

The Death Curse of Sven Oakenfist





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Special Thanks

Thanks to the Northlands Playtest Group: Crystal "Creepy Witch" Baker, Robert "Is it Time to Rage" Kennedy, Travis "Damn Faeries" Price, Jeremy "Shieldwall!" Hedge, Tim "I Don't Care if She's Evil, She's Hot!" France, Jordon "Estenfird!" Criss, and Timothy "In the Name of Thor!" Hall. Also thanks to our Friendly Local Game Store, Legends of Vincennes.



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Table of Contents

The Death Curse of Sven Oakenfist	p. s
The Daughters of Skuld	p. 9
The Barrow of Sven Oakenfist	p.20
Appendix: Random Encounters	p.24
New Monster	p.26
Legal Appendix	p.27

The Death Curse Of Sven Oakenfist

The Death Curse of Sven Oakenfist is an adventure for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game designed for a party of four to six characters of 7th to 9th level. Like all the Northlands Saga adventures, **The Death Curse** of Sven Oakenfist can be used on its own, as part of the saga, or as part of an ongoing campaign. It is designed for use with the Northlands setting available from Frog God Games but can easily dropped into any campaign the GM chooses.

If used as part of the Northlands Saga, *The Death Curse of Sven Oakenfist* can be played after *NS2: Beyond the Wailing Mountains* or as an interlude between *NS1: Vengeance of the* Long Serpent and *NS2: Beyond the Wailing Mountains* should the PCs leave the Far North before finishing the events of those two adventures.

Adventure Background

Sixty years ago a Viking named Sven Oakenfist was famed as a great warrior and a man touched by otherworldly powers. His grandfather was none other than Odin himself, and his grandmother was an uncommonly comely milkmaid of Gatland who unwittingly tempted the All Father with her beauty. While by no means an immortal scion or demigod in his own right, this lineage did give Sven a spark of divinity and an inhuman courage and ferocity in battle, even allowing him to turn himself into a man-wolf when in the throes of a consuming passion for bloodletting. He led a band of Ulfhendar, savage berserkers who laid their hearts at the feet of Odin's darker nature in return for martial prowess and spiritual fulfillment. Sven and his men pillaged and plundered their way across the Northlands in their longship the *Terror of the North*, taking great pride in their divine patronage and "heroic" deeds.



While raiding a fishing village along the coast of Estenfird, Sven was fatally stabbed in the back by a peasant boy, Anud. In his last moments, Sven cursed the boy with prosperity, with wealth, and with fame, for all of sixty-six years, so that in the end Sven's wight could come and take it away before Anud's very eyes. The peasant boy who slew a mighty warrior grew into a powerful man, rich and famed, and one of the greatest Jarls of the Storstrøm Vale. In his rise to power he was both lucky and devious, having survived dangers that would have killed lesser men, but also having broken his honor and bond on more than one occasion. As a jarl, he has manipulated the political landscape through threats, marriages, bribery, and underhanded dealings, all to his benefit. However, he has also been brave, loyal to his followers, and generous.

Today Jarl Anud is an old man, his body ravaged by age. As he faces the grim specter of death, he also fears that a different grim specter may beset him, though who is to say if the words of a dying madman carry much weight?

Adventure Summary

During a mid-winter feast, the wight of Sven Oakenfist appears and threatens Jarl Anud in his very hall, proclaiming that the end of the curse is upon him. The wight gives Anud a deadline, the next feast of Freyja in the Spring, at which point Sven will return and lay waste to all the Jarl's domains, his family, and his retainers. Jarl Anud asks if there are any heroes that are willing to save not just him, but his sons and those who serve him. As it happens, there are, the PCs.

The death curse of Sven Oakenfist is powerful magic, laid down by a man who is the grandson of a god, and not something that can be undone simply or without sacrifice. After searching their knowledge and consulting with oracles and wise women, the party learns that there may be only one way to lift the curse—strike down the wight in his own barrow. But to do that they must seek out the help of the Three Daughters of Skuld the Norn. The heroes must then set out across the chilly North Sea, brace the challenges posed by the Daughters of Skuld, and return in time to destroy the wight and lift the curse or many innocent people will die.

Adventure Hooks

The Death Curse of Sven Oakenfist takes place in the fall or winter as the party spends time as the guest of Jarl Anud Cursespear, a powerful jarl in the Storstrøm Vale (though the hall of Jarl Anud can be moved to another region if your campaign dictates). There are many ways that you can set this up. First, it is the custom of the Northlands to seek refuge for the winter, avoiding the dangers and hazards of the long, cold season. Travel is nearly impossible as snow covers the ground, thaws turn roads to muck, and storms ravage the seas. The tradition of hospitality is a strong one amongst the Northlanders, and only an outlaw or craven fool would violate the rights of guest and host. Because of this, it is common practice for travelers and wandering heroes to seek an invitation to spend the winter in the hall of a jarl, the more powerful the jarl the better.

Other options abound, such as placing the party in a situation that Jarl Anud must do them a favor. A shipwreck on the coast of the Jarl's domain is a viable option. A PC could owe a debt of honor to the Jarl, or vice versa, prompting the character to spend the winter in the Jarl's hall to either discharge the obligation or receive their reward. Finally, it is possible that the Jarl is a relation of one of the party members, and thus extends an invitation to come and stay for the winter.

Jarl Anud is more than happy to host travelers for the winter as it brings prestige and honor to his hall and household to have brave men and women as guests. Furthermore, having a few additional warriors on hand is never a bad thing. Jarl Anud has a secondary goal, however, for he fears for all he has gained in life and what fate awaits him in the afterlife. Taking advantage of the bonds of hospitality is not an honorable thing, but Anud did not become a jarl through strict adherence to the rules of honor.

Finally, one or more of the PCs could be the Jarl's own huscarls, liegemen dedicated to fight for the Jarl and his holdings. As such their own duty and honor might draw them into this adventure if you prefer a less delicate goad to draw your players forth.

Beginning the Adventure

As mentioned, the PCs are wintering as guests (or residents) in the hall of Jarl Anud. After several weeks of feasting in the Jarl's hall, the party should be able to have gathered some information about him. Allow them to make DC 20 Diplomacy, Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (nobility) checks to discover the information provided under "Adventure Background" above.

Whatever the PCs' reactions are to this information, there are always the laws of hospitality to consider. Calling the Jarl a coward or a conniver will violate those laws and, at the least, get the PCs thrown out into the cold but more likely result in a PC being challenged to a duel by either the Jarl, his sons, or one of his huscarls. In either case, under such circumstances their names are blackened and the party will not find themselves invited to stay the winter at the hall of any self-respecting jarl. Furthermore, as word of their misdeeds spread, the party, even if only one of the PCs violated the laws of hospitality, will suffer a –5 penalty on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks in the Northlands for the next year.

The Hall of Jarl Anud Cursespear

The Hall of Jarl Anud Cursepear LN small town Corruption +0; Crime -4; Economy +1; Law +3; Lore +1; Society +2 Qualities prosperous, superstitious Danger +0 Government overlord

Population 1,550 (1,435 human [Northlanders]; 10 dwarves; 5 other)

Notable NPCs

Jarl Anud Cursespear (N male human fighter 10: Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +15, Sense Motive +4) Manni Nafison, senior huscarl (LN male human fighter 6: Intimidation +9, Perception +8) Runolf Anudson, eldest heir (NG male human ranger 2: Handle Animal +4, Knowledge [nobility] +3, Knowledge [nature] +5, Perception +5, Survival +5)

Base Value 1,300gp; Purchase Limit 7,500 gp; Spellcasting 2nd Minor Items 3d4; Medium Items 1d6

Note All goods and services cost 50% more due to the Jarl's taxes, unless the purchaser is a guest, in which case they cost 50% less.

The hall is a grand one and one well placed. It sits in the Storstrøm Vale on the Ume River, a lesser tributary of the great Storm River. The hall also lies near the sea, and Jarl Anud's land reaches inland from the coast for a fair distance. It is a rich land, with many well-tended farms, expanses of wooded land, and prosperous fishing villages. The people are generally happy and content. Jarl Anud is strict but fair and rules his people well.

The hall itself is a large and ornate affair, with the main hall and several outbuildings encompassed by a wooden stockade and surrounded by a shallow trench. The stockade is made from well-dressed timber brought from Estenfird at great expense, stands thirty feet high, and has a covered walkway around the outside. The stockade sits on a low earthen mound eight feet in height fronted by a shallow trench six feet deep with a bottom of mud and water. The water level is only filled by periodic rains or snow melts, and thus the trench is dry in the summer, contains approximately 15 inches of water most of the year, and becomes topped off by snow in the winter.

The main hall towers over the stockade, its central support a single ancient tree cut in Estenfird 40 years ago. The beam is nearly 8 feet thick and runs from the front of the hall to the back, nearly 100 feet in length. The hall rises 50 feet above the ground, a remarkable height for a building in the Northlands. The roof is of thatch, but the best thatch available and is replaced twice annually. Every exposed surface is adorned with carvings of the gods, animals, the Jarl's more honorable exploits, fantastical beasts (many of which the Jarl has slain), and famous scenes from the sagas. The best of these carvings are accented in gold and silver-obvious displays of the Jarl's wealth and power.

The hall is divided into four main sections: a main hall that reaches up through two stories and is surmounted by a balcony that runs the entire interior of the hall, several rooms off the main hall that are used to host important guests, rooms for servants to prepare food and drink, and finally the second floor, where the Jarl, his family, and his closest retainers have their rooms. Such luxuries as private rooms are almost unheard of in the Northlands, and are a sign of the Jarl's great wealth.

Beyond the Great Hall, the settlement consists of several outbuildings, barracks, workshops, and other assorted structures. Although only a Jarl's hall, the population and industry rivals that of small towns, and forms not just the political center of the Jarl's domain, but the economic as well.

Wintering With Jarl Anud

Assuming the PCs have not made enemies of the Jarl, their time will be spent in a veritable heaven on earth. The food is plentiful, with roast hog and oxen, Gefüllter Fisch (stuffed herring pickled in lye), salted meats, cheeses, dried fruits, pickled vegetables, bread, porridges, cakes, ale, and mead in abundance. On days that the Jarl can conjure up a good reason,

Winter Pastimes

If you so desire, some of the athletic and manly activities of the huscarls and the Jarl's sons can be played out. These largely revolve around lifting and carrying things, throwing axes and spears for accuracy and distance, mock fights (with rebated or wooden weapons), footraces (as well as skiing and ice skating races), and the occasional hunt. The PCs can participate or not, and it has little impact on the story (unless they do something particularly noteworthy) and can be inserted merely for added amusement and flavor.

If hunting, roll on the following table for prey. Encounters occur if either party manages to catch the other, assume encounters begin at a range of 200yards and that both sides will be using Stealth and Perception to find each other. Most animals avoid contact, except as noted below.

Random Hunting Encounters

d10 Encounter

- 1 2No Encounter
- 3 1d4 Dire Wolves
- 4 Dire Boar
- 5 Dire Bear
- 6 1d3 Aurochs
- 7 Dire Lion
- 8 Bandits!
- 9 2 Owlbears
- 10 Normal Game

Dire Wolves: This pack is prowling the winter forests in search of easy prey. Let's hope the hunting party doesn't look tasty.

DIRE WOLVES (1d4)

CR 3

CR4

XP 800 hp 37 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Wolf, Dire")

Dire Boar: This beast is out searching for tubers and other overwinter forage, and doesn't want any trouble. He will, however, respond violently intrusion into his immediate vicinity in order to teach the intruders a lesson.

DIRE BOAR XP 1.200

hp 42 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Boar, Dire")

Dire Bear: This mighty beast has been awakened by something, and is prowling around outside its den looking for a target to vent its wrath upon. Enter the hunting party, and let the carnage commence.

DIRE BEAR XP 3.200

hp 95 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Bear, Dire")

Northlands Aurochs: These wandering kine have formed a small herd for the winter. They are seeking out the sparse forage that the forests yield, and are not looking for trouble. They make a great prize for Northlands hunters, who covet their massive horns, but are terrible foes when cornered in battle.

NORTHLANDS AUROCHS (1d3) XP 3.200 hp 105 (See New Monsters)

Dire Lion: This powerful predator is on the prowl for a mid-winter snack and, although cautious of humans, it is more than willing to try to grab easy prey.

DIRE LION XP 1.600

CR 5

CR7

CR7

hp 60 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Lion, Dire")

Bandits!: These five ruffians have fallen on hard times; the winter has set in and they have not yet made a large enough score to keep them through until spring. They are desperate, and will attempt to hide from larger or more dangerous looking parties. If captured and brought back to Anud's hall, the grateful Jarl awards the PCs jewelry and beaten gold worth 100 gp for each living bandit brought in and 50 gp for each dead one. Captured bandits are tried before the Jarl the next day and beheaded for their crimes against his people.

BANDITS (5) XP 2,400

CR 6

CR4

hp 53 (Pathfinder Roleplaying GameMastery Guide "Highwayman")

Owlbears: Always aggressive creatures, a recent cold snap has ruffled these beasts' feathers to the point that they is willing to seek warmth anyway they can, such as by plunging their beaks into some nice, warm entrails.

OWLBEARS (2) XP 1.200

hp 47 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Owlbear")

Normal Game: These are the normal game animals that consist of deer, boars, or other animals as would be expected in the forests of the Ume River. If spotted, allow the PCs to make a DC 15 Survival check to bring them down. Award the PC making the check 100 XP for the successful hunt.

namely any gods' feast day, commemorations of important events, or after a particularly good story telling, fine wines from the Southlands are brought out and served. The nights are spent eating, drinking, and swapping tales of brave deeds, often until the candles gutter and the servants are asleep on their feet. Several skalds are in the employ of the Jarl, and many others have made his court their home for the winter. Songs, poems, juggling, tumbling, and other diversions are common. As the nights run down, the PCs can find a warm place to sleep in the hall itself, or if they so desire in the stables or in the bed of one of the many willing servants.

Their days are spent recovering from the previous night's feast and being high placed and indolent. On warmer days the huscarls and other warriors spend time training or competing in tests of strength and courage. These activities are generally nonlethal, but present danger in the form of embarrassment. Mock duels and fights are common, as are sophomoric challenges and jokes.

The Coming of Sven Oakenfist

One evening, as the merrymaking and feasting have reached their nadir, read the following.

A loud booming echoes in from the front gate of the stockade. Quickly after the first boom, there are thunder cracks of sound as the sturdy timbers of the gate are splintered. Heavy footfalls can be heard approaching through the snow, as well as the death screams of the men on guard. The noise rapidly reaches the front door of the Great Hall, which explodes inward in a hail of splinters and the shattered bodies of the two huscarls on duty.

Standing in the doorway is a figure torn from dark tales told around winter fires. Partially translucent, partially all-too solid, it is eight feet of pallid, death-haunted reaver glowering at those in the hall. With its massive arms raised above its head and hamlike fists clenched in fury, it speaks in words like thunder.

"Anud! Anud, who dares call himself a jarl but is naught but a swineherd. Anud, who goes by the name Cursespear, though I say Back Biter and Coward. Anud, know your doom is coming, and your days are numbered. On the Feast of Freyja I will return to this hall and burn it, slay all within it, and laugh as you beg for your pitiful life. No mercy will you know, save that I will let you live long enough to see all you have stolen from greater men lay fallow, your wives' wombs made as if they were barren, and your lands awash in battle dew. I am Sven Oakenfist, and I have cursed you with my dying breath, and with words from a body that knows no breath, and with words from beyond the shroud of death, words that fear neither Hel nor Valhalla the abode of the gods."

The hall is stunned into silence with the arrival and speech of the wight of Sven Oakenfist. The Jarl's huscarls, chilled to the bone by the wight's words, yet insulted by the way Oakenfist has spoken to their Jarl, unsteadily rise up to protest and threaten. Anud's sons also rise, even more unsteady than his battle-scarred warriors. The PCs may do so as well, but before anyone makes an attack on the wight there is a gust of wind carrying with it the snow of the night, and it is gone.

All faces are pale in the flickering firelight at the departure of the apparition from Hel. None dare speak or so much as raise a flagon in the unnatural silence that has fallen over the entire hall. Finally the silence is broken by the scooting of a wooden bench across the cold stone flags.

Jarl Anud arises stiffly and speaks, "I stand here an old man, guilty of some of the things this fiend has laid upon me. I did slay him, as many of you know, driving the serpent's tooth of my spear through his back and bathing its tip with his life's blood. I made raven food of the man that was Sven Oakenfist, of this I make no excuse, for did he not come to my village to burn, rape, and slay? What did we have, save a few hogs and some dried fish? No, I, a lowly swineherd struck down a brutal thief who did not have the courage to fight warriors true, but instead to merely slaughter old men and boys.

"He says I have been a liar and a thief, but no more than any others who hold the title of jarl. I freely admit I have used falsehood and deception to gain my place in the world, but if I am to suffer the punishment the wight offers, then so must most, if not all, of the men of the Vale, and the Northlands that lie beyond. I have regrets, actions I wish I could undue, but so do all old men.

"Nay, I say a slayer of women is naught but a common bandit. I say a wight is naught but a coward afraid to face his wyrd and judgment at the hands of the gods. He threatens not just I, but all I hold dearest. This I cannot abide. I am an old man; my days in the shieldwall are long past. If it was just me he claims to come for, I would ride out tonight and face that cold blade, and pray to Odin and Thor that I may paint the fields with whatever ichor flows through its veins. It is not just I that lie under this curse, but my wives, children, my entire household, even all who live and call me jarl.

"The lives of these men beside me are mine to command, their oaths binding until death. Alas, I cannot ask them to do this, nor may I with mind's worth command them, though I know they will go. Their deaths are not what I wish to carry me to my wyrd, for as great as they are, as brave as they have fought against man and beast, I see they have no stomach to match the weather of their weapons against the walking dead. Nor will I ask my sons, for it is in their name that a father must fight and die, and not the other path. A world where a father sends his sons to die in his stead is a world that deserves to be eaten by the night.

"The task that lies ahead, to find a way to slay that which does not live and so force it to renounce its curse, lies not in the shields and hearts of common men, but in the battle dew-drenched bloodworms of heroes. What I need, what I beg of those who have been my guests these many nights, brave men and women from afar, whose tales of glory and spear-din we have heard, both from their lips and those of the skalds, is heroes of the highest order. Heroes who can brave the cold of corpses to slay the wight of Sven Oakenfist, and do so either by the Feast of Freyja or in vengeance of our deaths.

"I ask, are there such heroes here amongst us?"

The huscarls and the Jarl's sons howl in weak protest, but with a stern look and a raised hand from Anud they fall silent. At this point one or more PCs should stand. None of the other guests do so, and look sheepish and embarrassed when anyone takes up the challenge. If no character is willing to take up this task, the assembled people in the hall look at each other, and then eventually at the party. Should the entire party not take the bait and hook, then they do not deserve to call themselves heroes or adventurers and likely need to consider opening a pastry shop somewhere or maybe a florist. When the party does stand to take up the challenge, the Jarl responds.

"My guests, it warms an old man's heart to see bravery and courage in young men and women. I cannot help but think that you are less moved by my plight, for it is in part my own doing, but motivated by mind's worth and the insult to your host that this unnatural Thing has made today. I raise this horn in your honor, and offer you all that I may to assist you in this quest. To our heroes and saviors!"

At this the hall roars with hearty bellows and exclamations in the party's honor, and the feast begins anew. Some are subdued by the events, while others make even more merry, either as a response to fear or at seeing true heroes in action.

If a PC is so crude as to mention a reward, the Jarl responds and says,

"I seek heroes, not men whose lives and honor can be bought and sold. Yes, I know I have dealt with such kind in my days, and even to my own disgrace walked that path. If such is your motivation, you may not be men for the task that I have laid before you, but as you are the ones who would take up this burden for me, I can offer you what I have. I wish not to avoid my own wyrd, but to save this hall and this land for my son's inheritance and my daughter's dowry. I shall not lose such to gain such, but I will make a great reward to you and yours, have no fear. If you succeed in these heroic tasks, you may have you choice of my holding, as befits your station and reward."

One or more PCs may very well have made a grand speech or other gesture during this scene, and if so the GM should reward them with an XP bonus as if they had defeated a monster of a CR equal to their level-1.

The rest of the night is spent in drinking and feasting, much of it in honor of the new heroes and their upcoming quest. Any PC who wishes to will likely gain a small boon or a night's frolic from another guest. The huscarl's and the Jarl's sons are a bit subdued during the feasting, and depart as soon as it is acceptable to do so. The Jarl himself puts on a merry face, but it is obvious that he is melancholic.

The next day, after everyone has recovered from the feast, the heroes need to think over their plan. This is no ordinary wight, but a creature created by a death curse powered by divine blood. Simply riding to Sven Oakenfist's barrow and slaying the creature will likely not work. Allow the PCs to develop a plan of action, and have them make Knowledge checks. The DC and type of Knowledge check, as well as its results, are detailed below. Provide the information for any DCs below what the PCs roll.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC Result

- 15 A death curse leveled by a person of Sven Oakenfist's power and heritage has the effect of setting a person's wyrd, and thus their inevitable fate.
- 17 To alter such a fate, one must have near divine knowledge of wyrd and the workings of the Norns, goddesses who determine the wyrd of even the gods.
- 18 The three Daughters of Skuld live in the Northlands and have the power to peer through the strands of fate and see how it can be altered. Furthermore, they are willing to aid heroes who can pass their challenges.
- 20 Yrsa the Fair lairs in the Great Ocean Uthaf on Yrsa's Rock, held prisoner by a terrible beast called the Shrieker in the Dark. She tests men's courage and honor.
- 21 Mother Hengrid lives in the swamps of the Dnipir Delta; she tests men's compassion and courtesy.
- 22 Old Meg lives in a cave on the island of The Jomsburg, and is said to be the most powerful of the three sisters. She tests men's wisdom and virtue.

Knowledge (history)

DC Result

- 16 A death curse leveled by a person of Sven Oakenfist's power and heritage has the effect of setting a person's wyrd, and thus their inevitable fate.
- 18 To alter such a fate, one must have near divine knowledge of wyrd and the workings of the Norns, goddesses who determine the wyrd of even the gods.
- 20 One Gerimund the Bold, managed to climb the World Tree ages ago and even seduced Skuld, one of the Norns. She gave birth to three daughters, Yrsa the Fair, Mother Hengrid, and Old Meg.

Knowledge (religion)

DC Result

- 10 A death curse leveled by a person of Sven Oakenfist's power and heritage has the effect of setting a person's wyrd, and thus their inevitable fate.
- 12 To alter such a fate, one must have near divine knowledge of wyrd and the workings of the Norns, goddesses who determine the wyrd of even the gods.
- 15 The Norns are unapproachable, living far beyond the world in Yggdrasil, the World Tree. Only the greatest of heroes have ever climbed it and survived.
- 17 One Gerimund the Bold, managed to climb the World Tree ages ago and even seduced Skuld, one of the Norns. She gave birth to three daughters, Yrsa the Fair, Mother Hengrid, and Old Meg.
- 20 The three Daughters of Skuld live in the Northlands and have the power to peer through the strands of fate and see how it can be altered. Furthermore, they are willing to aid heroes who can pass their challenges.

Knowledge (geography)

DC Result

- 12 The Barrow of Sven Oakenfist lies only 10 miles from Jarl Anud's Hall, on the coast where the Jarl's lands meet the spray of the Kulding Bay.
- 15 Yrsa the Fair lairs in the Great Ocean Uthaf on Yrsa's Rock.
- 16 Mother Hengrid lives in the swamps of the Dnipir Delta.
- 17 Old Meg lives in a cave on the island of The Jomsburg.

The party may now decide how they will proceed. If they miss out on any vital information presented above, allow them to make queries of the local skalds and shamans for the information. They can make rerolls after such consultations with a bonus of +1 for every 20 gp they spend in gifts and bribes for these information sources or use Diplomacy (DC 15) to have these individuals make the check in their place (they each have a +10 modifier for the particular skill) with a +1 bonus to the roll for each 50 gp spent.

After gaining the necessary information, the PCs can plan their course of action against the wight. They may visit some or all of the Daughters of Skuld, or none if they so choose. If they forsake the help of the three sisters, the final confrontation with the wight of Sven Oakenfist will be terribly difficult, likely fatal to both the heroes and those they wish to save.

The Daughters of Skuld

The three sisters are the daughters of the Norn, Skuld, and a human warrior named Gerimund the Bold. The Norns are the arbiters of the destiny of men and gods, apart from the gods yet still divine beings. Gerimund was an honorable, but reckless, warrior five centuries ago. He ascended the Tree of Yggdrasill to seek the home of the gods, and encountered the Norns as they poured the water and sand from Well of Fate onto the branches of the world tree. Gerimund saw the three, and found that one was as beautiful as the dawn and more lovely than the ripe wheat fields of his homeland. With great trepidation he approached the three divinities and began what in latter days would be called "flirting". Skuld was struck by his courage, and fell immediately in love with him. The two dallied amongst the leaves of Yggdrasil for some time, and three sisters were the result. Their father raised the girls in the Northlands until they came of age, ascending to their mother's domicile in the heavens to learn of their divine nature.

As the product of a union between man and the divine, the three sisters have incredible powers. Their mother's heritage has given them command over the strands of fate and the ability to alter them and even reweave them. From their father they learned the customs and ways of the Northlanders, but most importantly the laws of honor and hospitality. Gerimund was an adventurer and wandering sellsword, and the childhood of the girls was a bizarre one as they followed their human parent across the world in search of adventure, fame, wealth, and glory. Sadly, Gerimund never achieved much of any of these things, and died an impoverished, yet still honorable, man.

Having completed their tutelage under their mother, the three sisters descended back to the land of mortals, only to find that their father had grown old and died during their absence. Turning to the only life they had known, the three set forth as adventurers, and though they accomplished great things, they never achieved that which they sought the most. Wealth, fame, and glory eluded them as it had their father, and no matter what treasures they found or what monsters they vanquished, it all slipped thorough their fingers.

"Defeating" the Daughters of Skuld

If it needs to be said, Yrsa the Fair, Mother Hengrid, and Old Meg are demi-gods—beings of a power far beyond what the PCs could muster. They cannot be intimidated, and will meet force with overwhelming destruction. The best way to get their assistance is to cooperate and play into their madness. Characters who attempt to use force or coercion should receive a firm warning that this is not a good idea. If they persist, then the GM should tell the player to get out a clean piece of paper, a #2 pencil, and 3d6...

After losing yet another fortune, Old Meg was visited by a wolverine who could speak. It explained that her aunts, being jealous that their sister had violated the oaths of maidenhood to which all three had sworn, had cursed both the sisters and their father, causing them to lose the things they sought and fail to achieve greatness. Shocked and hurt by this betrayal, Old Meg decided on a rash course of action.

To seek revenge against the Norns that had cursed her, Old Meg concocted a plan and drew her siblings into it. They would each set themselves as rivals in the weaving of wyrd against their aunts. Each would take a form similar to that of the Norns and hide themselves in the mortal world. Their goal was to test heroes and adventurers, granting the greatest among them a mighty boon, the knowledge to change their wyrd and alter the cloth of fate. Those who failed the challenges placed before them would suffer and die, and their souls would not pass on to the afterlife but instead be captured by the sisters and used to further power their enchantments. Sadly, even in this plan the curse of their aunts weighed on them, and the three sisters have gone insane, their tests less about finding worthy heroes and more about fulfilling their own mad desires.

Fair Yrsa

Fair Yrsa, like her sisters, has gone insane. In her fractured mind what caused the failure and death of her father was not merely a curse, but his own lack of courage. Towards this end, when she and her sisters swore a mighty oath to aid heroes and adventurers in their quests, she chose to set herself as a prize to entice the most courageous. For centuries Yrsa has been chained to a rock in the Great Ocean Uthaf, waiting for a hero to come and prove his courage by slaying the beast that guards her and setting her free.

The location of Fair Yrsa's Rock is not common knowledge, but those steeped in wisdom and learning maybe able to piece together its general location. A DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check will reveal that Yrsa's Rock is somewhere in the Cymu Current far south of the Cymu Islands but nearly due northeast of Osløn. The DC drops to 15 if the PCs gained all the pertinent information in the first chapter. Once again, bribing a local skald or cartographer will add a +1 bonus to the check for each bribe given, and Diplomacy can be used to have the check made in their place.

With these clues the party can set sail. Actually spotting the rock jutting out of the sea is relatively easy, requiring a DC 15 Perception check. Alternatively, a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check will spot seagulls on the horizon, birds not known to travel the open ocean. A DC 10 Profession (sailor) check will note the changes in the current indicative of a sizeable body of land. These checks can be made by anyone on the ship, not just the helmsman.

To reach the rock, the PCs must take ship—either their own or a hired one. Even if taking their own, the ship must be sailed by someone with ranks in Profession (sailor). A ship and helmsman can be hired in nearby Trotheim for 50 gp per day (1 week paid in advance and nonrefundable). A ship's helmsman alone (Profession [sailor] +10) can be hired in Trotheim for 3 gp a day. From Trotheim it is a cold and dangerous 523-mile voyage across the North Sea to Fair Yrsa's Rock, a trip of 11 days –1 day for each 5 by which the helmsman's Profession (sailor) check beats DC 10. An additional day is added each time the ship misses the necessary Perception, Knowledge (nature), or Profession (sailor) check to locate the island.

For each day of the voyage, the GM should roll on the Sea Voyage Random Encounters table in the Appendix. When in the Great Ocean Uthaf, add +2 to the roll to represent the greater dangers of that endless body of water.

Yrsa's Rock (CR 10)

Rising out of the warm waters of the Cymu Current is the small island of Yrsa's Rock. The island itself is a tall needle of dark grey rock steeply rising 380 feet above the ocean. The top of this sheer pillar is flat, and it is here that Yrsa is chained, awaiting her newest band of rescuers. Most of the island is shale-covered, barren rock, however a small amount of vegetation skirts the water's edge and climbs up a narrow rainwater carved channel on the south side of the central pillar. Even in the depths of winter the vegetation is still green and the island has a distinct late spring feel in the unusually warm air, thus hinting at the island's unnatural nature.



Waves thunder against the cliffs that encircle the island like the fortified walls of a Southlander keep. One small, ancient pier juts out from a break in the cliff wall, its wood pounded smooth and worn gray by the sea. Neither gulls circle above, nor do pelicans laze on the pier. A path leads through the cliff wall and joins with a single, vine-covered channel in the rocky pillar. A warm breeze that smells faintly of spring blossoms wafts from the island.

The surrounding cliffs of the Rock force visitors to either climb the rock face or ascend up the narrow defile. This channel presents the only easy means of scaling the pillar, unless our heroes can fly or are brave (read foolish) enough to attempt to climb the sheer and crumbling rock face. Should they do so, they face a DC 25 Climb check every 50 feet for the entire 380-foot climb. The channel is choked with spindly thorn bushes and other vegetation that clings precariously to what little soil has formed in crevices and pools and presents a DC 10 Climb check. On a failed check that results in a fall, the PC only falls 1d3x10 feet before becoming tangled in the vegetation and able to attempt to climb again. There is a definite dearth of animal life, something that anyone with ranks in Knowledge (nature) would be somewhat surprised to see. Not even insects crawl amongst the thorns and leaves.

At the top of the spire, there is a large open area, roughly circular and 50 feet in diameter. In the center of the circle is an 8-foot high finger of rock, its surface inscribed with countless runes, many of which are unknown to mortals. Chained to the rock and facing to the east is Yrsa the Fair, a woman in the prime of her beauty, flaxen haired, milky skinned, and blue eyed. Her form and features are that of feminine perfection, as clearly shown by her torn white shift, somehow wetted by seawater although none seems to spray this high. A simple circlet of gold adorns her head, and a large piece of amber hangs from a necklace of braided silver. Her chains are of platinum and gold, and alone would be worth a fortune. When the first party member reaches the top of the pillar, she speaks.

"Hark, my heroes, for I am at last saved from this fate, this horrid living hell! Make swift and free me before the beast returns from its hunt, and we all perish!"

The PCs may speak with Yrsa, though she offers little but frustrated urges to unchain her and be away. She claims to know much about curses and wyrd, but protests that now is not the time, for the beast will return very soon and they must all be away. In the entire conversation, she plays up the damsel in distress role to its highest. In no way will she be impressed by threats or intimidation, but if one or more PCs takes the bait and plays his part as heroic rescuer, she will respond favorably in later moments, but not now, for she points to the north and screams, "We are lost, for the Shrieker in the Dark has come!"

Creature: Charging out of the east, roaring an ear rattling battle cry, is the **Shrieker in the Dark**, the monster that guards Yrsa. Its body is muted black, making details hard to determine. Two great wings hold aloft a serpentine body. At the end of its long neck is a fanged filled reptilian head, a pair of red eyes—the only points of color on the entire beast—glowing brightly above a fang filled mouth.

THE SHRIEKER IN THE DARK XP 9,600

CR 10

hp 104 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2 "Primal Dragon, Umbral—Young Umbral Dragon")

Tactics: As it wings in, before the battle commences, the Shrieker uses *shield* on itself. The Shrieker in the Dark starts the battle by making a flying pass at the party, deploying its breath weapon to target the greatest concentration of foes. After the initial pass, it uses *darkness* to cloak the battle field and land closest to any spellcasters to use its claws and bite to best effect. If any foe does a significant amount of damage to it, that foe will be targeted with a Vital Strike employing the beast's bite attack. When hard pressed, the Shrieker takes to the air to deliver its breath



weapon again before landing and rampaging amongst its foes.

Development: After the battle, assuming the PCs have fulfilled Yrsa's requirements, she allows herself to be rescued. What happens next depends on the actions of the characters. If they fought with courage and honor, treated her with respect and deference, and in all things behaved as a hero should, she rewards them with Yrsa's Favor. If they have not, she levels Yrsa's Curse upon them and departs.

Yrsa's Favor

The party may now ask one thing of Yrsa, and she will grant it. Hopefully, they will ask how to defeat Sven Oakenfist or lift his curse. They may ask about the other Daughters of Skuld, but this question will only be met by stony silence and a poisonously jealous glare (though she will allow them another chance to ask again). If asked about the means to defeat Sven Oakenfist, she relates the following.

"My mighty heroes, you have saved me from a dreadful fate, for which I am eternally grateful. However, we all have a wyrd we cannot avoid, and mine beckons, I may tarry with you for only a day and a night, and then I must be away. Ask of me what you will, and if it should be in my power, I will grant it."

In her own confused, maddening way, Yrsa is talking about the spear (fang) that slew Sven Oakenfist (the viper). Thus the PCs should stab the wight in the back with the same spear that killed the man. If the PCs can't come to this conclusion on their own, a DC 15 Knowledge (local) would be able to make sense of the kennings and understand its meaning.

As all know, a viper is best slain by its own fang, but if you have its fang, why do you need to slay it? In a distant land called the Caliphate, there is a deadly viper called the "Two Breaths". This viper is a threat to all, both low and high fall to its rampages and entire villages are slain in a night when the vipers swarm through. There is but one beast, a small bird, which can slay the viper. The bird jumps upon the viper's back causing it to strike backward with its fang into its own spine as the bird nimbly hops away. But you do not have such a viper, nor such a bird. Perhaps if you had the viper's tooth to strike the viper through the heart that would slay the creature. That is if we are talking of vipers and little birds.

Before she leaves, assuming they haven't angered her, Yrsa gifts each PC with a medium magic item appropriate to their class (choose or roll from Chapter 15 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). If one PC has stood out among the rest in courage and deportment, he (or she, Yrsa is not picky that way) will be visited by the Daughter of Skuld in the night. If her advances are accepted, she rewards that hero with Yrsa's Boon, and the night passes pleasantly. If spurned, Yrsa lays her Curse upon the hapless hero, and departs on the appointed hour.

Yrsa's Curse

Those affected by Yrsa's Curse have had their wyrd twisted in such a way that it opposes their actions. The cursed PC can be forced to reroll any three rolls by the GM, taking the worse of the two. The effect lasts until all three re-rolls are used.

Yrsa's Boon

Those affected by Yrsa's Boon have had their wyrd altered to ensure their victory. The PC is granted three rerolls of any roll he makes, taking the better of the two. The effect lasts until all three re-rolls are used.

Mother Hengrid

Where the Dnipir River flows into the Seageaster Gulf, the river splits into many smaller channels forming a tangled delta of mud banks, sand bars, and swamplands. Somewhere in that tangled mess of land and water lies the Cottage of Mother Hengrid, one of the three daughters of the Norn, Skuld. Mother Hengrid, like her sisters, is a being of semi-divine power, the child of a force of the universe and a mortal man. She is also, like her sisters, quite mad and maintains illusions that hide her true nature from herself and visitors. In Mother Hengrid's twisted worldview, she is the patron of adventurers and lives merely to keep them from harm. Sadly, this has been perverted over the centuries by her madness and her aunts' curse, and today Mother Hengrid vacillates between being a caring matronly figure and a cruel disciplinarian.

Getting to the Cottage is a dangerous journey, especially in the depths of winter. From Jarl Anud's hall to Dnipirstead it is a cold 645-mile voyage by longship along the southern coast of the North Sea up and around the Hord Peninsula, though they can put in at Halfstead for supplies or repairs if necessary. Obtaining a ship and/or pilot in Trotheim are the same prices as mentioned under "Fair Yrsa" above. The journey takes 14 days –1 day for each 5 by which the helmsman's Profession (sailor) check beats DC 10 (not including any stops along the way).

The last leg of the journey is down through the Seageaster Gulf to the Dnipir Delta. The coast is a wild region known as Seageasterland, the home to the savage barbarians known as the Seagester. These

Stavie and Dnipirstead

Stavie

N hamlet Corruption -2; Crime -2; Economy -2; Law -4; Lore -3; Society +1 Qualities rumormongering Danger -5

Government council **Population** 45 (40 human [Northlanders]; 5 human [Seagester slaves])

Notable NPCs Knut the Lame, local merchant (N male human expert

2: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (geography) +8, Sense Motive +8)

Base Value 200gp; Purchase Limit 1,000 gp; Spellcasting 2nd Minor Items 1d6

Dnipirstead

LN village Corruption -1; Crime -1; Economy +0; Law -1; Lore -1; Society -1 Qualities strategic location Danger +0

Government autocracy Population 136 (125 human [Northlanders]; 11 human [Seagester slaves]) Notable NPCs

Jarl Alvi Gyrdson (CN male human barbarian 4: Intimidation +10, Perception +5, Survival +8)

Base Value 550gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4 barbarians are not Northlanders, and live by herding and farming the rich forestlands along the coast. For generations there has been a mixed relationship between the Northlanders and the Seagesters. Longships come to trade, bringing iron tools and luxury goods to exchange for gold, furs, amber, and slaves. Sometimes the Northlanders arrive and just take what they want, causing the Seagesters to be very wary of the approach of a longship.

There are only two Northlander settlements to resupply at in the Seageaster Gulf south of Smølsund—Stavie and Dnipirstead. Both are out-of-the-way frontier towns of small populations and limited means. Stavie is a resupply point for traders working Seageasterland, and is almost deserted in the winter. The larger of the two settlements is Dnipirstead, which is a trading post and a small-but-growing colony. From here longships sail up the Dnipir River to trade and raid both the Seagesters and strange foreign peoples who live beyond the Northlands in a region called the Sea of Grass. Some have even claimed to have sailed to the source of the Dnipir, portaged across the plains, and sailed down another river to a distant land known as the Caliphate.

For each day of the voyage, the GM should roll on the Sea Voyage Random Encounters table in the Appendix. If the PCs put into shore in Seageasterland, than use the appropriate table in the Appendix for encounters. This may provide the party with the opportunity for a little impromptu raiding or trading.

Once at the delta, the next task before the party is to find the cottage, though this is not as difficult as it seems. Locals know the rough location of it, and also know that through some arcane means the cottage tends to find those seeking it, and not the other way around. The GM should roll 1d8+5 days to determine how long Mother Hengrid will take to move her cottage to the party. Use the Dnipir Delta Random Encounters table in the Appendix. Until that time, they can flounder around in the swamp, following clues given by self-appointed savants from Dnipirstead. The GM should play up the local's lack of knowledge, and give a lot of useless directions, most of which should be based off of local jargon, such as "sail three days to where Harlod Noson ran aground, and then take the left hand fork in the river until you get to the big oak that looks like a chicken." If the party uses divination magic or some other means of locating the cottage other than guesswork or local (mis)information, than allow them to do so. The primary thing to keep in mind is that Mother Hengrid wants to be found, for otherwise how can she protect the heroes from their own folly?

The Cottage of Mother Hengrid

The cottage sits in a small island in the delta, bordered on the east side by a large arm of the Dnipir River, and on the others by smaller tributaries. Crooked trees, brambles, and sick-looking hummocks of grass cover the island, giving it a more sinister air than the rest of the swamp. Even in the depths of winter, snakes and insects swarm the island, and the air is warm and fetid. In the center stands a small cottage and two garden plots, as incongruous in its surroundings as the island is in the swamp.

The cottage is small, has a main floor and a half loft, and measures (on the outside) 30 feet square. Its walls are solid and well trimmed with subtle but attractive decorations carved along the door and window frames, as well as the corner posts. The windows are of occluded glass, thus letting light in but hiding the interior from prying eyes. The roof is of thick and fresh thatch, and the daub-and-wattle chimney looks freshly re-daubed. Two stone steps lead up to the door and are flanked my small beds of fragrant flowers. On the west side of the door is a comfortable looking wooden bench, the perfect place for travelers to rest their weary feet. Two small garden plots are on the north side, one of herbs and the other of squash and other vegetables. Smoke lazily wafts up from the chimney.

When the party approaches the house, they can smell the cook fire and the succulent things roasting there. Pork no doubt turns on a spit above a crackling fire, pies can be smelled cooling somewhere inside and the definite odor of mulling mead wafts through the door. Should the PCs address the house or perhaps even politely knock on the door, they are greeted by Hengrid as described below.



The door is opened by a matronly woman of late middle age, her hair up in a brown and gray bun, and her pale yellow dress neatly crisp and covered in a white apron. She looks you over with a concerned eye and says, "Dearies, you look tired, and oh, you are injured! Please, come in quickly so that I may tend to your wounds. You are heroes no doubt, yes, and on some foolish quest as well? Come in, come in, the fire is warm and the food is hot. I have roast pork, apple and gooseberry pies, and hot mulled mead. Those will be just the thing for you."

Mother Hengrid will fuss over the PCs, amusingly scolding them for tracking mud into her house, chiding them for the state of their clothes and equipment, hurrying to take their things, all of which need mending or cleaning, and ushering them into the kitchen. Remember that Hengrid is a demigod, and the PCs find themselves incapable of resisting her ministrations despite their best efforts. After their dirty items are removed, she notes that they themselves are none too clean, and then sends them out back to a huge wooden tub filled with scalding hot water. There is room enough in the tub for the entire party, and Mother Hengrid will brook no backtalk or naughtiness, threatening to send trouble children to the cellar without any food. Once they are well and soaked, she will scrub each PC with a boar's bristle brush and lye soap.

Once they are properly scrubbed, the party finds their clothing and equipment inside have been cleaned and mended—in fact it is better than new and will not break or wear out under normal use (it can still be purposefully sundered or broken). They also find a table laid out for them, each place with a bread trencher filled with a rich stew of roast pork and vegetables. Cheese and fruits sit in the center, and there is plenty of mead to wash it all down. After the meal, Mother Hengrid provides a slice of pie, oatcakes, and fresh buttermilk to her guests. After dinner there is time to relax in front of the fire, sip mulled cider, and talk. At the end of the evening, Mother Hengrid opens a previously unnoticed side door to reveal a room with warm feather beds piled high with wool blankets—one for each PC—even though the cottage was clearly not large enough to have such a room when viewed from the outside.

Development: Throughout their entire interaction with Mother Hengrid, the party is fussed over, encouraged to eat and drink, and made comfortable. She hovers over them and listens to their needs. Any attempt to broach the reason for the visit or talk about weighty issues is met with a disapproving clucking sound and an urging to wait until the proper time after the meal. PCs who misbehave by resisting Mother Hengrid's attentions or breaking the laws of hospitality find themselves warned to behave properly. It they continue, they find themselves teleported into the cellar (no save), left to wait in the dark for the fate that comes to unruly children.

Mother Hengrid's Cellar

A trapdoor in the kitchen leads to a short set of stairs that empty into a low-ceilinged, (6-foot height) dirt-floored, and stone-walled cellar. The cellar is cramped and filled with baskets of root vegetables, dried fruits, smoked meats, and other assorted foodstuffs that make all squares occupied by them difficult terrain. In the north wall there is a narrow 2-foot wide crack that leads into a natural cavern below the cottage. A person could just barely squeeze through the crack and escape (DC 12 Escape Artist), reaching the river after an hour's walk through the darkness. However, a variety of nasty critters issue forth from the crack if anyone enters it, or shines a light down it. Also, each time a person is cast down into the cellar, a new monster comes forth. Roll on the Random Cellar Encounters table below. The creatures that issue forth are not impeded by the terrain of the cellar. Sounds of combat are met with a loud stamping of Mother Hengrid's foot and a shouted "Keep it down, and go stand in the corner. You've got no one to blame but yourself!" Any who wish to join their comrades in the cellar may, but they will be left down there until morning. Once the trap door has closed it cannot be opened from below.

Random Cellar Encounters		
d8Encounter11d8 Giant Centipedes21d6 Giant Ticks31d2 Giant Stag Beetles41d6 Giant Ants51d4 Giant Leeches61d2 Giant Mantises73d12 Dire Rats81d6 Giant Spiders		
GIANT CENTIPEDES (1d8) XP 200	CR 1/2	
hp 5 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Centipede, Giant")		
GIANT TICKS (1d6) XP 400	CR 1	
hp 13 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2 "Tick, Giant")		
GIANT STAG BEETLES (1d2) XP 1,200	CR 4	
hp 45 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Beetle, Giant Stag")		
GIANT ANTS (1d6) XP 600	CR 2	
hp 18 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary ". Giant")	Ant,	
GIANT LEECHES (1d4) XP 600	CR 2	
hp 19 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary " Giant")	Leech,	
GIANT MANTISES (1d2) XP 800	CR 3	
hp 30 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary " Giant")	Mantis,	
DIRE RATS (3d12) XP 135	CR 1/3	
hp 5 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "R Dire")	at,	
GIANT SPIDERS (1d6) XP 400	CR 1	
hp 16 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary " Giant")	Spider,	

Do Your Chores

After the meal, the dishes are whisked away and the benches turned to face the fire. Warm and comfortable woolen blankets are brought out, and serious talk can commence. Mother Hengrid will answer any question put to her by the characters, assuming they voluntarily fill their roles well. There are several things a perceptive character will notice in the cottage that could use the attention of healthy young man or woman. First, the bin next to the fire is low, and as the after-dinner conversation begins, Mother Hengrid throws the last log onto the fire, inquiring if anyone would mind fetching some more wood from out back. Second, the cauldron that is used to boil the water for cleaning the dishes is empty, and water must be

drawn from the river and carried back, if there is a strong back to do the task. Finally, she scrapes the leftovers from dinner into a bucket and asks if anyone would mind feeding her dogs. The whole party or a part thereof may go to complete each task. If the tasks are not completed, or if no one even attempts them, the PCs will wake up the next morning in Mother Hengrid's cellar, and must face the monsters there to escape. In that turn of events, none of their questions will be answered.

Fetching Wood (CR 5)

The woodpile is well back of the cottage, about a hundred feet past the gardens. It stands 15 feet high and stretches for 8 feet; all of it carefully cut and stacked wood. The moon is full overhead, even if it should be in a different phase, and its light glints off a large double-bitted woodsman's axe next to the pile. At least 100 pounds of wood is required to fill the bin. As the fetcher approaches, he can detect a musty scent of old wood, but a DC 15 Perception check reveals an underlying musky tang.

Creature: When a log is removed from the pile, an angry roar rolls out from behind the woodpile, and a misshapen form looms up into the night. It is taller than a man and much heavier, clad in threadbare workman's clothes over warty skin and coarse hair. The **troll** screeches in coarse Norsk (the common tongue of the Northlands), "Fie, vandals, brigands, thieves! Scoundrels who skulk and steal from honest folk! Thou shalst not take from my sweaty toil! Hie thee back, fiends, or be mine dinner and ye bones ground for my bread."

The troll attacks after making his speech, seeking to drive away the intruders and protect his woodpile; after all he is the one who fells the trees, chops the wood, and piles it up. If the PCs retreat, he will not pursue, unless they continue to attack from range. At no point will he enter the cottage or even the gardens. If the PCs mention the troll to Mother Hengrid, she simply states that she can never get the woodsman to fill the wood bin and sends the PCs back to it.

TROLL XP 1.600

hp 63 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Troll")

Filling the Cauldron (CR 7)

To fetch the water back, someone has to carry the 20-pound cauldron down to the river, fill it, and bring it back. It should be easy but, naturally, will meet with complications. As the PCs approach the river, they need to make a DC 20 Perception check. If they succeed, they spot several large red eyes peeking from the water. If they fail, a swarm of **10 giant frogs** leap out to attack with surprise. Otherwise roll for initiative normally. The frogs attempt to drag PCs into the murky river and eat them.

GIANT FROGS (10) XP 400

hp 35 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Frog, Giant")

Feeding the Dogs (CR 6)

When one or more of the PCs go out to feed the dogs, Mother Hengrid tells them to simply call out, and the dogs will come to the front of the house. Standing outside the house in the dark, those feeding the dogs have a long wait. After 5 minutes they hear some barking off in the distance, barking that grows louder and more numerous the longer they wait. Furthermore, the barking seems to move forward in leaps and bounds, sounding suddenly closer without coming from the intervening distance. As the barking reaches its apex of noise and proximity, three gaunt doglike shapes burst out of the undergrowth and charge the party. The dogs are not interested in mere scraps. They want to eat something fresh and meaty, like a PC. The dogs are **3 yeth hounds** and will not fight to the death. If pressed they grab a mouthful of food and run off barking into the night.

HENGRID'S DOGS (3) XP 800

CR 3

CR 5

CR1

hp 30 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Yeth Hound")

14

Mother Hengrid's Answers

If any of the PCs are injured after completing one of the chores, Mother Hengrid dotes on them, cleans and binds their wounds, and sees that they are made comfortable. This doesn't get them out of the other chores, but each does receive the benefits of a *cure moderate wounds* spell (caster level 10th). If asked about the dangers of the chores, Mother Hengrid will wave them away as something that big boys and girls like them can handle easily.

After tending to their chores, the PCs may discuss their quest with Mother Hengrid. She is quite willing to talk, and will reveal any of the information about Sven Oakenfist, Jarl Anud, or the Three Daughters of Skuld that is given previously in the adventure. If asked how to defeat the wight of Sven Oakenfist or break the curse, she replies with the following.

"Ah, you wish to save the Jarl and his household? Well, that's a fine task for sharp children like you. As I see it, the problem is that the curse drives the wight. It is merely a shade of the man, and not the man at all. To undo a curse of this nature, you need to trick the wight into reliving it. If I were you, Dearies, I would seek the hand that slew the man, and slay the wight likewise. Now, get some rest, and be off in the morning."

The next morning the party awakens refreshed and ready to face new challenges. They find themselves laid out on the open ground in a dry portion of the swamp, their wounds healed and their possessions nearby (mended and cleaned of course). Piled in a rough pyramid are a number of muskmelons (one for each PC), each with the stem cut off and tied back on forming a lid. Inside is a helping of the stew the PCs were served the night before. These are Mother Hengrid's Gourds, and the heroes are amongst the few who have ever tasted them.

Mother Hengrid's Gourds

These muskmelons stuffed with stew are one-use magical items of high potency. Consuming a full melon takes roughly 1 minute, or 2 move actions that provoke attacks of opportunity if the character tries to choke it all down. Once consumed, the imbiber feels warm and happy, and finds himself refreshed and all his wounds healed (as a *heal* spell). The consumer is restored to full hit points, has all ability damage or ongoing conditions ended, acts as if he has had eight hours of sleep, has any special abilities that are limited by a number of uses per day restored to full, and casters have their number of spells per day reset as if they have not only had sleep, but had the opportunity to prepare the spells they used the previous day. The gourds will keep for one month after which the stew spoils and is no longer of use.

Old Meg

Old Meg's Caverns lie on the southern side of the island of the Jomsburg, a place no sane man would willingly go, for the Jomsburg is the location of the fortress of the Jomsvikings. These brigands, pirates, mercenaries, and cultists fill the hearts of every Northlander with terror, for they are the horror in the dark that sweeps in from the sea and kills, pillages, and burns. They know no honor, no mercy, and no sense of shame. The legends of their perfidy, crimes, and debaucheries are many. If this is the place the heroes have chosen to go, may the Valkyries sweep them to Valhalla, for they are not long for this world.

By sea, it is a 350-mile journey to Old Meg's Caverns from Trotheim (8 days), 510 miles from Dnipirstead (11 days), or 400 miles from Yrsa's Rock (8 days). Each of these is reduced by -1 day for each 5 by which the helmsman's Profession (sailor) check beats DC 10. No check is necessary to locate the Island of Jomsburg as its notorious location is well known

to the Northlanders. The Sea Voyage Random Encounter table in the Appendix should be used during this time.

The Jomsvikings are a sworn brotherhood, dedicated to each other and their own foul code. Part of that code is the worship of strange gods and demons, entities whose names are best left unsaid and forgotten. The lair of the feared Jomsvikings, the Jomsburg, is a fortress-city perched high above the North Sea. Tall, thick walls surround the city, even on the seaward side, and the Jomsvikings have spared no expense in the construction of their defenses, even going so far as to import priceless siege equipment from the Southlands. These siege engines throw stones large enough to sink a ship or shatter a shieldwall. The city proper is on the cliffs. However, a second city exists in a network of caves that lead from the main fortress through the cliffs to several half-flooded sea caves below. It is in these sea caves that the Jomsvikings bring their ships and store them in safety. The sea caves are strongly defended with underground fortifications, and massive chains are stretched across their mouths to block attacking ships. A further defense is the nature of the caves themselves, for their entrances are difficult to spot, and their passages are a maze of narrow winding watery tunnels.

Old Meg's Caverns

The Caverns of Old Meg sit in a 300-hundred-foot-high cliff, the opening midway up its face high above crashing surf. There is no safe anchorage below the cliff, and the sea crashes constantly against a rocky reef at the cliff's base. Holding a ship there is nearly impossible, requiring a DC 25 Profession (sailor) check from the helmsman every hour. Failure results in the ship being swept onto the rocks and suffering 2d10 damage. Above the spray line the cliff is home to nesting sea birds that cackle and swoop at any ship below or character climbing.

The climb up the cliff is long and hazardous, as the rock face is nearly sheer and covered in a crumbling rime of sea salt cast up by the waves that thunder at the base. The first 50 feet require a DC 30 Climb check, which drops to a DC 20 Climb check for the remaining 90 feet. Climb checks can be reduced by 5 after the first 50 feet if the climber wishes to try and use the small ledges the sea birds nest on to aid his ascent. This does pose a problem though, as the birds will be greatly upset to see their homes so roughly handled and attack and harry the hapless climber, causing him to make a new Climb check each round.

CI. Fountain Cave

The cave mouth leads to a small ice filled antechamber. On the east side of the chamber a natural stone bowl, 4 feet wide, and 3 feet deep, catches a small trickle of icy water that springs forth from a crack in the cave wall. A shell of ice has formed over this bowl from the splashing water looking for all the world like a large oval face with a gaping maw, 2-foot-diameter, where the water falls through it into the basin below. Slumped over the lip of the basin and frozen into this icy shell is a Northlands warrior, his chain hauberk rusted to ruin beneath its icy patina. One arm of this grim warrior dangles into the water and appears to be clutching something. His pale, desiccated face, still trailing a wisp of copper-colored beard, looks back towards the cave entrance, the expression empty in death.

The warrior is inanimate and does not pose a threat to the party. He is firmly frozen into the ice that has formed over the basin and will require several rounds of chopping with axes or other implements to free him. However, he possesses nothing of value or interest to the PCs, his equipment long since ruined. An examination of the corpse reveals that his hand that hangs submerged in the water appears to be holding a flat, rune-incised stone. Several more of these stones can be seen scattered across the bottom of the basin. The runes on them are unrecognizable, and the stones cannot be retrieved without magic unless the ice shell is broken through to gain access to the pool.

A DC 15 Perception check locates a stack of more of these stones resting in a small niche on the opposite side of the chamber. These are easier to





read and can be identified with a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check as rune stones cast to foresee the future. Individually they have no meaning, but depending on the sequence of how they land, a trained runecaster can read the omens in them. If any of the stones from the fountain are recovered, they are revealed to be more of the same.

These stones hold no particular value, but were left by Old Meg to be used as a small ritual to honor her heritage as a daughter of a Norn and to serve as a way to announce the arrival of visitors. If anyone drops one of the stones into the fountain, it makes a loud plopping sound that echoes into Area C2 and alerts the occupants to withhold their attacks. Any other sounds coming from here do not produce the same restraint.

C2. Frozen Gallery (CR 9)

The antechamber opens onto a long gallery. The stone of this cave is covered in frost and ice, and the air is frigid, like that of the depths of winter. Gigantic icicles hang from the ceilings, and are met from the floor by their mates, looking for like huge crystalline teeth. The gallery is 50 feet wide and nearly 200 feet long, and slopes down steeply into the heart of the island. Fanciful shapes formed of ice such as chimneys, slides, steps, and even vaguely humanoid or animal forms can be made out in centuries-old build up of rime upon the walls.

On the wall opposite the entrance to Area C3 are blood-stained, jagged spears of ice adorned with the arms, armor, tattered clothes, and bodies (or parts thereof) of past heroes who have braved Old Meg's labyrinth and failed (see sidebox).

Creatures: Lurking within the icy labyrinth of this cave are **2 frost drakes** trained by Old Meg to attack any intruders that do not first feed a stone into the fountain in Area C1. The sound of an object plopping

Failed Heroes

The exact identities of the failed heroes hanging in Old Meg's Cavern are left to the GM to decide. They could be ancestors or relatives of the party or their patron, well known heroes who disappeared decades or centuries ago, and even people from beyond the Northlands who quested far only to meet a grisly end. A DC 15 History check will reveal the likely name of a hero, as well as a possible interesting tidbit about his past. A list of some of these corpses and the magical items they carried (that can be found if they are searched), is provided below:

• Asgaut Borkson, one of the Hrolf clan, a warrior of some renown lost 150 years ago (*mithral shirt*).

• Gest Finnson, an infamous liar and braggert missing at sea 30 years ago (*amulet of proof against detection and location*).

• Saxi Sigriddottir, child of a famed adventurer and famous slayer of wyrms himself, thought lost on the Wyrm Fang Rocks 70 years ago (+1 adamantine battleaxe).

• Bjron Gunderson, a famed huscarl in service to the Jarls of Halfstead for 50 years until he retired and went aviking 15 years ago (*lion's shield*).

• Finn the Clever, a skald of some repute who once charmed a valkyrie and later disappeared with her 25 years ago (*harp of charming*).

• Knut Noson, a strange and impetuous godi of Thor missing these 200 years (+2 *thundering warhammer*).

• Galti of Estenfird, a bear of a man who is said to have defeated a dire bear by breaking its neck with one hand, lost at sea 60 years ago (*belt of giant strength* +2).

• Skuld the Witchy Woman (no relation to the Norn, Skuld), history does not record why she came here 40 years ago, only that she was drenched in blood (*cauldron of brewing*).

into the water is easily audible as it echoes down the gallery, alerting the drakes to withhold their attack. In this case they instead lurk among the icy scenery and give the PCs occasional glimpses of themselves as they lean forward between columns of ice and hiss menacingly. If attacked they happily fight to the death even if the intruders do make the proper offering. Old Meg does not respond to the sounds of fighting in this chamber.

FROST DRAKES (2) CR 7 XP 3,200

hp 84 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2 "Drake, Frost")

C3. Meg's Chamber

Old Meg resides in a roughly oval chamber that appears to have been carved out of a single block of ice.

Huddled over a small fire upon which boils an iron pot filled with noxious brown liquid, hunches a woman ancient beyond reason, her greasy grey hair hanging down past her shoulder, one eye a wretched ruin of an empty socket, and the other rolling crazy in her head. She is dressed in rags long since lacking in color or texture. As you enter, her crazy eye stops its revolutions and focuses on you with a piercing stare. On the floor before the fire is an ornate game board of ivory and ebony squares, the pieces realistically carved as golden bugbears.

The old woman's mouth opens with a creak of her jaws, and she speaks in a voice dry as stone, "Ah, I see a new batch of fools have dared my caves, no doubt seeking their reward. Know ye that what you have suffered so far in life is naught in comparison to what you may suffer still, for I see your future and past, aye, even your present, and I see foul things and great dreams, wonders and terrors, pain and joy—but mostly pain. These are my laws—the laws of my house. You may speak to none of what you have seen and done; no skald may breathe through his lips songs of you, save that you journeyed into the cave of Old Meg and came out. Nor may you tell of what boon you or your companions have sought and gained, just that these things have happened, and that Old Meg bade it so. Do you accept my challenge, a test of will and wits?"

Old Meg's Challenge

The task is simple; the heroes must defeat Old Meg in a game of hnefatafl, a popular board game of the Northlands. There is a catch, however, the PCs must play by her rules, and they themselves are the pieces. Pieces that are captured in the game are dead and gone, their souls taken by Old Meg for her own use. Should they win, the PCs are free to each ask of her a boon, and they will receive it, even so far as to know the exact means in clear words of how to slay the wight of Sven Oakenfist. Meg accepts no dickering or counter-offers. The PCs may either accept her challenge or leave the cave. To do otherwise is to court a date with the ice spears in Area C2.

Immediately upon accepting the challenge, one of the PCs is chosen to be the game player (the PCs have time to debate the choice). The rest find themselves shrunken down and filling the role of the playing pieces on the board. The game player directs the movement of his pieces, the piece itself decides what action to take during its move. The pieces can shout back suggestions or otherwise communicate with the game player. The PCs are the defenders in this game, and can choose to be any of the designated Players' Pieces on the board. Those not chosen stay as bugbears, as do all of Old Meg's pieces—all except the King which takes on the likeness of a Northlands jarl, one that very much resembles Anud Cursespear.

BUGBEAR XP 600

CR2

hp 16 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Bugbear")

The game is played on board nine by nine squares. The object is to move the king to any corner of the board. The player PC goes first as the defender and moves one of the PC pieces. Each piece may move a number of squares up to his normal speed divided by five a turn, but can only move in a straight line (lateral only—no diagonals). It cannot pass through an occupied space. After the PC piece goes, Meg moves a bugbear piece in the same manner attempting to kill the PC pieces and block access to the corners. She does not attack the king but does try to block his progress. After the PC player and Meg have each gone, the PC player can move the King piece one square in any direction including diagonal.

If a piece (other than the King) starts or ends a turn adjacent to another piece, it may make a standard action to attack (and if attacked the target may make a single attack in return). Moving pieces go first in these actions, and normal initiative is ignored as are attacks of opportunity from movement.

Old Meg will interrupt the game six times—three times to ask a riddle and three times to cheat. After one of her turns she will ask a riddle, and if the game player PC gives a correct answer, he gets to take two turns (with a PC piece, not with the King). If the answer is wrong or he fails to answer, Old Meg takes an extra turn. When she cheats, she does so after the game player's turn, causally bumping the table. This allows her to reposition 1d4 pieces up to three squares away.

Old Meg's Riddles

1. "A wonder on the wave, water becomes bone." *Answer: ice on a lake or sea*

2. "I'm told a certain thing grows in the corner, rises and expands, and throws up a protective crust. A proud wife carries off this boneless wonder and the daughter of a king covers that swollen thing with a cloth." *Answer: bread*

3. "What lives on its own substance and dies as it devours itself?" *Answer: a candle*

If they win, the PCs may ask Old Meg for one boon each. If they lose, slain PCs become permanent pieces on her board, replacing an equal number of bugbears and the player is given the option of leaving or joining the heroes of old upon the ice spears.

The boon takes the form of either the answer to a question, or the gift of an item from one of the fallen heroes. If asked about the death curse and how to lift it, Old Meg answers:

"A person's wyrd is not carved in stone, despite what my aunts may say. A brave man may face it and unravel the skeins that hold his life together. To do this is far more risky than even the gods themselves will chance. Breaking the curse may require the peasant boy to lose himself, and yet save all."

Once their business with Old Meg is complete, the party finds themselves standing on the ledge at the caves' entrance. No matter how much time they actually spent in the caves, only a few hours have passed. If they violate any of Old Meg's rules after leaving, they find themselves back on the hnefatafl board and must win their way to freedom again. This could result in a failure of the adventure, but it's not like they weren't warned.



The Barrow of Sven Oakenfist

The Barrow of Sven Oakenfist lies only 10 miles north of Jarl Anud's Hall, on the coast of the Kulding Bay, where he was laid to rest by his surviving Ulfhendar after his death at the hands of the boy, Anud. Anud chose the site of the barrow to build his own fortune so that he might prosper by virtue of his victory over the famed reaver.

It is possible that the PCs might choose to head straight here, but try to discourage this. Each visit with one of the Daughters of Skuld weakens the wight—visiting all three making him but a shadow of his former self. However, heading straight to him will likely prove fatal for all involved.

Before heading to the barrow, the PCs may wish to return to Jarl Anud's Hall to recruit him for the raid based on the wyrds laid out by the Daughters of Skuld. If so, he is reluctant to go, and his sons and retainers cry out strongly against such an action, but a DC 20 Diplomacy check can convince the old man to gird himself and take up the spear with which he first slew Sven Oakenfist to join them. If the PCs give a rousing tale of their adventures and appeal to Anud's older, nobler self, award a +5 bonus to the Diplomacy check. Even if they fail at the check, if they succeed at DC 10 at least, he loans them his legendary spear that hangs above his hearth as a trophy. It is a much-worn shortspear of no special aspect, though it will prove to be quite effective against Sven Oakenfist.

If Anud accompanies the PCs, then a retinue of 20 huscarls and 4 of his sons accompany the short expedition. They remain outside the barrow at Anud's orders, though Anud himself will accompany the PCs inside only after they have cleared each room until they reach Area B4. He will accompany them into that chamber.

JARL ANUD CURSEPSEAR CR 7 XP 3,200 hp 64 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide "Viking")

BI. Entrance

The barrow lies like the slumping corpse of a dragon, sprawled just above the shore. Its earthen sides are eroded and pitted from its long years of exposure to harsh North Sea storms. An opening in its north face closed with a large boulder over 10 feet in diameter. The surface is covered in carved runes faded with the years.

The boulder at the entrance weighs five tons and can only be moved by magic or if sufficient strength is used to drag it away. Draft animals can be roped to the stone in order to help with this. The surface of the stone is covered in runes describing the life and deeds of Sven Oakenfist, as well as warning away any who would trespass or disturb the tomb.

Anyone who reads Norsk can make out the faded inscription with a DC 10 Perception check. It says:

"Within lies Sven Oakenfist, the Jarl of the Seas; the Ravager of the Cymu Islands; Terror of Gatland, Estenfird, Hordaland, and the Vale; Slayer of a Thousand Men; He Who Broke the Back of Kathisizk the Great Serpent of the Sea; Reaver of the Dnipir River; and the Bloody-Handed Horror of Seageasterland.

"Let all who come here now bow in gratitude that He does not rise from this tomb and slay you for the temerity to gaze upon his resting place. Enter and you will surely die a death unfitting for a warrior, screaming as a woman and begging for mercy that will not come."

B2. Tomb of the Thralls (CR 6)

This chamber is roughly oval in shape. Directly across from the boulder-blocked entrance lies a post and lintel of carved wood framing an exit that leads further into the tomb. The wood is carved with scenes of common work: mending, making, reaping, sowing, and such things as thralls do across the Northlands. Along both walls are stacks of baskets and wooden boxes containing a wealth of well-made common goods: hoes, spades, baskets of food, and other household items. In the center of the room are six human corpses, each a man in his prime who shows signs of having been strangled to death. They are dressed in the simple tunics of thralls, and each bears a brand of a runic 'S' imposed on an 'O' on his arms showing him to belong to Sven Oakenfist.

The first chamber is where the thralls most loyal to the Jarl of the Seas brought the grave goods that would see him through a long afterlife. Their reward was to be strangled and placed here, perpetual servants of a madman.

Creatures: The thralls animate as **6 ghouls** and attack any who disturb the goods or cross at least halfway through the chamber. As they rise from where they fell, the thralls set up a piteous moaning—this fate was not one they choose, and they are compelled to fight against their own wishes. However, years spent serving Oakenfist and his huscarls has driven them mad with hunger and a lust for vengeance. The thralls attack with insane vigor, hoping to either vent their wrath at the cruel twists of fate or die and hopefully pass on to a better afterlife.

CR1

GHOULS (6) XP 400

hp 13 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Ghoul")

Treasure: Although they have been sitting in a dank earthen tomb for decades, the same magic that animates the tomb's inhabitants also preserves the grave goods. Looting tomb goods is not an honorable act—even the tomb of a murderous madman—and the PCs should think twice about removing any of the grave goods here. If they choose to be so base, there is 3,000gp in goods, weighing in total 250 pounds.

B3. Ship Barrow (CR 8)

Beyond the post-and-lintel doorway is an expansive stone and wood dome, 30 feet high, under which lies the rotten remains of a large dragon-headed longship. The ship has had its mast taken down and stowed, its oars neatly shipped, and its rigging coiled in the bow and stern. The dragonhead is carved in a fierce roar and covered in gems and sheets of pounded gold. In all aspects the ship looks ready to launch out of the tomb and resume its wave of terror and death.

Within this chamber lay the remains of Sven Oakenfist's last ship, the *Terror of the North*. Beyond the ship barrow and only visible from the deck of the ship or when one has one has passed halfway through the hall

THE BARROW OF SVEN OAKENFIST



THE BARROW OF SVEN OAKENFIST

is a pair of 10-foot-high doors of bound oak planks. These doors are richly carved and bear the same warning inscription as the boulder at Area B1.

Creatures: Manning the ship are the common crew of the Jarl of the Seas, a group of wretched men caught in the death curse and fated to continue their existence long after they should have passed to whatever afterlife awaited them. These men exist now as **10 draugr**. They are armed and clad as common seafarers, and despite lying in a tomb for thirty years they are still sodden by a lifetime at sea.

DRAUGR (10) XP 600

CR 2

hp 19 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary 2 "Draugr")

Treasure: The gold plating and gems that decorate the ship's figurehead are worth a total of 2,800 gp if the PCs are so crass as to loot them from the tomb.

B4. The Death Hall of Sven Oakenfist (CR varies)

This wooden ceiling of this room likewise rises 30 feet above the dirt floor. It is decorated much as one would expect a jarl's hall to be, with beautifully carved goods, silver, gold, and jewels but the once impressive furniture has been smashed, silver and goldcoated items bent and broken, and priceless tapestries of silk torn to shreds. Even the carvings on the wooden posts that hold up the roof have been defaced. Upon a mound of rubble in the center of the hall sits a rude throne surrounded by nearly a dozen armored warriors from beyond the grave. The figure upon the throne is the familiar huge and misshapen, semi-transparent shade of a mighty warrior, clad in ghostly mail and carrying a spectral greataxe. Its eyes are red and its hair flows in long braids, floating on a wind that no other creature can feel.

As you enter, the thing rises to its feet and says, "Hark, for I see you have come to seek your own wyrd, that to die at the hands of the Jarl of the Sea and his loyal huscarls. Have then, and let the battle-dew fly from our thirsty steel serpents! Commence the slaughter my brothers, and let none escape!"

This chamber was built to be fit as a resting place for a jarl, or at least it once was. Six decades of simmering rage has boiled over time and again, driving the wight of Sven Oakenfist to vent his frustration on his own grave goods and hall. The place is now a jumbled wreck that causes the entire floor to be littered with rich refuse and considered difficult terrain.

Creatures: The **Wight of Sven Oakenfist** is surrounded by his closest warriors, now **10 skeletal huscarls** for an undead shadow of a jarl. The huscarls are clad as they were in life with chain hauberks and relic longswords. The flesh has long rotted from their bodies, and their minds have slipped away under the strain of undeath, leaving little more than a fierce obedience. Jarl Oakenfist, lacks much of the power the man had in life and can no longer change shape or call down thunder and lightning (if the legends of the living Jarl of the Seas are to be believed). However, if he has not been reduced by visits to the Daughters of Skuld, he remains a more-than-formidable foe (see sidebox). The ghostly axe and mail are merely a part of his manifestation and do not come into play.

SKELETAL HUSCARLS (10) CR 2 XP 600

hp 17 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Skeletal Champion")

Tactics: With this the wight and his huscarls charge into combat. Sven Oakenfist targets the most impressive looking warrior in the party or, if Jarl Anud is along, then him. The fight will continue until one side is slain or the intruders have been routed, for the magic of the curse prevents the

Which Wight?

The form that the Wight of Sven Oakenfist takes depends upon how many of the Daughters of Skuld that the PCs have successfully visited. Each time the PCs visits one of the Daughters and successfully gains the information she has to give, the wyrds of Jarl Anud and the wight are twisted just a bit, reducing the wight in power. Each Daughter visited cumulatively changes the wight into a weaker form as described below. If the PCs get in over their heads, you might allow them to retreat after only killing one or two. However, if they persist in tempting their wyrds against a clearly superior foe, the Norns always have opportunity to snip another bit of string.

No Daughters Visited: The wight is at near full power and is much as he was previously seen at Jarl Anud's Hall and is a terrible foe for even heroes of legend.

THE WIGHT OF SVEN OAKENFISTCR 17XP 102,400CR 17

hp 270 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary 2 "Winterwight")

One Daughter Visited: Though much reduced, the wight is still full of hate and fueled by the burning desire for revenge and remains an implacable foe.

THE WIGHT OF SVEN OAKENFIST CR 11 XP 12,800

hp 82 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Devourer")

Two Daughters Visited: The wight has lost its connection to the tangible world and can only interact with it as a shadowy reflection of what it once was.

THE WIGHT OF SVEN OAKENFIST CR 7 XP 3,200

hp 52 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Spectre")

Three Daughters Visited: The wight is a mere whisper of his former self, now more full of bitterness and self loathing than anything else and is at his most vulnerable.

THE WIGHT OF SVEN OAKENFIST	CR 6
XP 2,400	
hp 76 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary 2 "Reven	ant'')

wight or his followers from leaving the tomb save to issue his threat and carry it out.

Development: The huscarls can be put to rest through normal means, but the wight of Sven Oakenfist is a different matter. He suffers wounds as would any other creature, but will not be destroyed by them. If reduced to 0 hp he collapses, and then rises at full strength 1d4 rounds later. To lay him to rest permanently one must fulfill or defeat the conditions of the wyrd. The spear used to slay the mortal Sven Oakenfist ignores the wight's incorporeal traits or damage reduction and if used has a 25% chance of permanently slaving the wight on a successful hit. If Jarl Anud wields the spear, the chance increases to 75%, or 100% if he strikes the wight while it is flat-footed. These conditions reenact the original cause of the curse, and thus defeat it. Alternately, Jarl Anud may sacrifice himself to the wight, thus fulfilling the curse and ending it (and also slaving the wight of Sven Oakenfist). Once the Jarl of the Seas is slain, all his followers de-animate and the tomb begins to crumble, collapsing entirely in 2d12 rounds. If the PCs hurry, they have time to each grab 1d6x100 gp worth of valuables from among the debris on the floor per round, but if they are still in the mound when it collapses they are instantly killed and buried under tons of earth and rubble.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs should be able to defeat Sven Oakenfist with the aid of the information gained from the Daughters of Skuld. Should they fail, they will likely be dead, and their story has come to a heroic end. Jarl Arnud, his household, and all his land will be laid waste on the night of the Feast of Freyja, a horror that is best left undescribed. Skalds will sing tales of the doomed Jarl and of the heroes who undertook to save him. If any PC should turn coward and run from the barrow, his tale will be one of the ruin of a man's honor and the betrayal of friends, family, and the bonds of hospitality.

Should the PCs succeed, the Jarl (if he survives) or his heirs will reward them well, granting them a place at his table for as long as the care. Any PC who wishes to give up his adventuring life may take their place amongst the Jarl's huscarls, or if they so desire, marry one of the Jarl's sons or daughters (of which he has plenty). For those heroes who wish to continue their journeys, the Jarl will gift them, as a rightful and just ringgiver should, with the following treasures:

To the greatest warrior in the party, Jarl Anud gives a *frostbrand* that he received from the legendary warrior Hengrid Donarsdottir. To the slyest of the PCs, he presents a rust-colored *bag of tricks* that he took from a cult of Loki two decades ago. To the most pious of the PCs he awards a *pearl of the sirens* that was given to the Jarl by a sea nymph. To the most nimble he presents an *improved ring of swimming* that he won in a dice game from another jarl. To the wisest PC he presents a *minor ring of spell storing* gained as plunder from a Southern monastery. Finally to the bravest he presents a *dragon-slaying arrow* that he received as a reward from a Wyld Fey prince and never has found the time to use. He also gives a fine suit of chainmail he discovered while aviking in the Cymu Islands (*elven chain*) to any PC that showed personal valor in protecting the old chieftain from harm in battle against the wight. It is possible that a PC will receive more than one of these gifts, but each should receive at least one of them.

In the spring, Jarl Anud will present the party with his greatest gift, his best and longest held possession, *The Tusked Whale*, a fully outfitted longship complete with crew of 20 and provisions for 90 days at sea. The crews are of the highest caliber, and are from the Jarl's household.

NORTHLANDS CREW (20) XP 200 hp 11 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide "Shipmate"*)

*Armed with handaxe, short sword, and javelins rather than scimitar, dagger, and composite longbow.

Appendix: Random Encounters

Sea Voyages Random Encounters

Roll on the table below daily when conducting sea voyages in the North Sea and Great Ocean Uthaf.

- d12 Encounter
- 1–8 No Encounter
- 9 Storm
- 10 Dragon Turtle
- 11 Dire Shark
- 12 Giant Octopus

Storm: A fierce winter storm blows in, causing damage to the ship and leaving everyone on board fatigued. Anything not waterproofed is soaked and possibly ruined (50% chance if not suited for the elements). The ship needs to be put ashore for repairs (requiring 1 day) and begins to take on water, sinking in 1d4 days.

Dragon Turtle: This mighty beast is spotted in the distance ahead of the ship. Sailing around will take 1d2 days, approaching will lead to an attack by the large and aggressive dragon turtle.

DRAGON TURTLE

XP 6,400

CR 9

hp 126 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Dragon Turtle")

Dire Shark: Hungry and agitated by the frequent winter storms, the shark will attack the ship, hoping to grab a tasty morsel or two before swimming away. If the party played in *NS1: Vengeance of the* Long **Serpent** and fought but did not kill the dire shark in that adventure, it is the same one and is out for vengeance, attacking until slain or the ship is sunk.

DIRE SHARK

XP 6,400

CR 9

CR8

hp 112 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Shark, Dire")

Giant Octopus: The passing ship above has piqued the interest of this giant octopus, causing her to come up from below and probe it with her tentacles. If she gets food, she keeps attacking, if severely injured she sinks back below to nurse her wounds.

GIANT OCTOPUS

XP 4,800

hp 90 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Octopus, Giant")

Seageasterland Random Encounters

Roll daily on the following table when the PCs are ashore in the Seageasterland coast and away from the Northlander colonies. Encounters occur at a fair range (150 yards) as the forest is not thick and the plains beyond are open.

2d12 Encounter

- 2–16 No Encounter
- 17–20 Tribal
- 21 1d4–1 Ogres
- 22 1d3 Winter Wolves
- 23 1d2+1 Werebears
- 24 1d6 Hill Giants

Tribal: This is a group of Seagesters, the natives of this region. They are semi-nomadic and winter along the coast. The tribe consists of 1d12+8 warriors, a shaman, a chieftain, 3d10+5 women, 2d12+9 children, and 2d20+20 assorted livestock (mostly sheep and cattle). They are not generally aggressive but are very leery of Northlanders, having both enjoyed good trading and suffered horrific raids. Roll d10 to determine their initial reaction: 1–2 unfriendly, 3–8 indifferent, 9–10 friendly. Unfriendly Seagesters send the shaman, women, children, and livestock inland while the warriors and chieftain form a defensive force to cover their retreat. An indifferent reaction results in the warriors and chieftain moving to meet any intruders away from the village after which they will open negotiations to determine their next course of action. Friendly Seagesters welcome the party into their village in the hopes of conducting some mid-winter trade.

SEAGESTER WARRIORS (1d12+8) CR 1 XP 400

hp 25 (Pathfinder Roleplaying GameMastery Guide "Cannibal")

SEAGESTER SHAMAN

XP 1,600

CR 5

hp 31 (Pathfinder Roleplaying GameMastery Guide "Shaman")

SEAGESTER CHIEFTAIN

XP 9,600

CR 10

CR 3

hp 102 (Pathfinder Roleplaying GameMastery Guide "Chieftain")

Ogres: These thuggish brutes are looking for some loot and some action and will attack a party that appears weaker than themselves. Failing that, they lurk in the area in the hopes of grabbing someone who strays from the main group or is in some other way vulnerable. They are cowards, and will flee if hard pressed.

OGRES (1d4-1) XP 800

hp 30 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Ogre")

Winter Wolves: These beasts are driven mad with hunger and bloodlust, attacking the party at first sight.

24

APPENDIX: RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

CR 5

CR4

CR 7

WINTER WOLVES (1d3) XP 1,600

hp 57 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Worg, Winter Wolf")

Werebears: This small family of lycanthropes will approach the party to trade amber and pelts (300 gp value) for manufactured goods. They stay in human form as much as possible, only changing if attacked or enraged. Their tempers are short, so attempts to cheat or deceive them will be met with violence.

WEREBEARS (1d2+1)

XP 1,200 hp 34 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary 2 "Lycanthrope, Werebear")

Hill Giants: These giants are out looking for trouble, and have found it. Upon spotting the party they move rapidly towards them and attack, hoping to kill and eat them all. They are too dumb to not fight to the death.

HILL GIANTS (1d6) XP 3,200

hp 85 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Giant, Hill")

The Dnipir Delta

Use the following table for when the PCs are exploring the Dnipir Delta. Encounters often occur in the swamp when one party becomes aware of the other and either evades or lays an ambush, and thus make Perception and Stealth checks for both parties before revealing the encounter. Unless otherwise noted these critters are out to kill and eat the party and will fight until reduced to single-digit hit points, then flee. Roll twice a day for encounters while in the delta, once in daylight hours and once at night.

2d8 Encounter

- 2 8No Encounter
- 9 1d4+1 Giant Crabs
- 10 1d4+4 Giant Wasps
- 11 Giant Flytrap
- 12 Green Hag
- 13 3d4 Lizardfolk
- 14 1d2 Shambling Mounds
- 15 Giant Slug
- 1d2 Will-O'-Wisps 16

Giant Crabs: This scuttle of crabs swarms up onto a ship or out of the swamp and into camp.

GIANT CRABS (1d4+1)

XP 600 **hp** 19 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Crab, Giant")

Giant Wasps: These wasps are looking to capture some meat to take back to the nest for their young

GIANT WASPS (1d4+4)

XP 800

hp 34 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Wasp, Giant")

Giant Flytrap: This plant just waits, knowing that a ship or foolish adventurers will soon come by.

GIANT FLYTRAP XP 9,600

hp 34 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Flytrap, Giant")

Green Hag: Eratha the Hag hates sharing her swamp with Mother Hengrid and tries to entice the party to aid her in causing harm to the Daughter of Skuld. Failing that, she tries to kill them, but if reduced to half her hit points she yields and offers to exchange the location of Mother

Hengrid's cottage for her life. She will hold to her word in this regard, and the PCs will find the cottage within 1d4 hours.

GREEN HAG

XP 1.600

hp 58 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Green Hag")

Lizardfolk: These lizardfolk are out looking for meat-preferably human meat. They attack and fight until two-thirds of their number are killed. If any escape, they return the next night with twice as many to gain their revenge and fight to the death. They do not attack if the PCs make it to Mother Hengrid's by the next night.

LIZARDFOLK (3d4) XP 400

hp 11 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Lizardfolk")

Shambling Mound: This mound of mobile plant matter shambles over to eat the party, unconcerned with death-it will simply sprout again in the spring.

SHAMBLING MOUND

XP 2,400

hp 67 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Shambling Mound")

Giant Slug: Yet another creature is looking for a meal, and finds adventurers tasty.

GIANT SLUG XP 4,800

hp 102 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Slug, Giant")

Will-O'-Wisps: These fey entities attempt to lead one of more PCs away from the party and into quicksand to drown and then feeding on them.

WILL-O'-WISPS (1d2) XP 2,400

hp 40 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Bestiary "Will-O'-Wisp")

CR 5

CR 1

CR 6

CR 8

CR 6

CR 3

CR 10

CR 2

New Monster

Northlands Aurochs

This massive ox is as tall as a man at the shoulders. Its coat is black with a pale stripe down its spine. Great lyre-shaped horns sweep forward from its bony brow.

NORTHLANDS AUROCHS (DIRE KINE)CR 7XP 3,200NN Huge animalInit +0; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +20

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20 (+12 natural, -2 size) hp 105 (10d8+50 plus 10) Fort +14: Ref +7: Will +4

Speed 40 ft. **Melee** gore +16 (2d8+15) **Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. **Special Attacks** powerful charge (gore +18, 4d8+15), stampede, trample (2d8+15, DC 25)

Str 30, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7 Base Atk +7; CMB +19; CMD 29 (33 vs. trip) Feats Endurance, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (gore) Skills Perception +20

Environment Northlands forests and plains **Organization** solitary, pair, or herd (3–12) **Treasure** none

Stampede (Ex) A frightened herd of aurochs (3 or more)

flees as a group in a random direction (but always away from the perceived source of danger). They literally run over (as an overrun that does not provoke attacks of opportunity) anything of size Gargantuan or smaller that is in their path, but no CMB check is necessary, and the target cannot choose to let them pass without taking any damage. The stampede deals 5d6 points of damage for every two aurochs in the herd (rounded up). Any victims of the stampede can make a DC 25 Reflex save for half damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

These massive aurochs (singular and plural) are prehistoric cattle that once roamed the plains and forests of the world in vast herds but are now on the verge of extinction, being found only in the primeval forests and remote places of the Northlands where there horns are prized trophies of the hunt—though many a hunter has fallen beneath their spearlike horns and crushing hooves in the attempt. Massive beasts, these prehistoric aurochs have been used as symbols of fertility and strength for many cults down through the ages appearing in decoration from the crudest cave paintings to ornate temples. When captured they command a high price for use in the arenas of cosmopolitan regions, though they often take a heavy toll among the matadors who face them.

Northlands aurochs stand 6 feet or more high at the withers with their heads rising 2 feet above that. Their characteristic lyre-shaped horns extend upward another 2 feet. They grow up to 18 feet long and can weigh as much as 8,000 pounds. Males have a black coat with a pale stripe down the spine, and females and calves have a reddish coat.

A light load for a Northlands aurochs is up to 3,200 pounds; a medium load 3,201–6,400 pounds; and a heavy load 6,401–9,600 pounds. An aurochs can drag 48,000 pounds.



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