER 3

IMPROVING Your hero

This chapter lists the various ways in which you can improve your hero during play. Chiefly, he'll progress by acquiring Divine Gifts. These powers will place him far beyond the capabilities of other men. The chapter also shows you how heroes acquire these Divine Gifts, and the hidden consequences of becoming too much a part of the divine world. For good measure, it also explains how your character can improve his Abilities in mundane ways that do not bind him to the will of the gods.

SPENDING VICTORY POINTS

During each encounter, you'll gain **victory points**. Victory points are awarded according to a process explained in Chapter Four. Victory points serve two purposes. First, as the name implies, they provide the score used to determine which player wins. Second, you can spend them to improve your character's game statistics. Spending victory points does not interfere with your chances of victory. Every victory point you ever get, whether you spend it or not, counts towards your **overall victory score**. Always keep this number updated; it not only tells you who's winning the current saga, but is used by designers in building their encounters. Keep track of how many points you've spent on character improvement; these are your **spent victory points**. Your overall victory points minus your spent points equals your **free victory points** total. This tells you how many points you have on hand to invest in character improvement. We'll go into more detail on using victory points to determine the winner of each game session in the next chapter. For now, our focus is on character improvement.

You can spend victory points on both Divine Gifts and Mundane Abilities. Sometimes you can spend points as soon as you get them, immediately improving your character. Other Gifts and Abilities require your hero to do certain things in the game world before the improvements take effect.

DEATH INSURANCE

At the beginning of any encounter, a pillager may spend 25 victory points to purchase death insurance. He makes a copy of his hero sheet and puts it aside, leaving the name field blank. Death insurance doesn't cover equipment, so any entries for equipment, magical or otherwise, must be left blank, too.

If the character later dies at some point in your saga, the player retrieves this sheet. He picks a new name and writes it on the sheet. *Voilà*, he has a new character, ready to go, which allows him to build on prior achievements and to keep up with

luckier players. At his leisure, he should make another copy of the sheet, in case he dies again. One purchase of death insurance can protect against multiple demises; the death of a character does not wipe out the player's investment.

Players can buy death insurance as many times as they want; they always get to use the most recent saved character sheet. The death insurance lasts for as long as you play that character.

When restarting, the player may select only the gear that a beginning character would get. He may kiss a fond farewell to any magical goodies his old hero had. The other heroes have probably already scooped it up. Some groups may have gentlemen's agreements allowing inheritance of equipment by a player's replacement hero. However, we recommend that you take a "We're Vikings, dammit," approach, with the attendant mad scramble to loot the corpse of a felled comrade.

Death insurance may remind you of computer games, which you save every so often to preserve your achievements. But in the world of **Rune**, what it represents is the favor of the gods, who insure that all great heroes have more-or-less identical, slightly younger cousins ... Uh, no. That can't be it. Okay, okay, I've got it: it reflects a tear in the space-time continuum created by Loki, no doubt to ... Nah, screw it. This *is* exactly like saving your game on the computer. It makes absolutely no sense in the fictional reality of the setting, but it makes the game work better. So make good use of the rule, and try not to think about it too much.



ABILITY INCREASES

In addition to the various Divine Gifts listed above, you can spend victory points to increase your hero's everyday Abilities. You can increase Abilities in two ways: through experience, or through training.

There is no mundane way to increase Characteristics.

EXPERIENCE

Whenever you do something important with your Ability, and succeed, you get a chance to learn by experience. The Ability increase represents your capacity to repeat the new trick you discovered in the heat of the moment. Whenever you succeed at an Ability roll listed in the runner's encounter notes, and you think you might be interested in increasing the Ability in question, make a note of it. At the end of the encounter, you may spend victory points to immediately increase any such Ability by 1.

You may increase any weapon Ability if you beat a foe's DFN total during the encounter, the Healer Ability if you used it to help a hero recover, or any Ability you successfully used to gain a battlefield advantage.

Your best Fighting Ability costs 150 victory points to increase by 1. Any Fighting Ability lower than that costs 75 victory points for 1 point of increase. Other primary Abilities cost 45. Secondary Abilities cost 30 victory points.

If you're lucky enough to successfully use an Ability you don't have, you can use this procedure to gain your first point of it.

TRAINING

If you want to learn a new Ability, and you haven't been able to use it successfully during play, you must train in it between adventures (not encounters). You must pay 30 for secondary Abilities or 125 for primary Abilities.

ADDITIONAL GEAR

Lost or damaged weapons are easy to replace by looting slain foes (see p. 164). Armor is another matter. You may also gain new common equipment (or replace destroyed equipment) by returning to your home base and bargaining for it with a local craftsman or trader.

DIVINE GIFTS

Divine Gifts are powers from the gods. The gods use their limited powers of omniscience to sense the activities of mighty heroes. When they become aware of these heroes, a connection establishes itself between hero and god. If the god approves of the hero's actions, the god sends him a tiny fraction of his divine essence. Not only does the hero not seek out the divine favor, it comes to him without his conscious knowledge. However, the first time he finds himself in a situation where the Gift might prove useful, he uses it involuntarily, as if by instinct. In many cases, Divine Gifts are not obviously supernatural: the hero might simply become stronger, faster, more resistant to cold, or whatever. Thus, the hero may not know that he has gained a Divine Gift even after he begins to make use of it. In other cases, anyone can see that a power is by nature divine. When you can make your lost weapon fly through the air and leap into your palm, it doesn't take a priest to know that the gods are at work.

Although your hero doesn't pick which Gift he gets and might not even know he's gotten it; you, the player, are still steering the longship. Each Divine Gift has a **cost** listed in its description. You may at any time spend the requisite number of points to gain a Gift. (Provided, of course, that you have them to spend in the first place.) And when we say "any time," we mean "any time," by Odin's beard! If you want to buy a Gift between your Initiative roll and your Attack roll during a combat situation, you may do so. Just be quick about it — your fellow players have every right to hurl crushed-up potato chips at you if you interrupt a



DIVINE GIFTS

Gift	Cost	Patron	Levels	Page
Agony Postponed	30	Heimdall	5	64
Aura of Phlegmatic Acceptance	75	Heimdall	4	65
Banish His Blade	45	Loki	Unlimited	65
Berserks' Blessing	150	Odin	Unlimited	65
Boon of Angrboda	150	Angrboda	Unlimited	66
Bone Setter's Blessing	30	Freyja	Unlimited	66
Buffering Gale	75	Thor	Unlimited	66
The Chattering Squirrel	45	Loki	Unlimited	66
The Clenched Jaw of Vengeance	45	Thor	4	67
The Clatter of Rushing Boots	250	Thor	None	67
Comeuppance Postponed	250	Loki	None	67
Craven Departure	250	Loki	Unlimited	67
Curds of Utgardaloki	100	Thor	8	68
Destiny Reversed	400	Urd	Unlimited	68
Dying Blow	30	Odin	Unlimited	68
The Eager Arrow	75	Heimdall	Unlimited	69
The Eight-Legged Horse	100	Odin	Unlimited	69
The Ever-Flowing Cup	45	Freyja	Unlimited	69
Eyes like Glowing Coals	45	Odin	Unlimited	69
Flesh Cries Out for Piercing	150	Loki	8	70
From Lofty Asgard's Peaks	125	Thor	8	70
Frost-Speeded Heels	75	Njord	Unlimited	70
Gathering Thunder	40	Thor	Unlimited	70
Gilded Tongue of Freyr	75	Freyr	Unlimited	71
The Gnawing Stags	30	Loki	Unlimited	71
Golden Apples' Sweetness	75	Freyja	Unlimited	71
Implacably Braced	75	Heimdall	Unlimited	71
Imprecation of Doom	250	Odin	Unlimited	71
Indefatigable Determination	75	Heimdall	10	71
The Knitting of Meat	45	Thor	Unlimited	72
The Lie Turns to Truth	75	Loki	Unlimited	72
Like a Wind-Tossed Leaf	125	Thor	Unlimited	72
Like the Leaping Stag	75	Ull	Unlimited	72
The Loyal Hilt	250	Thor	Unlimited	72
Mantle of Odin	100	Odin	Unlimited	73
Many-Impling Spear	75	Thor	11	73
Might of Thor	300	Thor	Unlimited	73
Mjolnir Awakes	30	Thor	Unlimited	73



Gift	Cost	Patron	Levels	Page
Naglfar Plows the Waves	30	Njord	Unlimited	73
Njord's Crust	75	Njord	Unlimited	74
Nurturing of Yggdrasil	150	Freyja	4	74
Obscuring Mist	30	Loki	Unlimited	74
On Valkyries' Wings	45	Odin	Unlimited	74
The North's Cooling Sigh	30	Njord	Unlimited	74
The Owl Hears the Viper	30	Heimdall	Unlimited	74
Penetrating Lightning	30	Thor	Unlimited	75
Plumed Up by Njordsbreath	45	Njord	Unlimited	75
The Raven Plucks an Eye	30	Odin	Unlimited	75
The Relentless Gales of Njord	400	Njord	Unlimited	75
The Remorse of Hoder	75	Hoder	Unlimited	75
Resist the Serpent's Tears	30	Tyr	Unlimited	76
Ripples from the Well of Knowledge	75	Odin	Unlimited	76
Roaring Shout of Rage	45	Odin	Unlimited	76
Rune Weapons		See Insert p. 77 and p. 76-80		
Scorn the Bite of Treachery	30	Thor	Unlimited	80
Scouring the Fell Spirits	30	Odin	6	81
Shoulders Wide as Bifrost	75	Heimdall	Unlimited	81
Skadi's Ermine Cloak	30	Njord	Unlimited	81
Sprig of Mistletoe	45	Loki	Unlimited	81
Sudden as a Mountain Storm	150	Njord	Unlimited	81
Survive the Lake of Flame	30	Tyr	Unlimited	82
Swiftness of Sleipnir	75	Odin	8	82
Through the Cracks	30	Asjandr	Unlimited	82
Thor's Thews	75	Thor	Unlimited	82
The Tireless Joy-Shout	30	Tyr	Unlimited	82
The Trumpet's Commanding Blast	75	Odin	Unlimited	83
Tyr's Forbearance	75	Tyr	Unlimited	83
Ull's Hide	75	Ull	Unlimited	83
Ull's Sure Hand	400	Ull	Unlimited	83
Valor of Tyr	75	Tyr	Unlimited	83
Vigilance of Heimdall	100	Heimdall	Unlimited	83
Wiles of Loki	75	Loki	Unlimited	84
With Either Hand	30	Ull	None	84
The Wounds Close Quick	75	Tyr	4	84
Wrestlers' Blessing	75	Thor	Unlimited	84
Zealous Sinews	45	Tyr	Unlimited	84

fast-moving combat to thumb indecisively through this chapter looking for the perfect Gift to buy.

To repeat: the hero gets no choice of his Divine Gifts, and does not know he has them until he uses them. The player is completely in charge of which Divine Gifts his hero gets.

CONSEQUENCES OF DIVINE GIFTS

The essence fueling a Divine Gift enters into the hero's body and soul, infusing him with a specific power. The psychic link between god and hero remains active. You must keep track of which gods are associated with the Gifts you've chosen for your hero, and how many levels worth of Gifts each has granted you. Each of these scores is called a **Divine Connection rating**.

After many game sessions, Ragnar has the following Divine Gifts: Curds of Utgardaloki (1 level, Thor), Destiny Reversed (1 level, Urd), Implacably Braced (1 level, Heimdal), Imprecation of Doom (2 levels, Odin), Like the Leaping Stag (2 levels, Ull), Lofty Asgard's Peaks (1 level, Thor), and Vigilance of Heimdal (1 level, Heimdal).

His Divine Connection ratings are as follows: Odin 2, Thor 2, Ull 2, Heimdal 2, and Urd 1.

Your highest Divine Connection rating indicates who your **primary god** is. If you have more than one deity tied for first place, each counts as your primary god. (An exception occurs if your Divine Connections are all rated at 1; in that case, you have no primary god.)

Odin, Thor, Ull, and Heimdal all count as Ragnar's primary god.

Gods pay special attention to particular places and situations in Midgard and the Underworld. If your hero encounters a place or situation of interest to his primary god, he may be compelled to act in accordance with the god's desires. He may find himself unable to do certain things, such as harm another favored hero of the god. (To see how to build such situations into an encounter as designer, see "In Defiance of the Gods," on p. 140).

A character with the Divine Awareness Ability can, by rolling Perception + Divine Awareness against a Difficulty of 6, tell how much divine favor a character enjoys; that is, he can glean the total of all of the character's Divine Connection ratings. By rolling against a Difficulty of 8, he can identify the character's primary god. Against a Difficulty of 10, he can identify all of the gods from whom a character has received Gifts.

LIST OF DIVINE GIFTS

The list of Divine Gifts appears below. The format for describing Divine Gifts is as follows:

Cost: This tells you how many victory points you must spend to gain the Gift.

Patron: Here we name the god who provides the Gift.

Levels: Most Gifts allow **levels**, meaning that they can be bought multiple times, with cumulative effects. If they allow unlimited levels, this entry says "Unlimited." If they allow only a certain number of levels, the number is given. If a Gift does not allow levels, this entry says "None."

AGONY POSTPONED

Cost: 30

Patron: Heimdal

Levels: 5

Sometimes a Wounded warrior must keep fighting, even if he must worsen his own injuries to fight at maximum skill. It is uncomplaining Heimdal who teaches this ability to the Norsemen. Your hero may ignore one point of Wound-derived Impairment for each level you possess in Agony Postponed. When he stops fighting, he suffers 6 points of armor-ignoring damage (see p. 142) for each Impairment point he ignored.

AURA OF PHLEGMATIC ACCEPTANCE

Cost: 75

Patron: Heimdal

Levels: 4

As guardian of Asgard's gateway, the doughty god Heimdal is prepared to suffer blows rained down on him by those who would seek to breach it. Your hero, too, has learned to accept as an emblem of honor the cuts and bruises dealt out by his foes. At the end of any encounter in which he was brought below 20 hit points, or suffered 4 Wounds, you gain 20X extra victory points, where X is your level in Aura of Phlegmatic Acceptance. You are disqualified for this award during an encounter in which you decline to defend against an attack.

BANISH HIS BLADE

Cost: 45

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

The smirk that crawls across the face of Loki when a foe stands disarmed before him is something to behold. It can crack earthenware and turn wine to vinegar. For Loki, it is the moment of anticipation before a helpless foe, more than the subsequent sinking of blade into flesh, which brings him the greatest pleasure. He has seen that your hero, too, likes to knock the blade from your enemy's hand before dispatching him, and has chosen to support and reward you. When you succeed in disarming an opponent, his weapon travels the normal distance times your level in Banish His Blade. If you damage him while he is disarmed, multiply the number of victory points you'd normally get from the strike by (1 + your level in Banish His Blade). Add the result to your victory point tally for the current encounter.

BERSERKS' BLESSING

Cost: 150

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

Odin is the patron of berserks, those who fight with neither mercy nor care for their own fates. The most reckless and deadly of them join the Einherjar, the fighters of Valhalla, after being slain. Odin has seen

ADDITION GOOD, MULTIPLICATION BAD

Several descriptions refer to "the number of victory points you'd normally get" in a given situation. This means the number derived from the scoring system in Chapter Four, *before* the additional benefits of any Divine Gifts or other unusual powers are taken into account. In other words, you can under absolutely no circumstances multiply the victory point benefit of one Gift by that of another. And that's not just any old, "under absolutely no circumstances," that's a *Viking* "under absolutely no circumstances" with a great big battle-axe to back it up. Keep this in mind if your group wants to create new Divine Gifts for your game, or if you're adopting Gifts found on Internet fan sites or mailing lists.

your berserk determination and is pleased by it. For each hit point of damage you lose due to the free retaliatory blow a berserk's surviving opponent gets, you gain 1 victory point per level in Berserks' Blessing. In other words, one level of Berserks' Blessing cancels out the victory point penalty you normally suffer for losing hit points; each level after that adds to your total.

BOON OF ANGRBODA

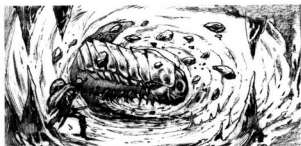
Cost: 150

Patron: Angrboda

Levels: Unlimited

Angrboda is the giantess who married dread Loki, upon whom he sired three monsters: the Midgard Serpent, the ravening wolf Fenrir, and Hel, goddess of the damned. She grants you the Ability to assume a monstrous visage, mimicking that of the foes who attack you. When an enemy (other than a human or craftwerk) chooses you as his target using the Foe Target Choice Flowchart (p. 196), or because he is Self-Willed and the runner wants him to attack you, he must roll his Res versus a Difficulty equal to your Disguise + level in this Gift. He may only

attack you if he succeeds; otherwise he thinks you're one of his comrades. He automatically succeeds (no need to roll) if there is no other legal target for his attack, or if you've already attacked him.



BONE-SETTERS' BLESSING

Cost: 30
Patron: Freyja
Levels: Unlimited

Although the gods of the Aesir, even those whom the Vikings worship, can be grave and unforgiving as they pursue the deaths of all who oppose them, the gods of the Vanir show greater mercy. Freyja, goddess of fertility and love, extends her blessing to those healers brave enough to risk their own safety to save others. When your hero expends an action during combat to administer healing, add 3X to his Soak, and 3X to the Soak of his patient, where X is your level in Bone-Setters' Blessing. The effect persists until the end of the current round, by which time you'll usually have completed your Healer roll. This Gift does not work when you treat your own character's injuries.

BUFFETING GALE

Cost: 75
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

When Thor strikes a blow with his mighty hammer Mjolnir, even the stoutest foe finds it nearly impossible to retain his footing. When you strike a blow with a melee weapon, it is with a buffeting force like unto Mjolnir's. After a successful strike (that is, when your ATK total exceeds your foe's DEF total), the runner must make a Res roll against a Difficulty of 9 plus your level in

Buffeting Gale. If he fails the roll, the foe has fallen down. See p. 53 and 127 for the dire consequences of falling in mid-fight. Add 20X victory points to your tally each time you knock a foe down, and for each subsequent round he stays down, where X is your level in Buffeting Gale. You can choose not to use this power on any given blow your hero strikes during its duration.

THE CHATTERING SQUIRREL

Cost: 45
Patron: Loki
Levels: Unlimited

The world tree, Yggdrasil, which connects and nurtures all of the realms of being, is infested by destructive animals. One is an eagle, which clutches in its beak a death-bleached hawk. Another is a serpent, which continually gnaws at Yggdrasil's roots. Between them scampers Ratatosk, a chattering squirrel that carries words of evil from the eagle to the snake and from the snake to the eagle. Though some say it is the eagle and the serpent which threaten the tree, neither of them would continue were it not for the insidious words of the squirrel. Loki grants your hero the power to degrade his enemies' combat performance by uttering a stream of guttural, ominous threats in the ancient tongue of the giants. Your hero must be within 3 paces of an enemy in order to activate the Gift, which you do by beating his Res total with a Divine Awareness + Presence roll. If you succeed, he suffers a penalty to his Soak equal to your level in this Gift. The penalty may not reduce his Soak below 0. The effect is contagious. If he is still alive at the beginning of the next round, the foe closest to him must make a Res roll versus a Difficulty of 6, or suffer the same penalty. If that victim is alive at the beginning of the subsequent round, the unaffected foe closest to him must roll Res versus Difficulty 6 or fall prey to it, and so on. The chain breaks when a new round begins with the most recent victim already dead. The penalties your enemies suffer last until the end of the fight. You may use this Gift only once per event. Use of this Gift does not require an action.

THE CLENCHED JAW OF VENGEANCE

Cost: 45
Patron: Thor
Levels: 4

No hero brave enough to fight worthy foes may say that he has never been defeated. But when an enemy does strike your hero down, he rises again, sets his jaw in implacable determination, and sets off to find his foe, to return and magnify the blows that felled him. This Gift comes into play after you are Wounded by a specific enemy in combat. You may now strike at him with redoubled fury. For the remainder of the encounter (or until that enemy is dead, whichever comes first), add your level in The Clenched Jaw of Vengeance to your Soak. The first time you hit your foe after suffering the Wounding blow, add the damage from the Wounding blow he struck you to your own. When you kill him, you gain 20X victory points, where X is your level in this Gift. Add the result to your victory point tally for the current encounter.



THE CLATTER OF RUSHING BOOTS

Cost: 250
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

There is nothing Thor takes greater delight in than the headlong charge towards a foe. His throat sings with fury and laughter as his hammer whirls through the air, picking up force, and his enemy freezes in fear, blasted by the wind from his approach. Your hero, too, finds wild delight in the charge, channeling it towards his foe's destruction. Extra-long charges add to your ATK score. A charge must be at least 10 paces long; you gain an increase of 1 to your ATK score for every 3 paces by which your charge exceeds that basic number. This increase

comes in addition to the usual +3 for charging. Additionally, for every level you have in The Clatter of Rushing Boots, an opponent set for your charge suffers a decrease of 1 to his Defense roll.

Don't bother with this Gift if you have a low Sprint rating.

COMEUPPANCE POSTPONED

Cost: 250
Patron: Loki
Levels: None

Loki's skill in battle, though far outstripping that of most mortals, is but a fraction of that possessed by his Aesir foes, like Thor, Tyr, and Heimdal. Thus he has become adept in the art of escape, the secrets of which he has passed along to your hero. When he turns tail and flees, he retains the protection of a character who is more carefully retreating: his DEF score increases by 3, even though he is facing away from the battle and running at a speed of two full moves. Other foes on your escape route are only able to take opportunistic potshots at you by overcoming you in an Engagement roll. Also, add your Loki Divine Connection rating to any Engagement rolls you must make for this reason.

CRAVEN DEPARTURE

Cost: 250
Patron: Loki
Levels: Unlimited

Loki reserves his most potent powers of escape only for those minions performing direct service for him. When events go against his favorite servitors, he may whisk them to safety. With this Gift, your hero dematerializes, instantly and permanently disappearing from the current event. When the next event rolls around, he rejoins the adventure, catching up with his comrades after having been transported to a safe location. In order to activate this power, you must succeed in a contest against an enemy who is currently engaging you in melee combat. Roll your level in Craven Departure against your foe's Res. If you are currently Engaged by multiple foes, the runner picks the enemy with the best chance of success against

you. The foe is not aware of the fact that his innate magic is working to suppress your attempted departure. Your hero must spend an action to activate the power, but your opponent doesn't spend one to thwart it.

CURDS OF UTGARDALOKI

Cost: 100

Patron: Thor

Levels: 8

When he visited Utgardaloki, the king of Jotunheim, Thor fought one of the giant's champions, a suit of shield-carrying armor that walked by itself and make the ground quake whenever it took a step forward. Knowing that he could not defeat this foe with the blunt striking face of his war-mallet, Mjolnir, Thor bit off its pommel. With his teeth, he sharpened Mjolnir's hilt to a point, which he then used to pierce the armor, defeating the giant's champion and winning from him a pot of magic cheese curds. Though Thor was at first angered to win such a meager-seeming treasure, he was later grateful when he learned that the curds could revive a dying warrior, so enabling him to win even greater glories before his inevitable journey to Valhalla. Your hero, too, can partake of the magic of the curds when you receive this Gift. At any time, including when you are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, you may spend 25 victory points to regain 4X hit points, where X equals your level in Curds of Utgardaloki.

DESTINY REVERSED

Cost: 400

Patron: Urd

Levels: Unlimited

Urd is one of the three mysterious Norns, the goddesses of fate. Urd owns one of the two magical wells at the foot of Yggdrasil, the world tree, where the Aesir meet in council. She is the Norn of the past. Indifferent to the woes of men, she sometimes accepts favors from mortals, asking them to perform inexplicable tasks that somehow bring foreordained events closer to fruition. In exchange for these favors, she may allow for just-elapsed moments to be unraveled and rewoven, often producing a different result. X times per session, where X

equals your level in this Gift, you can reroll a die immediately after you see how it comes up. The original result is ignored; those around your hero do not notice anything awry. He, however, is left with two memories: one of what actually happened, and one of the disaster that nearly was.

DYING BLOW

Cost: 30

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

There is no surer way to join Odin's company of warriors in Valhalla than to die executing one last, self-sacrificing stroke against a bitter foe. Though Odin would never dream of depriving his worshippers of their chance at glorious death, he will guide their hands so as to make their final blows strike truer. When your hero takes damage that would deal a fifth Wound, or take him below 0 hit points, he may continue to fight for a number of rounds equal to his level in Dying Blow. You may add your level in Dying Blow to any roll you make during your hero's final moments on earth. Further, any Wound-derived Impairment he suffered at the moment of the final blow is not only removed from your ATK total, but converted to a bonus.

Hallgerd is at -3 Impairment from Wounds and suffers her final blow. Although the -3 Impairment is still applied to her other rolls, all of her ATK rolls will now be made at +3.

No power or action, not even the hand of Odin himself, can rescue you from death once you've embarked on this final, fatal display of courage. As soon as the duration of the effect runs out, or the fight ends (whichever is sooner), you are dead. But the keening song of the Valkyries who come to bear your soul to Odin's hall will resonate with a special ring of ultimate victory. Your contribution to the final battle of Ragnarok will surely be a mighty one.

If a player subsequently creates a new character to replace the deceased instead of using death insurance, the new hero starts his career with a pool of unspent victory points equal to X times the total damage the previous one dished out after invoking Dying Blow, where X is the deceased's level in this Gift.

THE EAGER ARROW

Cost: 75

Patron: Heimdal

Levels: Unlimited

You hero's arrows are too hungry to be satisfied with the flesh of but a single foe. Nor are they content to be loosed from your bow only to miss their chosen targets. You may at any time roll Presence + X, where X is your level in The Eager Arrow, to cause every arrow your hero has fired during the current event to fly backwards through the air and back into your quiver. The Difficulty of this roll is the distance in paces between him and the furthest arrow $\div 10$. If you fail, the arrows remain where they are. When you succeed, arrows that damaged currently active enemies, which for these purposes are assumed to be still lodged in their flesh, rip back out of their limbs and torsos, doing a bit of further damage. Each victim of this effect suffers X points of armor-ignoring damage (see p. 142). Further, if your hero takes an arrow he caused to unstick from a foe's flesh, and fires it at that foe again, you gain a +X increase to your ATK total.

Although the above description refers to arrows, you can use this Gift with crossbow bolts, too.

THE EIGHT-LEGGED HORSE

Cost: 100

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

Odin's majestic and terrifying steed is Sleipnir, an eight-legged, coal-black horse spawned by Loki and given to the All-Father as tribute. Atop this mount, Odin flies through the night sky, hunting and increasing his awareness of the mortal world's petty doings. Odin grants you a share of his lofty perceptions, allowing your mind's eye to survey the entire battlefield. Armed with this knowledge, you may shout complex tactical instructions, such as "Watch out!" or "He's got a spear!" to your fellows. You may thereby grant another hero a +X bonus to add to his next ATK or DFN total (his pillager chooses which). You may do this X times per fight, no action required. Any pillager may willingly give

you any number of his unspent victory points in exchange for this favor. You are free to negotiate for other things, like silver or magical items, instead of victory points. Even when you don't get something in return, you can still use the Gift. X is your level in this Gift.

THE EVER-FLOWING CUP

Cost: 45

Patron: Freyja

Levels: Unlimited

Thor boasted to the other gods that he needed no help when fighting, because he was the greatest warrior of all. Freyja laughed gently at his boastfulness, and said that there would come a day when he would call on her for a favor, and would admit he needed aid. In exchange, she would then ask him a favor. Thor agreed, thinking he would never have to make good on the agreement. Yet the very next battle he fought, against giants with unblinking eyes the size of shields, laid him low, and he found himself near death, ready to receive their finishing blows. He called upon Freyja, and a cup appeared before him; he revived, and then fought and crushed the giants. When he got back to Asgard, Freyja had seven filthy sheep stables waiting for him, which he had to clean up without benefit of a shovel.

This Gift will not fully revive your hero when lying near death, but, then again, you won't have to clean up any sheep droppings, either. Your hero's level in this Gift equals the number of rounds he can survive with 5 wounds or hit points below 0 without the assistance of a healer (see p. 56).

EYES LIKE GLOWING COALS

Cost: 45

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

When Odin sets himself upon the battlefield, even his direst foes cannot help but stand in awe of his grim visage. He has lent you a fraction of his forbidding demeanor. When your hero activates this Gift, enemies who wish to target your hero for missile attacks must make a Bravery + Stamina

roll against a Difficulty equal to your level in Presence + Eyes Like Glowing Coals. If their Threat Category is Inferior or less, they must add the difference between the two ratings to their Difficulty. This roll does not require an action. Would-be missile users cannot fire at you, though your fellow heroes remain perfectly suitable targets. A foe attempting to target your hero after having failed this roll in a previous round must add 3 to the Difficulty for each past failure. This Gift lasts for X rounds once activated. If your hero Dodges a missile during its duration, the power ends prematurely.

FLESH CRIES OUT FOR PIERCING

Cost: 150
Patron: Loki
Levels: 8

Clever Loki strikes best by waiting for his foe to err. He blesses you when you follow his example. You may add 1 per level in Flesh Cries Out for Piercing to your ATK score when your hero strikes out of Initiative order, after Waiting for Opportunity. If you wait to strike an opponent who has just failed to hit his adversary, you may add 1 per level to your ATK score and 2 per level to your DAM score.

FROM LOFTY ASGARD'S PEAKS

Cost: 125
Patron: Thor
Levels: 8

When the day of Ragnarok comes, the forces of darkness will fight at a disadvantage, for their Aesir

foes will fight in Asgard, defending the high ground at the end of Bifrost Bridge. Add 1 per level in From Lofty Asgard's Peaks to your ATK, DFN, DAM, and Soak scores when your hero occupies high or superior ground.

FROST-SPEEDED HEELS

Cost: 75
Patron: Njord
Levels: Unlimited

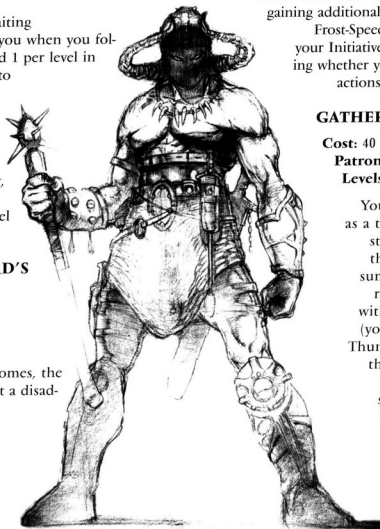
When others are only thinking of drawing their swords or leaping towards their enemies, your hero's hand is already on his blade's ready hilt. His chill eyes already stare into the terrified faces of your foes.

For every level in Frost-Speeded Heels, add 2 to your INIT score. This Gift does not aid you in gaining additional attacks. Subtract your Frost-Speeded Heels bonus from your Initiative total when determining whether you can take additional actions in the current round.

GATHERING THUNDER

Cost: 40
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

Your hero's fury builds, as a thunderstorm gathers strength in reaction to the intolerable heat of summer. After an initial round of Engagement with a foe, you may add (your level in Gathering Thunder) + (the length of the current combat, in rounds) to your ATK score. The effect lasts for a single ATK roll. You may activate it once per session.



GILDED TONGUE OF FREYR

Cost: 75
Patron: Freyr
Levels: Unlimited

Like golden, clever Freyr, your hero harvests a bounty of goodwill when he negotiates with others. Each level you purchase in Gilded Tongue of Freyr increases your Communication by 1.

THE GNAWING STAGS

Cost: 30
Patron: Loki
Levels: Unlimited

Among the immortal creatures that cause the continual destruction and suffering of the world tree, Yggdrasil, are four deer that feed constantly from its youngest shoots, preventing it from growing or changing. In honor of their destruction, which keeps destiny on course towards the grim conclusion of Ragnarok, Loki rewards those who risk their safety to destroy material things. You gain 5X victory points, where X is your level in The Gnawing Stags, every time your hero disarms a trap, or destroys or moves a barrier, item of cover, or man-made item (like a platform, ramp, or set of stairs) that adds multiple levels to the combat terrain. Your hero must successfully disarm the trap or neutralize the terrain features, and must do so during combat, taking at least one action per item.

GOLDEN APPLES' SWEETNESS

Cost: 75
Patron: Freyja
Levels: Unlimited

Freyja, goddess of female fertility, tends the orchard that yields the golden apples that protect the Aesir and Vanir from the effects of aging. After a battle, when the Aesir are weary, they come to her begging for her apples so that their weary bones may regain their strength, and so the victory celebrations might begin in earnest. Freyja has blessed you with your own Ability to recover quickly from the rigors of battle and other exertion.

Whenever your hero suffers Impairment, you may roll Presence + your level in Golden Apples' Sweetness against a Difficulty equal to 6 + your Loki Divine Connection rating. If you succeed, your Impairment decreases by 1. Impairment cannot decrease below 0. You may use this Gift X times per session, where X is your level in Golden Apples' Sweetness.

IMPLACABLY BRACED

Cost: 75
Patron: Heimdal
Levels: Unlimited

Like Heimdal, your hero is ready for the approach of any foe. When enemies charge, they learn to their peril what it is like to contest against an immovable object. Add 1 per level in Implacably Braced to your ATK, DFN, DAM, and Soak scores when you are holding ground, or set to receive a charge.

IMPRECATION OF DOOM

Cost: 250
Patron: Odin
Levels: Unlimited

Doom awaits all, but you can hasten its grip on a powerful enemy. Your hero may designate a foe to receive Odin's wrath. For the remainder of the current encounter, he takes 3X points of damage each time another foe loses 1 or more hit points from your melee or missile strike. X equals your level in Imprecation of Doom. You may strike any number of foes in order to cause this contagious damage to your target enemy. Damage from Imprecation of Doom is armor-ignoring (see p. 142). You may use Imprecation of Doom once per session. Damage dished out by this Divine Gift, as usual, counts towards your victory point tally.

INDEFATIGABLE DETERMINATION

Cost: 75
Patron: Heimdal
Levels: 10

When the fate of Asgard and Midgard hangs in the balance, a true warrior cannot allow mere tiredness of limb or cloudiness of mind to deter

him from his mission. Or so Heimdal teaches the legion of fierce attendants who aid him in his watch on the Bifrost Bridge. X times per session, where X is your level in Indefatigable Determination, your hero may ignore any Impairment penalties that would normally accrue to a single roll. If you then succeed, you gain 5X victory points, provided that the removal of the Impairment penalty made the difference between success and failure.

Ragnar has 4 levels in Indefatigable Determination and suffers from 3 points of Impairment. He uses Indefatigable Determination to ignore it during an Attack roll against a wild-eyed wendol. His ATK total is a 12; the wendol's DFN total is a 10. The two-point spread between ATK and DFN is less than the ignored Impairment, so Ragnar adds 20 victory points (5 times his 4 levels) to his plus column.

THE KNITTING OF MEAT AND BONE

Cost: 45
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

Thor gives the most favored of his warriors the Ability to cause their torn flesh, smashed bones, and severed nerves to flow back into place, so that his champions might return quickly to the field of battle. Roll Stamina + your level in The Knitting of Meat and Bone against a Difficulty of 9. If you succeed, your hero regains a number of lost hit points equal to X times the difference between Difficulty and the total of the roll, where X equals your level in this Gift. You must spend your entire round doing this; unless you are behind cover during this time, missile-using foes gain a +6 bonus to their ATK scores. You may do this as many times per encounter as you have level in The Knitting of Meat and Bone.

THE LIE TURNS TO TRUTH

Cost: 75
Patron: Loki
Levels: Unlimited

Loki is so skilled at imposture that he can gain an Ability, at least temporarily, by falsely

claiming to have had it all along. X times per session, where X is your level in The Lie Turns to Truth, you gain an increase of X to a die roll when using an Ability you don't have (The usual -3 penalty is still factored in when determining your modifier, so this Gift does not completely negate it until you have reached its 3rd level).

LIKE A WIND-TOSSED LEAF

Cost: 125
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

Your movements are both swift and unpredictable; you are no easier to strike with a sword than a leaf caught in the wind. Add 1 per level in Like a Wind-Tossed Leaf to your ATK, DFN, DAM, and Soak scores when your hero is ducking and weaving.

LIKE THE LEAPING STAG

Cost: 75
Patron: Ull
Levels: Unlimited

Ull the Hunter has learned to emulate the animals he stalks. When others seek to pierce him with arrows, he leaps like the stag, bounding into the densest woods in an eye's blink. When your hero successfully Dodges missile fire (rather than accepting the standard base Difficulty of 6), you gain 20X victory points, where X is your level in Like the Leaping Stag.

THE LOYAL HILT

Cost: 250
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

Your weapons, like loyal hunting dogs, do not care to part from you, and will return to your side if some foe tries to drive you apart. By throwing your weapon, you can make melee attacks against foes who are as far as 3 + 3X paces away from you, where X is your level in this Gift. If your ATK total is successful, your weapon flies out of your hand, hits the foe, and flies back to your hand, ready to be used again. If it botches, the weapon flies 3X paces away from you, following a straight line between you and

the foe you tried to hit. The weapon stops prematurely if it hits a wall or other solid object along this trajectory, as determined by the runner in consultation with his encounter map. It is possible in some cases to botch and still hit; when that happens, you hit the foe but don't get your weapon back.

You are not considered to be Engaged with foes you hit in this way, assuming they're more than 3 paces from you.

MANTLE OF ODIN

Cost: 100
Patron: Odin
Levels: Unlimited

You project an air of authority and gravity, as if Odin himself has lent you his robes of rulership. Each level you purchase in Mantle of Odin increases your Presence by 1.

MANY-IMPALING SPEAR

Cost: 75
Patron: Thor
Levels: 11

One day Thor strode through Jotunheim, to show the giants that they should fear him. Two giants, Grjotgaard and Skagalam, stood in his path and mocked him. So Thor took out his mighty spear, and told Grjotgaard that he would wound both of them with a single throw. The giants laughed, until Thor did what he promised to do, and their blood ran out on the ground. When your hero throws a spear at an enemy and does more than 12 - X points of damage to him (after his Soak is taken into account), the spear travels right through your foe and into a second opponent, provided that one is appropriately positioned to receive the blow. The two opponents can't be further apart than 5 paces times your level in Many-Impling Spear. You must make a new ATK roll against the second opponent. If you do more than 12 - X points of damage to the second opponent, the spear may continue its journey to a third, should another enemy be appropriately positioned. If you continue to be successful, the spear keeps going until it runs out of new opponents to burrow through. It never hits the same character twice in

the same sequence of blows. X equals your level in Many-Impling Spear.

MIGHT OF THOR

Cost: 300
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

The incomparable physical power of Thor fills your hero's veins and muscles. Each level you purchase in Might of Thor increases your Strength by 1.

MJOLNIR AWAKES

Cost: 30
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

As the wondrous hammer of Thor leaps to his hand at its master's merest whim, your hero's weapons speed to his grip with unearthly immediacy. X times per encounter, he may switch one weapon for another at the speed of thought, without delaying any other action. Both weapons must be on his person when you invoke the Gift. X equals your level in Mjolnir Awakes.

NAGLFAR PLOWS THE WAVES

Cost: 30
Patron: Njord
Levels: Unlimited

The most powerful vessel ever to ply the waves of Midgard was the dread ship Naglfar, made from the nail parings of the dead. Now it lies moored near Asgard's shores, where it will remain until loosened from its anchors by the upheavals of the Midgard Serpent, during Ragnarok. Njord, who yoked the ship to its anchor and is the patron of seafarers, lends your hero a portion of its power to cut through the waves. For each level you possess in Naglfar Plows the Waves, you gain a bonus of 3 on any Swim attempt.

NJORD'S CRUST

Cost: 75

Patron: Njord

Levels: Unlimited

Njord hardens your hero's body, just as the god's chill breath hardens the top layer of mountain snow, turning it into a crust of ice. Each level of Njord's Crust permanently adds 10 to your maximum hit point total. Other gods provide similar Gifts: Tyr's Forbearance, Ull's Hide, and Thor's Thews.

NURTURING OF YGGDRASIL

Cost: 150

Patron: Freyja

Levels: 4

Although they often seem unsympathetic to the doom faced by mortals and gods alike, the three Norns do sustain life and ensure the continuance of the various realms of existence. It is they who water the world tree, Yggdrasil, keeping it alive despite the destruction wreaked by the various animals that infest it. In tribute to the Norns, Freyja rewards healers, who strengthen the fallen so that they might rise again. Whenever your hero successfully uses the Healer skill to restore 12 more hit points to an injured ally, you get 20X victory points, where X is your level in this Gift. When you revive a dying hero reduced below 0 hit points, you gain 30X victory points. You do not qualify for extra points by healing yourself.

OBSCURING MIST

Cost: 30

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

Loki, as god of deception and trickery, cloaks you in a mantle of obscuring mist, which protects you from the slings and arrows of outraged foes. Once per encounter, you may spend an action to call up Loki's cloak of fog; it lasts for a number of rounds equal to your level in this Gift. When it is in effect, your hero counts as obscured for the purposes of your enemies' missile combat modifiers, no matter what he is doing.

ON VALKYRIES' WINGS

Cost: 45

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

By the time the Valkyries, the winged warrior-women who bear the honored dead to Valhalla, lift their cargoes, they have become light as feathers, shorn of the cares and terrors of mortal existence. Odin sometimes lightens the load of his followers when they are still alive. For each level you possess in this Gift, you may reduce the Init rating of your armor by 1. You may not decrease it below 0.

THE NORTH'S COOLING SIGH

Cost: 30

Patron: Njord

Levels: Unlimited

Njord, god of icy slopes and chill winds, shields favored heroes from heat and flame. Each time your hero is damaged by heat, fire, flame jets, or lava, you may subtract 3X from the damage he would otherwise suffer, where X is your level in The North's Cooling Sigh. Also, any heat, fire, flame or lava damage that would otherwise be armor-ignoring (see p. 142) is now reduced by the Prot rating of your armor.

THE OWL HEARS THE VIPER

Cost: 30

Patron: Heimdal

Levels: Unlimited

Because Loki is the patron of traps and trap makers, his nemesis, Heimdal, lends his acute senses to those who must brave them. Add 3 per level in this Gift to any Awareness rolls you make to detect the presence of traps. The trap need not be mechanical in nature, but must have been put in place by some intelligent force with the intention of harming others. Thus, a naturally occurring lava pit wouldn't trigger this Gift under normal circumstances. But if someone loosened the rocks around the lava pit in the hopes that approaching heroes would trigger a slide and fall in, it would activate the Gift.

PENETRATING LIGHTNING

Cost: 30

Patron: Thor

Levels: Unlimited

When a cowardly foe conceals himself from Thor's wrath, the Thunderer simply hurls a bolt of lightning at the tree, wall, or boulder that conceals him, shattering it. Just before your hero fires a missile at a foe hiding behind cover, roll Dexterity + your Thor Divine Connection rating. The runner rolls your foe's Res. If your total exceeds his, his cover is reduced by one degree: almost all cover becomes half cover, half cover turns to one-third cover, and one-third cover is reduced to no cover at all. The use of Penetrating Lightning does not require an action. You can use it once per encounter per level you possess in this Gift. The effect on the covering object you target is permanent; a lightning bolt actually follows the path of your missile to literally damage or destroy the object your enemy hides behind.

PLUMED UP BY NJORDSBREATH

Cost: 45

Patron: Njord

Levels: Unlimited

Njord, master of the winds, aids his favored heroes by slowing their falls with his icy breath. Whenever he is falling, you can reduce the effective distance your hero falls by one increment of the falling damage chart on p. 151 for each level you have in this Gift. The Gift doesn't literally change the distance he falls, it just reduces the damage suffered.

THE RAVEN PLUCKS AN EYE

Cost: 30

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

Although Odin is the father of the gods, he is still a dark and brooding figure possessed of many strange magics, especially those that gather knowledge. He traded his own eye for wisdom, and is attended by two fearsome giant ravens that whisper secrets into his ears. Like a raven feeding on the corpses left by a glorious battle, your hero plucks arcane knowledge from the foes he slays.

When a foe your hero damaged dies, you may roll your Odin Divine Connection rating versus the foe's Res. If you are successful, you may use, for a period of X rounds, X of the foe's game statistics in place of your own, where X is your level in this Gift. The game statistics you may choose from are: INIT, ATK, DFN, or Soak scores. Having 5 or more levels in this Gift extends the effect but does not allow you to stack game statistics. You can always roll again when a new foe dies, replacing your current substituted game statistic with a better one.

Using this Gift does not require an action.

THE RELENTLESS GALES OF NJORD

Cost: 400

Patron: Njord

Levels: Unlimited

Your hero enters battle with the swiftness of the biting winds that Njord, father of the Vanir, sends caroming down the wintry mountainsides. Each level you purchase in Relentless Gales of Njord increases your Quickness by 1.

THE REMORSE OF HODER

Cost: 75

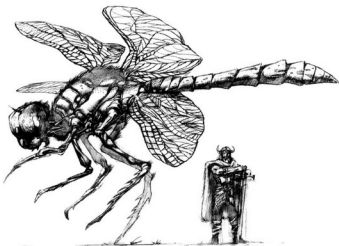
Patron: Hoder

Levels: Unlimited

Hoder is a humble, blind deity who numbers among Odin's many Aesir attendants. Loki hastened Ragnarok by tricking poor Hoder into firing an arrow at the beautiful young god Baldur, who was supposedly immune to all forms of harm. Loki then attached to Hoder's arrow mistletoe, the only living thing that had not been asked to swear never to harm Baldur. Baldur was killed. Though innocent of any fell intentions, Hoder weeps to this day. His sole blessing protects others from doing as he did.

If your hero fires into melee and you get a total indicating he'd accidentally hit an ally, you may roll Presence + Remorse of Hoder against a Difficulty of (the number of paces between your hero and his unlucky comrade) ÷ 10. If you succeed, the arrow swerves at the last minute and instead hits one of your foes. The player of the nearly pun-

tured hero decides which foe takes the arrow in his place. His choice is limited to foes within 20 paces of his current position. Both you and the player of the near-victim count the damage dealt to the foe towards your victory point tallies; each gets the full victory points.



RESIST THE SERPENT'S TEARS

Cost: 30
Patron: Tyr
Levels: Unlimited

Among the many forms of physical punishment from which Tyr protects his favored warriors is poison. Add your level in Resist the Serpent's Tears to your Stamina rolls to resist the effects of poison. If you fail but still fall within 3 points of the needed Difficulty, you may reduce any damage suffered by your level in this Gift. If a healer is attempting to cure your hero of poisoning, he may add your level in Resist the Serpent's Tears to his die rolls.

ripples FROM THE WELL OF KNOWLEDGE

Cost: 75
Patron: Odin
Levels: Unlimited

Odin cast one of his eyes into the Well of Knowledge to gain ultimate wisdom. He is both god and sorcerer, and mas-

ter of many weird magics. The magic granted by the other gods of Asgard is but a reflection of his.

When at a shrine of Heimdal, Thor, Ull, Freyja, or Freyr, the hero may roll Divine Awareness + Presence versus a Difficulty of 6. If successful, he can also gain any benefit from the shrine that he would from a shrine to Odin.

While at any shrine to Odin (or shrine functioning as a such, thanks to this Gift), he adds 5X victory points to his tally each time any pillager (including his own) purchases death insurance or a level in a Divine Gift, or repairs a damaged Helm of Power. X is his level in Ripples from the Well of Knowledge.

ROARING SHOUT OF RAGE

Cost: 45
Patron: Odin
Levels: Unlimited

When Odin is angered, the very heavens quake. Your hero can throw his head back and emit a fearsome bellow that sets his enemies' knees a-quaking. You may reduce the Res scores of all foes within 10X paces of your hero by X, where X equals your level in this Gift. To do so, roll Presence + your level in Roaring Shout of Rage versus a Res roll, which is made by the runner. He chooses the highest Res of any enemy within range of the effect. If you succeed, the Res scores of all enemies within range are reduced. Using this Gift does not require an action.

RUNE POWER: DOUBLE-BLADED AXE

Cost: 75
Levels: Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, any enemy who would otherwise take post-Soak damage from his double-bladed axe must instead make a Res roll against a Difficulty equal to your Great Weapon rating. If he fails, he is transformed into a crow. He flaps helplessly about, unable to seriously harm you. At the end of the duration, he falls from the air. He must roll Jump to avoid having fallen down. He will be naked, his armor and gear lying in a heap on the floor where you first hit him. (At

RUNE WEAPONS

Long before they turned their back on the Aesir to make blades and armor exclusively for Loki, the dwarves aided Odin and his kin by discovering a system of magical correspondences between various weapons and the elemental runes of power. Odin shared these secrets with the other Aesir, who in turn parceled them out to their favored warrior devotees, both on Midgard and in Valhalla.

Many weapons have an innate magical power unique to their particular type. A hero of sufficient accomplishment can learn to activate these powers for brief periods of time, provided that he bears the required weapon. He can use any version of that weapon, including the common one he started out with, to activate Rune Powers.

Unlike other Divine Gifts, Rune Powers can be used by anyone who knows the secrets behind them. These secrets were released by the dwarves after they concluded that Odin had swindled them out of fair payment for their discovery. Even goblins, dwarves, elves, the Dishonored, and trolls can use them. In fact, some Rune Powers are associated with weapons used by dwarves and goblins.

Rune weapon powers do not increase your Divine Connection rating, nor do they have patron deities. Otherwise they work exactly as any other Divine Gift.

Activating a Rune Power never requires an action, and Rune Powers become dormant after use. You can activate them again only after a certain interval of time has passed. The interval is dependent on your level in the relevant Rune Power, as per the chart below.

Level	Recharge Time
1	3 days
2	24 hours
3	12 hours
4	6 hours
6	3 hours
8	1 hour
10	30 min
12	10 rounds
16	5 rounds

the runner's discretion, intelligent foes, who have no doubt heard of the legendary Rune Power of the double-bladed axe, may choose to simply fly away at top speed when turned into crows. That way their naked landings will occur far from the swinging axes of hostile heroes.) The power remains active for $1 + (X \div 2)$ rounds, X being your level in this Rune Power.

RUNE POWER: DWARVEN BATTLE AXE

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

For a duration of up to X rounds, where X is your level in this Rune Power, your hero can activate the dwarven battle axe so that its Dam rating increases, depending on the Threat Category of your opponent, as seen in the following chart.

Level	Dam Bonus
Terrifying	+6
Exceptional	+5
Superior	+4
Equal	+3
Inferior	+2
Weak	+1
Pitiful	+1

The power remains active for $1 + (X \div 2)$ rounds.

RUNE POWER: DWARVEN BATTLE HAMMER

Cost: 400

Levels: Unlimited

This is a more fearsome version of the Rune Power: Dwarven Work Hammer. The differences are as follows:

- The victim turns permanently to stone instead of ice.
- It works on all Threat Categories except Terrifying.

RUNE POWER: DWARVEN BATTLE SWORD

Cost: 45

Levels: 8

Your hero may point his dwarven battle sword at a chosen enemy, rolling Presence + your level in this Rune Power against the enemy's Res. If you succeed, the battle sword emits a beam of magical energy that deals 4X damage to your foe. It ignores all impediments to missile fire, including cover, going around corners if necessary in order to strike the designated foe. You may use this power for as many actions as you can squeeze into X rounds. X is your level in this Gift. Using this Gift requires an action.

RUNE POWER: DWARVEN WORK HAMMER

Cost: 250

Levels: Unlimited

When your hero activates this power and then strikes an enemy with the dwarven work hammer, he immediately turns to ice. You can only do this to enemies whose Threat Categories are Inferior or worse. The runner rolls DFN or Res (whichever is higher) versus the attacker's ATK score to avoid the effect. If he succeeds, he remains unfrosted and takes 0 damage. If he fails, the character is as good as dead. There is no recovery from

transformation to a frosty statue, and the ice will inevitably melt. You get no victory points for killing victims in this manner. The Ability remains active for a number of rounds equal to your level in this power.

RUNE POWER: DWARVEN WORK SWORD

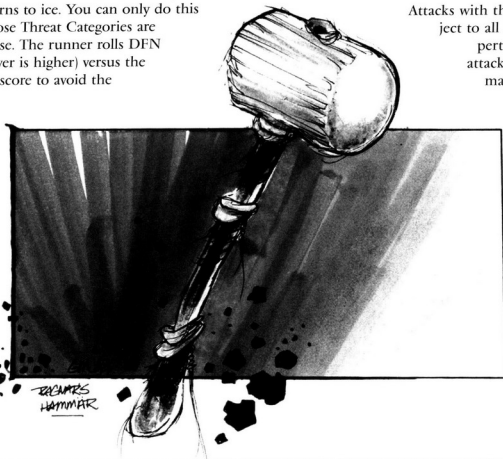
Cost: 75

Levels: Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, lightning launches out from the tip of his sword, seeking out as many as three enemies. Choose up to three foes within a 10X foot radius, where X is your level in this Rune Power. Roll Perception + Great Weapon. The opponent with the highest DFN score rolls it to counter your roll. If you beat his total, lightning strikes all chosen targets. This maneuver is treated in all other ways as a missile weapon attack, as if your missile weapon has the following game statistics.

Init	Atk	Defn	Dam	Load	Ability
+6	+8	NA	+12	0	Great Weapon

Attacks with this power are subject to all modifiers usually pertaining to weapon attacks. Your hero may make X attacks with the power before it becomes dormant again, where X is your level in Rune Power: Dwarven Work Sword.



RUNE POWER: FOUR-BLADED MACE**Cost:** 400**Levels:** Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, he becomes the center of a raging fire (see fire rules on p. 152) with a radius of 10X paces, where X is your level in Rune Power: Four-Bladed Mace. The conflagration continues for one round for each level you possess in this power. If you move the mace, the conflagration moves with you. Your hero is immune from the flame damage it causes, but his friends are not.

RUNE POWER: GOBLIN AXE**Cost:** 75**Levels:** Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, he may once per round create a magical duplicate of his goblin axe, which he can then throw at an opponent using his Thrown Weapons skill. The duplicate gains the game statistics of a throwing axe. It can disregard all obstructions to missile fire. As soon as you either hit or miss with a magical duplicate, it vanishes. The power remains active for 2X rounds, where X is your level in this power.

RUNE POWER: GOBLIN SPIKE CLUB**Cost:** 75**Levels:** Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, a cone-shaped barrage of rocks fires outwards from the business end of his outstretched club. You must make an ATK roll; everyone in the area of effect responds with a DEF roll. The Dam rating of this attack equals your level in this power. The cone is 10X paces long and 5X paces wide at its base, where X also equals your level. You can't exempt allies from the attack; everyone inside the cone suffers its effects.

RUNE POWER: HAND AXE**Cost:** 75**Levels:** Unlimited

When your hero activates the Rune Power inherent in his hand axe, he becomes insubstantial. He is still visible, but is partially immune to most dam-

age. You may also ignore the effects of the following terrain: barriers, slippery ground, uneven ground, slopes, and tube-strikers.

Add 4X to your DEF score and Soak, where X is your level in this power. Your hero's weapons become insubstantial, too, so subtract 4X from ATK and DAM scores. This power remains active for X rounds. It activates at the beginning of a round (when you roll for Initiative) and deactivates at the end of the Xth round. Activating it does not require an action.

RUNE POWER: MACE**Cost:** 75**Levels:** Unlimited

Your hero may cause his mace to emit a single blast of radiating force that buffets the X characters closest to him. X equals your level in this Rune Power. You don't choose the victims, and can hit your hero's fellows if you're not careful in choosing when to let loose. Each victim is picked up and carried 10X paces through the air in a direction of your choice. When landing, each must make a Balance + Dexterity roll Difficulty of 6. Those who fail fall down (see p. 53).

RUNE POWER: ROMAN SWORD**Cost:** 75**Levels:** Unlimited

Your hero's sword ignites, sheathed in fire that burns his enemies and other flammable things. This Rune Power activates automatically, without the need for a roll. When lit, your hero and everyone within 200 paces of him can see clearly in the dark. When you strike an opponent, he must check to see if his clothing lights on fire, as per the rules on fire found on p. 151. Also, add your level in Rune Power: Roman Sword to your DAM score. The sword remains alight for a number of rounds equal to your levels.

RUNE POWER: VIKING AXE

Cost: 75

Levels: Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, any victim he damages with his Viking axe must roll Res against a Difficulty equal to your Great Weapon rating. If the victim fails the roll, he becomes your hero's unthinking ally for X rounds, where X equals your level in this power. He fights on your behalf, treating all of your foes as his. He chooses his targets according to the Foe Target Choice Flowchart on p. 196. As soon as the X rounds expires, he switches sides again. He will attack your hero. If this for some reason is impossible, he'll use the flowchart to attack another hero. He will not attack other comrades possessed using this power. The Rune Power becomes dormant after X rounds. Keep in mind that the possession effect can outlast the original duration of the power. Victims can prematurely shake off its effect if all of their original allies flee or are slain.

RUNE POWER: VIKING BROAD SWORD

Cost: 200

Levels: Unlimited

When your hero activates this power, all actual Damage he deals to opponents (after Soak is taken into account) is added to your hit point total. Your hit point total never increases beyond its normal limit. The power remains in effect for a number of rounds equal to your level in Rune Power: Viking Broad Sword. Only damage actually dealt by the Viking broad sword is added to your hit point total.

RUNE POWER: VIKING SHORT SWORD

Cost: 75

Levels: 3

When your hero activates the Rune Power of the Viking short sword, a glowing, translucent sphere appears and shields him from damage. In order to activate it, roll Presence + your levels in Rune Power: Viking Short Sword against a Difficulty of $6 + Y$, where Y is the highest Res score of any

character currently attempting to harm your hero. Against an impersonal source of damage, like a trap, the Difficulty is a straight 6.

If you are successful, your Soak increases by X, where X is your level in this Gift, for a number of rounds equal to your level in this Gift. This Rune Power protects even against sources of damage that normally ignore armor.

SCORN THE BITE OF TREACHERY

Cost: 30

Patron: Thor

Levels: Unlimited

Many times has cowardly Loki tried to harm Thor from a distance, by making traps for him to walk into. And perhaps it is true that Thor is not the wisest of gods, that he is easily fooled, and that most of these traps have indeed closed their jaws around him. Thor has been buried in rockslides, impaled by spring-loaded spears, and dropped into vats of ever-burning fire. But he has always prevailed through his ability to shrug off the harm done by such treacherous assaults. Thor has blessed your hero with an equal ability to survive that coward's weapon, the trap.

When determining damage he suffers from traps, your hero's Soak goes up by 3 for each level you have in this Gift. It does not protect him against naturally occurring hazards like lava flows or whirlpools, only against harm suffered by the deliberate design of an intelligent trap-maker. So the harm done by an avalanche that rains down on him because of ordinary snowmelt, or because he made a noise, is not reduced by this blessing. However, if an enemy dug a trench in the snow in order to trigger an avalanche, the Gift does come into effect.

When your hero is damaged by an armor-ignoring trap (see p. 142), roll Presence + your level in this Gift against a Difficulty of 6. If successful, the damage no longer ignores your hero's armor.

If the designer's encounter notes do not specify whether a trap is the product of deliberate design, the runner makes a determination on the spot.

SCOURGING OF FELL SPIRITS

Cost: 30**Patron:** Odin**Levels:** 6

The gods are not the world's only magical beings. Ghosts, imps, and other malign spirits prowl the land. Although weak, their great numbers make them difficult to tame. Nonetheless, Odin has blessed you with the power to ward off their weird magic.

When confronting a weird magic terrain feature that applies a penalty to the heroes or a bonus to their foes, you may roll Presence + X versus a Difficulty of 6. If successful, you may subtract X from the penalty or bonus, even if X exceeds it! A negative penalty becomes a bonus; a negative bonus becomes a penalty. This power applies even when heroes and foes suffer the same penalty or enjoy the same bonus.

X equals your level in this Gift. If you designed the current encounter, your proxy must add 10 to the Difficulty when rolling to activate it.

SHOULDERS WIDE AS BIFROST

Cost: 75**Patron:** Heimdal**Levels:** Unlimited

The secret to successful battle is to force the enemy to fight on your terms. You hero's unyielding determination is like that of Heimdal, who waits on Bifrost Bridge to repel Asgard's would-be invaders.

- You may add 3X to any Engagement roll, where X is your level in Shoulders Wide As Bifrost.
- You may make an extra Y Engagement rolls per round, where Y equals $(X \div 3) + 1$.
- You may prevent enemies from fleeing or retreating by besting them in an Engagement roll (to which the above bonus applies).
- By making a successful Engagement roll, you may jostle aside an ally who intends to slay an opponent whose death you have already earmarked as your own. The ally is unhurt, but loses his opportunity to attack.

SKADI'S ERMINE CLOAK

Cost: 30**Patron:** Njord**Levels:** Unlimited

Njord's wife is the giantess Skadi. Although he prefers the shores and open sea, she dwells in the snowy mountains. To encourage his visits, she gifted him with a cloak to keep the cold from seeping into Njord's damp bones. Njord now lends a portion of the cloak's magic to those who please him.

This Ability works exactly like Scorn the Bite of Treachery, above, except that it applies not to traps, but to all other hazards.

SPRIG OF MISTLETOE

Cost: 45**Patron:** Loki**Levels:** Unlimited

To arrange the death of invulnerable Baldur, cunning Loki tied a sprig of mistletoe to the arrow fired at him by the blind god Hoder. The humble mistletoe, thought innocent by all, was the only living thing that was not asked to forswear its ability to harm Baldur. Hence, when Hoder's shaft found its mark, Baldur was stricken and died, beginning the inexorable progress of Ragnarok.

Add your level in Sprig of Mistletoe to the Dam rating of your hero's missile weapons.

SUDDEN AS A MOUNTAIN STORM

Cost: 150**Patron:** Njord**Levels:** Unlimited

Your blows rain down upon your foes with the speed and suddenness of a Njord-brewed storm. Whenever you roll an INIT total higher than 20, you may add another 2X to your INIT total for that roll, where X equals your level in Sudden as a Mountain Storm. This may grant you even more additional attacks (see p. 42).

SURVIVE THE LAKE OF FLAME

Cost: 30

Patron: Tyr

Levels: Unlimited

Goblins once fell upon Tyr and overwhelmed him, bearing him deep underground to a tower beside a fiery lake. They told him that they would spare him if he would betray Asgard to them. He refused, and they threw him, chained, into the lake. His flesh aflame, the chains melted away and he emerged from the lake to slay them all. With this blessing, you may share Tyr's endurance of blazing agony.

This Gift protects not just against fire, but against all escalating damage (see p. 142). For each level in this Gift, the onset of additional damage is delayed by one round. During this delay period, you merely repeat the damage you took last round. Only when the effect has elapsed do you begin to suffer the escalating damage.

Thorleik has 3 levels in Survive the Lake of Flame. He is in the midst of a raging fire. A character without this Gift would take 4 points of damage the first round, 6 in the second, 8 in the third, 10 in the fourth, and 12 in the fifth. Thorleik takes 4 (the usual first-round damage), 4 during the second round (his first level of Survive the Lake of Flame), 4 in the third (his second level), 4 in the fourth (his last level), then 6 in the fifth, 8 in the sixth, and so on.

SWIFTNESS OF SLEIPNIR

Cost: 75

Patron: Odin

Levels: 8

The All-Father invests you with the speed of his eight-legged steed, Sleipnir.

Add 5X paces to your maximum half-move per turn, and 10X paces to your maximum full move per turn, where X equals your level in Swiftsness of Sleipnir.

You gain 10X victory points whenever a) yours is the first hero to make a melee attack against a foe during the current event and b) more than 50 paces separated you from the nearest foe when the first Initiative rolls of the current combat were made.

THROUGH THE CRACKS

Cost: 30

Patron: Asjandr

Levels: Unlimited

Though the goblins are bitterly opposed to humankind, their king, Asjandr, occasionally needs humans to carry out his subtler schemes. He inveigles them to obey him by providing to men the blessing of small stature. You may momentarily shrink to a small size, squeezing through barriers that would thwart a normal man.

You may do any of the following X times per combat, where X is your level in this Gift.

- Treat any item of cover, or any barrier, as if it provides you full cover.
- Ignore any limits on the number of heroes who can flee through a given exit.
- Automatically escape further damage while fleeing (see p. 45); however, you lose any treasures you may be carrying.

THOR'S THEWS

Cost: 75

Patron: Thor

Levels: Unlimited

Your hero's muscles swell with the power of Thor. Each level of Thor's Thews permanently adds 10 to your maximum hit point total. Other gods provide similar Gifts: Tyr's Forbearance, Ull's Hide, and Njord's Crust.

THE TIRELESS JOY-SHOUT

Cost: 30

Patron: Tyr

Levels: Unlimited

Even when the battle grows grim and trails of gore run from his flesh, Tyr draws strength from his agony. He raises his sword to the heavens, bellows his war cry, and charges back into the fray, his determination fortified.

This Gift works only after your hero has suffered one or more Wounds, or his current hit points are

at 20 or less. He must begin a round disengaged from combat, and no more than a half-move away from an enemy who is already Engaged by at least one other hero. He releases an ear-splitting bellow and then leap at this foe, slashing away with his melee weapon. Add 3 to your ATK score. After the strike, your hero continues on, traveling a half move away from his target. Assuming your hero keeps away from him until his next attack rolls around, the foe won't consider you as a target according to the Foe Target Choice Flowchart (p. 196).

THE TRUMPET'S COMMANDING BLAST

Cost: 75

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

Odin, as lord of the Aesir, wears a mantle of authority that tempts even his enemies to serve him. X times per combat, you may roll a die + X, where X equals your level in this Gift, against a chosen foe's Res roll. If you win, your foe takes a free attack against one of his own allies. If he is currently fighting with a melee weapon, there must be a foe close enough to him to hit in close combat. If he is using a missile weapon, he must be able to fire that weapon at a foe. This extra attack does not cost the foe an action. If the foe hits his target, you add to your victory point tally as if your hero had scored the hit himself. If the target dies, you score the death blow bonus.

TYR'S FORBEARANCE

Cost: 75

Patron: Tyr

Levels: Unlimited

Your hero gains brave Tyr's capacity to absorb and withstand physical pain. Each level of Tyr's Forbearance permanently adds 12 to your maximum hit point total. Other gods provide similar Gifts: Thor's Thews, Ull's Hide, and Njord's Crust. However, as Tyr is the patron deity of Stamina, his Gift is slightly more potent than those of his fellow deities.

ULL'S HIDE

Cost: 75

Patron: Ull

Levels: Unlimited

Your hero's skin becomes tough and leathery, like that of Ull the Hunter, who hardened his skin under sun, wind, and rain. Each level of Ull's Hide permanently adds 10 to your maximum hit point total. Other gods provide similar Gifts: Thor's Thews, Tyr's Forbearance, and Njord's Crust.

ULL'S SURE HAND

Cost: 400

Patron: Ull

Levels: Unlimited

Ull the Hunter strikes sure and true, so that the woodland creatures he hunts might fall swiftly and without undue pain. Although when it comes to goblins and Sark Amen, you're probably indifferent to the undue pain, each level you purchase in this Gift increases your Dexterity by 1.

VALOR OF TYR

Cost: 75

Patron: Tyr

Levels: Unlimited

Like determined Tyr, your hero can struggle on to victory despite the aches and pains that would fell a lesser man. Each level you purchase in Valor of Tyr increases your Stamina by 1. This does not change your Wound Threshold or hit point values.

VIGILANCE OF HEIMDAL

Cost: 100

Patron: Heimdall

Levels: Unlimited

Like ever-watchful Heimdall, your hero's senses are well honed, so as to warn of danger. Each level you purchase in Vigilance of Heimdall increases your Perception by 1.



WILES OF LOKI

Cost: 75
Patron: Loki
Levels: Unlimited

Your hero's mind is like the ever-turning labyrinth of the Underworld, always ready to spring a new surprise on your foes. Each level you purchase in Wiles of Loki increases your Intelligence by 1.

WITH EITHER HAND

Cost: 30
Patron: Ull
Levels: None

During his long nights on the hunt, Ull trained himself so that his left hand was as skillful with a blade as his right. When you gained his blessing, he passed the trick along to you. You have no off-hand, and can wield single weapons in either hand with equal facility.

THE WOUNDS CLOSE QUICK

Cost: 75
Patron: Tyr
Levels: 4

Tyr, patron of the injured and suffering, provides several healing Gifts. The Wounds Close Quick speeds healing. For each level you possess in this Gift, you may reduce the period your hero must spend between Healer attempts, as given on the chart on p. 54, by 1 increment.

Thurid has 2 levels of The Wounds Close Quick. She is suffering from 3 Wounds. While a character without this Gift would have to wait 24 hours between healing attempts, Thurid can skip down two increments on the chart, to the interval for 1 Wound, which is 3 hours.

WRESTLERS' BLESSING

Cost: 75
Patron: Thor
Levels: Unlimited

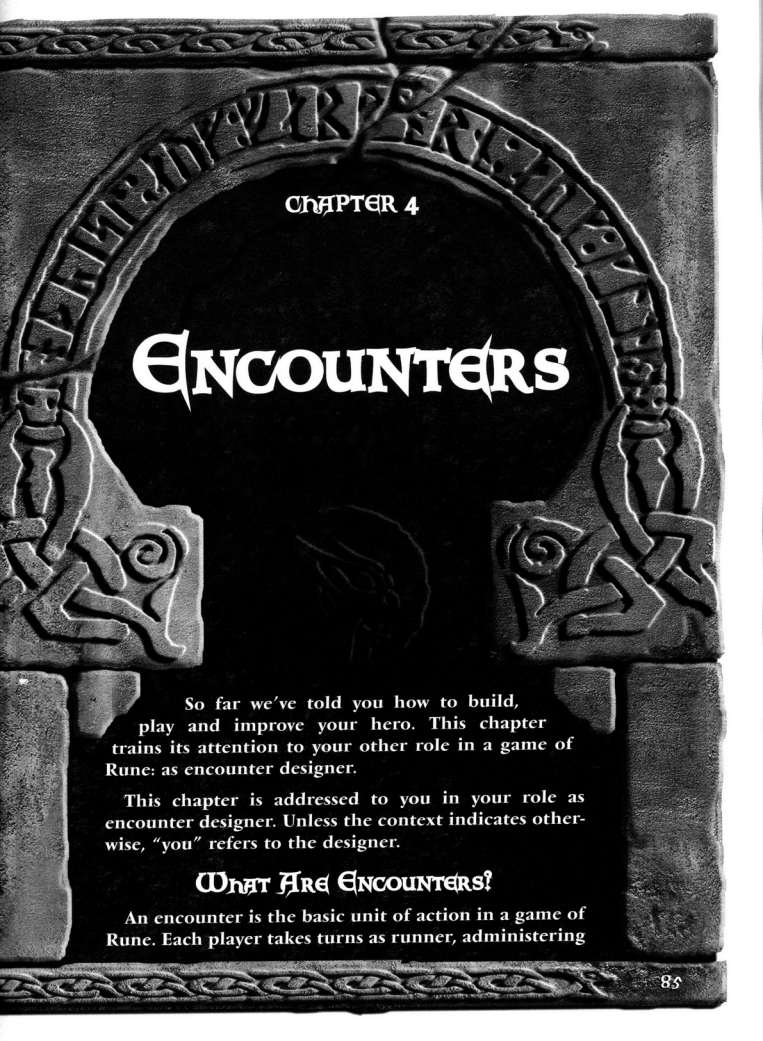
Though Thor takes rough joy in proving his superiority in battles of all kinds, he need not draw blood or do fatal damage to gratify his war-like urges. He takes as much pleasure from rough shoves and leaping maneuvers as he does from the final hammer-blow to his opponent's skull.

Add 20X to your victory tally whenever you win an Engagement contest that either grants you a terrain advantage, or prevents your foe from gaining the same. X is your level in this Gift.

ZEALOUS SINEWS

Cost: 45
Patron: Tyr
Levels: Unlimited

Tyr, who continues to struggle against his foes even when severely injured, has blessed the meat on your hero's bones with strong memories of their proper arrangement. When a Healer attempts to bring about your recovery, your very flesh cooperates with his efforts, as if eager both to please, and to rejoin the fray. A Healer attempting to patch up your injuries adds 3 times your level in Zealous Sinews to his Healer roll.



CHAPTER 4

ENCOUNTERS

So far we've told you how to build, play and improve your hero. This chapter trains its attention to your other role in a game of Rune: as encounter designer.

This chapter is addressed to you in your role as encounter designer. Unless the context indicates otherwise, "you" refers to the designer.

WHAT ARE ENCOUNTERS?

An encounter is the basic unit of action in a game of Rune. Each player takes turns as runner, administering

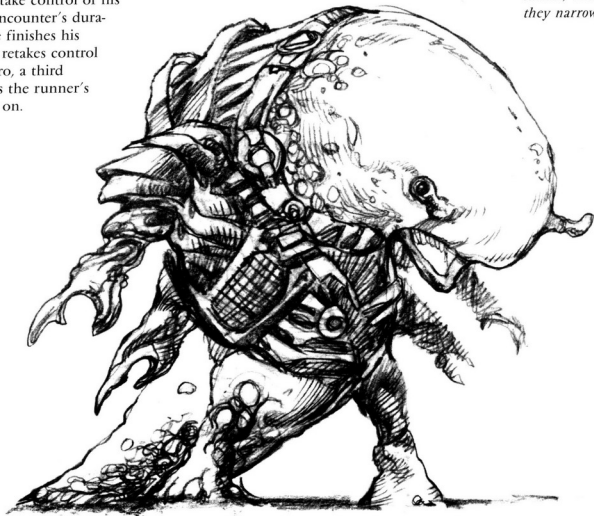
a single encounter before passing the baton to the next. The order in which you take the turns doesn't matter much — you can go clockwise around the table, counter-clockwise, mix it up — so long as everyone takes on an equal share of the runner's burden.

When you run an encounter, you turn control of your hero over to another player of your choice. Don't worry too much about your hero's fate — the rules give the other players powerful incentives to play him honestly, so that he survives and prospers. They may even have their own heroes risk their hides to keep him alive.

When your turn as runner ends, you retake control of your hero. Another player becomes runner, and administers the next encounter. You, or one of the other players, take control of his hero for the encounter's duration. When he finishes his encounter, he retakes control of his own hero, a third player assumes the runner's duties, and so on.

*Paul, Troy, Alex, Mark, and Dan show up for a session of **Rune**. Paul begins the game by running an encounter in which the Vikings come to the aid of a nearby village, whose herds are being raided by mysterious creatures. Troy, Alex, Mark, and Dan play their heroes as normal. Paul assigns Dan to play his hero as well. The heroes investigate the cattle thefts and soon find themselves in a pitched battle with goblin marauders. When the fight turns against the goblins, they flee, and the heroes pursue them to a tunnel entrance. This provides the exit point for Paul's encounter. Troy now takes over and runs the following encounter. He assigns Paul to control his hero. Troy, picking up on the ending of Paul's encounter, chooses an Underworld setting for his scene. The*

heroes trek downwards into the tunnel, where they narrowly



stop themselves from falling down a natural slide into a raging underground river. Then they fight a wyrm. When they kill the wyrm, Troy's encounter is over. Alex says that one of his encounters would fit in really well at this point, so he takes over. Troy takes his hero sheet back from Paul. Alex gives his to Mark, who he assigns to run his hero. Mark and Dan take their turns as runner after Alex. Now it's Paul's turn again.

If you have played, but not Game Mastered, in other roleplaying games before, you might be muttering to yourself that running a game is too much work. You just want to hit things! Well, rest easy. This section is designed to break down the process of devising encounters into a simple, formulaic process. You don't have to invent encounters from whole cloth — just follow the step-by-step procedure and you'll have a bunch of encounters ready before you know it. You even have the option of devising encounters randomly, so that you can quickly whip them up on the spur of the moment.

DESIGN TO WIN!

Just because you're the runner is no reason why you can't win an encounter. Although you shouldn't worry about it too much when you're just starting out, the choices you make when creating an encounter influence your chances of collecting more of those all-important victory points than your players. Accordingly, we explain how victory points are awarded before we go on to the basics of encounter design. The section on Victory Points begins on p. 89.

HOW DO I CREATE AN ENCOUNTER?

Encounter design breaks down into the following eight steps:

1. FIND YOUR BUDGET

You build encounters by spending encounter points. Everything you include that makes life tough for the heroes costs you points. You must earn those points by building in elements that reward the heroes or make their challenges easier

to face. You also have a limit on the total number of points you can spend, depending on the encounter's place in the overall adventure, and on the experience level of the group. The Budget section starts on p. 89.

2. DEVISE YOUR CONCEPT

Either way, before actually spending any points, you come up with the basic idea behind your encounter. The Concept section begins on p. 95

3. FOES

No encounter is complete without enemies for the heroes to smite. See the Foes section, beginning on p. 96, for details on including them in your encounter.

4. TERRAIN

Adding interesting terrain to your encounter not only makes it more difficult for the players, it makes combat more interesting for the runner, as well. The Terrain section begins on p. 120, and gives various different kinds of terrain designed to frustrate even the most worthy heroes.

5. DIFFICULTIES

Heroes do not prosper by combat alone; they must face other tests, whether to avoid traps or to find treasure. All of these tests follow the same rules and costs, which are explained in the Difficulties section, p. 129.

6. TRAPS AND HAZARDS

Through the judicious use of traps and other hazards, you can scoop up victory points at the heroes' expense. The Traps and Hazards section begins on p. 141.

7. TREASURE

The simplest way to pay for the nasty traps and unforgiving difficulties you've built into your encounter is by doling out treasure. The type of treasure gained is determined by a random roll made during play, so all you have to

do here is choose how many points you want to gain from each treasure.

See the Treasure section, p. 155.

8. OTHER GAINS

In addition to treasure, you can gain encounter points by including various other elements favorable to the heroes, ranging from clues to chances to trade in silver for gear, or vice versa. More on this is in the Gains section, p. 171.



YOUR ENCOUNTER NOTES

The runner's encounter notes must make sense not only to him, but to his fellow players. After an encounter is over, pillagers can demand to look at the designer's notes. He may refuse them only in advanced play, when the encounter contains clues to later encounters. Even in this case, he must turn over his encounter notes after all of the encounters hinted at have been played out.

Encounter notes should look somewhat like those used in the sample adventure on p. 213. This isn't a civil service exam, though; as long as the runner and pillagers can understand them, they're fine. When designers create encounters, they should be thinking about the actual game play, not losing themselves in highly detailed passages of text that will either never come to the players' attention, or will glaze their eyes over with boredom. We're not knocking other games in which GMs are encouraged to read aloud or paraphrase long sections of descriptive text before proceeding to the hacking and slashing, but **Rune** is not that kind of game. We'd even advise you to

use point form descriptions, if it weren't for the fact that we also want to encourage you to swap encounters with other groups over the Internet. For the purposes of trading encounters with others, you'll want to make your descriptions clear, though still brief. If you're just creating encounters for your own use with no thought of trading them, all your notes have to do is remind you of what you plan to say to the players when describing the events. Even if you do prefer to write complete sentences, try not to just read the text straight from your notes (or the notes of others, if you're using an encounter someone else designed). Some players read very stirringly, but most people are more interesting to listen to when speaking off the top of their heads. Notes should serve as cues, not as a script.

ADVANCED ELEMENTS

To begin with, we assume that all encounters take place in the Underground, and that the connection between them is tenuous. Once your group becomes experienced with the basics of encounter design, you can add a semblance of plot and continuing storyline by designating one designer as **plotter**, who creates a set of encounters that sets up a situation, develops it, and finally resolves it in a great axe-swinging climax. The rest of the designers create unconnected **cushion** encounters that fit in between the plotter's encounters; all of these encounters combine into what is called an **adventure**. With the addition of this innovation, you can expand the setting of **Rune** to the realms of the various non-human races, to foreign countries, and even to the mythic realms of the gods.

Rules for adventures start on p. 176; but should be ignored until you and your fellow players are confident designers of simple encounters.

RUNNING ENCOUNTERS

Having created your encounter, it's time to run it for your opponents. Notes on doing this are provided beginning on p. 192.

STEP ONE: FIND YOUR BUDGET

Determining the budget for your encounters is a two part process. First you measure the **victory point** levels of your players. Then you determine the number of **encounter points** you have available.

VICTORY POINTS

To truly acquire Odin-like wisdom as an encounter designer, you need to know not only how you, when you act as runner, can earn victory points, but how players earn them, as well. After all, the fewer points they win, the easier it will be for you to beat them.

HOW VICTORY POINTS WORK

As an encounter progresses, you may do something that qualifies you for victory points. This is true whether you're running the encounter or acting as a member of the Horde. Take note of the number of potential victory points on a scrap piece of paper. The total victory points you've jotted down in this way comprises your **victory point tally**. You don't actually, immediately earn these points; you can't add them to your character sheet or spend them on character improvements.

Participants permanently gain victory points only at the end of an encounter. At that time, the things you did to win points are balanced against the things you did to lose them. As a player, the worst you can do at the end of any encounter is to score 0 victory points.

However, designer/runners who egregiously step over the line from giving the other players a tough, but winnable encounter into blatant, Loki-like bloodlust, can suffer a worse fate than that. In extreme cases, they must accept a **deficit**. They can spend currently unspent victory points to reduce this deficit, but are not obliged to do so. Players suffering a deficit must deduct it from all future victory point gains until the deficit is entirely paid for.

Josie, whose nasty encounter wiped out a couple of heroes, gets as her score for that encounter a deficit of 75. She has 23 unspent points, and decides to apply them to the deficit. She now begins her next encounter with a deficit of 52. Her next encounter, which she spends as a Horde member, grants her 30 victory points. She doesn't get those points; they go to pay down her deficit, which now stands at 22 (52 minus 30.) Her next encounter, also as a player, nets her 50 victory points. She pays off her remaining deficit of 22 points, leaving her with 28 actual victory points.

When you must apply victory points to a deficit, you are treated, for the purposes of determining the winner of a session, as if you never gained them.

Janie gets a raw 133 victory points but must apply 40 of them to her deficit. The next-highest scorer, Junie, got 120 encounter points. Junie, not Janie, is the winner of the session.

Nobody can ever lose unspent victory points won during previous encounters.

Victory points are tallied up at the very end of an encounter, just as the heroes are ready to move on to

LENGTH OF BASIC ADVENTURES

An adventure is a series of encounters. In the advanced play option, it runs from the set-up to climax. In the basic format you'll be starting out with, an adventure consists X encounters, where X is 6 or the number of players, whichever is greater.

At the end of each adventure, the heroes return home, at which time they can cash in loot for victory points. Designers can, in some situations, build in opportunities to return home early to drop off loot (see p. 173).



the next one. Time spent in tallying occurs in the real world but not in the game. Victory points do not exist in the heroes' world; they are a game abstraction of which the characters are blissfully unaware.

VICTORY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

Horde members gain victory points in the following ways:

1. DAMAGE DEALT

For each point of damage a hero deals to a supporting character described in the encounter notes as a foe, the Horde member

gains 1 victory point.

The score is based on the actual damage dealt after all Armor Protection and other damage-reducing effects, such as divine gifts, are taken into account. Only damage actually suffered by the foe grants you victory points, so if a hero deals damage in excess of the foe's current hit points, the Horde member's gain is capped at his hit point limit.

Your goblin adversary has only 6 hit points left. You hit him for 12 points of damage. You score only 6 victory points from these hit points.

If a hero threw or maneuvered a foe into a trap or hazard, his pillager gets points for any resulting damage. If more than one hero helped arrange this damage, the players vote to decide whether to credit a pillager's hero, or distribute

the points evenly between the involved pillagers. As always, the runner gets to cast an extra, tie-breaking vote when the group deadlocks (see p. 195).

2. DEATH BLOWS

When a hero kills a foe, his pillager gains victory points equal to 50% of the foe's Might rating (see p. 100). (Drop fractions, as always.) This is in addition to any awards for damage dealt. This bonus applies both to straight-up combat and to lethal damage from battlefield traps and hazards.

3. SUCCESSES

Each time a hero succeeds at a roll specified in the encounter notes, his pillager gains victory points equal to the three times the difference between the Difficulty and result (roll + Ability). Unless the encounter notes require heroes to make additional rolls, pillagers do not gain points for any successes after the first.

A combat encounter includes a chasm which heroes must jump in order to get to their foes. Pillagers get points for the first roll, but not if their heroes keep gratuitously hopping back and forth over the canyon once the fight is done. However, if the encounter includes a sequence in which Loki's dancing bugs burrow into the soles of heroes' feet and force them to repeatedly jump the canyon, pillagers could get points for each leap.

4. LOOT

For every ounce of silver heroes return to their home base and give to their families or community, pillagers gain 1 victory point. Other valuable items grant you victory points based on their value in silver. Players get these points at the end of each adventure.

A bronze mirror worth 5 ounces of silver grants you 5 victory points.

Whenever a hero gains treasure, he faces a choice between turning it over to his community (so his player gets victory points), or holding onto it for personal use. Heroes may keep any amount of the treasure they gain. They may take silver with



KILL-STEALING

Astute readers will note that it is possible to rack up victory points by allowing a fellow hero to whittle down a foe, and then step in to finish it off, delivering the death blow and collecting its juicy Might rating bonus. Is this not a mistake, they might ask. Mistake? By Odin's quivering beard, this is no error! Any warrior worthy of his own battle-axe is anxious to prove himself to the gods, even if it means eclipsing his friends. Of course heroes wish to steal each other's kills! The Aesir do not reward heroes saddled with a kindergarten teacher's idea of fairness! Blood is good, but death is better! You wish a competitive game that is not really competitive? What kind of Vikings are you?

Attempts at kill-stealing are an expected part of the game, adding interesting additional tactical considerations to combat. The characters are aware of it, too, because it gives them power and proves their superiority over their comrades. The victory point rules encourage a dynamic where the other heroes are your comrades, but also your rivals. Forget to balance these two roles at your peril.



them on their adventures to take advantage of its persuasive qualities or to purchase needed items along the way. However, once the hero has gifted his winnings to his community, he can't claw them back. Generosity is a Viking virtue. (Though oddly enough, the people they're perennially raiding don't seem to see things that way.) Once a hero has won status by giving things away, it would be unthinkable to ask for them back.

5. PROXY SCORE

If you acted as proxy for the runner's hero, you gain half victory points for the things he did, minus the usual deductions. (The other half, also after deductions, goes to the runner.)

DEDUCTIONS FOR PLAYERS

After tallying up all of the points you gained during the encounter, pillagers must deduct from their total for any of the following circumstances:

1. DAMAGE SUFFERED

Pillagers deduct 1 for each point of damage their heroes suffer, after Soak is taken into account. If a hero heals in between bouts of damage, it is entirely possible for his pillager to take a deduction in excess of his hit point maximum. Heroes do not negate their pillager's previous victory point losses by gaining or regaining hit points during an encounter.

2. YOUR HERO'S DEATH

If a pillager's hero dies, his score is automatically 0.

3. WHOOPS, DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL YOUR HERO, MR. RUNNER!

If the runner's character dies, his proxy's score is automatically 0.

4. LOSS OF STATUS

Sometimes the encounter penalizes heroes for dishonorable behavior. They might face a deduction for pausing to heal when your village's reputation demands immediate action, or for wantonly slaying a bargainer or friendly supporting character.

5. DAMAGE DEALT TO OTHER HEROES

If a pillager deliberately chooses to have his hero attack another, he deducts 5 victory points for every point of actual damage dealt to his victim. If the hero he attacks dies, the aggressor's score is automatically 0. Other players do not suffer the usual deductions incurred by the death of another player's hero. You do not deduct points if your character was possessed when he dealt the damage. The attacked hero can strike back, dealing damage in return, without facing a deduction.

Proxies may never cause the runner's hero to attack another hero.

6. VALHALLA'S GAPING MAW

Pillagers suffer a penalty for each hero, other than their own, who died in the course of the encounter. Before calculating this, total up all awards and deductions so far and determine preliminary standings for the encounter: identify a provisional winner, runner-up and second runner-up. The amount of the penalty per dead hero increases for players who would otherwise place well in the standings, as follows:

Provisional Standing	Deduction
Winner	75
Runner-up	45
Second Runner-up	30

The death of a hero at the hand of another pillager's character does not trigger this penalty.

7. ODIN PUNISHES THE SLOTHFUL

If it was your turn to run but you punked out and passed the duties onto one of your opponents, you lose 50% of your victory points. Further, you will lose 50% of all victory points from now on, until you actually run an encounter. You face no deduction on the encounter you finally run.

VICTORY POINTS FOR RUNNERS

Just because you're the runner doesn't mean that your character remains frozen in the blocks while the other heroes dash ahead of him, picking up victory points.

(Note that runners do not gain victory points when supporting characters use Divine Gifts, such as The Nurturing of Yggdrasil, that grant bonus victory points to heroes.)

Runners do gain points for the following:

1. THANK YOU FOR PLAYING

Runners get 30 victory points just for running the encounter.

2. ALMOST DOWN, BUT NOT QUITE OUT

For each hero who is at any point during your encounter reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, or brought to exactly 4 wounds, the runner gains victory points equal to $75 + (\text{the hero's total victory points to date} \div 10)$. Total victory points to date includes the hero's spent and unspent victory points so far, but not his current tally for the present encounter.

He collects only once per hero; he doesn't get to double-dip if a hero is pulped more than once under his watch. He does not get these points in the case of heroes who later die during the encounter.

3. CHORTLE AT THE MISFORTUNES OF OTHERS

Each time a hero fails a roll called for in the design notes, the runner scores three times the difference between the Difficulty and result in victory points. Failures at freestanding Ability rolls garner no victory points.

4. WHEN TERRAIN COMES INTO PLAY

Runners gain 20 points for each terrain feature that motivates a hero to make an Engagement roll, move, or half move in order either to take advantage of it, or avoid its ill consequences.

Runners also gain 20 points for each trap which, during combat, motivates a hero to roll Engagement or any non-combat skill, to make a move or half move, or to spend an action doing something other than attacking an opponent.

Tube-strikers do not count as terrain features for this purpose. Runners get no points for terrain features which appeared in their previous two encounters.

The possible score for this category is capped at 80 points.

5. PROXY SCORE

Runners get half the victory points, after deductions are properly taken into account, from the actions of their own heroes, as controlled by the chosen proxy.

6. TRIFECTA

If you served as both designer and runner of the encounter, and if you also got at least 1 victory point from categories 2, 3, and 4, you gain an additional bonus of 75 victory points.

DEDUCTIONS FOR RUNNERS

The runner faces the following deduction. As previously mentioned, runners suffer a deficit if the total deduction exceeds his positive points.

1. DEAD HEROES

For each hero (other than his own) who dies in the course of his encounter, the runner loses 75 victory points.

WINNING

At the beginning of each session, make a note of your current victory point score. (A session is any meeting at which you gather to play a game of **Rune**.) The player with the highest score by the end of the session wins.

Keep track of your wins. The player to rack up the most wins over the course of a campaign wins that campaign. "What is a campaign?", you ask ...

Before embarking on a campaign, you and the other players must agree on its nature. Campaigns can either be finite or open-ended. A finite campaign ends after a predetermined number of sessions, or when the first player reaches a predetermined number of total victory points. The overall winner is then declared. A finite campaign gives the winner a high-quality jolt of triumph when the climactic moment comes. Having felt the tension build as the big moment approaches, he can war-whoop and dance about the room, brandishing

DESIGNER'S BUDGET TABLE

Average Victory Point Total

500 victory points

750 victory points

1000 victory points

Each additional 250 victory points

Limit Increases By:

50 encounter points

75 encounter points

100 encounter points

+25 encounter point limit increase

his imaginary battle-axe. (This behavior is not obligatory.) However, it is possible that the group might feel a bit disappointed, having invested many hours in building up their heroes, to bid them farewell. If you're of the school that contends one should never retire a roleplaying character until, impaled on an enemy's lance, he coughs up gouts of frothy blood and painfully expires, the open-ended approach is probably for you. You and the other players can at any time end the campaign by mutual agreement, but until that day comes, you still have a chance of surpassing your rival's scores — and you get to keep your hero in play until the valkyries claim him for Valhalla's halls.

Alternately, you can compromise between the two approaches, carrying your characters over from one finite campaign to the next.

ENCOUNTER POINTS

Just as you built your hero using a set number of points, you pay for the elements of each encounter you design with **encounter points**.

To gain positive encounter points which you will spend on things that harm or challenge the heroes, the designer must earn at least as many negative points by including elements which help or reward them.

The encounter point cost of a slope that covers two thirds of a combat area is -20. If you include one in your encounter, it gives you another 20 points to spend on risks and challenges.

The total number of positive points a designer can spend (or negative points he can earn, if you want to look at it that way) starts at 350 points.

Everything that has a cost counts towards the designer's limit; he can't circumvent the limit by bundling items together.

Michelle creates a trap that, on its own, balances out to 0 points. The trap includes features that cost 30 points, but also features that gain her 30 points. The trap takes up 30 points of her budget, not 0.

A designer's budget increases in step with the players' victory point totals. The chart above shows how many encounter points a designer gets when building encounters for experienced players. The value in the first column is a number of total victory points; if the majority of players (including the designer/runner) have reached that benchmark, you may increase your limit for any encounter by the value provided in the second column.

Limit increases are not cumulative.

The Horde includes five players, three of whom have more than 750 victory points. You can spend 375 points per encounter.

STEP TWO: ENCOUNTER CONCEPTS

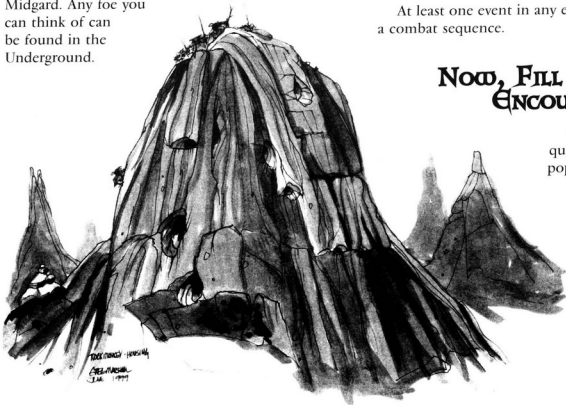
An encounter is more than just a random assemblage of sword-clanging fights, fiendish traps, and glittering treasures. But not too much more than that; we wouldn't want to get carried away with ourselves.

When you devise a concept for a basic encounter, you're answering the following questions:

1. Where does it take place?
2. How many events are there?
3. (For each event) What happens?

WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

This one's easy: until you get to the advanced adventure options described on page 176, everyone's encounters take place in the Underground, the sprawling subterranean network of caverns, tunnels, passageways, and chambers that connects the various mythic realms to the everyday world of Midgard. Any foe you can think of can be found in the Underground.



HOW MANY EVENTS ARE THERE?

An encounter must include one to four separate events. Each **event** revolves around a separate location. An event can include a combat sequence, any number of traps or other hazards, and any number of opportunities for treasure or other gains — provided that you can pay for them all, of course.

WHAT HAPPENS IN EACH EVENT?

For each event, think of a simple sentence that sums up what will happen to the heroes when they go through it.

- *"The heroes fight a bunch of goblins who live under a fiery waterfall."*
- *"An old crazy guy tries to hypnotize the heroes and take their equipment."*
- *"Dwarves challenge a hero to fight their new robot, with a big treasure as the prize."*

At least one event in any encounter must include a combat sequence.

NOW, FILL IN YOUR ENCOUNTER

Having answered these questions, you're ready to populate your events with the desired mix of elements, spending and gaining points as necessary.

STEP THREE: SELECTING FOES

This section is divided into two parts. The first tells designers how to include enemy combatants in their encounters. The second describes the main sorts of foes the heroes face in the world of **Rune**, and gives designers guidelines on creating new enemies of their own.

Designers *must* include one combat event per encounter. You can include a second one, too, if you want.

COMBAT EVENTS

This part of the Foes section shows designers how to create and pay for the foes heroes will fight.

STEP ONE: THREAT CATEGORIES

Foes fall into seven **Threat Categories**. From most to least dangerous, the categories are: Terrifying, Exceptional, Superior, Equal, Inferior, Weak, and Pitiful. When designing an encounter, the designer decides which of these categories each combat opponent falls into, but does not assign them precise game statistics. Instead, the runner determines the game statistics just before starting the encounter during a session.

STEP TWO: NUMBERS OF FOES

Threat Categories allow designers to match the number of opponents to the number of heroes. In an encounter with a single combat event, the total **Mix value** of all the foes in that event must equal the number of heroes.

A Terrifying enemy may be introduced only if there are at least four heroes to fight it. On the other hand, 2 Weak opponents may appear for each hero.

For encounters with two combat events, the total foe Mix value in one of these events

must equal the number of heroes, and the total Mix value of the second cannot exceed half the number of heroes.

Level	Mix	Ratio
Terrifying	4	One foe for four heroes
Exceptional	3	One foe for three heroes
Superior	2	One foe for two heroes
Equal	1.3	Two foes for three heroes
Inferior	0.7	Three foes for two heroes
Weak	0.5	Two foes for one hero
Pitiful	0.3	Three foes for one hero

Designers can mix and match opponents from several threat ratings. When adding up Mix values, ignore our usual rule on fractions and instead round to the nearest whole number. Round down when the fraction is 0.5.

Your encounter includes only 1 combat event. There are six players in the group, including yourself. You decide to create an encounter in which the heroes will face a Terrifying enemy. That takes up 4 of your available 6 points. You decide to add in one Equal and one Weak opponent, whose Mix values are 1.3 and 0.5, respectively. Your total is 5.8, which rounds up to 6, your maximum number for the encounter.

If the runner finds himself with more or fewer players than expected when the designer created the encounter, the runner quickly alters the Threat categories and numbers of foes so that the new Mix value equals the number of heroes.

STEP THREE: FOE TYPES

Now the designer decides what kind of foe each of these Mix values represents. He can use the foe types that appear later in this section, or he can come up with descriptions of new enemy types of his own creation.

Some of the foes we describe can never exceed a given Threat category; rock goblins, for example, can never be better than Inferior foes. However, as you're about to see, each category is relative to the current strength of the heroes. So the party might fight a Superior wendol in one designer's encounter, and then a Terrifying one in the next.

You decide that your Terrifying combatant will be a mechadwarf, your Equal one a dwarven centurion, and your Inferior one a dwarven laborer.

When you get to the foe type descriptions at the end of this chapter, you'll see that some foes have special Abilities to deploy against their prey; these increase their Mix values.

STEP FOUR: SELF-WILLED, OR PREDICTABLE?

As explained on p. 197, runners don't normally get to decide which heroes a particular foe will attack; instead, a flowchart makes the choices for them. However, a designer can make any individual foe Self-Willed by paying a number of encounter points pegged to its Threat Category.

Threat Category	Cost
Terrifying	+50 encounter points
Exceptional	+35 encounter points
Superior	+25 encounter points
Equal	+15 encounter points
Inferior	+10 encounter points
Weak	+5 encounter points
Pitiful	+2 encounter points

A **Self-Willed** foe may attack any hero of the runner's choice, unless the hero is already Engaged by another Self-Willed foe. Self-Willed foes may even break away from their current Engagements in order to break opponents, if the runner so commands.

Self-Willed foes allow runners more control over the damage dealt in combat; this is advantageous because runners get victory points for reducing heroes to 10 or fewer hit points, but only if the

heroes survive the encounter. Runners may also find themselves wanting to whittle down the winning player's hero.

Foes bound by the Foe Target Choice Flowchart on p. 196 (which is the default option) are referred to as **Predictable**.

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL): THE ADJUST

When using the standard foe types found later in this section the runner can add a second step, the **Adjust**, which specifies changes to the combatant's game statistics, giving him recognizable traits for his type. This adds flavor to the game, but is not mandatory.

Adjusts for standard foes are given in their entries in the Gallery of Fearsome Foes, in the second half of this section. When designers create their own creatures, they can give them Adjust ratings, using the rules given on p. 119.

Checking the entry for dwarven centurions on p. 108, you see that their Adjust values are: INIT -2, ATK -2, DFN -3, DAM +7. You write these values in your encounter notes, so you'll have them right at hand when you eventually run the encounter.

STEP SIX (OPTIONAL): MISSILE WEAPONS

You can arm certain foes with missile weapons. Check the game statistics for this type of foe to make sure it has the arrow icon (see the insert on p. 102), which means that it can use them. (You decide whether foe types of your own creation qualify.) Then, decide whether the foe uses a bow or a crossbow.

The designer gains 10 encounter points if none of the foes in a combat event use missile weapons, provided that at least half of the opponents (as measured by their percentage of the total Mix value) have the arrow icon.

Checking the game statistics for the foe types above, you see that mechadwarves can't use missile weapons, but that centurions and laborers can. You decide to give the centurion a crossbow and the laborer a bow.

YOUR WORK HERE IS DONE – FOR NOW

As designer, you can move on to the other elements of the encounter. Steps seven and eight are actually performed by the runner, right before starting the encounter. We could have moved them to the chapter on running encounters – if we wanted to be impossibly confusing. They make more sense here.

STEP SEVEN: THE ROLL OF VALOR

Before play begins, the runner gets the players to fill out the Roll of Valor (found below, and in the Appendix) with their heroes' current statistics. The players can fill in the Roll of Valor in any old order. The runner won't be referring to it during play. He must remember to fill it in for his own hero!

The one column heading that isn't self-explanatory is **Res** (which stands for **Response**). This is the hero's highest bonus for any action undertaken outside of combat. Usually this will be the bonus for an Ability, paired with its governing Characteristic. In odd cases, it might be the roll used to activate a Divine Gift or magical treasure.

If a hero's Divine Gifts allow him to increase any of the listed game statistics, his pillager must write down the maximum possible game statistic, with Gifts taken into account, for each entry. If a Gift permanently increases a stat, include it on the Roll; ignore Gifts that temporarily boost a hero's numbers

After everybody has filled it out, the runner circles the second worst number in each column with a highlighter or other marker. Treat ties as the same number.

Check out the sample Roll of Valor, opposite. In the ATK column, the lowest score is a 7; 3 heroes share it. That makes the second-lowest number a 10, not one of the 7s.

In the DAM column, the lowest score is a 7. The next score up from that is a 9. It doesn't matter that two heroes share it. Nor does it matter

which one you circle.

If many heroes share the same game statistics, you may have situations where the second worst number is also the second best, or best, or whatever. Don't worry about it.

All of the heroes but one have a Soak of 7; the other has a Soak of 10. You still circle the 10, even though it is also the best statistic.

Make the following adjustments when the number of heroes is less than four. For three heroes, use the worst number in each column. For two heroes, use the worst number and subtract 1 from INIT, ATK, DFN, DAM, Soak, and Res, and 10 from HP.

ROLL OF VALOR

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
10	10	8	14	7	48	6

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
9	11	10	9	10	119	3

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
8	7	11	8	7	70	3

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
9	7	7	12	7	58	4

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
10	12	12	9	7	52	4

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
2	7	1	7	7	48	2

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES

TALLY

(TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE RUNNER)

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	SOAK	HP	RES
8	10	7	9	6	52	3

STEP EIGHT: GAME STATISTICS

Then use the Adjust Table to determine the game statistics of each creature according to its Threat Category. An Equal opponent's statistics will be the numbers you circled in each column of the Roll of Valor. The runner creates statistics for less-threatening opponents by subtracting from the circled numbers. For more threatening opponents, add to those numbers.

To get the game statistics for our three enemies, we first start with the tallied game statistics from the Roll of Valor.

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
8	10	7	9	6	52	3

To get game statistics for our Terrifying mechadwarf, we add 6 to each of the first four columns, 3 to Soak, 30 to HP, and 3 to Res. This is our result:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
14	16	13	15	9	82	6

Now comes our Equal dwarven centurion. That's easy; we just copy the same numbers from the Roll of Valor tally.

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
8	10	7	9	6	52	3

Finally, our Inferior dwarven laborer, for whom we subtract 2 from the first three columns, 1 from DAM, Soak and Res, and 10 from HP, with the following results:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
6	8	5	8	5	42	2

The Response Rating

Foes use their **Response (Res)** ratings for any and every roll (other than INIT, ATK, and DFN) they must make during combat. The list of things they use Response rolls for includes, but is not limited to: Engagement, Bravery, Dodge, Awareness, Climb, Sprint, and Jump.

Adjusts

If the designer included Adjusts for the foes, the runner now uses them to modify his provisional game statistics.

As you noted when you designed the encounter, the centurion's Adjust values are ATK -2, DFN -1, DAM +9. You perform those adjustments to your centurion's game statistics.

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM	Soak	HP	Res
8	8	6	18	6	52	3

When adjusting, treat all HP results below 10 as 10, and all Soaks and DAM scores below 0 as 0. INIT, ATK, DFN, and Res can all go negative.

FOE MAKER'S TABLE

Category	INIT Score	ATK Score	DFN Score	DAM Score	Soak	HP	Res
Terrifying	+6	+6	+6	+6	+3	+30	+3
Exceptional	+4	+4	+4	+4	+2	+20	+2
Superior	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+10	+1
Equal	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Inferior	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-10	-1
Weak	-4	-4	-4	-2	-2	-20	-2
Pitiful	-6	-6	-6	-3	-	-30	-3

DEATH: THE PROPER OUTCOME OF ANY BATTLE

Foes always fight to the death — their own, or the heroes'. We concede that it isn't realistic, whatever in Odin's name that means, for enemies to act with bloodlust so fierce that they lose all sense of their own survival. But in practice runners always forget to have their combatants flee, so let's just admit that running away isn't what this game is all about. It's simpler and more fun to have the bad guys fight until crushed beneath the heroes' boots.

Missile Statistics

To get statistics for a foe's bow attacks, use its melee attacks as a starting point, and then apply the following modifiers: -1 to INIT, and -4 to ATK. The DAM score stays the same, but cannot exceed 11. For crossbows, the modifiers are -8 to INIT and -3 to ATK; DAM can't exceed 14. In each case, use the foe's Res rating as its DFN when armed with a missile weapon.

For the crossbow-wielding centurion, you reduce his INIT of 8 by 8, bringing it to 0. You reduce his ATK by 3, bringing it to 5. For DFN, you use his Res rating. His DAM is 17, and so hits the cap of 14.

	INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM
Melee Statistics	8	8	6	18
Missile Statistics	0	5	3	14

For the bow-slinging laborer, you reduce INIT by 1, taking it to 5, and his ATK by 4, taking it to 4. DFN is its Res rating of 2. DAM is less than 11, and remains the same.

	INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM
Melee Statistics	6	8	5	8
Missile Statistics	5	4	2	8

Equipment Already Included

The game statistics you generate for foes are final numbers, and include the benefits of weapons, armor, and shields for those creatures that use them. Under no circumstances should you take the game statistics garnered through this method and then give them extra bonuses for gear!

Wound Threshold

Most opponents have Wound Thresholds of 15. Those with more than 60 hit points have Wound Thresholds of 18. Those with less than 20 have Wound Thresholds of 12.

Might Rating

When a hero kills a foe, he gets a victory bonus of 1/2 the foe's Might rating. The runner calculates that rating as follows: (INIT + ATK + DFN + DAM + Soak + (HP ÷ 10)) ÷ 2. Lop off any fractions at the end of the calculation. Ignore missile weapon values when tallying Might. Treat any negative values as 0.

The centurion's Might is 24: (8 + 8 + 6 + 18 + 6 + 5.2) ÷ 2.

GALLERY OF FEARSOME FOES

In a world without enemies, there would be no glory. Fortunately for young Viking warriors aspiring to hallowed seats in the longhouses of Valhalla, the Viking world offers foes aplenty. Encounter designers draw their roster of blood-crazed combat opponents from the foes described in this chapter.

They aren't restricted to the foes outlined in this section, though. Guidelines for creating creatures and giving them **Rune** game statistics are given at the end of this chapter.

Foe types use a standard format, with the following entries:

Max. Threat: Some creatures are meant to be challenges only in numbers, or to beginning heroes. If a foe has a Maximum Threat Category listed, you can't assign it a higher Threat Category. Use a more respectable creature instead.



FOE REFERENCE TABLE

Bench- mark	Foe Type	Name	Mzximum Threat	Move	Adjusts	Mix	Page
2	Goblin	Leader	Weak	5	HP +50	0	114
3	Goblin	Rock	Inferior	15	None	0	111
3	Goblin	Shaman	Inferior	15	None	0	113
4	Goblin	Rock Goblins	Inferior	15	None	0	111
4	Goblin	Vegetarian	Inferior	15	INIT +1, DAM -3	0	115
5	Goblin	Warrior	Inferior	15	None	0	112
5	Land Crab	Small	Inferior	15	DFN -3, Soak +3	0	116
5	Craftwerk	Spider-werk	Equal	15	DAM +12, HP -10	+0.3	109
6	Dwarf	Laborer	Equal	15	None	0	107
6	Goblin	Roving Slayer	Equal	15	None	0	112
6	Craftwerk	Beetle-werk	Terrifying	100	INIT -15, ATK -4, DFN -4, DAM +6, Soak +8, HP -20	+0.2	108
6	Craftwerk	Centi-werk	Inferior	15	INIT +15, ATK -2, DFN -3	0	108
7	Viking	Dishonored	Superior	15	None	+0.5	103
7	Goblin	Senior Slayer	Equal	15	None	0	112
8	Viking	Dark Viking	Terrifying	15	None	0	102
8	Dwarf	Pit Boss	Superior	15	DAM +5, Soak -1	0	107
8	Elf	Mischief Maker	Equal	30	INIT +3, DAM -3	0	110
8	Goblin	Freak	Superior	15	INIT +6, ATK +1, DFN -3, DAM +3, Soak -1	0	113
10	Land Crab	Large	Exceptional	15	DFN -3, Soak +3	0	116
10	Troll		Terrifying	15	DFN -1, DAM +3	0	117
11	Dwarf	Medic	Exceptional	15	ATK -1, DFN -1, DAM +6	0	107
12	Dwarf	Centurion	Superior	15	ATK -2, DFN -1, DAM +9	0	108
12	Dwarf	Slaver	Superior	15	INIT -2, DFN -2, DAM +4	0	107
12	Elf	Courtier	Terrifying	30	INIT +3, DAM -3	0	110
12	Tube-Striker		Terrifying	0	None	NA	117
15	Wendol		Terrifying	15	INIT -3, DAM +1	0	118
16	Dwarf	Clan Champion	Terrifying	15	DAM +9	+0.3	108
16	Viking	Sark Amen	Terrifying	15	None	+0.8	104
17	Craftwerk	Mecha-Dwarf	Terrifying	15	DAM +9	+0.3	109
20	Giant		Terrifying	60	INIT -9, DAM +3	0	116
32	Craftwerk	Mega-Dwarf	Terrifying	45	None	0	109

IT'S A SIGN!

A series of icons precede each foe's game statistics. Here's what they mean:



The arrow icon means that the foe sometimes uses missile weapons. You don't have to give it missile weapons in every encounter but you can if you want.



The broken arrow indicates that the creature never uses missile weapons. If you want a foe with those game statistics that uses a missile, you'll have two choices. You can either create a new creature type with a different description and similar numbers, or come up with some weird explanation of the enemy's missile use, like a dwarven craftwerks experiment.



The battle axe means that the foe uses hand-held weapons and can be disarmed.



The claw indicates that the creature uses weapons that are a part of its body. It can't be disarmed.



The howling goblin means that the creature always charges headlong towards the heroes as soon as it gets wind of them. It uses the Foe Target Choice Flowchart in chapter five to pick its target.



The smirking goblin describes crafty foes who, when seeing the heroes, can wait to attack them. They'll most often choose to do so if they begin the encounter with some kind of terrain advantage, like high ground or cover.



And finally, the crescent moon icon means that the creature has night vision and is immune to penalties from darkness.

Benchmark: The foe's average INIT, ATK, DFN, and DAM score. For a more detailed description of benchmarks, see the insert on page 103.

Adjusts: Not every foe will have identical scores in INIT, ATK, DFN and DAM. When a foe's scores differ from the benchmark, we'll note it here.

Move: The maximum number of paces the foe can move during one round of combat. He can move half this distance and still act.

Mix: Some foes have a higher Mix value than their threat category would indicate (see the table on p. 96). Add this number to the foe's normal mix value.

VIKINGS

Not all Vikings pursue the time-honored ways of glory. Some have fallen from the ranks of those destined for Valhalla, becoming minions of the dark god Loki. These wretched creatures are heroes no more, and a quick death at the hands of an honorable Norseman is the best that is left to them.

DARK VIKINGS



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 8

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Dark Vikings are ordinary Norsemen who have pledged their allegiance to Loki. The chieftains and warlords among them believe that they will become gods themselves under the new regime Loki will impose after his inevitable victory at Ragnarok. Their followers believe that they will be elevated in power along with their masters, becoming warlords on Midgard or semi-divine attendants in Loki's twisted version of Asgard.

Not every Dark Viking believes that ultimate glory awaits him. Some agreed to follow him out of fear, either for their own lives or those of their kinfolk. Resigned and frightened, they know that they have done something wicked and dishonorable, and

THE BENCHMARK

For each standard foe type, we specify a **benchmark**. This suggests the average INIT, ATK, DFN or DAM scores for enemies of that type. This is just a guideline for designers to measure their own creatures against. The foes designers create never have to be average: they can be weaker or stronger than the norm. (When was the last time you met a totally average person, anyway?) The benchmark gives an indication of the relative power of various creatures. The game will be more fun if designers keep their foe statistics more or less in line with the benchmarks. That way, the heroes can enjoy hacking their way through goblins at the beginning of their career, and then progress to dwarves, Dishonored, wendols, and Sark Amen, just like they do in the computer game. To get the usual INIT, ATK, DFN, and DAM scores for a specimen, start with the benchmark and then perform the adjust.

The centurion's benchmark is 12. When you apply the Adjust to it, you get the first four game statistics of an average centurion:

INIT	ATK	DFN	DAM
12	10	11	21

We can see that the centurion we created for our encounter is less capable than the norm. He must be a new recruit, or an oft-wounded old veteran with tired bones.

Designers can use the benchmark when choosing foe types. To do this, they must know in advance what the results of the Roll of Valor will be, give or take a point or three. Average the projected INIT, ATK, and DFN scores of the heroes. Then pick a foe with a benchmark at or around the average. To make this method easier, the Foe Reference Chart on p. 101 lists foes in benchmark order.

No foe can ever have Divine Gifts. Nor do they use magical treasures.

worry that they have only postponed their doom. They realize that, when killed, they will join the undead ranks of the Dishonored, which is a fate that no one seeks. While some avoid combat in order to stave off their dread fate for just a little while longer, others hurl themselves headlong into battle, hoping that a still-honorable Norseman will do the right

thing and cleave their sorry skulls from their traitorous bodies. (Shamed warriors, when decapitated, are not banished to Hel's precincts; their souls are instead obliterated entirely. Utter non-existence is the best a regretful Dark Viking can hope for; the concept of redemption is alien to the grim Viking worldview.)

The mountain city of Thorstadt serves as a major stronghold for the Dark Vikings. In the dark times of Ragnarok's imminence, more and more Scandinavian villages are ruled by Loki's favorites.

Unlike most foe types, Dark Vikings range wildly in ability. Although the Benchmark represents an average, individuals cover the entire range of Threat Categories.

THE DISHONORED



Max. Threat: Superior

Benchmark: 7

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: +0.5

Life may end for cowardly or treacherous Vikings, but existence does not. When they die, they transmigrate to the realm of Hel, goddess of the dead. Until recently, it was thought that they would listlessly wander through that realm of flame and torment for a near eternity, until the final horn was blown before the battle of Ragnarok. But recently Hel found a way to aid her father, breaking the seals on the gates separating her realm from the rest of the Underworld. From the Underworld, the dishonored can travel to any other divine or mortal realm. Although they retain only a fraction of their memories, Intelligence and personality from life, and are not especially skilled fighters, they can still be tough opponents. Killing a man who is already dead and moldering is difficult work.

Loki and Hel use the Dishonored only for tasks suited to essentially mindless, if highly motivated, minions. Often platoons of the Dishonored are led by Dark Viking warlords.

The Dishonored are only completely stopped by extremely powerful blows. A killing blow



must not only reduce the creature's hit points to 0, but also meet or exceed its Wound Threshold. Non-wounding hits knock them to or below 0 merely cause them to fall down. To finish off a Dishonored in this condition, a hero must spend an additional action to crush or sever its head. The hero's pillager does not get the death blow addition to his victory point tally until he does this. If another hero completes the finishing move, his pillager splits the death blow bonus with the one who actually reduced it to 0 hit points. If no hero completes the finishing move before the Dishonored's next action, the runner rolls its Res against a Difficulty of 6 just before the Initiative step at the beginning of the subsequent round. If the roll succeeds, the Dishonored recovers, regaining X lost hit points, where X equals the difference between the roll's result and difficulty. Since it's back up again, no one scores the victory point award for the previous "death" blow. Until it is once more reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, it

regains X hit points at the beginning of each round. If it is again reduced to 0 with a non-wounding hit, and again not dispatched at the cost of a hero's action, the runner once more rolls his Res to see if he gets back up again.

SARK AMEN



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 16

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: +0.8

The most promising among the Dishonored are bathed in the bubbling blood of Loki, from which they arise as Sark Amen, the mightiest of undead opponents. The blood baptism elongates their bodies and reinforces their muscles. Sark Amen are eleven to twelve feet tall, highly resistant to blows, and capable of dealing hideous amounts of damage.

Sark Amen have all of the standard undead powers, as described above. They are also extremely fast and agile fighters, who disorient foes by leaping over them and around the battlefield. Sark Amen ignore the effects of barriers. During their Initiative, they can make a bound of up to twenty paces, leaping over any obstacle or combatant. This does not require an action. They can attack in mid-leap, levying a decrease equal to their Res to their victims' DFN rolls. It is often advantageous for them to make a leaping attempt against a new opponent each round, instead of continuing the same close-range encounter from one round to the next. Accordingly, a group Sark Amen often spend a confrontation jumping like grasshoppers around the battlefield, deftly switching off opponents. Runners are free to have Sark Amen trade off targets in this manner, regardless of the Foe Target Choice Flowchart (p. 196), so long as these maneuvers do not change the net number of Sark Amen attacking any given hero.

DWARVES

Dwarves are a race of being at least as old as the gods. Endlessly they toil in the clanking mills and factories of steam-shrouded Nidavellir. Once they produced items of great power for the Aesir, including Odin's spear, Heimdal's helm, and Thor's legendary hammer, Mjolnir. More recently (that is, during the events chronicled in the **Rune** computer game), the partly robotic, lightning-powered dwarven king threw in his lot with Loki and began production on special armor for the trickster god's undead shock troops, the Sark Amen. Although a Horde can agree that their games take place during the dwarf king's rein, we think it's more interesting if the heroes can interact with dwarves of varying allegiances. The rest of this description describes events that followed the heroic swath cut by Ragnar, hero of the computer game, as he rampaged through Nidavellir.

The technology of the dwarves exceeds the understanding of men. The players will recognize its clunky, steam technology as a twisted and primitive precursor of the early Industrial Revolution. To the heroes, dwarven steam power, electrical energy, and scythe-bladed dwarf/robot hybrids will seem like the direst magic. It remains enigmatic even to all-wise Odin. Odin has always lusted after the power offered by the product of dwarven forges. Loki thought it an essential element in his attempted conquest of Asgard. But the dwarves jealously guard their secrets. Any interloper into Nidavellir is immediately assumed to be a thief of technological secrets, and is welcomed with battle cries and furious blows from the enormous hammers, swords, and axes typical of dwarven weaponry. However, it is possible to interact peacefully with the dwarves, especially if one comes bearing large quantities of silver or other goods calculated to stimulate the avaricious streak that bedevils even the humblest of dwarves.

Dwarves dwell in the world of the physical. They have no patience for worship, or glibble-gabble about magic and mystery. As far as they're concerned, the Divine Gifts of the gods are an inferior route to power. They could figure it all out in concrete, mechanistic terms if they really wanted to, but steam and electricity are much sturdier and less capricious

sources of might than the whims of irrational deities. The dwarves know that their doctrine will render the gods irrelevant. They do not fear Ragnarok, but welcome it, certain that it will usher in a new era in which their technology will become predominant, and the nonsense and superstition of the gods will be washed away like so much industrial waste. Which side they support in the upcoming struggle is ultimately of little consequence, so they might as well, they think, provide armaments to the group that makes the best offer. Unfortunately, there is no denying that the gods are still wildly powerful, any one of them capable of great damage to even the best-protected dwarven installation. Until the cleansing tides of Ragnarok sweep them all away, they and their Viking followers must be avoided, bargained with, or pounded to a reddened pulp.

Dwarven society is highly regimented. In order to build mechanical things, it is essential to work in groups. The efficiency of the group is the most important thing. Groups are only efficient when they are strictly regulated, and each unit knows his duties and role within the larger whole. The worst act a dwarf can commit is the disruption of group efficiency. However, dwarves do not believe themselves capable of evil intent. To resent a superior is absurd, like a gear feeling jealous of a piston. Rebellious or self-willed dwarves are not immoral, they are defective.

Squads of medics scour Nidavellir for defectives, who are coveted as experimental subjects by dwarven hospital operators, who invariably double as researchers into steam-powered cybernetics. Defectives are set upon, swaddled in expansible steel restraints, and clouted into submission. The dwarven loathing of malfunction is so great that passersby often assist in the apprehension and bludgeoning process. Dwarven doctors open up the defective's skull and insert into it their most up-to-date brain fixatives. The insertion of these whirling gearboxes, usually about the size of a fist, often does serious collateral damage to the subject's brain. If this is the case, the head can still be salvaged for use as part of a mecha-dwarf (see below). Cynical individuals might observe that the entire process seems designed merely to generate spare parts for mecha-dwarves, but both cynicism and irony are unknown in Nidavellir.

Dwarves are literal-minded, blunt-spoken people whose sense of humor (if you can call it that) is mostly confined to puns and cleverly-worded threats of violence. Dwarves lust after money, silver especially. They hoard it in ingeniously-trapped mechanical safes, or simply spend it on new equipment. Dwarves can buy their way into prestigious bloodlines, so silver provides them their only means of advancing through the social hierarchy. They thrive in underground environments amid noise, darkness, foul vapors, and extremes of temperature. They like machinery and events with predictable outcomes. They loathe sunshine, flowers, forests, the sound of chirping songbirds, and mild weather. They believe that nature exists only to be mined for ore and smelted down. Although they respect the power of the Aesir, they look down their prodigious noses at the gods' human worshipers, who they consider superstitious weaklings with no proper sense of self-reliance. Goblins they see as nothing more than potential slaves. Elves are totally useless, not even good at forced labor.

Although dwarven society is rigidly organized, with few surviving dissidents, it is not always unified. Several competing bloodlines have for ages fought over the dwarven throne. Dwarven wars of succession make feuds between Viking villages look like a child's game. Lately the heads of these dwarven clans have taken to converting themselves into mighty, gigantic mecha-dwarves to more effectively battle one another in single combat. The late dwarven king, Hugir, dispatched his other cyborg opponents and then clamped down on the technology to prevent their relatives from also reconstructing themselves as giants to challenge him. Now that Hugir is dead, the heads of the various ancestral lines are racing to rebuild the technology — and themselves. Soon the massive subterranean chambers of Nidavellir will once again ring and shake with the clashing

limbs of battling, metallic mega-dwarves. Despite dwarven condescension towards humans, Viking warriors might be able to enter into useful negotiations with the factions of Nidavellir. In particular they might profit by finding fragments of the schematics for Hugir's robotic body, which the slain



monarch secreted throughout the Underworld, to hide them from his rivals. (He would have destroyed them, but feared that repairs might be difficult if the original plans were entirely lost.) Vikings entering Nidavellir would be wise to remain wary of Hugin's kin, now violently embittered by their champion's death at the hands of a mere Norseman.

LABORER



Max. Threat: Equal
Benchmark: 6
Adjusts: none
Move: 15
Mix: 0

This is your ordinary, running-the-mill dwarf that the heroes might find manning a complex piece of dwarven machinery. He'll be happily enjoying the rattle of the engines and the banging of its pistons until he sees the heroes. Then he'll likely attack, certain that the Vikings mean to sabotage the equipment he's duty-bound to protect, or to steal its secrets.

Laborers often oversee gangs of goblin slaves, viciously clouting them whenever their energy flags. Unless working for an impoverished clan, they treat their slaves as supremely expendable. Though not sadistic, they are certainly indifferent to the goblins' suffering. Heroes attacking dwarven work stations can safely expect that slaves will flee for the nearest exits if freed, and will only reluctantly engage them in combat.

PIT BOSS



Max. Threat: Superior
Benchmark: 8
Adjusts: DAM +5, Soak -1
Move: 15
Mix: 0

The pit boss oversees teams of laborers. Although he probably didn't design the equipment he toils over, he likely knows its quirks better than the dwarf who drew up the original plans. Many pit bosses identify strongly with the machinery they care for, treating it as a sea captain might his ship. They might defend their machine to the death, but would think twice before sacrificing themselves for a family member.

SLAVER



Max. Threat: Superior
Benchmark: 12
Adjusts: INIT -2, DFN -2, DAM +4
Move: 15
Mix: 0

Slavers ravage the Underworld's goblin territories in search of captives. Traveling in large parties, they attack with overwhelming force. They're happy to kill three goblins for every one they safely capture. As dwarves are fond of saying, "Goblins are a renewable resource." Slavers aren't much interested in capturing Norsemen; other human tribes might have breakable spirits, but Vikings are too damnably unpredictable and hungry for freedom. Slavers might pass Viking parties by, attempt to barter with them, or, if their sacks look to be bulging with silver, attack them for their treasure. Slavers have learned to be wary of Norsemen, some of whom will attack slave caravans to show their love of freedom, even though they might try to kill the very same goblins if they came across them as free beings.

MEDIC (DEFECTIVE-HUNTER)



Max. Threat: Exceptional
Benchmark: 11
Adjusts: ATK -1, DFN -1, DAM +6
Move: 15
Mix: 0

Medics patrol dwarven territories looking for signs of defective thinking, in order to capture the dissidents for "treatment" at the hospital that pays their wages. Some dwarven hospitals also pay for captured humans, who are used as subjects in medical experiments too risky to perform on actual dwarves.

Barb-net: On a successful hit, the barb-net encircles the subject and remains there. The subject suffers 20 points of damage each time he takes an action. He can free himself by rolling Str versus a Difficulty of 6 + the difference between the attacker's ATK roll and his own DFN roll. Each attempt to free himself, naturally, counts as an action and causes him to take the damage.

CENTURION**Regular Centurion****Max. Threat:** Superior**Benchmark:** 12**Adjusts:** ATK -2, DEF -1, DAM +9**Move:** 15**Mix:** 0**Clan Champion****Max. Threat:** Terrifying**Benchmark:** 16**Adjusts:** DAM +9**Move:** 15**Mix:** +0.3

A centurion is a well-equipped, experienced dwarven warrior. During lulls in the fighting between rival bloodlines, centurions serve the king as bodyguards. They rove the borderlands of Nidavellir looking to keep in practice by hacking their way through would-be intruders. When in this mode, they gleefully attack anything that moves, assuming their superiority over all comers. After a bruising encounter with superior warriors, they regroup and adopt cleverer tactics that exploit their home terrain.

During times of internecine conflict, centurions more carefully preserve themselves for only truly important fights, whether against genuine outside threats to the realm or rival dwarves. Centurions may serve together under the king and then break away to battle their former brothers-in-arms when a war of succession breaks out. This sense of loyalty as something that varies depending on the direction of the political winds may seem obscene to honor-obsessed Vikings, but comes perfectly natural to the phlegmatic, practical-minded dwarves.

DWARVEN CRAFTWORKS

Where slaves cannot or will not go, dwarves send their clanking, blocky artificial creatures. Powered by lightning-charged batteries, dwarven craftwerks are based on a class of natural creature well-adapted to subterranean life: the insect. (Well, okay, centipedes and spiders aren't really insects, but the

dwarves are indifferent to such squishy distinctions.) They can be set to automatically execute a range of behaviors. Any robot can be set to attempt to destroy a being that enters a particular area. Simple craftwerks, like beetle-works, centi-works, and spider-works, are always Predictable in combat. Craftwerks with biological components, like mecha- and mega-dwarves, can be Self-Willed.

BEEBLE-WERK**Max. Threat:** Terrifying**Benchmark:** 6**Adjusts:** INIT -15, ATK -4, DEF -4,

DAM +6, Soak +8, HP -20

Move: 100**Mix:** +0.2

Beetle-works are a cross between a robot and a conveyance. Ten feet high, twenty feet long, and weighing about one hundred tons, these are the workhorses of the dwarven robot fleet. A large cargo trunk sits where the carapace and wing case of an actual beetle would be placed. They are not especially fast, capable at maximum speed of only slightly outrunning a sprinting Viking. Still, "slightly" is enough to make this vehicle a formidable weapon. Beetle-works move rumblingly forward on mammoth treads capable of not just crushing but utterly liquefying any living thing unlucky enough to get run over by them. Heroes brought to 0 or fewer hit points, or a fifth Wound, by a Beetle-werk are assumed to have been run over and cannot be revived by any means. Their non-fatal injuries are assumed to be less conclusive: a victim may be rammed, have a foot run over, or whatever.

CENTI-WERK**Max. Threat:** Inferior**Benchmark:** 6**Adjusts:** INIT +15, ATK -2, DEF -3**Move:** 15**Mix:** 0

Centi-works look like ungainly mechanical centipedes, about as big as a man's arm. They scoot through the Underground, following trails and tunnels too small even for dwarves to crawl through. These are the most

perceptive of dwarven craftwerks, capable of sniffing out non-dwarves and even of transmitting a simple distress signal back to a receiver up to a mile away. (The receivers are several stories tall and packed full of volatile tubes which often blow, sometimes delivering terrible shocks to the equipment operators.) If equipped for early detection, centi-werks are unable to fight. (In other words, treat this type of centi-werk as a trap that, if the heroes fail to evade it, levies a "stick" penalty which applies during a subsequent battle with dwarves or their minions; see p. 144.)

The transmitter can be taken out and replaced with a set of steely fangs, which makes the centi-werk into a foe, not a trap, with the above game statistics.

SPIDER-WERK



Max. Threat: Equal

Benchmark: 5

Adjusts: DAM +12, HP -10

Move: 15

Mix: +0.3

Spider-werks are cheaper and easier to make than centi-werks, and are used for simple sentry duty. They're about the size of an ottoman with long, metallic legs. They pierce foes with their bladed mandibles or simply spear them with the sharpened ends of their darting forelegs. Though made of metal, they are not especially sturdy and can be shattered with a stout axe-blow.

MECHA-DWARF



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 17

Adjusts: DAM +9

Move: 15

Mix: +0.3

The second part of the term "mecha-dwarf" is a terrifying misnomer, as these hellish concatenations of dwarf and robot stand about twelve feet tall. They're equipped with gigantic scything blades where their arms should be. The blades pivot on an axis for a choice of horizontal or vertical slicing. Their drooling, half-mad dwarven heads can therefore decide whether to split a hero from stem to stern or simply go for the classic slash clear through the waist. The heads of mecha-dwarves are harvested both from the

ranks of defectives who worsen on the operating table, and from honorable centurions near death in the wake of a battle. They aren't capable of intelligible speech, although they sometimes seem to be trying to say things. It is therefore unclear just how much thought is still going on in their reinforced craniums. Their behavior conforms to your basic mindless engine of destruction, but that's not exactly uncommon among denizens of the Underworld.

MEGA-DWARF



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 32

Adjusts: none

Move: 45

Mix: 0

Aspiring plunderers of Nidavellir should act fast, before the mega-dwarves are rebuilt. These are massive, experimental versions of the mecha-dwarf. The technology for the successful manufacture of mega-dwarfs is still shrouded in mystery and secrecy. Each family jealously hoards its own secrets, while feverishly intriguing to steal those of their rivals. (Viking heroes might find monetary advantage in helping one bloodline pillage the blueprints of another.) The now-dead King Hugir had the best selection of mega-dwarf technologies, but even he had to spend most of his time hooked up to a titanic grid contraption that fed him electrical power.

One advantage all mega-dwarf designs enjoy over the standard, smaller mecha-dwarf is that the head must retain its identity and intellectual vigor. Winning the struggle for kingship is no good if one is left a burbling vegetable plunked atop a colossal suit of armor and gears.

Mega-dwarf armaments vary according to family design traditions. The mega-dwarfs of the Guar clan traditionally shoot fire from their eyes, while their Haudranir counterparts emit a reeking, poisonous gas. Perhaps the most celebrated method is that of the Jauptharir, whose mega-dwarves come equipped with twin buzz-saws, each ten feet in diameter and honed with such diamond-sharpness that they can cut a wisp of cloud in two and make it rain.

Elves

Elves are an ancient race of people more at home in darkened woods than in the open fields honest men favor. Though the stories tell of good elves who dwell in a land called Alfheim and who will fight with the Aesir at Ragnarok, it is much more common to meet the dark elves, a cruel and dispassionate people who delight in mischief and intrigue. Their realm, Svartalfheim, is legendary as a place of treasure and danger. Elves shun the Underground, preferring always to hear the rustle of tree branches above their heads.

Elves are slightly taller than humans, but much slimmer. Their features are sharp, and their narrow eyes icy-blue. They are beautiful, but in a cold and alien way.

MISCHIEF-MAKER



Max. Threat: Equal

Benchmark: 8

Move: 30

Adjusts: INIT +3, DAM -3

Mix: 0

Young elves are too foolish and impetuous to survive in the oaken palaces of Svartalfheim, where poison and treachery rule. They are sent out into the woods to cavort with giant spiders and soul-hungry pixies until they achieve both skill and wisdom. Nothing pleases them more than finding mortals in Svartalfheim. For these unwanted guests, they prepare a multitude of tricks and snares.

COURTIER



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 12

Move: 30

Adjusts: INIT +3, DAM -3

Mix: 0

An elfin courtier is always a skilled warrior as well as an accomplished schemer; both abilities are honed well by a lifetime of maneuvering for power in the high courts of Svartalfheim. These elves

might feature in non-combat encounters, as many a hero has been talked into participating in certain of their events by a wily, silver-tongued elfin courtier.

Goblins

Goblins are skulking, bestial humanoids who will pose a danger to beginning warriors and a nuisance to more experienced ones. Their chief habitat is the Underground. They rarely make incursions into the world of men, but may infest out-of-the-way pockets of Svartalfheim and Jotunheim. Dwarves often raid goblin territory to capture slaves. Escaped goblin slaves, and their descendants, are sometimes found cowering in Nidavellir's darkest corners, terrified that they will be caught and sent back to the dwarves' thundering, mechanized mills and factories.

Goblins speak in a guttural, growling language. They can either share their thoughts, or possess such basic and obvious instincts that they're able to act together as if impelled forward by a hungry, reflexively aggressive hive mind. When they see something moving, and it smells like it has meat on it, or looks like something one of them once smelled that seemed to have meat on it, they attack.

Devoted carnivores, goblins will eat almost anything remotely meaty, except for living goblins. They'll happily devour their ill and slain.

Some goblins are free-ranging, owing loyalty to none but the other members of a small pack. Most, though, are bound by psychic link to a goblin leader. Viking sages argue over the nature of these leaders. Some wise men say that they're priests and priestesses, capable of summoning the spirits of powerful ancestors. Others call them kings and queens, arguing that they are nothing more than very big and strong specimens of their kind capable of inspiring fear and awe in their followers.

Free-ranging goblins take slain enemies and drag them into well-protected hidey-holes, like the fissures of rock in underground caverns. There they eat them, beginning with the soft fleshy parts and tasty internal organs. After stripping the bodies of all flesh and skin, they crack open the bones and slurp-

ingly suck them free of marrow. Any hero making an Awareness roll with a Difficulty of 6 can identify a set of bones, human or otherwise, as having been gnawed upon by goblins.

Bound goblins drag their catches back to the throne rooms of their leaders, turning them over to a typically well-fed functionary who mediates between the monarch and his followers. The meat is then split up and divided amongst the tribe. The hunter who caught the meat may get an extra share, but the leader and his immediate circle get the best cuts.

Goblins do not worship Loki but sometimes obey his minions, out of fear. They are also sometimes used as expendable troops by elves, dwarves, and giants. Though sometimes they are overcome by their bloodthirsty instincts and will roil into battle with headlong ferocity, they're usually reluctant fighters when pressed to fight for others.

ROCK GOBLINS



Max. Threat: Inferior

Benchmark: 3

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Vikings refer to the standard male warrior-hunters of goblinkind as rock goblins, because they're often found skulking around on the rocks of underground passageways. They can't resist attacking anything vaguely meat-like, even if their bellies are swollen from previous kills.

Rock goblins are stupid and will rush forward to attack a target even after seeing their predecessors horribly mangled by him. They'll also lope through an obvious trap one after another, the later ones in the chain seemingly oblivious to the fact that every one of them gets slashed to tiny chunks on the way through.

Rock goblins are small, grey humanoids who move with a quadrupedal lope. Their movements combine the hopping motion of the bullfrog with the tentative, shivering energy of the squirrel. They can stand up on two legs, but are better balanced on four. They run and fight from this position. Rarely

armed, they attack with sweeping swipes of their oversized, clawed hands. They're about four and a half feet long from snout to toenail, and weigh about a hundred and twenty pounds.

Rock goblins don't speak Norse, or any other language, for that matter. Even if you could communicate with them, they're not capable of thoughts more complex than, "You smell like food," "We kill and eat you now," or "We kill and eat you later." It is therefore virtually impossible to interact with them. Best just to cut off their freaking heads.

ROCK GOBLINESSES



Max. Threat: Inferior

Benchmark: 4

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Goblin females are generally bigger, stronger, and smarter than their rock goblin brothers born to the same litter. Though similarly bestial and incapable of sophisticated judgments or meaningful interaction, they are a bit cleverer than their male kin. They are also somewhat more dangerous in combat.

Female warriors sometimes lead parties of rock goblins. Other packs avoid male company except when in heat. Some Vikings swear that female goblins hunt and eat their male counterparts, but this probably isn't true. It's more likely that free-ranging females defend themselves against gang attacks by rock goblins with unwelcome mating urges. They kill to protect themselves and then eat the corpses, as any goblin would.

Female warriors share the body type and characteristic movements of the rock goblin, but are about five feet long and one hundred and forty pounds in weight. Whereas rock goblins rarely groom themselves, female warriors are fastidious creatures, taking special care to gnaw and sculpt their nails to maximum sharpness.

WARRIORS



Max. Threat: Inferior

Benchmark: 5

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Goblin warriors are bigger and stronger than rock goblins. They know how to use weapons and show no particular propensity for stupidly suicidal actions. They usually wear ragged armor of scrap leather. Their stance and movement is less animalistic than the rock goblins; they run and stand on two legs.

Some of them form into free-ranging bands that survive by hunting and scavenging. Goblin warriors, though as carnivorous as their more bestial cousins, can restrain their instincts. They might hold off on attacking a foe until a terrain advantage presents itself. A few of them even learn to interact with others. They learn bits and pieces of Norse as well as the languages of the non-human races. They use these to bargain for food, trading scavenged equipment, silver, potions, charms, and amulets. These goblin traders are only too happy to cheat travelers. They'll also shadow and ambush trading partners after taking leave of them, hoping to



recover their lost goods. Although sneaky enough to maneuver foes into positions favorable to them, they show little tactical finesse when the battle is actually joined.

In goblin communities, goblin warriors enjoy a degree of status. They get to bully rock goblins and female warriors, but are browbeaten in turn by slayers and freaks.

SLAYERS



Roving Slayer

Max. Threat: Equal

Benchmark: 6

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Senior Slayer

Max. Threat: Equal

Benchmark: 7

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Slayers are the swaggering guardsmen who enjoy elevated status in goblin communities. As loyal guardsmen and lackeys to the leader class, they are permitted to grow distinctive tufts of hair that run up the center of the head, from the base of the neck to the crown of the skull. They dye these in wild colors to increase their appearance of ferocity. Slayers usually lead groups of goblin warriors into battle. Goblin leaders have only so many of these bully-boys at their disposal at any one time and feel queasy sending them all off to fight and die. Though nowhere near as stupid as rock goblins, slayers tend to puff up with vainglory and are prone to overconfidence.

Though they grovel and whine in the presence of their leaders, most slayers are sufficiently ambitious to want to lay weapons and silver away for future use. Each hopes to one day become a leader himself, and dreams of a time when he will sit upon a couch of moldering velvet, surrounded by green-skinned, bulbous concubines, having become so corpulent that he can scarcely exert himself to shift his bulk from one lounging position to another. The key to a

rise through the goblin ranks to leader status is to become popular with one's fellow goblins. Ambitious types cultivate allies by secretly feeding them with meat captured out in the dangerous corridors of the Underground. The hope is that they'll fight for their benefactor on the day when their leader finally turns blue from apoplexy or chokes to death on his own spit-up. Slayers therefore often stage raids without the knowledge of their leaders, hoping to secretly gain food for this purpose. Leaders remember only too well how they schemed to displace their predecessors, and are greedily alert for signs that their slayers are holding out on them. Slayers have to strike swiftly to evade their spies. Knowing what they risk, they tend to fight with a nervous and desperate ferocity. When fighting on behalf of their leaders, on the other hand, they carefully preserve their own hides, ordering underlings into the fray to soften up their prey before risking their own entry into battle.

FREAKS



Max. Threat: Superior

Benchmark: 8

Adjusts: INIT +6, ATK +1, DFN -3,

DAM +3, Soak -1

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Freaks are the drooling, ferocious berserkers of goblinkind. Brightly-banded, sleek, fast, and primed for slaughter, these creatures are as formidable as goblins get. About one out of a hundred goblin whelps is born a freak. To witness the birth of a freak is a horrible thing: they usually tear their way out of their mothers' wombs, in a gush of putrid blood. As the mother's dying shrieks echo off the cavern walls, nervous, well-armored slayers dash about, attempting to corner the hissing, sharp-clawed newborn and whip a chainmail sack over its head. (Regular burlap bags won't do; infant freaks can slash their way through cloth in an instant.) The baby freak is borne to a special feeding chamber and slapped into a metal cage rimmed with closely-spaced, barbed bars. For a period of three to four years, perspiring attendants toss meat into its cage, watching in horror as its razor-sharp teeth strip flesh from bone. During this time, goblin shamans waft foul-smelling, magi-

cal smokes and vapors into the cage. These slowly pacify the freak, allowing it a modicum of self-control in the presence of other goblins. At the end of this time, it reaches full maturity and is able to leave the cage without immediately setting upon and devouring the members of its own tribe. However, even the bravest slayer must still treat the freaks in their midst with delicate respect, as the merest slight can drive them into killing frenzy.

Goblin leaders value freaks as their ultimate warriors. They loose the creatures into the corridors around their underground domains, allowing them to eat whatever they kill. Their predations keep outsiders at bay. Leaders command the freaks to stick to the outlying areas of their realms; no one wants a creature with the hair-trigger unpredictability of a freak as bodyguard. Freaks are too bestial-minded to be interested in goblin politics or matters of succession. They just want to kill and eat things. Although most are too blood-hungry to do anything but leap immediately at anything that smells warm and alive, a few of them exhibit a sadistic cunning. These unusual specimens like to play with their food before killing it.

SHAMANS



Max. Threat: Inferior

Benchmark: 3

Adjusts: none

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Goblins fear the gods and avoid their schemes whenever possible. They know that the magic of the divine realms comes with a price. If they accept aid from either the Aesir or from Loki, they'll have to fight in the final battle of Ragnarok, a conflagration they want nothing to do with. The goblins expect to be skulking and scavenging long after the gods and their foolish followers succeed in killing each other off. So they settle for the more modest magics that can be gained by calling on the ghosts and spirits of their ancestors. They also harvest subterranean plants and fungi with magical properties, fermenting and drying them to make various burnable

powders. They ignite these powders to create smokes and vapors with magical properties.

Only a few goblins are born with the capacity to become shamans. They're physically weaker than warriors, but much smarter, and more greatly attuned to the hidden world of shades and spirits.

Shamans who follow goblin leaders enjoy privileged status. They get some of the best meat, choosing their cuts only after the leaders themselves, or sometimes the tribe's top slayer. Goblin leaders tend to get stupider over time, as they grow ever grosser and more bloated, becoming increasingly dependent on their shamans for advice. In scenes of negotiation with goblin leaders, it is often the tribal shaman who does the talking, as the leader grunts his assent or punctuates the conversation with the occasional low, rumbling belch. Shamans speak proudly, as if they are the aides to great heads of state. They regard Viking warriors with haughty disdain, but quickly turn to sweaty-browed wheedlers when their lives are threatened. Then they show their true cowardly colors. In their hearts, they feel simmering contempt for the leaders they serve, and will without a gulp of conscience betray them in exchange for their own continued survival.

Some shamans are solitary, either by preference or because they've been exiled from their tribes by petulant overlords. They hide away in well-disguised lairs protected by rings of traps, most powered by their strange magic. They may barter potions or knowledge of the Underground for precious, juicy fresh meat.

Shamans are best included in encounters as sources of support for other goblin attackers, like warriors or slayers. Their braziers of smoking herbs generate weird magic (see p. 128) which typically benefits only the goblins. The cost and nature of these magics are left up to designers, and must be paid for separately. Shamans can also call down weird magic simply by chanting to their ancestors. The disadvantage of this is that the effect goes away if the shaman is slain or otherwise stopped from chanting, while the effect of the smoke braziers survives them. The braziers can be extinguished, too, but it's harder to do this than to kill a shaman. A hero

attempting to do so must have at least a bucket full of water or sand on hand, must get to the brazier past probable opposition, and must then take an action to douse the burning herbs. Burning braziers bear the usual encounter point costs of weird magic. But the same magic summoned up by chanting shamans costs only half the usual amount. Goblin magic is always attuned to benefit only them, or to hamper only non-goblins.

LEADERS



Max. Threat: Weak

Benchmark: 2

Adjusts: HP +50

Move: 5

Mix: +0

A goblin leader is an overgrown slayer who has out-survived his fellows and seized the throne upon the death of his predecessor. On rare occasions, he'll be a shaman who's maneuvered his way to power. He rules a tribe of anywhere from several dozen to several hundred rock goblins, female warriors, slayers, freaks, and shamans. When he is not gorging himself on food provided to him by his wretched subjects, he carefully monitors the activities of his inner circle of slayers and shamans, alert to signs of treachery. Knowing that they want to succeed him, he plays them off against one another, so that they spend their time trying to do one another in, neglecting to consider just how soft his belly is, and how difficult it would be for an individual of his bulk to dodge a surprise spear-thrust. Surprisingly, few goblin leaders are killed in *coup* attempts. Their leading cause of death is, naturally, the axes and swords of righteous Viking warriors. Apoplexy, brought on by gross obesity, competes with choking as the number two cause of death.

Constant eating causes great cascades of fat to sluice up into the goblin brain. Goblin leaders are struck with a lethargy of thought as well as action. Their favorite shamans often do the talking and governing on their behalf. (Especially cunning shamans know that it's safer to rule by proxy than to make themselves the target of jealous slayers by seizing the throne themselves.)

Even a comatose Viking warrior could probably best a goblin leader in combat. It is the leader's many bodyguards, and the various traps that lace his throne room, that should give a hero pause. Leaders know much about their areas of the Underground, and have caches of treasure secreted away to buy off the hostile intentions of Viking marauders. They therefore serve as splendid non-combat opponents.

A goblin leader counts as a terrain feature for victory point determination purposes.

VEGETARIANS



Max. Threat: Inferior

Benchmark: 4

Adjusts: INIT +1, DAM -3

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Not all goblins are ravening, half-bestial fiends whose lust for meat keeps them in a near-constant homicidal frenzy. A breakaway group of goblins seeks to convert its people from their lives of carnivorous violence. The vegetarian goblins preach a doctrine of peace and goodwill towards all. They subsist not on the hacked-off limbs of their enemies, but on the various herbs and luminous fungi that light the otherwise darkened paths of the Underground. These are often the same plants that the shamans use to concoct their arcane powders and potions, and, indeed, the vegetarian goblins seem to acquire both strange powers and a hallucinatory view of the world.

Though hostile to standard goblins, vegetarian goblins cannot be considered the automatic allies of Viking warriors. They despise all killing, and look with tongue-clucking disdain on the pursuit of martial glory that motivates any self-respecting hero. They regard most of the Aesir as crazed and dangerous promoters of senseless murder. However, they do profess to worship Hoder, the blind Aesir god who accidentally slew Baldur, as part of Loki's attempt to accelerate the onset of Ragnarok. After ingesting large quantities of glowing mushroom paste, vegetarian goblins believe that they look upon the face of sorrowful Hoder, who now preaches against any use of arms. They wish to

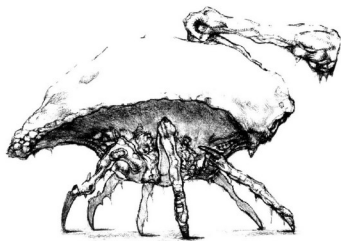
bring his revelations first to their own people, and then to men, giants, and dwarves.

If vegetarian goblins encounter Viking warriors, they may waylay them in hopes of making them into fungi-happy envoys bearing Hoder's message of peace and repentance to Scandinavia's fjords. They'll use their special attacks (see below) to render the heroes unconscious. Then they'll carry them off to their indoctrination chambers. Vegetarian goblins always strip captured Vikings of all weapons, shields, and armor. Any other Underground denizens would use the equipment themselves, or keep it in order to barter away later. The vegetarians regard the accoutrements of war as obscene and unclean, and do their best to immediately destroy them, or at least hide them where no one will find them. They'll toss even the most precious of magical weapons into lava pits, or into bottomless wells.

Captured Vikings face prolonged sessions of mushroom ingestion, after which they're subjected to lessons in meditation. The "new acolytes," as the vegetarians like to call them, are kept imprisoned in stout metal cages throughout this process. Vegetarian goblins always seem not just surprised but shocked when the Vikings escape and begin to pummel them to death.

They most especially want to convert the dwarves, who regard the vegetarians as easy pickings for their slave raids. Ironically, it is dwarven slavery that allows Vegetarians to spread their doctrine to other tribes. In the mills and presses of Nidavellir, they rub elbows with goblins from all over. Their preaching finds eager ears among enslaved goblins, who are fed only on fungal ooze and are anxious to believe that their state is not as wretched as it seems. Ordinary goblins become demoralized and slack-witted under the yoke of slavery, leaving the vegetarians to maintain their dignity and organize sabotage and escape attempts. When escapes succeed, slaves return to their home tribes to secretly promote the vegetarian cause. Eventually they leave their tribes to join all-vegetarian communities, often bringing their own converts with them.

Goblin leaders mock the vegetarians as naïve and doomed, but see any hint of vegetarian-



ism in their own ranks as a sign of weakness and degradation. They see to it that their shamans and warriors ferret out any secret vegetarians in their midst. If caught, they're slain and then made the centerpiece of special feasts.

Vegetarian goblins loathe violence but recognize their need to defend themselves. Fortified with magic fungi, they strike their foes with open, glowing palms. When their attacks succeed, they do only stun damage (see p. 142). Stun damage ignores armor.

Other Foes

GIANTS



Max. Threat: Terrifying
Benchmark: 20
Adjusts: INIT -9, DAM +3
Move: 60
Mix: 0

Take a Viking, make him four times uglier than he already is, blow him up to four times his height, knock out a third of his teeth, and you have a giant. These unruly titans, rarely seen outside

the boundaries of their kingdom, are the ancient rivals of the gods. Although they seem peaceable now, content to drink, eat, gamble, and engage one another in good-natured battles, the giants have a sinister side. Vikings caught by giants will

be treated as playthings, and it is well known that the giants have a habit of breaking their toys. When Ragnarok comes, the colossi of Jotunheim will fight against the Aesir, as they have done in the past.

LAND CRABS



Small Land Crabs
Max. Threat: Inferior
Benchmark: 5
Adjusts: DFN -3, Soak +3
Move: 15
Mix: 0

Large Land Crabs
Max. Threat: Exceptional
Benchmark: 10
Adjusts: DFN -3, Soak +3
Move: 15
Mix: 0

Land crabs are an omnipresent menace in the Underworld. These air-breathing crustaceans hunt by vibration, hugging the paving stones or hardened earth of subterranean passageways. When they sense movement, they scuttle with surprising speed towards its source, snipping away with its sharp, crushing pincers. Though a land crab bite can cause a nasty injury, the creatures are timid in the face of a stout defense. If hit hard enough, they freeze into a defensive posture, withdrawing their comparatively delicate claws, legs and eyestalks under their shells, which they clamp tight to the surface below them. Land crabs adopt their defensive posture after suffering any hit in which the ATK result exceeds the DFN roll by 10 or more. This happens regardless of the actual damage the crab takes. Although it is possible to overturn and kill a land crab, the effort is worth it only when one is hungry. Some land crabs are quite tasty when boiled, but others take on the fungal taste of the creatures they prey upon. It is impossible to know before tasting it how edible a land crab will be.

Remarkable camouflage abilities make land crabs difficult to avoid, especially in the Underworld's gloom. They're capable of mimicking the color and textural appearance of virtually any surface they rest upon for more than an hour. They retain these pat-

terns when they move onto other surfaces: a land crab with a brick-like pattern on its shell will still be colored red after it pursues its prey onto yellowish sand. The minimum difficulty of Awareness rolls to spot land crabs is 12. The cost of this difficulty is already reflected in the creature's Might score.

Land crabs are a dangerous nuisance, not a foe a hero might boast about besting when quaffing mead in Valhalla. Heroes get victory points only for the land crabs they kill and eat, and then only if they are low on rations and must hunt for food.

TROLLS



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 10

Adjusts: DFN -1, DAM +3

Move: 15

Mix: 0

Trolls, exiled from their shattered land of Trollheim, now scour the Underground for useful weapons and magics to use in a coming war of liberation, in which their enslaved kin will be freed from thralldom in Svartalfheim. Or so they'll tell you. In truth, many of these hulking, thick-skinned, brutish-looking beings have given up on their dream of vengeance, and act merely as petty bandits and waylayers.

Trolls are human-shaped, but tend to be anywhere from ten to twelve feet high. Their hands, teeth, and feet are out of proportion even for their size.

TUBE STRIKERS



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 12

Adjusts: none

Move: 0

Mix: NA

Tube strikers are overgrown, air-breathing relatives of the coral polyp. Encased in upright, rock-hard skeletal tubes, they wait for moving prey to rumble past them. Fleshy suckers attach them to the floor of an underground chamber. These are sensitive to vibrations. When a creature passes by, the tube striker unfurls its



long, whip-like neck, which bears a head resembling a lizard or dragon. Sometimes the jaws bite deep into a target's flesh. Alternately, the head grabs its prey and lifts it up towards the top of the tube. Its tentacles contain receptors sensitive to both the weight of an object, and whether it is organic or not. If it succeeds in grabbing and lifting an inorganic object, or a living thing too big to stuff down the two-foot diameter of the tube, it then flings away the rejected prey. Tube strikers don't eat heroes, but they may well grab their weapons and toss them away, or toss the heroes themselves into nearby lava pits, gorges, or flame jets.

Whenever a tube-striker's Initiative rolls around, roll a die to determine which of the two attack types it will use. It makes a bite attack on an even roll, and a grab attack on an odd roll. This random determination does not represent an action taken by the creature; it's just a way for runners to simulate the unpredictability of its instinctive reactions.

A bite attack is like any other attack and requires no further explanation.

On a successful grab attack, roll another die: on an odd result, it grabs the hero; on an even result, the tube-striker grabs an object on his per-

son. It throws either in a random direction. (Runners who use a miniatures mat or reference map with a hex grid should take a garden variety six-sided die and roll it to determine the direction.) An object travels 8 paces per point of difference between the tube-striker's ATK roll and the hero's DFN roll. Heroes are thrown a mere 4 paces per point of difference.

Breaking through this creature's rock-like skeletal tube is both phenomenally difficult and pointless. Killing a tube striker earns no glory (that is, no victory points), and the rosy flesh of the tube striker is no more edible than a tanned sheep's hide. Its DFN score reflects the difficulty of hitting a tentacle. If a hero deals 8 or more points of actual damage with a sharp-edged weapon like an axe or sword, the tentacle is severed. Tube-strikers have four tentacles each; if all four are gone, they can't attack.

Tube-strikers are really more like traps that happen to use the combat rules to adjudicate their effects. They do not have Mix values and are priced as traps, not combat opponents. Instead, they cost 7 encounter points per tube-striker, unless they appear as part of the scenery during a fight with another opponent. Then they're considered a terrain feature and cost -7 points per tube striker. Designers get points for, at most, four tube strikers, but can place more than that in their combat scenes if they want. Naturally, for maximum excitement, they'll want to place tube strikers in scenes where their random flinging of combatants might send them hurtling into mud pits, lava flows, or raging rivers.

WENDOLS



Max. Threat: Terrifying

Benchmark: 15

Move: 15

Adjusts: INIT -3, DAM +1

Mix: 0

Wendols are gigantic, vicious animal predators. Their fifteen-foot-tall frames cross body characteristics of apes, wolves, and big cats. Although they prefer a quadrupedal stance, they can for short periods rear up on their haunches, like a grizzly bear. They inhabit the snow-covered wastes of Midgard.



Wendols belong to small family units, hunting alongside their still-active parents and/or mature offspring. A few of them have expanded their range to the caverns of the Underground. Their long fur is either white, gray, or black, depending on their habitat. They fight with both formidably large clawed paws, and with the sharp, nail-shaped teeth that line their blunt, leathery snouts. Their favorite tactic against smaller opponents is the charge: they slam their massive bulk into their prey, knocking it down and then pinning it. A victim trapped beneath its three-ton frame is in little shape to flee or properly fight back. The human, goblin, and elfin bones found near Wendol lairs often reveal broken ribs, indicating that their victims often die from crushing damage even before their throats are torn out and soft belly meats devoured.

Wendols do not discriminate between men, goblins, dwarves, or any other type of being — everything is meat to them. They'll even attack the Dishonored and Sark Amen. Like any large predator, they're not averse to scavenging carrion, and the fact that certain items of carrion are still ambulatory means nothing to them. Absolutely fearless, they attack anything that moves.

On its first attack against a target, if the range between them is 30 paces or greater, the wendol may make a charge attack. On a success, the target has fallen down (see p. 53 of the Combat chapter.) On any other success, the wendol is on top of the target. He not only takes the armor-ignoring damage given above, and is treated as if he has fallen down, but he can't get up again until the wendol withdraws. If he kills the wendol, he can climb out from under it, which takes two rounds of effort.

Designers may pay an additional cost equal to that of making the wendol Self-Willed in order to specify that it will attack other non-wendol foes in the course of a combat encounter. The creature treats all non-wendols on the battlefield as possible legal targets, according to the Foe Target Choice Flowchart. To make the wendol both Self-Willed and capable of attacking other foes, the designer must pay twice the normal cost of making him Self-Willed. These wendol attacks are exempt from the usual rules governing collateral damage to foes (p. 197); in this case, the foe loses hit points or possibly even dies, but none of the players gain victory points as a result. By including this feature, the runner enjoys the benefit of depressing the possible victory point tallies of his opponents, the pillagers.

CREATING YOUR OWN CREATURES

To invent a creature of your own, first write out a brief description of its appearance and habits. This is a game of combat, so you don't need a scientific treatise on its role in its ecological niche or the sociological significance of its mating rituals. You should, however, think of at least one thing about it that makes it different from the creature types the game already has. The game statistics of **Rune** are sufficiently fungible that you don't need to create slight variations on existing creatures just to get a foe with the right power level.

If it is an intelligent humanoid, it can probably use missile weapons; if it is of animalistic intelligence or lacks standard human shape, it can't.

Craftwerks, undead, magical beings, and creatures with very strange anatomies can't be knocked unconscious. Any other type of creature probably can.

Decide whether the creature uses its natural weaponry, or relies on equipment.

Creatures at least as intelligent as the heroes can generally wait to attack. Otherwise, they rush in headlong.

ADJUSTS

Just because a designer can work adjusts into your new creature doesn't mean he should. But if his concept of the creature really requires it to be

tougher, slower, or more damaging than the standard foe of its threat category, he can specify one or more adjusts.

Creatures whose adjusts balance out are the easiest to include in an encounter. To balance a creature's adjusts, decrease one game statistic for each one you increase. Some game statistics are more equal than others. The exchange rate between statistics is as follows.

**3 INIT = 1 ATK = 1 DFN = 3 DAM =
1 Soak = 10 HP = 3 Res**

You want to increase the creature type's INIT by 3. You can balance that by reducing its ATK, DFN, or Soak by 1, its DAM by 3, or its hit points by 10.

You want to increase its HP by 60. You could reduce its ATK and DFN by 3 apiece. You could just as well decrease its DAM by 6 and its Soak by 4.

Downward adjustments to INIT, HP, and/or Res cannot be used to earn countervailing statistic increases, because including foes who are weak in those areas does not pose a significant disadvantage to the clever designer/runner.

Balanced creatures are preferable, especially if the designer wants to use them again, or encourage others to use his creatures. Still, designers can create unbalanced creature types. Unbalanced types must reflect their departure from normal game statistics with an adjusted Mix value. If the creature is weaker than the norm, its Mix decreases by 0.1 for each point of difference. If it is stronger, its Mix value increases by 0.1 for each point of difference. A point of Mix difference equals 3 INIT points, 1 ATK, 1 DFN, 3 DAM, 1 Soak, 10 HP, or 3 Res.

Your new creature, the Pulsating Spew-Rat, has an Adjust of INIT +9, ATK -2. 3 points of INIT are worth 1 point of ATK, leaving +3 INIT unpaid for. 3 points of INIT equals 1 point of Mix difference. The Mix value of a Pulsating Spew Rat is +0.1.

A Skittering Mudfish has a -6 DAM rating, and no positive adjustments to offset it. 3 DAM equals 1 point of Mix difference, so this creature's Mix value is -0.2.

STEP FOUR: ADDING TERRAIN

BEGINNERS, SKIP THE TERRAIN

Groups just learning these rules should skip terrain for their first encounter or two. (The introductory adventure in Chapter Seven has minimal terrain features; beginners should probably use that anyhow.) When running an encounter designed for beginners, runners get 20 extra victory points to compensate them for terrain-related awards they would otherwise receive.

As seen on p. 93, a runner's chance of winning increases if terrain features come into play during fight scenes. This is our way of bribing designers to make the fights more fun and interesting. In order to cash in on this bribe, you're going to have to include terrain features in your encounter. This section tells you how.

Designers can include as many terrain features in a combat event as they want, but only get encounter points for three features. They get to pick which three count. As you saw on p. 95, runners receive no victory points for terrain features that have no hope of coming into play. So designers should either bunch them close together, to make sure that the heroes at least come close to them, or should add extra terrain features so the heroes will use or approach enough features to cover the points earned.

Encounters without combat opponents do not provide extra points for terrain features.

Some point costs vary depending on the percentage of the combat area the terrain feature takes up. If the affected area is sizeable, but does not cover the entire area, characters will have good reason to maneuver their way in or out of it, depending

on whether the terrain feature favors or disadvantages them. This will create maximum excitement in your encounter, which is why we bribe you to do it.

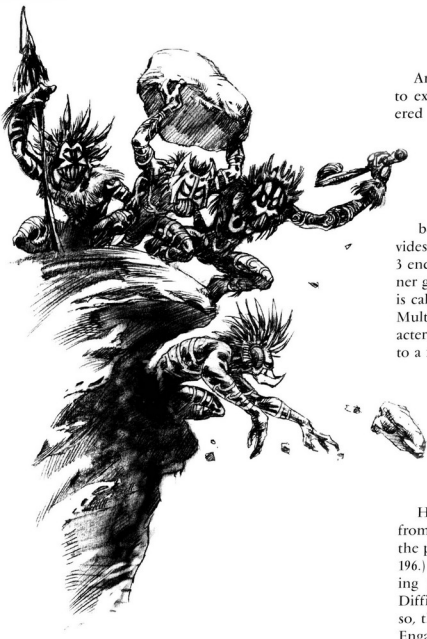
Once you decide how much of your combat area is affected by a terrain feature, map it out on graph or hex paper. Count the squares/hexes to ensure that the right number of them are marked as bearing that feature. If your encounter area bears more than one area-affecting feature, use colored pencils to indicate their borders. That way you can have them overlap if you want — provided that the overlap makes sense.

BARRIERS

A **barrier** is any object that can interfere with one combatant's attempt to hit or defend against another in melee combat; as seen on p. 53, it magnifies the advantage of the defter combatant. Barriers also force combatants to alter their routes as they charge through the battlefield. A combatant can either run around the barrier, or jump over it. Jumping a barrier takes a half action, effectively halving the total distance a combatant travels that round.

Examples of barriers include rotting timbers, chairs, rolled-up carpets, braziers, chicken cages, piles of rocks, and trenches. The designer gets 3 points for each barrier he places in an encounter, up to a limit of four.

Unless the designer specifies otherwise, the Difficulty of jumping a barrier is 6. The designer can make the Difficulty higher by paying the standard costs for an increased Difficulty. When a designer increases or decreases the Difficulty of jumping a barrier, he qualifies pillagers for victory points when they score successes, and runners for victory points when they miss. As usual, the addition to the victory point tally equals 3 times the difference between Difficulty and result.



For pillagers (and, conversely, runners) to qualify for victory points, one of the following situations must apply:

- The hero is moving towards an opponent, and the straightest route towards him is over a barrier.
- The hero is fleeing or retreating from an opponent, and the straightest route between him and an exit, or him and an item of cover, is over a barrier.

Cover

Any object that a character might hide behind to expose less of himself to missile fire is considered **cover**, and can provide encounter points.

Examples include large trees, walls, piles of rocks, fallen support columns, half-buried ships, and large items of furniture.

The points the designer gets depend on the number of people who can conceal themselves behind the object, and the degree of cover it provides. An object that provides **one-third cover** earns 3 encounter points. If it grants **half cover**, the runner gets 6 points. If it covers almost all of a target, it is called **full cover** and the runner earns 12 points. Multiply the points garnered by the number of characters who can hide behind the object (or objects), to a maximum of 36 points.

During the running of an encounter, a player might make a convincing case that an object the designer included for some other purpose ought to serve as cover. Of course, the runner doesn't retroactively gain encounter points for this revelation.

Heroes can also use cover to conceal themselves from Predictable foes, who ignore their existence for the purposes of the *Foe Target Choice Flowchart* (p. 196.) Self-willed foes can spot them behind their hiding places only by making Res rolls against the Difficulties listed on the chart below. Unless they do so, they aren't allowed to run behind the cover and Engage the hero.

Degree of Cover	Res Difficulty
One-third cover	3
Half cover	6
Full cover	9

If the hero lies prone behind cover, he increases the Difficulty by 3. He can lie down only if a) the cover could shelter three or more heroes and b) no other heroes are hiding with him.

If a combatant pops up from behind full cover to fire a missile, the runner randomly chooses a missile-using enemy to fire an opportunistic shot at him. In the case of foes, those bearing the howling goblin icon lose their next action. If they bear the smirking goblin icon, they do not lose an action. The opportunistic shot takes place as if the pop-up combatant is behind half cover, and is resolved after that combatant's action.

COVER AND ELEVATION

Combatants can take advantage of multiple levels (described later, on p. 124) to reduce the advantages provided by the cover behind which their opponents cower. The Atk penalty (see "Missile Attacks," p. 48) to hit a target behind cover is reduced by 3 for every 10 feet of elevation the missile user has over the target. Conversely, if the target enjoys an elevation advantage, the Atk penalty increases by 3 for every 10 feet of elevation separating the two combatants.

Ragnar stands on top of a 20 foot platform, and wants to fire his short bow at a goblin hiding behind a toppled statue. Normally the statue would provide half cover, for an Atk modifier of -6. The penalty to Ragnar's ATK roll is reduced by 3 for each of the two 10-foot increments separating him from the goblin. When you reduce a penalty, you add a positive number to a negative number: $-6 + 6 = 0$. The height difference completely negates the advantage of the cover. The goblin might as well be capering about with a flower between its teeth.

Let's say, though, that the goblin and his cover were up on that platform and Ragnar below them. Ragnar's Atk penalty would get worse, from -6 to -12.

The more geometry-minded among you might point out that, for a semblance of accuracy, this calculation should really involve a triangulation or some such nonsense. Bah! Norsemen do not triangulate!

JUMPING OVER COVER

Items of cover can, like barriers, force heroes to change their routes as they charge around on the battlefield. The Difficulty of jumping over an item of cover is 3 for one-third cover, 6 for half cover, and 9 for full. Designers may increase the

Difficulties by paying the difference in cost between the new and standard Difficulties.

Michelle decides that her piece of broken wall, which provides full cover, is festooned with dwarven barb-wire, increasing the Difficulty of jumping it from 9 to 12. Checking the chart on p. 129, she sees that a Difficulty 9 (free in this case) normally costs 30 points, while a Difficulty 12 costs 60 points. $60 - 30 = 30$, so her cost for changing the Difficulty from 9 to 12 is 30 points.

When they change the standard Jump Difficulties of cover items, designers qualify both pillagers and runners for success/failure additions to victory point tallies, using the rules given above, under "Barriers."

DAMAGING PLACES

A **damaging place** is a terrain feature that causes damage to all who enter a specific area. Examples include lava pits, expanses of flaming coals, dwarven steam-presses, or places exposed to biting mountain winds. The heroes must be able to avoid the damage simply by keeping away from it. They must be able to automatically perceive its dangers. Designers may not include any other trap or terrain feature that forces the heroes into the damaging place. They can, however, have foes attempt to maneuver them into it.

Designers can lure a hero into a damaging place by offering him treasures or other gains. He must be able to claim the prize simply by entering the damaging place. Designers get no encounter points for the treasures/gains they use as bait. If the hero must remain in the damaging place for 2 rounds to claim the prize, pay 10 encounter points. For 3 rounds, pay 20 encounter points. The designer may not require him to suffer the damage for more than 3 rounds.

A hero standing within a damaging place's area must make a Stamina roll versus a Difficulty of 4 for every round of his exposure to it. Its encounter point value is determined by its Dam rating.

Dam Rating	Cost
10	-10 encounter points
20	-20 encounter points
25	-30 encounter points
30	-20 encounter points
35	-10 encounter points

Runners can't use damaging places to kill off enemy combatants, which would deprive the heroes of their rightful victory points. Runners cannot cause foes to run willy-nilly into a damaging area. Nor may designers introduce any other mechanism forcing them into it. The only way foes can fall prey to the damage is if the heroes throw, shove, or otherwise maneuver them there. Remember that the heroes still get victory points for damaging or killing foes with terrain effects.

A damaging place can expand throughout the combat. It begins by covering one hex (which can be anywhere from 2 to 10 paces across, depending on your map scale), and every round expands to fill each adjacent hex. The cost of an expanding damage area depends on the size of your hexes:

Hex Size	Cost
2 - 4 paces	-20 encounter points
5 paces	-10 encounter points
10 paces	-1 encounter points

Designers can give damaging places additional trap-like features. For example, exposure to them might also pose a threat to weapons and equipment. However, designers must pay for these as they would any other trap.

EXTRAS

Extras are supporting characters who pose no threat to the adventurers but may complicate their attempts to mow down their true foes. It's funny to think of other people as terrain features, but non-combatants on the battlefield serve exactly the same complicating function as the other entries in this section, so that's where we're putting them.

Extras come in two types: **decoys** and **hostages**.

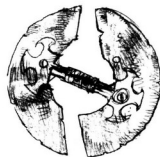
DECOYS

Decoys are servants, slaves, relatives, or other associates of the event's combat opponents who mean them no harm. They won't attack the heroes. At the beginning of each round, the runner rolls a die. If the result is less than or equal to the number of decoys, one of them is designated as **panicked**. The runner rolls Initiative for all panicked decoys, as well as all those who have yet to clear the battlefield. When a panicked decoy's Initiative turn comes up, he will run thirty paces in a direction chosen by the runner via a random die roll. Whenever his path intersects with a terrain feature (such as a barrier or an area of slippery ground) or the position of another character, he changes direction, until his 30 paces are up. Non-panicked decoys always run straight for the nearest cover or wall.

Decoys count as possible accidental targets when heroes fire into melee. Their frenzied leaps and terrified caterwauls distract combatants on both sides of the battle; any character rolling an ATK while within 5 paces of a decoy suffers a -1 per decoy decrease to his roll.

Although heroes gain no victory points for downing decoys, they can do so by making a melee or missile combat ATK roll against a flat Difficulty of 6. The decoy is either slain or decides to play dead until the fight is over, hoping to be overlooked in its aftermath. If the runner needs to know which is true, he rolls a die: on an odd result, the decoy lives.

The designer gains 10 encounter points for each decoy placed in an encounter, up to a total of 4 decoys. Decoys add to the complexity of running an encounter, and designers should avoid including more than three of them until they're experienced as runners.



HOSTAGES

Hostages are extras the heroes should want to rescue from their enemies. Captors rarely allow their prisoners to run about the battlefield; instead, they hide behind them. An enemy hiding behind a hostage adds 6 to his Soak score. The 6 points of damage instead accrue to the hostage, who has no Soak rating and can take 18 hit points before dying. An exception occurs if the hero's ATK roll exceeds the hostage-takers' DFN roll by 10 or more; in that case, the pillager can specify that his hero struck so deftly that he bypassed the terrified hostage.

Alternately, a hero can spend his action for the round on a special Engagement roll against the captor; if he wins, the hostage is pulled from the foe's grip. Freed hostages act like decoys — they run for the nearest wall or cover, but are subject to panic.

Heroes suffer a 20-point victory point deduction for each hostage slain during a fight, and gain 20 victory points for each hostage freed.

A designer gains 10 encounter points for each hostage he includes in an event, to a limit of 3 hostages per encounter.

Only crafty foes (with the smirking goblin icon) can use hostages. A foe can use a hostage to shield himself against, at most, two heroes. He can stop other heroes from poking at him by backing up against a wall or piece of cover.

LIMITED EXITS

If the combat takes place in an enclosed area and there is only one viable exit, the designer gains 20 points. That exit is probably also the entrance through which the heroes appear. If there are only two viable exits, the designer gains 10 points.

A viable exit is one which the hero can use to run away (see p. 45) without having to make a roll. If the hero must climb a rope or jump a chasm to get to an exit, or must roll to avoid a trap positioned at its threshold, it does not count as viable.

This assumes that only one hero per round can escape through each exit. The designer can also include a single exit, through which only two heroes can escape per round, and get 10 points for it.

MULTIPLE LEVELS

Think of your encounter area as a movie set. A single, flat floor does not an interesting set make. An encounter area outfitted with multiple levels allows opponents to jostle for higher ground. (As you'll recall from the Combat chapter, a warrior fighting from ground higher than his opponent enjoys an advantage over him.) Examples of higher ground can include balconies, walls wide enough to fight from, staircases, rooftops of low-slung buildings, piles of rubble, and modest escarpments.

For each additional level the designer builds into a combat encounter, he gains 5 points, to a maximum of 3 levels.

OBSCURED VISION

If heroes can't see, they will have trouble navigating their way around traps and hazards. They'll also face a significant disadvantage in combat, especially against foes who can see in the dark. The Underground, the environment in which the heroes will spend the majority of their time, is often dark. Most of its inhabitants, including goblins, dwarves, and the Dishonored, can see in very low light. Type descriptions of foes with night vision are marked with the crescent moon icon. (Dwarves and goblins find it tiring to do so for long periods, though, and often keep torches alight when not expecting axe-hefting company.) Heroes without light sources will also face penalties when exploring or fighting outdoors at night. In the Viking world, the night is something to be feared; dark threatens in a way that we, who always have electric lights at our disposal, find hard to imagine.

Some areas of the Underground are bathed in natural light. Torches may line inhabited corridors. Phosphorescent fungi grow in many of its wilder, uninhabited stretches, eerily illuminating caverns and fissures.

But when it is dark, heroes must carry torches. This limits at least some of them in combat, forcing them to choose between torch and shield. A torch reliably illuminates an area with a radius of twenty-five paces. Heroes can act without penalty even without a torch, provided that they are within that distance of someone else's light source.

If the heroes face opponents who can see in very low light, your decision to make a combat area dark actually costs you points, unlike most other terrain features. If the heroes face opponents who must also use torches or some other light source, it becomes a regular terrain feature that gains you points.

Full darkness costs (or gains) a designer 10 points. Heroes operating without a light source in full darkness suffer a decrease of 4 to all rolls based on Strength, Dexterity, Quickness, Perception, Communication, or Presence. This includes rolls of game statistics derived from Abilities based on those Characteristics, such as INIT and DEF.

Gloom costs (or provides) 5 encounter points. It is hard, but not impossible, to see in gloomy conditions. Characters without light sources suffer a 2 point decrease to all rolls based on the above-mentioned Characteristics.

Various situations can render the use of torches impossible. Other effects, like high winds or ongoing and heavy snow or rain, douse torches and keep them doused. These cost (or gain) an additional 10 points.

Darkness is not the only thing that obscures vision. Heavy fog reduces visibility in a way that torches won't deal with. So might thick swarms of insects, or clouds of smoke. (Smoke may also cause damage if inhaled; remember to pay for any damaging effects of smoke as a trap/hazard.) The degree to which the low visibility hampers rolls based on the above-named Characteristics varies from one vision-obscuring effect to the next. It might even vary in intensity within areas of an encounter, as the heroes move from the source of the effect to its periphery, or vice versa.

Anything that obscures vision in a way that the heroes can't address costs (or gains) 5 encounter points for each point of decrease it exerts. A design-

er gains 5 encounter points for each area of varying intensity within his combat area, up to a maximum of 3. He should make each a good size to increase the chance of earning victory points when they affect play.

Designers may also use darkness and obscured vision as a justification for increased Difficulties to non-combat rolls, for which they pay the standard cost.

OBSTRUCTIONS TO MISSILE FIRE

The encounter area may present numerous objects in the way of missile users, like multiple support columns, trees, jets of flame, or water spewed in an intricate pattern from an ancient fountain. Whatever its nature, the obstruction forces the missile user to spend an action moving whenever he switches to a new target, or whenever his current target makes a move. Missile fire obstructions earn 10 points if they're located throughout the area, or 5 points if they obstruct only about half of it.

Alternately, the entire area may be affected by a condition which increases the Difficulty of missile fire no matter the where shooter moves. It might be covered in fog, rendering all possible targets obscured. Or perhaps conditions are too windy to accurately predict the missile's arc. Because missile combat is contrary to the spirit of **Rune**, which holds that the only truly glorious fight is one in which your foe gets a chance to bleed on you as he goes down, designers get 5 encounter points for each penalty point they levy on missile users in this way. The maximum penalty is 4. Designers may change the Difficulty and the corresponding point, creating especially dense fog or high winds.

If you use this terrain feature, you can't also earn encounter points for including arrow icon-type foes who don't have missile weapons. (See p. 102.)

SLIPPERY GROUND

Areas of slippery ground slow movement and make it likely that some characters will slip and fall. They include muddy earth, rocks or paving stones slicked by water and/or moss, or snow-covered earth. Heroes with strong Balance ratings will want to lure their opponents into a slippery area; those prone to falling themselves will want to escape from it. In the area of muddy ground, the length of full and half moves is cut in two. Also, any character who moves more than 2 paces in the course of a single action must make a Balance (or Res) roll to avoid slipping. Any character who takes 10 or more points of raw damage from an opponent in melee combat (that is, before Soak is taken into account) must make a second DFN roll, or will fall into the mud. The second Balance roll uses as its Difficulty the original ATK result scored by the opponent. None of these rolls cost actions. But if the character does slip, he has fallen. See the rules for falling down, on p. 53 of Chapter Two.

The costs for slippery ground are:

- -15 encounter points if two-thirds of the area is slippery
- -10 encounter points if half the area is slippery
- -5 encounter points if either one-third of, or all of, the area is affected

Falling snow or rain might make an area slippery in the course of an encounter. The cost is the same as if the entire area were affected throughout the encounter.

SLOPED SURFACES

A sloped surface gives a higher ground advantage to the character who manages to maneuver himself to the upward side of the slope. Miststeps may cause heroes to fall down. Heroes who fall down may continue to roll down the slope.

At the beginning of combat, both Ragnar and his opponent are positioned on the same level of a slope. If he wins an engagement roll, Ragnar can move to higher ground.

TOP OF SLOPE



TOP OF SLOPE



Ragnar wins the engagement roll and gains the higher ground advantage! As long as he maintains this position he will receive a +2 bonus to all of his attack and defense rolls. He will also gain a +3 bonus to any further engagement rolls.

GAINING The HIGHER GROUND



To get the higher ground advantage over an opponent, a combatant must make an Engagement roll against him (see p. 44 of the Combat chapter). How difficult this is depends on the combatant's current position in relation to his adversary. The combatant with the advantage gets an increase of 3 to his Engagement roll. If both combatants are positioned on the same level of the slope (see the Gaining the Higher Ground Insert above), the Engagement roll is unmodified.

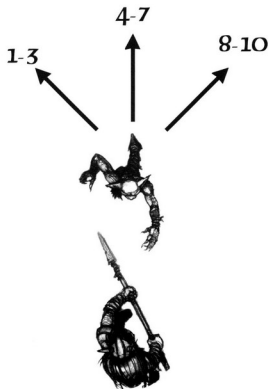
On a sloped surface, any character who takes 15 or more points of Raw Damage from an opponent in melee combat (that is, before Soak is taken into account) must make a second DFN roll, or will have

fallen down — see p. 53. If he fails the second DFN roll (which takes as its Difficulty the opponent's original ATK result) by more than 5, he not only falls down but begins to roll down the sloped surface. He comes to a stop at a distance of 3 paces for each point of difference between Difficulty and result, or at the end of the slope, whichever comes first.

The direction a combatant rolls in is determined by a roll as marked on the diagram below. The runner rolls a die. On a result of 1-3, the victim falls backwards at a 45 degree angle, to his adversary's left. On a result of 4-6, he falls directly backwards, ass over Viking teakettle. On a 7-10 result, he falls backwards at a 45 degree angle to his adversary's right.

FALLING DOWN ON A SLOPE

Ragnar smites his opponent, dealing a mighty 17 points of Raw Damage. The goblin fails its second DFN roll by 6 and loses its footing. The runner rolls a die to determine which way it rolls. Unless it reaches the end of the slope first, the goblin will roll 18 paces in this direction before coming to a stop.



TOP OF SLOPE

If, while rolling, a combatant hits another character, he might knock him over, too. The standing character may make a Dodge roll (Difficulty 6, no action required) to avoid falling down. If he fails the Dodge roll by 5 or less, he lands on top of the rolling character, bringing both to a halt. The two characters end up tangled together. While each can get up as normal (see falling down rules, p. 53, fallen combatants suffer an extra penalty if attacked while entangled in one another's limbs. Their DFN rolls decrease by 9, not the normal 6, and they can't attack at all, even if armed with a longshaft weapon.

When moving up a slope, the maximum distance a character can travel is halved. When moving down a slope, it is doubled.

No more than two characters can enjoy higher ground advantage over a single opponent.

Designers gain 15 points if an entire area is sloped, 20 points if two-thirds of it is sloped. They gain 5 points for each ramp, grade, or other slope placed within a generally flat combat area, provided that each sloped area covers at least 6 hexes of space. We're assuming here that the designer picks a hex size that's actually useful when it comes time to use the map, so that his sloping areas aren't just little tiny dots.

TUBE-STRIKERS

In some circumstances, the creature known as the tube-striker acts as a terrain feature. See its description on p. 117 of the Foes section.

UNEVEN GROUND

Uneven ground impedes movement but poses little falling risk. Examples of uneven ground include rubble-strewn ruins, the slopes of hills or ravines, and Underworld passageways whose flooring stones have heaved up.

Uneven ground reduces the maximum distance of full and half moves by 50%. It costs -7 points if it covers one-half to two-thirds of an area, -3 points if it covers all of an area or less than half of it.

WEIRD MAGIC

The strange magic of the gods, especially the trickster sorcery of Loki, can make any combat action more difficult. Grasping, partially incorporeal hands may appear out of nowhere to seize a warrior's weapons. Shrieking imps may manifest themselves on an attacker's blade, guiding it inexorably towards the defender's innards. Ill winds might sharpen sword edges or weaken shields.

Weird magic can add or subtract any number from any roll made during combat, including INIT, ATK, DEF, or the various rolls to activate Divine Powers. Or it can alter game statistics not normally rolled, like Damage.

Weird magic costs 10 points for each point of addition or subtraction to a roll or game statistic. If it hampers only the heroes

or benefits only their opponents, it costs points. If it affects both heroes and their opponents, hampers only their opponents, or benefits only the heroes, it earns points. The maximum adjustment to game statistics is 3. Designers can apply this to a single statistic, or spread the maximum 3 points around on a number of statistics.

Weird magic cannot apply to:

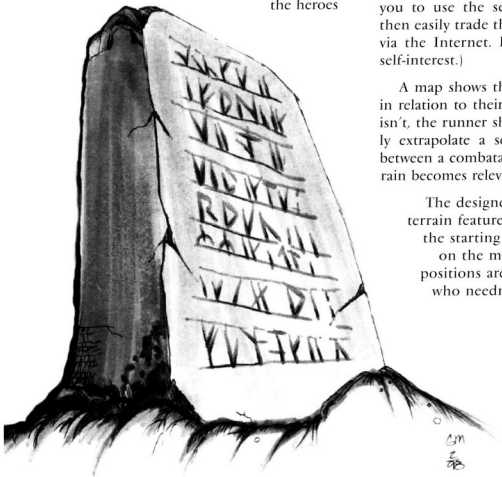
- both DEF and ATK
- both DAM and Soak
- foes' INIT rolls

DRAWING MAPS

Every combat scene needs a map. It can be a rough scrawl on a piece of scrap paper, a lovely computer printout created with mapping software, or a gorgeous work of hand-colored art. (We like you to use the second option, because you can then easily trade the encounter with other runners via the Internet. But pay no mind to our naked self-interest.)

A map shows the players where their heroes are in relation to their foes. It should be to scale. If it isn't, the runner should be able to quickly and fairly extrapolate a scale from it when the distance between a combatant and an enemy or piece of terrain becomes relevant.

The designer must place all of your chosen terrain features on the map. He can also note the starting positions of enemy combatants on the map, but this is optional. Starting positions are completely up to the designer, who needn't pay points for arranging foes to their (and his) advantage.



STEP FIVE: ASSIGNING DIFFICULTIES

Whenever the encounter notes call on a hero to make a roll, whether he's avoiding a trap or hazard or snapping up a treasure or gain, the designer must decide how difficult the roll is, and which, if any, special case rules apply to the situation. This section explains the costs for various difficulties and their related special cases.

BASIC COST

The cost of any roll, if victory would lead to a gain or prevent a negative event of some kind, is dependent on its Difficulty, as per the chart below.

Difficulty	Cost
4	-20 encounter points
5	-10 encounter points
6	+0 encounter points
7	+10 encounter points
8	+20 encounter points
9	+30 encounter points
10	+40 encounter points
11	+50 encounter points
12	+60 encounter points
13	+70 encounter points
14	+80 encounter points

The heroes reach a labyrinthine section of Underground passageways, its maze-like hallways obviously designed to confuse intruders. In order to find their way back to their camp and cache of food, one of the heroes must make a Map roll against a Difficulty of 12. This roll costs 35 encounter points to build into an encounter.

Difficulties may not exceed 14.

In the case of rolls to acquire treasure, designers gain no encounter points for Difficulties lower than 6.

If the roll is based on a non-governing Characteristic for the Ability, or the Ability has several governing Characteristics, make sure to specify the Characteristic in your encounter notes.

These costs assume that every hero gets to roll, and that each hero's result determines only his own fate. If successful, he avoids the trap/hazard or secures his share of the treasure or gain. The other heroes are all rolling for themselves, succeeding or failing separately. This is called a **Standard roll**.

OPPOSED ROLLS

In some cases, the hero, instead of rolling against a flat Difficulty, will be trying to exceed a supporting character's roll. The basic cost of an **Opposed roll** is keyed to the total bonus (typically Characteristic + Ability) the supporting character applies to his roll, as follows:

Bonus	Cost for Singular Roll
0	-20 encounter points
1	-10 encounter points
2	+0 encounter points
3	+10 encounter points
4	+20 encounter points
5	+30 encounter points
6	+40 encounter points
7	+50 encounter points
8	+60 encounter points
9	+70 encounter points
10	+80 encounter points
11	+90 encounter points

Supporting characters can't have bonuses in excess of 11.

ROLL TYPES QUICK REFERENCE

Situation	Type of Roll:	Page
Each hero rolls once; successful heroes gain benefit or avoid negative consequence; unsuccessful heroes lose benefit or suffer negative consequence	Standard Roll	129
A pillager rolls for his hero; the runner rolls for an opponent. If the pillager's roll meets or exceeds the runner's, the hero gains a benefit or avoids a negative consequence.	Opposed Roll	129
One hero rolls; if he succeeds, all heroes enjoy the benefit or suffer the negative consequence.	Singular Roll	132
Any number of heroes may roll; if even one roller succeeds, all heroes gain benefit or avoid negative consequence; if no one rolls successfully, all heroes all lose benefit or suffer negative consequence.	Singular Roll: No-Fault	132
One hero rolls; if he succeeds, he alone enjoys the gain or suffers the pain.	Singular Roll: Rush	132
Any number of heroes may roll, each suffering or enjoying the consequences of only their own rolls. Heroes who do not roll are unaffected.	Singular Roll: Scramble	133
Any number of heroes may roll; if all rollers succeed, all heroes gain benefit or avoid negative consequence; if even one roller fails, all heroes all lose benefit or suffer negative consequence. Heroes may choose to abstain from rolling. If no one rolls successfully, all heroes all lose benefit or suffer negative consequence.	Singular Roll: Dogpile	133
All heroes must roll; if even one roller fails, all heroes lose benefit or suffer negative consequences.	Weak Link Roll	133
All heroes must roll; if even one roller fails, all heroes in front or behind failed hero suffer negative consequences.	Weak Link Roll: Line of Doom	133
All heroes must roll; if even one roller fails, all heroes in front or behind failed hero must roll again to avoid negative consequences.	Weak Link Roll: Domino	134
During combat, the heroes must, between them, score 2 or more successes at a task; each attempt requires a combat action.	Multiple Rolls: Action Sink	135
One hero must make one successful roll per round until one or more other heroes succeeds at a separate Singular/Extra roll. If all of his rolls during this period are successes, all heroes gain benefit or avoid negative consequence; if even one roll fails, all heroes lose benefit or suffer negative consequence.	Multiple Rolls: Panic Button	135
All heroes must roll a predetermined number of times. Heroes who fail even once either suffer a negative consequence or fail to make a gain.	Multiple Rolls: Endurance Test (Standard)	136

Situation	Type of Roll:	Page
A hero must make a roll a predetermined number of times. If he fails even once, the entire group loses the benefit or suffers a negative consequence.	Multiple Rolls: Endurance Test (Singular)	136
All heroes may roll; to succeed, they must get a collective total of X successes, in the course of Y rounds. X and Y are specified by the designer.	Multiple Rolls: Countdown	137
A single hero makes a series of Opposed rolls against an opponent; if the hero is the first to tally a predetermined number of success, he gains a benefit or avoids a negative consequence.	Multiple Rolls: Scoreboard	137
A Standard or Singular roll in which the pillager is allowed to roll more than once, needing only one success to gain the benefit or avoid the ill consequence.	Extra Rolls Allowed	138
Any roll in which more than one Ability can be used.	Alternate Method	138
A Standard or Singular roll in which the hero is required to make two separate rolls with different modifiers; to gain the benefit or avoid the ill consequence, the pillager must succeed at both rolls.	Simultaneous Rolls	138
Any roll in which failure leads to more than one ill effect.	Combo Trap	138
Any roll in which success leads to more than one gain.	Combo Gain	139
Any roll in which success leads to a gain, but failure leads to an ill effect.	Lady or Tiger Roll	139



SINGULAR ROLLS

A **Singular roll** is one that needs to be made by just one character. If he succeeds, he avoids a bad consequence or secures a gain, possibly for the entire Horde. (Remember, a **Standard roll** is one in which every hero must roll, and each hero suffers individual good or bad consequences depending on whether he succeeds or fails.)

Singular rolls have an encounter point cost of 0. You'd think they'd earn points, since success for the heroes is more likely in a situation where they can pick the best Viking for the job, let him roll, and breathe a sigh of relief when he gets a high result.

The mad sailor Hrapp will give a map to the heroes if one of them impresses him with his bravery, by sitting without flinching as an albatross comes to peck at his eyes.

A wheeled dwarven machine which periodically emits a blast of magical green fire whips blindly around a corridor. Only one hero need use his Traps Ability on it to deactivate it. If he does so, everyone reaps the benefit.

The heroes find a wall with some writing on it. Only one of them needs to successfully use his Runes Ability to read its message.

This is balanced, however, by the fact that only that character gets a shot at winning the favor of the gods — that is, scooping up victory points for a successful roll. Given the victory point award at stake, heroes may in some situations wish to all try their hands at the task in question. This is where several different variants of Singular rolls come into play.

NO-FAULT

A sub-category of the Singular roll is the **No-Fault**, in which all characters can roll and the failures do not cancel out the successes. No-fault rolls most often occur when the heroes are performing purely mental tasks, like trying to figure out clues.

Because No-Fault rolls always favor the heroes, they gain the designer 15 encounter points.

Both Thurid and Thorleik try to read the wall covered in Runes. Thurid succeeds and Thorleik fails. Although the best reading of the runes Thorleik can muster is, "It's something about not going somewhere and not doing something," his thickheadedness doesn't prevent Thurid from correctly reading it as a warning not to go down the corridor which screams like the wind, unless you carry sweets for the spirits that live there.

RUSH

In a **Rush roll**, only one hero need make the roll, and only he enjoys the benefit of success or the consequences of failure.

A door has been trapped so that a spear will dart out from it when it is opened. Only the hero who opens it is at risk of being impaled.

The first hero to seize a golden orb from the top of the pole will receive 2 points of Invigoration (see p. 173) during the next combat.

Two or more heroes may want to attempt a Rush roll. To see who gets the chance, they must physically jockey for position. All contestants make Engagement rolls (Str + Brawling) to see who gets to try. Pillagers can avoid the jockeying by simply reaching an agreement designating a single hero to attempt the roll.

A situation where a single hero is targeted by a trap — one that fires missiles, for example — is technically a Rush roll, even though no other hero is likely to want to shoulder his way past the fellow in the crosshairs to take the hit instead.

Rush rolls allow the designer to limit the benefit the group gets from certain gains, or the harm dished out by certain traps. They also accentuate the competition between pillagers, making game play more interesting. Designers neither gain nor lose points for including Rush rolls, and are certainly free to judge for themselves whether it's economical for them to use Rush rolls in any given situation.

NEW DESIGNERS, READ NO FURTHER

If you're just learning the game for the first time, you can skip the rest of the Difficulties section. When first designing encounters, make all of your rolls Standard, Singular, Singular: Rush, or Singular: No-Fault. Once you've got the basic hang of things and want to do more complicated things with the rolls you require, come back and look at the options found in the rest of this section.

MORE SINGULAR ROLLS

SCRAMBLE

A **Scramble** roll is just like a Rush, except that any number of heroes can choose to try the roll, and each hero suffers or enjoys the consequences of his own roll.

Valykries show up to challenge the heroes to a sparring match. The winners each get 20 victory points, while losers suffer damage. Heroes not willing to take the risk can sit out; they neither suffer nor gain.

DOGPILE

A **Dogpile** allows each hero to try the task simultaneously. However, the failure of one hero means failure for all.

Ragnar, Thurid and Thorleik all decide that their Bravery Abilities are high enough to earn them a shot at a juicy encounter-point award, so they all troop out to the middle of Hrapp's marooned ship to wait for the albatrosses to come. The Difficulty is 8. Alex, rolling for Ragnar as your proxy, gets an 11 and becomes eligible for 3 victory points (the difference between Difficulty and result). Paul, rolling for Thurid, gets a 12, earning 4 victory points. But Joel, rolling for Thorleik, botches, scoring a -8. Thorleik not only flinches when the albatross comes: he squirms and whines like a little baby! Hrapp frowns, comments that Vikings are much more cowardly than they were in his day, and tears the much-needed map into tiny little pieces before the heroes' disappointed eyes.

Successful rollers still qualify for victory points, but the bad consequences of the roll come to pass, or the good consequences fail to materialize.

WEAK LINK ROLLS: When All Must Succeed

In some situations, every hero must succeed at the same roll, or everyone fails. No one gets the gain or treasure, or everyone falls victim to the trap or hazard. These are called **Weak Link rolls**. They cost an extra 40 encounter points. Designers may or may not find this a price worth paying, depending on the number of heroes in their groups.

The elf queen looks at the heroes through her magic lens to see if they are worthy of receiving her silver cup. Each must succeed at a Demeanor roll in order to win the prize.

In the case of certain traps, some heroes may still have a chance to evade the ill effects of a Weak Link roll, depending on their position in relation to the failed heroes. In neither case does the runner have to tell the pillagers which Ability he'll be testing when he asks what order the heroes are marching in.

LINE OF DOOM

If all heroes standing either immediately in front of or behind the failed rollers are automatically spared the effect, the designer has specified a **Line of Doom** roll. The designer must specify whether the source of the danger is to the front or rear-guard of the party. If the source of the danger

is to the rear of the party, all heroes ahead of the failed roller who is closest to the front of the line are spared. If the danger is in front, all heroes behind the failed roller who is closest to the back are spared.

Amundi, Bjarni, Canute, Dagfin, and Ufnal, marching in that order, must make Stealth rolls to avoid alerting a gremlin hidden in the walls. If he hears them, he'll pull a lever, dropping molten oil down on them from above. Canute and Ufnal fail their rolls. The source of the danger is behind the party. Canute is failed roller closest to the front of the line. This means that the heroes ahead of him, Amundi and Bjarni, managed to creep quietly past

the gremlin's station, and out of the range of the boiling oil. When Canute fails, the gremlin jumps on the trigger, hitting him and everyone behind him.

A Line of Doom roll costs 10 points, not the usual 40 for a regular Weak Link roll.

DOMINO

If all heroes either in front or behind of the failed rollers are forced to make a second roll to avoid the original trap, the designer has called for a **Domino roll**. Note that in some cases this last option may cause a Domino effect, where a hero succeeds at his first roll, is forced to make a second, fails it, forcing the next hero in line to reroll, and so on.

CONDITIONAL ELEMENTS

CONDITIONALLY AVOIDABLE TRAPS AND HAZARDS

Designers can create traps and hazards that heroes can avoid automatically, provided that their pillagers make certain choices. Most commonly, the pillagers choose *not* to do certain things, like touching a booby-trapped object or entering a dangerous area. If the designer forces the heroes to fulfill the triggering condition, whether through his description or by requiring a roll, the roll is not conditionally avoidable.

Even when they make the choice that triggers the hazard, the heroes still get a roll to avoid its effects.

If a Standard roll is conditionally avoidable, a single hero can make the choice that triggers the trap, but all heroes must roll to avoid its effects. Making a Standard roll conditionally avoidable gains the designer 10 encounter points.

If a Singular roll is conditionally avoidable, only heroes who make the triggering choice must roll, and only they suffer the ill-effects of failure. Designers gain an additional 20 encounter points by making a Singular roll conditionally avoidable.

The designer must specify whether the triggering condition works on **first exposure** (in which case only the first hero or group of heroes to trigger the condition must roll) or **remains in effect** (in which case a hero could theoretically make the choice several times, exposing himself to danger and requiring a new roll in each instance). First exposure gains the designer 5 additional encounter points;

specifying that it remains in effect provides 0 points.

If it fits the situation at hand, the designer can specify that a hazard that remains in effect can only be triggered a certain number of times before its ability to harm the heroes is exhausted. This option is included for purposes of atmosphere and garners the designer no extra points.

CONDITIONALLY AVAILABLE GAINS

Designers can also declare that heroes can secure gains without having to make a roll of any kind. The pillagers may have to figure out what simple choice to make in order to claim the gains, however. Note that the designer can't create complex puzzles, riddles, or other brain-twisters for the pillagers to solve; those are the sorts of things heroes, not their players, do, and they do them with die rolls.

The choice must be one that is achievable in the normal course of the encounter without having to succeed at any rolls or risk any damage. An exception to this general rule occurs in the aftermath of a battle; it is perfectly legal to state that the heroes automatically secure any gains after killing their foes and undertaking an inspection of their corpses and belongings.

For that matter, the designer can always leave treasure or other tangible gains out in plain sight.

Designers get no points for this. The advantage they get is in minimizing the number of rolls they require, thus thwarting the Rule of Escalating Buffness (p. 136).

Amundi, Bjarni, Canute, Dagfin, and Ufnal are climbing a rope, in that order; Amundi is the highest climber. A gust of icy wind blows them hither and yon. This trap calls for Weak Link rolls (Climb versus Difficulty 6) under the Domino option. Any character immediately below a failed roller must roll again. On the first roll, everyone except Bjarni succeeds. Bjarni falls off the rope, and also forces the hero immediately below him, Canute, to reroll. Canute rolls again, successfully, ending the chain reaction. If he'd failed, he'd have fallen off the rope and forced Dagfin to reroll, and so on.

A Domino roll costs 20 points.

COMBAT ACTION REQUIRED

Designers may specify a hero can only roll to avoid a bad result or get a benefit by forgoing one of his actions in the middle of a fight. This costs 10 points.

If the hero must score a number of successes, and each try requires a combat action, multiply the cost by the number of successes he must score. (As seen on p. 135, this is a kind of Multiple roll called the Action Sink.)

Obviously, this requirement only makes sense if the opportunity to snag the gain occurs during combat.

EQUIPMENT NOT NEEDED

Designers gain 5 encounter points for including rolls for which the standard equipment associated with the Ability in question is not needed. This situation most often rears its head when the character is using the knowledge arising from a physical Ability. Usually the roll will be based on Intelligence instead of its governing Ability. Examples include:

- Repair rolls to judge an object's durability.
- Map rolls to follow a map made by someone else.
- Climb rolls to guess the distance you might fall if you slip off a ledge.

This point gain is unavailable if the Ability rolled does not come with standard equipment. As the Norns would say: duh!

MULTIPLE ROLLS

Designers can make heroes roll multiple times to score benefits or avoid bad results. There are five kinds of **Multiple rolls**.

ACTION SINK

If the heroes must score several successes, and the only cost of the additional attempts is the loss of actions in combat, the cost is 10 per success required. The heroes must be allowed unlimited Extra rolls, for which the designer does not earn the usual encounter points.

To get to a platform from which they'll be able to neutralize their foes' cover advantage, the heroes must toss four heavy barrels off the staircase. This requires four successful rolls, undertaken during combat.

In the case of a trap/hazard, the designer pays an additional 20 points to specify that the negative consequences are triggered if the heroes do not score the required successes by the end of the combat. In this case, the number of successes needed can't exceed 4.

PANIC BUTTON

If the designer requires a hero to keep making successful rolls every round to maintain a benefit or stave off some undesirable result, he must pay an additional 25 encounter points. In order to include this feature, he must allow the heroes an opportunity to end the situation requiring their continual successes. To take advantage of the opportunity, they'll usually have to succeed at a roll of some kind or another. The designer must pay the usual Difficulty costs associated with the roll to end all Multiple rolls.

A defective dwarven craftwerk will explode, sending white-hot shrapnel ricocheting through the chamber, unless Thorleik can use his Sing skill successfully each round. By holding a particular note, he is able to mimic the sound-activation device that accesses the craftwerk's controls. This keeps the bot from blowing up, but doesn't solve the problem. To do that, Thurid must use her Repair Ability on the craftwerk, to safely deactivate it. As soon as she succeeds, Thorleik can stop singing.

ENDURANCE TEST

An **Endurance Test** is like the above, except that the heroes can end the condition simply by lasting a predetermined number of rounds.

It will take Ragnar 4 rounds to cross a wet and rickety bridge buffeted by fierce gusts of wind. If he does not make a successful Balance roll for each round spent on the bridge, he will plummet into the chasm below, taking heavy-duty falling damage.

Endurance Tests can be Standard or Singular rolls.

In the case of a trap or hazard, the designer multiplies all other positive costs associated with his gain

or trap/hazard by the number of Extra rolls required to get the final cost of an Endurance Test.

In the case of a gain, the cost escalates with each additional round after the first.

# of Rolls After the First	Cost
2 Rolls	+25 encounter points
3 Rolls	+40 encounter points
4 Rolls	+60 encounter points
5 Rolls	+85 encounter points

In either case, no Endurance Test can require more than 5 rolls.



THE RULE OF ESCALATING BUFFNESS

There is no hard and fast limit on the total number of rolls a designer may call for in a single encounter. However, from the seventh roll onwards, the heroes enjoy the increasing attention and favor of the gods, giving them a +1 bonus to their non-combat rolls, which is cumulative with each additional roll. This is called the **Rule of Escalating Buffness**.

To count towards the total of seven rolls, or to subsequently add to the heroes' Escalating Buffness bonus, a roll must meet the following criteria:

- It uses something other than a Combat Ability.
- It is listed in the encounter notes.
- It is not a Freestanding roll. (As you'll see on p. 172, Freestanding rolls give victory points to successful heroes, but do not reward runners when the heroes fail.)
- At least one hero actually attempts the roll.

During the encounter, the runner keeps track of the number of rolls made which meet the criteria. Starting with the seventh applicable roll, the Escalating Buffness bonus kicks in, increasing with each separate roll. Heroes may apply the new bonus to the roll that triggers it. If Extra rolls are required (see p. 138), each Extra roll counts towards the Escalating Buffness total.

Heroes may apply their Escalating Buffness bonuses to any rolls other than those using Combat Abilities, even when those rolls do not meet the criteria to further increase the bonus. Accordingly, they can apply to Freestanding rolls as

well as rolls not specified in the runner's encounter notes, as long as they use non-Combat Abilities. (Note that most Engagement rolls are based on a Combat Ability and therefore don't get the benefit of Escalating Buffness.)

Your encounter includes 11 rolls which meet the above criteria. The heroes make their way through the encounter. The third roll is optional and the heroes skip it. They make all the other rolls. On the seventh roll (the eighth listed in your encounter notes), they get a +1 bonus. They then make a Freestanding roll, to which they also apply the +1 bonus. It does not increase the bonus, though. The combat sequence follows: during that sequence, one hero makes a Jump roll and another, a Divine Awareness roll to trigger a Divine Gift. Both of these rolls enjoy the benefit of the bonus, but do not increase it.

After the fight, the heroes search for treasure. One makes an Awareness roll to find a cache of loot, as called for in your notes. He applies a +2 bonus to the roll. Then he must roll Dodge to avoid the loot's protective booby-trap. The bonus increases to +3.

The Rule of Escalating Buffness is a limitation on the number of rolls a designer includes because, as you'll recall (p. 93) the runner gets victory points when the heroes fail rolls, while the pillagers get them when their heroes succeed. So if a designer includes too many rolls in your encounter, he'll hit a point of diminishing returns where, when he acts as runner and the bonuses to the heroes keep stacking up, he's awarding more points than he's getting.



COUNTDOWN

In a **Countdown**, the heroes must score a number of successes in the course of a number of attempts. If they succeed, they get a reward or avoid a trap/hazard.

In a standard Countdown, the designer chooses how many attempts the heroes get to make, and how many total successes they require. The number of successes required can equal half the number of heroes, the number of heroes, half again the number of heroes, or twice the number of heroes.

There are four heroes in your group. You can require 2, 4, 6, or 8 successes.

The cost of a Countdown is determined in two steps. First, use the chart below to find the base cost. Pick the higher of the two possible base costs. "Difficulty Cost" refers to all positive costs associated with the Difficulty — not just the Difficulty Number, but any other charges, such as for Exotic rolls or rolls modified by divine ratings.

How Many

Successes Required?	Base Cost
# of heroes ÷ 2	20 encounter points or (Difficulty Cost x 2)
# of heroes	40 encounter points or (Difficulty Cost x 4)
# of heroes x 1.5	60 encounter points or (Difficulty Cost x 6)
# of heroes x 2	80 encounter points or (Difficulty Cost x 8)

You decide to require a number of successes equal to half the number of heroes. Checking the chart, you see that the base cost is 20 encounter points or 2 times the Difficulty cost. You've chosen a Difficulty of 7, which normally costs 10 encounter points. 2 times 10 is 20. The two choices are equal, so your base cost is 30 encounter points.

If you had chosen a Difficulty of 8, it would normally cost 20 encounter points. 2 times 20 is 40, which is the highest of the two choices. Your base cost would have been 40 encounter points.

The designer then chooses the number of attempts the heroes get, from 1 to 5. To get the final cost, he multiplies the base cost by the cost multiplier.

# of Attempts Permitted	Cost Multiplier
1	3
2	2
3	None
4	0.5
5	0.25

You decide to give the heroes four attempts to score the required number of successes. Your cost multiplier is 0.5. Your final cost is 20 x 0.5, or 10 encounter points.

In a variation of the Countdown, the heroes may be required to score a set number of successes in order to end recurring or escalating damage (p. 142) they're already suffering. In this case, the designer just uses the base cost, without a multiplier.

Countdowns can never also be No-Fault or Freestanding rolls (see p. 172).

During a Countdown, even though it typically occurs outside of combat, heroes may roll for Initiative to see who goes first, and if any of them get extra actions. If the roll is of a non-combat Ability, the heroes treat Qik + the Ability as their INIT score.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard rolls simulate a match, race, or other contest. They employ Opposed rolls (see p. 129). The hero and an adversary race to be the first to achieve 3, 4, or 5 successes. Think of this as a series of rounds in a contest. This rule is best used to add suspense to races and games.

Thorleik gambles against another Viking. The first to score 4 successes wins a locked chest, to which they have both laid a claim.

The additional cost of making an Opposed roll into a Scoreboard roll depends on the modifier the opponent applies to his rolls.

Opponent's Total Modifier	Cost Per Success Required After the First
3 or less	+5 encounter points
3 - 5	+10 encounter points
6 - 8	+20 encounter points
9 or more	+40 encounter points

EXTRA ROLLS ALLOWED

If the designer allows a character to make multiple attempts at a non-combat action (including rolls of non-combat Abilities during a fight), he gains 5 encounter points per **Extra rolls** allowed after the first.

If there is no set limit to the number of rolls a hero can make, the designer nets 20 encounter points.

DISTANCE: CLOSING A LOOPHOLE

If a hero must reach a particular spot before he can make a roll, that spot may not be more than 60 paces from any other spot on the map.

ALTERNATE METHODS

Some tasks can be completed in more than one way.

The mocking visage of Loki appears in a cavern to mock the heroes. If they don't dispel this apparition, they suffer Impairment. They can avoid the trap either through a successful Divine Awareness roll (in which the hero wills the apparition to vanish by invoking the name of Odin) or simply by hitting the floating visage with a missile.

Designers may include up to three ways of accomplishing any particular goal.

If there is more than one way to do a particular thing, the designer gains 10 encounter points for each method after the first.

In the above example, you allow two methods – the Divine Awareness plus the missile attack – and therefore get 10 encounter points for the second method.

SIMULTANEOUS ROLLS

Sometimes the designer will want to force heroes to make two separate rolls, each against a different Ability, at the same time.

You create an encounter in which the hero must stand on a rolling log and shoot at a target with a missile weapon. He must roll both Balance and the missile Ability of his choice.

The designer first pays the usual costs for both rolls as if they occurred separately. Then he suffers a 15 encounter point charge for each new Ability roll after the first.

If simultaneous rolls occur in combat, only one can require an action. The others must all be possible without spending an action.

In the above example, the missile shot could require an action, but the Balance roll can't.

COMBO TRAPS

One trap can have more than one bad effect. For example, a trap might make noise as it damages the heroes, so that it also serves as a "stick" (see p. 144) granting INIT bonuses to foes in the next room. The cost of a combo trap is a surcharge equal to 50% of all points the designer must pay for the trap's Difficulty and roll type.

You create a trap that deals both damage and Impairment. The Difficulty is 9 (cost 30) and your roll type is Weak Link (cost 40.) The combo surcharge is $(30 + 40) \div 2 = 35$.

If a cost the designer pays for the roll type applies only to one of the effects of the trap, he may ignore it when calculating the surcharge.

Let's say that, in the above example, heroes can avoid the Impairment if they personally succeed, but suffer the damage if any single hero fails. The avoidance of the Impairment is treated as a Standard roll, but the damage part is a Weak Link roll. Because you're only taking advantage of the Weak Link aspect once, you don't have to pay for it again as part of the surcharge. Under these conditions, you'd only take into account the 30 point cost of a Difficulty 9; half of that hits you with a surcharge of 15 encounter points.

When calculating the surcharge, the designer must ignore any points earned from lenient Difficulties or roll types.

Your trap deals damage and a victory point deduction. The Difficulty is 7 (cost 10) and your roll type is Singular: No-Fault (cost -15). You ignore the -15 altogether, leaving 10 points of positive cost. Your combo surcharge is half of that, or 5 points.

COMBO GAINS

The designer can create a single roll that leads to more than one gain if the hero scores a success. The cost of doing this is the (positive cost of the Difficulty, if any) times the (number of separate gains.) This can be an advantage when the designer wishes to cut down on rolls in order to stay clear of the Rule of Escalating Buffness (p. 136). Clever designers may find other uses for it. It's also a time-saver when an event includes a long list of gains.

LADY OR TIGER?

Most traps grant a hero only an addition to his victory point tally when he succeeds. Likewise, most gains do nothing bad to the hero when he fails the roll. However, in a **Lady or Tiger roll**, the hero scores a gain on a success but suffers a trap/hazard on a failing roll. There is no cost associated with a Lady or Tiger roll.

EXOTIC ROLLS

If a roll calls for anything other than a Characteristic + Ability roll, its cost increases.

CLUMPING PENALTY

If a designer's encounter includes more than three rolls against a particular secondary Ability, he pays a **clumping penalty** for making so much ride on that one Ability. For each roll after the third, the cost increases by 15x, where x is the number of rolls against the Ability previously included in the encounter.

Your encounter includes 5 Skald rolls, all at Difficulty 6. The first three cost 0 points, which is the standard cost for a Difficulty 6 roll. The fourth costs 45 points: the standard cost of 0 plus 15 points for each of the 3 previous rolls. The fifth costs 60 points: the standard cost of 0 plus 15 points for each of the 4 previous rolls.

The clumping penalty is necessary because the runner gets victory points when players fail rolls. Freestanding Ability rolls (see p. 172) don't grant you victory points, so the clumping penalty does not apply to them.

If the hero is only allowed to add his Characteristic to a roll (that is, if no Ability can logically be applied to it), add 20 to the cost.

If the roll requires an Ability none of the heroes have, add 40 to the cost.

If the game statistics of the runner's hero are such that the number he'll add to his roll is greater than that of any other character, we call it a **Stacked roll**. Add 75 to the cost of any stacked roll.

If the designer calls for a roll of INIT, ATK, or DEF, he does not predetermine a specific Difficulty when creating the encounter. Instead, he chooses a modifier to the baseline. That modifier can range from -2 to +8 for ATK and DEF. The runner determines what the baseline is just before the roll is made; it equals the number for the relevant statistic on his Roll of Valor. (The Roll of Valor, explained on p. 98 of the Foes section, gives the runner a sorta-kinda-not-really average of the heroes' game statistics, from which he derives the stats for their opposition.) Costs for baseline modifiers are listed in the chart below.

Astute readers will note that this is the general Difficulty chart, with a modifier of +0 in the place of Difficulty 6.

Modifier to Baseline	Cost
-2	-20 encounter points
-1	-10 encounter points
0	+0 encounter points
+2	+10 encounter points
+3	+20 encounter points
+4	+30 encounter points
+5	+40 encounter points
+6	+50 encounter points
+7	+60 encounter points
+8	+70 encounter points
+9	+80 encounter points

Designers may never include tests in which the only way for heroes to succeed is to roll their levels in a particular Divine Gift.

FAILURE LEADS TO TRAP

If the consequence of a roll is that a hero or heroes are then forced to make a subsequent roll to avoid a trap, the designer must add 10 to the cost.

IN DEFIANCE OF THE GODS

One of the risks of acquiring a large number of Divine Gifts is that the hero loses some of his free will. If a god who has rewarded a hero with many Gifts wants him to do something, the deity may be able to reach into his body and make a puppet of him. In other cases, the god may want to prevent him from doing something.

Designers can specify that heroes must apply their Divine Connection rating for a single, specific deity as an increase to the Difficulty of any roll. The cost of doing so varies by deity.

Deity	Cost
Freyja	+10
Heimdall	+15
Loki	+15
Njord	+15
Odin	+20
Thor	+25
Tyr	+15
Ull	+10
Any other deity	+5

Note that a designer can exactly offset this cost by installing a shrine to the deity somewhere else in the encounter (see p. 174). It even makes sense that a god would exert greater control over his followers when they're close to one of his shrines.

Try to make the action the god encourages or hinders match its agenda. Freyja wants to protect growing things, and stop the heroes from defiling fertile areas, no matter who controls them. Heimdall might force the hero to take action against the undead, or objects sacred to his enemy, Loki. Loki, of course, delights in destruction and trickery, and might stop the heroes from doing honest or helpful things. Njord hates heat and stillness, and might make the heroes extinguish fires or fix wind machines. Odin desires items that bring him knowledge, and might force the heroes to make maps for him. Thor may force the heroes to acts of thick-skulled bravery, even stopping them from retreating in the face of a superior foe. Tyr encourages acts of spectacular suffering; he might expect heroes to honor his deeds by walking into traps. Ull may force heroes to take valuable time from their journey to pursue elusive game animals.

If one of the players has over-specialized in the Gifts of a particular deity, a designer can use this encounter element to target him for a hose-down of mythic proportions.

STEP SIX: TRAPS AND HAZARDS

Heroes do not reach 20 or fewer hit points by combat alone. Traps and hazards allow runners to whittle down the pillagers, without the risk that they'll pick up victory points by the bucketful from dying blow bonuses.

As far as the rules are concerned, traps and hazards work in the same way: they're situations in which one or more heroes must make a successful roll or suffer some ill consequence, usually damage. A trap is a situation created by an intelligent being. They range from hunters' snares to steam-powered, deafening dwarven contraptions. Hazards, from avalanches to slime pits, occur naturally.

Important Limit:

No encounter can include more than 8 traps. No combat event can include more than 4 traps.

ELEMENTS OF A TRAP OR HAZARD

Every time you include a trap or hazard, you must decide the following:

1. What does the hero roll to avoid it?
2. What's the Difficulty?
3. Do any special case rules relate to the roll?
4. What ill-effect does the hero suffer if he fails?
5. What special case rules, if any, affect the operation of the trap or hazard?

To answer the first three questions, refer to the Difficulty rules, which you saw in the last section. This section is devoted to questions four and five.

When a hero fails his roll to avoid, he suffers the trap's ill effects.

TRAP DAMAGE

Most traps deliver damage. The number of hit points a hero loses when he fails to avoid a trap is equal to the trap's Dam rating plus the difference between hero's failed roll and the Difficulty, minus his Soak.

TRAP DAMAGE

Dam Rating + (Difficulty - Result of Failed Roll) - Soak

Ragnar enters a cavern where melting, spear-like icicles dangle overhead. One of them falls from the roof. As his player, you must roll Dodge versus a Difficulty of 8 to avoid it. Its Dam rating is 12. You roll a 4. The raw damage he suffers is 16 (the Dam rating plus the 4 points of difference between Difficulty and result). Ragnar's Soak is 6; his actual hit point loss is 10.

In addition to any costs for the Difficulty of its roll to avoid, the designer pays for a trap's Dam rating. If the Dam rating of the hazard is 15 or less, the cost equals the Dam rating.

The icicle hazard has a Dam rating of 12. Its base cost is 12 encounter points.

If the Dam rating exceeds 15, the cost is the Dam rating plus a surcharge. The surcharge is given in the chart below.

Dam rating	Surcharge
16 - 20	+5 encounter points
21 - 25	+10 encounter points
26 - 30	+15 encounter points
31 - 35	+20 encounter points
36 - 40	+25 encounter points
41 - 45	+30 encounter points
46 - 50	+35 encounter points

No trap carries a Dam rating higher than 50.

You create an alpine encounter in which the heroes are at risk of suffering 20 points of damage from an avalanche. Your cost is 25 encounter points; 20 points for the Dam rating, plus the +5 surcharge.

ARMOR-IGNORING DAMAGE

If a hazard's effects ignore armor, pay an additional 10 encounter points. The character may not subtract the Prot portion of his Soak score from the damage dealt.

Ragnar triggers a poison needle trap and suffers 14 points of raw damage. Because the poison deals armor-ignoring damage, Ragnar may deduct his Soak rating (3 points) but not his armor's Prot rating (3 points). He loses 11 hit points.

RANDOM DAMAGE

To create a trap/hazard that deals a random amount of damage, choose any number of d10s. When the damage is dealt, roll that number of d10s separately for each victim, totaling the values. Damage dice can botch or triumph, just like most other rolls. The difference between the result and the Difficulty of the hero's roll is added to the result of the damage roll.

Ragnar encounters an avalanche that does 4 dice of damage. You roll for him, failing his Ski roll by 4 points. The runner rolls four dice, getting a 3, a 9, a

4, and a 9. She adds the 4 point difference to the total of the damage rolls, getting a raw damage tally of 29.

The cost of random damage depends on the number of dice a trap deals out.

Dice	Cost
1	+2 encounter points
2	+7 encounter points
3	+15 encounter points
4	+22 encounter points
5	+26 encounter points
6	+30 encounter points
7	+43 encounter points
8	+50 encounter points

No trap may dish out more than 8 dice of damage.

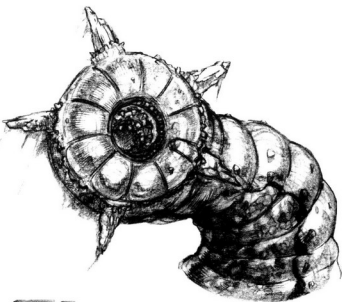
RECURRING/ESCALATING DAMAGE

After a hero is exposed to **recurring damage**, he continues to lose a set number of hit points per round until someone performs an action (usually requiring a roll) to put a stop to it. If a roll is required, the designer must always allow unlimited retries, for which he does not earn the usual encounter point gain.

Ragnar is constricted by a craftwerk snake of dwarven manufacture. It has a damage rating of 4, and recurs. Ragnar is allowed a Strength roll to avoid its grip, against a Difficulty of 6. You, his player, fail the roll by 2. He takes 6 points of damage (the Dam rating + his difference between Difficulty and result) immediately, and will take 6 points of damage each round after that, until he can make a Traps roll to deactivate the craftwerk.

To get the cost of recurring damage, the designer takes the normal cost for the amount of the damage rating and multiplies it by 2.5. Take into account any surcharges before multiplying. Lop off fractions, as usual.

A trap with a recurring Dam rating of 2 would cost 5 encounter points; $2 \times 2.5 = 5$. A rating of 21 points of recurring damage would cost 77 encounter points; $(21 + \text{surcharge of } 10) \times 2.5 = 77.5$.



Escalating damage is recurring damage that not only continues from one round to the next until stopped, but increases the number of hit points dealt with each succeeding round. The Dam rating increases by 2 each round. The damage the victim suffers each round is the original difference between Difficulty and result, plus the current Dam rating.

Ragnar falls into a vat of caustic oil. He gets a Stamina roll to resist. Its Difficulty is 10. You fail that by 3 points. The caustic oil has a Dam rating of 4. The first round, Ragnar suffers damage of 7 (the Dam rating plus the difference between Difficulty and result). The next round, he suffers damage of 9 (the difference plus 6.) The round after that, he suffers damage of 11 (the difference plus 8), and so on.

The cost of escalating damage is (base damage x 2.5) + 15.

An escalating Dam rating of 2 would cost 20 encounter points; 2 times 2.5 is 5, plus 15 equals 20. A rating of 21 points of escalating damage would cost 67 points; 21 times 2.5 is 52, after we drop fractions; add 15 for a total of 67.

In both cases, the hero is usually given a roll to avoid the effect in the first place, and another roll to put a stop to it. The hero gets one chance per round to end the effect; doing so requires an action. His allies may also spend their actions in attempts to end the effect. Designers must pay the usual Difficulty costs for both the roll to avoid and the roll to end the effect. Although the victim gets multiple chances to end the effect, he doesn't get to take the usual discount for a situation allowing Multiple rolls (see p.135).

IMPAIRMENT

Sometimes a hero will suffer an effect that decreases all of his rolls by a set number for a particular period of time. The effect may be physical or mental, but it is so distracting that it affects everything he does. The shooting pain in his leg may make it harder for him to concentrate on his mapping. The hallucinations of Ragnarok that haunt his mind blur his vision when battle comes, making it harder for him to strike his foes.

WHAT IMPAIRMENT AFFECTS

Here's a clarification which we, for simplicity's sake, left out of the introductory definition of Impairment: Impairment only alters a hero's *rolls*. It does not directly alter game statistics that are not rolled, like Soak. It does, however, modify every single roll you make. That's why it costs so much.

Like injuries, **Impairment** acquired during an encounter is removed before the next encounter starts. The base cost of Impairment is keyed to the number of rolls still to come in your encounter, as follows:

- For each combat sequence: +30
- For each roll to avoid a trap: +5
- For each roll to trigger a gain: +5
- For each Freestanding Ability roll (see p. 172): +3

Multiply this base cost by the number of Impairment points.

Impairment doesn't have to last until the end of the encounter. Designers can designate a point in your encounter during which the Impairment is removed. They pay only for the combat sequences and rolls appearing between the onset of Impairment and its cure. The maximum Impairment penalty a hero can suffer from sources other than Wounds is 2.

Some Impairments are specific; they affect only one Ability or another type of roll derived from an Ability (like Engagement). In this case, the designer pays for only the affected rolls. If the Impairment effect directly or indirectly affects INIT, ATK, DEF, or Engagement, you pay +10 for each combat sequence.

Note: Once you include an Impairment effect in an encounter, you *never* gain points for low Difficulties in tests to which the Impairment will apply.

STICKS

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

One splendid source of general Impairment is **sleep deprivation**. Heroes in the midst of long journeys learn to take their rest in all sorts of unlikely places. They learn to sleep like logs in dank underground caverns, on the decks of ships plying the roiling waves, or in the frosty embrace of Jotunheim's mountains. Unless they're anxious to join the ranks of the restless dead, they'll set up sentries to keep enemies and predators from assailing them while they slumber. Only in extraordinary situations will they be unable to sleep at all.

Such situations might include:

- proximity to dwarven machinery emitting an ear-pounding racket
- an area so heavily populated with enemies that any attempt to camp will soon be interrupted by attackers
- a place haunted by unseen ghosts and spirits who give off an aura of fear so strong that even the bravest cannot rest

Begin counting sleep deprivation after 16 hours of being up, when he would normally go to sleep. After 18 hours of sleep deprivation, heroes suffer 1 point of Impairment. After 36 hours, they suffer 2 points. Sleep deprivation obeys the standard costs for traps causing general Impairment.

You design an encounter. A hazard generating 2 points of general Impairment appears at its beginning. Later in the encounter, you create a trap that the heroes can roll Dodge to avoid. You consider making the Difficulty of that roll 4, in order to earn the usual 10 encounter points. But then you remember that the Impairment prevents you from snagging those points. Might as well make the Difficulty a 6.

You go back and turn the Impairment event into 2 points of specific Impairment to the heroes' DFN rolls. You can now earn the 10 encounter points from the Difficulty 4 Dodge trap, as the heroes' rolls to avoid it won't be lowered by the preceding Impairment effect.

A **stick** is any roll that, if the pillager fails, sticks him with a penalty to a roll appearing later in the same encounter.

Examples of sticks include:

Alarms, such as trap that warns enemies of the heroes' approach, giving them time to prepare for battle. If an alarm goes off, all foes in the upcoming fight get a bonus to their Initiative rolls which lasts for a given number of rounds. Different alarms might be avoided by various Abilities, like Awareness, Stealth, or Traps.

A Demcanor roll which, if failed, enrages the hero's foe, giving him an ATK bonus.

A Bravery roll which, if failed, causes the hero's hands to shake, decreasing his chances of picking a crucial lock.

The cost of a stick equals (the penalty to the subsequent roll x 5). If, as in the alarm example above, it affects a series of rolls taken over a set number of rounds, multiply the cost by the number of rounds. The basic decrease can't exceed 6.

A stick may also give foes a bonus to INIT, ATK, or DFN rolls. If the designer wants the bonus to benefit all of the foes in his encounter, the roll to avoid must be a Weak Link roll (see p. 133). ATK and DFN bonuses for foes cost (bonus x 5 x number of rounds the bonus remains in effect). INIT bonuses cost five points for each +3 increase, times the number of rounds the bonus remains in effect.

(Designers who want to create alarm traps that alert foes to the heroes' presence can do so with sticks that increase foes' first-round INIT rolls.)

Sticks are an important part of **Rune's** unusually linear approach to roleplaying. In many games, you might include a roll that leads to a branch in the plot. If the heroes succeed in breaking down the door to the vampire's castle, they can explore it and face a number of plot complications. If they don't, they never go down that branch, and none of those events happen.

In **Rune**, there are no branches. Failed rolls never entirely preclude the heroes from taking part in a given event. Instead, they just create a disadvantage when they do enter that event. To take the castle door example above, a failed Pick Lock roll doesn't mean that the door never opens. It means that the door opens later than the hero would like, and that something bad happens as a result: the vampire stands ready to bite him, gremlins have had time to better hide a potion, or whatever.

Adopting this slightly different way of thinking may be the biggest challenge **Rune** players used to other RPGs face when they devise encounters. Once you're used to thinking in this way, though, you'll find the concept simple and easy to apply.

LOSS OF STATUS

When among their own people, the heroes may sometimes risk a **loss of status** if they do not undertake a particular dangerous action. For example, they might want to stay at home and heal up, but are urged by their village elders to get a move on and track down the enemies who threaten them all. If the heroes flout their wishes, they lose some or all of the victory points they would otherwise gain for the current encounter. The cost equals the victory point deduction. Deductions come in increments of 5, and can't exceed 20. 20 is the maximum per encounter.

SPECIAL CASES

Here are some oddball options advanced designers will want to consider.

LIMITED TARGETING

If the trap or hazard affects all of the heroes, use the encounter point costs unmodified.

Limited targeting comes into play when a trap affects less than the entire party, but the runner can't tell in advance from his encounter notes which of the heroes will be at risk of falling victim to it. The victim is chosen either when the players decide to have their heroes do things that trigger the trap, or via a random roll by the runner.

STICK AND CARROT COMBOS

As you'll see on p. 171, a carrot is the opposite of a stick: a successful result grants the recipient a bonus to a subsequent roll.

The designer can devise rolls that lead to a carrot if successful, and a stick if unsuccessful.

The hero stands at a castle door. If he succeeds in his Pick Locks roll, he opens the door quickly and gains an increase to his Initiative rolls, because he's catching the vampire before it's ready for him. If he fails, his rattling at the lock alerts it to his presence, giving it an Initiative bonus.

If the designer makes the increase from the carrot equal to the decrease from the stick, the cost balances to 0. Neither increase nor decrease can exceed 6, or remain active for more than 3 rounds. A designer is, however, free to make the two asymmetrical. If the carrot's increase exceeds the stick's decrease, the designer gains 5 encounter points per point of difference. If the imbalance goes the other way, he pays 5 encounter points per point of difference.

The designer pays (or gains) only once for the Difficulty associated with the roll.

Example of Choice Method: A parasitic worm lurks under the lid of a chest full of silver. Only the hero who opens the lid risks falling prey to it. The actions of the players, not the decisions of the runner, determine who meets the worm.

Example of Random Roll: A poisonous bat will fly from its perch to bite one of the heroes. The runner rolls a die to decide which one gets fanged.

Designers pay less for limited targeting, depending on the maximum number of heroes who can suffer the effects of the trap.

# of Heroes	Cost
1	-15 encounter points
2	-10 encounter points
3 or more	+0 encounter points

REPEAT SHOTS

Any limited-targeting trap can keep harming targets round after round, until deactivated. Each round, the runner makes a random roll to see which heroes get targeted. The additional cost of **repeat shots** depends on how many characters the trap targets per round.

Targets

Per Round	Cost
1	+25 encounter points
2	+50 encounter points
3	+75 encounter points
4	+100 encounter points
5	+150 encounter points
6	+200 encounter points

Use the costs given here, not those given above for non-repeating limited targeting trap.

The designer must specify how the heroes can stop the trap from sending out repeat shots. If this requires a roll, the designer must pay all points associated with that roll, as usual. However, if it only requires an action, the designer pays no additional cost.

Limited-targeting traps that trigger only on the heroes' choices almost always also qualify as conditionally avoidable (p. 134). However, not all conditionally avoidable traps count as having limited targeting, because some affect the entire party.

Note that for this purpose one trap can include a number of separate objects that do the same thing. For example, a set of four bear traps, each of which has the same game statistics, counts as a single trap capable of damaging four heroes, not four separate traps, each of which affects only a single hero.

POSITIONAL MODIFIERS

Some characters may find themselves at an advantage or disadvantage when a trap goes off, thanks to their position in relation to an item on

the map. Typically a character increases or decreases his roll to avoid by 1 for every 10 paces of distance between him and a particular point. If he decreases his roll, the relevant distance is that between him and the perimeter of safety, beyond which he'd be rolling normally.

A pot of boiling oil drops from the ceiling, onto a point you've marked on your map as ground zero. Everyone must roll to avoid the splash. Those 80 paces or further away from it roll normally. Everyone else is inside a zone of danger. Those inside it decrease their rolls by 1 for each ten paces between them and the zone's outer border. So if Ragnar is 30 paces away from ground zero, he's 50 paces away from the safe zone. Accordingly, he suffers a 5 point decrease to his Dodge roll.

Sometimes heroes can increase their rolls by standing inside a zone of safety. The relevant distance is that between them and the edge of this zone.

A blast of frigid air threatens to freeze the heroes' bones, but Ragnar stands near a magical bonfire. He is ten paces away from it; its protective zone extends for 70 paces. The difference between the two is 60 paces, so Ragnar adds 6 to his Stamina roll to resist the cold's damaging effects.

The designer decides how large the zone of safety or danger is, and thus the maximum increase or decrease. The cost of an increase is 5 points times the maximum modifier. The gain from a decrease is 5 times the maximum modifier. The designer can't gain more for a decrease than he spends on the trap's damage.

The worst penalty victims of the boiling oil trap can suffer is -8, because the zone of danger is 80 paces in diameter. The cost is 80 encounter points.

The best bonus enjoyed by heroes inside the bonfire's zone of protection is 7, because that zone is 70 paces in diameter. The designer would get 35 encounter points for including it. However, the Dam rating of the trap is only 20, and costs just 25 points. The designer gets only 25 points back for the zone of safety modifier. Nonetheless, he leaves it as is, because he intends to the use size of the zone to maneuver the heroes into another of his cunning terrain features.

The designer can only use **positional modifiers** if the runner is going to keep track of the heroes' relative positions on a map.

TRAPS DURING COMBAT

Traps that go off during combat can add to the runner's score, because they're treated like terrain features for victory point determination (see p. 93).

These traps never hit the foes, no matter what. Designers should prepare to explain why the trap never hits the foes, only heroes. They gain no extra points for making these explanations plausible. The easiest way to design such a trap is to make it conditionally avoidable, and then see to it that the foes never take the action that trips it.

Goblins know that the river is full of flesh-eating fish, and so never venture into it.

A bridge over a lava pit is designed to collapse. The immortal Roman centurion who built it knows enough not to try to cross it.

A designer could just as well create weird magic traps smart enough to ignore the heroes' foes, tube-striker that hate the taste of dwarf, and so on. Or the runner can simply declare that the foes automatically succeed in any attempt to avoid a trap, without having to roll for them.

Designers may find it interesting to design traps so that they're triggered by specific events during combat:

- A combatant is disarmed
- A combatant falls down
- A combatant falls down from a cause other than terrain
- A combatant activates a Divine Gift
- A combatant goes berserk
- A hero uses a missile weapon
- A specific foe dies
- A specific foe botches or triumphs

CARNAGE OFF-THE-RACK

Certain hazards always work the same way. Instead of building them from scratch each time, designers use the following package deals to buy standard traps like acid, fire, and falling.

ACID (AND OTHER CAUSTIC SUBSTANCES)

Heroes should look before they leap into any pool of liquid, especially if it seethes and bubbles. Traps that immerse heroes in acid, roiling demon guts, or other caustic substances deal recurring, armor-ignoring damage. The designer can pick any flat Dam rating. Damage from immersion doesn't vary much from one victim to the next; random damage is not recommended.

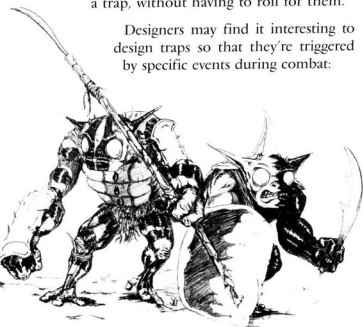
If the pool of caustic liquid is deep enough, it might also pose a drowning hazard. The designer pays for that using the drowning rules, later in this section.

Immersion in acid also damages armor and other equipment, and the designer must pay for this quality, too, using the rules given later in this section.

AMBUSH OPPORTUNITIES

An ambush is an attack made against an unsuspecting foe. Heroes can ambush foes, or vice versa. In the first case, the designer gains points; in the latter, he pays points. Ambush opportunities for heroes are gains; those for foes are traps. But it saves space to discuss both situations in one place, so here we go.

There are two kinds of ambush opportunities: **hiding places** and **lax sentries**. A hiding place is a well-concealed area in which either the heroes or their opponents can hide themselves



long enough to stage an ambush against the other side. In a lax sentry situation, the targets are encamped in such a way as to invite a surprise incursion by enemies.

When heroes wait in a hiding place or advance towards lax sentries, the group makes a Weak Link Stealth roll, against a Difficulty indicating the quality of the hiding place or the attentiveness of sentries. Particularly good hiding places and especially bleary guards carry low Difficulties. Poor hiding places and sharp-eyed sentries carry high Difficulties. A successful Weak Link roll makes foes suffer the ill effects of ambush, explained below.

When heroes pass by an enemy hiding place or camp out in such a way as to encourage foes to creep up on them, the group makes a Weak Link Awareness roll against a Difficulty indicating the quality of the hiding place or the stealth of approaching foes. Poor hiding places and careless stalkers carry low Difficulties. Good hiding places and especially silent creepers levy high Difficulties. A failed Weak Link roll subjects heroes to the ill effects of ambush.

During the first round of a successful ambush, all surprised combatants suffer a -6 penalty to their ATK, DEF and Engagement rolls. During the second, they suffer a -3 penalty to their ATK and DEF rolls. The third round brings a mere -1 decrease. At Initiative time in the second round, each combatant may roll Bravery (or, in the case of foes, Res) against a Difficulty of 9; if he succeeds, he faces only penalties of -2 during that round and no decreases the next. If he fails, he may roll again next Initiative to ignore the third round's decrease. These rolls do not cost actions.

Designers pay 50 points, plus Difficulty cost, to give foes ambush opportunities. They gain 50 points to give heroes ambush opportunities.

Lax sentry situations in which foes ambush the heroes make excellent conclusions to healing opportunities. Tricky runners will show the heroes the area map only when the ambush occurs, so that the pillagers are surprised that the previously undefined area their heroes have been resting up in turns out to be the middle of a battle scene.

DROWNING

Longship journeys across wind-lashed seas offer the Viking warrior a wide range of drowning opportunities. So do the raging underground rivers that surge through various passageways of the Underworld. Whenever a hero finds himself suddenly in a body of water too deep to stand up in, his player must roll his Swim Ability to avoid drowning. The basic Difficulty is 4, as modified according to the chart below.

Situation	Modifier
Water's surface is tranquil	-3
Water's surface is mildly choppy	0
Waves rage across the water's surface	+3
A mighty undercurrent is at work below the water's surface	+5
To get to shore, hero must swim against slight current	+3
To get to shore, hero must swim against strong current	+6
Hero is not just treading water, but trying to swim in a particular direction	+2
Hero is pulling another person with him as he swims	+4 plus person's Sta
Hero has been thrown a rope, which is held by a strong, well-braced compatriot onshore	-(3 + ally's Str)
Hero has been in the water for more than 1 round	+1 per round

The hero's player must roll Swim for each round spent in the water.

If the hero can swim towards shore, an island, a jutting rock, or some other object on which he can haul himself out of the water, he can end his risk of drowning. The distance he can swim per round is given in the description of the Swim Ability, on p. 27.

On a failed Swim roll, the hero goes under and starts to drown. Drowning damage ignores armor and escalates, starting at 6 points. See "Recurring/Escalating Damage," on p. 142.

Once a hero starts drowning, he can do nothing to stop it. Another hero can jump into the water to drag him to shore. Drowning victims flail about, involuntarily resisting their rescuers. The would-be rescuer must make a Brawling attack against the drowning victim's Brawling defense in order to wrap his arms around him and stop his resistance. He must also make his own Swim rolls for every round he remains in the water, or start to drown himself. The sagas mention many brave warriors who died trying to save others from drowning.

A rolling log trap knocks Ragnar into a cold underground river. Its current is mild, but Ragnar will have to swim against it to return to shore. The Difficulty is 4 (basic) + 3 (swimming against current), or 7. Ragnar has picked up 1 point of the Swim Ability since we last met him, so he's ready for the challenge. You roll his Str + Swim, for a result of 5. Not good enough. He begins to drown. He loses 6 hit points. His total is now 58.

The total cost of a drowning trap or hazard depends on the conditions.

Waters	Cost
Tranquil	+10 encounter points
Choppy	+30 encounter points
Raging Waves	+60 encounter points
Mighty Undercurrent	+80 encounter points

These basic costs increase if the hero must swim against a current to haul himself out of the water. A mild current costs an extra 30 points; a fast-moving current costs an extra 60 points.

Some waters, especially in the Underground, are infested with barracuda, stinging jellyfish, and other nuisance animals. See the entry on nuisance animals, p. 154.

EQUIPMENT DAMAGE

All sorts of things can damage a hero's weapons, armor, shields, treasure, and magical goodies. Prime culprits are acid immersion, high temperatures, low temperatures, and weird magic. A trap that deals damage to equipment costs 40 points.



Upon exposure to a trap that damages equipment, the hero's player must make a roll for each piece of equipment the hero carries. These rolls take place after the runner determines how much damage your hero suffered. Especially robust pieces of equipment get modifiers added to these rolls. For weapons, armor, and shields, the modifier equals the item's Load x 2. Ignore fractions after doubling. Dwarven items, like the dwarven battle axe, battle hammer, and so on, are especially rugged and gain a further +3 bonus. Magical weapons, armor, and shields gain a +6 bonus. Magical dwarven weapons get both bonuses.

Among other things, Thurid carries a double-bladed axe, a buckler, and a full set of leather scale armor. The Load value of the double-bladed axe is 3. Doubled, its roll modifier is 6. The buckler's Load value is 0.5; doubled, its roll modifier is 1. The armor's Load value is 4; doubled, we get a modifier of 8.

Modifiers for other equipment can't be determined using the handy Load value system. Instead, we must resort to a mawling and cowardly chart:

Item Type	Modifier
Climbing Kit	2
Trap Disarming Kit	4
Gambling Kit	2
Healer's Kit	1
Lyre (Musician's Kit)	1
Mapping Kit	1
Lock Picking Kit	4
Riding Tackle	3
Repair Kit	3
Skis and Accessories	4
Survival Kit	3
Potion	4
Charm	6
Amulet	8
Helm of Power	10
Legendary Item	15

Magical kits get a +6 bonus to the above modifiers.

If the trap did damage to the hero, the Difficulty for each roll equals one-half of the total Raw Damage it dealt. (Raw Damage is the figure before Soak was taken into account.)

Thurid took 16 points of raw damage from an acid trap. The Difficulty of her equipment survival rolls is 8.

If the hero suffered no damage, the Difficulty is 3.

If a roll for a piece of equipment succeeds, it is essentially undamaged, though it may look the worse for wear. The consequences of failure depend on the type of item.

Damage to Armor

Armor pieces lose 1 point of Prot rating, plus 1 for every 2 full points of difference between result and Difficulty. If Prot rating is reduced

but remains above 0, the armor pieces can later be fixed with a successful Repair roll. If its Prot is 0 or less, it is destroyed beyond repair.

For the armor, Thurid's difference is 3. 2 goes into 3 only once, ignoring fractions, so her leather armor loses a mere 1 point of Prot value. It goes from a Prot of 8 to a 7.

Damage to Weapons

Weapons lose 1 point apiece of Atk and Dfn, and 2 points of Dam for every point of difference between Difficulty and result. If at least one of these ratings remains above zero after the damage is applied, the item can still be fixed with a successful Repair roll. Otherwise, it has just become junk to heave angrily against a wall.

For her double-bladed axe, Thurid got 5 points less than she needed. The Atk, Dfn and Dam ratings for the weapon are, respectively, 5, 5, and 12. She subtracts 5 points from both Atk and Dfn, leaving those values each at 0. She subtracts twice the difference, or 10 points, from Dam, taking it from 12 to 2. Since one value is still above 0, the weapon is still repairable.

Damage to Shields

Shields lose 1 point apiece of Dfn for each point of difference between Difficulty and failed result. If Dfn remains above 0, a damaged shield can later be repaired. If not, it is no longer of any use.

Thurid's difference for the buckler is 12. Its Dfn value is 2, far below the damage. 2 minus 12 is -10. The buckler is utterly destroyed.

Damage to Kits

Acid-washed kits are either Slightly, Mostly, or Totally damaged. If the roll failed but was within 4 points of the Difficulty, the kit is Slightly damaged. Users suffer a -1 Impairment to the relevant Ability while using a Slightly damaged kit. On a difference between 5 and 8, the kit is Mostly damaged, and the Impairment is -2. On a difference of 9 or more, it has gone to equipment Valhalla, and users suffer the standard -3 penalty for attempting the Ability without the necessary kit.

Thurid's mapping kit goes into the acid bath with her. She rolls a 3, adding to it the kit's modifier of 1,

for a result of 4. That's 8 less than the Difficulty of 12 (the acid's Dam rating). Her difference is 8, which makes her gear mostly damaged. Until she can get a new mapping kit, her cartographic skills suffer 2 points of Impairment.

Gambling kits are an exception to the general rule. If a hero has even a slightly damaged kit, opponents will refuse to play with him — unless they have a kit of their own, which they will insist on using.

Damage to Potions, Charms, and Amulets

Potions are completely destroyed by a failed roll. A damaged charm or amulet has its bonus reduced by 1, plus 1 for every 3 full points of difference between Difficulty and result. If its bonus is reduced below 0, it becomes completely useless.

Damage to Helms of Power

A damaged Helm of Power loses 1 level of the Divine Gift levels it grants, plus 1 for every 5 full points of difference between Difficulty and result. If the number of Gifts it grants is reduced below 0, it becomes completely useless. It can be restored to its full potency by a hero whose main deity is the god who grants the helm's Divine Gift; to do so, the hero must roll Divine Awareness against a Difficulty of 6. This may be attempted once per encounter. Damaged Helms of Power can also be fully repaired simply by entering a shrine (p. 174) dedicated to the governing deity.

Damage to Legendary Items

When a legendary item is damaged, the cost of buying levels in its power doubles. It cannot be repaired.

FALLING

Damage ratings for falls vary by height. Designers pick the amount of damage they want a fall to dish out, and choose its length accordingly. Falling heroes are permitted a Jump roll (Difficulty 6); if they make it, they enjoy the benefits of a good landing. If they fail, they suffer a bad landing. Falling damage ignores armor, which, along with the variable damage, is already accounted for in the costs listed at the bottom of this page.

We're not going to lie to you and tell you that this chart accurately reflects the real-world hazards of falling from great heights. We tried throwing suitable subjects off the top of a tall building and scientifically recording the results, but rapidly ran out of Norsemen.

FIRE

Vikings respect fire as a terrible weapon. When they feud with one another, they strike at their rivals by burning down their houses. Sometimes they wait outside a burning longhouse for the terrified people to emerge. Then they cut them down as they try to flee.

FALLING TABLE

Dam rating: Good Landing	Dam rating: Bad Landing	Length of Fall	Cost
5	10	10 – 15 feet	+17 encounter points
10	20	16 – 20 feet	+25 encounter points
20	30	21 – 25 feet	+42 encounter points
25	30	26 – 30 feet	+52 encounter points
30	35	31 – 40 feet	+62 encounter points
35	40	41 – 60 feet	+72 encounter points
40	45	61 – 80 feet	+82 encounter points
45	50	81 – 100 feet	+92 encounter points
50	55	100 feet or more	+102 encounter points

Fire is frightening because it not only ignores armor, but feeds upon it, doing further harm to its victim. If allowed to catch fire, the quilted cloth beneath a hero's armor will ignite. For victims wearing flaming clothing, or otherwise in constant contact with fire, the damage escalates.



Flame Exposure

When a hero is first exposed to flame, the runner rolls an unmodified die against a Difficulty of 6 (4 if the hero is wearing quilted/fur armor) to see if the Norseman's clothing catches fire. If it does, the victim suffers escalating damage (as explained on p. 142), starting at 6 points plus the difference between the Difficulty and result. To end the escalating damage, the hero can spend an action to smother the flames by pressing the burning clothing against a wall or by rolling on the ground. This requires a Dex roll against a Difficulty of (4 + the number of previous failed rolls). Flame exposure hazards cost 16 points.

Ragnar is hit by a trap that spits flame at him. He wears fur/quilted armor, so the runner's Difficulty when determining whether his clothing catches fire is 4. The runner rolls a 5. The difference between the Difficulty and result of the roll is added to the fire's starting damage of 6 points, and so Ragnar suffers 7 hit points of damage as one of his sleeves begins to catch fire. He tries to dash the fire out against a damp nearby wall. You roll his Dex versus a Difficulty of 4. He fails. On his next round, he takes 9 points of damage (last round's damage plus 2) and must roll against a Difficulty of 5 (base of 4 plus 1 failed round) to put it out. This time he rolls a 7, adds his Dex of 3, and puts the fire out with plenty of margin to spare.

Raging Fire

Heroes in the midst of a raging fire automatically suffer escalating damage, regardless of what they're wearing. They must leave the conflagration before trying to smother the flames.

The escalating damage starts at 12 points. The Difficulty of the Dex roll is 6. Raging fire hazards cost 36 points.

The designer must still give the hero a roll to avoid exposure to flame in the first place!

Encounter terrain may offer other ways of putting out fires. Immersion in water (or other non-flammable liquids) immediately extinguishes flaming clothing. If a designer places a water source large enough for a hero to completely douse himself near the fire trap, he gains encounter points. If the water is within 20 paces, he gets 15 points. If it is within 40 paces, he gets 5 points.

If the fire trap goes off during combat and a flaming hero moves towards the water feature, or if a hero douses himself in it in the course of a fight, it counts as a terrain feature coming into play and helps the runner earn victory points.

Fire is impossible to reliably use against foes in melee. While it is easy to set a wooden house aflame (assuming you've crept up to it without alerting the people inside), there is no good way to directly set people aflame. Lantern oils of the Viking age do not make for good molotov cocktails.

GETTING LOST

Heroes suffer a variety of consequences when they lose their way. Getting lost costs them time, energy, and morale, and exposes them to wandering monsters.

Heroes avoid getting lost by making successful Map rolls. Every failed roll means that the heroes have gone off in an incorrect direction, wasting time. In order to get back on the right track, the map-drawing heroes must make X consecutive successful Map rolls, where X is the number of rolls *failed* in the course of the current incident, plus 1. X is capped at 4, no matter how many times the heroes roll. Any triumph is treated as two consecutive successful rolls.

The Vikings descend into a twisting network of narrow, interconnected passageways. Paul rolls Thurid's Map skill versus a Difficulty of 6. He fails his first roll. The value of X is now 2; he must score 2 consecutive successes before getting out.

Heroes can trade off mapping duties.

You convince the group to let Ragnar try. You roll and fail. Now someone has to roll three consecutive Map successes for the group to get out of the mess.

X is now 3. Paul keeps rolling for Thurid. He rolls a triumph, then a success. The triumph counts as 2, so the group has its 3 consecutive successful rolls.

After the heroes find their way again, the pillagers roll twice for each hero.

The first roll is Stamina + Bravery. The Difficulty for this roll is the total number of mapping rolls attempted (whether successfully or not) while lost and trying to get oriented. The runner should keep track of this while it's going on. On a failed roll, the hero suffers armor-ignoring damage; the pillager rolls a single die, treating the result as the damage rating. This represents the general exhaustion he suffered from stumbling around lost, plus various nicks, scratches, and other minor hurts he incurred on the trail.

On a botch, the hero suffers 1 point of Impairment from demoralization.

The Difficulty for the Bravery roll after getting lost is 4; Thurid's first failure + Ragnar's failure + Thurid's triumph + Thurid's final success. You roll Ragnar's Stamina + Bravery, and fail by 1. You roll a d10, getting a 7, which is the Dam rating. You take 8 points of armor-ignoring damage.

The second roll is Stealth, also with a Difficulty of the total number of map rolls made while lost. For each hero who fails, the heroes suffer one wandering monster encounter. The Threat Category of each encounter is determined by the difference between Difficulty and result, as per the chart below.

Difference	Threat Category
13 - 15	Superior
10 - 12	Equal
7 - 9	Inferior
4 - 6	Weak
3 or less	Pitiful

You botch Ragnar's Stealth roll, for a result of -4. Because the Difficulty was 4, this leaves a difference of 8. This means that the group was attacked by Inferior wandering monsters.

Designers pay a base cost of 30 for any threats of getting lost. If the Difficulty of the map roll exceeds 6, the designer must pay an additional surcharge equal to twice the Difficulty cost.

Troy designs an event with a hazard of getting lost. The Difficulty of the mapping rolls is 7. He pays the base cost of 30, plus the normal fee of 10 for a Difficulty of 7, plus a surcharge of 20, which is twice the Difficulty cost, for a total of 60 points.

GRABBER TRAPS

A grabber trap holds its victims in place, preventing them from leaving their current positions until it is disarmed. Designers will find them of little use outside of combat. Examples of grabbers include bear traps, snares, quicksand pits, land clams, and glue traps. To free himself from a grabber trap, a hero must spend an action and make a roll, usually STR + Traps. Another hero, assuming that he's not grabbed himself, can spend one of his own actions to make the roll on the trapped comrades' behalf. (Okay, it *could* happen ...) Heroes can spend as many actions as they require to free themselves or others.

A grabber trap may or may not do damage in addition to its immobilization effect. If so, the designer pays for its Dam rating, as normal.

Heroes caught in grabber traps can't make Engagement rolls. Missile-using foes gain a +3 ATK bonus when shooting at them. In melee combat, trapped heroes suffer a -3 modifier to both ATK and DEF.

Grabber traps cost 40 points. The Difficulty of getting out of the trap is 6, unless the designer specifies otherwise, paying the normal cost for Difficulties other than 6. Costs for the roll to avoid the trap in the first place are also as normal. These rolls are always Standard or Singular. In the first instance, the entire group runs into a number of grabber traps at least as great as the size

of the party. The latter case describes a single trap, or a number of traps less than the size of the party.

(You can figure out what a land clam is, right?)

NUISANCE ANIMALS

Not all creatures are created equal. While some are big and dangerous enough to count as combat opponents, others are merely nuisance animals. If given the chance to gnaw on, sting, or infect a group of heroes, they'll obey their instincts and do so. However, the damage they mete out is minor. Further, they're too small to fight as one would a proper combat opponent. It is very hard to kill a fast-swimming barracuda, buzzing wasp, or scuttling rat with a gigantic battle-axe. Nuisance animals generally appear in swarms. Heroes get no victory points for dispatching them. If they want to avoid their teeth or stingers, their best course is simply to leave the area they infest.

Examples of nuisance animals include: rats, barracudas, small jellyfish, wasps, horseflies, and vampire bats.

Even though the actual harm they do is minimal, most people find that their instincts take over when they are attacked by swarms of hostile creatures. Unless they can check their natural impulses, they'll run away from the creatures. While fleeing, they'll suffer a decrease of 3 to all rolls devoted to any action unrelated to immediate

flight from the creatures. To avoid fleeing, characters must make a Bravery roll, the Difficulty of which is 6 plus the number of points of damage they've suffered from the creatures during the current encounter. Even if they succeed, they suffer a decrease of 1 to all rolls, as a result of the distraction caused by the movement of the animals and the pain of their bites or stings. The Bravery roll must be made once per round.

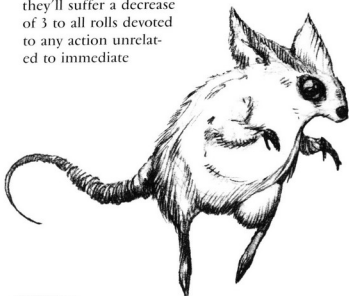
The basic encounter point cost of nuisance animals is keyed to the damage they can collectively do to a hero in the course of a single round.

DAM Score	Cost
1	1 encounter point
2	2 encounter points
3	4 encounter points
4	6 encounter points
5	10 encounter points
6	15 encounter points
7	20 encounter points
8	25 encounter points
9	30 encounter points
10	35 encounter points

Nuisance animal damage is armor-ignoring. It assumes that most of the attacks made by the swarm are deflected by the armor, but that so many separate bites or stings occur that a few of them must inevitably find their way through gaps in the armor to the victim's flesh. Heroes with an armor Prot rating of 2 or less suffer triple damage from nuisance animals.

Characters may take an action to attempt to evade swarming nuisance animals. They roll Dodge against a Difficulty equal to 6 plus the possible damage. Any success negates all damage.

Many nuisance animals are territorial and will attack only characters who enter a particular area. Others are confined to a single environment: barracudas and man-o-war jellyfish are found only in the water, for example. Nuisance animals never attack the heroes' foes.



STEP SEVEN: ADDING TREASURE

Any physical object that the heroes covet is considered treasure. Treasure falls into two main categories: **loot** and **gear**.

Loot is silver or any valuable item that can be valued in ounces of silver. Heroes want loot because, if they successfully haul it back home, they can convert it to victory points by giving it to their families.

Any item that increases the heroes' chance of success in the game is considered gear. This includes rare pieces of equipment, which the Vikings can only acquire through looting, or magical items that increase their Abilities. Gear does not directly provide victory points, although in some cases heroes may find merchants willing to trade silver for equipment, or vice versa.

CATEGORIES

When a designer includes treasure in an encounter, he gains points to spend elsewhere. Except when including small amounts of loot, he does not specify exactly what type of treasure appears. Instead, he picks a category of treasure. Only at the moment in the actual game when the heroes first see the treasure does the runner determine what it is, by randomly rolling on the chart provided for that category. The richer the haul a category provides to the heroes, the more encounter points it provides.

The treasure categories, and the points they provide, are as follows:

Category	Cost
A	-10 encounter points
B	-20 encounter points
C	-30 encounter points
D	-40 encounter points
E	-50 encounter points
F	-75 encounter points

PLACEMENT

Any treasure for which a designer gets points must be placed in the encounter in a way that allows the heroes a fair chance of actually laying their greedy little mitts on it. It must either be sitting out in plain sight, where a hero can automatically succeed in picking it up, or must be available to a hero who makes a die roll.

Success in non-violent confrontations can also earn the heroes treasure. They may get a magic amulet by impressing a Viking captain with their Carousing Abilities, or a bag of silver from a giantess pleased by their Demeanors.

If the treasure acquisition requires a roll, use the regular Difficulty rules to determine the cost for that roll, as you would for a trap or another kind of gain.

Designers pay nothing to make a treasure automatically available without a die roll. A designer can require the hero to survive a combat or hazard in order to get at it. The most common example of this is treasure the heroes find after they search the lair and belongings of their vanquished opponents. The designer cannot create an automatic triggering condition under the runner's control: the designer can't give a treasure to the first hero to be attacked by a self-willed opponent, for example. It must be the choice of the pillagers, not that of the designer/runner, that determines which hero gets an automatic treasure or gain.

The only way a designer can include a treasure that the heroes cannot actually get is to forgo the points he'd otherwise earn for it.

Your encounter includes a trapped staircase. You place a Category D treasure at the top of the stairs in plain sight. (When the heroes get close enough to see it, you'll roll on the Category D table and tell them what they see.) As soon as the trap is acti-

vated, a hidden tube-striker reaches forward and zaps the treasure away.

The heroes have no chance of recovering it, so you gain no points for including it. But you got the discount for making the trap conditionally automatic — after all, the heroes didn't have to go up that staircase, did they?

PALTRY AMOUNTS & LIAR'S SILVER

Designers can place up to 9 ounces of silver in any single event, gaining 1 encounter point for each ounce. You can also place 9 pieces of liar's silver in any single event. You can leave these paltry caches out in plain sight, or require a roll to get at them. Any greater treasure must use the treasure categories and random charts.

Loki finds great amusement in the lust for wealth that plagues mortal men. As a jape, he creates false silver and sends his minions forth to seed it in places where treasure-seekers might find it. If fooled by its luster, explorers haul it back to their home villages, struggling against its weight when goods of real value could instead be filling their packs. When they open their sacks of booty to show to their excited, gathered relatives, the coins turn to crawling and flying bugs that bite and exude a noxious substance that burns eyes and fouls crops.

Each piece of **liar's silver** looks and weighs exactly like a regular ounce of silver. Like the genuine article (see p. 158), its Load value is 1 for every thirty-two pieces.

Although it is easy to fall for this ploy of Loki's, explorers suffer losses to their reputation when they haul back sacks full of liar's silver. Those who've been too long in contact with money touched by Loki are thought to be cursed with ill luck, especially in matters of livelihood. Many villagers believe that their business affairs will suffer if their relatives bring them back coins touched by Loki. Heroes may therefore lose victory points when they take liar's silver back to their home bases. They must deduct 1 victory point per piece of false silver from any victory point gains they get from returning real silver to their villages. (See "Gaining Victory Points," p. 91.)

Unless they make successful Lore rolls versus a Difficulty of 8, heroes automatically

assume that their share of a cache of liar's silver is the real thing. Each pillager must make a roll for his own hero. The players know it's liar's silver, but can't make their heroes jettison it unless their Encumbrance class is Better Put Something Down or worse. Even so, if they have real silver as well, they must abandon the true and the false in equal quantities. Liar's silver can be left at a loot cache, but must be picked up at the same time as the rest of its contents.

Designers may include 9 or fewer pieces of liar's silver in any encounter; otherwise it appears only as a result of dire rolls on the treasure charts.

Loki's creation torments even us, because it doesn't really fall into any of the categories on our checklist: it's neither trap nor terrain feature. So we've put it on the Gains sheet, even though it costs encounter points and is not a thing to be desired.

MIX UP THOSE CATEGORIES!

Designers may gain encounter points for no more than 3 treasures of the same category in a single event, and for no more than 5 of any one category in an entire encounter.

RANDOM TREASURE CHARTS

The random charts for the various treasure categories are listed below. After certain charts, you'll see a line that looks like this:

Modifiers: A: -4, B: -2, E: +2, F: +4

It shows the roller what to add to, or subtract from, when determining the nature of treasures in certain categories. In this example, a Category A treasure requires him to subtract 4 from the roll; he'd add 2 for a Category E treasure.

Even with these modifiers, results can't go above or below the values provided on the chart. Unless otherwise specified, treat all results of less than 1 as 1s. If the chart goes up to 10, roll 1d10 and treat all results greater than 10 as 10s. Likewise, if the chart goes up to 100, roll 2d10, specifying one die as the tens place and the other as ones, and treat any result higher than 100 as 100.

The actual nature of a treasure is determined when a hero first lays eyes on it. Although the runner can do the rolling, it's generally more fun if a pillager does the rolling. The runner should give the nod to the one whose hero first saw or gained the treasure.

CATEGORY A

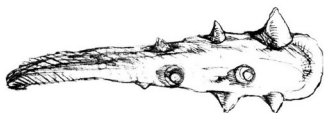
Roll	Treasure
1	1d10 ounces of liar's silver
2-5	loot worth 1d10 ounces of silver
6	loot worth 2d10 ounces of silver
7	Equipment
8	Potion
9	Charm
0	Roll on Category B chart instead

CATEGORY B

Roll	Treasure
1	(2d10 x 2) ounces of liar's silver
2	loot worth 2d10 ounces of silver
3-5	loot worth (2d10 x 2) ounces of silver
6	Equipment
7	Potion
8	Charm
9	Amulet
0	Roll on Category C chart instead

CATEGORY C

Roll	Treasure
1	(2d10 x 4) ounces of liar's silver
2-4	loot worth (2d10 x 4) ounces of silver
5	Equipment
6	Potion
7	Charm
8	Amulet
9	Helm of Power
0	Roll on Category D chart instead



CATEGORY D

Roll	Treasure
01-10	100 + (2d10 x 4) ounces of liar's silver
11-40	loot worth 100 + (2d10 x 4) oz. of silver
41-45	Equipment
46-47	2 pieces of Equipment
48-49	3 pieces of Equipment
50	4 pieces of Equipment
51-55	Potion
56-57	2 Potions
58-59	3 Potions
60	4 Potions
61-65	Charm
66-67	2 Charms
68-69	3 Charms
70	4 Charms
71-75	Amulet
76-77	2 Amulets
78-79	3 Amulets
80	4 Amulets
81-85	Helm of Power
86-90	Legendary Item
91-00	Roll on Category E chart instead

CATEGORY E

Roll	Treasure
01-10	200 + (2d10 x 20) ounces of liar's silver
11-40	loot worth 200 + (2d10 x 20) oz. of silver
41-45	2 pieces of Equipment
46-47	3 pieces of Equipment
48-49	4 pieces of Equipment
50-52	2 Potions
53-55	3 Potions
56-60	4 Potions
61-63	2 Charms
64-67	3 Charms
68-70	4 Charms
71-73	2 Amulets
74-77	3 Amulets
78-79	4 Amulets
81-85	Helm of Power
86-90	Legendary Item
91-00	Roll on Category F chart instead

CATEGORY F

Roll	Treasure
01-10	300 + (2d10 x 30) ounces of liar's silver
11-40	loot worth 300 + (2d10 x 30) ounces of silver
41-45	3 pieces of Equipment
46-47	4 pieces of Equipment
48-51	3 Potions
50-52	4 Potions
53-57	3 Charms
58-59	4 Charms
60-63	3 Amulets
64-67	4 Amulets
68-76	Helm of Power
77-78	2 Helms of Power
79-88	Legendary Item
89-90	2 Legendary Items
91-00	Roll twice on this chart, ignoring all further results over 90

LOOT CHARTS

Heroes win status by returning valuables to their communities. Vikings measure wealth in ounces of silver. It rarely appears in the form of coins. Instead, Vikings take looted silver items, like cups, plates, or works of art, and cut them up into pieces that weigh about an ounce.

Thirty-two ounces of silver carries a Load value of 1. (Yes, theoretically every piece of silver has a Load rating of 0.03125, but you'll recall that we lop off fractions in this game, so it doesn't count until you hit that threshold of thirty-two ounces.)

At the end of an adventure (or when the heroes enjoy the benefit of an early return to base; see p. 173), the heroes can cash in the loot they carry for victory points. Until then, they must carry it around with them from one encounter to the next. Load values for various types of loot are given on the Loot Chart, below.

Designers can build loot caches into their encounters, which allow heroes to temporarily hide their loot until the end of the adventure.

With cached loot, heroes don't have to worry about its Load value, or its getting damaged in transit. For more on these, see the Gains section, p. 174.

(In real life, pre-industrial farming societies like that of the Vikings treated the cow as a basic unit of exchange. However, it is neither heroic nor practical to herd cattle through dank, goblin-ridden underground passageways, so we're mentioning this fact only to ignore it.)

Whenever the runner gets a loot result, he then rolls on this chart to see what form it takes. Some forms of loot are light and easily portable; others are awkward and impose high Load values. Some are more durable than others; low Equipment Damage Modifiers increase the chance that they'll be ruined when exposed to equipment damage hazards (p. 149).

Roll	Form	Load	Equipment Damage Modifier
01-10	Furniture	1 per 5 items	4
11-15	Sculpture	1 per 3 items	6
16-20	Tapestries	1 per 10 items	3
21-30	Ceramics	1 per 15 items	2
31-90	Oz. of silver	1 per 32 items	15
91-00	Jewelry	0	4

MINOR MAGICAL ITEMS

The Viking world offers a wide variety of minor magical items powered not by the divine essence of the gods, but through the performance of various folk rituals handed down from one generation to the next. Although not nearly as effective as Divine Gifts, they can often make the difference between success and failure. These items are not purchased with victory points. Heroes can gain them only in the course of their adventures. They may seize them as booty, or receive them as rewards for slaying the minions of evil.

Potions, amulets, and charms usually work by adding to Ability rolls. A few items may temporarily increase other game statistics. Amulets, for example, might increase a hero's Prot value.

Most potions, and all amulets and charms, give heroes a set bonus to rolls using either a specific

Ability or a particular Characteristic. Items that boost Characteristics can be used on raw Characteristic rolls, or on any Ability roll deriving from that Characteristic.

Ragnar gains a potion that increases his Leadership Ability by 3. He can swig it before delivering a stirring speech to freed dwarven slaves, encouraging them to rise up against their masters. Thurid has a potion increasing her Presence. She could use it to do the same as Ragnar, or on any other Ability requiring Presence, or on a situation calling for a raw Presence roll.

Once activated, the effect of a potion, charm, or amulet works for a set period of time. Some last for only a round; others, for multiple rounds.

POTIONS

Potions are liquids brewed from a variety of ingredients often best left to the imagination. They can only be used a certain number of times. To take effect, they must be consumed by the user, or, in rare cases, poured out on a target object. Potions contain only a limited number of doses; once a character consumes the last one, it's as gone as any flask of mead.

Ragnar has three doses of his Leadership potion. Once he's used them, all he has left is an empty flask.

A **simple potion** may do nothing more than give a player a second attempt at a check he's already failed. It does not negate or erase a previous failure; it simply allows a pillager to take another attempt in a situation where his tries would otherwise be exhausted.

It takes an action to swig a dose of potion.

Start with the Type chart; the result of that roll tells runners which subsequent charts to roll against. The Ability Chart and Characteristic Charts, used for potions and several other treasure types, appear on p. 162. Finally, roll on the Potion Doses chart to determine how many times you can use the potion.

POTION TYPE

Roll	Type
1-2	Simple; roll on Potency and Ability charts
3-8	Ability; roll on Potency, Duration, and Ability charts
9-0	Characteristic; roll on Potency, Duration, and Characteristic charts

Modifiers: A: -4, B: -2, E: +2, F: +4

POTION POTENCY

Roll	Bonus
1-5	+1
6-8	+2
9	+3
0	+4

Modifiers: A: -5, B: -2, E: +2, F: +3

POTION DURATION

Roll	Duration
1-2	1 round
3-4	2 rounds
5-6	3 rounds
7-8	4 rounds
9	5 rounds
0	5 + d10 rounds

Modifiers: A: -6, B: -2, D: +2 E: +2, F: +4

POTION DOSES

This chart gives you the total volume of the potion, counted in the number of doses that it affords. This is how many times you can use the potion before it runs out.

Roll	Amount
1	4 doses
2-3	5 doses
4-7	6 doses
8-9	7 doses
0	8 doses

Modifiers: None

CHARMS

When a hero makes use of a **charm**, it can't be used until it recharges, which happens when a set condition is fulfilled. The player controlling the hero decides when to use it.

Ragnar has a charm which increases his Great Weapon Ability. He can activate it once every six hours.

It does not take an action to activate a charm.

Use the following charts to work out the type, bonus, duration, and recharge condition of a charm. Again, look on page 162 for the Ability and Characteristics charts.

CHARM TYPE

Roll	Type
1-8	Increases Ability; roll on Bonus, Duration, Recharge Condition, and Ability charts
9-0	Increases Characteristic; roll on Bonus, Duration, Recharge Condition, and Characteristic charts

Modifiers: A: -4, B: -2, D: +2, E: +4, F: +6

CHARM BONUS

Roll	Bonus
1-5	+1
6-8	+2
9	+3
0	+4

Modifiers: A: -5, B: -2, E: +2, F: +3

CHARM DURATION

Roll	Duration
1-2	2 rounds
3-4	3 rounds
5-6	4 rounds
7-8	5 rounds
9	6 rounds
0	6 + d10 rounds

Modifiers: A: -6, B: -2, D: +2 E: +2, F: +4

CHARM RECHARGE CONDITION

This specifies what condition the owner must fulfill before the charm recharges.

Roll	Recharge Condition
01-15	Deliver death blow to a foe of Equal or Better threat category
16-21	Score a Triumph on a QIK-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
22-27	Score a Triumph on a STA-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
28-33	Score a Triumph on a DEX-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
34-39	Score a Triumph on a STR-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
40-45	Score a Triumph on a PER-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
46-51	Score a Triumph on an INT-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
52-57	Score a Triumph on a COM-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
58-64	Score a Triumph on a PRE-based Ability roll called for in the encounter notes
65-70	Make a successful roll to activate a Divine Gift
71-74	Visit a shrine
75-85	Owner visits a shrine devoted to his primary deity
86-95	Wait until next event
96-00	Wait until next encounter

AMULETS

Amulets are typically defensive in nature; their magic activates whenever a set condition is met. An amulet works for an indefinite period, but its magic wanes a little each time it fails to protect its current user.

Thurid has an amulet that increases her Prot value. It can fail six times before it becomes useless. It activates whenever a servant of Loki tries to hit her. However, if a servant of Loki does succeed in damaging her, she must make a mark next to the entry for the amulet on her character sheet. When that entry has six marks beside it, its magic fades and it becomes worthless.

Amulets activate automatically when their conditions are met; this does not cost the user an action.

They stop working after a predetermined number of failures.

The following charts allow runners to determine the properties of an amulet. Roll on all three.

AMULET BONUS

Roll	Bonus
1-5	+1
6-8	+2
9	+3
0	+4

Modifiers: B: -2, E: +2, F: +3

AMULET FAILURE

This chart gives you the total number of failures the amulet can withstand before it becomes useless.

Roll	Useless After:
1	4 failures
2-3	5 failures
4-7	6 failures
8-9	7 failures
0	7 + d10 failures

Modifiers: None

AMULET ACTIVATION/EFFECTS

Roll	Effect Activates Whenever:	Bonus Applies To:
01-04	A Dark Viking tries to hit user with a melee weapon	DFN
04-08	A goblin tries to hit user with a melee weapon	DFN
09-12	A dwarf tries to hit user with a melee weapon	DFN
13-16	A Sark Amen/Dishonored tries to hit user with a melee weapon	DFN
17-20	A land crab tries to hit user in close combat	DFN
21-24	A wendol tries to hit user in close combat	DFN
25-28	A Dark Viking tries to hit user with a missile weapon	Dodge
29-32	A dwarf tries to hit user with a missile weapon	Dodge
33-36	User poisoned	Stamina
37-40	User exposed to disease	Stamina
41-44	User's Prot is reduced by damage to weapons or armor	Prot
45-48	User's HP total is 10 or less, and any opponent tries to hit him in melee combat	DFN
49-52	As per above, but with missile combat	Dodge
53-56	One or more fellow heroes have scored a kill in current combat, but user has not	INIT
57-60	User suffers non-Wound Impairment	ATK
61-64	User suffers Wound-derived Impairment	ATK
65-68	User was first hero to Sprint towards the foe	INIT
69-72	User faces a trap dealing fire damage	Roll to avoid*
73-80	User faces a trap dealing standard damage**	Roll to avoid*
81-84	User faces a trap dealing drowning damage	Roll to avoid*
85-88	User faces a trap dealing falling damage	Roll to avoid*
89-92	User faces a trap dealing acid damage	Roll to avoid*
93-96	User's current adversary delivered one or more Wounds to him during present combat	ATK
97-00	User has fewer total victory points than any other player	ATK

*"Roll to avoid" refers to any roll you make to determine whether your hero is affected by the trap.

***"Standard damage" includes any kind of damage not covered by another entry in the chart.

EQUIPMENT

Warriors are always keen for chances to pick up new killing instruments. Even those who consider themselves well-equipped know that weapons, shields, and armor can easily be lost or destroyed. By putting new weapons and gear in their path, you grant the heroes a benefit, and therefore get encounter points to spend elsewhere. Weapons, armor, and shields are all described in chapter two.

Roll on the following charts to determine the game statistics of equipment treasure. Ordinary piece-

of common equipment aren't gained as treasure. As explained in the sidebar on p. 164, the heroes can replace their lost or damaged common equipment by looting defeated weapon-using opponents.

EQUIPMENT TYPE

Roll	Type
1-5	Rare item; roll on Rare Equipment chart
6-0	Magical item; roll on Magical Equipment chart, then, as appropriate, Shield/Weapon or Armor potency charts

Modifiers: A: -5, B: -3, E: +3, F: +5

ABILITY AND CHARACTERISTIC CHARTS

These charts are used to determine the effects of several treasure types. If you get a result lower than 1, reroll until you get a result under 30. If you get a result higher than 100, reroll until you get a result over 30. Ignore category modifiers when rerolling.

ABILITY

Roll	Ability	Roll	Ability	Roll	Ability	Roll	Ability
01-02	Music	23-24	Animal Handling	45-46	Pick Lock	70-72	Bravery
03-04	Sing	25-26	Demeanor	47-48	Stealth	73-76	Disarm Trap
05-06	Repair	27-28	Sleep	49-50	Bargain	77-79	Healer
07-08	Disguise	29-30	Brawling	51-52	Awareness	80-82	Sprint
09-10	Pursuit	31-32	Insight	53-54	Divine Awareness	83-85	Dodge
11-12	Seamanship	33-34	Runes	55-56	Bows	86-88	Longshaft Weapon
13-14	Ski	35-36	Survival	57-58	Swim	89-91	Two Weapons
15-16	Ride	37-38	Skald	59-60	Chain Weapon	92-94	Thrown Weapon
17-18	Carouse	39-40	Lore	61-63	Balance	95-97	Great Weapon
19-20	Gamble	41-42	Leadership	64-66	Climb	98-00	Single Weapon
21-22	Deception	43-44	Map	67-69	Jump		

Modifiers: A: -30, B: -15, D: +5 E: +10, F: +15

CHARACTERISTIC

Roll	Characteristic	Roll	Characteristic
01-15	Quickness	57-68	Perception
16-28	Stamina	69-80	Intelligence
29-44	Dexterity	81-90	Communication
45-56	Strength	91-00	Presence

Modifiers: A: +10, B: +5, D: -5 E: -15, F: -30

RARE EQUIPMENT

Roll	Item	Roll	Item	Roll	Item
01-05	Barb-net	36-40	Goblin Spike Club	71-75	Four-bladed Mace
06-10	Gauntlet	41-45	Composite Bow	76-80	Dwarven Work Sword
11-15	Billhook	46-50	Double-bladed Axe	81-85	Dwarven Work Hammer
16-20	Morningstar (2 handed)	51-55	Roman Sword	86-90	Dwarven Battle Axe
21-25	Polearm	56-60	Heavy Crossbow	91-95	Dwarven Battle Sword
26-30	Pike	61-65	Light Crossbow	96-00	Dwarven Battle Hammer
31-35	Goblin Axe	66-70	Long Bow		

Modifiers: A: -20, B: -10, E: +20, F: +40



MAGICAL EQUIPMENT

This chart specifies what kind of magically-potent equipment appears. If the result is a shield or weapon, then go to the Shield/Weapon Potency chart to see just how its game statistics differ from a normal item of the same type. For Armor, consult the Armor Potency chart. Kits give a bonus to the relevant Ability, so go to the Kit Potency chart to find out what it is.

Roll	Item	Roll	Item	Roll	Item
01	Barb-net	31-32	Shortspear	71-72	Steel Scale Mail Armor
02	Billhook	33-36	Heavy Leather Armor	73	Tower Shield
03-04	Knife	37-38	Mace	74-75	Skis and Accessories
05	Sap	39-40	Hand Axe	76-77	Gambling Kit
06-07	Dagger	41-42	Studded Leather Armor	78-79	Repair Kit
08	Net	43-44	Short Bow	80-81	Mapping Kit
09	Gauntlet	45-46	Shortsword	82-84	Survival Kit
10	Whip	47-48	Spear	85-86	Lock Picking Kit
11	Buckler	49-50	Throwing Knife (set of 5)	87-88	Trap Disarming Kit
12	Morningstar (2 handed)	51-52	Leather Scale Armor	89-90	Climbing Kit
13-16	Goblin Axe	53-54	Throwing Axe	91-92	Healer's Kit
17-19	Goblin Spike Club	55-56	Composite Bow	93	Four-bladed Mace
20	Pike	57-59	Kite Shield	94	Roman Sword
21	Polearm	60	Light Crossbow	95	Double-bladed Axe
22	Quarterstaff	61	War Maul	96	Dwarven Work Sword
23-24	Quilted/Fur Armor	62	Long Bow	97	Dwarven Work Hammer
25	Flail (2 handed)	63-66	Viking broadsword	98	Dwarven Battle Axe
26	Sling	67-69	Viking Axe	99	Dwarven Battle Sword
27-30	Round Shield	70	Heavy Crossbow	00	Dwarven Battle Hammer

Modifiers: A: reroll results over 80; E: reroll results under 30; F: reroll results under 60

SHIELD/WEAPON POTENCY (BONUS)

Roll first for the bonus granted, then for the game statistic to which the bonus is applied.

Roll	Bonus
1-5	+1
6-7	+2
8	+3
9	Roll two more times on this chart, ignoring results above 9. Each bonus applies to a different game statistic; roll twice on next chart to see which ones. Reroll if the second result is the same as the first.
0	Roll three more times on this chart, ignoring results above 9. Roll three times on the next chart to see which game statistics receive the bonus; results are cumulative if you get the same statistic more than once.

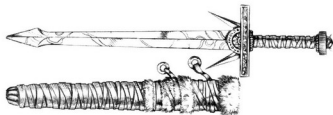
Modifiers: A: -5, B: -2, C: -1, D: +1, E: +2, F: +3

LOOTING COMBAT OPPONENTS

At the end of a successful battle, the heroes can scavenge 2 melee weapons from any foe whose type bears the axe icon (see Foes section) and 1 missile weapon from any foe who used one in the course of the fight. Because combat statistics for enemies are derived in relation to the heroes', their numbers don't necessarily match up to the Characteristics of particular weapons. We agree that this seems a little odd at first, but, because this asymmetry is necessary to prevent the heroes from being unexpectedly pounded to crap on a regular basis, we bet you'll eventually forgive us.

The players decide which common weapons they find on slain enemies. They should feel free to take advantage of this by choosing weapons of their favored type, for replacement purposes. If well-stocked with replacements, they can trade these looted weapons for silver when given bargaining opportunities. That silver counts for victory point purposes if hauled home. Designers gain no additional encounter points for looted weapons; they come with the package.

Armor worn by enemies is always assumed to have been shredded to bits in the course of the killing blows that downed them. Again, please accept this as a convenient game contrivance.



SHIELD/WEAPON POTENCY (STATISTIC)

For shields, reroll results of 2 or less. (Yes, this means that a rare few shields will increase the hero's Dam rating bonus.)

Roll	Statistic
1-3	Dam Rating
4-5	Atk Rating
6-7	Init Rating
8-0	Dfn Rating

Modifiers: None

ARMOR POTENCY

Roll	Statistic
1-2	Init Rating +1
3	Init Rating +2
4	Init Rating +3
5	Prot Rating +1
6	Prot Rating +2
7	Prot Rating +3
8	Prot Rating +4
9	Prot Rating +5
0	Prot Rating +6

Modifiers: A: -4, B: -2, E: +2, F: +4

KIT POTENCY CHART

Roll here for the Ability bonus provided by the kit. The bonus does not apply to tests in which equipment is not required.

Roll	Bonus
1-5	+1
6-8	+2
9	+3
0	+4

Modifiers: B: -2, E: +2, F: +3

Helm of Power

A **Helm of Power** is a helmet that grants its wearer one or more levels in a particular Divine Gift. A hero must have been wearing the helmet since at least the end of the previous event in order to make use of the Gift. Only one helm may be worn at one

time. A helm neither increases nor decreases the hero's usual armor protection when worn in place of his usual headgear. Each carries a Load value of 2.

If you already have the Divine Gift the helm grants, it is cumulative with your pre-existing levels.

HELMS OF POWER (DIVINE GIFTS)

Roll	Helm's Gift	Roll	Helm's Gift	Roll	Helm's Gift
01	The Loyal Hilt	34-35	Frost-Speeded Heels	66	Scorn the Bite of Treachery
02	Naglfar Plows the Waves	36	Gathering Thunder	67	Shoulders Wide as Bifrost
03	The North's Cooling Sigh	37	Gilded Tongue of Freyr	68	Swiftness of Sleipnir
04	Resist the Serpent's Tears	8	The Gnawing Stags	69	Through the Cracks
05	Scouring of Fell Spirits	39	Golden Apples' Sweetness	70	Thor's Thews
06	Skadi's Ermine Cloak	40-41	Implacably Braced	71	The Trumpet's Commanding Blast
07	Survive the Lake of Flame	42	Indefatigable Determination	72	Tyr's Forbearance
08	With Either Hand	43	Like a Wind-Tossed Leaf	73	Ull's Hide
09	The Chattering Squirrel	44	Like the Leaping Stag	74	Wiles of Loki
10	The Clenched Jaw of Vengeance	45	Many-Impling Spear	75	Wrestlers' Blessing
11	Dying Blow	46	Mjolnir Awakes	76	Zealous Sinews
12	The Ever-Flowing Cup	47	Njord's Crust	77	The Lie Turns to Truth
13	Imprecation of Doom	48	On Valkyries' Wings	78	Mantle of Odin
14	Obscuring Mist	49	The Owl Hears the Viper	79-80	Sudden as a Mountain Storm
15	Plumed Up by Njordsbreath	50	Penetrating Lightning	81	Vigilance of Heimdal
16	Roaring Shout Of Rage	51	The Raven Plucks an Eye	82-83	The Clatter of Rushing Boots
17	Sprig of Mistletoe	52	The Remorse of Hoder	84	Comeuppance Postponed
18	The Tireless Joy-Shout	53	Ripples from the Well of Knowledge	85-86	The Knitting of Meat and Bone
19	Agony Postponed	54	Rune Power: Viking Short Sword*	87	Rune Power: Dwarven Work Hammer*
20-21	Aura of Phlegmatic Acceptance	55	Rune Power: Roman Sword*	88-89	Berserks' Blessing
22	Banish His Blade	56	Rune Power: Viking Broad Sword*	90	Craven Departure
23	Boon of Angrboda	57	Rune Power: Dwarven Work Sword*	91	Destiny Reversed
24	Bone-Setters' Blessing	58	Rune Power: Dwarven Battle Sword*	92	Might of Thor
25-26	Buffeting Gale	59	Rune Power: Hand Axe*	93-94	Nurturing of Yggdrasil
27-28	Curds of Utgardaloki	60	Rune Power: Goblin Axe*	95	The Relentless Gales of Njord
29	The Eager Arrow	61	Rune Power: Viking Axe*	96	Rune Power: Four-Bladed Mace*
30	The Eight-Legged Horse	62	Rune Power: Double-Bladed Axe*	97	Rune Power: Dwarven Battle Hammer*
31	Eyes Like Glowing Coals	63	Rune Power: Dwarven Battle Axe*	98	Ull's Sure Hand
32	Flesh Cries Out For Piercing	64	Rune Power: Mace*	99	Valor of Tyr
33	From Lofty Asgard's Peaks	65	Rune Power: Goblin Spike Club*	00	The Wounds Close Quick

*Note that when using a helm that gifts your hero with a Rune Power, he still needs to use the applicable weapon. The helm just gives him the power without your having to spend victory points on it.

Modifiers: A: reroll any result higher than 18; B: reroll any result higher than 76; D: reroll any result lower than 19; F: reroll any result lower than 77

LEGENDARY ITEMS

Legendary items were made by the dwarves back when they were allied with Odin. Though not unique, each one is very rare, and the mere possession of one significantly enhances a warrior's reputation. Roll on the chart below to determine which legendary item the players have found.

Roll	Legendary Item
01-05	Armor of Inflexible Surety
06-10	Absorption Armor
11-15	Axe of Glory
16-20	Blade of Fair Title
21-25	Blinding Armor
26-30	Blood Tribute Armor
31-35	Blue Cloak of Treachery
36-40	Blunting Armor
41-45	Demon Maw Helm
46-50	Einherjar's Armor
51-55	Even-Handed Torc
56-60	Golden Blade
61-65	Light-Treading Boots
66-70	Loki-Thwarting Armor
71-75	Loki-Trouncing Wand
76-80	Mantle of Grim Justice
81-85	Ring of Alberich
86-90	Shield of Fury
91-95	Spitting Armor
96-00	Torc of Alberich

These different legendary items are described below.

To activate the powers of a legendary item, you must spend victory points on it, just as you would a Divine Gift. Also like Divine Gifts, most legendary items allow you to buy multiple levels. If the entry for Levels in a legendary item's description says "Unlimited," it allows unlimited levels; "None" means it does not allow levels. Keep in mind that, like any piece of equipment, a legendary item does not carry on to a saved character (see p. 60). Heavy investment in the powers granted by legendary items is therefore riskier than that in ordinary Divine

IDENTIFYING MAGICAL TREASURES

Although it would be realistic to say that heroes can't use these items until they identify them, it turns out to be a pain in the butt to administer this kind of secrecy. We therefore assume that Vikings are sufficiently attuned to the acquisition of loot that they can automatically identify all magical goodies on sight.

If a Gift has a level restriction, a helm can, at most, bring the user up to the maximum level, no matter how many levels it normally provides, or how many your hero has without it. If the random rolls determine that a helm provides a number of levels in excess of the Gift's maximum, it provides only the maximum levels.

Helms of Power increase their user's rating in the worship of the deity associated with their Divine Gifts. Even when removed, this effect continues until the beginning of the next event.

A helm which grants 2 levels of Agony Postponed increases its user's Heimdal rating by 2, provided that the user is wearing it, or only removed it during the current event.

HELMS OF POWER (LEVELS)

Roll	Level
1-5	1 level
6	2 levels
7	3 levels
8	4 levels
9	5 levels
0	6 levels

Modifiers: B: -2, E: +2, F: +3

Gifts. On the other hand, the cost of raising levels is generally cheaper.

Some legendary items give the hero a Divine Connection rating for every level the player buys, just like Gifts. Patrons are listed for items to which this applies.

Legendary items are almost always pieces of equipment. In addition to their special powers, they also count as magical equipment, and carry bonuses making them superior to ordinary pieces of their type. Roll on the appropriate magical equipment charts to see what those bonuses are, and which statistics they apply to.

Armor pieces made for Loki were fashioned by undead smiths from the still-living bodies of gigantic, demonic insects, and look like it. They gleam in sickly, iridescent colors, and are riddled with broken compound eyes, shattered mandibles, and pulsing stingers.

If the entry for Equipment Type says "Any Armor," roll on the following chart to see what kind it is:

Roll	Armor Type
1	Quilted/Fur
2-3	Heavy Leather
4-7	Studded Leather
8-9	Leather Scale
0	Steel Scale Mail

ARMOR OF INFLEXIBLE SURETY

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

For each level the hero possesses in this armor power, he may add 3 to any roll to resist Impairment or to gain Invigoration.

ABSORPTION ARMOR

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

When the user is struck by an enemy, the foe's weapon may adhere to the hero's armor, and, in a rainbow flash, is immediately absorbed into it. To prevent this effect, the foe must roll Res against a Difficulty equal to the hero's levels in Absorption Armor. If he fails, his weapon is instantly sucked up into the user's Armor, never to be seen again. Needless to say, he is disarmed. Until the end of the current event, you may add (the absorbed weapon's Dfn rating $\div$ 5) to your Prot. This item is only effective against foe types bearing the axe icon.

AXE OF GLORY

Equipment Type: Any Axe

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

Each time the user strikes a foe with this weapon, the victory point bonus for scoring the dying blow against him increases by 10X, where X is the user's levels in this power.

BLADE OF FAIR TITLE

Equipment Type: Viking Broadsword

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

The power of this sword comes into effect when another pillager's hero slays a foe the user previously struck with it, provided that the blade dealt more total damage to the foe than your opponent did when he scored his death blow. If this is the case, deduct 5X from the other hero's victory point tally and add it to the user's. X equals the user's levels in this power. The number of points transferred in this way can't exceed the death blow bonus.

BLINDING ARMOR

Equipment Type: Steel Scale Mail Armor

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

Whenever a foe strikes the user's armor, it gives off a shower of sparks that dazzle the foe's eyes. The after-image of the sparks lingers, making it harder for him to see for a short period. On any successful hit, he must roll Stamina against a Difficulty equal to the user's Divine Awareness + levels in Blinding Sparks. If he fails, he suffers a penalty equal to the difference between Difficulty and result to any action requiring clear sight. This includes all combat actions. He suffers the effect for a number of rounds equal to the user's levels in Blinding Sparks. If he suffers the effect more than once, he adds the penalties and rounds of duration together. The use of Blinding Sparks does not cost the user an action. Although the user's armor still sparks when hit by missile weapons, it is effective only against melee attackers.



BLOOD TRIBUTE ARMOR

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 45

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

The user can command this armor to grow dozens of tiny, sharp-ended feeding tubes which jut into his flesh and drink from it an amount of blood specified by the controlling pillager. For every 10 hit points worth of blood the user feeds it, he may add his levels in Blood Tribute to any single roll. Alternately, he can increase the armor's Prot value by 1 for every 4 hit points fed to it. In this case, the effect lasts until the end of the current encounter, or until the user regains the same number of hit points he just spent, whichever is sooner.

BLUE CLOAK OF TREACHERY

Equipment Type: A Deep Blue Cloak

Cost: 30

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

The user is immune from the victory point penalty for dealing damage to other heroes. Penalties he'd otherwise suffer from the deaths of other heroes are reduced by 25X, where X is his levels in this power.

BLUNTING ARMOR

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

Any melee weapon of normal (that is, not magical or dwarven) manufacture used to score a hit against the user is at risk of being damaged. Whenever a foe scores a hit, he must roll his weapon Ability against a Difficulty equal to the user's Divine Awareness + levels in Blunting Rigidity. If he fails, the weapon's Dam rating decreases by the user's levels in Blunting Rigidity. Weapon-using foes may discard and replace a damaged weapon as per the normal rules on being disarmed. The use of this power does not cost an action.

DEMON MAW HELM

Equipment Type: Helm of Power

Cost: 45

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

This helm looks like an enormous demonic head which the user places over his own. He can cause it to open its jaws and emit a low, horrible bellow that shakes the bowels of his foes. This requires an action. He can do it once per encounter. Thereafter, any character wishing to strike the user in combat must roll his primary god Divine Connection rating against the user's Loki Divine Connection rating. If he fails, he faces a penalty to his ATK rolls equal to three times the user's levels in Demon Maw Helm. The effect lasts until the end of the current event.

EINHERJAR'S ARMOR

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 45

Levels: Unlimited

The einherjar, Valhalla's honored dead, conduct constant mock battles against one another in anticipation of Ragnarok. As that battle will be bloody, there is nothing to be gained in pulling blows or fighting with blunted weapons. So they strike freely against one another, plunging blades into chests and enthusiastically lopping off limbs. Yet when the eerie sun that shines over Asgard sets behind its bordering peaks, the warriors slaughtered during the day revive, collect their lost limbs and organs, and become whole once again. Then they march to Odin's great hall, to drink and carouse until sunrise, at which point they again trudge off to do bloody battle against one another.

This armor allows the user to do the same, though in a much more modest fashion. At the end of each combat round, he regains a number of lost hit points equal to his levels in Einherjar's Armor. This happens automatically and does not require the use of an action.

EVEN-HANDED TORC

Equipment Type: Silver Torc (neck jewelry)

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

When another pillager's hero activates a Divine Gift which normally adds to his possible victory point tally, the user may force him to contest the user's Presence + X versus his Presence. X equals the user's levels in this power. If the user succeeds, the number of victory points the opposing hero gains is reduced by 10X, but cannot be reduced to a negative number. The user may use this power X times per encounter, where X is his levels in it.

GOLDEN BLADE

Equipment Type: Dagger

Cost: 75

Levels: Unlimited

When the runner rolls on a treasure chart for an item the user is the first to pick up, he adds X to any

d10 roll, or 10 to any percentile roll, where X is the user's levels in Golden Blade. The user suffers a 20X victory point deduction unless he then becomes the sole owner of the treasure.

LIGHT-TREADING BOOTS

Equipment Type: pair of boots

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

X times per combat, where X is the user's levels in this power, he may make a move, half move or Engagement roll or action due to terrain or the presence of a trap, without qualifying the runner for the victory point award he'd usually get from the user's action.

LOKI-THWARTING ARMOR

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 45

Levels: Unlimited

The user gains extra protection against Sark Amen, Dishonored, and Dark Vikings. Each time they attempt to hit him, his Prot rating increases by 1. In the course of single event, his total Prot increase cannot exceed his levels in this power. His Prot rating returns to normal at the end of the event.

LOKI-TROUNCING WAND

Equipment Type: Quarterstaff

Cost: 30

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

The possessor may use this power on any Sark Amen, dishonored, Dark Viking, or hero with a Loki Divine Connection rating. The user contests his Odin Divine Connection rating + levels in this power versus the target's Res (for foes) or Loki Divine Connection rating (for heroes). If the user wins, the target loses his next action. Characters who lost their previous actions to this effect are immune to it. The possessor must hold the quarterstaff in his hand, as a ready weapon, in order to use the power. He may not gain levels in this power when his Loki Divine Connection rat-

ing is equal to or greater than his Odin Divine Connection rating. If his Loki Divine Connection rating later becomes equal to or greater than his Odin Divine Connection rating, he immediately and irrevocably loses all levels in this power.

MANTLE OF GRIM JUSTICE

Equipment Type: Ermine-fur Collar (to be attached to a cloak)

Cost: 30

Patron: Odin

Levels: Unlimited

The possessor may use this power on any hero whose Loki Divine Connection rating is higher than his Odin Divine Connection rating, provided that the user has a higher Odin Divine Connection rating than Loki Divine Connection rating. He may use it X times per encounter, where X is his levels in this power. Each time his target succeeds at a roll called for in the encounter notes, he contests his Loki Divine Connection rating against the user's Odin Divine Connection rating. If the user wins the contest, the victory points the target would get for the roll instead transfer to the user's victory point tally.

RING OF ALBERICH

Equipment Type: A Ring with a Cloudy Amber Gem

Cost: 30

Levels: Unlimited

This item adds to the victory points the user gains whenever you succeed with an Ability roll called for in the encounter notes. It works on one Ability only. When the ring first appears, roll on the Ability Chart, p. 162, to see which Ability it boosts. Multiply all point gains from successes with this Ability by the user's levels in this power.

SHIELD OF FURY

Equipment Type: Round Shield

Cost: 30

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

X times per encounter, where X is the user's levels in this power, he may choose a foe's next target, trumping both the foe choice flowchart and, in the case of self-willed foes, the runner's discretion. If the foe is unengaged, the user succeeds automatically. If the foe is already Engaged with a hero, the user may cause it to disengage from its current target and attack a new one, by successfully contesting his levels in this power versus the foe's Res score.

SPITTING ARMOR

Equipment Type: Any Armor

Cost: 30

Patron: Loki

Levels: Unlimited

Whenever an enemy damages the user with a melee weapon, he also pierces a piece of this bug-like armor. It sprays green acidic blood towards the attacker. He must make a Quickness + Dodge versus a Difficulty equal to the user's Loki Divine Connection rating, or take 3 points of armor-ignoring damage for every level the user has in Acidic Spray.

TORC OF ALBERICH

Equipment Type: Copper Torc (neck jewelry)

Cost: 15

Levels: Unlimited

This item reduces by 3X the victory points the runner would otherwise gain when you fail an Ability roll called for in the encounter notes, where X equals the user's levels in this Gift. The runner's award can't be reduced below 0.

STEP EIGHT: CHOOSING OTHER GAINS

Treasure is not the only thing the heroes might want to find during their adventures. The items described in this section, which we lump together under the catch-all term **gains**, also gain designers encounter points.

Like treasure, designers can specify that the heroes receive a gain only on a successful roll, or automatically, by fulfilling a simple condition. The notes on "Placement" (p. 155 of the last section) apply equally to everything in this section.

AMBUSH OPPORTUNITIES

When heroes can ambush foes, it counts as a gain. The rules are a reversal of those for foes ambushing heroes, and therefore appear in the Traps section, on p. 141.

BARGAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Heroes welcome opportunities to exchange silver for equipment, or vice versa. If a designer includes an encounter with a supporting character able to exchange goods with them, he earns 15 encounter points. Prospective bargainers include wealthy Vikings, traveling trollish merchants and canny dwarves. Some of the gods, particularly Odin, adopt the guise of dust-covered peddlers when they choose to walk the land of Midgard. Bargaining is a contest, so designers must pay for the merchant's Bargaining skills as per the usual Opposed roll cost rules on p. 129.

Rules on how to run Bargaining scenes are in the Ability description, on p. 27.

Although the pillagers can specify that their heroes kill and rob any bargainers they run across, they never get victory points for the silver they may steal from these victims. Nor can they spend the silver on equipment in later bargaining sessions; they blow it all on mead or culturally inappropriate horns for their helmets.

CARROT

A **carrot** is our slightly slangy term for any situation in which the heroes make a roll and, if successful, get an increase to a subsequent roll. (We've already described its opposite, the **stick**, on p. 144.)

The heroes get a chance to make an Awareness roll to spot a cloud of dust in the distance. This indicates that the Bedouins are moving on the horizon. If they spot it, they get bonuses to their Initiative rolls when the nomads make their imminent attack. The bonus lasts for 3 rounds.

A small sealed tube hangs from a rope, which in turn dangles from a stalactite a hundred feet above the heroes' heads. A successful Bow roll severs the rope, dropping the tube to the floor below. Inside the tube is a map to a labyrinth ahead. Possession of it provides a bonus to the heroes' Map rolls when attempting to navigate the labyrinth.

A trio of Dark Vikings stands watch over a room behind a big brass door. A successful Disguise roll allows a hero to convince them that he, too, is a servant of Loki, sent to inspect the room. Inside the room a group of undead alchemists brew up a potion. Knowledge of the potion's ingredients provides a bonus to Healing rolls, which will become necessary in a later encounter when the heroes are poisoned with it.

The encounter point cost of a carrot equals five times the increase given to the later roll. Increases to INIT cost 5 encounter points for every 3 points of INIT gain. If, as in the Bedouin Awareness example above, the carrot affects a series of rolls taken over a number of rounds, the designer must multiply the encounter point cost by that number. Although a carrot can grant as high an increase as a designer wishes, he only gets encounter points for the first 6 points of increase (or first 18 points of INIT) and for the first three rounds of repeated rolls.

The designer can't include a carrot granting a bonus to a non-existent roll.

Freestanding Ability Rolls

Some Ability rolls lead neither to a lessening of risk to the heroes, nor any particular gain. Designers include them to contribute to a sense of atmosphere. These are called **Freestanding Ability rolls**. Most often, these rolls provide information to the players which is interesting but not absolutely essential.

The heroes find a smashed statue. You allow them to make Lore rolls to identify it as a statue of Tyr. Although success gives the players a hint as to what lies ahead — people or creatures who really hate Tyr — it doesn't provide a bonus to a future die roll, as would an actual carrot (as described above).

Freestanding Ability rolls count as gains because pillagers can still earn victory points when their heroes succeed at them. Further, they offer no risk to the pillagers, because runners do not get victory points when heroes fail.

Points garnered for adding Freestanding rolls vary by Difficulty. Use this price structure for Freestanding Ability rolls, ignoring the standard one on p. 129.

Difficulty	Gain
6	-10 encounter points
8	-8 encounter points
10	-5 encounter points
12	-3 encounter points
14	-1 encounter points

Designers do not get extra points for making a Freestanding Ability Singular and No-fault.

Healing Opportunities

It is to the heroes' advantage to spend long periods of time between dangerous incidents. Time to heal makes it more likely that they'll face their next fight in peak Viking condition. Designers gain encounter points by giving the heroes

safe harbors in which to recuperate between events in their encounters. Remember that heroes always heal up at the end of any encounter.

Time alone does not make for a healing opportunity. Designers must build into their encounters a safe place where they can rest up, free from enemies and protected from the elements.

The encounter points gained for inserting healing opportunities into encounters are pegged to the maximum time the heroes will be able to spend in their haven.

Time	Gain
1 hour	-5 encounter points
3 hours	-10 encounter points
12 hours	-15 encounter points
24 hours	-20 encounter points
3 days	-22 encounter points
6 days	-24 encounter points
12 days	-26 encounter points
24 days	-28 encounter points
No limit	-30 encounter points

Designers only get points for healing opportunities the heroes can actually use. They may freely include a healing opportunity if it is preceded by a combat event, and followed by another. Otherwise, they cannot get more points from healing opportunities than they spent on trap/hazard damage. This damage must precede the healing opportunity; the opportunity must also be followed by either a combat event, or another chance to take at least as much damage as the opportunity is worth. (Since heroes always heal between encounters, a designer does them no favors by including a chance to heal right near his encounter's conclusion.)

Your first event includes several traps for which you spent a total of 25 points. Checking the above chart, you see that you qualify to earn points for a six-day healing period after this event, provided that you follow it up with either a combat event, or another array of traps and hazards for which you spend at least 24 points on damage.

Runners end their healing opportunities by threatening the heroes with wandering monsters. See p. 199. Healing opportunities also allow heroes the opportunity to recharge certain Divine Gifts.

INVIGORATION

Invigoration is the exact opposite of Impairment; it increases all of the heroes' rolls by a given number over a number of rolls. Perhaps the heroes become divinely inspired, blessed by magic, or just confident.

Invigoration cancels out Impairment, and vice versa. Heroes lose any Invigoration they might enjoy when each encounter ends.

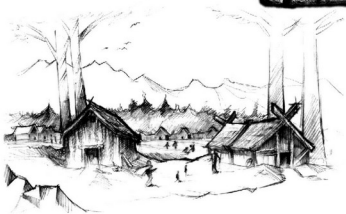
Like Impairment, Invigoration costs vary according to the number of rolls still to come in the encounter, like so:

- For each combat sequence: -30 encounter points
- For each roll to avoid a trap: -5 encounter points
- For each roll to trigger a gain: -5 encounter points
- For each Freestanding Ability roll (see p. 172): -3 encounter points

Multiply this base cost by the number of Invigoration points.

If for some reason you want the Invigoration to end before the conclusion of your encounter, just specify the point at which it ceases. Naturally, you gain points only for rolls and combat sequences prior to that point.

Some Invigorations affect only one Ability or another type of roll derived from an Ability, like Engagement. We call this a **Specific Invigoration**. In this case, you gain for only the affected rolls. If your Impairment effect singles out INIT, ATK, DFN, or Engagement, you gain 10 for each combat sequence.



REASON TO GO HOME

In a standard roleplaying game, the players decide when their characters haul themselves out of the dungeon environment in order to heal up, bargain with local craftsmen for new gear, and invest their mountains of coins in unicorn futures.

The doughty Viking heroes of **Rune** aren't so cooperative. Maybe *you*, the players, want them to go home, but they, the characters, almost always prefer to stay down in the deep, dank dark, looking for more enemies to slaughter and greater treasures to haul home. After all, if they go home they'll have to take baths and listen to their nagging parents. The troves of silver are always fatter around the next passageway.

To have their heroes return home at the end of an encounter, all players must roll Lore versus a Difficulty of 10. The runner adds together the differences between Difficulty and result for all of the successful heroes, and compares it to the same number for the ones who fail. Only if the first number is greater than the second do the Vikings decide to go home.

Designers gain encounter points by making the decision to return home easier. This is expressed as a bonus applied to each hero's roll. The designer gets 5 encounter points for each point of bonus. The maximum bonus is 5.

A designer may use this gain only if he's included at least 75 points worth of treasure in the encounter.

Loot Cache

A **loot cache** is a location, such as a cave, an area of loose ground, or grotto, in which the heroes can temporarily stash their own loot so they don't have to suffer its Load value or risk damaging it in transit. They leave it in the cache and retrieve it after the end of the adventure, on their way home. The encounter point value of a loot cache varies according to its reliability, as seen in the chart below.

Recovery Difficulty	Gain
4	40 encounter points
5	30 encounter points
6	20 encounter points
7	10 encounter points

A hero can increase the safety of a loot cache with a successful Traps roll, made when the loot is first hidden. He's not disarming a trap, but building one to deter robbers. The Difficulty of the roll is 6; if suc-

cessful, the runner makes a note of the difference. It becomes a bonus to the Presence + Divine Awareness roll made by the then-current runner when the heroes return to see if the loot is still there. This may occur many encounters down the road, so every player should keep accurate records of cache contents, recovery difficulties, and trap bonuses. Use the record sheet at the end of this book. A sample is given below.

When the heroes decide to return home, the then-runner, who is not necessarily the same person who ran the encounter including the loot cache, asks a for a list of outstanding loot caches. For each cache, a single hero (chosen by the pillagers) rolls Divine Awareness, reflecting his divinely-granted luck, against a Recovery Difficulty chosen by the designer. If he succeeds, the loot is still there. If not, it's been found and borne off by gremlins, goblins, other Vikings, or whoever. The heroes never get another crack at a lost cache.

Shrine

A **shrine** is a small holy place dedicated to one of the gods. At a shrine, players may buy death insurance (see p. 60), an action they can normally take only at the beginning of an encounter.

The designer specifies the god to whom the shrine is dedicated. Heroes may "save" their characters for a mere 12 victory points at a shrine of their primary god. Heroes may also gain any Divine Gift granted by the shrine's god at a 30% cost discount. They do not have to have the shrine's god as their primary deity to qualify for the Divine Gift discount.

The encounter point value of a shrine depends on the god to whom the shrine is dedicated:

Deity	Cost
Freyja	-10 encounter points
Heimdall	-15 encounter points
Loki	-15 encounter points
Njord	-15 encounter points
Odin	-20 encounter points
Thor	-25 encounter points
Tyr	-15 encounter points
Ull	-10 encounter points
Any other deity	-5 encounter points

LOOT CACHE RECORDS

List the location of the cache in the first column. In the next column, indicate the real-world date on which you played the encounter in which the treasure was cached. Then list the runner for that session, the Recovery Difficulty (found in the encounter notes), and the bonus, if any, gained by booby-trapping the cache against intruders. Use the large lower box to make a detailed record of the cache's contents. You can find the Loot Cache Record, along with several other helpful forms and cheat sheets, in the Appendix.

LOCATION	DATE	RUNNER	RECOVERY DIFFICULTY	TRAP BONUS
Trail Cave	2/2	Alex	6	+4

CONTENTS

5 Pieces of Furniture worth 40 oz of Silver

6 Pieces of Pottery Worth 12 oz of Silver

2 Viking Broadswords

1 Leather Armor

32 oz of Silver

If a hero's primary deity is Thor, Odin, or Heimdal, and he gets death insurance or gains a Divine Gift at a shrine of Loki, he must roll Divine Awareness versus a Difficulty of 8, or suffer 1 point of Impairment.

The encounter designer can require a roll to recognize or find the shrine, but is not obligated to do so.

Designers gain points for no more than two shrines per encounter, and these must be dedicated to different gods. Designers should remember that they can't cash in victory points for Gifts or death insurance while acting as runners, and that there is therefore no point in skewing shrine choices to favor their own heroes.

VICTORY POINT BONUSES

Sometimes designers will want to reward the heroes for behaving in a properly heroic, Viking manner. They do so by directly awarding victory points.

Victory point gains should always involve some risk, or at least emotional cost, on the part of the heroes. They should get victory points to compensate them for taking actions that Viking warriors would undertake without question, but that players may be reluctant to perform because they don't make sense if you look at the heroes in a cold-blooded fashion, as game pieces. Alternately, you can award them to reward the heroes when they act like Vikings, as opposed to modern-day people wearing furs and funny hats.

The list below provides some examples of actions worthy of direct victory point awards, and rough estimate of the victory points each action deserves. This is not an exclusive list. Designers should try to make situations of their own invention comparable to the awards given here.

- Dispatching a dying, sympathetic Viking supporting character, to give him an honorable death: 10 victory points.
- If a hero gifts a skald in recognition of his stirring poetry, he gets victory points, provided that his gift is more valuable than anyone else's. His victory point award equals the value of the gift in silver ounces, times two.

- Composing a satiric poem to shame a dishonorable Viking chieftain: 10 victory points.
- Refusing to taste the effete food of outlanders, even though it earns the hero a penalty on a later interaction roll: 10 victory points.

If a designer includes an action that is not listed here, fairness requires him to give the players at least a chance of realizing that it is worth victory points. He can either have a supporting character come right out and tell them that the action in question is the sort of thing expected of mighty Viking warriors, or he can require a Demeanor roll to allow them to figure out the correct course of action.

Many of these actions can be performed by only one character. For example, it would be absurd and undignified for an entire party of heroes to whack away at a dying ally. The hero who actually performs the action gets the full victory point total. All other heroes get half that amount each, provided that they do not stand in his way. If heroes squabble or jostle one another over the right to perform the action, no one gets any victory points. This is called a **singular award**.

Other actions, like the refusal of food example, can be undertaken by any number of heroes, each of whom gets the full award. This is called a **mutual award**.

Players get victory points only for situations built into the encounter. So if a helper happens to get unexpectedly eviscerated by a spider-werk, the heroes gain no victory points for delivering the blow that sends him to Valhalla, no matter how vigorously the players cajole the runner.

Like any other victory point awards, these add to the hero's tally, and are subject to deductions at encounter's end.

For fixed victory point awards, the designer gains encounter points equal to the maximum number of victory points available to be won by any single hero. For variable awards, where the exact number of the victory points won is dependent on the choices of the players or game statistics of the heroes, the designer nets a flat 10 encounter points.

DESIGNING ADVANCED ADVENTURES

By choosing to run advanced adventures, you make your campaigns more like stories, with beginnings, middles, and endings. Don't worry, it won't mean that you're going soft: there will still be plenty of random, gratuitous violence.

How They Work

Each time you play **Rune**, a single player is designated as the plotter. His job, when he takes his turn as runner, is to run the plot encounters. Just as all players share designer/runner responsibilities, each player should take his turn as plotter. Make your group's biggest keener start out as the first plotter. He may be the person who first bought a copy of the rulebook, and/or the one who usually GMs when you play conventional roleplaying games.

Collectively, all of the encounters the plotter designs, plus all of the encounters designed by other players, in between yours, are called an **adventure**. The plotter creates encounters which serve as its beginning, middle, and end. They're called **plot encounters**. The rest of the designers create encounters that sandwich in between the plot encounters. They share a basic setting with the plot encounters but are otherwise as free-floating as the unconnected Underground encounters everyone has been designing until now. These are called **cushion encounters**.

BUDGET INCREASES FOR PLOT ENCOUNTERS

Designers get more points to play with when they create plot encounters. Add 30% to the overall budget for the set-up encounter, 15% for the development encounter, and 50% for the climax encounter.

Plot encounters bookend the session's other scenes and contribute to a feeling that the heroes are doing important things instead of just aimlessly wandering around killing things. They turn the heroes' activities into a story — though it's a simple one made up mostly of fight scenes.

So, if in a four-player group, an adventure would map out as follows:

Runner	Encounter Type
Player 1 (the Plotter)	Plot: Set-Up
Player 2	Cushion #1
Player 3	Cushion #2
Player 4	Cushion #3
Player 1	Plot: Development
Player 2	Cushion #4
Player 3	Cushion #5
Player 4	Cushion #6
Player 1	Plot: Climax

A five-player adventure would map out like this:

Runner	Encounter Type
Player 1 (the Plotter)	Plot: Set-Up
Player 2	Cushion #1
Player 3	Cushion #2
Player 4	Cushion #3
Player 5	Cushion #4
Player 1	Plot: Development
Player 2	Cushion #5
Player 3	Cushion #6
Player 4	Cushion #7
Player 5	Cushion #8
Player 1	Plot: Climax

This assumes that you have three or more players in your group. In two-player games, the plotter should run cushion encounters, too.

Runner	Encounter Type
Player 1 (the Plotter)	Plot: Set-Up
Player 2	Cushion #1
Player 1	Cushion #2
Player 2	Cushion #3
Player 1	Plot: Development
Player 2	Cushion #4
Player 1	Cushion #5
Player 2	Cushion #6
Player 1	Plot: Climax

The starting budget depends on the type of encounter. Don't forget to up the point limit for experienced characters, as seen on p. 94.

Encounter Type	Point Limit
Plot: Set-Up	350 encounter points
Cushion	300 encounter points
Plot: Development	350 encounter points
Plot: Climax	450 encounter points

PLOT ENCOUNTERS

As shown in the adventure maps above, each adventure includes three plot encounters: the set-up, the development, and the climax. But before designing these, the plotter needs to determine what his hook is.

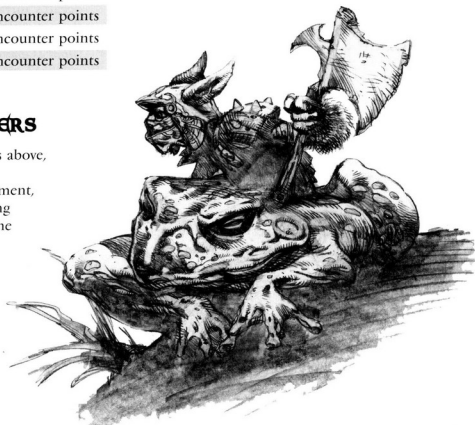
THE HOOK

The first thing the plotter determines, before designing his encounters, is the **hook** for the story. The hook is a very basic concept uniting not only plot encounters, but the cushion encounters of the other

designers. Most of the time, the hook should simply be a broad setting where a bunch of fights and other interesting things take place as the heroes progress through a series of encounters.

The plotter must give the other players advance word of the hook, so that they can keep it in mind when devising their own encounters.

The default hook in a **Rune** game is "the Underground." This means that all of the encounters take place in the vast underground tunnel complex in which the computer game is set. The Underground is the ideal hook because it's really easy to connect one encounter to the next. Each encounter is simply set in a different room of this enormous complex. The heroes can get from one encounter to the next just by walking down a corridor or kicking in a door. This is how you've been playing all along; the only difference is that you'll be adding a semblance of narrative to the familiar setting.





HOME BASE

The default assumption of this game is that the heroes' home base is an isolated Viking village somewhere in Scandinavia. All of the heroes are more or less the same age, and all want roughly similar things. First and foremost, they wish to prove their worthiness to the gods, so that, after death, they might join the ranks of the Einherjar. Secondly, they wish to increase the worldly status of their extended family within their home community. Status is measured by the family's ability to uphold cherished Viking values, but also by its wealth. So when heroes bring back silver or jewels from their adventures, they build their family's status. Although the game doesn't focus on this fact, the heroes' family members are farmers most of the year. They launch the occasional raid during the growing season, when there is little to do on the farm. When the heroes begin to show their mettle as a potential warrior, they earn special privileges. No longer do their relatives expect them to toil in the fields. They're better off honing their weapon skills, so that they can bring them more treasure from the Underground and elsewhere.

Once you've become jaded old hands at the game, your Horde might want to transplant the heroes to a new and exotic home base. It could be in Paris, Byzantium, or even Asgard. Make sure that your unconventional home base gives the heroes a reason to go out and get into trouble, and provides some sort of rationale for bringing treasure back to cash in for victory points.



Other hooks might include:

- *Scandinavia*. The adventure takes place in various wilderness locations and villages near the heroes' home base. They'll be negotiating with other Vikings, occasionally fighting them, and braving the hazards of travel in difficult, rocky territory.
- *Jotunheim*, the mountains where giants live. The heroes face the dangers of cold weather and treacherous mountain terrain, as well as the threats, puzzles, and challenges posed by giants. Giants are sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile.

- *Nidavellir*, the strange domain of the mechanistic dwarves. All or most encounters will be with dwarves or their mysterious devices. Carefully-engineered traps of incomprehensible workmanship abound.
- *Svartalfheim* is the thick, gloomy forest where the elves live. Encounters take place in the wilderness. Opponents often include unusually ferocious wild beasts. Traps consist of snares and other outdoorsy hazards.
- *Foreign Lands*: The players go to another region of Midgard and lay waste to it in search of treasure. They might burn down wealth-laden abbeys in England, battle hostile natives on the cold and rocky shores of Newfoundland, or serve as mercenaries in the Holy Land. This hook works splendidly if everybody is a history buff, but should be used with care if some of your fellow players couldn't tell a Varangian guard from a Valencia orange.
- *Underwater*: The heroes all take advantage of magic that allows them to breathe under the ocean's surface. They find themselves doing battle in a realm of mermen and manta rays.
- *Other Dimensions*: The heroes visit another fantasy world or game setting with which all of the players are already familiar, in order to sack and pillage it. The further afield you go from a Viking world, the more work it is for you and the other players to warp concepts like guns, laser cannons, and caped superheroes into the closed framework of the encounter design rules.

Some of these hooks are described in more detail in Chapter Six.

Plotters may also make more specific requests of the other players as they devise their encounters. They may want all of the Underground caverns they explore to be obscured by fog, or to start out frost-covered and end up meltingly hot. They might insist that everyone draw from the same narrow set of foe types. We recommend that you wait until everyone is comfortable with the advanced mode before trying to get fancy. Let people first get used to creating encounters that are essentially unrelated

to one another. Once you've all mastered the tricks in this chapter, you can start working together in innovative ways.

Once a plotter has chosen and announced the hook, he needs to actually create his plot encounters.

SET-UP

The **set-up** is the very first encounter in the plot. It takes the heroes from their home base, introduces them to a problem, and transports them to a confrontation with forces arising from or related to that problem. The default beginning for any story will be: "You're all training, drinking, and perhaps wooing prospective spouses, when something mysterious happens. You go to investigate..." The story gains impact if sympathetic characters face some kind of potential harm which the heroes can prevent. Finding the source of the trouble should start the heroes on a journey that will take them to the location you've chosen in your hook. The situation should be such that the heroes will be able to tell when their job is done and they can return home to tell people that the threat has passed.

Set-ups should be very simple. Plotters shouldn't be trying to outdo Tolstoy or Dickens. All they're doing is creating a very basic story idea to make fun, but otherwise unrelated, scenes of adventure hang together in a coherent (okay, semi-coherent) whole.

Here are some set-ups for you to plunder as needed:

- *Call of the Slain.* Ghosts of the dead haunt a heroes' hall, demanding that the Vikings avenge their murders. The ghosts lead the heroes to the camp where they were slain. From there they follow clues to the first encounter.
- *Cruel Assault.* Raiders attack the heroes' village. They follow the raiders' trail to the adventure's starting point.
- *Dread Affliction.* A prominent person in the village has been laid low by an incurable disease. The village god-talker says that the disease was sent by the minions of Loki. When she concentrates, she has a vision of the heroes entering a deep pit, and later fighting Loki's demon minions. The vision has enough

landmarks in it to lead them to the isolated fjord where the deep pit, smoking with the fumes of the Underworld, is located.

- *Not Dead Enough.* The dead are rising from their graves, at the behest of Hel, the death goddess. The empty graves connect up to a network of tunnels, which lead the heroes to the portion of the Underground that is Hel's.
- *Paid to Avenge.* A wealthy trader from another village promises the village a new longship if the heroes will track down and take vengeance against the man who besmirched his daughter's honor.
- *Stolen Child.* A child with great potential as a priestess has been kidnapped. The heroes must retrieve her from the minions of Loki who took her.

Having established a motivation and a goal for the heroes, the plotter then proceeds to design the story's first encounter, using the same process you would for any other.

After you finish running your set-up, each of the other players runs a cushion scene.

DEVELOPMENT

The next time the plotter's turn to run rolls around, he deploys a **development** encounter. In the development, the heroes are reminded of their original goal, and advance towards it. Typically, their reward for surviving the dangers of the encounter is a clue or a definite step towards eventual victory. Perhaps the heroes fight and defeat an identifiable henchman of the main villain. Or they might be rewarded with information directing them towards the final scene.

Let's look at possible development scenes for the various set-ups listed above.

- *Call of the Slain.* The heroes travel to the hall of the family that the ghosts blamed for their demise. After a furious fight, they slay the most hot-headed of the defenders. Only then, from the surviving noncombatants, do the

heroes learn that the family couldn't possibly have committed the crime.

They explain that a cruel band of elves, which has hated them ever since they heedlessly cleared a holy grove, must have assumed their shapes and gone off to kill someone who they knew would be avenged. The falsely accused family tells the heroes how to find the elves.

- *Cruel Assault.* The heroes find and defeat some of the mercenaries who participated in the raid. Interrogating them after the fight, they learn who ordered the raid and get directions to his home village.
- *Dread Affliction.* After defeating a wurm, the heroes sort through its treasure trove. They find a magic book containing the incantation that caused their village elder's illness. In the front of the book is a map, which may take them to the book's owner.
- *Not Dead Enough.* A gate of skulls around the entrance to the next encounter warns the heroes that they're close to Hel's home. The heroes gain a magic scepter that will protect them from Hel's wrath, and force her to grant them one favor.
- *Paid to Avenge.* The heroes reach the village where the despoiler of the woman's honor lives, only to find it swarming with dwarven slavers who attack them. The heroes defeat the slavers but learn that many captives have already been sold to the elves of Svartalfheim.
- *Stolen Child.* The heroes find one of the girl's slippers in a pile of junk gathered by a goblin scavenger.

ESTABLISHING YOUR VILLAIN

When possible, plotters should use the development to allow the heroes to better know — and hate — the main villain behind the story. It is dangerous to have the villain show up in person, because the heroes will do everything in their power to kill him right then and there. Unlike traditional single-GM roleplaying games, **Rune** doesn't let you cheat by just declaring that the villain gets away, in spite of what the player characters

ought to be able to do according to the rules. In this game, if you let your primary villain appear before the climax, you can't cheat to keep him alive. If the heroes dispose of the villain during the development, there will be nothing interesting for them to do during the climax.

Plotters who take this risk will need to have a second villain to substitute for the original when the climax rolls around, should the first one succumb to the heroes' axes. In this case, the plotter must quickly change his conception of the story so that the now-dead character who seemed to be the main villain turns out to be a mere henchman of an even more diabolical fiend. This can be unsatisfying, though, if the new main villain just turns up out of the blue.

Most of the time, plotters should allow their villains only indirect appearances during the development. Here are some ways to do this:

- The heroes meet a witness to the villain's dastardly acts, which are recounted in vivid, first-hand detail.
- The heroes find clues — like a map or journal — revealing the villain's sinister plan. Make sure that the bad consequences of the villain's acts upon innocent or sympathetic characters are clear to the heroes.
- In place of the main villain, an equally nasty but somewhat weaker henchman leads a battle against the heroes. During the fight, he taunts them with threats detailing what his boss will do to them.
- The fight takes place in one of the main villain's hideouts, against his lesser minions. The objects in the hall — torture implements, bloody altars, gigantic statues of hideous, grinning Sark Amen — establish the villain's evil nature. Their massive scale — huge staircases, vaulted ceilings, enormous tapestries — creates a sense of his power and importance.
- The heroes fight unwilling opponents who've been coerced by the villain into defending him against the PCs. In the battle's aftermath, they discover this, and, through their opponents' fear of the villain, begin to understand how loathsome he is.

CLIMAX

The final encounter you run wraps up the adventure with a satisfying concluding battle, followed by a resolution of the plot. The battle is invariably with the main villain. If possible, it occurs mere moments before he sets his evil plan in motion. Clues found in the aftermath of the battle answer any questions posed in the set-up or development. Pull out all the stops to make this the most nail-bitingly exciting action sequence possible. A plotter's best and trickiest ideas should go here.

Here are possible climaxes for our sample adventures:

- *Call of the Slain.* The heroes hack through the gnarled briars guarding the elven tribe's stronghold, and do pitched battle against their chieftain and his finest warriors. As they fight, they learn that the elves intend to seed the area with killer plants which will choke out the pastureland and starve out human farmers — including the people of their own village.
- *Cruel Assault.* The heroes enter the home village of the killers in disguise, and feast with them until their hosts reveal that they performed their acts of cruelty in order to win the favor of Loki. Their headman, bristling with new Gifts bestowed on him by Loki, sniffs out the heroes' subterfuge and lays an ambush for them.
- *Dread Affliction.* The heroes follow the map to a lair of trolls, where the shamans boast of their ability to cause diseases among humans. They intend to sicken the greatest leaders in your area, to leave the Norse people weak and unready for an all-out troll invasion. The heroes must destroy the scroll containing the disease incantation. When they do so, they not only set their village elder on the road to recovery, but remove the trolls' chance of weakening the Viking people. Naturally, they must fight the biggest, baddest trolls to get the scroll away from them.
- *Not Dead Enough.* The heroes enter the halls of Hel and gain an audience with the goddess herself. She tricks them into lowering their guard,



A SENSE OF PROGRESS

If your group is well into a saga and the heroes have, over time, presented their community with bushel after bushel of silver pieces, plotters should remember to take this fact into account when devising the hooks and plot encounters for their adventures. They should describe the changes the village has gone through since the heroes first started their careers of glorious plunder. It will build fortifications of ever-increasing strength, from ditches lined with stakes to massive stone walls equipped with high watchtowers and sturdy battlements. Its cattle herds will be large, fat, and healthy. Its men will don the finest cloaks; women will adorn themselves with jewels.

Your community's newfound wealth does not foreclose adventure possibilities; it just changes them. The richer you are, the more inviting a target you become for rival plunderers, Dark Vikings, dwarven raiders, and other fortune-seeking foes. Wealth may make your people complacent, or create strife as they begin to squabble over the distribution of your spoils. In short, abundance leads to as many interesting and dangerous situations as poverty.



and the magic scepter is taken from them. They battle her undead minions, recovering the scepter at the last minute. They use it to force her to withdraw the plague of undead. Angered but unable to harm them, Hel expels them from her domain, returning them to their home village.

- *Paid to Avenge.* After fighting many battles on the road to Svartalheim, the heroes discover that the rightful lord of an elfin domain has been displaced by a murderous usurper — who just happens to be advised by the man the heroes hunt. A force of loyalist elves gathers to retake their lord's castle and rescue him. This gives them the chance to slip in through a secret passageway while the elves launch a distracting frontal assault on the captured stronghold.

- *Stolen Child.* Plunging deeper into the Underworld, the heroes follow a trail of carnage and torture to a dank cavern defended by especially vicious goblins. As the heroes press the goblins, they learn that the leader they so fear is the young priestess directing the actions of a magical lightning-bolt thrower. The heroes must destroy the goblins, defending themselves against her without actually hurting her so that, during the aftermath, they can use Divine Awareness to lift the spell that's been placed on her and return her to her right mind.

HORSES IN ENCOUNTERS

Horses don't show up in Underground adventures; they're not much interested in Underground exploration. But as advanced adventures expand the scope of the game to include wide open spaces, players may find themselves wanting rules for horses and mounted combat.

Heroes may take horses along with them on adventures in Scandinavia, Svartalfheim, or other outdoor locations, given the permission of the plotter. When running encounters, remember that any predatory creature (including wendols, land crabs, goblins, and the Dishonored) will treat horses as suitable targets for attack. To them, horses represent gigantic, walking, comparatively defenseless storehouses of tasty meat. Dwarven craftwerks attack them because they move. More intelligent foes, like Dark Vikings, dwarves, and elves, will attack only horses being used in mounted combat.

Remember also that horses should also be subject to damage from your encounter's traps and hazards. Horses are valuable resources, and the players

should feel the sting when they decide to place them in harm's way.

A hero may start his adventures with a horse if his player spends 150 victory points. This represents the status you forgo to wheedle a steed out of your extended family or home village. (A truly legendary Viking wouldn't need a horse, would he? Why, in my day, we wouldn't dream of asking our elders for a horse! We trudged out to the Underground a hundred miles through the snow, in bare feet! And anybody who dared complain, we gave him the blood eagle, and he *liked* it!)

There's no point in purchasing a horse until the player knows the hero can make use of it.

The game statistics of a horse can be found in the insert below.

A horse can bear a Load of -20, suffering 1 Impairment point and a reduction of its Move by 10 for each additional point of Load. The horse may use Res to Jump or do other stunts. Its rider must roll Ride to stay on top of the jumping horse, and gets a +3 ATK and DEF bonus against pedestrian opponents. Add your Ride Ability as a bonus to Initiative.

A player may increase the quality of his hero's horse by spending additional victory points. Pay 25 victory points for

- each additional 10 hit points (you may do this up to 3 times)
- each additional DEF point (you may do this up to 3 times)
- each additional 10 paces of Move (you may do this up to 5 times)
- each additional point of Res (you may do this up to 6 times)

MIGHTY STEEDS: STATISTICS FOR HORSES

	INIT	ATK	DEF	DAM	Soak	Prot	HP	WT	Res	Mov	Might
Trample	6	7	1	8	0	0	48	9	1	200	10

RECAP: DESIGNING YOUR ENCOUNTERS

An encounter consists of one to five **events**, scenes that take place in different locations, possibly with long breaks of time in between.

The total number of encounter points the designer spends during an encounter must be offset by other elements favorable to the heroes, which earn points. The total points spent on a beginning event can't exceed 300. Other ceilings are given on p. 94.

One or two of these events should include a **combat** event, in which the heroes confront one or more **foes**. The designer chooses one of seven **threat categories** for each foe, ranging from Pitiful to Terrifying. The number of foes designers can include per hero differs for each threat category. Designers can include foes of various threat categories provided that the overall **mix value** equals the number of heroes who will face them.

Designers can earn encounter points by including **terrain** features in their combat events. If they come into play when the encounter is actually played, the runner also gets victory points. (Designers almost always run the encounters they create, motivating them to build the encounter to maximize runner victory.) Designers must indicate the relative locations and scale of the combat loca-

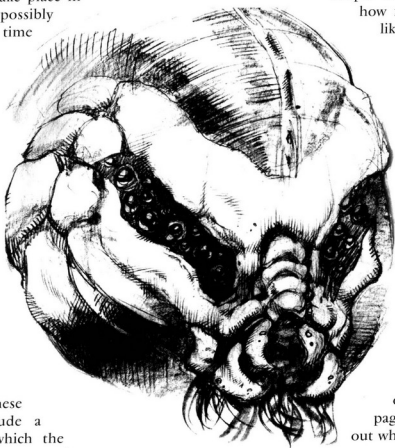
tion by creating a map. The map can be simple or elaborate, depending on how much individual designers like making maps.

Traps and hazards are bad things that can happen to the heroes; they can be included in any event.

Treasures earn the designer encounter points; during encounter creation, all he has to do is select a category of treasure. During the running of the encounter, when a hero fulfills the conditions to earn the treasure, his player rolls on the charts provided on pages 157 through 167 to find out what it is.

Gains are other events favorable to the heroes.

Designers must always give heroes a chance to avoid a trap or hazard or to realize a treasure or gain. They do so by choosing an Ability (or other game statistic) which the hero must roll, and a **Difficulty** he must beat. The higher the Difficulty, the greater the encounter point cost. A designer can make any roll straightforward, or impose a variety of special conditions on it, as discussed on pages 140 through 129. He can forgo rolls for treasures and gains, instead making them automatically available to heroes whose players specify that they undertake simple actions.



QUICK AND DIRTY ENCOUNTER DESIGN



Now that we've looked at the various pieces that make up an encounter, it's time to put them all together. This section provides designers with a quick and dirty method for creating their first few encounters.

This system ignores many of the more complicated options given in the previous section. You'll want to use it to start off with, and possibly when you're pressed for time later on. The encounters it helps you create aren't optimized to win you the highest possible number of victory points when you run. You can do that for yourself after you run a few encounters, and start to get a sense of what pays off in your group.

Don't over-rely on this system. Experienced players will quickly come to recognize the limited types of encounters it generates. Use it to learn the game and then throw away the training wheels.

This system assumes a beginning encounter level. You have an encounter point ceiling of 300.

This encounter will include 3 events. The first two events will include traps/hazards, gains, and treasure. The final event will include combat, terrain features, and some more treasure.

Event Number 1

The first event includes one or more traps. Use Trap Chart 1 chart to see how many traps there are: Then roll on Trap Chart 2 to determine their difficulty.

TRAP CHART 1: HOW MANY?

Roll	# Traps
1-4	1 trap
5-8	2 traps
9-0	3 traps

TRAP CHART 2: DIFFICULTY

Roll	Difficulty	Cost
1-2	4	-20
3-4	5	-10
5-6	6	+0
7-8	7	+10
9-0	8	+20

QUICK AND DIRTY ENCOUNTER DESIGN

TRAP CHART 3: WHAT GETS ROLLED

For each trap, roll 2d10 on the following chart, designating one die as the tens place and the other as ones. This tells you which Ability the heroes must roll, how many of the heroes must roll, and under what circumstances. If you can't think of a trap that would test a given Ability, use the example as a starting point.

Roll	Ability	Roll Type	Cost*	Example
01-04	Animal Handling	Singular	+0	Calm nuisance animals
04-08	Any Weapon Ability	Dogpile	+0	Damage trap mechanism
09-12	Awareness	No-Fault	-15	Notice innocuous item is booby-trapped
13-16	Balance	Standard	+0	Stay on tightrope or plank
17-20	Bows	Dogpile	+0	Damage trap with missile weapon
21-24	Bravery	Dogpile	+0	Disbelieve otherwise damaging illusion
25-28	Brawling	No-Fault	-15	Knock over a craftwork
29-32	Climb	Standard	+0	Escape trapped floor
33-36	Traps	Singular	+0	Disable snare
37-40	Disguise	Singular	+0	Fool craftwork sensors
41-44	Divine Awareness	No-Fault	-15	Sense evil presence
45-48	Dodge	Standard	+0	Evade spring-loaded spear
49-52	Jump	Standard	+0	Leap over rolling logs
53-56	Lore	No-Fault	-15	Remember legends of this trap type
57-60	Map	Singular	+0	Spot false wall where trap is hidden
61-64	Music	Singular	+0	Outplay a magical instrument
65-68	Pick Lock	Singular	+0	Open case protecting trap mechanism
69-72	Repair	No-Fault	-15	Fix a broken bridge
73-76	Runes	No-Fault	-15	Read instructions to avoid pitfall
77-80	Ski	Standard	+0	Escape avalanche
81-84	Sleep	Standard	+0	Remain conscious when gassed
85-88	Sprint	Standard	+0	Outrun rolling rocks
89-92	Stealth	Standard	+0	Avoid sound-triggered trap
93-96	Survival	No-Fault	-15	Avoid frostbite
97-00	Swim	Standard	+0	Avoid drowning

* In encounter Points

SPECIAL SECTION

Total the cost of the trap so far. Subtract that from 30. Spend the remaining amount on the trap's damage. Remember, the first 15 points of damage cost 1 encounter point each, and higher amounts of damage are 1 encounter point each plus a surcharge, as shown on this chart, repeated from the Traps section:

Dam Rating	Surcharge	Cost
0 - 15	None	+0 to +15 encounter points
16 - 20	+5 encounter points	+21 to +25 encounter points
21 - 25	+10 encounter points	+31 to +35 encounter points
26 - 30	+15 encounter points	+41 to +45 encounter points
31 - 35	+20 encounter points	+51 to +55 encounter points
36 - 40	+25 encounter points	+61 to +65 encounter points
41 - 45	+30 encounter points	+71 to +75 encounter points
46 - 50	+35 encounter points	+81 to +85 encounter points

The surcharge may mean that no Dam rating costs exactly the number of points you have to spend. If so, buy the highest Dam rating you can with the number of points you have.

Repeat as necessary for the number of traps you've chosen for this event. Keep track of the total number of encounter points you've spent.

You start by rolling on the first chart. You get a 2, indicating a single trap for this event. You roll a 2 on the Difficulty Chart: the Difficulty will be 4. You roll on Trap Chart Three, getting a 50. The roll to avoid is a Standard one, testing the entire group's Jump Ability. Heroes succeed or fail based only on their own rolls. You decide that steel wheels with razor-sharp protrusions will appear at the top of a ramp, roll down towards the heroes, and slice the ones who can't jump over them. Now you total the cost of the trap so far: $30 - (-20) = 50$. (Subtracting a negative number is like adding a positive one.) There is no Dam rating you can buy for 50 points, according to the surcharge and cost chart; the closest you can come within your limit is a Dam rating 30, for 45 points.

Now you'll purchase off-setting treasures/gains to earn the encounter points you spent on traps. The number of treasures/gains in the event equals the number of traps.

TREASURE/GAINS CHART 1: DIFFICULTY

For each treasure/gain, roll on this chart to find the Difficulty of the roll.

Roll	Difficulty	Cost
1-4	No roll required	+0 encounter points
5-6	6	+0 encounter points
7-8	7	+10 encounter points
9-0	8	+20 encounter points

On a result of "no roll required," the gain is automatically available to any hero who performs a simple act (say, searching the area) after the gain's accompanying trap goes off.

QUICK AND DIRTY ENCOUNTER DESIGN

TREASURE/GAINS CHART 2: WHAT GETS ROLLED

If the treasure/gain carries a Difficulty, roll here to see what kind of roll it is.

Roll	Ability	Roll Type	Cost*	Example
01-03	Animal Handling	Singular	+0	Train a foreign earl's truculent falcon
04-08	Awareness	No-Fault	-15	Spot disturbed ground
09-11	Balance	Standard	+0	Grab treasure suspended from high ceiling
12-14	<i>Bargain</i>	<i>Rush</i>	+0	<i>Convince a merchant to tell you of a treasure cache</i>
15-17	<i>Bows</i>	<i>Dogpile</i>	+0	<i>Win an archery contest</i>
18-20	Bravery	Dogpile	+0	Survive a gauntlet of drunken Vikings
21-23	<i>Brawling</i>	<i>No-Fault</i>	-15	<i>Win an arm-wrestling contest</i>
24-26	<i>Carouse</i>	<i>No-Fault</i>	-15	<i>Impress a hard-living jarl</i>
27-29	Climb	Standard	+0	Scale a wall up to hidden niche
30-32	<i>Deception</i>	<i>Singular</i>	+0	<i>Convince a dwarf his treasure gives off toxic fumes</i>
33-35	<i>Demeanor</i>	<i>Dogpile</i>	+0	<i>Impress a valykrie</i>
36-38	Traps	Singular	+0	Disarm a booby trap for cavern's new inhabitants
39-41	<i>Disguise</i>	<i>Singular</i>	+0	<i>Impersonate a merchant expecting payment from moronic goblins</i>
42-44	<i>Divine Awareness</i>	<i>No-Fault</i>	-15	<i>Impress a pious jarl</i>
45-47	<i>Gamble</i>	<i>Singular</i>	+0	<i>Win at dice</i>
48-50	Healer	Dogpile	+0	Heal a wounded jarl
51-53	Insight	No-Fault	-15	Flatter a generous jarl
54-56	Leadership	Singular	+0	Restore the confidence of rescued earls
57-59	Lore	No-Fault	-15	Recall the spot where your grandfather cached loot
60-62	Map	Singular	+0	Present a well-made map to a wealthy sage
63-65	<i>Music</i>	<i>Singular</i>	+0	<i>Outplay a hermit musician</i>
66-68	Pick Lock	Singular	+0	Open a chest full of treasure
69-71	Pursuit	Dogpile	+0	Catch a goblin's lost pet
72-74	Repair	No-Fault	-15	Fix a goblin's arrow quiver
75-77	Ride	Standard	+0	Advise a jarl on the likely winner of a horse race
78-80	Runes	No-Fault	-15	Read a letter for an illiterate goblin
81-83	Sing	Singular	+0	Entertain an elfin duchess
84-86	Skald	Singular	+0	Through satire, shame an ungenerous jarl
87-89	<i>Ski</i>	<i>Standard</i>	+0	<i>Win a skiing competition</i>
90-92	<i>Sprint</i>	<i>Standard</i>	+0	<i>Win a foot race</i>
93-95	Stealth	Standard	+0	Sneak into an encampment of snoring goblins
96-98	Survival	No-Fault	-15	Spot a disturbance in the snow where something is buried
99-00	<i>Swim</i>	<i>Standard</i>	+0	<i>Win a swimming contest</i>

* In encounter Points

Examples given in italics suggest situations that might be better handled as opposed rolls against a supporting character. If you do want to use an Opposed roll, you can get the bonus applied by the supporting character by subtracting 4 from the Difficulty you got on Traps/Gains Chart 1.

SPECIAL SECTION

TREASURE/GAINS CHART 3: TYPE OF TREASURE/GAIN

Roll on this chart to see what type of treasure or gain you'll include. Each is worth 30 encounter points.

Roll	Treasure or Gain Type
01-07	Bargaining Opportunity + 12 Hours Healing Opportunity
08-16	Limitless Healing Opportunity
17-24	Loot Cache, Recovery Difficulty 5
25-32	3 Freestanding Ability Rolls, Difficulty 6
33-57	Category C Treasure
58-84	Category A + Category B Treasures
85-92	Shrine to Thor + 5 Ounces of Silver
93-96	Shrines to Odin & Freyja
97-00	Shrines to Heimdal & Njord

You roll on the Treasure Chart 1, getting a 5, which indicates a Difficulty of 6. On Treasure Chart 2, you roll a 14, getting Bargain as the Ability to be rolled. You decide that a foreign merchant has been cowering in a corner of the passageway, afraid to trigger the trap. After the brave Vikings deal with it, he comes out of hiding. A hero can convince the merchant to reward them by beating a 6 with his Bargaining. On Treasure Chart 3, you roll a 78. If successful, the merchant will give them a Category A and Category B treasure.

Event Number 2

For Event #2, repeat the instructions for Event #1. Whew, that was simple.

EVENT NUMBER 3

Event #3 is a bit more complicated, as it features our climactic battle.

COMBAT CHART 1: FOE TYPE

Roll on this chart to pick the type of foe the heroes will confront.

Roll	Foe Type
01 - 20	Viking: Dark Vikings
21 - 26	Viking: Dishonored
27 - 30	Viking: Sark Amen
31 - 33	Dwarven Craftwerk: Beetle-werk
34 - 36	Dwarven Craftwerk: Centi-werk
37 - 38	Dwarven Craftwerk: Spider-werk
39 - 42	Dwarves: Laborers, possibly led by Pit Bosses
43 - 44	Dwarf: Slaver
45	Dwarf: Defective Hunter
46 - 49	Dwarf: Regular Centurion
50 - 51	Dwarf: Clan Champion
52	Dwarven Craftwerk: Mecha-Dwarf
53 - 54	Elves: Mischief Makers
55 - 57	Elves: Courtiers
58 - 60	Goblins: Rock Goblins
61 - 62	Goblins: Female Warriors
63 - 65	Goblins: Roving Slayers
66 - 67	Goblins: Senior Slayers
68 - 69	Goblins: Freaks
70	Goblin: Shaman
71 - 74	Land Crab: Small
75 - 77	Land Crab: Large
78 - 80	Trolls
81 - 90	Wendol
91 - 00	Other

If you get a result of other, just think up a weird visual description for the creature. It gets no adjusts or other distinguishing features.

Look up the foe type you get, finding out which threat categories it can belong to.

SPECIAL SECTION

COMBAT CHART 2: THREAT CATEGORY

Roll on this chart until you get a Threat category legal for the foe type chosen above.

Roll	Category	Ratio of Foes to Heroes	Mix
1	Terrifying	1:4	4
2	Exceptional	1:3	3
3	Superior	1:2	2
4-5	Equal	2:3	1.3
5-6	Inferior	3:2	0.7
7-8	Weak	2:1	0.5
9-0	Pitiful	3:1	0.3

Taking into account the number of heroes you expect to go through the encounter, pick the proper number of foes using the Mix value rules on p. 96. Add in other foes of lesser or greater threat categories to reach the correct Mix value total.

You roll a 55 on Combat Chart 1, which tells you that the heroes will be fighting elfin courtiers. You check their description on p. 110 and see that they can belong to any Threat category. You roll on Combat Chart 2, and get Equal opponents. Checking the ratio for that category, you see that you must include 3 elves for every 4 heroes. You happen to have 4 heroes in your group, so your total number of foes is 3.



QUICK AND DIRTY ENCOUNTER DESIGN

COMBAT CHART 3: TERRAIN

Roll three times on this chart to find the types of terrain which will be present in your combat event. Reroll duplicate results.

Roll	Feature	Cost
01-12	Cover, half protection, shelters up to 5 combatants	-30
13-18	Extras: 3 decoys	-30
19-24	Extras: 3 hostages	-30
25-36	Hiding Place, allows heroes to ambush foes, Awareness Difficulty 15	-30
37-48	3 additional levels	-15
49-60	Slippery ground, 2/3 of area	-15
61-72	Six 6-hex sloped areas	-30
73-80	4 tube-strikers	-28
81-85	Weird magic: -3 to DFN, all combatants	-30
86-90	Weird magic: +3 to ATK, all combatants	-30
91-95	Weird magic: +3 to DAM, all combatants	-30
96-00	Weird magic: -3 to Soak, all combatants	-30

You roll on the above chart for three terrain features. Your first roll is a 74, which gives you four tube-strikers, and grants you 28 encounter points. Next you get a 37; 3 additional levels, for 15 encounter points. Finally, you roll a 70, specifying 6 sloped spots, each at least 6 hexes in area, which gives you 30 encounter points.

MAP

Draw a map showing the combat area. Mark the entrance through which the heroes will charge, several exits, the relative locations of the terrain features, and (if you want) the starting locations of the foes.

BUYING TRAPS WITH YOUR TERRAIN POINTS

Total the points you get from terrain features. For each feature, buy another trap, using Trap Charts 2 and 3. When determining the trap's damage use the gain from the offsetting terrain feature as your budget.

You build three traps, worth 28, 15, and 30 encounter points, respectively.

Get Ready To Play!

And there, by Odin's lonely eye-socket, you have a quick 'n' dirty encounter. It may not be surprising, or provide you the best chance of winning the evening, but it's a start. You didn't spend your whole budget of 300 points, but you never have to do that. The important thing is that the points you gained equal or exceed the points you spent.

CHAPTER 5

RUNNING The Game

Now that you've seen how to design an encounter, it's time to look at your role as runner.

The Runner's Duties

The runner's responsibilities are to:

- Be thoroughly familiar with the contents of his encounter notes.
- Describe what's happening.



- Answer questions about what the heroes see and can do.
- Look up rules; make preliminary decisions when their interpretation is in doubt. (Runner decisions on rules interpretations can be overruled through the dispute resolution mechanism given on p. 195 of this chapter.)
- Roll dice and make decisions for supporting characters. Attack choices of Predictable foes are constrained by the Foe Target Choice Flowchart, which appears on p. 196.
- Roll dice to make any other random determinations called for in the encounter notes.
- Keep things moving.
- Maintain a friendly atmosphere.



RUNNING TECHNIQUES

In greater detail, the basic principles of running **Rune** are as follows.

Speak clearly. Think of yourself as a Norse skald and your players as a longhouse full of inebriated, grouchy Viking raiders. You need to capture their attention and hold it for the length of your encounter. If you let them get bored, you're in trouble. They'll miss crucial descriptions of their surroundings, and fail to understand what's going on. When they do start paying attention — like when their characters get hurt or suffer other fates sure to cost them victory points — they'll get annoyed with you. (That's better than what happens to a skald when his Viking audience gets bored, but you still don't want it to happen.)

Speak in a voice loud enough to be heard. Enunciate, so that players can tell what you're saying. Vary your tone: nothing is more sleep-inducing than a droning monotone issuing from a runner's mouth. For many runners, these techniques come naturally; that's why they gravitate towards the game master's role in games that use a puny single GM per saga. If you haven't run a game before, you might be a bit intimidated. Don't be! These techniques can all be learned. In particular, if you think your verbal skills need a bit of punching up, spend a little bit of time listening to sports announcers on television or the radio. Listen to the rhythms they adopt to keep listeners on the edge of their seats. You'll sound odd if you copy a sportscaster's style down to the last inflection, but they still provide a useful model. Running is a play-by-play where you get to make up the details; you're just describing goblins being hacked to bits instead of basketballs going into nets.

Your words, plus the players' imaginations, must provide a decent substitute for the excitement generated by the music, production design, and animation of the computer game.

Keep it moving. Another way to hold the players' attention is to make sure that something is always happening. Someone, possibly the

THE AXE RITUAL

When you switch from one runner to another, we recommend that you conduct the axe ritual, in which you pass a prop item from the old runner to the new. If you can find a toy Viking axe, that's great, but there are all sorts of other props you can use. Don't use real weapons, though. That'd be freaky.

As you pass the ceremonial axe, speak the following words:

Old Runner: *Now finished, my encounter has gone to Valhalla. Who steps up to wield my axe?*

New Runner: *I do, doughty warrior.*

Old Runner: *Are you worthy, young one?*

New Runner: *One day I will be old and feeble, like you. But now my mind is clear, and fortified with caffeinated beverages. I am strong and just enough to wield that axe. Give it to me before I frikkin' clout you one, old man.*

Old Runner: *Your words mark you as a true Viking. You shall bear the mighty axe of **Rune**!*

New Runner: *With honor I shall wield it!*

Everybody: *URGH! URGH! URGH! VIKINGS! URRRRRGH!*

medieval Icelandic poet Snorri Sturlusson, once said that fiction is like life with the boring bits left out. **Rune** isn't much like life, but you should still leave the boring bits out.

Know the rules. The better you know the rules, the faster you'll be able to run your encounters. Nothing stops an exciting game dead in its tracks like a rules question. This is a game where the other players may be as well acquainted with the rules as you are; knowing the rules inside-out gives you a strategic advantage. The more aggressive of your pillagers will be waiting to one-up you with their superior rules knowledge — which, oddly enough, always leads to interpretations in their own favor. Don't be scared; be prepared. Because **Rune** encounters are highly structured, you won't find the adventure going off in an unanticipated direction, as it does in many other games. This gives you a leg

up: you know which rules you're going to need to draw on during your encounters. If your encounter includes a drowning hazard, make sure you review the drowning rules before running it. If an encounter calls for a roll against a rarely-used Ability, take a second look at the Ability description. Shield yourself from players ready to wield their rules knowledge like a battle-axe.

When you don't know a rule, look it up. Although you should know the rules well, there will be times when you're caught without an answer on the tip of your tongue. Despite the above paragraph, you should never be ashamed to flip open the rules and check on a rule in the case of a genuine question.

Above all: don't worry, it's easier than you think! You may be daunted by the idea of running a game, especially if you've played in other RPGs where the GM's job is half rules expert, half author, and half improvisational performer. Well, in **Rune** you don't have to think on your feet. Your encounter is completely pre-programmed. The pillagers can't yank your plot in an unexpected direction. There are no surprises to worry about. Some effete outlanders will point to this as a flaw of the game, but as far as the inexperienced runner is concerned, the total linearity of encounters is a vital feature.

YOUR PROXY

As he begins his encounter, the runner selects the **proxy**, another player who will faithfully run his hero for him. He might not allow your hero the same opportunities he gives his own, but he'll work to give your hero a roughly equal share of the action, and to keep him as safe from harm as a self-respecting Viking is willing to get.

Although the runner can make suggestions about his hero's actions, the proxy doesn't have to follow them. If he finds the runner's entreaties too intense, he can request that the runner silence himself. When a proxy invokes this rule, the runner may not suggest or request any actions for his hero to take. No hinting, mugging, or signalling.

Don't worry; runners don't rely purely on the goodwill and altruism of their competitors during

the game. The proxy gets a goodly share of the victory points from the actions of the runner's hero. On the punitive side of things, he suffers a significant victory point deduction if he's unfortunate enough to see his ward keel over during his watch.

Runner heroes are protected from the capricious violence of other players, too. The victory points rules already discourage combat between heroes, and frown with special vigor on other players who hope to screw over a proxy by arranging the death of the runner's hero. All players lose victory points if he dies. They all have an incentive to keep his hide intact. They'll likely be more cautious with him than you would be yourself.

The following rules provide additional protection from would-be abusers of the proxy's position of trust:

- The proxy may not give away, trade, sell, or otherwise dispose of the runner hero's possessions without the runner's permission.
- The runner may veto any non-combat action the proxy wishes his hero to take, if that action requires a roll. The veto rule overrides a proxy's request that the runner remain silent about his hero's actions.
- The proxy may not keep the runner's hero out of the fight, either by refusing to join it, or by retreating or withdrawing, without the runner's permission.
- The proxy may not spend his charge's victory points. (The runner may still buy Gifts, death insurance, or make other victory point expenditures on his hero between encounters.)
- The proxy may not take any action that will result in his charge's gaining additional ratings in any of his Divine Connections.
- The proxy can't cause the runner's hero to attack another pillager's character.

RESOLVING RULES DISPUTES

With true Viking attention to fine detail, we've done our best to ensure that the rules in this book are simple, easy to understand, and resistant to unintended interpretation. Any rumors that we may have whiled away our testing period in the drinking of mead and the inebriated exchange of furtive sexual advances are, we assure you, vile slanders repeated by those who do not respect our ancient traditions. Fie, we exclaim, we have aimed for a level of quality control at least as good as Microsoft's! However, just as the gods of Asgard must look forward to inevitable destruction on the day of Ragnarok, game designers queasily anticipate the weeks following a new game release, when it is equally foreordained that hideous, gaping rules problems unnoticed during months of playtesting will suddenly reveal themselves to legions of readers, who will then leap towards the "send" buttons on their email programs with the ferocity of Norsemen crazed with lust for rapine and slaughter.

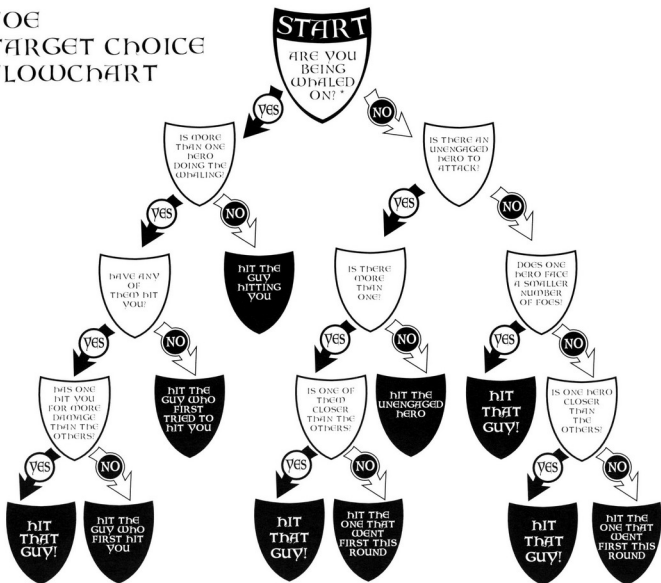
As rules questions rear their ugly heads, we'll attempt to smack them back down again on our web site. Some masochistic soul will be appointed as our official rules arbiter, and will issue clarifying rules with a grim supremacy rivaling that of Odin himself. Go to www.atlas-games.com to find out how to contact this Norn-like authority, and to read his pronouncements. The official errata and rules clarifications on the Atlas web site should be treated as an extension of this book. If a player can point to an answer to the question under dispute on the web site, it must be accepted unequivocally.

If you manage to find a completely new rules question, you must resort to democratic vote to resolve it. The current runner gets two votes. Each pillager gets one vote. Once the group makes a decision on a rule, it must be inscribed on a special notebook page designated as the **Book of Iron Law**. That ruling becomes a precedent to which you must adhere for the rest of your saga, future votes notwithstanding. Thus it is a bad idea to vote for a patently absurd or abusive rules interpretation just because it happens to favor you at the current moment. You can be certain that the bit-

ter supporters of the more reasonable, but losing, side will engineer their next encounters to ensure that your bogus rules interpretation repeatedly bites you on the ass.

Two exceptions allow you to void a precedent enshrined in the Book of Iron Law. One occurs if less than half of your play group was present to vote on the original ruling. It can then be overturned any time that a) the situation covered by the precedent comes up again and b) more than half of the play group is now present. The second exception allows a majority of players to at any time vote to adopt a new official ruling dealing with the question at hand.

FOE TARGET CHOICE FLOWCHART



* Note that "whaled on" includes being peppered with missile fire or targeted with thrown weapons.

The drawback of house rules is that they reduce your competitive edge when you play outside the confines of your usual group. You may make decisions based on your extensive knowledge of rules unknown outside your own circle.

CHOOSING FOES' TARGETS

Although runners make most decisions for supporting characters, they can't always choose who foes attack. Unless the designer paid encounter points to make a particular foe Self-Willed, the targets of its attacks are determined by the following procedure, which is also outlined in the flow chart on the opposite page.

Not all foes are necessarily thinking the exact thoughts implied by the flowchart. Nor are they necessarily conscious of the initiative order or the exact amounts of damage being dealt out by particular blows. They make their decisions instinctively.

The runner must supply the players with the opponents' game statistics whenever he is asked for them. This is not remotely realistic — chaos and confusion reign on real-life battlefields — but **Rune** is a game in which the runner is competing for points with the players, and so must keep his cards on the table. Face-up, that is.

- If the number of foes equals or exceeds the number of heroes, foes always attempt to engage every single hero on the field.
- In general, foes divide up their attacks according to who moves first. During the first round of a battle, each enemy picks his chosen target. His choice of target is determined by the flowchart. The questions are written in the second person, as if addressing the foe.
- At the beginning of every round, the foe again uses the flowchart to choose his next target. This allows foes to divide up their blows when engaged by multiple heroes. We admit that this rule isn't realistic, strictly speaking. But it prevents one player from losing an encounter — and probably his hero — just because he had the lousy luck to be singled out by a ravaging wendol.

- Sometimes you'll reach the entry "Hit The One Who Went 1st This Round" but all of the potential targets have yet to act in the current round. In this situation, pick the one with the highest initiative result.
- In melee, once a Predictable foe has chosen his target, he does his best to continue attacking until his adversary is dead. If a hero breaks away from his engagement with the foe, the runner consults the flowchart to see if he pursues the disengaging hero or switches to another.
- If firing missiles, Predictable foes check the flowchart with every new attack, and may, depending on circumstances, pick a different target each time.
- Self-Willed foes switch targets at the runner's whim, provided that the target still has 30 or more hit points and less than 4 Wounds.
- A runner can only send Self-Willed foes after his own hero (being played by the proxy) if a Predictable foe, in the same situation, would attack the runner's hero.
- Foe types bearing the howling goblin icon must always seek to attack the heroes. Crafty foes (with the smirking goblin icon) needn't attack, but, when they do, use the flowchart (unless they're Self-Willed, of course). No foe ever flees the area delineated by the encounter map. Runners may, however, make any other decisions for the foes, such as when to take advantage of terrain conditions, disengage in pursuit of an advantage, make Engagement rolls, wait for opportunity, and so on.

WHEN FOES SUFFER COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Runners can't deprive heroes of their rightful victory points by whittling away the foes' hit points on their own.

Some situations that come up during play may suggest that a foe ought to be injured by a force other than the heroes. For example, he

might try to jump a chasm to pursue a hero, but then fail his Res roll. Or he might step into a Damaging Place along with the heroes. When situations like this come up, the runner may choose one of two ways in which to deal with them:

- **Explain it away; the foe takes no damage.** The runner is free to dream up any wild justification for why the foe is unharmed. He might have consumed a potion that protects him from falling damage, or wear special armor protecting him from poison gas. Although the foe ought to be hurt, he isn't.
- **Randomly decide which player benefits.** The foe takes damage, as circumstances warrant. The runner makes a random roll, assigning victory points equal to the foe's lost hit points to the lucky pillager's tally. If the foe dies, the recipient also gets its final blow bonus. The runner includes himself among the possible recipients. The runner's right to choose this option is curtailed after the total victory points given out to all pillagers in this manner exceeds 20. After that point, any single pillager may veto the runner's subsequent choice to assign random ben-

efits. In the event of a veto, the runner must instead use the other option, above.



DEFAULT DIFFICULTIES

Often runners find that heroes want to use the designer's lovingly-crafted terrain features in surprising ways, in order to gain positional advantages over their enemies. That's a good thing; runners even get points when heroes take advantage of terrain. Heroes might figure out other convincing-sounding ways to prevail over the obstacles you set in front of them. Just because their solution isn't in the encounter notes doesn't mean that it can't work. If a player suggestion seems plausible to you (that is, you'd want a fair-minded runner to accept it if it was you proposing it as a player), by all means allow it.

The default Difficulty of any Ability check the designer hasn't built into an encounter notes is 6.

You've included different levels in your encounter. Alex wants his character to jump down from a high level onto a wendol below, gaining the +3 attack for such "death from above" maneuvers (p. 129). You haven't specified a Difficulty for moving from one level to the next, so its Difficulty is automatically 6.

Needless to say, the designer doesn't have to pay for these default difficulties. For one thing, Difficulty 6 is always free anyway. For another, if the designer doesn't know they're not going to happen, he can't exactly pay for them, can he?

This is not to say that you can't prepare in advance by specifying Difficulties for making rolls in relation to your terrain elements, or anything else. Just remember to pay for these Difficulties as you would any other.

Seeing how devastating Alex's maneuver ends up being, you resolve to assign a Difficulty of 8 to any attempt to climb up or jump off your levels in future encounters.

Although the Difficulty for unanticipated actions is set in stone at 6, the runner may specify a different Ability roll than the pillager desires or expects. He may wish to Jump a large steel fence, but you may deem it more realistic that he Climb it.

The runner can't call for the roll of a single Characteristic in place of an Ability, because that's effectively the same as increasing the Difficulty with-

out paying for it. However, he can specify that a roll is modified by a pair of Characteristics, with no Ability involved: Dex + Str to squeeze through a fence, for example.

The boundaries of your encounter area (assuming it takes place in the Underground, inside a building, or in a similar enclosed place) are, despite this rule, inviolate. The heroes can't bash new exits in solid rock or run through heavy stone walls simply by rolling against a Difficulty 6.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Sometimes, usually because they've been hurt and want to heal up, heroes will want to linger in the location of an early event. Unless the designer paid for a healing opportunity, the runner must get them up and moving towards his next event.

Runners keep heroes moving with wandering monsters, creatures of any type who rove about dangerous places opportunistically looking for victims to attack. Many are predators prowling about in search of a meal. Some may be robbers who ambush heroes for their equipment and treasure. None of them carry anything useful, aside from the weapons they use in their attacks against the heroes. There is no advantage or glory in fighting them. Heroes get no victory points for fighting wandering monsters. Wandering monsters have no treasure; nor does their defeat offer gains of any other kind. In fact, battles with these creatures are not played out in full. Instead, the runner abstracts the fight, describing it in a few sentences. If this were a movie, the heroes' battles with wandering monsters would not be shown in full. It might appear as a montage sequence, perhaps with shots from several fights cut together to show that time is passing but the events unfolding are too uninteresting to depict in real time. In short, wandering monsters are meaningless opponents who exist only to keep the heroes moving through your encounter, and to reinforce the idea that the adventuring environment is a dangerous one. They work more like a trap than actual combat opponents.

Whenever you need to move the heroes along, use a random die roll to choose a collec-

PROVIDING INFORMATION

At the end of any given encounter, the runner must be prepared to show his notes to the pillagers.

During a fight, the runner must supply the game statistics of the foes to the pillagers. But he needn't reveal the statistics of a given foe until the moment that a hero succeeds in dealing damage to it in combat.

tive threat category rating for the wandering monsters, as per the chart below. When the heroes encounter them, each player must roll an unmodified die vs. a Difficulty that varies by threat category. If the hero fails, he adds the difference to the DAM score given below. Even if he succeeds, he takes damage equal to half the DAM score. This damage is applied directly, ignoring Soak. The damage is assumed to have been suffered as a number of blows throughout an extended combat; it never counts as a Wound. Wandering monsters spontaneously employed by the runner to move characters can never reduce heroes below 4 hit points.

Roll	Threat Category	DAM	Difficulty
1-2	Superior	36	7
3-4	Equal	28	6
5-6	Inferior	24	5
7-8	Weak	20	4
9-0	Pitiful	16	3

Ragnar meets Superior wandering monsters. He rolls a 5, 2 less than the Difficulty. He suffers 38 damage (36 plus the difference). He does not Soak this damage, nor does he earn a Wound.

The heroes always defeat the wandering monsters. If more heroes than not score positive results, they slaughter the interloping creatures gruesomely.

Otherwise, they drive them off.

Before unleashing wandering monsters on dawdling heroes, you must give the pillagers some indication that roving nasties are a-prowl. The heroes might hear a distant growl or the patter of goblin footsteps against flagstones. They might apprehend a fetid odor or simply feel the hackles on the backs of their necks rise. If they quickly get up and go on their way, they avoid the wandering monsters and no roll is required.

Sometimes the heroes will decide that they're so badly injured that they're better off risking further wandering monster attacks than moving on to the next fight. In this case, additional waves of wandering monsters, each with the same threat categories as the first, periodically appear. In the case of a healing interval, they come after a period of time equal to that interval. You neither gain nor pay encounter points for extra waves of wandering monsters, no matter what their threat categories.

Meetings with wandering monsters are also one of the possible ill consequences of getting lost (see p. 199). Wandering monsters met by lost heroes lack the safety valve mentioned above; the damage they deal doesn't stop when heroes reach the four hit point threshold.

Except as a risk of getting lost, designers can't build wandering monsters into their encounters.

"RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY!"

Sometimes, despite the runner's best efforts to hurt the heroes without killing them, the pillagers will decide that their heroes are on the brink of death, and that running like stink is the better part of valor. Realistically speaking, foes that move as quickly as they do should pursue the heroes, smash them to a crimson pulp and, depending on their predilections, possibly eat them. However, that's not very much fun. Instead, we assume that when the heroes decide to cheese it, they get away from their foes.

On the other hand, it would be a shame to let them do so without the possibility of taking some further lumps. When the heroes wish to flee all at once, the runner calls for a Standard Opposed roll of the heroes' Sprint Abilities. Any hero who does not

meet or beat a Res roll by the fastest-moving surviving foe is reduced to 5 hit points in the course of his escape. (Heroes already below 20 hit points are immune to this effect.) Pillagers must therefore weigh the risks of remaining in the fight against those of allowing the runner to rack up additional "almost down, but not out" victory points at their expense.

If foes are crafty (they have the smirking goblin icon in their listing), the runner may choose, instead of reducing a hero to 5 hit points, to strip him of one or more treasures. This indicates that the hero was briefly captured by the foes, then rescued by his comrades before the enemy could strip him of armor or weapons. (Or maybe he had to drop the treasures to slow their pursuit, or was just clumsy. The exact justification is up to the pillager in question.) The number of pieces of treasure he loses equals $1 + (\text{the difference between his Sprint result and the lead pursuer's Res result} \div 3)$. As usual, discard fractions. He can't lose more than he has, obviously. If the hero carries more treasures than he's supposed to lose, the runner rolls a random die to see which ones are spared. The runner is never obligated to strip his own hero of Treasure.

If the designer included **limited exits** as a terrain feature (p. 124), only one hero can flee per round, per exit. The others must continue to stand and fight. The first hero to get to an exit is the one who gets to go through it.

Like any roll not called for in the designer's encounter notes, successful flight rolls don't add to heroes' victory point tallies; nor do failures pump up the runner's tally.

ENCOUNTER SHARING

Creating encounters is fun but takes time. Thanks to the Internet, a technological marvel that even Odin would approve of, a short-cut is at hand. We encourage you to trade the encounters you create with other **Rune** players via mailing lists, web sites, and chat rooms. Start with www.atlas-games.com, the online gateway for **Rune** RPG players.

When you're running short on time, you can grab an encounter from the Internet and bring that to the game. Of course, this system will only work if everyone is as generous with their time as they wish others to be with theirs. Make sure you contribute your own encounters to the rest of the **Rune** community. (This is the designer's equivalent of winning status by bringing silver back to his home village.)

LEAGUE PLAY

If absolute, crushing victory over a small circle of friends tastes sweet, then victory over a larger group is like drinking the honeyed mead of Asgard itself. In league play, you can strive to prove yourself the most capable Viking of them all.

Your league may consist of attendees at a convention, fellow habitués of a single game store, or employees of a big information-economy company, ready to stomp through its bleached and forbidding cubicles in search of mighty-thewed opponents.

League play requires an organizer to coordinate play and settle disputes. The league coordinator is called a **Champion of Heimdal**. Like Heimdal, he must keep his eyes forever peeled for dishonorable and treacherous activities, and must be prepared to mercilessly cut down unworthy souls who seek to enter Asgard's gates by foul means. Metaphorically speaking, of course. To preserve his impartiality, the Champion of Heimdal does not actually play. You should therefore show great gratitude to your local Champion. Buy him much mead. Or, if he is a game store proprietor, you might wish to reward him by purchasing a great many **Rune** products from him.

The first step in creating a league, as with any noble and bloodthirsty activity, is to give it a suitable name, so that the legend of the winner may better echo through eternity. You might call your league The Paragons of Might, the Fighting Scandinavians, the Madison Madmen, or whatever tickles your fancy. Name creation is usually the province of the Champion of Heimdal, though he may certainly solicit input from his fellow skalds.

League play is best organized around a central location, like a coffee shop, game store, or the meeting place of a role-playing club. If all members of the league place a high degree of trust in one another, actual play can happen anywhere. If dishonorable wretches dwell among you, it may be necessary to hold all sessions in the central location, so that the Champion or one of his deputies can verify that the sessions took place, the game was played in good faith, and its results are valid.

League members should announce play sessions ahead of time. The person announcing the session serves as its plotter, letting participants know the hook so they can prepare cushion encounters for it. Naturally, he also specifies the time and place for the game.

There are two types of league play: Inexorable Death Trudge and Weak-kneed Outlanders' Rules.

INEXORABLE DEATH TRUDGE

The **Inexorable Death Trudge** rewards your lunatic persistence in setting aside all other activities and family relationships to play **Rune** until you start to sound, look, and smell like an authentic Viking warrior. The more sessions you play, the better your chances of winning. The scoring system compensates for the fact that individual sessions may vary widely as to their length and the number of participants. In a display of Viking generosity, it also recognizes runners-up and even third place finishers. The winner's **league score** equals the session's total number of encounters times 4. The runner-up's score equals twice the number of encounters; the third-place Viking gets a score equal to the number of encounters.

Joel, Troy, and Paul, all stalwart members of the Beverley Street Bashers, come out on top in a league play session which was five encounters long. Joel comes in first, and gets 20 points (three times the number of sessions). Troy, in second place, gets 10 points. Paul, in third, gets 5. Robin and Alex, who played valiantly but did not prosper, are left out in the cold.

In order to qualify for your league score, however, there must be at least two other participants who did worse than you. So in a three-

person game, only the winner scores. In a four-person game, only the winner and runner-up score. For all three top finishers to score, you need at least five players. Two-person games never qualify for a league score.

After each session, the plotter submits a score sheet to the Champion of Heimdal, accompanied by the verifying signatures of the other participants. If the Champion, in his eternal vigilance, senses that all is on the up-and-up, he adds the scores to the players' tallies.

Inexorable Death Trudges always last for a set period of time. You can hold an entire Death Trudge over a single long weekend, or throughout the length of a game convention. Or you can drag it out to truly heroic proportions, stretching it out as long as three months. Needless to say, the Death Trudge's deadline must be determined by the Champion of Heimdal and announced to all participants before play commences.

When the deadline arrives, the player with the highest score is the winner. You may also want to recognize the second- and third-place finishers.

If you are true Vikings, you will wish to compete for booty of some sort. Perhaps league members can all chip in to buy a gift certificate or other prize to sweeten victory's coppery tang.

It is also possible to run an open-ended Inexorable Death Trudge. Players keep the same heroes, periodically stopping to recognize a winner, and reset the overall scores, then keep playing. Some leagues may wish to keep track of their Über-Winner, the player who scores the largest number of periodic victories throughout the course of an open-ended Inexorable Death Trudge.

WEAK-KNEED OUTLANDERS' RULES

This set of rules, which we naturally include only under protest, recognizes that some people, non-Vikings to a man, are fixated on thin-blooded notions they call fair and reasonable. In a **Weak-kneed Outlanders'** league game, players are limited to a number of sessions predetermined by the Champion of Heimdal. All sessions must be the same number of encounters in length. Players get 4

points for each win, 2 points for each second place finish, and 1 for each third place. As in the Inexorable Death Trudge, you can only score if at least two players did worse than you.

These blatant inferiorities aside, a Weak-kneed Outlander league game unfolds in the same manner as the Inexorable Death Trudge.

RULES DISPUTES IN LEAGUE PLAY

If a rules dispute arises in the course of a league game, you resolve it via the usual means, except that you are not bound to the ruling after the current game expires. However, if a player suspects that he's being colluded against, and that his rivals are banding together to make utterly wonky rulings simply to stab him in the back, he may protest to the Champion of Heimdal. The Champion is empowered to nullify any score gained by a player during a game in which he engaged in clear abuse of the rules dispute mechanism. The Champion of Heimdal is the final arbiter of all such cases.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

Tournaments occur at game conventions, where participants may come from far and wide. Although tournament organizers can simply play an Inexorable Death Trudge that lasts the length of a convention, this may become unsatisfying, because the opportunities for un-Viking behavior greatly increase. It is unlikely that all participants will know one another. They won't feel like part of a community, necessarily, and might not feel the same fear of exposure that would stop them from cheating in league play. We've run other play-whenever-and-wherever-style tournaments at conventions, and found many of the submitted score sheets to be fishy indeed.

The simplest solution to this is to restrict Inexorable Death Trudge play to particular times and places, so that a tournament judge, called the **Emissary of the Norns**, can patrol the area, solving rules disputes (see below), and seeing to it that tournament score sheets honestly reflect actual games played.

Other tournament styles are as follows:

BOOK OF THE NORNS

In **Book of the Norns** play, participants do not design their own encounters. Tournament organizers design the encounters and hand them out in advance of each session. Participants should all receive their encounters at the same time, so that no one gets the advantage of extra preparation time. Players are randomly assigned to groups, and one player per group is randomly chosen as plotter.

Each group runs the same encounters at the same time, under the watchful eye of the Emissary of the Norns. This tournament is played elimination style. Only the top placer for each group (or, when you have only a few groups, the top two placers) advance to a semi-final round. Each group's semi-final winner moves on to the final round, where the top scorer is declared overall victor.

HAND OF THE NORNS

In **Hand of the Norns** play, tournament organizers recruit impartial deputies, each of whom will serve as runner for all the encounters for a single group. It is otherwise similar to a Book of the Norns tournament, employing the same adventures for all groups and using an elimination format.

RULES DISPUTES IN TOURNAMENT PLAY

Tournament play resolves rules disputes differently. If your group cannot resolve a rules question, you must call on the Emissary of the Norns for a ruling, which he will make based on his interpretation of the **Rune** rule book and an up-to-date version of the online rules clarifications. His instant ruling must be considered infallible. Anyone arguing with the Emissary of the Norns after he has made a ruling suffers a 25 point victory deduction for the current encounter. The Emissary must keep his rulings consistent within any given tournament.

CHAPTER 6

The VIKING World

The following background material, though not essential to your enjoyment of the game, can help you to add atmosphere and fun descriptions to your encounters, especially advanced ones set outside the closed realm of the Underground.

As you might have noticed from the material you've read so far (one word: mecha-dwarves), Rune does not exactly take historical accuracy as its main goal in portraying Norse culture. Even the mundane information in this chapter, like the description of your home village, is keyed more to



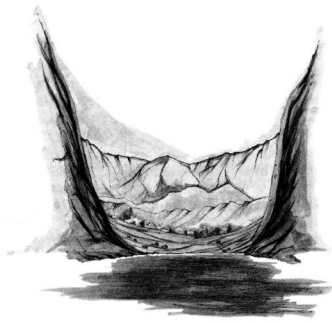
the design and mood of the computer game than to what we know about real-life Norse sites. We're having fun with a gleefully whacked-out, gorgeously-rendered, fantasy version of Viking myth. So, kids, don't mistake this for the real thing and write any history assignments on the role of vegetarian goblins in the economic development of medieval Norway, okay?

Seriously, we know that there exists a vociferous cadre of Viking enthusiasts eager to play a historically accurate game of Norse culture and mythology. We hope you like **Rune** for other reasons, but recognize that this may not be the game you may be looking for. You might want to consider playing **Ars Magica**, a more sober-minded fantasy roleplaying game, also published by Atlas Games, using its excellent *Ultima Thule: Mythic Scandinavia* supplement, by Paul Williams.

And yes, we know that real Vikings didn't wear horned helmets.

MYTHIC TIME

The action of a **Rune** game takes place in a mythic time-frame with no exact parallel in history as we know it. The state of technology matches the later medieval period, but the Norse lands have yet to



convert to Christianity. (In the real world, this process began in the seventh century; most of the records we have of Norse religion are by writers looking back on it from the Christian era.) With Odin, Loki, and the other gods routinely manifesting themselves in the lives of men, it is possible that the Christian era will never come to **Rune's** version of Scandinavia. After all, Ragnarok is brewing; perhaps the entire world will be destroyed when the gods battle. Or maybe Ragnarok will mark the passing of the old gods, creating an opening for Rome's missionaries. Who knows? The real point here is that the **Rune** era is both no time and every time. Outside the Viking world, our portrayals of other cultures also mix elements spanning from the Dark Ages to the Medieval Period. What year is it? Who cares, when there are plenty of goblins left to behead?

YOUR UPBRINGING

You grew up in a village on the banks of a fjord somewhere in Scandinavia. (You and your group can agree to get more specific about your homeland if you want, using the information given later in this chapter on regional differences between Norse cultures.) Since childhood you have thrilled to the tales told by the men of your village when they return from their raiding expeditions. The raiders, led by a chieftain, would be your village's most admired men even if they didn't go off to engage in wild and bloodthirsty adventures. They're the brave and able-bodied men from the village's richest families, who can afford the silver needed to equip them with weapons, armor, ships, and horses. Luckily, your own ancestors assured your family a small bit of wealth, by risking their lives in foreign lands and in the Underground. Now that you are old enough to swing a sword and to attract the attention of watchful Odin and battle-eager Thor, you intend to join their ranks.

Your village houses a few hundred people. They live together as extended families in large wooden buildings called **steads** or **longhouses**. These houses have few interior walls; everybody lives, eats, drinks, and farts together, in a spirit of true Viking togetherness. You grew up in these



crowded, raucous circumstances, with a roof of turf above your head.

You would feel strange if forced to sleep in a room all your own. Only the wealthiest villagers sleep in beds; the floor and a blanket is enough for any sturdy young warrior.

The village women take wool sheared from the sheep baa-ing on the pastureland outside your village and weave it into clothing. Men wear cloth trousers and leather jerkins over long woolen shirts. Women wear dresses of pleated linen. When it is cold, you don fur hats and heavy cloaks for warmth. When a man dons a blue cloak, it means that he intends to murder an enemy.

JARLS, KARLS, AND THRALLS

There are three types of people in your village: jarls, karls, and thralls. You are lucky enough to be the son of a **jarl**, the wealthy class that equips its young men and sends them out raiding. One day you might be the leader of your village, or a gray-bearded priest of Odin and the other Aesir gods. If you live that long. Because only one son from any family can fully inherit its lands and silver, it is perhaps convenient that many young men of this favored class meet premature ends at the hands of mecha-dwarves and wendols.

Killing a member of the jarl class is a major crime — one likely to start a feud between villages. Only by paying a hefty fee of compensation, called **wergild**, numbering many horses or thralls, can tempers be cooled and years of bloodshed averted.

Another layer of authority knits together your village with those around it. You are ruled by a king, elected by the jarls of each village, who in turn must listen to the voice of the village assembly, or **thing**. Both jarls and kings must take care to rule wisely, and with the consent of the freemen under them, or they'll be deposed. Although it is good to be wealthy and to descend from a line of valorous leaders, authority means nothing unless it is properly used.

Karls are the peasants who work the land. Like the jarls, they are landowners, but their holdings are small. They take up sword and shield to

defend the village from enemies, but rarely go out raiding. Though they are laborers, they are also free men, and can vote when the village meets in its *things*. At the *thing*, the villagers decide matters of law, choose targets for the jarls' sons to raid, and, on rare occasions, depose foolish leaders. The murder of a karl is a serious matter, but the compensation due for it is rarely more than one horse or thrall. Feuds that erupt over slain karls tend to remain in families, and won't necessarily embroil entire villages.

Thralls are indentured laborers who enjoy few rights. They may be captured hostages from foreign lands or rival villages, outlaws stripped of their free status, or unfortunates born to this wretched status. A *thing* may grant an especially admired or worthy thrall the status of a karl, but it will mean little change in his circumstances unless he can also somehow acquire a small landholding. Thralls are not trusted with weapons and don't participate in village defense. The murder of a thrall is treated as a property crime against the jarl or karl holding his indenture; it is more serious to kill a man's horse than to slay one of his thralls.

In their skalding (satiric verse) contests, jarls mock karls as cowardly, bumpkinish peasants. Karls in turn make fun of the jarls' arrogant airs and adventure-shortened lifespans. However, the power of each group is well-balanced, and the people you grew up with accept their respective lots in life. Thralls, naturally, are excluded from such considerations; if one of them engaged in satiric verse against his better, he'd be slain out of hand.

Among jarls and karls, women are accorded great respect. At the *thing*, their voices are at least as important as the men's. In the world of **Rune**, a jarl's daughter is as likely to don armor and clank off into the trap-laden byways of the Underground as his son. No one has trouble believing the stories of the fierce, winged Valkyries, because everyone knows a warrior woman he wouldn't dare face on the field of battle.

HOLMGANGS AND BLOOD EAGLES

As you grew up, you learned that the best way to settle disputes between equals was through a duel, which is called a **holmgang**. This roughly translates as "going off to an island to beat the crap out of each

other and settle it like men." Your people have developed many variant rules for *holmganging*: sometimes they tie the opponents to stakes so that no cowardly running can interfere with the proper laying on of the harm. In other instances, they make a sort of primitive boxing ring out of cowhide strips. Sometimes the combatants trade blows one at a time, to see who can take the most punishment. In other duels, they slash away at each other in freeform style, just as they would in a fight to the death.

The **blood eagle** is an especially gruesome form of execution favored by some Viking cultures. It involves the opening of the screaming victim's chest cavity so that the two sides of his rib cage can be pulled out and exposed. This is pretty nasty stuff even for an RPG based on an M-rated computer game, and we can see why you might want to ignore its existence. But many Viking enthusiasts take a disquieting interest in this particular custom, so we thought we'd better mention it.

YOUR RELIGION

Worship of the Aesir has been a big part of your life ever since you can remember. You learned the grim tale of how Odin cast out his eye for wisdom. You've thrilled to various tales of Thor's exploits, which may cast him either as staunch hero or muscle-bound buffoon. Mention of the gods and their myths appear throughout this book, so we won't repeat them in detail here.

PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES

Priests and priestesses are usually of the jarl class. No one chooses to be a priest. A high Divine Awareness ability is something that settles on a person, whether he likes it or not. Although priests are respected for the important tasks they fulfill in performing necessary rituals, the position is sometimes a terrifying one. Even the good gods, like Odin, can be terrifying to confront. Priests sometimes meet the gods face to face, in dreams and visions. Priests are often retired heroes, because the Aesir invest those who destroy their foes with great powers.

Priests never specialize in the veneration of a single deity. A priest represents all of the male gods; a

HOLMGANGING BETWEEN HEROES

The **Rune** rules provide no guidelines for settling disputes between heroes. It's up to the players to decide how to divvy up silver, potions, charms, and so on. Sometimes you'll want to decide the distribution of a coveted item, or select a "volunteer" for a dangerous assignment, by entering into a *holmgang*.

For this purpose, heroes can put a cap on the damage they deal out to one another. For example, you can specify that no blow can reduce an opponent by more than 8 hit points after Soak is taken into account. Any damage results above that threshold are simply ignored. The first duelist to deal more than X points of damage to his opponent wins the *holmgang*, and gets whatever benefit is at stake. X is a number you decide, so you pick a target that ensures in advance that no one will be killed by the duel.

You do not lose victory points for damage dealt to a fellow hero in the course of an agreed-upon *holmgang*.

priestess calls upon all of the female gods. Their most important duty is the performance of fertility rituals to bless crops and domestic animals. When the gods are strong, and Loki's minions are weak, food will be plentiful. When Loki is on the rise, the forces of death and madness strengthen, withering grain plants and drying up the wombs of cows and mares. Often the best way to strengthen village magic is to send mighty young warriors off to slay Loki's minions.

Priests and priestesses are also called upon to remember the stories of the gods, and to supply counsel to the troubled and weary. Their voices carry great weight at the village assembly. If they say Odin wishes something to be done, the people tend to believe this. However, villagers carefully watch a priest's behavior to make sure he hasn't been corrupted by Loki. Those who succumb to the trickster's temptations may be put to the blood eagle.

THE VILLAGE RUNE

In a central courtyard stands your village Rune, an artifact gifted to your ancestors in the ancient past by Odin himself. It is a large slab of rock with one of the letters of Odin's runic alphabet carved into it. When the gods are near, or when Loki's machinations bring Ragnarok another step closer, the rune pulses and glows. By giving his people proof of his existence and concern for them, Odin strengthened his position against Loki. Perhaps it is true that the gods depend as much on their worshippers as the other way around, and that, without belief and prayer, they would wither and die. This could be why Loki recently sent his Dark Vikings to attack nearby villages and destroy their Runes. Stone carvers throughout Scandinavia now work to recreate the Runes, in the hopes that rituals by village priests can reach Odin's ears and cause their power to be rekindled. The few villages still guarding intact Runes now protect them with added ferocity, for fear that Loki might finish the job before the new Runes can be finished and properly dedicated.

GEOGRAPHY

When you listened to the Viking raiders of your father's generation, you learned of the other places in the world. Your sense of geography is determined by which places are good to raid, and which are not. When you play a **Rune** hero, you must forget your modern conception of geography. You know that the world is flat, and that Scandinavia is the center of the world. Ringing the Viking lands are a number of foreign places, which are good to raid. They are ringed in turn by the realms of myth, from dwarfish Nidavellir to dread Niflheim. The exact relationships between these places is unknown, though, and complicated by the fact that they are best reached through shortcuts that run through the Underground. By tramping through subterranean passageways, you can reach the land of the giants faster and more safely than you'd get to Britain or to France, which require journeys across treacherous, storm-tossed seas.

VIKING PLACES

Just because a neighboring land is Viking is no reason not to raid it. Maybe it's bad to raid other Aesir-worshippers when Loki is strong. But when Odin has the upper hand, your neighbors are as good a target as any. If you can successfully raid them, that means they're weak. Once you're long gone, and their women are done lamenting the destruction you've left in your wake, they'll strengthen their defenses and better train their young men. You're doing them a favor, really.

NORWAY

Norway is a place of pleasant climate and poor farmland. Everyone knows that Njord has blessed the place that bears his name, and blows mild winds across it. Alas, its soil is mostly rocky or boggy; all right for pasture but little else. Its only good land is around rivers and on a few isolated plains. Its warriors have been toughened by this deprivation, and are aggressive raiders. Its biggest town is called Trondheim; many exotic foreign items, gained as plunder, can be found in its marketplace.

DENMARK

Denmark is a land of islands, and its people, like all islanders, become a little crazy at times and are as happy to slay one another as outlanders. Its biggest island, Jutland, is sparsely populated because its land is poor. (We addled moderns would call Jutland a peninsula, but who's counting?) Denmark is Scandinavia's gateway to the rest of Europe, so it is good that its people are mad and stubborn, for they are better able to resist the cunning ways of foreigners. Or perhaps it is proximity to outlanders, and not island living, that has crazed them. They have erected a great earthen wall called the Danevirke to keep the weak-kneed outsiders in their place. Its major settlements are Ribe, Aarhus, Malmö, and the twin border region towns of Slesvig and Hedeby.

SWEDEN

The Swedes are really two nations: the Svear and the Gotar. The Svear used to live in the east; the Gotar, in the south. Now they have intermingled



but still regularly revive their ancient feuds, at least when Loki is weak and it is safe for Viking to battle Viking. It is no wonder that they fight so enthusiastically, for Sweden is a land of honey and fat cows, the most fertile place in the Viking world. It is blessed by Freyr, no doubt. Its women are beautiful, and no wealthy man is satisfied unless he has two or three of them. They will reach for their axes over a woman's honor even quicker than they will over land or tribal pride. Its towns are Birka, Skara, Sigtuna, and Uppsala.

ICELAND

Iceland is a volcanic island in the middle of a cold and forbidding ocean. Only a small portion of it is good for farming. Icelanders are crazier than Danes, tougher than Norwegians, and more eager to fight than Swedes. Or so the Icelanders claim. Many fissures in the Icelandic earth lead directly to the burning halls of Niflheim, and to the heart of dwarf lands. Loki's minions have on several occasions tried to set its volcanoes to erupting, driving Odin's warriors from this remote outpost. So its people are highly vigilant against his workings, and the night-roamings of the Dishonored who climb up from its caves.

GREENLAND

Greenland is a great expanse of forbidding, icy rock, cleverly named to confuse enemies into coming here instead of the relatively more hospitable Iceland. Several exile colonies have attempted to establish themselves here, so far with little luck. Its white expanses are the domain of wendols and snow elves. Some say the wendols in its harsh interior are intelligent, and have a cannibal kingdom. At least its fjords remind a Viking of home.

PLACES TO RAID

When Loki is strong, Vikings should gird themselves for battle by raiding foreigners, so that they can arm themselves for the real battle.



INTOLERANCE IN RUNE

Vikings are not politically correct. They evaluate all outsiders according to their attractiveness as targets. As we hope you've already noticed, we're treating this theme in a winkling way ultimately meant not to celebrate national prejudice, but to underline its absurdity. However, sensitivities vary. If anyone feels that their fellow players are taking the joke too far while not really getting it, or that their personal sensitivities are being trod upon, we suggest that you dial this whole clement way back, and return to killing imaginary enemies like wendols and centi-works.



ENGLAND

Vikings have already conquered one-third of England, a place rich in good farmland. The coastline of its unconquered areas is conveniently dotted with monasteries, ill-defended places full of silver and other treasures, so it is a good place to go. The Saxons were once proud warriors but have allowed themselves to become weak; they putter about in gardens speaking in whimpering accents. The Normans have recently attacked them and taken over another third of their lands. The Saxons so hate the Normans that they sometimes pay Vikings to act as mercenaries and attack their towns. Thus Vikings are doubly rewarded for their raids there. Perhaps they can also get the Normans to pay them to pillage Saxons.

IRELAND

Vikings have plundered deep into Ireland many times. Like England, it places many monasteries on its coastline, to better serve Viking raiding needs. Although the Roman religion is strong in the settlements, the people in the countryside still worship gods that are more like those of the Norsemen, but are also strange. It is hard to tell which of these deities are Loki in disguise, and which others might be useful allies of the Aesir. Better, when in doubt, to kill all foreign priests. The Celts have

many kings, who fight one another all the time. Sometimes they will pay Vikings to fight in these petty wars, but it is important not be ensnared and end up Irish.

NORMANDY

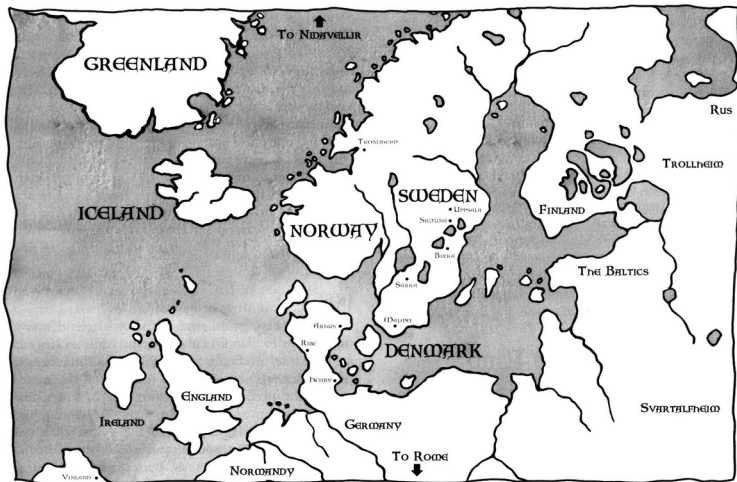
Normandy is a place completely in the cruel grip of Loki. Vikings went there and conquered the old, foreign kings, who were called the Franks. But the conquerors were infected with the weird foreign thoughts of the locals, and have begun to adopt their ways. They have lost Odin's holy runic language, and now call themselves Normans. If honest Vikings are not vigilant against Loki's wiles, they, too, will be degraded into mere Normans. It is safe to assume that any Norman is a servant of Loki, and worthy only as sword-food.

GERMANY

The Saxons, whose kings are always named Otto, are a dangerous people. One must admire their bravery as one hews them down with one's mighty axe. They used to have gods of their own, but now worship the Roman religion, after having it forced on them by the Frankish king, Charlemagne. This humiliation now lies in their past; their kings have grown bold of late, rudely attacking Denmark. Whenever they do so, it is the Vikings' duty, as true sons of Odin, to subject them to savage reprisals.

FINLAND

Finland is inhabited by reindeer-herding tribesmen who are good at running away. They can sometimes be made to pay tribute of walrus teeth, bearskins, and bird feathers. Their mountainous, frost-bitten land borders on the mythic realm of





Jotunheim. Some Finns are helpful, because they've learned the sneaky ways vital to the successful slaying of giants.

THE BALTICS

A people called the Balts live in these lands. The Swedes have had contact with them for as long as anyone can remember. Sometimes their royal families have even intermarried with those of Swedish kings. It is hard to know whether to trust them, for their gods are unlike those of the Vikings.

RUS

Even further away than the Baltic lands is a place we Vikings named Rus. You have heard that some of your people went there a long time ago, settled down, and have not come back. If you took the trouble to go there, you would surely find that they rule the place, for this is what happens eventually whenever Vikings move in on the territory of outlanders.

ROME

Far to the southeast is a nation called Rome, ruled by a king who practices a strange religion. From time to time, he sends priests to Viking lands to convince the Norse they should practice it, too. Your people show them their village Runes, and prove to them that Odin exists. Some of these Romans stay to become priests of your faith, though they are not talented at it. Others go away, dejected. They tell you not to raid their monasteries in England and Ireland, but this is advice you'd be foolish to take.

CONSTANTINOPLE

Even further away than Rome is the golden-terreted city of Constantinople, a gateway to an entire world of strange peoples and glittering riches. From what you've heard, Vikings have not conquered it, but have formed a mercenary group called the Varangian Guard, that serves the kings of the city. Rumor has it that they have heaped themselves in gold, wine, women, and battle-glory.

INHUMAN LANDS

Certain places sit strangely on the boundaries between the ordinary world and the places of myth. These are the realms of the races older than humanity: the giants, dwarves, elves, and trolls.

JOTUNHEIM

The frosty peaks of Jotunheim serve as home to the giants. They dwell in gigantic caves, which, if you believe their stories, were the wombs of the first giants, when the mountains lived and giants were made of stone. The massive silver treasures of these immense caverns are legendary, but so is giantkind's happy joy in violence. In Jotunheim, you must always be ready to outdrink and outfight surly, dim-witted beings four times your size. Some giants disdain their half-kin, Loki, but others may welcome him. Certain giants' strongholds may shelter the trickster's gathering armies.

It is possible to reach Asgard by traveling through Jotunheim, but mastery of obscure magics is required to move from the profane world to the sacred one. Neither giants nor godlings approve of this sort of travel, so heroes attempting it should be prepared for much Terrifying opposition. To travel from Asgard to Jotunheim, gods go east.

NIDAVELLIR

Nidavellir, the realm of the dwarves, is a twisting, ever-turning warren of passageways which were once straight and regular but have been reengineered so many times over the eons that even an experienced map-maker can easily become lost in them. Strangers' navigation problems are compounded by the miles of tubing, ducts, and wires that run along, through, and across many of the corridors. Huge grates issue forth great clouds of steam, some of it scalding. Gigantic machines clatter away twenty-four hours a day, offering those unfamiliar with them multiple opportunities for grievous injury. Bladed windmills, stamping presses, enormous gears, smashing pistons, and gale-force wind machines have all claimed their share of over-curious Vikings. Other machines build enemies for the heroes

right before their eyes, churning out a steady stream of spider-works and other mechanical killers.

You can reach Nidavellir by sailing north through frigid waters, and then scouring its glaciated surface for an entryway to its subterranean reaches. But with so many underground tunnels wending their way through there, this would seem foolish.

SVARTALFHEIM

To a Viking, a forest is no leafy and verdant paradise: it is a frightening place, full of things that want to kill him. Nowhere is this truer than in the tangled pines of Svartalfheim, home to the elves. Tall, slim of figure, with knife-sharp features, the elves are largely indifferent to the affairs of men, so long as they don't intrude on their forest territories. The elves maintain a complicated hierarchy of kings and titles, and endlessly murder one another in pursuit of authority over Svartalfheim's briars and thickets. Unlike the unsubtle thunderings of dwarven civil strife, struggles in Svartalfheim are waged with whispers, laws, and insidious poisons. Visitors who are not immediately pounced upon by the forest's population of giant, hungry spiders may be drawn into elfin politics, used as pawns, and discarded. If it weren't for the legends of vast silver hoards in Svartalfheim's oaken palaces, no sensible Viking would ever go there.

TROLLHEIM

The mountainous home of the once-proud trolls sits between Jotunheim and Svartalfheim, a location that explains its present, sorry state. Its lofty stone halls have been smashed by giants, their inhabitants taken as thralls to labor for indolent elfin jarls. These places may still be worth exploring, for the trolls, an ancient, tricky-minded race, knew much strange magic alien to man and god alike. However, the easy looting has all been done. What treasures remain are guarded by clever traps laid by escaping trolls. Though most surviving, free trolls have decamped to the Underground to plot their vengeance against both giants and elves, a few desperate souls may still be found here, seeking allies — and victims.

REALMS OF MYTH

Some places are known to exist in the sacred world; men must use magic to approach them.

YGGDRASIL

Yggdrasil is the world-tree, the center of all existence. The Norns nurture its roots to keep it alive, while verminous animals sent by Loki gnaw and nibble at it, seeking its death. Everyone knows that Yggdrasil marks the center of the world, and that by climbing it, one may reach Asgard, home of the Aesir. However, each nationality of Viking claims that Yggdrasil's roots surely reach deep into his own native soil. The Swedes say it is in Sweden; the Norwegians, in Norway, and so on. Perhaps one must have great priestly powers to find it at all. Maybe it is in a divine realm that just seems to intersect with our own.

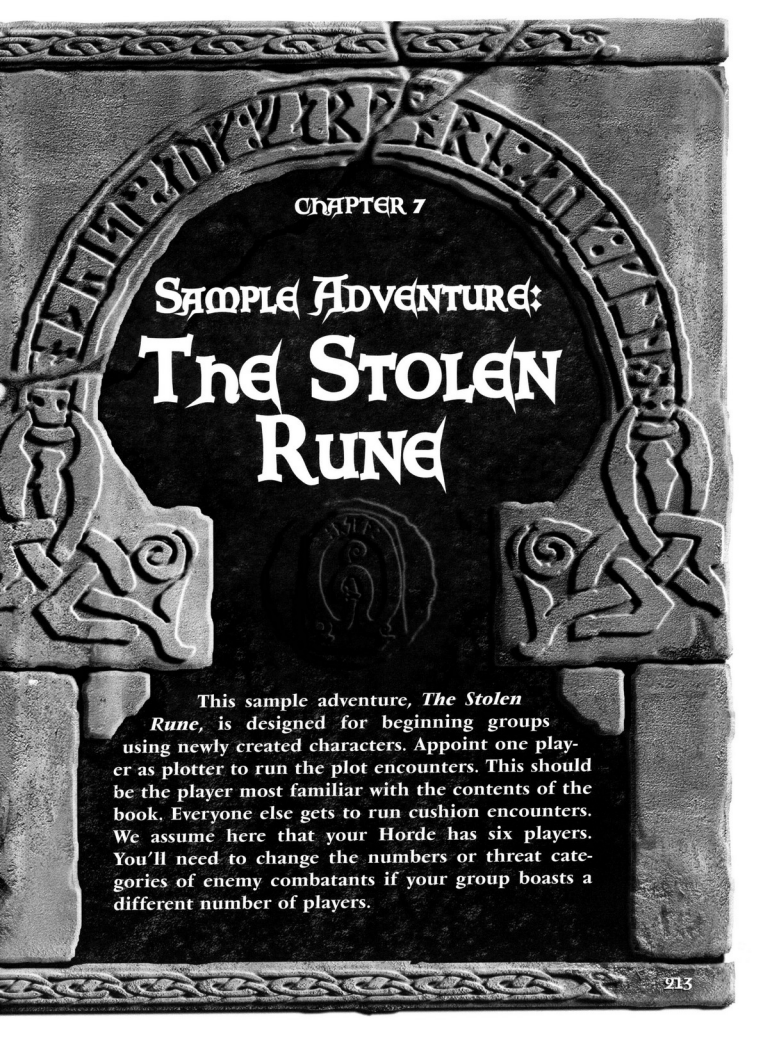
ASGARD

Asgard is the perfect realm where the Aesir live. It can be reached only by climbing the world tree, Yggdrasil, and then leaping onto Bifrost, the rainbow-hued bridge connecting Asgard to the Viking world of Midgard. Bifrost is guarded by the mighty guardian deity Heimdal, so one had better be pure of intention and strongly connected to the gods before petitioning him for entry.

The realms of Asgard are many, but of special interest is Valhalla, where the honored dead go. There they fight and drink and ready themselves for the real battle to come.

NIFLHEIM

Niflheim is the grim realm of Hel, mistress of the Dishonored. Although Viking myth records it as a frosty place where the bones of the shamed dead suffer from eternal chill, you've heard from heroes who've been there that other portions of it are licked by unquenchable flame. As part of Loki's recent plot against the Aesir, Hel broke through from her realm into the Underground, so it is now possible to get from one place to the other. The Dishonored have flooded the Underground; whether its creatures have colonized Hel's kingdom is a question you may soon have the chance to answer.



CHAPTER 7

SAMPLE ADVENTURE: The Stolen Rune

This sample adventure, *The Stolen Rune*, is designed for beginning groups using newly created characters. Appoint one player as plotter to run the plot encounters. This should be the player most familiar with the contents of the book. Everyone else gets to run cushion encounters. We assume here that your Horde has six players. You'll need to change the numbers or threat categories of enemy combatants if your group boasts a different number of players.

The adventure hook is the **Underground**, except for the first encounter, which takes place in **Scandinavia**.

Like an advanced adventure, *The Stolen Rune* includes set-up, development, and climax encounters. Until your group learns the ropes of encounter design, your own encounters should skip this element.

Note that these adventures are intended to teach the game to your group in a fun and entertaining manner. We do not claim that they are built to maximize the runner's chance of winning. For that, you'll have to apply your devious nature to the design of your own encounters.

FORMAT NOTES

This adventure adheres to the following format. You can replicate it if you want when designing encounters of your own, but needn't feel obliged to do so. Do what works for you. Just remember that you have to show your encounters to the pillagers when you finish running them, so they should be understandable by others. A clear format also makes your encounter more valuable to other runners should you choose, as we fervently desire, to make it available on the Internet. So, on second thought, adhere precisely to this format or we'll burn down your longhouse and steal your horses.



Narration: Passages of text for the runner to read out (or paraphrase) to the pillagers are accompanied by the chanting skald icon. They describe what the heroes see on a cursory inspection of an area when they first enter it.



Closer Inspection: Passages of text appearing with the magnifying glass (a cunning dwarvish invention) icon contain information the pillagers can discover if their heroes take a closer look around, or undertake certain specified actions such as making a roll called for in the encounter notes.



Background: These sections of text contain information the heroes could never logically learn, but which explain the underlying situation. The runner can use this information when called upon to react to unexpected actions by the heroes. The pillagers may enjoy reading it after the encounter has finished.

Instructions for the runner, including descriptions of traps, gains, and foes, appear in unboxed text. They'll often include bold-faced text to remind the runner of the paragraph's contents at a glance.

When combat maps are necessary, you can find them in the photocopy section on p. 246 - 249.





ENCOUNTER 1: TAKEN IN THE NIGHT

Type: Plot Set-up Encounter

Hook: Scandinavia.

EVENT 1: AWAKENED IN TERROR



Narration: Each hero is asleep in his bed when he wakes up, sweating, with a beating heart, knowing that some terrible omen has manifested itself upon him and his home village.

The heroes' home village protects one of the last few divine runes on Midgard. A very long time ago, these big granite obelisks were inscribed with magical runes by Odin himself and gifted to the villages that had given rise to Valhalla's most honorable warriors. Loki and his minions forever scheme to seize these runes, hoping to strangle the power of the Aesir. If a village loses its rune, everyone is shamed. Also, people owe their power and confidence to the runes, at least in part. Without this divine connection, everyone will suffer. Milk cows will dry up. Children will get sick. Men will be unlucky in battle.

TRAP — IMPAIRMENT: FRIGHT

Because everyone is magically connected to the rune, they suffer an immediate fright, even before they know for sure what has happened. Heroes who fail their Bravery rolls will be afraid that they are doomed. Their fear makes this a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Impairment reflects their fear.

This is a **Standard** roll; roll **Bravery** vs. **Difficulty 6**, heroes who fail suffer **2 points of Impairment** until end of encounter.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6); 90 (Impairment affects 1 combat sequence [30] and 3 rolls to avoid traps or trigger gains [3 rolls @ 5 pts each], for a total base cost of 45, which is then multiplied by 2 [the number of points of Impairment])

EVENT 2: THE GRIM DISCOVERY



Narration: Crawling out of their beds, the heroes go to the village square, where they see that some force has knocked a huge hole in the stone walls guarding the courtyard where the rune obelisk is kept. They know that the obelisk is twenty feet high, made of rock, and inscribed with a rune that glows when Odin's foes are strong in the land, and brave warriors must go out to combat them.

A set of strange parallel tracks runs from the smashed courtyard up to the hills surrounding the village.

GAIN — CARROT #1: WEIRD MACHINERY

Singular: No-Fault roll; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: Although stealing runes is the sort of thing Loki would do, the tracks indicate some sort of weird machinery — which means that dwarves are at fault here.

Hero gains **+4 increase** to the **Awareness** rolls made to score the **next Carrot**, which appears in the next event.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 7)

Points Earned: -15 (No-Fault); -20 (+4 increase @ -5 encounter points each)

Whether or not the heroes guess the significance of the tracks, they can certainly follow them up the hillside.

GAIN – CARROT #2: RAISED SCARS

Standard roll; roll Awareness vs. Difficulty 6, +4 increase for winning last carrot, heroes who make the roll see the following:

They gain a **+4 increase** to the **Dodge** rolls they must make if they inspect the bodies in the wake of the battle.



 **Closer Inspection:** The goblins have huge raised scars that run across each one's torso; the heroes deduce that dwarves have surgically installed explosive devices inside their chest cavities.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6)

Points Earned: -20 (+4 increase @ -5 encounter points each)

TERRAIN – NONE

Because this is an introductory encounter, there is no terrain.

TRAP – BOMBS IN GOBLINS



 **Background:** The goblins stayed to fight because they know that their surgically-implanted explosive devices will blow their heads off if they leave the area before the time their cruel dwarven masters specified. One of their number did try to escape. He exploded all over a thornbush, and the survivors had a heck of a time getting at his tasty, instantly cooked flesh without being pricked by thorns. The goblins fight to the death, because they know they'll also blow up if interrogated.

EVENT 3 COMBAT OPPONENTS – EXPLODING GOBLINS

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Gull	Rock Goblin	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Shreek	Rock Goblin	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Blomp	Rock Goblin	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Thornweed	Rock Goblin	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Daza	Rock Goblin	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)
Cringe	Rock Goblin	0	15	Inferior	none	Predictable (+0)

Points Spent: 0

Before the encounter begins, use this table and a Roll of Valor to determine the goblins' statistics and note them on a Foe Sheet. For the example below, we used the sample Roll of Valor from page 98.

Name: <i>Gull</i>		Score: <i>5</i>		COMBAT SCORES			
Type: <i>Rock Goblin</i>	TWT Points: <i>42</i>	TWT Score		INIT Score	ATK Score	DEF Score	DMD Score
Trait: <i>Inferior</i>	(Round Threshold: <i>15</i>)	(Round Threshold: <i>15</i>)		(Value: <i>6</i>)	(Value: <i>8</i>)	(Value: <i>5</i>)	(Value: <i>8</i>)
Element: <i>None</i>	(OUNDS		DEPENDENCY AND				
(Value: <i>15</i>)							
(Value: <i>0</i>)							
(Value: <i>0</i>)							
(Value: <i>18</i>)							
Self Weight: <i>0</i>							



Once the goblins are dead, the bombs still pose a threat. They're set to go off each time a slain goblin's body is interfered with.

Singular: Rush, conditionally avoidable if hero does not go near goblin bodies; roll **Dodge vs. Difficulty 6**, failed heroes suffer harm: **Dam rating 16**. Conditional trigger **remains in effect** (see p. 134), but expires after all seven goblin bodies have been interfered with. Winners of previous **carrot gain +4 increase** to their rolls.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 8); **21** (Dam rating 16); 0 (Remains In Effect)

Points Earned: -20 (Singular: Conditional)

GAIN — SILVER

No roll required; one pillager must specify that his hero is carefully searching the goblin's bodies



Closer Inspection: One of the goblins has six ounces of silver hidden in his boot, in the form of a thin chain necklace wrapped around his ankle.

Points Earned: -6 (6 ounces silver @ 1 point per ounce)

GAIN — TREASURE

No roll required; at least one pillager must specify that his hero is carefully searching the goblin's packs, **1 Category A** and **1 Category B** treasure.



Closer Inspection: Even more interesting than the necklace, however, are treasures in two of the goblins' packs.



Background: The bombs implanted in their slaves made the dwarves less watchful of the goblins than they otherwise would have been. They stole a treasure from the dwarven stronghold, hoping to bury it nearby after fulfilling their mission.

Points Earned: -20 (Category B); -10 (Category A)

SEGUE TO FURTHER ENCOUNTERS



Narration: By following the tracks, the heroes reach a hole in the ground. It looks like something mammoth has burrowed up from the earth. Part of the upturned mound of earth has been mowed back down again, as if the burrowing thing later crawled back into the hole. They go down into the hole, cautiously sliding down its dirt wall, until they find themselves in an smooth-walled underground chamber. There are a bunch of dead goblins in the room. Their wooden hovels are still standing. The heroes conclude that the goblins must have lived here. Some of their bodies are scorched; and others are sliced to bits. Putrefaction hasn't set in, so they've probably been dead for less than a day.

ENCOUNTER 1 COST TABLE

Item	Points Spent	Item	Points Earned
Impairment Trap	90	Carrot #1 No-Fault	-15
Combat: Exploding Goblins	0	Carrot #1 +4 Increase	-20
Terrain - None	0	Carrot #2 +4 Increase	-20
Bomb Trap Dam Rating 16	21	Bomb Trap Conditional: Singular	-20
		Silver 6	-6
		Category B Treasure	-20
		Category A Treasure	-10
Encounter Points Spent	111	Encounter Points Gained	-111
		Balance	0

ENCOUNTER 2: IT'S THE LAVA FOR YOU, PUTRID HUMAN

Type: Cushion Encounter

Hook: Underground



Narration: The heroes trudge through dark and gloomy underground corridors for a long time without seeing anything of interest. They hear skittering noises, which might be goblins following them, but they never get attacked. A banging sound echoes through the corridors, shaking the floor beneath their feet, but nothing comes of it.

EVENT 1: "KILL ME, BEFORE I AM FURTHER SHAMED!"



Narration: The heroes continue along, reaching a part of the Underground composed of rough, unfinished caverns. Ahead, they hear human screams of pain. The corridor ahead widens. They see a pair of large land crabs feeding on a man stuck on a wooden door by two spears that impale him at the shoulders. As soon as they sense movement from the heroes, they attack, instinctively protecting their kill from other predators.

GAINS – CARROT #1: TROLLS DID THIS!

No roll required, conditionally available for killing the land crabs; +5 increase to Single Weapon rolls made against Haurapir, the lead troll who appears in **Event #4**. Heroes learn the following:



Closer Inspection: If the heroes do kill the land crabs, they see that the creatures have fed heavily on the unfortunate victim's belly. The sight is a horrifying one. He doesn't have long to live, but sputters out a warning:

"Trolls did this! They ambushed me and my companion, Eldgrim! They believe we know where a treasure map is located. We have not heard of this map, and cursed them as fools. So they staked me to this door, leaving me as

food for the land crabs. They have taken Eldgrim up yonder, no doubt for further torture. His family is rich, and will reward you if you rescue him."

"When you fight your captors, know that the biggest troll, the leader, favors his left side. Fight him with a dagger or other small weapon, and thrust up into his ribs, hitting him on his right side. Stick him a good one, for me."

Points Earned: -25 (5 point increase @ 5 encounter points each)

GAIN – VICTORY POINT AWARD: KILLING LEIG

Singular, no roll required; pillagers may use **Rush** rules (p. 132) to see which hero shoulders aside the others to perform the deed, hero adds 20 to his victory point tally.



Closer Inspection: "As for me ... I'm done for. I ask that you put me out of my misery, so that I might die honorably, and not in shame. A man eaten by land crabs while helpless ends up not in Valhalla, but in dismal Hel. Cleave my neck from my shoulders with one of your bold axes! Kill me, before I am further shamed!"

Points Earned: -20 (20 point victory point award @ 1 point each)

Be sure to describe the Viking's death in appropriately melodramatic terms. His name is **Leig**, by the way.

EVENT 1 COMBAT OPPONENTS – LAND CRABS

Like any wild beast, land crabs fight with the utmost ferocity when defending the food they're eating.

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
#1	Large Land Crab	0	15	Equal	DNF -1, Soak +3	Predictable (+0)
#2	Large Land Crab	0	15	Equal	DNF -1, Soak +3	Predictable (+0)

Points Spent: 0



EVENT 2: RANDOM GREMLIN



Narration: As the heroes head in the direction specified by Leig, they see a quick-moving creature coming their way. It is a gremlin, carrying a cloth bag with an object of some kind inside.

GAIN — CARROT #2: GREMLIN-SPOTTING

Singular: No-Fault; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to see the gremlin early and get a good chance at whacking it; if any hero is successful on this roll, any hero attempting the roll immediately below gains a **+5 increase**.

Points Earned: -25 (5 point increase @ 5 encounter points each)

GAIN — CATEGORY A TREASURE

Singular: Rush; roll **INIT** vs. **Baseline +3** (see Opposed rolls p. 129) to quickly lash out to bowl the gremlin over with a melee weapon, or even a kick. On a success, the gremlin drops its bag, which contains a **Category A Treasure**

Points Spent: 30 (Baseline +3)

Points Earned: -10 (Category A Treasure)

EVENT 3: ISN'T IT ALARMING?



Narration: The heroes continue on in the direction Leig indicated. They hear a commotion up ahead, as they reach a place where the corridor curves, so that its terminus is out of sight.

TRAP/STICK — TRIP WIRE

A trip wire trap leads to a sheet of metal affixed to the ceiling (it was scavenged from Nidavellir by the trolls in the next room). If the wire is tripped, shards of metal shake loose from it, raining down on those below. Though the heroes might assume that it was meant to harm them, its real purpose is to alert the trolls in the next room to approaching intruders.

Standard: Weak Link (p. 133); roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, failed heroes suffer **Dam rating 4** (this is the Standard portion — successful heroes are unharmed); even a single failed roll gives all foes in the subsequent combat a **+9 Initiative bonus**, which lasts for **1 round**. (This is the Weak Link part.)

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6); **40** (Weak Link); **4** (Dam rating 4); **18** (+9 INIT bonus to foes @ 2 per point); **0** (Combo trap surcharge: Weak Link applies only to one effect, Difficulty cost is 0)



EVENT 4: ELDRIM AND THE LAVA PIT



Narration: A big troll is torturing a Viking, who must be Eldgrim, as you burst into the room. He's been hogtied to the end of a strange metal device, a big metal crane, and is suspended upside down over a lava pit. Eldgrim is attempting to remain stoic in the face of doom, but anyone can see that his flesh is being roasted off, and that he will soon die unless rescued.



Background: The troll brigand Haurapir knows that a Viking stole his map to a fabulous treasure. Because all Vikings look alike to him, he captures them whenever he finds them, torturing them for information they don't actually have. The crane is abandoned dwarven technology. Haurapir thinks that all Vikings are united in their attempt to keep him from his rightful treasure map. He'll attack on sight.

TRAP — FALLING DEBRIS

As heroes charge into the room, Haurapir will spring another falling debris trap, showering the heroes with more shards of metal.

Standard; Dodge vs. Difficulty 8, failed heroes suffer **Dam rating 18**.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); 23 (Dam rating 18)

TERRAIN — CRANE

Crane offers **full cover**, can shelter **1 extra combatant**.

Points Earned: -12 (full cover); -12 (shelters extra combatant)

EVENT 4 COMBAT OPPONENTS — TROLLS

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Haurapir	Troll	2	15	Superior	None	Self-Willed (+25)
Zalnaup	Troll	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable (+0)
Urjordir	Troll	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable (+0)
Mikko	Troll	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable (+0)

Points Spent: 25 (Self-Willed, Superior Foe)

TERRAIN — ADDITIONAL LEVEL

1 additional level

Points Earned: -5 (1 level)

TERRAIN — BARRIERS

1. Pile of rocks
2. Rusted metal parts, once part of crane
3. Iron maiden, rusted shut
4. Hardened magma flow

Points Earned: -12 (-3 per barrier; does not count against 3-feature limit)

TERRAIN — LAVA PIT

Lava pit acts as **Damaging Place**, **Dam rating 25** (p. 122). Heat damage occurs on hexes adjacent to the lava pit, as well as in the pit itself.

Points Earned: -30 (Damaging Place, Dam rating 25)

TRAP — LAVA PIT

Singular roll, conditionally avoidable (by staying out of the actual lava itself), **remains in effect** (p. 134); roll **Divine Awareness vs. Difficulty 6**, or suffer **Equipment Damage** (p. 149).

Points Spent: 0 (remains in effect); 0 (Difficulty 6); 40 (Equipment Damage)

Points Earned: -20 (Singular: Conditionally Avoidable)



GAINS — VICTORY POINT AWARD: SAVING ELDRIM

Singular: Solo; roll **Disarm Trap** vs. **Difficulty 7**, **combat action required**, to gain **10 victory points**, by getting to the crane's controls, figuring them out, and moving Eldgrim out of harm's way. Hero may make **3 extra attempts** after initial failure. After four failures, Eldgrim dies, and with him goes the victory point award.

Points Spent: **10** (Difficulty 7); **10** (combat action required)

Points Earned: **-10** (10 victory points @ -1 per point); **-15** (3 extra attempts after initial failure @ -5 per point)

GAIN — CATEGORY B TREASURES: HIDDEN IN CRANE

Hidden inside the **crane** (conditionally available) are a pair of **Category B treasures**.

Points Earned: **-40** (2 Category B Treasures @ -20 each)

TRAP/HAZARD — IRON MAIDEN: SPEAR

The iron maiden (listed above as a barrier) is also a trap, if opened. The trolls know not to open it, but the heroes might well do so during their post-fight search for treasure. If the lid is lifted open loose, a spring-loaded spear shoots out of the trap. If the opener is standing where the lid's handholds are located, the spear zips right towards his chest.

Singular: Rush; conditionally avoidable (by not lifting the lid, or by opening it from an odd angle or in an unusual or inventive way); **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 6**, failed hero suffers **Dam rating 15**.

Points Spent: **0** (Difficulty 6); **15** (Dam rating 15)

ENCOUNTER 2 COST SHEET

Item	Points Spent
Combat Opponents: Land Crabs	0
Gremlin Treasure Baseline +3	30
Trip Wire Trap	62
Combat Opponents: Trolls, Haurapir's Self-Will	25
Falling Debris Trap Diff. 8	20
Falling Debris Trap Dam 18	23
Lava: remains in effect	0
Lava: Difficulty 6	0
Lava: Equipment Damage	40
Save Eldgrim: Diff 7	10
Save Eldgrim: Action Required	10
Iron Maiden trap: Diff 6	0
Iron Maiden trap: Dam 15	15
Encounter Points Spent	235

Item	Points Earned
Carrot #1: +5 to Single Weapon	-25
Victory Point Award: Kill Leig	-20
Carrot #2: +5 to INIT	-25
Category A Gremlin Treasure	-10
Crane: Full Cover	-12
Crane: Shelters Extra Combatant	-12
Additional Level	-5
Barriers	-12
Lava: Damaging Place, Dam. 25	-30
Lava: Conditional Avoid, Singular	-20
Save Eldgrim: 10 Victory Points	-10
Save Eldgrim: 3 extra attempts	-15
Category B Treasures (2)	-40
Encounter Points Gained	-236
Balance	-1

ENCOUNTER 3: INSTRUMENTAL IN YOUR DOWNFALL

Type: Cushion Encounter

Hook: Underground

EVENT 1 LYRE, LYRE



Narration: The heroes trudge along through the murk of the Underground for a while until they hear a sound up ahead. The heroes find the sound soothing even before they realize what it is. They identify it as beautiful music being played on a lyre.

GAIN — CARROT: HAUNTING MUSIC

Singular: No-Fault; roll **Music** vs. **Difficulty 6**, equipment not needed, heroes rolling successfully gain a +5 bonus on their first **Music** rolls in the upcoming contest, realizing the following:



Closer Inspection: The music is splendidly played but also a little unearthly. It is not being made by a human. And although it is soothing, there is something subtly wrong and disturbing about it. Everyone should be ready for weird magic.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6)

Points Earned: -15 (No-Fault); -5 (equipment not needed); -25 (+5 carrot x 1 round @ 5 points each)



Narration: The heroes follow the sound to a small chamber lined with bones and silver. High up in an alcove is a lyre, playing by itself. Through its music, the heroes feel it welcoming them. They will stay forever, the music tells them, as did those whose bones they stand among. They will die at peace, lost in the music.

The heroes see the silver and gems scattered amongst the bones around them, but somehow can't bring themselves to grab the treasure. Tinkling coins might disrupt the perfection of the music. Neither can they bear to even consider knocking down the lyre with an arrow, or otherwise damaging or even coming into contact with it.



Background: The lyre exaggerates somewhat the danger the heroes are in. Although the unnamed individuals whose remains now litter its chamber did choose to stay and listen forever to its plucking strings, the heroes can leave at any time. However, they'll forever be haunted by the music they heard here. The distraction will cause them all to suffer Impairment — unless one of the heroes can outplay it.

HAZARD — IMPAIRMENT: LYRE CONTEST

Singular: Dogpile, Lady or Tiger roll (success allows heroes to scoop up category **F** treasure, failure dishes out 1 Impairment and lasts until end of encounter); hero's **Music** roll is opposed by foe modifier of 4.

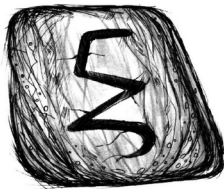


Closer Inspection: If they lose, the heroes can leave, but suffer Impairment from distracting memories of the eerie and beautiful music; they can't bear to take the treasure.

If they win, the heroes can leave without suffering Impairment, and can cheerfully grab up the treasure.

Points Spent: 20 (+4 Opposed Roll); 30 (1 point of Impairment affects 1 combat sequence); 65 (Impairment affects 13 rolls @ 5 per roll); 4 (Impairment affects 4 Freestanding rolls @ 1 per roll)

Points Earned: -75 (Category **F** Treasure)





Event 2: Thunder Drums



Narration: The heroes continue on for a while longer, passing nothing more interesting than a few rats fighting over the decaying body of a wall lizard. Then they hear a pounding sound up ahead. There is no way around whatever it is that's making the noise; the corridor has continued for miles without exits or turn-offs.

The heroes enter a large cavern. At the other end of the cavern, near its only exit, is a set of seven gigantic drums, each of them pounding away deafeningly as if being hit by a frenzied, invisible drummer.

Suddenly a creature lurches out at them from behind a limestone column. It's a young wendol. Its shrieks of agony can't be heard above the pounding of the drums.

Let the players think they're going to have to fight the wendol. Then, before actually rolling for Initiative:



Narration: The wendol collapses at the heroes' feet, apparently dead. Some kind of reddish ooze comes out of its ears.

GAIN — HEALING ROLL

Singular: No-Fault, Freestanding roll; **Healing** vs. **Difficulty 6**, **equipment not needed**, successful hero learns the following:



Closer Inspection: The healer diagnoses the cause of the wendol's death. The oozing material is its brain, mushed to a pulp by the incessant pounding of the drums.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding, Difficulty 6); -5 (Equipment Not Needed)

TRAP/HAZARD — MAGIC DRUMS

The drums will do the same to the heroes unless destroyed.

Standard roll: Stamina vs. **Difficulty 6**, or suffer **Dam rating 2**, escalating damage.

Points Spent [roll to avoid damage]:

0 (Difficulty 6); 20 (Exotic Roll: Characteristic Only); 2 (Dam rating); 20 (escalates [original Dam rating of 2 x 2.5] + 15)

To end escalating damage:

Countdown roll, requires **successes equal to number of heroes**; roll **Missiles** or **Thrown Weapons** vs. **Difficulty 6**.

Points Spent [roll to end damage]:

0 (Difficulty 6); 40 (Countdown requires successes equal to number of heroes, base cost of 20, escalating damage is a special case requiring no multiplier charge)



Narration: The heroes hear more weird sounds as they progress further along the way. This time it's a big rhythmic pounding sound. The air gets damper. A cold mist fills the tunnel.

Event 3: Pounding Waves

STICK — SNEEZING HAZARD

The bone-chilling cold might make one of the heroes sneeze, alerting the robots in the next room.

Weak Link roll; roll **Stamina** vs. **Difficulty 4**, gives foes +6 **INIT** for 1 round if tripped.

Points Spent: 40 (Weak Link), 20 (Exotic Roll:

Characteristic Only); 10 (6 points of **INIT** bonus to foes @ 5 points for each +3 increment)

Points Earned: -20 (Difficulty 4)

GAIN — CORPSE TRIGGERS FREESTANDING ROLLS



Narration: Up ahead, curled up into the fetal position, lies the corpse of a man in Viking armor. Sticking out of him at various points are six-inch long crescents of some strange, highly worked metal. The edges of the crescents are extremely sharp. One of the crescents pierced his helmet, although it looks like the wound it inflicted was only minor. It was the several crescents piercing his guts that doubtless claimed his life.

Freestanding Roll (#1), Singular: No-Fault; roll Lore vs. Difficulty 6

to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: The crescents look like dwarven work. The successful roller remembers hearing the hoary-bearded older warriors of his village talking about strange dwarven machines that move around like living things. Some of them are like guard dogs, who react to Norse raiders by trying to kill them. Some fire bolts of lighting. Others might well throw these crescent things.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6); 0 (No-Fault)

Freestanding Roll (#2), Singular: No-Fault; roll Healer vs. Difficulty 6 to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: He's been dead for about a day. He looks like he died more recently than that, but the chill of the Underground has kept him from decomposing as rapidly as he otherwise would. There are no flies down here to lay their eggs in him, and hence no maggots to gnaw his flesh.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6); 0 (No-Fault); -15 (Equipment Not Needed)

Freestanding Roll (#3), Singular: No-Fault; roll Divine Awareness vs. Difficulty 6 to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: Although he clearly died in terrible agony, alone and without comrades to recount his epic deeds, his corpse still gives off the aura of a worthy hero. He is doubtless in Valhalla even now, feasting with Odin's champions.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6); 0 (No-Fault)

GAIN — TREASURE

Conditionally available (search body): 1 Category E Treasure, 2 Category C Treasures, 1 Category A Treasure and 5 pieces of silver.



Closer Inspection: A search of the body reveals two treasures. If the heroes are clever, they'll realize that this suggests an unintelligent creature ahead. Not that it makes any difference. Well, maybe you can give them chocolates or something.

Points Earned: -50 (Category E Treasure); -60 (2 Category C Treasures @ 30 points each); -10 (Category A treasure); -5 (5 oz. of silver @ 1 point each)

EVENT 3 COMBAT OPPONENTS — SPIDER-WERKS

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
#1	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#2	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#3	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#4	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#5	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#6	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#7	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#8	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#9	Spider-werk	0.9	15	Inferior	DAM +5, HP -10	Predictable (+0)

Points Spent: 0



Background: This cavern was once the experimental headquarters of a dwarven engineer intent on proving himself to the clan that exiled him by building a bigger and better spider-werk. These off-the-shelf models were his guardians to protect him while he worked. Unfortunately, he succumbed to pneumonia, leaving behind these robots to protect his bones. They attack anything that moves, provided that it's bigger than themselves. Their sensors are sophisticated enough to ignore ambient movement, such as the continual action of the waterfall in this chamber.



TERRAIN — SLOPE

The banks of the river count as **2 sloped places**



Narration: The cavern is dominated by a big waterfall, which empties into a surging underground river. Swift currents have dug a big trench through the middle of the cavern. The banks of the river are sloped. Each bank counts as a slope.



Background: The dwarf engineer diverted the flow of the waterfall, setting up turbines to generate power for his experiments. The machine has since broken down, returning the waterfall to its original path.

within larger area, covering at least **6 hexes each**.

Points Earned: -10 (2 slopes @ 5 points each)

TERRAIN — COVER



Narration: A big dwarven contraption, its bolts and facings corroded, sits rusting in front of an alcove near the cavern's northwest corner. It's a big, boxy device about two feet high and twenty feet long. Various dials, wheels, and brass displays cover its oxidized surface.



Background: The heroes can theorize about this until the cows come home but will never figure out for certain what it is. (It was a piece of monitoring equipment meant to test the flow capacity of the robots. Or something like that.) Anyhow, its only use now is as a piece of potential cover.

The equipment provides **1/3 protection**, shelters **5 extra companions**

Points Earned: -3 (1/3 cover); -15 (extra combatants)

TRAP — DROWNING HAZARD

The river is a drowning hazard.

Conditionally avoidable (stay out of river),
Drowning, Choppy Waters (off-the-rack, see p. 148).

Points Spent: 30 (Drowning Hazard, Choppy Waters)

Spider-bots don't have lungs, but their workings are messed up by prolonged exposure to water, and they can sink to the bottom. So conveniently enough, if a hero maneuvers them into the water, we can treat them exactly as if they're suffering drowning damage.

(Well, that's how these spider-bots work. We're still free to have waterproof spider-bots in other encounters. There are various models, you know.)



TRAP/HAZARD — PROTOTYPE CRAFTWERK



Background: The next trap on the agenda is the dead engineer's prototype robot.



Narration: There's a large machine that looks like a big upright box with a pivoting, pointy head.

When any target enters the cavern, the craftwerk senses it and starts firing razor-sharp crescents. The craftwerk strikes at the beginning of each round, as if it were a character that wins Initiative every time out. It uses the Foe Target Choice Flowchart (p. 196) to choose its target. Although it will be firing at the heroes during the fight, its sensors are good enough to avoid ever hitting a spider-bot.

To avoid blades: **Singular, limited targeting vs. 1 victim, repeat shots;** roll **Dodge** (does not cost combat action) vs. **Difficulty 6**, failed roller suffers **Dam rating 7**.

Points Spent [avoid blades]: 0 (Difficulty 6); **7** (Dam rating 7); **25** (Repeat Shots: 1 victim per round)

Points Earned [avoid blades]: -15 (Limited Targeting: 1 victim)

To stop repeat shots: **Singular: Rush;** roll **Disarm Trap** vs. **Difficulty 7**, **unlimited extra rolls allowed, requires combat action**

Then succeed at a **simultaneous action; Balance vs. Difficulty 7**, does not require an action, **failure leads to trap** (drowning hazard; see above)

Heroes who fail the Balance roll fall into the river, where they fail prey to the drowning hazard (see above).

Points Spent [disarm blades]: 10 (Traps vs. Difficulty 7); **10** (combat action required); **15** (simultaneous action); **10** (Balance vs. Difficulty 7); **10** (failure leads to trap)

Points Earned [disarm blades]: -20 (unlimited extra rolls)

ENCOUNTER 3 COST SHEET

Item	Points Spent	Item	Points Earned
Lyre Contest: +4 Opposed Roll	20	Musical Carrot: No-Fault	-15
Lyre Contest: Impairs 1 combat	30	Musical Carrot: Equipment Not Needed	-5
Lyre Contest: Impairs 13 rolls	65	Musical Carrot: +5 Increase	-25
Lyre Contest: Impairs 4 Free Rolls	4	Lyre Contest: F Treasure	-75
Avoid Drums: Exotic Roll	20	Dead Wendol: Free Roll Diff 6	-10
Avoid Drums: Dam 2	2	Dead Wendol: No Equipment Needed	-15
Avoid Drums: Escalates	20	Sneezing: Difficulty 4	-20
Destroy Drums: Countdown	40	Corpse: Free Lore Roll Diff 6	-10
Sneezing: Weak Link	40	Corpse: Free Lore Roll No Fault	0
Sneezing: Exotic Roll	20	Corpse: Free Heal Roll Diff 6	-10
Sneezing: +6 Init to foes	10	Corpse: Free Heal Roll No Fault	0
Combat Opponents: Spider-works	0	Corpse: Free Heal Roll No Equipment	-5
Drowning Hazard	30	Corpse: Free Divine Roll Diff 6	-10
Avoid blades: Diff 6	0	Corpse: Free Divine Roll No Fault	0
Avoid blades: Dam 7	7	Treasure: Category A	-10
Avoid blades: repeat shots, 1 victim/round	25	Treasure: Category C (2)	-60
Disarm Blades: Diff 7 (1)	10	Treasure: Category E	-50
Disarm Blades: Diff 7 (2)	10	Silver: 5 ounces	-5
Disarm Blades: Combat Action Req.	10	Slope	-10
Disarm Blades: Failure Leads to Trap	10	Cover	-18
Disarm Blades: Simultaneous	15	Avoid Blades: Limited Targeting	-15
		Disarm Blades: Unlimited Extra Roll	-20
Encounter Points Spent	388	Encounter Points Gained	-388
		Balance	0

ENCOUNTER 4: The Temple of Loki

Type: Plot Development Encounter

Hook: Underground

Event 1: Picking Up the Trail



Narration: The heroes enter a large cavern with a floor largely covered in wet, sandy soil. It is the first stretch of raw flooring they've passed in quite a while. An underground river flows quietly through the cavern, depositing banks of silt. In the silt, the same kind of tracks the heroes saw back at their home village are clearly visible.

The cavern is inhabited. A stooped-over figure in burlap robes has a bunch of weapons laid out on a threadbare velvet cloth. Several big goblin slayers stand across from him, stroking their chins as they contemplate his merchandise.

GAIN — BARGAINING OPPORTUNITY



Closer Inspection: The man in the burlap robes is LeClerc, a crazy foreigner who decided he'd rather live in the Underground than in his homeland. He makes his living by scavenging items and then trading them to dwarves, goblins, and human explorers. LeClerc is willing to exchange silver for good weapons. He waits until the goblins have gone before revealing his stash of money.

Singular: Dogpile; roll Bargain vs. bonus of 3.

Points Spent: 10 (Opposed roll vs. bonus 3)

Points Earned: -15 (bargaining opportunity)

Each item the heroes wish to sell is treated as a separate situation; as normal, the heroes are

allowed one roll per item. The dogpile only comes into play if two heroes are simultaneously trying to dicker with LeClerc over the same item. Because he is not a foe, the heroes gain no victory points for any damage they inflict on him. He is not an especially formidable opponent. He fights with a shortsword.



Closer Inspection: When asked about the tracks, LeClerc knows nothing useful. He wasn't in the area when they appeared and knows nothing about them. He usually keeps his ear to the ground for good gossip, because that "lubricates many a transaction."

If the heroes tell him the story of their missing rune, he ventures that it's probably the minions of Loki at work. He knows that there is a temple to Loki down to the left and past the waterfall.

CARROT — WATERFALL WARNING

If the heroes impress LeClerc as upstanding sorts unlikely to come back and bushwhack him for the goods they've sold him, he volunteers some handy advice. He judges only those who attempt to impress him.

Singular: Dogpile; roll Demeanor vs. Difficulty 8, to gain +6 increase to Awareness roll in the next event.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8)

Points Earned: -30 (- +6 increase x 5 x 1 round)

LECLERC — CRAZY FOREIGN MERCHANT

Name	Type	Move	INIT	ATK	DNF	DAM	Soak	HP	Might
LeClerc	Human	15	6	4	5	4	1	48	9

EVENT 2: THE WATER NYMPH'S GRAVE



Narration: The heroes trudge through gloomy Underground corridors until they begin to hear the sound of a waterfall. As they approach it, it sounds like a typical loud and relentless sound of falling water pounding against rocks. But when they turn the corner and actually see the waterfall, the sound changes. Suddenly they hear not crashing water but a sweet, soothing song that makes the water seem inviting. A beautiful woman rises up from the swirling waters at the base of the falls and holds out her arms in a beckoning gesture.

TRAP — DROWNING

Heroes who fail victim to the siren call of the water nymph's ghost willingly jump headfirst into the wrenching whirlpool. Once they hit the cold surface of the water, they regain their wills and can try to save themselves from drowning.



Closer Inspection: The heroes can interact with the ghost of the water nymph after they have all dealt with the threat of drowning. She pouts unhappily if none of them join her. She says she was slain by a deceitful mortal who claimed to love her; instead he stole her treasure. Now she seeks a male companion to live with her forever in the waterfall, and in order to snare one she must coax him into drowning for her. She knows nothing about strange tracks or minions of Loki. She has been a ghost for many hundreds of years and is indifferent to mortal affairs.

Standard; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, failed heroes suffer **Drowning** (p. 148) with **Mighty Undercurrent**.

Points Spent: 80 (Drowning, Mighty Undercurrent)

GAIN — TRICK THE NYMPH FOR TREASURE

Singular: **Dogpile**; roll **Deception** vs. **Difficulty 6**, on a success, group receives **Category B Treasure**.



Closer Inspection: The nymph knows that there is a treasure hidden underneath a rock on a grotto shelf opposite her waterfall. She will tell the heroes about its location to reward them, if they trick her into thinking that they will lure a fine-looking mate to her waterfall, so she can ensnare him.

Points Earned: -20 (Category B Treasure)

EVENT 3: HARD DAYS FOR MINIONS



Narration: As the heroes continue past the waterfall, the flames from the torches on the walls around them begin to gutter and flicker, throwing eerie shadows all around. What might be the sound of laughter echoes in the distance.

GAIN — LOKI'S HERE!

Some characters may feel the presence of Loki raising the hackles on their necks.

Freestanding roll, Singular: **No-Fault**; roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 10** to detect the following:



Closer Inspection: Loki's foul aura is in the air. The feeling gets stronger as the heroes pass a particular corridor. It leads them to the shattered doorway into the scene shown on the map.

Points Earned: -5 (Freestanding Difficulty 10)

TERRAIN — BARRIER: TRASH PILE

A trash pile has gradually accumulated in the room.

Points Earned: -3 (-3 per barrier; does not count against 3-feature limit)

TERRAIN — COVER: ALTAR

The altar gives **1/3 cover**, and can shelter **2 extra combatants**

Points Earned: 0 (Not counted as one of the 3 terrain features worth points)

TERRAIN — COVER: STATUE

A large statue of Loki gives **half cover**, and can shelter **1 extra combatant**

Points Earned: -6 (base cost x 1 additional person it shelters)

TERRAIN — COVER: SE BARRICADE

Wooden barricade in SE corner give **almost complete cover**, can shelter **4+ extra combatants**

Points Earned: -36 (base cost -12 x 4 additional people it shelters, reduced to the maximum allowable)



TERRAIN — COVER: DOOR BARRICADE

The wooden barricade around the door offers **full cover**, and can shelter **4+ extra combatants**.

The barrier actually acts as an obstacle channeling entering heroes through the bear traps (described below). It is possible to squeeze through the crudely constructed wall of splintered, rotting wood:

Points Earned: 0 (Not counted as one of the 3 terrain features worth points)

NON-DEFAULT DIFFICULTY — BUSTING DOWN THE BARRICADES

Heroes can neutralize any hex worth of barricade by tipping it over. This takes an action and requires a STR roll.

Singular, combat action required, no set limit on extra attempts; roll **STR** vs. **Difficulty 8**.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8); **20** (Characteristic only); **10** (Combat action required)

Points Earned: -20 (no set limit on extra attempts)

TERRAIN — REDUCED EXITS

There is only **one exit**

Points Earned: 0 (Would be -8 but this is not counted this as one of the 3 terrain features worth points)

TRAP — BEAR TRAPS

Loki's minions have placed bear traps in the only clear entrance to their lair.

Singular, conditionally avoidable (take alternate route into combat area), **first exposure** (traps tripped on successful roll, but do not catch the heroes); roll **Jump** vs. **Difficulty 6** to clear them, **grabber trap** (p. 153), **Dam rating 10**.

Points Spent: 0 (Difficulty 6); **30** (Grabber Trap); **10** (Dam rating 10)

Points Earned: -25 (Conditional Avoid, First Exposure + Singular)

TRAP — CHASM



Background: When Ragnar recently cleared out this temple's mightiest defenders, Odin aided him by opening up this chasm in the earth, swallowing many Sarks Amen and powerful Dark Vikings. Now it's a hazard to anyone who attempts to leap it in the heat of combat.

Standard, conditionally avoidable (don't cross or get pushed into chasm); roll **Jump** vs. **Difficulty 9**, failed rollers suffer **falling damage**, **Dam rating 20/30** (21 – 25 feet), see p. 151.

Points Spent: 30 (Difficulty 9); **42** (21 – 25 feet fall)

Points Earned: -10 (Conditionally Avoidable)

EVENT 3 COMBAT OPPONENTS — DARK VIKINGS AND DISHONORED

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Oddi	Dark Viking	1.4	15	Equal	ATK +1	Predictable (+0)
Snurri	Dark Viking	1.3	15	Equal	None	Predictable (+0)
No Nose	Dishonored*	1.3	15	Inferior	None	Predictable (+0)
Maggot Breath	Dishonored*	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable (+0)
Svein the Suppurator	Dishonored*	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable (+0)

* See p. 103 for Dishonored special powers.

Points Spent: 0



Background: The minions of Loki in this temple are the survivors of a recent attack by the legendary Viking warrior Ragnar, who fought them with the aid of Odin himself. They're dispirited and desperate — but will fight fanatically, because they're cornered. They start out the fight hiding behind the southeast barricade.

TRAP — MALFUNCTIONING TELEPORT DEVICE



Narration: In the temple's northwest corner is a glowing ball of green energy, which occasionally shoots off sparks. It makes a sporadic humming noise.



Background: Once used to transport Dishonored back and forth from Hel to this quadrant of the Underground, it was damaged during Ragnar's attack. Now it disintegrates the bone and flesh of anyone who comes into contact with it.

Singular, conditionally avoidable (remains in effect); roll **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, failed roller suffers **Dam** rating 26.

Points Spent: 41 (Dam rating 26)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally Avoidable:
Remains In Effect)

GAIN — SILVER

8 pieces of silver lie on the floor beside the teleportation trap.

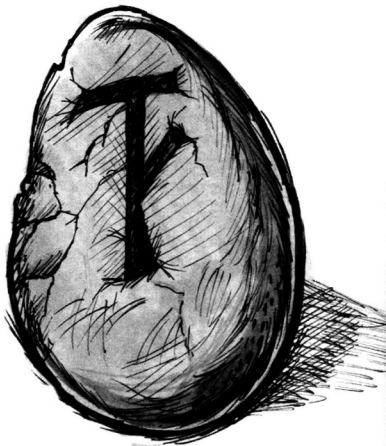
Points Earned: -8 (8 silver ounces @ 1 point each)

COMBAT TACTICS



Narration: The Dark Vikings and Dishonored begin the fight behind the SE Barricade. They fire through spaces in the barricade at the heroes as they navigate the narrow, trapped entrance to their room. Oddi warns the heroes to stay away, or face death at the hands of Loki's finest warriors.

As soon as two heroes bust through the barricade or all of the bear traps have been sprung, they'll try to maneuver the heroes into the chasm or the malfunctioning teleport trap. They may also run for the high ground of the raised platform in the middle of the temple, seeking cover behind the altar or statue.





GAIN — FREESTANDING INSIGHT

Freestanding roll, Singular: No-Fault; roll **Insight** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: Although it was wise to assume that the theft of your rune was the work of cruel Loki's minions, these pathetic wretches are clearly in no shape to have stolen even a spavined pony. Curse it! The sinister dwarves must be working on their own!

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6)

GAIN — CATEGORY F & C TREASURE

One of the Vikings slain by Ragnar hid some treasure from the others.

Singular: No-Fault; rollers must specify they're searching the chasm, roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 8**, success finds **1 Category F** and **2 Category C treasures** in a scooped-out shelf inside the chasm.

Points Spent: 20 (Difficulty 8)

Points Earned: -75 (Category F Treasure);
-60 (2 Category C Treasures @ 30 each)

ENCOUNTER 4 COST TABLE

Item	Points Spent	Points Item	Earned
LeClerc: Opposed roll Bonus 3	10	LeClerc: Bargaining Opportunity	-15
Waterfall Warning: Diff. 8	20	Waterfall Warning: +6 Carrot	-30
Drowning	80	Trick the Nymph: Category B Treasure	-20
Combat Opponent: Dark Vikings & Dishonored	0	Loki's Here	-5
Bear Traps: Grabber	30	Barrier: Trash Pile	-3
Bear Traps: Dam 10	10	Cover: SE Barricade	-36
Chasm: Diff 9	30	Cover: altar	not counted
Chasm: 21 — 25 feet fall	42	Reduced Exits	not counted
Teleport Trap: Dam 26	41	Cover: door barricade	not counted
Barricade Busting: Diff 8	20	Cover: Statue	-6
Barrier Busting: Costs an action	10	Bear Traps: Conditional Avoid	-25
Barrier Busting: Char. Only	20	Chasm: Conditional Avoid	-10
Treasure: Diff 8	20	Teleport Trap: Conditional Avoid	-20
		Barrier Busting: No Set Limit	-20
		Freestanding Insight Diff 6	-10
		Treasure: Category F	-75
		Treasure: Category C (2)	-60
		Silver: 8	-8
Encounter Points Spent	333	Encounter Points Gained	-333
		Balance	0

ENCOUNTER 5: JELLYFISH, GLORIOUS JELLYFISH

Type: Cushion Encounter

Hook: Underground



Narration: The heroes find themselves in a corridor that slopes downwards at a 45° angle.

At this point, make the players specify the order in which their heroes are standing.

There is room for the heroes to walk two abreast, though they can choose to go single file if they want.



Narration: As the heroes progress through it, the corridor becomes more like a tunnel. Then it gets damp. Moss slicks its walls and floor.

Finally the combination of slope and slick surface combine to turn the tunnel into a slide that threatens to dump the heroes into the mucky midst of the next fight scene.

TRAP/HAZARD — MOSSY SLIDE

This is actually an ambush trap that works in an unconventional way; instead of forcing the heroes to make Awareness rolls to spot their foes in advance, they must make Balance rolls to avoid being plopped right in the middle of their enemies. The effect is the same, though.

Domino roll; roll **STR + Balance** vs. **Difficulty 8**, or suffer **ambush** effects (p. 147) during combat that follows.

Points Spent: 20 (Domino); 20 (Difficulty 8); 50 (Ambush)

What Happens To Non-Sliders



Closer Inspection: Heroes who finish this sequence still on their feet can carefully approach the endpoint of the tunnel, which is in the ceiling of a big cavern. If their comrades have tumbled down into the cavern, they see that they've landed in an enormous (as in twenty feet in diameter and twelve feet high) blob of semi-translucent sticky goo. They also see a number of centi-works turn from seemingly feeding on the goo to moving towards their friends, mechanical mandibles menacingly a-clicking.

If no heroes have fallen, the point man in the marching order can peer down into the cavern and see the goo and the feeding centi-works. The robots pay no heed to the Vikings peering down at them from the hole in the ceiling.

GAIN — TO JUMP OR NOT TO JUMP?

Freestanding roll, Singular: No-Fault; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6**, to note the following:



Closer Inspection: The goo looks bouncy enough to break your fall if you leap down into it. (In game terms, your characters will automatically succeed and don't have to make Jump rolls to avoid falling damage.) Heroes voluntarily jumping into the goo won't suffer the effects of ambush, as they've already seen the centi-works and will be ready for them.

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

TRAP/HAZARD — PROTOPLASM AVOIDANCE

However, the heroes may still, for other reasons, be reluctant to go goo-diving. They may fear all sorts of hazards that aren't actually in play, worrying that the goo is acidic or damages armor or whatever. The goo counts as Slippery Ground (see below) but is otherwise pretty benign. Your players have probably grown up watching horror movies, in which an eternal rule of survival is: "Don't touch the goocy stuff!" If so, they may wish their heroes to descend to the floor of the battle scene without landing in the goo. This is more easily said than done. The opening is right over the goo pile. They'll need to climb down on ropes (Climb roll) and then swing the rope (Jump roll) to land outside the goo perimeter. (I signed on to write this game only so I could use the phrase "goo perimeter" in a sentence, by the way.)

Singular, conditionally avoidable (by choosing to fall), **first exposure;** roll **Climb** vs. **Difficulty 7**

Then also make a **simultaneous roll;** **Balance** vs. **Difficulty 6**, or suffer **21 – 25 foot fall, dam** rating **20/30**.

Points Spent: 10 (Difficulty 7); 15 (Simultaneous Roll); 42 (21 – 25 foot fall)

Points Earned: -25 (conditionally avoidable, first exposure)

Once the heroes are on the same level as the centibots, whether willingly or unwillingly, the combat can commence.

TERRAIN – SLIPPERY GROUND



Background: The goo is in fact a big jellyfish-like creature that crawled up from a well in search of food. Blobs not being the smartest creatures in Midgard, it wasn't able to crawl back into the well and has been slowly dying ever since.

If you're in or on the blob, you're on **slippery ground**. The slippery ground affects 2/3 of area

Points Earned: -15 (2/3 of area)

TERRAIN – COVER: WELL

An **abandoned well** leads to another branch of the underground river the heroes have been encountering throughout the adventure. It's big enough to lend **half cover** to a **single hero**.

Points Earned: -6 (half cover)

TERRAIN – LIMITED EXITS

There are only **two exits** (not counting the one in the ceiling, which isn't exactly accessible), and each one is narrow, allowing room for only one person to squeeze through.

Points Earned: -10 (2 exits, 2 heroes can run away per round)

GAINS – TREASURE IN THE GOO



Background: The jellyfishy thing crawled up on top of a pile of scavenged equipment, which its salvagers abandoned when they beheld the gooey stuff.

Heroes willing to scoop their way through the creature's oozy tissue and through the various pieces of discarded equipment gain a category B treasure.

Conditionally available; 1 Category A Treasure and 1 Category B Treasure

Points Earned: -10 (Category A Treasure); -20 (Category B Treasure)

TRAP/HAZARD – PARASITE IN THE TREASURE



Background: A slimy, blood-sucking slug has nested itself inside the sack containing the treasure. Without blood to suck – gooey jellyfish just don't cut it – the parasite has gone dormant.

COMBAT OPPONENTS – CENTI-WERKS

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
#1	Centi-werk	1	15	Weak	INIT +15, ATK -2, DNF -3	Predictable (+0)
#2	Centi-werk	1	15	Weak	INIT +15, ATK -2, DNF -3	Predictable (+0)
#3	Centi-werk	1	15	Weak	INIT +15, ATK -2, DNF -3	Predictable (+0)
#4	Centi-werk	1	15	Weak	INIT +15, ATK -2, DNF -3	Predictable (+0)
#5	Centi-werk	1	15	Weak	INIT +15, ATK -2, DNF -3	Predictable (+0)
#6	Centi-werk	1	15	Weak	INIT +15, ATK -2, DNF -3	Predictable (+0)

Points Spent: 0



Background: These centi-werks were altered by a dwarven researcher so that they'd go out and gather interesting protein samples. He intends to use them to make a food-like paste especially nutritious to mecha-dwarves. Not that the heroes will ever know this; they just see the centi-werks feeding on the blob.

When the centi-werks' sensors sniff out the heady presence of sweating Viking, they'll stop gnawing at the blob and try to kill the heroes in order to collect their tissue samples. Their owner kept their poison bites intact for just this sort of eventuality, hoping to catch some big, strange creature rich in food value.



Closer Inspection: When it senses a warm-blooded Viking mammal messing about with the treasure, the slug-like creature springs into action, seeks out some exposed flesh, and burrows its way in.

Singular roll, **conditionally avoidable** by not rooting around in goo for treasure, **first exposure**; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 8**, or suffer **Dam rating 9**, armor-ignoring, recurring.

Any character can make the healing roll necessary to find the parasite after it has burrowed under the victim's skin, cut an incision, and then drug the slug with medicine in order to make it go limp. It can then be pulled out in one piece.

To end recurring damage: **Singular: No-Fault**; roll **Healing** vs. **Difficulty 6**.

Points Spent: **20** (Difficulty 8); **22** (Dam rating 9 x 2.5 multiplier for recurring damage); **10** (Armor-Ignoring)

Points Earned: **-25** (conditionally avoidable, first exposure); **-15** (roll to end damage is No-Fault)

ENCOUNTER 5 COST TABLE

Item	Points Spent
Slide Trap: Domino	20
Slide Trap: Diff 8	20
Slide Trap: Ambush	50
Avoid Goo: Diff 7	10
Avoid Goo: Simultaneous	15
Avoid Goo: 21 – 25 foot fall	42
Combat Opponents: Centi-werks	0
Parasite: Diff 8	20
Parasite: 9 Recurring Dam	22
Parasite: Armor Ignoring	10
Bucket Liar's Treasure	7

Encounter Points Spent 216

GAIN — BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF PARASITISM

The victim may make a Bravery roll to avoid embarrassing himself with frightened outbursts, showers of flop-sweat, or other expressions of unseemly concern over the slug rooting around under his skin.

Freestanding, Singular; roll **Bravery** vs. **Difficulty 6**

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

GAINS — BUCKET TREASURE



Closer Inspection: Down the old well is a bucket, covered over with burlap. Under the burlap are some treasures and some pieces of "silver."

Singular roll; roll **Climb** vs. **Difficulty 6** to get **1 Category B**, **1 Category E Treasure** and **7 ounces of Liar's Silver**.

Points Spent: **0** (Difficulty 6); **7** (7 oz. Liar's Silver @ 1 each)

Points Gained: **-20** (Category B Treasure); **-50** (Category E Treasure)

Item	Points Earned
To Jump?: Freestanding Diff. 6	-10
Avoid Goo: Conditional Avoid	-25
Slippery Ground	-15
Cover: Half	-6
Limited Exits	-10
Goo Treasure: Category A	-10
Goo Treasure: Category B	-20
Parasite: Conditional Avoid	-25
Parasite: No-Fault	-15
Parasite: Freestanding	-10
Bucket Treasure: Category B	-20
Bucket Treasure: Category E	-50

Encounter Points Gained -216

Balance 0

ENCOUNTER 6: LONGSHIP OF THE DEAD

Type: Cushion Encounter

Hook: Underground

EVENT 1: A FIENDLY LOCAL



Narration: The heroes trudge along an underground passageway until they meet a hunched, one-eyed fellow who points a glowing staff at them. "Halt, undead dogs of Loki!" he cries. "Or with my Norn's-staff I shall render your bones to paste!"



Background: This is Mord, a thoroughly crazy member of the Dishonored who believes himself to be still alive, still honorable, and still an implacable foe of all things undead and un-Viking. If the heroes approach him correctly, he'll shelter them for an evening, giving them a blessing to boot. (Later he'll be overcome by bestial hunger and start thinking about devouring their brains, but, hey, perfect hosts are hard to find in the Underground.)

GAIN — MORD'S BLESSING

The heroes must try to convince Mord that they are honorable Vikings.

Singular: Dogpile; roll **Demeanor** vs. **Difficulty 6** to gain **1 point of Invigoration** (lasts until end of encounter) and access to shrine of Odin.

Points Earned: -30 (1 combat); -20 (Invigoration affects 4 rolls to avoid traps or trigger gains); -20 (Invigoration affects 2 Freestanding rolls); -20 (Shrine to Odin)



Narration: When mollified, Mord claps the speaker on the shoulder, explaining that it is good to meet brave Vikings in such a dire place.

Here you lean forward and, as Mord, stage-whisper into the players' ear: "Can't be too careful, you know. These hallways are crawling with undead."

Mord invites the heroes back to his hidey-hole, assuring them that it is warm and dry. Charms protect it from the ever-sniffing noses of hungry zombies. They can rest, heal, and eat a humble yet hearty meal.

Mord leads them down a narrow passageway. You hear an echoing sound like distorted song. Mord shudders. "The Dishonored sing to celebrate the deaths of more craven wretches, who will soon join their ranks."

He sidles into a very narrow passageway. The heroes must squeeze their way along it. It's a tight fit, especially for the bigger members of the party. Finally it widens out again. The heroes see a small wooden door, which Mord unlocks with a rusty key at his belt. The door creaks open and Mord beckons them to enter.

GAIN — SMUDGED CHARMS

Freestanding Roll, Singular: No-Fault; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: Observant characters may notice that the charms chalked around the doorway and its threshold were once proper and efficacious wards against the undead, but that each and every one of them has been smudged. Although there's a chance that the markings might still keep the Dishonored out, it seems unlikely.

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6)

GAIN — NOT ACTUALLY FISH

Freestanding Roll, Singular: No-Fault; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to learn the following:



Closer Inspection: You realize that he's cooking patties made of mulched moss and mushrooms, patted together to look like fish.



Background: The food is perfectly safe and nutritious. It tastes like chicken — if chicken were made from fungus, that is.



Narration: Mord looks after the heroes for about a day, but then warns the them away, telling them that he has a prophetic gift, and that terrible things will happen to them if they stay. He looks extremely haggard, and his hands are shaking.



Background: After a day Mord begins to get shaky. His bestial instincts are coming to the fore again, and he's finding it harder to suppress them. He still won't admit his true nature, least of all to himself, but he has no intention of allowing the heroes to fall prey to his monstrous urges.

GAIN — MORD'S END

Singular: No-Fault roll; roll **Insight** vs. **Difficulty 7** to learn the following, which leads to **20 victory point gain**.



Closer Inspection: Mord has a secret he won't admit even to himself. He's afraid that he'll harm you, and so wants you to leave before he's driven to commit an evil act.

If confronted with this, Mord breaks down and begins to weep. Finally he accepts what he is, and begs the heroes to slay him once and for all. Although he will never get to Valhalla, at least he can keep himself out of Hel's clutches, and will not be made to march against the gods when Ragnarok comes.

The tearful, shuddering Mord does not resist his beheading.

Points Spent: 10 (Difficulty 7)

Points Earned: -20 (20 victory points @ 1 each)

If he is slain in this manner, 10 of the above victory points go to the hero who discovered his secret, and 10 to the one who performs the execution. Obviously, if the same hero does both, he gets all 20 points.

If heroes can't agree on who gets to kill Mord, they can jockey with one another, in a Rush (p. 132.)



If the heroes still want to stick around and heal, they begin to hear whisperings carried to them by the peculiar acoustics of the passageway outside Mord's hovel:

"Mmm, Mord is dead. Mmm, the living dwell within his hovel. Mmm, we shall slay them."

If the players want to stand and fight, just come out and tell them that these will be wandering monsters, worth no victory points.

GAIN — LOOT CACHE

If they kill Mord, they can use his place as a loot cache, with a Recovery Difficulty 6.

Points Earned: -20 (Difficulty 6 Loot Cache)

EVENT 2: SKULL-LINED PATH



Narration: The heroes continue along their way, gradually entering a sector of the Underground that reeks of undeath. They reach a narrow corridor allowing them to stand, at most, two abreast. It slopes downwards slightly. The passageway's floor is paved with what at first seem to be very large cobblestones made of some soft and chalky stone. Then the heroes realize that they're treading on a carpet of human skulls. Some of the skulls are upturned, so that you can see their faces.

As the passageway continues, its walls and ceiling begin to display these mortar-embedded skulls, until the entire tunnel is lined with them.



Background: Some of the skulls are magical traps created with Hel's blessing to harm intruders into her realm.

Ask the heroes what order they're standing in.

TRAP/HAZARD — SKULL ORCHARD



Narration: One of the skulls glows red, emitting an eyebeam that sweeps the corridor, finally directing itself at the two heroes at the head of the marching order, and the one in the back. They stand shuddering in the beams for a few moments, their hair curling and beards burning.



Standard roll, limited targeting (chooses targets by marching order); **Divine Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** or suffer **5 Impairment** to **Single Weapon Ability**, lasts for **next combat sequence**.

Points Spent: 0 (Limited Targeting, 3 heroes);
50 (5 points of specific Impairment @ 10 points each)



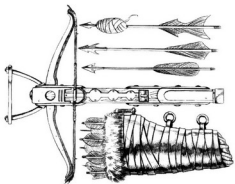
Narration: Then the skulls underneath the heroes' feet all shift in the mortar to bring their snapping jaws up towards the soles of Viking boots, and start chomping away.

TRAP/HAZARD — SNAPPING JAWS

Standard; roll **Jump** vs. **Difficulty 6**, extra rolls required: 3 rounds,* 3 dice **Dam** rating, ignores armor.

*Three rounds is how long it takes to get through the section of corridor with the biting skulls.

Points Spent: 15 (3 extra rolls); 15 (3 dice **Dam** rating); 10 (Ignores Armor)



EVENT 3: THE DREAD SHIP ITSELF



Narration: The skull-lined passageway leads directly to a large cavern. As the heroes approach it, they realize that they'd been hearing something, but had been too distracted by snapping and eye-beaming skulls to pay full heed. The singing they heard earlier is emanating from the chamber they're now approaching.

Dominating the chamber is a Viking longship cobbled together from rotting wood. Sitting on the deck and carousing with upturned flagons is a group of Dishonored, pathetically pretending that they are still alive and cruising towards home along the Baltic Sea, their ship laden with booty.

When they see living Vikings entering their domain, they are overcome with envy for the living, and attack.

TRAP/HAZARD — BONY BALLISTA

Mounted on the sides of the "ship" are gigantic, bizarre missile weapons born of an unholy union of Loki's magic and dwarven technology.

There are three of these large, metallic contraptions, each the size of a man. From long barrels they fire flaming skull missiles at the heroes. Each requires two Dishonored to operate; one to turn the big wheel that pivots and aims the barrel, the other to load blood-soaked skulls into its breech. Once fired, the skulls acquire a halo of black flame that trails behind them as they swerve through the air towards the heroes.

Singular: Rush, only targeted heroes suffer effects if they fail, **limited targeting** zeroes in on three

EVENT 3 COMBAT OPPONENTS — DISHONORED

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Heiki	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Injald	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Asgerd	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Starkadt	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Grim	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Ketil	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable
Busla	Dishonored	1	15	Weak	None	Predictable

Points Spent: 0

heroes who scored **highest INIT results** this round; roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 11** to avoid **1 point of Impairment, specific to DEN**; **extra rolls required, every round until** one of the two Dishonored operating each of the three cannons is drawn into melee combat.

Points Spent: **50** (Difficulty 11); **0** (Limited targeting: 3 heroes); **10** (1 point of specific Impairment for 1 combat sequence @ 10 points each); **25** (extra rolls until condition is met)

TERRAIN — BARRIERS: JUNK ON DECK

1. Discarded planks
2. Corpse of slain Dishonored, decapitated in a recent argument
3. Rocks
4. Empty amphorae (ancient clay jugs)
5. Rotting crate
6. Chair

Points Earned: **-12** (-3 per barrier [up to 4]; does not count against 3-feature limit)

ENCOUNTER 6 COST TABLE

Item	Points Spent	Item	Points Earned
Mord's End: Diff 7	10	Mord: Combat Invigoration	-30
Skull Orchard: Impairment	50	Mord: 4 rolls Invigoration	-20
Snapping Jaws: 3 extra rolls	15	Mord: 2 Freestanding Invigoration	-20
Snapping Jaws: 3 Dam Dice	15	Mord: Shrine to Odin	-20
Snapping Jaws: Ignores Armor	10	Smudged Charms: Freestanding 6	-10
Ballista: Diff 11	50	Not Fish: Freestanding 6	-10
Ballista: Impairment	10	Mord's End: 20 Victory Points	-20
Ballista: Extra Rolls	25	Loot Cache	-20
Combat Opponent: Dishonored	0	Barriers	-12
		Additional Levels	-15
		Weird Magic	-10
Encounter Points Spent	185	Encounter Points Gained	-187
		Balance	-2

TERRAIN — ADDITIONAL LEVELS: DECKS OF LONGSHIP

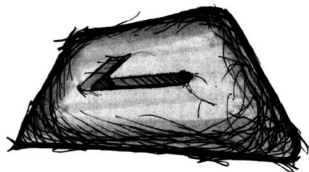
There are three additional levels. The outer deck of the longship is 10 feet from the ground; the center deck is five feet lower than that, and the front deck 5 feet higher.

Points Earned: **-15** (3 levels @ 5 per level)

TERRAIN — WEIRD MAGIC

The ancient longship gives **+2 to both sides' DAM scores**

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



ENCOUNTER 7: RESCUE OF THE RUNE

Type: Plot Climax Encounter Hook: Underground



Narration: As the heroes continue on through further natural limestone caverns, none of which betrays signs of the precision engineering and workmanship typical of the dwarven realm, they begin to hear crashing and banging noises which definitely do remind them of dwarf machinery. The sound seems to come from all around them, yet they spend many fruitless hours following the noises down dank and circuitous passageways, none of which end up at an entrance to a dwarven area.

A clattering noise of metal on stone periodically repeats. On several occasions, they spot its source: spider-works, nosing around after them. They keep moving and avoid the spider-works.

If a player gets over-eager and wants to go charging after the spider-works in search of victory points, remind him that these count as wandering monsters.

EVENT 1: I'LL HAVE VEGETARIANS WITH THAT, PLEASE



Narration: Finally the heroes reach a promising-looking chamber. The room is typical limestone cavern, but smack dab in the center of one of its walls is a fifteen-foot-high door, made of some unfamiliar gleaming metal. The door seems to vibrate, as if rattled by some enormous thrumming machine on the other side.

Gathered around the door are about half a dozen sickly-looking goblins, all wearing robes and walking with an upright posture more typical of men (well, effete outlanders) than of goblinkind.

GAIN — SPOT THE VEGETARIAN

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

Points Earned: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6)



Closer Inspection: Heroes making successful Lore rolls identify these goblins as vegetarians. Their strange religious beliefs cause them to forswear violence and the consumption of flesh — including that of wary explorers. The goblins might try to bore the Vikings with annoying talk of their false beliefs, but will not attempt to harm them.



Background: Indeed, these goblins are here to send one of their number off on a holy pilgrimage. He intends to go to the truth-forsaken land of Nidavellir, where the ignorant, benighted dwarves live. The pilgrim, whose name is Vuja, will preach to them, bringing them enlightenment which will inspire them to abandon slavery, the eating of meat, and the use of helpless living creatures in their strange experiments. Or so the plan goes.

Enthusiastic about their cause, the goblins are only too happy to share the above information if asked. Until the Vikings make clear their nonviolent intentions (assuming they exist), the vegetarians will eye them warily, as they would any blood-maddened, predatory beasts.

However, a friendly approach will not only put the goblins at their ease, but bring about an invitation to trade.

GAIN — BARGAINING OPPORTUNITY

Singular: Dogpile; roll **Demeanor** vs. **Difficulty 6** to get **bargaining opportunity** (vs. +1 bonus) with Vuja's comrades.

Points Earned: -15 (Bargaining opportunity); -10 (Opposed bonus 1)

The goblins are traders. Cashing in silver for equipment and vice versa supplements their meager living. It also gives Viking raiding parties motivation not to kill them. They will buy any equipment the heroes wish to sell, exchanging it for silver. The oldest-looking goblin, whose name is Bluvon, does most

of the talking. He requires the Vikings to swear on their gods to trade honestly, and that they will not engage in ambush during the exchange. Thus if the heroes do decide to kill the goblins and take their stuff, the displeasure of their gods cancels out any victory points they'd otherwise get for the silver. (The Aesir have no problem with their people killing outlanders and taking their goods, but look on oath breakers as the spawn of Loki.)

If the heroes won't swear on their gods, the goblins won't trade with them, revising any favorable impression created by the above Demeanor roll. The goblins are non-combatants; killing them yields no victory points, either. If the heroes decide to attack anyway, despite all indications of the worthlessness of the attempt, don't waste time rolling up the fight. Just describe the gruesome, piteous deaths of the defenseless vegetarians in a few sentences, and then get on with the adventure.



Narration: When all trading is taken care of, Vuja's comrades bid him a solemn farewell, wishing him luck on his heroic pilgrimage. Bluen says he looks forward to the valiant tales he will tell upon his return. Then the others depart. Vuja stands in front of the big door, in nervous anticipation. He withdraws a glowing wand and points it at the door.



Closer Inspection: If asked, he explains that they found this key in a gremlin lair, and reckon that it might open the door.

What happens next depends on how controlling the heroes wish to be.

If Vuja is allowed to proceed unmolested:



Narration: Vuja approaches the door, points the wand at it, and furrows his brow, as if trying to work the thing with his mind. The gigantic door then slams down flat on the ground in front of it, like a drawbridge, crushing Vuja to pulp. Orange-tinted goblin blood oozes slowly out from under the door.

The heroes may now waltz in across the lowered door, entering Nidavellir.

If the heroes interfere with Vuja's actions:

Any hero standing directly in front of the door, within 15 feet of its threshold, is himself caught under the trap when it slams

down into the ground. If he is with Vuja, the goblin is pulped, as above. If he took the device from Vuja, he feels the thing vibrate in his hand as he gets closer to the door. It won't work except within the trap range.

TRAP/HAZARD — CRUSHING TRAP

Singular: Rush, conditionally avoidable (by letting Vuja open the door himself) on **first exposure**; roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 6**, or suffer **Dam rating 25**, ignores armor.



Closer Inspection: If the heroes prevented Vuja from approaching the door, he, naturally, survives this incident. He tells them that they have obviously been sent by the martyred prophets of vegetarianism to aid him in his holy quest.

Points Spent: 35 (Dam rating 25); 10 (Ignores Armor)

Points Earned: -25 (Conditionally avoidable, first exposure)

If Vuja is alive, get the players to specify their marching order as they cross the threshold of the now-open door into the passageway beyond. Make sure you find out where Vuja is in this order. As soon as he crosses, he is targeted by another trap. A pair of craftwerk tentacles shoot out from the walls towards him. This happens no matter where he is in the marching order.

GAIN — TENTACLE DEFLECTION

The hero either directly in front of or right behind Vuja can make a Freestanding roll to catch the tentacles with a shield or parrying weapon, deflecting them from Vuja's head and saving his life.

Freestanding roll; roll **Single Weapon**, **Great Weapon**, **Longshaft Weapon** or **Two Weapons** vs. **Difficulty 6**.

Points Spent: -10 (Freestanding Difficulty 6)

If the hero's roll fails (or is not made), one of the tentacles scythes forward with its bladed business end and, in one bloody stroke, pops Vuja's head off its shoulders. The other tentacle grabs his severed head by the hair and repeatedly bashes it against the metal walls until it is just a red, meaty ball.

The heroes face no danger from this trap. This next, one, however, threatens everyone.

EVENT 2: The Shaking Room



Narration: The party continues through corridors of worked metal. On several occasions they narrowly avoid spider-werk attacks by quickly ducking behind corners, evading the machines' detection abilities. Then they enter a large square room.

TRAP — SHAKEN LIKE DICE IN A CUP

Singular: No-Fault; roll **Lore** vs. **Difficulty 7** to recall the info in the text block, below.

Then also make a **simultaneous roll**, **Singular:** No-Fault; roll **Awareness** vs. **Difficulty 6** to spot and avoid the detectors

Both rolls are No-Fault, meaning that everyone can try and the heroes need only a single success at each. If no one makes this, suffer **7 dice Dam rating**, ignores armor; acts as an alarm, grants upcoming foes +7 **INIT** bonus on first round of combat.

Points Spent: 10 (Difficulty 7); 15 (Simultaneous Roll); 43 (7 dice damage); 10 (ignores armor); 14 (grants foes +7 **INIT** @ 2 encounter points per **INIT** point)

Points Earned: -15 (Lore No-Fault); -15 (Awareness No-Fault)



Closer Inspection: A character well-versed in adventuring lore (ie. one who makes a successful **Lore** roll) will recall that dwarf traps are sometimes triggered by tiny magical eyes the dwarves install in the corridors of Nidavellir. The little glass eyes, which are very hard to see, notice when objects pass by them, and activate the trap. Usually there is an eye situated on either side of the corridor, directly across from each other. In rare circumstances, you can see dust motes caught between the two eyes; they sparkle like red fairy-dust.

If the heroes score at least one success on each roll, they see the chest-height "magic" beam and can carefully limbo under it, avoiding the trap.

If not, steel doors immediately slam shut as soon as they enter the room, both at the entrance they came through, and at the exit opposite it. Then, with the whirring of well-oiled gears, the entire room lifts up and turns upside down. It then vibrates up and down at an extremely rapid rate, tossing the heroes like dice in a box being shaken by a monstrous child.

In addition to the foes immediately below, the alarm also benefits the dwarves in the next encounter.

EVENT 2 COMBAT OPPONENTS — DWARVEN CENTURIONS



Narration: A quintet of dwarven centurions await the heroes when the trap stops shaking and its other door opens. The door opens as soon as a hero gets nose-to-nose with it. This leaves him open for an attack by the centurion standing on the other side when the steel door zips up into the wall above it. (The door the heroes came through stays shut.)

To take advantage of his +7 Initiative bonus, the dwarf in the lead attacks right away, so that at least the initial exchange takes place in the doorway. His companion won't be able to fight until he moves or falls; likewise, only one hero will be able to attack the point man. However, if the hero retreats back into the room, both dwarves will enter, brimming with foolish overconfidence.

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Deugrasch the Eager	Centurion	0.6	15	Inferior	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Self-Willed (+10)
Thembrodt of the Varicolored Robe	Centurion	0.6	15	Inferior	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Predictable
Yarosh of the Questioning Gaze	Centurion	0.6	15	Inferior	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Predictable
Zangschidt the Humorless	Centurion	0.6	15	Inferior	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Predictable
Florian the Fleet	Centurion	0.6	15	Inferior	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Predictable

Points Spent: +10 (Deugrasch Self-Willed)

TERRAIN — LIMITED EXITS

There is only **one exit**, the other door will lock behind them; **two heroes** can exit per round.

Points Earned: -10 (1 exit, 2 heroes per round)

TERRAIN — SLIPPERY GROUND

The floors of the steel room are made slippery by the heroes' own blood, as extracted from them by the impact damage of the shaking-room trap. For every hero who suffers actual damage from the trap, one area of the floor is bloodied. The size, in hexes, of the blood pool, depends on the amount of damage the donating hero suffered.

- Heroes suffering actual damage of 10 or less create splatter pattern #1, as seen in the diagram below.
- 11 to 19 lost hit points leads to splatter pattern #2.
- 20 to 29 hit points arrange themselves into pattern #3.
- Hit point losses of 30 and up manifest themselves in pattern #4.

We figure that the blood ought to cover about half of the area, but this will vary from one run of this encounter to the next. Blood spills can, naturally, overlap.

If you're playing quick and loose, without a hex map or miniatures, just designate roughly half of the area as blood-covered.

Points Earned: -10 (slippery ground, half of area)

GAIN — POCKET CHANGE

Between them, the centurions have **7 ounces of silver**.

Points Earned: -7 (7 silver @ 1 per)

BLOOD SPLATTER DIAGRAM

In this diagram, each splatter pattern has an X in or near the middle. This is its originating hex. For each bleeding hero, randomly position the center point of the blood splatter by rolling one d10 for the horizontal axis and another for the vertical. Each axis is divided into ten hexes, which are numbered for your convenience. If a center point is too close to a wall to draw the full pattern, just ignore the bits that otherwise would go beyond the wall.





EVENT 3: SAVE THE RUNE!



Narration: The action picks up again with the heroes moving through the gleaming hallways of Nidavellir. If they set off the trap but beat the centurions, they're probably traveling quickly, knowing that they've already alerted anyone else in the complex. Otherwise, they're probably heading cautiously down the eerily well-lit corridors. Finally they reach a door in need of opening.

CARROT/STICK COMBO – DOOR OPENING

Singular: Rush; roll **Pick Locks** vs. **Difficulty 6**, success grants +9 INIT for 3 rounds, failure grants same to foes.

Points Spent: 45 (+9 INIT bonus to foes @ 5 per 3 points x 3 rounds)

Points Earned: -45 (+9 INIT bonus @ 5 per 3 points x 3 rounds)



Narration: When the heroes bust the door down, they see a steam-filled room lined with strange dwarven equipment. This equipment lines most of the walls, and is stacked almost to the top of the chamber's forty-foot-high, domed ceiling. In the middle of the room is the heroes' village rune; it is suspended from heavy chains, which are in turn attached to a scaffold. As the heroes enter, dwarven technicians are affixing huge metal tubes to the surface of the rune. Ever-enlarging cracks spider-web out from each of these points of attachment. The rune itself pulses erratically; the luminous magic that usually illuminates the letter is now emanating from the cracks, too.

GAIN – THE RUNE'S IN DANGER!

Freestanding roll, Singular: No-Fault; roll **Divine Awareness**, **Difficulty 6** to know the following:



Closer Inspection: If the heroes don't get those hose things off the rune in the next few rounds, it will be destroyed. Their village will face ruin, and Loki's power over the Aesir will grow.

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

TRAP/HAZARD – SCAFFOLD AND RUNE

The heroes must risk one hazard (climbing the scaffold) in order to deal with the other (loss of status from rune's possible destruction.)

Part A: The Scaffold

Singular: Scramble, conditionally avoidable by declining to save the rune (remains in effect), unlimited extra rolls allowed, requires a combat action; roll **Climb** vs. **Difficulty 7**, any failure causes 21 – 25 foot fall (Dam rating 20/30).

Points Spent: 10 (requires combat action); 10 (**Difficulty 7**); 42 (21 – 25 foot fall)

Points Earned: -20 (Conditionally avoidable, remains in effect); -20 (unlimited extra rolls allowed)

Part B: Knocking Off the Technicians

Detaching the hose is easy, but first the heroes must dispose of the four technicians who are each affixing a hose. They count as noncombatants and do not garner victory points. All the heroes have to do is hit them once (making an **ATK** roll vs. an uncontested **Difficulty** of 6) and they plummet from the scaffolding. They land in the huge pool of electrically charged gel below the rune. On their way down, they're hit by bolts of lightning (see below) that arc out of the pool. They land, smoldering and singed, in the pool, and are either incapacitated or dead.

Singular: Action Sink (p. 135; 4 successes needed); roll **Brawling** or any **melee weapon Ability** vs. **Difficulty 6**, or all heroes suffer 20 point victory deduction.

Points Spent: 40 (4 successes needed @ 10 each); 20 (trap triggered if successes not scored by combat's end); 20 (20 victory point deduction @ 1 each)

TERRAIN – ADDITIONAL LEVELS: SCAFFOLD

The scaffold also figures as a terrain feature, providing 3 additional levels. The scaffold has levels of planking at the 5, 15, and 25 foot levels.

Points Earned: -15 (-5 per level)

TERRAIN – DECOYS: TECHNICIANS

These decoys are 3 additional technicians who are located on ground level when the fight begins. (The technicians on the scaffolding don't act like standard decoys, because they exist only to be shoved off the platform, at which point they are out of play.)

Points Earned: -30 (3 decoys @ 10 each)

TRAP — LIGHTNING BOLTS

Bolts of electricity continually course between dwarven machines and the pool of gel; once per round, one of them is powerful enough to deal damage to a combatant on either side of the fight. These are normal laboratory conditions for the inhabitants of the room, and they've grown adept at anticipating the path of the lightning — and at dodging when they're wrong. In other words, as usual, the foes are never in danger from the designer's traps.

Singular, repeat shots (targets **1 hero**, random check each round, heroes behind covers or obstacles not counted in random roll, to end repeat shots **1 hero** must spend an action destroying some dwarven machinery, no roll required); roll **Dodge** vs. **Difficulty 6** or take **Dam rating 20**.

Points Spent: 25 (repeat shots, targets **1 hero** per round); 25 (Dam rating 20)

TERRAIN — ADDITIONAL LEVEL: TRACKED VEHICLE

Also present is the **large tracked vehicle** used to truck the rune from the heroes' home village. It is parked too tightly against the wall to act as cover. However, it is high and flat, and heroes could treat it as yet another additional level (10 feet high at the cab, 5 feet high in the back) if they so desire.

TERRAIN — SLIPPERY GROUND: POOL OF GEL

The aforementioned pool of blue gel lies in the middle of the room. It counts as **slippery ground** but garners no points, as it covers less than a third of the room's area.

TERRAIN — MEGADWARF

Rising from the blue gel, with the rune suspended above it, is the brass frame of a megadwarf's arms and torso. The biological portion of this work in progress has not yet been installed. The thing waves around its clockwork arms whenever anyone gets close to it, but its flailings are not fast enough to constitute a hazard to either the heroes or the dwarves. Each time one of the hoses is detached from the rune, the frame begins to rattle and smoke. When the last one is removed, it deactivates completely, accompanied by a brief shower of sparks and a loud crackling noise.

TRAP — THE OBLIGATORY FINAL EXPLOSION



Narration: Not long after the last dwarf falls to Viking axes, the equipment in the room begins to shiver and shake, giving off clouds of dense and acrid smoke. The Vikings must either run for the exit or the cab of the weird vehicle, to shield themselves from an imminent explosion.

Characters get one round's worth of movement to position themselves for the blast.

EVENT 3 COMBAT OPPONENTS — DWARVEN TECHS AND 'WERKS

Name	Type	Mix	Move	Threat Category	Adjusts	Predictable/ Self-Willed
Helmspur the Runator*	Medic	1	15	Equal	ATK -4, DNF -3, DAM +4	Predictable (+0)
Prototype Y**	Mecha-dwarf	3	15	Exceptional	None	Self-Willed (+35)
Hcino	Centurion	0.5	15	Weak	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Predictable (+0)
Yona	Centurion	0.5	15	Weak	INIT -2, ATK -2, DNF -3, DAM +7	Predictable (+0)
#1	Spider-werk	0.3	15	Pitiful	DAM +12, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#2	Spider-werk	0.3	15	Pitiful	DAM +12, HP -10	Predictable (+0)
#3	Spider-werk	0.3	15	Pitiful	DAM +12, HP -10	Predictable (+0)

* Helmspur is the technician in charge of the experiment and the mastermind behind the rune theft. He cackles maniacally whenever he acts in combat.

** Prototype Y doesn't deliver the extremely nasty damage typical of his kind. He's tough enough as it is. Perhaps his blades are due for a sharpening or something.

Points Spent: 35 (Prototype Y Self-Willed)



Standard roll; roll **Sprint** vs. **Difficulty 7**, or suffer effects of **raging fire** (p. 152).

Points Spent: 10 (Difficulty 7); 36 (raging fire)

GAINS — TREASURE

After this final outburst of destruction, the heroes can search the smoldering wreckage for various treasures. They find 1 treasure each from **Categories C, D, and F** plus two treasures each from **Category A and B**

Points Earned: -20 (2 Category A); -40 (2 Category B); -30 (Category C); -40 (Category D); -75 (Category F)

FINISHING TOUCHES



Once the heroes have dispatched the dwarves and located their loot, they can rev up the strange dwarven vehicle and head back to Scandinavia.

Tell the hero with the highest rating in Traps or, failing that, Pick Lock, that he's succeeded in starting the thing up. Don't require a roll, as this is just background detail.



Narration: The heroes follow the vehicle's tracks out through the other exit and manage to retrace its trail out of Nidavellir, through the Underground, and home. Although a few monsters appear to briefly menace them, most would-be enemies seem intimidated by the giant vehicle and give them a wide berth.

When they arrive back in their home village, a throng of hopeful relatives await them. When they see that the heroes have recovered the rune, there is much rejoicing. Central to the celebrations is the ritual burning of the foul and unclean dwarven vehicle. That'll show them!

The heroes are toasted long into the night. Soon even the heavily injured ones look forward to finding an excuse to trudge back into the mysterious world of the Underground so they can kill things and take their stuff.

ENCOUNTER 7 COST TABLE

Points Item	Spent	Item	Points Earned
Crushing Trap: Dam 25	35	Spot Vegetarian: Freestanding 6	-10
Crushing Trap: Ignores Armor	10	Goblin Bargaining Opportunity	-15
Shaking Trap: Diff 7	10	Goblin Bargaining Opp. Bonus 1	-10
Shaking Trap: Simultaneous Roll	15	Crushing Trap: Conditional Avoid	-25
Shaking Trap: 7 dice damage	43	Tentacle Deflect: Freestanding 6	-10
Shaking Trap: Ignores Armor	10	Shaking Trap: No-Fault #1	-15
Shaking Trap: Grants Foes +7 INIT	14	Shaking Trap: No-Fault #2	-15
Combat Opponents: Centurion Self-willed	10	Limited Exits	-10
Door Opening: +9 INIT for 3 rounds	45	Slippery Ground	-10
Scaffold: Combat Action Required	10	Pocket Change: Silver	-7
Scaffold: Diff 7	10	Door Opening: +9 INIT for 3 rounds	-45
Scaffold: fall	42	Scaffold: Conditional Avoid	-20
Techies: Action Sink, 4	40	Scaffold: Extra Rolls Allowed	-20
Techies: Triggered if successes <4	20	Scaffold: Terrain, 3 levels	-15
Techies: Victory Deduction	20	Decoys	-30
Lightning: Repeat Shots	25	Freestanding: Rune in Danger Diff 6	-10
Lightning: Dam rating 20	25	Treasure Category A (2)	-20
Combat Opponents: Prototype Self-willed	35	Treasure Category B (2)	-40
Explosion: Diff 7	10	Treasure Category C	-30
Explosion: Raging Fire	36	Treasure Category D	-40
		Treasure Category F	-75
Encounter Points Spent	465	Encounter Points Gained	-472
		Balance	-7

APPENDIX

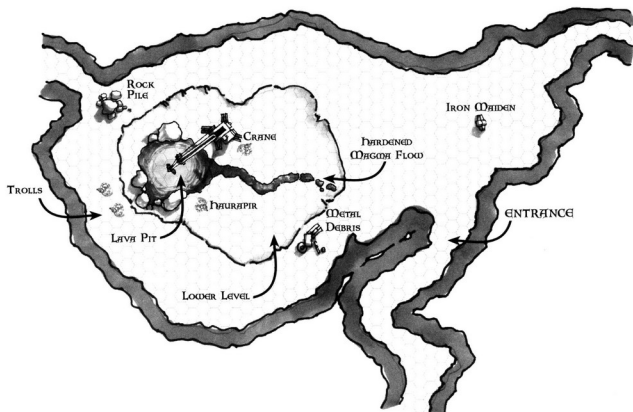
MAPS, FORMS, AND CHEAT-SHEETS

Here you will find all the maps, hero sheets, and runner's aids necessary for a proper game of Viking mayhem. Feel free to photocopy any of the material in this section for your personal use. It's also available for download at our website: www.atlas-games.com.

The first few pages of this appendix contain the maps for our sample adventure, "The Stolen Rune." Clever (and possibly Loki-touched) pillagers will notice we didn't include maps for Encounter 1 or the first combat event of Encounter 2. Since neither of these events contain terrain we didn't think special maps were necessary.

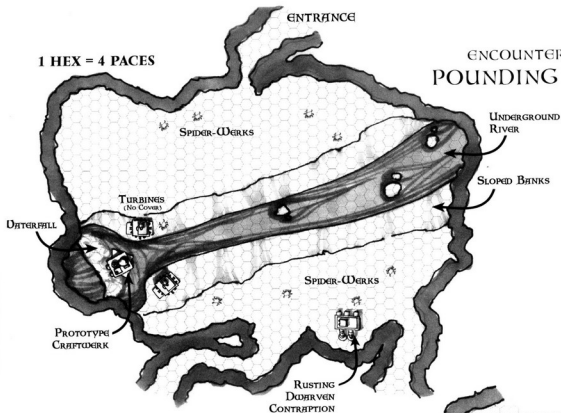
The final section is devoted to Hero Sheets, Foe Sheets, and several forms to help you design and run encounters.

ENCOUNTER 2, EVENT 3 ELDGRIM AND THE LAVA PIT

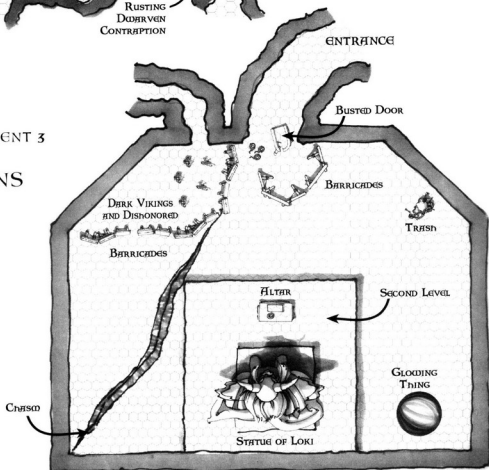


1 HEX = 4 PACES

ENCOUNTER 3, EVENT 3 POUNDING WAVES



ENCOUNTER 4, EVENT 3 HARD DAYS FOR MINIONS

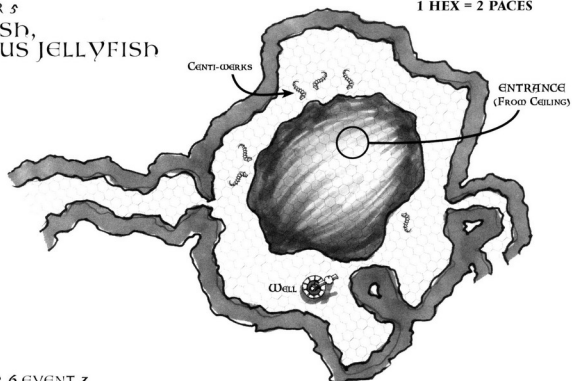


1 HEX = 2 PACES

ENCOUNTER 5

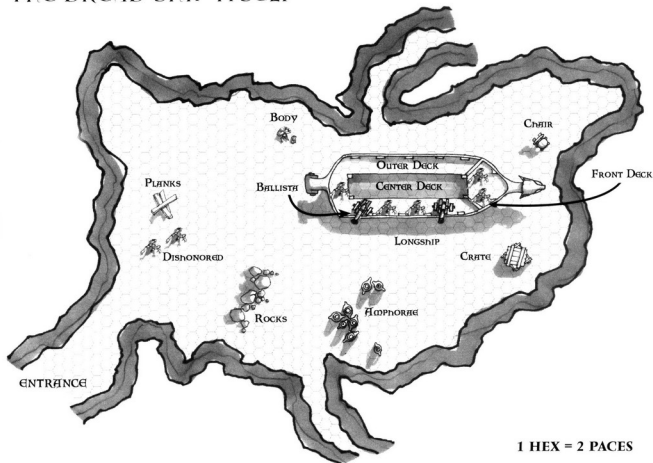
JELLYFISH, GLORIOUS JELLYFISH

1 HEX = 2 PACES



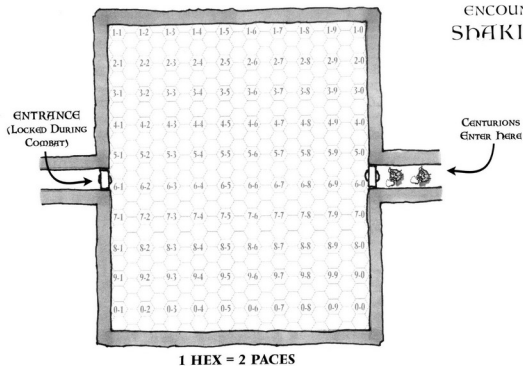
ENCOUNTER 6 EVENT 3

THE DREAD SHIP ITSELF

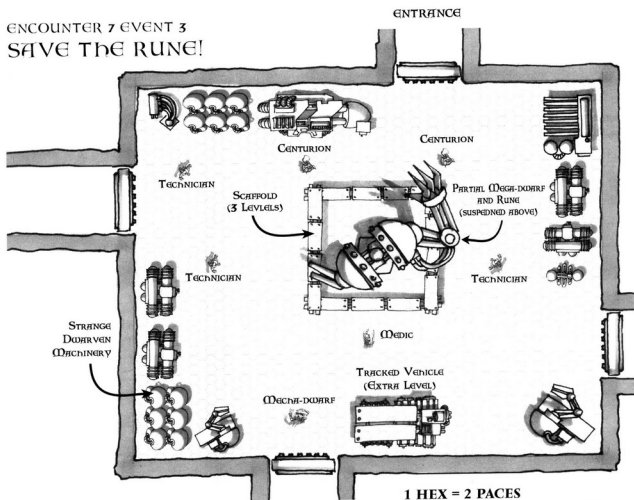


1 HEX = 2 PACES

ENCOUNTER 7 EVENT 2 SHAKING ROOM



ENCOUNTER 7 EVENT 3 SAVE THE RUNE!



RUNE HERO SHEET

HERO'S NAME:

WINS:

TOTAL VP'S:

SPENT VP'S:

FREE VP'S:

CHARACTERISTICS

RATING

STRENGTH (STR)
STAMINA (STA)
DEXTERITY (DEX)
QUICKNESS (QIK)
INTELLIGENCE (INT)
PERCEPTION (PER)
PRESENCE (PRE)
COMMUNICATION (COM)

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

ENCUMBRANCE (ENC)
ENC Decrease
MOVE
SOAK
RESPONSE (RES)

HIT POINTS

MAXIMUM

CURRENT

WOUND THRESHOLD:

WOUNDS

    
-1 -2 -3 -4 -5
(INCAP, DEAD)

IMPAIRMENT/INVIGORATION

    
-2 -1 0 +1 +2

COMBAT SCORES

ATTACK

INIT
SCORE

ATK
SCORE

DEF
SCORE

DAM
SCORE

FIST OR KICK

NON-COMBAT ACTION

FIGHTING ABILITIES

RATING NOTES

BODDS (PER)
BRADLING (DEX)
CHAIN WEAPON (DEX)
GREAT WEAPON (DEX)
LONGSWORD WEAPON (DEX)
SINGLE WEAPON (DEX)
THROWN WEAPON (PER)
TWO WEAPONS (DEX)

EXPLORATORY ABILITIES

RATING NOTES

ANIMAL HANDLING (PRE)
AWARENESS (PER)
BALANCE (DEX)
BRAVERY (STR)
CLIMB (STR)
DODGE (QIK)
HEALER (PER, DEX)
JUMP (STR)
LORE (INT)
MAP (INT)
PICK LOCK (DEX)
PURSUIT (PER)
REPAIR (DEX)
RIDE (DEX)
SEADWINSHIP (STA, INT)
SKI (DEX)
SLEEP (STA)
SPRINT (STR)
STEALTH (DEX)
SURVIVAL (INT)
SWIM (STR, STA)
TRAPS (DEX)

INTERACTION ABILITIES

RATING NOTES

BARGAIN (COM)
CAROUSE (STA)
DECEPTION (PRE)
DEMEANOR (COM)
DISGUISE (INT)
GAMBLE (INT, PER, QIK)
INSIGHT (COM)
LEADERSHIP (PRE)
MUSIC (COM)
RUNES (INT)
SING (STA)
SKALD (PRE, INT)

MISC. ABILITIES

RATING NOTES

DIVINE AWARENESS (PRE)

WEAPONS

INIT RATING	ATK RATING	DEF RATING	DMD RATING	ABILITY	LOAD
----------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------	------

ERODOR

PROT RATING	INIT RATING	LOAD
----------------	----------------	------

SHIELDS

INIT RATING	ATK RATING	DEF RATING	DAM RATING	ABILITY	LOAD
----------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------	------

OTHER ITEMS

Load

LOOT

NUMBER OF ITEMS	DAMAGE MODIFIER	VALUE IN OZ. SILVER	LOAD
--------------------	--------------------	------------------------	------

OUNCES SILVER

OUNCES LIAR'S SILVER

TOTAL LOAD: 5

DIVINE GIFTS

Patron Level

HELMS OF POWER

PATRON LEVEL

LEGENDARY ITEMS

PATRON LEVEL

DIVINE CONNECTIONS

DEITY	RATING	DEITY	RATING
ANGRBODHI		ODIN	
ASJANDR		THOR	
FREYJA		TYR	
FREYR		ULL	
HEIMDAL		URD	
HODER			
LOKI			
NJORD			

RUNE DESIGNER'S NOTES

ENCOUNTER TITLE:

TYPE:

HOOK:

EVENT TITLE:

EVENT NUMBER:



NARRATION:



CLOSER INSPECTION:



BACKGROUND:

COST SHEET

ITEM

NOTES AND DETAILS

COST

ENCOUNTER POINTS SPENT/GAINED:

RUNE FOR SHEET

NAME:

TYPE:

THREAT:

ADJUSTS:

MOVE:

MIX:

MIGHT:

SELF WILL? (V/N) COST:

SORX:

HIT POINTS:

WOUND THRESHOLD:

WOUNDS

-1 -2 -3 -4 -5
(b) (b)

IMPAIRMENT AND INVIGORATION

-2 -1 0 +1 +2

COMBAT SCORES

INIT ATK DEF DAM
SCORE SCORE SCORE SCORE

MELEE:

MISSILE:

SPECIAL:

NAME:

TYPE:

THREAT:

ADJUSTS:

MOVE:

MIX:

MIGHT:

SELF WILL? (V/N) COST:

SORX:

HIT POINTS:

WOUND THRESHOLD:

WOUNDS

-1 -2 -3 -4 -5
(b) (b)

IMPAIRMENT AND INVIGORATION

-2 -1 0 +1 +2

COMBAT SCORES

INIT ATK DEF DAM
SCORE SCORE SCORE SCORE

MELEE:

MISSILE:

SPECIAL:

NAME:

TYPE:

THREAT:

ADJUSTS:

MOVE:

MIX:

MIGHT:

SELF WILL? (V/N) COST:

SORX:

HIT POINTS:

WOUND THRESHOLD:

WOUNDS

-1 -2 -3 -4 -5
(b) (b)

IMPAIRMENT AND INVIGORATION

-2 -1 0 +1 +2

COMBAT SCORES

INIT ATK DEF DAM
SCORE SCORE SCORE SCORE

MELEE:

MISSILE:

SPECIAL:

NAME:

TYPE:

THREAT:

ADJUSTS:

MOVE:

MIX:

MIGHT:

SELF WILL? (V/N) COST:

SORX:

HIT POINTS:

WOUND THRESHOLD:

WOUNDS

-1 -2 -3 -4 -5
(b) (b)

IMPAIRMENT AND INVIGORATION

-2 -1 0 +1 +2

COMBAT SCORES

INIT ATK DEF DAM
SCORE SCORE SCORE SCORE

MELEE:

MISSILE:

SPECIAL:

NO MISSILE WEAPONS: ☐ +10

(Only if at least half have the  icon)

ENCOUNTER POINTS SPENT/GAINED:

LOOT CACHE RECORD

LOCATION	DATE	RUNNER	RECOVERY DIFFICULTY	TRAP BONUS

CONTENTS

ROLL OF VALOR

INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES
INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES

TALLY
(TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE RUNNER)

INIT	ATK	DEF	DMG	SOAK	HP	RES

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