

# MIDGARD

## VIKING LEGENDS



Violent Viking drama in a world  
of the Norsemen's greatest fears

By Ben Redmond

# MIDGARD

## VIKING LEGENDS

*Never walk  
away from home  
ahead of your axe and sword.  
You can't feel a battle  
in your bones  
or foresee a fight.*

*- The Havamal*

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For Barry,

Who taught me to draw to a level I, at least, was happy with,  
For putting up with having to teach a grown man how to draw  
stuff he usually only has to teach kids,  
And for inspiring my son with a love for art of all kinds

Rest in peace, Barry—we'll remember you well

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Midgard**, the Viking roleplaying game. This short document contains all the rules you'll need to play your own mythic-historical Viking roleplaying game.

## WHAT IS MIDGARD?

**Midgard** is a roleplaying game, where you take on the role of a legendary Viking hero and complete your own epic quests. It is a mythic-historic setting—that is one in which you try to stick closely to the history or the period, but assume that all the gods, myths and monsters that the Viking people believed are actually true.

The rules within are designed to capture essence of Viking mythology and legend. It's heavy on "crunchy" (in both the onomatopoeic sense and the gaming jargon sense of the word) combat and has been heavily influenced by what I have found out about runic divination and the meanings of Viking runes (also known as Futhork runes): Dice mechanics rely heavily on runic divination themes, and characters are built on their ties to the runes that define their personality and outlook on life.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This edition of the **Midgard** rules stands as a final edition. With this version complete, it has been thoroughly play tested, and includes everything I guess you'd expect from a roleplaying game: a complete system, a setting to play in, decent

examples to help explain the more complicated issues, and a sample adventure to get you going.

**Midgard** begins with **character creation**, often the first thing people want to know about when trying to get a handle on the game. This is a fairly short chapter, but does now include a couple of worked examples and sample characters for you to have a go with.

The second chapter covers the different **traits** that make up your character, to give you an idea as to what the different skills and powers you have chosen might do in the game.

The third chapter covers the game mechanics, giving you the **basic system** for rolling the dice and determining success at a given task.

Chapter four covers **combat systems**, and forms a large part of the way the game works. This chapter also includes rules for weapons and armour.

Chapter five is the **setting**, giving an historical overview and suggested setting for your own games of **Midgard**.

Chapter six looks at **villains and monsters**, giving the GM rules to help them run the game smoothly.

Finally, chapter seven provides a sample adventure, entitled **Isle of Darkness**, which takes the characters on a quest that stretches across the Viking world and pits them against a number of dastardly villains and creatures of Viking myth.



In previous versions, I've said I'm open to constructive criticism, and welcomed comments from anyone with anything useful to add. As this is a final version, I am still open to ideas and comments, and would love to know what you think, but any further suggestions will have to go into some kind of supplementary product.

Just pop over to whatever blog or forum site you got this from and post your thoughts. If I spot it (and I'm sad enough to regularly check these places) I'll reply and discuss your ideas, and maybe even use them in any further supplements I write for **Midgard**.

## INSPIRATION

I always think it's useful for people reading a new roleplaying game to know a bit about how the game was imagined and what inspired the author to write it. If you think I'm just being vain, feel free to skip past and onto the crunch that follows.

In the beginning we were playing another game of historic-myth, but for a different time, and a very different place. We were just packing up after an inspiring session and the thought popped into my head "what about a game like this, but for Viking history?" I was already a fan of films like the *Thirteenth Warrior* and books like the *Last Kingdom*, and was keen to stretch my creativity on a period of history I knew fairly little about. My gaming mates were enthused and I got to work.

Vikings have long been an interest of mine, since visiting the newly

opened Jorvik Viking museum in York as a child. I've watched many films and read many books on the period, such as *The Thirteenth Warrior*, *The Vikings*, and even Terry Jones's slightly less reverential *Erik the Viking*. I also picked up a copy of Bernard Cornwell's *The Last Kingdom*, but





ended up wanting the Vikings to win.

So if you like Vikings read on and hopefully you'll find a shield-splitting, berserk-stoking, rape and pillage of a game.

## HISTORICAL ACCURACY...

When I wrote the first draft of *Midgard* I really only intended it as a roleplaying system, rather than a setting. As it's an historical setting what would be the point me spending hours rewriting Wikipedia's Norse myth and Viking history pages? Surely you, dear reader, can do that for yourself, or just make it up from what you've learnt from the films, comic books and other popular culture avenues open to you. The trouble was I was worried—there's bound to be someone who picks up *Midgard* who knows more about the period of history than me, so I worried about putting myself on the spot. However, friendly constructive criticism from Rob Lang of the Free RPG Blog, persuaded me that the game needed some form of setting, and that for most people who bought the game, any lack of historical accuracy would either go unnoticed or be of little consequence. Personally, I'm not sure whether I think the setting being completely accurate is that important: if you're all having fun and feeling a-Viking, who cares!

As such, in the setting chapter, you will find a discussion of what I have found out from my research into the history or the period, and where evidence is limited, and I have used dramatic license to flesh out the setting, I will qualify it as such. In some cases I found a character or place that just

sounded so damned cool I just had to put it in the setting, no matter how historically inaccurate it may be. Those of a strict historic conscience may wish, therefore to avoid such inaccuracies and develop the setting in ways that they feel are more strictly in keeping with the true history.

For those without such knowledge, or without any great need for such precision may find that my discussion may also provide insight and inspiration for those of you who would prefer to fill in the details of the setting yourself—perhaps consider it a primer on the history of the period.

Or if you prefer to just have a setting there written up and ready to use you'll find that too. Perhaps a little briefer than in some roleplaying games, but I think *Midgard* is a game about the adventure and the quest as opposed to the setting.

In conclusion, if I have done what I set out to achieve, I will have managed to capture the flavour of films like the Thirteenth Warrior that were the inspiration for this game in my systems. If you don't like them, fair enough—If you've downloaded this for free, you've not paid anything for it so you shouldn't feel cheated, and if you've paid for a print copy, you've still spent a lot less than you would on most other complete roleplaying games.

## A NOTE ON ARTWORK

Much of the artwork included in *Midgard* has been created by my own hand. I realise it's not the best quality. I've only just started art lessons, so much thank must go to my teacher, Barry Tomlinson, for putting up with my insane Viking obsession!



# CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION

This chapter of *Midgard* guides you through character creation. To create your character, follow these steps:

## STEP ONE: BIRTHRIGHT AND LEGEND

The first thing you need to do is pick a Birthright and Legend

Your Birthright is your godly, or mundane, heritage. Choose one of the five Gods from the god runes (Freyja, Thor, Odin, Heimdall or Tyr), *Hauld* (Freeman), *Loysing* (Bondsman), or *Half Alfár* (half elf). Bonuses associated are detailed in part two.

Your Legend is a character template which provides bonus skills helps you calculate your legend score. Whilst most Viking people were fairly multi-skilled, your legend determines the aspect of Viking life within which your legend will be written. The following legends are available (and are described in more detail in part two): Berserker, Blacksmith, Chieftain, Huntsman, Law Reader, Merchant, Sailor, Seidr, Skald, Trickster, Volva, or Warrior.

## STEP TWO: GOD RUNES

Buy your God Runes. You start with two points in each rune, or four if you selected that rune's god as your birthright. You now have fourteen points to spend on these runes, on a one-for-one basis. You can only increase your god runes by a maximum of 4 points beyond their

starting level. The god runes are Freyja, covering health and natural understanding; Thor, covering strength and skill with manmade items; Odin, covering your magical abilities; Heimdall, covering defending and interaction skills; and Tyr, covering your martial capabilities.

## STEP THREE: CALCULATE QUALITIES

Calculate your qualities. Most qualities are calculated using a combination of two different god rune scores. There is a special table to help you calculate your base score in the quality, which you then modify in some way to give your final quality score. Only courage doesn't work in this way, as courage is a cast, rather than a simple number-based quality.



**Defence:** Your Defence is calculated by adding 1 to your base from Heimdall & Tyr.

**Weapon Skill:** Your Weapon Skill is your unmodified base from Thor & Tyr.

**Courage:** Your Courage is a special cast that you will make when faced with mental challenges. Your cast score for courage is the highest of your Thor or Odin runes, whilst the bonus for the cast is the lowest of these two runes divided by 2 (round up).

**Wyrð:** Your Wyrð is how attuned you are to nature and the mystical realm, and manifests as points that are spent to enhance your actions and activate your supernatural powers. Its score is calculated from your Freyja and Odin base quality, multiplied by your legend score and your highest total levels of gifts in a single rune.

**Health:** Your health score, which is both determines your wounds and is used to resist certain physical effects. Your health is calculated by adding one to your base from Heimdall and Freyja.

**Wounds:** Your Wounds come in four different ranks. The first rank, during which you take no penalty, contains your health x 3 wound boxes. Your second rank, which suffers the penalty of you receiving one merkstave token on every cast, has 2 x health boxes. The third rank, suffering a 2

The character sheet template includes the following sections:

- QUALITIES:** Five large circular icons for Freyja, Weapon Skill, Courage, Wyrð, and Health.
- ARMOR:** Four rows of armor types (Leather, Iron, Steel, Plate) with associated stats and a 'Total Speed Penalty' box.
- WOUNDS:** A grid of boxes for tracking wounds, with a 'Committed to Medicine' checkbox.
- WEAPONS:** Two sections: 'Melee Weapons and Shields' and 'Ranged and Thrown Weapons', each with columns for Weapon, Skill, Rank, and SP.

merkstave penalty, has 1.5 x health boxes. The fourth rank has a number of boxes equal to your health score, and suffers a 3 merkstave penalty. Your final rank suffers a 4 merkstave penalty and has only half your health boxes. If you have chosen the Bondsman birthright you receive an additional box in every rank.

### STEP FOUR: SKILLS

You can now apply your legend skill bonuses. Each legend provides you with the first rank in one of four skills. You also gain a bonus skill point in two skills depending upon whether your character is male or female. Male characters receive a free rank in Farming and Sailing, whilst female characters receive free ranks in Medicine and Animal Lore. If your Legend and gender skills clash you must select the alternative skill with your legends, and can never gain more

Combined God Runes	Quality Base Score
4-7	1
8-10	2
11-12	3
13-15	4
16 (or higher)	5



than a +1 bonus at character creation. You also receive thirteen points to spend on skills. If you take the Hauld birthright you receive an additional two points to spend. Costs are as follows:

- » To gain the first level in a skill costs one point.
- » To increase a skill to 2 costs two points, in addition to any cost that may have been incurred buying the skill beforehand.
- » To increase a skill to 3 costs an additional four points.
- » To increase a skill to 4 costs an additional eight points.

## STEP FIVE: RUNE GIFTS

The next step is to buy your rune gifts. Rune gifts are the special powers and techniques that make your character special. To buy a run gift you must have a legend score at least equal to the level of the gift. You have twelve points to spend on rune gifts, which cost as follows:

- » To buy a level 1 gift costs one point.
- » To buy a level 2 gift costs two points.
- » To buy a level 3 gift costs four points.

## STEP SIX: WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

The final step is to choose your weapons and armour. You can choose any items that your GM feels are appropriate to your Legend, or to your general concept. Most items are roughly balanced according to overall effect, but also with some emphasis put in certain areas for flavour.

Some weapons also have special restrictions put in place—these are more as a guide for the GM to determine what legends certain weapons are suitable for.

## CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLES

The following worked examples take you through the character creation process, showing you how the different components are calculated and how different choices can affect your character overall.

### Mark's Character

The worked example is for Mark's character. Mark wanted to create a classic Viking berserker.

#### Step 1: Birthright and Legend

As Mark wanted to play a Berserker, the legend choice was straight forward. Mark wanted his berserker to be as hard as nails, which realistically meant a choice between being a descendant of Freyja or a Loysing. Mark didn't like the idea of essentially being a slave, so he went for being a descendant of Freyja instead.

#### Step 2: God Runes

Mark decided to make Freyja high, but not quite maxed out at 7, enabling him to have his secondary stats, Thor and Tyr at 6 each. Heimdall was an obvious choice in to get most of the remaining points, as it also adds to health and wounds, so he made that 4 and Odin 3.

However, when he started to work out his



also pretty meaty, with his Thor 6 and Odin 4 giving him a 6d+2 courage.

*Defence 3, Weapon Skill 3, Courage 6d+2, (base Wyrð 3), Health 4*

#### Step 4: Skills

Mark chose Might, Wrestling, Berserker and Axes as his legend skills, and put them all up to 2 to start with, costing 8 of his 13 points. He also wanted to put his berserker skill up to 3 at first opportunity. This gave

him one skill point left - a supplementary skill at level 1 - after reading through the skill list, it came to a toss up between athletics, for throwing and dodging, or alertness for battle sense and such. In the end he opted for Alertness.

him one skill point left - a supplementary skill at level 1 - after reading through the skill list, it came to a toss up between athletics, for throwing and dodging, or alertness for battle sense and such. In the end he opted for Alertness.

*Might 2, Wrestling 2, Farming 1, Sailing 1, Berserker 3, Axes 2, Alertness 1*

#### Step 5: Rune gifts

*Freyja 7, Thor 6, Odin 4, Heimðall 4, Tyr 5*

#### Step 3: Qualities

Mark's berserker's god rune scores actually manage to make him pretty nicely spread across his qualities. His defence is on the low side (Heimðall + Tyr is 9, so a base of 2, giving defence 3), but his base scores for Weapon Skill, Wyrð and Health are all at 3 (Tyr + Thor = 11, Freya + Odin = 11, Freya + Heimðall = 11), giving Weapon skill and base wyrð 3, and health 4. His courage is

Mark went straight for Wunjo's berserker specialities and chose the whole lot to begin with, spending 7 of his 12 points. He also felt that, given the fact that going berserk costs an action, that storm of blades was fairly key, which, as a level 3 gift, only left him with one remaining point - another extra level 1. He came up with a shortlist of Might of the Aurox, Wild Strike and Hammer of Thor, but in the end opted for the extra penetration Hammer of Thor would give his Berserker.



*Wunjo: Merksteve Channelling (1), Healing Laughter (2), Battle Lust (3); Thurisaz: Hammer of Thor (1); Hagalaz: storm of blades (3)*

deciding to make Odin the 5 stat, preferring the extra courage this provides him.

*Freyja 4, Thor 4, Odin 5, Heimdall 6, Tyr 7*

## Nigel's Character

Nigel's character idea is for something of a legal champion - someone who fights primarily in single combat for the honour and protection of others.

### Step 1: Birthright and Legend

After going through the birthrights, Nigel was keen to take either Heimdall or Tyr, given his concepts links to both offensive and defensive combat, and to law and diplomacy. In the end he stumped for Tyr, deciding that the attack in combat was more important to the concept that the defence - he wanted to specialise in smashing shields.

For his legend, the choice was obvious - warrior was clearly the key concept. The character perhaps has an element of Law Reader, but is much more a warrior than anything else.

### Step 2: God Runes

To continue the joint emphasis on Heimdall and Tyr, Nigel chooses to max out Heimdall at 6 but leave Tyr one short of max to keep the two close together. Its also the lowest combined score that puts his defence at 5. With the remaining god runes, Nigel is unsure how to distribute his points - he wants to be fairly evenly spread, but his remaining points would give him one rune at 5 and the other two at 4. He plays around with combinations until

### Step 3: Qualities

Nigel's Defence is his best quality, given his Heimdall and Tyr scores add up to 13, giving him a maximum 4 base, for a defence of 5! Weapon skill is also reasonable, with the 7 from Tyr and the 4 from Thor combining to give him 11, which is a base (and therefore weapon skill) of 3. His courage cast is 5 (his Odin score) and his bonus is +2 (half Thor). His base for calculating his Wyrð is 9, giving him a base of 2, and his health comes to 10, giving him a base of 2 again, which calculates to a health of 3. He's a good fighter and very difficult to hit, and fairly brave, but has a relatively small Wyrð pool and is perhaps a little on the light side for a Viking warrior, but Nigel figures he doesn't intend to be hit often, so thinks he can take it.

*Defence 5, Weapon Skill 3, Courage 5d+2, Wyrð (base 2), Health 3*

### Step 4: Skills

Firstly Nigel wants the Legend 3 status and the rank 3 gifts this gave him access to. As a result he puts 8 points into his four Legend skills of Sax, Axes, Shields and Alertness. He also feels he should have Law and Diplomacy to represent the social side of his character's role in resolving disputes. After putting one point into each of these, he realises he has three points left, so decides to pick on of these two new skills to increase to 2nd rank, and find another



skill to buy at first rank to buy to broaden the concept. As he trawls through the skill list, he decided that Sidr would be a good choice, given its relationship to status as well as knowledge of the gods, and he also feels it symbolised his honour to some extent. One gift Nigel was eyeing up was Sealed in Blood, which uses Diplomacy, so he decides to put an extra rank into it to make his gift more potent if he can afford to take it. Given that he's playing a male character, Nigel also gets one rank of Sailing and Farming.

Sailing 1, Farming 1, Sidr 1, Law 1, Diplomacy 2, Sax 2, Axes 2, Shields 2, Alertness 2

### Step 5: Rune Gifts

On his first trawl through the gift list, Nigel picks out a number of trees that had powers that suited him: Dagaz in particular had the shield splitting properties he wants to specialise in, and Algiz had the shield using gifts. He is also keen on the Gebo gift Sealed in Blood, as mentioned above.

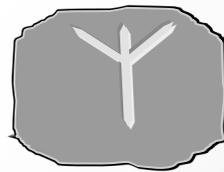
However, as he looks through the list he realises that your rune gifts also determines how he regains Wyrð based on personality-roleplaying. At this point Nigel also spots Ingwaz, which has a Wyrð regain ability that ties in particularly nicely with his character concept, and likes the look of the virtuous courage gift.

As with anything though, it comes down to the points. He decides to get both Shield Splitter and Penetrating Attack on Dagaz, making that his primary rune with a total of 5. He feels these gifts capture the main focus of his character's combat style, and he decides to ditch Breakthrough Defences as he felt he probably won't have great

problems hitting things with his high Tyr and good combat skills. He also bought Shield Defence and Block and Breech, deciding that shielding others wasn't priority and ditching the rank 2 gift. Finally he decided to wait for the Gebo gift and start with Virtuous Courage, wanting to boost his courage above the moderate level his god runes gave him.

And his Wyrð could now be calculated, giving him a Wyrð pool of 30 (Wyrð base 2 x Legend 3 x primary rune 5)

*Algiz: Shield Defence (1), Block and Breech (3); Ingwaz: Virtuous Courage (2); Dagaz: Shield Splitter (2), Penetrating Attack (3)*



### A final note on Creating your Character...

Midgard is a game about the violence of Viking life. While it is possible to play a character without any great capability in combat, much of the game may pass you by with little to do. You will excel in the gaps between the fights, but much of the fun of this game comes from the battle. As such we recommend that you give your character some combat capability to ensure you remain entertained and involved throughout. The system is designed to provide many different options in battle and allows you to create many different styles of warrior.



# CHAPTER 2: TRAITS

This section details the different traits that make up your character

Each different trait type is covered in its own section below

## BIRTHRIGHTS

Birthrights determine your character's background. Are you heroic, of divine blood, or are you descended from slaves?

The following birthrights are available:

**Descendant of Freyja:** You can trace your line back to Freyja, or Freyr. Gain a +2 bonus to your Freyja god rune.

**Descendant of Thor:** You can trace your line back to Thor. Gain a +2 bonus to your Thor god rune.

**Descendant of Odin:** You can trace your line back to Odin. Gain a +2 bonus to your Odin god rune.

**Descendant of Heimdall:** You can trace your line back to Heimdall. Gain a +2 bonus to your Heimdall god rune.

**Descendant of Tyr:** You can trace your line back to Tyr. Gain a +2 bonus to your Tyr god rune.

**Half Alfar:** One of your parents or grandparents was an Alfar, the elves of Norse myth. Half Alfar are often otherworldly and mysterious, yet are treated with honour and reverence rather than suspicion. You gain four extra points to spend on rune gifts.

**Hald:** you are a freeman, afforded the full

rights under the law, but cannot trace your line back to a god. Whilst you have no divine heritage, you are skilled in mundane matters. You may spend three extra points on skills.

**Loysing:** you are, or are descended from, a freed slave, but are still dependent upon your former master's homestead for your livelihood. Your hard life has left you resilient and tough. You gain an additional wound box for every rank.

## LEGENDS

Your legend is something of your background, but more importantly it dictates what role you will take within your own legends as the story develops. In addition to your legend type, you also have a legend rank. Your legend rank is equal to the lowest of the four linked skills.

The following legends are available:

**Berserker:** Survival (F) or Might (Th), Berserker (A), two from Axes (T), Sax (T) or Wrestling (Th).

**Blacksmith:** Earth Lore (F) or Diplomacy (H), Might (Th), Ironworking (Th), Sax (T) or Shields (T).

**Chieftain:** Games (Th) or Sidr (A), Command (H) or Tactics (T), two from Riding (F), Swords (T) or Archery (T).

**Huntsman:** Animal Lore (F) or Survival (F), Stealth (F) or Navigation (F), Archery (T) or Spears (T), Alertness (T) or Earth Lore (F).

**Law Reader:** Legends (A) or Writing (F),



Sidr (A) or learning (H), Diplomacy (H) or Empathy (H), Law (H).

**Merchant:** Navigation (F), Luck (A) or Sax (T), Diplomacy (H), Deception (H) or Empathy (H).

**Sailor:** Navigation (F), Sailing (Th) or Survival (F), Command (H) or Sax (T), Athletics (F).

**Seidr:** Rune Divination (A) or Seid (A), Sidr (A), Legends (A), Diplomacy (H) or Deception (H).

**Skald:** Legends (A), Sidr (A), Diplomacy (H), and one of Deception (H), Learning (H) or Alertness (T).

**Trickster:** Games (Th) or Seduction (H), Luck (A) or Athletics (F), Diplomacy (H), Deception (H).

**Volva:** Medicine (Th) or Empathy (H), Rune Divination (A), Fate Weaving (A), Legends (A) or Deception (H).

**Warrior:** two from Sax (T), Axes (T) or Spears (T); Shields (T); Might (Th) or Alertness (T).

**Legend Score:** You also have a legend score. This is calculated by adding 1 to the lowest of your Legend-linked skills.

## GOD RUNES

The five god runes represent your character's overall strengths and capabilities.

The god runes that make up your character are:

 **Freyja (F):** As the earth goddess, Freyja is interested in nature, health and fertility. Your Freyja score

represents your ability to interact with the world around you. It covers health, toughness, athleticism and agility, perception and an understanding of the natural world.

 **Thor (Th):** As the god of the forge and thunder, Thor is concerned with power and control, of man's dominance over nature and a power to enact his own destiny. This rune covers strength, manual dexterity and understanding of and ability to use man-made tools and other objects. It represents your ability to interact with items and the man-made world.

 **Odin (A):** Odin is the As, the ancestor god, the ruler of the gods. As lord of Asgard and a seidr he is interested in magic and other mystical matters. As the ancestor god he represents your character's ties with their ancestors and the flow of time.

 **Heimdal (H):** As the guardian god, Heimdal stands for fortitude in the face of adversity and is an excellent negotiator and a wise counsellor. As the father of all three classes of Viking society, he represents man as much as he does divinity. This rune represents your resilience and your ability to interact with others.

 **Tyr (T):** As the god of war, Tyr is the favoured patron of warriors and is concerned with all matters of battle. This rune represents your prowess in battle.

## SKILLS

The following skills are available:



## Freyja Skills:

**Animal Lore (F):** Your knowledge of animals, their behaviour, strengths and weaknesses.

**Athletics (F):** Your general athleticism, including dodging, jumping and climbing.

**Earth Lore (F):** Your knowledge of the natural world around you, identification of minerals, plants and an understanding of their properties.

**Navigation (F):** Your ability to find your way around, read maps and a certain amount of intuitive direction sense.

**Riding (F):** Your skill in the saddle.

**Stealth (F):** Your skill at hiding and stalking.

**Survival (F):** Your ability to survive in the wilds, spot ambushes in the wild, to endure extreme environments, and to track and trap prey.

## Thor Skills:

**Craft (Th):** This skill covers a range of general object-making skills, which are largely part of the female domain – weaving, pottery, etc.

**Farming (Th):** knowledge of the techniques required to till the earth and breed beasts.

**Games (Th):** Your skill at the games of strategy and luck that play an important role in Viking society.

**Ironworking (Th):** Your ability to work with iron and forge these crucial items for your society.

**Medicine (Th):** Your knowledge of herbal medicines and wound treatments, and skill at making remedies. Medicine casts can be used to help you recover from injury. See the Recovery section in Chapter 3 for full details.

**Might (Th):** This skill is used whenever you





need to lift, carry or generally heave around heavy objects.

**Sailing (Th):** This skill covers a wide range of skills all relating to the control and maintenance of Viking long ships.

**Wrestling (Th):** Your skill at wrestling and grappling.

**Writing (Th):** Your ability to scribe runes and read the wards, laws and other works written in runes. This is a mundane ability and conveys no magical abilities.

## Odin Skills:

**Berserker (A):** Your ability to summon a berserk rage and channel that energy into a ferocious attack.

**Fate Weaving (A):** Fate Weaving is a magical skill, whereby a Volva can twist the threads of fate. Taking ranks in this skill provides the special rune gift Stands of Fate (which lets you provide a small bonus or penalty to a target). This skill is exclusive to the Volva, and requires rune gifts to access its powers.

**Legends (A):** This is your knowledge of the different legends of your people, but also your ability to interpret your own role in your own unfolding legend, providing suggestions as to the way fate is directing you.

**Luck (A):** This skill can be used whenever you want a lucky break. Its effects are varied and often minor.

**Rune Divination (A):** This skill is used to divine the future from runes. Taking ranks in this skill provides the special rune gift Norns Cast (which can provide an indication if a proposed action is likely to

have a good or bad outcome), but more powerful effects can be achieved with further rune gifts.

**Seid (A):** This is another magical ability with a wide range of effects, accessed through rune gifts. Taking ranks in this skill provides the special rune gift Seidr Trance. Without rune gifts Seid can be used to enter a trance that will enable you to identify supernatural presences in the vicinity.

**Sidr (A):** This skill determines your connection to the gods and knowledge of their stories and teachings. It also indicates a level of respect that your character is held in within society.

## Heimdall Skills:

**Command (H):** Your ability to command others to do your bidding, whether through inspiration or intimidation.

**Deception (H):** Your skill at deceiving others, whether lying misdirection or sleight of hand.

**Diplomacy (H):** This skill covers your ability to negotiate with others and create a good impression.

**Empathy (H):** Your ability to read others' moods and personality, and to spot their deceptions.

**Law (H):** Your knowledge of the laws of Viking society.

**Learning (H):** This skill covers any item of knowledge not otherwise covered by other skills, such as the various Lore skills, Sidr or Law.

**Seduction (H):** This skill represents your ability to seduce members of the opposite



sex.

## Tyr Skills:

**Alertness (T):** Your awareness on the battle field, perception of dangers around you and ability to avoid being surprised.

**Archery (T):** Your skill with the bow.

**Axes (T):** Your skill with the specialist fighting strategies that can be employed with the Axe.

**Sax (T):** The Sax is the basic heavy dagger common to all Viking warriors. This skill is used for this dagger and any other basic hitting weapon, such as hammers, clubs, improvised weapons or even punches and kicks.

**Shields (T):** Your ability to use shields, either to block blows, or as an intrinsic part of your combat strategy in the shield wall.

**Spears (T):** Your skill with spears, both in melee combat and when thrown.

**Swords (T):** Your skill with swords.

**Tactics (T):** Your understanding of strategies on the battlefield.

## GIFT RUNES

Gift runes are special powers and extraordinary techniques that give your character the edge. They also form Viking's personality mechanic.

Each gift techniques bought belongs to one of twenty four runes. Each rune describes a circumstance in which your character can regain Wyrð points. If your character has a gift for that rune, you can regain a number of wyrð points equal to

the total level of all gifts in that rune.

Gift runes also have requirements that must be met before you can purchase the gift. This could be a minimum skill level or god rune score.

## Fehu - ƒ

Fehu represents luck, wealth and endeavour. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Fehu gifts whenever you put in greater effort and diligence than the task requires.

**Patient Reward [1]:** You remain focused on completing your, enabling greater levels of success. By spending a Wyrð point you can move any tokens added to the Future Rune stone onto your Tyr's or Past Rune stones. You can only do this on actions of Medium length or longer.

**Persistent Endeavour [2]:** Spend two wyrð points to ignore a courage cast for an interrupted short action in combat.

**Lucky Boon [3]:** Spend 1 wyrð point each to achieve any or all of the following effects on a luck cast:

- » Make the cast an instant action. [1 wyrð]
- » Make the carry-over successes apply as a skill bonus rather than adding additional dice. [1 wyrð]
- » Add a number of bonus dice to the cast equal to half your Freyja god-rune score. [1 wyrð]

## Uruz - 𐌺

Uruz represents physical strength and health. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Uruz gifts whenever you use



physical might to solve a problem that would have been better solved by other means.

**Bull Charge [1]:** You can charge your enemies knocking them off their feet, slamming them into others or the wall. Spend 1 Wyrð as you make a Knock Back attack. Your success margin will inflict damage as well as pushing your target back as per the usual rules (see Chapter Four, Combat, for more details), or ignore the difficulty penalty for knocking your opponent prone or into another enemy.

**Might of the Aurox [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð points to add half your Freyja rune score to your might skill for a single cast.

**Thick Hide [3]:** You can toughen your skin. As a combat action spend 3 Wyrð and gain a hardness bonus to your base wounds equal to half your Heimðall god rune score. Armour piercing damage still bypasses this hardness, but further damage will be ignored.

### Thurisaz – Þ

This rune represents focused strength, conflict and aggression. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Thurisaz gifts whenever you start a fight against a more powerful opponent.

**Hammer of Thor [1]:** Your mighty blows send shockwaves through your opponent's armour, reducing its protection. When an attack hits, spend a Wyrð point to ignore one level of hardness of your opponent's armour.

**Strike of Thunder [2]:** Channelling your aggression, you can put a lot of might behind a simple blow. Spend 2 Wyrð points

and take a +2 action speed penalty on any Sax-based attack action. You gain a number of bonus tokens on the Outcome Rune stone equal to half your Thor level.

**The Thorn Bush Defence [3]:** You can set up a stinging defensive wall of counter thrusts. Whenever you declare a defence from the start of the round, when armed with a Sax-based weapon, spend 3 Wyrð. Every time an attack fails to hit you this segment, the attacker takes damage (AP 0) equal to half your Thor score.

### Ansuz – Ʀ

This rune represents eloquence in your ability to communicate, whether, spoken, written or more mystical methods. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Ansuz gifts whenever you solve a problem through negotiation where it might have been more easily solved through other means.

**Scribe the Perfect Rune [1]:** When performing an action that involves the scribing of runes you can make a perfect rune if precise proportions. Spend 1 point of Wyrð move all Merkstave tokens to your Outcome Rune stone on any cast involving writing or scribing stones, including some magical abilities.

**Eloquence of Odin [2]:** When you speak you are clear and people hang on your every word. Spend two Wyrð points to add half your Odin level to the dice rolled in any cast relating to verbal communication.

**Rune of Power [3]:** By spending 3 Wyrð you can scribe a rune that imbues the item it is scribed upon with some sort of power. The rune scribed must be related to the effect desired. This requires a quick



difficulty 3 Writing cast, but using Odin rather than Thor. Once the rune is scribed it can be used to achieve a number of different effects as described below.

#### Enchantment Bonus:

Typically this will provide an item with some form of bonus that affects one aspect of its use. Such bonuses last a scene. You can, however, follow up the Writing cast with a long cast with another skill, such as Blacksmithing if you want to make the effects permanent. Effects add a bonus equal to your Base Wyrð score. Effects can include:

- » Increase the damage or reduce the speed of a weapon.
- » Provide a skill bonus to a specific skill when using the enhanced item.

**Curse or attack:** If you want to apply the effects as a penalty to, or attack against, another (unwilling) character you must spend an attack action (using sax or athletics) to attach the rune to them, as an additional action after writing the rune. If you are using a weapon that uses the Swords skill, however, you can add 5 to the speed of your attack to attempt to scribe the rune directly onto the target as a single attack action using Odin and Swords (only the Swords skill allows you to perform this action). Effects used in this manner are as follows:

- » Provide a merkstave penalty to a specific skill.
- » Deal direct damage that bypasses armour (at 2 + Base Wyrð damage), with success margin adding extra damage.

**Invocation:** Certain runes are tied to gods or the forces of nature. By invoking the power of these forces through a rune the achieve dramatic effects. Following the Writing cast you make a quick Sidr cast, calling for the power of the gods and holding the rune aloft. Affects achieved are similar to those mentioned above, either positive or negative, however the difficulty of this cast depends on the number of targets affected and the distance they are away from you. The base difficulty of the Sidr cast is 3, but each additional target in the melee zone after the first increases this difficulty by one, whereas every target beyond the melee zone adds two to the difficulty. However, when the effects are applied to multiple



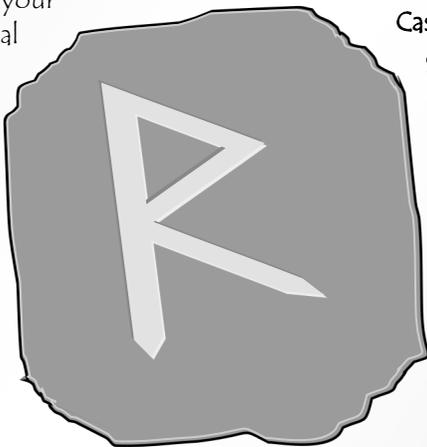


targets, work out the total magnitude of the effect, including bonuses from the Outcome rune and then divide it by two (rounded down) to decide on the overall effect. As runes are invoked to produce specific effects, such as invoking the power of ice to target a fire giant, the GM may restrict who can be targeted with a single attack.

Further effects can be achieved based on the GM's interpretation of the player's description of the rune used and its effect.

## Raidho - ᚱ

This rune represents your ability to make critical decisions with careful deliberation. Its gifts relate to your ability to read runic divinations. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Raidho gifts whenever you spend time to carefully deliberate when the situation suggests urgency is needed.



**Norns Cast [Special]:** Any character who purchases at least one rank in the Rune Divination skill can use this rune gift without investing any of their points for rune gifts. This technique is achieved with a simple, short Rune Divination cast, and the expenditure of 1 Wyrð point. Decide on a course of action that you want to cast about. The difficulty of the cast will relate to how many different factors affect the course of action, and is set by the GM. A successful cast will reveal whether the course of action is likely to be mostly successful or mostly unsuccessful.

**Five Stone Cast [1]:** This is a more complex reading than the simple norns reading that can be achieved with the basic skill. Spend a wyrð point when you make a rune cast. In addition as to whether the current course of action is likely to lead to success or not, this cast will also tell you the general nature of any problems likely to be faced, and a general impression of what "success" or "failure" actually means within the context of the action. General impressions might be things such as "evil magicians" or "foul weather". The success margin determines how many individual items of information the GM reveals.

**Cast for the Other [2]:** This gift allows you to make a rune cast without the person who the reading relates to being present. It costs an additional 2 Wyrð to make this cast (although can be used in conjunction with other rune divination gifts), and you must specify the course of action you believe the target is taking before making the cast.

**Seven Rune Cast [3]:** This rune casting provides much more detail. Spend three Wyrð when you cast to use this gift. You can get more specific details about the problems likely to be encountered: "the evil seidr Thjok" or "a storm will hit on the third night at sea". The reading will also give you advice as to the best way to proceed on this course.



## Kenaz - <

This rune represents your openness to new ideas and ability to learn from new experiences. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Kenaz gifts whenever a new experience leads you to changing your opinion on a matter that had previously been important to you.

**General Knowledge [1]:** You can spend a Wyrð point to temporarily gain a single bonus rank in any knowledge-based skill that you do not possess any ranks in. This lasts for a single cast.

**Living Encyclopaedia [2]:** You know most things. When casting for a knowledge-based skill, spend 2 Wyrð to add a number of dice to the cast equal to half your Heimðall level.

**Instant Recall [3]:** You have an excellent memory and can recall most things instantly. Spend three Wyrð to add half your Heimðall score to the Future stone for any knowledge-based cast.

## Gebo - X

This rune represents your skill at bargaining and sealing pacts. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Gebo gifts whenever you seal a pact or strike a bargain that is less favourable to you than any other party involved.

**Duplicitous Dealer [1]:** Whenever you make a deception cast as part of making a deal, you gain a +1 bonus to the skill level, by spending 1 wyrð.

**Sealed in Blood [2]:** By spending 2 wyrð points when making a pact or striking a bargain, you can make it psychologically

difficult for the other party to break that pact. You must spend the wyrð, make a Diplomacy cast, opposed by Empathy, and mix blood with the target to achieve this effect. If successful, whenever the target acts in a manner that is in opposition to the terms of the deal they suffer a Merkstave penalty to any related cast equal to the success margin of your cast.

Targets can attempt to break the pact by making a courage cast as a quick action, difficulty equal to your Diplomacy skill ranks plus your successes margin on the cast to break the cast. This action can be taken as many times as necessary until the pact is broken.

**Unbreakable Oath [3]:** By spending 3 Wyrð you can make your blood pact even more binding. The pact works in the same manner, except you must also extract a vow from your target. If they ever break the vow they suffer the merkstave penalty to *all* casts. To break the pact they must make the same Courage cast but as a short action rather than a quick action.

## Wunjo - P

Wunjo is the rune of joy and ecstasy. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Wunjo gifts whenever you act out great joy in response to a positive event when it puts you in danger to do so (doing this in combat is good example of being dangerous—doing so costs you a combat action and means that you count as immobilised for the segment in question).

**Merkstave Channelling [1]:** The rune that symbolises a berserker's battle lust is a merkstave Wunjo rune. If you have this gift you can spend a point of Wyrð to convert all Merkstave tokens immediately



into Success Margin tokens on any attack action whilst you are berserk.

**Healing Laughter [2]:** Whenever you regain Wyrđ through Wunjo you can regenerate wounds instead. Every point of Wyrđ regenerated can instead be spent on regenerating wounds. You can spend as many or as few of these points as you like.

**Battle Lust [3]:** with this gift you live for battle. Spend 3 Wyrđ whilst making a Berserker cast to add half your Freyja score to your Berserker skill.

## Hagalaz - N

This rune represents wild, uncontrolled forces. You regain Wyrđ equal to your total ranks of Hagalaz gifts whenever you recklessly face a wild force, such as a storm or wild beast without showing concern for your own safety.

**Wild Strike [1]:** This gift allows you make a wild and unpredictable strike. Spend a point of Wyrđ to add one token into both your Freyja's and Outcome Rune stones during any attack action. Your Defence is reduced by one until your next attack if you use this gift.

**Master of the Wind [2]:** The very wind seems to bend to your will. Activating this power costs 2 Wyrđ and can be used to either add a number of tokens to the Outcome Rune stone of a ranged attack the Future Rune stone of a sailing cast equal to half your Freyja score.

**Storm of Blades [3]:** You can strike rapidly in succession. Spend 3 Wyrđ at the start of a combat round. Your weapon skill increases by one, but you may not declare defence actions (although you may still

switch to an active defence during a segment).

## Nauthiz - ʀ

This rune represents restrictive psychological forces, such as fear. You regain Wyrđ equal to your total ranks of Nauthiz gifts whenever you willingly show fear.

**The Gloom [1]:** There is something about your presence that summons dread. Spend 1 Wyrđ and make a 2 minute difficulty 3 Command cast to silently make your presence felt. If successful all characters nearby suffer a 1 merkstave penalty to any courage casts they make.

**The Look of Dread [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrđ to force a single target character to make a courage cast, difficulty set by your Odin score (half Odin +1). If they fail they will act scared of you and will suffer a +1 merkstave penalty to any tests they make against you, and you will receive a +1 skill bonus in all your actions directed against them. They will also try to remove themselves from your presence as much as is reasonable.

**Confound [3]:** Spend 3 Wyrđ to make a deception cast as a quick action, opposed by the target's Alertness. The single target of this ability suffers an action cost penalty equal to half your Odin score plus the success margin of your cast on all further actions this scene.

## Isa - |

This rune represents challenges, blocks to thought, and frustrations. In merkstave it form it represents stealth and ambush. You



regain Wyrd equal to your total ranks of Isa gifts whenever you willingly wait to see what will come when fast action or a pre-emptive strike might have been a better course of action.

**At One with the Shadows [1]:** When making stealth casts you can spend 1 wyrd point to transfer all tokens from the Merkstave stone to either the Outcome stone or the Future stone.

**Ambush [2]:** Spend 2 wyrd points when you start a combat sequence from a hidden position. You can add a number of tokens equal to half your Freyja score to either the Outcome or Future stone to an attack action.

**Reader of Faces [3]:** Your patient studying of those around you and understanding of the things that can affect a person's psychology has led you to be an excellent reader of people's faces and moods. Spend 3 Wyrd and make a Heimdall + Empathy cast as a short action, to ask a question and study your target's responses, both verbal and non-verbal. This cast is opposed by your opponent's courage. If successful you can read the true answers to your questions.

### Jera - ⚡

This rune represents rewards for past diligence, peace and the many cycles of the universe. You regain Wyrd equal to your total ranks of Jera gifts whenever actions taken in previous scenes are shown to have had fruitful results.

**True Diligence [1]:** By spending 1 Wyrd points when you make any non-combat cast that involves a carry-over effect, you can add the carryOver tokens to both the

Outcome Rune stone and the Past Rune stone, doubling the effectiveness of the bonus gained. However, if you do so you cannot place any tokens on the Future Rune stone during either action, and must discard any tokens added to the Future stone from either cast.

**Peaceful Defence [2]:** spend 2 Wyrd points when you cast for Defence action to use your Freyja god rune score on the roll rather than Heimdall.

**Way of Peace [3]:** You can enter a stance whilst in combat that makes you much harder to hit, but whilst in this stance you cannot perform any attack actions. This is particularly useful when making short actions in combat. Whilst this power is active you gain a +1 bonus to your defence, and a skill bonus to block and dodge actions, equal to half your Freyja score. This can be used in conjunction with Peaceful Defence. Once activated this effect will last for the full combat or until you make an attack.

### Eihwaz - ⚔

This rune represents strength and dependability. You regain Wyrd equal to your total ranks of Eihwaz gifts whenever you stick strictly to a vow when it disadvantages you to do so.

**Enduring Might [1]:** You can reduce merkstave penalties due to environmental effects or wounds. Spend a Wyrd point to reduce merkstave penalties for environmental or wounds by 1. Environmental penalties are reduced for a number of hours equal to half your Thor score whilst wound penalties are reduced for a number of rounds equal to half your Thor score.



**Mighty Grapple [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð to gain a bonus to your Wrestling skill for an action equal to half your Thor score.

**Fist of Thunder [3]:** Spend 3 wyrð to harden your fists. Your unarmed damage score increases to half your Thor score for the rest of the scene.

## Perthro - 𐌷

This rune represents feminine mystery and occult secrets. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Perthro gifts whenever you use devious means to achieve your goal where you run a high risk of being discovered and great penalty if you are found out.

**Seidr Trance [special]:** Any character who purchases at least one rank in the Seid skill can use this rune gift without investing any of their points for rune gifts. To use any of the Perthro powers below, or some powers related Seidr found in other rune gifts, you must first enter a Seidr trance. This trance can provide carry-over bonuses to any Seidr casts made whilst the trance is active.

Whilst in the trance you become aware of the presence of supernatural creatures in perceptual range. It will allow you to:

- » identify disguised creatures as being of supernatural origin (but not what that origin is),
- » detect invisible creatures with a quick, difficulty 4 Seid cast (if successful you can see them for a round of combat), or
- » Sense the general presence of hidden supernatural creatures within perceptual range (but not identify or pin-point their location).

The trance will last until you deem otherwise, or it is interrupted by damage (as with short actions in combat) or you collapse from exhaustion (lack of Wyrð). Each long action in a Seidr trance costs one point of Wyrð to maintain.

**Commune [1]:** You can speak to the spirits to seek guidance and find answers to your questions. Firstly make a Seidr cast to summon the spirits. The GM can determine how the location affects the difficulty of summoning spirits who will know the answer to the character's question – being close to where an event happened, or where the ancestors of a person you are wanting to find something out about, makes things easier. Once summoned you may answer any number of questions, spending a wyrð point per question asked. The success margin from the Seid cast can carry-over to a Seid cast to ask each question. The GM can interpret the success margin of this cast to determine how much info the spirits are willing/able to reveal. The character must remain in the trance to keep questioning spirits. The GM should use merkstave effects on these question rolls to break the summoning and release the spirit.

**Request [2]:** This power is used to request the spirits for aid, normally in the form of healing or enchanting items. Make a Seidr cast at a difficulty determined by what you are attempting to do (simple healings or enchantments are difficulty 4). The success margin provides an enchantment bonus to an item (bonus dice to casts made using that item) or heals half Health wounds per token. If you want to make a more unusual request you can do. The GM sets the difficulty and decides what each success margin token indicates.



**Travel [3]:** This allows you to travel out of your body, throughout the world and even to other planes of existence. Spend 3 Wyrð per hour spent travelling. You can travel to other places in Midgard or to other worlds of Yggdrasil. Travel is slow in astral form, and clarity of what the Seidr sees whilst projecting is disrupted the further they go from their body, and things are viewed in a semi dream-like state. The GM can interpret what you see and the length of time it takes as he sees fit.

## Algiz - Ƶ

This rune represents protection and guardianship, and of a connection with the gods. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Algiz gifts whenever you put yourself in danger to protect others.

**Shield Defence [1]:** You are expert at holding your shield in just the right position to thwart your opponents. Whenever armed with a shield you can spend 1 Wyrð to increase your defence by 1 for the rest of the round.

**Shieldbearer [2]:** You read the battlefield with skill and look to protect those around you. When an ally within melee range of you has been hit by an enemy who is also within melee range of you, you may spend 2 Wyrð to use your action to block the attack with your shield.

**Block and Breach [3]:** the best fighters in the shield walls are those able to combine their ability to block with the skill spot the opening in their opponent's defences and attack. Use this power if you make a



successful block with your shield. You can make a bonus attack against your opponent as an instant action, but your opponent gains a +1 bonus to their defence.

## Sowilo - ƿ

This rune represents your success and health, and can symbolise fire, particularly a cleansing fire. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Sowilo gifts whenever you succeed in a painful manner, whether the pain is physical or otherwise.



**Purge the Soul [1]:** You can spend 1 Wyrð to allow yourself to use wounds to buy off merkstave tokens on any cast on a one-for-one basis.

**Purging Flame [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð when you attack a creature of supernatural evil. Add a number of bonus tokens to the Outcome Rune stone equal to your ranks in Sidr.

**Cleanse the Body [3]:** Spend 3 Wyrð points to instantly cure all natural diseases and neutralise all mundane poisons. Most supernatural affects, whether mind-affecting powers, or magical diseases or poisons, can be purged on a simple, instant Courage cast, difficulty set by the GM. However, where the GM feels such an effect is a key element of the story this gift will not work.

## Tiwaz - ↑

This rune, linked with the war god, Tyr, represents commanding presence and martial success. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Tiwaz gifts whenever your leadership decisions are proven to have led to victory for you and your allies.

**Tactical Awareness [1]:** Spend 1 Wyrð point to make a tactics cast as an instant action.

**Adaptive Fighting [2]:** This gift lets you reproduce effects of a weapon by using your weapon in a slightly different way. Examples: stabbing someone with an arrow, using the hilt of a sword like the hook of an axe head, or throwing a sword like a spear. You make the cast with your highest appropriate skill for the attack (either the weapon you are wielding or the one whose effects you are duplicating), but suffer a +1 merkstave penalty on the cast

(it's chancy and things can go wrong). You must be able to describe how the weapon can be used in this manner, and should be of approximate size or weight to the weapon it duplicates (you can't use an arrow to duplicate a broadsword, for example).

**Combat Master [3]:** You are fully aware of what is going on around you in battle and can counter attacks and make your own attacks with expert precision. When you have opted to take an attack action but are hit, you may spend 3 wyrð to make an instant Alertness cast at a difficulty equal to the Weapon Skill of the character hitting you. If successful you can add your Alertness ranks plus any success margin, to your defence against that attack.

## Berkano - ↗

This rune represents health, vitality and fertility; growth in all meanings. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Berkano gifts whenever you learn something from your experiences and grow as a person as a result.

**Learn from your Mistakes [1]:** Spend 1 Wyrð point when you botch a cast (i.e. have tokens remaining on the Merkstave stone and not enough on the Past stone to overcome the difficulty of the cast). Gain a +1 skill bonus on the next time you cast the same skill.

**The Branch that Grows [2]:** Whether this is a supernatural ability or a special technique, whenever you loose an arrow or throw a spear it seems to grow in the air, gaining weight and speed. Spend 2 Wyrð whenever you make a ranged attack with a shafted missile (spears or arrows, not hafted thrown weapons like axes and daggers).



When you buy this gift you should decide whether the effect is achieved through a special technique or just raw strength (Thor), or supernatural power (Odin). Add half your chosen god rune score to the weapon's damage when you activate this power.

**Regenerative Power [3]:** By spending 3 Wyrð and focusing your will you can start to shake off injuries and heal wounds quicker than usual. You make a difficulty 1 courage cast to see how many wounds you heal. You can make this cast either as a quick action or a long action. As a quick action you heal your success margin wounds, as a long action you multiply this by your health. Each time you use this gift the difficulty increases by 1.

## Ehwaz – M

This rune represents travel and vehicles, teamwork and harmony. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Ehwaz gifts whenever you work well as a team to achieve a challenging goal.

**Expedient Journey [1]:** Spend 1 Wyrð when making a simple cast for a long distance journey. You can move any tokens from your Outcome Rune stone to your Future Rune stone.

**Trusted Comrade [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð when an ally makes a courage cast and make an instant Command cast at the same difficulty. Your ally add a number of bonus dice to their courage cast equal to half your Heimðall score plus the success margin of your Command cast.

**Cooperative Attack [3]:** When you combine forces with your comrades you can perform a powerful attack. As a quick

action, make a command cast, difficulty set by the target's Defence. You and your allies gain a skill bonus to attack the target equal to half your Tyr score plus the success margin of your cast on your next attack against the target.

## Mannaz – M

This rune is the rune of mankind, representing the self, your connection with your fellow man, intelligence, forethought and skill. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Mannaz gifts whenever you uncover a significant deception made against you.

**The Courage of Ignorance [1]:** Mannaz merkstave often represents a self delusion or ignorance. In times of fear this can be something of an advantage. Spend a wyrð point to move any merkstave tokens to your Past Rune stone during a Courage cast.

**Reader of Men [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð when you make an Empathy cast to oppose a Deception cast. Add your Alertness ranks as a skill bonus for the cast.

**Details of War [3]:** Spend 3 Wyrð and make an Empathy cast as a quick action, difficulty equal to the target's Defence. Reduce the target's defence by your success margin against your attacks for the rest of the combat, to a minimum of 1.

## Laguz – F

This rune represents water, the sea and flowing, whether creative or spiritual flow, or the flow of the body. It is also the rune of imagination and dreams. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Laguz

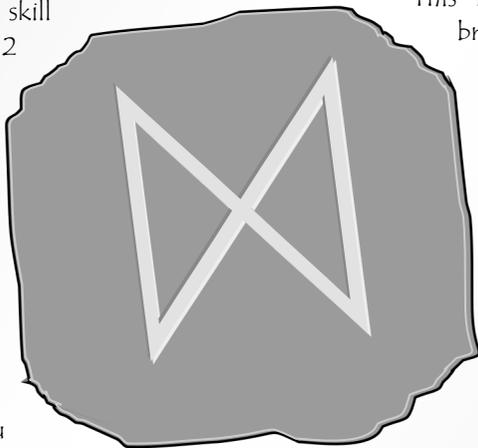


gifts whenever you achieve success through a particularly imaginative plan.

**Body of Water [1]:** Spend 1 Wyrð to add a token to your Future Rune stone on a dodge action.

**Flow of Combat [2]:** When you make a dodge action you can spend 2 Wyrð to add your Athletics ranks as bonus tokens to your Past stone on an attack action in the next action segment.

**Creative Strategy [3]:** This ability can be applied to any skill cast. Take a difficulty 2 action of whatever speed the related actions are likely to be and make a suitable cast to formulate a plan (tactics, learning, or survival, for example). Any following actions that involve you enacting the plan gain bonus tokens on your Past stone equal to the success margin of this cast. In combat this can be used to give you a fairly universal bonus to all actions in that combat, except switched actions.



## Ingwaz - ◊

This rune represents common sense and simple virtues and strength. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Ingwaz gifts whenever your common sense approach is proven to be more successful than a more learned or complex solution to the problem.

**Virtuous Courage [1]:** Spend 1 Wyrð to

move all merkstave tokens on a courage cast into your Past Rune stone.

**Common Sense [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð to add a number of dice to any knowledge-based cast equal to half your Freyja score.

**Simple Strength [3]:** Spend 3 Wyrð to add your Might ranks to the weapon damage on a successful attack.

## Dagaz - ✖

This rune represents light, a breakthrough or clarity after uncertainty. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Dagaz gifts whenever your actions lead to a breakthrough in thought or deed after a time of confusion or uncertainty.

### Breakthrough Defences [1]:

Spend 1 Wyrð whenever your attacks are blocked to gain a +1 bonus equal to your Past stone on your next attack against that opponent.

**Shield Splitter [2]:** Spend 2 Wyrð when you make an attack to damage a weapon or shield, or if directly targeting an opponent's armour. Reduce the target item's hardness by your ranks in Axes.

**Penetrating Attack [3]:** Spend 3 Wyrð to increase the AP value of the weapon you have attacked with by your Alertness ranks. This power lasts for the rest of the round.



## Othala -

This rune represents the home, your connection to your ancestors and your spiritual heritage. You regain Wyrð equal to your total ranks of Othala gifts whenever you sacrifice an important inherited possession for the gain of others in your family.

**Strand of Fate [Special]:** Any character who purchases at least one rank in the Fate Weaving skill can use this rune gift without investing any of their points for rune gifts. By spending a Wyrð point and making a short, simple Fate Weaving cast, difficulty equal to the target's legend (as a default, the targets' legend is the difficulty for all fate weaving casts), you can weave basic good or bad luck into their future. At any future point you can add a token to either the target's central stone or their merkstave stone.

**Twist of Fate [1]:** Spend 1 Wyrð and make an action speed 3 combat action Fate Weaving cast, contested by your target's current action, to add a number of merkstave tokens to your opponent's cast equal to one plus the success margin of your cast. You must be able to see the target to use this gift.

**Weaving Strands [2]:** By weaving two strands together you can achieve much more powerful effects. Spend 2 Wyrð and make a short Fate Weaving cast, difficulty equal to the highest legend of the two target characters plus one. Whenever the two target characters lives cross you can add any number of tokens up to half your Odin score, plus any success margin for the roll, to either character's merkstave or central stone on any casts made whilst they are together, but whenever you do so the

other target must take the reverse effect— if you give one of the characters two tokens on their central stone the other must take two to their merkstave stone. You can target any character you know the name of with this gift. This can be any name that can be attributed to them, even an alias they have used.

**Strands of the Soul [3]:** This power allows you to do a large variety of things to your target, including healing and dealing direct damage. All require a day action and the expenditure of 3 Wyrð points per level of the target's legend. Beneficial effects use the target's legend for the difficulty, whilst harmful effects are opposed by the target's Courage cast. The effects typically last for a day, but the GM can reduce this or increase it as he sees fit.

Here are some effects that can be achieved:

- » Reduce target to their legend in wounds.
- » Reduce target to 1 in a given god rune.
- » Fully heal the target
- » Increase target's god rune to 8
- » Provide a +4 merkstave penalty to all casts made by the target with one given skill.
- » Increase a skill to 4 ranks.

# CHAPTER 3: BASIC SYSTEM

This section looks at the core game systems of Midgard.

## MAKING A CAST

When you take an action the GM will give you a difficulty and a time the action will take. See the table below for typical difficulty scores.

Difficulty	Score
Easy	1
Average	2
Tricky	3
Difficult	5
Legendary	7

When you make a roll, or cast, you are simulating drawing runes. When you cast your runes follow these steps:

- » Place a number of tokens in the Cast Runes stone on your character sheet equal to your rank in the skill. These represent your natural skill.
- » Declare how much Wyrð you wish to spend to enhance the cast. The maximum you can spend is 2 plus your legend.
- » Roll a number of d8s equal to your God Rune for the action plus any wyrð spent.
- » Place an additional token in the Cast Runes stone on your character sheet for every 6, 7 or 8 rolled. These represent casting a rune that is intrinsically tied to

your success in the action.

- » Place a token in the Past Rune stone on your character sheet for every dice that come up with a 3. These represent the runes that are placed on the past section of the rune cast, showing which parts of your past have come into play on the action.
- » Place a token in the Future Rune stone on your character sheet for every dice that come up with a 4. As with your Past Rune score, these tokens represent useful runes cast on the future region.
- » Place a token in the Outcome Rune stone for every dice that come up with a 5. These tokens again represent useful runes cast on your outcome region.
- » Place a token on the Merkstave stone for every dice that comes up with a 1. These represent runes drawn in the problems region of the cast that come up Merkstave, and so could have a negative effect on the cast. You should also add any other Merkstave tokens for penalties applied, such as for wounds.
- » Distribute the tokens in your Cast Runes stone between your Past, Future and Outcome stones, or to remove a Merkstave token.

To succeed in your cast you need to have enough tokens on your Past Rune stone to overcome the difficulty of the action.

If you succeed you can apply any bonus from your Future Rune score to reduce the time the action takes (see the table below). Future Rune stone can hold a maximum of 4 tokens. In situations where a degree of



success can be applied, your score on the Outcome Rune stone can be applied as the success margin for the action.

Action Time	Base Time	Modifier
Quick	5 secs	1 sec
Short	2 minutes	20 secs
Medium	10 minutes	2 mins
Long	1 hour	10 mins
Day	12 hours	2 hours
Week	7 days	1 day

### Merkstave Effects:

The GM can use each Merkstave token from your cast to apply the following effects:

- » Reduce the Success Margin by 1
- » Increase the time the action takes by 1 step (e.g. add 20 minutes to a long action)
- » Add 1 to the success margin of the next action targeted against you
- » Apply a critical failure effect (only when the cast fails).
- » Apply a complication to a successful action.

Critical failure and complications are story-based effects that affect the character in some negative way. They have no direct game effect (other than possibly one of the game effects mentioned above) but can make the story more compelling and exciting.

The GM can apply Merkstave penalties as

well as increasing the difficulty. This is done for things that affect the character on in a more holistic manner than simply making the task more difficulty, such as wounds and extremes of environment.

### TYPES OF CAST

Casts can be one of the following types:

**Simple:** Simple casts involve actions that either succeed or fail, there is no need for a degree of success. In these casts any tokens in the Outcome Rune stone have no effect.

**Instant:** Instant tasks happen so quickly as to not involve any time. In these casts tokens in the Future Rune have no effect. In combat these actions can be done outside of the usual combat round and do not count as your action for the segment.

**Opposed:** Opposed casts are when two characters are acting in direct opposition to one another. In these tasks tokens on the Future Rune stone have no effect. The player and GM should distribute their stones between the Past Rune and Outcome Rune stones. When they have distributed all their tokens they should reveal them simultaneously. The winner is the character with the highest score in their Past Rune, but the effects will be based on their score in their Outcome Rune. In an opposed simple action it is simply a case of getting as many tokens into your Heimdall's stone as possible.

**Contested:** Contested casts are similar to Opposed casts, however, in these casts the speed of the action is as important, if not more important than the other factors. Player and GM distribute their tokens in secret in the same manner. In this case,



however, the difficulty for the task is set by some defined factor, such as the target's defence, and the success over the other character is determined by which action goes first, with the success margin used to break any ties.

## CARRY-OVER CAST

Some casts allow you to set up or provide a bonus to a follow up action, such as preparing ingredients for a magic ritual. You can gain a carry-over bonus for any cast. Sometimes the GM may specify that a cast can provide a carry-over bonus, whilst in other occasions you can develop your own series of casts to build up bonuses over a series of actions.

Where the GM specifies a carry-over bonus can be applied the GM can choose any difficulty he or she wishes. However, if the player requests an action to provide a carry-over bonus, the difficulty should be set at one lower than the action the player is looking to gain a bonus on.

Whenever a carry-over bonus can be applied the success margin can be carried over onto the next action as bonus tokens in the Past Rune stone.

To qualify for a carry-over bonus the basic cast itself must be a simple action—if the success margin has any other effect on the action in question it cannot be used for a carry-over bonus.

For example, Snorri is looking to climb a tricky cliff face, the GM tells him it will require a difficulty 3 Athletics cast to climb. Snorri decides to study the cliff before making the climb. The GM asks for a difficulty 2 Survival cast (difficulty set at one less than the original three). Snorri

makes the roll and succeeds with two tokens on his outcome stone. As a result he gains two bonus tokens on his past stone for his climb action.

## Aiding Others

Carry-over bonuses can also be used in situations where characters help each other out or combine efforts on a single endeavour. In many cases you can merely enable your carry-over bonus be applied to another character's cast. Where characters are pooling their resources together, though, choose one character to be the main acting character and then all the other characters involved make the same skill cast, at the usual difficulty of one lower than the main action. The character completing the main action can pool all the bonuses from all assisting characters.

## WOUNDS, FATIGUE & ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The GM has three tools at his disposal to describe the many different effects that can belay your character: Wounds, Fatigue and Merksteve Penalties.

**Wounds:** You can suffer wounds for effects other than just combat damage. A good way to assign wounds from an effect is to decide whether the character can avoid or lessen the level of injury suffered by dodging out of the way or resisting its effects with their courage or health. See below for the different ways of using these tools.



**Fatigue:** Fatigue is represented by a loss of Wyrð. You can use the same methods for resisting Wyrð loss as you can with Wounds. When a character has no Wyrð left they cannot cast any runes, and so only receive their skill bonus to casts. When you drop to 0 Wyrð you are exhausted and gain a +4 merkstave penalty all actions as if critically wounded.

**Environmental Factors:** External factors that can weigh on a character can be represented by giving separate Merkstave penalties.

## Countering These Effects

There are also three different ways characters can counter these effects:

**Athletics:** Where an effect can be negated or lessened through dodging, a contesting Athletics cast can allow the character to resist the effects.

**Courage:** Similarly where a character can

use their courage to resist their effect (remembering that this can be used for any kind of mental resistance), an opposed Courage cast can help reduce or cancel the effects.

**Might:** When you wish to resist with your physical fortitude, an opposed Might cast can be used to reduce or cancel the effects in the same manner as Courage.

## LUCK

Luck is a special skill in **Midgard: Viking Legends** that acts unlike any other skill. With any other skill you make a cast when your character acts. The dice roll represents how capable your character is in the circumstances. Luck, on the other hand, doesn't represent your characters activity but the events that go on around them without any direct input from your character. These are lucky happenstances, or the gods smiling upon you.



## How it Works

You can make luck casts at any point to narrate a short lucky happenstance that effects the game—for a short time you take over the roll of Gamesmaster, describing what happens in the game.

However there are rules and limits to what you can achieve with a luck cast—the old GM favourite RFED (“Rock Falls Everyone Dies”) is obviously out of the scope of this skill. It is often a good idea to make the roll before deciding exactly how the effect will play out.

A luck cast can be made as a quick action and always has a difficulty of 2. Whilst technically the character can act as normal during the time that the lucky event is occurring, the Norns of fate are always seeking to balance luck and fate. During the lucky event you will find that whatever task you attempt will end in non-spectacular failure. As such the luck cast counts as a quick action—during that time anything else you might attempt would fail.

Whatever the effects of this cast in terms of the narration, the mechanical effect in the game is simply handled by the luck cast providing carry-over successes to the next appropriate action the character makes.

## RECOVERY

When your character takes damage, spends wyrd or otherwise suffers hardships they will slowly recover from their traumas over time.

### Healing Wounds

You recover from wounds naturally over

time. Every day spent without performing strenuous activity allows you to regain a number of wounds equal to half your health score. If you spend the time with full rest you recover your full health score in wounds.

### Medical Aid

Characters with the medicine skill can make a day action cast (difficulty 1+ the merkstave penalty from your injury) to increase this rate. For each such action you will recover wounds equal to their success margin on the cast.

You can also use medicine to apply some first aid following a battle. So long as you treat your target within two hours of their injury you can make a medium, simple medicine cast (difficulty 3 plus the merkstave penalty of the injury) to heal your Health score in wounds. However, this action can be attempted once per target.

### Regaining Wyrd

Wyrd is regained based on your strength character and sense of success. Wyrd, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is regained by completing your gift rune criteria. Wyrd is also regained when you have completed a scene within the story. Here you regain Wyrd points equal to your legend score. However the if the GM feels you were particularly successful in the scene he can award you bonus wyrd, up to double your Legend (so you can gain regain a total wyrd up to triple your legend score at the end of a scene.. See the table below for advice on Wyrd regain rewards:

The GM has complete discretion on the



award given, but the players will be limited

environmental effects. It could be anything from ten minutes to a day. Each merkstave penalty caused by environmental effects should be removed for each period of time that has passed.

Level of scene success	Wyrð Bonus
Players largely uninvolved with the action of the scene	0
Players involved but struggled with the challenges, possibly	1-2
Players fully involved and driving the action forward with	3-4
Players well involved and showing inventiveness and	5-6
A scene of legend—the skalds will be telling the tale for	7-8

as to how much they can receive by their Legend score.

### Recovering Fatigue

Where you have lost wyrð due to suffering from fatigue or exhaustion you can regain the wyrð loss through rest. A full day of rest recovers all wyrð damage, but not wyrð points spent.

### Recovering from Environmental Penalties

Recovering from penalties caused by environmental effects only begins once you have been removed from the hazardous environment.

The rate of recovery can vary greatly depending upon the severity of the penalty applied and the nature of the effects the penalty represents.

The GM sets a basic period of time for the

## ARM RINGS

Golden arm rings were often given out by Viking kings as rewards to their loyal and courageous warriors. In **Midgard** Arm Rings are the way in which your GM rewards your character and lets you improve your character's different traits.

At the end of a quest, rather than at the end of a gaming session or chapter in the story, the GM will award the players between one and three Arm Rings each. Arm Rings allow you to improve your character's God Runes, Skills or Rune Gifts. Improving your god rune scores causes a recalculation of any linked qualities.

Each arm ring earned must be spent on skills, god runes or rune gifts. Each ring generates a number of points to be spent in the same manner is during character creation. Points can be combined and saved from multiple arm rings to gain a bigger bonus

An arm ring spent on god runes generates only one point. All god runes can now be increased to 8.

An arm ring spent on skills generates three points

An arm ring spent on rune gifts generates four points. Level 4 rune gifts, should your GM allow them can be bought for an additional 8 points.

# CHAPTER 4: COMBAT SYSTEMS

This section covers the systems for combat in Midgard.

## RANGE AND MOVEMENT

Range is an important consideration in any battle. It helps determine who can attack and with what types of weapons. Range in Midgard is kept fairly abstract to ensure the action can flow.

### Melee Zones

Within any combat there will be one, or possibly more, areas that are defined as Melee Zones. Whenever two or more characters come within about 10 feet or so of each other a melee zone forms. Characters are considered able to move freely within the melee zone and are able to target any other characters also within the same melee zone. Characters outside the melee zone are further away and must spend a movement action to move into the melee zone before being able to make a melee attack.

### Moving and Ranged Attacks

The GM should abstract the distances between characters rather than measure them accurately. Distances are referred to in terms of the number of movement actions required to cover the ground between the targets. When characters move towards each other or away from each other increase or reduce the distance between them accordingly.

Ranged weapons have arrange given in terms of move actions.

Characters mounted on horseback can cover two move actions worth of distance in a single action, or three if they succeed at a difficulty 2 Riding cast.

## COMBAT SEQUENCE

In each combat round you gain a number of actions equal to your Weapons Skill. Each round is divided into segments, characters can act in a segment if they have actions remaining, but must act if they do.

Each segment follows this sequence of stages:

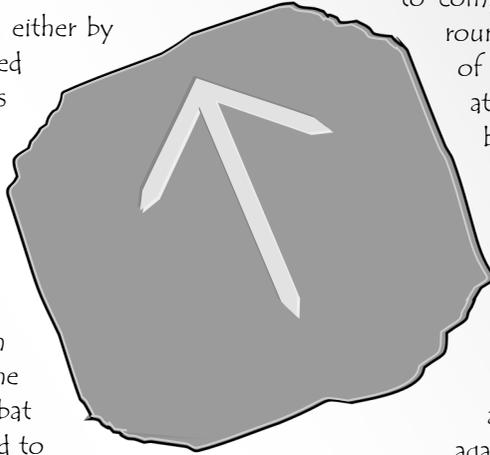
- » At the start of each segment, players declare a basic action in ascending Weapon Skill + Alertness order. Where results are tied, characters with the lower Alertness skill declare first. If results remain tied players may negotiate or toss a coin to decide who declares first.
- » All characters then cast for their action. This roll dictates your initiative (the speed of the weapon used, or 5 for quick actions, reduced by the usual bonuses).
- » Actions are then resolved in ascending initiative order. The difficulty for the attack is your Defence score. The success margin, plus the weapon damage score, is the number of wounds dealt. Armour points reduce the number of wounds caused.
- » As you act you can declare the specifics



of your action – such as attack can be specified as a Knock Back or Smash.

## Surprise

If the GM determines, either by cast (such as an opposed stealth versus alertness) or simply because the situation dictates it, he can award a surprise bonus to a character. Such bonuses are applied in the first segment of the first round of combat only, and can be added to both the character's Weapon Skill + Alertness rating for declaration order, and to their Future Rune stone on their action. If a cast is used the success margin should determine the modifier. The GM can also assign any modifier he sees fit. In the same manner.



but you run the risk of them being interrupted by attacks against you. Make the cast for the action and calculate the number of rounds the action will take to complete. It will take one round for every 20 seconds of the action you are attempting. If you are hit by an attack you need to make a simple, instant, courage cast at a difficulty equal to half the damage caused (rounded up). If you fail your action is interrupted and you must start again. If you start your action in the first segment of the round you can count that round towards your total rounds for the action, whilst if you start the action in a later segment in the round you can't start counting of the rounds until the next round.

If you suffer wounds whilst attempting a short action in combat you must make an instant, simple Courage cast to avoid the action being interrupted and you having to start again. The difficulty for this cast is the damage suffered.

## Reaction Switches

Some actions are classed as reactions and can switched to in response to a an opponent's action. You can switch to a block, dodge, or escape pin action in this manner. You must recast the roll. As blocks and dodges are contested casts, your new cast in these cases must beat the target's action speed. As you have reacted late, however, you do not gain the usual action speed bonus for such actions (see the entries for the relevant action types below for more details).

## Short Actions in Combat

You can do short actions in combat too,

## COMBAT ACTIONS

There are two stages of choosing actions, the basic action and the specific action. The different options are dealt with below.

### Basic Actions

The following basic actions can be chosen when declaring your action:

**Attack:** covering any physical attacking



action.

**Move:** covering any type of action that involves moving

**Defence:** covering dodging and protective manoeuvres with shields or weapons.

**Skill Action:** Activating a rune gift or skill action – any quick action can be made as a combat action.

## Specific Actions

The actions below are the different actions that can be taken in combat:

**Strike [Attack]:** This is the basic attacking action and involves hitting someone with a basic weapon. Cast the appropriate skill and god rune for your attack. For example, to throw an axe roll Freyja + Athletics.

**Block [Defence]:** This action involves parrying a blow or putting your shield in the way. You cast Heimdall + skill with a weapon (or shield). If unarmed you can only block other unarmed attacks. This is a contested cast, but your weapon's action speed is considered 2 lower, or 4 lower for shields. The difficulty for this cast is equal to the attacker's weapon skill + skill used to attack you with -2. If the block is successful against a weapon, the weapon can be damaged as if your enemy targeted the weapon (see below), but reduce the success margin by 2. They cannot choose to disarm you in this way.

**Dodge [Defence]:** This action involves moving out of the way of your opponent's blow. Again this is a contested cast, at your unarmed action speed, made using Freyja + Athletics. The base action speed for a dodge is three, or a standard five if you have used an active defence to switch to a dodge action.

**Run [Move]:** Running is—obviously, I suppose—a move action. You only need to make a run action if you want to move a distance away from or towards a melee zone. Running requires a simple Freyja + Athletics cast. This is usually difficulty 1, but this increases to 2 if you are looking to leave a melee zone. The GM can also apply further penalties for unstable ground. A Merkstave penalty might be used to have you trip and fall prone.

**Charge [Move]:** This action lets you both cover ground and attack in a single action. The action speed is determined by adding five to the weapon speed (and so will almost always lose you initiative) but you do not count as being in close combat until your action is resolved. If two characters charge each other in the same segment they do not take the movement penalty to their action and instead form a new melee zone.

**Smash [Attack]:** This big hit requires longer time to wind up. Take a +2 penalty to your action speed, but add a bonus token to your Outcome Rune stone.

**Knock Back [Attack]:** Rather than wound your opponent, this attack concentrates on pushing them out of the way, or possibly over a cliff, etc. The difficulty of this action varies depending upon what you wish to push your target:

- » Knocking a character out of the melee zone, is resolved against their defence score. You can choose to go with them, creating a new melee zone with only the two of you involved, or to make it so that they require move action to return. This counts as a simple action.
- » You can knock a character over, making them Prone (see below). This



is a simple action, but the difficulty is increased by 1.

- » You can also knock back multiple opponents, such as by knocking a target character back into their comrades. The difficulty of such an attack is determined by the highest defence of the characters targeted. The success margin determines the number of additional characters that are also knocked back. This can be used to apply either of the knock back effects above, altering the difficulty accordingly if you wish to attempt to knock all the characters prone.

Knock Back attacks are easier with heavy weapons (reduce the difficulty of the attack by 1), but harder with light weapons (increase the difficulty of the attack by 1).

**[Note:** *Prone characters count as immobilised and their movement rate is seriously hampered until they use a move action to get up]*

**Target Item [Attack]:** You can target an item held or carried by your opponent, either to disarm them or to damage the item, including their armour. To target an item held in their hand you must make an attack against your opponent at +1 difficulty, whereas an item carried in a pocket or backpack, or even their armour, is resolved at their normal defence.

If you hit work out damage in the usual way, but compare the result against the target weapon's Hardness and Structure score. Your damage score is applied to the Structure of the weapon as wounds are to a character, but the weapon's Hardness reduces the strength of the attack. Armour piercing has no effect in such attacks.

Striking a weapon to damage it is easier

with heavy weapons (reduce the difficulty of the attack by 1), but harder with light weapons (increase the difficulty of the attack by 1).

To disarm an opponent add a further +1 to the difficulty (on top of the usual +1 to target the weapon). Every three tokens in the Outcome stone indicate the number of move actions away the item is thrown as it is flung from their grasp. The number of categories the target weapon is larger than your weapon adds a further +1 to the difficulty, whereas every category it is lighter reduces the difficulty.

**Pin [Attack]:** Pinning an opponent is usually, but not always, done with the Wrestling skill—a series of rapid blows, for example, might pin your target. Pinning involves restricting the actions open to your opponent, allowing them only to escape the pin (see below).

Attack against the target's defence as normal. If you succeed your opponent can only escape the pin as their next action. Your attack will also do damage, Your success margin applies as normal, but you do not add your weapon damage modifier, unless you are using the Wrestling skill to apply the pin, in which case you apply your unarmed damage modifier (usually +1).

Your opponent doesn't get to use their armour to soak the damage caused from pinning attacks. However he can use his ranks in either Wrestling or Athletics in the same manner as armour hardness.

As with a standard attack the target of a pin gets to choose which location they take the damage on. Effects of taking this damage apply as normal.

If you act again before your opponent's



next action and choose a different action, the target is immediately relieved of the obligation to take an Escape Pin as their next action. You must declare that you are continuing with the pin as you declare your basic action.

A character who is pinned counts as being *immobilised* (see the armour section below) against attacks from characters other than the character pinning them.

If you maintain the pin in subsequent rounds it becomes more difficult to keep hold. Add a cumulative +1 penalty to the difficulty to attack cast for each round after the first the pin is maintained. After the pin is broken this penalty is removed and you can attack again with no penalty.

**Escape Pin [Defence]:** You try to escape a pin. You can attempt to dodge or wriggle out of any pin with either Freyja + Athletics or Heimðall + Wrestling. This is a simple action, opposed by the pinning character's cast for this round (if they haven't chosen a pin attack you are free to act, although if they declared before you, you will be restricted to a defence action).

**Stoke Fury [Skill]:** You can stoke your anger and fury, summoning your berserker wrath. This involves making an Odin + Berserker cast (quick action). The difficulty for the cast is 4 minus your merkstave wound penalty (wound penalties do not apply to this cast). If successful you are classed as Berserk for the remainder of the round. You also gain a berserker level equal to the success margin. Whilst berserk you add a free token to the Outcome Rune stone for any attack-class action for each berserk level, you ignore wound penalties on all attack actions and add your berserk level to your courage

bonus.

**Evaluate Battlefield [skill]:** you can spend a simple, quick action evaluating the battlefield, making a tactics cast. The GM sets the difficulty based on how chaotic the battlefield appears. If successful a +1 bonus can be applied as a cast dice pool bonus to the character's next attack or defence cast. You can also make a command cast to confer this bonus to your allies as a further simple, quick skill action, the difficulty for this cast is based on how close by and able to hear you your allies are.

## WEAPONS

The tables on this and the previous page show the typical weapons available.

### Weapon Notes

The following rules apply to the different weapons:

**Improvised weapons:** Improvised weapons can be anything that could theoretically be wielded. Thrown improvised weapons are generally smaller than those wielded by hand. Larger improvised weapons can have more structure points than other weapons, dependent upon their size – a thick heavy club might have two points, for example.

**Throw Range:** Your standard throw range is calculated by dividing your Thor score by 2. Weapons without a throw range can be thrown one movement distance, but the difficulty of the attack is increased by 1 with heavy weapons.

**Legend Restrictions:** Some weapons are suggested to be restricted to certain



legends. These are guides to help the GM decide which weapons are appropriate for different character types.

**Light and Heavy Weapons:** Weapons with a base speed of 2 or less count as Light weapons, weapons with a base speed of 5 or higher are classed as heavy weapons. Some actions you make in combat are affected by this classification.

**Using a weapon with two hands:** Heavy weapons can be wielded with two hands, reducing the action speed by 1.

**Dual Wielding Weapons:** You can wield two weapons simultaneously in attack if you are armed with a weapon in each hand. Use the highest base attack speed and damage modifier of the two weapons as a base and apply a +1 bonus to damage for normal (i.e. not light or heavy) weapons and a +2 bonus for heavy weapons, however an equal number is also added to your opponent's defence against such

attacks. Light weapons used in such a manner add no bonus to damage but do reduce the speed of the attack by 1.

**Weapon Descriptions:**

The following section describes the different weapons available.

**Double-Headed Axe:** These weapons are more often found in legend than in archaeological finds. They were probably impractical to wield in real life, but their prominence in Viking legend means they deserve a place here at the top of the damage tree.

**Bearded Axe:** This axe has a special head, with a large hooked blade below the connection with the haft. This makes it expert at pulling away shields and hooking weapons from your enemy's grasp.

**Large Axe:** The standard fighting axe of the Viking warrior, designed to split helmets

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Speed	AP	Hard	Str	Special
Double-Headed Axe	Axes	7	6	3	6	1	-1 difficulty when targeting weapons
Bearded Axe	Axes	6	5	2	6	1	-2 difficulty when targeting weapons
Large Axe	Axes	6	5	3	6	1	-1 difficulty when targeting weapons
Throwing Axe	Axes or Sax	4	4	2	6	1	-1 difficulty when targeting weapons
Berserkr	Sax	6	5	1	9	1	Legend Berserker
Longsax	Sax	5	5	1	8	1	
Hammer	Sax	5	5	0	10	1	
Sax	Sax	4	4	1	8	1	
Scramsax	Sax	3	3	1	7	1	
Club/improvised	Sax	3	4	0	5	1*	
Dagger	Sax	2	2	1	7	1	
Unarmed	Sax or Wrestling	1	1	0	-	-	
Round Shield	Shields	2	4	0	8	5	Additional -2 speed on block, Additional +2 difficulty to disarm
Broad Spear	Spears	5	6	1	7	1	
Hewing Spear	Spears	5	6	2	7	1	
Thrusting Spear	Spears	5	6	1	7	1	-1 action speed on block
Broad Sword	Swords	6	4	1	10	1	Legend Chieftain
Long Sword	Swords	5	3	2	9	1	Legend Chieftain



and shields with equal ease.

**Throwing Axe:** The mainstay of the Viking warrior's arsenal, most warriors had at least a couple of these stuffed in their belts as a back up and for throwing at oncoming enemies.

**Berserkr:** This heavy, well-crafted sax is perhaps better seen as a single-edged broad sword, believed to have been a special weapons used by berserkers to maximise the damage from a simple sax blade.

**Longsax:** a longer, heavier version of the sax, with a two foot blade.

**Sax:** This is the typical simple hacking sword used by many Viking warriors, with a blade eighteen to twenty inches long.

**Scramsax:** A shorter, foot-long blade, often used as a heavy dagger.

**Club/Improvised Weapon:** This weapons counts as picking up any old solid lump of wood or other heavy material.

**Dagger:** More of a tool than a weapon, but useful in dire straits.

**Unarmed:** This is here to show how unarmed attacks work in the system. Your action speed with unarmed attacks is equal to four minus half your Freyja god rune score.

**Round Shield:** The classic Viking shield of thick wood reinforced with iron rivets and strapping. Your shield is designed for blocking rather than attacking, and as such is most often used in an active defence. When making an active defence using your shield you reduce the action speed by a further -2 (-4 in total, making the base action speed 0). Shields are usually strapped to your arm, making them harder to disarm. If your opponent tries to target your shield with a disarm attack, the difficulty is increased by a further +2 (+4 in total).

**Broad Spear:** This is the most primitive of the spear designs with a broad leaf-shaped blade.

**Hewing Spear:** This spear has a longer sharper blade, better for piercing armour and can be used to slash as well as thrust.

**Thrusting Spear:** This common Viking spear has a crossed hilt just below the blade which makes it ideal for parrying attacks.

**Broad Sword:** The classic Viking sword with a short and broad blade, rounded pommel and relatively short hilt.

**Long Sword:** A longer narrower sword than the classic broad sword, a rarer sword.

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Spd	AP	Hardness	Structure	Range
Bow	Archery	4	3	3	5	1	Perception
Spear (various)	Spears	- (as melee) -					2x Throw
Throwing Axe	Athletics	4	4	2	6	1	Throw
Dagger	Athletics	2	2	1	7	1	Throw
Improvised	Athletics	2	3	1	7	1	Throw



**Bow:** Viking bows were primitive in comparison to later medieval bows. Two hands are always required to operate a bow.

## ARMOUR

A limited range of armours were common to Viking warriors, and they often wore multiple layers of different types of protective clothing.

### Armour Systems

Armour in **Midgard** is ablative, reducing in effectiveness as it takes damage. Armour also has a hardness score, just like weapons and shields.

When you are hit by a blow you must follow these steps to determine how much damage is caused to the armour and how many wounds you suffer.

» If the weapon has an AP score, this damage is dealt directly to your wounds total.

» The rest of the damage is dealt to your armour. Firstly you choose which of the different types of armour you are wearing the blow has landed on.

» If you are *immobilised*, due to being prone or pinned, the attacker gets to choose the hit location instead.

» Reduce the damage affecting the armour by the hardness of the armour that is taking the blow.

» Tick off a number of structure points equal to the remaining damage on the armour you have selected.

» If the armour is reduced to zero structure points the remaining damage is taken to your wounds, even if you have other armour left.

### Armour Characteristics

You will typically wear armour over 4 different areas: Head, Body, arms and Legs. You can select different armour types to wear on each different area.

Armour Type	Str. Modifier	Hardness	Speed	Special
Natural Fur	n/a	1	n/a	
Thick Cloth	x 2	0	+2	
Furs	x 2	1	+1	Legend Berserker or Seidr
Hardened Leather	x 1	2	0	
Chainmail	x 2	3	+1	
Reinforced mail	x 3	3	+2	
Steel Helm	x 2	10	0	
Bone Helm	x 1	3	0	Legend Seidr or Volva



**Structure Points:** The number of base structure points the armour has is determined by the sum of the different areas one which you are wearing the armour in question, multiplied by the armour's structure modifier.

**Hardness:** The armour's hardness score is determined by the type of armour you are taking the hit with.

**Action Speed Penalties:** You also take a penalty to your action speed based on the armour you are wearing add up the total speed modifier for the four areas to find out your total modifier, and reduce this by your Might skill ranks.

## Armour Types

**Natural Fur:** animals with thick pelts also gain some benefit from their hides in combat in terms of permanent a hardness bonus.

**Thick Cloth:** Thick clothing, of wool and linen, are common. Thick cloth protection cannot be made for the head.

**Furs:** The pelts of wolves and bears are often worn, especially by berserkers, whom gain their name from the bear skins they wear in combat. Furs can be worn on any location.

**Hardened Leathers:** Hardened leather worn over the clothes is common.

**Chainmail:** This basic armour of metal links provides high protection.

**Reinforced Mail:** Wearing chainmail over

thick cloth armour is a great way to beef up your protection. You cannot reinforce a mail hood and so cannot take this option for the head.

**Steel Helm:** This is a special plate steel helmet, and provides excellent protection for the head.

**Bone helm:** Taking the skull of a large animal, reinforced with leather or cloth and using as an intimidating head protection is common amongst outlandish seidr.

## Armour Locations

Some locations have special rules for when damage manages to penetrate (i.e. you take any wounds on these locations, even from armour penetrating blows).

**Head:** Attacks that penetrate the head armour cause triple the usual damage.

**Arms:** Attacks that penetrate against the arms cause you to make an instant, simple courage cast (difficulty equal to wounds suffered) or drop one held item (your choice).

**Legs:** Damage against the legs makes you make a simple, instant Athletics cast (difficulty equal to the no wounds suffered) or fall prone.

Armour Location	Str	On penetration
Head	3	Damage x3
Body	8	No extra effect
Arms	5	Courage cast or drop held item
Legs	7	Athletics cast or knock back



# CHAPTER 5: THE VIKING WORLD

As a mythic-historical game, the setting for **Midgard: Viking Legends** should be rooted in history. The following description is one potential setting that you could run **Midgard** in, but not the only one.

## THE VIKING AGE

Before I begin on describing the actual setting, I think it's probably a good idea just to quickly go over the history of the "Viking Age," which may provide you with other ideas for where you want to set your own game.

### The Start of the Age

If you read the history books, the Viking Age officially begins in the late eighth century (780s or 790s), with the sacking of a number of European sites by Viking raiders. However, in my self-educated opinion on the subject, I think that the Viking culture must have been "there" before this point, so in my mind it would be perfectly acceptable to run an early eighth, or even a seventh or sixth century setting of **Midgard**. I'd hesitate going earlier than this, as you'd then start running into the Romans if you strayed outside of Scandinavia, which I don't think would suit **Midgard**, although maybe you have other ideas.

### Ninth Century

During the ninth century Viking culture

shifts from working through a large number of petty kingdoms and "city" states (although few Viking settlements, if any, would be what even people of the era would have considered cities) to more unified Kingdoms. It is during this period that Norway was unified by Harold Fairhair, the Danes conquered a large part of what is now England, Iceland was discovered and colonised, and the Vikings expanded east through the Russian river systems.

The fact that the beginning of Viking expansion in ninth century also coincides with the start of the Medieval Warm Period, a period where the temperatures in the North Atlantic were mild, making these more northerly climes a more hospitable place to live.

### Tenth Century

In the tenth century the expansion continued, but this century is perhaps better signified by the Christianisation of the Viking peoples. It appears that there is some debate between historians as to the end point of the Viking Age, and some Scandinavian historians seem to think the end of the period should be denoted by Christianisation. Aside from the historical argument, **Midgard** is a game of the old gods of Norse legend, and as such I think that Christianisation should mark the upper limits of where the game should be run.

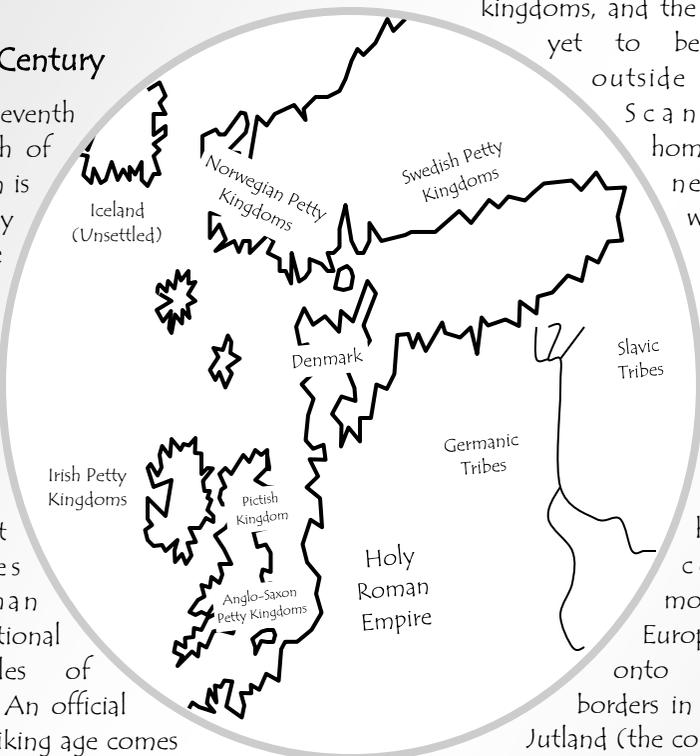
However, in case you want to ignore my advice (and, hell, you're perfectly free to do so if you wish), the tenth century

Viking expansion continues into Iceland and Russia, and settlements are further set up in Normandy and Prussia.

is at the beginning of the ninth century: 822 AD. At this time most of the Viking lands are still a collection of petty kingdoms, and the Vikings have yet to begin settling outside of their

### Eleventh Century

In the eleventh century much of the expansion is now done by the Normans, descended from Vikings but speaking French and utilising feudalist monarchies rather than more traditional Viking styles of government. An official end to the Viking age comes with the English defeat of the Norwegians in 1066, at Stamford Bridge, not Hastings, indicating that the Norwegians were still active and may have some vestiges of Viking tradition remaining. It is also during this period that Icelandic explorers reached North America.



Scandinavian homeland. In the neighbouring world, Mercian dominance of Britain has come to an end;

Charlemagne has conquered most of Western Europe, pushing onto the Danish borders in the south of Jutland (the continental part of what is now Denmark), with his son, Louis the Pious, has been anointed Holy Roman Emperor only six years previous; and most of the rest of Europe is sparsely populated by what the Romans would have referred to as "barbarian tribes."

## 822 AD: THE MIDGARD SETTING

So let's get cracking with the detail of the actual setting.

### Introduction

Midgard's canon setting – my suggestion for the best period to run a Midgard game,

This is an era ripe for Viking adventure. Those pesky Christians haven't really touched Viking territory yet, and with Charlemagne's mighty empire, under Louis the Pious, at its peak, they represent a big force to be reckoned with. You set your game in either the petty kingdoms of Norway and Sweden, or in the more unified kingdom of the Danes. There's plenty of wild lands out there to explore and conquer, whether you want to go deep into Slavic territory, raid the Christian



Franks or Anglo-Saxons, or even discover Iceland, it's all there for you.

**Note:** In researching this section I have paid less attention to closely tying up dates and an official timeline. Instead I've picked out the most colourful and interesting kingdoms and rulers, and thrown them all together in a way that might not make any historic sense. But the way I see it, the records are unclear, written quite a while after the actual events and were injected with a certain amount of legend anyway. So I'll be detailing these places with a large amount of poetic licence to make a more interesting world to play in.

## Viking Petty Kingdoms

At the beginning of the ninth century, the lands of what is now Norway and Sweden were divided into multiple petty kingdoms, many of which were little more than individual towns or clusters of villages. Although later called Jarls, in this period these tiny states were ruled by men who called themselves Kings. In this section you will find a collection of some of these petty kingdoms that I think are most interesting or best suited to use in building your own **Midgard** sagas.

### Agder

Agder sits on the southernmost tip of the Norwegian peninsula, and as such commands a great location for trade with Denmark and the other petty kingdoms. However, Agder is ruled by a vain and cowardly king, Harald Granraude. King Harald considers himself the greatest of kings and believes all others should kneel to him. However, this hubris tests his men's loyalty and he is not a popular king.

### Adventure Hooks:

- » With the death of Alfhild, King Gudrod the Hunter (see Vestfold below) is seeking a new wife to forge a new alliance. When Harald Granraude refuses the Swedish imposter the hand of his daughter in marriage, Gudrod decides to take her by force. The players could be sent by Gudrod to attack Harald's homestead and bring her back unharmed whilst being hunted by Harald's men, or they could by Harald's men defending their princess or hunting down her kidnappers.
- » As tensions in Denmark heighten, Harald decides to side with Harald Klak, seduced by his access to Carolingian wealth (see Denmark, below). When Horik sends an emissary to Harald Granraude's court, the players could be either secret assassins in the emissary's entourage or the King's bodyguard trying to thwart the assassination attempt.

### Alvheim

Like his brother Oystein, Gudrod's first kingdom came through marriage to Alfhild, an Alfari maiden of great beauty whose father, Alfari, ruled the land of Alvheim. However, Gudrod has since expanded his kingdom to the east, capturing the Eastern half of Vingulmark.

### Adventure Hooks:

- » King Gudrod is honoured by the visit of an Alfari lord from Alvheim. However, the players discover he is really looking to take Gudrod's place, not believing a man should marry an Alfari princess.
- » Alfgeir threatens to take back Gudrod's



captured Vingulmark territory. As a half-Alfar king, he summons a force of Alfar to fight for him, but unbeknownst to him he has been tricked by a Svartalfar lord who seeks the land only for himself.

Attundaland can swap one of their free skill ranks gained from their gender for a free rank in the Shields skill. GMs should be careful when deciding whether to allow this, possibly only using the rule in Attundaland-only campaigns.

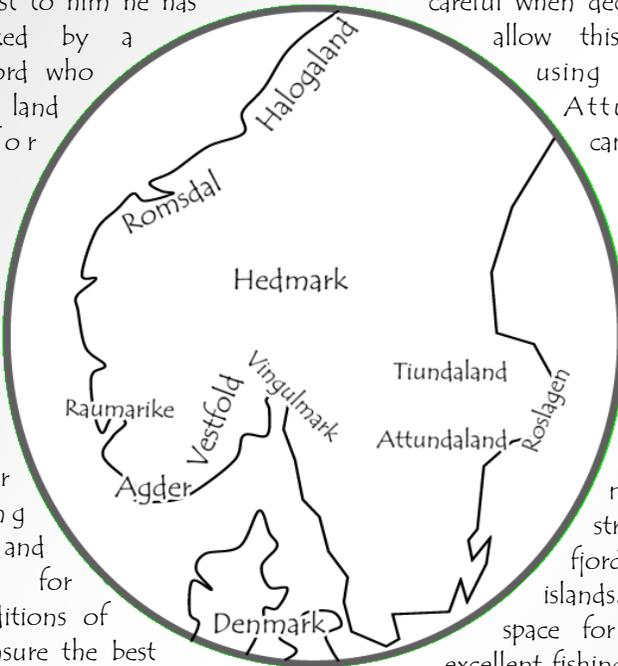
### Attundaland

This "land of the eight hundred" is known for its disciplined warriors. Rather than using ordinary men and arming them for battle, the traditions of Attundaland ensure the best fighting men are trained in the ways of battle and as such are greatly feared. Its kings are also trained in this way, leading to great leaders on the battlefield. However, despite their prowess and discipline, Attundaland has less productive farms than other kingdoms and is much poorer than its neighbours.

#### Adventure Hooks:

- » The players are Attundaland warriors, who must fight to defend their kingdom from invading Niflheim creatures flowing over the mountains at their northern border.
- » Famine strikes the land, but a Volva claims it is the result of a curse from a neighbouring petty king. The players must confront the king and break the curse.

**Optional Rule:** Characters from



### Halogaland

Halogaland is the furthest north of the Viking petty kingdoms, made up of rugged mountain cutting straight into deep fjords and many rocky islands. There is little space for settlement, but excellent fishing and many places to shelter longboats from the stormy seas. As such it has many small communities built around the sea. The kings of Halogaland claim to descend from the Legendary sea king Seaming, son of Odin. The current ruler, King Eystein, is a canny political mover, looking to marry off his daughters and forge alliances with the strongest of his neighbouring kingdoms.

#### Adventure Hooks:

- » A great sea serpent has been attacking and sinking ships travelling further north. King Eystein is keen to expand his northern border through settling further north and sends his best warriors to find the beast's lair and slay it.
- » Ketil Flatnose of Romsdal is threatening to invade Halogaland. Eystein sends messengers to his allies



requesting aid. The players could either be the messengers, running the gauntlet of Romsdal lines, or Romsdal men looking to stop Eystein getting his message through.

**Optional Rule:** Male characters from Halogaland can choose to gain two free ranks in Sailing rather than a rank in farming. Female Halogaland characters can choose to swap one of their free ranks from their gender for a rank in sailing instead. GMs should be careful when deciding whether to allow this, possibly only using the rule in Halogaland-only campaigns.

## Hedmark

Hedmark is a heavily forested kingdom, with a thriving timber trade. Settled in the previous century by Halfdan Hvitbeinn, who fled from west Odin's wrath as famine took hold of his father's kingdom. King Halfdan is the father of two of the greatest kings of the 822 AD era: Oystein, who inherited Vestfold when his father-in-law King Erik died, and Gudrod the Hunter, who has forged himself his own kingdom further south. King Halfdan, now ancient and venerable, hangs on to his kingdom in the knowledge that both of his sons have already proved themselves skilled and worthy rulers, but fears that they may have to settle his inheritance through fighting each other. Halfdan is of the legendary Yngling line that will, later this century, unite Norway, through his great-grandson, Harald Fairhair.

### Adventure Hooks:

- » The woods are full of dangerous creatures. When a remote village is mysteriously massacred at the hands of some unknown creature, the players

are sent by the king to find the beast and slay it..

- » Enemies from Halfdan's father's kingdom have tracked him through the woods and claim that only his ritual sacrifice will appease Odin and lift the famine that continues to grip their kingdom. The players could be sent to bring Halfdan to "justice" or to protect their king from this irrational fate.

## Raumarike

Raumarike, also known as Rogaland, is found on the western edge of southern Norway. It is characterised by more gentle beaches and bays than the harsh fjords further north. Raumarike is ruled by Ragnar Lodbrok, a charismatic and powerful Viking warrior who seems more interested in raiding to the west and conquering Denmark than consolidating his rule or forging alliances with his neighbouring kings. He is a constant thorn in Charlemagne's side, regularly raiding down Frankish rivers. He has taken the almost equally legendary shield maiden, Lathgertha, for his wife, and has been blessed with two sons. Already showing signs in their childhood of being as legendary as their father, Ragnar claims he continues his adventures so that the legends of his sons won't eclipse his own.

**Note:** This ancient kingdom is not geographically linked to the modern district of Oslo.

### Adventure Hooks:

- » King Horik of Denmark captures Ragnar's youngest son, but when Ragnar dashes off to the rescue, Horik counters with a strike at Ragnar's capital. The players could be part of a skeleton force defending the own or an



elite invasion force, sent to capture Lathgertha and Ragnar's remaining son.

- » On a raid down the Frankish coast, Ragnar hears a legend of a Christian relic of great power—a cup believed to grant immortality—which is thought to be held at the southern end of the Bay of Biscay. Ragnar picks the bravest and strongest of his men and sails off on a quest to capture the relic.

### Romsdal

Romsdal is a land of legend. With its sweeping valleys, deep fjord and mighty Romsdalfhorn. It is also the legendary home of Raun the Old, father of many of the great lines of Viking kings. When Raun died his valley kingdom was passed to his son Jotunbjorn (meaning giant bear). Centuries later the kings of Romsdal remain giant, bear-like men, standing head and shoulders above normal men and thick of hair and beard. The current king is Ketil Flatnose, an aggressive man, fond of raiding across the seas, with a keen eye on Pictland. The kingdom of Romsdal is situated on the northern coast of south-west Norway, just below Halogaland.

#### Adventure Hooks:

- » Given Romsdal raids on the Pictish coast, king Oengus of the Picts sends an envoy to king Ketil, hoping to sue for peace. However, the emissary is a druid and has magic powers that allow him to trick King Ketil into sealing a pact he will not be able to break. Can the players work out the Picts' plans before it is too late?
- » During a raid on the Picts the players are engulfed in a strange magical

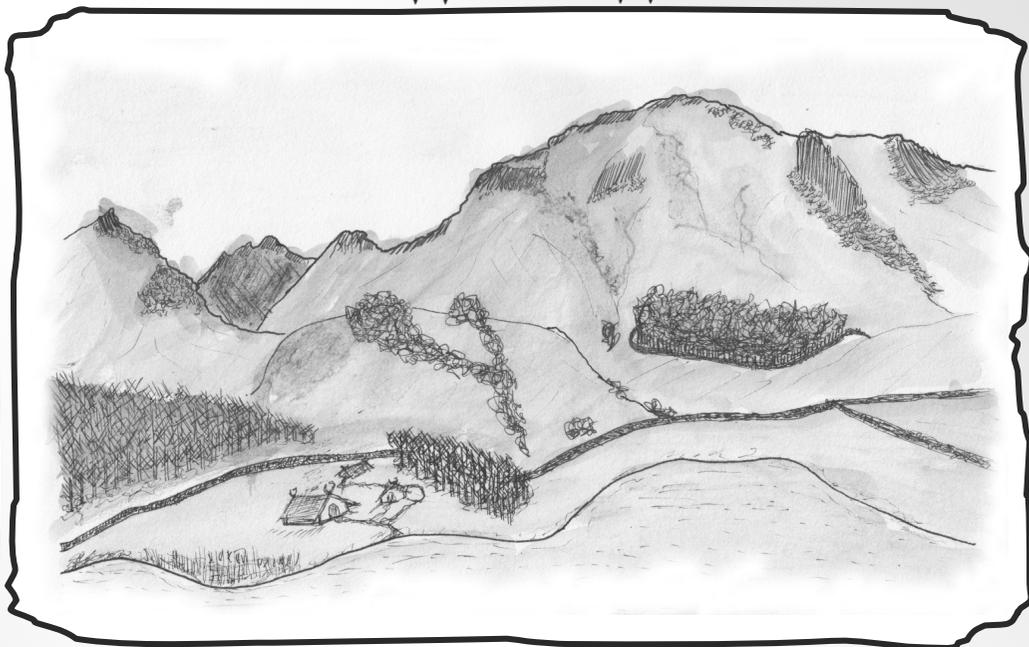
darkness and find themselves separated from their party. They must find their way back through hostile territory and defeat the creatures who brought them there.

### Roslagen

This coastal kingdom of many islands and coastal inlets. Ruled by the brothers Bjorn at Haugi and Anuld Uppsala. The kingdom is known for its fleet of ships, and its kings seem mostly interested in raiding eastwards across the Baltic Sea. In years to come, the kings of Roslagen will come to rule Sweden and their eastern colonies will eventually become Russia, but at this point Roslagen is by no means a dominant force in the region. Unlike other kingdoms rules by two kings, such as Denmark (below) the brothers rule in unity and target far flung places. They follow the legends of their ancestor, Bjorn Ironsides, who travelled far to the south, entering the Mediterranean after rounding the Iberian peninsula, and seek to expand their interests east.

#### Adventure Hooks:

- » A foreign trader has reached the southern shores of the Baltic following a great river. After being rescued from eastern Germanic barbarians by Roslagen ships he piques Bjorn and Anuld's interest and they decide to send an expedition east to find this river and its route through to the East.
- » A mysterious ship has been attacking Roslagen ships and disappearing into the foggy seas and slipping away between islands. The kings order the ship be hunted down, but when the players find it they discover it is no ordinary ship—it could be a ghost ship or crewed by monsters, or maybe a



foreign scouting vessel in prelude to an invasion.

**Optional Rule:** Male characters from Roslagen can choose to gain two free ranks in Sailing rather than a rank in farming. Female Roslagen characters can choose to swap one of their free ranks from their gender for a rank in sailing instead. GMs should be careful when deciding whether to allow this, possibly only using the rule in Halogaland-only campaigns.

## Tiundaland

The land of Tiundaland, as calling it a kingdom would be inaccurate, lies perhaps furthest east of the Viking lands at this time. A pleasant and fertile land, Tiundaland is the source of Viking law, and all law readers bow to the superior knowledge of the law readers of Tiundaland. It is a land ruled by its law readers rather than a king. Law readers from all over Viking lands travel to

Tiundaland to learn their trade.

### Adventure Hooks:

- » A stranger appears in the players' kingdom claiming the right to the throne, threatening to usurp the king they are loyal to. They must travel to Tiundaland to ask the master law readers for aid in countering the stranger's claim.
- » The law readers rule is just but often inflexible. When framed for a crime the players must find evidence to clear their names or face execution.

**Optional Rule:** Characters from Tiundaland can swap one of their free skill ranks gained from their gender for a free rank in the Law skill. GMs should be careful when deciding whether to allow this, possibly only using the rule in Tiundaland-only campaigns.



## Vestfold

Vestfold comprises of the lands to the west of Vingulmark (see below). It is a fertile land of pleasant lowland pastures, perfect for farming, and with a milder climate than most of the surrounding kingdoms, due to its southerly location and protection from the mountains of Grener to the west. Like his brother Gudrod, Oystein's first kingdom came through marriage to Hild, whose father, Erik Agnarsson, ruled the land of Vestfold.

### Adventure Hooks:

- » A band of fur trappers go missing in the mountains to the west. The players are sent to investigate and discover the same dark secret that led to the trappers being killed.
- » King Halfdan of Hedmark, Oystein and Gudrod's father, nears death. The players travel as part of Oystein's entourage to help him secure his rightful inheritance.

## Vingulmark

Vingulmark is an important centre of trade and power during this period of history, but as such it is regularly fought over. Vingulmark is made up of the lands that surround Viken (lit. "The Bay", also known as the Fold) a 17-mile long fjord with rich farmland and excellent access for trade. In 822 AD Vingulmark is split, part ruled by King Alfgeir, the hereditary King, and the rest conquered by Gudrod the Hunter.

- » His grip on power weakening, Alfgeir tries to summon an Alfar lord to help him, but the supposed ally actually begins to take over his kingdom. Can the players discover the treachery and

save their king?

- » One of Alfgeir's nephews decides to take it upon himself to rid the kingdom of Gudrod's influence. He raises an army to take back the lands captured by Gudrod, hoping that doing so might put him in a position to take over rule from his uncle. But it all goes horribly wrong and the players get involved, maybe sent by Alfgeir to clean up the mess, maybe from within the army, after the upstart dies.

## Denmark

Denmark is made up of the European continental mainland region of Jutland and a number of islands to the north and east of Jutland. In this period of history Denmark probably wasn't a unified state, but there is mention in the Frankish histories of a King Gudfred of the Danes, who caused Louis the Pious some trouble around the Empire's border with Jutland. Taking some dramatic licence, and to show something of a contrast between the petty kingdoms further north, I have decided to depict Denmark as a unified kingdom in 822 AD.

### King Gudfred's Peace

Although now dead, King Gudfred was a canny politician who used his dominance of the seas to great effect in securing peace with his Carolingian neighbours to enable him to carry out campaigns of conquest against his fellow petty kings of Denmark.

Gudfred's kingdom is built on the strength of his fleet. Able to muster over two hundred ships, his fleet dominates the seas of the period. It is the strength of this fleet that led Charlemagne to forge a peace with



Gudfred to secure the protection of his coast from other raiding Vikings.

### Civil War

Between 812 AD and 814 the Danish fought a civil war of succession following the death of Gudfred. Gudfred's son, Sigfrid took the throne, but Gudfred's nephew, Anulo, contested the throne and the two raised armies and went to war. Although both were killed in the battle, Anulo's army won and Harald Klak and his brother, Reginfrid, became kings. Denmark. However, Sigfrid's brothers rose up again to claim the throne in 813 AD and this time expelled Harald and killed Gudfred's oldest son.

Whilst king, Harald had made himself and important ally of Charlemagne and it was with Frankish support that he returned to Denmark. However, a pact was reached whereby Harald and Gudfred's son Horik shared the crown.

The current state of affairs in Denmark is one of great political tension. Jarls claim loyalty to one king or the other, and should either one pass offence, war would surely follow. Harald relies on the strength of his alliance with the Franks to secure his position, whilst encouraging Horik and his remaining brothers to turn their attention, at the request of Emperor Louis, to raiding Britain and Saxony. It seems it is only by keeping Horik's forces busy and separated that Harald is able to hold on to his power.

Harald Klak has been converted to Christianity and has built a church in Hedeby, in southern Jutland. Due to his close alliance with Louis and his year spent in exile in the Empire, Harald is considered untrustworthy, duplicitous and cowardly

by the Jarls close to Horik. Monks are starting to walk amongst the Danes and the new religion is treated with great suspicion. There is one school of historic thought that suggests the Vikings began raiding in response to forced conversions in the late eighth and early ninth century. If you want to play a game that uses Christianity as a source of evil in your world, then Denmark may prove to be an excellent place to set your campaign.

### Denmark in 822 AD: Suspicion and Intrigue

In the 822 AD setting, Denmark is the place to play out the intrigue and politics of Viking life. Much of Midgard revolves around the raids and heroic deeds of Viking warriors, but there is another important political side to Viking life. Viking politics is steeped in honour and tradition, with laws passed down through oral tradition for centuries. The position of Loki, a trickster god, in the Norse pantheon suggests that the Vikings were well aware of the way men can fool other men, and guarded against it. However, the political tension between Harald and Horik creates a time where many Danes will be fearful and suspicious of the sneaky Harald and his monks. Many see Christianity, and the monks in particular as Harald's spies. Who knows, perhaps they are.

### Adventure Hooks

The following adventure hooks are suitable for a Danish campaign:

- » With Horik secretly raising an army against Harald the players are sent on a mission to Louis' court to seek his aid in restoring the peace.



- » As a long and cold winter seems to stretch on longer than is natural. Horik's law reader claims Harald has cursed the land with his pact with the Christians. How does Harald react to these claims? Whose side are the players on? What is the truth behind the long, cold winter?
- » An alliance of Viking petty kingdoms have risen up to end Danish dominance of the seas. The players are sent to bargain with some of the major players, such as Roslagen and Vestfold, to attempt to break the alliance. When they get their, however, they discover a sinister influence is behind the plot.
- » The players are from a small town within Denmark. When the local monk is killed mysteriously Harald sends an investigator to the town to get to the truth. However, the Inquisitor begins torturing the "heathen" to get to the truth, so the players must get to the bottom of things themselves to save the town from the rack.

## Foreign Powers

There are a number of foreign powers in

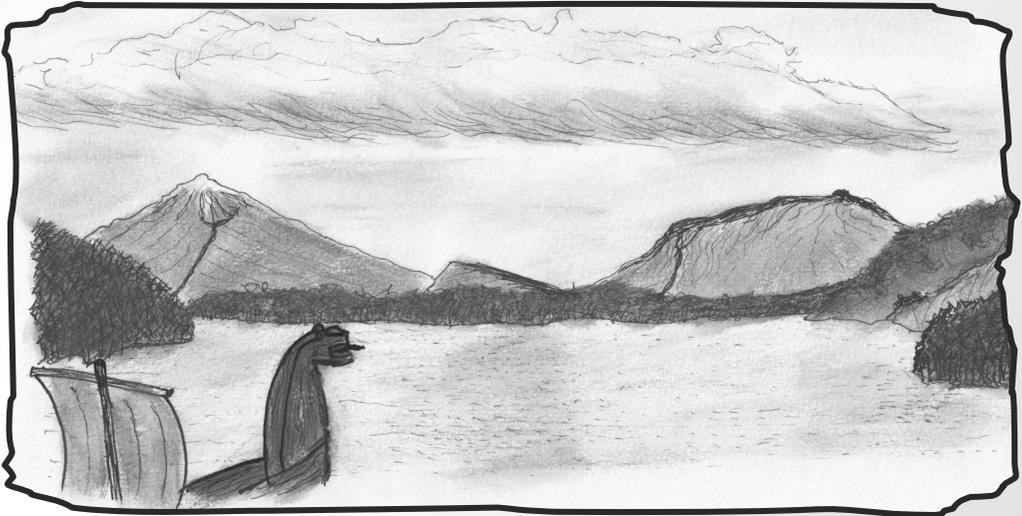
the **Midgard** setting that could play a part in the players' adventures. These different kingdoms and regions are described below.

### Holy Roman Empire

Charlemagne is now dead, but his empire is at its peak, with his capable son, Louis the Pious, on the throne. Whilst Frankish tradition divides a father's inheritance between his offspring, only Louis outlived his father, and so now resides as sole emperor.

Seeing the potential breakup of his and his father's hard won empire following a near-death experience, Louis took steps to establish a system of inheritance of the different titles that made up the empire. He made his sons and nephew kings of the different sections of his empire, but made them all subservient to him as emperor.

However, Louis' nephew, Bernard of Italy, resented this ruling and feared that his independence was threatened. He started to make moves to declare the independence of Italy, but Louis raised a mighty army and hit Bernard with a pre-emptive strike. Bernard surrendered and





was later tried and executed for treason. Being deeply religious, the guilt of this action weighs heavily on Louis.

Currently Louis' attention is occupied in the south east of his empire, fighting border wars against the Slavic peoples of the Balkans.

The empire is a devout place, defending the church of Rome and the power of the papacy, whilst using the legitimacy of the church to consolidate the power of the monarchy. With the collapse of trade that followed the break up of the Roman empire, churches have become central to town life in the Frankish empire. The economy is largely agricultural with the churches dotted around the landscape forming de facto market centres where farmers come to trade and meet. Charlemagne also codified a single law for the empire, and the centres that build up around churches also play a key role in the dispensation of imperial justice, though *missi dominici*—judges brought in from outside the area to hear cases and pronounce judgments.

### Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms

The island of Great Britain is home to a number of different kingdoms, many of which can be described as Anglo-Saxon. These kingdoms were built by people from communities not unlike the Viking peoples, and indeed the traditional gods of the Anglo-Saxons are the same as those of the Vikings. However, the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms are now Christian and culturally seem much closer to Charlemagne than their Viking cousins. Although similar in many ways, the Anglo-Saxons do not share the Viking love and mastery of the sea and regularly welcome Danish traders. Their

lands are fertile and they have plenty of crops and goods to trade.

Although divided into numerous different kingdoms, the Anglo-Saxons see themselves as a cousins with close cultures and languages. Currently no one kingdom dominates, however, Egbert of Wessex, in the south west of Great Britain, is starting to throw his weight around, making aggressive sounds in the direction of Mercia, the previous superpower of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Northumbria and Kent are largely spent powers, their periods of dominance ended in the seventh and sixth centuries respectively, but both remain important centres of religious influence.

### Kingdom of the Picts

The Picts are a Celtic people who live in the northern third of Great Britain and the neighbouring islands. They are largely unified under their king, Oengus II. Theirs is a Christian land, but with a peculiar Celtic twist. They have taken the idea of saints as a central part of their faith and have adapted the worship of many of their old Celtic gods into saint cults. The Picts are currently fighting off an invasion of the Scots, a Gaelic people originating from the North East of Ireland. However, it is a slow invasion of colonisation and skirmishes, with the Scots slowly taking over more and more land over the decades. Oengus has taken the banner of St Andrew as his personal standard and is trying to raise an army to fight off the invading foreigners. However, soon both the Scots and the Picts will have more to worry about as the Vikings start to take an interest in both their lands.



### Irish Petty Kingdoms

The kingdoms of Ireland, known as Tuatha, are many—somewhere in the region of eight to one hundred such kingdoms exist in the 822 AD period. However, these tiny kingdoms live together in relative peace, and all defer to the rule of the Ard Ri, or High King. High Kings are elected, which often leads to periods of violence when an issue of succession becomes closely contested, but whilst a high king is in place, the smaller kingdoms are able to live together to a much greater degree of peace than is typical for the time.

### Germanic Tribes

Much of the eastern frontier of the Holy Roman Empire is populated by tribes of Germanic peoples similar to those already integrated into the Empire. Those closest to the Empire live a life of contradictions:

close to the empire they benefit from trade with it, but likewise they are fiercely independent and fearful of conquest should the mighty Empire flex its muscle. These tribes are beginning to become Christianised by missionaries from the Empire, but many still hold on to their traditional beliefs that are close to those of their Viking cousins to the north: they call Odín Woden and Thor Donar, for example.

### Slavic Tribes

Further east are found the tribes that we would define as Slavic peoples. As little is known of their beliefs they present a creative GM with a blank canvas to invent their own characteristics for the peoples of this region.



# CHAPTER 6: VILLAINS & MONSTERS

This section looks at the different enemies and mythical creatures the characters are likely to face and presents some systems to help you run a combat containing multiple antagonists.

you might face, yet also be a fairly low threat, unless they manage to surround you in great numbers, and enable a nice morale-boosting slaughter-rate for the PCs.

## TYPES OF ENEMY

It is important that the GM does not have to roll multiple casts for all the different enemies that the PCs will face in a given battle, and as such enemies have been graded and a different casting system is used for GM controlled characters. I'll begin by going through the different types of enemy you can use as GM to throw at your players.

**Jarls:** Jarl-level enemies are the most powerful the PCs will face. These are significant individuals of a similar power to, if not more powerful than, the PCs. Jarls have a simplified character sheet to enable the GM to more speedily build their characters.

**Shieldbearers:** Shieldbearers are the second rank of enemy—reasonably skilful and enough of a danger to the PCs to make them worried about attacks from them, but essentially simple for the GM to run and relatively quick to kill.

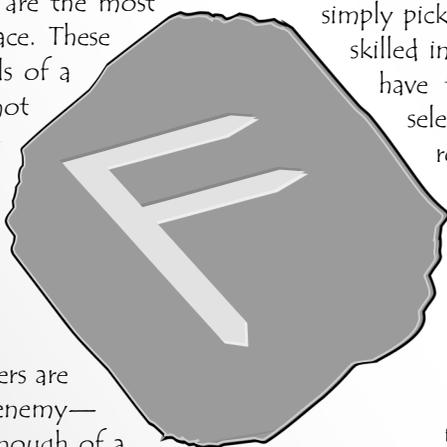
**Warriors:** Warriors are the lowest rung of enemy the PCs will face. These are used to represent the large numbers of opponents

## Enemy Rank

Each enemy you are likely to face will have a Rank score, which determines much of their capabilities. A rank score will range between 1 and 4. The different skill levels and qualities for each class of enemy are calculated as follows:

**Jarls:** A Jarl-level enemy's rank has the least effect on its qualities and skills. You can choose whatever levels in qualities you desire, but when it comes to skills you simply pick a list of skills the Jarl is skilled in. They are considered to have their rank in each skill selected, and half their rank, rounded down, in all other skills. When determining your courage, only set the bonus, not the cast—the GM cast (see below) will be used for any cast you make.

**Shieldbearers:** Shieldbearers' rank determines the base for all of their qualities (i.e. Defence is 1+rank, health is 3+rank, etc). You also pick which skills you think are appropriate for your the shieldbearer and they are considered to have their rank in levels in these skills, but





no ranks in any other skills.

**Warriors and Warbands:** Warriors operate in “warbands” of up to four. The warrior’s rank determines the base Defence, Courage bonus and Health, but they have no Wyrð, Weapons Skill 1 and no skills to speak of.

When in a Warband of equal-ranked warriors combines, each warrior past the first adds 1 to the warband’s Defence, Weapon skill and Courage bonus.

Where a mixture of different ranked warriors are combined into one warband use the highest rank as the base but only add a +1 bonus where the other warriors’ total rank equals the lead warrior’s rank—e.g. a band of a rank 4, 3, 2 and 1 warriors will have a base rank of 4, but gain a +1 bonus (3+2+1 is 6, but the 2 points over are wasted, better to split the rank 2 warrior on its own). It is advised that you combine warriors in this way only when desperate—the whole point of warriors is that they make your life pretty easy as a GM.

See below for more details of how a warrior’s rank is applied to how it works in the game.

## THE GAMESMASTER’S CAST

The GM makes a single cast for any given action or any particular action, or, in combat, for all actions within a given round. He rolls a number of dice calculated from the following formula:

$$2 + \begin{matrix} \text{Number of PCs} \\ \text{In the scene} \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} 2 \text{ per Jarl} \\ \text{in the scene} \end{matrix}$$

Once rolled the GM distributes the tokens generated from these dice as normal. This

result, along with different modifiers for applied depending upon the type of roll made and the class of enemy acting, is then used to calculate the results. The different types of resolutions and how they differ for each class of enemy are described below. If you are making a cast outside of combat you don’t apply the additional bonus for Jarls—if you are rolling for a Jarl only apply one +2 bonus to the cast, but for Warriors and Shieldbearers don’t apply any bonuses.

## Recasting in Combat

The point of the Gamesmaster’s cast is to reduce the complexity of the rune casting dice roll system when a GM has multiple characters to worry about. Outside of combat, requiring a recast does not usually add much extra complexity to the situation, but in combat having to reroll the dice can cause big problems.

As such the GM does not reroll when asked for a recast, he simply alters the outcome according to the different skills used on the new roll (see below). The dice roll segment of the result remains the same throughout the segment.

## Skill and Courage Casts

Most basic skill casts, whether using a skill action in combat or otherwise, are resolved as follows:

**Jarls:** Jarls can distribute a further number of tokens equal to their ranks in a given skill as a PC can.

**Shieldbearers:** If a shield bearer possesses a skill add their rank to the number of tokens in the Past Rune stone.



**Warriors:** warriors are not generally considered to have skills and as such gain no benefit beyond the cast dice.

## Wyrð Points and Rune Gifts

Jarls and Shieldbearers can make use of rune gifts, but Warriors cannot. Their Wyrð score is based on their rank, but without having Legend or wanting to calculate their rune gift total, give them a number of Wyrð points equal to their rank multiplied by their total ranks of rune gifts.

When you give an enemy a rune gift it might have a bonus calculated based on a god rune score. As enemies don't have god runes, simply use their rank in place of a Half god rune bonus and double their rank in place of a full god rune bonus.

If you wish you can create special rune gifts that only your enemies have access to. For such powers you don't need to worry about assigning them to a specific rune, but you should work out their level as this dictates their cost and affects the enemy's Wyrð pool.

## ENEMIES IN COMBAT

In combat you make a single cast each round in which you have enemies that are acting. This roll determines what every enemy does in that round of combat, but different classes of enemy apply the results of the cast in different ways.

### Weapons and Armour

Enemies can be armed with any weapons and armour you see fit. You can also develop your own armour and weapon types to represent natural weapons and armour.

Bonuses from weapons and armour are applied as follows:

**Jarls:** Jarls receive the full armour benefits afforded to PCs. Their weapons work as normal.

**Shieldbearers:** Shield bearers only have one armour location which has 10 base structure points. When they are immobilised PCs can target specific locations to achieve the usual benefits. Their weapons work as normal.

**Warriors:** Warriors have only one armour location and do not gain any structure points for their armour, but gain the benefit of its hardness when they take damage—see Wounds below for full details. In a warband where warriors are identically armed, each attack is resolved with the same weapon. Where a warband has a mixture of weapons, you should make sure you use each weapon once a round.

Some enemies may be unarmed, or armed with natural weapons, usually these will have an action speed equal to 5-rank and natural weapons will deal 1+ rank damage at AP 1—supernatural claws will do 2x rank damage and AP score equal to the creature's rank.

### Segments and Actions

All classes of enemy have their own Weapon Skill score, and as such this is used to determine which segments they can act in.

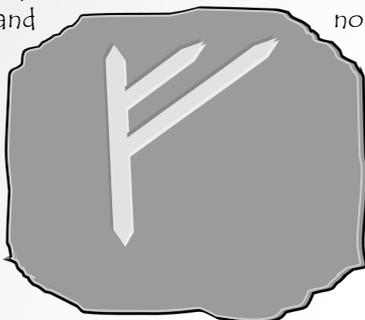
### Declaration Initiative

Basic actions in combat are declared as follows:

**Jarls:** For Jarls, calculate their equivalent of Weapon Skill + Alertness and declare in the usual order.

**Shieldbearers:** Shieldbearers declare on their rank only. When this still leaves their declaration tied with a PC, the shield bearer declares first.

**Warriors:** Warriors always declare their actions first. If there are multiple warrior types in an encounter, they declare in ascending rank order.



**Jarls:** calculate the speed of the action as normal, and reduce this by the tokens you have in the Future Rune stone, remembering that you can distribute bonus tokens here based on the skill bonus.

### Shieldbearers and Warriors:

Other enemies actions are resolved simply by taking the tokens on the Future Rune stone away from their base action speed.

## Overcoming Action Difficulty or Defence

The score used to determine whether an enemy overcomes the difficulty of a given action is determined as follows:

**Jarls:** Add up the number of tokens in the Past Rune stone, plus you can distribute further tokens here based on the Jarl's skill bonus in the same way as with an action outside of combat.

**Shieldbearers :** Where the Shieldbearer has a skill that applies, add the rank bonus to the tokens in the Past Rune stone, otherwise just use the tokens on the stone.

**Warriors:** If making a simple attack or defence action add the warband's full rank bonus to the tokens in the Past Rune stone (warriors are assumed to have basic combat skills), otherwise add just the warband size bonus to the tokens on the stone.

## Action Speed

Calculate the speed an enemy's action resolves at as follows:

## Damage

All enemies damage based on their weapon in the same way as PCs.

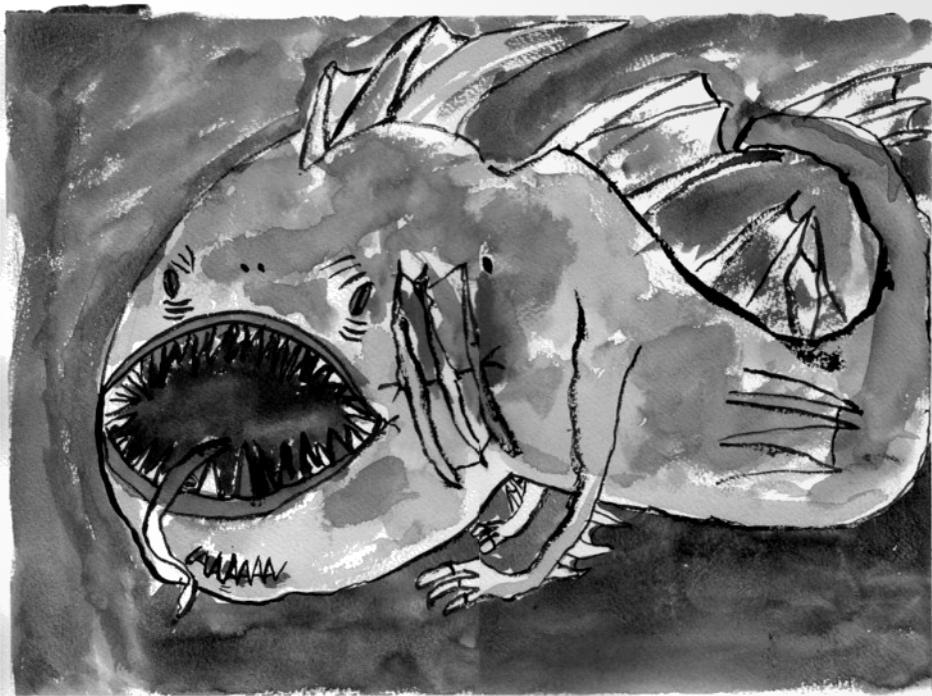
## Wounds

Calculate an enemy's wounds as follows:

**Jarls:** Jarls have four wound levels: the first has 2x Health boxes at no penalty, the second 1.5x health with a +1 Merkstave penalty, the third 1x health at a +2 Merkstave penalty and the final one at 0.5x Health at +4 Merkstave.

**Shieldbearers:** Shieldbearers have 3x health wounds. The suffer no penalty until these are gone, at which point they die.

**Warriors:** Warriors do not have wounds as such—each blow that hits a warrior warband must overcome its Health (or rank as they are the same) + the hardness of its armour with the damage caused. If multiples of this total are achieved multiple Warriors are slain—e.g. if a rank 2 warband armoured with hardened leather is dealt 13 damage. This slays 3 individuals (4 for



each), but the remaining point of damage is wasted. Where a warband is made up of warriors that are of different rank or with different armour remove those with lowest combined health + armour hardness bonus first.

## CREATURES OF VIKING MYTH

Here are some example creatures—a Wikipedia primer if you will—to get you started thinking about what creatures you might get your PCs to fight in their **Midgard** sagas. The research that has gone into this is very limited. Feel free to do your own research, but the selection I provide below gives a decent range of unusual creatures that will not feel out of place. I don't provide any stats for these creatures as you can stat them up as Jarls,

Shieldbearers or Warriors as you see fit.

**Alfar (Elves):** Norse elves are the major inspiration for Tolkien's elves in the Middle Earth books. There are two different types of elf in North myth: Ljósálfar, the light elves who seem to represent the perfection of humanity; and Svartálfar, or Dökkálfar, Black (or Dark) elves, who are corrupted, cruel and twisted versions of the elves who prefer to live underground—I personally see these as being very similar to Tolkien's Orcs. Whilst some sources refer to dark elves and dwarves possibly being the same thing, I prefer to have dark elves as a separate cruel creature, whilst dwarves are merely greedy smiths. Half elves are also noted.

**Draugr:** These undead are the bodies of Viking warriors risen from their graves. They are reported to have great strength and the ability to turn into a smoky form.



**Dvergr (Dwarves):** Subterranean little people, known for being highly skilled smiths and for their greed.

**Einherjar:** Spirits of brave warriors who have fallen in battle and now live out the glory of battle and the following feast of the gods on a daily basis. Perhaps unlikely to be used in a game, unless they have perhaps been summoned back to Midgard for dark purposes and the PCs would need to find a way to free them.

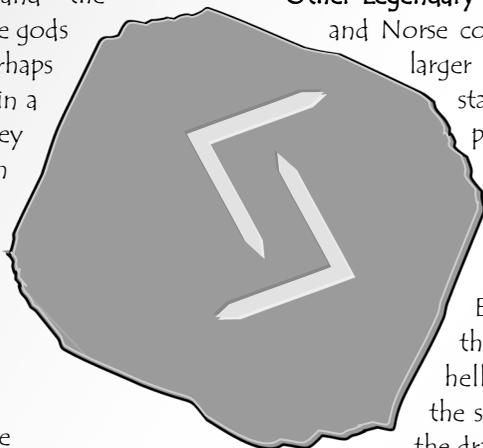
**Jötnar:** Giants are common in Norse mythology, and are often seen as being peers of the gods. Some internet sources suggest that they range in size from bigger than the universe to about the same size as men. I would suggest making most that your players encounter a little bigger than men. References are often found to Bergisar (mountain giants), Eldjötnar (fire giants), Hrímfursar (frost giants), and Trolls.

**Haugbui:** Undead who cannot leave its burial mound

**Landvættir and Rá:** Nature spirits came up regularly in my research. Some are large creatures of significant power, whilst others are small and mischievous, seeming similar to faeries in Celtic lore. They are often referred to as guardian spirits, protecting specific places. Examples include Bergsrá (mountain spirits), Huldra (forest spirits), Havsrá and Sjövættir (sea spirits), and Sjörá (freshwater spirits).

**Valkyries:** These female spirits took the spirits of the dead to Valhalla. Perhaps difficult to work in to a game as an enemy unless corrupted or bewitched by evil magic.

**Other Legendary Creatures:** Many legends and Norse cosmology include much larger creatures of godlike status. Whilst these are probably not suitable for games, perhaps they could have (much weaker) spawn that roam the earth. Examples include Fenris the wolf, Garmr the hellhound, Jörmungandr the sea serpent and Nídhögg the dragon.



## SPECIAL SKILLS AND GIFTS

Some enemies for your characters will have special powers and skills that are beyond the normal ken of man. Here are some new skills and gifts that you can use to make your opponents more threatening.

### New Skill: Gateways (Odin skill)

Gateways is a new skill reserved for NPCs only, unless with specific GM permission. It involves the opening, closing and manipulation of gateways to other realms within the World Tree. See below for details of its uses. It also allows characters to understand the workings of Gates between realms.



## New Rune: the Blank Rune

Whilst the use of a blank rune stone in runic divination is a modern addition with no record in history, it does provide a potential for those powers that come from outside of the heroic Viking experience. In this case it is used, along with the Gateways skill, to allow the ability to open gateways to other domains within the Viking cosmology. It is recommended that this skill is not available to player characters.

The blank rune represents experiences outside of Viking culture, and is often tied to magical powers that twist the very fabric of the world. Creatures or villains with blank rune gifts regain Wyrð equal to their total ranks of blank rune gifts when they seek power outside Viking culture at the expense of their position within society.

**Close Gate [Special]:** With the use of the Gateways skill without any rune gifts you can close gateways open to other realms. Spend 1 point of Wyrð and make a contested Gateways cast with the magician who opened the gate. The difficulty for each cast is set by the opposing character's courage modifier.

**Open Gate [1]:** With this gift the character can make a short Gateways cast to open a gate to another realm. Spend a point of Wyrð and make your cast. The difficulty is based on the strength of the barrier between realms in the chosen location. Towns and

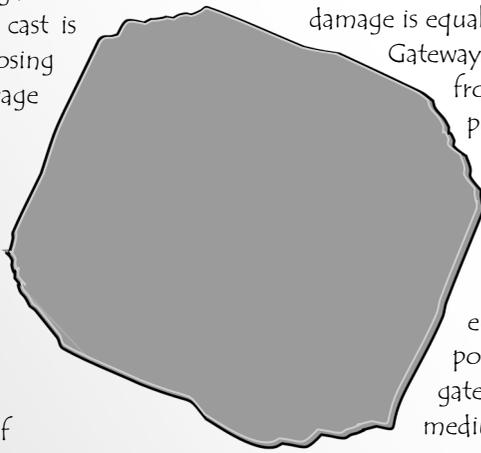
agricultural land is difficult (5-6) and heavily populated areas are very difficult (7+), whilst wild areas are easier (3-4) and areas of mystery and religious power, such as a sacred grove or holy island, are much easier (1-2).

Multiply the success margin by two to determine the number minutes the gate will remain open whilst you are not concentrating on maintaining it. Whilst concentrating on keeping it open you cannot make any other actions and must make a courage cast at a difficulty equal to the damage you take if you are attacked whilst concentrating.

You can make the cast easier by ritual preparation of the site with a long Sidr cast at the same difficulty. The success margin applies as a carry-over to the Open Gate cast.

**Gate Strike [2]:** Using this gift you can make an attack by opening a small gate to an elemental realm for a short but deadly instant. With this attack you can make either a flame attack or a frost attack. Base damage is equal to 2 plus your ranks in the Gateways skill. All damage from frost attacks is armour piercing, whilst flame attacks do double damage, but the damage isn't armour piercing.

**Summon [3]:** This power enables you to summon a powerful creature through the gate. Summon a creature as a medium Gateways action, the success margin indicating the rank of shieldbearer summoned (max 4).

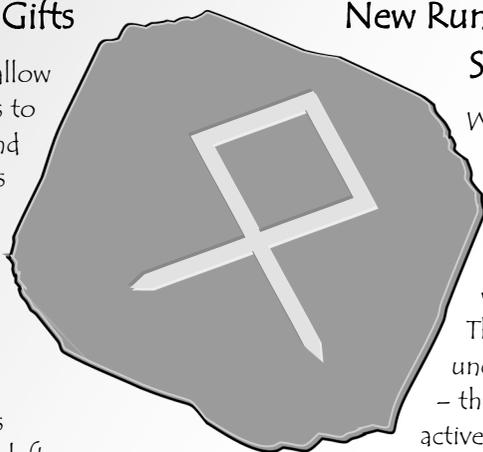




## Rank 4 Rune Gifts

Another option to allow creatures and villains to have greater and more mysterious powers than the player characters is to allow them access to a mysterious fourth rank of rune gift. What these gifts might involve I've left deliberately vague. If you need to have a special gift power to allow a villain to be able to achieve a certain effect to get your adventure to work, just decide what it does and pick a rune that it fits best with and make it that rune's rank 4 gift.

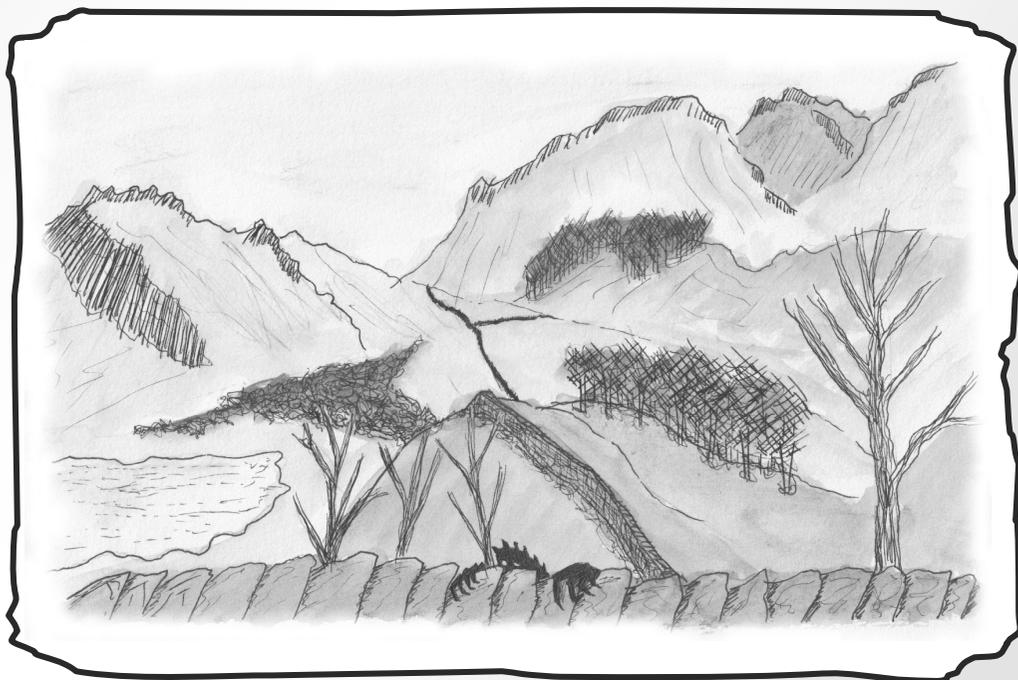
Here's an example rank 4 gift that I've used in the sample adventure that follows:



## New Rune Gift: Bind the Soul [Othala 4]

With this power you can bind someone's soul to yours so that they cannot act to harm you and will actively work to protect you. They feel a special, unexplainable love for you – they may hate you but will actively look out for you and look to keep you safe. Make a

Fate Weaving cast of any action length you choose, opposed by an instant Courage cast on the part of the target. The success margin indicates the time (in terms of a number of similar action lengths to the action you took) the target spends under your influence.





# CHAPTER 7: ISLE OF DARKNESS

This chapter provides you with a sample adventure to help you build your own **Midgard** campaign. It is set in the town of Terrak, a small independent settlement just south of Halogaland.

soon seduced the monks into his service and began to plot his revenge on the children of Svargrim, sending a force of Svartalfar to raze Terrak to the ground.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

An evil fire giant and his clan of svartalfar servants have infiltrated Lindisfarne priory and have struck out across the north sea to attack Terrak, the character's home village. After successfully defending their village from marauding Svartalfar, the source of the attack is divined and the PCs must travel to face their enemy. There they discover that the fire giant intends to summon further creatures from Muspellheim to wreak his vengeance on Terrak. The party seeks out the wise woman who banished the giant initially, where they learn that an evil Seidr has stolen her wand. She asks the characters to retrieve her wand, promising to enchant it so that they can banish the fire giant themselves.

## BACKGROUND

Decades ago, an evil fire giant named Blotnorr was defeated in battle by Svargrim Gunnarsson, the chieftain of Terrak and banished to Svartalfheim by his Volva, Hengeka. In Svartalfheim Blotnorr was able to seduce a clan of svartalfar into his service, and eventually break free from that dark domain when the monks of Lindisfarne dabbled in an occult ritual that opened a gateway to Svartalfheim. He had

## USING THIS ADVENTURE

As you use this adventure you will be presented with scenes. It is helpful to the players if the scenes are treated as separate entities, rather than flowing too easily into each other. This creates a Viking saga feel to your game. In addition, each scene begins with an introductory verse, provided in a very amateurish approximation of the style of the Viking Eddas. Reading this out at the start of each scene helps to define its start point and set the atmosphere for the rest of the scene.

## SCENE 1: ATTACK IN THE NIGHT

The story begins with the PCs awaking in the black of night to find their village under attack from unknown sources.

**Introductory Verse:** *Quiet night / Clear dark skies / Myriad Stars shine bright / Yet with moon full of wane / Draws dark over noble Terrak / And shadows draw around, Whilst heroes lie a-bed.*

**Elite Svartalfar:** (one per PC); Rank 3 Shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Stealth, Athletics, Alertness; Def 4, WS 3, Co 3, He 4; Weapon: claws (Dam 6, Spd 3, AP 3); Armour: Chain (H 3, Str 20); Gifts: body

of water (1), ambush (1), at one with the shadows (2)

Wyrð	Armour	Wounds
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00000	00000	00000
00		00
00000	00000	00000
00000	00000	00000
00		00
00000	00000	00000
00000	00000	00000
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At the start, ask the PCs to make a simple, opposed Alertness versus Stealth cast, with a +2 skill bonus to the Svartalfar (if the Svartalfar use at one with the shadows they must all spend a point). From this point split the action into short action (2 min) phases to time characters different actions, such as drawing weapons, donning armour, etc. The Svartalfar will act as follows:

In the first phase they will be moving into position. Characters looking can spot them with an opposed Alertness versus Stealth cast, success margin determining how much they manage to see about the attackers (with no margin they see movement only, with a margin of +1 they see hooded humanoids, with two they can identify that the intruders move with a martial bearing, and with three or more they can see the Svartalfar's faces, potentially making a further difficulty 2

Legends cast to identify them as Svartalfar). Success margin can carry over to a ranged attack, after which the Svartalfar attacked will retreat into the woods and start the action sequence again from turn 1.

In the second phase they will charge in to attack any houses where there has been obvious movement or where a character has come out, or light a torch (+2 skill bonus to characters looking for the attackers now). After one attack they will retreat into the shadows. If PCs pursue they will climb trees to avoid them.

In the third phase, if they have lit a torch, they will throw it at a house with a PC in it. If being pursued they will attempt to ambush the PC, if left alone after they retreated they will go back to the first phase on the sequence.

In the fourth phase all PCs should be out of their homes and open to attack, start combat proper at this point.

After one has fallen they will retreat and try to escape, GM fiat for stealth if necessary, as it is critical that the Svartalfar get away and allow you to restart combat on the next wave. Be honest if you have to do this and award the victim with some bonus Wyrð to compensate, say 1 point per point of success margin that they would have otherwise beaten the svartalfar's stealth cast by.

## SCENE 2: THE AFTERMATH

In this scene the PCs and the town chieftain discuss the next course of action.

**Introductory Verse:** *Cold grief / Calls for vengeance / Whence came the Svartalfar*



*from? // Heroes called / Fireplace crackles / Mead is supped with wise council / A quest will begin.*

Terrak's chieftain, Storlu Svargrimsson, summons the PCs to his hall to discuss the attacks. At first he is loathe to believe their reports of Svartalfar, claiming such creatures to be stories told to frighten children.

With proof or persuasive argument he will be convinced to call for a divination (either from a PC or he will call for an NPC volva who can five-stone divine).

This is a difficulty 2 cast. Results as follows:

*Norns:* mostly successful (effectively useless)

*Five-Stone:* meaning: recover a stolen item then cross the sea westwards to an island monastery, problems: a banished enemy of the chieftain's father.

*Seven-Stone:* meaning recover Hengeka's wand then travel to Lindisfarne (island off the north east coast of Northumbria), problems: Blotnorr seeking revenge against Svargrim Gunnarsson.

Following this information being revealed ask the PCs for a Legends cast, which will allow the characters to know some details of the story of Blotnorr and Hengeka—despite it being his father's tale, Storlu does not know the tale as he was very young when his father died. This cast is difficulty 2 for if a seven-stone cast was done and difficulty 3 if a five-stone cast. The following information is known dependent on the success margin achieved:

- » *Basic:* Svargrim and his volva, Hengeka, defeated the fire giant Blotnorr.

- » *Success margin 1:* Hengeka banished Blotnorr to Svartalfarheim, and Blotnorr swore vengeance on Svargrim's lineage.

- » *Success margin 2:* Hengeka left the village after an argument with Storlu.

- » *Success margin 3:* Hengeka and Storlu fought over Storlu's refusal to hunt down a thief who stole Hengeka's wand.

- » *Success margin 5:* Hengeka used her wand to banish Blotnorr.

The characters should now plan to visit Hengeka, who lives in the mountains above the town. Storlu will be reluctant, but can be talked round, but in doing so will tell them that they will have to go without him.

## SCENE 3: THE ANCIENT WISE-WOMAN

Following their encounter with the Svartalfar, the characters travel into the mountains overlooking Terrak to find Hengeka.

**Introductory verse:** *Steep Slope / Cold grey rock / Above the tree line / The snow-white peak rises // Dark cave / Ravens in flight above / The ancient wise woman / And her secrets lie within.*

Hengeka lives in a small wooden hut in the mountains a day's hike from Terrak. She will be friendly as they approach and expect to be able to help them in some way. However, she is reluctant to help those she sees as being sent by Storlu. They will need to win her round with their arguments. She will tell them that her wand was stolen by a selfish, hateful hermit seidr, called Iorek,



but she doesn't know where to find lorek.

By divining on the action of tracking down the thief they will be able to know the following:

*Norms:* mostly successful (effectively useless)

*Five-Stone:* meaning: travel north and find a cave in the mountains, problems: a hermit seiðr who was the thief.

*Seven-Stone:* meaning: travel to Niðaros and seek a cave in the mountains above the town, problems: a hermit seiðr called lorek.

Whether they make divination or not, the characters can also make a legends cast. The difficulty of this cast depends on whether the characters have successfully divined on the course of action, and if so what level of detail they have divined. If they have successfully completed a seven-stone divination the difficulty is only 2, whereas it is difficulty 3 if a five-stone divination has been completed. If they have not successfully made a divination, the cast is difficulty 5. This cast will reveal the following:

- » *Basic:* They will know of a story of a dark seiðr called lorek, who stole a powerful wand
- » *Success margin 1:* lorek lives far to the north in a cave above Niðaros.
- » *Success margin 2:* lorek is known to command the animals and defends his territory aggressively.

Finally, if all of the player's efforts to find out where the thief may have come to no useful outcome, Hengeka will tell them that all she knows is that the thief fled north. They will know that the town of Niðaros is a major trading port in the north and will be a good place to go to ask

around about the wand.

## The Journey North

Journeying to Niðaros is relatively simple. A Tactics check will tell the characters that an approach overland will let them sneak up on lorek, whilst a journey by sea will require them to dock in the town and may lead to lorek being alerted.

A sea voyage is a two-day difficulty 1 sailing action, with no navigation roll required.

An overland journey first requires a difficulty 6 instant Navigation cast (any one character can make this roll). The Legends cast made about lorek's location can be used to carry over success for this cast, This is then followed by all characters making week-long, difficulty 3 athletics cast, with the successes from the Navigation cast being added as a carry-over bonuses to all such casts. Use the worst result to determine travel time. If the worst result is a failure, double the travel time and apply a +1 merkstave penalty due to the environmental effects to all characters for every merkstave token on the worst cast.

If they stop off in Niðaros they will be asked their business, if they reveal too much lorek may be alerted through his rat spies that live in the town. Similarly characters who are travelling to Niðaros to find out more about lorek, they will be able to find out where they can find lorek by asking around the town (Difficulty 2 long diplomacy tests until they achieve success), but this will alert lorek to their presence and intentions.



# SCENE 4: IOREK'S DOMAIN

As the characters approach Iorek's domain they will see a single lone mountain that stands out amongst the others – it is black and barren, whilst the others are lined with trees and capped with snow.

**Introductory Verse:** *Black peak / Alone in the range / Barren and foreboding it towers high / Yet no trees line its base / Nor blessed be it by a white cloak of snow.*

As they approach the mountain they realise that the blackness comes from a combination of black rock and twisted, dead tree trunks.

If the Iorek is aware of the character's intentions from their time in Nidaros they will be stalked as they even approach the mountain by two of his wolves. If the wolves are detected (opposed Stealth versus Survival casts) and engaged they will simply run away, but will return to tracking them shortly after. The terrain is craggy and broken, providing plenty of cover.

Iorek lives in a large hut high up the mountain, made from the twisted, blackened remains of the trees found around the mountain. It can be spotted from the base of the mountain with a quick difficulty 2 survival cast.

If they approach from overland, or from the town but Iorek has not been alerted to their presence they will make an opposed stealth versus survival cast to see if the wolf patrols that guard Iorek's cave spot them. If they do they will attack them, and will shortly be joined by the rats. When the first wolf is slain Iorek himself will join the fight.

The characters can attempt to talk to Iorek and bargain with him, but he treats them with hostility from the off. Even if they can talk him round (at which point he will call off his creatures) he will never give up the wand, nor can he be persuaded to leave his mountain for any reason.

**Iorek:** rank 3 thane; Skills: Athletics, Sax, Deception, Legends, Seid, Fate Weaving, Rune Divination; Def 3, WS 3, Co 4, He 4; Weapons: broad spear (Dam 5, Spd 12, AP 1); Armour: head bone helm (H 3, str 3), arms thick cloth (H 0, str 10), body thick cloth (H 0, Str 16), Legs thick cloth (H 0, Str 14); Rune gifts: Way of Peace (3), Twist of fate (1), Weaving Strands (2), Bond the Soul (4), Cast for the Other (2), Seven-Stone Cast (3), The Branch that Grows (2).

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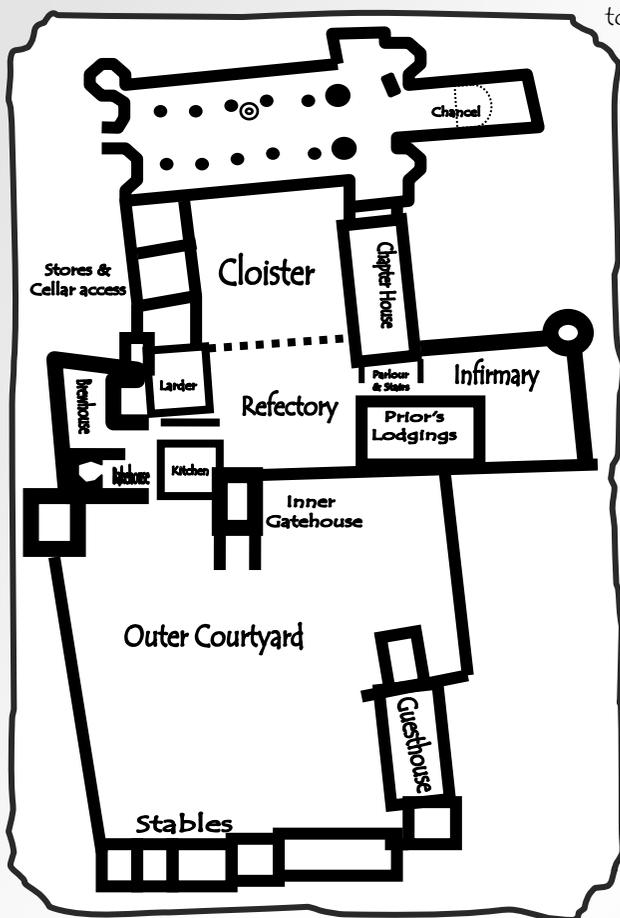
Wounds: 00000 000 (no pen),  
00000 0 (+1),  
0000 (+2),  
00 (+4)

Armour: arms 00000 00000  
body 00000 00000  
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legs 00000 0000  
head 000

**Wolves (x4):** Rank 3 Shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Stealth, Wrestling, Survival; Def 4, WS 3, Co 3, He 4; Weapon: claws (Dam 4, Spd 3, AP 1); Armour: natural Fur (H 1);

Wounds: 00000 00000 00  
00000 00000 00  
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00000 00000 00

**Rats (x20):** rank 1 warriors; Weapon: bite



to wrest the wand from Iorek's dead grasp. Whilst using the wand, a character with ranks in either Seid or Fate Weaving gains 3 bonus ranks in the Gateways skill.

### Crossing the Seas

PCs will then travel to Lindisfarne (short diff 3 navigation action, carrying over to a diff 2 week sailing action).

## SCENE 5: THE DARK ISLE

With the wand in hand, the characters will face Blotnorr in a final battle. The characters approach Lindisfarne and must weigh up how to attack. Within the priory more Svartalfar await, along with a corrupt monk who has learnt dark magical powers and Blotnorr himself.

(Dam 2, Spd 4, AP 1), Armour: natural fur (H 1).

Iorek will fight to very near death, assuming he is too powerful for the PCs, but once down to his last 3 wounds he will retreat to his hut. Once in this state he will still refuse to hand over the wand, claiming they will have to kill him first. Whilst in the hut he has been spending the time weaving a bind the soul on a suitable character. He will try to keep them talking (opposed deception versus empathy to realise this) so that he can weave a stronger cast and attempt to bind half the party to get them to slay each other.

After the encounter the PCs should be able

**Introductory Verse:** *Sail close / Brave warriors / Under cover of darkness / Strike axes for vengeance / And purge the heart of evil from the dark isle. // Blotnorr / Vile Giant / Defiler of the World / In trepidation approaches / A great battle will begin / And will end only in blood.*

As the characters approach the isle they may make a simple difficulty 3 Tactics casts to identify easy points of access (which will bring them up into the cellar area marked on the map. If they fail this cast, however they must either try subterfuge (opposed Deception versus Empathy) with the monks at the west entrance or outer gatehouse.



## Encounters

If any of the svartalfar who attacked Terrak escaped they will have returned and the monastery will be expecting them. The Church door will be magically sealed (difficulty 5 Gateways cast to break). They will be granted easy access at the outer gatehouse and then attacked in the outer court by the escaped elite Svartalfar plus the Svartalfar monks (two per PC).

As they move around the priory they will encounter human monks who will try to flee and raise the alarm.

If the priory is caught unawares the PCs will not encounter the elite svartalfar, but will encounter the svartalfar monks (half in the Cloister, the other half in the chapter house). If captured and questioned they will be fearful of the prior and his "demons" and may indicate that the master demon performs infernal rites in the chancel.

The prior is to be found in his lodging, but if the PCs beat the Svartalfar he will try to attack them from a distance with his magic.

**Prior:** rank 2 thane; Skills: Sax, Diplomacy, Legends, Seid, Fate Weaving, Gateways\*; Def 3, WS 2, Co 5, He 4; Weapons: Dagger (Dam 2, Spd 8, AP 1), Flame/Frost attack (Dam 10/5, Spd 11, AP 0/5); Armour: head none, arms thick cloth (H 0, str 10), body thick cloth (H 0, Str 16), Legs thick cloth (H 0, Str 14); Rune gifts: Twist of fate (1), Open Gate (1), Gate Strike (2), Summon (3).

Wyrd: OOOOO OOOOO OOOO

Wounds: OOOOO OOO (no pen),  
OOOOO O (+1),  
OOOO (+2),  
OO (+4)

Armour: arms: OOOOO OOOOO

Body: OOOOO OOOOO  
OOOOO O

Legs: OOOOO OOOO

**Human Monks:** rank 1 warriors; Weapon: unarmed (Dam 1, Spd 4, AP 0), Armour: none.

**Svartalfar Monks (x 10):** rank 2 shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Athletics, Alertness; Def 3, WS 2, Co 2, He 3; Weapons: claws (Dam 4, Spd 7, AP 2); Armour: thick cloth (H 0; Str 20).

Wounds:

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Armour:

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OOOOO OOOOO



## The Final Battle

Blotnorr is found in the Chancel, where he is chanting over a brazier. He is accompanied by three elite svartalfar who did not take part in the attack on Terrak. If the PCs manage to gain entry into the chapel without fighting the remaining villains elsewhere in the monastery, they will all flood into the chapel to fight the party before they get to the Chancel to encounter Blotnorr and his bodyguard. Blotnorr appears as a large man, about seven feet tall, with a reddish-copper skin and bright orange flames for his hair, eyebrows and beard. He is naked except for a black loincloth, but his skin shines with a metallic sheen.

When the PCs enter the Chancel area, Blotnorr smashes the brazier to the floor, sending up a wall of flame around him, which he will use to send out fireballs against the PCs (his Gate Strike attacks), but will protect him against all attacks so long as he remains within it. Melee attackers take 4 AP 2 damage just for making the attack. The wall can be dispelled on a Difficulty 5 Gateways cast. The Svartalfar will attack the PCs and fight to the death as they are Blotnorr's most loyal warriors.

Whilst Blotnorr cannot be killed by the PCs weapons, he will take injury as normal. However, when he is reduced to the zero wounds his body will burn up but a small fire will remain, with his face visible within the flames. The flames will not be extinguished by any means, but a difficulty 6 Gateways cast will banish him back to Svartalfarheim.

**Blotnorr:** Rank 4 Jarl; Skills: Athletics, Alertness, Command, Gateways, Might, Sax, Sidr, Tactics, Wrestling. Def: 5, WS 4,

Co 5, He 5. Weapons: Flaming Broadsword (Dam 10, Spd 4 AP 2), Fireball (Dam 12 Spd 5, AP 0); Armour: Natural (H 5, Str 20, one location); Gifts: Open Gate (1), Gate Strike (2), Look of Dread (2), Strike of Thunder (2), Might of the Aurox (2), Simple Strength (2), Breakthrough Defences (1).

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Armour: 00000 00000  
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Wounds: 00000 00000 (no pen),  
00000 000 (+1),  
00000 (+2),  
000 (+4)

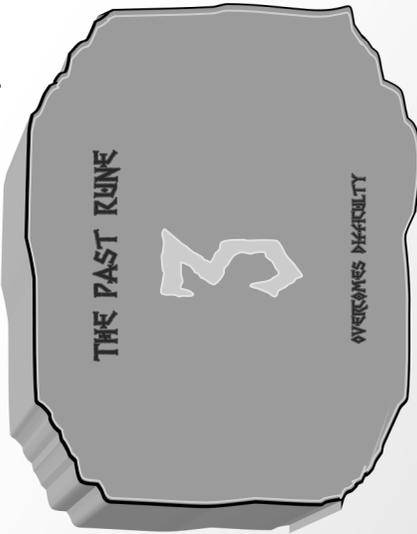
**Elite Svartalfar (x3):** Rank 3 Shieldbearer; Skills: Swords, Athletics, Tactics; Def 4, WS 3, Co 3, He 4; Weapon: Black Sword (Dam 7, Spd 3, AP 3), Shield; Armour: Chain (H 3, Str 20); Gifts: body of water (1), Shield Defence (1), Shieldbearer (2).

Wyrð	Armour	Wounds
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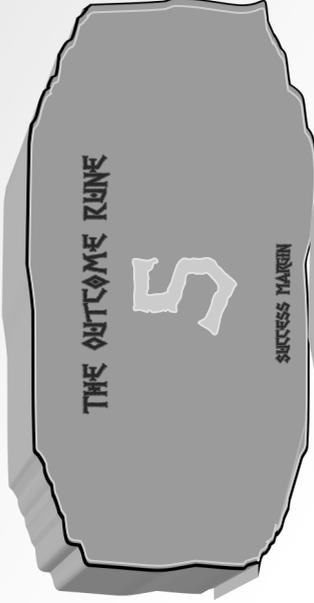
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# RUNE CASTING



Place a number of tokens in the *Cast Runes* stone equal to your rank in the skill.

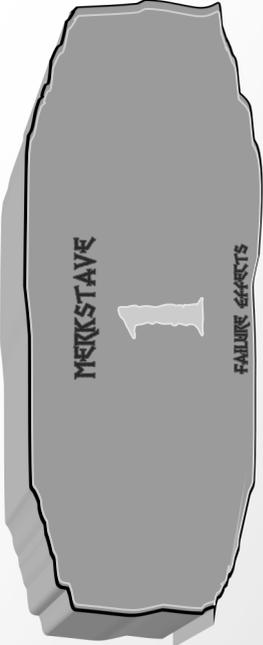
Roll a number of d8s equal to your *God Rune* for the action, plus any bonus dice from spent Wyrld points (max 2 + Legend).



Place an additional token in the *Cast Runes* stone for every 6, 7 or 8 rolled.

Place a token in the *Past Rune* stone for every dice that comes up with a 3.

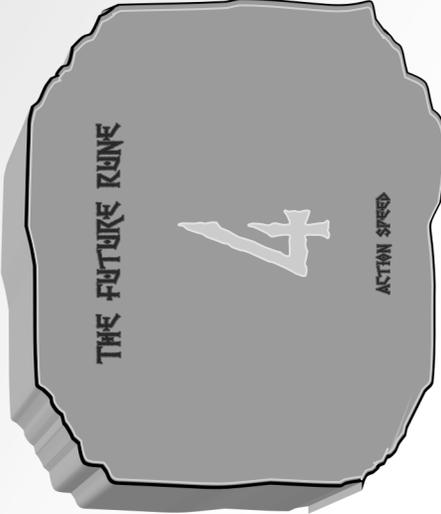
Place a token in the *Future Rune* stone for every dice that comes up with a 4.



Place a token in the *Outcome Rune* stone for every dice that comes up with a 5.

Place a token in the *Merkstave* stone for every dice that come up with a 1.

Distribute the tokens in your *Cast Runes* stone between your other stones, or to remove a *Merkstave* token.







Feared for centuries for their bloodthirsty love of battle, and their dedication to their pagan gods, the Vikings were a mighty force to be reckoned with in dark ages Europe.

But there was a world of dark forces, where great evil plotted the destruction of the world. But there were great heroes who fought for honour and to protect their loved ones, and for the sheer joy of battle. It is a cold, dark world of grim horrors and epic quests.

Midgard: Viking Legends is a roleplaying game, where you take on the role of a legendary Viking hero and complete your own epic quests.

Written by Ben Redmond, one half of the design team behind multi Ennie-nominated Etherscope.



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