

CASTLES[®] CRUSADES

NINE WORLDS SAGA VOLUME II: ODIN'S FURY



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VOLUME II: ODIN'S FURY

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ODIN'S FURY

Until this moment we only thought the Dark Elves could work metals second to their Dwarven neighbors in Svartálfheimr, but we were wrong. These gold gilt Iron-Berserkers were unstoppable. A demonic fire raged within them, ignited by some mysterious force the Dark Elves added.

They were not going to let us get to the  Rune, Yggr saw to that. He truly was the Terrible One as the Völva in King Hrólfr's court prophesied. These Iron-Berserkers pounded their way through dense doors with only their metal fists. I shuddered to imagine what their weapons did once they hit. Their eyes blazed as though they were cast in Helheimr, and they might have been.

Every corridor we sought to escape the domain of the Dökkálfar appeared barred. Barred by the elves or by their metal monstrosities. Yggr's haunting laughter echoes somewhere in the stone and I swear that I could also make out the squawks of ravens as well. What they are doing this far deep in Svartálfheimr is another mystery for another time.


Our strongest blade simply bounced off of the Iron-Berserkers' hide no matter where we struck or stabbed. Glorious it is to perish in battle at the end of a blade and be sent to the Hall of the Slain, but this is not a valorous manner in which to do so. This

foe is not living, it does not breathe or think. What manner of enemy is this that we face in the Underworld?

According to our navigator, Boddi Froði is still many miles away from where we are, and if we can survive this we have to still find our way to the swamps he resides in. These Iron-Berserks only number four but they possess the might of twenty or more men.

Our mistake was treading too boldly into the lands of the Dark Elves without caution. We let down our guard and trusted too easily the first willing stranger who offered to speak to us. It was the long-bearded man named Ygg that did so. He seemed to be functioning as the spokesman for the Dökkálfar, taking the place of their absent king.

Whoever this Yggr was he asked us too many questions and yet it was us who came to him with questions originally. His dark eyes searched us as we spoke. He looked for something. Not on us but in our words and language that was unsaid. When he discovered whatever he needed, he sent the Dökkálfar's Iron-Berserks upon us.


Now we fight for our lives and we are not completely sure why. We are no closer to the  Rune or Boddi but death is looming the closest of them all by the second . . .




INTRODUCTION

This adventure continues from where the first, *Hel Rising* leaves off in this series and now pits the adventuring party against an angry Allfather. Oðin has just begun to realize that he was tricked somehow recently and he is piecing everything together (for more see 'Background to the Story').

Using his ravens across the worlds, they found the origins of the quakes in Denmark in the Hills of Ormr, and from there the scent of the trail of those many parties involved. How each fit into the whole he hasn't worked out yet, but through his many tricks he has surmised that he was deceived and that an important clue to why lies in the subterranean world of *Svar-tálfaheimr*.

The player characters' motives traveling to this world are clear, 1.) seek out the hermit Boddi Froði, and 2.) find the first  Rune. Once these two objectives are met, they can then follow the path to find the other twelve runes across the Nine Worlds while avoiding all others who seek them as well. It won't be easy.

Many frightening and wondrous things will lie in their path towards reaching these ends, the worst of all is Oðin himself. One would think that the Allfather would be gracious to discover that others are aiding him to find his  Runes, but it is the opposite. These Runes possess terrifying power and do not belong in lesser beings' hands. Once he realizes the situation, his fury (thus the module's title) will be unleashed. The adventurers are what stand in the way of protecting the Nine Worlds now that the Runes are scattered and lost. If Oðin, Hel, or any other forces in between manage to take them, the temptation to unleash their potential is too great.

Each Rune possesses its own magic as well, alone and separate. Combined, it will become the dreaded Final Winter. Unfortunately, it will be some time before the players/characters even realize what the nature of these Runes truly are in these modules. They only need to understand that they were once in the possession of Oðin in Valhöl, where Hel's thieves nearly stole them only to be foiled by a Fylgia spirit of a Völva to protect the Nine Worlds. It must be understood as well that these runes must be collected and returned to Valhöl before the Allfather knows it and then everything is returned to 'normal' again.

It won't be until later into the series that the purpose and function of these runes is told to the adventuring party, and then the looming danger is apparent and frightening. Unlike my Celtic Faery series, which is loosely linked together, these are linear and continual. This means that module #1 will proceed to the next in order until the final adventure ends in #13 in one continuous saga.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER


There is no need for adventure 'Hooks' from this module forward in the series now that the tale has begun. Introducing new characters in however can be difficult if the others are in un-


likely locations (such as sailing in the middle of the sea where this module begins for example). If the new character is created using the Codex Nordica, then the transition shouldn't be too difficult as there are many avenues possible.

Where this adventure lies in the overall series is shown on this list:

NINE WORLDS SAGA SERIES


- 1 Hel Rising
- 2 ***Oðin's Fury***
- 3 Crisis in Álfheimr
- 4 The Jötun's Scheme
- 5 Witches of Järnviðr
- 6 Despair of Helheimr
- 7 Loki's Wolves
- 8 Frejyr's Hunt
- 9 Berserker's Den
- 10 Dreker of Niflheimr
- 11 The Great Winter
- 12 Allfather's Vengeance
- 13 Shattering of the Bones

In these thirteen modules, the  Runes, numbering themselves thirteen coincidentally enough, are sought after in modules #2-10. There is a rune for each letter in Old Norse but these are not in order, and in some of the modules there will be two runes instead of one. To make a mention, the number thirteen was an unlucky one in Nordic society and superstition. This notion has been inherited into modern times and used to good effect in the Horror genre.

Together, in proper order, the Great Winter's Runes would appear as this: . These runes will be shown in each module in some fashion to display which are being sought after. The player characters will become both weary and used to hearing about the 'Casket of Bones' or '*kista av ben*' in the series as they are a poetic kenning to the Ash wood case and the thirteen runes they seek. Gradually they will obtain the whole collection and must not be tempted to harness them separate or together in combination, for such power will be devastating *and* attract the attention of the gods, giants and other mighty entities along the way.


*One additional and interesting element to this runic aspect in this series is the **Odin's Runes** set only available with the Codex Nordica's Kickstarter with pledges at \$49 and higher. These runes can used as props in the game and handed out as they are found and obtained through the module series for a touch of tactile fun and realism. If ran correctly, it will take months of gaming through each module in the series, for the players to deduce what the meaning of the runes could possibly be in Old Norse.*

Losing characters along the way in a well-traveled saga such as this can be frustrating. If the player and CK are clever enough together, they can devise a smart way to introduce the new replacement in the story. There will be many battles and terrible spells cast against them, but even more so diabolical plots crafted to stop and destroy them.

It will seem overwhelming at times, even with a good collection of the  Runes gathered and a hefty experience earned, for the enemies will be many. The CK will need to be fairly meticulous about notes and details once this saga is in full swing. Campaigns are often the most difficult to maintain for gaming groups for various reasons, and running a module series even more so, awaiting the next book to be released. There could be a lot of time between the last module to wait and life gets in the way.

In any case, good gaming is a cooperative venture, requiring a 50/50 amount of work from both players and CK. These modules are the mode of transportation, the rules the platform to use and the rest is effort. Make the most of it!

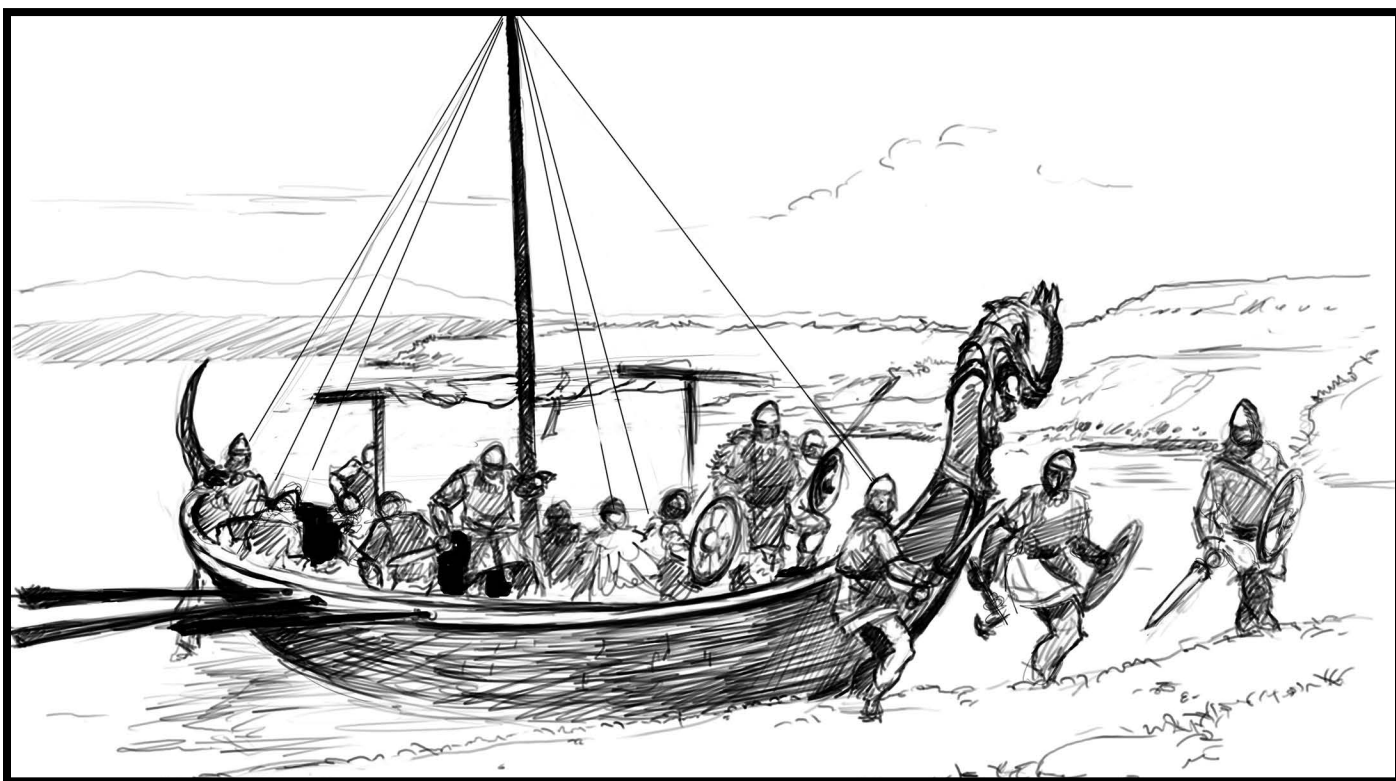
BACKGROUND TO THE STORY


Sent by the events in the first module *Hel Rising* and the last dying words of the Völva Tyra, they must first journey to the Underworld of Svartálfaheimr. Here they must look for a wise hermit named Boddi Froði who dwells in the Swamps of Ketthontla. Boddi can help them find the other  Runes, he possesses an enchanted crystal that can view them in the other worlds if held to the sky or earth. Getting to him will be difficult part.

Svartálfaheimr is populated by the Dökkálfar and Dvergjar from the days when Ymir was slain. They work their dark crafts and arts here deep in the rock and soil as before shunning the light. Sinister and slightly treacherous, they are not aware that one of the Runes has fallen into their realm. If they do find out this knowledge they will waste no time getting it. They will war over it in fact sending the Underworld into chaos just to obtain this precious Rune. Each race has their own secrets and mighty works of power and will easily use them to obtain the Rune.

What complicates this is the appearance of Yggr, an alias of Oðin Alföðr in this world. He has come seeking the answers that his two ravens hinted at in Miðgarðr while in Denmark. He is aware that something is afoot in Svartálfaheimr and it can be traced back to the wounding of the World-Serpent Jörmungandr by the monstrous raiders of Skallagrímr. Whatever this event was, it took his attentions away from his feast among his Einharjar in Valhöll and now he must know. Oðin regrets that he was not sitting atop his throne of Hliðskjálf on Yggdrasil when Jörmungandr shook – it was almost as though the monstrous dragon knew.

Once Oðin makes his way into Svartálfaheimr he tries to make the adventurers speak of their purpose there and who and what they seek. He uses trickery and deception to fool them into revealing their motives. If he does not get what he wants then his real side is shown. ‘Terrible One’ is the definition to his epithet and that is what the adventurers will experience in the depths of the Nordic Underworld. This is only the second adventure module but it will feel like they have journeyed and experienced many times this number after tangling with the Allfather.



The well-thought out title to this adventure will make earning the first  Rune worth the hair-raising experience it should be and propel the adventuring party towards noble ends to gather the rest. If played right, not only will the inhabitants of Svartálfaheimr not know of the Rune, but Óðin will be none the wiser either. Of course, this won't make for an epic tale in the saga if nothing too dramatic or scary happens along the way.

There will be an enhanced section about Svartálfaheimr for the CK in this module expanding more on how to run this subterranean realm in a manner than isn't exclusively 'dungeon' like, but in a wholly different style.

ACT 1 – SAILING TO THE EDGE

WHERE MIDGARDR SPILLS OVER

Leaving on the ship that King Hrólfr gave them (assuming that they kept to their Ring Oath and did not betray it to King Finna or even to Skallagrímr), the slow voyage from Denmark on the grey turbulent seas will not be joyous.

If the adventurers are not experienced in sea-travel they must make a Constitution check or become Sea-Sick at several points along the way. This will make them nauseous and vomit over the sides of their vessel in the rolling waves. Between their combined oar power and the single sail, their speed will not be great. If they are fortunate, the winds will grant them nearly eight knots of speed or more an hour.

These seas are not devoid of other traffic in the sea-lanes however. Other ships from Scandinavia, Germania, Gallia and the Isles may be sharing the same stretch of waters. Merchants and raiders could be plying the waves going in either direction.

There is a 2 in 10 chance that other traffic might be crossing the often busy North Sea as the adventurers travel direct north. If so this d6 table is a useful chart of ideas of what may transpire:

1. **D6 NORSE RAIDING KNÖRR SHIPS:** With an average of 20 warriors per ship, this could prove deadly. In the middle of the open sea, this is not unusual for an encounter and would be considered piracy by the greater number as they make their way towards their destination. Norse Raiders (*They are 3rd level fighters with vital statistics of HD 3d10, AC 13, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Spear (d6), Battle-Axe (d8) and Dagger (d4).*)
2. **SNEKKJA:** Hailing from Sweden, this large craft bears supplies and extra men for settlers in a Hibernia. The ship will not slow or stop for anyone and has 15 warriors aboard to protect its goods. They will flatten anyone in their path, *players included.*
3. **D4 FÆRING VESSELS:** These normally short range raiding ships have set out from the shores of Sweden, with each a crew of 5 warriors, and are now desperate enough to latch onto any ship in view to find their way back to shore. They loot, plunder and cause havoc if possible as well with no mercy. These men are desperate and without morals.
4. **SAXON KEEL:** From Saxony, this slightly large ship bears several families, their belongings and many warriors (d20) to Britannia westwards. If they happen to see a vulnerable vessel on their route they will not avoid taking a chance to acquire it. Saxon Warriors (*They are 2nd level fighters with vital statistics of HD 2d10, AC 13, and HP 20. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Spear (d6), Battle-Ax (d8) and Dagger (d4).*)
5. **FRANKISH COG:** This ship, equivalent to a Snek-kja, is filled with important trading goods being sent from Franconia to a Norwegian king. In the hold are spices, silks, textiles and other expensive items meant to bring a lure into a peaceful alliance with Frankish rulers (to slow or halt their raids and terror along the Rhine and coasts of Gallia). Diplomats, ten warriors (use Saxon statistics) and many crew and servants are aboard this important ship.
6. **DRAUGRSKIPR:** *Although this is meant to be revealed in all of its frightful reality in a later module, #10 'Dreker of Niflheimr', the adventurers see a ghostly, dark Dreker, or Orm 'Dragon' ship moving silently on the waves distantly. It will not attack them this time but it will eerily pass them and not be bothered by the force of the waves or the winds, defiantly and strangely existing. Only large forms could be made out moving on the top deck, what flesh could be viewed was pallid but little more than that. A lingering mist carried with the ship on the waters and a heavy ominousness with it, as it faded into the distance.*

REACHING BESTLA'S MAELSTROM

After sailing the cold frigid waters beyond Scandinavia, the air will slowly grow dense with frost and occasional snow. The pot of coals to warm the ship will not seem enough, but compared to the Final Winter that might later occur if all fails, this freeze is minor.

If the adventuring party has managed to navigate their way north over the thousand miles and were able to remain warm and fed in the hoar frost, it will require they keep their attentions heightened for the mysterious maelstrom in the sea.

Before they ever reach the region of the swirling maelstrom terrible storms surge in the seas about the anomaly. Icy hail and biting rain pound the ship and shrilling winds lash the sail and crew, forcing them to hang on (Dexterity check or they are tossed to the freezing seas). This storm will rage for a time and feel as though it will never end leaving them frozen and wet.

An Intelligence check will be needed to perceive the distant thundering roar of the massive gapping maelstrom of Bestla. In the dark freezing waters ahead an enormous swirling whirlpool swallows random ice chunks and other drifting debris that have found its way into its growling maw.

A hovering mist hangs over the frightening maelstrom ahead. Bobbing and jostled together are the remains of countless ships that have accumulated over the centuries around this monstrous maelstrom. The roar of the maelstrom is nearly akin to a beast's and an odd warmth lingers around the whirlpool, thus the mists.

Whichever player character is in charge of guiding the ship must make the check (Dexterity) to properly direct it towards the maelstrom and not entangle it in the debris near it. Once caught in the current, it takes little time before they are whisked along on the waters into the vortex speedily.

Quickly, all other experiences at sea seem less dangerous as Bestla's Maelstrom pulls them into the spiral. Its roar hums and vibrates the ship, almost hypnotically, as they are now yanked into darkness.

Their ship goes to its side in the maelstrom, tipping almost and just about spilling out the adventurers and the supplies into the abyss. Each player and NPC in the ship must make a Dexterity check or be tossed overboard into the abyss (see 'Landing in Svartálfaheimr') for a possibly awful fate. Those lucky enough to hang on will ride the maelstrom downward into the Underworld.

The adventuring party's ship will splash onto a dark lake lit by small green bio-luminescent creatures in its murky waters. A dismal gloom will be above them with no light source. Only occasional noises of things flying by, or odd squeaks or groans. Not far ahead is strange land comes into view.

It is rocky, porous volcanic stone and granite, with a dark shrub-like plant growth covering it mixed with glowing fungi and other bio-luminescent forms of life. *Nothing* is familiar about this place, the noises, sights or scents.

LANDING IN SVARTÁLFAHEIMR (D4)

1. Falling, the PC/NPC tumbles into the labyrinthine caverns of the realms of the Dökkálfar taking 2d10 damage in the fall and will lose consciousness unless a Constitution check is made. When they awake there is a 4 in 10 chance they will find themselves in the holding cells of the Dark Elves. If so, they will be questioned only later to be done so by Yggr. This won't be a very positive outcome.
2. After losing grip from the ship, the character/NPC will land in the Swamp of the Ketthontla near Boddi Froði. They may end up with the wise hermit early on or have to contend with the monstrous ogre that rules the swamps.
3. The fall placed the adventurer/NPC into the edge of Niflheimr where the Dead dwell. The nose wrinkling scent of rot and corpses is strong in this mist shrouded crevice where nothing grows. The Winds of Gunnagagap blow here. After impact, a d12 damage was taken from the rocks. Now the individual is so far from the others there is little chance they will ever find them without a major expedition in Svartálfaheimr.
4. Plunging from the abyss of Bestla's Maelstrom, the individual lands in the region of the dwarves painfully (d20

damage). If they disturb the busy dwarves, they will be worse trouble. However, traveling through dwarven territory will be dangerous enough (as the rest of this adventure will prove).

EXPLORING SVARTÁLFAHEIMR

There are no currents or winds in this part of the Underworld to propel the ship forward. It will require oars to move it. Due to torches and the bio-luminescent life the features of the shores can be seen ahead – barely.

The adventurers will have no starting point aside from stepping ashore. They have no tracks or evidence to work with yet, only the need to press on. They have an entire world before them to wander in beginning with the first step. The CK can prolong this as long as they feel it is needed for the sake of story and then inject the plot from the module when given the opportunity.

This world was one of the first left from the carcass of Ymir after his death by the Sons of Borr. Its many winding and odd angled caves in the earth and rock were created from the earliest days of the Dark Elves and Dwarves as they burrowed like moles and maggots.

This world is very unfamiliar in that no breezes blow and it does not have a surface and the sky does not exist as one would define it. It is easily obviously that this shoreline and its rocky coasts are small and limited and quickly will be engulfed into the dark land before them.

Many different tunnels go into the dark earth from here, an eerie ghostly blue glow shimmers from them mixed with disturbing noises. Svartálfaheimr. Taking any tunnel at this point will lead to the same place from here as this is the beginning of the adventure.

It is clear early on, from the carvings on the stones, that this area is inhabited by someone. The designs and patterns are complex and display an intricate knowledge of precision and mathematics.

This may remain elusive to the adventurers due to the general lack of such of knowledge and might appear as mystical symbols, etc.

The smell of strange oils, furnaces and other unidentifiable odors (all related to the production of metal-work and other similar things) fills the air. Distant echoes of hammers, tools and work confusingly thunder in the gloom around the adventurers.


The corridors are also very confusing in their layout and seem to have no logic, or a different form of intelligence behind it. This section of Svartálfaheimr is on the edges of their own populated region, but it is guarded by their own sentries, posted since the time when Óðin first allotted them this land below the earth (see 'Dark Elfin Sentries').

6 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Exploring many of the caverns of Dökkálfar inhabited Svartálfaheimr can be risky. There is a reason why the many industrious native peoples of this subterranean world remain in their chosen realms and have highly sophisticated and deadly means of protection.

The CK can use the following ideas or adapt or modify as needed in the adventure.

ROLL A D6

- 1 LINNORMR'S LAIR:** Dreaded even by the Dark Elves, this venomous dragon has taken residence in this cavern. Ruddy colored, horned and foul-tempered, the Linnormr became trapped in Svartálfaheimr as a small hatchling and remained. It began to search out the many tunnels and caverns plundering from the elves and dwarfs and anyone else it happened across over the centuries acquiring a small horde of its own. If it is not bothered the Linnormr will stay in its lair, but if it senses the  Rune it will issue forth to take it and add it to its horde, and unfortunately, the adventurer's ship lies close to this region in the escape. It is the CK's decision on including this unforeseen and terrible winged complication later, or this early in this adventure.

LINNORMR (*This Red Dragon is a HD 8d12, AC 19, and HP 96. His primary attributes are mental and physical. He attacks by 2 claw (d8+1), wing (d10+1), tail (d10+1) and bite (4d10+1). His abilities are breath weapon (8d10), immunity to fire (full) His treasure horde is type 2.*)

- 2 CAVE OF THE EXILED WITCHES:** These six mortal women (of various ages and attractiveness) were cast out from Miðgarðr in extreme exile on pain of death by their kin in Sweden for their excessive practices in the Dark Arts in honor of the Goddess Frigg. Rather than mingle among society bearing the noticeable and hideous marks on their faces for the rest of their lives they made the difficult trek to the Underworld. The six, calling themselves the Friggrdætur ('Frigg's Daughters') continue their dark worship of Óðin's wife here. They are a strange benign evil if left mostly alone or sought after for magical or prophetic advice, but if they crossed or handled aggressively, they will use their evil ways to good effect. They and the Dark Elves have an agreement and no one bothers each other here.

DAUGHTERS OF FRIGG (*These Lawful Evil 4th level Clerics' vital statistics are HD 4d8, AC11, and 32. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by Dagger (d4) and by spear (d6). Spells – 0 Level: detect good, detect magic, detect poison, light, 1st Level: command, detect secret doors, sound blast, 2nd Level: hold person, speak with dead.*)

- 3 TOMB OF FORGOTTEN RULERS:** The earliest Dökkálfar since the time of Ymir that ruled Svartálfaheimr and perished in battle or by other means were interred here by their people. This mausoleum was etched from the dark stone and earth over time, when the elves were not as ad-

vanced in their skills, or as wealthy in their possessions. The dusty, once well-dressed bones of a hundred Dökkálfar rulers are in niches in the walls in this labyrinthine area. There isn't a large amount of wealth here, not in the usual sense. It is found in the old tattered vestments of the Dark Elf kings. Scattered jewels and other inlaid precious metals in small quantities (the CK can allot as needed). *The CK can create the tension and possibility that this mausoleum may rise animated at any time from some spell or curse.*

- 4 TROLL'S HOME:** A clan of trolls have traveled down from Järnviðr to dwell here among the Dark Elves and dwarves many centuries ago. They are not evil natured, more self-contained and private by habit. Unlike the more monstrous of their kin these trolls are small elf-like, not very attractive and very quirky in behavior. They are led by Hæringr, a devious leader. These trolls will steal from anyone that dares to wander into their home cavern and then sell it back to the owners. If this doesn't work, they will hide the possessions deep into Svartálfaheimr instead.

(The chaotic neutral troll's vital statistics are HD 6d8, AC 16, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by 2 claw (d4), bite (2d6) and spear (d6). Their abilities are rend, darkvision (60 ft.), twilight vision, and regeneration 2.)

- 5 UNSTABLE CAVERN:** This massive expansive cavern, filled with stalactites and stalagmites is very unusually quiet and has no signs of traffic (meaning few tracks or disturbances). It eventually leads into a greater part of the Dark Elf kingdom but they avoid the region due to its instability. As caverns go, this place is very sanitary meaning there has been no history of activity by other beings or semi-intelligent animals here.

If the adventurers use this cavern to move through the Underworld the instability works in this way: walking (as a group) will create a 2 in 10 chance of collapse of the ceiling and/or floor causing 8d10 damage, running (as a group) will create a 4 in 10 chance of collapse sooner causing 5d20 damage. The rubble will take d4 hours to dig out of and may attract the attention of the Dökkálfar or others depending on what is happening in the adventure at the time.

- 6 HEL'S SHADOWS:** This lightless cavern is incapable of holding any light source, only in the immediate area (one hex or five feet radius) due to a mere notice once by the goddess Hel many ages ago. She blotted out this location in Svartálfaheimr to deny the despised access through this region into where the Svartálfar dwell (only five miles distant). To make one's way here it would require constant intelligence checks (per mile) or the traveler will fall from the precarious narrow walkway and plunge to their death below, if they are lucky suffering 2d100 damage in Helheimr. If they survive they are stuck in the dismal realm of the Goddess Hel and from here the CK can decide what can happen next. *Refer to the Codex Nordica for this location and what may come next for ideas.*

YGGR THE STRANGER


Due to the occurrences in the first module ‘*Hel Rising*’ Óðin Alföðr sent his two ravens into the Nine Worlds to discover the origin of the quakes and disturbances only to find them emanating from the Hills of Ormr in Denmark. Troll-blooded raiders were maiming and wounding an exposed tail-end of the World-Serpent Jörmunganðr and a series of battles were involving a group of people who were also sighted (by Thought and Memory) at Ormr. Because of this Óðin had to find out for himself what is afoot in his universe. He was aware that these individuals (the adventurers) were making a perilous journey to Svartálfarheimr and so he must be there to divulge their intentions.

As the adventurers survive whichever encounter(s) upon arrival into Svartálfarheimr they will happen in the dark natural caverns a scrawny, lanky bearded man in typical Norse garb, dressed as a non-descript traveler with an Ash wood, rune etched staff. His eyes are gaunt, face sunken and he appears a little sickly but will grin upon seeing them.

He will shake their hands and be as friendly as possible and non-assuming. Yggr will say to them:

“My name is Yggr and I am a wisdom seeker; a traveler. With these shoes I have traversed across many strange worlds to find hidden knowledge and seek what others do not take the time to want to know. Many are too concerned with bloody battles or power; or worse, wealth, and I do not have time for that. I want knowledge. It is all I ask from strangers on my way. I hold secrets, a million or more I am sure, for every step I take I have someone’s knowledge and wisdom stored in my head.

If I may, can you impart on me some sort of hidden knowledge you have about something that no one knows in this world or universe? It is safe with me. In payment I can answer for you any question you ask in turn.”

NOTE: Óðin will expect them to tell him of their quest for the  Rune or at the very least Boddi Froði, but if he is told something else that is misleading he replies:

“I thank you for your knowledge strangers. I find the best sources of the most interesting wisdom comes from the most diverse of people. I am sorry however that because of the knowledge you handed me I do not have anything of equal value to give to you if you give me a question so poor is my collection in comparison. I will be on my way now.”

Yggr will scheme to make his way to join with the Dark Elves to plot to take the secrets from the adventuring party by force if he must since being subtle does not work. This will cause him to exhibit his darker side and the reason for him alias’ name, ‘The Terrible One’.

If the Players Reveal Their Purpose: Yggr’s face will change and grow more ominous, shadows will fall darker around them and strangely one of his eyes will go dark as though it is missing, and Yggr will say in a gruff and angry tone of voice:

8 CASTLES & CRUSADES

“So you have come here to take what is not yours under the guise of deception? Saplings not yet ripe to cut or harvest. I will give to you the secret knowledge that no one else has in these Nine Worlds fools. That you have angered He with Twice Hundred Names and Who Armies Name With Spears Cast. I will not relent in my hunt or my preventive actions of your efforts. Svartálfarheimr shall be your grave.”

Yggr glares at them as a terrifying wind shrills down the corridor around them, blinding and strong. Before they were aware of it he has vanished completely out of sight in the chaos and the winds ceased.

Yggr will still resort to turning to his Dark Elves and using them for his awful plan in capturing, torturing and gaining the secrets of the adventuring party for the Runes, but now he will seek out Boddi. It will be a race for time truly if the players even realize what they have done. Óðin’s fury hasn’t yet been unleashed in this story but will be later if he is foiled and skillfully tricked along the way.

However the encounter with Yggr is handled, the adventuring party will be soon to arrive into the domain of the Dark Elves. It will be evident by the architecture and elaborate design work on the stones as they leave the natural areas of the Underworld behind. Svartálfarheimr’s true wonder and antiquity from the first moments of creation since Ymir’s demise is glorified here by the plentiful art which extols that past.

The elves have carved into the stones, floor-tiles and the columns in this eerie world. Ever present are the echoes from the rings of hammers, and the gusts from bellows and other noises by the industrious elves somewhere in the many chambers and corridors beyond.

Unfortunately travel into elfin territory for strangers within Svartálfarheimr isn’t so simple or safe. The Dökkálfar have placed guards in their borders to keep unwanted outsiders away. Due to their obsessive work creating and devising, they have spent little time mastering the arts of war, so they have made up it in other ways.

DARK ELFIN SENTRIES

Manufactured from metal and magic, the Dark Elves have engineered their warriors and guards for their kingdom unlike their dwarven neighbors (See ‘*The Iron-Berserks of the Dökkálfar*’). It is unknown how many of these sentries were crafted since the time of Ymir’s Death by the xenophobic elves, but they likely number in the tens of thousands.

These metallic statues stand gathering dust for centuries until the presence of others stirs them from their slumber. Once awakened the Sentry is nearly unstoppable. Its purpose is two-fold: 1.) resist and repel strangers by force and kill if needed, and 2.) take survivors to the King.

The Sentries were made to appear as tall armored (in mail and helm) slender faced Dökkálfar with droopy moustaches, armed with axes. They were once chrome but are now tarnished by

age. They are gilt by gold and silver and detailed in elaborate Norse patterns and designs and the furious fires from Múspellheimr lights them inside, nearly forever burning as a life-spark.

Because of the weight of the ages many of the Sentries have become covered in rubble or collapsed soil from geological changes but they are still active and waiting. If strangers are within fifty feet of one and make noise, or their presence be known in some manner, they awaken. They move swiftly and do not stop in their pursuit or attack of their prey until destroyed.

There is a 4 in 12 chance that the adventuring party will be near or encounter a sentry as they enter the kingdom of the Dark Elves. If so, the CK can roll a d6 for the number present: 1-2: 1, 3-4: 2, 5-6: 3.

MÁLMUR VERNDARI (These 'Metal Protectors' vital statistics are HD 2d12, AC 16, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by battle-ax (d12). Their abilities are agelessness (immortality).


The Málmur Verndari as they are called by the Dökkálfar are second to the Iron-Berserks but still deadly and efficient. Sneaking by them undetected into the kingdom of the Svartálfar is a difficult feat. Once passed them however, the adventurers are now fully into the realm of the Dark Elves.


ACT 2 -DARK DEALINGS

SPEAKING IN TERRIBLE PLACES

It is fairly logical to assume that the adventuring party have never been here before, or are not playing one of the Dark Elves. Traveling here is completely unfamiliar to them, and so should be handled with complete mystery and fascination.

The kingdom of the Svartálfar or Dökkálfar is well-built into the stone and earth by their architects and engineers over time. Homes are nestled into place close, claustrophobic and yet sturdy, while their defenses are prepared against their rivals the Dvergar (dwarfs). Unlike the Dvergar the Dökkálfar have constructed their kingdom in a manner that would be perceived upside down from a surface dweller's perception.

It will not take long before the adventurers are discovered by the natives unless they are attempting to sneak about. If so, they will require a lot of patience and slow movement. The greatest question in this is – where exactly do the adventurers intend on going? This world is unknown to them, and so is the location of both Boddi and the  Rune.

NOTE: Due to the presence of the  Rune in Svartálfarheimr the inhabitants are agitated by its magic unknowingly. The Rune has caused them to be quick to anger and overly reactive more than usual. This will be something that visitors to this world will not know is unusual or different.

The adventurers will see the following in the subterranean cities of the Dark Elves:



- Blue, red and purple bio-luminescent fungi and other similar plants are used to illuminate beautifully, if eerily, the various lanes and domains of the city from above.
- Arching stairs seem to cascade down everywhere from above to the stone-tiled street-like road. These stairs are from homes and other buildings that are not well understood.
- It seems as though the habitations of the Dark Elves are afraid of being low to the ground even though they were underground already, as though they were expecting something to happen. Floods are what they fear, such as what came after Ymir's death when his blood poured and filled the worlds, and what may come with Ragnarök.
- There were no presences of warriors or soldiers anywhere to be found strangely. Everything about the Dark Elves is alien and creepy. Their culture and its art is based around the slaughter of Ymir by Óðin and how the very first Dark Elves emerged from the gory flesh of Ymir.

If the Adventuring Party Go To the Elves Willingly:

This option makes the CK's job easier in setting up what is to come in the story. The players will be practically walking into the trap that Yggr has ready for them (however their first encounter with him went in Act 1). The Dark Elves will be spooked around them, but with their strange robed gloomy

wizards, the players will be led to the grand palace of the king. The Dökkálfar will show plenty of courtesy and respect for the player characters as they are brought to the ‘king’ with plenty of ceremony (see ‘Yggr – The King of the Svartálfar’).

If the Adventuring Party Are Caught by Devious Means:

This can be from being stealthy, or having one too many battles and failing to fall into the hands of the Dark Elves eventually. However it occurs, it is negative and they will be dragged by force to meet the ‘king’ for their punishment. It will be a terrible and torturous time once taken.

YGGR – THE KING OF THE SVARTÁLFAR

The palace of the Dark Elves is a magnificent dark stone structure, round in form, squat and ominous, with no watch towers or guard posts, only one long stair case that leads to two tall golden doors. The bio-luminescent shine illuminates it dramatically in the gloom of the Underworld from all exterior surfaces, its name is *Völskuggor* (‘Hall of Shadows’).

Yggr, secretly Óðin has come to his First Created, the Dark Elves, to step in as their long forgotten king. It has been many millennia since the Dökkálfar had their king or need of one, but they had his throne ritually cleaned and prepared every day since the Terrible One first sat there so long ago. Now he has returned. The Dark Elves do not know him as ‘Óðin’ and believe him to be someone else with divine powers who obeys the Allfather. They worship and follow his every word when he does appear without question.

The adventuring party is brought before the Dökkálfar King, here his name is Löndungr (‘Shaggy Cloak Wearer’) due to his fondness for donning a grey dire wolf’s hide cloak. He appears as a Dark Elf with powerful eyes, deep voice and garbed in rich gold raiment with a spear and one white eye. He will sit with much presence on his tall throne, casting a snide glance down at the adventuring party before speaking to them:

“You do not belong here, you are not welcome here among the First Born of Ymir’s Blood strangers. Outsiders do not make their way this far into Svartálfarheimr by mistake or pure blind luck. You are here for something...or...someone? Please tell, it would be wise if you do not have secrets.

You can pass on through my kingdom as you were, so as it was before, if you tell me. If you do not I must take certain measures to ensure that this kingdom is not vulnerable to our enemies. The Dvergar are ever eager to prey on us and you may be their agents.”

If the Adventurers Tell Their Purpose in Svartálfarheimr:

This will risk Boddi’s life and everything that the Völva Tyra told them before she passed away prophesizing in Miðgarðr. Unfortunately the outcome of not revealing their purpose will lead to the next option and what will happen. Óðin will incarcerate the player characters, torture them cruelly and then send his Dark Elves to do his bidding in finding Boddi and the Rune.

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The situations to follow will occur so swiftly from here on that the adventurers won’t be able to keep up with them.

If the Adventurers Refuse to Speak to the King:

This will be the second time that the adventuring party will unknowingly encounter and fool Óðin and he will be angry. If they are obstinate and even rude he will say to them:

“Fools! You invite yourselves into my kingdom without sending any proper diplomats or envoys, you travel hidden and in secret, clearly with the same intention. Now you are questioned by the king of the Dökkálfar, the most powerful man in the realm and you refuse to be privy with him when he demands it.

I will send you to be taken to the cells deeper below where even the Svartálfar and Dvergar do not dig or go, to ruminate the last moments of your lives. Whereupon you will then be made to speak by agonizing torture until your soul breaks and I get my answer . . . or you die. This is the outcome you have chosen outsiders.

Every time you resist and fight me I will make one of you an example until I get my answer. Take them to the pits!”

The ‘King’ shouts his orders and from the side corridors thunder six massive metal warriors similar to the Sentries but more frightening. Each one appears as they were a Berserker molded into animated iron, gilt in gold and elaborately crafted. They are fierce and robotic. A raging red fire blazes within them and shimmers from their joints and eyes (the Múspel Spark).

These six Iron-Berserks will stomp to the adventurers’ side and grab them. The adventurers will be blinded by dark cloth bags, beaten bloody and then dragged below swiftly. They will obviously be unarmed and separated from their possessions by many levels.

THE IRON-BERSERKS OF THE DÖKKÁLFAR

These nearly invincible metal warriors are manufactured by the Dark Elf weaponsmiths to protect their kingdom. Primarily because, unlike the Dvergar, they devote their time to constructing strange and dark devices and items for their patrons and clients from the Nine Worlds – those brave enough to ask.

The Svartálfar captured one Múspel Spark for each Iron-Berserk made to give it life, this required over 5,000 of such sparks. Ultimately this is less than what was needed for the Sentries, but the result was worth more in the end. Each Iron-Berserk is equal to ten mortal men, or two Sentries. Held inside a massive iron walled hall the army waits, only a few are used at a time throughout the kingdom to function as guards and to enforce authority. Now that Óðin has returned he will be easily tempted to use them all if his wrath is completely ignited (*which is possible in the rest of this module*).

These Iron-Berserks resemble their namesakes, each appearing as though they are frozen by the metal in the state of the frenzy, the divine Óðr or ‘Rage’ with wild eyes, gnashing lips and bent

faces. The Dark Elves modeled them after an ancient memory of witnessing Oðin caught in his berserker fury, it left a cultural impression on the Dökkálfar.

In battle they furiously slash and attack as though they are possessed by the Allfather's 'fury'. The Dark Elves built them to defend the realm against their rivals the Dvergar not far away. They anticipate a war someday and plan to march them into the dwarven region of their world to conquer and slaughter, or if another foe were to threaten them they would do the same.

A critical hit on the Iron-Berserks will not only do double damage on them but there is 1 in 10 chance that the Múspel Spark inside is hit and shatters 'killing' it instantly.

The Iron-Berserks only follow the orders of higher ranking elves, the king/Oðin and the other lesser leaders. By magic and creative work, the Dark Elves are able to take the Múspel Spark and convert it to a Life-Spark.

(These 'Iron-Berserks' vital statistics are HD 2d20, AC 17, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by battle-axe (d12). Their abilities are agelessness (immortality).)

INCARCERATION AND TORTURE

Yggr will see to it that the adventurers, regardless of how matters are handled previously, are brought to this outcome. In his cruel manner, he will have them taken below against their will by the Iron-Berserks to the lightless cells where they will be shackled for a time.

Each adventurer is held in iron shackles that also bind the fingers tightly. The king has placed several elves on watch in the corridors, sending the Iron-Berserks elsewhere in the kingdom in quiet preparation for war.

After what felt like a few hours, a Dökkálfar interrogator arrives. He is garbed in a black hooded cloak, ominous and silent, armed with strange tools in a leather bag. The King follows, cruelty on his face, and they will begin to torture the most beligerent or mouthy character first:

"Tell me why you are in Svartálfalheimr. You are wasting all of our time the more you refuse to speak. It is clear that you have a motive here, a purpose that has placed you deep into world that is not your own. Now tell me, the king, what is your purpose here.

For each time you refuse to give me an answer I will make you suffer stranger. For what are you here?"

NOTE: With a nod by the king, the Dark Elf interrogator will jab with a burning firebrand (d12), sharp-tool (d6), or by other cruel instrument (CK's decision).

The other adventurers may be able to try to find a way out of their imprisonment if possible. There will be little available to them to make this a reality but if a Rogue or Thief class is present this could be likely.

Yggr tortures each adventurer one by one if need be until he gets an answer. He will take them one at a time and give them the same run of questions and tortures putting them close to death before he gets the reasons why they are in Svartálfalheimr.

If Yggr/Oðin is told about the Rune and Boddi:

Obviously, if Yggr was never told the previous two times in this adventure about the purpose of the adventurers he will now act on this information. He will grin and give a deep laugh before sending out his Dark Elves to find both. It will complicate their purpose here in this world instantly.

If Yggr/Oðin was never told a thing:

Each adventurer was tortured fairly badly until their morale was broken and they were tossed into a cell and forgotten, left to starve by Yggr. If they refuse to speak or comply he will let them perish in obscurity in this cell and forget about it unless one of them makes a deal with him.

ESCAPING FROM VÖLSKUGGOR

Unless the adventurers are sneaky, the Iron-Berserks will not get involved in the escape and only the Dark Elves will stand in their way. This may change however if they cross and infuriate Yggr on the way out.

The many dark and winding corridors of the elfin palace are confusing to the outsiders, the logic is completely alien. Occasional Iron-Berserks stomp and thunder in the corridors doing whatever unknown biddings for Yggr and function as guards. If alerted, the entire palace will be sent after them from all directions.

Yggr will be furious (thus this module's title and what will follow later in Act 3). It will have to be a Cat & Mouse game and many battles on the way out of Völskuggor's mind-numbing twists and turns. The CK can here take this escape as slow as needed, to really emphasize the dramatic nature and dire setting in which they are located.

Dark Elfin warriors (to a limited extent) will come to search for the adventurers using the Iron-Berserks as their muscle. Völskuggor has six levels of chambers, each populated by the many servants and layers of bureaucracy that the Dökkálfar believe is needed to maintain their kingdom. Each layer serves the king when he returns, or prepares for the time when he does, while the rest coordinate and control the other peoples in the realm.

DARK ELF WARRIORS *(These chaotic neutral fighters' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 14, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by Bastard Sword (d10/d12), long composite bow (d8) and Spear (d6). Their abilities are darkvision (150 ft.), superior listening (+3) and cavern sense).*

The Svartálfar warriors are little seen outside of Völskuggor as they attend the king or his acting stewards. If war comes to Svartálfalheimr between the Dark Elves and the Dvergar they will leave the palace to lead the forces of the Múspel Spark. These warriors are garbed in dark mail and helms with a match-



ing cloak and other clothing, boots and the like, meant to be intimidating to other peoples.

Oðin will command them later in Act 3 as he hunts this world for the adventurers, the Rune and Boddi, and most of all when he causes war against his other First Born the Dvergar.

YGGR'S WORDS OF VENOM

By this time in the adventure it is assured the adventuring party has made Yggr/Oðin into a complete and official enemy. They may not even know for sure that Yggr is in reality the Allfather yet, but they will know this persistent stranger wants to know their secrets and will stop at nothing to get them.

Word would have spread over the realm of the Dökkálfar of the King's decree by now not to harbor the adventurers, that they are enemies and should be turned in on sight. This leaves them nowhere to go just as soon as they seemed to get to this dismal kingdom.

Logically it gives only the viable option of fleeing the kingdom of the Dark Elves into somewhere else to look for the - Rune and Boddi.

From this point in the adventure Yggr/Oðin will become a menace and nightmare forever terrorizing the adventuring party in some form. This problem can remain even after this module and persist throughout the series until the end if the players are not wise in their dealings with NPCs. Obviously if it wasn't for Oðin possessing these powerful runes, these circumstances wouldn't be happening as such, but the ability to be tactful and civil is important when encountering unknown beings – one never knows who they might be!

FLEEING IN THE DARK WILDS

If the adventuring party are fortunate enough to manage to not be slain or re-captured by Yggr and his Dark Elfin hordes sent from Völskuggor, they can run into the 'wilds' of Svartálfarheimr. By this time they are now in the depths of the Underworld and must follow the natural caverns where ever it leads them.

It is once again fairly sensible to assume that the player characters do not know where the Dvergar dwell physically in this world and they will have to hope to find them by pure accident.


What follows can act as a guide to lead the adventuring party through in Svartálfarheimr as they retreat from the shadowy kingdom of the Dökkálfar. What must be remembered is that somehow they need to find their way back to their ship on the other side of the Dark Elves once all deeds are completed in this module.

There will be several means provided in this module if the players choose to take them but if they do not it will be more difficult for them.

The obstacles that lie in the way of the adventuring party in the Underworld are more often natural in origin than just violent or aggressive (there will be plenty of time for that in the later modules in this series). This world isn't filled to the brim with endless 'dungeons', treasures and seemingly starving monsters in confining chambers waiting to pounce on hapless strangers. It is mythical and magical but the scant references to it never mention anything analogous to the basic fantasy dungeon.

ODIN'S HUNT BEGINS

This is the start to the fury of the Allfather. Yes, the mighty Chief God of the Nine Worlds will start hunting the player characters ruthlessly throughout Svartálfarheimr to get what he wants.

If he realizes that his  Runes are missing and that they are indeed seeking them he will be zealously on their trail.

Dökkálfar hunting teams with their beasts, Vargr, will smell out the adventurers if they can with enough time. The Allfather will begin the search in earnest, he will send out his ravens, Huginn and Muninn, to fly the caverns for him. He could go to his All-Seeing throne atop Hlidskjalf and find them in an instant but not their intentions, it would do him no good. He knows they are in Svartálfarheimr, but not their ultimate destination(s). He would rather know beforehand if he has been tricked or outsmarted without having to resort to go to the Well of Mímir. If need be, that will be his last plan of action.

The CK can choose to have the Dark Elf hunting parties as close to the player characters' heels as often as they wish to raise the tension and to push them forward. Perhaps the monstrous howls of the Vargr echoing in the dark caverns, or the chatter of the elves could spur them on, as could other noises. Many tricks can be used to prod and pull them away from the kingdom of the Dökkálfar.

There are no limit to the numbers to the hunting parties being deployed from Völskuggor by Oðin so the CK can have endless fun with these gaunt and eerie elfin groups, possibly hinting that they bear Sentries or Iron-Berserks in their company (they do not but this is optional).

There are an average of 3-9 Dark Elf Hunters and 2-3 Vargr in each team sent out by the Allfather across the wilds in Svartálfarheimr. If his hunting parties fail to capture the adventurers (by Act 3), he personally will be forced to hunt them down, leading his Dark Elves and cause a war in the Underworld to get what he wants, but this is assuming several other said actions have, or haven't, taken place so far.

DÖKKÁLFAR HUNTERS *(These 2nd level chaotic neutral rangers' vital statistics are HD 2d10, AC 12, and HP 20. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no significant attributes. They attack by long bow (d6), spear (d6) and net. Their abilities are twilightvision (150 ft.), superior listening (+3) and cavern sense).*

VARGR WOLVES (*These chaotic evil demonic wolves' vital statistics are HD 4d8, AC 14, and HP 32. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Bite (2d4) and 2 claw (d8). Their abilities are darkvision (60 ft.), twilight-vision (50 ft.), track and scent.*)

SVART FLJÓT – BLACK RIVER

After running fifty leagues into the wilds of the Underworld from the kingdom of the Dark Elves with the hunting parties on their tracks, a massive dark river stands before them. Its waters are as lightless as nearly the rest of the world, and move with strange currents.

It spans over two hundred yards and the other shore is not usable as walkable land, as it is high angled and rocky. The only way is to follow the flow of the dark river as it goes deeper into Svartálfarheimr or remain trapped until the hunting parties arrive for a last stand on the gloomy shores.

Either the adventurers will have to risk swimming the cold, dangerous waters (Dexterity checks at a CL: 1 X 10 or drowning will begin to happen), or they can attempt to construct a raft of some sort to float on the currents. Either way they will end up having to continue to fleeing from King Löndung's men.

Whichever option the adventuring party decides to use in accessing the Black River, it will take no time before they are carried by the fast flowing currents down into an angle. The growling roar of the waters against the rocky confines of the caverns thunders around them as they are carried.

Drop-offs: Before the adventurers' time is done in the river they will have to survive many miles of unexpected drop-offs and dangerous waterfalls. These will come to them with a suddenness that is as frightening as the fall itself. Many minor drops are felt in the current for a time but eventually the adventurers are yanked into a larger fall, the first major one in the Underworld. To remain 'safe' as they were in this a Dexterity check is needed (CL:2) or they will take 2d12 damage from the impact on the rocks and cascading water below in the nearly 100 ft. fall. They will tumble in the gloom and cold without any clue as to up or down for a time.

They will be pulled left and right many times with force, often under the tow of the water (a check or they may begin to drown) and then face another drop, this time a worse one. This waterfall is spectacular at almost 150 ft. in the bio-luminescent dim gloom and will require another Dexterity check (CL:3) or suffer from 3d10 damage from the fall below and unconsciousness if a Constitution check is not made.

Drainage to Helheimr: After surviving this massive drop the current does not slow but it does begin to change into many different smaller channels in the rocky landscape. The strange smooth rocks, covered in glowing fungi and mushrooms, are as far as the eye can see in this part of the Underworld, but the waters are seeping into countless cracks within the dark earth below. If the adventurers are not quick enough they are drawn

into the draining cracks with the cold waters and will find themselves dumped into the dreary seas of Helheimr near where the Ship of Nails Naglfar waits (*what the CK does from here is up to them . . .*).

ODIN'S RAVENS RETURN

Flapping their heavy wings, the Allfather's two trusted ravens will search the Underworld for the adventurers high and low in the meantime. The louder, the more pronounced the adventurers make their presence known the more likely Huginn and Muninn will find them and report back to their divine master. *This is not what the player characters obviously want!*

Huginn and Muninn will both perch dangerously close to where the adventurers might be camped, hiding, etc to sniff out the air or look for signs of their tracks. Whatever they see and think is transferred to the Allfather in turn instantly.

The CK can throw in the hint or presence of these two ominous birds whenever it is deemed appropriate to scare the adventurers, if they let down their guard or become too arrogant from dealing with the Dark Elf hunting parties.

Both ravens will be forever searching over the Underworld for Oðin without rest. They will not be frightened off or intimidated by the efforts of the adventuring party, these grim doom-bringing birds fear nothing and no one, only obediently doing what their master demands.

DVERGARHEIMR

Crossing the Black River, its perils, and dodging the hunting parties of the Dark Elves deep in the wilds of Svartálfarheimr, the adventurers will see before them intricately carved architecture. Dark stonework, shaped and guide by the hands of the Dvergar (dwarfs) of the Underworld.

It is clear this region's façade is not crafted by the Dökkálfar. The style is very large, brutal even and strong. Although intricate, the motifs of monsters battling warriors are common and everywhere in the enormous Dvergar façade, it is not the same as what was seen in the other land. This is epic and grand.

Statues stand aloft, slightly worn by the ages, glorifying the strength of the legendary defeat of Ymir by Oðin, Vili and Vé. The art on the walls around the doors displays the images of dwarves swimming in the blood of the slain giant Ymir, emerging from his corpse entering to life.

NOTE: As a moment of tension upon arriving at these portal gates to Dvergarheimr the CK could have a hunting party (or two) appear fresh on the adventurers' trail. It won't be easy to simply gain entry into the dwarven realm once here. This will place the player characters between two difficulties at once.

Gaining Entry: Two massive ornate stone doors are all that stand before the adventuring party and the rest of Svartálfar-

heimr. No Unlock spell or other magical trick can work here, it is protected by high level Charms by the Dvergar. There is a process which must be followed to enter Dvergarheimr:

One must knock using the bronze ring in the mouth of the dragon on either door.

Answer the Door-Keeper's Riddle: "*Harshly he clangs, on hard paths treading which he has fared before. Two mouths, he has, and mightily kisses, and on gold alone he goes. Alright now, guess this riddle!*" (Gold Smith's Hammer on which gold is beaten)

Answer the Door-Keeper's Question: "*Will you enter our realm bringing us opportunity and prosperity, or will you bring us calamity?*" (There is no correct answer, the dwarves will prosper from either reply but how they treat their guest as hosts.)

Once this process is done, the double doors will dramatically open with dust blowing on the breeze.

If the Dark Elves are still present in battle they will leave quickly, fading into the darkness.

Inside the doors the smell and noises of furnaces, anvils and what must be endless foundries and similar chambers beyond. Hammers ring and echo, the stinging scent of metal in crucibles and in molds fills the air.

Around them is a massive corridor, rows of statues displaying honored Dvergar (*See the 'Dvergatal' in the Codex Nordica*), it is a mighty and breathtaking show of power and heritage.

No dwarves are in sight at the moment but their presence is not hard to notice in the shadows and in other areas beyond. Unlike the Dark Elves, the Dwarves have taken their bloody origins from Ymir and have gone in an entirely positive and epic direction.


Corridors go into all directions and show that many structures, an entire city, exists under the dome of the earth above. Thousands of fires and strange lights flicker and shine on the high smooth surface far above in this eerie and odd land.

The many moving shapes of the citizens of this dwarfen city can be seen in the cobbled streets, they are dressed in decent garb and are a little startled by the appearance of the adventurers. Runic writing on walls near the edge of the city say this is the city of *Brimirborg*.

If the adventurers make an Intelligence check (CL:2) they will notice the vague outlines of gigantic humanoid bones in the city's form. This is not something the dwarves crafted but they built the city *around* long ago. It is part of the giant Ymir's bones to everyone's surprise.

Whether the player characters try to attract attention or not, heavily armored and armed guards will arrive (4) to surround and take them to where ever they want to go.

Brimirborg has many Beer-Houses and a population of 3,500. The king of the Dvergar lives many miles away from here in

Dvergarheimr, and the wilds where Boddi lives and the  Rune are located even further.

If the adventurers come to town speaking of the terrible deeds of the Dark Elves and of their king they will be taken to speak the dwarf king without delay. Otherwise they will be ignored or simply just watched by cautious guards for security.

LINGERING IN THE CITY

The dwarfs are typically gruff, often humorless, and if they do joke it will be callous and crude, or obscure. They do not know how to socialize with outsiders well and are generally xenophobic, keeping to themselves, unable to be very open or cheerful.

The Beer-Houses (3) are full of laughing and rude dwarfs, telling private stories and jokes, unwilling to talk to outsiders. Their alcohol is super strong and may require Constitution checks to stay conscious along the way.

Brawls occur often. Between dwarfs it is for jest and fun, but with strangers it would be for rivalries and other reasons. The children and womenfolk of the dwarfs are as strong in limb and form as well, and resemble their early creator – Oðin. There is no mistaking this anywhere one goes in the Dvergar territory.

Markets and shops are widespread in the city. Chores are plentiful here and many are busy working on them, but there is no hiding the intense industry being done in the forges by the smiths. Smoke rises constantly from this section of the city and the clang of the hammers mixed with the ring of tools can be heard throughout Brimirborg.

There are no places for strangers to stay over in the city as the dwarfs do not care for long-term guests. They are weary of non-Dvergar greatly.

If they are Taken to the King:

If the adventurers are smart about this and their situation, they will inform the city guard about the Dökkálfar. They will also need to mention their situation to some limited extent and how they must find someone in Svartálfarheimr. An escort of six dwarfen warriors will lead them on the lengthy five mile walk down a stone path to a tall arching bridge that lies before the king's fort – *Kongheim*.

KONGHEIM – THE KING'S HOME

Built by the first of the Dvergar after the deluge of Ymir's blood for a place of refuge, this became the secure place (and grandiose) domain of many of the rulers of Dvergarheimr. Since those days however, many other kings have come to power in Dvergarheimr in other competing realms with their own fortresses. But this hollowed old home of kings still stands from the earliest of days.

It is a city into itself and has a population said to be over 10,000 or more. There are three walls, many gates, complex defenses and expert masonry work to protect Kongheim from any threats, allegedly the Dark Elves and Jötun that may threaten someday.

NOTE: If for some reason Oðin is aware of the adventurers being here, he makes another appearance in another guise as ‘Reiðartýr’ (Wagon Rider) at the fort’s gates, bearing doom.

Kongheim is an impressive fortress, unlike anything the adventurers have ever seen before in their travels. The skill and design by the dwarfs in planning and crafting this city is almost beyond description for them. The fort is practical but with aesthetics and has a toughness about it.

MEETING KING MOSOGNIR

The rich, jewel encrusted palace of the venerable dwarf king Mosognir is one of the finest places the adventuring party have likely ever stepped into in their lives so far. It is grand in scale, detailed in elaborate artistry and masonry with motifs of the Three Sons of Borr slaying Ymir prominent.

Well-dressed courtiers, advisors, guards, and the many others of the ancient king’s entourage stand in the torch-lit hall.

King Mosognir has a long grey, braided beard to his feet, his eye-brows and ear hair are styled but equally long. He has deep blue, tired eyes and a wrinkled face, his clothes are finely made, brightly colored, threaded in gold and silver, and his battle-ax is by his right hand. To his side stand his elite warriors, six, and they nearly growl on the arrival of the strangers.

The King speaks to them:

“You have come to Kongheim with interesting news I hear? Please inform my tired and dusty ears of this, I am eager to know what you youthful outsiders have to say.”

NOTE: King Mosognir has become so old and bored with his life that he seeks any thrill that resembles the glory days of his youth. He languishes on his throne endlessly wanting an event to occur so that he can take up his ax again. Few wish to face him because of his legendary name. The player characters bring to his court an interesting opportunity that he cannot ignore. *He is said to be the first dwarf to have been born or ruled since Creation.*

If the King is told everything:

“I will rally my warriors from all quarters of the realm to help protect you and send my guides to aid you to seek out the Swamps of Ketthontla if you need. If you say the King of the Dökkálfar is hunting you and wants what you are after then he shall not have it. Our peoples have been at odds for many an age and we do not fear them or their devices. We Dvergar will do this for you, but for a price. I, King Mosognir, will send one of my own to join you, from this moment on, to help you seek the Rune, for there must be others like it. He shall be our diplomat and your doorway into our lands and people when you need it. This is the least I can do.”

If the King is told little to nothing:

“I cannot help you with your request strangers. Perhaps I can send you with a guide, a ranger, to aid you on your way out of Dvergarheimr? It is a shame that you have wasted all of our times here, now be on your way.”


The adventurers will be escorted out if they have not told King Mosognir any important or crucial information.

HÁKON THE IMPUGN ONE

Chosen by King Mosognir to be the diplomat and accompany the adventuring party in their trek across the Nine Worlds, Hákon, is a hyper-critical and very spoilt dwarf. He was raised in the palace of the king never having to shed blood or see his own. He has been educated on the runic knowledge of Oðin, its literature and charms and how to read them. Because of his spoiled upbringing he feels that he must be frank about everything he finds less in quality or noble in others’ character or behavior.

Hákon is not experienced in traveling or even camping and his knowledge of life beyond Dvergarheimr, much less Kongheim, is purely based on travelers’ tales and legends making him very naïve. He has a way with his words however and can speak with fine eloquence when needed, showing his education and upbringing in the king’s presence but he is useless in battle and magic.

King Mosognir has given him a secret mission in this however. If Hákon discovers that the mission of the adventuring party is far more important and grand than it seems (and it is), then he is to become more involved and gather these ‘runes’ and take them back to Kongheim for the dwarves when they are all gathered together – at any cost. One price of having Hákon slain, either by the players through treachery or accident, is that the dwarves of Svartálfarheimr will now be the adventuring party’s enemy and seek a vendetta. To do this, they will send a group of warriors/assassins (numbering usually about 10 or more) at 3-4 experience levels higher than the player characters to exact vengeance in the Nine Worlds. The CK can exploit this and bring the fear of dwarf rage on them later in the module series, it will only add to the many issues that will pile up in the process of playing these adventures.

The CK will need to play this NPC with a gradual process of trust in the group. It is often hard to earn players’ trust when NPCs are suddenly thrust upon them and must cling to them in some unwanted capacity. There will always be a lack of trust. Throughout these modules in this series the CK must make Hákon a necessary evil, someone the group both despises (due to his hyper-critical tongue) and likes to have around (due to his skill with speaking well). For him to betray the group and take the  Runes eventually, he must work his way up the ranks in the team and strike when he is not expected. It is best to plant this seed early and watch it blossom.

HÁKON THE IMPUGN ONE (*He is a Neutral Courtier with vital statistics of HD 2d12, AC 15, and HP 24. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by dagger (d4). His abilities are determine depth & direction, defensive expertise (giants/ogres), resistant to Arcane Magic, and resistant to fear.*)

IF ODIN FOLLOWED THEM

As dreadful as this is, the Allfather might be on their trail from the kingdom of the Dark Elves, depending on what they left behind and did (many players do not use discretion). If the Svartálfar hunters and their Vargr were left behind at the gates to Dvergarheimr, the Allfather, however, is never deterred or slowed and can make his way to the dwarf kingdom on the adventurer's trail.

If it takes it, Oðin will cause a war among his own first creations just to learn/acquire what the adventuring party possesses. He will take the guise of a dark robed, wide-brim hat man in a wagon called simply Reiðartýr ('Wagon Rider') to the many peoples of the Nine Worlds. He will arrive at the gates of Kongheim, be let in, and ride his way into the heart of the city as the adventurers are meeting with the ancient king.

Oðin has waiting hordes of his Dark Elves and their Vargr prepared to surge into Dvergarheimr on cue to cause chaos and confusion, and to grant old King Mosognir his wish to die in battle. If the players have been clever and crafty in their avoidance of the Allfather during this entire adventure then by this stage they will surely inspire his rage and fury once and for all.

In disguise as the 'Wagon Rider' Oðin will arrive in the middle of Kongheim with a sinister purpose. If handled correctly by the CK, the adventuring party should just be leaving King Mosognir's palace with their scouts/rangers to make their way to the furthest edges of Dvergarheimr. If this is so then Oðin will belch an ominous laughter within the streets of the dwarfen city and uncover his wagon with hellish glee. While he does this the townsfolk gather in curiosity to see what the odd man in the old wagon is making noise about only to discover horror.

Released from the darkness of the ornate wooden wagon fly a small group of winged trolls (10). They are ghastly, demonic and foul and called from the deepest of fell places by the Allfather to stir chaos in Kongheim. These trolls will distract the city guard as the Dökkálfar hordes, Vargr and their Iron-Berserks

breach the Stone Gates into Dvergarheimr for a full-scale invasion. This war will alert all in the dwarf kingdom and cause a panic not seen for thousands of years. King Mosognir will eagerly don his battle-dress and accompany his warrior retinue in a short time to go to battle.

The king's escort of the adventuring party to the edge of the kingdom will not stop or change in this chaos. It will quicken however and the fires from the impending destruction and its awful arriving tide are evident in the far distance under the earthen dome.


REACHING THE EDGE OF DVERGARHEIMR

If Oðin's war isn't happening, or even if it is, behind them as they leave King Mosognir's fortress they will be lead across the rocky and dark wilds of Dvergarheimr by four dwarf rangers.

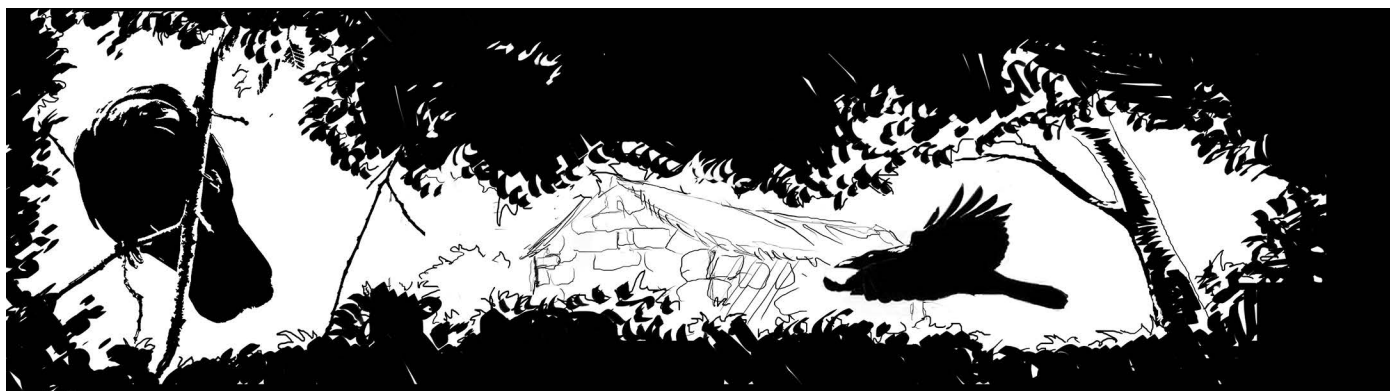
These four ranger/scouts are garbed in natural colored clothes, camouflaged against the gloomy rocks and earth. They know the paths and secret short-cuts beyond the villages and move swiftly.

Svartálfar hunting parties (*like those seen at the Gates of Dvergarheimr*) will be roaming the borders of this realm, sent by the Allfather. There will be a 3 in 10 chance (per hour/mile of travel) that one of these parties will find them. If so there will be 2d6 Dark Elf Hunters and 2d4 Vargr. If the war is occurring in Svartálfarheimr there is a d4 Iron-Berserks present as well to attack them with each ambush.

Around them the landscape changes subtly into one of rolling wind- and water-carved stones and hills, high and with low and deep valleys. Glowing fungi and other oozing bio-luminescent forms light up the strange land, casting a strange shimmer in many colors.

There can be moments that Oðin's ravens are sighted in what passes for sky above in the gloom to create more tension and an urgency to move on. This module's 'theme' is immediacy, and the constancy of moving forward to seek Boddi and the first  Rune.

The Dvergar rangers will be mostly silent as they lead the adventurers on through the farthest wilds away from the most inhabited regions of Dvergarheimr and where the Dökkálfar dwell. The topography of the Underworld appears to switch



and go low and slope downwards over time. As with the beginning of first setting foot onto the shore of this world, there is a constant lack of grasses, trees and other foliage as one would expect in a 'world'.

Somewhere ahead in the air a slightly noxious odor drifts about and the dwarfs slow. One finally speaks to them with caution as they go low to the rocky earth:

"The scent of the swamps is ripe in the air, we alone are near to Her domain now. From here you must go on, our duty is done. King Mosognir wishes you and his diplomat Hákon the best of luck and the blessings of the gods with your quest. We must not leave."

The dwarfs silently scramble and leave the other direction as they came, back over the hills and rocks in the gloom. The adventurers are now left near the large dark, bubbling waters of the Swamps of Ketthontla.

ACT 3 – THE RUNE AND DOOM

BODDI THE HERMIT AND THE SWAMP HAG

For miles around them the dark, boiling waters of the foul swamp is before them. Its waters are fetid and reek in the air, causing taste and smell to be offended easily. Flashes of fiery wisps appear from the swamps at times, many flutter off randomly and fade. Mysterious and haunting sounds echo and whistle through the vastness of the bleak waters. What appears to be lumps of isles and rocky islands are distant in the mists. Splashes and movement are very evident in the swamp.

Intelligence check (by all in the party) can locate many scattered bones from many beings and beasts in the muddy shores of the bubbling swamp. What caused their demise is not clear but many have the grooves and cuts of either teeth, claws or weapons on them.

NOTE: The Dark Elves will not stop in their pursuit of the adventuring party here by any means, they do not fear the Ogress (Ketthontla) that dwells and rules the swamp unlike the dwarfs. Yggr will be expecting the player characters here eventually if his ravens and/or hunters have done their work.

Movement in the swamps requires wading in the waist-high murky filth (it is warm and every hour there is a 1 in 8 chance it can cause 1d4 points of damage), or finding a way to skip isle to isle. Many denizens dwell here aside from the dreaded Ketthontla, and all are dangerous to encounter.

The longer the adventurers spend in the swamps, or the louder they are as well, they risk attracting the attentions of the denizens and other beings. In general there is a 3 in 8 chance (per hour) that something stirs in the swamp, or the Ogress. This table below can be used, with a d4:

D4 SWAMP ENCOUNTER

- 1 THE OGRESS:** She rules this swamp from shore to shore, her name is unknown but her deeds are not. Without any survivors to tell the story, the Ketthontla Ogress will devour any that come to her 'territory'. In her younger years she worked for the witches of Järnviör before Angrboða was slain, now she dwells here and terrorizes the region with none to challenge her. For more on the Ketthontla see the 'Codex Nordica'. *(The chaotic evil ogress' vital statistics are HD 5d8, AC 15, and HP 40. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks by club (3d6), bite (2d8), and slam.)*
- 2 IRRBLOSS:** These wispy energy beings flit and flash across the dark dense waters of the swamp with a wildness. There is a hint of some previous spirit in them at times, with an outline of a humanoid form and eyes, fleeting but gone before they strike. Vengeful, they seek to take others with them under the dismal waters. *(These chaotic neutral spirits' vital statistics are HD 6d8, AC 25, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by Icy touch (d8). Their abilities are immunity to magic and mist Form.)*
- 3 BÖYG:** Slithering in the murk is this troll-like serpent, which sometimes functions as a 'pet' to the Ogress. The Bøyg is foul tempered and skillful in the black waters, able to hide itself well from sight and is fond of ambushing its victims. If it can it will jealously feast on the victim(s) without the Ogress knowing, but if she is aware, it will grip them and make them unable to resist her attacks in the end aiding her instead. *(This chaotic evil monster's vital statistics are HD 3d12, AC 16 and HP 36. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by Bite (3d10). Its abilities are constrict.)*
- 4 VÆTTIR:** These spectral women float about the swamp waters and remain from what had been left of earlier sacrifices by the dwarfs (of Mortals) to satiate the Ogress. Now they haunt the waters forever bitter and hungry for justice and souls. To strangers they and the Irrbloss are nearly the same but they are not, only separated by their cause of death and reason to exist. *(These chaotic neutral spirits' vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 15, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by Spear (d6), battle-ax (d8) and broadsword (2d4). Their abilities are evade detection.)*

Past these encounters and into the thick of the swamps there are many other dangers are well. These waters are quagmires and similar to quicksand in most locations with steaming hot jets of steam and other threats. The CK can decide to use, when judged best, these many dangers in the swamps before setting them on the correct path to Boddi Froði's abode:

- **HOT VENT:** Jutting out from below are sizzling steam vents that can suddenly appear and then vanish again without warning. These are random and deadly causing 3d8



damage with a 2 in 8 chance of igniting all flammable objects on contact.

- **QUAGMIRE:** This expansive dense section of the water is worse than the rest and will slow the group's movement to a crawl. With each action, once in, a Dexterity check is needed or the individual sinks further down a foot at a time. It will require the help of others with rope or other clever ideas to extricate them.
- **QUICKSAND:** This area of the swamp works the same as the quagmire except that the individual will completely sink far below the water level and under the silt/sand layer to drown or asphyxiate.
- **DANGEROUS CURRENT:** From out of nowhere a current will rush up and take individuals away (Dexterity check with a CL: 1) 5d20 feet at a time in any direction. These currents are guided by unseen forces and often the hot vents below in unison.
- **POISONOUS GASES:** Hovering over the waters are fetid and death-dealing vapors that will cause a painful death to those who find them. First appearing as a fine mist with a slight green tinge, these deadly gases will cause d8 damage (per minute) exposed to them if a constitution check is failed.

18 CASTLES & CRUSADES

THE ISLE OF THE OGRESS

If the Ketthontla is not encountered along the journey, after many torturous miles deep into the swamps her isle will first be found. Its bone littered shores will stand out against the gloom. Rotting carcasses lie amid the dry old bones on this large rocky island. Twisted and gnarled trees stand here, the few that seem to exist in Svartálfheimr.

The ogress lives in a cave-like hole where her disgusting half-eaten piles are scattered about the entrance. She has a pest ridden cloth covered bed and a fire-pit. There is a 50% she is here unless there are noisy disturbances in the swamp (for example: from battling the Dark Elves, etc).

This island is about 500 ft. in radius and little more but has a commanding view of the dark swamps (if one has darkvision). The ogress' treasure is treasure level 1 in *Monsters & Treasures*. If the ogress is able to battle and subdue the adventurers, she will drag them back here and bind them up by her cave. Then she will prepare to feast on them by sharpening her knives over the flames and drooling, gazing at them with her cat's eyes. She will be very eager to eat them all without delay.

BODDI FRODI'S HOME

After much trouble and searching, tangling with the denizens of the swamp, the Ogress, natural dangers and possibly the Dark Elf & Vargr hunters – another large isle will appear in the waters. It will be after many miles of travel and after the adventurers are likely extremely uncomfortable, wounded and having to tolerate the biting criticisms of Hákon.

From the mists a high shored island comes into view. It is leafy with many green glowing ferns and fungi among its rocks, the interior is difficult to see, especially from below on the waters. Scaling the island will require several Dexterity checks at CL: 2 (X3) before making it to the top of the edge of the shore's cliff.

Boddi's island is bowl-shaped but forested. Mists drift in the sometimes glowing plants and fungi, animals creep, fly and move about in the shadows in this island eerily.

To the player characters who or what is on this island is not obvious, and so it will appear dangerous to them, filled with more of the unknown.

It is larger than the Ogress' island, over ten times the size but the Ketthontla seemed incapable of climbing it. Traveling into the interior, the adventuring party finds no signs of civilization or a presence of habitation by others . . . yet.

Gradually they will find this very unusual sight amid the glowing misty forest:

You see a very well-built wooden home, square in form, with intricate design-work etched in the exterior and dragon heads shaped from the ends raised and in the air. The shingles are made from light, green-glowing, layered sheets of bark. The home is raised over the forest-floor with red painted steps that lead up to the richly detailed doors. In the roof there is a large

opening and a bronze tube jutting from it into the air. From inside there is a mumbling voice, it is confused and yet wildly enthusiastic.


Depending on how the character approach the fantastic Nordic home, the voice inside will continue mumbling. If they knock on the door the speaking will stop and an awkward silence will follow for a few minutes.

BODDI FRODI – THE HERMIT VISIONARY

Boddi will open the door slowly and peer outside if given a chance. He is an older Human man with Light Elfin blood, eccentric in appearance with long hair, eye-brows, and dressed in richly made clothes, suitable for a noble or even high ranking wizard. His eyes are darting and forever searching, and he chatters to himself often motioning with his hands, holding a conversation with someone that is not there (or so it seems).


If the adventurers introduce themselves and their purpose:

He will invite them inside his home with some excitement and surprise. They will find a very clean and nicely organized home, almost modern by some standards. Boddi has a large library on the walls filled with scrolls and tomes of books, runic materials and cryptic occult items lie scattered in his main chamber. Boddi takes them into a chamber that is his observatory/orrery where a massive telescope stands and a moving model of the Nine Worlds whirls away to one side around a detailed giant form of Yggdrasil. Boddi stands amazed at them, his wild eyes unsure if what they say is true or not. He says:


“You have come. So the  is about to happen! It is by the Runes after all but not as it was foreseen at Mimir’s Well, only with Oðin’s missing eye could it be known. You need the Auga Runni to aid you in finding them, and I have it. It is here sitting and gathering dust. No one would notice it.”

Boddi lifts up a five pound quartz or diamond-like crystal from a table, it is rough edged and unworked. He puts it to his eyes and gazes about, then blows the dust off of it. Quickly he returns to gazing into it and looking in many directions through it, shifting the stone like a mad-man while mumbling to himself.

After about ten minutes he smiles like a pleased child :

“I have found it! You are right, one of the  Runes is here in Svartálfarheimr after all, it is hard to believe. It is only ten leagues from here and not in the swamps. It landed in the troll dens, that is where we must go to get it. That is right, we. I wish to go with you and see these runes for myself. My life has been built around predicting the time when the Final Winter will come but my calculations have been wrong as of late. My orrery has stalled and not been accurate in the shifting in the cyclic revolution about Yggdrasil. I insist that I must come with you, at least to see this first rune, or if not to help you in finding the others for I can use the Auga Runni with skill.”

Boddi’s eyes become wild with a crazed madness. Before the adventurers can say either way he is already in his bedchambers (a messy place) packing frantically.

NOTE: Yggr will come to Boddi’s island if he is lead there by clumsy players and do sinister things with the eccentric astronomer. He will replace the man with a Vardøger (Doppelgänger) and even though he will still lead them to the Rune, he will also lead them into a trap to take it as well. Oðin will then realize what has happened to him and then trouble will transpire in the following modules in the series as the god will sabotage their efforts, betray and slay them all to get what were his in the end and then cause the  after all.

It is hoped that no players are this clumsy and foolish to defeat their own purpose in succeeding in this adventure.


Boddi will pack to trek the Nine Worlds with the adventurers in an amazingly short time, but first he will take them out of his home hurriedly to a cove where a small boat (Færing) waits. He quickly jumps in and unties it waving for the others to join him.

“We must row there across the swamps and hope that the Ketthontla is not on the prowl. She hungers and is always afoot day or night, and in Svartálfalheimr the two are the same. Where we go trolls nest and hide, they fled here after the Allfather placed the child of Mundilfari in the sky afraid of the light, just as the dwarfs and Dark Elves had done. If we are smart about it, we can find the Rune and leave without incident. If we are not, the trolls will be a problem and we will have to battle our way out with it.”

Boddi rows across the dark waters as fast as he can go leaving his island behind. The Auga Runni stone is held in his leather bag on his back where he keeps it close at all times jealously.

The CK can decide to add more of the swamp encounters (minus the Ogress if she is slain already) along the way.

AUGA RUNNI

“Eye of the Runes”. This crystal allows the viewer to see through the Nine Worlds magically and view the Fimbalvinter Runes as shimmering golden-white domino forms. Their proximity depends on which world they are on in relation to the other Runes. The Auga Runni will aid in navigating to the Nine Worlds if it is angled in the direction of the sun. Even in the Underworld it will help the viewer in the same way. Without this crystal, finding the  Runes will be extremely difficult. Boddi will eventually allow the player characters to view through the stone as he learns to trust them. Eventually.

COMING ASHORE TO TRÖLLANDA

Not far ahead in the mists above the murk of the swamp more desolate land appears, but this is not like the other landscape in Svartálfalheimr. It is shattered and disrupted, rocky earth with craters and smoky columns drifting high in random locations.

Boddi points into the bleakness with the Auga Runni to his eyes:

"The Rune, I see it! It is five miles inland, not too far from here. I can see its glow in the crystal. It is not too close to the troll dens so we can make it safely if we are careful."


Boddi rows the boat ashore and wastes no time placing its cable onto a rock. Hákon secures himself with his cloak and hood, taking great care not to get too wet as he come ashore. He makes it a point to show all his sword on his hip (it is useless in his hands practically but it is for display).

Very unusual croaking and groaning noises bellow in the countryside from all directions, they are very unfamiliar and eerie ('trolls'). No light shines across this bleakness, no bio-luminescence glowing or fires burning, only a slight dimness across the vastness. It is quickly depressing upon arrival.

Occasionally movement is heard in the gloom and rocks around them and the sense of being observed is strong the further inland they go. Suspicious and conspicuous rocky mounds that tower high over the landscape seem to be filled with many dark holes where the noises and movement emit from at times.

Floating on the chill breeze are foul and rotten odors at times resembling raw meat and bad breath. Boddi continues to use the Auga Runni, letting the vision within guide him through the terrible landscape. Where it takes him he follows mindlessly along.

The adventuring party pass between three towering rocky mounds of what are 'troll dens', each housing 15-30 trolls in the winding tunnels. As they are passed the movement is clear within them, and glowing beady maroon eyes peer at them from various cavern entrances. Sniveling, growls and other monstrous sounds erupt from the caves.


The CK can choose to make the five mile trek to the first  Rune silently tense for the long duration, with always the hint that the trolls may attack at any time, or another potential threat. This IS the adventuring party's first acquisition of the many Runes to come and this entire module's many twists and turns have led to this moment. Play it based on however the atmosphere feels most appropriate depending on what the players do and their style of role-playing.


THE FIRST RUNESTONE

After five miles and treading through tense troll inhabited land Boddi leads the adventuring party to a deep steaming crater where a white shimmering glow emits. A strange power tingles the air as everyone draws near.

Boddi becomes excited:

"This is it, the Rune, crafted by the Allfather after he first learned the Secrets of the Runes on Yggdrasil after nine nights. We have it before us. Which stone is it I wonder?"

Down in the steaming crater sits a palm-sized bone rune-stone, domino shaped with the Victory Rune or 'Man' rune or  shining in white. The rune-stone crashed into the earth from above with enough force to punch a hole in the surface of Álfheimr (it appears as a tiny star-like speck above in the darkness).

This  Rune possesses the Odinic Charm power of **Instilling Serenity**. To harness its power, the holder must be able to make a Wisdom check to discover its secret first. Once this is done, the knower of such secrets can then summon the Charm by saying aloud (and holding the Rune) and rolling a d20:

I know an eighth:


That all are glad of,

Most Useful to men:

If hate fester in the heart of a warrior,


It will soon calm and cure him.

Saying these words of Oðin will summon forth from the rune-stone a power which will effect 2d20+Holder's Wisdom in warriors and calm them, if they are in battle. A critical roll will permanently take out the need to fight in warriors and berserkers making them absolutely incapable of raising a weapon or becoming aggressive ever again.


Once the  Rune is in hand a series of terrible events will transpire centered around it. These events are all dependent on several previous possible events as well, and if they were to have happened or not. Below are the various combinations of what frightful things could occur around the player characters:

THE ALLFATHER: The most obvious and the underlying theme in this module is that of Oðin. By now his fury would be complete. In his insatiable need to discover the purpose of the adventurers, and how it related to the agitation of Jörmunganör in Denmark, if he was foiled and denied again and again, he is at his patience's end. By now, with his Dark Elves behind him (and presumably his war now in Svartálfaheimr), he will seek to find the adventuring party and cause them untold pain and horror. He is the Father God after all and he is not one to be trifled with by any means. If all of these things are true and have occurred so far in his adventure then he will be ready to pounce on them in Tröllanda. He will have a horde of 40 Dökkálfar Hunters, 10 Vargr and 20 Iron-Berserks lying in wait nearby. They will make their move as soon as the Rune is taken on his orders.

They are to take it to him if they are defeated.

THE TROLLS: With or without Oðin's forces, the trolls will be drawn to the  Rune and those who hold it. They will quickly run and crawl across the broken landscape to reach the adventuring party in a frenzy in great numbers to pry the rune from them. Initially there will be 3d12 trolls rushing to attack them from all sides, in

time, after 12 minutes an additional d10 more trolls will appear. They will be hissing and snarling from the high rocks and cliffs swinging their claws and baring their fangs. Few things will scare them off except absolute slaughter (nearly 75%) or extremely bright and blinding lights. These trolls are grey-black skinned, stand about 5'5, stout, with hairy heads and goat horns with ugly faces and grunt like beasts. They are not the pleasant Ælf-like creatures found in other worlds but have grown foul from dwelling in this dismal world. *(These chaotic neutral creatures' vital statistics are HD 6d8, AC 16 and HP 48. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by 2 claw (d4) and bite (2d6). Their abilities are rend, darkvision (60 ft.), twilight vision, regeneration 2.)*

Between these two forces alone the adventuring party must struggle to take the first  Rune back to Boddi's boat and into the waters away from land. If the players manage to endure this nightmarish situation, Oðin will send a dart to hit Boddi in the fury of battle undetected.

This will slowly transform Boddi into something else that will serve him later in these modules and betray the party to take the Runes unless prevented.

THE RETURN TO THE SHIP

Wise Boddi has learnt the many locations and geographical secrets of Svartálfarheimr in his many years here. He knows the many rivers and other hidden directions in this world by his intricate maps, once drawn up by the Dwarf travelers.


Boddi will offer to take them and guide them across many turbulent rivers, channels and winding channels in this gloomy realm. It will take several days to reach the Outer Sea where their ship is anchored near the edge of Svartálfarheimr.

Taking these routes in the outlying regions of this world, in less traveled areas, there is less chance of encounters with the frightful and dangerous. Assuming a war now rages in this world due

to Oðin's forceful intervention, this world is now being rent into bloody pieces between Dvergar and Dökkálfar.

During the journey Hákon will quickly become intolerable with his hypercritical nature. He will be picky and ultra-sensitive towards anything that makes him uncomfortable. If it is too cold/wet/dry he will complain. If food is scarce he will see to it that he gets the largest portions first. He will manipulate the situation(s) so that he remains tended to and in charge somehow – always. He will test the players' patience if played correctly.

By the time of the arrival to the adventuring party's ship Boddi has been viewing through his Auga Runni often and gathering his thoughts. When they arrive he is full of ideas and eager to speak:

"I know where we must go next for the  Runes, I have seen them in the crystal. For when the thirteen toppled out of Valhöll, three had fallen to Álfheimr but only this one you have made it to Svartálfarheimr. The other two remain there above us in Lord Freyr's Realm, that is where I suggest we go next. It is but a short sojourn from here. The two Runes are far apart however, and their positions change often, that is something I do not like...we must contend with the Light Elves.

Before we go deeper to the roots of Yggdrasil, where we are not ready, we need to gather the runes that are closest to Miðgarðr. You are not experienced enough yet to go where Hel rules from her throne, or the Jötun stomp about, not yet no! I suggest we contend with the elves and their tricks and enchantments before we tackle the brute force of monsters and demons.

I will assist you in finding the many paths between the Nine Worlds where I can. It is a very beneficial thing that you have this vessel but I fear that it won't be enough to endure the terrible seas to come later..."

END OF 'ODIN'S FURY'

'CRISIS IN ÁLFHEIMR' IS AHEAD.





ODIN'S FURY

With Hel's plot unearthed, the Nine Worlds beckon, for somewhere beyond Midgaard lies Odin AllFather's scattered Fimbulwinver Runes! And to stop Hel and bring peace to King Hrolfr's realm, someone must fetch the runes and return them to Valhalla, before any take note!

But beginnings are oft as hard as endings and King Hrolfr's heroes must first sail to the frigid seas of the north and seek out the portal to the shadowy world of Svartalfaheimr in hopes of seeking the first of these coveted Runes of Odin AllFather.

Svartalfaheimr, however, is an endless world of shadow and confusion, where Dark Elves rule sprawling realms from deep places, wild beasts hunt for wreck and ruin and the Lord of that world is crafty and altogether evil. Somewhere in the midst of this lies a wise man, Boddi, who can serve as a guide through the Nine Worlds and aid those seeking the Fimbulwinter Runes before either Odin or Hel, or their agents do in time.

To fetch the runes, to find the guide, all this before the wrath of the Dark Elves is unleashed and before Odin AllFather learns of what's afoot, for his fury is one none can withstand and failure, unbeknownst to all, means the end of days.



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