

WHEN WINTER CAME TO SKEDEMOSSE

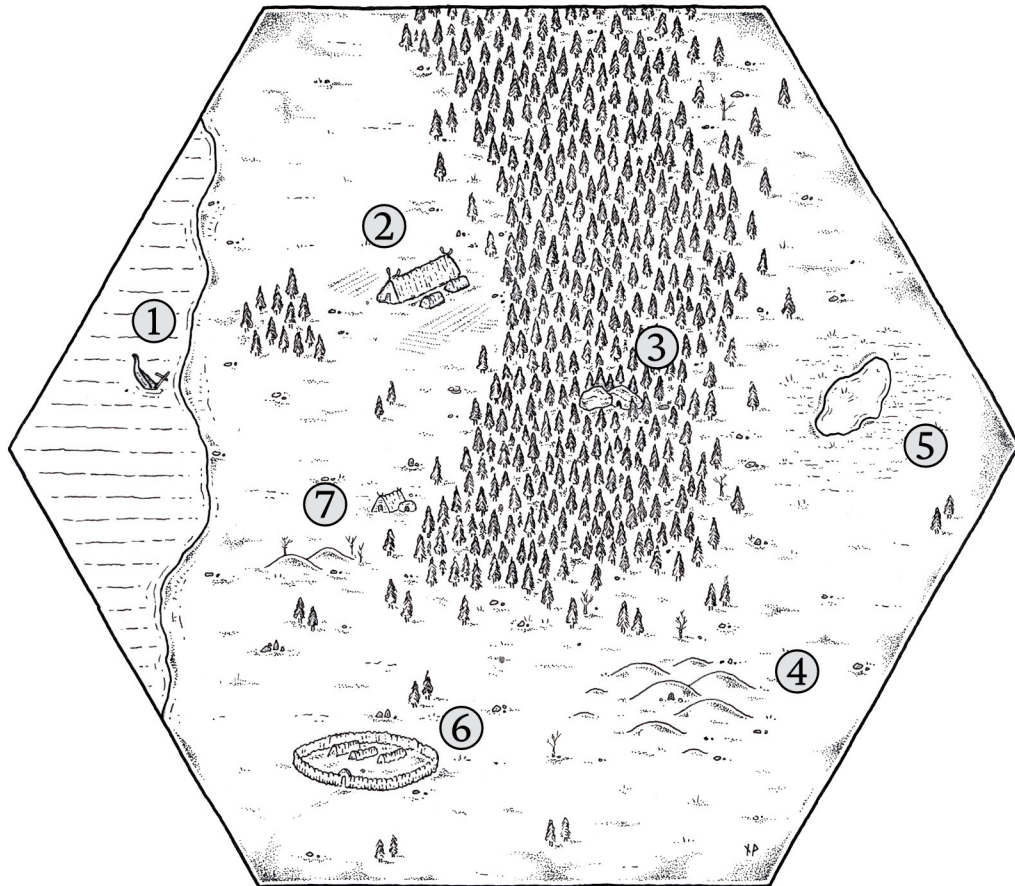
A SCANDINAVIAN IRONAGE ADVENTURE



DESIGNED FOR USE WITH
**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**

FOR TRADITIONAL
ROLEPLAYING GAMES BY
**CHRISTOPHER
KÄCK**

THE LOCAL REGION



1. The Beach

2. Thorir's Farm

3. The Troll Lair

4. The Ancient Grave Mounds

5. The Sacred Bog

6. The Abandoned Ring Fort

7. Floki's Smithy



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Writing & layout: Christopher Käck

Cover by: David Seymore

Cartography: Niklas Wistedt

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INTRODUCTION

This is an adventure written for old school roleplaying games and is completely compatible with Old School Essentials. The adventure is set in **600 AD in Scandinavia** in a **low-fantasy historical setting**.

The adventure takes place on Öland in old Svithiod (what later becomes modern-day Sweden).

PLAYING IN VENDEL PERIOD

Vendel Period starts in **Scandinavia** during the *Migration Period* and ends with the start of the *Viking Age (540-790AD)*. It was a time of strife and heroism. The time of the famous heroes such as Beowulf and monsters like Grendel. Pagan kings ruled the North guarded by their elite warriors.



This adventure is not written with the intent of making a game setting that is just like the Vendel age actually was, but rather *how it might have been perceived to be* during the era.

The gods *were* real. There were things, *sentient things*, hiding in the woods, in the ancient mounds, in the mountains and under the waves. Runes held *real* power. Your ancestors *did* conspire to protect you.

Here follows some suggestion of modifications to the rules to allow a more flavorful experience.

Available classes

I suggest limiting the available classes to the following

Warrior (Fighter/Barbarian), **Skald** (Bard), **Thief**, **Goði**

Weapon	Damage	Weight (coins)	Cost (sp)	Qualities
Axe	1d6	40	4	Melee, Missile(5'-10'/11'-20'/21-30')
Seax	1d6	30	7	Melee
Spear	1d6	30	4	Brace, Melee, Missile(5'-20'/21'-40'/41-60')
Sling	1d4	20	2	Blunt, Missile(5'-40'/41'-80'/81-160')
Bow	1d6	30	25	Missile(5'-50'/51'-100'/101-150'), Two-handed
Dane axe	1d8	50	7	Melee, slow, two-handed
Sword	1d8	60	10	Melee

(Cleric), **Hunter** (Ranger).

Money

Silver was typically used as monetary instrument in this era, so if you wish to have an authentic feel I suggest you convert from a gold based system to silver based system by simply converting the rulebooks gold pieces one to one for silver pieces (1gp = 1sp).

Typically silver bands worn around the arm were used for trade. They could be cut to achieve the desired weight needed for a trade. Coins were also used.

Weapons

Feel free to get creative with the weapons list but here is a proposed table for Scandinavian Vendel Era weaponry.

Armor

Keep the existing armor list as is but remove the option for plate mail.

Note that chainmail did exist at this time but was very expensive and wearing one will make the person stand out as a warrior of great wealth or status.

Helmets were also a prestigious piece of armor to wear.

Helmet +1 AC

Religion

The Germanic pantheon was large and many Gods were worshipped. The religion during the Vendel Period just preceded the Viking age and you can find a lot of inspiration for the religious practices during the era by reading the works of *Snorre Sturlarsson* or other re-tellings.

Typically every man and woman would have a deity they were closest to, their “best friend”.

Every religious character that makes an effort to support their patron with sacrifice and prayer will be granted some protection in life.

Pick one deity from the list and grant the character the associated bonus.

Tyr +1 INT

Tor + 1 STR

Frey/Freya +1 CHA

Odin +1 WIS

Ull +1 DEX

Njord +1 CON

The Gods demands sacrifice and worship and will in return grant strengths and victories.

Breaking an oath will remove this advantage and it can not be regained until proper amends have been made for breaking the oath.

Society

Small kingdoms make up the north. Many of the former large power centers have lost their status when Europe transitioned from bronze to iron based societies.

On the top of the social hierarchy were the **Kings**, under them came the **Jarls**

(“earls”), then came the freemen, the **Karls**. Under the Karls there existed a slave cast called **Thralls**.

Languages spoken

Northern Speech or Norse, is the “common” of Vendel Period Scandinavia. It has four distinct dialects, all are comprehensible between each other but they help mark where someone is from.

Archaic Old Norse - older version of Norse, mostly used by ancient beings like Trolls and Dwarves. Can be found on old carvings

West Norse - Spoken in what is modern day **Norway** (and later on **Iceland** but it was not populated by the Norse until 9th century)

East Norse - Spoken in what is modern day **Sweden** and **Denmark**

Gutnish - Spoken on the baltic islands of **Gotland** and **Bornholm**

There are a myriad of other languages that are possible to encounter especially if the characters leave Scandinavia. Such as *Anglic* and other *Germanic languages*. *Saami* (to the north) and *Latin* (to the far south).

These might be more or less comprehensible for a Norse speaker and I advice further research if you go that path (or just wing it: *we are here to have fun*).

Common names

Male	Female
1. Agmundr	1. Alfildr
2. Björn	2. Dagrún
3. Egill	3. Fríða
4. Gudleif	4. Gulla
5. Hákon	5. Guðrún
6. Hjalmarr	6. Hjördís
7. Oddvarr	7. Ingríðr
8. Ragnarr	8. Ragna
9. Sveinn	9. Sigríðr
10. Ulfr	10. Sólveig
11. Yngvarr	11. Valdís
12. Þórvaldr	12. Þóra

THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is set during winter in 600 AD. It is a location based sandbox covering a single six mile hex. Feel free to use it as a *whodunnit one-shot* or as part of a larger campaign.

It should also be runnable as a more conventional fantasy adventure with little to no modifications.

Assume **THACO 19[0]** and **120'** movement if nothing else is stated.

Weather

Weather (roll daily)

1. **Sunny**
2. **Overcast**
3. **Slight breeze, cold**
4. **Strong winds, very cold**
5. **Light snowfall, cold**
6. **Snow storm, very cold**
(CON check or suffer -2 on all reasonably affected ability checks)

Winter has arrived and a first

layer of snow covers the ground. The cold air is crisp and unforgiving. The snow makes a crackling sound as you step on it.

Suggested hook

Returning from Bornholm traveling back home to Svithiod the characters have made the risky decision to make a push for it, hoping to finish the last bit of travel before the long winter sets in. Traveling by boat up the coast they are surprised by a harsh winter storm and the ship gets wrecked against the cliffs of the baltic island Öland.

They wake up as the first morning light clears the storm and they find themselves on the beach with their belongings strewn about them. Parts of the ship can be found broken into pieces along the waterfront.

Except for the boat and the food only one important thing seems to be missing: the ancestral arm ring.

This ring is of grave importance to one of the characters. Having been in the family for six generations, granted to his ancestral father by a Dane King after performing deeds of valor at his hall. *It must be recovered.*

The troll has the ring

Welcome to the holy land of Öland.

The hex

Drop the hex in your existing hex crawl or simply place it on the west coast of Öland just south of the town **Köpingsvik**.

The hex is about 6 miles and so an unburdened traveler (with good traveling conditions) could cross the tile 4 times in a day.

Most locations, *except the troll's lair* are well known by the locals and I recommend having the NPCs talk about, and give directions, to them.

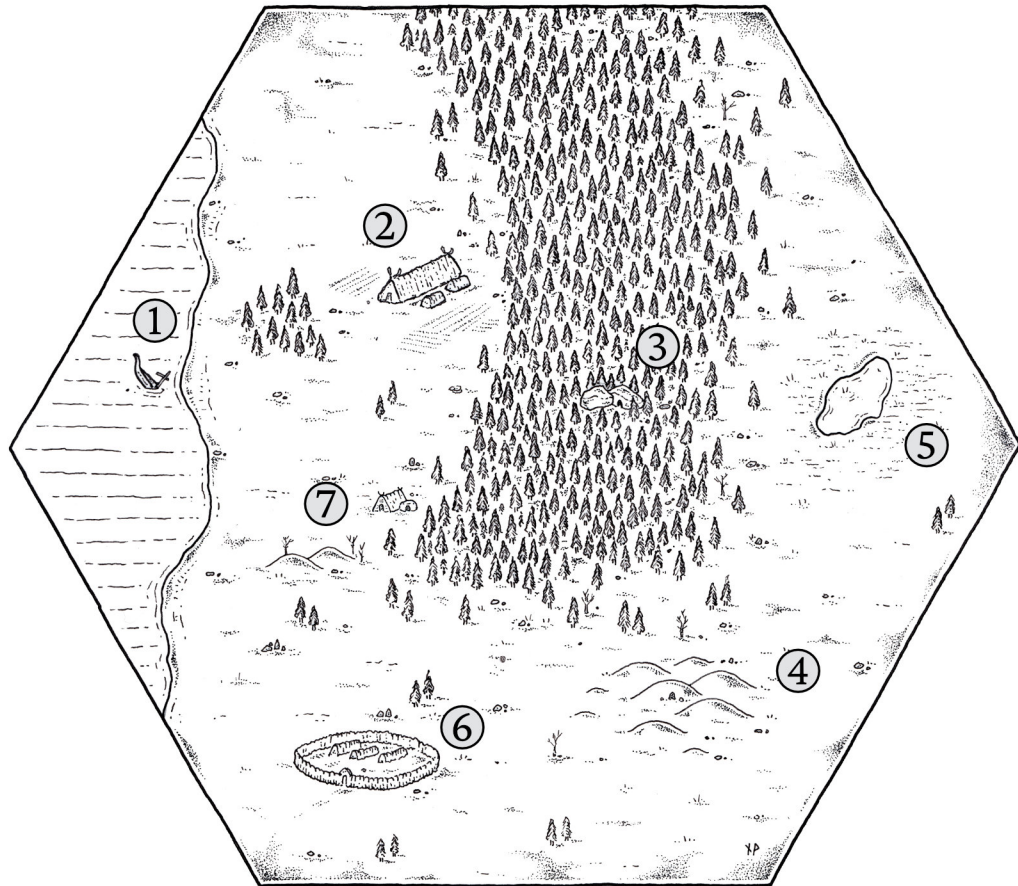
THE EVENTS TIMELINE

These events will take place if the characters do not intervene.

The first night after waking up on the beach

- **Eira** will tie the dogs in the guest sleeping section at the farm and unlock the main door before going to bed
- **Six armed men** will sneak in to the farm in the middle of the night with intent of stealing the gold hidden under Thoris's sleeping cot (1-in-6 characters wake up before they have killed anyone)
- They will **murder Thorir** and d4 other in their sleep and make away with the gold through the woods towards the abandoned ring-fort
- If they make it there they will stay another night to divvy up the gold and celebrate and then travel north to Köpingsvik

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Random encounters in the wilderness (roll twice a day)

1-4. 1d6 **robbers** from the ring fort (see page 27)

5-8. 1d6 **farmers** traveling to Köpingsvik, the trade hub to the north. *HD 1 (6hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 7. Attack: hand-axe (1d6)*

9-10. A **hunting party**. 4 **hunters** on steeds and their 3 **hounds**. Earlier in the day an altercation within the group resulted in a dead hunter, the body was hidden. Their conscience and nerves are eating away at the group **Hunter**. *HD 1 (6hp). AC 9 [10]. ML 7. Att: bow (1d6). Hounds HD 1 (4hp). AC 5 [14]. ML 8. Att: bite (1d8)*

11. *Eilifr* the Dwarf (see page 38)

12. The Troll (see page 28)

1. The Beach

- The snow has been disturbed, almost looking like large **footprints** close to the person who carried the arm ring, they lead inland but disappear under newly fallen snow
- All characters's equipment can be found strewn about the beach, as well as the broken remains of the boat
- Spending a full round combing the beach reveals some ember worth equivalent of 1d10 SP
- All rations are ruined by the water
- Very cold, as it is freezing temperatures and everyone is wet from the storm
- Chimney smoke rises from behind some trees nearby (**Thorir's farm**)



2. Thorir's Farm

The well maintained homestead is owned by Thorir. He lives here with his wife, children, brother and farm-hands.

- Smoke rises from the long-house roof. Smells of burning birch
- Trails in the snow lead between the houses and around the farm

- Sound of Halfdan chopping wood can be heard during the morning hours

Thorir will honor custom and house any guest that show up at his doorstep. He will offer place by the fire, food, mead to drink and dry hay to sleep in.

He will not accept insolence from his guest. Baring this he will show the utmost respect and hospitality.

Pigsty

Pigsty is warm and contain several well fed and wooly pigs that are happy for visitors.

There is a separate section where fresh hey is stored, the room is warmed by the pigs and can sleep a few people (if they can stand the smell)

Shed

A well kept shed lined with farming equipment and tools. A small **sailing boat** lies upside down packed away for winter (seats 6 people) behind the house, the sail can be found in the shed.

The völvas hut

A small hut marked by an oxen skull above the doorway. Next to the door sits three large, blood caked, wooden idols.

- Messy interior with herbs, pots and rune-carved bones strewn through the room
- *Alfhild* the völva lives here and spends most the time

during winter indoors

- Two tiny goat can be found rummaging about the living space (standing on tables, shelves etc)

What are people talking about?

1. The cold weather and how it is a bad time to travel
2. The smith has always been an odd character, but stranger than usual lately
3. Excitement about the upcoming Yule celebrations at the fortress on the *She-isle* in Skedemosse. Horse races and sacrifices are the main event
4. Harvest was plentiful and stores are full, but the signs still indicate a cold winter this year. It is thus good that the island does not have any wolves to bother them. *However legend talk about them swimming over from the main land in harsher years*

The long-house

Large long house with moss covered roof. Two doors both facing the other buildings. Roof slopes down ending at ground level. Smoke rise from the smoke hole.

- Hit by wall of warmth as one enters
- Smell of stew cooking over the open fire

The house consists of two sections, one primarily for the animals and one for the humans. Its just separated by a low wall that doesn't reach the ceiling so the sounds and smells of the animals spreads throughout the homestead. The living space is to the west and the animals live in the east part of the building, each have a separate entrance.

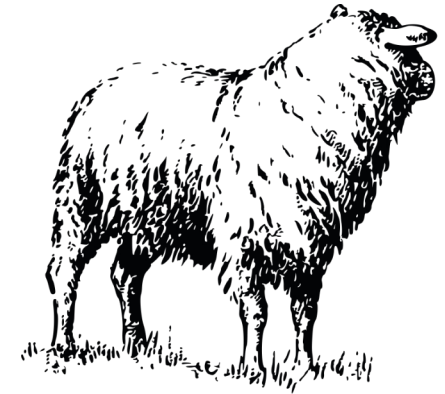
The living area

The biggest section of the house. This is where the family and farm hands spend their time when they are indoors. There is a large fire-pit in the

middle of the room surrounded by low benches.

- From the ceiling hangs drying herbs, smoked meats, hard bread, and cheese
- Further towards the animals there is a section with long tables and benches
- Along the walls there are cots for sleeping, with hanging fur and skins that allow for the slightest privacy
- Some parts of the walls are reserved for storage. Clay pots and wooden bowls and barrels containing seeds, food & mead. Furs, tools and weapons also clutter the shelves
- During night everyone on the farm sleeps in here, including the two large dogs (the only exception is the völva). During daytime you can expect to meet the women of the household occupied with construction

of fabric, cooking or other crafts in this room



Random events around the farm (roll twice a day)

1. One of the **dogs** get very agitated about something in the tree line and needs to be locked into the stables to avoid him running off (He has just spotted a bird)
2. **Ylva** and **Gunder** can be seen sneaking off discussing something in subdued voices (*they are worried about how to handle the pregnancy*)
3. The völva **Alfild** walks out into the yard to the wooden idols in front of her hut and begins a *blot*, an offering to the Gods. The ceremony involves using twigs to spray animal blood on to the idols, herself and anyone else nearby
4. **Rough men** carrying weapons ride through the farm searching for three runaway thralls. They will pay 75sp to anyone returning the thralls to their owners. *HD 1 (8hp). AC 7 [12]. Morale 9. Attack: hand-axe (1d6). THACO 18 [+1]*

People at the farm

Thorir and his wife Gro

- *Thorir (49yr)* is a rich Karl and has fought many battles for is Jarl, he is deeply loyal
- Speaks with **booming** voice. Weathered face. Ice blue eyes give impression of a man of action
- He is a serious person, understanding the ancient traditions as law
- Questioned about the arm ring he says there are **outlaws** prowling the area but he recommends seeking the answers to its location with **the Gods in the bog** (“*It might be decorating Ran’s hall for all we know*”)
- Keeps a **chainmail, helmet** and **sword** by his bed
- *Gro (39yr)* is ten years younger than Thorir, content in leading the large household

Thorir. HD 3 (14hp). AC 7 [12] (6 [3] with shield, 2 [15] in armor w/shield),. Morale 11. *Attack:* Sword (1d8). THACO 17 [+2]

Gro. HD 1 (5hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 10. *Attack:* Dagger (1d4)

Alfhild The Völva

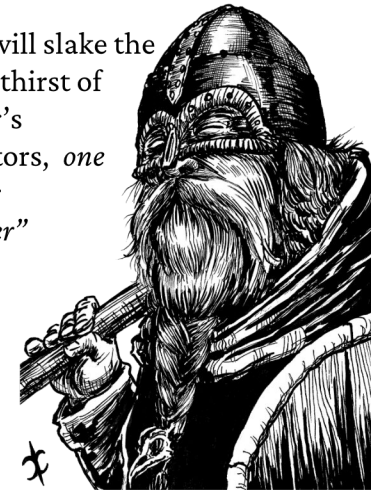
- Local seer. Reads runes, heals the sick, interprets and communicates with Spirits. Both respected and feared by the others
- Short magical metal wand. Dressed in colorful red wool dress over a dirty white linen dress. Rune carved bones in neckless
- **Knows** that there is a troll in the woods that likes to collect things. Doesn’t know how to find it
- **Knows** that the smith has drunk dragon-blood and is blessed by its gift

- **Knows** that unruly spirits guard a powerful sword in the old grave mounds. *Many things once lost can be found there*
- Has read warning sign in the runes that tragedy is about to strike the farm, suspects all newcomers to be the harbingers of the doom
- Will cast runes for 5 silver and read a persons future. The 3-in-6 and and what she tells will come true
- Will tend those that need healing, will not use the spell **Cure Disease** lightly (only on friends, or to help friends, or if she is payed equivalent of **200 SP**)

Alfhild. HD 2 (12hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 11 *Attack:* Metal wand (1d6). *Spells:* *Blinding flash* (Everyone within 30’ **save vs spell** or get blinded for 1d6 rounds), *Remove/Cause Fear*, *Cure/Cause Disease* (1/week)

What the Runes reveal

1. “You will soon haggle with the dead”
2. ”Your ancestors howl in pain over the loss of a bracelet. Do them right and you will be rewarded”
3. ”The dead sit hungry when you feast, pay them great honor this Yule feast”
4. “You will die without a blood bound heir. You need to seek other conduits for your immortality”
5. “Things happen often that you think of the least. A snake will be your bane”
6. “You will slake the blood thirst of Thorir’s ancestors, *one way or another*”



The Farmhands

There are four farmhands: *Halfdan* (27yr), *Björn* (20yr), *Gunder* (19yr) & *Olle* (16yr).

The farmhands assist on the farm with all heavy tasks. In the winter there is a lot of wood chopping, some repairs to the buildings, tending to animals and clearing out dung.

They are never caught without a small knife (1d4), but typically carry farming tools such as hand-axes (1d6). In the longhouse Thorir keeps spears and round wooden shields for them.

- **Gunder** has a secret affair with the maid *Ylva*. They hide this from the family
- **Björn** is a talented lyre player and often entertains with stories of old during the evenings

Farm hands. HD 1 (8hp, 6hp 2hp 4hp). AC 7 [12] (6 [13] with shield), Morale 8. *Attack:* Spear/hand-axe (1d6)

The Maids

Three maids are working on the farm: *Eira* (20yr), *Ylva* (18yr), *Sylvi* (16yr).

The maids assist with milking the cows and goats, tending animals, cooking food, and producing fabrics.

They always carry a small blade hanging from their belts (1d4).

- **Eira** is secretly plotting to have Thorir's gold stolen
- **Eira** feels unjustly treated by *Thorir* and *Gro* and seek to settle the score by helping the outlaws
- **Ylva** is pregnant, the farmhand *Gunder* is the father. It is still the first trimester and it doesn't show much except she experiences morning sickness

The Maids. HD 1 (4hp, 3hp, 2hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 7. *Attack:* Knife (1d4)

Thorir and Gro's children

The couple have had several children together, four of which are currently living: *Vivi* (15yr), *Vide* (14yr), *Asbjörn* (4yr), *Tora* (1yr).

- The two eldest help around the farm with chores learning the crafts and trade. They always carry blades (1d4)
- **Vide** is the oldest boy and destined to inherit the farm. He follows closely the lead of his father and joins him on his travel to the Thing and other errands
- The two toddlers are taken care of by their mother *Gro* but she is a busy woman so the siblings, maids and farmhands often help out with this task

Vide. HD 1 (6hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 10. *Attack:* Knife (1d4)

Vivi. HD 1 (3hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 10. *Attack:* Knife (1d4)

The dogs

There are two large wolf-hounds on the farm, *Tage* and *Garm*. They are massive and covered with a coarse grey pelt. They are used as guard dogs and for hunting.

They obey all residents of the farm.

Hounds HD 2 (8hp, 3hp). AC 5 [14]. Morale 9. *Attack:* bite (1d8). THACO 18 [+1]. MV 180' (60')

Take down on an attack roll of natural 20 they bring their prey to the ground giving it -4 AC until next full round

Vigilant only surprised on 5 or 6

Ulf, Thorir's brother

A warrior. A few years younger than brother. Enjoy's ale more than he should. Loyal to his brother (ML 12 when protecting him).

Ulf. HD 3 (19hp). AC 7 [12] (6 [13] with shield, 2 [15] in armor w/shield). Morale 10, *Attack:* Axe (1d6). THACO 17 [+2]

2. The Ancient Grave Mounds

On a wide field several large **grass and stone covered mounds** can be seen from far off.

The place is known locally as the *ancient mounds*, or the *barrow*. It is not known exactly when it was built, but what people **do** know is that the ancestors used this place as a burial and holy site. There are rumors of restless spirits residing in the barrows so locals stay mostly clear of the site, especially at night.

Sometimes sheep herders will allow their flock to graze in the area but the shepherds take great care not to be forced to sleep anywhere near the hills.

Encounters

1. **Local couple** trysting on top of a mound for good luck and fertility. Will quickly make a run for it if discovered
2. **4 Grave robbers** busy digging into the top of one

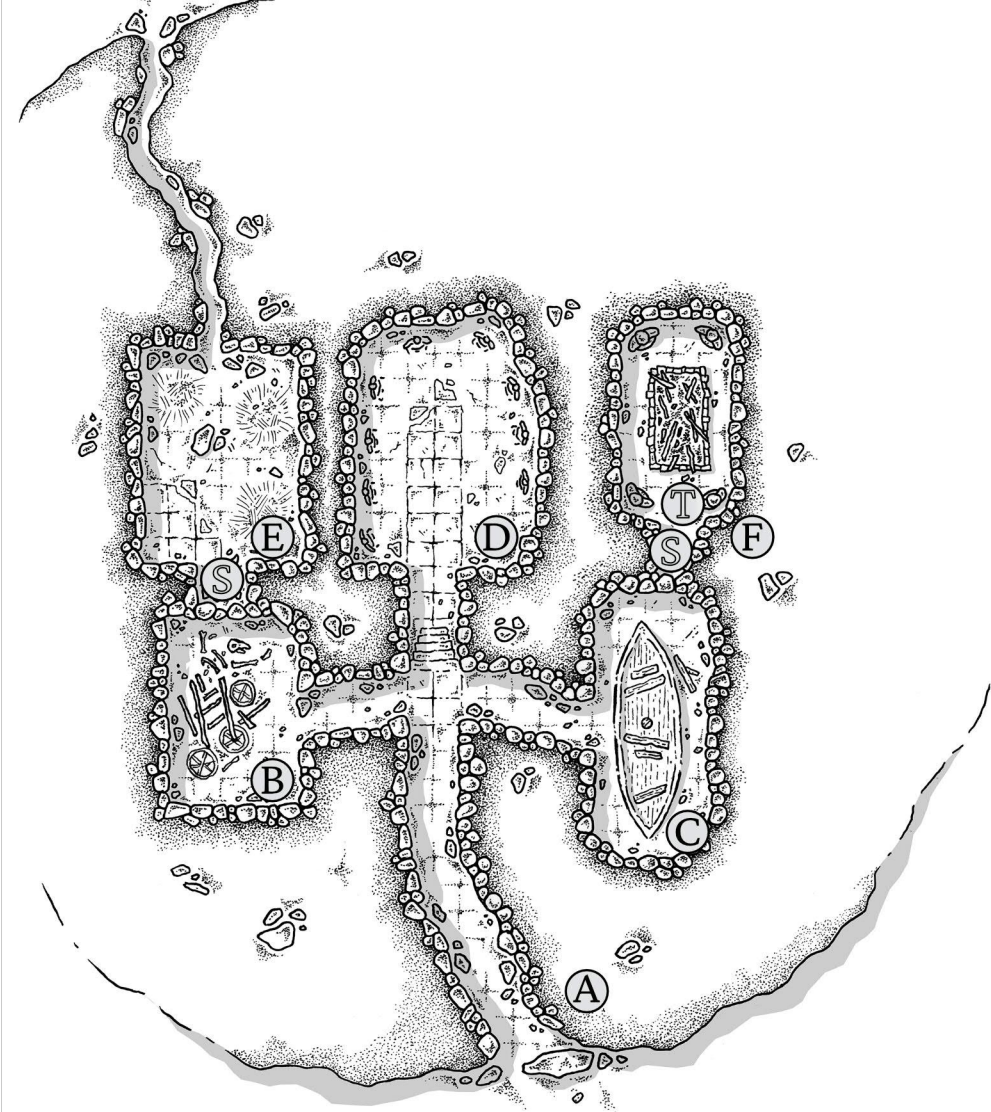
of the barrows hoping to strike ancient treasure. If they see someone approaching they will flee leaving an abandoned shovels and picks behind them (*stats as Brigands*)

3. **1d4 Smoldering boar** (see page 25)
4. **Elifir the Dwarf** (see page 38)

One mound stand out in particular. It is **covered by a murder of crows**, all looking at the approaching characters. The **grass** on the mound **seem dryer** than the others.

The haunted mound

When the crow covered mound is approached they fly up into the heavens with a loud fluttering. One can not be sure, but it's almost sound like the bird are crowing *Only sorrow lies here* before flying off north towards the forrest.



- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. The entrance | E. The plundered tomb |
| B. The wagon grave | F. The pyre |
| C. The boat grave | S. Secret door |
| D. The family burial chamber | T. Trap |

A. The entrance

This human sized entrance, facing east-south-east, is partially blocked by an old stone slab that has fallen to the side. The opening is wide enough for an adult human to squeeze through.

It is **very dark** inside the cave and a light source is required (torches, candles or oil lamps for example). Except when the sun is setting on the *autumnal equinox* (at that time the suns rays shine into the tunnel, illuminating it).

- *Smells of damp earth*. The walls are lined with large boulders and the floor is packed earth
- The ceiling is rather low and to enter a normal man would have to *crouch down*

B. The wagon grave

Wooden debris in the middle of the room from an old broken wagon and the skeletal remains of a horse.

Searching the debris uncovers an unusable bronze dagger and a **gold ring** (20sp).

Some of the stones in the north-western wall can be pushed over and **reveal the entrance to room E** (can be found by searching the area).

C. The boat grave

This room contain the outlines of an broken down old boat. In its midst lies a skeleton, a shattered old bronze sword (worthless) and a beautiful **bone comb** (10sp).

- In the north-western wall some stones can be removed and **reveal the entrance to room F**. A successful search will reveal it

D. The family burial chamber

Following the main entryway forward arrives at some steps that leads down into a large chamber.

- In the chamber **sit a dozen skeletons** resting against the walls. The chamber is a family burial chamber and the skeletons all belong to the one extended family who lived here during the late bronze age
- Searching the room reveals a stag horn, some old broken pots, bronze and **gold jewelry** (200sp)
- There is a **restless spirit** who haunts this room. If the room is disturbed a spectral glow starts lighting up one of the skeletons. It will raise its head slowly and greet the visitor in an **ominous crackling voice**

The vengeful wight

- The **wight** is named *Alu*
- **Mostly bones** and some very **dry skin** stretches over the animated body. Dressed in tatters barely recognizable as clothes. Ornate **bronze torc** around

his neck (300sp). The **empty eye sockets** have a piercing stare that makes the weak shiver. The bones crack and creak as he moves about

- *Alu* owns a **powerful sword** of dwarven make called *Heidr*

Heidr Magical sword +2

The sword is sentient but unable to communicate

Every time the sword is drawn without getting to taste blood it incurs a *mental burden* on the wielder. **Save vs spell** or get -1 WIS until sword tastes blood again. The effect is accumulative, when WIS reaches 0 the character turns into a wight. The blood must come from an act of violence (blood letting does not slake its thirst)

- *Alu* **knows where the troll is hiding**
- The wight will aggressively defend the family tomb

against any plundering

Wight. HD 3 (13hp). AC 5 [14]. Morale 12. *Attack:* energy drain THACO 17 [+2]. MV 90' (30'). XP 50

Mundane damage immunity (only harmed by silver and magic)

Undead

Seeking vengeance

- The wight is trapped in his old body due to an unresolved blood feud. He lingers here in hope of being able to claim his revenge
- The wight is willing to trade the sword Heidr against an **oath** sworn to end his cursed state by granting him vengeance. For the same price he will also **tell them where the troll lives** (*if they are wise enough to ask for this info*)
- If the oath is sworn and the oath giver changes his mind at any point (*i.e.*

decides not to actively seek the revenge) the wight **will know this** and come to haunt them that very night. The first appearance is a warning. If the oath-sworn does not pursue the vengeance after that Alu will return another night when he is sleeping and try to kill the oath-breaker and reclaim the blade

- The wight can at will appear and disappear, out of the soil, near Heidr
- The vengeance Alu seeks is the **violent death** of the last living relative of a man named Tóki
- Alu will also accept a legalistic reason, presented by a law man, for why the dispute should already be settled (but will grant no sword)
- Tóki was responsible for the willful and sadistic murder of Alu's wife and daughter
- The last living relative of

Tóki is the **farmhand Gunder** on **Thorir's farm**. Alu knows this and will describe him in detail

E. The plundered tomb

Strong musk of animals. Faint source of **outdoor light** make it in through the small tunnel to the west if its daytime.

Smoldering Boar. HD 3 (8, 12, 12, 17, 16, 15hp). AC 7 [12]. Morale 9. *Attack:* tusk (2d4) THACO 17 [+2]. MV 150' (50'). XP 35

- Hidden burial chamber that has long since been plundered by grave robbers. The robbers left a **small tunnel** that can be crawled through leading into the room
- The tunnel has since been used by a sounder of **large boar** that have been influenced by the restless spirits living in the mound. **1d6 boars** will be restlessly rummaging about the room at any moment. They are **very aggressive**. Their

skin seemed **scabbed** and, as if they are **smoldering**, **smoke** is rising up from their backs

F. The pyre

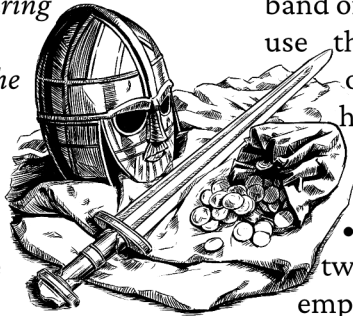
Hidden behind a the western stone wall sits a smaller chamber. It is covered with soot and in the middle of the floor are the remains of an old pyre.

- **A trap!** The floor just after the entrance hides a very thin rotten floor board. Stepping on it might break it causing a fall down in a 6' pit causing 1d4 damage
- Remnants of wooden idols in each corner (men in horned helmets, where the horns are shaped like flying birds of prey facing each other over the head)
- Searching the pyre unveils four pieces of **2 ornate gilded foot rings** (1000sp, 1400sp), a **cloak pin** (800sp) and a **medallion** (1300sp) and 4000 ancient pieces of **copper coin**

4. The Abandoned Ring Fort

Overgrown trails lead towards a hill that rises above the grass clad landscape. Visible from afar, at the top of a hill stands the ruins of an old *seemingly* abandoned ring fort.

- *If approached during the night of the farm attack, or the night following:* **warm light from a lit bonfire** can be seen from some ways off



- The **stone walls** stand in a large circle. They were 16' high during their heyday but winter and scavenging for stone has taken its toll and the walls now irregular in height and in some places not taller than 7'
- There is a **single doorless gate** into the fort
- Inside the fort there are the outlines of three houses still standing. The original

roofs are gone on all of them

- One house has been given a temporary roof made of fir branches, moss and assorted evergreen by a band of **local outlaws** that use this place a basis of operations. The house has a makeshift door
- The remaining two buildings stand empty
- 1d8 **outlaws** are present 2 in 6 chance the **leader** is here
- In the house 40 rations can be found, and 100sp worth of stolen silver
- *During the night of the farm attack, or the night following:* a large bonfire lights the center of the fort and the outlaws are celebrating having split the loot from the farm. All the **8 outlaws**

and **their leader** are here. **All of Thorir's stolen gold** can be found in the house

The Outlaws

Ragged clothes from wilderness living. **Scarred and rough men.** Some missing eyes or fingers.

They have been planing the attack on the farm for a few weeks after meeting with *Eira, the farm maid*, in Köpingsvik during a market day.

- The outlaws **know nothing** about the missing arm ring
- Bringing them in to Köpingsvik will yield a reward of 10sp per outlaw. There is no penalty for killing or robbing them (as they are outlaws) but it yields no other reward

Outlaw leader. HD 2 (12hp). AC 7 [12] (6 [13] with shield). Morale 8. *Attack:* Spear/hand-axe (1d6). THACO 17 [+2]. XP 20



- * • The leader has a helmet and shield and padded jacket as armor. He has a **war horn**, when he sounds it it **inspires his men** (*ML 11 and it halts those fleeing*)
- He is a sympathetic leader towards his men, but ruthless to outsiders and men of order. He feels his outlawry is a betrayal by society and he has lust for revenge

The Outlaws HD 1 (4hp). AC 9 [10]. Morale 7. *Attack:* hand-axe (1d6). THACO 19 [0]. XP 10

5. The Troll Lair

The Troll is a hungry collector of things, *artifacts*, that strikes it's fancy. Others call it *Hrossþjófr*.

It's not *simply* evil. It just wants *things* and has very little concern for human life or happiness.

- Doesn't go near the farm (superstition: *doesn't want to incur Aesir wrath by disturbing those under their protection*. He has seen the wooden idols and he does not like them)
- Always hungers for meat & items imbued with love
- Very *curious*, get fascinated when it sees something new or strange. It can't help itself but sneak up and examine it
- *Scared of loud noises & thunder*. Will try to flee from anything very loud except if it's protecting it hoard or has become very angry (morale check to see if he stays put when loud

noises are employed during initiated combat)

- *Bark skin*. When not seen by anyone but birds the Troll can turn its skin to bark, making it look like an old dead tree. 1-in-8 chance to see through the disguise
- **Speaks:** Slow and staggering Archaic Norse, but doesn't really want to

The Troll HD 4 (18hp). AC 4 [15]. Morale 9. THACO 15 [+4]. XP 125.

Attack: Club/throw rock (1d8) or *weapon grab* (on successful attack he will grab a weapon or shield and throw them away 3-in-6 the item breaks)

The troll lair

Only two people except the troll knows how to find his lair: **The vengeful wight:** Can tell exactly where it is, for a price.

The smith: Knows it might be in the woods and what signs to look out for.

The troll houses itself in the woods. It lives there under several massive moss covered rocks stacked up against each other forming a cave entrance that leads down into a dug out hole in the ground. It moved there recently after the smith scared it away from its old hiding hole.

Outside

- The stones are moss covered, if the moss is removed it reveals runic inscription of dwarfish make
- Bones of various origin, mostly cattle, can be found close to the cave
- The entrance looks like a naturally occurring hole between several large rocks (seemingly placed there by the continental glacier)

The cave

- The rather small entrance leads down to one big room. It is *very dark* in here and smells like a stable



- **4-in-6 chance the troll is home.** If home he will wait standing in the shadows perfectly still until all intruders have passed him, before trying to grab the last one to enter and run (**save vs paralysis**, every round to wriggle out)
- The cave contains the following four pieces of jewelry: *the stolen arm ring*, a royal golden **torc neckless** (1300sp), an ancient **blue cobalt bead necklace** of Egyptian import (800sp), a wooden box containing **beads of ember** (500sp)

6. The Sacred Bog

The bog is called *Skedemosse* and surrounds a small lake, cornered by sharp reeds.

- **The lake** look green and inhospitable but it is **holy** and has been used as long as people can remember to make sacrifices to the Gods
- Impossible to travel to the bog on horseback (difficult on foot), unless using one of the two stone-paved roads that lead to it (one from south-west, one from east)
- East of the bog lies a raised track made for horse racing, that regularly sees use (*winning horse is then sacrificed in the bog*)
- On the *southern shore* there is a small **neck of land reaching out into the lake**, on it sits a **small boat** that allows travelers to reach the lake center to make sacrifices (*customary sacrifices include burned*

weapons, jewelry and animals)

- On the neck of land there are **two large poles** stuck into the ground. Each pole is **crowned with the rotting head of a horse**. They are both facing west. *These are nithing poles. A well known way to curse someone*
- On the *north eastern* edge of the lake a peninsula houses a large **circle shaped stone fortress**
- Inaccessible and buried at the bottom of the green lake lies *a treasure of immense value*. However it is the property of the Gods and they guard it *jealously*

The fort

- The peninsula on which it stands is called the *She-isle*
- Impressive **circle shaped fortress**

- The fortress has **16' walls of stone** with only a single entrance
- In front of the entrance stands a large **wooden idol** of a woman with a single tear trickling down her cheek (*Frigg, wife of Odin*)
- Inside the fort there is **one large hall** and about **50 smaller houses** (one for each of the local farms in the area, some sheds and stables)
- The fortress is used for celebrations and as a refuge in times of war. It currently stands **completely empty and unused**
- Searching all houses takes at least half a day and will yield **20 days rations** (grain, dried meats, dried apples etc), **5 wool blankets, 2 low quality axes**, plenty of **dry firewood & hay**

The horse track

To the east of the lake, following the stone paved

road, there is a raised track for horse racing. The track forms a circle and is about 830' long.

- The track is used for horse races and the winning horses are often sacrificed in the bog
- The track itself is slightly raised out of the surrounding bog, but trees and other vegetations covers the view so the whole track is not visible from any one point
- A small hill sit next to the the start / end part of the track . Here the audience is usually standing or sitting. Some logs shaped into stools and benches are scattered on the hillside facing the track

Encounters in Skedemosse (*roll twice a day*)

1. Odinic cult members. Lying in a circle around an extinguished campfire, passed out from psychedelic mushrooms, are five men dressed in grey robes. They are all members of an **Odinic cult** that has been growing in popularity among the aristocratic youth in the area. One of the men is a young boy of 17 years named **Egill**. Egill is the **son to the Jarl in Köpingsvik**. He *forbidden by his father to take part in the Odinic cult practices* as he is expected to continue leading the existing ancestral Tyr cult when he grows up. He **will pay 5sp for promises not to expose him**. If he worries that the silence will not be kept he will send some (*number of characters + 2*) **young thugs** (*stat as brigands*) to drive out the people who have seen him in this precarious situation

Egill. AC 5 [14]. HD 3 (13hp) . Att 1 x sword (1d8). THACO 17 [+2]. MV 120' (40') SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1) ML 9 AL Neutral XP 35 Carries 3d6sp in coinage and jewelry worth 300sp

2. A procession of 4 armed men and a elder from Köpingsvik have come to sacrifice **an outlaw** in the bog. If not stopped they will keep him bound and knock him dead, with a club to the back of the head. Dumping the body in the lake after a short but solemn ceremony. The outlaw is part of the group that has a camp in the abandoned fort

Armed Men. AC 5 [14]. HD 1 (4, 4, 8, 1hp). Att 1 x hand axe (1d6). THACO 19 [+0]. MV 120' (40') SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1) ML 9 AL Lawful XP 20 Carries 3d6cp each and the elder has 1d6sp

3. The Mistress of the Lake (a *sjörå*). An *alluring nude woman* sit in a remote area by the lake, gazing at her own reflection in the muddy lake water while she combs her long hair. Some cows are grazing behind her near the shore. Talking to her reveal her *yellow animal like eyes (and a good eye will note her sharp fangs)*. She **fears pure iron**, throwing it towards her, or raising it in harm will make her disappear by diving down into the lake (the cows will follow). *She knows the arm ring is not in the bog, given food as an offering she will tell of this*. She is very shy but takes kindly to flattery and compliments, given enough of it she will flip a roman gold coin (stamped with the face of Marcus Aurelius) worth 50sp to the person, before leaving

Mistress of the Lake. AC 5 [14]. HD 8 (32hp). Att 1 x bite (1d6) or drown. THACO 12 [+7]. MV 120' (40')/180' (60') swimming SV D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (1) ML 8 AL Chaotic XP 1200 **Magic Resistance** *unaffected by illusions, sleep, charm and hold spells* **Weakness Iron** *pure iron weapons do double damage* **Drown** *on successful attack save vs paralysis or be held under water, retry each round, three failed saves means death*

4. Two hotheaded young aristocratic warriors are **racing horses** to select which one to sacrifice. The rough race turns violent and the two resort to drawing weapons and engaging each other in a **deadly fight**

Mundi & Starr. AC 6 [13]. HD 2 (8, 5hp). Att 1 x seax (1d6). THACO 18 [+1]. MV 120' (40') SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1) ML 10 AL Neutral XP 20 Carries 9 and 6 SP respectively. Mundi has a golden bracteate around his neck (20sp)

5. **Thralls in hiding.** Three escaped thralls are hiding out with a small improvised camp not too far from the bog. Two middle aged men called *Lutr*, *Drumb* and an older woman named *Ysja*. They were all born Thralls but have recently escaped their farm after their old master died and they were given as inheritance to his sadistic brother. Their plan is to winter in the woods and come spring get on board a boat and head for West Gothia

Thralls. **Ac** 9 [10]. **HD** 1 (3, 4, 2hp). **Att** 1 x hand axe (1d6). **THACO** 19 [+0]. **MV** 120' (40') **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1) **ML** 8 **AL** Neutral **XP** 5 *Keep 1d10 rations in their camp*

6. **1d6 Bog men.** Degenerate men who have been put to a dishonorable death, without the proper rites, in the bog. They find no peace and their malevolent spirits linger in their partly decomposed bodies to wreak their chaotic forces on men of law visiting the holy place. Often trailing their old hang nooses and other rope after them. They lure under the surface in secluded parts of the bog. Will attack *Lawful* characters on sight (roll normal reaction for *Neutral* or *Chaotic* characters)

Bog men. **Ac** 8 [11]. **HD** 2 (8hp). **Att** 1 x bite / strangle (1d8). **THACO** 18 [+1]. **MV** 90' (30') **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1) **ML** 12 **AL** Chaotic **XP** 20 **Undead** *immune to effects that affect living (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep). Resistant to fire fire does half-damage*

Making a sacrifice

The bog has a potent sacral energy to it and blots held and sacrifices made here are very potent.

The following sacrifices are customary:

Horses. Any sacrifices of a horse will grant luck in battle. Allow a single re-roll a future dice roll. If the horse was valued more than 300sp **Freyr** might also forgive oath breakers.

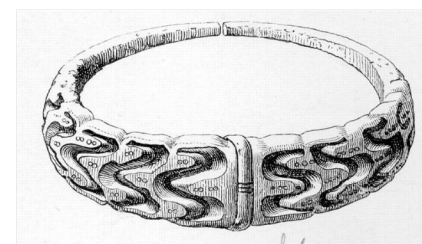
Weapons. Breaking and sacrificing weapons (possibly won in battle) pleases the Gods. If the value is more than 100sp grants +1 next attack roll made by the one sacrificing (accumulative with every 100sp worth).

Jewelry / Gold / Silver / Guldgubbar. Gods look kindly to gifts of rare earth metals and skilled craftsmanship, but most importantly is that the gift is valuable to the one who offers the *blot*. If the sacrificial goods value exceeds 100sp allow a single re-roll of a

skill check (accumulative).

Humans. Human sacrifices are uncommon, but executions do take place in the bog and when they do the dead are often dedicated to the Gods. Doesn't grant any game mechanic favors.

Some custom valuables sacrificed here could grant favor with the Gods on the DM's discretion. Examples include *the ancestral arm ring* and *parts of their sunken ship*.



7. Floki's Smithy

The sound of hammer against steel announces the smithy when you get closer to it.

Next to the shed that constitutes the actual smithy stands a lonely moss covered A-framed hut in which the smith Floki lives.

Floki is currently a settled down **smith**, but in his younger years he was a celebrated **hero** and traveling swordsman (**level 6 fighter**) who has faced many perils in his life.

The smithy

A clay furnace, wooden buckets with water, a large anvil, work tables and other tools fill the shed.

Spear-heads, knives, seaxes and shield buckles are in store. Floki sell these for fair market prices.

Floki can *repair weapons and armor* and other things of metal. He charges the normal

market fare for this and does a decent job of it.

The cottage

Floki will offer any traveler some of his perpetual stew (*layered and complex taste, very satiating*) he is constantly cooking indoors.

The house is one large room centered around a fireplace. It's cozy yet rather smoky and cramped for space. There is a small table next to the fire with room for four people. The sleeping cot is unmade and close to the central fireplace.



Floki, the old hero

- Has drunk dragons blood and can therefore understand bird speak, *but bird affairs seldom interest men*
- **Knows** that the troll is probably either in the woods or hiding by the barrows. Can describe what the troll caves probably looks like and what tracks to search for, such as piles of bones and passages under large stones (searching in the wood after getting instruction 2-in-6 for finding the lair every hour searched)
- **Has seen** fires burning in the **old ring-fort**, he suspect someone is making camp there
- **Knows** restless things lurk in the ancient grave mounds so he does not want to go near them
- The troll has plagued him

before (stealing his old helmet). So he drove it out of its old lair and chased it away forcing it to move to it's new home

- Not interested in more adventures, just want to live in peace and practice his craft, only true and imminent danger to his smithy or the local villagers will stir him to fight
- Might accept apprentices teaching them the art of combat but only if they help out in the smithy in return

Floki HD 6 (34hp). AC 7 [12] (4 [15] in armor w/shield). Morale 12. *Attack*: Sword (1d8). THACO 14 [+5]

Eilifr The Dwarf

Wandering dwarf who left *Nidavellir* to find the sound of cat footsteps for purposes unknown. 4' tall, sharp teeth dark dead eyes & pointy ears.

- **Aggressive**, selfish and distinctly non-human
- Dislikes humans, “*sons of Ask*”, but will trade favors if they have something to offer
- **Wants:** captured cats and a Huldra chained with his silver chain
- **Speaks:** Archaic Norse
- **Possessions:** Galdr, empty bag (for cats), pouch with mushroom (1d6 doses, **save vs death** or die in 1d4 days after ingesting), a silver chain (100sp), 450SP worth of gold
- *Galdr*. Exquisite long-dagger (*seax*). “Sings” loudly (a song of steel) when drawn. Hypnotizes

victim with fascination (**save vs spell** or get -2 attacks against yelder)

What is he doing?

1. Eating the raw intestine from a freshly killed albino moose, using nothing but his teeth
2. Soliciting carnal favors from a Huldra, unsuccessfully
3. Carving runes into a beautiful bowed lyre
4. Been caught in net by angry farmers set on his destruction

Eilifr HD 5 (28hp). AC 4 [15]. Morale 12. *Attack:* 2x *Seax* (1d6). THACO 17 [+2]. *Save vs spell* or get -2 attack against Eilifr



SUMMARY OF THE CAST

Alfhild, völva

Alu, vengeful wight

Björn, Halfdan & Olle farmhands

Egill, son of the Jarl in Köpingsvik

Eira, farm maid, betrayer of Thorir

Eilifr, wandering dwarf

Floki, smith and retired adventurer

Garm & Tage, hounds

Gro, Thorir's wife

Gunder, farmhand, last living relative of Tóki

Heidr, magical sword

Hrossþjófr, troll, collector

Mundi & Starr, battling aristocrats

Sylvi, farm maid

Thorir, farm owner

Tóki, long dead murderer of Alu's family

Ulf, Thorir's brother

Vide, oldest child of Thorir and Gro

Vivi, Asbjörn & Tora young children of Thorir and Gro

Ylva, farm maid, pregnant with Gunder's baby



CONCLUSIONS

- If the arm ring is retrieved from the troll I suggest rewarding 250 XP per character (as if the found arm ring were sellable treasure)
- If the characters revenge the murder of Thorir they will be considered local hero's and any survivors from the family will pay 100sp as reward for delivering justice
- If the characters flee the farm without catching the culprits they will be suspected as aiding the murdering bandits
- If a character dies, sing his death song and roll up a new one (if he died with honor transfer his hamingja, *level*, to the new character)

ALTERNATIVE HOOKS

Most importantly the characters are *passing through*

the hex and manages to *lose something of value to them* so they have to interact with the surroundings.

Here are some examples

- Thorir owes a money to a rich merchant in town. The merchant hires the characters to visit the farm to settle payment (the valuable object can be stolen by troll on the inbound trip & characters might get accused of Thorir's murder if it was known they went there to get the money)
- Characters are passing through the hex on their way to a Midwinter blot in Köpingsvik. When they break camp in the morning they notice their equipment is gone
- A hireling or NPC the party is traveling with gets kidnapped in the night as they are passing through (the troll keeps him for food)

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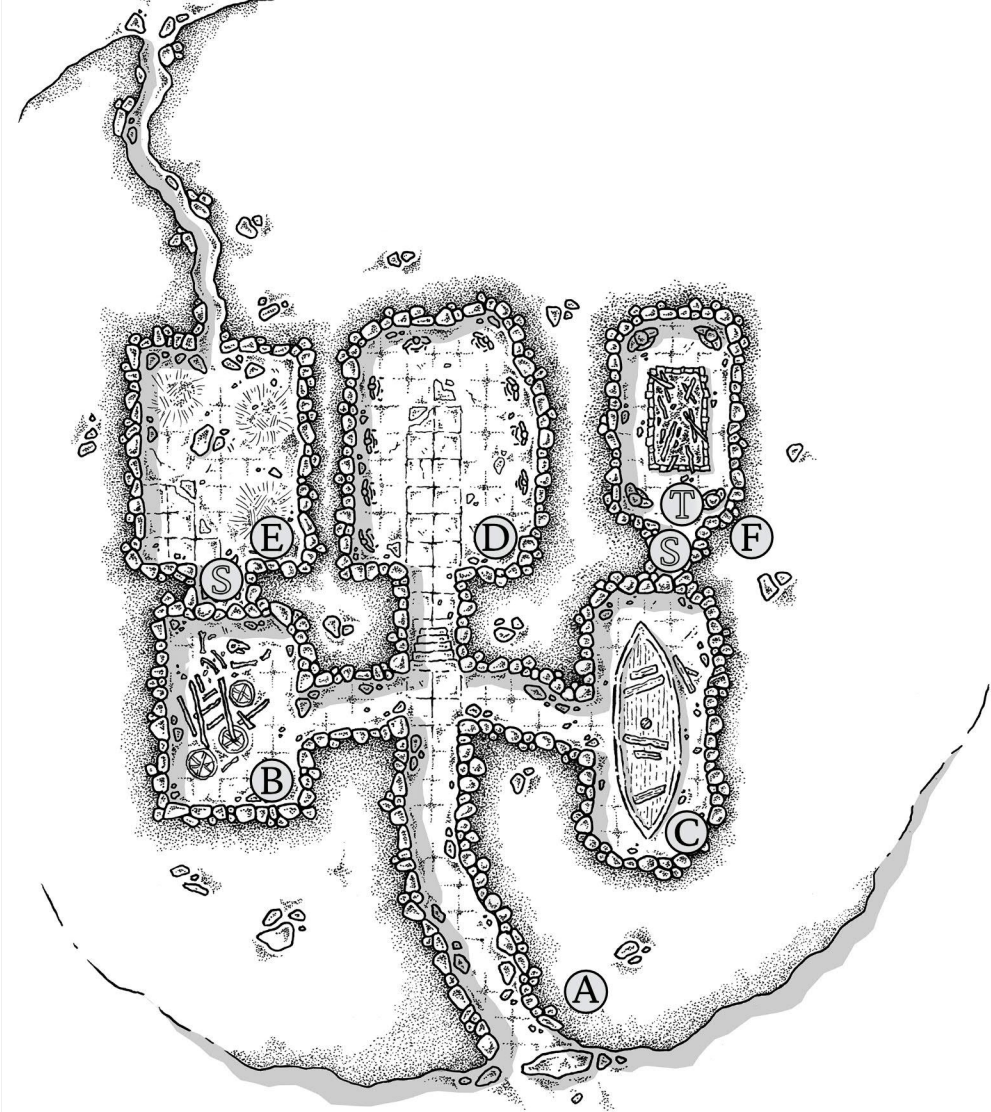
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A. The Entrance

B. The wagon grave

C. The boat grave

D. The family burial chamber

E. The plundered tomb

F. The pyre

S. Secret door

T. Trap

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