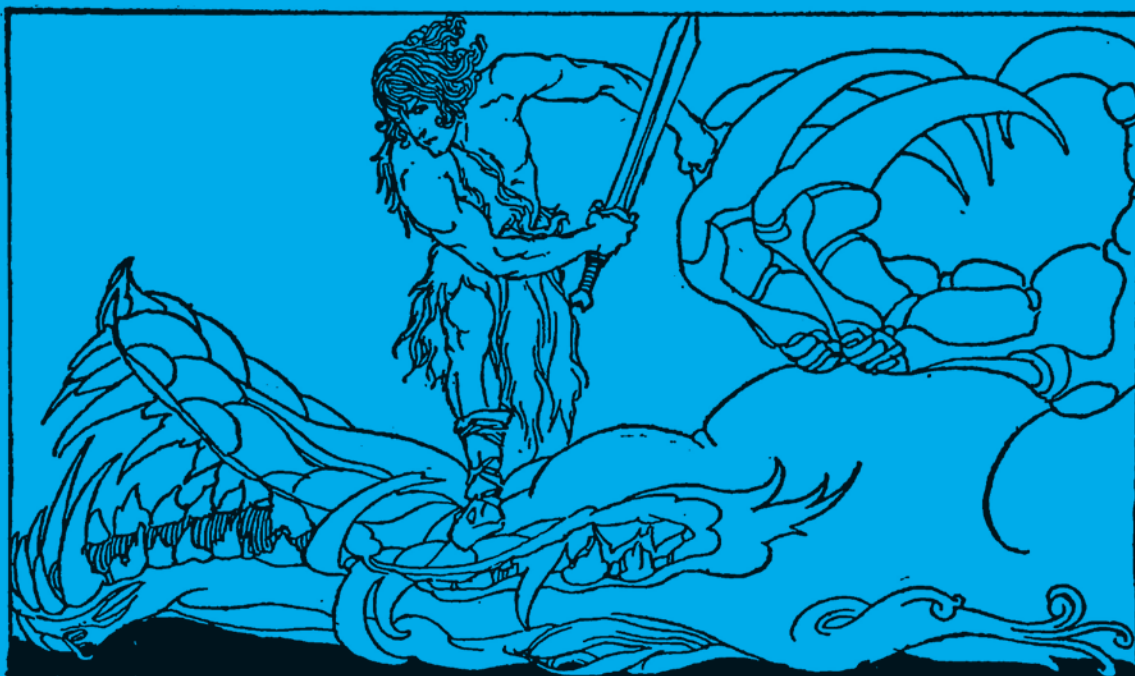


The Dragon Horde²

A Publication Dedicated to Old School Tabletop Role-playing Games



Willy Pogany

Special Nordic-themed Issue



NEW BIG DRAGON
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DRAGON BREATH

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello and welcome to issue #2!

First, a note regarding the name of this humble publication. Many of you may have said to yourselves, “Does this guy know he spelled ‘horde’ wrong? It’s supposed to be ‘h-o-a-r-d.’” Yes, I do know I spelled it wrong. It is a subtle-but-intentional pun—one that might make more sense if there was a group of us putting this thing together. This publication is, essentially, a two-man operation. I do find some confirmation in the fact that many great publications are based on misspellings, some intentional and some accidental (like the 80s indie comic book *Cerebus the Aardvark*). I did consider “fixing” the spelling, but the first edition built some momentum (and I thank you for it being so well-received); it seems counter-intuitive to rename the zine at this point. (BTW, I would probably have gone with *The Dragon Tooth* should I have had it to re-do.)

Second, I’m still trying to keep a majority of this book’s material “outside the blog”—that is, I’m trying to produce exclusive content for the readers and supporters of this publication as a way to make it “special.” Now, that doesn’t mean you’ll never see this content outside *The Dragon Horde*. In fact, one of the articles from issue #1 is slated for a secret project I’ve had brewing for quite a while (and one that is likely to stay secret, given the number of things lined up in front of it).

Finally (and possibly the biggest news of all), this zine is now available in print format! Each copy is lovingly hand-crafted, the way a zine should be (being personally printed, stapled, and folded). This falls right on the heels of launching the dedicated New Big Dragon storefront, thanks to the discovery of a great local printing resource that gives us control over the print quality of all our books. But I’ve already written about that on the *Save vs. Dragon* blog.

As usual, I hope you enjoy what’s contained herein, as much as I’ve enjoyed putting it together. Good gaming!

RICHARD J. LEBLANC, JR.,
New Big Dragon Games Unlimited



Arthur Rackham

THE MONSTER ROSTER

LINNORMS

Evil, cruel, ancient, primeval—these cousins of dragons have bedeviled men ever since the sons of Bor built Midgard. The foul linnorm shall continue to plague the earth until Ragnarök.



LINNORM ECOLOGY

Linnorms are cunning, cruel, and territorial, often wreaking havoc upon “trespassers” within their ever-expanding domains. Linnorms are driven by a greed matched only by their voracious appetites.

LINNORM SUB-TYPES & BODY FORMS

Linnorms appear in 6 different types, each with a distinct appearance and set of abilities: flame, forest, frost, gray, land, and river. All are wingless and generally serpentine. Growing longer as they age, their worm-like bodies sprout additional pairs of legs to support their increasing length. While only Flame or Grey linnorms possess the power of flight, any linnorm that possesses at least 2 pairs of legs (i.e., 4 legs or more) is able to burrow. The length of a linnorm is approximately 3' per HD.

LINNORM AGE LEVEL

The age of a linnorm affects many of its abilities, including the number of spells it may cast, and the number of times a day it may use its breath weapon.

Age Level	Age	HD Adj.	# of Legs
1. Very Young	1-5 yrs.	-4	0
2. Young	6-15 yrs.	-3	0
3. Sub-adult	16-25 yrs.	-2	0
4. Young Adult	26-50 yrs.	-1	2
5. Adult	51-100 yrs.	±0	2
6. Mature Adult	101-150 yrs.	±0	2
7. Old	151-200 yrs.	+1	4
8. Very old	201-250 yrs.	+2	4
9. Venerable	251-300 yrs.	+3	4
10. Elder	301-350 yrs.	+4	6
11. Ancient	351-400 yrs.	+5	6
12. Legendary	401+ yrs.	+6	8

STANDARD LINNORM ATTACKS

Linnorms with 2 or more appendages are capable of making a number of claw attacks (determined by total number of appendages) against the same target as their poisonous bite attack. In conjunction with a bite/claw attack, all linnorms are able to attack with a tail slap against the same or a different opponent.

All linnorms possess a breath weapon that may be used in lieu of other attacks, doing a number of hit points in damage equal to half the linnorm's remaining hit points. Linnorms may use their breath weapon a number of times each day equal to their age level (e.g., a venerable linnorm would be able to use its breath weapon up to 9 times per day).

SPELL USE

Beginning at a certain age level (by type), linnorms gain spellcasting abilities equal to a first level magic-user or cleric, and improve by one spellcasting level for each additional age level. For example, a linnorm attaining magic-user spells beginning at their 4th age level would use spells equal to a 1st level magic-user at their 4th age level, a 2nd level magic-user at their 5th age level, and so on.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All linnorms possess infravision to 90' and are able to detect invisibility within a 30' range. Additionally, all linnorms are immune to poison.

LANGUAGES

Each linnorm type speaks its own language, but only has a 50% chance of speaking the language of any other linnorm type. Furthermore, linnorms only have a 20% chance of speaking common.

Flame

Appearance: Deep orange to flaming red scales

Climate/Terrain: Any

Bite: Poisonous (kills in 3d4 rounds)

Breath Weapon: Stream of flame (5'Wx 100L).

Special Abilities: immune to fire (incl. magical); pyrotechnics (as MU spell; 3x/day); fireball (3d6; 120' range; once every 3 rounds)

Spells: as magic-user, beginning at 1st age level

Forest

Appearance: Mottled green and black scales

Climate/Terrain: Sub-arctic & temperate forests

Bite: Poisonous (kills in 4d6 rounds)

Breath Weapon: Stream of acid (1'W x 80'L)

Special Abilities: Speak with animals (at will); invisible to animals (at will); surprises on 1-3 (on 1d6) in forest

Spells: as magic-user, beginning at 4th age level

Frost

Appearance: Pearly blue scales

Climate/Terrain: Arctic & subarctic areas

Bite: Poisonous (kills in 3d6 rounds)

Breath Weapon: Cloud of cold (ice particles) 60'W x 40'H

Special Abilities: immune to cold (magical and non-magical); phantasmal force (3x/day)

Spells: as cleric, beginning at 4th age level

Gray

Appearance: Tiny, shiny black scales (skin-like)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Bite: Poisonous (kills in 3d4 rounds)

Breath Weapon: Jet of acid (black slime) 3'W x 60'L - corrodes in 3d6 rounds (if unwashed)

Special Abilities: shape change (at will; 3x/day)

Spells: as cleric, beginning at 1st age level

Land

Appearance: Dull green to brown scales

Climate/Terrain: Any non-arctic/non tropical

Bite: Poisonous (kills in 4d6 rounds)

Breath Weapon: Cone of heat (120' long; 5' wide at mouth; 40' wide at terminus)

Special Abilities: invisibility (at will; 3x/day)

Spells: as cleric, beginning at 2nd age level

River

Appearance: Pale green-gray scales

Climate/Terrain: Sub-arctic & temperate forests near water (particularly rivers and lakes)

Bite: Poisonous (kills in 3d6 rounds)

Breath Weapon: Cloud of steam (80'L x 30'W)

Special Abilities: immune to electricity; lightning bolt (3d6; 120' range; 2x/day)

Spells: as magic-user, beginning at 7th age level

LINNORM (0e/1e Stats)

Type:	Flame	Forest	Frost	Gray	Land	River
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare	Very rare	Very rare	Very rare	Very rare
NO. APPEARING:	1	1	1	1	1	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-3	1	-3	-1	0	3
MOVE: (M0/F/Sw/Bu)						
Serpentine	32"/36"/-/-	24"/-12"/-	18"/-18"/-	12"/36"/12"/-	32"/-18"/-	12"/-132"/-
Bipedal	18"/24"/-6"	18"/-9"/6"	12"/-18"/6"	12"/24"/9"/6"	24"/-18"/6"	9"/-24"/6"
Quadrupedal+	12"/24"/-12"	18"/-9"/12"	12"/-18"/12"	12"/24"/9"/12"	18"/-12"/12"	9"/-18"/12"
HIT DICE:	12	10	12	11	9	9
% IN LAIR:	60%	40%	60%	70%	50%	35%
TREASURE TYPE:	H	H	H	H	H	H
NO. OF ATTACKS:						
Serpentine	2 + special	2 + special	2 + special	2 + special	2 + special	2 + special
Bi/Quadrupedal	4 + special	4 + special	4 + special	4 + special	4 + special	4 + special
Hexa/ Octopedal	6 + special	6 + special	6 + special	6 + special	6 + special	6 + special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:						
Serpent	4-24/3-18	3-18/2-12	4-24/3-18	3-24/2-16	3-18/2-12	3-12/2-8
	+ special	+ special	+ special	+ special	+ special	+ special
Bi/Quadrupedal	2-12/2-12/4-24/	1-6/1-6/3-18/	2-12/2-12/4-24/	1-8/1-8/3-24/	1-6/1-6/3-18/	1-4/1-4/3-12/
	3-18 + special	2-12 + special	3-18 + special	2-16 + special	2-12 + special	2-8 + special
Hexa/ Octopedal	2-12/2-12/	1-6/1-6/	2-12/2-12/	1-8/1-8/	1-6/1-6/	1-4/1-4/
	2-12/2-12/4-24/	1-6/1-6/3-18/	2-12/2-12/4-24/	1-8/1-8/3-24/	1-6/1-6/3-18/	1-4/1-4/3-12/
	3-18 + special	2-12 + special	3-18 + special	2-16 + special	2-12 + special	2-8 + special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells, breath weapon	Spells, breath weapon	Spells, breath weapon	Spells, breath weapon	Spells, breath weapon	Spells, breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spells	Spells	Spells	Spells	Spells	Spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See description	See description	See description	See description	See description	See description
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional	Average	Genius	Very	Exceptional	Average
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil	Chaotic Evil	Neutral Evil	Chaotic Evil	Chaotic Evil	Chaotic Evil
SIZE:	3' long per HD	3' long per HD	3' long per HD	3' long per HD	3' long per HD	3' long per HD
PSIONIC ABILITY:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Att./Def. Modes:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil



LINNORM (BX Stats)

Type:	Flame	Forest	Frost	Gray	Land	River
ARMOR CLASS:	-3	1	-3	-1	0	3
HIT DICE:	12	10	12	11	9	9
MOVE: (Mo/Fi/Sw/Bu)						
Serpentine	320'/360'/-/-	240'/-/120'/-	180'/-/180'/-	120'/360'/120'/-	320'/-/180'/-	120'/-/320'/-
Bipedal	180'/240'/-/60'	180'/-/90'/60'	120'/-/180'/60'	120'/240'/90'/60'	240'/-/180'/60'	90'/-/240'/60'
Quadrupedal+	120'/240'/-/120'	180'/-/90'/120'	120'/-/180'/120'	120'/240'/90'/120'	180'/-/120'/120'	90'/-/180'/120'
ATTACKS:						
Serpentine	1 bite/1 tail + special	1 bite/1 tail + special	1 bite/1 tail + special	1 bite/1 tail + special	1 bite/1 tail + special	1 bite/1 tail + special
Bi/Quadrupedal	2 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	2 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	2 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	2 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	2 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	2 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special
Hexa/Octopedal	4 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	4 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	4 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	4 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	4 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special	4 claws/1 bite/ 1 tail + special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:						
Serpentine	4-24/3-18 + special	3-18/2-12 + special	4-24/3-18 + special	3-24/2-16 + special	3-18/2-12 + special	3-12/2-8 + special
Bi/Quadrupedal	2-12/2-12/4-24/ 3-18 + special	1-6/1-6/3-18/ 2-12 + special	2-12/2-12/4-24/ 3-18 + special	1-8/1-8/3-24/ 2-16 + special	1-6/1-6/3-18/ 2-12 + special	1-4/1-4/3-12/ 2-8 + special
Hexa/ Octopedal	2-12/2-12/ 2-12/2-12/4-24/ 3-18 + special	1-6/1-6/ 1-6/1-6/3-18/ 2-12 + special	2-12/2-12/ 2-12/2-12/4-24/ 3-18 + special	1-8/1-8/ 1-8/1-8/3-24/ 2-16 + special	1-6/1-6/ 1-6/1-6/3-18/ 2-12 + special	1-4/1-4/ 1-4/1-4/3-12/ 2-8 + special
NO. APPEARING:	1	1	1	1	1	1
SAVE AS:	Fighter: 12 (adj. \pm per HD)	Fighter: 10 (adj. \pm per HD)	Fighter: 12 (adj. \pm per HD)	Fighter: 11 (adj. \pm per HD)	Fighter: 9 (adj. \pm per HD)	Fighter: 8 (adj. \pm per HD)
MORALE:	11	9	10	11	10	9
TREASURE TYPE:	H	H	H	H	H	H
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic	Chaotic	Chaotic	Chaotic	Chaotic	Chaotic

THE LONG AND SHORT OF THE VIKING LONGHOUSE

Adapted from *The Private Life of the Old Northmen* by Rudolph Keyser
(Translated by the Reverend M. R. Barnard, M.A.)



One dwelling type dominated nearly the entire history of the Norse peoples—the longhouse. These structures usually took on one of two forms: the (wooden) longhouse or the turf house. Where timber was abundant, freestanding houses were built almost completely of wood. By comparison, in areas where timber was scarce or expensive, only the well-to-do could afford to adopt this style, forcing the poorer classes to live in turf houses constructed partly of stone and partly of earth and turf pounded together (creating a “mound-like” structure).

Longhouses were conspicuously rectangular, with a door at one end (or both). They were also a remarkably self-contained “apartment,” furnished (at most) with a few small closets, passages, and a loft. In contrast, a large “residence” was more akin to an estate of several such longhouses—lying close together, but completely unconnected. The overall width of a house ranged in size from 15'-25', with lengths ranging anywhere from 50'-100' (depending on the social status and wealth of its owner).

Inside the longhouse, the floor consisted of earth firmly rammed down, which in some cases would be covered by straw or rushes; though in more advanced forms, it would even be covered with wood. In the middle of the floor lengthways was

a long rectangular hearth or line of smaller circular or rectangular firepits. The roof peak featured several smokeholes which allowed the smoke from the hearth(s) to escape (even so, the smoke had a tendency to fill the upper part of the room and cover the rafters with soot).

During the daytime, light would be admitted into the dwelling partly through these smokeholes (ijdii), and also through additional openings in the lower part of the roof (glugavy). The longhouse was otherwise “window-less.”

Beds were placed around the perimeter of the interior, with benches set just inside the ring of beds. Sufficient room was left between the benches and the hearth(s) for tables used at meal times. The master’s seat was at the head of the table, flanked by two sacred staves carved of wood and noting the importance of the high seat.

The inner beams would sometimes be ornamented with carvings and paintings representing mythical or historical events, or subjects taken from nature. It was also customary to hang weapons on the walls, especially shields. In the houses of chieftains, each man’s accoutrement usually hung from the wall above the place allotted to him. Sometimes on great occasions, the walls were decked with tapestries (tjold), including home-wrought embroidery,

embroidered woollen cloths, and occasionally prized items of foreign manufacture.

Longhouses, particularly in the earliest ages, often included subterranean structures known as earth-houses (jarðhus). These secret cellars afforded the people of the house a hidden means of escape when under attack, or a hiding-place for a refugee that the master of the house did not want found. In those unquiet times, people frequently took the law into their own hands and private feuds were common, making the jarðhus an absolutely necessity.

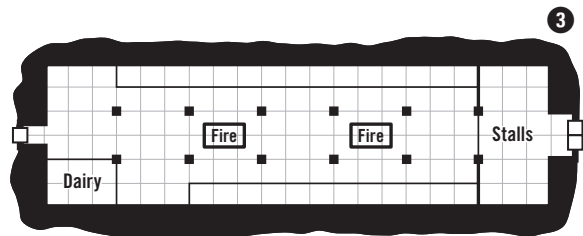
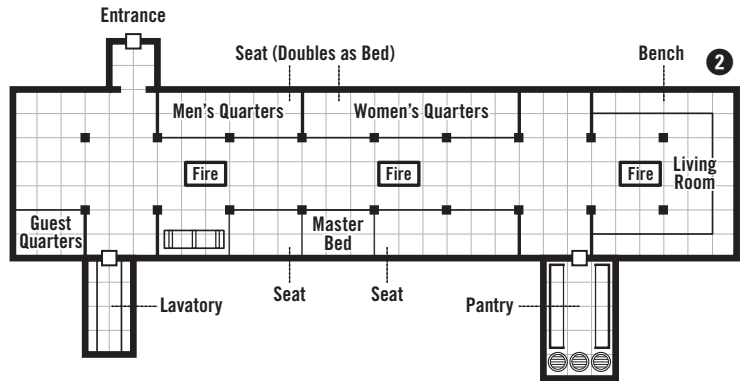
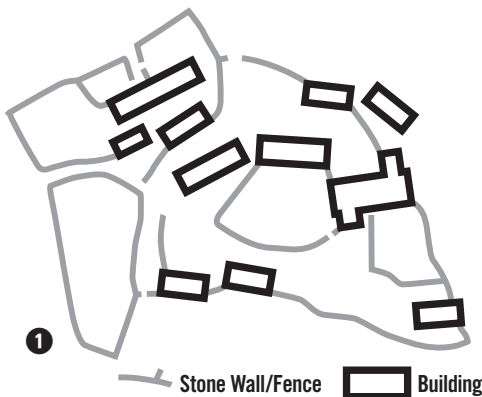
If the jarðhus was intended merely as a secret means of escape (as opposed to a refuge), it usually consisted of nothing more than a subterranean passage running from the owner's apartment to one of the outhouses (e.g., the cattle-shed or sheep-pen), or sometimes into a neighbouring wood. If the passage opened into the woods, the exit would normally be concealed from view by a thicket or bushes surrounding its mouth, thus providing the refugee with a better chance of remaining undiscovered. Sometimes, a similar secret underground passage connected some of the habitable dwellings on the estate (e.g., passing from the sleeping apartment to the keeping room).

When the jarðhus was intended as a place of refuge for some persecuted individual, it was constructed with greater care, but furnished with only the barest necessities (e.g., food and water). The entrance to the jarðhus was most often accessed via the storeroom, making it easier to supply the hidden person with provisions without fear of detection. Earthen storage houses of this type were usually constructed at some distance from the other houses of the estate, and were not frequented often.

Few could afford the large estates described above. Peasant farms were far more humble. On poorer estates, there was usually only a main dwelling, a small detached guest house, and perhaps a house for servants. On those estates of a better order, in addition to the structures noted above, there would be a room for the women, a bath-room, and a distinct building for the serfs of the estate. On the estates of powerful chieftains there would additionally be the following: a building specially intended for banquets, a guest house (gestahus) for the accommodation of poorer travellers, and a small building for private conferences.

EXAMPLES

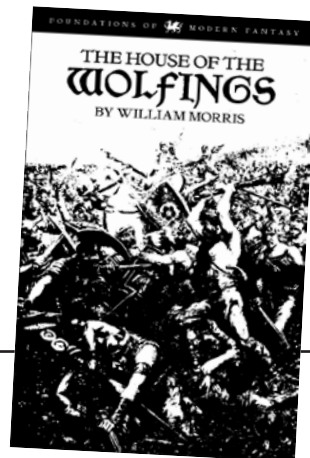
- ① Village/Estate
- ② Estate Longhouse (Wood)
- ③ Peasant Longhouse (Turf)



FROM THE FATHER OF MODERN FANTASY
THAT INSPIRED TOLKIEN AND LEWIS...

FOUNDATIONS OF  MODERN FANTASY

THE HOUSE OF THE
WOLFINGS
BY WILLIAM MORRIS



Warriors, dwarves, gods, epic battles, magic armor, and a ring. If this all sounds familiar, it's for good reason. In *The House of the Wolfings*, the first of the author's many great fantastic romances, William Morris weaves the traditional with the supernatural, and establishes a precursor to the modern epic fantasy genre. Based on a translation of an old Norse saga, Morris reconstructs a portrait of the lives of the Germanic Gothic Tribes galvanized into action against the attacks of imperial Rome. Thiodolf, the leader of the Wolfings, is one of two men chosen as War-Dukes to lead the tribes against their enemies. Thiodolf may be supported by his lover the Wood-Sun and their daughter the Hall-Sun (both of whom are related to the gods), but he also possesses a dwarf-made mail-shirt that, unbeknownst to him, bears a curse.

"The Dead Marshes and the approaches to the Morannon owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme. They owe more to William Morris and his Huns and Romans, as in *The House of the Wolfings* or *The Roots of the Mountains*."

– **J.R.R. Tolkien**

"He seems to retire far from the real world and build a world out of his wishes; but when he has finished the result stands out as a picture of experience ineluctably true."

– **C.S. Lewis**

Paperback • 196 Pages • \$7.95
<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/RchrdLBInc>



HERE'S THE THING...



Christian Krohg

Looking to add some flavor to your kick off your next adventure? Just remember, "There's always that thing!"

The Old Norse, Old English and Icelandic peoples call them a "þing." The Germans and the Dutch called them a "*ding*," the modern Scandinavian language uses "*ting*," and Anglo-Saxon England called them a "*folk moot*" or "*folk mote*." Regardless of the name, in these societies, a *thing* (or folk moot) was a general assembly of the free men in the society, wherein they performed the legislative and judicial functions of government—leaving the executive functions to the king (who led these assemblies, but by no means held the power in them).

Usually meeting once per year, the standard agenda of a thing (which met at a place called a *thingstead*) included the airing of complaints, the rendering of decisions, and the passing of laws. Adherence to the laws was highly regarded, but laws were seldom, if ever, written down. In Viking societies, it was the job of the *lovsigemann* to memorize them; this was done to help assure no one changed the laws—laws to which even the chieftains and king were subject. There were no penal institutions, so criminals were often exiled from society and made outlaws. Anyone could kill an outlaw free from the risk of criminal prosecution.

Disputes were resolved through negotiation and compromise. Such resolutions were particularly required since feuds and violence were permissible and, in some instances, even required to maintain one's honor. Settlements were most often reached between families, since the whole family was held responsible for the actions of one member, no matter how distant the relation. Punishments were, however, based on the closeness of the relationship. Most often, these settlements took the form of some type of financial compensation. Disputes could also be settled through a form of duel called *holmgang*, where two participants with sword and shield would fight to the death.

Finally, folk moots were also used as a place to present new techniques and ideas (e.g., new techniques for fishing and hunting), seek solutions to problems (e.g., approaching raiders or invaders), and even proffer suggestions (e.g., raiding and invading other countries). This makes things the perfect place to kick off adventures set against a milieu inspired by any of the societies mentioned above (Norse, Celtic, et al.)

THE VÖLVA

A NEW NPC CHARACTER CLASS

Part seer, part shaman, part wanderer—the völvu was held in high esteem, had immense authority, and charged well for her services, including prophecy, manipulation, protection, and healing. And even though she traveled the land freely, it was not uncommon for her to be the first person summoned in a time of crisis, acting as counsel to tribal chiefs and gods alike.



Richard J. LeBlanc, Jr.

The völvá (plural = vödur) is a shamanic seeress whose practices encompass necromantic shamanism, sorcery, and prophecy. Rarely is a völvá seen without her staff (the word “völvá” is derived from the words meaning “wand carrier” or “carrier of a magical staff”). The staff of the völvá is related to the distaffs of the Norns, who use them to spin fate.

Vödur hold the highest esteem in their homelands, most often acting as the right-hand of powerful warlords, sometimes holding even greater authority than the aristocratic lady, but still reliant upon the warlord’s benevolence. In fact, some vödur hold such power that even the gods themselves have been known to seek their counsel.

The völvá is an exception among women who are normally bound to family and community in clan society. Instead, vödur tend to remain unmarried (though not necessarily celibate) and travel the land, moving from estate to estate, selling spiritual services. In her younger years (at lower levels, generally from 1st through 8th), a völvá will travel the land, usually followed by a retinue of young people (approximately twice as many followers as the level of the völvá), until she is summoned in a time of crisis. Not only does the völvá hold immense authority in these situations, but she charges handsomely for her services as well (approximately 1,000 gp per level per month, plus 10% of all wealth acquired by her employer during that period; e.g., a 7th level völvá retained as a specialist would charge 7,000 gp per month, plus 10% of acquired wealth).

ABILITY SCORES: The prime requisite for vödur is Wisdom. A völvá who has a Wisdom score of 13 or greater gains a bonus on earned experience points. Vödur fight as magic-users, but save as clerics.

RESTRICTIONS: Vödur determine their hit points with four-sided dice (d4). They are averse to wearing armor so they may not wear any, nor may they carry a shield. Furthermore, the only weapon a völvá may use is her staff (see *Special Abilities* below for further information). A völvá must have a minimum score of 9 in both wisdom and intelligence.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: The most potent of the völvá’s abilities is the use of magic spells. The magic of the völvá is akin to both clerical and wizardly magic (with the spells usable by vödur coming from both the cleric and magic-user spell lists). The vödur use the following three main forms of magic:

- 1) Seiðr (pron. seithr): a form of spiritual journey that manifests itself in divination (aided by necromantic spirits) and manipulation (including spells of both influence and illusion; e.g., confusion, delusion, illusion, fear, etc.)
- 2) Spá-craft (pron. spau-craft): prophecy of the future through a combination of intuition and personal gnosis (knowledge and insight)
- 3) Galdr: a form of magic that involves the chanting or singing of magical incantations (the word galdr means “to sing”)

Because a völvá’s magic is spiritual in nature, vödur need not study nor memorize spells (as magic-users). Instead, they need only spend time focusing on the three methods noted above. Therefore, vödur may choose from all available spells of the same level for each adventure (or day). Once that spell is selected, it may not be changed during the course of that time period (adventure or day).

Beginning at 6th level, a völvá is able to shape-change once per day into any animal form associated with Freyja (boar, cat, falcon, or mare). Each völvá is able to use this ability once per day for a duration in turns equal to the völvá’s level. In this alternate form, they attack and save as their human form, and have the same number of hit points, but all movement and damage is done as the animal. Furthermore, the völvá may not use any of her other magical abilities while in animal form. The völvá will change back to human form if killed, but may otherwise change back at will. Once the völvá has returned to human form, she may no longer use the shape-changing ability for the rest of the day.

Although a völvá is limited to using only a staff as a weapon, the völvá is able to focus a portion of her magical energy into her staff, striking with +1 “to hit” and damage bonuses when using the staff in hand-to-hand combat, and gaining an additional +1 bonus for each 3 additional levels, (e.g., she strikes with a +2 bonus on all “to hit” and damage rolls at levels 4-6, a +3 bonus at levels 7-9, and so on). Furthermore, she is able to use her staff defensively during melee combat, providing a -1 AC bonus in such combat per three levels (e.g., a -1 AC HTH bonus at levels 1-3, a -2 bonus at levels 4-6, and so on).

Due to their migratory nature, a völva may never establish a stronghold. Instead, beginning at name (9th) level, a völva will seek out a warlord strong enough and wealthy enough to retain her services. The warlord that a völva serves must be at least two levels higher than her, and must compensate her with no less than 10% of any wealth

acquired during her service. Should the völva rise in level while serving a warlord so that she is only one level lower, she will leave immediately (regardless of the greatness of the warlord's need, or the amount of compensation offered to the völva) and she will leave his service immediately in search of a stronger warlord to serve.

Level	Name	Exp. Pts.	HD	Spells by Level					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
1	reader	0	1d4	2					
2	visionary	2200	2d4	2	1				
3	diviner	4400	3d4	3	2				
4	clairvoyant	8800	4d4	4	2	1			
5	foreteller	16600	5d4	4	2	2			
6	harbinger	33000	6d4	4	3	2	1		
7	prognosticator	66000	7d4	4	3	2	2		
8	soothsayer	125000	8d4	4	4	3	2		
9	völva	250000	9d4	4	4	3	2	1	
10	völva (10th level)	500000	9d4+1	4	4	4	2	2	
11	völva (11th level)	750000	9d4+2	4	4	4	3	2	1
12	völva (12th level)	1000000	9d4+3	4	4	4	4	3	1
13	völva (13th level)	1250000	9d4+4	5	4	4	4	3	2
14	völva (14th level)	1500000	9d4+5	5	5	5	4	3	2





Franz Stassen

Völva Spells Available by Level

1st Level

charm person
cure light wounds
detect evil*
detect magic
know alignment
protection from evil*
read languages
read magic
remove fear*
resist cold
sleep

2nd Level

activate staff
bless*
diagnosis
detect curse
detect food
detect invisible
detect poison
detect traps
ESP
know metal
phantasmal force

3rd Level

clairaudience
clairvoyance
cure blindness
cure disease
dispel magic
empathic healing
locate object
protection/evil
10' radius*
protection/
normal missiles
remove curse
speak with dead
striking

4th Level

charm monster
confusion
control human
cure serious
wounds
divination
hallucinatory
terrain
massmorph
neutralize poison
suggestion
wizard eye

5th Level

commune
contact higher
plane
control giant
dispel evil
false identity
feeblemind
locate person
pathfinding
stone tell
true sight

6th Level

anti-magic shell
analyze item
astral eye
control dragon
cure critical wounds
geas*
indetectability
locate monster
projected image

* denotes a spell
that is reversible

RUNECRAFTING: Beginning at name (9th) level, a völvá may begin to craft runed magic items. The crafting of a runed magic item is an intense and time-consuming process, and includes the following four stages: 1) the gathering of the materials and tools needed to craft the item, 2) an intense spiritual journey during which the völvá “searches” for the rune to be crafted, 3) a period of time during which the rune is contemplated until it is “known,” and 4) the crafting of the rune upon the item.

There are two distinct types of runed items (as crafted by a völvá): 1) runed items which act similarly to a ring of spell storing (that is, the reading of each rune releases an associated spell), and 2) runed items with permanent magical effects (e.g., a runed +1 sword).

Crafting a runed item that stores spells generally takes 250 gp and 1 week per spell level per rune (one “charge”). A runed item may hold as many runes as the item allows, but an individual rune is required for each spell or effect. Furthermore, there is a 10% chance per rune of failure during the process (e.g., there is a 10% chance of failure when crafting the first rune, a 20% chance of failure when crafting the second rune, and so on). Any failed attempt to craft a rune on an item will nullify any other runes already crafted upon the item (even if those previous attempts were successful). New/additional runes may not be crafted on a runed item that has released a charge.

Stored spells within a runed item may be used by any character as long as they are holding/wearing the item, and know how to phrase that rune aloud. Phrasing a rune correctly requires a knowledge of that individual rune, and how to speak it (e.g., a *detect evil* rune from one item does not appear identical to a *detect evil* rune from another item, nor are they spoken the same). Unless the völvá that created the rune is available to teach an understanding of the rune, a read magic or read languages spell is required.

Creating a runed item with a permanent magical effect can take anywhere from a month to a year, with a monetary cost of approximately 5000 gp per month (at DM’s discretion). A runed item with a permanent magical effect may be used by a character of any class (or race), and normally does not require speaking the rune for its magic to take effect.

Given the time and costs required for the research and production of a runed item, many völvur will refuse to perform these services for a retaining warlord, reserving the privilege solely for gods.

Völva Spell Notes by Level

Underlined spell name denotes new spell or spell not normally found in most standard OSR editions.

1ST LEVEL

charm person: as magic-user spell.

cure light wounds: as cleric spell; not reversible.

detect alignment: as cleric spell *know alignment*.

detect evil*: as cleric spell.

detect magic: as cleric spell.

protection from evil*: as magic-user spell.

read languages: as magic-user spell.

read magic: as the magic-user spell.

remove fear*: as level cleric spell.

resist cold: as cleric spell.

sleep: as magic-user spell.

2ND LEVEL

activate staff: völvá is able to “power up” her staff to strike with a number of dice (d6s) equal to 1/2 her level. [duration: 1 “to hit” roll, regardless of success or failure on the roll]

bless*: as cleric spell.

detect curse: völvá is able to detect if an item is cursed; item gets saving throw vs. magic, with target saving roll varying by strength of magic (stronger magic being harder to detect), from weak (5 or higher on d20) to strong (15 or higher on d20). A cursed item that makes its save eludes detection. [range: touch of staff to a single item; duration: permanent]

detect food: allows völvá to find any existing food in an environment where its presence is crucial (e.g., desert, wilderness, etc.). [range: 20'/level; duration: 6 turns]

detect invisible: as magic-user spell.

detect poison: völvá is able to detect the presence of poison in an item (if present); spell provides no immunity to the poison. [range: touch of staff to a single item; duration: permanent]

detect metal: allows völvá to detect the presence of metal, but not to know its type; the völvá's staff will be gently “tugged” in the direction of the largest source of metal (by volume) within range of the spell. [range: 60'; duration: 6 turns]

detect traps: as cleric spell find traps.

ESP: as magic-user spell.

phantasmal force: as magic-user spell.

3RD LEVEL

clairaudience: as potion/magic-user spell.

clairvoyance: as magic-user spell

cure blindness: völvá is able to permanently cure one target creature (range: touch of staff) from blindness (most kinds, including from light/dark spells, but not from curses); not reversible.

cure disease: as cleric spell; not reversible.

diagnosis: allows the völvá to know what is wrong with a character that may be ill, unconscious, or similarly affected, and to know the extent of any damage that may have no obvious manifestations. [range: touch (hand); duration: diagnosing a single character requires a spiritual journey of 1 turn, during which the völvá must maintain concentration or the spell will fail]

dispel magic: as magic-user spell.

empathic healing: allows völvá to “absorb” all damage, poison, etc. from injured character and transfer the damage to herself; the völvá must absorb all damage and cannot be selective about which afflictions or the amount of damage absorbed (e.g., if the character has lost 14 hit points, been poisoned and made blind, the völvá must take 14 hit points of damage, become poisoned, and made blind); any remaining durations for an afflicted character are transferred to the völvá with the same amount of time remaining as if the originally afflicted character still possessed them; if the völvá absorbs more hit points than she currently has, she will die; if the völvá empathically heals an unconscious character, she will immediately fall unconscious. [range: touch (hand); duration: see above]

locate object: as cleric spell.

protection/evil 10' radius*: as magic-user spell.

protection/normal missiles: as magic-user spell

remove curse: as cleric spell; not reversible.

speak with dead: permits the völvá to speak to dead creatures, asking up to three questions; the

length of time since the creature has died limits the level of völvá as outlined below:

level of völvá	creature may not have been dead longer than:
4	1 day
5	3 days
6	1 week
7	2 weeks
8	3 weeks
9	1 month
10	6 weeks
11	2 months
12	3 months
13+	+2 months/level above 12

striking: as cleric spell, but use of spell is limited to the völvá's staff.

4TH LEVEL

charm monster: as magic-user spell.

confusion: as magic-user spell.

control human: as ring of human control.

cure serious wounds: as cleric spell; not reversible.

divination: provides the völvá an overview of the conditions of a known area (e.g., creatures present, general type/amount of available treasure, physical condition of area, etc.); base chance of success is 60% +2% per character level [range: any distance from völvá, as long as location is known; duration: requires a spiritual journey of 1 turn, during which the völvá must maintain concentration or the spell will fail]

hallucinatory terrain: as magic-user spell.

massmorph: as magic-user spell.

neutralize poison: as cleric spell.

suggestion: völvá is able to guide the actions of a single target creature by making a reasonable suggestion of a few words (spell effects are negated immediately if suggestion causes self-harm) [range: 30'; duration: 6 turns + 6 turns/level]

wizard eye: as magic user spell.

5TH LEVEL

commune: as cleric spell.

contact higher plane: as magic-user spell.

dispel evil: as cleric spell.

control giant: as potion of giant control.

false identity: provides the völvá doppelganger-like ability to take on a complete identity of another human, including the ability to talk like the assumed identity. [range: self; duration 2 turns/level]

feblemind: as magic-user spell.

locate person: as *locate object*, but for person that is well known to the völvá.

pathfinding: allows the völvá to find the quickest way from her current location to target destination (e.g., out of a forest or a dungeon); may only be used once per day. [range: special; duration 6 turns]

stone tell: völvá is able to "converse" mentally with an area of stone, allowing the völvá to ask questions of the stone, and receive information about the location, as well as the history of the location. [range: touch; duration: 1 turn; area of effect: 1 cubic yard of stone]

true seeing: allows the völvá to see the reality of any illusion or similar effect, including secret doors and ethereal objects/creatures. [range: 120'/sight range; duration: 1 round/level]

6TH LEVEL

anti-magic shell: as magic-user spell.

analyze item: permits völvá to know all aspects of an item, including its abilities, side effects, etc.; magic items are permitted a saving throw vs. magic, with target saving roll varying by strength of magic, from from weak (5 or higher on d20) to strong (15 or higher on d20). [range: touch; duration: requires a spiritual journey of 1 turn, during which the völvá must maintain concentration or the spell will fail]

astral eye: as wizard eye, but eye may move through objects, unless impenetrable by magic.

control dragon: as potion of dragon control.

cure critical wounds: as cleric spell.

geas*: as magic-user spell.

indetectability: makes völvá immune to all forms of detection and divination except for *detect life* spells. [range: self; duration: 3 turns + 1 turn/level]

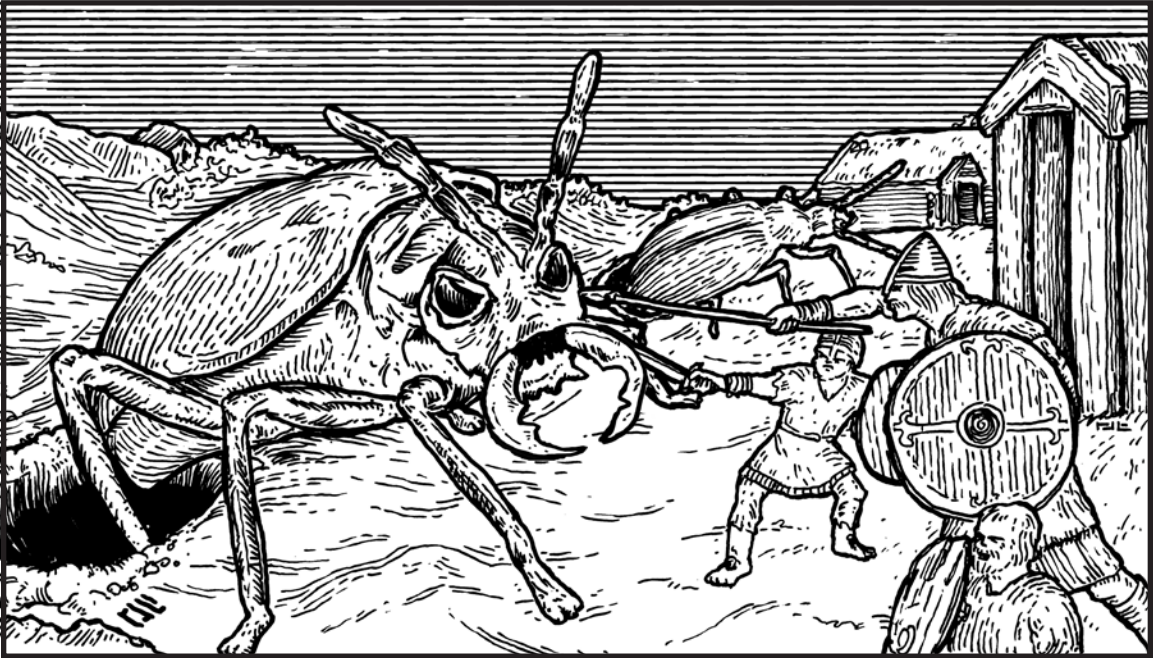
locate monster: as locate person, but for any individual sentient creature well known to the völvá.

projected image: as magic-user spell.

vifillmein

An Adventure for Characters Levels 1-3

Richard J. LeBlanc, Jr.



Over the past few weeks, the small farming community of Sællgarth (the name means “Happy Farmland”) has have been plagued by attacks from giant beetles. Given the belief by the locals in *urðr* (fate), they are sure they have done something to offend the gods. Fearing the area has become permanently cursed, many families have left the area, abandoning the name Sællgarth in favor of Vifillmein (“Beetle-home”).

Egill (a local boy) witnessed something strange one night while passing through Sællgarth on his way home from the day’s hunting expedition. He saw a young man with a five-braided beard and wild black hair who appeared to call forth beetles from the ground and command them. The boy’s widowed mother and the others of their village dismissed his vision as shadows misread under a dark moon, but Egill knows what he saw. After weeks of pleading, and the ever-encroaching beetle threat. Egill reached a breaking point, and has set out in search of the bearded man. Taking with him only some food, the well-crafted bow left by his deceased father, a few arrows, and a poor excuse for an axe, he has set out for where he saw the man commanding the beetles. Along the way, he is asking every person he meets for assistance, including the PCs.

Background for the DM

Though unknown to the people in the area, “ground zero” for the beetle plague is the longhouse belonging to the novice magic-user Arn Marr the Flamestealer. Arn Marr himself, however, is quite well known by everyone in the area. He is an infamously lazy person who always finds the easiest way of doing things. This is, in fact, how he got the moniker of “Flamestealer,” when a local resident remarked Arn Marr would sooner wait for somebody to walk by his house with a lantern than attempt to start a fire in his home using flint and steel. Arn Marr is the only magic-user known to be in the area, though the locals will often remark that the term “magic-user” is a stretch, since Arn Marr has done little-to-no studying to that end (having learned little more in the last three years than a ventriloquism spell). Should it be suggested that Arn Marr is responsible for the beetle plague, nobody will think he is capable of it, though many will feel that if he were capable of it, he might have done it out of revenge for the locals’ continued ridicule of him.

In truth, Arn Marr was trying to take the easy way out again. A traveling merchant passing through the area sold Arn Marr an orb that was supposed to grant added levels of spellcasting to the person that possessed it. However, in reality the item is a **cursed sphere of beetle summoning** (see the **New Magic Item** sidebar). No sooner was the merchant out of sight than a giant beetle came out of the sphere. It has been producing all types of giant beetles ever since. Now that Arn Marr owns the item, the curse is his to deal with.

When the plague started, the infestation inside Arn Marr’s home was so bad, and the beetles dug through so much ground below Arn Marr’s turf house that it collapsed into the ground. With its earthen roof level to the ground, it appears the house was wiped off the face of the earth. It is, however, actually sunken and intact—accessible only by entering a nearby beetle tunnel and crawling into the now-subterranean structure.

Launching the Adventure

The following suggestions are offered for ways that may be used to introduce the PCs to this adventure:

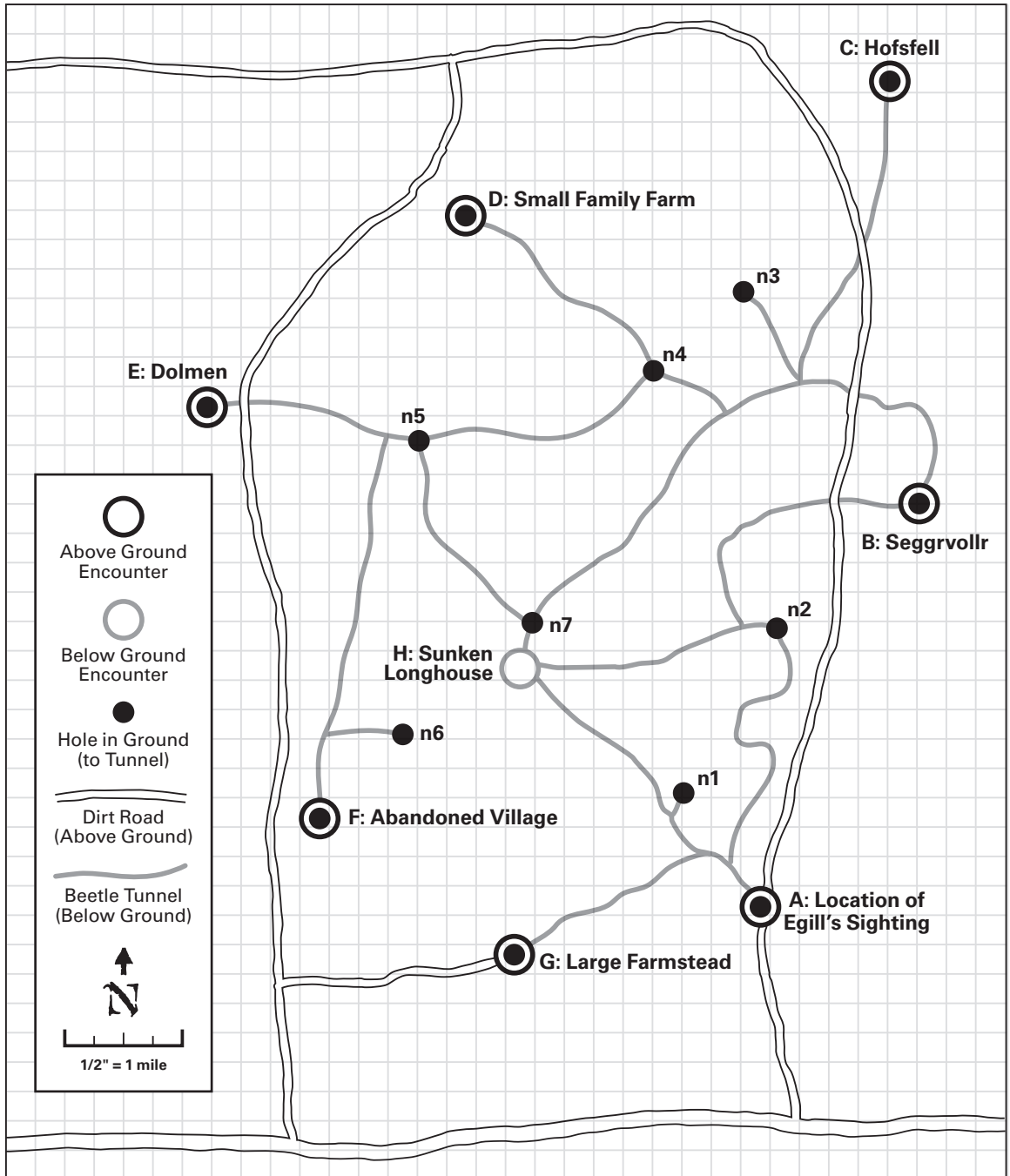
1. A group of the local farmers post a modest reward for adventurers willing to investigate and eliminate the plague.
2. Egill stops the PCs on the main road that passes along the south side of the area and begs them to help him investigate the plague.
3. The PCs are traveling the main road that passes along the south side of the area when they are attacked by **2 giant tiger beetles** (hp:13,12). Egill will pass by during the attack and join in (relating his story afterward).
4. The PCs meet a group of travelers heading away from the area on the main road. The travelers warn the PCs to stay away, and relate the details of the beetle plague.

Local Rumors About the Plague

Roll 1d12

1. Arn Marr the Flamestealer did it out of anger at the locals for making fun of him being so lazy.
2. The gods are angry at everyone for making such fun of Arn Marr.
3. A traveling merchant that passed through recently was a mischievous god in disguise. He did this.
4. Arn Marr purchased a tome of spells from the traveling merchant, and summoned the beetles to exact his revenge.
5. Arn Marr died when the beetles attacked him.
6. A traveling merchant died in a beetle attack.
7. The only way to stop the plague is through prayer and penance.
8. The plague will stop only when enough lives have been lost to appease the gods.
9. Arn Marr is too lazy to have started the plague.
10. A völvu living about ten miles to the west is to blame for the plague.
11. Arn Marr hired a mentor who started the plague as a test for Arn Marr, but Arn Marr is too lazy to learn to stop it.
12. A recent fire to the north left conditions prime for the laying and incubation of beetle eggs.

Map of the Vifillmein Area



Maneuvering Through/Following the Beetle Tunnels

The beetle tunnels are small (only about 2'-3' in diameter), allowing only limited movement inside. Unless otherwise noted, the tunnels are completely dark.

Gnomes and halflings may crawl through comfortably at half their normal movement rate, but may not engage in combat other than defending themselves with a shield (if they enter "shield first").

Dwarves and elves may "wiggle through" at one-fourth their normal movement rate, but only if unarmored and have no shield; neither may they engage in combat. Dwarves and elves in armor or with shields will be unable to enter without needing to excavate first.

Humans and larger races may only enter if they excavate first.

Characters with a modicum of outdoor aptitude (e.g., elves and rangers) will be able to easily follow the paths of the beetle tunnels from above ground (by following "ridges" created at the surface).

MAJOR ENCOUNTER AREAS

A. Area of MU Sighting

This is the area where Egill originally saw the magic-user who was supposedly summoning the beetles. (Arnmarr was, in fact, trying to fight them off.) A large hole in the ground here leads downward into a tunnel. Just inside the entrance (underground, near the mouth of the tunnel) are the carcasses of 2 giant fire beetles. The beetles' glowing ocular glands—ruptured by a violent death—sprayed across the walls, providing a fair amount of illumination in the immediate area.

B. Seggrvollr (Lithic Monuments)

This area features 28 gigantic (approximately 30'-tall) tapered lithic stones set in the form of a large oval. Three of the giant stones have fallen over as a result of the giant beetles' tunneling under the field. In the middle of the oval, **2 giant bombardier beetles** (hp:15,13) are locked in battle with **3 giant fire beetles** (hp:9,7,6). There are two distinct holes in the ground here: one leads north (intersecting with the tunnel that leads to the village of Hofsfell), and one heading westward before turning south, approaching the fire beetle den at **n2**.

If the two men from Hofsfell (Ketill Horsskelson and Erlendr Ulfarson) have joined the PCs, they will know this place is known as Seggrvollr ("Hero Field"), and that it was supposedly made by the gods as a monument to the fallen heroes of the heavens that died in the battle to defeat the demons that originally inhabited the world, and make it habitable by men. In a moment of silence (e.g., at the end of battle with the beetles), Erlendr stare blankly at the monuments and shed a single tear at the sacrilege that the beetles have done to this place.

Wandering Monsters: Above Ground

Check every 3 turns.

Roll 1d8

1. 1d4+1 bandits
2. 1d4 giant bombardier beetles
3. 1d4 giant fire beetles
4. 1d4 giant oil beetles
5. 1d3 giant tiger beetles
6. 1d4 "refugees"
(locals evacuating area w/ all they can carry)
- 7-8. No encounter

Wandering Monsters: Below Ground

Check every 2 turns.

Roll 1d4

1. 1 giant bombardier beetle
2. 1 giant fire beetle
3. 1d4 giant oil beetle
4. 1d3 giant tiger beetle

NPCs I

Egill Elkeson

0-level Fighter

13, 4'6", 115 lb., male

S:7, I:12, W:14, D:13, C:11, CH:15

hp:3, AC:8, AL:(lawful) good

Equipment: bow, 5 arrows, axe, 3 days' rations

Notes: Egill is familiar with the area and the locations of the various farms/settlements (but is unfamiliar with anyone living in those places); +1 bonus on saves vs. magic, +1 bonus on ranged attacks; -1 bonus to AC

Ketill Hrosskelson

1st-level Fighter

24, 6'1", 195 lb., male

S:14, I:11, W:10, D:12, C:11, CH:14

hp:8, AC:7, AL:(neutral) good

Equipment: leather armor, shield, axe, sword, shovel, crowbar, 2 weeks' rations

Notes: Ketill is a quiet man who lets his physical actions speak for him; +1 "to hit," damage, and opening doors

Erlendr Ulfarson

1st-level Fighter

22, 5'10", 165 lb., male

S:10, I:7, W:15, D:15, C:8, CH:13

hp:7, AC:7, AL:(neutral) good

Equipment: padded armor, shield, axe, sword, lantern, 1 week's rations

Notes: Erlendr is of simple mind, but is incredibly empathic and can become quite emotional; +1 bonus on ranged attacks; -1 bonus to AC

C. The Village of Hofsfell

This small village consists of 5 generously-sized longhouses. The tunnel from underground that leads to this area opens up just to the southwest of longhouse #1. The village is home to 9 extended families (2 families in longhouse #1, 2 families in longhouse #2, 1 family in longhouse #3, 2 families in longhouse 4, and 2 families in longhouse 5). All of the people living here are completely deaf—the result of a succession of attacks from giant bombardier beetles. The beetles have been successfully fended off, but it has left many of the residents here (approximately 50%) "shell-shocked."

There are 2 adult males here who are willing to join the PCs and lend their services as 1st-level fighters (see **NPCs I:** Ketill Hrosskelson and Erlendr Ulfarson). Unfortunately, those men will remain completely deaf for another 1d4+3 days, and partially deaf for another 1d4 months afterward.

D. Small Family Farm

This 2-acre plot of land was once home to rows and rows of a variety of crops, but they have been absolutely destroyed (by the beetles). Only a few shreds of leaves and stalks are left. Situated near the north end of the property are two modest longhouses. The main tunnel leading into the area connects to a series of tunnels weaving under the farm's fields. Individual tunnels lead from from the labyrinth under the field to longhouse #1 and longhouse #2 (below).

The smaller of the two longhouses measures approximately 20' wide and 60' long, and was used as the residence. The only inhabitants here now are **3 giant fire beetles** (hp:9,7,6). A hole in the middle of the floor here leads downward into a system of interconnected tunnels weaving under the farm's fields.

The larger of the two longhouses measures approximately 30' wide and 80' long, and was used as the stables and slaves' sleeping quarters. Strewn about the floor in the stable area are the shredded remains of the half-dozen or so cattle that were once housed here (eaten by the beetles). A hole in the floor here leads downward into a system of interconnected tunnels weaving under the farm's fields. Cowering in the rafters of the servants' area is a **15-year old servant girl** (hp:3; fights/saves as NM).

E. Dolmen

A beetle tunnel exits the ground here in front of a large, weathered, moss-covered dolmen (megalithic tomb). Strewn across the ground here are what appear to be the carcasses of nearly a dozen beetles, but the scene is one of such gore that it is impossible to tell of what species. A shuffling can be heard coming from inside the dolmen. If the PCs come within 20' of the dolmens, **2 ghouls** (hp:14,13) will leap out and attack. Inside the dolmen is a small wooden chest with 4000 gp and a **scroll: protection from undead**.

F. Abandoned Village

This village consists of 5 abandoned longhouses and 1 stable, each of which has been both ravaged by the beetles and looted by bandits. Inside the barn are 2 **giant fire beetles** (hp:9,8) fighting over the remains of a cow.

G. Large Farmstead

This 5-acre plot of land was once home to rows and rows of a variety of crops, but they have been absolutely consumed (by the beetles). Only a few shreds of leaves and stalks remain. Situated near the south end of the property is a massive 50'x120' longhouse (the residence), and an elongated 20'x70' longhouse (stables and slaves quarters) which has been nearly completely destroyed. A moaning, blister-covered cow wanders around at the edge of the field.

The tunnel under this area enters the smaller longhouse in what was the slaves' quarters, but so little remains of the building which was also used to house animals, it's almost impossible to tell.

The outside of the other building (the main residence) appears untouched. A group of men are moving things out of the home and loading them into the back of a horse-drawn cart situated in front of the main entrance of the longhouse. The men are actually bandits who have been looting throughout the area. Outside the longhouse, are 2 **bandits** (hp:7,6,4) with swords. Inside the longhouse are 3 **bandits** (hp:7,5) with swords and shields. The bandits outside the house will attempt to make the PCs believe this is their home, that the women and children have already been sent ahead, and the men are packing up their belongings to leave the area. If they get the chance, they will ask the PCs to help them, and lead them inside the house where the other bandits will be ready to ambush the PCs. If any of the PCs get a good look at the items already in the cart, they will see that the cart contains duplicate tools and metal household goods of which most families only own one. Inside the house, lying on the floor, are the bodies of the family members that lived here (2 adult males, 2 adult females, and 3 female children). The kills are so recent, blood is still oozing from the wounds that killed them (inflicted by the bandits). In the back of the cart is a medium wooden chest with iron hardware that contains the following: 1000 gp, 300 pp, 2 gold necklaces (300 gp, 400 gp), a blue star sapphire (1000 gp), and a **wand of paralyzation** (7 charges). The chest is locked and protected with a poison needle in the latch that kills in 2d4 turns (on a failed save vs. poison).

H. Sunken Longhouse (Arnmarr's Longhouse)

At "ground zero" for the beetle infestation is Arnmarr's longhouse. Due to the constant beetle activity wearing away the ground underneath it, the structure has completely sunk into the ground, and its earthen roof appears as nothing more than a raised earthen ridge along the ground. The only way into the building is through one of the existing beetle

MONSTERS USED IN THIS ADVENTURE

Bandit

HD:1; AC:6; #AT:1 weapon;
M:12; ST:T/1.

Beetle, Giant Bombardier

HD:2+2; AC:4; #AT:1 bite (2d6) or special; M:9; ST:F/1;
rear vapor (8' cube): 3d4,
all hearing creatures in
16' radius = stun (2d4 rds.)
+ deafen (2d4 add. rds.)

Beetle, Giant Fire

HD:1+2; AC:4; #AT:1 bite (2d4);
M:12; ST:F/1; ocular glands
give off light (10' radius;
glow 1-6 days after removed)

Beetle, Giant Oil

HD:2; AC:4; #AT:1 bite (1d6)
or special; M:12; ST:F/1;
squirt oil: on successful hit,
target attacks at -2 "to hit"
until cured

Beetle, Giant Tiger

HD:3; AC:3; #AT:1 bite (2d6);
M:15; ST:F/1

Ghoul

HD:2; AC:6; #AT:2 claws/
1 bite (1d3 ea.) + special;
M:9; ST:F/2; paralytic touch:
2-8 turns vs. ogre-sized
or smaller, except elves
(on failed save vs. paralysis)

NPCs II

Arnmarr the Lampstealer

1st-level Magic-User

28, 5'9", 135 lb., male

S:13, **I:**17, **W:**15, **D:**14, **C:**9, **CH:**10

hp:24, **AC:**5, **AL:**Chaotic

Magic Items:

ring of protection +1,

ring of invisibility,

wand of fireballs (1 charge)

Spells: First (1): *Ventriloquism.*

Notes: Arnmarr gets none of the appropriate bonuses that should normally be provided him, regardless of his high ability scores (he refuses to try/apply himself).

Ugga Snorrason

1st-level Fighter

18, 6'1", 175 lb., male

S:12, **I:**9, **W:**8, **D:**12,

C:8, **CH:**8

hp:8, **AC:**4, **AL:**(neutral) good

Equipment: chain armor, shield, axe, sword, dagger, 2 days' rations

Notes: Ugga is a hopeful, proud, and devout man.

tunnels, or excavating directly down through the 3' of earthen roofing, then breaking through the roof into the structure underneath.

Arnmarr (see **NPCs II**) has been trapped inside the structure since it sank into the ground some three weeks ago. He has tried several times to smash the item, but quickly learned all that does is summon a giant beetle before the orb automatically "repairs itself." Unfortunately, he is trapped with Cursed Sphere of Beetle Summoning. As the item summoned new beetles, Arnmarr would use his ring of invisibility, staying hidden from the beetles that appeared until they left through one of the existing tunnels, or dug a new one. Given his propensity for laziness, Arnmarr could not bring himself to attempt to dig his way out (since the tunnels are too small for him to crawl through). Instead, he locked up all his food in an iron chest (to keep it safe from the beetles) and rationed himself judiciously to make the food last as long as possible (in hopes somebody would eventually find him and save him).

If Arnmarr hears any sounds nearby (e.g., the PCs tunneling their way in through the roof, or otherwise), he will immediately use his ring of invisibility, withdraw to the remotest corner of the room, and do his best to remain unfound. If any one attempts to take his food stores, he will beg and plead (while remaining invisible) that the food not be taken. He will make himself visible only as a last resort. He will also freely offer up the story of how he was duped, begging for pity and assistance with removing the curse from the sphere. If none of the PCs possess the ability to remove the item's curse, he will tell them there is a völva about 10 miles west who will remove the curse for a modest fee. Unfortunately, Arnmarr foolishly spent every last gold piece he had to buy the sphere and, therefore, has no money to pay the völva (who is infamous for asking to be paid in advance of providing her services). He will, however, give every last magic item he has to the PCs if they promise to take the orb to the völva to remove the curse. Arnmarr will not hesitate to lie about how often the orb summons beetles, making it seem much less malevolent than it truly is.

Arnmarr has not gotten much sleep over the last few weeks (since the orb summons a beetle every 30 minutes) and he has a tendency to ramble nonsensically and change subjects often.

MINOR ENCOUNTER AREAS

n1. Human Carcasses

On the ground here, near the hole into the tunnel, are the carcasses of 2 local men that appear to have died fighting giant beetles. Lying on the ground next to them are their swords, but they seem to have had no other weapons or equipment. Searching the bodies will reveal the first man was carrying in his pocket a lock of blond hair tied with a strand of leather (a "good luck charm" from a loved one). The other man has 2 gp in his pocket. Otherwise they have nothing of value.

n2. Tiger Beetle Den

Blood and small body parts on the ground here show evidence of combat. Just inside the hole here, **2 giant tiger beetles** (hp:13,8) are using the space as a makeshift “den.” Inside the hole with them are a **scroll: invisibility** and a **+1 dagger**.

n3. “Booming” Hole

A booming sound echoes from inside this hole. Somewhere down the tunnel heading toward the hole is a **giant bombardier beetle** (hp:9). The beetle will emerge from the hole approximately 1 turn later.

n4. “Glowing” Hole

A strange light emanates from inside this hole. A closer look inside the hole reveals that a fight took place with a giant fire beetle, and the giant fire beetle lost. Its glow glands were ruptured during the battle and sprayed all over the tunnel walls just inside the hole. Smearred across the remains of the beetle, using some of the glowing fluid, a rune has been drawn (the “signature” of the victor in this battle).

n5. Uggja Snorrason

Sitting atop a giant fire beetle carcass here is **Uggja Snorrason** (see **NPCs II**). Smearred on the carcass that Uggja is using as a stool, in the glowing fluid from its glow glands, is Uggja’s personal identification rune. Uggja believes the beetles were sent by the gods as a way to prove his worth as a warrior. He is marking each of the carcasses of the beetles he kills to make sure the gods know who killed them.

n6. Oil Beetles

2 giant oil beetles (hp:8,6) are crawling out of the hole here.

n7. Access to Arnmarr’s Longhouse

This hole accesses the tunnel that provides the most direct access to Arnmarr’s Sunken Longhouse (**H**). It will take approximately 12 turns of 1 person digging in this area to open the tunnel up enough to provide human-sized access into the longhouse (divided by the number of people digging). There is a 1-in-2 chance every 3 turns spent at this tunnel that the beetle summoned by the Cursed Sphere of Beetle Summoning (for that 3-turn period) will exit through this tunnel.

EPILOGUE

The merchant who sold Arnmarr the sphere was actually robbed and killed by the bandits (which explains how they came into possession of their **wand of paralyzation**).

The völva will charge 500 gp to remove the curse from the sphere (at which point it will become an unremarkable glass globe worth 2 gp).

Arnmarr will most likely not learn his lesson from these events.

NEW MAGIC ITEM: Cursed Sphere of Beetle Summoning

This small spherical glass orb is approximately 6” in diameter and swirls inside with a smoky mix of green and gray. It summons giant beetles at a rate of 1 every three turns. The beetles will appear to “crawl out of the sphere” (materializing from a small, normal-sized beetle into its full giant-sized form), doing so in 1 round.

Once every 3 turns, roll 1d4 to determine which kind of beetle is summoned by the sphere:

1. 1 giant bombardier beetle
2. 1 giant fire beetle
3. 1 giant oil beetle
4. 1 giant tiger beetle

If the orb is smashed or broken, it will automatically release an additional giant beetle, and the broken orb will “repair itself” (no matter the orb’s state or condition, or location of its pieces), returning to its owner (e.g., at his/her feet) at the beginning of the next round.

The orb will continue to produce beetles until the curse is removed from the object.

If the curse is removed, the sphere will appear as a clear, lifeless glass orb (2 gp).

DEALING WITH LEVEL DRAIN

Very few tenets of old-school gaming have been house-ruled as extensively as monster attacks that cause level drain. The following set of options is presented to provide alternatives to the “by the book” rules for life draining by undead creatures.

As a Factor of the Character’s XP Required to Attain 2nd Level

Drains 1d6 times the experience required for the character to have reached second level. For example, if a fighter were required to earn 2,500 XP to reach second level (even if that fighter is third level or above), then a successful wight touch (and failed saving throw) would result in an XP drain of 1d6 times 2,500 points. The XP drain can only be replaced by additional earned XPs and does not “heal.”

As a Product of a Pre-determined Number of XPs and the Amount of Damage Generated by the Attack

Under this methodology, a number of XPs is multiplied by the hit points in damage caused by the attack. For example, if a successful wight attack does 1d4 and produces 3 points of damage, and the XP factor is 1,000 XPs, then the attack would permanently drain 3,000 XPs. This factor (of XPs) may be static or scalable, for example:

- any static number the DM feels is befitting of the campaign (e.g., 100 XP, 500 XP, or 1,000 XP)
- a number of XPs based on the HD of the monster (e.g., a base of 100 XP per HD multiplied by the number of HD of the monster, then multiplied by the damage done in the attack)
- a number of XPs based on the remaining hp of the monster (e.g., a base of 10 XP per hp mul-

tiplied by the hp the monster possesses at the time of the attack, then multiplied by the damage done in the attack)

Percentage of the Character’s Total Number of XPs

Under this paradigm, the monster would drain a percentage of the character’s total XPs (e.g., 5% or 10%). Alternately, the percentage drain may be based on the level of the monster (e.g., a 2 HD monster might drain 2%, while an 8 HD monster might drain 8%).

Temporary Level Drain

The touch of the creature drains a number of level as prescribed by the ruleset, but only lasts for a certain number of days. The duration of the drain may be based on any of the following options:

- 1 day per HD of the monster
- 1 day per hp of the monster
- 1 day per point of damage caused by the attack
- a randomly determined number of days (e.g., 1d6)
- a randomly determined number of days based on the HD of the monster (e.g., 1d4 days per HD)

Optional rule: A second touch from the same creature results in the drain becoming permanent (as prescribed by the original ruleset).

Loss of Experience Points Only (But Not Levels)

The character loses a number of XPs equal to the number of XPs required to attain their current level. The character continues to attack and save at the current level (as well as keep all current hp), but this loss of XPs seriously delays the character in attaining their next level.

Life Force Loss Expressed Through Character Aging

This method “life drain” is treated as bringing the character closer to death, instead of the “stripping away” of life experiences. Any of the following options may be used for determining how much the character is aged:

- 1 year per HD of the monster
- 1 day, week, month, or year per hp of the monster
- 1 year per point of damage caused by the attack
- a randomly determined number of years (e.g., 1d6)
- a randomly determined number of months or years based on the HD of the monster (e.g., 1d4 days per HD)

Permanent “Life Force” Drain on Constitution

The character permanently loses 1 point each CON. Alternately, the character’s CON may be “raised” back to normal when the character attains his or her next experience level. **Optional rule:** A life drain which reduces the character’s CON to less than 3 results in the character becoming undead.

Permanent Drain on a Randomly Determined Ability Score

This option is based on the idea that a “life force” drain affects all characters differently, causing some to lose strength, causing others to become reserved and introspective (i.e., losing charisma), etc. Roll 1d6 to determine which ability score permanently loses 1 point.

Permanent “Life Force” Drain on all Physical Ability Scores

The character permanently loses 1 point each of STR, DEX, and CON. **Optional rule:** Any drained ability is “raised” back to normal when the character attains his or her next experience level.

Permanent Loss of Hit Dice

The character immediately and permanently loses 1 HD, but not a level. For example, a 12th level cleric who has suffered a successful wight touch but failed his or her saving throw would immediately lose 1d6 hit points, and would then only have 11 HD (though still attacking and saving as an 12th level cleric). Upon reaching 13th level, the cleric would attack and save at 13th level, but would only use 12 HD when determining hit points. Any 1st-level character affected as such would immediately be reduced to 1 hp, attacking and saving as a normal man (rather than a classed character).

Optional rule: Any first level character losing their single hit die immediately becomes an undead creature (type determined by DM based on attacking monster type).



Richard J. LeBlanc, Jr.

The Houses of the Mark

NPC Encounters Adapted from
William Morris's *The House of the Wolfings*

In the 1898 novel *The House of the Wolfings*, William Morris pens a romantically reconstructed portrait of the lives of the Germanic Gothic tribes, complete with dwarven-smiths, magic armor, and an epic battle for freedom—all set against the backdrop of a forest called Mirkwood. On the river that runs through the forest, Morris's Goths inhabit an area known as the Mark, which is divided into three areas: the Upper-mark (at the north end of the river), the Mid-mark (about a half-day's ride south of the Upper-mark), and the Nether-mark (about a half-day's ride south of the Mid-mark). All three areas are inhabited by a men of one kindred, called the Mark-men. Though they are all one people, their tribes (houses) number many, and each bears a banner by which they may be known when in battle or at the Council.

The Houses and NPCs detailed here have been adapted from those appearing in *The House of the Wolfings*.



Victor Lambdin

Thiodolf the Mighty

The greatest leader of the men of the mark and chieftain of the Wolfings (though he does not belong to the house by blood, being the son of an Elking and a god); big, tall, wide-shouldered, strong, curly haired, black-bearded, and grey-eyed; the wisest and best warrior in the Mark; the most dauntless of the Wolfings; well-beloved of women, but the lover of Wood-Sun.

Fights/saves as 10th level fighter; +3 damage bonus (from STR); +2 ranged attack bonus, -2 AC bonus (from DEX); +2 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); +3 to reaction rolls (from CHA); +2 chain mail, +1 sword flames on command, boots of speed.

Wood-Sun

Counsel to, and lover of, Thiodolf

Fights/saves as 8th-level Völva (fights as 8th-level MU, saves as 8th-level cleric); +3 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); +2 ranged attack bonus, -2 AC bonus (from DEX); in addition to the ability to shape-change into animal form, Wood-Sun is also able to assume one human form (Thorkettle of the Wolfings); ring of human control; ring of regeneration.

Houses of the Mid-mark

ALFTINGS

Banner: swan
Appearing: 1-4
Approx. # in House: 40

The men of the Alftings are naturally charming and charismatic (gaining a +1 bonus to all reaction rolls). The Alftings are also a well-off tribe, making a good living for themselves by negotiating the exchange of resources between the other houses, and taking a percentage for themselves. Alftings will usually carry swords and spears, wear chain armor, and carry shields.

BARKINGS

Banner: roe-deer
Appearing: 1-6
Approx. # in House: 60

The men of the Barkings are skilled hunters and capable trackers. They will normally be armed with a bow, a spear, and a knife. They will never wear armor more cumbersome than leather or padded as it would hinder their ability to move silently (as a thief of a level equal to their HD). Barkings do not carry shields (which inhibit bow use).

BEAMINGS

Banner: tree
Appearing: 1-8
Approx. # in House: 80

The men of the Beamings are truly "beaming." They pride themselves most on hard work and, as an example of this, polish everything they own to a high shine. The men of the Beamings each

carry a sword and an axe, wear chain armor and metal helmets, and carry metal shields. The polish on their possessions is so high, they gain a -1 AC bonus on very sunny days, due to the distraction caused by light reflecting in the eyes of their opponents.

Geirodd of the Beamings:

Fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +1 damage bonus (from STR); -1 AC bonus (from DEX); +2 bonus to reactions (from CHA); +1 sword, +1 shield.

Toti of the Beamings:

Fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; +2 damage bonus (from STR); -1 AC bonus (from DEX); +1 sword, +1 shield.

BEARINGS

Banner: bear
Appearing: 3d6
Approx. # in House: 150

The Bearings are strong men of large build (gaining a +1 damage bonus from strength) who are nearly as hairy as their namesake. They are also men of stout heart (with a base morale of 10). The majority of the Bearing men wear leather armor and carry a shield, a sword, and a spear.

Angantyr of the Bearings:

Fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter.

Arinbiorn of the Bearings:

Captain and chief of the Bearings, a grizzled man of very big body; fights/saves as 4th-level fighter; +3 damage bonus (from STR); +1 reaction/morale bonus (from CHA); +1 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); chain armor, +1 sword, does not carry a spear.

Asbiorn of the Bearings:

Fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; doughty (base morale of 11); +2 to all reaction/morale rolls (from CHA); chain mail.

ELKINGS

Banner: elk
Appearing: 1d4
Approx. # in House: 80

The elkings are accomplished bowmen, and attack with a +2 "to hit" bonus when using a bow. The Elking men limit themselves to leather or padded armor, and do not carry shields. They are normally armed with a bow, a spear, and a knife.

Hiarandi of the Elkings:

Fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +3 "to hit" when using a bow; +1 damage from STR; +1 bonus to reactions (from CHA).

ERINGS

Banner: water-bank
Appearing: 1d4+1
Approx. # in House: 50

The men of the Erings are great hunters and trackers of the wild-wood, and excellent fresh-water fishers. They are a humble group, and only 50% of the men will ever be armored (leather or padded only), but all men carry shields, spears, and bows.

GALTINGS

Banner: boar
Appearing: 2d4
Approx. # in House: 100

The men of the Galtings are great hunters and trackers. And while they have a great patience when tracking a target, they can often be a bit unfocused when dealing

with others face-to-face (suffering a -1 penalty on reaction rolls). 50% of Galting men wear leather armor, 10% wear chain armor, and the other 40% do not wear armor, but all Galting men do carry shields. Galting men will normally be armed with a sword and a spear.

GEDDINGS

Banner: pike
Appearing: 1-6
Approx. # in House: 65

The thin-faced Gedding men are accomplished hunters and trackers, but are especially capable fishers. They are not particularly strong men (though they suffer no penalty), but are generally swift (gaining a -1 bonus on initiative rolls). 30% of Gedding men wear leather armor, while the other 70% wear no armor. All Gedding men do, however, carry shields. Furthermore, they are normally armed with a sword, a spear, and a knife.

HROSSINGS

Banner: horse
Appearing: 2d4
Approx. # in House: 85

The long-faced Hrossing men are accomplished horsemen, gaining a +1 "to hit" bonus when making HTH attacks from horseback. Nearly every man will be mounted, wear leather armor, carry a shield, and be armed with a sword and a spear.

Fox the Red of the Hrossings:

While he is an honored and accomplished man among the Hrossings, Fox the Red was originally captured from a foreign

land and made a slave of the Hrossings before being given his freedom (at which point he fell naturally into their numbers); fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +1 damage (from STR); +1 leather armor, +1 sword.

MALLINGS

Banner: mallard
Appearing: 1-4
Approx. # in House: 45

The men of the Mallings are most comfortable when near water. They are strong swimmers and fishers. They wear leather armor, carry shields, and wield swords and spears.

OSELINGS

Banner: wood-ousel
Appearing: 1-6
Approx. # in House: 60

The oselings are quite capable bowmen, and attack with a +1 "to hit" bonus when using a bow. The Oseling men limit themselves to leather or padded armor, and do not carry shields. They are usually armed with little more than a bow and a knife.

SHIELDINGS

Banner: shield
Appearing: 2d6
Approx. # in House: 120

The men of this house are trained from the time they are young to use a shield to its full effect, and receive an additional -1 AC bonus (in addition to the protection normally afforded by a shield). The men of the Shieldings wear either leather or chain armor, bear shields, and normally carry a sword, a spear, and a knife.

Geirbald of the Shieldings:

One of the quickest horsemen in all of the marks; fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; +1 reaction bonus (from CHA); +1 shield.

Geirmund of the Shieldings:

Fights/saves as 5th-level fighter; +2 damage bonus (from STR); +1 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); +1 chain armor, +1 shield, +1 sword.

Gisli of the Shieldings:

The swiftest of all horsemen in the marks; absolutely relied upon as the most-trusted messenger in time-critical situations; fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +1 reaction bonus (from CHA); +1 leather armor, +1 shield.

STEERINGS

Banner: steer
Appearing: 1-4
Approx. # in House: 40

The Steerings are strong men of large build (gaining a +2 damage bonus from strength) who are nearly as stubborn (-2 on all reaction rolls). The majority of the Steering men wear chain armor and carry a shield and a sword.

VALLINGS

Banner: falcon
Appearing: 1-6
Approx. # in House: 50

For every 5 Valling men that appear, 1 of them will be a falconer with a trained falcon. The Valling men wear leather armor, and carry a shield and a sword.

Gunbald of the Vallings:

Fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +1 damage (from STR); +2 to saves vs. magic (from WIS).

WITHINGS

Banner: willow-bush
Appearing: 1-4
Approx. # in House: 40

Withing men are accomplished hunters and trackers, and have an encyclopedic knowledge of plants and their uses. Withing men wear leather armor, and carry shields, swords, and axes.

WOLFINGS

Banner: wolf
Appearing: 3d8
Approx. # in House: 200

The Wolfings are the largest and most important house in all the marks. When important decisions must be made that affect all the houses of the Mark, the House of the Wolfings host the folkmoot, and the assembled houses look to Thiodolf (chief of the Wolfings) for leadership. 30% of Wolfing warriors wear chain armor, 50% wear leather armor, and the other 20% wear no armor, but all carry shields. Furthermore, most Wolfing men carry swords and axes, though many additionally carry a spear.

Egil of the Wolfings:

Acts as the messenger for the House of the Wolfings; fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; +1 reaction bonus (from CHA); +1 leather armor.

Hrosshild (the Shieldmaiden) of the Wolfings:

Leads a group of 11 other shieldmaidens (that will always appear together); fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +1 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); -1 AC bonus (from DEX); +1 reaction bonus (from CHA); +1 shield, +1 sword.

Jorund of the Wolfings:

Fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; dedicated (base morale of 11); -1 AC bonus (from DEX); +1 reaction bonus (from CHA).

Sorli the Old of the Wolfings:

Fights/saves as 5th-level fighter; does not leave the house, but acts as leader to the young men and sturdy maidens (that do not travel with men) when arms must be taken up to defend the house; +2 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); +3 sword, +1 ring of protection.

Thorkettle of the Wolfings:

This is an assumed identity (disguise) of Wood-Sun when she must move freely among the men of the mark.

Wolfkettle of the Wolfings:

Fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter.

WOODINGS

Banner: green-tree
Appearing: 1-10
Approx. # in House: 90

The men of the Woodings are natural woodsmen and carpenters. They gain hunting and tracking

bonuses while in the woods, and are able to climb trees at a rate of half their normal movement. The men of the Woodings will always carry an axe, and gain a +1 bonus to damage (from STR). Woodings carry wooden shields, and will normally wear nothing more protective than leather or padded armor (else it hinders their climbing).

Athalulf of the Woodings:

Fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +2 damage bonus (from STR); -1 AC bonus (from DEX); +2 axe, +1 shield

Grani the Grey:

Revered woodwright; no damage bonus (from STR); fights/saves as 4th-level fighter; +1 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); +1 leather armor, +1 axe.

Steinulf of the Woodings:

Renowned woodwright; fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +2 damage bonus (from STR); +1 axe, +1 shield.

Viglund the Woodman:

nearly infallible tracker/hunter; fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; +3 damage bonus (from STR).



WORMINGS

Banner: serpent
Appearing: 3d4
Approx. # in House: 125

Also known as the "Sons of the Worm," the men of the Wormings are sly fighters, gaining a +1 "to hit" bonus on HTH attacks, a -1 bonus on initiative rolls, and a +1 bonus on surprise rolls. 20% of Worming men wear chain armor, 50% wear leather armor, and the other 30% wear no armor, though they all carry shields. The Sons of the Worm are most often armed with axes and swords; however, about 20% will be armed alternately with axes and spears.

Elfric of the Wormings:

Fights/saves as 3rd-level fighter; +2 bonus "to hit"; +1 to saves vs. poison (from a natural tolerance he has built up through exposure to venom); +1 sword, +1 shield, potion: neutralize poison.

Houses of the Upper-mark

DAYLINGS

Banner: rising sun
Appearing: 1d4
Approx. # in House: 60

The Daylings are an old and venerable house. Unfortunately they are also an aging house, with a dwindling number of able young men. The Dayling are, however, revered for their wisdom in political and military matters. Daylings wear chain armor and bear shields, and are normally armed with swords and spears.

Agni of the Daylings:

Fights/saves as 4th-level fighter; +1 sword.

Asmund of the Daylings:

Has a natural intuition that appears almost prophetic; fights/saves as 5th-level fighter; +2 sword; +1 ring of protection.

GEIRINGS

Banner: vulture
Appearing: 1d6
Approx. # in House: 55

The men of the Geirings are scrappy and tenacious fighters (base morale of 10), wear almost any type of armor, and use almost any type of weapon.

Birsti of the Geirings:

Messenger for the Geirings; fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; chain armor, sword, spear.

Bork of the Geirings:

Trained reconnaissance man; fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; leather armor, sword, knife, ring of invisibility.

KARTINGS

Banner: cart
Appearing: 1d4
Approx. # in House: 65

The Karting men are trustworthy and reliable. They wear leather armor, use shields, and carry swords and axes.

SPEARINGS

Banner: spear
Appearing: 2d6
Approx. # in House: 80

Spearing men are taught to use a spear from the day they are born, and receive a +1 bonus when using a spear (in melee and when thrown). They wear leather armor and carry shields. While they possess swords and often wear them

at their sides, they rarely use them (reserving them for the most dire of situations).

House of the Nether-mark

LAXINGS

Banner: salmon
Appearing: 1-10
Approx. # in House: 90

The men of the Laxings don't have much contact with the other houses (due to the great distance between their house and the others), so they will seem reserved to outsiders. They are great boatsmen, able to row at 125% the rate of normal men. They are also accomplished bowmen, making such attacks with a +1 "to hit" bonus. Laxing men tend toward leather armor, and many of them do not carry shields. In addition to bows, Laxing men carry swords and knives.

Otter of the Laxings:

Gaunt, stark, well-beloved old warrior; chief of the House of the Laxings; serves as Thiodolf's War-Duke when the houses fight together in battle; fights/saves as 6th-level fighter; +2 damage bonus (from STR); +2 to saves vs. magic (from WIS); +1 chain mail; +2 sword, +1 shield.

Sweinbiorn the Black:

Fights/saves as 2nd-level fighter; possesses a beautiful singing voice; +1 reaction bonus (from CHA); chain mail.

Valtyr of the Laxings:

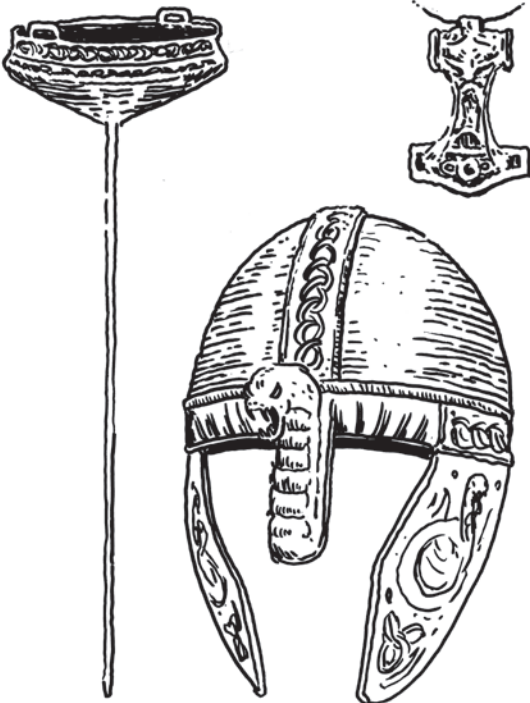
Brother of Otter; fights/saves as 4th-level fighter; +1 damage bonus (from STR); chain mail; +1 sword, +1 ring of protection.

A TRIO OF NORSE-INSPIRED MAGIC ITEMS



1 Guardian Lamp

Most often fashioned by clerics of Heimdall (the guardian of Bifrost), a *Guardian Lamp* appears as a bronze bowl lantern (about 6" in diameter, with a wick at its center) set atop a 3' long spiked bronze pole. When planted in the ground, filled with oil, and lit, it provides protection from evil (as cleric spell) to a 20' radius. When held (or is otherwise "unplanted"), it only provides protection to a 10' radius.



2 Mjölknir Pendant

A Mjölknir Pendant is fashioned to appear similar to the hammer wielded by Thor, hanging upside down, with the base of its handle strung from a chain or strip of leather. The decorative embellishment of these pendants varies greatly, normally featuring knotwork and interlace, but sometimes featuring the face of a dragon, a warrior, or even Thor himself. Created by priests of Thor, these pendants bestow their wearer one of a number of boons, including but not limited to:

- +1 "to hit" vs. dragons
- +1 "to hit" vs. giants
- +1 "to hit" vs. serpents
- +1 "to hit" when using a hammer (including magical hammers)
- +1 to all saving throws vs. poison

3 Ormstunga Helm

The Ormstunga ("serpent tongue") Helm appears as a pointed helm with cheek guards and a serpent set on the helm's nose guard. This helmet grants its wearer the following boons:

- the ability to speak with all dragons and serpents (including linnorms)
- +1 "to hit" vs. dragons and serpents (including linnorms)
- a +1 bonus to all saving throws vs. dragons and serpents (including linnorms), including spells, breath weapons, and poison

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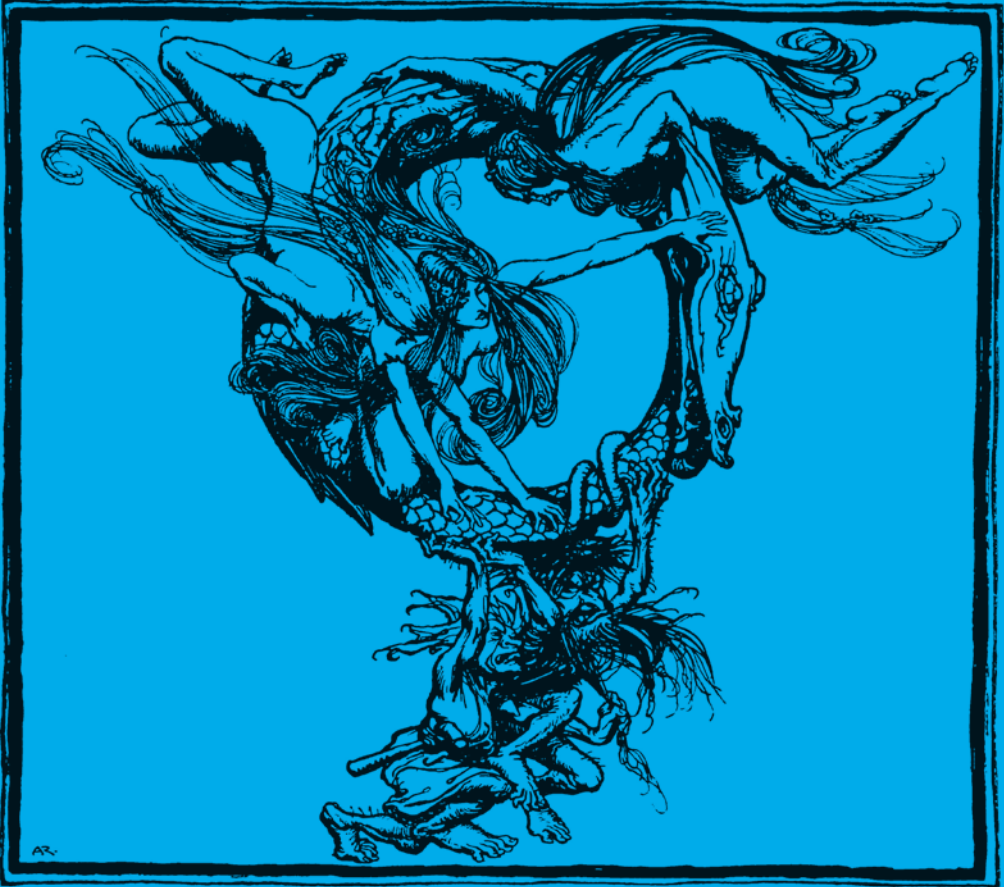
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Arthur Rackham