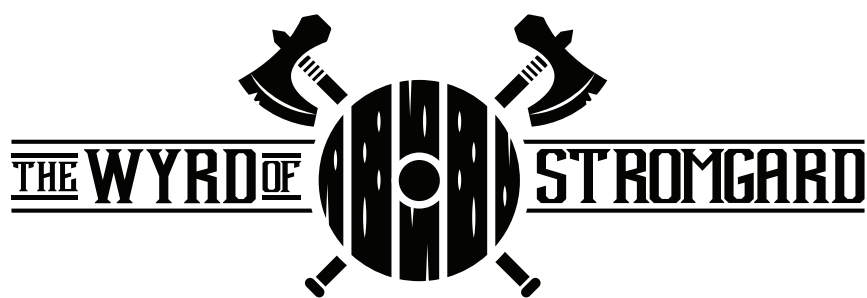


THE WYRD OF STORMGARD

SAM GUNDAKER



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Wyrd of Stromgard was built for use with Dungeon World,
designed by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel.

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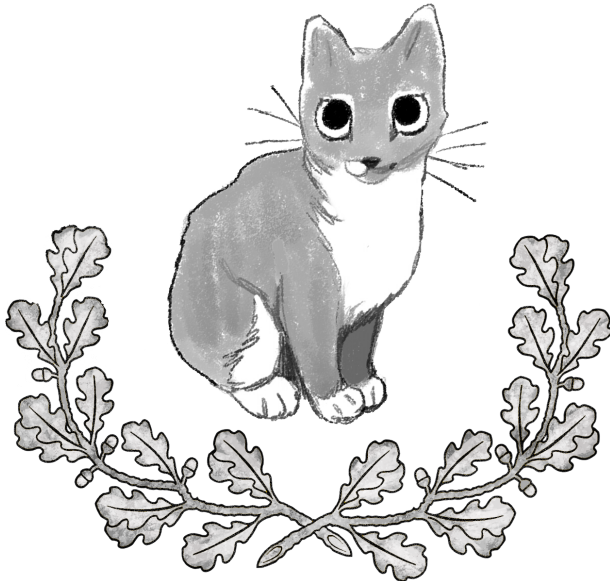
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There was a final moment of quiet, when I held your face in the palm of my hand and you watched me with a gentle expression. You were gone in another second, peaceful and slow. When everything was over, they told me you'd crossed the Rainbow Bridge.

The only Rainbow Bridge I know of leads to Asgard... to Valhalla and Fólkvangr, the meadow of Freya. Lore tells us that the warrior goddess was a protector of beasts, that she watched over the loving and noble spirits of animal companions in these fields. Legends also tell us that she was especially fond of cats and showed them special favor...

You sat diligently with me the entire time I researched Stromgard. You demanded to sit on the keyboard while I wrote dozens of drafts and it changed from a one-off campaign to a fully formed world. Not even your Leukemia diagnosis kept you from watching us launch the Kickstarter, even though you had to leave us just a couple days later. Not everyone is lucky enough to experience the unending loyalty and companionship animals can bestow on us... But I think of you and your limitless capacity for love and caregiving every day.

For Tifa, always my friend



*Bræðr muno beriaz
ok at bonom verða
muno systrungar
sifíom spilla.*

*Hart er í heimi,
-- sekggold, skálmold
-- skildir ro klofnir --
vindold, vargold--
áðr verold steypiz,
Mun engi maðr
oðrom þyrma.*

It is harsh in the world,
Debauchery rife,
--an axe age, a sword age--
--shields are rent--
a wind age, a wolf age--
before the world goes headlong.
No man will have
Mercy on another.

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

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Introduction

*And the mighty past they call to mind,
And the ancient runes of the Ruler of Gods.*

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

The Wyrd of Stromgard is exactly what it says it is. In Norse lore, words held real power and to speak something aloud was to make it real. That's why prophecy and fate were often called a 'wyrd'. The Wyrd of Stromgard is whatever you will it to be, whether that's hell and high water, bloody conquest, or heroic journeys and metamorphoses.

The Wyrd of Stromgard is made to be used with the Dungeon World system, which in turn was built on the Apocalypse World ruleset. The Wyrd of Stromgard uses Dungeon World's moves and rules to quantify actions and events- it isn't a 'hack', per se. It's an expansion. The Wyrd of Stromgard doesn't alter the rules of Dungeon World but it is a fully formed and fully functioning setting for players to interpret and customize as they please in any way they wish.

Firstly, Stromgard is a rich fantasy-Norse setting, populated with beings and locales made famous in the surviving canon of Norse mythos. Stromgard was inspired by the lore of the many Icelandic Sagas, as well as the better-known Poetic Edda and Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda. While most of the surviving knowledge about Vikings and their lore comes from a post-Christianization world view, Stromgard was intended to represent a pagan land where the dichotomy between good and evil isn't as clearly defined. Stromgard was also intended to blend fantasy and what kernels of truth we know of... The

fantastic elements of monsters, tangible magic, and cataclysm meld seamlessly with the real struggle of harsh winters and resource scarcity.

Secondly, Stromgard is intended to function as a heavily detailed stage for your own epic sagas. In line with Dungeon World's GM principle "Make maps but leave blanks", Stromgard was designed with customization in mind. Sure, the land is littered with steadings and dramatic landmarks but there is always room for more- for yours, specifically. Stromgard is an intricate setting, with moving parts. But those parts are intended to be left out, added to, or support new ideas as the GM and their party sees fit.

So, what does this book contain? Primarily, it provides elaborate stage and set dressings to place your Dungeon World games into an expansive and lush fantasy world without having to do a lot of heavy lifting in the form of playbook hacks or other preparations. Inside, you'll find five class playbooks- the Bearskin, the Skald, the Hunter, the Stormcaller, and the Crone. You'll also find five racial classes- the Fae, the Troll, the Dvergr, the Alfir, and the Jötunnborn. These powerful supernatural beings have skill sets tied to their innate abilities and cultural backgrounds so they don't rely on class specializations like mortals to be formidable out in the world. Mechanically speaking, these characters have powerful boons that are tempered by weighty drawbacks.

There's also seven compendium classes for extended campaigns that offer a huge variety of specialized skills for advanced PCs. These include the Runecaster, the Fae-Touched, the Úlfhéðnar, the Seiðr, the Ghost Rider, the Voyager, and the Unsavage. These compendium classes offer a wide range of arcane, physical, and social skills to further color PCs and drive

narrative. All of these classes provide detailed archetypes for basing a plethora of Norse heroes and heroines off. Additionally, the standard Dungeon World classes fit in just fine inside Stromgard, too. You'll also find a wealth of knowledge about Stromgard as a setting and its many facets like race, economy, religion, warfare, and arcana. You can use this information as is to run a fuss-free campaign or alter any portions you desire to tailor to your tastes.

In the back of the book, you'll find more GM-centric aides: a robust monster manual, premade steadings and a handy generation table, a map, equipment lists, item and services/shopping guide, as well as mundane and magical loot tables (all with an emphasis on being easy to create narrative hooks from) and an NPC generation table. The GM's toolkit contains high-impact, highly tested strategies for improving your game. There's tips on raising player engagement, fostering a healthy and productive play environment, as well as advice on how to pace character development and building your collection of narrative hooks. It also includes a sample session structure incorporating a lot of this advice into an easy to understand and easy to reference framework that can help elevate your campaigns to the next level. And speaking of campaigns, there's also an entire four-front Adventure ready for you to use as a backdrop for an epic long-format campaign complete with monsters, custom moves, extra-planar locations, titanic monsters, gods, and the end of the world. No GM's toolkit is complete without a direct path to apocalypse, surely.

The Wyrð of Stromgard is a stage, meant to support and highlight your own creative impetus as you run amok in a world brimming with Norse lore.

Concerning Vikings

In this year... came first three ships of Norwegians from Horthaland and then the reeve rode thither and tried to compel them to go to the royal manor, for he did not know what they were: and then they slew him. These were the first ships of the Danes to come to England

Entry 787, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Despite what Hollywood films and pulpy comics would have you believe, we currently have very few verifiable facts about Vikings. The vast majority of what we know about Vikings and the Norse people, in general, comes from a post-Christianization world view, which isn't particularly helpful when trying to assemble facts about pagan societies.

Surviving accounts from the British Isles are where we picked up the term “Viking”, which means pirate, or raider. Alternatively, “Norse” is a fairly nondescript term that derives from “North”, which obviously doesn't tell us a whole lot about what else Vikings did besides sail south and sack villages. We know that Norse people were spread out over a large chunk of Europe and the term referred to a few different groups of people as a kind of overarching reference. Norse people primarily inhabited Scandinavia and over the course of several centuries, raided all along the British Isles, France, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and as far south as Iraq (which is a *hell* of a long way from Scandinavia in the early medieval period). Norse people were also not the only cultural group living in Scandinavia during their heyday.

Christian monks first wrote about Viking raids on English

land in 790A.D. (though there is evidence of Viking activity in other areas from earlier dates) and the aptly named “Viking Age” lasted until the Norman conquest of England in 1066A.D., at which point all of the Scandinavian kingdoms had been converted to Christianity and were swiftly assimilating into the rest of overarching Christian-European culture. There’s a great deal of nuance and detail in this time period that paints a much more intricate picture, though, if you find yourself inclined to research the not-fantasy version of these intrepid warriors, explorers, and heathens.

Typically, Norse fantasy worlds tend to aesthetically match up on a point somewhere between these two dates unless you’re looking to make a purely fantastic setting with some horned helmets tossed in. In creating Stromgard, I imagined a world closer to the 790s end with mineral and alloy scarcity and developing iron working techniques. But, as was my goal for Stromgard as a setting, it is flexible and customizable and could comfortably exist at either end of this period. The GM need only adjust minor details to give it the feel they’re going for. In Stromgard’s playtesting, I found one of the most surefire ways to communicate its historical placement to the players was in how easy it was to obtain iron weapons- make any fully iron swords and axes that aren’t starting equipment expensive or available only as gifts from the wealthy if you want to run a Scandinavian iron age setting. This tells the PCs to treat their weapons with care or they’ll be carving spears by the fireside all night. Conversely, make these weapons easier to obtain for a more recognizable, fantasy-medieval feel. Stromgard handles both quite easily and only requires a little adjustment to carry campaigns based on real historical events.

I can’t stress enough, however, that there’s no need for

GMs to choose a historical point from which to base their games. If you're like me, your table is probably host to at least a few players who are sticklers for historical accuracy (what little can be drummed up in this case), so picking a recognizable point of reference might surprise and delight them. Consider your party's interests and expectations and use that to choose a reference point if you wish. Set your campaign closer to 790 for a feel that more closely matches up with the Scandinavian iron age aesthetic of rough hewn weapons and fully pagan beliefs or at the 1066 end of the spectrum if you're looking for more widespread military campaigns, political gains, and more global social forces. If perilous exploration is more your style, Erik the Red landed in Greenland in 980 (where Vikings continued to live for nearly five hundred years). There's plenty of evidence to support the assumption that these Norse people traded with local Native groups, specifically the Beothuk (who are related to the Algonquin) and the Thule- both considered to be the ancestors of the Inuit people. Furthermore, Bjarni Herjólfsson and Leif Erikson landed on continental North American soil first in 985 and then again in 1000.

Culture obviously follows the sliding scale as well with more pagan sensibilities on the 790s end and a more recognizable Christian world view on the other. When pinning down your preferred time period, consider the purpose of religion and spirituality in your setting. What gods were revered and why? During their travels, how did voyagers honor their gods in foreign lands? What about strange new gods? Could these encounters have been peaceful or were they invariably bloody? Women warriors were also regarded with increasing contention as Christianity spread, its emphasis on the role of women as subservient to men influenced a woman's ability to sail and fight

with the rest of their village's able-bodied warriors. The spread of Christianity brought harsh punishments for any perception of non-heterosexual romantic relationships which makes uncovering the pagan values that served as the cornerstone of 790s (and earlier) society difficult to uncover. Stromgard has many cultures and many races with more pagan-rooted societal norms as a default, mostly because it's more interesting to explore the world as it could be in role-playing and fantasy, rather than stick to societal norms that still exist in basically the same form today.

Speaking of religion (that's a quality segue right there), what do we know about Norse religio/cult traditions? Basically nothing. Well, that's not entirely true but it's very close. We have burial mounds and artifacts and runestones left behind that give us sparing details to how these people functioned culturally. While Vikings were actively tearing up the European coasts, the only accounts that survived were from the victims' perspectives. Which is why the image of a savage, bloodthirsty barbarian still sticks with the vast majority of Norse imagery today. Also consider the fact that any cultural accounts the Vikings kept of themselves were interpreted by people trying to convert them and actively fighting to strengthen the hold of syncretism in Northern Europe.

Many scholars over many centuries have translated and re-translated runes and stories. Along the way they make small changes, whether intentionally or otherwise, that slowly but surely change the original message, the original subtly, and the original intent of the work. There's a certain amount of this that's unavoidable in anthropology, unfortunately, but as it stands our summarized knowledge of all Norse lore comes from a massive game of Telephone that we've been playing for centuries. We can account, however, for a lot of things through

the number of fairly reliable sources- Thor, Odin, Loki, and Baldr were all prominent gods, of course, but why is Odin often likened to a shepherd? Why the constant push to categorize Loki, a trickster, into either a “Overall Righteous” or a “Overall Evil” box? Was Frigg always one goddess, independent as a matron of visions and wisdom? Or was she once two people, Frigg and Freya, whose domains saw some overlap? Is the concept of *ergi* (sexual receptivity used to specifically refer to male witches and seers) a complex pagan idea or a newer Christian sensibility to demonize non-conformers? What is the difference between dwarves and ‘black elves’? Is there a difference?

The honest and painful answer is that we don’t know and likely never will. Too much has been lost to time and too many cooks have been in the proverbial kitchen. New discoveries and understandings are always possible but without any surviving context or the ability to truly analyze this culture without a modern bias, our work is going to be exceedingly difficult.

Stromgard is believable and detailed and dynamic because it was created from what sources we do have. I wanted Stromgard to *feel* real above all else. I wanted Stromgard to be a robust fantasy setting that could hold up to some escapism. I wanted it to provide an interesting background for heroic player characters and interesting societies. I wanted it to subvert some fantasy convention and I wanted it to be a new experience. To do this, though, I had to strongly root it in real sources, in the surviving lore and mythos from twelve hundred years ago.

Stromgard took most of its inspiration from literary sources, *The Poetic Edda* chief among them. *The Poetic Edda* is an uncredited collections of myths and poems that originated in some form at a much earlier date and whose text is primarily

taken from the famous medieval manuscript, the *Codex Regius*, which to this day remains one of the most (if not *the* most) important preservations of Scandinavian lore still in existence. The *Codex Regius* text was (re)discovered in 1643 and dates back to the twelfth century. There are many tales included in this Edda, including *Völuspá*, the tale of the Seer who prophesied Ragnarök for Odin, *Lokasenna*, a tale of Loki's tribulations, written in a specific verse alluding to wisdom, and Baldr's *draumar*, a narration of Baldr's dreams and visions, plus more than a dozen others.

The other Edda- *The Prose Edda*- was compiled by Snorri Sturluson possibly as early as 1220. *The Prose Edda* contains a detailed description of the Norse tree of life and the many planes on which its denizens live as well as a veritable wealth of common myths. It primarily consists of three separate books and was intended to be compiled as a textbook. The two Eddas together make up the vast majority of our collective knowledge of the Norse- and both of these Eddas were written or compiled long after the Vikings ceased to exist.

Stromgard's other primary inspirations were many of the numerous Icelandic Sagas and *Beowulf*- which is probably the most widely known introduction to Viking lore via the Geats and the Danes. What makes *Beowulf* unique is that it is likely the oldest surviving long-form story in English literature and is mandatory reading in most high school and college literature classes. *Beowulf* survives in full as part of the *Nowell Codex* and the timeline of its creation is still hotly debated- which is *typically* dated between 700-1000A.D. while the physical manuscript's creation falls somewhere between 976-1010A.D. with plenty of room for academic debates in between. You can see the pattern here of 'we discovered this story written hundreds

of years after its setting existed' kind of throws a big wrench in the process of reconstructing lost societies.

If you like Norse lore or the real history of the Vikings, you may want to check out these literary sources. If nothing else, they'll certainly serve as a fun inspiration for things to add to other RPGs, even beyond Stromgard, and give you insight on how to incorporate realism to make your fantasy world seem even more believable. Check out your local university's library or even just browse Wikipedia if you're looking for some light-weight, easily verifiable facts. I would, however, advise against rooting your campaign too rigidly in the concept of 100% watertight, historical accuracy. Part of the charm and magic of the Norse setting is, well, magic. With Vikings, reconstructing their history just isn't possible. But that certainly doesn't mean you can't take heavily from academia and anthropologists who have spent innumerable hours trying to piece the Vikings' legacy together.



Welcome to Stromgard

*Strong was he made with the strength of the earth,
With the ice-cold sea, and the blood of swine.*

Hyndluljóð, Poetic Edda

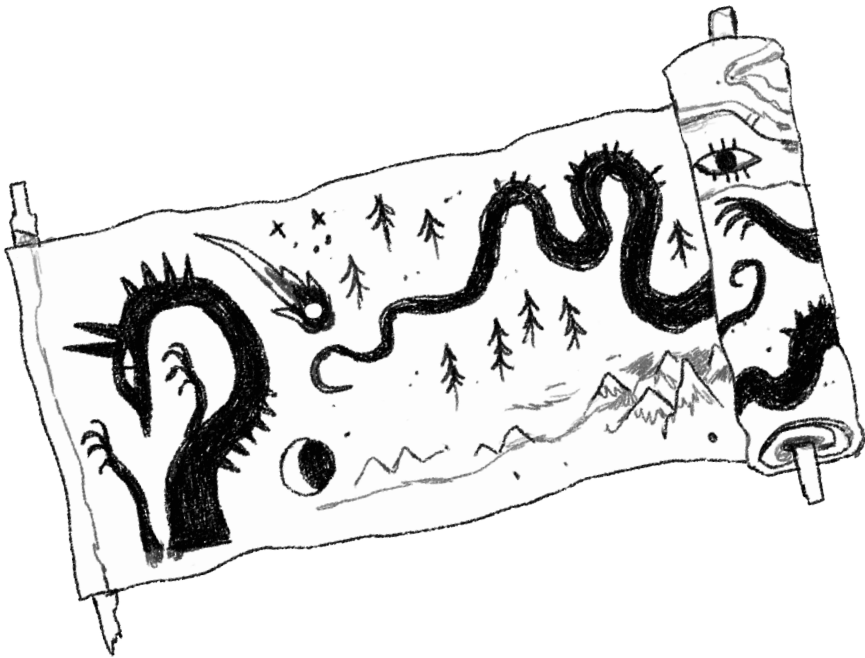
Stromgard as a setting takes most of its inspiration from fantastic tales and planar realms described in the Eddas. Compiled here is a brief look at the most prominent races of the Nine Realms and the most recognizable gods. There is room here for endless customization. Add races, add planes, add gods that fit the narrative you and your table want to tell.

It's worth mentioning that this section is specifically written with a more academic tone to lay out cultural and societal norms without commenting on the morality of them. Mechanically, Stromgard desires to decouple race from alignment as much as possible in the hopes that narrative evil is based more on action than on preconception. In the setting chapters, my aim is to simply present a dynamic world that can easily support intrigue, justice, inequities, and complex systems of social expectations that make for powerful narrative impetus.

The realm of Stromgard sits on the mortal plane, Midgard and as such, Stromgard's diverse population consists primarily of mortal races- those without divine blood, who will eventually wither and die. Typically, these groups are racially insular but the general economic situation and interest in other matters keep warmongering to a minimum and relationships fairly

WELCOME TO STROMGARD

diplomatic. From a large-scale standpoint, at any rate. Humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes are the most populous races in the realms, and most of them interact with each other regularly in some form or another. The purveying ideals of honor and strength causes most people to judge others by their actions before their culture, which has the benefit of facilitating usually tolerable rapport with neighbors.



Society

*Long while this branch of Odin's stem
Was the stout prop of Norway's realm*

Ynglinga Saga, Prose Edda

Stromgard is home to a few distinct societies- humans, mortal elves, and dwarves are the largest populations of the realm but there are also a number of large halfling and gnome settlements.

Economy

One factor that shapes all of these people, however, is resource availability in Stromgard and how that molds the economy. By and large, pure metal alloys are difficult to obtain in Stromgard. Dwarves have the most advanced smithing and metal working techniques available and their powerful ruling families live or die by their ability to keep gold, silver, and iron flowing to craftsmen, who in turn supply the other races with tools and weapons.

Most of Stromgard is poor and a little isolated, as small hamlets, villages, and towns rely on agrarian methods to sustain the population during the long and harsh winters. Humans (and sometimes other races) also supplement their wealth by zealously raiding lands to



the south during the summer months, bringing back slaves, ore, weapons, and other treasures. The typical human in Stromgard would have an easier time sailing south to win a blade from a fallen enemy than save the scraps of their valuables to trade for a well made dwarven axe.

Power

The importance humans (the most populous of Stromgard's races, easily) place on conquest and raiding gave rise to the notion that whoever has the best fleet of ships, the best sailors, and the best warriors will subsequently gain and maintain the most wealth. Which is how Stromgard became a kingdom with its own High King. In reality, the High King of Stromgard is simply the richest person in a collection of small villages and towns. Sure, the king has a formidable personal militia but most people feel that razing a few acres of farmland with it is a waste, especially when you could simply send fewer men out on boats and have them come back with endless heaps of gold and jewels. Because of a lack of cohesion among the human settlements of Stromgard and the current High King's disinterest in cultivating absolute deference, he simply leverages his wealth to build roads and bridges, mans them with watches and collect taxes once a year. The human villages enforce this amongst each other, holding each other accountable for their share of the 'public works'. The High King passes the occasional decree but without real backing from the populous, his reach is not watertight. Conversely, should any single settlement prove themselves to be too much of a hindrance, that private militia starts to seem a little more useful.

The other races have their own methods for governing

themselves and they typically treat the position of Stromgard's High King with more respect than it probably deserves, though this is in an effort for all leaders to come across as equals. At a high-level viewpoint, the major populations of the realm enjoy a relatively peaceful existence. At least in their own relationships, this, of course, does not factor in ever rising tensions with the Jötnar, monsters, or angry gods, etc.

Honor

The forge of hard work, self sufficiency, and slowly burgeoning civilization has instilled the people of Stromgard with a highly prized culture of honorable conduct. This sentiment, at least on the whole and in generalities, is shared by people of all mortal races. In Stromgard, there are very black and white ways to solve problems. Attacking someone from behind is always a dishonorable move, attacking someone at night is also typically considered dishonest. The people of Stromgard value those who are forthright with their grievances and who speak plainly about them. They also value leaders who meet their charges at the same level, who are willing to stand on the battlefield with their men, or face whatever threat they meet head on. People who run away from a fight- even one with the high likelihood of a terrible outcome- are usually considered cowards and someone unwilling to speak their mind, craven.

This very prominent, yet loose code of ethics has given rise to two interesting concepts that those wandering Stromgard may find themselves confronted with. Firstly, the law of *holmgang* has the potential to be quite harsh, depending on where it is invoked. To call a holmgang, an aggrieved party makes a public accusation against the person who has wronged

them and challenge them to a one-to-one duel. Most of the time, this duel is fought to incapacitation, though there are many places where killing your opponent is the goal. Typically, a crowd will come out to watch- along with at least one skald to officiate- and the winner of the duel is considered the righteous person who was telling the truth all along. To lose a holmgang can have serious repercussions, especially as they sometimes end in death. Some holmgang losers are socially shunned by any who hear of the event and others may be straight up murdered by an angry mob if the result was controversial or run out of town.

The other strange concept one might encounter in Stromgard is a little less easily defined. The concept of *ergi* is old, even in Stromgard. It should be noted that only human and dwarves abide by the concept in any capacity. Elves have never used it and ascribe an entirely different meaning to the word and it means very little to halflings and gnomes. Historically, the word *ergi* was used to describe male practitioners of certain magicks, where rumor held that one must take on the ‘sexually-receptive’ role in certain coupling rituals in order to gain their power. Obviously, the word started to get hurled all over the place to ridicule men who were effeminate or took male lovers, or even who just didn’t fit in well. The biggest scandal, however, is that the god Loki declared Odin was *ergi* after his encounter with the Norn at the well of knowledge. In so many words, Odin told him to piss off and no gods since have questioned it. Mortals followed suit of course, and only the most backwater, uncultured coward would sling it around these days with the intent of stigmatizing someone.

The dwarven use of the word *ergi* does not carry the context of ridicule. They do believe that some magics (partic-

ularly oracular powers) are gained via sex rituals. To them, ergi simply means someone who has gained those powers and they only understand the wider context of the word thanks to human interactions. In polite dwarven society, the word has stopped being used almost altogether.

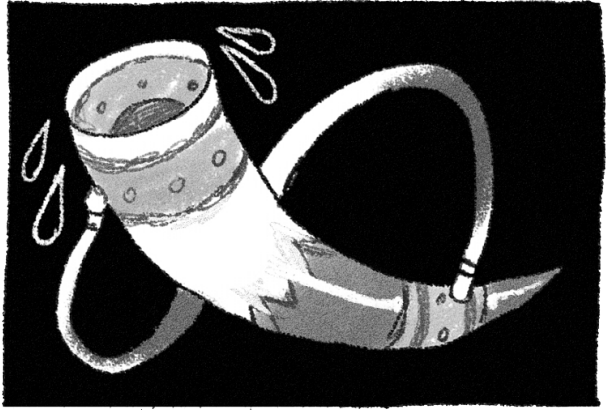
Language and Literacy

The races of Stromgard each have their own unique language and sometimes sub-languages or dialects as the culture divides geographically. A foreigner, for instance, doesn't learn how to speak "Dwarvish" they learn how to speak one of four distinct dialects and struggle when communicating with the other three. Dvergar also have their own language but as it is the root of the Dwarven languages, they can communicate with relative clarity to each of the dialects and learning the Dvergar language has been the most pragmatic approach for academics or intellectuals looking to speak to many kinds of dwarves.

There are separate dialects throughout Elvish and the common human tongue as well. Halflings have a different, robust accent for nearly every separate village they inhabit and they're quite fond of guessing the homeland of others based on inflection. Humans have a huge variety of accents, dialects, and colloquialisms that can be very difficult to keep up with for the longer-lived races. Many raiders come back with foreign slang- especially obscenities- that they learned in far flung ports. An Elvish saying is that if you wish to insult someone, consult a human first.

Written languages in Stromgard are abundant, though they are typically "broader-stroked" and more idea-based than phonetically rooted. Jötnar, however, do not have a written

language. Instead they leverage their immortality and ancient knowledge to pass information along orally, making each member of their albeit disconnected society a relative treasure trove of information and lore.



The Dwarven language is the only one designed to be written with brushes in lieu of stamps or chisels. Sprung from their centralized and powerful economy, Dwarves have a high need for writing and record keeping, prompting them to further push the efficiency of carved or painted sticks, bark, and various (albeit rough) paper-making technique.

The most common written language is the runic system, which was developed by human skalds ages ago to assist in recording the names and deeds of kings more accurately and permanently. There are two sets of runes in Stromgard, one of which represents abstract ideas via rough pictograms with very few compound ideas. The other is a phonetic set of runes, which are used in sequence to sound out other words. As you can imagine, the pictograms have a much higher information density than the runic phonetics but most literate peoples must make use of both to communicate complex ideas.

Races: Elves

*The elfin-beam shall bear a daughter,
Ere Fenrir drags her forth;
That maid shall go, where the great gods die,
To ride her mother's road.*

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

Origins

The mortal elves of Stromgard are the distant descendants of Vanir gods that have lost their divine blood over many millennia. Today, there are three distinct groups of elf-folk. To describe them, however, a brief explanation of Vanir and Aesir is in order. For a more in-depth summation, check out the chapter on Gods. The short version, however, goes like this: the Aesir are the high gods, the most powerful and influential of all, who answer to Odin, chief among them and who dwell in the highest plane of existence, Asgard. The Vanir are gods as well, but lesser in both power and influence. Typically they serve and defer to the Aesir in order to promote peace, governance, and civility among the immortals. They live in a lower realm, Vanaheim. Eventually, conflict arose between the Vanir and the Aesir, and after a few bloody ages of war and betrayal, the Vanir gave in and agreed to submit to Aesir rule to prevent more bloodshed. The immortal elves, at this point, were one people who fought hard for the Vanir. At this juncture, they could not come to an agreement on what course of action to take and were divided.

Half of them decided to submit to Aesir rule and strive to bring order to the rest of the Nine Realms and the other half was deeply hurt by the Aesir aggression; while they surrendered without undue bloodshed, they retreated to become a rigidly insular society that minimized interaction with the other groups. These two groups used to live on one single plane of existence but the realm was split by powerful magic into two: Alfheim, home of the Alfir who believe strongly in justice and order, and Svartalfheim, the lower realm of the Nithfir. Colloquially, the Alfir are known as light elves and the Nithfir as moon elves. While the other races simply assume that these descriptors refer to physical appearance, the mortal elves of Stromgard are taught that the Alfir are associated with light because they worship the Vanir god Freyr. The Nithfir do not worship at all as far as anyone else can tell but they are still part of the elven people as a whole and their nickname is a reflection of the relationship between light and dark, sun and moon.

Mortal Elves

Mortal elves are the descendants of these two divine peoples. Over the ages, there were some Alfir who descended to Midgard and remained, eventually forming a small but growing population that- over thousands of years- lost their connection with the divine and gained mortality. In the best of circumstances, they now live to be between seven and eight hundred years old, and reach maturity at about eighty.

In Stromgard, elves are divided into clans based on region and tend to live in intricate villages built directly into whatever natural feature dominates the area. To the north, there are several elf villages carved directly into the sides of mountains,

with the dwelling walls rising in one piece out of the living stone, to the south, huts and long-houses are built directly into towering treetops. Elven construction isn't as intricate as dwarven or gnomish but it is generally a marvel to see first hand.

Physically speaking, elves look very similar to humans. They tend to run a little sligher in frame and have a wider spectrum of flesh and hair tones. Depending on the region and the individual elf's background, skin pigmentation can range from extremely pale, almost pearlescent blues and greens all the way to dark coppers, umbers, and ochres. Generally speaking, elves tend to be more inclined towards non-combat pursuits but their sligher build does not affect their ability to perform as warriors, sailors, berserkers, and hunters that are prized by any lucky enough to have them.

After humans, mortal elves are Stromgard's largest populace and their presence in every corner of the realm is proof of their strength of numbers. As a people, elves are typically known for their general amiability and the importance they place on maintaining good relationships with the other denizens of Stromgard. To outsiders, elven culture can be a minefield of minor offenses and faux pas but elves are usually quite slow to anger and usually give bumbling but well-meaning foreigners the benefit of the doubt. The instant they feel they are being intentionally disrespected, however, elves can quickly turn icy or even violent in some cases.

Elves and humans deal with each other quite often via trading, intermarrying, conquest, and generally just living in close proximity to each other. Offhandedly, interracial marriages between elves and humans are usually endorsed by elvish parents and elvish culture typically favors the new relationship living within elven settlements. They take these bondings very

seriously and will go to great lengths to make sure non-elven spouses are made comfortable and feel welcomed.

With dwarves, elves share a unique relationship. Both cultures highly value the arts but their artistic and aesthetic philosophies are just about always at odds with each other. Elves and dwarves are commonly friendly-ish rivals, though there have been innumerable instances of these turning bitter and cold after one too many heated arguments. Elves generally disengage from frustrating discussions before losing their tempers, which in their culture is a sign of maturity and level-headedness... and usually considered an indicator of correctness. Disengaging a heated dwarf, however, is not a simple task.

Elves get along quite easily with gnomes and halflings. With Jöttnar, however, elves tend to show open hostility. This is all deeply rooted in the Aesir/Vanir relationship and the prominent belief that the Jöttnar wish to overthrow the gods and plunge the world into chaos. A typical elf, however, could be convinced that a Jöttnar or Jötunnborn was an upstanding person worthy of respect but they will have to earn that with an exemplary reputation. Elves have an honor sensibility very similar to humans in that they value forthrightness and honorable engagement in combat, though their justice system is, for the most part, mostly removed from honor duels and more rooted in community tribunals- typically with the goal of proactive and focused solutions over retribution. Unless the crimes go against the gods, involve necromancy, or poaching- to which they react quite swiftly and angrily. Elves can almost always be convinced to at least hear the plight of the accused before passing judgment, even in these more volatile circumstances, though forgiveness for these serious crimes is rare.

Because of their longevity, elves do not organize their

communities into small units based on familial relations. Instead, they view themselves as individuals that belong to (and have obligation to support) the community at large. Elf children are primarily cared for by one or both of their biological parents but it is commonplace for neighbors or relatives to get involved as well. In elvish culture, it is considered to be beneficial for children to spend time with many adults in order to better teach them diplomacy skills and respecting differences of opinion. This is also heavily influenced by the fact that, because of their long lives, elves experience very little pressure to have children.

Elven society is noted for being quite egalitarian in terms of gender and class equality. Those unfamiliar with elven society will sometimes have trouble distinguishing between genders at a glance and can sometimes find encounters to be confusing. This mostly comes from the elven interpretation of masculine and feminine. To elves, those words don't describe clothing, preference of company, personal ornaments, mannerisms, work, or obligations and elves are often caught off guard by human or dwarven notions of binary gender presentation and the confusion between describing bodies and describing people.

Religion is relatively simple in elvish society- they worship the personified spirits of the natural world surrounding them, believing that every living thing is part of a great cosmic tide that ebbs and flows constantly. They believe that the natural order of things must be preserved and their surroundings must be mindfully cultivated and resources must be managed with care. To an elf, the cycle of life and death is sacred and to defile it is to commit a steep crime against the sanctity of life. Mortal elves typically look to the Alfir as the pinnacle of all they can hope to achieve, idolizing their divine blood and their service to the higher gods. As far as universally known deities

are concerned, they worship Freyr primarily, as he is a champion of order and light. Mortal elves still hold the Nithfir in high respect, though it is considered somewhat taboo to speak about them in public or in the presence of outsiders, for fear it will drive them away forever.

Alfir and Nithfir

Alfir and Nithfir are able to live indefinitely, dying only on the edge of a weapon or by certain magical ailments. Beyond this and their shared history, nearly nothing is known about the Nithfir in this day and age. Alfir, uncommon as they are on the mortal plane, are much more open about their ways and society and are usually quite happy to speak about it at length. Rare is the mortal that lays eyes on the cities of Alfheim but if Stromgard-bound Alfir are to be believed, it is a sprawling construction of crystal and glass, reaching up into the rose colored sky and stretching as far as the eye can see in every direction, dotted with small forests of trees and blanketed in vines. On Stromgard, Alfir do not have a standing home or village they congregate in. Their mortal descendants are more than happy to offer them shelter, however, so they rarely have issue finding what they need.

Physically, both groups of divine elves are quite similar to their mortal descendants. They tend to be larger of frame- both taller and broader- but the spectrum of their hair and skin tones is larger. Flesh ranges in color from silvery white and lightly tinted pearlescent tones to striking shades of violet and sky blue. Naturally occurring hair colors in Alfir tend to range between silver and platinum to deep, ruddy golds while Nithfir are said to have hair like liquid onyx. In Alfir society,

however, fashion is an enjoyable pastime and method of self expression so magically altered skin, hair, and eye colors are quite common.

Since communication with the Moon Elves has all but dried up, Alfir have turned their their often-relentless focus on better civilizing the mortal world below. They believe strongly in the need to organize a comprehensive governmental system to ensure that justice is served appropriately and that society is productive, healthy, and content. With very few exceptions, Alfir believe ardently that all crimes should be heard by a jury before passing judgment and they believe that punishments for crimes should prioritize rehabilitation and reintroduction to society wherever possible. Alfir prize systemic support so much that they have, on many occasions, submitted perpetrators to punishment at the hands of an unjust or poorly thought-out law with the intent to work the kinks out of legislation in process or even after, rather than clear charges in extenuating circumstances. Because of this outlook, they have earned the reputation as being somewhat-to-extremely harsh and inflexible about deferring to the law in every situation. Naturally, this prioritization of law and order makes them quite difficult for people of more... gray or self-interested moral backgrounds to get along with. Nowhere is this more evident than with their relationship to Jötnar.

Alfir typically believe that all Jötnar are uncivilized brutes that are driven to upend the world and murder the gods. Light Elves that have spent a great deal of time in the mortal realm are more aware of the reality- that Jötnar are very individualized and prize freedom, not that they necessarily cannot peacefully coexist in a world with governance. Still, their feuding and latent mistrust has fueled countless generations of

immediate dislike, disdain, and in many cases, outright violence.

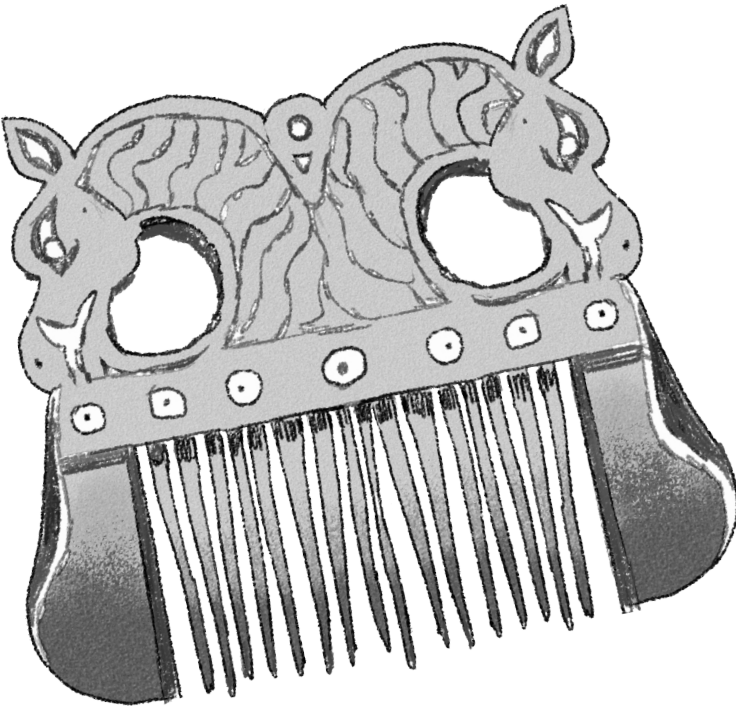
By and large, the Alfir maintain good relationships with most of the other groups of Stromgard. Their strict adherence to black and white concepts of justice can make them come across as severe or extreme and many also find them a little naive for a race of beings that usually live for untold ages. Their disconnection from mortality and the ways of mundane people can be confusing and stressful for Alfir who have not had the opportunity to learn about Midgard first hand. Typically though, they are welcomed in all settlements and usually learn local customs relatively quickly (for an immortal).

Alfir have a strange societal breakdown that's not seen in any other race. To celebrate the very rare birth of an Alfar child, the Light Elves call huge swaths of stars to streak across the sky so that they rain down like silver fire in a huge shower. Alfir children reach physical maturity at about one hundred and fifty years old and during this time they live in close proximity to their biological parent(s) or relatives, depending on a number of factors, not the least of which is an adult Alfir's ability to remain interested in their child (a lamentable side effect of immortality, apparently). Once they reach physical maturity, they are considered a member of Alfheim as a whole, rather than the smaller family unit. It is also common for Alfar to forget their biological parents after a few thousand years.. As a people, they are so community-minded that they view those individualized relationships unimportant unless there is more to the connection than simply blood.

As with most beings of divinity, Alfir don't understand gender particularly well. At a societal level, bearing children is unimportant and mostly uninteresting so the need to be able to tell at a glance who can carry a child simply doesn't apply. Alfir

make assumptions based on external factors like masculine or feminine fashion trends, or by simply asking if they're not sure-which can be a little awkward for non-Alfir not expecting to be asked such quite so bluntly. They make very little stereotypes based on gender, finding it a fascinating but ultimately unimportant concept that mortals have to worry about.

The god Freyr is the most important figure in Alfir spirituality. Not only do they worship him as the foremost authority on justice, compassionate governance, and light but they also commune directly with him on certain occasions, giving their religious inclinations a hard grounding in concrete communication.



Races: Dwarves

They took his skull also, and made of it the heaven, and set it up over the earth with four corners; and under each corner they set a dwarf: the names of these are East, West, North, and South.

Gylfaginn, Prose Edda

Origins

Dwarves are fastidious about preserving and venerating their own history, which makes studying them a much more straightforward task than it is with elvish affairs. There are two kinds of dwarves: Gundkin, modern dwarves that are mortal, simply called “dwarves” by most, and Dvergr, the primordial “parent” race who still exist today and who still retain their primal forms and immortality. When the world was not yet created as it exists today, a being now known as Ymir lived. Ymir was titanically huge and is often called the first Jötun, for it is from him the race of ice giants sprang. Odin and his siblings slew it after a time and made the worlds out of the carcass for all the races to live on. The first dwarves, the Dvergr, were born directly of Ymir’s corpse and have been a fully formed race- like the Jötnar- ever since. In dwarven canon, the first dwarves were said to be shaped of flesh and filled with Ymir’s blood. A rude version of the telling describes the dwarven people emerging from the corpse as maggots. This version is- obviously- quite angrily rebuked in dwarven society and they have fought against its existence so long that even the word maggot is often taken as a slur in dwarven areas.

After the planes of the cosmic tree were created and distributed, the dwarven people were given Myrkheim to be their home. It is a realm of stone castles and a magnificent cairn that marks the entrance to a sprawling hall housing famous and notable dwarves who have passed on, along with vast murals that record much of dwarven knowledge. Here, both groups of dwarves live together where they maintain most of the extra-planar travelways for the gods, including the Bifrost. Myrkheim is also home to the vast majority of Dvergr as they have more interest in forging for the Aesir than they do in the material riches and profitability of Midgard. Conversely, most Gundkin live in Midgard in this age, though their population fluctuates and both groups are capable of living together quite harmoniously.

Mortal Dwarves: Gundkin

Mortal dwarves live to be between five and seven hundred years old in the best case scenarios, though a realistic mortality rate for them is lower. They pursue war often, eager for spoils and rare resources, plus working conditions in dwarven mines can be quite dangerous. Because their home plane of Myrkheim is a shadowy realm under a violet sky, most dwarves prefer to construct settlements in mountain ranges or sheltered foothills, digging straight into the earth and hollowing out entire mountains, centuries at a time.

While plenty of baseless rumors will tell you that dwarven cities are impossible to find with the untrained eyes, they're definitely not. Most established settlements have plenty of guards and watches to announce your presence, and due to a vast array of legal formalities, someone is usually sent out to

retrieve visitors. Because dwarven economy is heavily tied around the markets of the other cultures, they are quite well versed in the customs of outsiders. They can sometimes come off a little cold or brusque with foreigners, as they treat hospitality like a business transaction. Typically, dwarves are only fully at ease in social environments that consist of other dwarves.

Not every dwarven settlement is dug out from underground. The dwarves who live north near the jagged banks of the Black Band built their city in the walls of a deep treacherous ravine that cuts straight into the ground. Rumor has it that some dwarves have discovered how to construct cities under the shallows just off the coast, though whether or not this is actually true remains to be seen. Dwarven settlements are marked with the some of the best technology in Stromgard. Many mountain cities enjoy a kind of widespread heating during the worst of the winter months with clever chambers running through walls and walkways to distribute magically regulated heat. Other comforts include nearly impenetrable defenses, high quality iron weapons, ready access to glass and fine metals, and even parchment.

Dwarves are famously easy to spot at a distance, standing taller than halflings at about four to almost five feet tall and are quite stocky. Most are muscular from their work of mining and smithing, so they tend to be on the wideset side. They make stout warriors of all types and are also well known for being hardy clerics and even sailors if they can overcome their innate distrust of the ocean- dwarves firmly believe it is chock full of leviathan horrors (and they're not entirely incorrect). Dwarves have ruddy complexions and tend to have freckles or beauty marks with skin tones ranging from fair to a dark coppery color. Dwarven hair comes mostly in all the colors of fire and gold, and

rarely black.

Dwarves, as it is commonly said, get along cordially with all the other races of Stromgard- even Jötnar. They cannot, however, seem to get along with each other on a long-term basis. This is mostly due to the cutthroat nature of dwarven society, which is bent entirely around the ore market. Dwarves live and die by ore veins and other resource claims- their legal system allocates the ownership of an entire vein to whomever owns the land it was found on and competition is fierce and often involves underhanded things like subterfuge, sabotage, and violence. Families fight and undermine each other constantly and anyone with a stake in a lucrative mine had best ensure they've got formidable defenses. Everything in the typical dwarven social environment is motivated and powered by some step of the commercial process, from mining and refinement, to production and manufacturing, to buyer negotiations and contracts.

Dwarves highly value shrewd business sense and discretion. Individuals who are able to secure their assets without messy, direct violence are praised as cunning and intelligent where as bold moves or open hostility invites scorn at worst and pity at best. Dwarven sensibilities on honor stem mostly from their concept of a 'public face' and a 'private face'. In

essence, this means that dwarves do not abide by open betrayal or unprovoked violence at a surface level but will practically necessitate that these things happen with subtlety and cunning behind closed doors. Dwarves who can pull off asset takeovers or destabilize their rivals without giving away their involvement and maintaining an alibi are almost universally admired for their 'ambition' and 'drive'.



Like all aspects of modern dwarven culture, family organization directly benefits the iron industry and helps maintain their control of it. Typically, dwarven families divide into ‘houses’ with the nuclear family and extended relatives all living together. The oldest female dwarf of the family typically assumes the role of the matriarch. She makes financial decisions for the assets her estate owns and oversees all business dealings. Matriarchs are responsible for the longevity and health of their house, tasked with arranging beneficial marriages for her children and grandchildren, outmaneuvering opponents, and avoiding assassins. The matriarch also has the power to place family members in different areas of business operations. Smart choices that match skill to a need reap huge benefits while small oversights at any juncture can have catastrophic results, leading most matriarchs to be calculating, iron-willed, and very intimidating.

The matriarch primarily manages the house’s business and the rest of the family is tasked with completing the labor in some capacity. In smaller, poorer houses, many do not have the huge extended families or standing to maintain ore vein ownership and are usually hired on to perform labor for other families. While job safety can vary from vein to vein and matriarch to matriarch, the pay is typically stable and enough to make ends meet, at least until that particular vein runs out. If not assigned to the mines, other family members work the smelters and forges, liaison with outsiders for supply contracts, or sell to whatever buyers they can. Wealthier homes have legions of miners in their employ, leaving core family members to be divided up in overseeing and managing the supply line.

Unlike elves and Jötnar, gender plays a stronger role in dwarven society. While region is a factor in the rigidity of

preconceptions, most dwarves believe that while anyone may work the mines or refinement processes, the counting of money or other assets is women's work. It is believed that math is a type of witchcraft and that for a male to do it would invite demonic attention. Conversely, religious outreach and priesthood are considered men's work most of the time, with some limited positions in more progressive temples for women. However, as dwarven superstition believes women have a natural kind of magical essence to them that could attract malevolent presence if left to tend temples, it is usually preferable to find missionary work for women as war clerics and Paladins.

The dwarves worship Odin and venerate their ancestors, believing that every step their people took led to the reality of the present. It is also common for dwarves to seek the wisdom of their ancestors in the form of prayer or the loud singing of hymns. When a dwarf of special prominence dies, efforts are made to immortalize their accumulated knowledge in books or sculpture in a public area of the city.

Dvergar

Colloquially known as the 'parent' race of modern dwarves, Dvergar are what's left of the original dwarves that were formed of Ymir's flesh and blood. Like the immortal elves, Dvergar only die on the edge of a blade or by some other special means; they don't age. They live exclusively underground as the bright sun of Midgard is hard on their adaptive dark-vision. They can function in directly sunlight but rarely do so, finding it irritating and sometimes painful. Typically, Dvergar live near mortal dwarves when they venture out of Myrkheim but they tend to burrow to extreme depths to build more

permanent living situations. While the mortal dwarves and Dvergar don't always live together, much of their culture is shared and both groups pleasantly regard the other when they do meet.

Physically, Dvergar are extremely easy to tell at a glance—they look like moving rock, standing about five feet tall and weighing nearly five hundred pounds. Their silhouette is broken up by large juts of crystal formations, growing straight out of their body. Sometimes these formations are also accompanied by lines of glittering ore or some other mineral, weaving along the Dvergr's body. Up close, Dvergar have rough, human-like skin where there isn't stone, which comes in a rainbow of colors, typically darker shades of whatever crystalline structures are found in the rocky parts of their body. The patterns, colors, and features of a Dvergr's body are said to be unique, like a fingerprint.

Because of their insular nature, most mortals of Stromgard never live to see a Dvergr. They don't have much of a longstanding relationship with any of the mortal races, due mostly to a lack of interaction. Friction does tend to be an issue with Dvergr interactions for some others, however, as these ancient dwarves have unique views on possession and ownership. To the Dvergar, any artifact made by them belongs to them, no matter how the item traveled from one hand to the next. Sometimes, Dvergar come to the surface to hunt down artifacts or items they expected returned to them, much to the confusion and irritation of the person now in possession of it. Dvergar also have a somewhat controversial approach to honor. They are pragmatic and utilitarian, prioritizing their survival and victory over honor and valor. Stabbing someone in the back when they're not expecting it is a totally fair move in the mind

of a Dvergr and this causes some issue with other races for obvious reasons.

Dvergar don't have tight knit family groups either, believing that they are all part of the same community. Most attribute this to the fact that they simply live so long that the need for close family units is simply a non-issue for them- it is easier for them to function as a larger group. Dvergar also have no physical maturation period. Their birth is not a biological thing but a thing of some arcane art that's tightly guarded. It is also nearly impossible for outsiders to discern Dvergar gender at a glance, though it seems as though they are able to tell each other apart with ease.

The Dvergar, like the Gundkin, worship Odin. They are often commissioned by him for weapons and mighty armaments. It was the Dvergar who made his spear, Thor's hammer, the chain that binds Fenrir, and the framework for Freyr's ship. At the beginning of the world, Odin also instructed four Dvergr to hold up each corner of the sky- which they

continue to due to this day. The cardinal directions, North, South, East, and West, are named for these Dvergar- Northri, Suthr, Austhi, and Vestr.



Races: Gnomes

There is a good city, amongst others, where there is dwelling great plenty of those little folk, and it is a great city and a fair. And then men be great that dwell amongst them...

The Travels of Sir John Mandeville

Gnomes are thought to be related to mortal dwarves in some capacity, though the direct genealogical link has been obscured over the ages. Unlike most dwarves, Gnomes prefer to live above ground and usually near natural resources they can harness for their work. Like dwarves, gnomes possess immense skill and the drive to create- so much so that their desire to create is the primary driving force in a gnome's life. Unlike the dwarven drive for capital gains and resource holding, gnomes value innovation and ingenuity above all else. To them, there is far more value in creating something new and innovative- even if it is only at a conceptual stage- than in making something mundane, even if it is beautiful and well crafted.

To outsiders, gnomes can sometimes come across a little manic. They are either absolutely devoted to their current pet project or utterly morose that nothing is interesting enough to hold their attention and creativity. Gnomes commonly experience bouts of depression throughout their adulthood due to the immense pressure they put on themselves to invent or create something truly spectacular. The gnomish difficulty in regulating between "utterly obsessed" and "completely disinterested" makes them slightly intimidating to work with but there's literally no other group in all of Stromgard that can devise absolutely ingenious solutions to seemingly unsolvable

problems.

Gnomish settlements are easy to spot. Typically, they are not well planned out and usually look as though someone tried to erect multiple villages on the same plot of ground. For what they lack in aesthetic cohesion and carefully planned infrastructure, these settlements are often equipped with wildly advanced technology like arcane defenses, impenetrable walls, complex locking mechanisms, sophisticated resource allocation, even things like advanced hygienic customs. It is also common knowledge that gnomish workspaces are notoriously dangerous, usually mixing reckless construction techniques with the arcane and sometimes exacerbated by entirely too much zeal and not enough understanding.

Physically, gnomes are shorter than dwarves, generally in the four foot tall range and with a slimmer frame. Gnomes are surprisingly dexterous, especially when working with their hands and being adept with magic is relatively common- though gnomes with arcane inclinations tend to still spend most of their time creating and developing new ways to apply it.

Gnomes have a very small population, due in part to their shortish lifespans of about two hundred years and their cultural disinterest in raising families. Some gnomes make excellent parents that are able to develop ingenious ways to divide their attention and time between children and inventing. On the whole, however, it can be more challenging. Many gnomish children are raised with extended family or relatives in an effort to spread child-rearing around as much as possible. The logic of this being the time and impact of raising young ones can be reduced if the task is spread out amongst relatives and other family, therefore turning childcare into a slightly more communal effort. Family units in gnomish steadings are huge

and confusing, with family responsibilities spread across children, parents, grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins et al, all working to spread childcare, house-keeping, and cooking as widely as possible to reduce to the impact to any single gnome.

Ethical sensibilities in gnomes can be quite different from the other races and may be a challenge to understand for those not acquainted with their ways. To the outsider, gnomes can come across as extremely obsessive and even slightly callous. They care so much for their studies and research that many outsiders consider their intensity to go past poor self control and into outright dangerous negligence. Project management on bigger endeavors is so poor that casualties are almost certain. In the race to improve and complete things, most gnomes pay little heed to safety- both in working conditions and in completion. They rarely consider whether a dangerous pursuit should be attempted, concerned instead only with whether it was feasible at all and immediately applying all available resources to it.

As you may have guessed from the rest of gnomish inclinations, they're not tremendously concerned with gender presentation. Like with everything else in gnomish society, unless it's innovative and interesting, they have more engaging things to worry about.

Another unique thing about gnomes is that they're possibly they least pious of all races. Unlike the Jötnar, however, they bear no ill will towards the gods. Neither Aesir or Vanir deities seem concerned with gnomes and, likewise, gnomes are far too interested in their own doings to tend to the spiritual. Gnome clerics, paladins, and shamans are a rarity but they have happened in the past before, if an individual finds their imagination and obsessive impulses held by such notions. Typically, like

dwarves, gnomes tend to hold Odin in highest regard.



Races: Halflings

*...Fattish in the stomach, shortish in the leg.
A round, jovial face; ears only slightly pointed and 'elvish'; hair
short and curling...*

J.R.R Tolkien, The Letters of J.R.R Tolkien #27

Halfling creation myths are lost to time. Even they don't seem to know when or how they came into being. Many people believe they are relatives to dwarves and gnomes- mostly due to similar heights and stature- but it has recently become a popular theory that Halflings are a race of mortal fae, descended from the natural spirits to live as mortal beings for a span of about two to three hundred years.

Halflings are a fully agrarian society and rely on the fertile valleys and hills of Stromgard to scrape out a living. They are a particular hardy race, well accustomed to the freezing winter months and rarely falling prey to diseases that lay waste to others. Most halfling villages are densely populated, with public buildings like inns, a leader's long-house, and ale houses occupying the center-most area, followed by commerce and craft related buildings, further surrounded haphazardly by civilian residences. Beyond that, halfling settlements cordon off wide pastures for sheep and goats, and even in rougher terrain, halflings build tiers into the land for farming and raising animals. Halfling villages are invariably quaint and usually not tremendously well protected. Because Halflings maintain good relationships with practically every race in Stromgard, however, attacking one of their villages typically invites the wrath of

others.

Like dwarves and gnomes, halflings are a short, stocky people. Only about four and a half feet tall on average and usually heavy set, Halflings are closer to dwarven stature than gnomish. They come in a range of complexions from fair to dark and often appear with unique skin markings. Many halflings are coated in freckles or possess interesting beauty marks. Some halflings are born with a kind of mottling to their skin that combines both light and dark skin tones. In halfling belief, it is said that these children are destined for to bring great joy. Halfling hair tends to be a little on the coarse side, prompting curly hair on most of them- from loose waves to tight ringlets. Physically, halflings tend to be underestimated by the other races but they are fleet and silent, if need be, and have a sturdy constitution. By nature, halflings aren't tremendously inclined for bloodsport or battle but there's no shortage of halfling warriors and it is common knowledge that they are well suited to the arcane arts.

Halflings can be found all over Stromgard, whether in their own settlements or as part of others'. Halflings believe hospitality is a chief virtue in an often cruel world and they welcome anyone into their villages without question or judgment. Conversely, halflings also highly value the pursuit of happiness in any form it might take, and therefore encourage curious young halflings to indulge their wanderlust away from the relative safety of their home. These two beliefs prompt a lot of coming and going in Halfling villages, and has helped them find friends and allies all over the world. Even Jötnar are unhesitatingly welcomed into halfling towns, plied with drink and food and a warm place by someone's fire to sleep. Naturally, there have been occasions where the halflings find themselves

with a proverbial (and literal) knife in their back for such blind kindness but they're determined to uphold their ways.

Halfling society is driven by a number of ethical considerations. They believe that showing kindness or offering help to someone, even someone dangerous, is the surest path to mutual understanding. They believe that being upfront and open more effectively reaches the root of problems and showing faith in someone discourages conflict and fosters the best possible outcomes. Halflings are unerringly trusting, even against seemingly better judgment and take everyone at their word until given concrete reasons not to. It should be emphasized that halflings are not stupid. They are fully aware of the risks they take in being so forthright in an often unforgiving world but they believe that leading by example will help even the gods and Jötnar learn peace. Because of these factors, halflings have extremely limited patience for oath-breakers, indiscriminate turmoil, and anyone who doesn't appreciate a good ale or a well made cheese.

Family culture is strong in halfling society, due chiefly to their agrarian lifestyle and the need to maintain a healthy population that can produce food. Instead of individuals farming/raising food with personal land or animals, halflings share everything to ensure that all members of the community get enough to eat. Village leaders help divide the work (from tilling and planting to animal husbandry and processing) among the group and ensure that all minimum needs are met. With this work distribution system in place, many halflings are free to pursue other jobs beneficial to the community like foraging, fishing, the making of alcohol, cheeses, aged meats, and fairly advanced food preservation. With the whole community managing work flow and leveraging skill sets, halflings enjoy a reasonably comfortable existence, even during harsh winters.

Taking a leaf from their dwarven relatives, halflings seem more aware of gender than some of the other races- mostly in that they tend to monitor their populations closely and pressure is often placed on producing children. Not much in terms of labor is seen as innately masculine or feminine, however, and the community as a whole is expected to assist in raising young and supporting new families. The loose governing of halfling settlements falls to their ‘elders’, an abstract term for the typical deference shown to the oldest or most powerful druids or shamans of any particular village. They offer guidance to the village as a whole but do not actually carry total authority over anyone. Their wisdom is highly respected, however, and when paired with the halfling drive to find peace, their word is close to law.

For any who study halfling culture, their religious inclinations are quite unique. While the halflings revere the gods- especially Frigg and her son Baldr- they primarily worship the ‘carnal innate’. To the uninitiated, this can sound downright sinister but it is nothing quite so dark. To halflings, the carnal innate refers to natural hungers- for food, for companionship, for peace, for coupling, anything at all. Halflings feel that sating these desires is sacred, as is helping others sate their own, which brings us back to the halfling inclination to feed and shelter those who ask. In their society, sharing a meal is a holy act, one not treated with pomp and circumstance and solemnity, but one that represents the forging of bonds and shared experiences. Halflings believe that eating food, sharing it, developing special, more indulgent recipes to celebrate occasions is an act of worship. Breaking open a special keg of beer is a show of joyful piety in halflings.

Races: Humans

*What dream is that? quoth Odin,--
I thought to rise ere day-break
To make Valhall ready
For troops of slain;*

Skáldskaparmál, Prose Edda

In many ways, humans are a strange race. Their origin story is muddled in myth and a healthy amount of controversy, perhaps ironically befitting of the shortest life expectancy of any populous race on Midgard. In the best case scenario, humans live to be about eighty years old. Some can magically extend their life beyond a century but this is rare and typically only possible with immense effort. Many things kill humans before they can even reach eighty, however, as they are vulnerable to many diseases that don't affect others, are constantly engaged in warfare of some kind, and widely believe that the only worthy death one can experience is via honorable combat.

The human creation legend is a convoluted one, with many retellings in every corner of Stromgard. The basic tale usually follows like this: When Odin and his brothers slew the cosmic giant Ymir, they divvied up his body parts to serve as the foundation for the Nine Realms on the branches of the tree of life. They took the brow of Ymir to make Midgard, originally intended to be a fortress instead of the home for mortals. Odin and his brothers, Vili and Vé, supposedly descended to view their handiwork and discovered a number of trees growing next to a river. Up to this point, most of the tales overlap but this is

where everything diverges. Some maintain that there were only two trees, which Odin used to build two humans and bestowed the names Askr and Embla to them. Odin and his brothers gave them gifts and set them off to be the progenitors of the rest of their race, giving them Midgard as a home in the process. The dwarves tell a version in which *they* discovered the grove of trees and built the first humans from their wood. At their request, Odin, Vili, and Vé granted the constructs life, intelligence, movement, and the senses. Notably, elves and halflings actually believe that Askr and Embla were fae like creatures, making the connection between humans and fae a popular topic of academic discussion. Even the main threads of this tale tend to get frayed and unclear depending on which region you hear it or even who you hear it from.

Humans have a reputation for being fairly industrious, building settlements where they will and carving a living from frozen earth and rock. They're never tremendously permanent, however, so human settlements tend to show their immediate wealth- and as soon as that wealth is depleted, there's an exodus. They build closely packed communities of stone homes and larger wooden structures for their leaders, typically called jarls, and for communal events to take place in. Nearly every town has some sort of paddock for the keeping of livestock as well as patches of cultivated land for farming. Humans are agrarian in that at least some of their wealth and economy is based in farming. The other major source of human wealth comes from conquest and warfare.

Nearly all human settlements reflect their combat prowess in some way or another. A town's defenses are a good indicator of its people's competency in war- a highly defended town has the resources for walls and watches and typically the enemies to

test them. A town that cannot produce formidable warriors will have little gold or iron for militia training. Any town with ready access to the sea will prioritize a shipyard and docks- which in turn facilitates one sure road to power, glory, and wealth... sacking foreign ports. Humans have also become quite talented at the forging of weapons and tools if they have the resources, though they will typically make use of dwarven supply contracts if they can afford it.

Unlike most of the other races, humans- at least in theory- answer to a 'high king', who is the leader of Stromgard's largest port town (also called Stromgard) and by extension its largest and most powerful fleet of ships. The high king backs his authority with military power and wealth but should enough of the holdings in Stromgard decide simultaneously to stop paying tributes and openly rebel, even he would not have the power to fully cow them.

Humans are highly variable in appearance, even though they are short-lived and susceptible to disease. Ranging on average from about five to a little over six feet tall, humans have a huge range of stature as well, from gangly and thin to wide set and muscular. Skin tones in Stromgard tend to be on the fair side, sometimes with freckles, but it isn't unusual to find darker variants with unique features. Many of those who come to Stromgard from overseas have a full spectrum of rich complexions, from bronze and rosy coppers, to warm browns and shades almost as dark as blackwood. Furthermore, as these outdwellers mix with Stromgard natives, an even wider array of skin tones become more common in given regions. The most common hair colors for humans in Stromgard ranges from flaxen to red-gold, but earthy browns and blacks are still fairly common.

Humanity carries an extremely uncommon trait of being

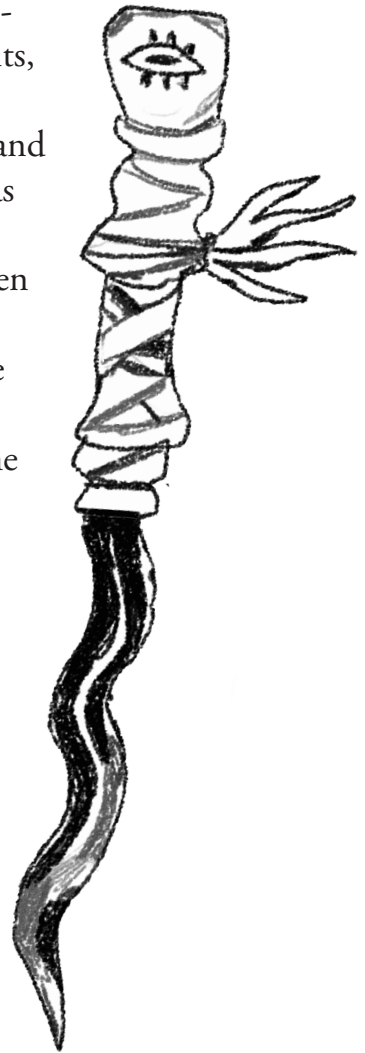
able to produce children with other races, a characteristic shared only by the shape-changing Jötnar. Because of this and their own careful attention to progeny, humans are the most populous race in Stromgard. Their standing is typically positive with most other races and they tend to keep their skirmishing limited to other humans (though this has not always been the case). Humans especially rely on the dwarven weapon economy, prizing their finely made armaments and rare metals above almost everything else. Humans are also inventive with their seafaring endeavors, often consulting gnomish architects and arcanists for design advice.

Human ethics can be confusing as for every generalized rule there are multiple exceptions. Broadly speaking, humans believe that dying in honorable combat is the highest accolade one can achieve. Only the most worthy of human warriors are escorted by Valkyries to Odin's golden mead hall of Valhalla or Freya's army-field of Fólkvangr, sitting at the highest point of Yggdrasil in Asgard. Hel, the lady of Helheim and master of the lands of the dead, takes the rest. Legends say that humans are her favorite of the races because they die quickly and quickly make replacements. Humans place great store on personal honor and reputation, though pragmatic and self-interested types game the system with little effort. Many of these sentiments are tossed out in war situations (especially on foreign soil), especially the stance against ambushes, which is a favored tactic of conquering Vikings.

Because of their limited lifespans, procreation and progeny are major concerns in human settlements. Every member of the community is expected perform their social duties in maintaining a sustainable population and there can be complications if one does not meet these expectations.

Humans in Stromgard typically live in tightly knit steadings that divide into small family units—consisting of the nuclear family, grandparents, and sometimes other relatives. Family members share the burden of child rearing and labor, usually attempting to birth children as frequently as possible. Tragically, there is a high infant mortality rate for human children as the long winters can be unbearably harsh for such helpless creatures, which puts more pressure on adult humans to not only try often for pregnancy but to time it so that the child avoids a winter within a few months of it being born.

Unlike most of the other races of Stromgard, humans ascribe many things specifically gendered traits. Child care, for instance, is typically thought of as women's work and manual labor is more often believed to be men's work. Because of the very delicate balance between resource management, fragile mortality, and population needs, humans can be ardent in their expectation that everyone fulfill their designated roles in the community. Disregard for social convention doesn't typically result in open hostility or exile, however. Humans are adaptable above all else and prize productivity over traditions almost universally, letting those who defy social precedent still be valuable members of society instead of out-casted. Humans are typically more concerned with progeny and



population needs to be overly controlling with convention in relationships so long as the settlement is in good health.

Humans usually enter into a legal union with the motivation of procreation, asset protection, and establishing or maintaining a legacy but will usually have at least one other simultaneous, romantic relationship outside of this that is centered around intimacy and a deep emotional connection (and is also legally recognized, though differently from an opposite-sex spouse). More often than not, this is to compensate for the way typical Viking unions are products of convenience and social need, with little emphasis on emotional fulfillment. As far as humans are generally concerned, as long as population needs are maintained and balanced, then romance and love are pursuits all are entitled to enjoy.

Because of their creation myth, humans are particularly devoted to Odin and Thor, both gods who represent honor and strength. Humans also pray to Frigg, the patron goddess of mothers and childbirth, and also Freya for fertility and- if you are a female warrior- strength and skill on the battlefield. Humans have almost as many seasonal celebrations as halflings and many believe that it is because they have such a fleeting number of seasons to enjoy.

Races: Jötnar

*The erne in old days lighted
Where the Æsir meat were bearing
To the fire-pit; the Giant
Of the rocks was called no faint-heart*

Skáldskaparmál, Prose Edda

The Jötnar- or Ice Giants, as they are sometimes called- are the oldest race, even among the immortal Vanir and Aesir gods. It is said that Ymir, the first being out of whom Odin and his brothers created the planar system, was a Jötnar of unfathomable size... so large that his corpse was used to make all of the lands in which people dwell. In the slaying of Ymir, it was said that his children- the first Jötnar as we know them- were swept away in the flood of hot blood that rushed from his body and spread to the corners of the world. Jötnar learned how to be self sufficient and resourceful, raising a growing population highly skilled in both martial and arcane arts.

The distinction of ‘race’ is not a tremendously useful grouping for Jötnar as their physical forms, inclinations, and inherit abilities vary immensely based on a number of mitigating factors. Jötnar born near the Iron Forest, for instance tend to take on the forms of hulking, bipedal wolves, some Jötnar have steely blue-gray skin that’s tougher than iron, some radiate cold, other radiate heat and breathe fire. There seems to be no size limitation for a Jötun’s physical body, only that it seems to take them many lifetimes before they’re able to achieve colossal forms. Most theorize that the more ancient and powerful an individual Jötun is, the more they can flex their physical forms. Unlike

Aesir and some Vanir, Jötnar reportedly cannot fully change their body from one shape into a completely new one. They are born with a set number of limbs, for instance (typically two arms, two legs, sometimes a tail, and generally only one head) but can alter many things about their body at will- such as skin and hair color, sex, ability to bear children, and the visibility of natural weapons like claws and fangs. Most denizens of Stromgard can tell a Jötnar when they see one, however, as the aura of ancient otherworldliness that surrounds them is almost impossible to conceal.

Jötnar tend to live in very small groups in extremely isolated settings. Their strong belief in self sufficiency and survivalist inclinations make them disinclined to start real communities where the burdens of life are shared. Typically, a Jötun parent lives with their children somewhere the children can grow and learn to fend for themselves, at which point the Jötun child either sets off on their own, succumbing to their innate wanderlust, or repays the parent by caring for them and continuing the cycle. Some Jötnar settlements exist, however, though they are rare, extremely isolated, and ferociously protected. The Iron Forest is home to a sizable clan of Jötnar that function like a wolf pack. An 'alpha' makes decisions for the group and the others form a social hierarchy beneath her, supporting her endeavors to feed and protect. Settlements like these are usually very wary of outsiders and significant efforts will need to be made in order to communicate a desire for peace. It also doesn't hurt to bring a finely made gift, especially a useful one, if you wish to enter a Jötnar village and leave intact.

The physical make-up of a Jötun, as previously mentioned, is widely variable. It took the humans of Dennar nearly four years to figure out that marauding werewolf attacks were

actually just Jötnar with particularly vicious natural forms. The Titan of Nottirn Lake was thought to be a earthbound Aesir for ages until someone slew it and it was discovered that it was Jötnar of immense age. While Jötnar ancestry is easy to spot in more mundane forms, once the Jötnar sort of surpass typically humanoid sizes and shapes into monstrous, their origins seem to be a bit harder to pin down. The most fascinating aspect of Jötnar physiology, however, is their ability to bear children regardless of apparent gender. While studying Jötnar bodies is difficult due in equal parts to their standoffish nature and their inherent distrust of others, common belief holds that Jötnar are not equipped to carry offspring until they actively will themselves to, which raises many fascinating questions without concrete answers.

For as much as Jötnar typically dislike meshing into social hierarchies and for as much as they resist the gods' every attempt to control them, it is universally accepted that Jötnar are somehow extremely appealing to nearly every group- mortal or immortal- in all the realms. Despite the conflicts between the Vanir, Aesir, and Jötnar, it is impossible to miss the fact that countless gods have taken Jötnar spouses. Loki, Skadi, and Gerðr are all of mostly Jötun blood, and even Odin himself is descendant of Jötnar. Mortal races usually find them desirable as well, even if they reportedly make for intense but brief trysts. Many Jötnar do not hold to the stereotypes, however, and find they make well-suited parents of typically healthy children. They can be vivacious, devoted spouses who viciously protect those they care for, even in the face of insurmountable odds. It bears repeating that Jötnar value freedom and independence above all things but that their desire to bear young and couple with a well-suited partner doesn't necessarily interfere with this.

While technically Jötunheim is another plane of existence, it surrounds Midgard like an enormous ring and traveling between the two is relatively simple- as simple as merely stepping over the border which has lead to fairly widespread exposure to Jötnar from the Midgardian side. Most races of Midgard deal with Jötnar on an irregular and infrequent basis but you can usually find pockets of them, living in isolation where they can. Some Jötnar have adapted to city life, finding entertainment and satisfying work among a denser population.

Most of the time, however, Jötnar culture and sensibilities make it a little hard for them to assimilate into other cultures. For one, their independent natures typically mandate a degree of individualism that doesn't work well in communities where everyone is expected to fulfill certain social roles. The Jötnar prioritization of the individual over the community can rub many the wrong way and often gets reduced to abrasive stereotypes. Furthermore, and a much larger obstacle for many, is that the Jötnar yearning for independence and strong aversion to participating in social hierarchies that do not place them at the top has led to the ardent and long-standing believe that the Jötnar are either planning to or are currently (in some form) violently resisting the control of the gods. As you can imagine, this can be quite a hurdle to overcome with more pious peoples, especially Alfir and to a lesser extent mortal elves.

Jötnar can also experience troubles from other races due in part to their lack of defined sex. Jötnar are born with bodies that are less easily divided into binary genders and without a sex that's easily discernible at a glance, non-Jötnar can find making assumptions a stressful situation. Furthermore, the concept of gender in Jötnar society is quite weak and since any Jötnar can will themselves the ability to produce children at any time, their

understanding of other cultures' sex and gender is also quite shaky. Additionally, Jötnar can also successfully copulate with any other race- which is probably a factor in their almost universal appeal as partners. Interestingly enough, this a trait that only humans share.

Somewhat scandalously, the Jötnar do not worship any of the gods and loudly proclaim that they are equal to the Asgardians. The Jötnar worship their own strength and their place in the cyclical nature of the world. To the Jötnar, forging your own path, protecting your loved ones, clashing with a powerful rival, and freely pursuing happiness and contentment are their holy rites. Jötnar are usually, by nature it seems, very distrustful of any attempts to 'organize' this creed into a centralized temple or the like and typically do not produce many individuals willing to spread their ways through peaceful missionary work. Their resistance to the rule and powers of the Aesir and Vanir gods has given rise to many unseemly stereotypes and generalizations that make it hard for them to have peaceful relationships without great effort. Most Midgardians believe that the Jötnar are power hungry anarchists simply biding their time until they can launch an assault on the gods. Others believe they incite the gods intentionally to rain misery and misfortune down on everyone. It isn't uncommon for natural disasters, diseases, and other catastrophes to be blamed on Jötnar impiety. Any signs of impending Ragnarök and most people immediately blame Jötnar for starting it on purpose. It can be a difficult existence, especially for Jötnar who travel to other realms and intermingle with other societies.

Warfare

*God of the blade of battle,
We bear through Hákon's life-days
The Seed of Fýri's valley
On our arms, where sits the falcon.*

Skáldskaparmál, Prose Edda

Arms & Armor

Across the vast majority of Stromgard, most martial weapons take the form of roughly hewn axes with heavy, solid heads on sturdy oaken hafts. Swords, especially shiny, high-quality ones are usually only seen on people of import or wealth as they are typically too expensive for an undecorated warrior. A full breastplate or plate pauldrons is generally cause for everyone to stop what they're doing and gape openly in most of the realm. Well-made battle axes and chain shirts can still be too expensive for a rural warrior or young fighter looking to cut their teeth, which makes hardened and shaped leather or belted tunics the go-to option of choice. The vast majority of inexperienced warriors outfit themselves with spears- either heavy and long for close combat or short and light for hurling incredible distances.

Warriors who regularly take to the sea to conquest other lands tend to favor foreign armaments as a kind of extremely functional war-trophy. Unusually shaped halberds, curved swords, and piece-mail fetch exorbitant amounts of money back in Stromgard or make handsome heirlooms.

Conquest

For most groups in Stromgard, war and conflict are an unavoidable part of life. Humans and Jötnar tend to be the most heavily involved in violence as they are some of the few races that will war with their own people at comparatively little provocation. Humans in particular are gifted tacticians, capable of defying tactical convention to overpower much larger and better equipped forces. While humans will die of old age much faster than the other groups, anyone can lose their life on the edge of an axe and this typically plays to the human's favor. They are usually of fairly high constitution and their desire for short term victories and earthly pleasures makes them a dangerous opponent. Few warriors can match the sheer recklessness and unrelenting determination humans possess during wartimes. While certainly not the strongest or most durable force in Stromgard, a human contingent is enough cause for caution and the reluctance to engage directly with human forces has grown strong in recent generations.

This reluctance to clash has, if anything, only prompted humans to find conflict elsewhere. The human High King of Stromgard possesses a huge fleet (consisting of hundreds of ships and even a retinue of Stormcallers) by which he maintains his authority among his people and even among some of the other mortal races as well. War in Stromgard rarely reaches the scale that would require such a fleet and so humans have taken the battle elsewhere. After the winter ice floes melt, conquest season officially begins.

Established and refined by humans, conquest is a bloody endeavor that yields great rewards for those interested in fame, glory, and wealth. Each village sends their strongest warriors in

small, lightweight ships that hold between ten and over a hundred sailors. Many of these explorers- who take on the title of Viking while they are away- leave for several months at a time, sailing south to known ports and easy targets beyond Stromgard, while the bravest, most well-equipped parties sail even further to places unknown. The priorities for these trips typically follow a somewhat predictable order- Firstly, sack the living hell out of an unprotected civilian port, target their places of worship (they're full of gold, after all), grab anything of value, cut down any who stand in the way. Then, conscript or enslave anyone strong enough to make up for Vikings lost in the skirmish, load up the boats, repeat until cargo capacity is maximized, then return to Stromgard.

The kingdoms that are a few days to a week or two south of Stromgard are prime targets. There are several large settlements dotting a series of islands with no unified force and hardly any warriors to even scrape a ragtag militia together. More than any other ports in the known world, these islands are continuously raided every year as marauders ransack churches and hamlets like wolves descending on fat, unprotected livestock. For those of a more adventurous spirit or eyes on bigger prizes, many brave raiders sail out to the edges of the known world itself, bringing back exotic weapons, coins, and even spices. Though beyond the easy island targets, there's no telling what kind of defenses or organized military forces await reckless raiders who press in without a thought.

Slaving is an abhorrent practice that has found a foothold in conquering. Vikings (both historically and in Stromgard) typically forced raid survivors- if they were strong enough to survive at sea, anyway- to function as replacement sailors for any warriors lost during conflicts. These conscripted sailors were

treated well enough to keep them healthy, for the most part, but their main function- to the Vikings- was forced labor and little else. Upon returning, these conscripted were contracted to more forced labor, usually as farm hands for a predetermined number of years. Once the contract was completed, the "conscript" was given all the same rights as native-born citizens. During their period of forced labor, conscripted were- at the very minimum- protected by some rights. The right to defend themselves from bodily harm and carry weapons, notably, as well as the widespread understanding that altering a conscription contract, once set, was considered dishonorable enough in some parts to warrant bloody retaliation from the whole village. But all of this does not erase the traumatic and dehumanizing experience conscripts routinely faced. Even once freed, these people were still in a mostly foreign, far off land with no real concept of how to return home. Many simply made new lives where they ended up, for lack of feasible alternatives... some go on to join other conquering Vikings in the hopes of reaching their homeland someday.

Humans are the only race that actively take part in open and unabashed slavery in this way. Elves and most of the small-folk races vocally revile the practice. Dwarves are ardent opponents and will not take part in conquest raids with human crews that partake in conscription (though very unflattering comparisons are sometimes uttered about the ruthless dwarven metal economy and the unerring need for dangerous manual labor). Suprisingly enough, it is the Jötnar who most viciously oppose conscription, even going so far as to sabotage raids occasionally.

Conquest is a bloody tradition and takes a violent name, but thankfully not all of its outcomes end in bloodshed. Many sail south to make peaceful contact with new ports and peoples,

opening up trade routes, bringing all sorts of commodities and skilled (voluntary) labor back with them. Peaceful talks can still be dangerous to those unskilled at working through foreign language and customs, however, and even if the port itself is safe enough, there's no telling what kind of ocean-dwelling monsters could make life difficult.

Tactics

Viking raids are extraordinarily successful for a few reasons, not the least of which is the simple fact that the fighters from Stromgard are strong and relentless. Firstly, ships built in Stromgard are long and lean, streamlined to cut through the water and nimbly pivot around rocks or ice with minimal effort. Most important of all, however, is their lightweight design. In Stromgard, a guiding design principle is that a ship must be light enough for its crew to carry across land, which makes it easy for warriors to travel huge distances inland via small waterways that their victims don't anticipate.

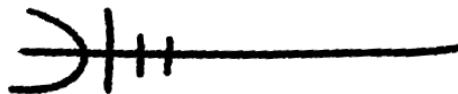
Unlike warfare and bloodshed in Stromgard, 'dishonorable' tactics like ambush and backstabbing carry far less stigma during a raid. These are, in fact, the most common tactics to employ when sacking- travel far inland at night, bring the ships ashore, and attack the settlement itself while its occupants sleep. During raids, it is also common to focus on the most vulnerable first targets first, rather than facing a well defended vault or a contingent of armed soldiers before setting a monastery on fire.

Another tactic heavily favored by pillaging raiders is playing into the rumors and stories their survivors tell, building up the panic and disorganization when they land. Warriors regularly go into battle naked, drunk, howling at the moon, and

some even set flame to their weapons in the effort of creating mass hysteria and anarchy during the first few critical moments of open conflict, undermining the chance for resistance to organize.

On open seas, sailors from Stromgard usually have the advantage as well. Longships are made to be fast and during an assault from either the land or sea, most helmsmen have the boats quickly lashed together in a kind of makeshift flotilla under the idea that the sailors will be able to quickly respond to defensive needs while relatively few can concentrate on piloting the ships.

Arcane technology has also added immeasurable benefits to those sailing from Stromgard. For sailors and raiders, there is no single asset more valuable than a Stormcaller. These mages can speed travel a thousand times over and are devastating in a skirmish. They are usually fringe dwellers, however, and many have found difficulty in keeping them satisfied during contracted voyages. The second most valuable thing a ship can be equipped with is a sunstone, a gold colored, cut and refined gem that emits a fine beam of light that points in the direction of the sun no matter the weather conditions or other visibility impairments. There is no more precise navigation tool widely available. While these gems are fairly easy to obtain (dwarves typically have ready access to the raw materials), they do come at a price line that is quite steep to those looking to purchase their first ship and tend to be the resource that restricts ship ownership the most.



Shipyards

The shipyards of Stromgard produce a few basic types of ships, though most helmsmen- especially veteran raiders who go out to conquest every spring- will typically add modifications or unique features to set themselves apart from the rest and also to accommodate the goals of their excursions as much as possible. Dexterity and cargo capacity were the two most important features that defined a ship's purpose. Rowers, with lightweight, pinewood oars, could cut through the surf like an arrow, while sturdy sails could travel obscene distances. For each feasible function, the Vikings could construct a ship tailored to that exact need.

Faering - A small vessel with oars for 2-4 people and room for a few more. These are cheap and light and many travel surprisingly long distances in them.

Knarr - A long distance ship, heavier and more rugged. These are designed to travel huge distances mostly by sail, but can hold around 30 sailors and move via auxiliary oars if need be.

Nydam - A longship designed for speed and dexterity. These ships hold between 15-20 people and can sail in water less than 3ft deep.

Karve - A heavy ship designed to transport cargo but that was still light enough to coast in extremely shallow conditions. Not hugely nimble but can haul a huge amount.

Additional Moves regarding warfare:

Pillage

When you *wish to sack a foreign port and command a number of Vikings*, issue your orders and roll +CHA. On a 10+ your warriors are well organized and gain a huge advantage surprising the settlement. There no major casualties and you obtain what you were aiming for. On a 7-9, your fighters are too eager and green. They lose the ability to fully catch the settlement unaware by being too noisy and slow in the approach. They meet the resistance head on and you suffer some casualties. The loot you obtained only a lesser version of what you wanted. On a miss, the assault was a disaster. The settlement had defenses you weren't prepared for, your warriors succumbed to chaos and broke formation and the chaos hindered them as much as it scared the townspeople. You suffer heavy losses and come away from the ordeal empty handed.

Ally

When you *wish to extend the hand of peace in a foreign port and command a number of Vikings*, issue your orders and roll +CHA. On a 10+, someone in your crew is able to passably communicate with the locals, who are a little nervous but curious about your people and your ways. You have good luck in securing talks with local authority and your sailors- as long as they are well behaved- are welcomed and permitted to trade for goods. On a 7-9, the locals do not trust you and you find them incredibly difficult to communicate with. They are only tolerating your presence and could easily be tipped into open hostility if your sailors overstay their welcome. With a show of good faith, you will be able to slowly build rapport with them but a misstep will

set you back. On a miss, the port is immediately hostile to you, having heard stories of barbarian raiders from the north already. They do everything in their power to drive you off before you can even land.



Gods and the Nine Realms

*I nine worlds remember,
nine trees,
the great central tree,
beneath the earth.*

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

Perhaps the most crucial element to understanding the people of Stromgard is understanding the planar system and how the differing realms relate to each other. Stromgard is part of a much larger world, after all- or, as it is more commonly understood, network of worlds. Each one has its own people and features and its own place in the hierarchy of divine authority.

The Nine Realms

There are nine worlds nestled into the branches of the cosmic tree, known as Yggdrasil. Travel between these planes is possible for the magically gifted or those of divine blood, though each realm has different policies regarding the open use of roads leading in or out. The Bifrost, or Rainbow Bridge as it's colloquially known, connects Asgard to most of Yggdrasil but it is also heavily guarded and to traverse it without permission or invitation is a steep offense. Like the Bifrost, most extraplanar roads were constructed by the Dvergjar and to this day, their kind and their cousins, the mortal dwarves, are the most knowledgeable about securing safe passage to other worlds. Jötnar,

however, excel at unearthing even the most hidden entrances and can freely travel through the planar system as they please, though they face great risk in doing so. The only thing most gods find more offensive than an uninvited mortal is an uninvited Ice Giant.

Asgard

The highest world on Yggdrasil and the home of the Aesir gods. Odin and his family make their home here and it is from here that he commands his servants and vassals. Valhalla is also here, its golden walls the literal eternal paradise for mortal warriors. Asgard is well defended and the road in watched constantly. As far as entering uninvited, its strongly believed that the task is impossible. Also in Asgard is the sprawling fields of Freya, the warrior goddess who is heavily associated with the Valkyries. Priests and clerics tell that her meadows receive the first half of the honorable warrior-dead for fighting Ragnarök while Valhalla receives the second.

Vanaheim

Immediately below Asgard is Vanaheim, both in physical location and in authority. Vanaheim is the realm of the Vanir gods, excluding the lower ranking divine elves. The lesser gods here spend their time mostly in pursuit of things that add beauty to their long life. Music, poetry, and song tend to be the preferred pastimes of many deities that reside here. Chief among these is Freyr, god of light and song and the entity to whom all immortal light elves are sworn to serve. Long ago, the Vanir would often war with the Aesir over power and territory and

some remnants of this still exist today, though there has been peace for a few ages now. Most of the Vanir gods would be willing to take up arms again, though as they have largely lost the will to stand against Asgard, an overarching, unifying desire would be needed to move them.

Alfheim

Known as Elf-home in their native tongue, Alfheim is the sacred home of the light elves. Travel between Alfheim and the other realms is typically quite easy, if a bit bureaucratically tedious. Freyr has given his people leave to come and go as they please, for the most part. With proper permissions, Alfr are typically permitted to travel to most realms, even Asgard, if they desire. Because the Alfr have made it their mission to assist in Midgard's progress towards being civilized, travel between those two planes is particularly active.

Myrkheim

The birthplace of the Dvergar and the ancestral home of the modern dwarves. Myrkheim boasts the densest population of dwarfkind across all Nine Realms and is a hub of commerce and industry. Ore for the finest of dwarven crafts is mined here and many of the legendary dwarven heirlooms were crafted here. Thor's hammer, the chain he holds Fenrir, and even Odin's spear were all forged in the open halls of Myrkheim under the dim light of their garnet sun and indigo sky. A great number of dwarves- mostly Gundkin but also some Dvergar- migrated out of Myrkheim over the last few ages to set up homes and colonies in the mountains and hills of Midgard, taking advantage of their

unique natural materials and the lucrative potential of controlling most of the weapons market there.

Midgard

Below Myrkheim is the realm of Midgard, home to the mortal races. Midgard technically answers to Asgard but it is largely a lawless place where most gods do not usually venture into directly. To those living on it, Midgard appears to be endless. The ocean seems to stretch on for an infinity and voyagers always seem to find new land masses with new people inhabiting them. Midgard is a realm of cycles- seasons change, day becomes night, tides rise and fall... it seems every natural force in Midgard has a counterforce to pull back against it. Life is hard there, however, without innate divinity keeping them alive, the mortals must toil for shelter and sustenance, each year marked by a harsh winter that kills plants and drives animals away. But the mortals are nothing if not resilient and inventive.

Jötunheim

Jötunheim is a strange place, said to physically exist as more of a ring than a true world. Legends state that the Midgard Serpent lies asleep and coiled around the edge of Midgard, but that Jötunheim, in turn, encircles the serpent, making both planes and the great snake look like a cosmic bullseye. Jötunheim is primarily a land of icy crags and impossibly huge mountains, though it does boast plenty of forests, fjords, and even some beautiful lowlands. Everything here is proportional to the larger Jötnar and most mortals would find themselves absolutely dwarfed in their forests or foothills.

While travel between Jötunheim and Midgard is relatively simple and unregulated, most mortals live in fear of Jötnar and wouldn't readily volunteer to explore their homeland. There is a persistent belief that Jötnar are likewise constantly trying to find ways into Asgard so they can infiltrate it and depose the Aesir.

Svartalfheim

In terms of divine hierarchy, Svartalfheim is technically equal to Alfheim. It is home to the reclusive moon elves, the Nithfir, though in terms of physical location it is far outflung on the limbs of Yggdrasil and actually sits a little below Midgard. After the last Aesir/Vanir conflicts, the Nithfir decided to abandon their place in the divine hierarchy and retreated entirely into their own realm. So much time has passed since then that most have forgotten what Svartalfheim looks like. Travel in and out is prohibited and the road is blocked by intense offensive magic and arcane traps. Svartalfheim is entirely cut off from the other realms and it seems as though the Nithfir living there have every intention of keeping it that way.

Helheim

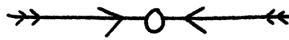
Beneath Svartalfheim, Helheim is the home of the dead who do not make it into Valhalla for one reason or another. The realm is controlled by a goddess of the same namesake who judges the deeds of the unworthy and assigns them labor to complete in punishment for misdeeds in life. There are rumors of secret portals that lead in and out of Hel's domain but only the insane would try to force their way into Helheim while they still had life in them.

Niflheim

Immediately below Helheim- and technically a subrealm as it is actually attached to Helheim via arcane tethers- Niflheim is a barren, icy wasteland that serves as a prison for the cowardly or dishonorable dead Hel discards. It is impossible to reach Niflheim without going through Helheim first, supposedly, but it's safe to say that this frozen hellscape gets very few outside visitors.

Muspelheim

The lowest plane on Yggdrasil is Muspelheim, the land of the fire giants. The entrance as been sealed off, as far as anyone knows, to keep the giants from climbing the cosmic tree and setting all the worlds ablaze. Even bringing up Muspelheim in conversation is nearly taboo as it was prophesied that Surt, the fire giant's god-king, would escape as the final doom Ragnarök would bring before everything perished in a cosmic blaze.



Types of Divinity

Divinity, power, and godliness are three very gray boundaries in the Nine Realms. Arcane scholars of all races have argued about the characteristics of each since the beginning of organized study, it seems. Most people- mortals and immortals of all races- tend to categorize powerful beings into three main categories.

Jötnar

The Jötnar the oldest race and a powerful set of people that are extremely varied in terms of physical appearance and prowess. Some Jötnar are human sized, some are tall as mountains and proportionally powerful. What separates a Jötnar from a god is much less clear. Ymir, the first giant, is inarguably a divine being. And many Jötnar are either married to Aesir- notably Skadi- or have Aesir offspring with another god. Odin is said to be part Jötnar, as are his sons Thor and Loki. The qualifiers that make a Jötnar a god are difficult to nail down, though beings like Surt and Ymir are unquestionably worthy of awe and terror.

Aesir

The Aesir are considered the highest rank of divine power in the Nine Realms, chiefly due to their immense influence and control over the natural world that governs mortals.

Vanir

A lower class of divine beings. Long ago there were many violent conflicts between the Aesir and Vanir but it seems that those dark days are finally in the past to stay. The Alfir and Nithfir are also technically Vanir deities but they are the lowest ranking, least powerful of them.

The Gods

Ymir and Creation

No discussion of gods and cosmic beings would be complete without first discussing the origin of the worlds that be. Ymir was the original primeval being from before the world was truly alive. A being that eludes simple descriptions, Ymir was simultaneously male and female, fire and ice, and life and death while also none of these things, all at once. Ymir was nourished by the milk of the divine cow, Authumia, who also brought the first Aesir god, Buri, into existence by licking ice into the shape of a person. The first true Jötnar were born from Ymir's sweat and the union between one of these proto-Jötnar and Buri bore Odin and his two brothers. The brothers eventually slew Ymir and used the body to create the earth and cosmos—the rush of blood became the seas, bones became the mountains, hair became trees, brains became clouds, and the skull was the heavens. Odin and his brothers made Midgard out of Ymir's brow and originally intended it to be a defensible place. A rather insulting, contested legend describes the first dwarves as forming from the corpse's maggots. The more polite version states that they were shaped of Ymir's flesh and filled with his blood.

Surt: Pillar of Fire

Surt is a titanic Jötun that resides in and controls the realm of fire, Muspelheim. One of the catalysts for the cyclical destruction of the world, known as Ragnarök, Surt is hellbent on leading his armies to war against the Aesir and Vanir. With

an enormous flaming sword, Surt desires little else then to set the world ablaze and bring the gods to their knees. Many prophecies of Ragnarök warn of him rising from the south and tearing the land apart under his mighty steps.

The Aesir Deities

Odin

King of the gods, most commonly associated with wisdom, war, martial combat, sorcery, and prophecy. He gave up his left eye and spent nine days hanging from a branch of Yggdrasil by a noose in exchange for a drink from the Well of Knowledge, kept by the Norns.

Frigg

Wife of Odin. She is associated with prophetic arts and is the patron god of Seiðr and their craft. She is often invoked by wives and mothers seeking strength to guide their families.

Thor

A mighty and noble warrior, Thor is most commonly associated with combat, battle prowess, storms (especially lightning), protection, strength, and sometimes virility. Along with a number of magical, dwarven items, Thor wields Mjolnir, an enormous hammer with the power to level mountains.

Bald̥r

A god of light, Bald̥r is associated with the sun, summer, and purity. He is also sometimes invoked by sailors as he

supposedly has a magnificent ship that surpasses all others. It has been prophesied that Baldr's death is one of the first signs of impending Ragnarök.

Tyr

The somewhat rare voice of law and due process in Asgard. Tyr is associated to honorable glory and is a venerable warrior even with only one hand.

Loki

Loki is considered an Aesir god but his origins and motives make him somewhat of an outsider. He is part Jötun and adopted son of Odin. Loki, above all else, values cleverness and wits. Often called a trickster, Loki does much to turn convention on its head and expose the hypocrisies of civilization. Loki is only invoked with care, as he is prone to mischief, but he is associated with knowledge, wits, outcasts, and revenge.

Hel

Like Loki, Hel's role as an Aesir god is very gray. As Loki's daughter, she is considered to be more Jötun than anything else and counts the wolf Fenrir and the world-eating snake Jörmungandr among her multiple siblings. Hel oversees the realm of the same name, managing the dead that do not make it to the golden mead halls of Vallhalla. Although an astronomically small number of people ever lay eyes on Hel and return to tell the tale, rumors say she is both old and young, and at once beautiful but terrifying. Like her father, Hel is said to possess a crafty streak and will oblige mortal pleading to return to life if some impossible task is completed- inevitably ending

in breaking her charges' wills. Hel also has many loyal servants, which prompts most mortals to avoid invoking her name in fear of summoning her attention.

The Vanir Deities

Freya

Depending on the region, Freya is sometimes considered an Aesir. She is the preeminent goddess of love and beauty, as well as wealth, fertility, and the moon. Like Frigg, she is a champion of Seiðr and sorcerers, especially female spell-weavers. It is said that the first Seiðr learned their powers from her. Freya is also, however, a highly gifted warrior and helps the Valkyries sort through the honorable dead, deciding on champions to bring to Valhalla and her own field of warriors, Fólkvangr.

Freyr

The lord of Alfheim and of the Light Elves living there. He is associated with sacral authority, the sun, weather, and prosperity. He is commonly invoked by mortals for fair sailing conditions and matters of virility. The Alfir revere him as the divine embodiment of all that is light and fair and pleasurable in the world.

Njord

The god of the sea and just about everything associated. Njord is invoked by those wishing for safe travels on open water, plentiful fish, calm winds, and placid tides. He is also commonly associated with farming, bounty, and crop health. Njord is typically believed to be immensely kind and forgiving, often

depicted as a robed figure shepherding the weak.

Skadi

Technically a Jötun, Skadi is sometimes considered a Vanir goddess- depending on your take on her status after a failed marriage to Njord. She is a mighty hunter and warrior, associated with bows and arrows, skiing, mountains, and winter's icy grasp. Skadi values independence and freedom most of all, and does not look kindly on the cowardly or simpering.

Kvasir

A wiseman said to have formed from the mix of Aesir and Vanir saliva. Kvasir was known to be well traveled and knew many of Yggdrasil's secrets and denizens. Scandalously, this Vanir god was "murdered" by a pair of dwarves- as much as you can truly murder an immortal, anyway. His blood was drained and mixed with honey, which fermented and became the Mead of Poetry, which provides wit and intelligence to any who drink it.

Heimdallr

While his true relation to the Aesir and the Vanir is obscured to mortals, most regions hold the belief that he is more closely linked to the Vanir gods. Heimdallr is the steward of the Gjallarhorn- a magical horn that can be heard in all nine realms and is the immortal watchman of the Bifrost, which he guards the passage of carefully. Rumored to possess golden teeth and a golden horse, Heimdallr is often portrayed as a being of sharp sense, foresight, and gallantry. He is also the son of the Nine Mothers, demigoddesses of the seas and is said to have created

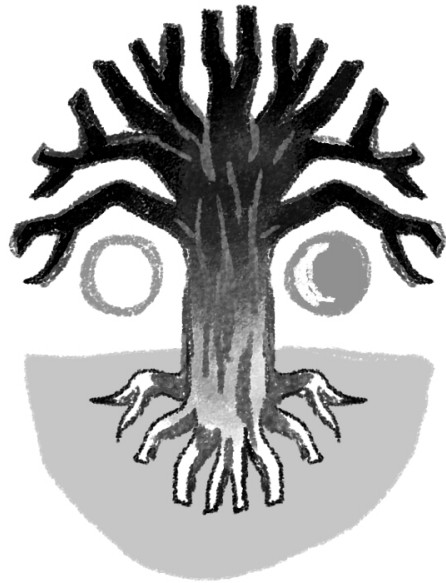
social castes that bind mortals.

Ullr

Like most of the Vanir gods, Ullr's status flip flops between Aesir and Vanir depending on who you talk to. He is associated with archery, glory in combat, and ritual. Those devoted to him regularly have "servant of the glory-father" or "servant to the glorious one" etched into their weapons and equipment, along with a hexagonal marking that somewhat resembles a shield.

Gerðr

Like Skadi, Gerðr is a Jötun that is typically counted along with the Vanir as she is the wife of Freyr, the sun deity and patron of elvenkind. Both by her beauty and divine mind, Gerðr is revered as a kind of holy muse who can inspire works of art from even the clumsiest of hands. She is also commonly associated with the earth and stability.



THE BLACK BAND

MT. HIMMIN

HIMIN

SERPENTS
BACK

VIDRMAARK

VIDRMAARK

JURGEN ROAD

SKOGLAND

GRELUND

ASKRABELT

LAKE CALENHAD

LAKE CALENHAD

GANDRMYR

GANDRMYR

NOTTAN
LAKES

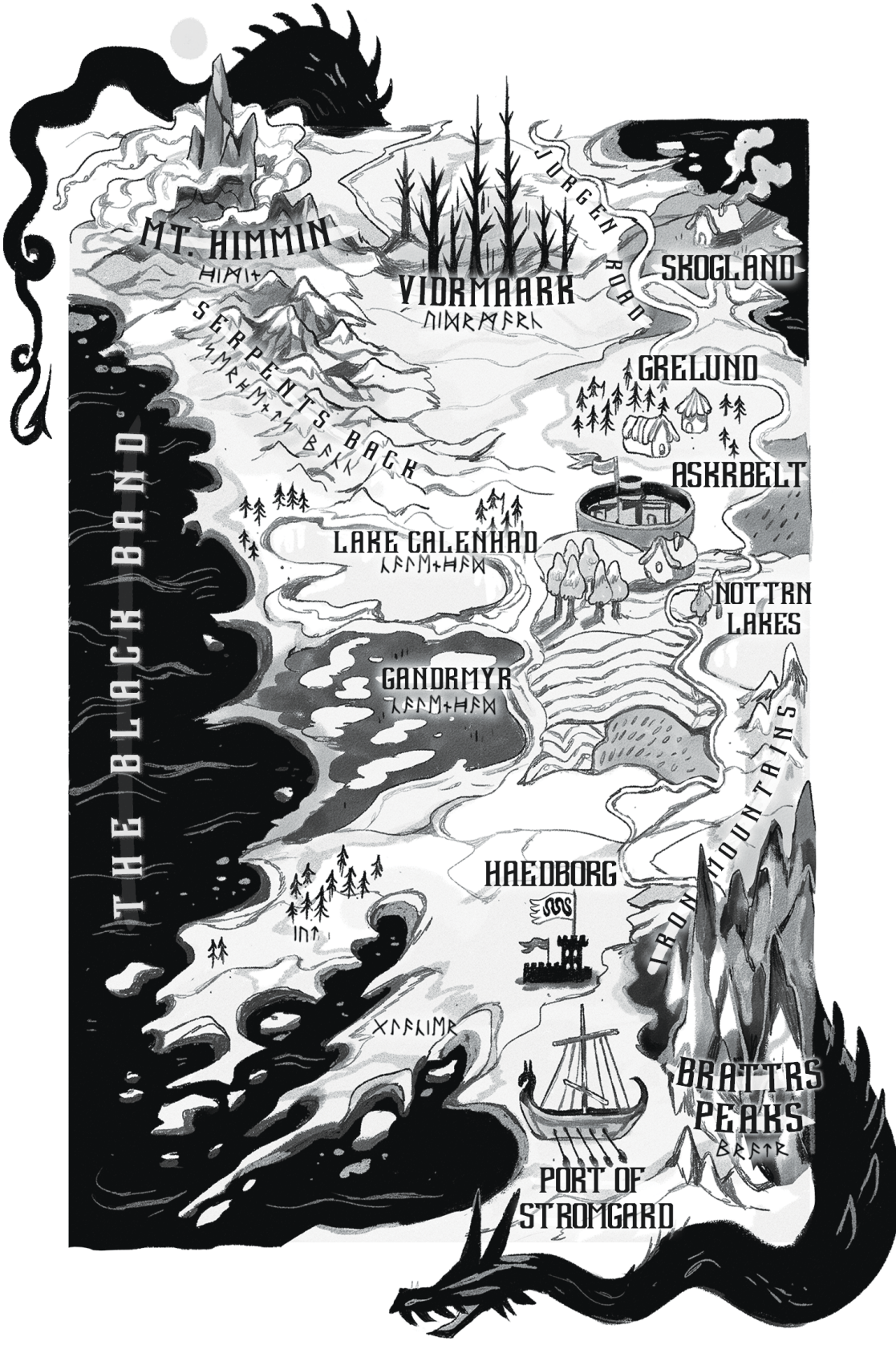
HAEDBORG

IRON MOUNTAINS

BRATTS
PEAKS

BRATTS

PORT OF
STROMGARD



Notable Places

*The horse shall run not
whereon thou ridest,
Though fain thou art
thy foe to flee*

Helgakviða Hundingsbana II

Stromgard lies near one of the extreme northern edges of Midgard and while the winters are harsh and long, pleasant and mild summers melt the ice floes and open up passage to the southern world. The entirety of Stromgard is huge but populations are clustered, leaving vast swaths of rugged land isolated. Dense forests stretch across most of the northern borders of the realm, full of dangerous beasts and sometimes worse, if rumors are to be believed. The **Vidrmark** is the largest and densest of these, said to be home to all manner of monsters, witches, and feral nature cults. One main thoroughfare- **Jurgen Road**- cuts through most of the realm from north to south and is *generally* safe enough for travel so long as you don't look like too easy of a target for bandits. To the north and west is the huge mountain range known as **Serpent's Back**- it stretches far northward for hundreds of miles. The tallest peak of the range, and of all Stromgard, is **Mt. Himmin**, whose sharp peaks are always shrouded in cloud. Somewhere in this range is the Elvish community of Dalle, reportedly carved directly in to one of these snowy peaks. At the southernmost point of Serpent's Back, after a fertile stretch of valley, is **Lake Calenhad**. The basin that forms this massive lake is said to be a crater left behind from a deadly Aesir/Vanir conflict eons ago, though now it is a gentle sanctuary

for many kinds of fish. Further south still is **Gandrmyr**, the regional name for Spirit's Mire. Like the Vidrmaark, Gandrmyr is the subject of endless rumors and legends. Most maintain that many powerful witches and druids seek a special kind of wood only found here, indeed the word 'gandr' refers to magical wands and staves. Rumors also claim that fae traverse this swamp regularly. At the southern border of Stromgard, **Brattr's Peak**-the second tallest peak in the region- stretches up to the heavens in the middle of the rugged and jagged expanse called the **Iron Mountains**. One of the major dwarven cities is here, dug into the base of a deep, rocky chasm and rumored to be illuminated by enchanted stones.

Stromgard is bordered to the west by the **Black Band**, a wide, incredibly deep expanse of water that leads to the sea. The Black Band is treacherous and often underestimated by green sailors leaving on their first conquest since it usually appears to be calm while vicious riptides churn just below the surface. Part of the Black Band pools east, creating the large inlet against which the capital of Stromgard sits. Also named **Stromgard**, the capital city is home to the high king and the biggest naval fleet in the region. Central Stromgard is mostly gentle, rolling hills and fertile soil... and therefore where the majority of established settlements are located. **Nottrn Lakes** are a collection of small, ice cold lakes that feed from the Iron Mountains and which provide ample fish for the surrounding villages.

Steadings and Landmarks

Skoglund: Small village that is decidedly not notable. Currently in a near-exodus status as trade fails and a bad knurtr raid compromised the community's food supply. Their only value is

the religious symbol- an ancient apple tree- growing in the center of town that used to be a mini pilgrimage for other isolated villages. *Dirt poor, Shrinking, No Defense.*

Grelund: Idyllic little village not far off Jurgen road. They raise goats and sheep and are well known for their hospitality. While several days' journey from Skoglund, they used to trade labor and goods before Skoglund's troubles. *Poor, Steady, Militia (some able bodied men and women with old weapons), Safe*

Askrbelt: Prosperous village that helps maintain Jurgen Road by patrolling it. They charge a toll to help cover the costs. The town is walled off to protect its citizens from goblin harassment, though there is quite a bit of farmland in the open. The town has a builder's guild, a blacksmith, an open market, two taverns, a butcher, a brewer's, and a constabulary with two holding cells. *Moderate, Growing, Guarded.*

Haedborg: Large town right off of the main fork of Jurgen Road. This town has a large population, even in the summer, and produces enough to be able to send supplies and aid during times of crisis. Rumor has it that the land is always healthy and fertile due to a long standing pact with neighboring fae. *Wealthy, Growing, Guarded, Resource (Foodstuffs/Lumber), History (miracle)*

Port of Stromgard: The wealthiest stading in the realm and also the largest. Stromgard is a defensible city with stone walls and a trained, well equipped guard that is well organized. The high king's naval fleet and tentative power over the other steadings is what backs Stromgard's authority. The entire western

portion of Stromgard backs into the Black Band with huge, well made piers, a shipyard, barracks, and training grounds for warriors and sailors. Stromgard also boasts the largest marketplace in not only the realm but also in the corner of the world. Vikings and sailors bring back all manner of strange and exotic products from their travels. Many people who are conscripted also end up in Stromgard once their forced-contracts are up, creating pockets of expats from far-flung cultures. Most freed conscripts set up in Stromgard to gain access to the shipyard in the hopes they can buy passage or a ship itself to return. Some simply end up staying to make a life for themselves. There are also a few

academic institutions in Stromgard dedicated to learning and the magical arts.

*Rich, Steady, Garrison,
Exotic (raw materials,
arcane knowledge, culture),
Oath (to protect and lead
the realm's other steadings),
Market, Arcane, Person-
age (high king), Power*



The Arcane

*The sun turns black , earth sinks in the sea,
The hot stars down from heaven are whirled*

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

The arcane fabric of Stromgard, Midgard, and even the entirety of Yggdrasil has been a topic of intense study since time immemorial. There are countless wizards and mages of all disciplines studying nearly unlimited schools of magic and more collected knowledge on the subject to fill the grandest libraries known to man. And still, the mysteries and innermost workings have hardly been scratched. New magicks are invented everyday and it only takes someone reckless and dangerously clever to pull off such a feat.

There are two major ‘wells’ one may tap in to the cosmic forces of ‘magic’ from. The first is divine magic. Divine magic is what powers clerics and paladins, and relies upon receiving power from a deity or other cosmic force in exchange for devotion and service, typically.

‘Natural’ magic is the tapping into and shaping of wild natural forces that govern the Nine Realms. This can exceedingly dangerous. As the laws of nature can differ in different realms, extraplanar visitors of magical persuasion can sometimes be met with unexpected spell results that can turn deadly in an instant. The most mundane magic- worked by medicinepeople and hedgewitches- is quite subtle and can work without any obvious manifestation. Powerful mages can pull demonic fire directly from Muspelheim before your very eyes but, thankfully, power at this scale is rare.

There is a less classifiable third major school of magic involving prophesy and Seeing. The magic of fate-reading and foresight is usually considered to be a divine gift, though some anomalies exist. True prophecy and wyrd-reading are considered to be extremely rare and valuable gifts. People typically treat the art of foretelling to be a gravely serious act that can be immeasurably valuable and an immense burden. Seiðr are the most powerful of seers, and must drink from a well of knowledge- guarded by the Norns- to gain their incredible powers. The type of fate read by a Seiðr is called a wyrd. In Stromgard, all words have power and to speak them is to create and in that, make real (sometimes symbolically, sometimes literally). A wyrd is just that, a fate given form. Interpreting a wyrd can be difficult, sometimes impossible, but a wyrd is a great treasure, even if it brings great suffering.

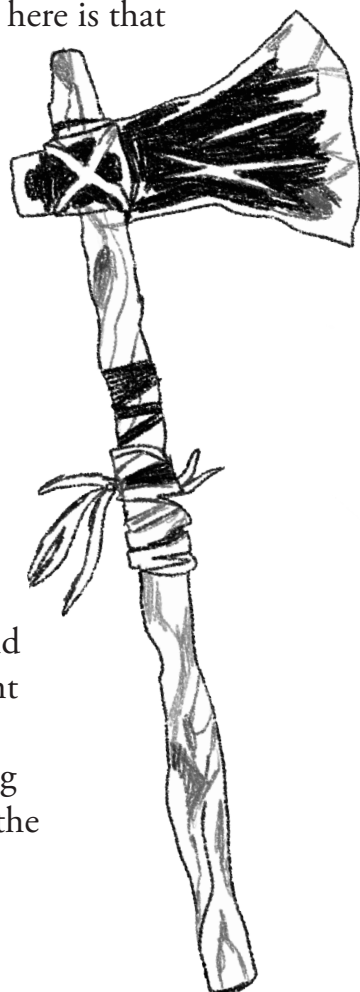
Not only can a seer read the wyrd of a person, but a place's wyrd can also be read, spelling the fate of all. Ragnarök is known by many names but it signifies one thing above anything else- a cataclysm so bloody and chaotic that the world itself will die. Many seers have foretold different events supposedly destined to take place during the apocalypse. Winter will rage on for years, a great battle will rend the land, the gods will be murdered, even mighty Odin is seemingly destined to die in the jaws of Fenrir. This will bring untold devastation in the form of floods and storms, until the world is sunk. Ragnarök is also said to represent a cycle and that ultimately, the world would be reborn again. Though what this means for mortals is unknown.

Class Playbooks

*We have heard of the glory in bygone days
of the folk-kings of the spear-Danes,
how those noble lords did lofty deeds.*

Beowulf

These are the basic roles players will take on while adventuring in Stromgard and they work very much like standard Dungeon World class playbooks in terms of functionality. One of the major differences here is that race has been decoupled from alignment by replacing the standard ‘race’ move with a broader ‘back-ground’ move. The main goal in doing this was to open up the classes to be played by any race character with any alignment they choose. GMs and their players can discuss what societal norms apply to their preferred races as they please- there is a brief summary of race relations of the ‘default’ Stromgard setting in the Race section, though if you are playing a race not specifically mentioned therein, collaborate with your group to build your own. Alignment moves are still present but I encourage players and GMs to write custom alignments or brainstorm interesting ways to enact alignments not listed and/or the shades of gray between them.





THE BEARSKIN

“Odin’s men rushed forwards without armor, were as mad as dogs or wolves, bit their shields, and were strong as bears or wild oxen, and killed people at a blow, but neither fire nor iron told upon them.”

Ynglinga Saga, Prose Edda

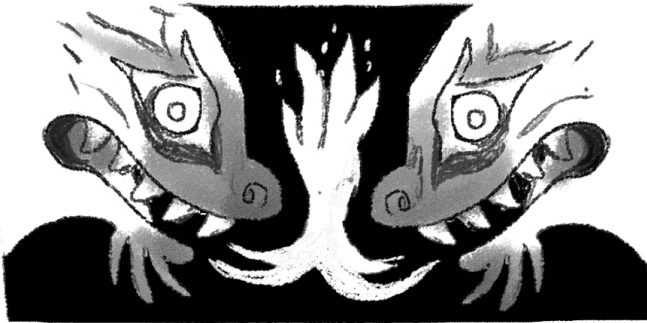
The Bearskins are beholden to no one. Once, these berserkers were mere warriors but their relentless devotion to their carnal instincts and feral ferocity has fully transformed them into something entirely different. They have rejected the nature of man, learned the ways of beasts, and wholly given themselves over to their indomitable thirst for adversaries that can offer a challenge. They charge relentlessly into combat covered in nothing but pelts, insult their enemies by refusing to use a shield, wander the land like wrathful spirits looking for challenge and blood... To die gloriously in combat is a Bearskin’s greatest desire. Since their destinies are usually prized by warrior-deities, the Bearskins often get their wish.

What defines a Bearskin, what separates them from a normal warrior, is the blood-lust. In the heat of battle or in a spike of danger, a Bearskin can snap and go into a frenzy. This violent rage puts everyone in proximity at risk. Allies, enemies, and even innocent bystanders are all simply moving targets to a Bearskin frothing at the mouth and rabid with the desire to rend flesh from bone with their bare hands. Bearskins give up a great deal for their mantle, certainly, but for those who can put their bodies and rational mind on the line, untold destruction can be leveraged through their mortal body.

For those who can gain their trust and earn a little of their loyalty, there are no stronger, more terrifying warriors to employ as front-line fighters than the Bearskins... The mere sight of a berserker in full rage would cause most leaders with a care for

their casualties to disengage immediately. The Bearskin, like any beast, is untamable. In battle, they feel neither fear nor pain, they sacrifice kinship and comfort for the ways of the wild. Their frenzy makes them a dangerous ally to keep close and their solitary lifestyle makes them more legend than reality to most folks. And yet despite all of this, the Bearskins- rare and solitary though they may be- are still highly prized by any daring commander who can secure their services. It goes without saying, though, that this comes with great risk.

Odin, and to a lesser extent Thor (as well as a host of other nature- and war-based deities) favor these formidable warriors and their strict, if slightly unorthodox, commitment to straightforward combat. It is rumored that Odin himself taught the first Bearskins in the ways of the wild, showed them how to withstand the ravages of fire and the bite of steel and cold. While the Bearskins aren't organized into a society or order, their ways get taught and passed down just the same, from fighter to fighter, keeping the wisdom of Odin alive and the path to Valhalla open.



Choose a Name

Hrolf, Astrid, Grendel, Kolga, Rollo, Delling, Sven, Sváfa, Thorstein, Kára, Bosi, Hervör, Asumund, Eyfura, Bodvar, Thora, Volgarr, Bylgja, Arngrim, Hefring, Björn, Angeyja, Styrbjörn, Atla, Gunnar, Eyrgjafa, Flosi, Imður, Brandt, Ulfrún, Einar, Fan, Olavi, Yenne, Ove, Sketh, Tarben

Choose a Look

Body: Hulking, sinewy, towering, ritualistic markings

Eyes: Piercing, intense, strangely colored, scarred shut

Hair: Loose and wild, mohawk, messily bound

Clothes: Furs and pelts, rough hewn cloak

Vitals

Max HP is 8+CON

Base Damage is 1D10

Background

Choose your heritage

Bardic

You are one of Odin's Men and therefore privy to his wisdom as well as his strength. When you *Spout Lore* about signs or omens, take +1.

Dwarf-Blooded

Your constitution is unmatched. You are immune to poisons and hangovers.

Not One for Words

You may use STR to intimidate instead of CHA to *Parley*.

Starting Moves

You start with these moves

Blood Rush

When you *succumb to a raging blood-lust*, hold 3. While berserking, you may spend hold, one for one, to choose:

- Add 1D6 extra damage to an attack; missed attacks while raging may result in collateral damage to other people/objects
- Destroy or damage something the enemy is carrying
- Take +1 forward when bring your might to bear against an enemy or your surroundings or otherwise perform a feat of strength
- Take no damage from the next successful melee attack against you.

Once you're out of hold, you become *Docile*. You may spend all of your hold to become *Docile* at any time to end the *Blood Rush*.

Docile

When *your blood-lust fades*, you become docile. Take -1 ongoing to all actions and another *Blood Rush* cannot be triggered until after you *Make Camp*.

No Trappings of Men

When you *cast off the burdens of civilization* by sleeping under the open sky and wearing only pelts and hides, take +1 armor.

Rampage

Roll +STR to bullrush through or destroy obstacles. On a 10+ you break through or destroy an object in your path. On a 7-9

you can only manage a lesser version of your intent. On a miss, you're put in a bad position.

Shield Biter

When you *show your enemy your shield and bite it* to show that you do not fear of pain or death in battle and aren't bound by their laws, your weapon gains the *Forceful* tag. Using your shield in battle as armor immediately removes this tag for the remainder of the encounter.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Neutral

Plunge recklessly ahead in spite of overwhelming danger.

Evil

Plunder a trophy from a bested foe.

Gear:

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 8+ STR.

You have a pouch of **Henbane** (3 uses) that provides +1 armor during *Blood Rush* and -1 armor during *Docile* as well as a **Ceremonial Shield** (1 weight).

Choose your weapon:

- Two handed axe (close, +1 damage, 2 weight)
- War spear (reach, +1 damage, 2 weight)

Choose your animal totem:

- Bear
- Wolf
- Boar
- Eagle
- Serpent
- Goat

Bonds

Explore with others before beginning or write your own

_____ is a coward. I will show them what valor is.

_____ may not be like me, but I think they will find their way to Valhalla with a noble death.

I do not have the patience for the way _____ clings to the bondage of civilization.

They may try to hide it but _____ fears me. For good reason.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

On the Eve of Battle

Perform a sacred demonstration in preparation for battle. The purification and subsequent anointment takes an hour. Ignore either: the effect *or* damage from the first attack made against you in your next fight.

Cunning

You may now add the following options to use during your *Blood Rush*:

- Strike them a blow so mighty that they're stunned
- Draw all attention to yourself.

Blood Roar

When you *scream like a bloodthirsty animal* and charge into battle, demoralize the enemy combatant(s). Take +1 on the first attack you make per combat encounter.

Cold Blooded

You're incapable of being intimidated.

Odin's Men

Take a move from the **Skald** class.

Live to Fight

When you *go into a rage* and activate your *Blood Rush*, regain CON + 1D6 HP.

Unkillable

When you *take your Last Breath*, on a 10+ immediately return to consciousness with 1HP. Your *Blood Rush* immediately triggers, even if you were *Docile*.

Improved Blood Rush

Take +1 hold during *Blood Rush*.

Evil Eye

When you *stare into the whites of your enemy's eyes*, your bestial nature intimidates even their weapons, blunting them. Take +1 armor until the end of combat.

Beastkin

When you *call upon the spirit of your animal totem* and change your physical form, roll +CON. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 2. On a miss, hold 1 in addition to whatever the GM tells you. You can take the physical form of your animal totem and any innate talents and weaknesses they have. When you run out of hold, you revert back to your natural form, or you can spend all your hold to revert back whenever you wish. The GM will describe 1 or more moves your animal form has. Spend hold to do these actions. You retain all of your normal stats during this time.

Advanced Moves cont'd

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Fire Dance

Requires: On the Eve of Battle

Your ritual now incorporates an elaborate, wild dance and a large bonfire. You are immune to the destructive nature of fire while *Blood Rush* is active.

Blood Payment

Requires: Fire Dance

Your ritual is now perfected with an offering of your own blood. You are immune to the damage inflicted by bladed, slashing weapons while your *Blood Rush* is active.

Unleashed

You can now incorporate the following into your *Blood Rush* options:

- Your weapon gains the *Messy* tag

Greater Blood Rush

Replaces: Improved Blood Rush

Gain +2 hold when activating *Blood Rush*.

Berserker's Vigor

Replaces: Live to Fight

When you go into a rage and activate your *Blood Rush*, regain CON + 1D10 HP.

Chain Kill

Gain +1 hold with every subsequent kill during *Blood Rush*.

Well of Knowledge

Take one move from the **Skald** class.

Overpower

When you roll a 12+ on any *Defy Danger* roll, you turn the danger back on itself. The GM will describe how.



THE SKALD

*For fabling braggarts
Full am I of scorn,
Of worthy friends:
Courts I of monarchs
A many have sought,
A gallant minstrel
Of guileless mood.*

Arinbjarnarkviða, Egil's Saga

Everyone knows that there is power in words, though maybe none know it as well as the Skald. A Skald can invoke the gods, trace notable bloodlines, immortalize heroic deeds and cowardly acts for all of time. When the Skald speaks, they create truth. When the Skald speaks, they make things real.

All jarls and commanders and leaders are very aware of the power a Skald wields, especially over them. Make an enemy with a vengeful Skald and your whole seat of power and influence could be facing a smear campaign or worse still, simple erasure from the minds of the people you need to hold sway over. Authority in Stromgard is often made on tremulous compromises and no one has better insight to these webs than a Skald. They know full well that a simple lie or a flattering tale is all that it takes to manipulate the threads of fate.

Above all, however, the Skald is an academic and lore-keeper, a resource the community depends on for information, mediation, and education. Skalds are highly respected because of their role in most settlements and they have little trouble interacting with people from all walks of life. Noble-born and other ruling classes depend on them to record their lineage and settle matters of court as an unbiased third party, warriors ask the Skald to send their prayers to the gods on the eve of battle, sailors employ the Skald on long expeditions to record their

journeys and take the lead with any foreign interaction.

The trappings may be unassuming for a Skald but their power is immense and far-reaching. Society relies on Skalds to record history and ensure the stories of Stromgard, and its people, survive. They are the thread that binds the past to the present and the present to the future.



Choose a Name

Bersi, Ingeborg, Bragi, Sigrith, Snorri, Brynhild, Elvindr, Vlasta, Egill, Galica, Kormakr, Blenda, Eilifr, Rani, Hallfredr, Ingrid, Einarr, Darby, Gunnalgur, Lamone, Sigvatr, Ragna, Ottar, Runa, Arnor, Selby, Njal, Soini, Tua, Helgi, Tove, Heimir, Thyra, Völsung

Choose a Look

Body: Gangly, svelte, thick, sturdy

Eyes: Clever, bright, sharp, beguiling

Hair: Intricate braids, pulled high, shorn, loose

Clothes: Fur-lined cloak, buckskin tunic

Vitals

Max HP is 6+CON

Base Damage is 1D6

Background

Choose your heritage

Networker

When you reach out to another skald or bardic professional for information, take +1 forward when acting on their tip.

Mixed Blood

Choose a secondary culture and take a +1 to *Spout Lore* in matters that concern them.

Starting Moves

Historian

When you *visit a famous place*, or somewhere you've been before, ask the GM one of the following questions. The GM must answer truthfully.

- Is everything as it seems here?
- What is notable about this location's history?
- What do the people here value?
- What are the locals wary of?

Mediary

Your occupation makes you a valued member of society. Until you give people a reason to mistrust you, they will tend to take you at your word. This will not keep already-hostile enemies from attacking you.

Well-Timed Strikes

When you *Hack & Slash*, on a 7-9 take +1 armor forward. On a 10+ you still gain the +1 armor forward but an ally of your choice also gains +1 forward to attack the enemy.

Cultural

You can communicate on a basic level with any culture or race.

Recitation

When you *perform for a crowd of people*, roll +CHA. On a 10+ you influence the crowd's emotions, on a 7-9 choose one:

- The effect lasts longer than one minute but less than five
- The effect is deeply moving and the crowd is stirred to intense reaction
- The magic is subtle and the crowd isn't immediately aware of your manipulation when the effect wears off

Direct

When you *make intense, direct eye contact* with someone in an appropriate setting, you may ask them what their true motivation is. The character will tell the truth even if they would have hidden it otherwise.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Neutral

Resolve a fight with words instead of bloodshed.

Chaotic

Deliberately delude someone for your own gain.

Gear:

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 9+ STR.

You start with a **favor owed** to you by a local noble, wealthy patron, or other prominent person for expert services rendered.

Choose your signature instrument:

- Panflute made of auroch horns and sheep bones
- Small horsehair harp with mysterious runes carved into the body
- Metal lur, a long horn that was once used to marshal a great army.
- A set of horn pipes, an heirloom of your family

Choose your equipment:

- Bill Hook (reach, 2 weight)
- Heirloom Short Sword (close, 1 weight) and Wooden Shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)

And take your supplies:

- Adventuring Gear (5 uses, 1 weight)
- Bandages (3 uses, slow, 0 weight)
- A pouch of 5 coins

Bonds:

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ 's deeds are great and numerous. My songs will immortalize them.

_____ has a radical worldview that deserves further study.

_____ is more than who they say they are.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Serenity Now

Recitation now affects animals

Divine Leverage

When you *take your Last Breath*, if you trigger a meeting with Death, make them an offer instead. If Death agrees, return to the living stabilized with 1HP.

Kenning

When you *use the same metaphor to describe yourself* or one of your allies in all of your tales, roll +CHA. On a 10+ choose an epithet to attach to yourself or the ally you sang about. People will treat it as though it is true until proven otherwise. On a 7-9, the effect is temporary, the GM will decide how long.

Traverse Tale

When you *spin an intricate tale* while you *Undertake a Perilous Journey*, cut the duration in half.

Well-timed Sidestep

Replaces: Well-timed Strikes

When you *Hack & Slash*, on a 7-9 take +2 armor forward. On a 10+ you still gain the +2 armor forward but an ally of your choice also gains +1 forward to attack the enemy.

Tilt Tactics

Single out an enemy and let loose on their insecurities. That enemy considers you its highest priority target.

Radical Leanings

When you *introduce a new idea* to an NPC roll +CHA. On a 10+ they think the idea was their own and take to it with fervor. On a 7-9 their passion fades in a day or so. On a miss, they respond negatively and take a hard stance against it.

Bolster

When you *bolster the courage of others* roll +CHA. On a 10+ they shake off all fear and doubt, becoming brave instantly. On a 7-9 the effect is fleeting; they realize it is superficial and resort to cowardice. On a miss, they're cowed and terrified.

Slander

When you *ruthlessly insult* an NPC, roll +CHA. On a 10+ they make an extremely rash decision that will have lasting consequences. On a 7-9 you cross a line and they will have their revenge. On a miss, you've gone too far and they blow up here and now.

Double or Nothing

Whenever you're about to take damage, describe how you luckily avoid it and roll +DEX. On a 10+ you escape the danger and take no penalty. On a 7-9 you endure the blow you tried to avoid and you're committed to your daring but failed dodge. On a miss, you endure the blow and something else bad happens. The GM will tell you what.

Advanced Moves cont'd

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Story and Song

When you *perform this song* roll +CHA. On a 10+ you can convince anyone who hears it that its lyrics are the literal truth. On a 7-9 you believe it too. On a miss, a memory of your own gets corrupted somehow.

Thu'um

Your word is a weapon. When you *shout your battle cry* at an enemy, roll +CHA. On a 10+ it deals 1D10 damage with the *Forceful* tag. On a 7-9 choose one:

- Roll damage twice and take the lower result.
- Take -1 ongoing to using *Thu'um* until you *Make Camp*.
- You draw unwelcome attention or put yourself in a spot.

Incite

Requires: Radical Leanings

You may now apply the effects of *Radical Leanings* to a group of people of 12 or fewer.

Evil Eye

When you enter into combat roll +CHA. On a 10+ hold 2, on a 7-9 hold 1. Spend hold to make eye contact with an NPC, who flinches or freezes and can't act or break the contact until you look away. On a miss, your enemies immediately identify you as their biggest threat.

Music Soothes the Savage Beast

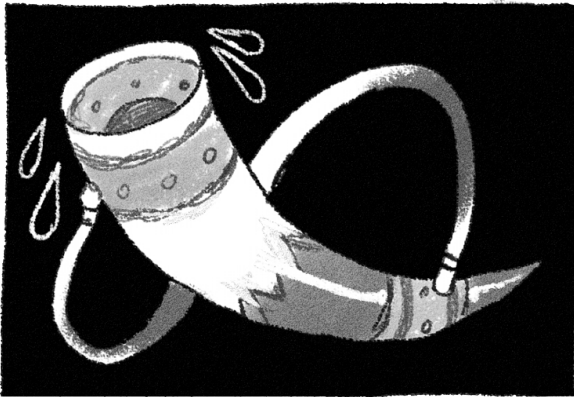
Recitation now affects all creatures, including monsters.

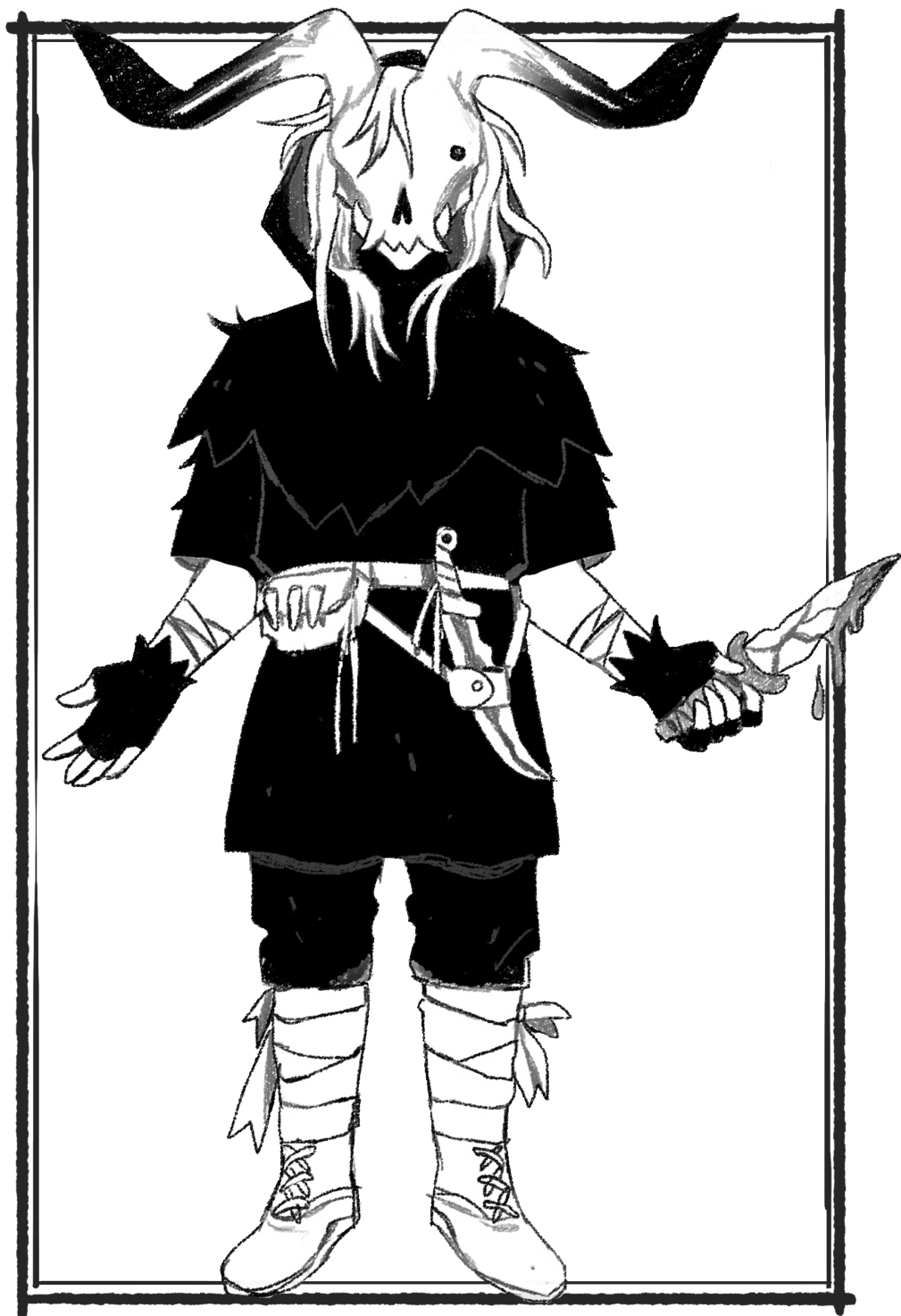
Jack of All Trades

Take a move from another class.

Rules of Engagement

When you *give an enemy you have damaged the chance to escape* or surrender, roll +CHA. On a 10+, unless they are willing to die fighting you, they oblige. On a 7-9 they fear you and you take +1 armor against them for the remainder of the encounter.





THE HUNTER

“Many men both saw and heard a great number of huntsmen hunting. The huntsmen were shadowed, huge, and hideous, and rode on black horses and on black he-goats, and their hounds were jet black, with eyes like saucers, and horrible.”

Peterborough Chronicle, Laud Manuscript

The Hunters are a mysterious, isolated sect. Hardly anything is known about their structure (if there's even any to be found) except the fact that they are unerringly sadistic, anarchistic vigilantes who hunt the dishonorable and the unpunished. The Hunter code of honor is difficult to read for outsiders but when a Hunter decides on a mark, nothing will keep them from taking their hit. Still, the fact remains that while overall, the moral compass of the Hunters remains highly individualized. It is clear that these shadowy rogues are committed to serving justice, however they define it.

The Hunters are incredibly secretive, especially about their order and its level of cohesion. Even under threat of torture and physical duress, Hunters rarely spill anything meaningful about their structure. Facts are, therefore, quite scarce but bribe the right skald and they may tell a few choice pieces of information. While most of this is unverifiable simply due to the nature of the Hunters' silence, their order is rumored to have originated in the deep belt of forest at the north-eastern edge of Stromgard's borders. This stretch of woodland, the Vidrmaark, is dense and dark and it takes very little imagination to picture secret meetings and rituals taking place here, free from the prying eyes of even the gods.

Many lorekeepers also believe the rumor that Hunters will accept anyone into their fold and forgive all of their sins if they pass a rigorous initiation ritual that is not only physically demanding, but emotionally debilitating and mentally draining.

And also reportedly very fatal.

These are more obscure rumors than what the common folk typically hear, however. Mostly, people know to stay away from Hunters and to flee at the sound a hunting party on dark, misty nights. Some bolder parents tell stories of Hunters to misbehaving children and warn them that a shadowy assassin will materialize at night to make them pay for their transgressions. Most wiser people, however, avoid speaking about Hunters in public or in polite company as there are superstitions and conspiracies that claim they hide in plain sight and are endlessly resourceful with disguising themselves. It is also believed that to speak of Hunters aloud is to invite their judgment, whatever that may be based on.

It is also common knowledge that the Hunters are devoted to (some say worship) something called the Wild Hunt—a ghostly cavalcade of demonic forces that roam the land for cowards, backstabbers, and other dishonorable and then forcefully drag them off to Helheim, and the dark lady Hel, herself. Typically rumored to occur over the dead of winter, a legion of mounted, monstrous riders led by a huge horned figure sound their enormous hunting horns and rampage across the land. Hunters chase worthy quarry as a show of devotion to the Wild Hunt, to prove their capabilities and earn a spot for themselves so that they may hunt even in death. This, in turn, is also why when a Hunter suffers pain or insult, absolutely nothing will deter them from delivering recompense.

To the rare few who witness the Hunter in battle without winding up as a stain on their blade, they are inevitably left in awe by their fleet footed speed and brutal, debilitating strikes. They are powerful fighters and brutally unrestrained. Pain and injury hardly seem to slow them at all. They are resourceful,

cunning, adaptable, and above all, stubbornly determined to produce results.



Choose a Name

Thorson, Ragni, Torben, Ruthulan, Tor, Nora, Ulf, Hildr, Vidar, Ylva, Viggo, Hlökk, Skögul, Geirskögul, Halla, Gunnbjorn, Ölrún, Bjarni, Helga, Leif, Sifka, Sigmund, Hergerd, Borghilde, Ingeld, Egil, Gudrun, Breca, Ogn, Haki, Solveig, Hama, Bara, Mörðr, Dagmar

Choose a Look:

Body: Lithe, sinewy, athletic

Eyes: Mismatched, hawkish, feral

Hair: Wild, adorned with small antlers or plants, messy plait

Clothes: Oversized cowl, ornamental mask

Vitals:

Max HP is 6+CON

Base Damage is 1D8

Background

Choose your heritage

Shamanic

You have a special hatred for the undead. When you hunt down and destroy anything abusing the natural cycle of life and death, take +1 ongoing against them.

Eagle-Eyed

Intangible obstructions like smoke or bad weather do not inhibit your ability to see in daylight.

Hardened

You require little in comfort. You regain full HP even when roughing it outdoors as long as you can get a few hours' sleep.

Starting Moves

The Hunter's Mark

Hunters mark themselves during a secret initiation ritual.

Choose a gift:

➤ **Dark Vision**

Thin geometric designs in black ink trail up the sides of your skull and down the length of your throat.

They are imbued with a kind of warding magic that allows you to see clearly in the dark, both natural and magical.

THE HUNTER

➤ **Flame Soak**

Curling flares in crimson are etched into the palms of your hands. The runic design soaks up to 1D8 fire damage inflicted by a single instance. Once you have absorbed the flame, you will need to take a long rest or *Make Camp* before you can use this ability again. You can also create small flames at your finger tips (about the size of a match's flame) for utility purposes like lighting a candle.

➤ **Water Breath**

Rolling, undulating circular designs in cobalt blue are carved into your arms, shoulders, and chest. The sigils allow you to breathe water for 1D10 minutes, though once that is depleted you will need to take a long rest or *Make Camp* before you can use this boon again.

➤ **Feather Fall**

Intricate feathers have been painstakingly stippled into your back and down your spine. When you fall from a height of 40ft or less, take no damage from impact.

Fleet-Footed

When you *wear no armor*, take Armor equal to your DEX bonus.

Insomniac

Take +1 to *Take Watch* rolls.

True Sight

When you *Discern Realities* during combat, take +1.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Good

Do justice regardless of laws or personal risk.

Chaotic

Exact vengeance against someone or something that harmed you. Charge interest.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 9+ STR.

You start with a **memento** of your best kill. Describe it. You also have **Healing Poultices** (5 uses, 0 weight)

Choose your armament:

- Short Bow (near, 2 weight), Quiver of Arrows (x5 ammo, 1 weight), and a Hunting Dagger (hand, 1 weight)
- Club (close, 2 weight) and Stone Dagger (hand, 1 weight)
- Rough Halberd (reach, two-handed, 2 weight)

Bonds

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ has insulted me and a Hunter never forgets.

_____ is weak and in need of protection from those that would exploit them for selfish gain.

_____ does not understand the true nature of the weak and the strong.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Weathered

Take a move from the *Ranger* class.

Pay it Back

Take +1 ongoing to attacks against anything that successfully damages you.

Resourceful

When you *Make Camp*, provided you are in a suitable area, you can gather herbs to make one Healing Poultice per night.

Wild Hunt

When you *mark a target befitting of your skills*, add +1D4 damage on your first attack against it.

Knife in the Back

Take the *Thief* move *Backstab*.

Nimble

When you *take the most direct path* between two points, regardless of obstacles or structures in the way, roll +DEX. On a 7-9 you make it across but cannot use the same path back.

Catlike

When you *Defy Danger* DEX take +1.

Beat Feet

When you *run away from an enemy*, roll +DEX. On a 10+ you and your allies escape without a trace. On a 7-9 you can get away but your allies aren't able to follow the path you set as quietly.

Fast Learner

When you *see someone else successfully Defy Danger*, take a +1 to copy the action.

Eagle's Strike

When you *attack from above with intent to kill*, your attack damage counts as *Piercing* damage.

Advanced Moves cont'd

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Those of the North

Take a move from the *Ranger* class list.

Feral

Take either the *Cheap Shot* OR *Shoot First* move from the *Thief* class list.

Tributes For the Horned Rider

If you *take time to mark your kills* in the name of the Wild Hunt after a conflict, take +1 forward.

Hard to Kill

Whenever you *suffer a debility* in combat take +1 against whatever caused it.

Paid in Spades

Requires: Pay it Back

During a battle you can choose to take an extra 1D4 damage on a hit (ignoring armor) to add your level to the damage dealt on your next successful attack to anything that has already damaged you.

Grounded

You are deeply rooted in the tangible experiences of the world and are immune to thought probing, mind control, and other unnatural influences.

Feline Grace

Replaces: Catlike

When you *Defy Danger* DEX take +2.

Deader

Mark your target. Even if they escape you they will be known to other Hunters and will find no rest anywhere.





THE STORMCALLER

*The sea, storm-driven, seeks heaven itself,
O'er the earth it flows, the air grows sterile,
Then follow the snows and the furious winds*

Hyndluljóth, Poetic Edda

The arcane is always a dangerous frontier but maybe not as much as it is for a Stormcaller. Few who call themselves wizards or mages can conjure up so much power at their fingertips. No mere geomancer, the ability to be a Stormcaller is a rare gift that can manifest unexpectedly and suddenly. There are tales of Stormcallers that suddenly learn their aptitude for controlling wind and lightning well into adulthood and could hardly master cantrips up to that point. Set apart by other elemental mages by their raw power, Stormcallers are resourceful and typically wicked smart, always using the world around them to their advantage in a pinch.

Their skill set is highly sought after amongst sailors as well. Stormcallers can single-handedly guide a full fleet to the edges of the world at great speeds while ensuring that weather and tides are agreeable and a fair wind blows at their backs. Also, should any monstrosities below the waves come up to cause trouble, a Stormcaller at the ready is more effective at dispatching an issue than men clambering between boats and hurling spears. Conversely, there are few things that can cause as much chaos for sailors as an angry Stormcaller.

These elementalists are resourceful as well, forging vicious weapons out of mere ice, limited only by their wild imaginations- which makes them almost impossible to catch unarmed and unawares. Stormcallers are typically fringe-dwellers, honing their craft in isolated snowfields or secluded glacial expanses due to the primal and sometimes wild nature of their powers. The loyalty and camaraderie of these powerful mages must be earned,

therefore, though Stormcallers are motivated by much more than simply gold. Their strength is highly prized but also feared in equal measure.

Leveraging their desires over the primal forces can add to the Stormcaller's commonly capricious nature. Much like the storms they summon and harness, the mages themselves can be fierce and wild, difficult to keep under control and impossible to pin down. Very few prisons can adequately hold a Stormcaller... or even amount to little more than an inconvenience. Additionally, the retribution a Stormcaller could wreak once free is typically enough to damper any bright ideas about imprisoning them so directly. Tales have sprung up here and there about whole villages suddenly buried under snow or sealed off from mountain passes... And while Stormcallers are adept at close range combat, they can make the most of long range conflicts by blockading areas and turning it into a battle of attrition, accelerate food rot with dank weather, flood them out, manipulate the cycle of seasons itself.

Stormcallers must be wary, however. Of their own double-edged abilities, of course, but also of those with an agenda and a need for firepower.



Choose a Name:

Agnar, Hagbarðr, Dröfn, Haco, Dúfa, Höðbroddr, Hrönn, Ragnarr, Kólga, Starkaðr, Unn, Caldar, Uðr, Carr, An, Staan, Reed, Stigr, Gráinne, Sutherlund, Muirisc, Yudit, Furatha, Kylda, Brenna, Iona, Halvdan, Visäte, Gunnborga, Öpir, Frögärd, Ösby

Choose a Look:

Eyes: Unseeing, sunken, shadowed

Hair: Long and tousled, unevenly shorn, strangely colored

Clothes: Well-crafted robes, dyed kyrtil, shaggy cloak with
ornamental pin

Vitals:

Max HP is 4+CON

Base Damage is 1D8

Background

Choose your heritage

Grey-Elvish

You can walk through snow or mud or other malleable surfaces without leaving tracks.

Störmson

You cannot be hindered by rain or snow while moving under your own power.

Apt Student

When you *Spout Lore* about the natural world (like weather or geography) or the finer points of arcane workings, take +1.

Starting Moves

Biting Words

When you *deliberately escalate a situation* that leads to a fight, you can attack first.

Ice Weapon

Like any good mage, you've learned to harness your powers for offensive purposes. When you conjure a weapon of ice, roll+WIS. You can use your WIS as STR or DEX when attacking with this weapon. This weapon always has the *Touch*, *Dangerous*, and *x3 Uses* tags. Each attack counts as a use. On a 10+ choose two of the following tags to add. On a 7-9 choose one.

- *Hand*
- *Thrown/Near*
- +1 Damage
- Remove the *Dangerous* tag

Brittle

Your icy aura degrades blade edges. When you *take damage from an enemy attack* they will suffer 1D4 reduced damage on their next hit against any target.

Fragile

You can weaken an object small enough to hold in your hand to the point where it will fracture and break if it is moved. You can break it yourself or choose to leave it for someone else to shatter.

Ice in the Veins

You're immune to the effects of magical and nonmagical cold. Weapons or the weight of an ice floe will still hurt but the coldness itself does nothing

Glass Cannon

Gain +1 damage to attacks while wearing no armor.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Chaotic

Disregard a figure of authority.

Lawful

Use your powers to enforce the law.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 7+ STR.

You start with:

Dungeon Rations (5 uses, 1 weight), a **Stone Dagger** (hand, 1 weight), and a pouch of **Poultices and Herbs** (2 uses, 1 weight)

Bonds

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ fundamentally misunderstands the nature of my power.

I share a secret with _____ that could upset the balance of power.

I must protect _____ from the destructive realities of the world.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Shield

When you *magically brace yourself for an attack* against a person, place, or thing, roll +WIS. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 1, on a miss- in addition to whatever the GM tells you- something goes terribly wrong. As long as you're braced and concentrating, spend hold, 1 for 1, to do the following:

- Raise a wall of ice to absorb half of the attack's damage or effect.
- A blast of icy wind leaves the assailant vulnerable to an ally's attack, giving them +1 forward.
- Make a show of crackling energy and thunder, directing the enemy's attention and attack to yourself.
- Raise jagged lances of ice from thin air to deal damage to the enemy equal to your level.

Improved Ice Weapon

You may now choose to add the following tags when creating an *Ice Weapon*:

- *Messy*
- *Forceful*
- *Reach*
- *Thrown/Far*

Lightning Step

You can teleport to any *Near* location. This also produces a deafening thunderclap that can be heard for miles.

Blast

When you *create a blast of freezing wind* that tears through the area for about a minute, roll+WIS. On a 10+ choose two effects, on a 7-9 choose one.

- Cold enough to slow enemy movement by half.
- Strong enough to cause light damage to homes and ships.
- Whips up snow or dirt to obscure visibility.
- Pushes one object your size or smaller towards or away from you.

Stormcall

With one hour of meditation, create a blizzard or torrential rain-storm that lasts for 1D4 days. Even out of season, precipitation will impede travel and moor boats.

Shaper

When you wish to *create something*, roll +WIS. On a 7-9, choose what price you pay to build your structure.

- It takes an hour to make
- It is extremely fragile
- It collapses without active concentration
- No one you do not have a bond with can touch it without it melting.

Immobilize

When you *grab someone with thick ice* that bursts from the ground, roll +WIS. On a 7-9, choose what price to pay.

- The restraints are extremely fragile and won't hold for long against struggling

- The restraints must be maintained with active concentration
- The restraints can only hold two limbs
- The restraints slow them or monopolize their attention for a moment but do not hold them.

Advanced Moves:

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Freezing Blast

Requires: Blast

You can now add ice shards to *Blast* that cause 1D4 damage to anyone caught in the gust as an effect.

Frozen Hide

Add +1 Armor.

Fractured Prison

Requires: Immobilize

When you *Immobilize* someone you may now choose to deal them 1D4 damage as an effect.

Lightning Stride

Requires: Lightning Step

If you choose, you may now teleport through enemies that are in your available zone, dealing 1D4 damage to each.

To the Bone

Through advanced harnessing of destructive natural forces, your *Ice Weapon* now permanently takes on the *Ignores Armor* tag.

Construct

When you take time to create a figure made from ice and snow, treat it as a character that only has access to basic moves, has a +0 modifier for all stats, HP equal to your own level, and has a damage die of D6. Roll +WIS to issue orders to the construct. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7-9, choose 2. On a miss, choose 1 in addition to whatever else the GM says.

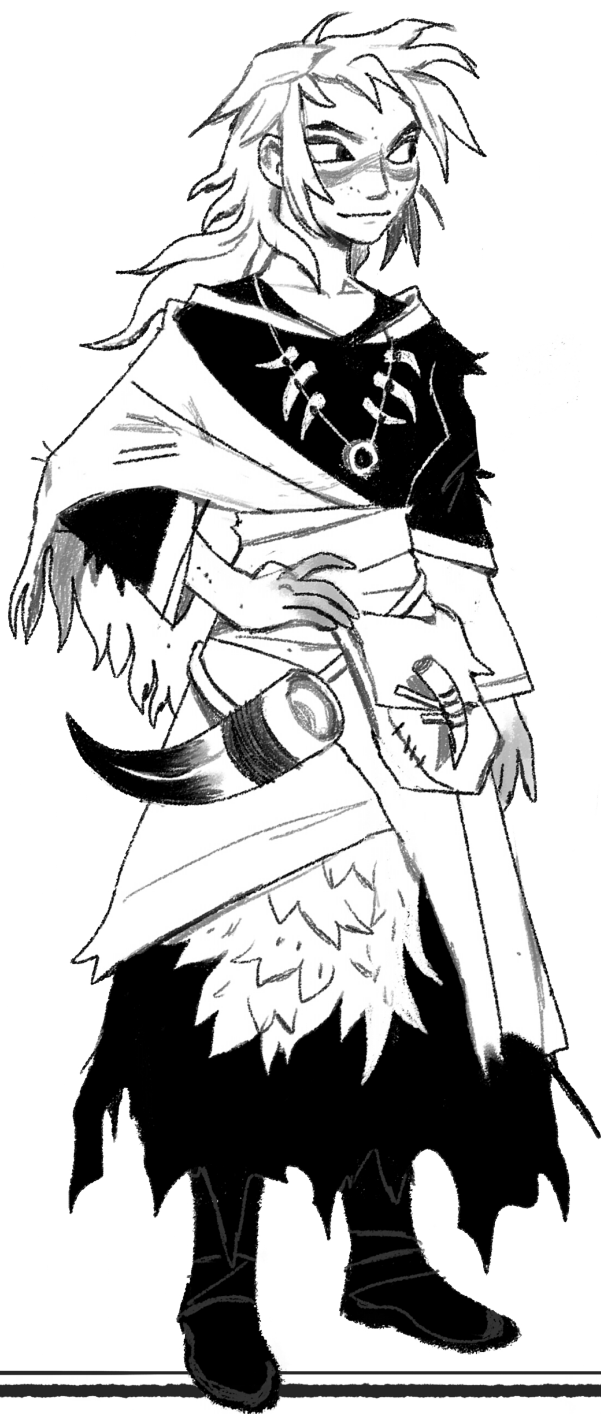
- Its damage die increases to 1D8
- +1 HP per level
- It has 1 armor
- It has the *Large* and *Reach* tags
- One stat has a +2 modifier
- You can see and hear anything it sees or hears

You can only command one construct at a time. If you summon a second one, the first melts.

Frozen Solid

When you freeze any living creature (up to *Large* size) solid, roll +WIS. On a 10+ the creature is completely frozen. On a 7-9 deal 1D6 damage and they regain their mobility after 1 minute.





THE CRONE

*The wide-seeing witch, in magic wise;
Minds she bewitched that were moved by her magic*

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

There are few in Stromgard so shrouded in mystery as the Crone. For a long time, it was said that Crones were old women living in remote huts and that you must show them respect and offer a gift if you expected to benefit from the encounter. Today, Crones come in all shapes, sizes, and gender persuasions. It is not so much a physical descriptor as a title, one that describes a certain skill set and lays out a certain expectation for the layperson making an attempt at interaction.

Crones are, however, very powerful and still treated with some amount of caution all over the land. They are regarded as wisepeople, skilled hedgewitches and shamans- but their powers come with a price and they are notoriously unpredictable. They would just as soon wreak havoc on the land then heal a blight. Crones can deliver curses, sicken livestock, read sleeping minds, plant suggestions... To ask for the services of one of these mages is to ask for all these horrible things and worse should you not appease whatever request they make in exchange.

With so many tales circulating about the doings of these powerful witches, most settlements of Stromgard will go out of their way to show hospitality to a Crone- for fear of being cursed in some way, not because they desire to show kindness. Because the Crone's reputation will nearly always precede them, they can have difficulty meshing normally with villagers, though they typically have no trouble intimidating their way to whatever they require.

Choose a Name

Ufkel, Aella, Beyla, Byggvir, Fitela, Eldir, Himinglæva, Glenr, Eistla, Angantyr, Kahina, Folcwalding, Sarra, Heiðrekr, Oya, Hjalmar, Lethsa, Svafrlami, Ithothel, Eilo, Sinfjötli, Mithna, Gudrun, Andrasta, Ivar, Nemaë, Gangleri, Skuld, Göndul, Asmund, Asta

Choose a Look

Body: Crooked, weathered, youthful

Eyes: Stone cold, glittering, yellowed

Hair: Covered, long and tangled, wiry

Clothes: Layers upon layers, many pouches and bags, wide brimmed and battered hat

Vitals

Max HP is 8+CON

Base Damage is 1D4

Background

Choose your heritage

Wiseperson

People might be intimidated by you but they also know that you have vast knowledge and experience. Take +1 to *Parley* if you use this as leverage.

Wyrð-Magicks

A widely held belief is that to say something out loud gives it a kind of power. Take +1 whenever you *Spout Lore* about the arcane or mythical.

Starting Moves

Curse

When you *suffer an insult or slight from someone and curse them*, roll +INT. On a 7-9 choose one effect below. On a 10+ the curse manifests in an additional, unexpected way. No matter the roll, you may choose whether the effects manifest immediately or at a later point in time.

- Blight the land
- Sicken livestock
- Cause illness
- Cause recurring nightmares
- Cause the target to be haunted by a restless spirit
- Cause an extended unlucky period

Energy Delay

When you use your powers to alter the natural energy of something- inertia, force, mass, etc- by absorbing it, describe how. At a later time, you will have to release the pent up energy in some manner, usually at a destructive cost to yourself. You can hold on to one unique force at a time. Force output must match its original direction relative to you. A stab wound that is delayed will still be a fresh, open wound when the energy is released, just as a powerful crushing force will still crush downward when released.

Phantom Touch

When you summon a phantasmal extension of your arm and hand, roll +INT. On a 10+ it can interact with physical objects just like a real limb in a radius of about 10 feet.

Mystic Rites

When you draw on leylines, natural magic, or the correct components to construct a specific arcane effect, tell the GM what you're trying to accomplish. The GM will give you 1-4 of the following stipulations as your magic takes hold:

- It will take a long time to complete
- First, you must _____
- You will require the assistance of someone
- It will take a hefty sacrifice
- The best you can do is a lesser version that is unreliable or limited somehow
- There is a dangerous risk that comes with the spell
- It attracts the attention of something dangerous

Jedi Mind Trick

When you implant a suggestion on someone, roll +CHA. On a 10+ they repeat the suggestion and believe it for one minute and they will be confused as to where the idea came from once the spell ends. On a 7-9 they will remember your face and what you did after the spell fades.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Chaotic

Intimidate or scare your way out of a direct confrontation.

Evil

Terrify someone into doing something against their will.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 6+ STR.

You start with **Dungeon Rations** (5 uses, 1 weight) and a pouch of **Poultices and Herbs** (2 uses, 1 weight)

Choose your weapon:

- Ragged Broom (two-handed, 1 weight)
- Homemade Staff (two-handed, 1 weight)
- Gnarled tree branch (two-handed, 1 weight)

And a collection of **Ritual Components** (0 weight, x7 uses)

➤ Any time you need common items for spellweaving you can expend one use to pull it from your collection with the GM's agreement (they may request that you obtain something more unusual). You can replenish your uses by collecting, bartering, or buying magically interesting materials with the GM's approval.

Bonds:

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ has a curse on them but not from me.

I know what haunts _____'s nightmares.

_____ has a sickness coming to them that I may be able to prevent.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Empath

Choose an item of importance you own. When someone else holds it you can gain the general impressions of their thoughts.

Sleepwalker

When you obtain and burn a lock of hair from your victim, you may briefly take control of them when they next sleep. This includes clumsy or heavy walking, slurred speech, and general impressions of emotions. Anything that would normally wake a person will jar your victim out of the trance and the spell ends.

Medium

When you sit in meditation under the open night sky and call out to the ethereal realm to speak with a spirit, roll +CHA. On a 10+ you find the spirit you were looking for and may ask it three questions. On a 7-9 you locate the spirit but can only get vague information from them.

No Mortal Barrier

When you attempt to unlock a nonmagical lock with your powers, roll+INT. On a 7-9 you manage to undo it but it draws unwanted attention.

Willingly Sacrificed

A willing ally may choose to give you 1D4 healing at the cost of 1D4 damage to themselves.

Face Stealer

When you take on the face of another, roll +CHA. On a 10+ you copy their face perfectly, though your body and voice remain your own.

Finder

When you speak the full and true name of a person, place, or thing to the wind at exactly noon, roll +INT. On a 10+ you will have a dream of the thing's exact location that night. On a 7-9 you gain a vague or cryptic impression.

Swarm

At your command, a mass of small vermin materialize at your feet. Once summoned, the animals behave as their devouring instinct demands and will frenzy on any food source within sight. Healthy creatures larger than a dog that get caught in the swarm take 1D4 damage. Creatures smaller risk being eaten alive.

Nightshade

Cause unnatural darkness to fill a confined space for up to five minutes.

Aura Sight

All living things give off a faint aura. With some concentration, you can see their forms in any darkness, natural or otherwise.

Dominate

When you wish to control a creature of animal intelligence or lower and it is within your direct line of sight, roll +INT. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 1. You may spend hold, one for one,

to do the following. When you take damage as your animal host or to your own body while dominating, add an extra 1D4 damage.

- Move to a new place
- Make a loud noise
- Retrieve a small object (smaller than the creature itself)
- Attack a target
- Behave unnaturally to draw attention.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Death Wail

When you throw your head back and shriek at the top of your lungs, roll +CHA. On a 10+ angry spirits join to form a hellish cacophony that causes enemies to flee in terror.

Overwhelm Mind

Requires: Dominate

You may now control human targets and add the following conditions to your available pool:

- Speak a handful of simple phrases
- Target does not realize they were influenced after the spell has worn off.

Flux

When you bend time itself to make an enemy suffer a previously successful attack a second time, roll +INT. On a 10+ deal the damage from your last successful attack a second time. On a 7-9

deal the damage a second time and take 1D6 damage yourself.

Sacrificial Lamb

Replaces: Willingly Sacrificed

A willing participant can now choose to heal you for 1D6 at the cost of 1D4 damage to themselves.

Body Snatcher

Requires: Face Stealer

When you take on the full appearance of another, roll +CHA. On a 10+ you look and sound exactly like them, though your movements and mannerisms are still your own.



Voidtouch

When you are in a dark place and summon the very shadows to attack, roll +CHA. On a 10+, shadowy figures leap from the darkness and deal 1D10 damage before melting away again.

Race Playbooks

*All the witches spring from Witolf,
All the warlocks are of Willharm,
And the spell-singers spring from Swarthead,
All the ogres of Ymir come.
Out of the Ice-waves issued venom-drops,
Waxing until a giant was,
Thence are our kindred come all together-
So it is they are savage forever.*

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

The Race Playbooks of Stromgard are a little different from the other classes. These characters must be played as their listed races because their moves (and thus their skills) derive from their specific cultural background and physical traits. Also, their physical appearance and heritage will have a more pronounced effect on their relationships with the rest of Stromgard's citizens. These characters are immortal to some degree and typically do not age once they reach maturity- although all of them can be killed, just as any mortal. They are also quite powerful in their own rights. On the other hand, these character archetypes also come with distinct disadvantages as well, making their immense boons more of a trade off. These playbooks are fun for players of all skill levels but they tend to make an exceptionally fun option for the player looking for something new.



THE FAE

*And when he came around to the land he went to the west side of Iceland, North
around the land, where he saw all the mountains and hills full of Guardian-
Spirits, some great, some small*

Heimskringla

The word 'fae' is technically an umbrella term for several races of lesser demigods and nature spirits who populate the quiet places of Stromgard. Because of the vast amount of diversity in their looks compared to their relatively similar behavior, most people simply refer to any non-mortal, non-Jötnar being as a fae until corrected.

Fae have a huge range in physical appearance but they are nearly all deemed to be attractive to other mortals- though this is typically a product of the fae's own desires magically manifested and their semi-malleable form. Fae aren't usually in possession of fearsome strength but they are wily and are exceedingly talented at gaining leverage over others... their looks are merely another tool of their trade. Blessed and cursed with strange magicks, fae are also beholden to their own powers. They typically hunger for something and desire it so constantly that it drives them to obsession and is typically the foundation for most of their moral compass. Fae also carry a specific weakness and they'll employ all manner of devious tricks in order to keep mortals from discovering it and exploiting their powers.

Universally, fae are excellent at taking oaths and bargains- performing some magical service for someone dumb enough or desperate enough to agree to whatever exploitive nonsense the fae can pass off as reasonable. Taking an oath with a fae, unlike any other mortal, is magically binding and doing so without fully understanding the terms can have disastrous consequences.

Choose a Name

Mim, Oydis, Dagna, Asmund, Eydis, Laufsblad, Leka, Hallr, Stikla, Festa, Taka, Hafa, Bregda, Althjof, Hraun, Almr, Gleidr, Mersing, Snjallr, Andi, Ond, Ljoss, Brunn, Brenna, Lios, Margbrytinn, Gaetinn, Rista, Kottr, Glathr, Ryothr, Eir, Vaettr, Dalr, Lysa, Dofni, Dufa, Olr, Tun, Orn, Elgr, By, Mikinn, Fjorthr

Vitals

Max HP is 6+CON

Base Damage is 1D6

Build a Fae

Choose your characteristics

Choose a Tell

Some magical features cannot be hidden

- Glowing eyes
- Pupil-less eyes
- Slitted or horizontal pupils
- Crystalline skin
- Scales
- Tail
- Horns
- Antennae
- Other



Choose a Desire

All Fae have a hunger they must feed instead of a typical alignment

- Mortal servants or companions
- Chaos
- Justice
- The protection of something sacred
- Pleasure
- To punish the sacrilegious

Choose an Affinity

All Fae are attuned to a natural force

- Air
- Earth
- Water
- Fire
- Light
- Shadow

Choose a Weakness

All Fae have an unswerving weakness to a counterforce. You are unable to interact with one of the following:

- Pure iron
- Thresholds (you must be invited to pass through them)
- Bells
- Unable to directly lie
- Medicinal Herbs

Starting Moves

Double Edge

Take an additional *Weakness* for an additional *Affinity*.

Attuned

When you *cast a spell with your element* describe how you take control of your surroundings and to what effect, then roll +INT. On a 10+ you achieve your intended effect. On a 7-9 you can manage a weaker version of your intent plus it causes an unexpected side effect. The GM will tell you what.

Variable Shape

A fae's shape is limited only by their power. Once per long rest, you may change your shape to any size between one and seven feet tall.

Terms and Conditions

Any party who enters into a bargain with a fae and fails to uphold their end of it is cursed. The GM will tell you how.

Light Hands

When you *steal a small, interesting item* without being motivated by its monetary value, roll +WIS. On a 10+ the item comes in handy later on and serves its purpose well. On a 7-9 you find a neat use for it but the item's original owner discovers you have it.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 7+ STR.

You start with **Adventuring Gear** (5 uses, 1 weight) and 1 **Healing Potion** (0 weight)

Choose one:

- Holy oil for blessing or anointing (0 weight)
- Flask of wickedly strong alcohol (1 weight)

Choose your weapon:

- Oak Staff (close, two-handed, 1 weight)
- Painted Rod (hand, 1 weight)

Bonds:

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ and I have made an accord.

I want _____ to tell me their true name.

_____ wants something from me. I might be convinced to oblige.

Advanced Moves:

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Tricksy

You always have leverage during *Parley*.

Prank

When you *play a prank on a gormless bystander* that causes immense distress or hilarity, mark EXP.

Charming

When you *tell someone to do something* that they are hesitant or reluctant to do, roll +CHA. On a 10+ the subject is in a delicate hypnotic state and will oblige your request unless it directly contradicts their morals. On a 7-9 the subject will still do what you ask but it will know that you are influencing them.

Dream Reader

When you *stare at a sleeping person*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ you gain clear images of their dreams as well as a sense of whether or not they have dreamed the same dream before. On a 7-9 the images are vague and abstract.

Blood Promise

A willing ally may choose to give you 1D4 healing at the cost of 1D4 damage to themselves.

Fairy Gold

When you *pay for goods and services with fake currency* that turns into worthless material in a day, roll +CHA. On a miss, they immediately notice you're not good for cash and you'll face the

consequences of trying to pull a fast one.

Partake

When you *offer food to someone* and they acquiesce, they heal 1D6. However, they are now beholden to you for a favor or else they'll take a debility.

True Name

When you *know someone's full and true name*, take a +1 against them.

Drain

When you *slow mortals down by feeding off their energy*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ heal 1D4 damage and all targets in a 10ft radius move as though heavily encumbered and exhausted. On a 7-9, one target you touch will be slowed.

Minor Illusion

When you *bend reality itself to your will*, roll +CHA. On a 10+ gain 3 hold. On a 7-9 gain 2. Spend hold, one for one, on the following:

- Illusion can be seen
- Illusion can be heard
- Illusion can be smelled
- Illusion can be touched or touch something
- Illusion lasts longer than one minute
- Illusion can affect up to five targets.

Blend

When you *craft a new look for yourself* and describe how you cover your Tell, roll +CHA. On a 10+ the disguise will fool anyone who isn't specifically wizened in the ways of fae or on the lookout for you specifically. On a 7-9 the disguise will fool anyone who does not give you more than a precursory glance. This will not alter your smell, voice, size, or mannerisms.

Mortal Pawns

When you *Aid or Interfere* with a mortal they take a +1 or -1 to their next action as well, respectively.

Advanced Moves:

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Compelling

Replaces: Charming

When you *bend someone to your will* and command them to do something, roll +CHA. On a 10+ they obey your orders even if it goes against their alignment. On a 7-9 they obey but they are aware of your influence and will regain themselves once their task is complete.

Reaching Illusion

Requires: Minor Illusion

Increase the limitation of your illusion from five targets to a total of fifteen.

Conceal

When you *hold still in relative shadow*, you cannot be seen by nonmagical means.

Malleable Form

Requires: Blend

You may now choose to add the following conditions to your total pool for creating disguises.

- Your Tell is concealed
- Your voice matches your target
- You accurately impersonate someone you've never seen
- Change size for free, if necessary.

Loaded Bargain

When you *strike a deal with someone*, roll +CHA. On a 10+ you exploit the terms so that you greatly benefit from the arrangement and they do not. The GM will help you decide how.





THE TROLL

*Trolls call me
Moon of Dwelling-Rungr,
Giant's wealth-sucker,
Storm-sun's bale,
Seeress's companion,
Guardian of corpse-fjord,
Swallower of heaven-wheel,
What is a troll other than that?*

Skáldskaparmál, Prose Edda

Trolls are almost universally feared and reviled in Stromgard. Most of the mortal races treat them like monsters and typically try to hunt or at least drive them away on sight. Many trolls are maneaters, however, and it would be unfair to say the general fear surrounding them is entirely unfounded. But trolls are more complex than perhaps first glance may tell.

Firstly, trolls vary greatly in physical appearance, some are tall, thickly built human-sized beings that are said to be quite beautiful, even despite the long tufted tail. Others are quite monstrous in appearance, some towering larger than even the Jötunnborn, with a thick hide and oversized canines for shredding meat. Of all trolls, these more threatening looking specimens will find the most difficulty interacting with other races save for the Jötnar. Trolls are, no matter what their appearance however, typically treated with what ranges from immediate suspicion in the best case scenario to outright hostility depending on a wide range of factors.

A lot of myths about shifty, feral trolls comes from the fact that these creatures cannot stand in the light of the sun, lest they turn to stone in a matter of seconds. Paired with the troll's massive physical strength and their immense constitution (thanks to their unholy metabolism that feeds into rapid regeneration of damaged tissue), trolls strike fear into the hearts

of all mortals. And because mortals are constantly invading troll-lands to build new settlements, tensions are at a breaking point.



Choose a Name

Vorr, Trond, Bard, Hugi, Grim, Tove, Yrsa, Fen, Nár, Orm, Kor, Keld, Gull, Fiske, Fell, Crow, Greip, Hrym, Pir, Gint, Nith, Gorr, Aurr, Berr, Ny, Nott, Eik, Minn, Forn, Ell, Kyn, Othr, Ux, Fol, Mol, Lith, Grof, Borth, Gras, Hyl, Sipill, Ausa, Vald, Ven, Traust, Skott, Kyr, Set, Gil

Choose a Look

Body: Huge, hairy, knuckle-dragger, spindly, fair

Eyes: Beady, feral, soft

Hair: Bald, matted, shiny

Clothes: Rotted rags, scavenged scraps, whole and well-kept

Vitals

Max HP is 10+CON

Base Damage is 1D10

Background

Choose your heritage

Passably Human

You're able to blend in to most human settlements as long as they can overlook your nocturnal lifestyle, long tufted tail, and hairy feet. Take +1 to CON and -1 to both WIS and INT.

Intermediary

At first glance, you're obviously inhuman, standing nearly seven and a half feet all and weighing more than a fully grown bull. But you have two arms, two legs, and only one head so interacting with others isn't impossible. Take +1 to CON and -1 to WIS.

Monstrous

You're just over eight feet tall, your body is solid like a rock wall. You've got huge, predatory teeth, a vicious face, and angry, feral eyes. People lay one look at your and flee screaming. Take +2 to CON, but -2 to both WIS and INT.

Starting Moves:

Governed by Light

Trolls suffer petrification when exposed to sunlight- it is their greatest weakness. As time flows, the following things can happen:

During Daylight

- If exposed to direct sunlight, troll flesh will turn to stone permanently. The warmth of the sun's rays feel

like an acid burn and the painful effect will radiate up the victim's entire body.

- A troll's regenerative power does not work on sun-petrified areas.
- Sunlight petrifies almost instantly and petrified limbs cannot be regenerated, even if they are hacked off.

During the Night

- Treat any failure on a *Take Watch* roll as an automatic 7-9.
- If your party members fail a *Take Watch* roll, even if you were not elected to *Take Watch*, roll +CON. On a 10+, treat it as though you had been actively *Taking Watch*.
- Fire and lightning inspire a special wariness in you. Take -1 forward while operating around either.

Regenerate

You have an available pool of HP that you can pull from to heal yourself whenever you choose. Your pool total is equal to your CON score. When you deplete these points, go into a feeding frenzy to curb your hunger. The frenzy lasts until you have fully restored your regeneration pool by gorging yourself with *Hunger* feedings.

Hunger

You have an insatiable appetite that must be fed. Doing so restores an amount equal to your CON modifier to your total available regeneration pool. Any time you wish to feed, choose one:

➤ **Rock**

Consuming rocks sates your hunger. The higher the value- enchanted jewels, stones of a holy building, etc- the less you need to consume. Typically, 100lbs of mundane or common material constitutes a feeding. Each feeding restores you CON modifier to your total available regeneration pool.

➤ **Flesh**

You're nightmare fuel at its most rudimentary. When you consume the flesh of someone, take +1 ongoing against any who saw the act. One adult human is one feeding. Each feeding restores your CON modifier to your total available regeneration pool.

Darkvision

You can see in the dark perfectly, magical darkness is still a hindrance.

Impenetrable Hide

Your natural armor is +2

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Chaotic

Continuously eat, even when it's not necessary.

Evil

Specifically target the weak and helpless while rampaging or feeding.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 10+ STR.

Choose your weapon:

- Heavy Club (Forceful, +1 damage, close, 2 weight)
- Sling (near, 1 weight) and Heavy Stones (x5 ammo, 2 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring Gear (5 uses, 1 weight)
- Healing Potion (1 weight)

Bonds

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ has made me think hard about my life.

_____ is just another dirty squatter taking up troll-land.

_____ plays fancy and civilized but they're no different.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Bergtanging

When you *take back land from humanity* for Troll-kind, take +1

THE TROLL

forward against your victims, in either attack actions or *Parley*.

Familial Bonds

When you *appeal to another troll for aid*, roll +CON. On a 10+ you can ask them three questions. On a 7-9 ask two. If the troll you ask doesn't already know, they can return to you in a day or two with some pertinent information.

Brute

When performing a feat of brute strength, take +1.

Monster

When you *Parley* with any non-troll, you can use STR to intimidate.

Dense

Mind control intended for targets of human intelligence or greater doesn't work on you.

Surprisingly Agile

Take +1 to *Defy Danger* DEX rolls.

Sack

Target the strongest or most threatening fighter amongst your enemies and take +1 to attack rolls when you charge straight at them.

Unstoppable force

When you *attack three different targets in succession*, roll 1D6 extra damage on the fourth.

Filthy

You're immune to naturally occurring filth and diseases.

Leathery Hide

Take +1 Armor.

Bite

When you get close enough to *grab someone smaller than you* and sink your nasty teeth into them, deal damage and mark off one feeding. If you finish an enemy off with *Bite*, heal 1D4.

Advanced Moves:

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Critical Hit

When you *Hack & Slash*, on a 10+ roll damage a second time.

Sharp Sense

You can't be taken by surprise.

Barrage

When you *Hack & Slash* with at least three targets within reach, hit all of them for full weapon damage.

Wide Swing

When you *Hack & Slash*, even on a miss you still deal 1D4 damage.

Smash

When you *strike a creature of Small or Tiny* size, you flatten it into the ground on a 10+. If it had a corporeal body, you kill it

instantly.

Meat Tank

Take +1 Armor

Shield Breaker

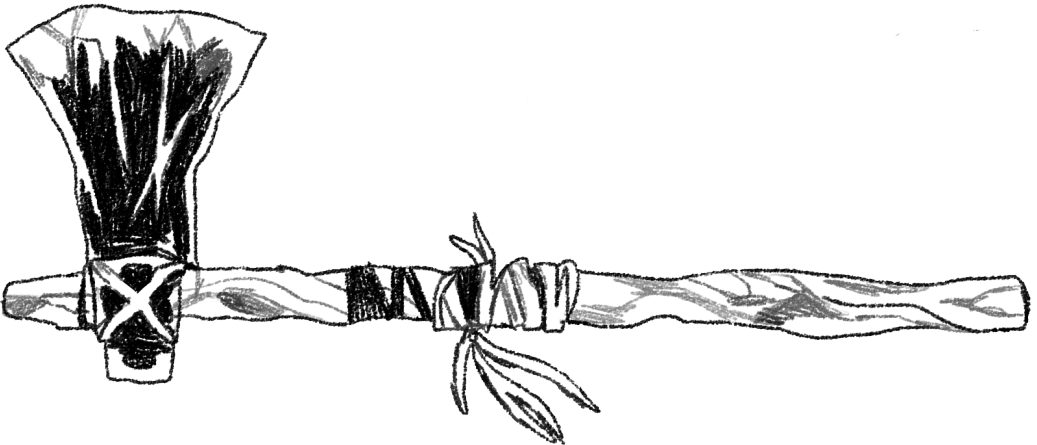
When you *specifically target the shield of an opposing warrior*, roll +STR. On a 10+, you break their shield, rendering it unusable and leaving your enemy vulnerable. On a 7-9, you knock it aside, opening them up to an attack from one of your allies- they will be able to regain themselves after that.

Never Tell Me the Odds

When you *attack an enemy that clearly outpaces you* and pay no mind to your chances of success, add your CON modifier to your damage done against them.

Wrecking Ball

A heavy blow from your fists deals +1 damage and takes the *Messy* tag.





THE ALFIR

*Many places are there and glorious. That which is called Álfheimr is one,
where dwell the peoples called Light-Elves;
...fairer to look upon than the sun.*

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

The Light Elves, or Alfir, as they call themselves, are a subgroup of Vanir gods that live on the plane of Alfheim and worship the god of light, Freyr. On the mortal realm of Midgard, most common elves and even some rural humans revere the Alfir. They, the Vanir, and the divine moon elves (the Nithfir), had multiple bloody conflicts with the Aesir deities of Asgard many ages ago and after much strife, they have entirely submitted, aligning themselves more closely with the Aesir, valuing order and governance not only among their people, but others as well.

Alfir descend to Midgard for many reasons, though as a group they are typically quite invested in the spread of civilization. Alfir are at home on the battlefield, though they are rarely a bloodthirsty people, making excellent rallying points to other warriors and bolstering their comrades. The power available to them as demigods makes them a powerful ally and a relentless threat to their enemies. They can conjure magical arms and armament out of thin air, speak directly into someone's mind, draw energy from their surroundings, and heal with a touch. While ultimately killable, the otherwise immortal Alfir are considered invariably beautiful and radiate a faint holy light about them at all times. Legends say that they know instantly when they are being lied to and some wilder tales even describe Alfar speeding up the passage of the seasons to perform unheard of miracles.

As a group, the Alfir ardently disapprove of the resistant,

chaotic ways of the Jötnar and those who have interacted with both sides know the general enmity towards each other is a dangerous, volatile mix.



Choose a Name

Morkret, Gullveig, Álfhildr, Örvar, Rán, Ivaldi, Lothen, Aragan, Aif, Fredo, Feydis, Folke, Alva, Hagan, Hella, Jerrik, Ive, Gormir, Trygve, Van, Esthra, Raynor, Liv, Aaric, Thurida, Alfrothul, Ase, Aren, Gala, Sturla, Aud, Ulfr, Hildeberh, Signy, Harald, Freawaur, Hakon

Choose a Look

Body: Slender, willowy, soft, muscular

Eyes: Soulful, sparkling, unearthly

Hair: Swept back, braided, adorned with flowers

Clothes: Flowing furs, fine cloth, well-made leathers

Vitals

Max HP is 8+CON

Base Damage is 1D6

Background

Choose your heritage

Celestial

Your home is in Alfheim, not on the mundane realm of Midgard. Your superiors, however, believe that you would benefit from mortal interactions. Take +1 to *Parley* rolls in

formal settings but -1 to *Discern Realities* rolls during crises.

Promised

You live for some greater purpose and your clan is eagerly setting you through trials to prove that you are ready. Take +1 to all *Spout Lore* rolls about anything involving Alfir society.

Silver-tongued

You're a gifted diplomat and a persuasive force. Take +1 to *Parley* against anyone caught in a petty mortal squabble.

Starting Moves

You start with these moves

Prestidigitation

Your kind rarely deign to do mundane tasks by hand. Instead, whenever you need to complete a simple task- light a candle, dry clothing, style hair, pack a bag, etc- you can simply do it with your innate magic.

Ethereal

You're always surrounded by a faint golden or silvery glow. It isn't enough to light a dark place but it does make your true nature difficult to hide. Take +1 forward with any pious mortal, especially mortal elves, who sees it.

Divine Touch

When you *lay your bare palms on someone* who is sick or hurt, roll +WIS. On a 10+ heal 1D6 or cure a sickness. On a 7-9, heal 1D4.

Fair

You are not bound to a physical form the same way mortals are. You can freely display you age, gender, sex, hair, and eye color in any way you please. Mortals will invariably find you other-worldly and beautiful still.

Connections

Your regular dealings with the gods and goddesses of the realms have forged you some reliable connections. When you wish to petition a god or goddess for information, prepare an appropriate gift and roll +CHA. On a 10+ your gift was well received and the deity provides you with a little guidance. On a 7-9, the deity still offers some direction but you lose social standing with them and won't be able to call in any favors with them without an extravagant gesture or tribute.

Aether Sense

You can sense magical signatures from a radius of about 25 feet. When you wish to discern what type of magic it is, roll +WIS. On a 10+ the GM will tell you the general nature of it. On a 7-9, the GM will give you a detail or two about it.

Alfeimborn

You do not need to sleep.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Lawful

Control- through diplomacy- those too helpless to control themselves.

Neutral

Find a way to enforce order out of chaos.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 7+ STR.

You start with **Adventuring Gear** (5 uses, 1 weight) and **10 coins**.

Choose your weapon:

- Elven Bow (near, far, 1 weight) and quiver of Elfshot arrows (x5 ammo, +1 piercing, 1 weight)
- Curved Saber (close, +1 damage, 1 weight)

Choose your armor:

- Finely Crafted Leather Armor (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Polished Shield (1 armor, 2 weight)

Bonds

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____’s ways are trite but charming. I could teach them a lot.

It turns out _____ is quite gifted in the arts.

_____ would benefit greatly from learning proper oration.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Divine Visage

Some of the more rustic areas of Midgard still worship Alfir as true gods. When you enter a small, remote stading, roll +CHA. On a 10+ the villagers treat you as a living deity. They'll honor you with sacrificial livestock, feasting, and singing as much as their resources allow. On a 7-9 you make an impression but the villagers are either too insular to trust or too intimidated to find this a joyous occasion.

Dealing Fate

When you *consider strategy and tactics before battle*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ your weapon deals +1 damage for the next combat encounter. On a 7-9 deal +1 damage on your first attack roll.

Óswane

You can speak telepathically into the mind of anyone you have a bond with inside a radius of about 10ft.

Celestial Armament

When you *say a blessing over your arms and armor* before battle, roll +WIS. On a 10+ gain +1 armor for the next combat encounter. On a 7-9 reduce the damage of the first successful attack against you by 1D4.

Crusade

Your presence on the battlefield greatly encourages morale in your allies. Anyone fighting with you against a common enemy takes +1 forward to attacks until you take damage.

Moldable Essence

Your form isn't as rigid as a mortal's. When you wish to alter your physical form, roll +WIS. On a 10+ gain 3 hold, on a 7-9 gain 2. You may choose to activate effects in sequence or simultaneously. Spend hold, one for one, on the following:

- Light as a feather
- Stiff as a statue
- Heavy as a horse
- Small as a house cat
- Big as a bear
- Effects last longer than 1 minute but less than 5

Secret Siphon

When you *draw in energy from living things* around you like plants, animals, or people, replenish 1D6 health as long as your presence is secret. Sentient creatures do not take damage from this, but they may feel fatigued and may suffer the consequences.

Justicar

When you *suspect someone is lying to you*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ you sense their overarching motivation and whether or not they are trying to deceive you. On a 7-9 you can tell if they are being generally honest or not, but cannot get their motivation, purpose, or other mitigating factors.

Advanced Moves:

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Blind

When you *release a blast of pure light*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ you blind anyone caught by surprise for one minute. On a 7-9 you still catch your intended targets but you also blind yourself for a second.

Jötun Hunter

When you *identify and pursue any Jötun*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ gain +1 forward against the creature until it dies. On a 7-9 deal +2 damage on your first strike to it.

Wider Óswane

Replaces: Óswane

You can now speak telepathically into the mind of anyone you have a bond with, regardless of distance.

Miracle

When you *perform a divine miracle* to heal the sick or wounded they heal +2D8.

Song of Seasons

When you *alter the natural world to benefit your passing*, roll +CHA. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 2. Spend hold, one for one, on the following:

- Snow drifts melt
- Mountain passes become usable
- Plants bloom or die / migratory animals change course
- Blizzards cause snow to pile up

- Ships are iced into ports
- The song's effects last for several days, giving secondary effects more foothold
- The song's effects last for several weeks, causing havoc to crops, trade, and resource management.

Mindreader

When you *wish to read the thoughts at the forefront of your target's* mind, concentrate and make direct eye contact with them. Then roll +WIS. On a 10+ you get a clear snapshot of what is occupying most of their active through. On a 7-9 the vision is very hazy and you're only able to discern a few scant thoughts.

Semi-Eternal Mind

When you *meet someone you've met before*, you may take +1 forward against them as long as you have spent a long time apart.

Earthly Divine

When you *first meet with someone who has already heard of you*, roll +CHA. On a 10+, tell the GM two things they've heard about you. On a 7-9 tell the GM one thing and the GM will tell you one.



THE DVERGR

*Then sought the gods their assembly seats,
The holy ones, and council held,
To find who should raise the race of dwarfs
Out of Brimir's blood and the legs of Blain.*

Völuspá, Prose Edda

To most not of dwarvish descent, the Dvergar are little more than a mysterious legend- the ancestors of modern dwarves, still in their primordial forms from when they were created from the first god, Ymir. The physical form of a Dvergar only adds to their mystique. They appear to be living rock fused with dark gray flesh, usually with quite fascinating features like huge crystalline structures, veins of glittering ore, or glowing lines of magma.

Common dwarves, however, share some of their culture with their still living ancestors so the knowledge of their existence and ways are not entirely lost. To know of the Dvergar is one thing and, unfortunately, getting close enough to *know* the Dvergar first hand is quite difficult for non-dwarves, though it can even be quite a rare opportunity for some dwarves. The Dvergar are, for better or worse, a tightly insular people who do not usually enjoy dealing with other others. They have difficulty understanding overland mortals most of the time as the traditional Dvergar ideals of honor, pragmatism (especially in combat), and property ownership causes friction.

Misunderstandings with mortals are typically the result of a Dvergar not obliging the mortal sensibilities of face-to-face duels to settle matters and would easily stab someone in the back while they weren't looking to end a confrontation. While humans, elves, and even mortal dwarves would balk at the idea of turning down an honor-duel, a typical Dvergr has little

interest in risking their life for anything they feel is frivolous. To the primordial dwarves, this is an act of pragmatism and intelligence, not cowardice, though it is a hard gap to bridge when trying to mesh with overlanders.

The other issue that regularly comes up with mortals is the concept of property, to which the Dvergar have a famously radical concept. The Dvergar believe that anything forged or crafted by them never leaves their ownership, no matter how the item changed hands in the first place. When the Dvergar lent fantastic crafts and even Mjolnir to the gods, it was with the idea that these artifacts still belonged to the Dvergar and will someday be returned. One of the most common reasons these primordial dwarves find their way to Midgard is to try and recover items they believed should have been returned to them. Which, as you can imagine, can make for some very heated arguments, especially when considering the Dvergar live until killed and mortals grow and die in the blink of an eye.

Dvergar, if you can gain their trust, make excellent scouts as they can read the land like an open book, find valuable ore with ease, and locate important resources without breaking a sweat. They are famously the most skilled craftspeople in all the nine realms, and even the high gods rely on them for their mighty weapons and powerful relics. Dvergar make excellent warriors and mercenaries if a satisfactory contract of service can be reached. They are quite handy with a huge variety of martial weapons and often create their own special arms, crafted with skill enough for even the gods. Their thick hides make them difficult to fell and their determination to rise and fight again is indomitable. While nearly blind in direct sunlight, the Dvergar are unstoppable underground or in dark, rocky places- where they are nearly invisible and can carve paths and tunnels with all

the ease of molding wet sand.



Choose a Name

Neth, Ivald, Mótsognir, Kleo, Durinn, Thubrann, Nýi, Maeve, Niði, Halva, Norðri, Hamme, Suðri, Runa, Austri, Bo, Vestri, Era, Alþjófr, Laifa, Suna, Náinn, Aras, Nipingr, Bera, Dáinn, Drifa, Án, Finna, Anarr, Halladora, Veigr, Vindalfr, Lithr, Vith, Nýráðr, Reginn, Ráðsviðr, Silkisif, Erikr, Thyrth, Thorbjorn, Aslaug

Choose a Look

Body: Craggy, ore veins, crystal formations, smooth

Eyes: Pure white, solid black, gem-like

Hair: Wiry, thick braids or ringlets, mossy

Clothes: Cap with wide brim, helm with visor, thick smithy's apron and gloves.

Vitals

Max HP is 6+CON

Base Damage is 1D8

Background

Choose your heritage

Asher Clan

The natural ash in your body absorbs and neutralizes poisons.

Irönbörn Clan

Your sharp mind is too strong to be bent to the whims of fleeting Midgardians. Illusions have no effect on you when created by a mortal.

Vatnsberi Clan

Water flows through your body like blood and you cannot succumb to magical paralysis.

Skýr Clan

Your knowledge of the arcane keeps magical mind control or manipulation from taking hold in you.

Starting Moves

Start with these moves

Adapted Vision

After ages of living in the dark, your people's eyes can no longer stand the intensity of the sun. In natural sunlight, you are severely hindered by the painful glare. On the other hand, you can see in total darkness just fine, magical or otherwise.

Born of Stone

Your body is made of earth, rock, and lines of jagged crystal. You have natural +2 armor.

Metallurgy

With a few resources, you can make minor repairs to arms and armor with a few hours of uninterrupted concentration. These skills also cover the creation of small items like simple ornaments, jewelry, fixtures, nails, horseshoes, etc...

Stone Flesh

Magic has difficulty permeating your stone hide. Take +1 ongoing against any spellcasters targeting you with magic.

Prospect

When you *spend time surveying your natural surroundings* and soil composition, roll +WIS. On a 10+ choose 2, on a 7-9 choose 1. On a miss, you give an incorrect assessment.

- The general health of the soil; whether it is fertile or barren, whether it has been packed down or dug up recently, etc.
- What living creatures make their home here.
- What natural resources are in the area
- What kind of ore is near

Sentinel

You do not need to eat or sleep. If a move tells you to mark and consume a ration, ignore it.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Lawful

Pursue an opportunity to broaden your knowledge for the benefit of your people.

Neutral

Reclaim stolen artifacts for your people.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 11+ STR.

You start with **Dungeon Rations** (5 uses, 1 weight) and a **pouch of gold ore** (about 20 coins' worth)

Choose your weapon:

- Maul (close, +1 damage, 2 weight)
- Pickaxe (close, Piercing, 1 weight)

Choose your armor:

- Fine Chain Shirt (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Iron Breastplate (2 armor, 2 weight)

Bonds

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ has promised me something of value for my assistance.

_____ and I have learned to appreciate each other over time and I regard them closely.

_____’s tactic of attacking the enemy head on is cute but they’ll live longer if they learn some discretion.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Forge of the Gods

Take +1 to *Spout Lore* roles concerning the divine.

Emissary

Contact with other clans has offered the opportunity to learn. Choose another background move.

Power in Words

Dvergr treat their promises with absolute solemnity. Take +1 forward when you're acting to satisfy a debt or promise you made with someone you have a bond with.

Smithy

You can now create basic arms and armor. The GM will help you determine what stat bonuses, if any, apply to your creations. You can also make more substantial repairs to arms and armor. Broken or shattered swords, deformed spears, punctured armor, etc, are as good as new in your skilled hands- so long as you have raw materials, safety, and time in which to work.

Hoard

Dvergar have deep feelings of possession for Dvergr-made items that find their way into the hands of mortals. Take +1 against anyone who tries to prevent you from taking a rightful prize.

Darkling

When you *stay still and quiet in a rocky setting*, you cannot be seen by nonmagical means.

Fire-Forged

You feel no pain from fires and magical fire causes 1D4 less damage on attacks.

Acid Touch

When you *secrete acidic liquid from your fingertips*, roll +STR. On a 10+ the acid is potent enough to cause 1D4 damage to nonmagical living entities and significant damage to metal, wood, and stone.

Direction Sense

As long as you can see unimpeded by sunlight, you never lose your way.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Fracture Point

When you *hit their most obvious weakpoint* with all of your might, roll +WIS. On a 10+ you break through their defenses in a way others can take advantage of. On a 7-9 deal damage with the Piercing tag. On a miss, take -1 against the target until the end of the encounter.

Compel Truth

Dvergr hate lies more than almost anything else. When you verbally challenge someone's truthfulness in front of witnesses, roll +WIS. On a 10+, they are compelled to speak the truth. On a 7-9 they cannot lie but are not obligated to speak. No matter the result, the spell wears off after a few minutes or when the target leaves your immediate presence.

Dig

Your life underground has made you adept at creating sturdy tunnels in a fraction of the time it would take overlanders. You can dig a four foot wide tunnel under a fortress wall in a matter of hours, create small underground alcoves for shelter in a few minutes, etc.

Master Smith

Replaces: Smithy

In addition to making comprehensive repairs to arms and armor, you can now work on magical items. With research, materials, and time, plus access to a forge, you can fuse broken items back together again or recharge their innate spells.

Volcanic Bomb

When you *heat up your core and eject a molten hot blob of liquid rock* at an enemy, roll weapon damage against your target and deal half of that result as splash damage to any other targets within ten feet of the primary at a cost of 1D6 damage to yourself.

Appraising Eye

When dealing with mortal merchants in any matters concerning fine metals or utilitarian alloys, roll +WIS. On a 10+ the bargain is beneficial to you and decidedly less for the merchant. On a 7-9 your opposition is much less concerned about offending you but ultimately cedes to a reasonably fair trade weighted a little in your favor.



THE JÖTUNNBORN

*All the witches
Spring from Witolf
All the warlocks
Are of Willharm
And the spell-slingers
spring from Swarthead;
All the ogres
of Ymir come*

Völuspá, Prose Edda

Of all the peoples in the mortal plane, none are quite as misunderstood as the Jötunnborn. They are the product of a Jötnar marriage to one of the other races (even gods, sometimes) and usually have physical indicators of their ice-giant blood, which can put something of a target on their back in some situations.

Jötunnborn are quite varied in what they pick up from their combined heritage. Some are fully committed to living as Jötnar and preserving the wild chaos of the world, some are pious and serve the gods, some are even elevated to god-dom and asked to live with and support their divine spouses.

Jötunnborn, as a whole, do not take persecution lying down, however. There are common stories of Jötunnborn going to immense lengths to exact vengeance for an insult against their blood, even as they are outcasted from most Midgardian settlements. Jötunnborn are powerhouses in combat, retaining their ice-giant strength and constitution. With the blood of Ymir coursing through them, they can still access a lot of their ancestral power. Finding gateways between realms, for instance, is child's play to the Jötunnborn, as is dampening unfriendly arcane energy.

Choose a Name

Offa, Rerir, Sörli, Hathir, Lothor, Brithard, Anaan, Arne, Finn, Sten, Arvid, Embla, Endr, Kory, Kare, Yrsa, Revna, Eira, Beorhtric, Hiordus, Magnus, Ninga, Kveld, Nefr, Gagnráðr, Ahhoth, Hunding, Yasante, Hæmingr, Aminatu, Högne, Tinthu, Hothbrodd, Helema, Sima

Choose a Look

Body: Bluish flesh, natural markings, abnormally tall or heavy.

Eyes: Blood red, predatory, feral, crystalline

Hair: Shaved sides, top knot, wild tangles

Clothes: Warrior's garb, little coverage, ragged furs

Vitals

Max HP is 8+CON

Base Damage is 1D10

Background

Choose your heritage

Iron Forest

Whenever you wish to interact with wild, nonmagical animals, they are inclined to trust you until you prove to be a threat.

My Big Fat Jötnar Wedding

Despite the sometimes violent hatred between both groups, the rampant intermarrying of gods and Jötnar left a ripe opportunity for your clan to exploit. You are betrothed to a lesser Aesir deity. Describe them and what this union can offer you.

Full-Blooded Monster

You were born of Ymir's sweat and you refuse to let the Aesir make you docile. You have permanent, monstrous features like claws, enormous fangs, extra heads, towering height that exceeds 8 feet, etc.

Starting Moves

Start with these moves

Strength of Gods

No matter what your current form looks like, the strength of giants courses through you. Add +1 to your STR modifier.

Grudge

When you *swear vengeance upon someone* who's wronged you because of your heritage, write a new bond for it. Take +1 forward against them until the bond resolves, one way or another.

Bad Blood

Any time you enter a new settlement- or one that does not take kindly to strange frost giants- perform the basic move *Outstanding Warrants*.

Sacred Vengeance

When you *fell an enemy you have a Grudge-bond with and eat them*, you consume your enemy's mind and knowledge- not just their blood and bone. In addition to any useful information you may glean (the GM will tell you), you also gain a one-time-use skill or power from your meal. The GM will create a special move for you.

Tracking

When you *catch the scent of someone* and have a belonging of theirs, roll +INT. On a 10+ pick 3, on a 7-9 pick two:

- The trail is fresh
- The trail is discernible even in crowded places
- You can pick up traces of emotive pheromone in the scent, telling you if the target was scared, angry, etc...
- You can pick up a secondary scent from the target, for instance fresh blood from a wound or the smell of horses
- You can discern whether or not magical energy interacted with your target at some point along the trail.
- You can tell whether the trail exits the current plane but you will have trouble following it across realms.

Unloved

Unless you're among Jötnar or other persecuted communities, you can use your very presence as leverage during *Parley*.

Thick Skin

Gain +1 armor.

Alignment

Choose your leaning

Good

Teach someone about a harsh reality to help them survive.

Neutral

Oppose the gods' oppressive control over you.

Evil

Shake someone's faith in the gods by whatever means necessary.

Gear

Begin with this equipment

Your load is 10+ STR

You start with **Dungeon Rations** (5 uses, 1 weight) and a concealed, improvised **shiv** (hand, 1 weight)

Choose your weapon:

- Battleaxe (close, 1 weight)
- Iron Sword (close, +1 damage, 1 weight)

Choose your armor:

- Old Leathers (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Mismatched Chainmail (1 armor, 2 weight)

Bonds

Explore with others before starting or write your own

_____ must get stronger if they are going to survive.

_____ is weak because they have never known true hardship.

_____ is all too eager to bend in subservience.

I must watch my back around _____.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 2-5, choose one of the following

Astral Traveler

You might not be welcome on the Bifrost but with some planning and scouting, you can always find an alternate way to any of the Nine Realms.

Questionably Merciful

When you *fight with a rival or enemy but refrain from finishing them off*, take +1 forward against them.

Pack Mentality

When someone defers to your advice or orders, they get +1 forward when they follow your word, reinforcing your ‘alpha wolf’ tendencies.

Ancient Knowledge

Jötnar barely age and the passage of time has imparted vast knowledge to you. Whenever you *Discern Realities*, you can use your INT instead of WIS.

Sturdy

Ignore the *Clumsy* tag on armor.

Quick Instincts

When you *trust your gut and rely on your instincts* to outpace your enemies, take +1 to *Defy Danger* INT rolls.

Dominant

When you *inflict damage on a target in plain view of those weaker*

than you, take +1 on your next *Hack & Slash* roll.

Form Unbound

You cannot hide your Jötnar heritage but you can change your features and sex at will to mimic the appearance of other humanoids.

First Blood

When you are the *first to deal damage* in a an encounter, deal an extra 1D4 damage.

Magic & Mystery

When you *Spout Lore* about gods, realms, or other magical and historical lore, take +1.

Calculated

When you *confront a foe with a predetermined battle plan*, add your INT modifier to the damage you deal on each strike so long as things are going exactly according to your plan.

Advanced Moves

When you take a level between 6-10, choose one of the following

Alfar Hunter

When you *identify and pursue any Alfr*, roll +WIS. On a 10+ gain +1 forward against the creature until it dies. On a 7-9 deal +2 damage on your first strike to it.

Bloodthirsty

Requires: First Blood

You can now add the *Forceful* or *Messy* tag to your first strike.

Pack Hunting

Requires: Calculated

If they also follow your predetermined battle plan, your allies may now add their INT modifiers to their damage rolls.

Magebane

When you *target an ongoing spell* that is currently active, roll +INT. On a 10+ the spell is dispelled or canceled, on a 7-9 you weaken its effects.

Hone

When in combat, all 10+ rolls have an unexpected benefit. The GM will describe it.

Astral Tracking

Requires: Astral Traveler

You can now track targets across different planes and realms as one of your *Astral Tracking* parameters.

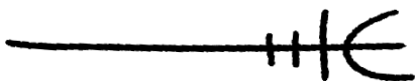
COMPENDIUM CLASSES

*On clear gold labels let into the cross-piece
it was rightly told in runic letters,
set down and sealed, for whose sake it was
that the sword was first forged, that finest of iron
sprial-hilted, serpent bladed.*

Beowulf

The Compendium Classes are special ‘prestige’ classes that the GM may open up to any PC once they have met certain conditions. The Compendium Classes offer a few new moves to allow the character archetypes to specialize even further than their playbooks allow. Once a PC takes on a Compendium Class, they may choose one of the new moves at level up instead of one their character sheet.

- Take note that while most of the Compendium Classes are available to all characters, the Úlfhéðnar is available to the Bearskin only.



The Seiðr

*I doomed myself when I dared to tell
What fate will befall the gods*

Vafþrúðnismál, Poetic Edda

Associated with spinning thread and tantric sex rituals, the Seiðr were usually (but not always) women who had the gift of foresight. They were both intimidating and revered as powerful mystics who could at once deliver you to your fate and also burden you with terrible truths. The Seiðr themselves carry a heavy burden as well, their powers keep them from being able to live normal lives and they will be eternally sought, praised, and damned for their magic.

When you drink from a well of knowledge and gain divine insight, you make take this move:

Read Wyrð

When you wish to consult your oracular powers, roll +WIS. On a 7-9 you receive a vision of what is likely to pass, on a 10+ you may ask the GM one clarifying question.

For every additional level you reach, you may choose one:

Well Read

When you *Spout Lore* about the divine or mystical, take +1

Secret Finder

When you *Discern Realities* to uncover a lie, take +1

Threads of Fate

When you accomplish an alignment goal in combat take +1 forward.

Face of the Divine:

When you wish to speak for the gods, assume the appearance of one so long as your goals align. Roll+WIS to take the physical form of a god, on a 10+ those who see it are convinced you are the real deal, on a 7-9 the effect is temporary and your audience will realize what you've done as soon as it wears off.



The Runecaster

*I know a twelfth one
if I see up in a tree,
a dangling corpse in a noose
I can so carve and color the runes,
that the man walks
and talks with me.*

Hávamál , Codex Regius

	Gold		Pain		Ice		Sun
	Livestock		Gift		Season		Person
	Giant		Joy		Possession		Water
	Divine		Beginning		Death		Gods
	Justice		Storm		Mystery		Horse
	Journey		Need		Elk		Day

The Runecaster boasts the rare gift of literacy and has learned use runes to tap into the magic of creation. This mystical ability comes from the Norns, the terrifying keepers of fate, at once beautiful and horrifying. Usually at some astronomical cost, a Norn will impart the secrets (where the word ‘rune’ itself comes from) to a willing and respectful pupil. A Runecaster weaves spells with wit and skill, etching them into tablets or stones to serve as powerful amulets or even as deadly traps.

When you pay the heavy price required by a Norn (or other divine keeper of fate) you gain access to the preceding list of runes.

You also take this move:

Inscribe

When you *alter the flow of reality*, roll +WIS. on a 7-9 you can inscribe one rune into a surface to cause a subtle effect with a cost. Tell the GM what you hope to achieve. On a 10+ you can perform the subtle magic at no cost.

For every additional level you reach, you may choose one:

Add Rune

You may now add an additional rune when you *Inscribe*. You may keep taking this move as you level up and the effect stacks.

Bar Entry

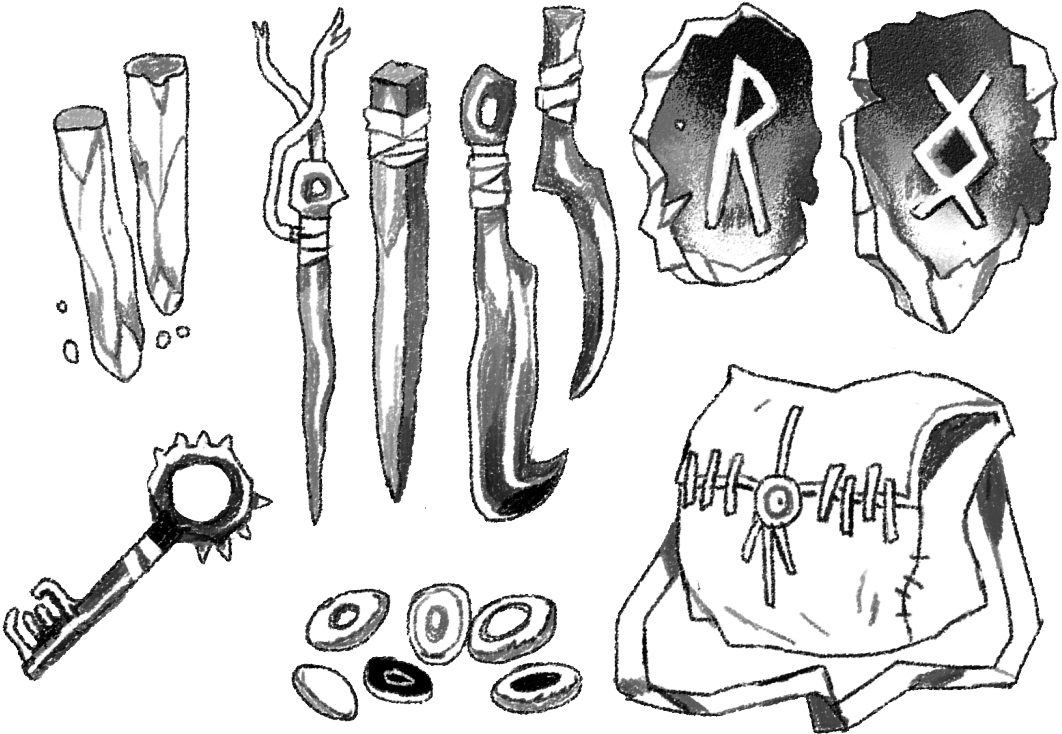
When you carve a complex systems of runic wardings on a portal, no one you wish to keep out will be able to cross the threshold.

Devil's Cage

When you lure someone into standing within a runic circle (concealed or otherwise) they become trapped inside the borders by an invisible, intangible wall until the rune itself is damaged or broken.

Unwitting Activation:

When you inscribe runes you may choose to have them activate when they are read by an unsuspecting victim/beneficiary. They do not need to be spoken aloud, simply that they are read makes the effect real.



A note about runes: The runes used here are mostly the Elder Futhark set, most commonly found on artifacts from the 2-8th centuries bce. There are also two other major derivative sets: the Younger Futhark and the Futhorc variant that were used in the later medieval ages. The historical value of these runes and our ability to read them is, frankly, priceless, and we've used them to unravel many mysteries of Norse culture. However, I must stress that knowing their modern context and use is also incredibly important. Bear with me here for a quick contextual lesson:

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries occultism experienced a resurgence of interest in Germany, bringing these runes as a mystical, culturally significant item to the forefront of a lot of German imaginations. While the interest in mysticism didn't hold with a lot of the upper echelon of Nazis when they rose to power, their cultural symbolism was very attractive and can be seen in a lot of Nazi insignias and propaganda.

The most commonly used and recognized runes in association with racist violence and neo-Nazi propaganda are:  which, usually seen in pairs, became the SS emblem and  (specifically with serif/wings) which was also used in SS iconography. Please keep in mind the historical context when using these runes in your game and keep in mind that *many* modern neo-Nazi and violently racist organizations have appropriated runic iconography and actively use them today. For safety and courtesy, it's a good idea to double check that your players are okay with using them in-game and be aware of the association if you create any artistic assets that might have them prominently displayed.

The Fae-Touched

*Iarð skal rifna
ok upphiminn*

Skarpåker Runestone

There is a saying that only fools and the desperate broker deals with the fae. They unerringly benefit from each deal they make. Those who are bound to the fae are magically marked and sometimes take on fae-like characteristics from their dealings with them. Inevitably, there comes a time for those bound to a bargain to pay the price, however, and this is when fae sometimes show their true colors.

When you enter into a contract with a fae, in addition to the terms of the bargain, take the following:

Accord

Add a new bond describing your relationship to a fae and describe the physical mark the connection has left on your body (no shadow, color blind, etc). Any fae that see it recognize that you have had dealings with their kind before, for better or worse.

Fair Price

When you *Aid* (or *Interfere*) with another player, change the result to +2 if the player agrees to the price you demand.

For every additional level you reach, you may choose one:

Bound to the Earth

In any natural setting like a forest or open field, take +1 to any *Discern Realities* rolls performed there.

Flighty

You're prone to lashing out when someone directly insults you thanks to the influence of the Fae, but take +1 ongoing against anyone who pays you blatant disrespect.

High Court

When you are about to take your *Last Breath*, you may give up that move permanently in order to call upon the Fae Court for assistance once. This is automatically a partial success. They will do what they can to remove you from imminent danger and stabilize you but there's always the possibility of far-reaching consequences later.



The Voyager

*Once the longships regrouped, only
Kolga's Sisters could be heard crashing,
a sound as if swells and bluffs were bursting
Helgi had the high sails heightened,
the unfailing crew rallying through
the rollers, Ægir's dreaded daughters trying
to over throw their stay-bridled sea-steeds.*

Helgakviða Hundingsbana I, Poetic Edda

When you gain command of your own ship and the crew to man it, choose one of the following:

Conscript

Desperate times, desperate measures and all that. When you make port, roll +STR to *conscript local sailors* into your service. On a 10+ you gain 2 + your STR modifier people who are reasonably competent. On a 7-9, you gain 2 sailors who are passably competent. You may treat Conscripted as though they are recruits, though you will take a -1 to CHA rolls involving them. Remember that conscripted sailors are there against their will and are prone to mutinies if they suffer further mistreatment.

Sea Voyage

Use *Undertake a Perilous Journey* to quantify a sea voyage, including naming three 'officer' roles- the quartermaster, the trailblazer, and the scout. Roll that move like normal except that for every 5 recruits you have manning your ship(s), you can add +1 to any officer roll.

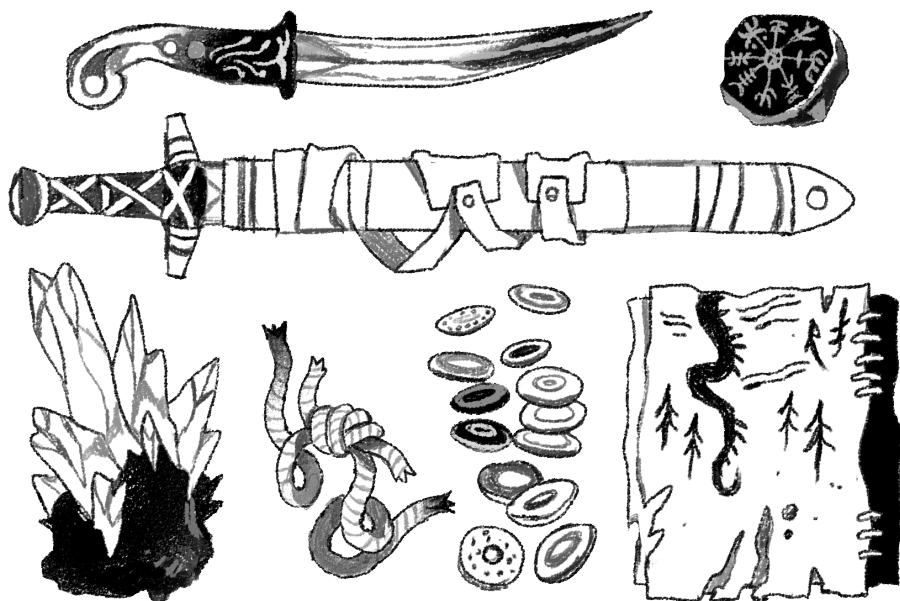
Each time you level up, you may choose one:

Monster Hunter

Little is more exhilarating than chasing down and dragging back a colossal catch. With a little time and good weather, you can always find signs of a sea monster.

Ambassador

You've seen strange lands and strange people with strange goods and customs. Whenever you make port, roll +CHA. On a 10+ the locals treat you as a friend and ply you with gifts and open trading until you give them a reason to dislike you. On a 7-9, they're wary but can still be convinced to trade with a show of kindness or interesting gift. You'll have a very hard time using *Ambassador* and *Conscript* in the same port, but it's not impossible, strictly speaking.



The Úlfhéðnar

Who are they that wade out into battle?

Wolf-skinned they are called.

Haraldskvæði

There's no animal more dangerous than one who is hurt or one who is protecting young. The Bearskin with someone to protect becomes an Úlfhéðnar- wolf-hooded. The Bearskin's natural talents do not lend themselves to defensive fighting, so the berserker must be driven to great need before taking their solemn vow of guardianship.

When a Bearskin vows to try and use their frenzied strength to protect a specific charge, take the following:

Sworn

When you put yourself in between a threat and the person you've sworn to shield, roll +STR. On a 10+ the enemy realizes you're the biggest threat to them and you shift their attention away from who you're protecting. On a 7-9, you take the damage intended for your charge. On a miss, you've just revealed your biggest weakness to the enemy.

Each time you level up, you may choose one:

Oathkeeper

When you take your *Last Breath* and your charge is still alive *and* in immediate danger *and* the result is a miss, treat it as a 7-9. Death will have a hefty bargain for you but they'll let you try to

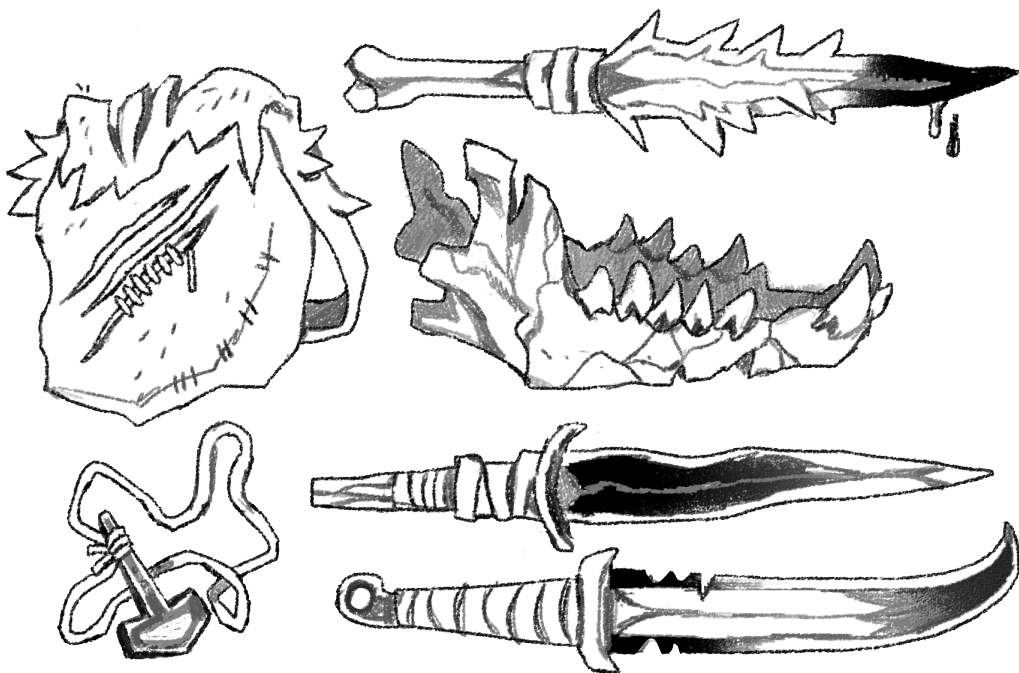
fulfill your oath.

Frenzy

When your charge takes damage from an attack, your blood-lust rockets to previously unheard of level of violence and triggers a *Bloodrush* automatically. Anything between you and the source of damage- including your charge or other allies- will take 1D6 damage for being in the way. If you hurt your charge in the chaos you immediately shift back to a *Docile* state and cannot use another *Bloodrush* until you *Make Camp*. This supersedes any moves that can reactivate a *Bloodrush*.

Lion Tamer

When you are in a *Docile* state, spending time with your charge while they are safe and uninjured will let you regain the ability to activate *Bloodrush* after a short rest.



The Unsavage

If someone speaks dishonor to another man... they shall meet where three roads meet. If he who has spoken comes and not the insulted one, then he shall be as he's called: no rights to swear oaths, no right to bear witness, may it concern man or woman.

Hednalagen, Pagan Law

When you publicly disregard the conventions of honor to your own benefit and show no shame, take the following:

Holmgang

In any settlement, someone may demand an honor-duel with you. You can refuse at the risk of more poor treatment and -1 to *Outstanding Warrants* when you return. You can also accept and fight the challenger, fully armed, with intent to incapacitate. If you win, take +1 forward to *Parley* rolls in this location and the loser must offer up recompense for the insult (the GM will decide what).

Each time you level up, you may choose one:

Ergi

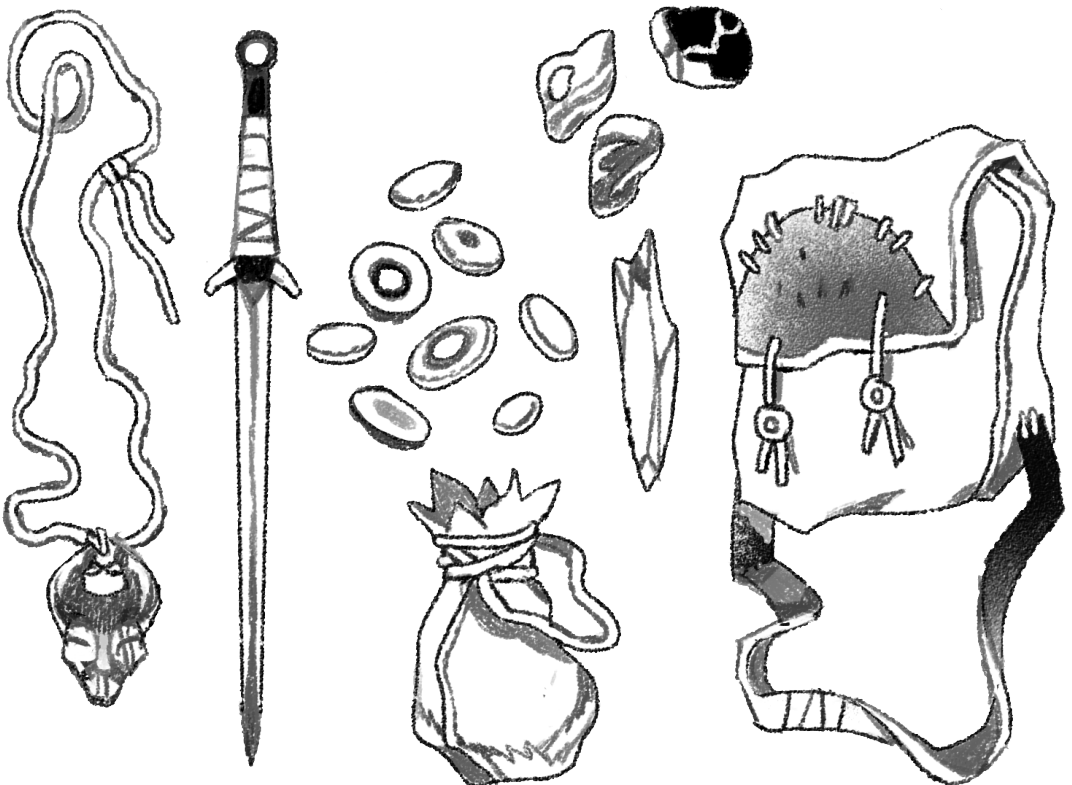
You've been branded as docile and spineless which makes others think you're an easy target. Prove them wrong or play it to your benefit. Because of your reputation, fighters and soldier types will always be willing to believe that you will need protection in combat.

No Tales of Cowards

You've gained the reputation for putting your life above the valor of dying in battle. When using your experience evaluating the danger of a given situation, take +1 to *Discern Realities* rolls.

Outdweller

Odin was once branded as Ergi too and this makes him sympathetic to your standing. When you are threatened with immediate, mortal danger, you can call out to Odin to preserve your life, healing 1D8 damage instantly. Once you are in relative safety, prepare an honorary sacrifice thanking him or prepare to face his wrath. This ability cannot be triggered again until the sacrifice has been seen to.



The Ghost Rider

*It sates itself on the life-blood of fated men,
paints red the powers' homes
with crimson gore.*

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

While Hunters worship the Wild Hunt and spend their lives trying to gain access to it, anyone with a strong enough sense of justice and a disregard for conventional means can earn their place. The Horned Rider only wants to see sentences carried out and that misdeeds are paid for in blood.

When you earn your place in the Wild Hunt as a phantom vigilante, take the following:

Moonlight Rider

Under moonlight, your body takes on a spectral fire and your face goes skeletal. The sight of you in this form will send almost anyone fleeing and it inspires terror in any who see it. Take +2 to all *Parley* rolls in this form using your intimidation as leverage.

Posse

When you summon the specters of ghostly hunters to frighten or intimidate, take +1 against any who lay eyes on them. The spirits cannot physically interact with the world but they will scare the piss out of anyone or anything that sees them.

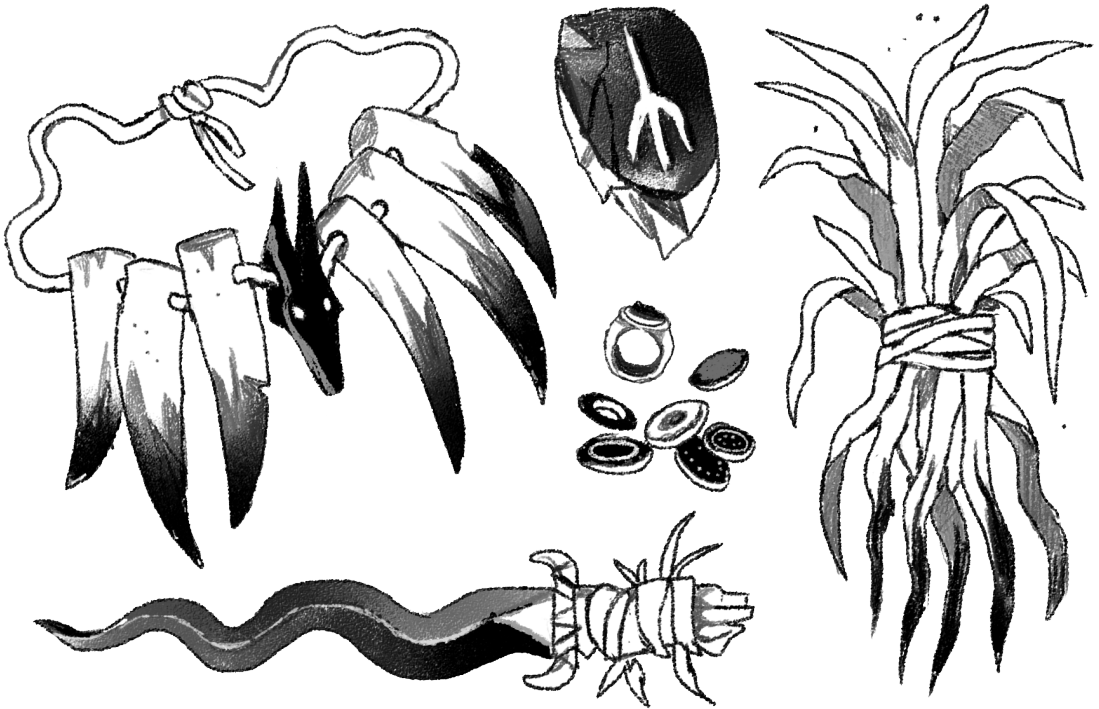
Each time you level up, you may choose one:

Draw it Out

In a way, you're an assassin but you're not out for a silent kill and a clean getaway. You're an executioner and you want this to be a spectacle. Mark your target before a combat encounter. Once you're attacking them, do an additional 1D4 damage on successful *Hack & Slash* rolls against them in an effort to maximize the pain of each hit and get them squealing.

Known to All

When you make a show of dragging your victim to the eager hunting party, you can use the terror it inspired as leverage in any *Parley* attempt made in this location or against any who witnessed it.



Equipment

*In the night went men,
in studded corslets,
their shields glistened
in the waning moon.*

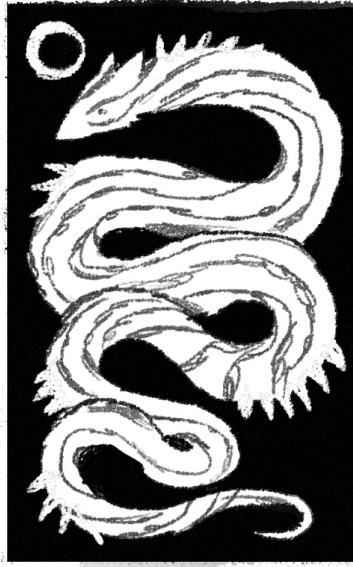
Völundarkviða, Poetic Edda

The arms and armor of Stromgard are simple and rustic at best. Virtually every man, woman, and child carries at least one weapon on them at all time. Even slaves are permitted by law to carry knives on them. However, there is also a large disparity of wealth, which separates most arms and armor into ‘wealthy’ and ‘peasant’ equipment. With iron and steel coming at high cost and limited availability, most soldiers of the land must make due with what’s available to them.

Wealthy fighters and distinguished veterans of many successful raids typically go into battle wearing full regalia- a helmet, mail shirt, shield, sword, and bow. Soldiers with less resources tend to favor spears and axes, cloth or leather armor (if they can afford it), and the poorest combatants tend to favor the still-deadly sling, wood cutting axes, and whatever clothes they wear on their back. Tools that can double as weapons are also extremely popular.

GMs should flex their creativity when determining scarcity and value of both mundane and arcane equipment. Real Vikings typically relied on barter, not coin, and games can have wildly different tones and challenges as economic factors are tweaked.

EQUIPMENT



It should be noted that not every playbook character begins with coins in *The Wyrd of Stromgard*- instead, that starting boon is really only provided to characters who would likely have access to excess material wealth based on their cultural or professional background. PCs who do not start with coin will need to either earn some or barter- whether by using items or resources picked up in earlier adventures or by providing services like protection, spellwork, or even information.

Ordinary Weapons

Yew Bow

near, 10 coins, 1 weight

Flexible, lightweight longbow with high accuracy over a decent range.

Elm Bow

near, far, 70 coins, 2 weight

Huge, heavy bow with an immense range.

Barbed Arrows

x3 ammo, +1 piercing, 25 coins, 1 weight

Thorny arrows that get lodged into targets and leave deep wounds if not removed by a skilled, patient hand.

Bone Arrows

x3 ammo, +1 dmg, 25 coins, 1 weight

Intentionally brittle arrows that splinter upon impact, rending flesh and making the shards difficult to remove.

Winged Spear

reach, +1 dmg, 35 coins, 2 weight

Thrusting/cutting weapon, two handed. The wings at the base of the head are designed to aid in pinning or trapping enemy limbs as well as parrying shields.

Hewing Spear

reach, 25 coins, 2 weight

Heavy spear, two handed, for thrusting/cutting.

Atgeir

reach, +1 piercing, 75 coins, 2 weight

A heavy spear with a long reach. An expensive item that is considered a status symbol. Thrusting/cutting weapon.

EQUIPMENT

Bill Hook

close, 15 coins, 1 weight

A short polearm with a hooked and bladed iron head. Suitable for thrusting, cutting, slashing and also climbing.

Seax

close, 5 coins, 1 weight

A long, straight-bladed knife similar to a machete or short gladius.

Hand Axe

thrown, near, close, 3 coins, 1 weight

Throwable, lightweight axe with a single blade edge that serves well even as a primary weapon.

Dane Axe

reach, close, +1 dmg, 30 coins, 2 weight

This axe is nearly six feet tall and requires two hands to wield with any competence. The iron head is heavy and expensive but durable and extremely deadly.

Sling

near, 2 coins, 1 weight

A cheap but very reliable and very popular weapon for poor warriors. Keep some stones on hand for ammo or pick them up off the ground as you need them.

Ordinary Armor

Round Alder Shield

+1 armor, 20 coins, 2 weight

Sturdy and lightweight shield that will see you through many a battle. You can remount the boss on to new wood when the shield has taken too much abuse.

Reinforced Round Shield *+2 armor, 60 coins, 3 weight*

A round shield that has been reinforced with leather padding and iron splints. It is heavy for its size but still maneuverable.

Kite Shield *+2 armor, 70 coins, 3 weight*

This long, heavy shield was inspired by foreign armaments and is best suited for mounted combat. Creative types may still find interesting ways to use it in close quarters.

Scale Lamellar *3 armor, worn, clumsy, 250 coins, 3 weight*

This heavy shirt is a dream for most poor warriors but if you can buy one, you'll enjoy sturdy protection while leaving both hands free. Most lamellar chest pieces consist of many plates of iron sewn together and worn over a heavy cloth tunic or shirt. Its weight has the added effect of helping you stay warm in the wilderness.

Mail Shirt *2 armor, worn, 50 coins, 1 weight*

Cheaper than a lamellar piece, a mail shirt will still do a decent job protecting you from stabs, though it is markedly less effective against slashes and blunt force trauma.

Gambeson *1 armor, worn, 15 coins, 1 weight*

Both for warmth and for some protection, a Gambeson is a thick shirt padded with wool and quilt-stitched for durability. Like leathers, it's not the sturdiest but it's definitely is better than nothing.

Splintmail *2 armor, clumsy, worn, 60 coins, 1 weight*

Pieces of leather splinted and bound into a shirt, influenced by

foreign soldiers' garb.

Steinnr *1 armor, clumsy, worn, 2 coins, 3 weight*
Two flat pieces of stone tied to hang over the chest and back.
Stupidly impractical but better than nothing.

Everyday Items

Dice *12 coins, 1 weight*
Ten six-sided dice carved from auroch bone in a small wooden case. Many games can be played with these, which are familiar to just about everyone in Stromgard.

Set of scales and weights *25 coins, 1 weight*
Dealing often with fine metal coins will necessitate the ownership of one of these as without it you will have to trust that coin or ingots contain as much valuable metal as they should.

Piece of fine gold jewelry *40 coins*
Cloak pins or hair pieces are popular and usually bear the emblem or motif of a noteworthy bloodline or deed from someone's past. Pendants, bracelets, small, plain diadems, and rings also make great investments as mementos or keepsakes.

Small metalworking tools *65 coins, 1 weight*
This travel-sized set allows the owner to work on small metal repairs and includes an assortment of files, tongs, tweezers, a detailing stylus, and small hammer.

Lockpicks

50 coins. x3 uses

This small set of delicate picks can be used to open a nonmagical lock as long as you have a dexterous hand. Their durability is quite low, however, so take care in their use.

Carving knife

20 coins, 1 weight

A handsome, bone-handled carving knife sure to impress the guests of your next feast.

Drinking horn

15 coins, 1 weight

A large horn to keep alcohol in. A craftsman spent a good deal of time burning an intricate pattern into the lip.

Hunting horn

10 coins, 1 weight

Hung from a leather strap, this hunting horn blasts a deafeningly loud, clear note that can be heard for nearly 8m/13km.

Set of runes

Starts at 25 coins, 1 weight

A set of runes, no matter the material, will set you back a little. A craftsman literate in the arcane symbols must painstakingly carve each by hand. Many magic-users prefer semi-precious stones to aid in their channeling of fate but for others ordinary stone or bone serves just fine.

Symbol of devotion to a deity

Iron	<i>35 coins</i>
Copper	<i>20 coins</i>
Wood/Bone/Shell	<i>5 coins</i>

Many carry symbols of their favored deity in many materials. It

carries the bonus of letting others know how to deal with your corpse should you die in battle.

Selection of iron beads for hair

15 coins

Well groomed hair is considered an attractive trait in most people but especially in warriors and even more especially in men.

Chokeberry wine

4 coins, 1 weight

This piquant forest berry wine comes in a leather skin and can be expended for 1 Ration in a pinch.

Fishing rod, line, and hook

3 coins, 1 weight

Fishing, both in the sea and in fresh water, is a less labor-intensive way to feed a few people, though you'll be at the mercy of the water's fluctuating bounty.

Snowshoes

15 coins, 1 weight

Made from wooden slats and sinew, these wide shoes are an absolute nightmare for trying to move quietly or dexterously but they will keep you from expending extra energy by keeping you on top of snow instead of trudging through it. Your calves will thank you.

Skis

25 coins, 2 weight

Cross-country skiing is a viable way to travel the lowlands and it cuts foot travel time by almost half.

Tattooing needles

30 coins

Packed into a case made from horn, these long needles will last through a few tattoos before needing to be replaced.

Cloak pin

35 coins

A person's cloak pin can say a lot. It normally carries their crest or something notable from their history in their intricate design.

Comb

10 coins

Most combs were made of either wood or bone, with handsome designs carved into the smooth surface.

Common Services

Tattooing

Starts at 15 coins

The price of a tattoo rises steeply with its size and intricacy.

Grooming

5 coins

Warriors returning home from conquest are required to take part in cleansing and purifying rituals, heavily influenced by foreign religious customs. It does wonders to attract romantic attention.

Fresh meal

Meat, cheese, buttered vegetables, bread	<i>8 coins</i>
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Fowl, turnips, and pickles	<i>5 coins</i>
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Dried or preserved fish, fruit, and nuts	<i>3 coins</i>
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These meals aren't ideal to be used as rations as they will spoil quickly. They are the kinds of meals you might see while enjoying the hospitality of a generous head of house.

Ferry service

15 coins

Bartering local passage is generally fairly inexpensive, so long as

you don't leave the Stromgard border. Most anyone who owns a boat would be willing to trade labor for passage as well.

Passage to the southern countries *Starts at 45 coins*

Travel by ship is the fastest way to leave Stromgard for the southern countries that get ransacked during raiding season and even further beyond. The open ocean is dangerous, however, and most sea captains would rather take a nonrefundable deposit as insurance in case you die.

Custom commissioned weapon

Mundane/Martial

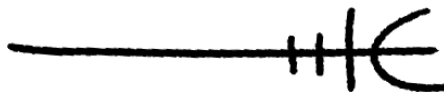
Starts at 110 coins

Enchanted

Add minimum 85 coins

Custom arms and armor cost a fortune in Stromgard but they are the best way to broadcast your station and wealth. Material is the heftiest factor in cost and different weapons will need varying amounts. A spearhead will need less iron than most swords, for instance. Rarer materials are also available for forging, though their price will reflect how difficult they can be to work with.

Adding enchantment on to a weapon is possible, provided you know an enterprising hedgewitch or shaman willing to make a deal. Expect to pay them handsomely for their services.



Legendary Items

Andvaranaut - A beautiful engraved ring of solid gold that can be used to turn mundane ore into gold every sixth day. Whoever wears it will attract misfortune and disaster, however.

Bornholm Amulet - A round silver amulet that appears to have been a foreign coin at one point. Engraved harshly with runes, this charm will let anyone wearing it communicate with foreign language speakers as though there was no language barrier.

Brísingamen - This fine golden collar is inset with amber in the shape of the crescent moon and is a personal treasure of the goddess Freya. Once per day, the wearer may cast the *Wizard* spell Sleep but it has a 25% chance of attracting the attention of Freya, who would like her amulet back.

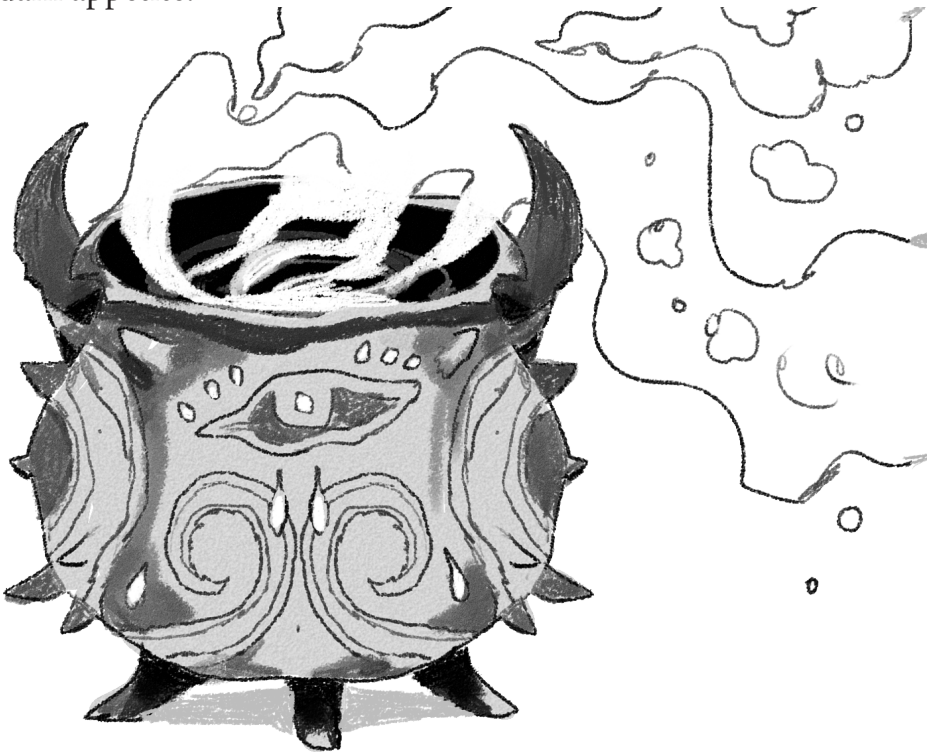
Dainsleif - A cursed sword that must take a life every time it is unsheathed. The wounds it inflicts are either immediately lethal or will cause a wound that can never fully heal. A wielder that does not satisfy the blade after drawing it is cursed to spill their own blood on it.

Base Bonuses: +4 Damage, 2 weight

Draupnir - A heavy gold ring that creates multiples of itself if it is exposed to moonlight. The copies seem valuable, for a short time, but after a day or so of exposure to sunlight, they rust away into nothing, with only the original remaining.

Eitr - An extraordinarily rare and immensely powerful arcane substance. This ethereal liquid is the essence of life itself and can be distilled into pure miracles. Its misuse could be catastrophic as it is exceedingly volatile. It is kept under tight guard in Asgard, where the gods attempt to not only keep it from mortals, but from Jötnar as well.

Eldhrímnir - A cauldron that's said to be able to bring dead bodies back to life at a terrible cost if they are steeped inside the black maw of this monstrosity. The only way to undo the cursed and cruel magic of the cauldron is to sacrifice someone willing to its dark appetite.



Gambanteinn - A powerful bastard sword with a black iron blade that curses whomever it strikes with great misfortune for

the rest of their life while it simultaneously turns its wielder to rampant evil. People of pure and divine natures or those with a holy background are particularly susceptible to the powerful corruption in this blade.

Base Bonuses: +2 Damage, 2 Weight, Two-handed, corrupts the wielder slowly.

Gjallarhorn - A huge horn that can be heard across all Nine Realms and is said to summon aid from all corners if it is used by a true and just person.

Gleipnir - Barbed, evil looking manacles that can be used to bind any prisoner, even if they are a god or otherwise non-corporeal.

Gormson's Gold Disc - This heavy gold disc has a spell inscribed in it, allowing the holder to cast the *Cleric* spell Speak With the Dead once per day.

JárnGREIPR - Heavy iron gauntlets that let you wield monstrously huge weapons with ease. Treat all weapons as though they had the *Precise* and *Forceful* tags.

Gadfly's Delight - A tiny magical gadfly in a small glass jar. When uncorked, it will immediately disappear from sight only to reappear at the most opportune moment to sting someone in the eyeball precisely when it will cause the most distress and chaos.



Mead of Poetry - The Mead of Poetry is magical liquid that bestows immense knowledge and cleverness. Whoever imbibes it will learn something they needed to know or be able to solve a problem that had previously stumped them.



Shard of Bifrost - A shard of the Bifrost, broken off by the legendary Mjolnir and forged into a blade by dwarves. This blade always glows a pale blue and is famed for its icy cold bite, famed to be as harsh as the night-winds of Jötunheim.

Base Bonuses: +3 Damage, 1 weight, wounds inflicted with the Shard will become frostbitten if not immediately dressed.

Shard of Gungnir - A splintered spear haft and heavy iron head. Its immense size seems impossible to wield but it glows softly under moonlight and, if held aloft, will reflect light in the general direction of your destination.

Singing Stone - There are said to be many Singing Stones throughout the land. These small amulets or tablets are enchanted to recite a certain poem or few lines of text whenever the wearer wishes.

Svalinn - An intangible shield of pure light that is said to

appear to people in times of great crisis and violence. Svalinn is most suited for diverting fire and lethal blows against the just and true.

Skidbladnir - A collapsible ship enchanted to fit inside a drinking horn. Once the wearer decides they need a ship, they simply pour the horn out over the ocean and a full sized drakkar appears. When they wish to return the ship, they need only to try and scoop it out of the water with the horn.

Tooth of Jörmungandr - An odd white-bladed sword carved from the tooth of the World Serpent. This sword is incredibly light for its size and requires almost no upkeep. Its wickedly shaped edge and unique color make it extremely recognizable.

Base Bonuses: +3 Damage, +2 Piercing, 1 weight

Undyne's Haft - A long, handsome spear with a barbed head, once a simple fishing tool. Its heavy shaft is now the vessel for a mermaid's soul, which sings out to the denizens of the oceans both great and small. This also allows the wielder to understand the hearts of sea creatures and vice versa.

Base Bonuses: Reach, +1 Damage, Two-handed, 2 weight, +1

Piercing, lets the bearer communicate with sea life in a rudimentary fashion

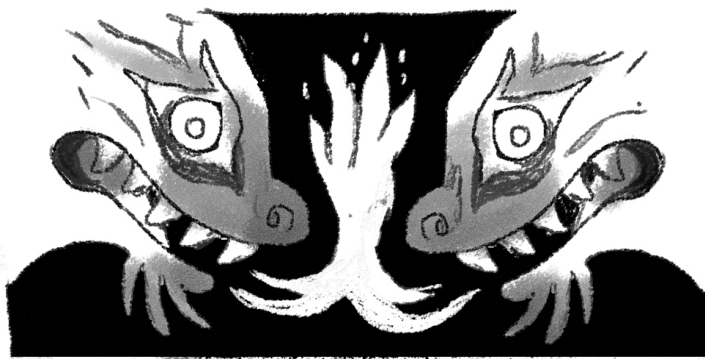
Monsters

*For Sigmund
no small fame grew after his final day,
after that hardened soldier, prince's son,
had killed a dragon, keeper of a hoard*

Beowulf

The monsters of Stromgard are largely inspired by Norse mythology, though many come from other parts of the world too- notably Celtic and medieval Anglo-Saxon legends. Here, you'll find a wide array of monsters that range from evil and destructive, to pure and good, to just plain feral and beast-like.

All of these entities can also be easily scaled to be more or less difficult as well, so that you can use whatever monster fits your campaign narrative best without excessive concern over what the PCs are intended to fight mechanics-wise. A fun idea for more advanced campaigns is titanic monsters or beings who are so huge and powerful stats simply don't apply. Your party will need to come up with something more clever than simply attacking it with mundane weapons but if there's one universal truth about Norse myths, its that huge monsters were an ever present fear.



Baba Yaga



Tales of Baba Yaga- or something like her- exist in just about every corner of the world. A wisewoman that holds immense knowledge- not only about the arcane and mystical but of the natural world- makes for a hard temptation to resist for anyone with a tough problem to solve. The Baba Yaga exists sometimes as three separate old hags with the same name (similar to the Greek Fates or Celtic figures that embody the traits of the Mother/Maiden/Crone) and sometimes just as a single entity. She lives deep in the woods in a house that can walk, using enchanted chicken legs. Baba Yaga's motives transcend the mundane concepts of good and evil- her aid is hers to give to anyone she sees fit, as is her wrath.

Baba Yaga

Ghost Hand (1D10 damage)

Close, Reach

Solitary, Devious, Magical

10HP / 4ARM

Baba Yaga is a vicious hag that lives in the most secluded parts of the forest in a hut that can move on magical chicken legs. She is a well of immense knowledge and can sometimes be convinced to advise with an appropriate gift and due respect. Other times she's as wild as a storm, raging through the forest on a magical pestle and eating small children.

Instinct:

- Amass and keep lore

Moves:

- Offer a hard bargain to someone in need
- Appear and disappear in her magic hut
- Remember individual smells and track them
- Teach a hard lesson

“So can you help?” Tor asked impatiently, leaning in a cramped hunch over the old hag’s dining table. “They’re bound to catch up to me-”

“Drink you tea, child,” the shambling old woman barked, the glint of iron teeth in her mouth stark against the candlelight. Tor eyed the vessel of steaming liquid in front of him with obvious suspicion but the Jötunnborn could see no way to refuse without being uncouth. “A good hound never loses the smell of a hare,” she went on cryptically, “but a good hare has many burrows to hide in.”

“Then that means-” Tor began, unable to control himself.

“Drink your tea!” she snarled. “Or no help will come.”

Bicorn

While there are sometimes more monstrous things also called bicorn, the bicorn of Stromgard are close relatives to unicorns and operate closely to Arthurian legends as well—bicorn are particularly fond of gentle-hearted women and an emblem for all that is innocent and good. They are said to appear before the helpless and abused in times of immense need and their healing powers make them a legend among warriors. While provoking a bicorn attack is extremely unlikely due to their skittish nature, it's said that they can be vicious and aggressive if cornered or suffer harm.



Bicorn

Dual Pierce (1D8 damage, 2 Piercing)
Close, Reach

Solitary, Magical
15HP/4ARM

Bicorns are guardians of the most remote, sacred spots all over the Nine Realms. To see one is a great boon and there are old wives tales from all corners about horrifically wounded innocents wandering into a dark grove only to be approached by this noble beast and miraculously brought back from the brink of death.

Impulse:

- Protect the pure

Moves:

- Heal grievous injuries
- Teleport to safety
- Gore impure interlopers

Ana sat slumped against a rotted log at the edge of the clearing, lolling a little as she panted shallowly. She had escaped the bandits but was mortally wounded- she'd taken one of their blades to the gut and the steady pulse of visceral pain that told her everything she needed to know. She was dying.

A soft noise prompted her to lift her heavy head- through her snow matted hair she caught sight of something that made her heavy, struggling heart skip a beat- a horse, unsaddled and unshoed, stepping towards her cautiously, great muzzle lowered and soft eyes gentle. She didn't dare move when she realized the two great spiral horns that sprouted from the beast's head. As her shaking, death-pale hand reached up to stroke the snowy muzzle, she felt a divine warmth wash over her as her vitality restored. She would live, somehow.

Dýrbjorn

The prefix *dýr* is usually translated in modern fantasy as *dire* and appended to monsters to denote a more dangerous version. Both dire-wolves and dire-bears originate from Norse and Proto Germanic myth where animals were said to have ‘ancient’ or ‘primordial’ forms. This difference in physical appearance was said to correspond to a much higher level of ferocity, aggression, and pure brute strength as well as a vastly larger physical size. While even normal bears can tower close to fifteen-ish feet on their hind legs, a dýrbjorn can reach twenty to twenty-five regularly. Territorial and prone to berserk rages (the berserkers aren’t known as Bearskins for nothing, afterall) even a single dýrbjorn can wipe out a village without much effort.



Dýrbjorn

Charge (1D10+1 damage)

Close, Reach

Single, Large

10HP/2ARM

While dýrbjorn aren't known for their intelligence, they are aggressive and particularly vicious when hungry. Their towering size can reach almost 25ft fully grown and weigh thousands of pounds. The danger they present to even an experienced group of warriors is steep and to engage one is pure foolhardiness.

Instinct:

- Seek food

Moves:

- Frenzy when in pain
- Ambush weaker prey

Stoic had seen more than his fair share of violence- the scars criss-crossing his body like thatchwork told the story as well as his mouth. Except for the one about the dýrbjorn. Whenever he told it, the longhouse would go silent- even veterans and jarls would listen raptly to the telling- of how he tracked a monster terrorizing an isolated village to a mountain crag. How he had expected wolves or maybe a storrrkat. How he had been intentionally diverted and ambushed by a towering beast, slavering and covered with vicious spines, standing about as tall as a snekkja's mast. It was lightning fast for its size and Stoic had fought for his life on that mountain. His tale always reached a nailbiting climax when he lifted his gambeson to show the deep puncture wounds and clawmark scars raked across his torso and usually drew applause when he offered his listeners a better view of his spiny, heavy bear-fur cloak.

Fjölð



The fjölð is mostly a monster based off Viking superstition of gold and money-counting. The name means 'plenty' which reflects how this monster feeds and ensnares its victims and temporary hosts. According to Norse legends, math- specifically the counting of money- was considered a type of witchcraft that only women could (or should) perform. In Stromgard, this is the warden that enforces that particular taboo- by catching an unwitting man off guard and leeching their energy away by temporarily inhibiting their cognitive functions. The fjölð is a type of daemon and in this method 'possesses' the victim until they are sated... then at which point they leave their stupid prey helpless and confused until the effects wear off.

Fjölð

Drain (1D6 damage) + Ignores Armor
Close

Single

10HP/4ARM

Fjölð are non-corporeal demonic spirits attracted to confusion and bad math. Their demonic essence is harmed with salt anointed weapons but otherwise, bladed objects will simply pass through them. When they drain a target, they are sucking out raw cognitive power and the more they feed, the stupider their prey becomes.

Instinct:

- Hunt taboo-breakers

Moves:

- Feed on targets cognitive intelligence
- Incapacitate target
- Cause permanent mental damage

Of course Vitruvius knew the law, the superstition behind it was as old as dwarves themselves. But there were no women to count his conquered treasure and he needed a number now if he was going to survive his debtors. The stocky figure knelt and carefully sorted his pile of coins, ingots, iron weapons, and other, more exotic trinkets. It swiftly turned into an intense struggle. He found himself starting over constantly. Six... ten... a dozen... he paused, staring blankly at the little nuggets of gold. Six... ten... he paused again, noncomprehending. He thought he might have heard a short chuckle from just behind him but was too busy wondering why counting was so hard to feel alarmed by this. Six... None of this made any sense. He stared blankly at the treasure. What even was all of this stuff? What was he doing with all of it? It was so pretty though.

Gullinbursti



While there is only one Gullinbursti spoken of in Norse myth- the one forged by Sindri for Freyr- in Stromgard, they are a reclusive species that live in the densely forested regions of the realm. Because of the Gullinbursti's association with Freyr and with gold, it is also heavily associated with the Alfir and mortal elvenkind. Many of their weapons, trinkets, and household items bear the motif of the golden boar as a symbol of strength and material wealth. It is considered a great honor to hunt one and any wishing to make the attempt must impress the elves of the region and earn their blessing first due to the beast's divine association.

Gullinbursti

Divine, Solitary

Gore (1D10 damage, 2 piercing)

12HP/1ARM

Trample (1D10)

Close, Reach

Gullinbursti are relentlessly single minded when threatened or enraged and they will never give up on chasing someone who has tried to wound it and not yet succeeded in killing it. These huge boars are considered to be of divine descent by Alfir and most Elffolk. Before hunting one it is an essential custom to ask permission and provide a needed service to local elves for their blessing if you wish to avoid their long memory for wrath. The Gullinbursti's bristly hide is also said to be made of gold and is incredibly valuable.

Instinct:

- Defend territory

Moves:

- Relentless pursuit
- Aggressively attack if threatened
- Inspires protection by elves

Eira had never run so damn fast in her whole life. The Gullinbursti's thick hide had prevented her axe from doing anything beside absolutely enraging it. She was sprinting full tilt, her stamina draining quickly. It was snorting and frothing at the mouth right behind her and she couldn't get enough of a lead on it to hide. She darted around a heavy oak and planted her feet, leaping up to the high branches as dexterously as she could. There was a second of relief before the enormous boar threw its entire weight against the trunk and the whole tree nearly came down.

Heiðrún



The heiðrún is actually referenced in both the Poetic and Prose Eddas and, like the Gullinbursti, they both reference a specific, single beast. The heiðrún is a gigantic goat that lives Valhalla and provides the mead for the gods and mortal soldiers who have earned their place there. It is a little unclear due to translation discrepancies but supposedly the heiðrún eats the leaves of part of Yggdrasil- which is the reason this fantastic creature produces fresh mead in place of milk. In Stromgard, there are multiple heiðrún, though they are extraordinarily rare (and colossal) and only found natively on the higher planes of Yggdrasil and typically in the care of some kind of divine being.

Heiðrún

Charge (1D10+3 damage)+ *Forceful*
Huge, Reach

Solitary, Huge
 16HP/1ARM

Heiðrún eat the leaves from sacred trees to produce golden mead that even the gods find invigorating. Heiðrún are typically fearful of most who approach and would rather not act with aggression. However, if cornered or hurt, they *will* attack and their size makes them extremely deadly.

Instinct:

- Graze

Moves:

- Create opportunity to escape danger
- Produce golden mead instead of milk

Sörli could not believe his eyes, though that had sort of been the theme once he had managed to sneak onto the Bifrost. A goat stood below him in a sunny clearing. The animal was enormous. Bigger than enormous. Almost as big as the Jarl's house in Sörli's long abandoned home town. Thirteen men- maybe more- could sit astride its shaggy back and Sörli marveled for several long moments as the beast contented itself to stand precariously on its hind legs to eat leaves off a tree.

He wondered what giant goat milk would taste like and found himself climbing down to check before he could rationalize it. He approached cautiously but needn't have worried. The goat let him and seemed not to care when he took a sample. To his shock it was not milk at all, but mead. The best he had ever tasted and his whole body sang with delight and his every nerve was invigorated by the taste.

Ice Giant

When most mortals talk about terrifying things out of Jötunheim, this is usually what they're referring to. Fully wild Ice Giants- whose seething rage and desire to take action against those who have slighted them are still fully intelligent and capable of reason... however it takes something truly special to get through their hatred as they are absolutely given over to their most primal emotions. In the meantime, expect a rampaging Ice Giant to viciously attack almost anyone on sight, even their own kin. Ice Giants make full use of their Jötun abilities, often appearing with monstrous forms and unearthly features.



Ice Giant

Large, Organized

Huge Weapon (1D8+3 damage)+ *Forceful*

10HP/2ARM

Close, Reach

A Jötun completely given into their rage is avatar of destruction and bitter hatred towards any who commit wrongs (perceived or otherwise) against them. Like a cornered animal driven to lashing out, an enraged Ice Giant has little regard to bodily harm or long lasting consequences of an attack. More troubling still is that these beings sometimes form small groups and can coordinate their destruction.

Instincts:

- Lash out at perpetrators of oppression

Moves

- Ignore the harsh snow and ice
- Cause chaos, undermine civilization
- Attack those who openly defer to the gods

Morkret didn't think it was possible to be taken off guard by something so grotesque and so huge. It lumbered up from the craggy dip between switchbacks, tearing huge tracks into solid rock as it clawed its way into the open to pursue. Morkret wasn't an expert on Jötnar, sure, but it didn't take a genius to see its furious, ice-blue eyes dilate with the realization that an Alfar had been unfortunate enough to happen across it. It let out an earth-shattering roar that sent a small avalanche of rocks, snow, and dirt down the mountainside and Morkret decided staying to study the thing was a bad idea. He turned and sprinted back the way he had come, flying nimbly over the treacherous path. The Ice Giant was on the ridge now, panting deep and wet as it frothed and slavered like a berserker, charging down the narrow path after him.

Jörmungandr

Otherwise known as the Midgard Serpent, Jörmungandr is technically a type of dragon. It is said to be as large as a mountain range and destined to end Thor during Ragnarök. Legends say that this massive beast hibernates around the plane of Midgard, its enormous body coiled around the world of mortals in a rather poetic display of the fragility and impermanence that burden the people of Midgard. Though, it goes without saying that in the face of this nightmare, even divine immortality may prove to be a transient state. Invoking the name of Jörmungandr at sea is said to make the beast restless and remains a sailor's most ardently believed superstition.



Jörmungandr*Stealthy, Divine*

Jörmungandr is an enormous snake-like dragon said to surround the borders of the known mortal world like a noose around a condemned neck. Tales vary about its exact location- some say it lives at the bottom of the sea in black, briny water, others say it burrows into the ground, and still others maintain that it cannot be large enough to physically encircle the world and instead must dream of Ragnarök from some kind of lair.

Instinct:

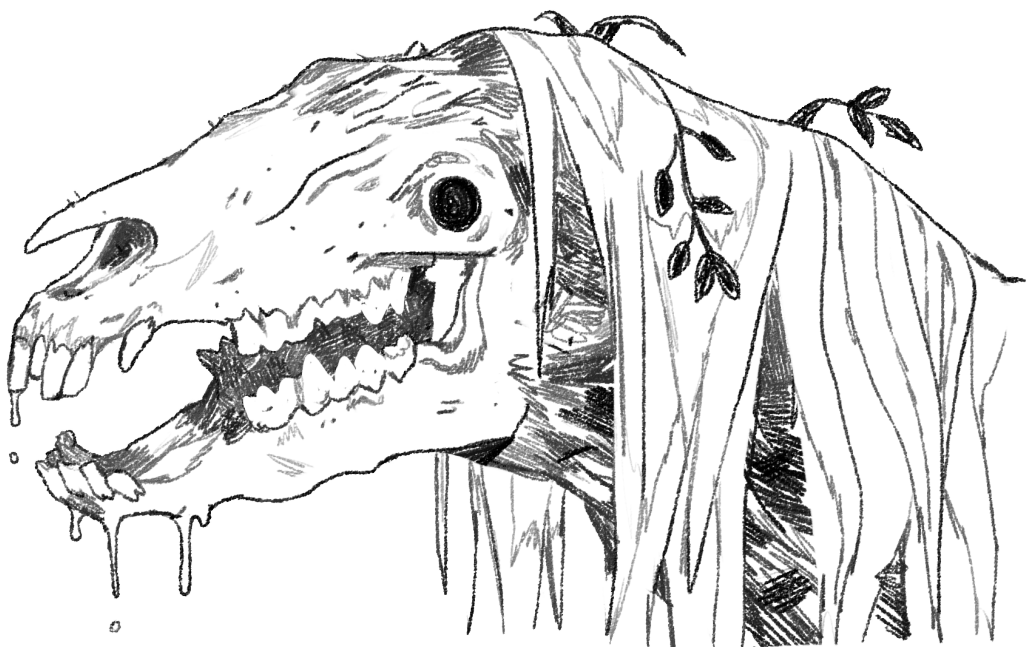
- Remain hidden until the apocalypse
- Drown Midgard in a violent tide

Moves:

- Move stealthily in water
- Manipulate tides and weather
- Summon swarms from the depths

Vidar had seen monsters before- hell he was sometimes called that himself if he stuck around civilized towns longer than necessary. But that was nothing on the hellish shape rising out of the sea like a bloody mountain. His plan to cross the straits into Jötunheim in the hopes of finding an ounce of peace seemed incredibly foolish now, as the World Serpent's huge, fanged jaws opened and a putrid smell that curled his toes hit him like a wall. Now he was trapped on a tiny drakkar spinning in the churning waves as this absolute titan of a snake was taking out whole ships with each lunge, leaving not a plank or man behind. Vidar's desire for the freedom Jötunheim represented steeled his nerves and he gripped his spear tighter, barking an order back for the helmsmen to bring him closer.

Kelpie



Kelpies are a monster primarily from Scottish legends that found their way around most of the Celtic canon due in no small part to how horribly grotesque they are. There's a great deal of symbolism between Kelpies and various Satanic imagery, especially when discussed in more modern writings, but also with Pan, Poseidon, and others figures. Modern socio-anthropologists suggest that Kelpies were a practical way to keep children away from treacherous waterways and away from strangers. Whatever the reason for their invention, Kelpies are an embodiment of deceit and suffering and can take on the forms of enticing beings to try and capture their victims.

Kelpie

Bite (1D8 damage)

Close, Reach

Solitary/Magical

10HP/2ARM

Kelpies partially absorb any who touch them and their hands (or legs, if they were foolish enough to try and ride them) become fixed to the Kelpie's slimy, rotting body. Once a Kelpie has ensnared a victim it will plunge into the nearest body of water and dive deeply, keeping its victim from escaping and drowning them. Kelpies typically eat their prey, but will sometimes leave a mostly intact corpse behind that floats up to the surface as a warning.

Instinct:

- Absorb and drown prey

Moves:

- Morph into a horse, hippocamp, or distressed, attractive human
- Lure and deceive prey

The shift Dagmar felt from curious delight to horror when she laid her hand on the thickly muscled steed made her every alarm instinct flare up with tremendous force. It was like sticking your hand in mud... or placing your hand on what you expect to be a solid, warm surface only for it to give way to cold, rotten meat and for the stench of water-logged death to hit your senses like a hook to the jaw. It surged and Dagmar lost her footing in the shallows, dragged along by the skeletal, slimy nightmare and she couldn't help the terrified scream that ripped up her throat over the sound of splashing and struggling. The Kelpie dove and the world was muffled, greenish black water enveloping them both totally while the skull of the horse head grinned toothily.

Knútr

The word *knútr* means ‘knot’ and in this case, it’s a reference to the close knit groups knútr form to compensate for their small, weak bearing. Individually, knútr aren’t threatening but it’s their swarms and tendency to act as a huge, relatively cohesive unit that make them dangerous. Knútr have long, gangling limbs covered in rubbery, slimy skin. Their flesh is a dark, greenish color, usually influenced somewhat by their habitat, and they can live either in above ground shanty-towns made of debris or in natural caves found all over most of Stromgard. While knútr present something of a threat en masse, they’re not particularly intelligent and definitely not threatening individually.



Knútr

Bite (1D6 damage)

Close

Horde, Small

3HP/1ARM

Recently, Knútr have gotten it into their heads that eating the flesh of more intelligent races will improve their overall health as a group. The most common method of their attack is to send a small party into a populated area to cause a ruckus and while the warriors run out to deal with that, more rush into homes and farms to steal any child small enough to carry off- along with anything else they can grab.

Instincts:

- Devour and Steal

Moves:

- Swarm
- Call for reinforcements
- Cause a diversion

Knútr were swarming through the abandoned village and Mim could see them pouring down the main thoroughfare by the hundreds- tiny, snapping jaws full of razor sharp teeth and beady eyes greedy for flesh. Volgarr was taking out three or four with each swipe of his huge axe but the tide was still rising. Mim thought he might have a better idea. The wind-Fae raised the old horn to his lips and the wind kicked up, stirring up a cloud of snow as he took a huge gulp of cold air, held it for an instant, and then forced it through the lur. The sound rang for miles and a blast of air with the force of a hurricane ripped from the bell. Knútr were sent flying through the air like dead leaves on stormwinds, squealing and flailing as the lur's echoing note still reverberated over the hills and eskers with triumphant clarity.

Kraka



Another creature unique to Stromgard, Kraka are a vicious species of two-headed crow with long, pheasant-like tailfeathers. They can typically be found in most mountains up near the timber line and higher as they usually nest in sheltered outcroppings or cliff faces. Like most corvids, Kraka are tremendously intelligent and can hunt alone or in small groups. Their intelligence also lends itself to some sadism as the dissonant sound they make when both heads screech (compounded if more Kraka are present) confuses any who hear it. Their tailfeathers- about as long as a human arm- are prized as both alchemical ingredients and as status symbols for the hunter who has everything.

Kraka

Peck/Talons (1D8 damage)

Close

Small Groups, Small

4HP/2ARM

Kraka are clever hunters but also quite cruel. They will surround and pick off weak targets wherever possible, oftentimes hypnotizing their prey into killing itself in various grisly ways. Their intelligence is still less than humans but for a beast they are cunning and rarely give up on something they want.

Instinct:

- Target the weak

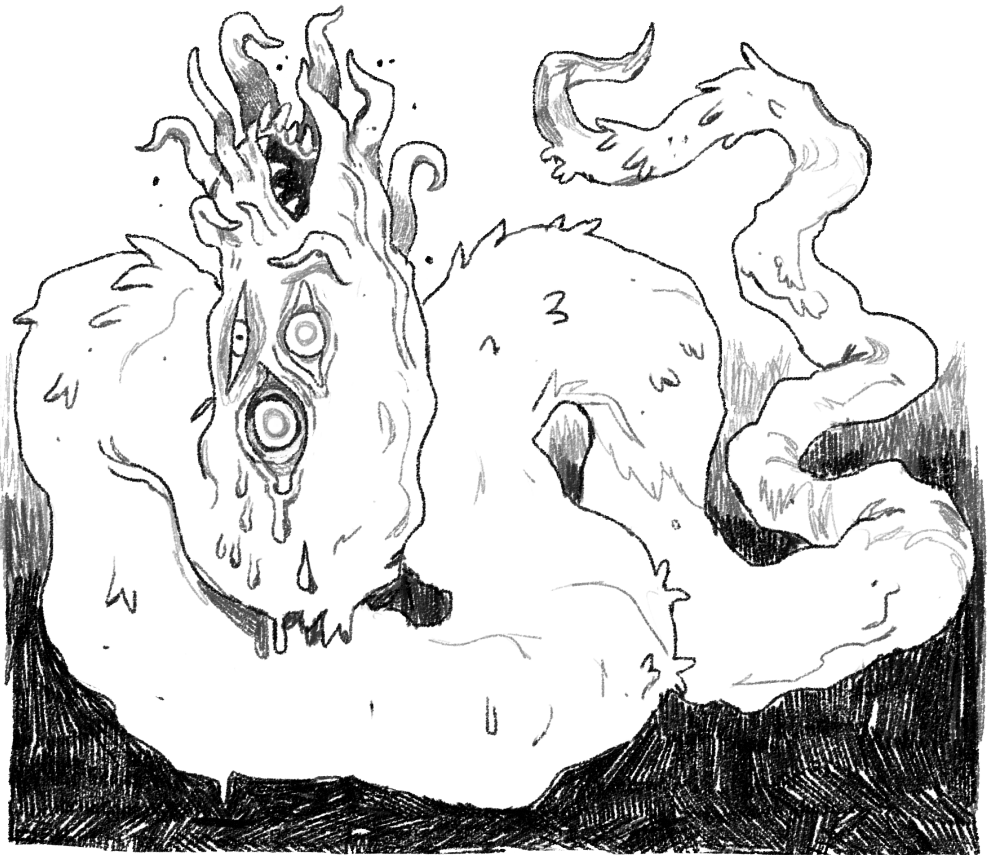
Moves:

- Hypnotize with dissonant screeching and implant dangerous compulsions.
- Create a cacophony

Beorhtric stared at the birds circling above him- odd-looking things with two heads, he thought absently, squinting against the glare of the snow and the iron gray sky. The birds cawed to each other and the noise was scratchy and harsh but it echoed over the rocky crags almost pleasantly. The sound intensified as the other birds answered the first call and a second later the noise was the only thing Beorhtric could process as it filled his head with oscillating echoes that made it hard to think. He stood to try and follow as the birds wheeled and dipped closer to the cliffside, circling over the void. Still, Beorhtric followed, unaware or unconcerned for the steep drop he was about to step off.

Linnorm

The Linnorm is a huge, ugly creature distantly related to dragons. They live underground where they are blind and limbless, as well as a sickly pale color like a titanic maggot. Linnorms exist to cause destruction but hibernate for much of their lives, making them a fairly rare monster encounter. Greedy or over ambitious adventurers have gone after their hoards, however, and most only succeed in waking the Linnorm up and causing untold devastation on the countryside. The Linnorm's wake of rot and death can ruin farmland for generations, making their long game more dangerous and impactful than the short-term conflict.



Linnorm

Smash (1D10+2 Damage)+ *Forceful*
Close, Reach

Huge, Solitary
 12HP/4ARM

Linnorms are huge, blind dragon-like creatures that hunt via their acute sense of smell. They hoard trash and treasure alike and can hibernate for years at a time. In addition to their smashing attacks strong enough to level a village, they also belch a disgusting poison gas that can cause a temporary blindness or violent retching in any creature caught off their guard.

Instinct:

- Rot the earth and destroy landmarks of civilization

Moves:

- Hoard
- Belch poisonous fumes
- Travel underground at high speeds

Lagertha and Hirodis were both in rough shape and the site of their battle was blasted with scorchmarks and the pungent smell of something poisonous and rotten. The Linnorm had been close to succumbing when it had abruptly changed tactics and burrowed underground, traveling just under the topsoil at an alarming rate. Hirodis had watching the disturbed earth uproot trees as it traveled, only for them- and the grass- to rot before their very eyes as the earth turned black.

When they had pursued it to the edge of the forest, a terrible sight greeted them. Skoglund was in chaos, the fields were overturned, the crops blackened, wilted, and rotting. Some houses had collapsed under the foundational disturbance and the smell of something putrid and dank wafted from the blighted land.

Ljúga



The word *ljúga* means ‘lie’ or ‘false’ in Old Norse- which fits this particular animal because it lays huge golden eggs that tempt many novice adventurers to steal them. This has made the *ljúga* an extremely territorial animal. Technically, the *ljúga* is a type of Fae creature but its intelligence is more typical of beasts. Standing at about 7ft tall, these ugly terrors are both monstrous and extremely intimidating when you factor in their unusually aggressive behaviors. Their false-golden eggs are worthless as a smithing material but the right arcanist might pay a fortune for one.

Ljúga*Solitary*

Maul (1D10 damage)

12HP/2ARM

Regurgitate Acid (1D8 damage) + *Ignores Armor*

Gnarled, spiky bird-like creature that possess an untamable, feral nature. They are extremely territorial and the mothers will relentlessly attack anything they believe to be a threat to their fledglings. Ljúga can swell up to twice their normal size by extending their wings and rattling their spiny feathers to stand on end... and the hissing acid it produces is strong enough to melt iron.

Instincts:

- Viciously defend nest

Moves:

- Puff up to intimidate
- Spit acid

Ninga was backed against a cliff face with a golden, spherical object cradled in her arm. When the ljúga had charged her from the brush, screaming at the top of its lungs she had realized that what she had picked up was not metal, but an egg. Of course, her instincts had kicked in and she had bolted without putting the egg back in its nest first and now, a crazed ljúga had cornered her in the shallow ravine. It hissed, a horrible, gargling noise that- if Ninga was honest with herself- scared the hell out of her. Its spiny feathers rattled and its body swelled up to monstrous proportions and it bent its sharp head down and struck. Ninga was nothing if not a ball of highly agitated reflexes, though, and she slashed out with her sword. The ljúga recoiled and spat a blob of black acid, catching end of the blade and to Ninga's utter horror, melted it like hot wax.

Mermaid

There are mermaid-like creatures in almost every mythological canon the world over, preying on the universal wariness of the sea and the punishment for succumbing to the temptation of someone alluring and seemingly beautiful. Mermaids are especially prevalent in Greco-Roman, Celtic, and Scandinavian myths and they all take forms that are reasonably similar- a humanoid fish creature that appears beautiful at first glance, with a heavenly voice but who will drag you into the cold depths to eat once they ensnare you and reveal their true monstrous nature. To counterbalance this, though, is the plethora of tales from half-drowned sailors swearing to be saved by a beautiful person with a fish's tail.



Mermaid

Rend (1D8 damage)+ Messy

*Close, Reach**Group, Stealthy*

6HP / 2ARM

Most mermaids are out to consume flesh- they'll take on the forms of beautiful women with glittering fish tails, singing songs so lovely that it clouds the minds of men until they throw themselves overboard. Mermaids also tend to swarm around shipwrecks, picking off sailors to drag to the sea floor. Occasionally, one might hear of mermaids who save drowning men, but the truth of these tales is hotly debated.

Instinct:

- To prey on interlopers

Moves:

- Seduce humanoids with magical allure
- Drown and eat victims

Kveld usually hit the drink hard after coming ashore and it's why most ignored him when he came back from a short excursion gone awry. He'd fallen off the boat during a storm and had prayed to Frigg to preserve him. The life had almost left his body in the cold, crushing depths when- and he swore it was true, up and down, no matter how drunk he got- a pair of strong arms encircled him. A man, he swore, had pulled him from the sea to leave him in a gentle neck of shoreline a few miles away. Kveld admitted his consciousness was touch and go for a while but consistently described a beautiful man, strapping and strong with a long plait of onyx-black hair- had smiled at him, showing a row of viciously pointed teeth. From his prone position on land, Kveld said he could see the man's lower half- a thick, finned tale covered in black scales interlaid with violet shimmers.

Níðhöggr



The Níðhöggr is an ancient and terrible dragon that is cursed to live out its apparently immortal existence trapped in the tangled roots of Yggdrasil. The Níðhöggr is so cursed that simply speaking its name aloud is said to leave the speaker vulnerable to taking on a portion of the beast's never-ending suffering and pain. Because of this, most simply refer to it as the Curse Striker but most good people of Stromgard refrain from even saying that. Even depicting this furious monster in artworks or rune-stones is considered an ill-advised endeavor as the wrath of this semi-deity can apparently be felt across all nine realms.

Níðhöggr*Devious, Magical*

The Níðhöggr is a hideous dragon entangled in the roots of Yggdrasil and the beast has been trying to chew his way out for ages. Should Níðhöggr ever make it to the surface, rampant, cataclysmic destruction would closely follow.

Instinct:

- Escape the roots of Yggdrasil
- Lash out in pain

Moves:

- Spread suffering
- Breathe fire
- Destroy life

Alr was quick on his feet but he was barely staying out of the warpath of the thing rampaging behind him. His success in locating and freeing the Níðhöggr (a reckless plan to gain the attention of the gods) had quickly disintegrated. He could barely make out the shape of the huge, thrashing beast as it seemed to be utterly possessed by rage, crashing into the bramble-covered cavern walls and screaming bloody murder at the top of its voice, the noise echoing down the stone tunnel and making Alr's head spin. The temperature suddenly spiked around him and he chanced a glance backwards to ascertain the monster's next move when a column of arcane, violet fire blasted up towards him. He could feel the hair on his arms and face singing as the ball of light and heat rocketed into him.

Storrkatt



The word *stórr* means ‘big’ in Old Norse and Stromgard was in need of a large feline predator basically from conception. The Storrkatt was an obvious answer to this. The Storrkatt’s prowess and legendary size are loosely based off legends of magically enlarged wild cats from a many Irish and Welsh tales. Like most cats, the Storrkatt is a clever and capable hunter but cautious and prioritizes survival over conflict unless it is gravely wounded or protecting its young. The Storrkatt always carefully sizes up its prey before lunging and unless it is fairly certain it can take the its target down without much of a fight, it will probably pass on for easier meat.

Storrkatt

Maul (1D8 damage)+ *Messy*
Close, Reach

Stealthy
 10HP/1ARM

Storrkatts will do what they can to avoid an open fight, either by stalking their prey patiently for miles or running away if they think there's a chance they could sustain significant injury. A cornered or desperate Storrkatt, however, is a hellish monster that will tear you to pieces the instant it gets its claws into flesh.

Instinct:

- To pick off the vulnerable

Moves:

- Find an opportunity to escape
- Ambush
- Patiently stalk

Bloðorn the hunter had traveled to this remote mountain to hunt a Storrkatt... to add to his pelt collection but he'd taken a bad step on the pass and now lay immobile in a shallow outcropping he had dragged himself to a few hours ago. His broken leg pulsed with agony and was unable to support his weight in any capacity. The sound of a dislodged pebble made him crunch up, his senses on high alert for danger. And, by Thor, he had certainly found it. A huge mountain cat- big as a horse- was stalking slowly towards him, bold as can be, sensing its prey was weakened. Its eyes- ice blue and vertically slitted- were dilated and fixed with unswerving intensity on Bloðorn's broken body. Its paws were silent against the rocky surface but he had no problem imagining what those claws would look like when they weren't retracted. He reached for his dagger and took a steadying breath.

Surt

Surt is a towering giant and pure, destructive chaos deified who is destined to consume the world in unholy flame. Ragnarök ultimately hinges around Surt escaping his prison in the ash-and-fire plane of Muspelheim and raining havoc on the rest of existence. Tales of Surt's physical appearance center around the translation of the word *surtr* to mean ashy or swarthy, building on Surt's construction as an entity of pure fire. Surt is also supposedly a colossus, in terms of scale. His footsteps were said to level mountains and his flaming sword capable of setting the tree of life ablaze.



Surt*Intelligent, Planar*

Surt is a colossal humanoid figure of pure fire and malice, bent on splitting the earth open and hurling cataclysm onto all nine realms. Above all else, Surt hates the gods of Asgard and their- to his mind- unrightful domination of the worlds.

Instinct:

- Destroy Asgard
- Unmake the Worlds

Moves:

- Exist as pure planar fire
- Flaming sword
- Create volcanic fissures in footsteps
- Scar the earth
- Burn constructs of divinity
- Relentless perseverance

Mar's whole world was falling apart, literally, as the towering, vaguely humanoid form of white hot fire knelt with a lumbering kind of threat towards the portal to the Bifrost. Most of the other dwarves had died in the initial assault. Surt had stomped the mountain flat and his armies of fire imps had laid waste to the survivors. Mar knew damn well what it was trying to do, even before it forced its flaming hands into the light and began prying apart the arcane frame with pure, primordial might. A sound like a thunderclap rent the air and the giant had broken through, bending to force its way into the extraplanar realm on his way to Asgard.

Vargar

Vargar, similar to dire wolves, are what evolved into modern fantasy's wargs. These huge, wolf-like animals were taken from historical lore and popularized in high fantasy fiction by J. R.R. Tolkien. In his books, the wargs are typically mounts for orc scouts and it really solidified their place in the modern fantasy canon as it got reinterpreted into Dungeons & Dragons, board games, novels, and other rpgs.

In Stromgard, vargar are huge and wolf-like as you would expect, playing into the Norse concept of 'primordial' or ancient forms that most beasts were said to possess at one point. Specifically, the vargar are descended from Fenrir, the giant wolf destined to eat the world during Ragnarök.



MONSTERS

Vargar

Bite (1D10 damage)

Close, Reach

Group, Large

10HP / 0ARM

Vargar tend to hunt in packs of 3-6 and are quite clever. They can track prey for miles with their keen sense of smell and their eyesight is sharp, even in dark environments. Its jaws are huge and a good bite from one can take out a horse.

Instinct:

- Hunt prey as a pack

Mover:

- Surround and flank
- Track
- Pursue fleeing prey relentlessly

Nefr and Gagnráðr could outrun the couple of vargar hot on their heels. They had horses, after all, and they had the advantage of endurance. The rough foothills of the Iron Mountains limited their movement somewhat, keeping them close together as their mounts plunged through the paths and jutting rock formations with fleet steps and the occasional whinny of effort.

Nefir looked up abruptly as a shadow passed overhead and her heart sank. Vargar were up on the ridge, just to their left, along with the pair still barking and snarling at their heels. She whipped her head to the right and found three more vargar giving them a slightly wide berth, running to keep up but watching carefully. "We're surrounded!" she called to Gagnráðr, panic lacing her voice. "We're being herded!"

Vaxa Ormr

There are plenty of tales regarding the titanic serpent wrapped around Midgard and the Vaxa Ormr, while much smaller, is like something born from a nightmare. Black as sin with huge yellow eyes, this demonic serpent wants little more than to cause as much chaos and destruction as possible. While Vaxa Ormr sightings are rare (they do not live on Midgard long term, it seems) the legendary warrior Thorfinn slew one that measured almost 70ft long and weigh nearly half a ton. Vaxa Ormr are often mistaken for Midgard Serpent by those lacking a good size reference but this titanic snake is huge and terrifying in its own right.



Vaxa Ormr

Terrifying, Solitary, Huge

Tail Swipe (1D10+3 damage)

22HP/4ARM

Bite (1D10 damage)+ *Messy*

Reach

Vaxa Ormr are gigantic serpents that find their way onto Midgard occasionally and wreak as much destruction as possible. They are huge, heavy, and clever- they can easily wipe out a legion of well trained warriors with a swipe of its tail. A few legends survive depicting mortal fighters who managed to take one down, but they are a terrifying monster against whom only clever planning, tactical advantage, and skill will overcome.

Instinct:

- Lie in wait to ambush

Moves:

- Destroy constructs of man
- Lightning fast strikes

Agnar threw a freezing blast of hail in the snake's hellish, pointed face but it seemed to only anger the great beast more. Its sharp head kept darting down at the guardsmen attempting to rally a coherent attack, picking them off one at a time to the constant clamor of armor and screaming. Its great black tail came next, sweeping most of the armed contingent off its feet. Agnar was a bit quicker than that, though, and he pivoted on his feet deftly as the snake's golden eyes seem to pinpoint him next. A lance of clear, crystalline ice materialized in his hand at a quick prompting and he braced it under his elbow as the monstrous, fanged head darted down with incredible speed. The lance tip hit home but so did a fang and Agnar felt sudden, terrible pain ripping up his arm and into his shoulder.

GM's Toolbox

*The sword shall bite not
which thou bearest,
Till thy head itself
it sings about*

Helgakviða, Poetic Edda

Staying on principles in Stromgard

Staying on top of Dungeon World's GM Principles is easy in Stromgard. Because the Wyrd of Stromgard isn't a true hack, it still relies on these governing principles to guide and inform play. They are still crucial to the game's cohesion and should be adhered to as much as humanly possible. If you've GM'd Dungeon World before, you're probably very well acquainted with these. If Dungeon World is new to you, I recommend reading the official GM Principles first before reading these. I intended for these to be more of an extrapolation on them than a baseline. I do think revisiting them is worthwhile, however.

Draw Maps, Leave Blanks - Truthfully, this one is possibly the most important in The Wyrd of Stromgard. As an expanded setting, a lot of work has been done to provide GMs and their players with a rich fantasy world where a great deal information has been laid out for easy use. Make sure that when you're GMing The Wyrd of Stromgard setting that PCs are still shaping the environment as they explore it. If their Spout Lore moves conflict with something in the book, go with the players. If they

need more or less steadings, differing cultural interactions, etc... Give them what they're interested in. It's very important that they have agency in forming the world around them and letting them interact with the setting in meaningful ways will create fun and memorable games for everyone involved. Stromgard is a detailed place, sure, but there's always, *always* room for customization and you *should* tailor the world to suit your players.

Address the Characters, not the Players - This one goes a long way and I ignored it a lot when I was a brand new GM. Firstly, it helps put all the players into a “ready-to-roleplay” mindset that actually cuts down on bad habits like meta-gaming. It also helps shed some clarity on whether a conversation is happening in game or not, which can be quite confusing when the stakes are high.

Embrace the Fantastic - Stromgard is ultimately a fantasy setting. Let it be so. Meticulously enforcing one hundred percent factual details in a fantasy game slows down the whole process and generally isn't fun for anyone involved. Discuss details that need to be resolved but don't worry about historical accuracy.

Make a Move that Follows - The best way to visualize this principle is as a pendulum. There's a natural push/pull in the narrative and for every action your PCs perform, there should be an equal motion reacting to it. Your PC failed a Hack & Slash so now an enemy can deal damage. Narratively, the enemy is reacting to the character's missed or failed attack but from a mechanic perspective, an enemy can really only react to player choices, because the hard moves that cause damage or put the

players in a bad spot are moves that follow player choice. The best moves to follow a player choice depend on the situation, of course, but ‘a move that follows’ should always be something that swings the narrative pendulum back, adjusting or changing the scenario before putting the ball back into the players’ court. I find that this helps guide my decisions on which hard or soft moves to make. If you’re ever stuck, I recommend revisiting this principle.

Never Speak the Name of Your Move - This one is self explanatory for the most part. Saying the move you’re going to make mutes your narrative power. It also breaks up the flow of storytelling, invites unneeded discussion, and disables the GM’s strongest tool- the ability to keep the players guessing and the narrative stakes high.

Give Every Monster Life - Not every monster is going to throw themselves at a tough party and fight to the death. Most will run away when they sustain grave damage. Some will try to stalk and pounce on the group or lure away a straggler. Don’t just assault your party with piles of stats under different names. Build narrative stakes, push them higher, challenge naiveté occasionally, make monsters break the mold, challenge your party’s preconceptions.

Name Every Person - Similar to the above principle, it’s important that NPCs all have names. Bringing back NPCs the party has already met usually has pretty high narrative interest so be sure to give your NPCs a name and a couple facts about how they live and their appearance/demeanor.

Ask Questions and Use the Answers - I recommend formally starting each session by asking the PCs a few questions about their characters and how they are reacting to the campaign narrative- make a note of the answers you get. These sessions will reveal what your players are interested in and what they enjoy about their characters... which should supply you with hooks to use later. But even if that's not your style you need to be asking your players at least a few questions a session about the world and their characters- they should be asking you and each other a few, too. Nothing's more gratifying than playing to your PCs by bringing something they were interested in into more emphasis in-game.

Be a Fan of the Characters - Each session, try to give each PC a moment or two in the spotlight. Construct scenes where they shine. Don't let this hold you back from letting them fail or face consequences, however. Even mythical heroes have their low points. Keep the stakes high but give your PCs the stage.

Think Dangerous - The 'sadistic GM' cliché creates a very 'player vs GM' environment that can be stressful and not very fun. Raise the stakes with your PCs' actions but root them heavily in the world so that the PCs better grasp that the danger is in the world itself, not in your enactment of it. Conversely, don't be afraid to kill PCs either, such is the dangers of adventuring afterall, but let it be dramatic and fulfilling. Consequences, not sadism, is the key.

Begin and End with the Fiction - Keep your PCs immersed. Keep yourself immersed by starting sessions with action or immediate conflict. Set the scene and then end the session at

logical dramatic dips wherever possible. I personally recommend using cliffhangers as end points sparingly but that's simply a matter of style.

Think Off-screen, Too - Always make sure that your monsters, factions, people, etc are moving and living their lives when they aren't a part of the immediate scene. Nomads move on, seasons change, people don't wait around for adventurers to return to ask for clues. The real world is ever changing, so too should Stromgard.

Tips for GMs

Being the ringleader for a game night RPG session can be a very rewarding experience as you help your players roleplay awesome characters and weave intense stories. It can also be super stressful and nerve-wracking, especially for those of us with anxieties regarding roleplaying, public speaking, or just social situations in general. Unfortunately, it's a bit of a learning curve if you're new to tabletop RPGs. There's lots of podcasts and live-play streaming channels to check out before your first game, however, and I strongly recommend that you do to check out how the pros run games and also to start developing your own unique game management style.

For experienced GMs, Dungeon World can sometimes throw veterans for a loop with narrative-focused rules and the priority the mechanics put on the fiction. For Dungeon World players and GMs who are already familiar with the system, wrangling new players can sometimes feel like herding cats. Because of the general difficulty in GMing for the first time as

well as the challenges many experienced players and GMs find, I included this section of tips and tricks that might help organize play and streamline your game nights. These strategies have helped engage my players and make my GMing more efficient and with any luck, they'll work as well for you.

Group Management

Playing RPGs with people from all walks of life is one of the greatest things about the medium. Everyone's interpretation of standard classes and fantasy tropes is different and that's one of the highlights of running games to me. There can sometimes be challenges in managing a very diverse group of people but with a tiny bit of forethought, it's quite easy to get everyone on the same page and set the standard for open and honest communication between everyone involved.

Before you even create your characters, hold a mini-meeting with your players. This doesn't have to be in person and shouldn't take more than a couple minutes or a few brief emails. Ask your players what kind of story elements they're interested in roleplaying, ask them what level of gore and violence they're comfortable with. Ask them if they have anything they'd like to not roleplay up front or any graphic/intense content that they'd rather not deal with. Let them talk to you privately if they'd rather not say in front of the group. Then, respect that they confided in you and oblige their desire to avoid certain types of content. I also make it clear to my players that if anything starts to go somewhere in game that they want to avoid, they can let me know and I'll adjust, no questions asked. It is vital to welcome people of all backgrounds into RPGs and it isn't hard to accommodate the occasional content request. Most importantly, as the GM, it is important to step in if a player is hassling

another regarding content warnings or any requests to tone down the intensity. The GM's position as the game leader does sort of translate to out of character conflicts sometimes and it is important that you foster an environment that is about fun and adventure. The expectation needs to be set that requests to adjust content be taken seriously by everyone involved. Once that baseline has been established, your players should find it very easy to follow and it will eliminate any unexpected issues that could make for a very un-fun evening. In actuality, I find that I *rarely* run into content the players object to but the more important thing here is that you've opened the floor to their input and will not only respectfully address any concerns, but it sets the standard the players should follow as well.

While veteran GMs might find this old hat, it's a good reminder to those less experienced that your players will all have individual tastes in terms of play styles, goals, and interests. You may also feel pressured to cater to all of your players simultaneously while running a game. In my experience the easiest way to approach this is to apply more of your focus on giving each character a few moments in the spotlight each session. Then, as you go further into long-running campaigns, continually ask them questions that inform you of what's interesting them and make a point to bring it up in game. Most GMs can't serve every player exactly what they want, but the best GMs are good at finding out what their players find gratifying and giving to them little bits at a time.

Character Development

There are a few surefire ways to get your players creating sturdy, three dimensional characters that are interesting and complex. Unfortunately, they can feel a little counterintuitive.

First and foremost, don't do a heavy amount of character development before the first session or even during character creation. I know that might sound crazy but stick with me.

When players do a massive amount of backstory and persona work before the game starts, it's easy to accidentally make characters with epic or intense backgrounds that clash a little with whatever tasks you set a few level one characters to complete. Also, in my experience, the way we intend to play a character versus the way we end up actually playing a character can sometimes be quite different. I strongly recommend discouraging your players from doing any heavy brainstorming about their characters before the first session. I also strongly recommend that the group use the first session to all choose and create characters at the same time so that they can bounce ideas off of each other and create characters that are interwoven (sometimes tangibly, sometimes in a more abstract fashion) to some extent. You and your players should always be asking questions of each other to help extrapolate on details that could turn into hooks or moving emotional moments later on but don't let character creation drag on for too long.

Let the game run a session or two. By this point, you'll probably have a lot of great hooks for each character plus you will have given enough time for the narrative stakes to raise and real tension to build. This is the 'butter zone' of character development. Let the intensity start to bloom at this point so there are real risks and there's been enough time for the players to really start connecting with their characters. This also gives you a wide range of options in choosing exactly what situations would have the highest payoff for each individual character. Make the bearskin seriously consider fleeing, present the skald with a high stakes gamble on his honor, give your paladin a crisis

of faith. This is the point with these narrative hooks will have the most impact.

Structuring Sessions

Here is a very brief, *very* tentative outline for how I run longer sessions in Dungeon World.

Session 0: Mini Groundwork - Take thirty-ish minutes or less to just lay out expectations. This step is still helpful for single-session games, but the longer you intend to run with the same group, the more helpful this step is. Learn your player's interests and dislikes, talk about they types of characters they're interested in playing in and start brewing loose storylines for them to play in.

Session 1: Character Creation and Setting Framework - Spend the first part of your initial, full session creating characters. Some groups can do this in a couple minutes, some take about an hour, it just sort of depends on the interparty dynamics, class offerings, and general setting ideas. Try not to let this part exceed ninety-ish minutes so that you can save some character development for in-game. I usually run a pretty straightforward first session with an easy-to-understand goal. Let the party start to work out their team dynamic, make any adjustments to alignment as necessary and I suggest letting the session run until the team achieves their first main objective. I would also end this session on a high note to build anticipation for the next.

Session 2: Character Exploration and Setting- Before actually starting play, begin the game by asking each player some in-

character questions to get a better feel for their personalities and goals. Try not to make these into a back-and-forth discussion. Let the player give you information and just file away anything interesting or exploitable for later. Some examples:

Stormcaller, you immediately showed distrust for the Jarl in the last session. What was the reason for that?

Fae, you mentioned last session that you come from a big family. What was that like?

Crone, do you understand the nature of your powers or are you experimenting as you go?

Bearskin, you mentioned that you have ritualistic tattoos, what do they signify?

Use these answers while building the setting and your game's narrative, let them inform you of what kind of hardships and problems your PCs should face.

Session 3 Onward: Full Swing - This is about where you can start going full force at you PCs, drawing more and more from them every game to build meaningful challenges and emotional connections. Once everyone is ready to play, do a character Q&A for a few minutes, but now start making it more specific and related to in-game actions. Also keep in mind that, if used cleverly, leading questions are also totally acceptable. Here's some examples:

Bearskin, you jumped between the Alfir and the Linnorm

last game, what made you decide to protect her?

Skald, you didn't have time to retrieve the Ranger's body after the hellhound killed her. You ran for your life. Did you perform any kind of tribute or funerary rites?

Hunter, you murdered a local thug who was a fairly small-time target considering your skills. What made you decide to take him out?

Using this format lets the whole group find connection and meaning in their actions. This might be a more involved structure for a lot of experienced players but I've found that it's really helpful in keeping people in the fiction and it sort of becomes second nature after a few sessions. The rest of the game can sort of swing into this format as well and the GM can ask more or less questions as they need in addition to giving the PCs out-of-game time to discuss their relationships with each other. When most of the characters hit about level six, I tend to shift the nature of the questions even more towards plot and are much more action-specific. Use their answers to build hooks and increase the speed at which the stakes climb as the characters approach retirement at level ten.

Building Future Games and New Campaigns

You can (and should!) try to use information you've learned during sessions to construct new plotlines, one shots, and even brand new campaigns with new settings and characters. Use each session as an opportunity to learn more about what your players are interested in both at a meta-level

(Rita likes roleplaying social intrigue, Rob is bad at it but seems to have fun being a loose gun in those situations, Miranda gets really into highly detailed combat, Jack loves solving problems and devising clever solutions...) and at a character level (Arthema the Ranger came from a blasted hellscape, Prince Grop was the charismatic leader of the conquering forces, Sumi survived the Planar Wars...). Give your PCs the situations they enjoy but also take the blasted hellscape, the background political conflicts, or even the world history you created and use them as different lenses in the same setting for new characters or as a springboard for inspiration into what a new setting could offer your PCs. The main point here is that everything the PCs give you during game can be used or re-purposed elsewhere and that's how you'll build a hefty stock of hooks and narrative inspiration that do a good job engaging your players and really up the level of collaborative roleplaying at your table.

Follow the Leader (but not really)

Your players will look to you to guide play most of the time. After all, a lot of the narrative impetus will be constructed by you and the players will naturally assume you have all the information. They'll act and believe they're following your lead but I strongly recommend you follow theirs. This may sound convoluted but it's simple: let your PCs make decisions about play, while they're playing, without openly telling them how you're making adjustments on the fly. They'll think you planned it all along and this tactic usually jumps up the excitement. Here's some basic examples to elaborate:

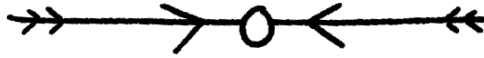
Scenario 1: I created a clever puzzle in a dungeon for the

party to work through. One of my PCs thought of an interesting workaround that I didn't take into account when I designed it. I narrate that he has solved the contraption but don't reveal that those were unintended outcomes and simply act as though their solution was *a* correct one. The player feels rewarded by their cleverness and the group feels a burst of morale. Explaining that you 'gave them that' doesn't really add anything to the payoff of getting around the puzzle.

Scenario 2: A PC's story takes a drastic turn and they wind up taking on some kind of unique career specialization, gaining a new skill set, or fulfilling a new role. Without discussing it, either find a compendium class or create a few moves for a homebrew compendium class that relate to this character's new lot and give it to her at the next session. Don't explain that you made it, don't justify why you gave it what moves, just hand it over with whatever title you've created for her and announce that her character may choose from these moves on level up if she wishes. It isn't as though the player will be specifically unaware that you either created or searched for a fitting new addition to her character but it makes the act of "unlocking" a compendium class seem more like an achievement or exciting reward for good character development. It also broadcasts to the other players that you are equipped to foster really good play and kind of makes everyone excited to engage.

Scenario 3: Gary's Stormcaller character, Agnar, lost an arm in a hard-won battle against a colossal snake. Agnar survived with magical healing but the arm was unrecoverable. His character still plays the same mechanically, so his arm being missing isn't

hugely impactful to the way the game plays. To the narrative, however, you can make this a great big deal. Incorporate his new injury and recovery into the game world and narrative itself- does the cold environment makes the remainder ache, give him opportunity to show how he's adjusting, are there any mundane tasks that are suddenly quite challenging for him to manage without aid? How comfortable is Agnar with asking for help, if he needs it? Has the party been overly concerned with his recovery? You could also have an NPC ask an innocent and well-intentioned question, have an enemy make a remark, play into any of the other PCs showing concern but perhaps keeping it to themselves. Doing this let's Gary develop more of Agnar's narrative while also giving the other PCs the opportunity to become invested as well. Additionally, the vast majority of players find it super gratifying to see these kinds of details about themselves come into the game in a meaningful way.



Play Aides

Creating Gods and Religion

Whether the setting you play in has literal gods and deities or not, you'll need to take a few things into account to make a realistic, driving force- to whatever end is up to you and your players. Answer the following questions when creating a god or deity (or even a religious order or cult):

- What purpose or need does the entity in question serve?
- How does it provide for its worshipers/followers?

- How does the entity accommodate for changes in social attitude?
- How do followers ensure they receive whatever the entity is offering?
- How does this entity punish those who commit offenses?
- What does this entity consider an offense?
- What overarching alignment would best describe this entity?

Old Norse Surnames

Bloodaxe	Oakarm
Cnute	Eld
Arrow-Odd	Forsberg
Hardruler	Hornblower
Herjolfsson	Shieldbiter
Finehair	Kjarrwalker
Housemight	Tidecaller
Fadlan	Varangr
Hardradi	Thorgard
Bluetooth	Ragnulf
Bareleg	Osulf
Ironside	Holgata
Haddingjaskati	Hastein
Hjörvarðsson	Hvalman
Hundingsbani	Varasgaut
Bergfalk	Ketill
Bearsson	
Birchman	

Mundane Loot Table

1	Crimson-bladed knife
2	Smooth, banded crown
3	Crystal encrusted beetle effigy
4	Heavy gold belt buckle shaped like a serpent
5	Gossamer veil made of gold thread
6	Ceremonial mask with terrifying visage
7	Ancient scroll covered in complex markings
8	A large fragment of stone tile with animal motif
9	A heavy golden ring with a secret compartment
10	Elk skull headdress inlaid with iron decoration
11	Pile of fine, high quality animal pelts
12	Perfectly spherical amethyst
13	Hammered silver armband
14	Handful of finely detailed bone beads
15	Golden amulet of foreign origin
16	Round, yellow crystal that glows softly
17	Heavy silver cloak pin with famous insignia
18	Huge iron belt buckle with an engraving
19	Heavy bronze ring with an engraving
20	Silver hammer amulet on a chain



NPC Generation Table

Roll a D20 1-5 times to randomly select traits for a single NPC

	Feature	Feature	Job	Persona	Drive
1	Tall	Elaborate Hair	Warrior	Cold	Reclaim Honor
2	Short	Mohawk	Mercenary	Arrogant	Best a rival
3	Wide	Unnaturally colored hair	Scholar	Taciturn	Unravel a secret
4	Slender	Dark skin	Tactition	Amiable	Debilitate a foe
5	Muscular	Medium skin	Sailor	Suave	Save a soul
6	Chubby	Light skin	Clergy	Irreverent	Serve a god
7	Prominent old injury	Freckles	Builder	Socially inept	Convert to a cause
8	Dressed finely	Vitiligo	Smith	Stiff	Perfect an art
9	Dressed poor	Graceful	Noble/Rich	Standoff-ish	Discover something
10	Dressed to blend in	Clumsy	Wiseperson	Honorable	Cure an ailment
11	Obviously armed	Notable accessory	Healer	Stern	Guide someone
12	Not obviously armed	Uncommon race	Seer	Awkward	Interpret the gods
13	Scarred	Mismatched eyes	Lorekeeper	Reckless	Gain fame/infamy

GM'S TOOLBOX

	Feature	Feature	Job	Persona	Drive
14	Missing eye	Tattoos	General	Brash	Command wealth
15	Missing ear	Unnaturally colored eyes	Craftsman	Impatient	Assert dominance
16	Deformed nose	Scar from magical wound	Assassin	Contrarian	Indulge in pleasures
17	Missing finger(s)	Limited mobility	Hermit	Bookish	Answer a question
18	Unfamiliar accent	Sickly looking	Arcanist	Hesitant	Command loyalty
19	Displays signs of abuse	Magical aura	Expert	Charismatic	Preserve something sacred
20	Nervous tick	Carries something magical	Demigod	Selfish	Eradicate a threat



Pronouncing Old Norse

A very rough breakdown

Most consonants in Old Norse sound fairly close to their modern English equivalents. Below are some notes on deviations I organized but be sure to check out the Acknowledgments section for more sources on Old Norse linguistics for a more in-depth look from *much* more qualified sources.

The letter **c** is always pronounced hard, as in cat or carpet.

ð is pronounced like **th** in English, as in thought or that.

g makes a rough, harder sound, closer to the Scottish pronunciation of loch.

j is pronounced like **y**, as in yarn or yesterday.

p usually sounds like normal English **p** (as in put or pot) but before an **s** or **t**, it turns into an **f** sound (like fun or fight).

r is usually trilled.

þ is pronounced **th** like thorn, there, and then.

Accented vowels are usually long vowels. Unaccented vowels are usually short.

æ reads like *a* in pat.

Adventure Front

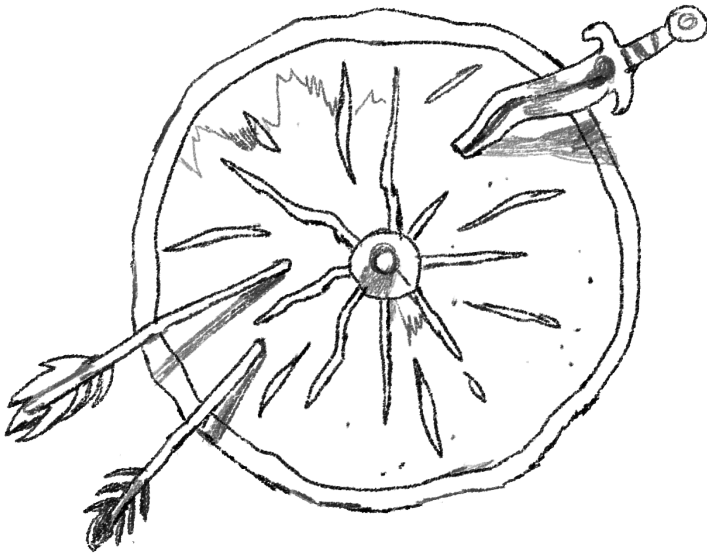
What will be after heaven and earth and the whole world are burned?

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

Using campaign fronts in your games is not only easy and super convenient, it's still one hundred percent feasible to improvise a lot as you go on. The Wyrd of Stromgard itself functions as a giant sandbox to play in and its campaign fronts utilize a lot of the same tools plus the addition of narrative impetus elements to help provide the GM with interesting hooks to immediately implement. This campaign is meant to be a longer running plot—think of it in terms of a long form television series with four seasons. Each season has its own dangers and resolutions but will feed into the overarching goals. How long it will take you to play through the fronts depends mostly on how 'broad stroke' or 'meticulous' your PCs tend to be and obviously any content you add yourself or tangents you explore could significantly add to the number of sessions it takes to get through. Premade campaign fronts are a great outline for major plots.

The included campaign front here will have PCs decoding and responding to the disasters that foretell the end of the world. Ragnarök is, literally, the fate of the gods as war breaks loose upon the World Tree and various catastrophes lay waste to all the races and cultures caught in between the clash of gods and Jötunn. This apocalyptic campaign has the destruction of the physical worlds as well as the murder of the gods for narrative stakes and the intensity ramps quickly. Dangers two, three, and

four culminate with monsters so fierce and so powerful they are statless, and will need to be overcome with wits and preparation, not brute strength and mundane weapons. The point of this particular campaign front is to offer the players an immense challenge and a crazy amount of dramatic risk. So keep the stakes high and see what they can come up with.



Signs of Ragnarök

*Surtr moves from the south
with the scathe of branches
there shines from his sword
the sun of Gods of the Slain.*

Völuspá, Poetic Edda

At the dawn of the world...

The seers told it to Odin long ago, when he called upon the völva to rise from the land of the dead to deliver unto him her wisdom. Obliging, the völva delivered a prophecy then and revealed to Odin the burning of Yggdrasil and the slaying of the gods. Midgard and the lower realms would be drowned in floodwaters before being razed by the hellfires of Muspelheim. The völva warned of Loki's loyalties, the death of Baldr, the rising power and anger of the Jötnar, of Thor's end succumbing to the Midgard Serpent, and of even Odin's death in the jaws of Fenrir. Odin understood the gravity of what the völva told him but he was determined to meet his fate ready to resist his enemies.

From that point on, Odin ordered the Valkyries to bring all the slain warriors of Midgard who had honor and valor to reside in Valhalla until the time comes for them to fight once again, but now in Odin's personal retinue. He asked the völva how he would know that the time for ice and fire was upon him and she responded:

*Endless winter will blast the world-ash,
Hunger and disease will fester,
Mead and sweet fruit only a dream.*

*Then rampant bloodshed will soak the land,
Enemies everywhere but in the open
Retaliation sets the cycle
No duels, no honor,
Just a wolf and a knife in the ribs.*

*Then the angry tides shall rise
To cleanse the realms of congealing blood.
The churn will engulf everything
And a serpent's strike will shake mountains*

Odin listened to this very seriously, believing the völva both honest and speaking truth. He committed the verses to his vast memory, vowing to always be wary of such events so that he could meet the fate of the gods head on and without fear. As he stood to leave, the völva stopped him, throwing out her hand and meeting his eye. She shook her head and warned of more. When Odin's mighty brow furrowed, she continued:

*These omens be not random chance
They are keys to the sleeping fire's cage,
And once it is open, Yggdrasil, the gods,
Elves, and dwarves, and men, and even Jötnar,
Will burn.*

*With each of Surt's steps, he will level the world,
He will climb to Midgard and burn up the oceans,*

*Jötunheim will a ring of fire be
When he demands access to the Bifrost
The dwarves, brave and loyal as they may be,
Cannot keep him out.*

*Bright Freyr and his children the Alfir
Will make their last stand in Vanaheim
There is no victory against a walking nightmare*

*And when they are dead
Nothing will stand between it and Asgard*

Odin knew what the last verse described and knew then that the völva was accurate. Nothing on this or any other world could stand against the fire giant currently sealed away in Muspelheim. The old god vowed then to be vigilant and watch for signs of judgment.

But that was ages ago. Whole peoples formed and dispersed many times since the völva's prophecy. And certainly, the worthy are still said to be ushered into Valhalla to await Odin's battle-cry but the ways of the most ancient of gods is hazy and nearly lost to lesser immortals and ignorant mortals. No one but Odin and that völva know the prophecy in its entirety and no one can say if it still causes the venerable god quiet anxiety now or if he has let it pass from his mind like a snowflake in an infinite blizzard. But things have already been set in motion whether he knows it or not.



Danger One: Endless Winter

*Much have I fared, much have I found,
Much have I got of the gods:
What shall live of mankind when at last there comes
The mighty winter to men?*

Vafþrúðnismál, Poetic Edda

Harsh winters in the realm of Stromgard are commonplace and there are sometimes seasons that stretch on for longer than normal. The endless winter of Ragnarök, however, is something else entirely. It is one of latent fears of Midgardians—losing a war of attrition against a winter that stretches on, for food stores to dry up and for heavy snows to entrap and crush, to cut Stromgard off from the seas and rest of the world. As foretold by the völva, a winter that stretches on with no sign of spring is the first key to the gate of Muspelheim.

Danger One: Endless Winter

Arcane enemies, ambitious organization

Impulse

- To cast a spell over time and space
- Learn forbidden knowledge
- Claim arcane resources

Major Forces

- Cult of the Iceblooded (organized sect of renegade elementalists seeking to upend the world)
- Warmongering Jötnar

Impending Doom

- Unleashing a never-ending blizzard is one of the requirements to unseal Muspelheim and free Surt.

Grim Portents

- The cultists decide that aiding the Jötnar looking to overthrow the gods will provide them with the best chance of recovering an artifact called the Eye of the Storm.
- The Jötnar accept the cultists' raw arcane force in exchange for the knowledge of their artifact's location and confirmation that it is needed to unseal Surt.
- The cultists begin preparations to recover and use the Eye of the Storm by amassing arcane resources to help amplify the spell from all over Stromgard.
- The cultists successfully release storms that rage across the land incessantly.

- The cultists and Jötnar begin planning to recruit the moon elves, whose loyalties are largely unknown.

Starter Hooks

Ask your players these questions just before you begin session

- Chaos and order are the chief opposing forces of existence. Which do you favor?
- Many Jötnar are judged on the relatively small population that openly defies the gods. Is this fair?
- Are the gods all-powerful?
- Is your fate malleable or should you meet it head on?
- Someone you know was targeted by the Cult of the Iceblooded. Why were they so important to you and what did the cultists want with them?

Narrative Hooks

For use if the story needs extra inspiration

- Magical tools of arcane amplification start disappearing or are outright stolen.
- A rise in incidents involving renegade or rogue mages causing trouble.
- Unusual and violent weather.
- A prominent arcanist is assassinated and his personal research stolen.
- The barrow of a famous wizard-king is ransacked.
- Huge runestones that mention the Eye of the Storm are pulled from the earth and vanished.

- Suspicious figures begin pressing the knowledgeable about the artifact.
- Jötnar have unfathomably ancient and vast knowledge of all things magical. They also keep many secrets.
- A hushed accord is made by candlelight in secret
- Weighty secrets that could change the world as we know it.
- An icy blue teardrop of smoky glass that radiates energy and biting cold- The Eye of the Storm
- Clouds build overhead and all hell breaks loose as the storm compounds out of control.

Special Moves

Situation-specific moves for this campaign. Create more as you need for specific things not already covered by Dungeon World moves.

Resist Thrall

When you hold the Eye of the Storm in your hand, roll +INT. On a 10+ you escape the thrall of this powerful artifact. On a 7-9 you badly desire to use this item but you cannot tell if the thrall influencing you or if it is your own desire. On a miss, you are influenced to do something that carries immense consequences.

Arcane Amplification

When you use an item intended to amplify magical energy, add +1 to any Cast a Spell/magical move roll per arcane amplifier in your possession. The item you use as an amplifier weakens as you use it in this manner, the GM will let you know how, if necessary.

Forge Ahead

When you try to brave a blizzard, roll +CON. On a 10+ you manage to trudge to shelter, though your travel time is increased by half. On a 7-9, you're slowed down substantially, doubling the time it takes you to find shelter. On a miss you become hopelessly lost and spend 1D6 days outside. Spend a ration for each and find a way to stay warm or lose 1D4 hit points per night. You cannot make camp until you find shelter.

Monsters

Iceblood Cultist

Magical, Organized, Hoarder

Ice Spear (1D8 damage)

10HP/2ARM

Thunder Breath (1D8 damage)+(Forceful)

Close, Reach



The Cult of the Iceblooded is a loose order of mages and wizards who wish to send the world into chaos, mostly to spite the gods. They relentlessly seek out anything that can amplify their power as they search for the artifact that will let them call an unending blizzard to Midgard- they're willing to do whatever it takes to get their hands on it.

Instinct:

- Undermine divine authority

Moves:

- Summon reinforcements
- Seek magical artifacts
- Enhance own magical ability

Items

Eye of the Storm

1 weight

A glass teardrop with a long delicate tail. The material is smoky and tinged a pale blue. It radiates an intense cold and a voice seems to call out from inside it.

Arcane Amplifier

1-3 weight (varies) Arcane

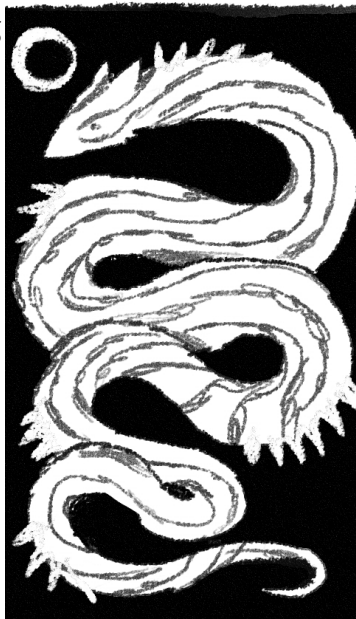
Amplifiers can be created out of any number of objects (hence their variable weight). Powerful wizards create these objects to serve as a kind of attunement field when casting, greatly increasing the potency of their spells. When an amplifier is used to boost a spell, the item is used up and destroyed in the process.

Danger Two: War Rages On

...All over the world there shall be mighty battles. In that time brothers shall slay each other for greed's sake, and none shall spare father or son...

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

There's nothing the agents of anarchy and chaos enjoy more than eschewing convention in a way that turns the world on its head. Through deception, trickery, and manipulation, old fears and bad blood can be easily preyed upon. Paranoia is a powerful stimulant and prone to making mortals act out in fury and frustration at relatively little provocation. To Surt- and those who seek to free him- chaos is the true nature of the world. The gods cannot impose order and authority over something that is by nature untamable, and rampant destruction will prove it. The wolf Fenrir will prove it, destined as he is to be the one who murders Odin should he break free of his chains.



Danger Two: War Rages On

Ambitious Organization, Arcane Enemies

Impulse

- To cast a spell over time and space
- Learn forbidden knowledge
- Claim arcane resources

Major Forces

- Cult of the Iceblooded
- Warmongering Jötnar
- Revenge-driven Nithfir/Moon Elves
- Fenrir

Impending Doom

Widespread chaos razes the land as fighting and skirmishes break out, treaties and accords violated, and efforts at peace are thwarted. As more people are dragged into the confusion, the second seal on Surt's prison is broken. Fenrir escapes.

Grim Portents

➤ The cultists and Jötnar make contact with the Nithfir on Myrkheim. They convince the long-isolated moon elves that now is the time for vengeance. The Nithfir are won over and help the cultists and Jötnar destroy a prominent sacred site and frame it on a group of innocent mortals.

➤ The combined forces of Jötnar, cultists, and Nithfir continue to assault sacred locations and pious villages- all disguised

as other parties to create confusion, paranoia, and anger. A once-peaceful steading is brought to full violence against a long time ally in a misunderstanding.

➤ A once pious steading deliberately destroys a monument to the gods in a deliberate and open display of disrespect and defiance- they are unaware that events have been intentionally orchestrated.

➤ Furious, many of the gods retaliate and even more chaos is sown. Crops fail, livestock dies, diseases take hold, monsters flourish, and the dead start to rise from their barrows.

➤ The smell of so much pain and blood drives Fenrir mad with frenzy and the monstrous wolf escapes his fetters to wreak havoc.

Starter Hooks

Ask your players these questions just before you begin session

- An old relative used to tell you legends of the Moon Elves, the Nithfir. What were they usually about?
- Have you ever traveled to another plane before? Myrkheim is an extremely isolated Realm but what rumors about it have gained traction?
- Given their history and distaste for the Aesir, is an attempt at compromise worth trying to pursue with the Nithfir? Or is it a lost cause?
- Do you hold on to the grudges of your forebearers? Or is your agenda fully your own?

- Is there such a thing as an insurmountable foe, unfellable by anyone?

Narrative Hooks

For use on the fly

- A hazy portal, hurriedly opened
- A secret emissary breathlessly offers respect
- The halls of Myrkheim rise like towers of pearl and obsidian towards the heavy-hanging moon
- The emissary politely cuts open old wounds and highlights old pains
- The council cannot help but be affected by the past
- A critical success that will deal a hard blow
- Enemies, united against you
- Deceit and lies fuel violence and hatred
- Hysteria rises like a fever
- Angry and hurt, people do not see that they are misled
- “Self defense” and “keeping the peace” excuse acts of cold violence
- Righteous fury as lesser gods punish the world for their insolence
- Famine and sickness rise even faster, natural disasters claim cities
- A monstrous wolf, manacled, paces furiously as the smell of blood makes its eyes dilate with hunger.
- A sword sticks from its salivating mouth
Odin’s destiny lies in the beast’s jaws
- The second lock opens

Special Moves

Planar Portal

When you *attempt to use a planar portal without permission*, roll +DEX to avoid the gaze of the watchers manning the road. On a 10+ you evade their attention with ease. On a 7-9, you can avoid their eyes only by leaving the main road, making it much easier to get lost. On a miss, a *Path Guardian* violently confronts you.

Sword in the Maw

When you *pull the sword out from Fenrir's jaw*, roll +STR. On a 10+ the sword comes loose in your hands and bursts into divine light. On a 7-9 the sword cuts deeply into the wolf's mouth, causing him to go into a pained frenzy. On a miss, the blade comes free but you are thrown back and knocked prone, the divine blade landing elsewhere.

Political Pawns

When you *try to quell an angry mob by exposing the conspiracy* that's driving them, have all present members of the party roll +CHA (including any pertinent bonuses). A majority of 10+ rolls amongst the party results in the crowd coming to their senses. They are willing to risk their lives at the party's command in an effort to undermine the conspirators who manipulated them. A majority of partial successes causes the mob to disperse, regarding the party with some wariness but little malice. A majority of misses causes the crowd to turn into a violent riot targeting the party who are hellbent on causing harm.

Monsters

Moon Elf Assassin

Divine, Planar, Ancient

Backhanded Stab (1D10+4 Piercing)

8HP/3ARM

Throwing Dagger (1D8 + Ignores Armor)

Close, Reach, Near



Nithfir assassins recruited to incite chaos among mortals. They are offensively formidable and carry an array of debilitating poisons with them, along with a slew of other devious items.

Instinct:

- Undermine divine authority
- Exact vengeance

Moves:

- Deceit - Frame someone
- Disguise Self
- Move Silently
- Vanish

Mortal Vigilante

Organized, Cautious

Trusty Axe (1D8+4 damage)

10HP/2ARM

Close

The world is in chaos and many warriors are taking it amongst themselves to quell the madness, though their task is made almost impossible by the true nature of the attacks. Vigilantes now roam the roads, looking to hunt down anyone who could be guilty, or scapegoated, to bring a little peace back into the world. These warriors typically target nonhuman races but will make due with any target they think they can take down.

Instinct:

- Restore Order
- Be perceived as just

Moves:

- Scapegoat someone to placate a crowd

Path Guardian

Large, Organized, Divine, Planar

Bronze Fist (1D10+3 damage + *Forceful*)

12HP/4ARM

Close, Reach

Bifrost Guardians are towering metallic automatons that answer

to Heimdallr and the other Aesir. While not truly sentient, they can think and act above their master's bidding to some simple degree. They rarely need to, however, as once they are set upon intruders their only goal is to eradicate them.

Instinct:

- Obey Orders from Asgard
- Exterminate Trespassers

Moves:

- Bullrush
- Relentlessly pursue
- Eject interlopers

Fenrir, World Eater

Huge, Divine, Planar

Fenrir is a hulking, monstrous wolf that had to be chained up by the gods to preventing it from eating the earth and cosmos. This being is no mere beast, however. It is intelligent and cunning (like its father, Loki) and its physical form is powerful enough to destroy Yggdrasil itself. Standing against Fenrir is standing against destruction incarnate. Destined to devour Odin during Ragnarök, at the dawn of the world, even the gods didn't know how to control it. Thanks to Dverggar ingenuity, however, and a divine sword, the beast remains sealed. For now.

Instinct:

- Destroy life, steadings, and the earth itself
- Attack Asgard

Moves:

- Consume planar fabric
- Bargain and deceive

Items

Valdrbane

2 weight

This sword was thrust into Fenrir's jaw by the gods to force his mouth shut, rendering him incapable of fully engulfing the world. Its heavy blade is imbued with the desire to smite evil and restore order to a chaotic world. Against any planar or divine force, this sword does real damage but at great taxation of the wielder's body.

Danger Three: Dark Waters Rise

*When the sea shall gush forth upon the land, because the Midgard
Serpent stirs in giant wrath and advances up onto the land.*

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

The threat of flood and engulfing tides is something that strikes fear into most and for sailors and warriors who have spent time on the sea, know one knows better how destructive of a force the tides can be. Not only is it absolutely infinite in crushing weight and cold blackness, it houses a million horrors in its depths, stealthy and huge and hideous, ready to sink claws and teeth into any land walker that fails to treat the ocean with the fear and respect it is due. Nothing, however, is more hideous or huge in the wide ocean waters as Jörmungandr, the Midgard Serpent. Sensing its brother's rampage, Jörmungandr rises from the depth to finish what Fenrir started, and enact his destiny of killing Thor. The fate of mortals seemingly sealed, Surt's prison can no longer hold him.

Danger Three: Dark Waters Rise

Planar Forces

Impulse

- To give dreams of upcoming destruction
- To attack indirectly
- Cause tidal waves

Major Forces

- Jörmungandr, the brother of Fenrir

Impending Doom

As war ravages the land, Jörmungandr awakens and adds its fury to Fenrir's strength. This breaks the third and final seal on Surt's prison in Muspelheim.

Grim Portents

- The sensitive begin having prophetic dreams that the worst is yet to come, that Ragnarök is about to be fully realized.
- Storms dominate the skies, growing in intensity and destructive power.
- The prophetic dreams reveal that Surt's last lock opens when Jörmungandr rises from the sea.
- The fire giant will destroy the world.
- Jörmungandr levies an attack against the land, bringing the hordes of the ocean with him.

Starter Hooks

Ask your players some of these questions just before you begin session

- What haunts your nightmares?
- Have you spent extended periods at sea? What is the most dangerous thing out there, in your experience?
- The masses are no doubt panicked by the weather and Fenrir, but have you seen mass hysteria yet at the thought of this getting worse?
- Where is Odin during all of this?

Narrative Hooks

For use on the fly

- Black sky over black, churning water
- The smell of low tide, even far from the sea
- Feverish nightmares plague the attuned
- Vague impressions of a hulking monstrosity
- A cold, dark expanse full of pale, sharp-clawed horrors
- Walls of rushing, churning water washing through towns
- Muddy flood waters washing away homes and roads and people
- Desolation and a wake of destruction
- Forests flattened
- Coastlines reformed and unfamiliar
- A titanic form rises from the depths
- Coils and coils of thick black serpent undulate in the

water

- Thor is destined to die by this beast
- The weather becomes intense and even more destructive
- The final lock opens and somewhere a fire like the sun ignites with fury

Special Moves

Prophetic Dream

When you *have a prophetic nightmare*, describe it to the GM and roll +WIS. On a 10+ you have a +1 against something threatening from your dream, your choice. On a 7-9 the GM will choose something from your dream and give you a vague impression on when you will encounter it. On a failure, take a -1 forward against something terrifying from your vision. GM's choice.

Rough Waters

When you *attempt to sail a churning sea* roll +STR. On a 10+ pick 2, on a 7-9 pick 1.

- The ship's sails remain intact
- You take on little water
- You retain your bearings
- You don't lose any supplies or cargo

Tidal Push

When you *flee a rising tide, debris, mud, and water as it forms a quickly-moving wall behind you*, continue moving without stopping to stay head of the deluge for 1D100 miles. If you get

caught in the swell, roll +DEX to escape with a -2 modifier.

Monsters

Dream Feeder

Tiny, Magical, Terrifying

Mind Melt (1D6 dmg + causes INT debility)

8HP/4ARM

Close



Dream Feeders come from another plane, invading Midgard as the sensitive begin having prophetic dreams. The mix of reality and dream haze is irresistible to these small, millipede like creatures. At night, they burrow into a sleeping host's facial orifice and latch onto the brain, feeding off its activity until the victim goes catatonic.

Instincts:

- Feed on high quality dreams

- Render prey brainless.

Moves:

- Devour target's mind
- Sneak up on prey

Mudwalkers

Small, Horde

Entangle (1D6+2 Damage)+(Ignores Armor)

5HP/0ARM

Close

Mudwalkers are submarine, snake-like insectoids with long tentacle clusters that serve as their primary mode of locomotion. They are usually bottom feeders but during rough tides they rise to the surface and search for prey by infesting muddy, debris clogged flood waters. When alerted to the movements of nearby prey- drowning animals, struggling humans, etc- Mudwalkers slide stealthily through the bracken and surround their prey before plunging in for the attack. Even in frenzied swarms, Mudwalkers prioritize incapacitation of their prey and will try to wrap around the body to immobilize it before latching onto it and draining its fluids.

Instinct:

- Go into a feeding frenzy

Moves:

- Overwhelm a target
- Remain undetected in bracken

Danger Four: Hellfire

*Surtr fares from the south with switch-eating flame,
On his sword shimmers the sun of the War-Gods;
The rock-crags crash; the fiends are reeling;
Heroes tread Hel-way; heaven is cloven.*

Gylfaginning, Prose Edda

The ultimate force of destruction to Midgard and all the other Realms of Yggdrasil. Surt is a planar force made of pure hellfire and who carries a sword as bright as the sun. While he will rain destruction upon those who freed him, Surt's rampage is focused on destroying the gods, delivering them to their fate for failing to bring order to the worlds. Surt's goal is destruction and pain, and the broken worlds he rages through won't be able to muster meaningful resistance without a miracle.

Danger Four: Dark Waters Rise

Planar Forces, Hordes

Impulse

- Reveal the chaotic nature of the world
- Expose the weakness of the gods
- Attack bastions of civilization directly
- Overwhelm

Major Forces

- Surt and his hordes

Impending Doom

Surt, chaos and destruction incarnate, walks the land and leaves desolation in his wake. The world meets its fate.

Grim Portents

- Mountains are leveled and forests burn in Surt's foot steps.
- Surt assaults the dwarves, seeking entry to Asgard.
- They are his first target. At their defeat he forces a planar gate open and moves towards Asgard.
- Surt destroys the Bifrost behind him, razing the realms as he goes.
- In Vanaheim, Freyr leads the Vanir and Alfir against him. The losses are catastrophic.
- Surt breaches Valhalla and begins his real assault.
- Odin is destined to die fighting Fenrir and Thor is destined to die trying to control Jörmungandr. The armies of mortal souls and Valkyries make their last stand against the fire giant.

Starter Hooks

Ask your players some of these questions just before you begin session

- The worlds are burning one at a time, is standing your ground even an option or should you make peace with your end?
- The agents of chaos who brought this onto the world will suffer with the rest of you anyway. Was their conviction to resistance noble in its own way or nothing but arrogant futility?
- How will you make your last stand?

Narrative Hooks

For use on the fly

- A being of pure fire.
- Massive footsteps- each a disaster.
- The world will never be the same again for Surt's passing even if it survives.
- The landscape is irrevocably changed as mountains are leveled
- Scorched earth
- Forest fires burn out of control
- Dwarves standing in protection of the Bifrost, valiantly hoping to keep the demon out
- Their forces are devastated
- The portal to the Bifrost is forced open
- Realms between Midgard and Asgard are set ablaze, one at a time

- Bifrost crumbles
- The forces of the Alfir retreat to rally in Vanaheim
- Faces grim, immortal blood pumping with determination
- At Freyr's command, the Alfir make their last stand
- Immortals meet their mortality
- Surt tears apart the veil to burn Asgard, the remaining gods stand and fight
- The legions of mortal souls in Valhalla mount an assault against the demon

Special Moves

Last Stand

When you *stand with a doomed ally*, you relive your past glories during a quiet moment before seemingly certain doom approaches. Describe your most valiant or otherwise greatest accomplishment to give yourself and anyone in earshot a +1 ongoing against a common foe.

Monsters

Fire Imps

Small, Organized, Planar

Planar Flame (1D8+4 dmg + *Ignores Armor*) 16HP/4ARM

Close, Near, Far

Fire Imps are the primary residents of Muspelheim besides Surt. They are distant cousins to the Jötnar, though their affinity for flames over ice and snow make them immediately discernible. While their physical forms are small, they are beings of pure

flame and they are a tough adversary for fighters that don't have opposite elemental forces at their beck and call.

Instinct:

- Encourage mayhem

Move:

- Ignite the earth
- Rally allies
- Destroy a bastion of civilization

Alfir Archer

Organized, Planar, Divine

Called Shot (1d10 + 2 damage + 3 piercing) 12HP/1ARM

Hand Axe (1d8 + 2 damage)

Close, Reach, Near, Far

The archers of Alfheim are the Light Elves' primary offensive force. These soldiers are trained and talented, equipped with high quality weapons and make these archers a threat at nearly every range. The Alfir are stalwart in the heat of battle, making them charismatic and bolstering rally points on the front lines. Most fighters will follow an Alfir's command without hesitation during a skirmish.

Instinct:

- Quell chaos and evil

Moves:

- Rally troops
- Issue orders

Vanir Paladin

Organized, Planar, Divine, Ancient

Smite (1D10+4 Damage) + (*Forceful*)

15HP/5ARM

Close, Reach



The Vanir Paladin force is one of the deadliest forces outside of Asgard and possibly the best trained/most cohesive in all of the Nine Realms. The Paladins work tirelessly as a team and employ complex maneuvers and formations to get the better of their foes. They are also heavily armored with blessed weapons.

Instinct:

- Deal justice and smite evil

Moves:

- Pinpoint or expose a weakness
- Relentlessly attack
- Heal the wounded

Acknowledgments

The Wyrd of Stromgard was a product of many people's hard work and accumulated knowledge and I'd like to take this opportunity to draw attention to some of them for their invaluable help.

Firstly, this project literally wouldn't exist without my spouse, Jeremy Toler. His laser focus on the end goal kept me on track during production, his thoughtful input gave me perspective in drafting, and if it wasn't for his business acumen, The Wyrd of Stromgard would likely spend the rest of its life as a grotesquely rough outline rotting on my Google Drive.

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DuBois, and Jose Mendoza. Not only did you help me refine the constantly updating playbooks but you made Stromgard's inaugural campaign everything I had hoped it would be: adventurous, dangerous, and the source of several TTRPG War Stories.

This section would be incomplete without a gratuitous amount of praise for Vincent Baker and *Apocalypse World* or especially to Adam Koebel and Sage LaTorra, the designers and authors of *Dungeon World*. For a long time, I thought I didn't enjoy tabletop rpgs but *Dungeon World* rekindled my excitement in the medium and their licensing on the text of *Dungeon World* made it possible for The Wyrd of Stromgard to be a distributed project in the first place. Additionally, I reached out to Adam several times during this whole process and I can't thank him enough for taking the time to address my badgering.

I also must profusely thank the artists who worked with me to complete this monstrosity. Camille Kuo did fully rendered paintings of both the cover and the Kickstarter's GM screen in a matter of weeks with minimal direction. She was a powerhouse and her immense talent and skill still catches people's eyes whenever they see the game materials. Eli Spencer, Stromgard's interior artist, deserves so, *so* much praise for her contributions. She worked with me for months hashing out the character classes, equipment, map, embellishments, etc for this book and I strongly recommend you look her up. Her unique style gives Stromgard most of its personality and I knew as soon as I saw her art that she was my first choice artist for the illustration work. Eli, thank you so much for deciphering all of my inane notes and for putting so much of yourself into Stromgard. 'Thank you' barely begins to cover it. Stromgard's unique identity is can almost entirely be attributed to Eli's

unique art and I wish there was an easy to share the constant stream of praise I hear for the game's look and aesthetic. Thank you so much for sifting through that enormous log of historical and fantasy Norse costumes I sent you, I know it was probably too much information.

Also, there are two websites I'd like to specifically praise, as they made the frankly alarming amount of research I put into Stromgard much easier to manage. Firstly, the *Internet Sacred Text Archive* was an absolute godsend as it contains frequently referenced poems and epics from Norse myth and it was where I was able to easily hunt down most of the attestations and quotations I used to open each chapter. They host tons of other content, not just Norse, and I highly suggest you check them out the next time you need to read something old and possibly translated from a dead language.

The other is *The Vikings of Bjornstad*, a reenactment group out of the San Francisco area that did very good job on an ancient Norse-English dictionary based on accumulated translations. I found myself referencing their dictionary often, especially when I needed to make up words that sounded Norse and still held some translatable integrity. While they're not specifically an academic group, they really went about creating their content with the same meticulous attention to detail and for that I both thank and applaud these weekend anthropologists and historians.

Of course if you're reading this then you bought my book, hopefully. Thank you! The Wyrð of Stromgard was a labor of love and I hope that you enjoy it.

Credits

It goes without saying that our two-hundred and four backers (plus the non-Kickstarter preorders) literally carried *The Wyrd of Stromgard* from small scale, PDF release (if that) to existing in the real world as a tangible book. From both of us, we cannot thank them deeply enough for supporting us as indie creators and taking a chance on Stromgard's potential. We hope that they'll continue supporting small studios and independent creators!

In particular, many of our backers submitted magical weapons and items, as well as adventure front prompts as part of our crowdfunding campaign. We had so many outstanding and original ideas that we put it to a community poll to choose the 'finalists'. I'd like to thank the community for submitting so many amazing ideas and especially thank those who created the most popular of the bunch- specifically Logan "Dogface701" Collins for the *Shard of Bifrost* weapon and the inspiration to flesh out *In the Shadows of Titans* as one of the additional adventures. Espen Andre Henriksen (aka Essenrik) dreamt up the intimidating *Tooth of Jörmungandr*, a personal favorite and immediately a hit in our polls! Also Alexander R. Corbett deserves so much thanks for submitting the idea of *Undyne's Haft*, which I was very excited to add and used it in one of my personal campaigns. Also, a profuse thank you to Phillip McGregor, who possesses a wealth of knowledge on historical arms and armor and who very kindly offered me some assistance in dating Stromgard's equipment.

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“**The Poetic Edda.**” Internet Sacred Text Archive, June-Oct 2018, www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/index.htm.

I referenced many sections of the *Poetic Edda*, all of which can be read in their entirety on the **Internet Sacred Text Archive**. Attestations were pulled from the following poems within the *Poetic Edda* itself:

Voluspo

Hovamol

Vafthruthnismol

Helgakvitha Hundingsbana I

Helgakvitha Hundingsbana II

“**The Prose Edda (of Snorri Sturluson).**” Internet Sacred Text Archive, June-Oct 2018, www.sacred-texts.com/neu/pre/index.htm.

I also referenced the *Prose Edda* many times, pulling another large chunk of quotations and attestations from it and the following poems contained within:

Gylfaginning

Skáldskaparmal

“Heimskringla: The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway (by Snorri Sturluson).” Internet Sacred Text Archive, June-Oct 2018, www.sacred-texts.com/neu/heim/index.htm.

“Heimskringla or The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway.”
The Ynglinga Saga. The Medieval & Classical Literature Library. Oct 2018, mcclibrary.org/Heimskringla/ynglinga.html

“The Story of Egil Skallagrimsson (Egil’s Saga).”
Arinbjarnarkviða. Internet Sacred Text Archive, June-Oct 2018, www.sacred-texts.com/neu/egil/index.htm

Beowulf. Translated by R. M. Liuzza, Broadview Press, 1999.

“Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál),” *Heimskringla.* Oct 2018, [heimskringla.no/wiki/Haraldskvæði\(Hrafnsmál\)_\(B1\)](http://heimskringla.no/wiki/Haraldskvæði(Hrafnsmál)_(B1))

“Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Peterborough (/Laud) Manuscript.” Yale V2 Vault Portal, Sept 2018, <http://classes.v2.yale.edu/access/content/user/haw6/Vikings/AS%20Chronicle%20Peterborough%20MS.html>

“The Voiage and Travayle of Sir John Maundeville Knight,”
Gutenberg Archive, Oct 2018, www.gutenberg.org

Skarpåker Stone. Runemaster unknown. Early 11th century. Skarpåker, Nyköping, Sörmland, Sweden. Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skarpåker_Stone. Accessed Sept 2018.

Hednalagen. *The Pagan Law*. Author Unkown. 13th century.
Västergötland, Sweden. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holmgång
Accessed Sept 2018.

Carpenter, Humphrey and Tolkien, Christopher. “**The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien**”. Houghton Mifflin Hardcourt 2000

Culture and History

“**The Vikings of Bjornstad: Old Norse Dictionary**”. The Vikings of Bjornstad. Jan 2018-Oct 2018, www.vikingsofbjornstad.com/Old_Norse_Dictionary_E2N.shtml

“**Viking-Age History**”, Hurstwic. Oct 2018, hurstwic.com/history/text/history.htm

“**Viking Ships**”, Avaldsnes. Sept 2018. avaldsnes.info/en/viking/vikingskip/

“**The Five Viking Ships**”, Vikingeskibsmuseet. Oct 2018, www.vikingeskibsmuseet.dk/en/visit-the-museum/exhibitions/the-five-viking-ships/

“**Old Arabic Texts Describe Dirty Vikings**”, Science Nordic, Oct 2018, sciencenordic.com/old-arabic-texts-describe-dirty-vikings

Linguistics

“**Runes**.” Wikimedia Commons. Oct 2018, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Runes.

“Old Norse Grammar/Alphabet and Pronunciation,” Wikibooks. Oct 2018, [en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Old_Norse/Grammar/Alphabet_and_Pronunciation](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Old_Norse_Grammar/Alphabet_and_Pronunciation)
Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.
Web. Jan-Oct. 2018.

Wikipedia was naturally a great stepping stone into deeper research for specific areas of Stromgard, but the following articles were ones I referred to the most:

Runes

Elder Futhork

Greek Alphabet (Euboean variant)

Younger Futhork

Anglo-Saxon futhorc

Proto-Norse

Wigot Runes

Nazi Symbolism re: Runes

Runestones

