

NS 4

An adventure for 4 to 6 PCs
Levels 8 to 10



the NORTHLANDS SAGA

— Blood on the Snow —

By Kenneth Spencer



Swords
& Wizardry

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FROG GOD
GAMES

Credits

Author

Kenneth Spencer

Developers

Greg A. Vaughan

Producers

Bill Webb and Charles A. Wright

Editor

Aaron Zirkelbach and Dawn Fischer

S&W Rules Conversion

Aaron Zirkelbach

Layout and Graphic Design

Charles A. Wright

Front Cover Art

MKUltra Studios

Interior Art

Chris McFann

Cartography

Robert Altbauer

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 “Esten-fird!” Criss, and Timothy “In the Name of Thor!” Hall. Also thanks to our Friendly Local Game Store, Legends of Vincennes.

FROG GOD GAMES IS

CEO

Bill Webb

Creative Director: Swords & Wizardry

Matthew J. Finch

Creative Director: Pathfinder

Greg A. Vaughan

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Skeeter Green



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Blood on the Snow

Blood on the Snow is an adventure for the Swords & Wizardry Complete Roleplaying Game designed for a party of four to six characters of 8th to 10th level. Like all the Northlands Saga adventures, ***Blood on the Snow*** 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 be dropped into any campaign the GM chooses.

If played as part of the Northlands Saga the events of *Blood on the Snow* take place the same winter as *NS3: The Death Curse of Sven Oakenfist* but before the springtime events of *NS5: Raven Banners Over Gatland*.

the cult plans to spread terror and chaos throughout the land. But this is not their primary goal; rather it is merely a pleasant secondary effect. The true reason for the uprising is that the leaders of the cult have been ordered by their high priest to draw Donarsdottir into a trap inside the walls of Three Rivers as she attempts to defend the people of Estenfird, and there to capture her. Once in the Beast Cult's custody, she is to be taken off to the cult's secret lair at a mysterious prehistoric ring of standing stones, there to be sacrificed in a foul ritual that will pollute not just her, but her entire bloodline. Since Donar is one of the names for Thor, god of Thunder and Storms, this poses a threat not to just Estenfird, but to the Northlands, and possibly even the realms beyond.

Adventure Background

For years the heroic Hengrid Donarsdottir, Protector of Estenfird, has been a thorn in the side of the Beast Cult of Shibauroth, hunting them in the depths of the woods, on isolated farmsteads, and even in the streets of Three Rivers. Now the Beast Cult has commenced with a grand uprising the likes of which has never been seen before in Estenfird. Calling upon all their hidden cells of worshipers and the beast-things that they revere,

Adventure Summary

The heroes must not only respond to the Beast Cult's rampages throughout Estenfirð, but also get to Three Rivers in time to try and save it from the horde that has amassed against it. There they discover that Hengrid Donarsdóttir has been captured and learn something of the fate that is in store for both her and the Thunder God. Following the trail of the



Beast Cult, the PCs must rescue the Protector of Estenfird from the claws and fangs of the cult before she can be used to fulfill the fell rite that may very well slay Thor and upset the balance of power in Asgard and its sway over the entire Northlands.

Adventure Hooks

There are several ways to get the party involved in the plot of *Blood on the Snow*. They should begin either in Estenfird or one of the other Northlands countries. It is the middle of winter, so likely they are holed up in some jarl's hall or village waiting out the boring and lean months of winter for the arrival of the spring thaw when they can once again take up the sword and shield in the quest for adventure and glory. If they are already in Estenfird, they should be in a location other than Three Rivers—preferably Vöss or Ulmer. If you'd like to start them in some other location within Estenfird, you will need to modify the adventure accordingly.

Outside of Estenfird, the party's first notice of the adventure will be when rumors of a bloody uprising of wildmen and beasts in Estenfird arrives on one of the infrequent trade ships that brave the wintry waters of the North Sea. Word has it that these inhuman raiders have appeared from the wild and have been laying bloody waste to all the farms and steadings that they come across. The larger settlements have not, as yet, been threatened, but communications and travel is slow in the winter and

Estenfird has always been lightly populated. It will be especially difficult to get the hirthmenn assembled and deployed to meet these attacks in an organized fashion due to the weather and the threat of their attacks on isolated settlements in absence of their warriors rallied for the hirth. In this case, the traders carry word that the Althing of Estenfird is offering good silver and the chance for lands and riches to warriors who are willing to come to their aid at this time of need. This will require a sea voyage, which you can assume to be successful or build encounters on the winter-gray seas as you see fit.

If the PCs are already in Estenfird, then they hear rumors of the wildmen attacks on the outlying farms and steadings much sooner. However, it takes several weeks before the full threat is realized and the Things begin calling up the hirthmenn to meet this threat. The PCs may be citizens of Estenfirs and thus members of the hirth or they may be visitors who are given the same offer as is being sent abroad—aid Estenfird and receive silver and lands. In this case, however, rather than begin mobilized with the hirthmenn, due to their experience and skills they are sent abroad as troubleshooters to assist in the rallying of the hirth and the defense of the people in whatever way they best can.

Whether in Estenfird or not, if the PCs are of a less-mercenary bent, they can likewise, be called through various means by a higher power: godi of Thor or Odin may receive visions directing them towards Estenfird, a wise woman or woods-witch may seek out the party or their patron and give forth a dire prophecy, or PC clerics, oracles, and paladins may receive visions directing them to Three Rivers.

Chapter One: Estinfird

Estenfird

Alignment: N

Capital: Three Rivers (1,640)

Notable Settlements: Bräcke (45), Hörby (165), Nieuburg (156), Ørsa (15), Risør (867), Struer (145), Úlmer (134), Vöss (1,367), various small holdings no larger than a village.

Ruler: Althing of Estenfird and local Things

Government: Democratic

Population: 22,300 (22,200 Northlander, 100 Nuk)

Humanoid: dwarves (few)

Monstrous: giants, drakes, wyverns (Wyrn Fang Mountains); barghests, worgs, fey, megafauna (woodlands); trolls, ice trolls (Troll Axe Pass); yeti, remorhaz (Bloody Pass)

Languages: Nørsk, Common, Dwarven, Nuk

Religion: Aesir, Vanir, Ginnvaettir

Resources: timber, furs, foodstuffs, copper

As one of the youngest Northlander colonies, Estenfird is a wild land on the frontier of Northlander civilization (and considering how the rest of the world sees the Northlands to be the frontier, Estenfird is a frontier indeed). Less a nation than a quarrelsome collection of independent-minded settlers, Estenfird does not have a king or jarl, leaving the local Things and the Althing of Estenfird as the only semblance of government in the whole region. Estenfird ranges from the tip of the Skagerrak Peninsula northeast along the Ice River as far as Nieuburg. Few settlers have pushed beyond Nieuburg, as the climate becomes far too cold for agriculture and the Nuk, although not particularly violent, have made it known that they do not appreciate people encroaching upon their lands. Many brave words are said in the halls of Estenfird about pushing the Nuk out of the way, but so far none have dared to confront that enigmatic and mystical race.

The average Estenfirder is a rugged and forthright person, inured to hard work and dangerous environments. They are often stern and taciturn, slow to speak but quick to act. Few Estenfirders go a-viking as they have plenty of adventure at home. In the southern portions of the region, along the many rivers and on the coast, agriculture takes precedence, and many Estenfirders are farmers or herdsman. The rivers of Estenfird are rich in fish, but the surrounding oceans yield only a poor catch, making this region one of the few that sees little in the way of maritime activity. Inland and in the mountains, fur trapping and logging are the primary industries. In the spring fur trappers and hunters come down the rivers and gather at Three Rivers and Nieuburg to sell their season's catch. In the fall the loggers come down in huge flotillas of cut trees, selling lumber to merchants from throughout the Northlands and beyond.

Estenfirders are notorious for their independent ways, a factor that causes worry in the more dictatorial jarls of other regions. There are no jarls in Estenfird, and to even suggest such a thing is to invite harsh words if not a blood duel of holmgang between the hazel posts. Many who come to the region do so to escape crimes or feuds or to live as free men and women beholden to and reliant upon none. The local Things meet once a year, drawing in people from the scattered farmsteads and logging camps. The Things of Estenfird are unique in that they do not have a landholding requirement, there is so much unclaimed land in the region that all a person has to do to become a landholder is to point at a place and say 'mine'. Instead, to speak or vote in the Thing a person must be free and have the sponsorship of anyone who has spoken before at that Thing. The Althing of Estenfird works in a similar way, only the requirement is that the sponsor has already spoken or voted in the regional Althing.

Vöss

N small town

Government council (Thing of Vöss)

Population 1,367 (1,009 humans [Northlanders]; 302 humans [Southlanders], 56 other)

Notable NPCs

Reginald Shapswith, Southlander merchant (N human)

Purchase Limit 5,500gp; **Spellcasting** 4th

Note: All manufactured goods and imported items cost 150% of list price.

As the main port of Estenfird, Vöss is rapidly growing from a small fishing hamlet into a town whose size may one day surpass Three Rivers. The local Thing has even voted to construct a breakwater in the Southlander fashion in order to encourage larger merchant ships from those warm and soft (but rich) kingdoms. The people of Vöss are warm and inviting, knowing that only the trade of merchants, whalers, and lumbermen provide the wealth their community needs in order to grow.

Úlmer

N village

Government council (Thing of Úlmer)

Population 134 (134 humans [Northlanders])

Notable NPCs:

Black Berg (N human ranger 2)

Purchase Limit 2,500gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd

Note All manufactured goods and imported cost 150% of list price.

This small fishing village enjoys a deep fjord that affords it a protected harbor. Although not as popular as Vöss as a landing point, Úlmer does see some traffic. Most of these are adventurers and other heroes, and the village has become somewhat cosmopolitan in its outlook, assuming the strangers in question have plenty of money and don't cause trouble.

Estenfird suffers from several threats, in addition to the long, cold winters and general ruggedness of the land. Giants are common in the Wyrn Fang Mountains, as are drakes and wyverns. The general lawlessness of the region promotes independence, but also encourages attacks by outlaws, bandits, and even Northlanders from other regions a-viking along the shore. The gravest threat to date has been the growth of the Beast Cult of Shibaurth, foul worshippers of a demon god dedicated to bestial violence and mayhem.

Adventuring in Estenfird

The PCs most likely begin their adventures against the Beast Cult in Estenfird in the town of Vöss, a small port at the mouth of the Ice River where the North Sea meets the Great Ocean Úthaf. It is also possible that they made port in Úlmer, and if so modify the adventure accordingly. The adventure assumes that by the time that the PCs have reached one of

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these towns, the Beast Cult's uprising is already well underway, perhaps even weeks old. Progress of the uprising is slow due to the winter snows, but likewise news travels slowly so that only now are reports of the full extent of the slaughter and depravity in the countryside reaching ears in the major settlements. If the PCs were already in Estenfiro, then assume that they responded to the summons of the hirth in Vöss, and the amount of time it took them to be notified, prepare their gear, and make the journey through the snow-covered forests has resulted in them arriving at the same time as if they had sailed from another part of the Northlands.

Upon arriving in Vöss, the PCs are quickly apprised of the situation in Estenfiro (as much as is known anyway) by the commanders of the hirth. They explain that attacks by wild animals and wilder humanoids apparently sprang up simultaneously in the wilds all around Estenfiro, attacking outlying farms and small steadings and slaughtering the inhabitants. Survivors are few and those that have been found report the attackers were crazed wildmen that seemed to want nothing more than to sate their bloodlust. How they have managed to get the forest beasts to join them in the raids is unknown. Though their advance has been slowed by the winter weather, it has become clear that the raiders are slowly converging on Three Rivers.

Hengrid Donarsdottir, Hero and Protector of Estenfiro, has traveled to the capital to coordinate the defenses against the expected attack. The hirth of Estenfiro are being gathered, but only slowly due to the weather. Most of those around Three Rivers have arrived, but the outlying settlements such as Vöss and Struer still have hirthmenn trickling in as news slowly spreads throughout the country and have not yet been able to march to the capital's assistance. Since these outlying hirths represent a significant portion of Estenfiro's fighting force, if reinforcements do not reach Three Rivers before the wildman horde, it is feared that the city will be lost. As a result, the PCs are requested (or ordered if hirthmenn) to travel up

the Ice River to Three Rivers as an advance scouting force to not only cause what damage they can to the marauding raiders but to also gather as many hirthmenn as they can to join them in their march to relieve Three Rivers. Though at the PCs' levels, they could likely teleport directly to Three Rivers, assume either that they have never been there and the risk would, therefore, be too great or that their duties to the hirth require that they gather hirthmenn as they go so that a larger force could prevent the city from falling to invaders whereas a smaller force might fail to have sufficient numbers to do so. If they prove intractable in attempting such a tactic, however, then the ritual already begun by the Beast Cult has created sufficient magical interference in central Estenfiro to prevent any such magic from functioning beyond a mile or two.

Though they are asked to depart immediately, the PCs will have the opportunity to equip themselves and gather appropriate cold weather gear (if they do not already have it). They can also spend the evening asking around town for additional information. Roll once on the following table for each PC, if the same entry is rolled by different players, they learn the same information.

Rumor Table

Roll	Result
1-3	The wildmen attacking the outlying steadings are accompanied by beasts—both natural and unnatural. No one knows how they control these creatures.
4-6	The wildmen seem to have come from everywhere at once, as if they had been gathering and lying in wait for months to await some prearranged moment.

- 7-8 The wildmen are crude and primitive, relying more on tooth and claw in their attacks than armor and weapons. In fact they use few tools other than fire—fire they use a lot as they burn halls and farms whether inhabitants are inside or not.
- 9-10 The wildmen do not appear to be seeking plunder. They attack suddenly, rape and kill with a bloodthirsty fervor, burn the homes of their victims, and then move on to seek their next victim. They do not pause long enough even to search the thatch of the cottages they burn to see if the inhabitants have hidden their silver within. Truly they are animals in human form.
- 11 The wildmen raiders wear strange runes tattooed or seared into their flesh. Sometimes these runes seem to glow with an inner light or spark with fury when the wildmen are in their battlerage.
- 12 The wildmen are not mere brutes. They are dumb like a fox, and there is some method to their madness. See how they gradually converge on Three Rivers allowing more reinforcements arrive? It is almost as if they are waiting for something. There's more to their plan than just random slaughter, I'll wager.
- 13-15 Hengrid Donarsdottir is said to be the offspring of a deity and human mother, which explains her thunderous temper and her unbelievable battle frenzy.
- 16-17 Donar is another name for Thor, God of Thunder and Storms.
- 18 The runes worn by the wildmen are symbols of the Beast Cult of Shibauroth, one of the Ginnvaettir—demons of ancient times.
- 19 The Beast Cult of Shibauroth has stumbled upon an ancient ritual that can steal the power from a victim's entire bloodline.
- 20 The Beast Cult of Shibauroth intends to use the Daughter of Storm and Thunder in a fell ritual to usurp the power of Thor himself. Woe unto the Northlands if the Thunderer falls under the sway of the Beast Cult.

Gathering the Hirth

Throughout the adventure, the PCs will have the opportunity to aid or interact with the people of Estenfird. These folk should be role-played as independent but a bit provincial; the common view of them throughout the Northlands is that Estenfirders are a bit uncivilized and not especially bright. In truth, they are as civilized as any other man, and as intelligent as well, so don't overplay the stereotype too much.

The PCs' goal in the first part of the adventure is to convince the warriors they encounter to assemble for the hirth and join them in the march of Estenfird. They are generally reluctant to do so as they know that the attacks have been occurring all over Estenfird and targeting small, outlying settlements especially. They fear that if they leave their women and children unprotected, the wildmen will attack in their absence and slaughter their families. Hirthmenn who are raised are assumed to have the equipment and provisions necessary to take them to Three Rivers, so the PCs do not need to worry about providing such necessities. Their main concern is simply convincing the hirthmenn to go along.

As a result of these activities, the PCs are likely to end up with a small army of followers as they head to Three Rivers. For the most part these NPCs will not take an active role in the adventure; this is a story about the PCs and not one about a huge army of stragglers and followers. Keep in mind that Estenfirders are unused to taking orders from anyone and will balk at a group of adventurers, especially foreign or non-human ones, barking commands. When NPCs, especially in abundance, are involved in the same combat as the PCs, you do not need to roll out their attacks, track their hit points, or perform any other 'management' of their stats unless you feel it is absolutely necessary. Instead, these allies should be used to add drama to the story, perhaps by holding off a number of foes, thus leaving the party to dispatch opponents worthy of their power. If you do need to use their full stats, reference the following stats below.

Finally, stats are not given for Hengrid Donarsdottir, as she is the foil the heroes must rescue, not the instrument of the action of this saga. It is expected that the PCs will win through in the end, so do try and keep Hengrid alive, we may need her in later adventures of the Northlands Saga.

Hirthmenn of Estenfird

Use these stats for the warriors that may come to the aid of the PCs. They are not great fighters, but in numbers they may turn the tide of battle. Hirthmenn are militia, not professionals or adventurers, and will not risk their lives or the lives of their families needlessly. The stats for the common hirthmenn can also be used for any warriors the party may have from amongst the crew of a longship.

Hirthmenn: HD 2; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 weapon (1d8); Move 12; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None; Gear: battleaxe or flail or sword, leather armor, 1d10 gp, 1d6 sp.

Hirthmenn Archer: HD 3; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 weapon (1d8) or 2 bow (1d6); Move 12; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None; Gear: battleaxe or flail or sword, ring mail, bow (long or short), 1d10+10 arrows, 1d10 gp, 1d6 sp.

Hirthmenn Leader: HD 5; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (1d8) or 2 bow (1d6); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; Special: None; Gear: battleaxe or flail or sword, plate mail, bow (long or short), 1d6+14 arrows, 3d10 gp, 3d6 sp.

Learning the Cult's Plan

At some point the PCs need to discover the true nature of the Beast Cult's plan to capture and sacrifice Hengrid Donarsdottir. Few Cultists are willing to talk under interrogation or even torture, and their minds are so fractured that it is doubtful they would have anything to say. The common rank and file does not know their leader's plans, but being a very loose hierarchy, individual warband leaders are aware of the need to capture Hengrid alive. Warband leaders tend to be rather prideful and boastful people (and are often not 'people' at all) and, like the majority of the Beast Cult, not terribly bright. Putting it simply, they will drop clues during battle, taunting their foes with how the Cult will take the precious Daughter of Storm and Thunder and have their way with her; how she is likely already in the hands of the Cult; how they are taking her to The Stones to sacrifice her to their demon god; and other sundry loose talk. These taunts will be mixed in with more personal comments concerning the weakness of the PCs, how the PCs' will taste (or already do if the cultists have taken a bite out of one of them), how the Cult will soon rule all Estenfird, and how the whole world will be bathed in blood.

The Frozen Forests of Estenfird

When they depart from Vöss (or Úlmer) the PCs must travel overland through Estenfird, up the Ice River to Three Rivers. The land is rugged and heavily forested with few paths or trails, and nothing that could be mistaken for a road. The deep snow further hampers the party's movement. The Ice River is living up to its name, and is frozen this time of year, thus blocking a swift journey by boat. The party will not be able to travel faster than 12 miles a day mounted or 6 miles afoot. If traveling with a mixed group or riders and marchers, they must go the pace of the slower group if they wish to stay together. The most direct route to Three Rivers is straight along the banks of the river, though that is also the more obvious route and a likely place for an ambush. A more indirect route through the forest would take somewhat longer but would provide the added benefit of concealment to the PCs' journey and possibly add the element of surprise

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to their approach to Three Rivers.

However, all is not as easy as a walk in the forest. Small bands of cultists wander the woods, and several villages have either already suffered the depredations of the Beast Cult, or are about to. Isolated farmsteads are also threatened, and although some have been burned out, others are in need of relief or are still unaware of the horrid events unfolding in Estenfird. Finally, Estenfird is not a safe place in the best of times, and the usual hazards of dangerous flora and fauna abound.

Other than the town of Risør, there are no major settlements on the way to Three Rivers, though multiple villages and steadings have been constructed along the frozen banks of the river and in the surrounding forest. As the PCs approach Three Rivers, they find villages and farmsteads that have been slaughtered, bodies roasted over great bonfires, and the twisted runes of Shibauroth painted on the walls (in blood, of course). Some of the cultists may be left behind—either alive or as corpses fallen in battle—giving some clue as to what is going on. Feel free to throw in a survivor or two who hid and escaped the sack. Horror-stricken ramblings about what happened, especially references to the cultists hunting for Hengrid and torturing people in order to obtain information of her whereabouts, will provide some clue as to the true nature of the Cult's plans.

If the PCs follow the Ice River to Three Rivers, there are two set encounters: Risør and the Beast Cult Ambush. These can be avoided if the PCs stick to the woods, though if they wish to travel through the woods and then swing into stop by Risør on the way, they can successfully locate the town on a 1-3 on a 1d6 roll (1-4 if the party includes a Ranger or Druid). Otherwise they have missed the town and must spend 1d2 days searching up and down the river until they locate it. The ambush occurs along the river north of Risør and will be entirely avoided unless the PCs travel along the river for the whole distance between Risør and Three Rivers.

Estenfird Random Encounters

While the party journeys along the river or through the frozen forests of Estenfird, consult the following list of encounters. Feel free to use whichever ones best suit the party, or utilize the random encounter table to generate them. When using the table, roll for encounters twice per day of travel (morning and afternoon). If the party remains stationary and does not travel on a particular day, only roll once and subtract 4 from the roll (results less than “1” treated as “1”). Encounters marked with an asterisk can only occur once. If rolled again, treat as “No Encounter”.

d12	Encounters
1-3	No Encounter
4	Tree of Death*
5	Hunting Cats
6	Megaloceros Herd*
7-8	Wildman Warband
9	Abandoned Village
10	Besieged Village
11-12	Farmstead

Tree of Death: A hangman tree lurks in a grove of trees, luring wanderers into its grasp with a small trove of treasure left at its roots by past victims. An 8-member raiding party of the Beast Cult stands watch near the tree, worshiping it and the havoc it causes as part of their fealty to Shibauroth. They are immune to its hallucinatory spores due to their enchanted runes of Shibauroth. Though the tree is adapted to the colder environment of Estenfird, it is still susceptible to cold attacks.

HANGMAN TREE: HD 8; HP: 35; AC 2[17]; Atk 4 vines (1d8); Move 3; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Hallucinatory spores, magic resistance (45%), paralyzed by cold, slowed by darkness, strangle, swallow, surprise on 1-4 on 1d6, vulnerable to electricity. (Tome of Horrors Complete 318).

Hallucinatory Spores: A hangman tree can release a cloud of spores in a 50-foot radius spread. Creatures in the area must succeed on a saving throw or believe the tree to be of some ordinary sort or to be a treant or other such friendly

tree creature. An affected creature becomes passive for 2d6 rounds and refuses to attack the hangman tree during this time.

Paralyzed by Cold: Cold-based effects paralyze a hangman tree as if by a hold monster spell.

Slowed by Darkness: Spells that generate darkness slow the hangman tree (as the slow spell) for 1 round per caster level. **Strangle:** Opponents struck by a vine in combat must pass a saving throw or be strangled for 1d6+1 points of damage per round until the vine is cut (it has an AC of 4 [15] and can take 6 hp damage) or the strangled victim or a rescuer makes a successful open doors check.

Swallow: The hangman tree can attempt to swallow a strangling (or strangled) victim with a successful attack roll and a failed saving throw by the target. A swallowed victim suffers 2d6 points of crushing damage per round and can only escape with a successful open doors check. The tree's trunk can hold up to two human-sized victims.

Vulnerable to Electricity: A hangman tree takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from electricity, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.



BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH (8): HD 5; HP: 31, 31, 24, 23, 23, 21, 21, 18; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

Hunting Cats: The forests of Estenfird are home to a diverse number of strange and unusually large animals. One of these, the dreaded saber cat, has picked up the party's scent and begins stalking them. This encounter

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begins at 400 yards when the saber cat first begins its stalk. It follows behind the party staying hidden until they are at a vulnerable point, such as making camp or engaged in combat. Once its prey presents itself, the saber cat pounces, grabs the weakest-looking PC, and flees with its prey. A second saber cat lurks nearby and attacks 2 rounds later with the same tactics. If cornered they fight to the death.

SABER CATS (2): HD 9; HP: 40, 32; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4+1) 1 bite (2d6); Move 12 (Swim 6); Save 6; AL N; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Rear claws (+3 HD Smilodon, Tome of Horrors Complete 648).

Rear Claws: If a saber cat hits with both its claw attacks, it can pull itself up to rake with its rear claws (2 additional claw attacks).

Megaloceros Herd: This small herd of 4 megaloceros does, 3 fawns, and a stag are enjoying the winter forage. The does and fawns look like normal specimens of the gigantic elk species, but the stag is a great white beast, larger and more fearsome than naturally found. His pelt shimmers silvery in the winter light, and his eyes have a preternatural intelligence. Once they get wind of the approach of the party, the does and fawns flee a short distance away while the stag covers their retreat. If attacked, the stag and the does fight to the death to defend the young.

The stag is not a normal animal, but an embodied spirit of the forest. If recognized as such and approached with respect and reverence, he may aid the party. The great stag expects to be treated as a jarl of the forest, and the PCs should offer him not just their respect, but deeds as well. His starting attitude is unfriendly, and he will not aid anyone who has acted wantonly or foolishly towards the creatures of the forest or who has caused devastation or destruction in his lands (normal hunting, gathering, and campfires are accepted as part of the natural order). If properly treated and his attitude changed to friendly, he will aid the party if they complete a task for him.

The Great White Stag advises the PCs that a great ambush has been laid for them by the Beast Cultists along the banks of the Ice River past Risør. He wishes for them to ambush the ambushers and completely destroy the force of cultists involved. He will guide them by back paths to reach this ambush so that they may approach undetected but will not assist in the battle itself. Once this warband has been defeated, the Great White Stag will accompany the PCs on the rest of their march and guide them along the ways of the forest to the steadings and villages that are within range of their travels. With the Great White Stag along after the ambush, any further rolled random encounters should be considered an Abandoned Village (20%), Besieged Village (40%), or a Farmstead (40%). There will not be other random encounters with cultists or beasts while the Stag is present. Also while the Stag is present, convincing hirthmenn to join the PCs on their march is much easier due to the good omen the Stag represents. Once the PCs are within sight of the walls of Three Rivers, the Stag departs and disappears into the forest, leaving no trail.

THE GREAT WHITE STAG: HD 12; HP: 60; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 hooves (1d6) 1 gore (2d8); Move 18; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Charge for 4d8 damage

MEGALOCEROS DOES (4): HD 6; HP: 41, 38, 31, 31; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 hooves (1d6); Move 15; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: None. (See appendix).

MEGALOCEROS FAWNS (3): HD 3; HP: 20, 13, 9; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 hooves (1d4); Move 12; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None. (See appendix).

Wildman Warband: A group of cultists and their allied beasts have spotted the party and charge to attack. The peryton flies over to shadow mark a PC in the rear of the party before attacking. The aurochs-headed minotaur leads a mad charge of worgs and cultists. He looks for the largest and most combat-capable PC, while the worgs close on any obvious spellcasters. The Beast Cultists scream and slash, driven mad by the runes that burn upon their skin. These creatures fight to the death.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (6): HD 5; HP: 30, 26, 23, 23, 18, 16; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

MINOTAUR: HD 6+4; HP: 37; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 Head butt (2d4) and 1 bite (1d3) and weapon (1d8); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Never gets lost in labyrinths.

WORGs (4): HD 4; HP: 23, 17, 16, 11; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+1); Move 18; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

PERYTON: HD 5; HP: 24; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 hooves (1d4), gore (1d6); Move 12 (Fly 24); Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Shadow mark. (See appendix).

Shadow Mark: A peryton can spend an action flying over a foe. If his shadow touches his foe (who must make a saving throw to avoid), the peryton gains a +2 to hit and damage that foe until that foe is dead or the peryton chooses to use this ability again.

Abandoned Village: The burned remains of a small village, the Beast Cult has already been through and slaughtered the inhabitants. A thorough search of the burned cottages will turn up 2d20 gp worth of silver and household items that were left by the maniacal raiders.

Besieged Village: The sound of yelling and chanting cultists echoes through the forest from ahead. A small village is under attack by a band of Beast Cultists. The defenders look ready to be overwhelmed, and if no one comes to their rescue then the village will fall within a matter of minutes. Attacking the village are five Beast Cultists and a wizened-old fey in a red wool cap led by a terrible hound-like creature. They turn their attacks upon the PCs, if they intervene. If this encounter is rolled a second time, use the Cultist Raiding Party Table under "Farmstead" below to determine the make-up of additional raiding parties.

There are 3d10+10 villagers left alive. Most are non-combatants, but 20% of that number are able-bodied hirthmenn with 1d3 hirthmenn archers, and a hirthmenn leader. If the village is saved, the PCs can attempt to recruit the hirthmenn for the march to Three Rivers. To do so they must convince the warriors to leave their homes and family members behind in order to face the threat against their land. If any of the PCs are well known in the area it will help influence the hirthmenn. Other potential boons include if the party indicates that Hengrid Donarsdottir may be in danger, news of farmsteads of villages that the PCs have aided against the Beast Cult, the presence of hirthmenn or archers already marching with the PCs, and if the Great White Stag is accompanying the PCs.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (5): HD 5; HP: 31, 27, 22, 20, 19; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

BARGHEST: HD 6; HP: 20; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) and 1 bite (1d4); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Feed, shape change into goblin or wolf. (See appendix).

Feed: Once per month, a Barghest may spend a full round feeding on a dead non-chaotic opponent. It grows larger,

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gaining +1 HD (affecting CL/XP, To Hit, Saving Throw, and HPs instantly), +1 damage to all attacks, and -1 [+1] to AC permanently. Barghests may become at maximum 9 HD creatures, at that point they lose this ability to feed but not their appetite for flesh.

REDCAP: HD 8; HP: 32; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 scythe (1d6+2) and 1 kick (1d4+2); Move 15; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Irreligious, Red Cap. (See appendix).

Irreligious: Redcaps must make a Saving Throw or flee in terror when presented with a holy symbol.

Red Cap: Redcaps wear a wooden formless hat, red with the blood of it's victim. While wearing this hat they gain a +2 to damage (already factored into above stat block) and regenerate 2 hit points every round. Knocking off the hat requires an attack vs AC 2[17].

Farmstead: Roll 1d6: on a 1–2 the farmstead is under attack (use table below to determine the nature of the raiding party); on a 3–4 the farmstead has already been burned out and the raiders have moved; there is nothing left to do but bury the bodies—or what is left of them (though if the PCs wish to spend a day tracking them, the PCs can successfully catch up to the raiders); and on a 5–6 the farmstead is peaceful, the residents going about their daily tasks, remote enough that they know nothing of the current situation in Estenfird.

If the farmsteaders are alive and can be convinced of the danger to Estenfird, any hirthmenn present may be convinced to join the PCs in their march to Three Rivers as in “Besieged Village”, above. At any farmstead there are 1d6+1 hirthmenn (if more than 4 are present, then 1d2 will be archers) and a 10% chance that there is an additional hirthmenn leader.

Cultist Raiding Party

Roll d3 to determine how many times to roll on the table below. Add the total results together to determine the make-up of the raiding party. This should not be the major combat encounter with the raiders, as there is a large ambush awaiting the PCs along the river.

d8	Raiders
1–2	2d3 Beast Cultists
3	1d2 Barghests
4	1d3 Minotaurs
5	1d2 Perytons
6	Redcap
7	1d4 Worgs
8	1d2 Yeti

BEAST CULTIST OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING: HD 5; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

BARGHEST: HD 6; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) and 1 bite (1d4); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Shape Change into goblin or wolf, feed. (See appendix).

Feed: Once per month, a Barghest may spend a full round feeding on a dead non-chaotic opponent. It grows larger, gaining +1 HD (affecting CL/XP, To Hit, Saving Throw, and HPs instantly), +1 damage to all attacks, and -1 [+1] to AC permanently. Barghests may become at maximum 9 HD creatures, at that point they lose this ability to feed but not their appetite for flesh.

MINOTAUR: HD 6+4; AC 6[13]; Atk Head butt (2d4), bite (1d3)

and weapon (1d8); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Never gets lost in labyrinths.

PERYTON: HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 hooves (1d4), gore (1d6); Move 12 (Fly 24); Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Shadow mark. (See appendix).

Shadow Mark: A peryton can spend an action flying over a foe. If his shadow touches his foe (who must make a saving throw to avoid), the peryton gains a +2 to hit and damage that foe until that foe is dead or the peryton chooses to use this ability again.

REDCAP: HD 8; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 scythe (1d6+2) and 1 kick (1d4+2); Move 15; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Irreligious, Red Cap. (see appendix).

Irreligious: Redcaps must make a Saving Throw or flee in terror when presented with a holy symbol.

Red Cap: Redcaps wear a wooden formless hat, red with the blood of it's victim. While wearing this hat they gain a +2 to damage (already factored into above stat block) and regenerate 2 hit points every round. Knocking off the hat requires an attack vs AC 2[17].

WORG: HD 4; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+1); Move 18; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

YETI: HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 fists (1d6); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Fear, hug, immune to cold.

Hug: If the yeti successfully hits an opponent with both fists he does a bear hug for an additional 2d6 damage.

Fear: If hugged by a yeti, a character must pass a saving throw or be paralyzed with fear for 1d3 rounds.

Risør

Lying halfway between Vöss and Three Rivers, Risør is a walled village that is rapidly growing into a small town. It is a common stopping point for both overland and river-borne trade, and its people have begun to make noise in the local Thing about building a permanent warehouse as well as housing for merchants.

Risør

N small town

Government council (Thing of Risør)

Population 867 (832 humans [Northlanders]; 34 dwarves)

Notable NPCs:

Valgred Skursdottir (N human fighter 4)

Purchase Limit 7,500gp; **Spellcasting** 4th

Note All manufactured goods and imported cost 150% of list price.

When the PCs arrive in Risør, they find that the hirth has already been gathered, 300 hirthmenn with an additional 20 hirthmenn archers, and 3 hirthmenn leaders stand ready to defend the town's stockade walls. The quickly recognize that the PCs are not marauding Beast Cultists and open the gate to allow them and any hirthmenn accompanying them inside the city. The PCs discover that though the town has not been attacked, its entire hirth has been gathered within its walls as well as all the outlying families and livestock in case of just such an eventuality. The local Thing, however, has met and elected to keep the hirth at home rather than answer the summons to Three Rivers. They fear the danger of attack upon their own town is just too great.

If the PCs call upon the hirth to march, the town will convene its local

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Thing of freeholders and allow the PCs to address the town assembly. The initial attitude towards orders to march is unfriendly. If the PCs may use the same modifiers as described under “Besieged Village” above to try and convince them, though intimidation will not work since they have to convince the entire assembled body of citizens. Additional modifiers include if the PCs bring back proof they have annihilated the Cultist Ambush up the river (see below) or if they ask that only two-thirds or less of the hirth accompany. Potential results are listed below. If the PCs have offered to leave a portion of the hirth behind, these hirthmen should be excluded from the results. Attacking citizens of the town will accomplish nothing, and PCs serious about helping Estenfird should not seriously consider doing so.

<u>Success</u>	<u>Result</u>
Marginal	100 hirthmenn, all the archers, and one leader will accompany the PCs.
Fair	Half the hirth (including 2 of its leaders) will accompany the PCs.
Good	The archers and one leader must remain behind.
Great	A token force of 10 hirthmenn and 10 archers will remain behind.
Complete	The entire hirth will accompany the PCs.

Cultist Ambush

Halfway between Risør and Three Rivers along the banks of the Ice River, the Beast Cultists have prepared an ambush for any force marching up from Vöss and Risør. Their scouts have spotted the party’s approach (unless they are being led by the Great White Stag), and the cultists are prepared for them. The ambush consists of 10 Beast Cultists, 3 trolls, and 5 worgs. They have prepared a large fallen log to roll down from a low rise beside the trail the PCs are following (save or take 5d6 damage and be knocked down). They launch their ambush by rolling the log down upon the PCs and then charging down in one screaming mass. If the PCs are with the Great White Stag, then the cultists are unaware of their approach, the log trap is not triggered, and the PCs gain a surprise round to deal with the ambushers.

If the PCs are with a larger force, assume there are additional cultists sufficient to engage them as well, though the PCs’ fight will determine the outcome of the greater battle. If the PCs win, their hirthmenn win as well. Determine the percentage of hp lost by the entire party to determine the percentage of casualties their hirth followers take. (For example: If the party total hp at full health is 200 and they lose 20 hp collectively in the battle, then 10% of their hirthmenn are killed). Archers count as 2 casualties and leaders count as 5, so the players can choose some of them to deduct from the percentage total in order to lose fewer men.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (10): HD 5; HP: 36, 34, 27, 26, 26, 25, 21, 20, 19, 19; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

TROLLS (3): HD 6+3; HP: 41, 39, 37; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4) and 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Regenerate 3 HP/round.

WORGs (5): HD 4; HP: 24, 23, 17, 15, 13; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+1); Move 18; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

Chapter Two: The Battle of Three Rivers

In the center of Estenfird at the confluence of the Ice, Wrath, and Savage Rivers a triangular peninsula of land serves as the site of Three Rivers, the largest settlement in Estenfird. Most of the year Three Rivers is generally a quiet—almost desolate—town, but during the fur trade rendezvous in the spring and logging festival in the fall the town swells to three times its normal population. Every five years the Althing of Estenfird meets here, bringing in more people as the freeholders of the region gather to conduct trade, hear legal cases, and debate critical matters.

As befits a frontier settlement, Three Rivers is one of the better-defended towns in the Northlands. A stout wooden palisade blocks off the one side not bounded by the river, and the town hirth is one of the most active and best trained in the Northlands. In its short history giants, werewolves, Beast Cultists, bandits, vikings, and even a dragon have attacked Three Rivers. Although reduced to rubble many times, the Althing of Estenfird has consistently voted to rebuild the town, and even managed to collect enough donations to make it larger and stronger each time.

Three Rivers

N small town

Government council (Thing of Three Rivers, Althing of Estenfird)

Population 1,640 (1,450 humans [Northlanders]; 50 humans [Nuklanders]; 40 dwarves; 100 other)

Notable NPCs:

Hengrid Donarsdottir, Protector of Estenfird and the Daughter of Thunder (N female fighter 12)

Nafi Tofason, merchant (L male human)

Inga Bersdottir, trapper (N male human)

Purchase Limit 7,500gp; **Spellcasting** 4th

When the PCs arrive at Three Rivers, they find that the Beast Cult has arrived in force ahead of them. The Beast Cult has not drawn itself up in regular lines, but instead has formed a multitude of small encampments based around each warband. Fires burn day and night; and the various groups spend their time either in ritualistic dances, sacrificing people and animals they have captured, or fighting each other. There is no central leadership and no desire to have one. Every day a band decides to test the walls—several others joining in—but so far all have been repulsed by the town's defenders.

Guards are not posted on any regular basis, and it should be easy to sneak across the siege lines. However, many cultists possess senses beyond those of humans, and can tell a cultist from an interloper by smell alone. Assassins disguising themselves to enter a camp will suffer a -20% penalty to their check (failure results in an attack). From the tree line to the town wall is 600 yards and the party will pass 1d6+1 camps along the route. If combat occurs at one of these camps, create a band using the Cultist Raiding Party Table under "Estenfird Random Encounters" in Chapter Two. There are 2,000 cultists and allied beasts gathered outside the walls of Three Rivers, and fights will likely go unnoticed by the other bands unless the PCs become too overt about it; violence is the way of the Beast Cult.

Once the PCs and any hirthmenn accompanying them reach the

walls, the town gates open to allow them in and close again before the disorganized Beast Cultists have a chance to react. The PCs are hailed as heroes by the town defenders, especially if they have brought a force of hirthmenn with them. The hirth of Three Rivers gathered in the town already comprises 800 men, not nearly enough to defeat the massed horde but certainly enough to put up a spirited defense in hopes of more reinforcements arriving. The PCs' hirthmenn are arrayed by the hirth commanders into defensive locations in the city, and the PCs are allowed to position themselves where they wish. However, they do not have much time to heal with potions and scrolls provided by the town's hirth much less explore the town, because shortly after their arrival the attack upon Three Rivers begins.

The Sack of Three Rivers

The Battle of Three Rivers commences with a mighty sounding of horns from the assembled horde of the Beast Cult. An aerial assault of drakes and perytons and a general storming of the walls quickly follows. Use any of the appropriate encounters from Three Rivers below to play out portions of this battle that involve the PCs. A huge war mammoth acts as a living battering ram in an attempt to break through the main gates. The main attack comes from the river as cultists and their monstrous allies charge across the frozen Ice River. Minutes later the Common Green erupts as a giant dire badger bursts forth, waves of frenzied cultists in its wake.

The combined assault on the walls, gate, across the river, from the sky, and from beneath the town is too much for the defenders. Although they fight valiantly, they are too few to save their town. Minutes after the badger bursts forth, any concerted or organized defense becomes impossible as the hirth flees their posts to see to the safety of their families and seek some escape from the carnage.

The contributions of the PCs, however, are not without merit. Not only may the PCs participate at the individual areas listed, but the number of hirthmenn that they brought with them affects the battle as well as indicated on the table below (archers count as 2 and leaders count as 5). "Rare" monsters are those that appear in numbers of 2 or less at any given encounter, and "common" monsters are those that have 3 or more at any given encounter. Additional effects are listed with the individual encounters.

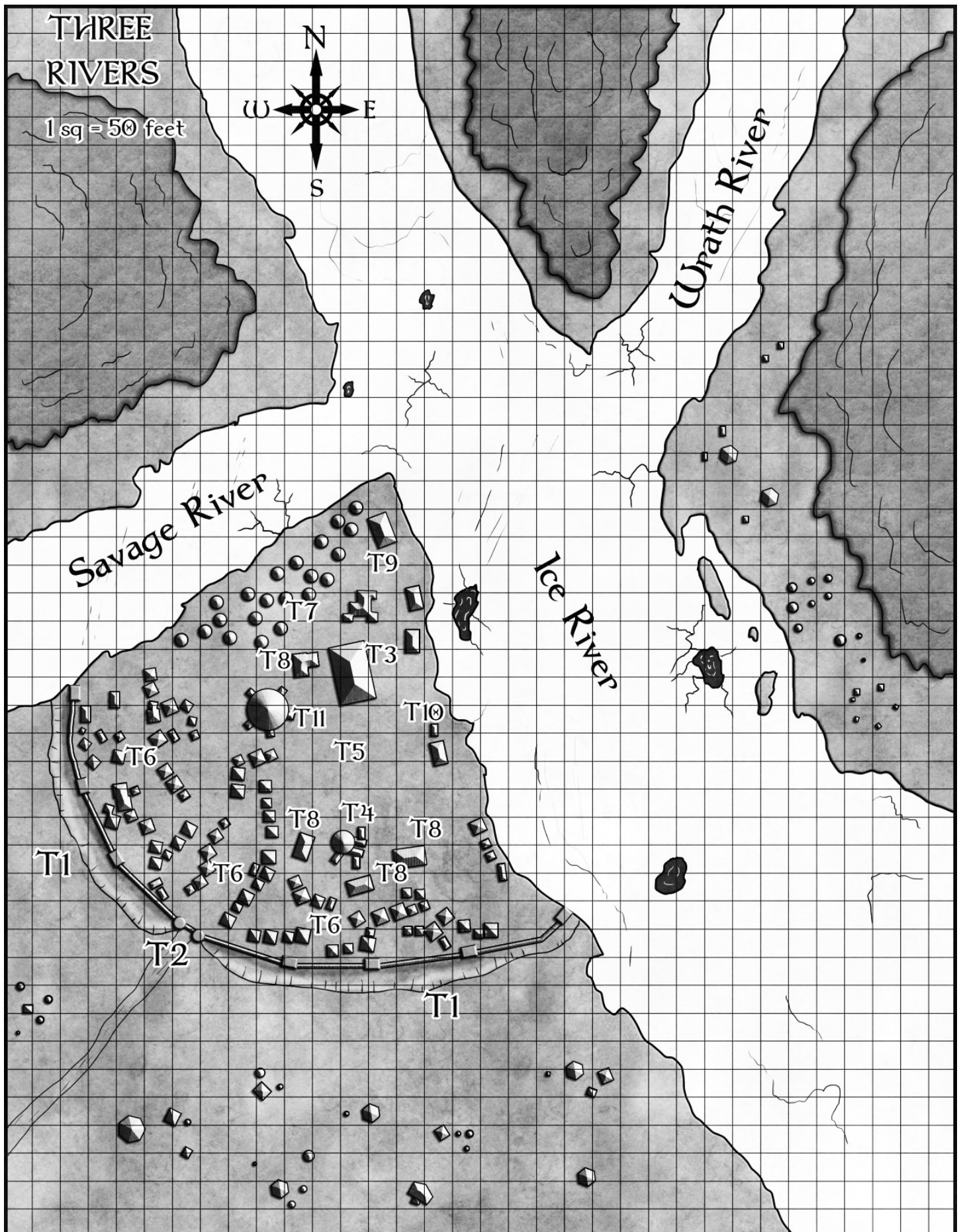
No. of Hirthmenn Battle Effect

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. 100 or less | No appreciable effect. |
| 2. 101–200 | Reduce a common monster at each encounter area by 1 (GM's choice) |
| 3. 201–350 | Reduce each common monster at each encounter area by 1 |
| 4. 350–500 | Same as 3 above but rare monsters have only 75% hp |
| 5. 501 or more | Reduce each common monster each encounter area by half, and rare monsters have 50% hp |

Encounters in the Sack

There are two types of encounters that take place inside the dying town. Planned events occur at certain locations in the town and under described under "Locations in Three Rivers" below. In addition, a table of random

CHAPTER TWO: THE BATTLE OF THREE RIVERS



CHAPTER TWO: THE BATTLE OF THREE RIVERS

encounters is provided as well to use as you see fit to illustrate the horrors of the town as it falls to the mad cultists. Roll d6 or select an encounter of your choosing. Encounters marked with an asterisk can only occur once.

d6 Random Encounters

- 1 The Trolls and the Children
- 2 Ambush from the Skies
- 3 Collapsing Building
- 4 Cultists on the Loose
- 5 Feeding Trolls*
- 6 All-Consuming Fire*

The Trolls and the Children: A group of children was being hustled along the streets towards a cellar by their mothers, however a pack of fearsome ice trolls wandered down the street and attacked the women. The children have taken shelter beneath a wagon and have yet to attract the trolls' attention as the trolls finish off the women. The PCs arrive too late to help the women but can still save the 7 children if they act quickly.

ICE TROLLS (6): HD 2; HP: 15, 13, 12, 11, 11, 10; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 claws (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: +1 or better weapon to hit, double damage from fire, immune to cold, regenerate 2 hp/round, rend, vulnerable to slashing weapons.

Rend: If an ice troll hits with both claw attacks, it will rake flesh for an additional 2d6 damage.

Vulnerable to Slashing Weapons: If an opponent rolls a natural 20 with a slashing weapon against an ice troll, the ice troll must succeed on a saving throw or lose a limb (roll 1d6: 1-3 arm, 4-6 leg; 50% chance of either right or left). An ice troll that loses a leg falls to the ground, but can continue moving at one-half speed. Severed limbs cannot attack but move at a speed of 30 feet toward the nearest source of water or ice.

Ambush from the Skies: The party moving through the sacked town has attracted the attention of a rampage of flame drakes, which swoops down out of the sky to rend and tear. First, they fly over and strafe the party. On their second pass they make Fly-by Attacks, seeking to snatch up a PC then drop him elsewhere in the city from at least 100 feet high. If the PCs brought at least 50 archers and a leader with their hirth, then remove an additional flame drake from this encounter.

FLAME DRAKES (3): HD 6; HP: 30, 29, 29; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 bite (2d6) and tail slap (1d6); Move 8, (Fly 24); Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Fireball breath. (See appendix).

Fireball Breath: Every 1d6 rounds a Flame Drake may spit a ball of flame that explodes like a fireball spell doing 5d6 damage to all within 20 feet.

Collapsing Building: One of the burning buildings collapses, spilling flaming timbers, furniture, and debris into the streets. Every PC must make a saving throw or suffer 2d8 points of fire damage and on a failed save make another saving throw to avoid catching fire. Any who fail the initial save by more than 5 are pinned beneath the flaming rubble and take 2d6 fire damage per round until pulled out with a successful open doors check.

Cultists on the Loose: A gang of Beast Cultists rampaging through the streets has turned the corner and spotted the party. With a howl they charge in a maddened frenzy of bloodlust.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (6): HD 5; HP: 30, 27, 26, 22, 17, 16; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-

affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

Feeding Trolls: Four trolls sit here surrounded by a heap of dead townsfolk and livestock. They are sitting on the remains of two houses, alternately between bites of corpses and swigs from looted casks of ale. A faint moaning can be heard from the pile of bodies, indicating that not all of them are dead. If the trolls are defeated, 2 townsfolk can be saved.

TROLLS (4): HD 6+3; HP: 38, 36, 34, 33; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4) and 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Regenerate 3 HP/round.

All-Consuming Fire: The way ahead is awash in flames, buildings have collapsed into the street, flame shoots out randomly from the few structures still standing, and fire elementals, called forth by the cult to further the work of their dark god, caper and dance amongst the destruction.

HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL: HD 12; HP: 50; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 strike (2d6); Move 12; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: Ignites materials.

Ignite Materials: Fire Elemental attacks cause flammable materials to ignite if the material fails a saving throw (GM disc).

LARGE FIRE ELEMENTALS (2): HD 8; HP: 33, 31; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 strike (2d6); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Ignites materials.

Ignite Materials: Fire Elemental attacks cause flammable materials to ignite if the material fails a saving throw (GM disc).

Locations in Three Rivers

Below is a description of the town of Three Rivers. Each entry describes a location as it appears normally, followed by what happens to it during the battle. Each has an encounter linked to it for use after the breaching of the walls and the savage sack of the town.

Tr. Ditch and Palisade

Estenfird is not a peaceful land, even in comparison to the violence endemic to the rest of the Northlands. In addition to the threat of the Beast Cult, monstrous creatures, raiders, pirates, and all manner of dangers lurk in the forests, shores, and mountains of Estenfird. Because of this, the Althing of Estenfird has repeatedly voted to not just raise a wall, but also raise the money to build one. One of the former leaders of the Althing, Alrik Flokkison, had spent part of his youth as a mercenary in the Southlands and had seen the mighty castles of those kingdoms. At his own expense he brought a Southlander engineer to Three Rivers to design and direct the construction of its walls. However, the Northlands lack an abundance of stonemasons, so the result was not a soaring castle of stone, but rather a fortress mostly of wood.

A 15-foot deep, 40-foot wide ditch fronts the palisade, half filled with snow in the winter and filthy water in warmer months. The wooden stockade walls themselves are 20 feet high and constructed of sturdy oak trunks that sit on top of a steep 20-foot slope faced with cut stone. Along their top, the tree trunks have been shaped into sharp points from between which the defenders can fire arrows or hurl down spears and axes. Every 80 feet is a wooden tower with a stone base that rises 10 feet above the surrounding walls. Inside each tower is a stair that leads from the ground to the roof and one large room to shelter from the weather at the level of the catwalk. Each tower has four windows in this room, two facing out and one each facing to the right and left. A stout door banded in iron and fitted with a sturdy wooden bar can be closed, cutting the tower off from the catwalk. On these were to be mounted ballistae and catapults, but the Althing grew tired of the expense of the wall and voted against this measure some 50 years ago.



On the inside of the wall is a 15-foot-high catwalk allowing the defenders to move entirely about the inside of the wall. Access to the wall is only through the towers or the gates, no other ladder or stairs were part of the design. Even so, some folk have built their houses close to the wall, and others have made use of their own ladders and ropes so as to be able to more quickly mount their posts in the event of an attack.

During the Sack

Bands of cultists attempt to storm the walls, using grapples as well as their bare hands and claws. Every 10 rounds one of the following groups attempts the wall (roll d4). If the PCs brought at least 30 archers with their hirth to Three Rivers, reduce the number of flying attackers by half on top of any other reductions that are called for.

Group 1: Consists of **10 Beast Cultists** armed with ropes and grapples to scale the wall.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (10): HD 5; HP: 36, 32, 29, 28, 28, 25, 23, 22, 22, 18; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

Group 2: Two hill giants charge the wall and attempt to batter it down.

HILL GIANTS (2): HD 8+2; HP: 41, 34; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (2d8); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Throw boulders (2d8 damage).

Group 3: Three ice trolls and a band of **5 Beast Cultists** attempt to climb the walls using their bare hands.

ICE TROLLS (3): HD 2; HD: 14, 11, 7; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 claws (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: +1 or better weapon to hit, double damage from fire, immune to cold, regenerate 2 hp/round, rend, vulnerable to slashing weapons. (Tome of Horrors Complete 570).

Rend: If an ice troll hits with both claw attacks, it will rake flesh for an additional 2d6 damage.

Vulnerable to Slashing Weapons: If an opponent rolls a natural 20 with a slashing weapon against an ice troll, the ice troll must succeed on a saving throw or lose a limb (roll 1d6: 1-3 arm, 4-6 leg; 50% chance of either right or left). An ice troll that loses a leg falls to the ground, but can continue moving at one-half speed. Severed limbs cannot attack but move at a speed of 30 feet toward the nearest source of water or ice.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (5): HD 5; HP: 30, 26, 25, 21, 20; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

Group 4: A flight of **4 perytons** attacks the walls defenders.

PERYTONS (4): HD 5; HP: 33, 26, 24, 17; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 hooves (1d4), gore (1d6); Move 12 (Fly 24); Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Shadow mark. (See appendix).

Shadow Mark: A peryton can spend an action flying over a

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foe. If his shadow touches his foe (who must make a saving throw to avoid), the peryton gains a +2 to hit and damage that foe until that foe is dead or the peryton chooses to use this ability again.

T2. Gate of Flokkison

The Althing lacked the silver and will to complete the great stone fortress that Alrik Flokkison envisioned, but before their means and desire failed they did manage to build the most formidable structure in all the Northlands, the great Gate of Flokkison. This massive double barbican is made entirely of stone and features two massive drum towers and a double-gated interior with the latest in defensive technology. Standing 50 feet over the facing slope, the towers themselves may be the tallest man-made structure north of the Duchy of Monrovia. Between the towers is a thick connecting wall on a height with the wooden stockade that surrounds the rest of the town.

The gates themselves are 25 feet wide and made of oak planks three feet thick and heavily banded with good iron. Both gates can be barred from the inside with massive oak timbers 30 feet long and 4 feet thick. Each gate features a small sally port that can be barred separately, as well as a tiny window that can be open or closed. An iron portcullis can be dropped down behind each gate, and the mechanisms that raise and lower the portcullises can be locked against even the mightiest of giants lifting them (open doors at -1, -3 if locked). The 60-foot-long passage through the barbican from gate to gate is dark and poorly lit. Murder holes line the ceiling, and hidden sally ports allow defenders to attack those trapped inside and then escape back into the walls for safety. Doors lead from the towers onto the wall between and out onto the flanking catwalks of the stockade walls.

Inside the two towers are a maze of rooms for the garrison's use, a secure well sunk deep into the earth, a kitchen, an armory, and storage rooms. Defenses include arrow slits, overhanging hoardings, stations for pots of boiling oil to be prepared, and positions for catapults and ballistae. Of the latter two, only the pots for boiling oil were ever installed, and most of these have long since rusted from disuse (oil being expensive so far from the sea). On its own, the barbican can withstand a concerted siege of months, and no siege weapon in the Northlands can begin to threaten it.

During the Sack

Any of the bands that are noted as attacking the walls above can be used to assault the gates. However, the main attack takes the form of a **war mammoth** brought south from the arctic tundra of Nukland. **Six Beast Cultists** are riding the mammoth, hanging off its body like fleas. The mammoth is driven before the gates and tries to batter them down.

WAR MAMMOTH: HD 12; HP: 61; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 slam (1d10) and 2 gore (1d10+4) and 2 trample (2d6); Move 12; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: None. (Mammoth, Tome of Horrors Complete 636).

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (6): HD 5; HP: 28, 25, 23, 20, 18; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

T3. Hall of the Althing

Facing across the Common Green from the Great House of the Gods sits the Hall of the Althing of Estenfir. In most lands of the North, the Althing meets in a sacred grove, menhir, or even a round barrow as

they do in Vastavikland. In Estenfir they have constructed a great hall in imitation of the great halls of jarls found in lands farther south. The Estenfirers have no nobles nor jarls, princes, or kings. Instead they are ruled by their own conscience and will and by the laws of the Althing and their local Things.

The Hall of the Althing is a thing of beauty, constructed by the work of volunteer freemen from the natural wonders of the land. Its walls are of wood, carved and painted with scenes of the hunt. Likewise graven are the corners and lesser posts. The ridge post is 130 feet long and sits 35 feet above the ground. It is carved with images of the afterlife and the gods, with a large scene of Valhalla and Hel at either end. Inside there is a central dais of five steps, and around it a cleared space from wall to wall, broken only by the occasional thick wooden post holding up the ceiling. The interior walls are bare save for bland and unadorned tapestries to keep out the cold. Iron braziers stand at key locations to warm the hall, but no great fire burns here. Nor is there a scrap of furniture, for the Althing of Estenfir must stand and listen while they meet. During meeting the dais is occupied by whoever is speaking at the moment. The doors to the hall are of stout oak and are not meant to be barred, though after the town's walls are breached this changes.

During the Sack

Hengrid Donarsdottir and a handful of hirthmenn hole up in the Hall of the Althing after the walls have fallen. With them are 40 non-combatant women, children, godi, and the elderly, wounded, or infirm. A small horde of cultists descends upon the place, but instead of fighting normally they seek out Hengrid and attempt to subdue her.

Hengrid is a tall woman—unnaturally tall at nearly 7 feet in height. She is powerfully built, fair skinned, and blue eyed with her long blond hair worn in two braids that flow from under her helmet. Upon her chest is an iron hammer amulet of Thor, and she wields a mithral greathammer that has sparks of electricity constantly playing across its head. Hengrid has already been seriously wounded in the sack, but she stands firm at the head of her men, defending the innocents in the hall with her own life's blood. She will not descend from the steps, nor will she leave her charges or her men.

Regardless if the PCs are present at this area or not, eventually the "Ambush from the Skies" encounter for "The Sack of Three Rivers" above should run (multiple times if necessary), and one of the drakes scoops up the wounded Hengrid and disappears with her into the clouded skies heading to the northeast.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (12 or more): HD 5; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

HILL GIANT: HD 8+2; HP: 32; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (2d8); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Throw boulders (2d8 damage).

ICE TROLLS (6): HD 2; HD: 11, 10, 9, 7, 6, 6; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 claws (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: rend, +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, double damage from fire, regenerate 2 hp/round, vulnerable to slashing weapons. (Tome of Horrors Complete 570).

Rend: If an ice troll hits with both claw attacks, it will rake flesh for an additional 2d6 damage.

Vulnerable to Slashing Weapons: If an opponent rolls a natural 20 with a slashing weapon against an ice troll, the ice troll must succeed on a saving throw or lose a limb (roll 1d6: 1-3 arm, 4-6 leg; 50% chance of either right or left). An ice troll that loses a leg falls to the ground, but can continue

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moving at one-half speed. Severed limbs cannot attack but move at a speed of 30 feet toward the nearest source of water or ice.

GIANT DEMON BADGER: HD 7; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) and 1 bite (1d10); Move 9; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: +1 or better weapon to hit.

T4. Great House of the Gods

Temples are a rarity in the Northlands and rarer still in Estenfird. The Althing has voted 85 times to not fund the building of a temple, so the devotees of Thor, Odin, and Freya banded together to build a home for their gods in Three Rivers. Arguments broke out immediately over what form it would take, and an agreement was reached that pleased no one, but that they could all live with.

The Great House of the Gods is smaller than the Hall of the Althing, and is a patchwork collection of shrines to the various deities of the Aesir and Vanir as well as a few Southlander gods whose worship has been adopted by one or another Estenfirder wealthy enough to fund the temple. As a result the original plan for a single grand temple is now a ragtag collection of small shrines, not all of them interconnected, built against one another and providing a multitude of doors and windows.

During the Sack

The sacred shrines of the gods, both foreign and domestic, are attacked with aerial bombardments from a rampage of firebrakes that have joined with the Beast Cult. Those who flee there seeking shelter are in for a rude surprise as the ramshackle wooden building quickly becomes a blazing maze of flaming doorways and smoke-filled passages. If the PCs brought at least 50 archers and a leader with their hirth, then remove an additional flame drake from this encounter.

FLAME DRAKES (3): HD 6; HP: 32, 28, 22; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 bite (2d6) and tail slap (1d6); Move 8, (Fly 24); Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Fireball breath. (See appendix).

Fireball Breath: Every 1d6 rounds a Flame Drake may spit a ball of flame that explodes like a fireball spell doing 5d6 damage to all within 20 feet.

T5. The Common Green

Like many towns and villages of the Northlands, Three Rivers maintains a common area inside its bounds for the grazing of its citizens' livestock. As land is cheap and plentiful in Estenfird, the Common Green of Three Rivers is unusually large for its population. This serves two purposes: first it gives the townsfolk a place to keep and graze their cattle, sheep, and goats and second, and of greater value to the town, it serves as a place for merchants, loggers, trappers, and others to set up tents during the fall and spring gatherings.

During the Sack

The town's Common Green is rent open as a badger of truly epic proportions tunnels out of the ground. Following close behind in its tunnel are dozens of screaming cultists, this surprise attack bellowing the death knell for Three Rivers. Another 20 cultists emerge from this burrow every minute until some means is found to collapse it.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (48): HD 5; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

T6. Private House

This is one of many houses built and inhabited by the townsfolk of Three Rivers. It is a simple one-story affair of wood, mud plaster, a packed earth, and a thatched roof. Inside is a common room plus a private bedroom for the man and woman of the house. A pen behind holds ducks, geese, or chickens, and a small vegetable garden fills up the rest of the plot. Minor decorations adorn the walls and posts, though nothing beyond the skills of the family. Little of value can be found inside, and heroes are generally above looting some common freeman's house. Just in case, there is 2d10 gp in assorted household goods and hacksilver hidden away in the house.

During the Sack

This, like other homes throughout Three Rivers, is the scene of rampant carnage and destruction. Any of these homes visited by the cultists will be torched, unless the cultists are inside currently looting, murdering, and raping the inhabitants (50% chance of each). Roll once on the Cultist Raiding Party Table in Chapter Two to determine what group is in one of these houses.

T7. Thrall's House

This is little more than a sod or wattle-and-daub, single-room hovel with a packed dirt floor and poorly maintained thatch roof. Thralls own few possessions, and these they tend to keep on themselves since they generally lack the means to safely store anything of value. A pen behind might hold a thin nanny goat or sad chicken, but generally if a thrall should have such wealth, he eats it.

During the Sack

The cultists don't spend much time here, choosing instead the fatter prizes to be found in the freemen's or merchants' houses. These are quickly put to the torch after only a cursory looting. However, they do not make great hiding places, because the flames quickly spread to consume them all. There is only a 30% chance of cultist raiders being here (roll as for T6 above), though after the first 30 minutes of battle in the city, all of these homes are ablaze.

T8. Merchant's House

Only a handful of merchants make their residence in Three Rivers, but those that do enjoy showing off their wealth. These houses are built like either traditional longhouses in pale imitation of the great jarls of Storstrøm Vale, or in the style of the two- or three-story townhouses of the Southlands. In either case, the merchant's houses are covered in signs of their wealth: tile or shingle roofs, plank floors covered in carpets, rich tapestries on the walls, carvings and paintings on every surface (even ginger breadding in some cases), brick or stone chimneys, and even horn or glass windows (though most of these are small and cloudy). Should someone choose to loot a merchant's house, anything of value has been carefully buried (50% chance) or locked away (50% chance) during the siege. Finding buried treasure takes a successful find secret doors roll. Success yields 300 gp in household goods and an additional 400 gp in assorted coin and hacksilver hidden away.

During the Sack

The cultists particularly focus on these areas. They do not burn these houses until after the sack and there is always a raiding group at one of these (use double strength versions those that are found at area T6).

T*9*. Thorbald's Mead Hall

Three Rivers can boast of being home to a handful of structures largely unseen in the Northlands outside of large cities like Halfstead or Trotheim. Amongst these is Thorbald's Mead Hall, an inn and tavern of sorts. Founded ten year ago by Thorbald One-Eye, a retired adventurer and viking, the mead hall offers fire, food, and mead to any who visit, all without the usual laws of hospitality. In the past decade the mead hall has become popular with foreign visitors, but also with many of the men of Three Rivers. There they can enjoy the long-storied pleasures of a jarl's feast hall, at a price that a common man can afford.

The hall is a long, narrow building built in the style of a lesser jarl's feasting hall. It is constructed of wood with a packed earth floor and a thatch roof. Decorations are minimal, and the ceiling and walls are stained with years of wood smoke. Two wings jut out from the back portion of the hall, one containing the kitchen and access to a cellar (filled with stored foodstuffs, casks of ale and mead, and smoked hams) and the other wing serving as Thorbald's living quarters.

During the Sack

The mead hall of Thorbald has long been a gathering place for the men of the village as a place they can drink in peace. Today it is a barricaded fortress valiantly trying to hold out against the swarming horde of cultists. Fifteen hirthmenn and leader have fallen back to the mead hall and pushed the hall's tables and benches against the door. A small litter of cultist bodies lies outside, felled by arrows, spears, and axes sent from inside the hall. However, a second wave of cultists, this time savage, degenerate humanoids from the deepest mountains, accompanied by a hill giant has arrived on the scene, and the fate of those brave Northlanders inside is in doubt.

HILL GIANT: HD 8+2; HP: 47; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (2d8); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Throw boulders (2d8 damage).

YETI (3): HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 fists (1d6); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Fear, hug, immune to cold.

Hug: If the yeti successfully hits an opponent with both fists he does a bear hug for an additional 2d6 damage.

Fear: If hugged by a yeti, a character must pass a saving throw or be paralyzed with fear for 1d3 rounds.

T*10*. Riverfront

Three Rivers sits just south of the confluence of the Ice, Wrath, and Savage Rivers, and as such the river has played a major role in the town's development and economy. Unlike Southlander towns, the riverfront of Three Rivers is undeveloped, being merely a broad, gently sloped area that runs from the Common Green down to the water. Here longships and smaller boats are dragged ashore and rafts of logs are brought in for auction. A few pole-and-slat warehouses stand just above the waterline, but most of these are little more than roofed sheds without walls.

During the Sack

The main body of the horde comes charging across the frozen Ice River, through the sheds of the Riverfront, and pour into the town. Hundreds of cultists and their allies are part of this body of slaving madmen, thus feel free to use any and all of the encounters from this adventure to represent the mixed and undisciplined multitude. It is likely the PCs will not be able to stem this tide, and will have to fall back to a more defensible location.

T*11*. Sven Blacktooth's Stables

Horses are slightly more common in Estenfirð than in the rest of the Northlands, partly due to the distances between villages and farmsteads, and partly due to the freedom of the people (there are no jarls to restrict movement or ownership of property). Sven Blacktooth runs a stable where visitors to the town can keep their horses. However, most visitors only bother stabling their mounts during the winter months, as the Common Green is free and a better option the rest of the year. As a result, Sven usually close up shop after the spring festivals and heads south in his longship to 'trade'.

The stables are sturdily constructed and are much like stables anywhere, save that the building is round. This is an uncommon feature in the Northlands, save in Gatland where round stables are the norm. The building is wood with dirt floors and a shingle roof, with a large hayloft on the second floor. Sven sleeps there when he is operating his stables, and is usually roaring drunk through the winter. He has three stable boys, all thralls he has taken from various parts, and it is these young men who do the actual work and run the business.

During the Sack

Sven Blacktooth's Stables is on fire. Inside the horses and donkeys are screaming in fright, their eyes rolled back into their heads and froth foaming their mouths. As the largest try to kick their way out of the stalls, the hay loft catches and soon the whole building will go up in a great inferno, spreading burning bits of hay across the straw roofs of the town to start dozens of additional fires.

Chapter Three:

The Stones on the Marsh

Regardless of the party's heroics to save Three Rivers, the sack of town was not ultimately the goal of the Beast Cult—they wanted Donarsdottir. And the PCs are unable to prevent that. However, as she is carried away as a captive by the cultists, other small warbands converge to join and escort the group back to their lair, so the PCs have little trouble finding and following the trail, which leads unerringly to the Yellow Light Marshes. The distance is not great, 20 miles to the edge of the marshes at most, though the thick forest and deep snows will slow down the party. The cultists either have snow shoes or have bodies well adapted to such minor things as deep piles of snow, so the PCs will be unable to overhail them. However, upon reaching the edge of the marshes, the cultists split up once again into many warbands to continue wreaking havoc, and the PCs must find their own way through the depths of the marshes where Hengrid has been taken.

Yellow Light Marshes

In Estenfir, the Yellow Light Marshes have a foul reputation. For generations it has been said that people who enter them either do not come back, or are driven mad by what they have witnessed inside. The marshes get their name from the yellow and bluish tinted balls of light that can be seen along their edges at night. Most of these are naturally occurring phenomena caused by marsh gas, atmospheric anomalies, and such, but others are the result of will-o'-wisps coming to the edge of the marshes to lure folks in. The will-o'-wisps are not part of the Beast Cult, but both parties have developed an attitude of mutual caution, allowing them to coexist somewhat peacefully in the marshes.

The marshes themselves are treacherous, with shifting currents, brackish ponds, and dangerous animals and monsters. Trees are not common in the marshes, and most of the terrain is open, flooded grassland. Once, before the Beast Cult came to power, there were a few marsh villages, and their remains dot the expanse of sodden ground. Between the villages there once ran a network of wooden walkways, portions of which remain to this day.

At the center of the marsh is a tangle of thick thorn trees and shrubs that form a wall encircling The Stones. The Stones themselves are older than the Beast Cult, but were either constructed by some long-dead, demon-worshipping race or have been corrupted to fell gods. Either way, they are a haunted and forlorn place, a spot where the horrors of the Abyss intrude on the ordered nature of the world.

Journey through the Marshes

The Yellow Light Marshes are perilous most of the year, but especially so in the winter. Ice and snow cover ponds and streams; the wind blows from the mountains, piling drifts above the height of a grown man. The long marsh grass is dry and brown, tall enough to hide a person or beast crawling but not so when walking. Although quicksand and shifting land is not a threat, water is still abundant and travelers quickly find themselves sodden, a dangerous proposition in the winter.

Roll on the Marsh Encounters Table once per day, adding one to the die roll if traveling at night. Keep in mind that this is winter in the far north; daylight lasts for only eight hours, but the nights are lit by the Northern Lights and count as bright moonlight. Encounters marked with an asterisk can only occur once.

d6	Marsh Encounters
1-3	No Encounter
4	Walkway
5	Abandoned Marsh Village
6	Winter Worm
7	Will-O'-Wisps*

Walkways: The party has happened upon one of the remaining walkways built by the marsh folk. Although few marsh folk remain, their villages once dotted the Yellow Light Marshes, and their walkways provide a safe, but uncertain, means of navigating the wetlands. Roll 1d6: on a 1-2 the walkway is too degraded to be of any use, on a 3-4 the walkway is sound, but runs in a different direction than the party needs, and on a 5-6 the walkway is sound and runs in the direction the party is going. The walkway runs for 2d10 miles before either turning or becoming impassable. No Survival checks are necessary while on the walkway. There is a 25% chance that the walkway will lead to a village before that time.

Abandoned Marsh Village: This village is a small and rude affair, sitting on stilts sunk deep into the muck of the marsh. It is visible from some distance, and the faint lines of wooden walkways running from this to other locations can be seen. From here the party can find a walkway leading towards their destination, however that walkway only runs for 2d10 miles before either turning or becoming impassable. There is a 25% chance that the walkway will lead to another village before that time.

Winter Worm: One of the rare but deadly winter worms, insect-like creatures native to Estenfir, has been awakened by the party's passing. It will stalk them, waiting until after dark to dart in and seize the smallest PC or animal companion and run off with it.

REMORHAZ: HD 10; HP: 42; AC head 0[19], underside 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (5d6); Move 12; Save 5; AL C; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Swallow whole on natural 20, melt weapons.

Swallow Whole: If the attack roll of the remorhaz is natural 20, it swallows it's victim whole, killing it instantly

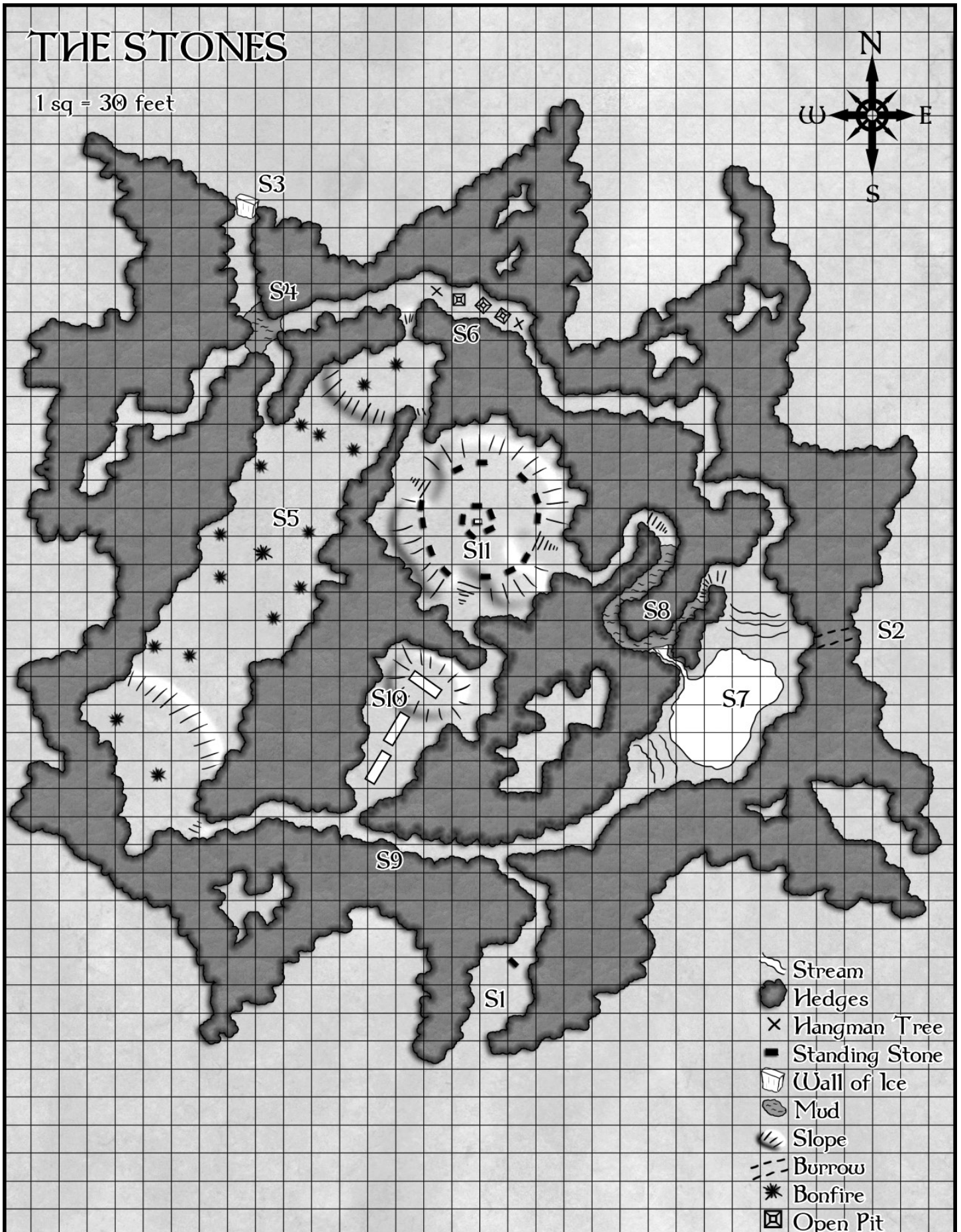
Melt Weapons: The remorhaz melts all non-magical weapons touching it, also dealing tremendous damage to anyone touching it.

Will-O'-Wisps: This event will only occur at night. The party has attracted the attention of the inhabitants of the Yellow Light Marshes, a 'family' of 2 will-o'-wisps. The will-o'-wisps attempt to lure a character away from the group into a nearby pool of quicksand, but failing that they attack, enraged by the violation of their territory.

WILL-O'-WISPS (2): HD 9; HP: 36, 36; AC -8[27]; Atk 1 shock (2d6); Move 18; Save 6; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: None.

The Stones

The Stones sit in the middle of an unnatural tangle of thorny hedges near the center of the Yellow Light Marshes. This hedge forms an enclosed area cut off from the outside world, walled and roofed in blackish-green growths. These growths are not affected by the winter cold, and the inside



CHAPTER THREE: THE STONES ON THE MARSH

of the hedge is warm throughout the year. It is obvious that the PCs have arrived at the right place because a swirl of thick, dark clouds has formed high above The Stones and has begun to spin in a slow vortex as the cultists within begin their dark ritual. Any creatures that attempt to fly above the hedges it instantly struck by a bolt of dark energy (5d6 damage) each round that it remains aloft. Shibauroth does not want encroachers at this crucial hour.

The hedge walls are covered in sharp poisonous thorns that move to impale any who come too close. Characters near the hedge must make a saving throw or be impaled by a thorn for 2d4+2 damage plus poison (1d3 Con damage). The hedge can be cut through (5' thick, 50 hp per foot thickness) but regenerates at a rate of 50 hp per round, closing around anyone in the hedge and trapping them there. Members of the cult are not attacked by the hedge.

Every 10 minutes spent outside the hedge results in a cumulative 10% chance of running across a patrol of **2 hill giants**. This chance restarts each time such a patrol is encountered. There are a total of three patrols before no more will be encountered. Within a day the horde will begin to return, and soon there will be upwards of a thousand cultists present. The PCs' time is short.

HILL GIANT: HD 8+2; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (2d8); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Throw boulders (2d8 damage).

Sr. South Entrance

An arch of thorny hedges leads into a deep and gloomy tunnel made of living plants. Before the archway stands a 6-foot-tall runestone carved with glowing runes of the Beast Cult surrounding a relief of a bestial figure eating the bodies of armored Northlander warriors.

Creatures: Six **beast cultists** stand guard here watching for anyone wanting use this entrance. They are too undisciplined to sound an alarm and instead just rage and attack.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (6): HD 5; HP: 38, 30, 29, 27, 21, 16; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

S2. East Entrance

Hidden along the eastern perimeter (secret doors check required to find), this entrance is little more than a 4-foot-wide muddy tunnel that leads 9 feet under the hedge before surfacing in area S7. Some savage creature (possibly the demon badger) burrowed the tunnel out at some point in the past, and it has since lain forgotten.

S3. North Entrance

This is the main entrance into the thorn hedge that surrounds The Stones. It is a thick bastion with a 15-foot-high arch closed off by a *wall of ice* spell.

Creatures: Waiting behind the *wall of ice* in case someone manages to break through or circumvent are **8 Beast Cultists** who were not allowed to participate in the uprising. They are anxious for combat and gladly rage and fight to the death.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (8): HD 5; HP: 37, 30, 29, 27, 24, 24, 21, 15; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast

runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

S4. Mud Way

Several of the passages in the hedge are muddy, but none so much as this one. The three forks of the Mud Way are sodden to the point of being nothing more than thick, dirty water 7 feet deep. Here the Beast Cult often 'baptizes' those it wishes to forcibly convert, chaining them in groups in the sinking soup until only one remains alive. Usually in order to survive one must use his fellows to form a living raft, not to mention eating their flesh to stave off starvation. Currently six unfortunate captives (all hirthmenn) have begun the trial of their lives, and struggle to stay afloat. They plead for mercy when the PCs approach. The chains are easily enough broken. If rescued none have the strength to fight, but can find their way back out unassisted.

S5. Feast Hall of the Damned

The grandest of the halls of the Beast Cult, this hall is sunk into the earth so that its thorny roof hangs 90 feet overhead. It is over 100 feet wide and extends 450 feet from end to end where mounds of bone—both ancient and recent—provide a 30-foot slope down to the hard packed dirt of the feast hall floor. A great bonfire, 20 feet in diameter, sends a constant cloud of smoke wafting up to the ceiling high above. Throughout the hall are the remains of smaller fires, some still smoldering, some naught but dead ash. Skulls of famous kills, banners taken from vanquished foes, and other grisly trophies line the walls.

Creatures: Here the bulk of the Beast Cult of Estenfirld can gather, but as most of them are still spread throughout the land on a rampage, the hall is nearly empty. **Four cultists** plus the high priest's pet construct—a **scarecrow** constructed of bones, vines, and a misshapen swamp gourd—lurk here atop the northernmost bone pile, guarding against intruders, feasting, and fighting amongst themselves.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (4): HD 5; HP: 36, 32, 28, 19; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

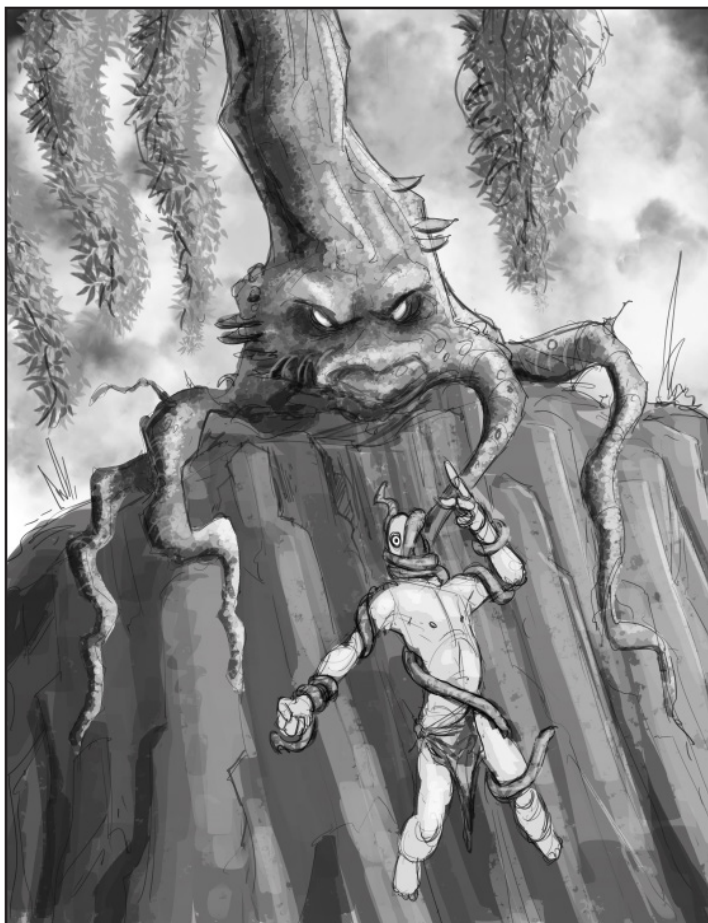
SCARECROW: HD 5; HP: 27; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 strike (1d6 + Fascination); Move 9; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Double damage from fire, fascination, immune to cold. (Tome of Horrors Complete 473)

Fascination: Any living creature within 30 feet meeting the gaze of a scarecrow must succeed on a saving throw or be fascinated for as long as the scarecrow is "alive" or remains within 300 feet of the fascinated person. A fascinated creature can take no actions but can defend themselves. A fascinated creature can attempt a new saving throw any time it is attacked. The touch of a scarecrow fascinates a foe in the same way its gaze does.

S6. Prisoner Pits

This hall is 60 feet high with a hard-packed floor. Spaced along its length

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are three 10-foot-wide and 15-foot-deep pits used to house prisoners awaiting sacrifice. All three pits are cramped with captives (2d10+5 per pit) taken from Three Rivers and other parts of Estenfind. The captives are largely women and children, but some badly wounded warriors have also been taken. When the PCs pass, the prisoners set up a wailing plea for deliverance which, if allowed to go on for more than 4 rounds, alerts the guards in area S5.

Creatures: At each pointed mark with an “X” stands a **hangman tree** placed to prevent prisoners from escaping. The trees have learned to not grab the more powerful cultists, but are more than willing to go after anything else (including lower-ranking cultists) who attempt to pass them.

HANGMAN TREES (2): HD 8; HP: 46, 38; AC 2[17]; Atk 4 vines (1d8); Move 3; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Hallucinatory spores, magic resistance (45%), paralyzed by cold, slowed by darkness, strangle, swallow, surprise on 1-4 on 1d6, vulnerable to electricity. (Tome of Horrors Complete 318).

Hallucinatory Spores: A hangman tree can release a cloud of spores in a 50-foot radius spread. Creatures in the area must succeed on a saving throw or believe the tree to be of some ordinary sort or to be a treant or other such friendly tree creature. An affected creature becomes passive for 2d6 rounds and refuses to attack the hangman tree during this time.

Paralyzed by Cold: Cold-based effects paralyze a hangman tree as if by a hold monster spell.

Slowed by Darkness: Spells that generate darkness slow the hangman tree (as the slow spell) for 1 round per caster level.

Strangle: Opponents struck by a vine in combat must pass a saving throw or be strangled for 1d6+1 points of damage per round until the vine is cut (it has an AC of 4 [15] and can take 6 hp damage) or the strangled victim or a rescuer makes a successful open doors check.

Swallow: The hangman tree can attempt to swallow a

strangling (or strangled) victim with a successful attack roll and a failed saving throw by the target. A swallowed victim suffers 2d6 points of crushing damage per round and can only escape with a successful open doors check. The tree's trunk can hold up to two human-sized victims.

Vulnerable to Electricity: A hangman tree takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from electricity, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.)

S7. Dark Fey Glen

The Beast Cult does not pervert the hearts and minds of man and monstrous beast alone, but also can corrupt the more malicious of fey creatures. The tunnels and halls of the hedge open up here into a dimly lit grotto formed of living thorn. Broad muddy steps descend from each entrance down to a wide area dominated by a scummy pond in the center. The ground is marshy on the floor of the grotto and littered with the bones of past victims. Giant mushrooms grow in patches from the steps and across the grotto, staying clear of the deadly thorns of the hedge.

Creatures: Dark fey make their homes here, plotting, feasting, and fighting. Today 5 **spriggans** and a **redcap** linger, resting from the travails of the great uprising and awaiting the fulfillment of the cult's fell rites.

SPRIGGANS (5): HD 4; HP: 29, 24, 23, 21, 16; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 short sword (1d6) or pole arm (1d8); Move 9; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 6,400; Special: Size alteration, spells. (Tome of Horrors Complete 516).

Size Alteration: At will, a spriggan can enlarge to triple its normal size and ten times its normal weight. Weapons, armor, and other inanimate objects on its person grow proportionately with it when it changes size. The spriggan can change sizes at will in place of making a move in combat. An enlarged spriggan doubles its Hit Dice and doubles its damage. While enlarged, a spriggan cannot use its spells..

Spells: Spriggans can cast fear, pyrotechnics and strength at will.

REDCAP: HD 8; HP: 48; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 scythe (1d6+2) and 1 kick (1d4+2); Move 15; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Irreligious, Red Cap. (See appendix).

Irreligious: Redcaps must make a Saving Throw or flee in terror when presented with a holy symbol.

Red Cap: Redcaps wear a wooden formless hat, red with the blood of it's victim. While wearing this hat they gain a +2 to damage (already factored into above stat block) and regenerate 2 hit points every round. Knocking off the hat requires an attack vs AC 2[17].

S8. Bent Bog

This crooked tunnel is more water than soil, forming a long narrow bog only 10 feet wide and 8 feet high. The floor is difficult terrain due to thick mud that sucks and pulls at the feet of anyone crossing it.

Creatures: Long ago, before the Beast Cult took over the site, the original builders placed their honored dead in this bog as sacrifices to their own fell gods. These dead remain, and are now thralls of the cult, rising up as 2 **bog mummies** every 60 feet that the PCs travel to kill and drag down trespassers. They do not travel beyond their 60-foot territory, though they will try to herd PCs into the territory of the next pair and trap them between. There are a total of 10 such bog mummies.

BOG MUMMY: HD 8; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 slam (1d6 +bog rot); Move 9; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Bog rot, +1 or better weapon to hit, resistance to fire (50%). (Tome of Horrors Complete 66).

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Bog Rot: Its touch infects victims who fail a saving throw with bog rot, a supernatural disease that does not allow wounds to heal naturally, and cuts magical healing in half until cured with the cure disease spell. Humanoids killed by a bog mummy rise as bog mummies themselves in 1d4 days unless their bodies are removed from the swamp or a cure disease spell is cast on the corpse.

S9. Long Hall

This hall is long and narrow, and the ceiling of thorns stands only 8 feet above the muddy floor. The hall is arrow straight, and serves as an access to the area S1.

Creatures: As the back way into the hedge, this hall is mostly unused, though guardians have been posted in case intruders set on disrupting the rituals make it past the guards at the entrance. There are **4 Beast Cultists** here accompanied by **6 worgs** who use their scent ability to guard against invisible intruders.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (4): HD 5; HP: 34, 30, 23, 23; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

WORGs (6): HD 4; HP: 26, 25, 25, 22, 21, 17; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+1); Move 18; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

Sro. Giants' Hall

One of the largest of all the halls, this cavernous space is over 60 feet in height. Three trestle tables with benches fill the hall, each 50 feet long and 6 feet high. One sits on a slightly raised earth platform at the north end of the hall, and the others rest on the hard-packed floor. The giant cultists use this hall for feasting, sleeping, and fighting and the tables are covered in appropriately sized trenchers of bread filled with humanoid and other meats, as well as mammoth-tusk drinking horns sized for very large thirsts.

Creatures: Most of the giants are still out raiding, but a **hill giant** and **3 cave giants** remain as guards.

HILL GIANT: HD 8+2; HP: 42; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (2d8); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Throw boulders (2d8 damage).

CAVE GIANTS (3): HD 9+1d6; HP: 44, 42, 35; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (2d8) or 1 slam (1d8); Move 12; Save 6; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: None. (Tome of Horrors Complete 274).

Srr. Black Altar

At the center of the hedge maze lie The Stones, a ring of ancient standing stones whose origins are long forgotten. A steep tor rises out of the marsh to a height of 25 feet, its top flat and level as if a great knife had cut it off. The Stones stand on this hill, and a set of stairs carved from the same rock leads up on three sides. This hill is the one location in the maze that is open to the sky, the dark vortex looming directly over it, however, the high hedge walls block the view of anyone outside seeing the ring unless they actually fly above the hedge and risk the dark bolts from above (see "The Stones" above).

Two rings of standing stones enclose an open area dominated by an



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altar caked in blood, both old and fresh. The outer ring of stones is 15 feet high and 120 feet in diameter; the inner ring is 10 feet tall and 30 feet in diameter. The Stones themselves are roughly cut from a black glass-like rock, harder than simple obsidian and as solid as granite. Veins of red-gold lace the glassy surface, forming a network of markings whose true meaning remains indecipherable. They were there when the first Northlanders drifted into Estenfir, and the few Nuklanders who wandered south of their home on the tundra claimed The Stones were old when they were young. The Northlanders brought the Beast Cult with them who then turned the site to their foul purposes.

The Beast Cultists have carved their own blood-red runes into the faces of the stones and anointed them with grisly trophies of their misdeeds. Iron spikes have been driven into the four corners of the square altar stone as attachment points for a set of iron fetters. Blood-red candles stand at each corner as well, the runes of Shibauroth carved into the tallow. A captive recently taken in Three Rivers is chained to the altar, her armor and clothes stripped from her.

A circle of cultists stand between the inner and outer rings; naked and covered in Beast Runes, both tattooed on and painted in blood. Several wear fearsome masks, necklaces of teeth and claws, or other savage and feral ornaments. Before the altar stands a creature that appears human, but whose heart is that of a demon beast—long ago given over in service to Shibauroth, Demon Lord of Beasts and Blood. In an otherworldly voice he intones a long prayer in Abyssal, the foul words sliding off his tongue and lingering as a foul corruption in the air. By his side three withered crones, feral beast-women in their own right, provide a chanted chorus. Across the altar from the high priest stands a bull-headed statue made from the same strange glassy rock as the stones. Glowing red runes have been carved into the surface of the statue. Any magic-user in the party can quickly note that the statue is actually a powerful construct, no doubt waiting for the right ritual to activate.

Creatures: The captive is, of course, Hengrid Donarsdottir who, though tied up and exhausted has not actually been seriously harmed. The cultists await the end of the ritual to inflict their dark deeds upon her. Standing between the two circles are a total of **14 Beast Cultists**. The crones are **3 green hags**, and the cultist conducting the ritual is **Herjof the Bloody-Handed**, high priest of the cult in Estenfir. The statue is an **obsidian minotaur**, though it is not currently activated.

BEAST CULTISTS OF SHIBAUROTH, RAGING (14): HD 5; HP: 35, 30, 29, 28, 28, 28, 27, 24, 22, 22, 22, 21, 19, 19; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) or 1 bite (1d4); Move 14; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Beast runes; Gear: Winter furs, beast cult totem.

Beast Runes: The Beast Runes of Shibauroth tattooed and branded into the skin of his followers give his Beast Cultists a +2 to movement rate and AC (already factored in the above stat block), as well as render them immune to mind-affecting effects or spells. They also cause the bearer to give off an aura of evil.

GREEN HAGS (3): HD 6; HP: 38, 32, 29; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4 + weakness); Move 12 (Swim 12); Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Mimicry, spells, weakness. (See appendix).

Mimicry: A green hag can imitate sounds to make itself sound like any animal found near its lair.

Spells: A green hag can cast the following spells at will: faerie fire, invisibility, pyrotechnics.

Weakness: A green hag's strike saps strength, inflicting 2 points of strength damage per landed blow.

HERJOF THE BLOODY-HANDED, HIGH PRIEST OF SHIBAUROTH,

Cleric 13: HP: 52; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 +3 heavy mace (1d6 + 3); Move 12; Save 4 (2 vs paralyze or poison); AL C; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: Spells; Gear: +1 plate mail, +3 heavy mace, ring of regeneration, bone holy symbol of Shibauroth
Spells: 1st lvl - cause light wounds x2, detect good, detect magic, protection from good; 2nd lvl - hold person x2, silence (15 foot radius) x2, snake charm; 3rd lvl - cause

disease x2, prayer x2, speak with dead; 4th lvl - cause serious wounds, protection from good (10 foot radius), sticks to snakes x2; 5th lvl - dispel good, finger of death x2, insect plague; 6th lvl - blade barrier.

Obsidian Minotaur: HD 12; HP: 63; AC -2[21]; Atk 2 claws (2d8 + 1d6 fire); Move 9; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 16/3200; Special: Breath weapon, burn, immune to most magic. (Tome of Horrors Complete 403).

Breath Weapon: Once every 1d4+1 rounds, an obsidian minotaur can expel a cloud of gas directly in front of it. The cloud fills a 10-foot cube and lasts for 1 round before dispersing. Any creature in the area must succeed on a saving throw or be slowed (as the slow spell).

Burn: A creature hit by an obsidian minotaur must succeed on a saving throw or take an additional 1d6 points of fire damage for 1d4+1 rounds as clothes ignite and armor becomes searing hot.

Immune to Most Magic: Certain spells and effects function differently against the creature. A transmute rock to mud spell slows it (as the slow spell) for 2d6 rounds (no saving throw), while transmute mud to rock heals all of its hit points. A stone to flesh spell negates its immunity to magic for 1 full round.

Tactics: The cultists of the outer ring charge down the slope and into the fray to savagely attack intruders. Killing them does not disrupt the rituals being conducted. Until the obsidian minotaur is awakened, the high priest will not stop his ritual, even to defend himself. Instead, if he is threatened the crones form a protective circle around him to fight off any attackers. The ritual is being enacted as the party arrives; 5 rounds after the first PC enters the area the ritual is complete and the obsidian minotaur is awakened. It serves the high priest of the Beast Cult, following his directions. If the high priest is slain the minotaur rampages throughout the room, attacking the nearest foe or the last person to harm it, ignoring any sense of tactics. It fights until destroyed. Should the heroes disrupt the ceremony by defeating Herjof before those 5 rounds are over, the obsidian minotaur remains inert and is merely a frightening statue.

Development: The obsidian minotaur is needed for more than just its sheer ferocity. Its body is being used as a vessel through which an avatar of Shibauroth can act to complete the blood sacrifice of Hengrid Donarsdottir. After the obsidian minotaur is awakened the PCs have 6 rounds to destroy the construct before it turns on her and strikes, tearing her heart out and eating it in 1 round. Disrupting the ritual by killing Herjof, freeing her from her bonds and taking her out of the inner ring of stones, or destroying the obsidian minotaur all will halt the ritual. See below for details of what occurs if the PCs fail or succeed in saving Hengrid and disrupting the ritual.

Should the PCs fail: Hengrid dies horribly as her heart is torn out and consumed. A tide of blood and gore washes out of the cloud vortex above the altar, drenching all in The Stones and surrounding hedges. The sky is rent by red thunder, and the rain begins to fall—a red rain of blood with hailstones of gristle and bone. Across the Northlands animals howl, milk curdles, and ale kegs explode. The obsidian minotaur is suddenly imbued with the spirit of Shibauroth and the godly bloodline of Thor. As the blood drenches it from above, it grows and transforms over 3 rounds into a thanatotic titan. During this transformation, the obsidian minotaur is immune to any harm, and all the surviving cultists fall in worship and ignore the actions of the PCs, which provides them a good opportunity for escape. At the end of the transformation, the titan lays waste to any non-cultist within 5 miles of The Stones and sets up its lair in the ancient henge to begin its rule upon the earth as Shibauroth incarnate.

Thanatotic Titan: HD 23; HP: 120; AC -3[22]; Atk 2 claws (4d8); Move 16; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 23/5300; Special: Godslayer. (See appendix).

Godslayer: Any cleric hit by a thanatotic titan's attack must succeed at a saving throw or be unable to cast spells for

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1d4 rounds.

Should the PCs succeed: If Hengrid is saved and the ritual ruined, Thor unleashes his wrath upon the Beast Cult and its hidden lairs. Thunder rolls like none have ever heard before, as if the sky itself has been rent asunder as cyan flashes of lightening stream down out of a sky black with clouds. A cleansing rain falls, washing away the blood and gore of the recent battles. Winds howl and the seas are whipped to froth, drowning any and all who gave their allegiance to the cult. Any surviving cultists within the hedges or indeed all of Estenfird are struck down by these bolts from the blue and left is little more than blackened corpses—all except Herjof who dared to attempt to lay hands upon the divine bloodline of the Thunderer. In a brilliant flash of light Herjof (if alive) or his corpse (if already dead) is suddenly immolated in a cleansing fire and disappears into the swirling storm winds. As the rain peters out and the clouds scatter, the PCs find themselves alone upon the tor, the threat of the Beast Cult no more.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs failed, Beast Cultists pour out of their hiding places throughout Estenfird and the wild lands beyond. Predators and prey violently attack each other and any human they can find, and birds plummet dead from the sky. Temples of Thor burst into flames and his godi are driven mad. And above all, a fledgling demon lord broods and grows in a stricken grove deep in the Yellow Light Marshes. How the PCs deal with the aftermath of the death of a god and the birth of a newly rejuvenated demon lord is up to them, but it shouldn't be pretty.

If the PCs succeeded, they will likely notice that there is little in the way of treasure available in this adventure; the people of Estenfird are not wealthy in gold, silver, or magic and can raise only 2,000 gp per PC worth of arm rings, hacksilver, small valuables, and assorted coinage. In addition, each hero is given a ploughgate (eight oxgangs) of premium farmland near Three Rivers sufficient to accommodate the four families of serfs that work it and generate an annual income of 200 gp for the PC. The PCs can choose to claim larger, less-lucrative tracts of land elsewhere in the wilds of Estenfird if they wish to go through the trouble of settling and developing it themselves. The Beast Cult cares little for possessions, and what they do have is profane and corrupted. However, should the heroes be successful in rescuing Hengrid Donarsdottir, they will have earned the respect and gratitude of her father, and to a lesser extent the rest of the Aesir.

Shortly after returning from the The Stones to Three Rivers and being feted as heroes by the freemen of Estenfird and given their reward, one evening the victorious heroes find themselves lost in a deep fog of divine origin. After wandering for a few minutes, they spot a light in the distance, which leads them to grand feast hall the likes of which they have never seen. Dripping with gold and silver leaf-covered statues and carvings of the gods and past heroes; the hall is warm and inviting. A fire burns in a grand hearth in the center, and finely wrought tables fill the main floor, their benches crowded with the apparitions of the same heroes whose statues line the walls. At the front of the hall is the high table, at which sits a glowing aura of lightning and thunder. A number of places of honor to the left and right of the aura are empty, waiting for the party to take their seats.

With words that burst forth like a sudden storm and whip through men's souls as sharp as the wind, the PCs know they are bidden to sit and enjoy. A feast beyond mortal proportions is laid out for them with roast meats, fresh vegetables, and endless horns of mead and ale. Men and women of unearthly beauty serve the guests. It is a feast of divine magnificence, the food is plentiful and of the finest quality, the company is of the highest caliber, and the entertainment is grand indeed. Skalds, dancing girls, a trained bear, and other performers wander the hall. Boasts and tales of valor issue from the lips of the long-dead heroes, and even a few fights break out in a good-natured way.

After a few hours or days (time seems to have no meaning and none of the feasters seems to grow full, overly drunk, tired, or injured), the aura of thunder and lightening speaks again, and though the words are those mortal ears cannot fathom, all know it is time for the PCs to tell the tales of their deeds and most especially of the defeat of the Beast Cult and rescue of Hengrid Donarsdottir. After the party has each had a chance to boast and tell of their deeds, they finally grow full and drowsy, the heat, food, and mead taking its effects. One by one the heroes drift off to sleep.

The PCs awake back where they were before the mists claimed them, any injuries (including ability damage or negative levels) healed, clothes remade into ones of finer quality, water skins filled with *Thor's Mead* (equal to 3 doses of *potion of heroism*), and a sack of leftover roast hog for each of them (each portion will remain fresh and sustain its owner for 30 days). Additionally, each PC will have a major magical item suited to his class (choose something that the player has expressed a desire for at some time in the past if possible). Furthermore, if they should ever need to call upon the gods for any reason (and if their request is not contrary to the will of the gods) they each have access to a single *limited wish*, though they will not know this (the GM should feel free to have the gods intervene on the party's behalf at some future point).

Appendix — New Monsters

Barghest: This wolfish beast has front limbs that look more like hands than a paws.

BARGHEST: HD 6; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) and 1 bite (1d4); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Feed, shape change into goblin or wolf.

Feed: Once per month, a Barghest may spend a full round feeding on a dead non-chaotic opponent. It grows larger, gaining +1 HD (affecting CL/XP, To Hit, Saving Throw, and HPs instantly), +1 damage to all attacks, and -1 [+1] to AC permanently. Barghests may become at maximum 9 HD creatures, at that point they lose this ability to feed but not their appetite for flesh.

Flame Drake: A red and gold scaled dragon, but stands only on two legs.

FLAME DRAKE: HD 6; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 bite (2d6) and tail slap (1d6); Move 8, (Fly 24); Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Fireball breath.

Fireball Breath: Every 1d6 rounds a Flame Drake may spit a ball of flame that explodes like a fireball spell doing 5d6 damage to all within 20 feet.

Green Hag: Green-skinned crone-like creature.

GREEN HAG: HD 6; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4 + weakness); Move 12 (Swim 12); Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Mimicry, spells, weakness.

Mimicry: A green hag can imitate sounds to make itself sound like any animal found near it's lair.

Spells: A green hag can cast the following spells at will: faerie fire, invisibility, pyrotechnics.

Weakness: A green hag's strike saps strength, inflicting 2 points of strength damage per landed blow.

Megaloceros: The elk stands the height of a human at its shoulder. Its antlers are ten feet across.

MEGALOCEROS DOE: HD 6; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 hooves (1d6); Move 15; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: None.

MEGALOCEROS FAWN: HD 3; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 hooves (1d4); Move 12; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

Redcap: This snarling little humanoid wears metal boots and a blood red pointed cap.

REDCAP: HD 8; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 scythe (1d6+2) and 1 kick (1d4+2); Move 15; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Irreligious, Red Cap.

Irreligious: Redcaps must make a Saving Throw or flee in terror when presented with a holy symbol.

Red Cap: Redcaps wear a wooden formless hat, red with the blood of it's victim. While wearing this hat they gain a +2 to damage (already factored into above stat block) and regenerate 2 hit points every round. Knocking off the hat requires an attack vs AC 2[17].

Peryton: This creature has a stag body and antlers, hawk wings and talons, and the head of a wolf.

PERYTON: HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 hooves (1d4), gore (1d6); Move 12 (Fly 24); Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Shadow mark.

Shadow Mark: A peryton can spend an action flying over a foe. If his shadow touches his foe (who must make a saving throw to avoid), the peryton gains a +2 to hit and damage that foe until that foe is dead or the peryton chooses to use this ability again.

Thanatotic Titan: This titanic, armored figure's hands end in claws. Its voice thunders with blasphemous rage.

THANATOTIC TITAN: HD 23; AC -3[22]; Atk 2 claws (4d8); Move 16; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 23/5300; Special: Godslayer.

Godslayer: Any cleric hit by a thanatotic titan's attack must succeed at a saving throw or be unable to cast spells for 1d4 rounds.

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