

CASTLES CRUSADES[®]

NINE WORLDS SAGA VOLUME III: CRISIS IN ALFHEIMR



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NINE WORLDS SAGA

VOL III: CRISIS IN ALFHEIMR

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CRISIS IN ALFHEIMR

Written by Brian N. Young

The woodlands of Alfheimr glistened in its splendor. Each leaf, flower, ivy-strangled tree and colorful fungi shimmered brightly, almost too brightly, filled with such a spectrum of colors that our eyes couldn't take it all in.

How we sailed here with Boddi's aid from Svartálfaheimr alive, I do not know--especially after Yggr's wrath. According to his Auga Runni two more of the Fimbulvinter Runes lay here in this realm of the god Freyr. They had fallen, scattered many leagues apart over the world; and if we are fortunate enough, we can get to them without either Hel, her followers, Oðin, or Freyr even being aware.

The light elves, creatures of brilliance and purity, may aid us along the way knowing that their rivals, the dark elves, are hot on our trail. King Mosognir has it out for us now. His many armies of dark elves and Iron-Berserkers are finding a way to seek us out. If we hadn't discovered the watery escape, their monstrous wolves would have smelled our scent and found us for sure.

This world is beautifully crafted, every form and angle here is wondrous and fair. Each breeze that touches the ferns and woods creates an auditory wonder in itself. Exotic birds flutter past chasing spectacular insects. The hiss of a cascading waterfall echoes distantly in the vastness of the forest. We almost ponder how difficult seeking the Fimbulvinter Runes could be in this idyllic world.

Occasionally abrupt, thunderous noises would sound and alert us; because of our situation, we tensed each time. The warriors flexed with their weaponry, and I prepared my bow with a keen eye to the shadows of the woods. Entire flocks of frightened birds would soon flee into the azure skies above. From here, in Álfheimr you can view Bifröst clearer, its many colors contrasting against the blue above. We all knew that should we complete our quest of gathering the Runes, we must cross it and meet Heimdallr in the future. Unless another way can be found into Ásgarðr and into Oðin's Hall of the Battle-Slain....

Before we knew it, massive trees cracked and shattered around us, their trunks and branches scattered into the air about us. The heavy thud from hooves hit the earth followed by an angry snort, almost a growl, and backed by an intelligence.

Our band of adventurers had only moments to evade the creature that emerged from the woods. The beast was a giant golden boar. Its hairy bristles stood high on its back. The eyes were black and the size of small shields, lit by fury, and with curved tusks jutted from its mouth. The hooves were sharp and deadly, cutting through the undergrowth with ease.

The hildisvíni was upon us and we were pinned in a wooded grove to perish or fight to the end.

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INTRODUCTION

This adventure module continues right after Odin's Fury in the series as the adventuring party desperately makes the hard earned effort to retrieve the lost Fimbulvinter Runes. Using the assistance of the hermit Boddi Froði and his enchanted crystal the Auga Runni, they can spot and track down the Runes across the Nine Worlds one by one before the gods do and bring about the dreaded Great Winter.

This module accommodates the option that Oðin, as himself or in the guise of 'Yggr', was angered and the plot was revealed. Assuming so, he and his dark elven allies from below in Svartálfaheimr, will still be on the trail of the adventuring party as they escape that world. The available option is open however though that should the adventuring party be intelligent, and cautious, they may have avoided being personable with Yggr, or King Mosognir and somehow found their way through Odin's Fury fortuitously and with little negative consequences.

The forested world of the light elves would appear safe from their previous enemies below in the underworld, but the two realms of the elves are always in balance. This world will be more delicate to traverse as they make their way to each of the Runes. The challenges will be savage and the enchantments confusing and off-putting to the senses in this Nordic faery realm. This is the Norse equivalent to the Celtic Otherworld and will be packed full of difficulties that can bog them down on the quest to obtain the Runes. If Oðin is still on their trail, they will be given more troubles than before. The God Freyr may aid them, being he is of the Vanir, a different family of god, but this alliance is only limited and achieved with great difficulty.

By this time in the series of gaming, the players should understand the importance of the Fimbulvinter Runes but not yet how they play together as a whole. The linear nature of this series is evident by now and as it continues onward to the end, the data in the Codex Nordica will become even more important as more are played.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

As mentioned before in the previous modules, there is no need for a 'hook' in this series due to the continuing story from module-to-module. Once the final session is completed from Odin's Fury, this adventure module will continue on from that one as before and the CK can go onward without a break in the story.

Clearly, creating characters from the **Codex Nordica** for this series is advisable because the two are made for each other. Even the other codices, the **Codex Celtarum** and **Codex Germania** will perfectly fit this series adding some other diverse characters, with both Celtic and fellow Continental Germanic characters into the mix. As more of the codices are being released a mythic world campaign would be even more plausible, and a more diverse band of characters along for the ride would be a fun possibility!

For a complete list of the adventure modules and this adventure's place in them, see following page.



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 thirteen Fimbulvinter Runes are sought after in modules #2-10. There is one Rune for each letter in Old Norse. They are not in order, however, and in some modules there will be two Runes instead of one. It is worth mentioning that 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: *FIMBULVINTER*. The 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 separately or together in combination. Such power would be devastating and attract the attention of the gods, giants and other mighty entities along the way.

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 way to introduce new characters into the story. There will be many battles and terrible spells cast against them, and diabolical plots crafted to stop and destroy them.

It will seem overwhelming at times, even with a good collection of the Fimbulvinter Runes gathered and a hefty experience earned, as the enemies will be many. The CK will need to be fairly meticulous about notes and details once the saga is in full swing. Campaigns are often the most difficult to maintain for gaming groups for various reasons. Running a module series is even more so, awaiting the next book to be released. There could be a lot of time to wait between the last module, and life tends to get 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, and the platform to use; the rest is effort. Make the most of it!

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BACKGROUND TO THE STORY

When the völva, Fylgja, foiled Hel's agents in stealing the Runes from Völhal, they tumbled down the Nine Worlds. As they did, many fell as shooting stars. With fiery fury several tore through the earth into other deeper worlds of Helheimr, Svartálfaheimr and the other more brutish realms but others simply drifted and gently fell into place. Two of which had done so in the land of the light elves, the Ljósálfar.

One Rune fell into the hands of the elves themselves, and now they have claimed it. Although they are possessed of the light and glow from the purity of the sun, being children of Freyr, they will not give it up so easily. It has corrupted them and given them a change of thinking and heart. With the Rune, they now war and campaign against the folk of Álfheimr, unbeknownst to the Vanir.

The second Fimbulvinter Rune lies untouched by any in the wilderness of Álfheimr, its powerful magics influencing the world around it. It rests on the edge of the mountains near the fissures where the dark elves dwell. If Oðin is alerted to the loss of his Runes from the previous two adventures in this series, he will, at the very least, send out his own servants to find them, or he will take another form as Fengr. In this form, he will hunt the adventurers down in order to take back the Rune and to acquire intelligence on the locations of the remaining Runes. The goddess Hel will do the same, and it won't be a pleasant confrontation.

If Freyr discovers what is going on in his world, he will send out his army of elves to try to take the Runes for himself before making any decision on what course to take. He still holds an old grudge over the Æsir-Vanir War and would almost reconsider opening the old wounds from this era again if he could to regain some power once again if given the chance.

The adventuring party will be playing it carefully in this world, not knowing who to trust. The light elves dislike their underworld opposites, and the vanir hold a grudge against their Æsgardian counterparts as well. The politics and racial hatreds will become complicated suddenly once the Fimbulvinter Runes come into play. Oðin will cut through this, however, and use simple brutality to get what he wants in the end, finding everyone and everything expendable in his universe.

This module will lead the adventuring party to their next module in the harsh world of Jötunheimr where more Runes and a fiercer set of challenges await them. The grasp of Hel and Oðin will tighten around them if it hasn't already. Smart players will have to stay more than just several steps ahead of the gods in this series to survive. It is the only way.

ACT 1 - ARRIVING ASHORE

WHERE WATER FALLS UPWARD

Boddi Froði's guidance, using the Auga Runni, has led the adventuring party out from the sunless tunnels of the underworld on the strong currents of a river to a waterfall over time.

This journey took many days. Behind them they know that a massive battle, if not war, was now being waged in Svartálfaheimr. Having the first Fimbulvinter Rune in their hands was already a strange experience. Its innate and powerful enchantments are felt as a tingling sensation.

Ahead, the flowing waters flow upward strangely into the murky skies. Hákon the Impugn One (from the previous adventure) will not be willing to undertake the odd waterfall that is flowing upwards and will complain bitterly the entire time.

The ship is slowly carried into the current and drawn upward by the cool waters, then aloft. For a space of time everyone feels as though they are flying amid the waters above in the gloom before they, and the ship emerge from the sea in a loud splash.

They are surrounded by endless miles of crystalline blue oceans, scenic skies, filled with flocks of birds and before them a forest wilderness with high mountains that stretches on as far as the eyes can see. Distant golden structures shimmer in the sunlight high on peaks. The scents of a variety of flowers and herbs fill the air. Pollen and other particles glide in the breeze, mixed with insects and birds about them and the woodlands. The area is lush and wild.

Boddi has the Auga Runni out and is gazing within it intently, after some time spent he says to the adventuring party:

“The first Rune in this world is near, I should guess maybe ten leagues distant from the shore inland. Judging from the dense woods, we will have to get to it by making our way through it one way or another.”

There are forested coves everywhere in Álfheimr along the endless shoreline. Both strange and familiar animal noises sound from the trees that the adventuring party can identify. Although profuse with life, there isn't an ominous feeling here, it is just one of a great and beautiful woodland lit by clear sunlight and the shimmering Rainbow Bridge.

GOING ASHORE TO JOURNEY

After the adventuring party make their way to an ideal spot to moor and anchor their ship, they can start the lengthy travel inland to locate the first Rune. This won't be simple, of course, depending on the many underlying subplots floating about.

It will require an intelligence check to spot animal trails in the woods as a means of finding where to start. Deer and other beasts have paths cut into the forest undergrowth cutting this way and that.

The sun shines high overhead casting strong shadows in the woods but this shouldn't be a reason for the adventuring party to let down their guard. The longer they travel in the presence of the tall trees, the more they realize there is a sentience in them. The slightest nuance of humanoid form in the branches, bark and more is evident as they journey onward.

Other presences are felt in the forest about them now more. Whispers, voices and they become more frequent as more travel is made.

Hákon doesn't care for the light elves, or their way of life. If he was grumpy before in the previous module, he will become even worse here. In this module, to win over the adventuring party more, he will try his hardest to play the eager diplomat when the light elves or their god, Freyr, is involved. Hákon will grumble and complain surly as is his normal manner, but he will suddenly show some unexpected importance.

During the time they are traveling the many leagues, the CK can elaborate and even embellish on these sights given below in the woodlands of this faery realm if needed. The pace of the journey can be up to the CK, whether it be relentless with the assumed enemies still on their trail from the last adventure module or relaxed.

Many of the sights of Álfheimr:

- A large scenic pond, nearly glowing blue water, covered in lily pads, teeming with fish and dragonflies. Flowers line its shores. Until this time, it isn't likely the party has seen a pond so perfect in beauty.
- A colorful grove of mushrooms, of all shapes and sizes, makes passages through this section of the forest difficult. The air here is hard to breathe with an odd scent due to the fungus, not necessarily poisonous, but very strange for a time.
- Plants appear to be leafy when in fact are covered in thousands of nesting butterflies. Once disturbed, they fly away in clouds into the woods. Shimmering light highlights the patterns on their wings.
- Herds of deer rush past the adventuring party. They leap and sprint with ease through the dense forest, led by their antlered buck. Their hides are as oddly colored as the other denizens of Álfheimr in an unnatural manner compared to their related species in Miðgarðr. These animals have a startling intelligence in their eyes, and snort and grunt with what could almost be considered a language.
- Large rivers and tributaries will split the forests in places making continual travel broken and hard to maintain. Caverns and crevices were formed by the roaring waters that have come down from the distant high mountains in this world. They will have to ford, with great difficulty (the CK can decide how difficult personally depending on their own group's strengths).
- Occasional hills can give vantage points on the landscape in this world (if Boddi Froði was brought along for guidance to find the Runes) it will be clear that many leagues of woodlands stand in the way. Although all of it is scenic and wondrous to behold, it will require days of travel just to reach the first Fimbulvinter rune.

By nightfall and the passage of the sun in the skies above the adventuring party can nearly spot the vague silhouette of Ygg-

drasil in the skies. Its massive form is almost surrealistic to any being not from the Nine Worlds.

The blaze of fireflies, faeries, bio-luminescent animals, fungi, and plants keep the world of Álfheimr aglow about them continually. This world is in a strange and perpetual state of spring.

DANGER BY NIGHT – HEL’S WRATH I

The Goddess Hel has not by any means forgotten what happened in Denmark since the entire debacle was her doing. Now that the adventuring party are involved she has taken it personally and wants them out of the picture. Obviously, she wishes to evade the Allfather’s notice and skip his intervention in taking back his own Runes.

She has sent up straight from Helheimr eight vættir spirits that will locate, confuse, and destroy the adventurers. These spirits will wait until the adventurers are sleeping before they do their work. Hel gave them a simple list of objectives:

- 1** Confuse the team members.
- 2** Take the Fimbulvinter Rune(s).
- 3** Slay the adventuring party.

The adventurers know these spirits well as they were attacked by them before in Kongensborg in **Hel Rising** in Act 3 during the eve of the attack by her lead raider Skallagrímr. (Use the **Codex Nordica** for reference on the vættir and other ideas on how to use them against the encamped party).

These Chaotic Neutral spirits’ vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 15, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with Spear (d6), Battle-Axe (d8), and Broad-sword (2d4). Their abilities are Evade Detection.

The vættir will seize the Fimbulvinter Rune by force once they can locate it and will disappear into the dark woods with it. They will seek out an entrance to the underworld and then to Helheimr from there to bring it to their goddess.

NOTE: If the vættir achieve their objective so early in the saga, there is no way the adventuring party could feasibly retrieve it from her and live. Not only is it too early in the campaign, but they are too ill-equipped to take on such a journey. Helheimr and Hel’s palace, Éljúðnir, would be nearly impossible to gain access to while alive. They would have to consider it a loss for now and simply move on to gain the other two Runes from this world with the future hope of regaining the lost Rune when they do reach Helheimr in module #6 in this series.

This will not be Hel’s only attempt on their lives in this module. She will be a persistent menace in the whole of the Nine Worlds Saga until the near end.

DAWN’S DEW AND LIGHT

If the adventurer’s manage to survive their first night in the Álfheimr, and Hel’s first attempt on their lives, they have done well.

Hákon and Boddi (if they are along with the group) are ready to leave. The woodlands are covered in glistening dew by the first light of dawn across the Nine Worlds. It smells fresh, and the enchanting forests about them feels vibrant and lively.

According to the Auga Runni the Rune is near. It lays only three to four leagues away, in the dense woods, where signs of civilization gleam golden and crystalline amid the emerald leaves.

The journey to where the civilization appears ahead in the forest is peaceful in the morning light. Birds, squirrels and other creatures playfully go about their business in the branches surrounding the party.

THE ELVES OF ANKI

As the Fimbulvinter Runes were cast out of Valhöl and the two made their way to Álfheimr, one had landed in the territory of a group of light elves. These elves were, at one time, peaceful like the many others in the world, serving their god, Freyr, without question.

The influence of Oðin’s Rune changed them for the worse and brought out an aggressive side that had been dormant since the Æsir-Vanir War, when the armies of Freyr were sent to battle those of the Æsir.

It was into the hand of an elf named Anki that it fell, who became the leader, or ‘king’ rather, that chose to wage a battle of assimilation with the other faeries of Álfheimr. If they resisted, he destroyed them. Anki’s Fimbulvinter Rune was the Týr or ‘T’ rune-stone, a victory stone (See ‘The Fimbulvinter Runes of Álfheimr’) which has twisted his mind due to its warrior enchantments.

Freyr has remained woefully ignorant of this turn of events, for no faery or inhabitant of Álfheimr has yet come to him with pleas of aid or help against Anki’s actions. The Rune has blinded even the god with its magnitude of power.

Anki’s kingdom has spread far into the world and is hard to escape once one has gained its attention. With his cavalry of boar riders and warriors, he has swept across the many once peaceful woodlands with ease. Given time he will discover the other Fimbulvinter Rune and then his power will again amplify.

This of course would be ended quickly by the actions of Hel, Oðin or Freyr if they intervened with simple ease once they found Anki in possession of the Runes. It would be dire however if any of the gods did so, for the adventuring party’s ultimate goals would be lost. The primary objective would be to take Anki’s Rune by some means before any of the gods discover it.

Sentries are posted in high trees, undetected by the adventurers (unless their rangers or rogues make checks with CL -3) and watching them from many quarters while they enter the region of Anki. Elven guards stand camouflaged against the trees with a system of communication (birds, insects and other animals) with their leader.

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Anki has become a killing machine among the Ljósálfar due to the Rune around his neck. The war god, Týr's, power has been channeled through the stone into the elf making him unstoppable, and his bloodlust insatiable.

THE LIGHT ELVES OF ÁLFHEIMR

In general the Ljósálfar are a peaceful society, fairer than any other in the Nine Worlds except for the gods themselves. They have no peasants or serfs, only a king and citizens, in their social strata and live by reason and logic alone.

Because of their life of high-mindedness in dealing with skillful magics and enchantments, they seem distant and lofty to others. Often they speak so, when they are in the company of non-elves, but their lives are centered on warring against darkness and evil.

Light elves are willing to aid those in trouble by healing them, or assisting them with no compensation if the cause is just. They are zealous in their protection and loyalty to Freyr and Freyja and will die for them if need be.

Light elves glow a comforting light from under their skin as though a candle burns beneath the skin all over. Many from other worlds say this glow is from their closeness to the sun as it passes above, while others say it comes from the light of holy purity inside.

Anki has twisted the ways of the light elves, and his ways are spreading across Álfheimr at an alarming rate. The gods are not likely to intervene in the wake of this corruption, unless they are directly threatened by it.

NOTE: Other Ljósálfar in Álfheimr will happily assist the adventuring party and be 'normal' in their behavior. These elves may even be made into allies if handled properly (See Act 2 and 3). Unfortunately, encountering them first in this module will be difficult simply because the adventurers will not know where the politics in this world lie until it is too late.

DEALING WITH THE ALLFATHER (AGAIN)

If the previous adventure module *Odin's Fury* did not fare well for the adventuring party in that they revealed to Oðin their motives and plans, then this module will not go so well either.

The many story elements within will spiral further out of control once the Allfather makes his presence be known in this world. This time, he will assume another of his two-hundred guises to infiltrate the world.

In the service of Anki, Oðin will assume the form of **Fengr** or 'Catcher'. He will be a feral wildman--a tracker, ranger and hunter, hired to seek out the adventurers. He will meet them several times in Álfheimr, either through his cunning traps or by other means, until he has them in his clutches. Due to his clothing of furs, it will be very difficult to identify him as being a mortal man or of another race, but he is bearded and stout, with piercing, dark eyes, a gruff voice, and a pet dire wolf (vargr) always near.

NOTE: Fengr's traps will appear throughout this adventure once the adventuring party have met Anki and have taken the first of the Runes by force. The only way they can avoid the Allfather's harassment is by completing this module and moving onto the next and into Jötunheimr where he has no desire to go. He will, of course, send his son Þór to take care of matters.

MAKING WAY INTO ANKI'S REALM

As stated earlier, the presence of the adventuring party will be observed already by Anki's sentries perched atop the many trees who have sent word back to others in his forest kingdom. Until they become an urgent threat to him, he will not know of their presence.

Anki's people have been given a straightforward order on what to do with outsiders that arrive into Álfheimr:

- Capture them, if possible, and drag them back to the fortress of King Anki.
- If that fails, attack them using the Boar Riders until the outsiders are slain leaving no one alive.

It will take little time before the first of Anki's light elves start to move in an attempt capture of the adventuring party. Due to the dense woods, the elves will have the advantage. *Detect Traps* (CL: -3) will be required before the light elves spring their surprise.

- From the thick undergrowth Anki's elves will pounce with nets on the adventuring party. It will take weapons as strong as an axe to hew and hack into the netting to free the party, and require over d10 turns to do so.
- If the first netting fails to work, more elves will arrive from the leafy boughs with specially rigged, netted arrows and long-spears that will be fired from above on the adventuring party. These will pin down the party members one by one as they are fired or thrown if the AC is rolled, as though combat is being held.
- Once the adventuring party are caught, they will be bagged up and in the nets and dragged, over the remaining five leagues to Anki's fortress to be incarcerated (See '*Ljósborg – Anki's Fort*') and questioned intensely.

If however, and more likely, they resist the attempts at being captured by the light elves, a more aggressive stance will be taken by the people of Anki. This is where the influence of the Fimbulvinter Rune shows its power, and how it has warped the once serene nature of the light elves.

A decent amount of time will pass between the first attempts at capture and the next as the elves will gather their strength and re-organize their efforts. It should be assumed that the adventuring party will be making distance between the first ambush of the Ljósálfar and what is to come next.

BOAR RIDERS' AMBUSH

Seeing that their attempt at capture was a failure, the light elves of Anki will move to their next plan and they will signal the Boar Riders to mobilize in the woods.

Thunderous noise erupts with grunts and snorts as 3-6 (or more depending on party size) Boar Riders emerge from the forest to attack with two elven warriors atop each wielding spears.

LJÓSÁLFAR BOAR RIDERS *(These Neutral elves' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 12, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are mental and physical. They attack with long spear (d8), and dagger (d4). Special ability is Glow of Light.*

HILDISVÍNI *(These Chaotic Neutral, giant beasts' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 16, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Trample (2d8) and Gore (2d10).*

The Boar Riders will try to do everything possible to destroy the party members. If just one of the Boar Riders is left living, they will flee to Ljósborg to alert Anki and the others of the danger and then a larger problem will grow for the adventuring party.

During the battle against the Boar Riders, the CK can throw these complications into the fight:

- The pursuit and struggle occurs on a wooded ridge, narrow and with only enough room for a few to pass at a time. This limits the ridge to a couple of opponents per turn unless they are in a column. For each player caught in a struggle on this ridge, there must be a dexterity check per turn or tumble down the sides into the rocky, forested ravine below taking 5d20 damage.
- The battle commences across a dangerous stretch of lake where islets dot the surface. The hildisvíni have the advantage of height over the deeper areas of water whereas the fleeing and struggling adventuring party must keep their heads above the water often, or they will suffer physical consequences. If they move while battling the foe, there is a chance (3 in 6) that they will fall in a deep hole in the water that will take a d4 turns to leave at a time. This will also require a check to ensure the character will not drown. Keep in mind they must also contend with the Boar Riders as well during this struggle.
- A fungi forest lies in their path, providing an interesting and delicate challenge. Every mushroom and other jelly they touch, or potentially move close to is sensitive and could expel noxious fumes into the air creating problems. With each combat turn the player must make a dexterity check or bump into a fungus in the surrounding forest and have terrible consequences if they fail (d4: 1. Dizzying effect causing a -2 in combat for d6 turns, 2. Sickness effect causing a decline in Constitution over d10 days by a point – can only be healed by a god or 5th level or higher cleric or druid, 3. Blinding effect causing a -4 in combat for d8 turns, 4. Skin irritation effect creating a skin-wide growth of fungi making life difficult until a d4 months pass).

If the adventuring party manage to defeat the Boar Riders, they are clear (for now) of dangers from Anki's warriors, but they will obviously be drawn towards Anki eventually due to the Fimbulvinter Rune in his possession. The only option left at this point logically would be to continue journeying towards the civilization nestled in the woods of Álfheimr. Anki's scouts and patrols will be present and hard to evade due to his paranoia.

LIGHT ELVEN PATROLS: Agile, small and lightly equipped bands of elves (6 in number) patrol the woods occasionally. The chance to encounter them is 3 in 8. If any are left alive to flee for help, they will send word for Boar Riders (d4) to come in a matter of d10 minutes.

LJÓSÁLFAR PATROL *(These Neutral elves' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 12, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are mental and physical. They attack with long spear (d8), and dagger (d4). Special ability is Glow of Light.*

LIGHT ELVEN SCOUTS: These swift elves, 1 – 3 in number, move in designated regions throughout Anki's 'kingdom' in Álfheimr and frequently report back to Anki by way of birds. This world normally has little traffic from outsiders other than the Vanir that visit Freyr in his palace or the other deities in their fortresses scattered about and so his scouts mind their business. Since the arrival of the Rune things have changed. Anki has become paranoid with his power and his mind warped expecting trouble (which is in fact true). Unless the adventuring party are traveling with stealth in mind, the scouts will find them and give word to the patrols, which in turn will find its way to Ljósáborg and King Anki.

LIGHT ELVEN SCOUTS *(These Neutral Elves' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 12, HD 12. Their primary attributes are mental and physical. They attack by Spear (d6), Short Sword (d6) and Dagger (d4). Their ability is Glow of Light.*

LJÓSÁBORG – ANKI'S FORT

Using the aid of the Auga Runni, the first of the two Fimbulvinter Runes in Álfheimr isn't far away as seen within the crystal. It lies within the golden palace of the self-made elf King Anki.

Built from and within the faery influenced woodlands is the large city of Bænum Ljósi (City of Light). Anki took the former populated area, which was harmonious and diverse and turned it into the center of his realm. He now rules over the other non-elves with an iron-hand, directing them into labor camps to complete his fortress, the spectacular Ljósáborg (Light Fort).

The sylvan city's population is massive, over 15,000 and rising, as the woodland folk flee for his protection (more for fear of him rather than any other reason). The delicate and intricate structures which comprise the city are well-crafted and made from skillful smiths and metals.

Anki chose to emphasize the theme of 'light' in his naming of the city and fortress in honor of his impending campaign against his ultimate foes, the dark elves. He is building strength to bring

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war against them, unaware that they already have deadly forces below and a possible war brewing (after Odin's Fury module).

NOTE: It would require a simple visit to the God Freyr to alert him of Anki's doings down below and all would be settled rapidly. Unfortunately, Freyr would also find and take the Fimbulvinter Rune and therefore learn of the situation of the other Runes and take action. He would be especially motivated to act because of the old grudge against the Æsir. Possessing the Runes would empower the vanir against them greatly and act as either a bargaining tool or worse if needed if Óðin became belligerent in response to the knowledge of the Vanir having them (the CK's ultimate decision of course).

Bænum Ljósi is spread out over a radius of ten miles in the forest with Anki's high rise fort in the center. Sneaking through the city will be difficult between the patrols, watch and citizens, especially because it isn't arranged in a manner familiar to anyone from a large village or urbanized area. The Ljósálfar sylvan 'cities' normally are uncharacteristic of other worlds to begin with, and after Anki's influence event more so.

ACT 2 - MEETING KING ANKI

HOW TO GATHER TÝR'S RUNE

However the adventuring party manages to find their way to Anki's fort and acknowledge the first Rune using the Auga Runni and Boddi's help, they will have to gain access to king of the light elves and his Fimbulvinter Rune. This is where it becomes extremely complicated and deadly.

The faery population of the city will be instantly up in arms and paranoid if the characters are found and caught within the city's limits. They will gather, growing in hostility. In fact, their behavior will be completely unusual for their normal behavior and should send red-flags to those characters that know about this world and its inhabitants.

After dealing with the nightmare in Svartálfalaheimr below just recently, and being brought before other kings and rulers, the adventuring party should already be tense and paranoid about what may occur. They have a right to be as Anki will be a true madman, driven so by the Rune's power.

There are many options of how to be before King Anki:

- 1 Be Taken as Captive:** If, during their journey inland, they are captured by the Boar Riders, the characters are led to the jeweled throne of the Ljósálfar King Anki.
- 2 By Stealth into the Fortress:** This will be the most difficult as the elves and other faery-folk of Álfheimr are extremely sensitive. Rogues and rangers are the best suited for this job, but to do so would require a CL: -3 (average) as often as the CK decides while the player characters sneak inside the lofty fortress.
- 3 Using Magic:** By using teleport or other similar spells the characters could change their locations and perhaps end up within the fortress. Faery spell-like abilities (as like those

in the **Codex Celtarum** for example) could also be of benefit here.

Built more by what equals slave labor than by volunteer work, Anki has the faery inhabitants of his conquered region of Álfheimr toiling away on his fortress of Ljósáborg. Its many intricate forms and designs display the sinuous patterns of nature and the closeness that the beings of this world have with it, yet the skill is unlike that which the light elves normally possess. Their construction and smithing abilities come from many other sources outside of this world, borrowed from an influence of the Dvergjar who are enemies of the dark elves.

THE PALACE OF LIGHT AND ITS KING

King Anki and his palace are grand. His palace is crafted from gem stones and sheets of gold grafted onto granite blocks. The construction is sleek and cleverly formed, reflecting the intricate Norse interlocking pattern work.

Its many corridors are busy with warriors and servants. Surrounding the exteriors of the palace are massive stables where the hildisvíni are kept and fed. King Anki's construction of the fortress is only 50%, making it vulnerable if an enemy force were to attack. Fortunately, in Álfheimr there are few foes really that could bring it is a peaceful world. (Mapping such a palace for the sake of this module is futile being it is only down to a small number of chambers, corridors and cells of use).

Due to the light elves' natural glowing ability there are no torches or other light sources in the palace. The elves can create their own light as needed where ever they go when it is dark. Many sections of the interiors have bio-luminescent fungi growing to illuminate only a tiny area at a time.

KING ANKI AND HIS CHAMBER

Befitting his sudden rise to power and inflated ego, Anki has suited himself up into a grandiose vestment with sparkling golden cloak, enchanted scale armor and helm (dwarven made). He is armed with a great axe and mighty shield, and when he displays strong emotions his skin and the Fimbulvinter Rune glow until they becoming blindingly bright. There is a pompous air about him as he sits on his bejeweled, crystalline throne. Six of his light Elven warriors stand guard, three to each side of him, armed with spears and shields. Faery courtiers and servants scurry about his hall with platters and goblets while the endless noise from construction is heard by his laborers on the fortress.

The Rune, Týr's, hangs in plain sight on a leather cord about his neck. Anki is proud of his find. The 'T' shaped rune shimmers on its own, and the adventuring party can feel its presence simply being near it. The difficult part is now obtaining it from King Anki who has been turned into a battle machine.

If the adventuring party are led before King Anki he will say to them:

"Few are in my kingdom, and fewer still are those from outside Álfheimr. What a unique group you all are to

be before me in my palace. Trespassers are only welcome here if they can contribute to the well-being of this world, isn't that Freyr's rule? Yes, it is, and so I shall follow with the same dictate.

If you are judged not a threat to my kingdom, you may join us and our growing power as we begin to prepare in our upcoming war against the Dökkálfar. Since the division of our two peoples, none have surpassed the other. Now that balance has shifted and we, the Children of Light can purge the people of Svartálfaheimr from their world.

Until such time as you are deemed non-threatening to my kingdom, you will be contained in a cell. I will have my best question you and search you for anything that might raise doubt as to your intentions here. I cannot risk what I have by allowing you few in and not checking everything, you understand. Do you have any questions?"

If he asked about his plans concerning Álfheimr:

"I will rule in the shadow of the god, Freyr, as his second king, his regent you could say, when he is away with the other Vanir, for the time will come again when a war against the Æsir shall happen. He will find that I have prepared for him an invincible army unlike any seen before since that early war. This time there will be no truce, and we will storm Ásgarðr before the giants ever do. This world will not be vulnerable."

If he is asked about Svartálfaheimr:

"Since the slaying of Ymir by the Sons of Bórr the Svartálfa have been our menace, always scuttling underfoot in the shadows and scheming with the Æsir, devising with them weapons and objects of power. That time will end as sure as the wolves chase the sun and moon across the sky. I am training an army to march below into their realm and to exterminate them all and scatter their remains to the very dust they dwell in so that time will forget them all."

If asked about the Rune around his neck:

"It is an object of honor to show my devotion to the god of war, Týr. His reign was displaced by the arrogance of Óðin, who has forced his way to power across the Nine Worlds leaving no room for others. The Allfather, as he is fond of being titled, is not so to all of us, for many of us are the people of the Vanir, and we do not praise the Æsir in such a carefree way. I would like to be the Týr among the Vanir, if fate were to allow it."

ANKI'S PLANS CONCERNING THE PLAYERS:

Ultimately, he will view the adventuring party as a threat to his own power if they display their purpose in Álfheimr, and/or advertise the other Fimbulvinter Rune in their possession. Anki will quickly move to action and mobilize his warriors and begin to entrap the party by force.

Anki will not withhold violence to stop them, nor will he loosen the grip he has over the other peoples of his kingdom, because he realizes deep down that his control is fleeting.

NOTE: The adventuring party have been in similar situations before in the previous modules in this series and should already see where things are heading. Becoming held in confinement by strangers would grow old by now and so should be avoided, or at least with a backup plan for an escape. Their journey in the Nine Worlds to obtain the Runes will be a lengthy one with several such encounters.

King Anki will sound the alarm in Ljósáborg to stop the adventuring party and acquire their Rune and any knowledge of the other lost Runes. The shimmering golden fortress will pulsate with a mysterious chime to alert the citizens of the strangers' presence.

If they flee, it will be a very difficult escape, one worthy of the greatest blockbuster films (if the appropriate checks are successfully made along the way). See below for 'Great Escape from Anki's Fortress'.

LJÓSÁLFAR WARRIORS X 15 *(These Neutral elves' vital statistics HD 2d6, AC 12, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are mental and physical. They attack with long spear (d8), and dagger (d4). Special ability is Glow of Light.*

Initially, fifteen warriors will arrive in three groups of five. Their purpose is to attack and/or restrain the adventuring party for and bring them to Anki. More warriors will arrive, and wizards (3rd level) will come after twelve (12) turns have passed in combat: d6 more warriors/d4 turns and d4 wizards and every d4 turns.

If King Anki is boldly confronted and attacked (and somehow defeated this early in the module), a massive weight of difficulty will be simplified for the adventuring party later in this story as they reach the second Fimbulvinter Rune. Unfortunately, his own Rune will make this very difficult to do. Facing the self-appointed king of the light elves on his own turf is dangerous but it would off-put the hiring of the next incarnation of Óðin. This would be the one rare instance when a quick to act player group would solve several problems, unforeseen to them, later in the adventure. Many gaming groups have the urge to attack without thinking or even having a clear strategy, and do so with a simple need to gain experience and for the thrill of it all. This would be the unusual situation where such a moment would benefit them later in the long run – if they survive.

KING ANKI OF THE LJÓSÁLFAR *(He is a 4th level Fighter, Lawful Neutral, his vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 16, HP 40. His primary attributes are mental and physical. He attacks with a Two-Handed Axe (2d12)+3*. His abilities are granted by the Týr Rune (See *'The Second Runestone')*

Anki's men will protect him in the battle when it gets to be too perilous for him (or his HP are too low), but if he dies, his hold over his populace will break. The Fimbulvinter Rune's charm will shatter at that moment. All of its enchantments will also

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begin to tear apart and fall apart across his kingdom of Álfheimr within minutes.

THE SECOND RUNESTONE

Hung around the slender neck of Anki is the second the infamous Great Winter Runes. It is domino shaped, palm sized and carved from bone (Ymir's). The distinctive mark of the symbol of the war god, Týr, shines a brilliant crimson on its surface. This Rune is among the Victory set, and the wielder can gain advantages in battle, as Anki had.

This Fimbulvinter Rune possesses the Odinic charm power of victorious mead. To harness this power the holder of the Rune must make a Wisdom check in order to control the abilities within. After the check is made the holder of the Rune must say aloud:

An eleventh I know: if haply I lead
my old comrades out to war,
I sing 'neath the shields, and they fare forth mightily
safe into battle,
safe out of battle,
and safe return from the strife.

Once these words are said aloud, preferably with fury in the voice, the Rune will surge with blood red power, and its energy will fill the holder from head to toe with the abilities of a Berserker (See **Codex Nordica** 'Berserker').

Once the first two Runestones are gathered and close together, the adventuring party can sense that an impending power will be steadily growing as more are collected. The light elves will dissipate once Anki is slain. His kingdom will fade back into the leafy woodlands before their eyes as they leave it (if this is the outcome).

GREAT ESCAPE FROM ANKI'S FORTRESS

If however, the situation with King Anki didn't go so well and discussions fell apart, and even the forced diplomacy of the dwarf Hákon couldn't save it, then an escape was the only option.

NOTE: The CK can still manage the battle from before amid this escape as the light elf king's people will attempt to surely try to prevent them from leaving.

ESCAPE TABLE OPTIONS

(Roll d6 for obstacles as story requires)

- 1 INCOMPLETE STAIRCASE:** This spiral stone stairway is lacking over half of its steps and, therefore, dangerous. An attempt to descend and escape Anki's fortress will prove difficult as his warriors will not stop in their assault. To span the lethal height and down the next 2-3 levels, each character will have to jump/leap over the missing section (a CL: 3) or take d20 damage in the fall.

- 2 HALL OF ARCHERS:** Anki's woodland archers (35) have set up an ambush, either inside a corridor, atop the fortress, down a forested street in the city surrounding the fortress, etc. Unless one of the adventuring party possesses an ability similar to second sight (being able to see into the future for example), they won't be able to anticipate the volley of arrows. Each character must roll their odds of being hit by these arrows, it will be in two volleys before they can reach any safe cover. The chance of being hit is a 4 in 8. If the roll goes poorly, the player will be struck by d6 arrows (in each volley) and take d8 per arrow. The archers will scatter for safety once they have fired their surprise volleys.

- 3 SCAFFOLDING:** Due to the construction of the fortress, the many layers of wooden scaffolds, poles and other building equipment are set up outside the massive unique fort. The faery laborers toil night and day to serve Anki (so long as he possesses the Rune) until the massive structure is completed. With dexterity and smart thinking, the adventuring party could climb, slide, dive, and perform acrobatic tricks to evade the light elf king's people on the way down to the street level. To do this may take many turns of dexterity checks while actively battling foes. The CK can judge the CL as needed based on the factors of movement, height from the ground, etc. Failed dexterity checks would result in falling from these heights and the consequential damage (most likely between 5d20 or more).

- 4 HILDEVÍSI HERD:** The alarm given by the king sent the Boar Riders into a frenzy. They thundered into the streets of the wooded city surrounding the king's fortress on their giant, enchanted boars searching for the strangers. The Boar Riders, numbering several hundred, are stampeding the leafy shadowed lanes with the riders on their backs hoping to find the smallest sign of the adventuring party. D4 will be in a group at a time. They will be very destructive, letting no faery tree, home, or obstacle stand in their way once they locate the player character(s).

- 5 LIGHT ELF PHALANX:** Anki used his insight into Týr's knowledge of war to train many groups of his warriors into the craft of spear-fighting. Tightly organized and armed with long-spears, the golden glowing elves of Álfheimr are now able to come together and skillfully undo the classic shieldwall that is so common in the Nine Worlds (a strategy taught by the Allfather). His elves have yet to use it on those who are skilled in the skjaldborg as yet but they are eager. It is hoped that when Anki's kingdom is strong enough, they can do so against the dark elves first and then beyond in the other worlds. As for the adventuring party, they will have to contend with a corridor (or more depending on the mood of the CK) of armed and armored Ljósálfar prepared to tear them to shreds. Anki has 6-9 warriors lined up shoulder to shoulder with their spears forming an impenetrable wall of iron. They will block all passage and force the adventuring party backwards into selected chokepoints.

- 6 COLLAPSING STRUCTURE:** In the escape, due to the incomplete building process of King Anki's fortress, there is a likelihood that massive portions of it will fall

apart around the adventuring party as they are in combat and fleeing for safety. This is a 3 in 6 chance/turn. If so, then entire stone floorings and wall sections will violently rip and break apart under and by them and fall hundreds of feet below to crash into the expanding faery city of Bænum Ljósi below. This will pull anyone with it unless they make a dexterity check (CL: 2) as well. They will tumble into the depths amid the stones and take 4d20+3d10 damage and must make a constitution check or be knocked unconscious from the impact for d20 minutes. If Anki is slain and his magical 'hold' on the fortress is now lost from the Fimbulvinter Rune, then the odds of the fortress collapsing is even greater at 4 in 6 as the adventuring party leaves.

LEAVING ANKI'S KINGDOM BEHIND

It will be assumed that, regardless of diplomacy (by NPCs or players), everything will indeed fall apart in the presence of the power mad light elf king and the adventuring party, and probably in a short time.

If they manage to make it out of his kingdom, past his many warriors and Boar Riders, spear-men, scouts, etc and back into the thickly wooded wilds, they have many options to choose from, but not all are ideal. Many will complicate matters (as mentioned earlier in this module), while others will pile on more layers for them to handle and have to prioritize.

King Anki will be furious, even more so if he was attacked and harmed personally by the adventurers. This will be a personal affront to his ego now that he views himself as a king and leader of a multitude of beings in Álfheimr.

The options for the players are few, but all are epic at this point. There maybe more, depending on what they sort out as well. Here are the likely options open to them:

- Travel further into the world and distance themselves from Anki and his kingdom. The light elf king's influence isn't as far or great as he believes. This avenue would encourage the players to explore this Nordic realm of Faery more.
- Seek out the next Fimbulvinter Rune (See Act 3). It lies in the mountainous reaches (where the god Völundr dwelled...and may again).
- Go to the god Freyr and inform him about Anki's actions. This would, of course, compromise the entire purpose of seeking the Runes and include another god in the matter.

By the time the adventuring party decide their actions, Anki will already have his next one. In fact, it was chosen for him by Oðin Allfather, who has sniffed out the players from the previous adventure (**Odin's Fury**).

OF HIRING THE CATCHER

King Anki will be approached, much in the same manner as the dark elf king, Mosognir, was before by the Allfather in another alias or guise--this time by the presence of a large, burly wild-man, a tracker who is named Fengr or The Catcher.

Fengr has piercing blue eyes, a booming voice, orange hair and beard, tinged with red, as though it is blood, and a stocky frame. He is clothed in hides and pelts and armed with hunting spears and nets with a pet vargr. He will offer his services to the light elf king while glaring at the Fimbulvinter Rune around his neck aware that it is one of his own missing prizes.

NOTE: Unfortunately, even the god must abide by his own laws, and has made a ring oath to the elf king to find and return the adventurers for a reward--a reward that he has yet to name. Fengr however knows what he seeks, all three Fimbulvinter Runes in one instance should the adventurers possess them at the time he catches them during this module!

Oðin/Fengr is aware of Anki's dislike of him and the other Æsir and is doing this to destroy him in the end and to obtain a portion of his lost Runes while stopping/slaying the adventurers all in one fell swoop. It is a complex gamble, but the Allfather is, after all, the mightiest of gods in the Nine Worlds and is rarely ever outdone by anyone.

NOTE: Fengr will lay many traps from this point forward in the module if Anki still remains alive and possesses his Fimbulvinter Rune. It just requires the adventuring party to slip up once and they will be taken back to Ljósáborg before they know it, and then the reckoning will occur.

Fengr will waste no time in finding the trail to the adventurers. Anki will not send his elves to seek them out, instead he will regroup his forces, especially after any damage they might have created in the escaping process. The elf king's next plan of action is to prepare the marshalling of his forces for his invasion of Svartálfarheimr while Fengr does his work.

NOTE: The only way the adventuring party can avoid the return of the Allfather is twofold: a.) by never letting on in modules #1 or #2 at the appropriate times given to Oðin of what they are doing in the first place, and/or, b.) slaying King Anki and taking the second Fimbulvinter Rune in this second act. Otherwise, the Allfather will be a persistent menace and hunt them down until he can arrange a situation in which he can gather his missing and stolen runes and punish those who have them.

SEEKING OUT THE NEXT RUNE

Once the dangers are few and behind, Boddi Froði will take out the Auga Runni and carefully observe the firefly, faery-lit landscape of Álfheimr for the next Fimbulvinter Rune. After many minutes of searching he is able to re-locate it again (remember he had done so after the party first set ashore). Boddi points towards the distant scenic mountains and says:

"Our next Runestone is there in those mountains. Considering what we have encountered so far I worry over what we may find, or who, with it in their possession. This world is the tamest of the Nine I believe. King Anki was the exception to what we should find here.

In my studies I know the Vanir are less wrathful and spiteful than the Æsir as gods go, so our presence here may go unnoticed. So long as we do not leave this world

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damaged or remind them of our presence everlasting. It is difficult to say what they may do should they ever discover these Runes.

We need to find the shortest and fastest route there to the Runestone. We may never know if the gods are on our trail again, but must assume they are. There are few places the gods cannot go, and Álfheimr is a world where they all can travel alike.”

FINDING FREYR’S COUNSEL

Given the world of Álfheimr by the gods, and pre-eminent among the Vanir, Freyr reigns over this realm. Mutters amid the many peoples of the Nine Worlds since the aftermath of the Æsir-Vanir war say that Freyr is bitter since the truce was made. This truce was less in the eyes of the Vanir since they lost so much in the conquest of the more clearly victorious Æsir. After all, his sister and twin, Freyja is one of the Allfather’s wives and considered (by Freyr) more of a prize of the truce. Many anticipate Freyr’s want of return to power someday and the rise of the Vanir in the Nine Worlds again, to sweep the Æsir aside once a weakness to Oðin’s supremacy is discovered (and there are several).

Lysalfheim is Lord Freyr’s palace atop the highest mountainous peak in this forested and scenic world. It glimmers golden and with a crystalline light over the entire world. Dozens of cascading waterfalls shower around it from the heights of green cliffs. Freyr’s presence in Álfheimr is unmistakable.

A stone woodland pathway scaling the hundred league distance from the lower altitude of the forests leads straight to the god’s grandiose palace. These paths are safe, only occasioned by animals and faery-folk; never dangerous. If Anki is in pursuit of the adventuring party, it will become a problem. In this case, Fengr will be laying one of his many traps higher in the path.

FENGGR’S TRAP #1: The first trap is placed in a tight pathway, where less than two can pass shoulder to shoulder, and the fall is over five stories high at this point (causing 5d20+10 damage). Fengr has laid a classic trip-line net hidden in the dense, leafy undergrowth. Unless a detect traps check is made, it will require a dexterity check by each party member (NPCs included) or the trap is sprung. If so, the net will spring into action from the ground and bag up everyone dangling them over the dangerous height. In less than five minutes Fengr and his giant vargr beast arrive from the shadows to take them back to King Anki’s court.

NOTE: Fengr is not to be trifled with in any way, as he is Oðin Allfather in reality. Although the player characters may not know this and will try to engage him or his vargr in open combat, this will be suicidal in the end. Once the adventuring party are in his grasp in any of these many traps, it will be a sure trip back to King Anki where matters will be resolved once and for all. One way or another, the first Fimbulvinter Rune will still end up in their hands, possibly with a few party casualties as the price. To be caught by Fengr is an awful fate. Sawing free from his net is the only option. Having to contend with his dire wolf is another matter.

FENGGR is a 6th level Neutral Ranger. His vital statistics are HD 6d10, AC 19, and HP 60. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by Bearded-Axe (3d4) and Long Spear (d8). His abilities are Combat Marauder, Conceal, Delay/Neutralize Poison, Favored Enemy, Move Silently, Scale, Traps, Survival, and Track.*

VARGR (This Chaotic Evil beast’s vital statistics are HD 4d8, AC 14, and HP 24. His primary attributes are physical. Attacks are by Bite (2d4). The abilities are Darkvision (60 ft.), and Twilight Vision, Scent, and Track.)

NOTE: *If Fengr is wounded or his HP are reduced to zero the Allfather will fall and appear dead for a time. Oðin will awaken enraged, furious that he was struck down, slain by these mortals in such a way. The next encounter he will be more powerful (add +2 levels of experience to the Ranger class in his return as Fengr).

The arrival to Freyr’s grand palace, once it is made, is serene. Only the sound of birds and the peaceful noise of waterfalls echo in the area surrounding Lysalfheim. Its crafts work and skill is the finest in all of Álfheimr, nothing the adventurers had seen so far in this world could rival the Vanir god’s palace.

The surface, architecture, and overall layout of this palace are already impressive from the outside. Its two massive, ash wood doors are heavily decorated with amber and jeweled metal. There are two giant golden knockers in the form of boars’ heads with rubies for eyes. Lysalfheim’s roof is tall, possibly three stories or more.

The only way to get attention is by using the knockers at Lysalfheim. They will thunder and echo in the palace. Minutes will go by until a large man with a rough face, garbed in plain clothes opens a door. Byggvir will say to them:

“Who comes to the hall of Lord Freyr? State your names and purpose in Álfheimr, or leave this world the way you came. For none but those who have something to give are welcome here.”

NOTE: It is Freyr’s law in this world that only those who could bring something worth mentioning were allowed here. Those who were unable were exiled and forcibly banished. It denied the violent and harmful from ever being present and endangering his peaceful realm. This is why Álfheimr is normally so serene peaceful.

Byggvir will let them inside the glistening halls of Lysalfheim once they declare their purpose and the urgency of King Anki actions in Freyr’s world.

Byggvir will then say to them waving a hand to come inside:

“Freyr will see to you in his court. What you bring to his palace is indeed important. Follow me and know your words are prized, as much as the finest wealth or treasure.”

Byggvir will lead them through the many golden lit corridors of the sylvan palace of the Vanir god. Delicately illustrated panels detailing the life of Freyr, the Vanir, and a portion of the Æsir-Vanir War fill the many corridors around them. Byggvir moves slowly, his back hunched, and clearly his many years of toil and labor have had their toll on him. He is not one of the faery, gods, or giants, but he isn't mortal either. His race is difficult to distinguish exactly, but he appears to be a mixture of many.

Somewhere in Lysalfheim the strum of a harp is heard mingling with beautiful voices, the song is ethereal. Many shimmering faery presences are about them in this strange palace, and many don't have physical form and seem nearly ghostly. They linger, stalk and playfully follow the adventurers as they make their way to Freyr's court.

FREYR'S COURT OF LIGHT

Nearly blinding with rays of pure light, its origin unknown, the crystal and golden court of the Vanir god, Freyr is before them in its breathtaking grandeur. Balconies jut out from the many spots in the ceiling where his attendant faeries and other visitors from afar are gathered. Complex and wondrous artwork covers every inch of the columns, floor and all other surfaces in Freyr's court.

His throne is made from amber and glows from within, laced with gold. The beautiful, flawless god Freyr is seated atop his throne, garbed in nothing more than a woven with glowing thread. Freyr's beauty and vitality is mightier and outshines his own palace.

When the adventuring party arrives Byggvir goes to Freyr's ear and mumbles, pointing to the player characters at moments before stepping to the side. Freyr looks down to the adventuring party, his face stoic. He rests his chin on a fist and speaks:

"Byggvir tells me that you have come to Lysalfheim with urgent and important news; news that might endanger Álfheimr as we know it. Please, you are welcome to tell me all you know before my court. Nothing you say here will leave this palace. What is spoken here remains here unless I choose otherwise."

If Freyr is told about Anki and the Runes:

Freyr and his court become serious and solemn. The festivity and music grow silent in the time they tell the story. The god's face grows thoughtful and his eyes look into the sky and he grins:

"So the Allfather has lost the tools of his Great Winter? They have scattered across the worlds that he and his brethren fought us Vanir and the Jötun for with so much vigor for, and now they lay bare and exposed."

One of my own people here in Álfheimr has one of them? I must take it, then, and make it my own and show what the peoples of Álfheimr can do when properly motivated. My sister, shackled to the son of Bórr like a concubine, will be no more! I will free her from

those bonds and see to it that my Boar Riders follow in the hooven path of Gullinbursti when I lead my armies hence.

The other Vanir will rally around me. I had a dream one night, not more than several fortnights ago that thirteen odd shaped stars fell from Valhöll after Jörmungandr stirred. I thought it was a strange vision, perhaps it was...or maybe I was having a vision of this moment when his Fimbulvinter Runes were lost? Yes, once I let the other Vanir know that this dream was not just an odd dream we shared from drinking the Drought of Ages, but it was more, they will throw off the manacles of the Æsir and storm Bifröst together, before Surtr and the Jötun."

Freyr's grin turns into a large smile. Before the adventurers know it, the god dons glistening golden armor, a blood red cloak, black shield, and spear. His palace scrambles to action around them preparing for first, the arrival to Anki's fort to take the Rune, and then second, to rally the Vanir for war against the Æsir later.

Freyr then says to them:

"You have given to me and Álfheimr an invaluable gift, possibly the greatest ever in my world's history. I am aware that the Allfather is in my world, indeed present now, but he is more of nuisance. Messengers will be sent out to the Vanir to seek out the other Runes before he can find them. Together we can hold the Nine Worlds hostage and force the Æsir to submission, rule what used to be ours, and take Oðin from his throne on high."

"You are always welcome in my world, friends. I cannot thank you enough for what you have brought to me. For what you have given me--not what you've carried here in hand, nor in your pack, but by word. The many deceptive forms of the Allfather have now brought him to ruin. He will see that it is no way to rule subjects."

Freyr boldly strides out of his court, followed by his faery hordes, armed for their confrontation with King Anki.

NOTE: If the adventuring party wish to be involved in the altercation, they will have to somehow join with Freyr's entourage, after all if they don't the Runes will now eventually be out of their hands and in those of the Vanir!. He will ride his enchanted, giant, glowing boar Gullinbursti and lead his army of faeries across Álfheimr towards King Anki's kingdom (See *'Freyr's End of Anki'*). This will be a quick and brief invasion as the god will not be engaged by the light elf's people. Freyr will storm Ljósáborg with his loyal forces, Anki's joining him, and thunder into Anki's throne room. The god will demand submission from him with one chance or he will simply behead him without much ceremony. Týr's Rune won't have much effect against the god in the hand of an elf, mortal or otherwise (if more than half or more of the Runes are used however, this will be different).

FREYR'S END OF ANKI

If the adventuring party are smart enough to decide to tag along with the God Freyr, they will join his massive faery entourage as they sojourn across Álfheimr. The shimmering god will have rallied an army of thousands in a short time. How the players could only guess since it happened so speedily and without much noise or hubbub.

Freyr will be in the lead, mounted atop his magnificent boar Gullinbursti, the enchanted boar created by the dwarves Eitri and Brokkr. Gullinbursti stands more than three times the height of any hildivisi in this world. Golden, bejeweled horns and regal, silken banners are carried by, and there is much pagantry from Freyr's horde as they line up for the ride to Anki's kingdom.

The adventuring party are placed in the lead, as scouts, to help aid in the process of finding the whereabouts of this 'kingdom' within the god's world. Freyr's faery hordes are eager for battle, although they appear fonder of drinking, lovemaking, and fun. Though armed, his band are less war capable than Anki's on appearance and seem jaded and pleasure seeking, almost decadent.

Freyr turns to his slightly sloppy and clumsy horde to speak, and they come to order and listen:

"Show his most loyal no mercy, my people, as they have given up their rights as citizens in my lands when they chose to follow one of their own so willingly. We will crush them and leave no reminder of this sapling they call a kingdom. I am the singular ruler here in Álfheimr; there will be none other.

Leave this Anki to me. I only ask that you do not harm those who have huddled for his protection as they sought to be safe from danger and were weak already. Only stop those foolish enough to defend him by force of arms. Anki's most loyal will attack us; and when they do show no hesitation.

Álfheimr cannot devour itself from within. We must remain strong and be ever ready, for the dark ones who stir below us. Where there is no light, their darkness will blanket us swiftly and waste no time. When you are done, rally around Gullinbursti. Plant your flags wherever you have victory against them, and a new tree will flourish in my name."

Freyr glances upward into the skies towards the faded rainbow of Bifröst and continues to speak:

"For someday in the future we will take those flags across the Rainbow Bridge and plant them in Ásgarð in the name of the Vanir...but that is a stratagem best left for another day. Onward, we march, to Anki's kingdom!"

His faery hordes cheer, and they ride and fly in a thunderous mob behind him away from Lysalfheim down the mountain-side.

Freyr's army isn't quiet as they storm across the countryside from Lysalfheim. The adventurers are given Giant Boars to ride to keep up, but this hardly suffices for most of the trip, as the trip is unusually swift (supernaturally so). Freyr takes his army of faeries through the dense forests, into paths hidden to all with ease, that no large sized army could ever move through, and over grand ivy covered stone bridges, further inland far into Álfheimr.

The god's route cuts through the many difficult areas the adventurers had to traverse earlier as they fled Anki's kingdom the first time, but Freyr does so with ease. His army's horns echo and play their odd music, ethereal and dissonant in the woodlands.

THE FIRST ATTACKS BY ANKI'S PEOPLE

In the assault, Anki's people come out of the woods on their giant boars hurling spears from all quarters. In the chaos of the assault, however, Freyr's people waste no time to counter the attacks, quelling them as they come.

The brutality of the faeries of Álfheimr is shocking. One would expect this from the giants but not from the delicate and often small beings that populate this wild world. For the moment, the adventurers are not threatened but can witness the swift dispatch of the foes of Freyr.

Eventually, after several failed ambushes by Anki's people from the forest cover, a hail of arrows and spears will shower down on Freyr's army. There is a 3 in 6 chance that every party member will be struck by one of these projectiles. If so roll a d4, 1-2: an arrow (d6), 3-4: a long spear (d8). The number of missiles hitting the adventurers per assault will be d6. It is the CK's call as to how often these volleys hit from Anki's men. These will keep everyone on their toes for sure as they near Ljósáborg.

Boar Riders will explode from the woods in an attempt to stop or delay the progress of Freyr's army towards Anki's palace, but their efforts are futile. The CK can run individual set battles against these Riders as needed to increase the intensity.

Freyr will ride up to Ljósáborg's gates and leap from Gullinbursti, then storm the doors. He will shatter the doors, followed by his closest commanders (all elves) and take the stairs to the top where King Anki's court lies. It is assumed the adventuring party will go as well since their personal interests lie with Anki's possession of the Fimbulvinter Rune.

THE TAKING OF TÝR'S RUNE

Freyr will not be stopped or slowed in his rush upstairs to Anki's court. The elf king's finest warriors will try to mount a defense against the god but will be cut down as wet grass before him.

The player characters are little more than an afterthought at this point. It is crucial that they find a way to separate Anki from his Fimbulvinter Rune before Freyr can obtain it. If they do not then the entire quest in this module, and the succeeding series to

follow, may be doomed. If Freyr takes the Rune, as need to be reminded, he will then be empowered to seek out the other that has fallen in his world and then all others in the Nine Worlds in an effort to renew his war on the Æsir, consequentially bringing about the Great Winter.

King Anki, surrounded by two dozen of his enchanted elf berserkers, is ready to confront Freyr. This will be largely a story of NPCs facing NPCs leaving the player character little to do unless they seize the opportunity to take the advantage and beat the god to getting the Rune somehow.

If the players do not stop this encounter, Freyr will have no difficulty in slaying Anki and his enchanted guards. He will rip off the Fimbulvinter Rune and then events will begin to spiral out of control (See *'Freyr's War Against the Æsir'*).

There are several possible way for this to occur:

- Stalling Freyr by holding some manner of conversation, a searching through chambers or corridors in the fortress (knowing that Anki isn't anywhere near these areas of the fortress in the meantime). Meanwhile, the rest of the adventuring party can make their way to Anki and forcibly take the Fimbulvinter Rune from him before Freyr can ever have the opportunity.
- Redirect battles to other locations outside. Start fires, begin chaos and make Freyr's army have to split its forces and make decisions as to act and go to him for tactical aid thereby keeping him from devoting his time to seeking out Anki. Again, this will give the adventuring party time to stop Anki personally and claim the Rune for themselves.
- Tell Freyr that Óðin recently paid the adventuring party a visit in Svartálfheimr and possibly even be in Álfheimr. This knowledge might be enough to distract the god to throw off his pursuit of Anki long enough to buy them time to take the Rune for themselves. Freyr's disdain for the Allfather is plenty enough to make him want to send out scouts and thin out his faery hordes to find the Head of the Æsir. This would buy the adventuring party time.

FREYR'S WAR AGAINST THE ÆSIR

If the events have spiraled completely out of the party's control, there will be no going back.

Freyr will have the Týr Fimbulvinter Rune and there is almost no prying it from the hand of a god. Freyr will instantly sense the other Rune stones in his world, including the one in the possession in the players. From there, he will be able to detect all others in the Nine Worlds.

The course of the adventures in these modules will change permanently and the CK can modify as needed for their own campaign. Freyr will do these things as he prepares for his war against the Æsir:

- 1 Gather the Vanir to his palace of Lysalfheim for a tactical meeting.

- 2 Send out his swiftest across the Nine Worlds to take the remaining the Fimbulvinter Runes before Hel, Óðin, or the adventuring party take them.
- 3 Plot to undermine the Allfather's authority throughout the Nine Worlds by using the many Vanir who have since married into the many Æsir families.
- 4 Seize key locations in the Nine Worlds once the Runes are obtained and hold them with warriors gathered and mustered from several worlds.
- 5 Take the Bifröst Bridge, slay Heimdallr, then destroy the bridge and use the olden Vanir way between worlds before the Æsir assumed control. Storm Ásgarð, take hostages from among the Æsir, slay the most powerful, and destroy the Allfather's seat of power.
- 6 The Vanir will cast out the remaining Æsir that might challenge them, reinforce their authority over the Jötnar and any other enemies, and place Freyr and Freyja on the joint throne above all.

TRAVELING FURTHER IN ÁLFHEIMR

If the adventuring party are wise and avoid all to do with the god Freyr and wish to simply travel beyond Anki's kingdom, or what is left of it (if they have slain him and taken his Rune), now they can journey further onward fairly safe for a time.

Boddi Froði's guidance with the Augi Runni has led the party far, many leagues deep into the bio-luminescent forest towards misty looming mountains. They are dark and almost ominous but wrapped in greenery.

A light fog glides over the woods and mountains eerily as the adventuring party draw near. As with the other endless leagues, the wilderness is alive with life. Most of it is difficult to spot with the eye half of the time.

Boddi's estimation of the second Fimbulvinter Rune is many leagues from here and lies still further in the mountains; they are nowhere near it yet. Unfortunately, there will be much trial and tribulation to get through first in order to reach the next Rune, and this won't be so easily overcome.

NOTE: If the previous modules in this series have not been handled well and the problems have begun to pile up quickly, then those foes could also be hot on the party's heels as well (Mosognir's dark elves, Iron Berserkers, etc). The travel into these mountains may not be so peaceful even with its own particular encounters and difficulties.

Occasional snorts and grunts from stags and boar echo in the fastness. Herds of deer sprint from the clearing to the thick woods.

Álfheimr is an almost different realm in this part of the world. The presence of the faeries is less noticeable and 'normal' wildlife very prominent, the land more rugged. This is very deceptive for strangers who don't know to recognize the faery beings that hide within the trees. They aren't quite the same as the rest

of Álfheimr, but similar to those that dwell in Miðgarðr (which is where they migrated to).

FENGR'S TRAP #2: While the adventuring party make their way into this region of Álfheimr from the woodlands, they have another chance of stumbling into one of Fengr's traps.

Fengr has his dire wolf, the vargr, lying in wait under the brush and ferns. The dire wolf will ambush the adventurers and pounce on them, or drive them into a partial retreat (and make them stumble onto the pit trap).

In order for the adventuring party to not fall for this second trap either they must make a detect trap check or a dexterity check or plummet 50 feet, take 5d20 damage, and get taken by the net a second time. Each victim of the trap must make a constitution check or go unconscious for d10 minutes from the impact. They will awaken to find that Fengr is carrying them all easily on his back. Fengr is now at 8th level in experience.

Fengr and his vargr will take them to a secluded crevice in the mountains nearby where he will begin to take the Fimbulvinter Rune(s) from them, and then interrogate them about the others. Fengr will not be nice about this as his patience is running thin. This will make him mean and cruel. This time, he will not take them to Anki or even consider it as an option. The CK can relish in roleplaying out this scene in the cruelest and grimmest manner possible. It will be up to the players how they can escape Fengr and his vargr.

ACT 3 – THE NEXT RUNE

VÖLUNDR'S COUNTRY

Perhaps unknown to the adventurers, they journey into the smith god, Völundr's, territory. Boddi, a wealth of knowledge, would know such a fact if asked, but otherwise he would remain quiet.

This land is dramatic, even more so than the other half of Álfheimr. Even in this region, Freyr's golden palace of Lysalfheim shines distantly. It can be seen from nearly everywhere in this world. The location of the Vanir god's palace was chosen with precision.

Boddi uses the Auga Runni to again locate the Fimbulvinter Rune. Taking his time gazing into the crystal, he says:

"The last Rune in this world is only ten leagues distant and deep into the mountains. We need to get beyond this valley first and out of the clearing where we can be seen by all. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you what lies in between. I am sorry."

In many areas of the sloping forested mountainsides, high tumbling stones create the valley. A mix of grey, dark and other assorted stones have since fallen from the earliest ages of creation, now they are covered in lichen and ivy, flowers and herbs.

DREADFUL ENCOUNTERS IN ÁLFHEIMR

Although these encounters can really be used elsewhere in this world just as easily, the CK can place these anywhere along the way as the adventuring party make their way into this region in order to spice things up.

Many of these beings are not necessarily harmful but will be intending to make life difficult for the players for sure if they intrude upon their territory. The CK can roll a d6 to make these encounters random or choose as needed.

D6 ÁLFHEIMR ENCOUNTER

- 1 ASKRFRÖA:** These guardians of ash trees, children of Yggdrasil, are innately harmless. If their particular tree of habitation is threatened or harmed, however, they will retaliate. They appear as light elves but with leaves and twigs in their hair and hypnotic green eyes. **ASKRFRÖA'S** vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 14, HP 12. Their primary statistics are mental. They attack by Slam and Claw (d8). Their abilities are 4th level Druid spells, Ljósálfar abilities and Ash Tree Bond.
- 2 BYSEN:** These industrious gnomes are always hard at work. They can grow quickly irritated with strangers if they are interrupted in their cutting of trees, construction of structures, etc. They are always found wielding axes, and they are the tenders of the woods. They are legendary for being persistent in their ability to take down large threats (dragons, etc) when annoyed. **BYSEN'S** vital statistics are HD d10, AC 13, and HP 10. Their primary statistic is mental. They attack by Axe (2d8). Their abilities are Lead Astray and Blindness.
- 3 ELLEPIGER:** Alder trees are where these alluring faery women dwell along with their families, the ell-foket. The ellepiger have long blonde hair, don beautiful dresses, possess slender bodies, and play and dance around their home trees. Their backs are hollow and missing, which they try to hide from strangers at all costs. Ellepiger only leave their trees by night to frolic and lure lonely men to make love and then to feed on their souls and body. **ELLEPIGER'S** vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 14, and HP 18. Their primary statistics are mental. They have no attack. Their abilities are Lure and Drain Life.
- 4 HULDRA:** Created by Freyr and Freyja to populate Álfheimr, these sylvan faeries have fox tails and tree-bark on their backs but are beautiful women. They are ravenous and lustful by nature. The males are called huldrkall or huldru. They are unable to mingle with mortals, but do not understand why and persist in their attempts to travel between worlds anyway. They form a large part of Freyr's court. Normally, they are solitary and prefer to be alone, but in his company they are comfortable enough to gather. Huldra and huldru are wild and dangerous. **HULDRA'S** vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 13, and HP 18. Their primary statistics are mental. They attack by Slam and Knife (2d6). Their abilities are Glamour, Strength, Luck, and Shapeshifting.

5 **HYLDEMOER:** The elder witches or ‘mothers’ that protect the trees, and are part of the tree, itself, in this forest. If a branch or twig is used for kindling or firewood it is considered an insult to the spirit of the tree. The hyldemoer will uproot if needed and seek out those that bothered it. The entire tree will hunt down the foes as far as it takes, or summon its elder mother from elsewhere to do its work. **HYLDEMOER’S** vital statistics are HD 8d8+40, AC 16, and HP 104. Its primary statistics are mental and physical. It attacks by Branch (d10+6) and Weapon. Its abilities are Tree Bond and 5th level Druid spells.

6 **PUKI:** Shapeshifting, goat-legged faeries that populate the wilds of Álfheimr. They are fond of playing pranks on strangers at the very least innocently, and at the most will attempt to seduce them. Worst case scenario, they may attempt to steal precious goods or destroy the party. They are favored among Freyr’s court and have no manners or rules to guide them. The CK can use the puki at their whim and will for whatever troublemaking seems beneficial in the story. The Puki use their shapeshifting to terrible advantage. **PUKI’S** vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 13, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Bite (2d8) and Claw (3d4). Their abilities are Shapeshifting and Faery Lights.

HEL’S WRATH 2

The goddess, Hel, is ready for another round and sends more of her wrath up from Helheimr to the adventuring party after their defeat of her minions and Skallagrimr in Denmark. By now, she is well aware that they must have several of the Fimbulvinter Runes in their possession with plans of obtaining more.

NOTE: Hel won’t become aggressive in her retaliation against the upstart adventurers and their pursuit of the lost Runes until modules 5 and 6 in this series, when they are, quite literally, on her front-steps. Until then, she is busy orchestrating other matters behind the scenes.

Hel’s powers are greater by night, of course, so when the adventuring party rests she will again choose to send her agents up from the underworld and attempt to take the Runes from them and slay them as well, if not horrify them in turn.

Summoned from the darkest recesses of the mountains that reach into Svartálfarheimr, Hel has called up a troop of wulver warriors loyal to her. They are unlike the rest of their own kind found in the other worlds. These are bloodthirsty and violent and will willingly take lives for Hel, making sacrifices for her. Hel has stirred them from the caverns deep to make them sniff out the adventurers’ campsite with orders to slay them all, take the Runes, and bring them back to her in Helheimr when done. These dark, hairy beast men will emerge from the misty wooded mountains howling like a pack of wolves armed for battle and prey on the adventurers without mercy.



WULVERS X 12 *(These Neutral Evil beings' vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 13, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by 2 Claws (2d8), Bite (2d12), Broad Sword (2d4), Battle-Axe (d8), and Long Spear (d8). Their abilities are Wolf Empathy.)*

Hel's wulvers will sweep out of the night mists covered in red war-paint seeking those that carry the Fimbulvinter Runes primarily. They will not stop until they are every last one is slain, or the adventuring party are defeated, and Hel's objective is met.

MOSOGNIR'S REVENGE

Just when the adventuring party thinks they have reached the wilds of this region of Álfheimr, and every foreseeable danger is beyond them, their (recent) past will come to haunt them.

The dökkálfar have come from Svartálfarheimr with a vengeance, led by their packs of vargr and scouts. King Mosognir hasn't forgotten what has transpired in his kingdom below, and now he has ordered his dark elves to issue forth from below to hunt the party out to seek the Fimbulvinter Runes out.

They have been agitated by the words of Oðin in his two guises (see the previous module 'Odin's Fury'). It takes little provoking to get the dark elves to want to enter into Álfheimr and confront their rivals, the light elves, and now that the Fimbulvinter Runes have begun the process, such a matter is now out of control.

Four war bands (composed of twenty warriors with five vargr, and six scouts) are set into the world. Each also have been given command of five Iron Berserkers as well to aid them in their work. King Mosognir wishes to gain the Rune(s) for himself but this is really a demand subconsciously brought on by the Allfather, who will take them from him.

These dark elf war bands have emerged from the underworld in many locations and at many different times. The CK can throw them in to raise the tension in when needed since it will be very unlikely they will ever defeat one war band singlehandedly. If the players have gained useful allies in the light elves they may be able to gain protection from them in some way against this threat.

Several different scenarios may also play out here as well if other elements in this module haven't been completed, and the CK can exploit this along the way while the player characters make their way to Völundr's Smithy Rune. The different possibilities are listed below:

- 1 If King Anki is not slain and still hunting the adventuring party and seeking to go to war against their mutual enemies, the dark elves, this is their chance to do so. A tense chase could ensue in the wilderness with Anki's light elves hot on the heels of the player characters, perhaps a few skirmishes before another foe arrives – a Dökkálfar war band. A three way battle then erupts.
- 2 Perhaps if the adventuring party were involved in the mix up with Freyr and Anki and managed to take Týr's Rune, but failed to completely fool the god in the process, they

now are fleeing far into Álfheimr seeking the other Rune before he can obtain it. Freyr may be sending out his own loyal faeries to hunt down the player characters. If so, they are now hiding far in the wilderness. It is then that they encounter one of King Mosognir's war bands.

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 Nightvision (150 ft.), Superior Listening (+3), and Cavern Sense).*

DÖKKÁLFAHUNTERS *(These 2nd level Chaotic Neutral Rangers' vital statistics are HD 2d10, AC 12, and HP 20. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Long Bow (d6), Spear (d6), and Net. Their abilities are Nightvision (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.), Twilightvision (50 ft.), Track, and Scent).*

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)*

VÖLUNDR'S SMITHY

The legendary smith of the gods, Völundr, his smithy, and home are located high aloft within a mountainous cleft which overlooks the valley in this region of Álfheimr. Very few can find it, and for those who can, it requires devoted years of trying. It took the Swedish king Niðhad hard work to locate him and a great deal of trickery before luring him to Sweden.

The smith god's home is built from the massive stones and its foundations derive from the earth itself. Völundr and his dwarf friends together constructed this home so that he could build his weapons, tools, and other wondrous items.

The smith's personal name for his home is *Járnstáne* (Iron-stone). It is said that his forge thunders power enough to shake the earth and often the worlds when he makes certain items for the gods. His raw ore is stored deep within Járnstáne, along with his coals, his enchanted anvil and tools, and his furnace. The furnace holds flames from Múspelheimr's fires in its belly, and he is one of the few smiths in the Nine Worlds that can contain and use it. Not even the dark elves below can maintain them for too long as it will consume their furnaces and smithing tools.

It requires a strength of 25 to lift and use Völundr's hammer at all if it is tried.

The smith god is presently seated with the other gods in Valhöll confused as to why the Allfather suddenly left them. Obviously Oðin is out amid the Nine Worlds hunting down the source of

the World Serpent's agitation, and now those that are trying to find the Fimbulvinter Runes. Völundr's home is both spartan and luxurious with plentiful artwork showing the rise of the sons of Bórr as Ymir fell and the birth of the Nine Worlds.

A strange presence is felt in his massive mountain home at all times (this is the smith god's spirit or fylgja that tends to the place while he is away and tells him everything that transpires). Whatever the adventuring party does, takes, or tries to achieve in the smith god's domain will never remain a secret because of his fylgja. Unless the players want Völundr's vengeance on their heels, they need to show restraint in his home. Staying the night for shelter or protection is fine, perhaps even to eat from his food stores if starving, but anything more, and the god will be quick to anger. For some idea of how spiteful and vindictive Völundr could become, have the players read the old saga Völundarkviða.

NOTE: The smith god does not leave any completed or incomplete enchanted weaponry or items in his forge or home. He is careful in only working on them and finishing them one at a time for their owners.

THE KETTA OF THE WILDS

Unbeknownst to the adventuring party, they have been stalked by a large savage Ketta. The venomous, giant cat has kept its distance, spying on the weaker members hoping to find the right moment to prey on them. Whether this ambush comes when the player characters are sleeping, traveling in a tight formation in a dangerous ravine, or a certain (weak/vulnerable) character might be posted on guard duty, the Ketta will be ready to attack from the high hills or dense tree cover.

The **Codex Nordica** provides the basic data on the Ketta from Norse mythology. What is given here is additional material the CK can use in other adventures as well.

The Ketta is smart, a problem solver and able to analyze unlike other felines. Once it finds its prey, it won't stop until it has it. Only fire will drive it away, but temporarily, and the Ketta to return later.

KETTA'S (*The chaotic evil vital statistics are HD 3d10, AC 16, and HP 30. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by Bite (3d10) and 2 Claw (2d10). Its abilities are Poisonous.*)

THE SECOND RUNE – THE 1ST ICE RUNE

Cast from Hel's treachery along with the others, this Rune Stone fell into Álfheimr hard, to impact in the mountains. It landed, undisturbed by any beings, and remained unclaimed for its time (unless any events transpired in the course of this module that may change this eventuality – Freyr's knowledge, Fengr/Oðin's involvement, or Anki's part in the story, not including the many other elements left over from the previous modules).

As with each Fimbulvinter Rune, after it hit a deep crater was made where it fell. This Rune stone, of particular importance to the overall composition to the formation of the ice that comes



with the Great Winter, will bring a surrounding freeze to the environment. Since the eternal spring that is Álfheimr never suffers snow, chill or ice this will be noticeable soon enough once the frozen crater is spotted (CL: 3).

A light snow falls in the air around the Fimbulvinter Rune about its crater. Identical to the rest, this stone is domino shaped on bone with the blue glowing form of the 'I' rune mark upon its form. This is a Wave Rune and shimmers with frost about its form.

Boddi smiles and says to them:

“We have the Ice Rune, the very rune that brings the frost and snow into Niflheimr, its very essence put into the rune! Cast within it is *know enemy*. This is a profound talent of the Allfather wherein one can gain an insight into the abilities of a foe.”

To use the Odinic Charm of *know enemy* the holder of the Rune must make an intelligence check while holding the Fimbulvinter Rune and chanting the Odinic spell:

A fourteenth I know: if I needs must number,
the powers to the people of men,
I know all the nature of gods and of elves
which none can know untaught.

Once this is done the possessor of the Rune can sense, within a radius of 20 ft. the abilities and spells (if they fail a wisdom check) of others instantly on command. This can last for ten turns once started by the user. Only possessing the two Ice Runes as a pair can bring about the alteration in the weather.

FENGR'S FINAL TRAP #3: Óðin Allfather, at this point in the adventure, frustrated and greatly annoyed at the adventurers will try his one last trap to take the adventuring party into his clutches. The group should be quietly rejoicing in their ability to counter the Allfather's many attempts at taking them, for very few mortals or other beings in the Nine Worlds can claim to have achieved such a deed for so long.

The Allfather will find one among the huldra in Freyr's world, a wild woman named Svala, who he will endow with special extra enchantments to aid her in capturing the party members.

Fengr's plan runs thusly:

- 1 Svala, a beautiful woodwife, will 'run for her life' from dangers in the forest (a band of dökkálfar) into the hands of the adventuring party. They will more than likely save her and fend off the dark elves (only 10 in number).
- 2 Svala will then grow fond of one of the party members, seduce him and use her faery lure abilities to do so if there are difficulties.
- 3 When the party members are in a divisive mood, she will make sure that the seduced member will separate from the rest, alone and with her. Eventually her views will be dominant.
- 4 On the journey to return back to the ship on the other side of Álfheimr (after achieving the goals of obtaining both Fimbulvinter Runes), Svala will try to become a member of the team along with Boddi and Hákon.
- 5 Wherever Svala goes, Fengr and his vargr secretly follow, ready to strike when the time is ready.
- 6 If rejected from the party, Svala will stalk them from the woods using her abilities to locate the ship.
- 7 Ultimately, Svala will make her way to the member with the Runes and seize them. Using her abilities, she will paralyze or kill all who stand in her way once she finds them. Fengr and his vargr will aid them at this moment.

SVALA'S vital statistics are HD 6d6, AC 18, HP 36. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks by Slam, Sickie (d4+3). Her abilities are Glamour, Strength, Luck, Shape-shifting, Touch of Death*, and Frightful Moan*.

*Odinic Charm.

Touch of Death: Svala's touch drains the life energy out of the victim, whether through pure fear or by sucking out of the victim's psychic force into her insatiable gullet. This touch literally takes years from the victim's life. Humans and half-orcs age d4 decades, halflings and half-elves d6 decades, and dwarves and gnomes 3d4 decades. Elves are immune to this form of attack as their life force is eternal and they do not fear death.

Frightful Moan: Svala can wail and evoke the darkest and most sentimental morose feelings, washing over all who hear it with this intensity until it is too much to bear. The horrific moan causes a cacophonous noise that unsettles the mind. Any creature hearing this noise must succeed a wisdom check or suffer the effects of fear. A successful check grants that individual immunity to Svala for 24 hours.

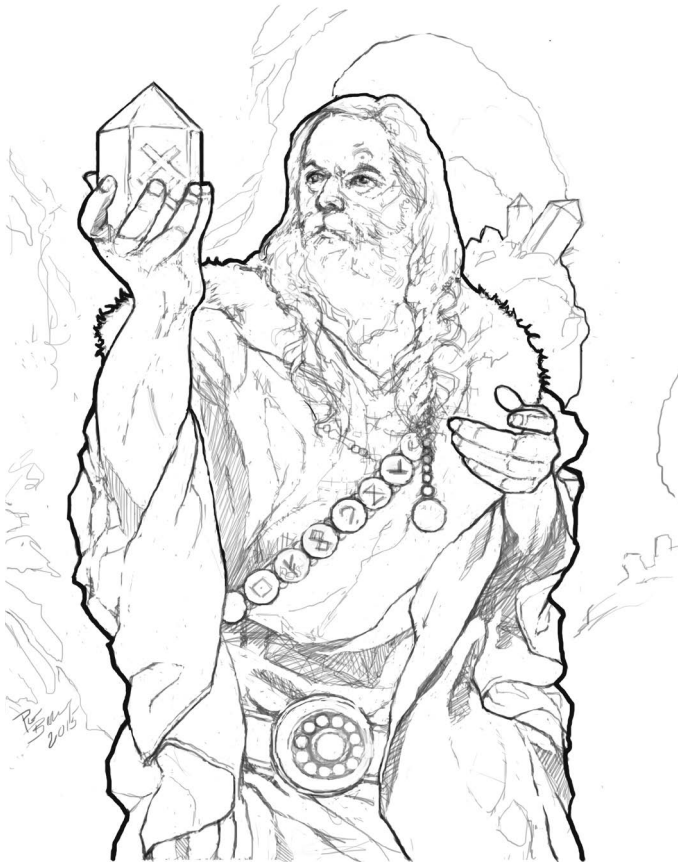
NOTE: Fengr prefers to have Svala attack and take the Fimbulvinter Runes at the ship, that way he knows where it is located. Even being the omnipresent god he is, he is not privy to everything as many would believe, that is why he must take multiple forms to achieve certain goals. Óðin has sent his two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, beyond into the other worlds to spy on Hel and the other gods now that he suspects the worst. Fengr will return in his 8th level guise again, along with his monstrous dire wolf as before, both without wounds.

If the Allfather is thwarted yet again this time around during this module he will have to resort to other measures and regroup his efforts. Óðin only has 198 more forms to assume if needed, and lo and behold if he needs to choose his normal form of the bearded traveler with the crooked hat...then the adventuring party will surely have earned his wrath in this series. For the moment, they have only gained the Allfather's dislike, as he is unsure as to the complete situation (unless of course the players have ruined the matter and let on to him already). The Allfather will not follow the adventuring party to their next destination in this series, instead, if he must, he will let his son, Þór the Giant-Slayer, do the job to their dismay.

THE RETURN JOURNEY TO THE SHIP

By this time in the module the adventurers have traveled hundreds of leagues in Álfheimr, fought many foes, outsmarted many tricks and traps, and had to pursue many hints of paths that might have led nowhere just to obtain the next two Fimbulvinter Runes. Now, they are many leagues away from their ship just as they were in the second module Odin's Fury. The CK can make the return journey simple and concise if need be, using the giant boars as mounts (perhaps granted by the light elves as gifts?), or just by taking simple overland routes.

However the adventuring party find their way to their mobile floating home/ship, they will find it intact. Their dwarf companion Hákon will be no comfort however as he likely hasn't been in this module (if the CK played him to the fullest), reminding them that his presence here is one of diplomacy sent by his people. The dwarf will be eager to rest aboard the vessel and be away from the chaos, danger, and drama caused by the party.



WHERE NEXT TO GO IN THE WORLDS?

Boddi Froði, gazing into the *Auga Runni*, cast its crystalline form into the shimmering sky of Álfheimr for a time. He did this only to stop, frustrated and worried. Momentarily he would change his angle in the sky, or towards the sea and then take out one of his carefully drawn charts and lay it on the table on the ship. He repeats this set of actions again and again.

Boddi appears more worried by the minute as he checks his maps and his crystal, then he looks to the adventuring party before speaking. When he did speak, he did so with almost a small voice, afraid to voice his words.

“My friends, I have glanced many times at the skies above and below us and at my charts and within the Auga Runni, and my mind is not deceiving me. Where we must go next is not ideal, not pleasant. Our time spent among the elves is over, I am afraid.

The nearest Fimbulvinter Rune is in Jötunheimr. The seas that divide these two worlds are turbulent but can be traversed, and we must reach there before others do. Let us hope that the giants haven’t found the Rune first...if they

have, we can only guess what horrors they will cause with it in hand.

All of the dangers of Jötunheimr for one Rune must be endured. We cannot risk leaving it only to retrieve it later. The giants cannot be armed with Oðin’s charms in anyway. If they feel empowered enough, they will amass and storm the Bifröst Bridge before Surtr’s command is given. We don’t know what Rune lies in their world. It might be a less lethal one, but it may not.

Prepare for ice and stone. Their world will be rugged and harsh and we will be naught but a speck of dust in their presence, but a threat to them all the same--especially so with the Runes in our possession. They will seek to have them once they know of them and will spare nothing to take them. Enchantments and glamour are the least the giants will care to use, it will be brute force and power to wrest them from us.

Let us waste no time in leaving these shores, as serene and peaceful as they are, to make our way to worse ones. Jötunheimr welcomes no one that is a stranger, and even less so who is not among the giant-kind.”

DEPARTING ÁLFHEIMR

After withdrawing the anchor and using the oars, the player characters will have to guide the ship on the calm waters away from the land of elves and into the endless horizon of the World Sea. Steering the ship around towards the dark seas and skies, gradually the calm waters become rough as leagues are traversed.

The sweet smelling, flower and herb scented air is now growing rotten with dead fish to match the sea’s harshness. Strong lightning distantly strikes in the black horizon beyond.

Boddi points in the direction of the worst part of the skies and sea:

“That is the region where the World Sea divides, where the coils of the Jörmunganör writhes and churns in its near slumber below the waves. It is there we must sail to cross over into the waters that will take us to Jötunheimr and to where the next Fimbulvinter Rune lies.

We will be climbing ever higher up Yggdrasil as we go, but this will not be our course you realize, for the path we take on the Whale’s Back is not readily apparent. To gather the Runes as they have fallen across the Worlds is neither easy, nor convenient. We will be as erratic on the World Tree as the squirrel that scales its trunk.”

So ends ‘Crisis in Álfheimr’ and next is the fourth tale in the saga, ‘The Jötun’s Scheme’.

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CRISIS IN ALFHEIMR

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

From the dark shadows of Svartalfaheimr the trail leads to Alfheimr, the land of the fabled Light Elves, where the Vanir God Freyr reigns! Vanir, a perpetually spring-like world, surrounded by endless miles of crystalline blue oceans, scenic skies, filled with flocks of birds and a wilderness of high mountains, is ill prepared for the chaos of the Fimbulwinter Runes!

Freyr is unaware that two of the Runes have fallen into his world. The adventuring party must find their whereabouts before the Runes unleash their dark power on Vanir and the one-eyed stranger who follows wreaks havoc on them all.

Things in this world are not what they seem, and with the Runes' influence they are even worse. Continue on the saga through the Nine Worlds and plunge into the fabled lands of Alfheimr!



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