



JOURNEY TO RAGNAROK

THE RUNE THIEF
5. THE EYE AND THE WOLF



CREDITS

JOURNEY TO RAGNAROK is an Adventure and Setting inspired by Norse Mythology, compatible with the 5th Edition of the most famous role-playing game, designed by Michele Paroli

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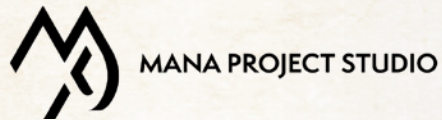
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THE EYE AND THE WOLF

Journey To Ragnarok: The Rune Thief Adventure #5: The Eye and the Wolf

For characters of 4th level

The Rune Thief is a campaign set in the world of “Journey to Ragnarok”, and it will take the characters from 1st level up to 7th level, by exploring the heart of Midgard and trying to stop a mysterious threat. Albeit the adventures are designed to be played one after the other in order to produce the most enjoyable and consistent narrative, each adventure can be played as a one-shot, with minimum effort on part of the narrator to portray the events leading up to that point to the players.

INTRODUCTION FOR THE NARRATOR:

Alrekr Sigthollr (pp. 130, JTR corebook), Jarl of Uppsala, has always been somewhat suspicious of the Icy Crows, despite having to deal with them on daily basis. As a consequence, he has recently banished a diviner, called Ydreg Drufilsson, because he could not provide the Jarl with the divinations he craved.

A resentful Ydreg was forced to leave Uppsala in a hurry. When he reached the shore, buffeted by icy winds, he met a lonely fisherman that offered to take him to the Fenmark where he would be safe.

The journey went on for several days, due to the frequent stops along the shore, until they got to the island that sits in the middle of the channel between Svjtioad and the Fenmark. Chasing a myth that the old fisherman told him, Ydreg pushed into the heart of the island and rediscovered there a forbidden knowledge: a forgotten ritual aimed at stealing the runes from Midgard.

The journey then resumed towards the Fenmark, without the Old fisherman who in the meantime seemed to have vanished like a snowflake in the sun.

PREVIOUSLY, IN THIS SERIES OF MODULES

The characters had the opportunity to witness a divination ceremony that however displeased the jarl once more. They learned that the jarl was expecting a new

diviner, a well known expert coming from Skjult Borg, but that he was late. Since the weather was getting worse, one of the Jarl’s servants recruited the adventurers so that they would go and check on the diviner, Thorgest, to make sure he didn’t find trouble along the way. The characters rescued him and took him to Uppsala, as expected.

Unfortunately, Thorgest soon detected a disturbance in the energies of the cosmos, as if something interfered with the correct divination of the runes. Thorgest had to inform the Jarl that he needed time to perform a long, complex ritual, aimed at investigating the cosmic energies looking for tears, flaws or other problems.

The heroes are therefore staying at Uppsala, waiting to hear the answers of the diviner, when suddenly grim news arrive from the Fenmark: smoke and fires were spotted along the shore, across the channel. The heroes hurry over there, and they discover that the attackers wielded strange and formidable powers, granted by the runes that were branded on their skin.

Once back in Uppsala with the survivors, the heroes are presented by the bad news that Thorgest’s ritual did not give the desired results: he failed to obtain anything but partial information regarding how the runes are supposedly vanishing from reality and from the minds of men. The Rune Master however suggests the heroes go to the nearby town of Varmrfors, where one of his old mentors resides, hoping that he will be able to explain what is happening.

Along the way through the Great Forest, the heroes meet the ghosts of a group of Odhinn’s Eye soldiers and those of a Wolves of the Shadow patrol; in life, the two rival groups had forged an alliance to defeat a dangerous troll. To put the spirits to rest, the heroes ventured into the cavern of the very old and blind troll, to defeat it.

After a few hours walking, they finally reach Varmrfors, where they realize the situation is tense between the Wolves of the Shadow clan and the Odhinn’s Eye clan.

THE RUNE THEFT

To steal a rune, Ydreg has to sacrifice an individual who happens to personify its essence (see Runic Divination, pp.306 JTR corebook), through a dark and evil ritual.

When that happens, that rune disappears, leaving no trace of its existence in Midgard and in the mind of its people: any representation of that rune vanishes; inside rune satchels like the ones runemasters use for their divinations, the rune stone crumbles, leaving behind only a pinch of fine, flour-like dust (if a PC is a runemaster or for some reason owns a satchel of runes, they can notice the missing rune only if they check that all 24 of them are there). No one remembers the name of the stolen runes, all that's left is a blurred memory, the feeling that something's missing and there's a void where there shouldn't be, nothing more. This feeling is much stronger for those individuals that used to embody that rune and its meaning.

As far as Runemaster PCs, their features and abilities are not affected by this from a mechanics point-of-view (ie. All their features work normally); however, Futhark circles that they summon appear incomplete, their features with visual effects like light, auras or energy bursts now become flickering, unstable or weakened from a visual

point-of-view (again, their mechanics are unaffected).

If someone performs a divination and the result happened to be one of the runes that have been already stolen, you should just ignore that result and look at the next available rune. This method is very useful if you are using a runic die; if you are using an actual bag of runes, just have the Narrator take away the stolen runes without showing the players how many and which ones are being removed.

WHO WAS THE OLD FISHERMAN?

The Old Fisherman was no other than a manifestation of Loki, who conceived a complex plan against Midgard and its people. He manipulated Ydreg into stealing the runes, and in so doing blinding all divinations, smothering all knowledge and in turn undermining the faith of the Norse in their old traditions.

RUNES STOLEN SO FAR

The Aett of Freya, 01 to 08, and the runes Hagalaz (09), Nauthiz (10), Isaz (11), Jera (12) and Eihwaz (13).



INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following text:

“In the Great Forest, Varmrfors represents an oasis of relative comfort and warmth, graced by the benefits of a thermal spring that fills the air with water vapor and prevents the snow and the ice from building up like elsewhere.

However, the atmosphere in Varmrfors is quite tense: people walking down the streets are frowning, and you’ve seen a few flags of the Wolves of the Shadows as well as those of the Odhinn’s Eye dancing to the breeze, and you know these two clans often don’t see eye to eye.

Good man Gordi, the mushroom gatherer that welcomed you and took you under his roof for the night yesterday, takes you to the centre of the village and shows you the most interesting places in town, such as the Temple, Tuli’s inn, the Foreigner’s Shop and Aethelfryg’s Sawmill. On top of that, he tells you about the most important people of this community, so you know who to talk to.

With a pat on your back, he bids you farewell: “Mushrooms won’t gather themselves!”

VARMRFORS

The little town of Varmrfors was built where a freezing creek plunges into a warm thermal spring, creating a waterfall surrounded by vapors and lush vegetation: the geothermal warmth melts the snow and prevents the formation of ice, favoring a mild and comfortable microclimate.

It’s no surprise then that Starri of the Icy Crows has chosen Varmrfors to retire to a contemplative life, like many before him once they’ve reached old age, at the temple near the waterfall.

The population is mostly focused on hunting, woodcutting and river fishing. The priests at the temple often need medicinal herbs, purifying lichens and mushrooms with mystical properties

for their healing services that tend to both the body and the mind: this is the reason why some villagers earn their living by working for the temple, sifting through the rich undergrowth of the forest for precious ingredients.

Varmrfors, like many other settlements in the Great Forest, has a good relationship with the **Wolves of the Shadow** clan, and passing patrols are always welcome.

However, the presence of the Icy Crows make sure that the village does not openly take sides in the struggles for power between the clans, striving to remain neutral.

Varmrfors has always been considered an oasis of serenity, a comfortable refuge from cold, soreness and the problems of the Norsemen.

The most important figures in Varmrfors are:

- **The wise Starri**, the oldest of the Icy Crows here: he doesn’t perform ceremonies at the temple anymore, but he is a leading figure for the community, not only for his younger brothers from the clan.
- **Aethelfryg Uthirsdottir**, the woodcutter: taller and stronger than most men, her expertise with the axe is only equaled by the respect everyone has for her.
- **Tuli “the barrel”**, a jolly middle-aged man that runs an inn; his passion for beer, cider and good food are local legends.
- **Mannfred Longway, the foreigner**: he came here many years ago from the lands of the Englar. No one knows much about his past but he is admired for his skill at creating long, straight arrows that strike with precision.
- **Edval Norvirsson**, despite his young age, he is widely regarded as the best hunter in town, also thanks to his two wolves that he raised since they were cubs and that accompany him when he’s out hunting.

Since about a week ago, a small group of Odhinn’s Eye soldier has marched into Varmrfors.

Leading them is Gunnar and they have set up a small camp right outside the village, near the thermal springs. Just hours before, a group of **Wolves of the Shadow**, led by famous Oleg Greytail, has also reached the village. The **Wolves of the Shadow** are guests of Tuli “the barrel”, who allowed them to sleep in one of his warehouses for a few days.

THE QUARREL

About ten days before the heroes have reached Varmrfors, a group of **Odhinn's Eye** soldiers crossed the mountains towards the Svtjod, on direct orders from the King, in order to patrol the borders of the Wolves of the Shadow lands, and preventing plots, rebellions and intrigue.

The **Odhinn's Eye** soldiers ventured into the Great Forest and found Dreymandibù, a little village that had been completely destroyed. Buildings burnt to the ground, still smoking, and countless bodies strewn across the streets suggested the attack was quite recent.

The soldiers then, as commanded by their commander Gunnar Halfrithsson, began investigating and looking for the culprit. After having set a camp at the centre of the village in no time, they inspected the corpses, the tracks and the battlefield.

Gunnar, a veteran with a stone-hard soul hardened by the winters and by a life spent fighting, holds deep-rooted prejudice and resentment towards the **Wolves of the Shadow**; for this reason, he suspected the rival clan of this carnage, thinking it may have been over matters of honor or of taxes.

The following day, a patrol of **Wolves of the Shadow** headed towards the frozen wastes, arrived at Dreymandibù and, seeing the flags of the **Eye** waving upon the charred remains of the town, decided it was time to exact revenge on their people. Despite being outnumbered, their captain, Oleg Greytail, walked to the enemy camp and demanded an explanation from commander Gunnar.

The menacing tone of the **Wolves of Shadow** however meant that Gunnar, ready to fight and confident in his numeric advantage, refused to provide any explanation and denied Oleg any authority to make such demands. The **Wolves** interpreted this reaction as an admission of guilt and but a moment later, arrows were already flying left and right, and shining blades were drawn. At the end of this brief but violent battle, three **Wolves** managed to run away, leaving behind two of their brothers. The **Eye** suffered similar losses: one soldier was killed and five others, including commander Gunnar, were injured by the arrows of the **Wolves**.

Oleg Greytail fell back with his two surviving rangers towards the nearby village of Varmrfors, to warn the Icy Crows of what happened and asking that they send messenger crows to call for reinforcements to send the **Eye** soldiers back to the other side of the mountains.

The following day, however, commander Gunnar

arrived in Varmrfors with a smaller group of soldiers: fearing that the **Wolves** would be back to finish what they started, despite his injuries Gunnar tracked them and followed them to Varmrfors. He expects loyalty and cooperation from the Icy Crows.

The Icy Crows are now in a difficult position, at the center of a dispute between two rival clans; old Starri warned the two parties not to spill any blood and locked himself inside the temple with the other Crows, refusing the temple services to both clans until they'll find a way to settle things out.

GUNNAR

A veteran of many battles, he took part as a young soldier to many raids against the lands beyond the sea; now that the snow has settled on his hair and on his beard, he was granted a leading position by his clan. He is a stern, strict and unforgiving commander: he has a strong sense of honor, he cares for traditions and he shows no mercy to those who defy his authority and the crown.

He holds a grudge against the **Wolves of the Shadow** precisely for their free and rebellious nature, he thinks they are useless cowards hiding in the woods, nothing more than common bandits.

When in Dreymandibù Gunnar was confronted by Oleg Greytail, he refused to recognize the status of the **Wolves** captain, fully aware that such a gesture would not fail to cause a reaction and lead to a fight; he was confident in the numeric advantage his side had over the enemy.

In Varmrfors, Gunnar is still just as sure about his status and, as far as he's concerned, either the **Wolves** will submit to him (and also to his clan, and his King) or he will be justified in considering them dangerous enemies that need to be dealt with. Either way, his warrior ego will be satisfied.

Gunnar uses the statblock of a Veteran, modified as follows:

- Instead of a short sword, he uses a throwing axe.
- He does not have a heavy crossbow (but he can attack at range with his throwing axe, +5 to hit, dealing 1d6+3 slashing damage).
- He has the following Bonus Action: Battle Fervor. For a minute, Gunnar and all his allies within 30 ft obtain 2d4 temporary hit points

and have Advantage on the next melee attack they make. Gunnar cannot use this feature again until he has completed a short or long rest.

OLEG

After a youth spent as a hunter in the Great Forest, Oleg joined the clan of the **Wolves of the Shadow** when his family was killed by some brigands during a pilgrimage to Uppsala.

The **Wolves of Shadow** represented in the begin just the chance to avenge his loved ones, but later on they became for Oleg a symbol of freedom, justice and courage. Over the years, he proved his valor by becoming a patrol captain, one of the bravest and most determined: he often pushes towards the desolate wastes beyond the Great Forest to guard the borders of the Svtjod.

Oleg is called Greytail for his greyish hair that he usually wears in a ponytail. He is a fiery captain, he can't stand impositions and he does not recognize any authority besides his clan, towards which he shows great loyalty and attachment.

When he met Gunnar and the soldiers of the **Odhinn's Eye** in Dreymandibù, he refrained as much as he could from jumping to conclusions and taking out the **Eye** soldiers one by one, shooting arrows from deep inside the forest and exploiting the area to their advantage.

Going against his strongest instincts, he wanted to obey to the orders he had received from his superiors and tried to avoid violence and talk instead. But when he was met by the disdainful gaze of commander Gunnar, as he refused to cooperate, Oleg's fierceness got the best of him and he gave in to the provocation. He now regrets the death of two of his rangers, and he hates Gunnar for this. He is adamant about the **Odhinn's Eye** being behind the destruction of Dreymandibù, he will have justice and vengeance, whatever the cost.

Oleg uses the statblock of an Explorer, modified as follow:

- He has 42 HP, AC 15, Speed 40ft; he has Resistance to bludgeoning, slashing, piercing from non-magical weapons that aren't silvered.
- He has the special feature "Pack Tactics": Oleg has advantage on attacks against a target if at least one of his allies is within 5ft from the target and that ally is not incapacitated.

- He has the Reaction "War Howl": When Oleg sees one ally being reduced to 0 HP, he can use this reaction to howl: every enemy within 60ft must make a **Charisma** saving throw with **DC 15**, taking 1d6 psychic damage on a failure.

Note: Oleg, about 2 months ago, was bit by a **Werewolf**. Since then, his behaviour has deteriorated drastically. Luckily, the full moon cannot be seen often during this long winter, and therefore his "condition" is not fully developed.

However, being unable to let himself go and give in to his animal instincts makes Oleg violent and prone to bursts of wrath. He does not know he is a **Werewolf** and he has no control over his transformation.

Oleg transforms automatically as a Reaction when he is reduced to 20 HP or less. His stats do not change, with the exception that he will favor fighting with his sharp claws (To hit: +4, 2d4+2 slashing damage) and his bite (to hit: +4, 2d6+2 piercing damage) instead of his weapons. Using Multiattack, he makes one Attack with his Claws and one with his Bite.

THE WOLVES AND THE EYE

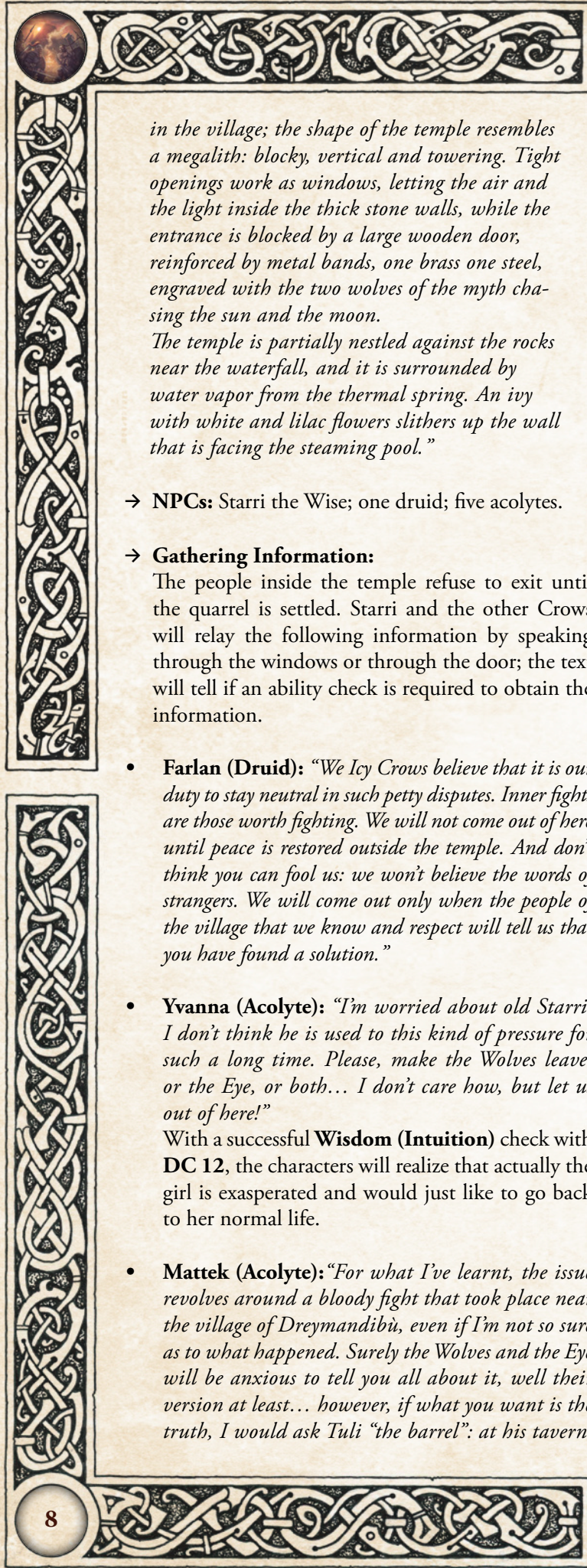
The characters need, somehow, to unravel the problem and solve the issue that has set apart the Wolves and the Eye.

They should gather information around the village to make up their mind about who they should support; then they should obtain the favor of the most important people in the village and finally convince Gunnar or Oleg to accept the proposed solution.

The city is an area in which the characters can move freely and decide with whom they want to interact: they will have to choose their own path, tell truth from lies and pick sides... the Wolves, the Eye, or neither clan!

1. Temple of the Icy Crows:

"This wood and stone building with an octagonal base is higher than all the other buildings"



in the village; the shape of the temple resembles a megalith: blocky, vertical and towering. Tight openings work as windows, letting the air and the light inside the thick stone walls, while the entrance is blocked by a large wooden door, reinforced by metal bands, one brass one steel, engraved with the two wolves of the myth chasing the sun and the moon.

The temple is partially nestled against the rocks near the waterfall, and it is surrounded by water vapor from the thermal spring. An ivy with white and lilac flowers slithers up the wall that is facing the steaming pool.”

→ **NPCs:** Starri the Wise; one druid; five acolytes.

→ **Gathering Information:**

The people inside the temple refuse to exit until the quarrel is settled. Starri and the other Crows will relay the following information by speaking through the windows or through the door; the text will tell if an ability check is required to obtain the information.

- **Farlan (Druid):** “We Icy Crows believe that it is our duty to stay neutral in such petty disputes. Inner fights are those worth fighting. We will not come out of here until peace is restored outside the temple. And don’t think you can fool us: we won’t believe the words of strangers. We will come out only when the people of the village that we know and respect will tell us that you have found a solution.”

- **Yvanna (Acolyte):** “I’m worried about old Starri, I don’t think he is used to this kind of pressure for such a long time. Please, make the Wolves leave, or the Eye, or both... I don’t care how, but let us out of here!”

With a successful **Wisdom (Intuition)** check with **DC 12**, the characters will realize that actually the girl is exasperated and would just like to go back to her normal life.

- **Mattek (Acolyte):** “For what I’ve learnt, the issue revolves around a bloody fight that took place near the village of Dreymandibù, even if I’m not so sure as to what happened. Surely the Wolves and the Eye will be anxious to tell you all about it, well their version at least... however, if what you want is the truth, I would ask Tuli “the barrel”: at his tavern,

people empty beer tankards and fill them with stories.” With a successful **Charisma (Persuasion)** check with **DC 12**, the character will obtain the following additional bit of information about Tuli “He’s a jolly good fellow, if you’re nice to him and get on his good side... I don’t know, maybe with a song... he won’t deny his help!”

- **Starri (Rune Master)** “The Wolf is fierce, yet honest, like all the wild beasts. He does not act on meanness, it follows its instincts and the all comprehensive nature’s justice, even if sometimes this does not coincide with the justice of men. The Eye is important, it sees many things and many more it saw. Sometimes however it gets blinded, and loses sight of virtue and truth. Consider both points of view and don’t be prejudiced. Solving this quarrel may be as easy as pouring a chalice of dark red wine, but finding a rightful and virtuous solution will require a greater effort. Please, I am asking you to make this effort.”

- **Starri (Rune Master)** “I know Oleg, but only by name. They say he is an expert explorer, who does not fear ice, beast nor fate. I wonder though if a whole life spent running against the wind wouldn’t leave one’s soul tired and worn out, incapable of rising above the most basic human instincts and desires.”

→ **Development:** See chapter “Solving the Quarrel”

2. Odhinn’s Eye camp:

“Opposite the temple, on the other side of the steaming pool, a small camp has been set up: it is just four tents placed in an orderly manner around a campfire.

Two spears have been planted in the ground right outside the perimeter of the camp, and there is a flag dangling from where the two spear tips meet: it show the Odhinn’s Eye symbol. Several people are staying at the camp: some sitting around the fire eating dried meat, others busy sharpening blades, and more patrolling the perimeter, about 30ft away. They all wear Odhinn’s Eye armor and when they meet you the salute you with a nod.”

→ **NPCs:** Gunnar; 1 Thug; 4 Guards;

→ **Gather Information:**

Gunnar spends most of his time in his tent, while his first officer (the Thug) usually sits by the fire with two soldiers (Guards); the other two soldiers are usually patrolling or guarding the camp from a few feet away. They are all quite jumpy, they expect an attack by the **Wolves** any time now.

- **Norunn (Thug):** *“Move along, strangers. This camp is Odhinn’s Eye territory. We are here under the authority of King Asbjorn the Red.”* With a successful **Charisma (Persuasion)** check with **DC 16**, Norunn can be made more cooperative, revealing: *“If you are looking for those responsible for this situation, look for the Wolves. I swear on my honor: they were the first to strike, as I swear we will be the last to do so if it comes to wielding weapons again!”* he concludes spitting on the ground and beating on his chest with his fist.
- **Tannig (Guard, sitting by the fire):** *“The Wolves are savages, they lept out of the wood with bloodied eyes, throwing accusations at our commander for the carnage of Dreymandibù.”*
Veit (the other Guard sitting by the fire) continues *“As if we had marched all the way from the coast of Norvgr just to pillage some woodcutters’ village! That is insane!”*
- **Yaros (Guard, patrolling):** *“When that Oleg Greytail unsheathed his sword, our commander did not stand there and watch it happen... and neither did we! The fight was brief, but bloody, and we chased those rascals away getting just a few scratch and bruises.”* The man seems to be very proud of himself and of the outcome of the battle. A successful **Wisdom (Intuition)** check with **DC 10** makes it possible to force him to admit: *“Yeah well, we did suffer one loss, poor Elbrog was hit in his liver and he bled out face down in the snow. But we took out two Wolves, so afterall we came out the winners!”*
- **Gunnar (Veteran, commander):** *“If those good for nothing Wolves of the Shadow think they can defy the authority of the Eye and the rule of King Asbjorn over the lands of Svtjod in front of me... they won’t have time to say their prayers. I’m too old to grant such riff-raff the benefit of the doubt, by now I’ve learnt on my own skin that we need to quash any rebellion in blood, before it is too late.”*

The commander has a hard expression as he says these words. With a successful **Wisdom (Intuition)** check with **DC 10** it is possible to notice how he is hiding the pain for a wound on his shoulder. If he is asked something about that, he will play it down: *“It’s nothing, it is but a tiny arrow, just a pointy stick thrown by some coward hiding in the bushes... This wound will heal, but I don’t think that coward will forget the screams of his brothers as we were gutting them, a slow and painful death...”* With a successful Intelligence (Medicine) check, the characters can realize that the wound is actually quite serious, as the man struggles to raise his shoulder and he wouldn’t be able to defend himself just as well as usual. Nonetheless, his hatred for the **Wolves of the Shadow** is true.

→ **Development:** See chapter *“Solving the quarrel”*


3. The Inn of Tuli, called “The barrel”:

“You are in front of a stone building in front of which, on a wooden pole, dangles a sign made out of a shield. You immediately notice how some of the crude rough stone bricks have been painted blue, giving a stylish touch to a building that would otherwise be very blocky and simple. The building has a higher floor and from inside you hear voices, some music and the smell of stew and cider.

Once inside, you find a single large room with the usual bonfire burning in the middle: at the moment, some juicy boar shanks are being roasted alongside some deer ribs. Alla round the fire, long benches provide comfortable seating for every guest while the host, a robust man with a shining smile beneath two black mustaches, is serving generous amounts of beer and cider. He often stops to chat, always ending with a fragorous laughter. On a bench a lonely boy wearing poor clothes is playing a simple melody on his stringed instrument.”

→ **NPC:** Tuli “the barrel” (commoner with 16 HP and +4 in Persuasion e Deception); a minstrel (Spy); 2d8 Commoners.

→ **Gather Information:** Tuli is talkative and always in a good mood, even in the saddest circumstance; he loves the company of equally joyous people, so



he will appreciate who will delight him with a pun, a song or a tale of epic deeds. The minstrel is sitting on a bench on his own, seemingly invisible to the people around him.

- **Ervin (the minstrel):** *“I arrived right before this whole situation between the Eye and the Wolves... I was just passing by, but I decided to stop to see how it all ends. I usually move from town to town, looking for this kind of situations: great inspiration for a new ballad or a new chorus.”*

With a successful **Wisdom (Intuition) DC 12** check, you can notice how he is hiding something and he is keeping an eye on a couple of fellows on the other side of the room. If pressed, he will admit *“Those two are up to no good, I heard them say they hope the Wolves and the Eye have another fight, so that they can loot a few bodies.”* With a successful **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 10**, it is possible to convince him to sing the tale of how in the village of Dreymandibù, everyone was slaughtered and the **Wolves** believe the **Odhinn’s Eye** soldiers did it.

- **Tormen (commoner):** *“We get a lot of Wolves of the Shadow, around here, never caused a problem. Oleg Codagrigia is quite known in the Great Forest, he is a brave man who does not fear pushing far towards the icy wastes of the far North. Those Odhinn’s Eye soldiers have made a big mistake, going against him, believe me.”*

- **Gard (Commoner):** this guy is clearly drunk and he blabs *“Longway, the foreigner, as we call him, often does business with the Wolves: his arrows are the best, and the Wolves use a lot of them. He knows Oleg, the patrol captain, quite well. Maybe he’ll be able to tell you more about him... provided you can get him to talk. He is a strange fellow, he is. The strange stranger... sounds good! Ha!”*

- **Irva (commoner):** woman around 25 years old, looks quite out of place in this tavern, among drunk and noisy men. She is looking around, quite nervously. *“I’m looking for my husband Elmir, have you perhaps seen him? He is about this tall, hair tied in a ponytail. He was wearing a black leather vest. He is been missing since this morning...”* With a successful **Charisma**

(Persuasion) DC 10, Irva will explain better what is the matter *“I was almost hoping to find him here, drunk but safe. But I can’t see him... I just hope he hasn’t really gone to the Wolves of the Shadow asking them to take him with them. He is as clumsy as they make them, can’t tell the pointy end of a sword from the hilt ... but since he took out that boar last year, right between the eyes, he is convinced he is a superb archer, worthy of the patrols that go around the Great Forest”* The woman looks a bit sad *“I hope this isn’t all a ruse just to dump me...”*

- **Tuli called the barrel (host, commoner):** *“G’day travelers! Sit down, I’ll bring you food and drink, the best of the Great Forest! Fresh game, mushroom soup and the most bitter beer you’ve ever tasted!”* The tiny plump man smiles and invites you to take a seat. With a successful **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 10** he can be convinced to stop and give his opinion about what is happening in town: *“Those Odhinn’s Eye scoundrels are not welcome in my inn! My brother, he was a Wolf of the Shadow, so I haven’t got a shade of a doubt as to who is right and who is wrong! Now I must apologize but I have more clients to tend to...”*

To get his attention and convince him to reveal more, the characters should try their hand at reciting poetry, or singing songs narrating the deeds of heroes and gods: with a successful **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 15**, Tuli will come back to the group’s table to compliment them on their entertainment, and will tell them: *“I’ve given Oleg and his men a place to stay, one of my warehouses, you know? Right behind the inn. They will be safe there and they’ll have a roof over their head, at least. From what they’ve told me, they caught the Eye soldiers red-handed, among the corpses of the good men, women and children of Dreymandibù. Oleg asked for an explanation but the Eye soldiers, clearly guilty, refused. So things turned rough. Two wolves were killed without mercy, such a shame.”*

→ **Development:** Tuli is one of the most important people in the village, he can help solving the conflict. In particular, as should be obvious by now, Tuli supports the **Wolves of the Shadow**, but he can be convinced to support also a compromise.

If the group admits to Tuli that they support the **Wolves**, the host will reveal that the priests wouldn't be swayed even if he spoke openly in favor of the Wolves: he claims that the Icy Crows don't hold him in high regard because he spends all his time working at the inn, and despite being one of the most affluent citizens, he seldom gives offers to the temple. His proposal to the characters is as follows: *"Let's do this: you go in the woods, hunt the biggest beast you can find. A deer, a bear... even a boar will do. I will give it to the temple as a gift. I think that will redeem me to the eyes of the Crows, and they will listen to me."*

If the group wants to accept this sidequest, see mission chapter **"Big Game Hunt"**

4. Wolves of the Shadow warehouse:

"Right behind the inn, you find a wooden warehouse. Planted firmly above the door there is a throwing axe, and from this axe hangs a cloak bearing the symbol of the Wolves of the Shadow. As soon as you come near, two faces show up at the windows and look at you carefully. Another couple of steps and the two figures make their presence obvious, wielding their longbows menacingly and looking straight into your eyes. It's a clear warning not to mess with them. You knock at the door, and it opens just enough to let you squeeze in."

→ **NPCs:** Oleg, two archers (Explorers).

→ **Gather Information:** Oleg Greytail and his two brothers are sitting on barrels and crates. Further along the wall, there are some straw bedrolls. This place is very cold, as there isn't any fire to keep at bay the winter cold.

- **Berfin (Archer):** *"Upon arriving at Dreymandibù, we were shocked. I had never seen so much blood on the ground. Corpses, entrails, severed limbs everywhere. The people of Dreymandibù had always been nice to us Wolves, and in exchange we would offer them our protection whenever we were around. But there had never been any problems before then, at most we had to chase away some wild beast, nothing more. Once*

we even had Edval the hunter come with us. He lives in one of the last huts here in Varmrfors. Go ask him, if you don't believe me."

- **Kennarl (Archer):** *"What's done is done, it is useless to dwell on what happened in Dreymandibù. We should focus on the here and now. The captain said that if we could convince the Crows to send a message for us, the Odhinn's Eye soldiers would understand what it means to be chased by a pack of wolves, hungry for vengeance."* It seems as if Kennarl is trying hard not to say something. By taking his side, and with a successful **Charisma (Persuasion)** check with **DC 12**, the characters can convince him to talk: *"I don't agree with my captain's actions. He was too impulsive. He was taunted, that is true, but he was the first to unsheathe his blade, starting the fight. If he kept his cool, maybe Tober and Randr would still be alive..."*

- **Oleg (Captain):** *"I would have never thought the Eye would dare come to the Great Forest. Still, there they were, in the middle of Dreymandibù ... among butchered corpses, beheaded bodies and pools of drying blood. We could have ambushed them, taking them out one by one while hiding in the forest ... but I wanted to act in the honorable way. I moved forward to parlay with their commander, demanding an explanation. He didn't even admit their guilt, nor he made up an excuse. He just stood there, in front of me, looking down on me, and he refused to answer to me. The battle was inevitable."*

The man moves about and seems quite agitated as he recounts his version.

With a successful **Charisma (Persuasion)** check with **DC 16** it is possible to get him to admit that if the situations won't be solved quickly, he will take the matter in his own hands. As he says this, his hand moves to the hilt of his sword.

→ **Development:** See chapter **"Solving the Quarrel"**

5. The Foreigner's Shop:

"This tiny building is different from any other

in the village: its shape is irregular, it has a steep roof painted green and a big bush with small purple flowers on the side where, weren't it winter, the sun would shine.

The door, engraved with an arrow with great artistry, is ajar and from the inside you can hear several noises: someone chiseling wood, singing a merry tune, then stopping for an instant before resuming his song accompanied by the rasping sound of a grindstone."

→ **NPC:** Mannfred Longway (Spy, with a Long Bow instead of a Hand Crossbow).

→ Here it's possible to buy high quality arrows: for 20 gp, a quiver of 20 arrows that treat any damage roll of 1 as a 2.

→ **Gather Information:** This is evidently an artisan's shop. The pavement is covered in sawdust, working benches are placed on each side and there are many carving tools hanging from the walls.

This image could not be complete without the barrels full of arrows with the fletching of different colors.

Sitting on a stool, you spot a man in his forties, with a weird black goatee and perfectly groomed moustaches.

His hair is medium length and combed towards the back. He is checking with a piece of string whether an arrow is straight.

"Goodmorning to you. My name's Longway... Mannfred Longway. I come from a land far away. Everyone here calls me the Foreigner, which I didn't like at first... but now, I'm used to it. You know, there is no mean intent in this nickname, the good people of Varmrfors welcomed me with open arms and now I am one of them. Of course, it helps that I craft the best arrows in the Svjtod and that I'm willing to sell them at a low price."

The man smiles.

He speaks in a funny, musical accent that goes up and down with each sentence. It's as if each sentence ended with a question. If he is asked about the quarrel between the **Wolves and the Eye**, he will be quite direct: *"Sure, I often have business with the Wolves, but I have no interest in their relationship with the other clans. I would be happy to support any peaceful*

solution, I don't care if it's in favor of one clan or the other. This whole matter is damaging my business, and I don't feel safe with two armed groups camping in the village, ready to shed blood."

If he is asked his opinion on Oleg, Mannfred will say *"Greytail, sure, I know him quite well. He likes my arrows, whenever he's around he buys some quivers. It seems a good man, if you look past his impatience and his rough manners. Let's say I am not shocked that he is involved in this situation; I'd feel sorry however if anything happened to him."* With a successful **Wisdom (Intuition)** check with **DC 14**, the characters can notice that Mannfred is downplaying Oleg's bad temper and that, knowing him, he suspects that the truce won't last long.

→ **Development:** Mannfred is willing to talk to the priests at the temple in favor of either clan, or even in favor of a neutral solution. However, right now he has other problems that bother him: a spirit of the woods is after him, for some reason, and stops him from gathering the wood he needs for his arrows.

Every time he enters the forest, he gets assaulted by squirrels, owls, and one time even a wolf! If the characters can get rid of the spirit once and for all, Mannfred will support them and their decision in front of the Crows.

If the group wants to accept this sidequest, see mission chapter **"You're not welcome!"**

6. Aethelfryg's Sawmill:

"This low but wide building is surrounded by woodpiles placed in an orderly manner.

There are long and sturdy wooden beams covered in resin protective paint, and the perfume of the resin can be smelled from across the street.

A woman, almost 7 feet tall, with wide shoulders and strong arms, is chopping wood on a stump, handling her hatchet with strength and precision."

→ **NPG:** Aethelfryg Uthirsdottir (Woodcutter)

→ **Gather Information:** the woman is a sight to behold, larger than most men in the village.

She's busy and doesn't have a lot of time to chat: she's abrupt and a bit rude.

"I've been in Dreymandibù, a few years back. A village like any other, I don't buy it that the Eye soldiers have come all the way here just to pillage it." The woman says these words with a shrug, without taking her eyes off her work *"I don't know who is right and who is wrong, to be honest. My business goes on anyway: with this freezing winter, people always need wood to burn. If at any point that means wood for funeral pyres, I don't care."* Aethelfryg stands up, cracking her back and drying the sweat off her forehead with her arm.

With a successful **Charisma (Persuasion)** check with **DC 10**, the woman can be convinced to cooperate. *"Fine, fine, I'll tell you what: in this whole situation, I don't appreciate neither the Wolves nor the Eye. The former just ran away like cowards, instead of facing their foes; the latter took advantage of their numeric advantage to defeat the Wolves. And this is before even wondering who is guilty of the carnage in Dreymandibù. I don't think it was the Eye, but sure as Hel I don't think it was the Wolves either! You want me to support you in front of the Crows? Show me your strength, show me you're not weakwilled and I'll do what you ask."*

→ **Development:** Aethelfryg wants to test the characters' strength before accepting their requests. If they earn her respect, she will support their decision in front of the Icy Crows, as long as their decision is clear and firm, be it in favor of the Wolves or the Eye, but she won't support neutral solutions that seek a compromise.

If the group wants to accept this sidequest, see mission chapter **"Like Real Women"**.

7. Edval's Hut:

"This tiny hut near the woods, right at the edge of Varmrfors, has no distinctive features that set it apart from any other wood and stone hut in the village, if it weren't for two reindeer skins drying out on crossed poles planted right outside

the door. As you draw near, a low growl reaches you from the side the hut: your eyes frantically search for this hidden menace, and after a second you spot a couple of wolves. As you reach for your weapons, ready to defend yourselves, you see a young boy in his twenties, with scruffy ginger hair, who gestures with a large butcher knife towards the wolves: "Thunder! Lightning! Stand down!" he orders the wolves, and they immediately lower their ears and put their belly and their chin to the ground, whimpering; it is only now that you realize the beasts are wearing black leather spiked collars."

→ **NPG:** Edval Norvirsson the Hunter (Assassin, with a Longbow instead of Light Crossbow; his attacks do not inflict additional poison damage, but subject the target to the restrained condition if it fails its saving throw against poison); Thunder and Lightning (Wolves; Thunder has 18 HP, while Lightning has 16 Dexterity and his AC, Stealth, attack and damage are increased by 1 point).

→ **Gather Information:** Edval is a shy individual, a man of few words. If a character can speak to animals, they can also speak to the wolves.

- **Edval (Hunter):** *"I've known Oleg for years. He stops by with his patrols whenever he's heading to the frozen wastes beyond the Great Forest. A few times we've gone hunting together and he asked me again and again to join his patrol. He insisted I would make an excellent ranger, but I don't care about clan politics. I live for the thrill of the hunt, darting through the forest with my wolves, tracking down bears."* The boy pauses, looking at his own reflection in the sharp knife he is holding *"I spoke with Oleg when he got here, last week. It had been a year since last time. He told me everything. I'd like to believe him but... something doesn't feel right: why would the Odhinn's Eye soldiers slaughter all those men, women and even the children of Dreymandibù? I asked Oleg if the soldiers were covered in the victims' blood. I didn't get an answer, quite the opposite, as he went in a rage and almost went for my throat. He even accused me of having turned my back to him and having been corrupted by the Eye. Well, I hadn't turned my back to him then, but*



I have now. I think the Eye soldiers were wrongfully accused, just as I was, and I think Oleg caused the bloodshed without a good reason. And maybe Oleg is now slowly realizing this, too.”

- **Thunder and Lightning (Wolves; requires Speak with Animals):** *“Greytail smells weird. Don’t like how he looks at us. Wasn’t like that when we first met him, years ago. Now he is scary. He smells like blood.”*

→ **Development:** Edval is willing to talk in favor of the Odhinn’s Eye or in favor of a compromise. First however, he needs to solve the problem with his wolves: they refuse to leave the hut, as if they were afraid of something.

Should the characters manage to convince the wolves to leave the hut and follow Edval up to the temple, he will speak to the priests for them.

If the group wants to accept this sidequest, see mission chapter *“Follow the Pack Leader”*.

SIDE MISSIONS

1. Big Game Hunt:

The group has to catch for Tuli a beast sufficiently large, to impress the priests at the temple and redeem the plump host at their eyes. Once outside the village, one character in the group can attempt a **Wisdom (Survival) DC 15** check.

On a success, they will spot the tracks of a large animal, a reindeer the size of an elephant that was there just an hour before; the character can lead the group to the reindeer on a safe path.

On a failure, they will still find the reindeer tracks but they will not realize its size; on top of that, the character will lead the group on a dangerous and longer path to reach the animal. It will take two hours, and they will pass through some poisonous vines that the animal stopped to eat. With a successful **Wisdom (Nature) DC 15** check as a group

check, the characters notice the danger in time to avoid it. Otherwise, they will all have to pass a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw. On a failure they will be poisoned for 1 hour (it is advised not to tell the characters the exact duration) and they will take 1d6 poison damage.

Once they have reached the end of the path, they'll spot a clearing in the middle of which this gigantic reindeer is feeding off the lowest branches of a tree. Its fur is covered in moss and vines. The characters can engage the beast in combat however they prefer. The Giant Reindeer uses the same statblock as a Triceratops.

Once they've killed the animal, they can figure out a way to carry it in town and give it to Tuli. Building a crude sleigh with some logs can be enough.

2. You're not welcome!

The group is after the forest spirit that is preventing Mannfred from gathering wood for his arrows. Mannfred can point more or less the area where he usually goes to gather wood, and he is sure the spirit will be in the vicinity: it's a clearing near a large birch with snow white bark, some twenty minutes from the village.

When the group arrives at around 500 ft from the birch, they will be attacked by a large murder of crows (it counts as three Swarms of Bats, without the Echolocation and Keen Hearing traits) that will try to harass them and chase them away. Once killed, the individual crows vanish in a puff of twigs and dead leaves. Once they reach 0 HP, the swarms disperse as usual.

Once the crows have been death with, the group will spot the large birch Mannfred had mentioned. With a successful **Wisdom (Perception)** check with **DC 17** (or an equally high Passive Perception score), a character can notice something moving, invisible, among the branches of the birch. It is a Trévaettr, a Spirit of the Trees, a creature similar to a Dryad but much more violent and dangerous. It guards the woods, with sharp claws, against hunters, woodcutters and intruders. (It uses the statblock of a Lamia, modified as follows: it speaks Sylvan instead of Abyssal; it can use Invisibility at will instead of Disguise Self; once per day it can use Conjure Animals instead of Compulsion).

The Trévaettr charmed with her fae magic a dumb commoner called Elmir, who ventured in the forest looking for flowers to give to his beloved Irva (see dialogue with her at Tuli's Inn). Elmir is confused and he thinks the Trévaettr to be Irva, so he defends

her anyway he can: as soon as the characters reach 180ft from the birch, he will show up from behind the birch, shooting arrows at them. He is a man in his thirties, with his hair tied in a ponytail, and he is wearing a black leather vest, thus matching Irva's description (if the characters met her at Tuli's)

Elmir uses the statblock of a Commoner, but he wields a Shortbow: he has +2 to hit, and deals 1d6 piercing damage on a hit. Poor Elmir is not really a threat for the group, he is an annoyance at best: the Trévaettr won't hesitate to use him as a human shield or as a hostage if she is struggling; by making a successful **Wisdom (Intuition)** check with **DC 10** when they first see Elmir, the characters can realize that he is not really an enemy, but a victim, and that he poses no tangible threat to them.

The Trévaettr will begin the encounter by ordering the characters to leave immediately, all while staying invisible; she warns them against cutting any more trees to make arrows that will be used for hunting the animals of the forest. As soon as possible, the Trévaettr will summon some animals to attack the group; note that casting any spell interrupts the invisibility, but the Trévaettr may still be hidden, out of sight. The highest branches are an excellent hiding spot, to spot her the characters have to beat her **Dexterity (Stealth)** **DC 16**.

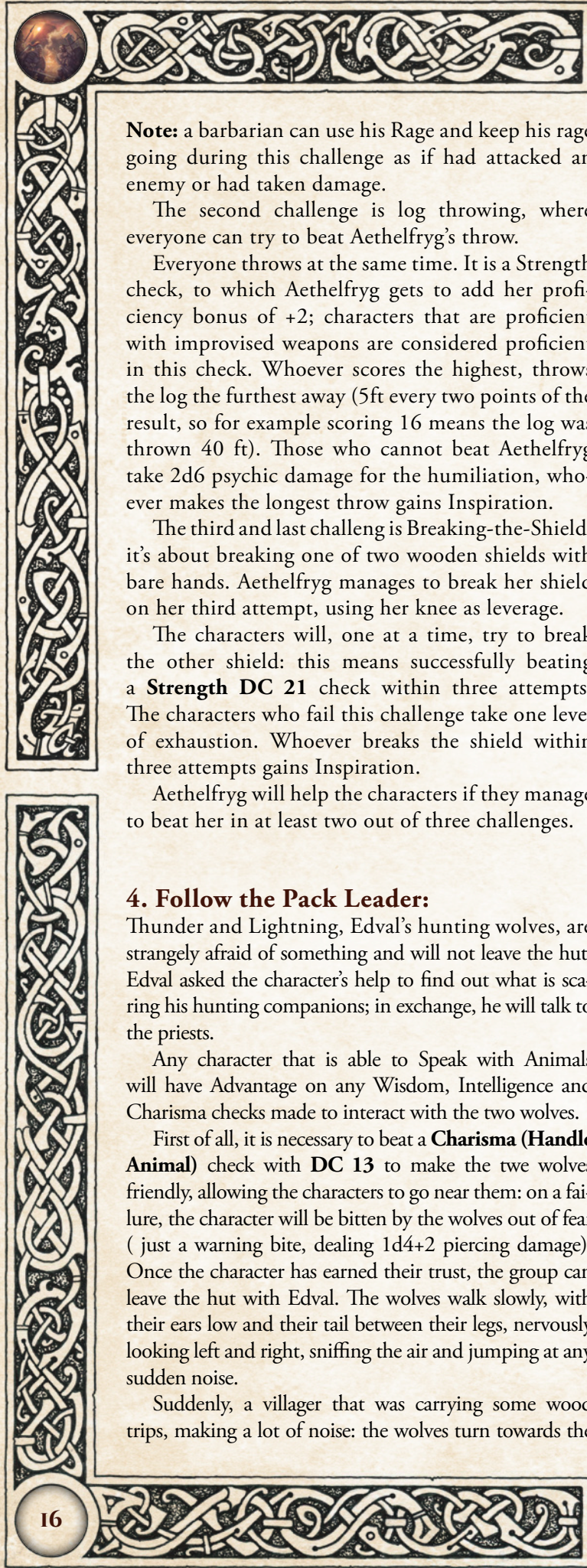
Once the monster is killed, the group can go back to Mannfred and tell him that his problem was solved and now all he has to do is repay their favor.

3. Like Real Women

Aethelfryg is one of the strongest people in the village; she loves putting her strength to the test, and showing off. Maybe it's because of her that the men of the village, scared, are careful not to harass any woman.

She now wants to see if the characters are worthy of her respect, by having them take 3 tests of strength: all characters can join in, one at a time, until one can beat her. Only then, they can take the next test.

The first challenge is a traditional arm-wrestling contest on the stump she uses to cut wood: it is a series of contested Strength checks with Aethelfryg. It is necessary to win twice in a row to beat her and beat the challenge. Aethelfryg has a Strength score of 18 and therefore makes her checks with a +4 bonus. Characters defeated by Aethelfryg in this challenge take one level of exhaustion. Whoever beats her, gains Inspiration.



Note: a barbarian can use his Rage and keep his rage going during this challenge as if had attacked an enemy or had taken damage.

The second challenge is log throwing, where everyone can try to beat Aethelfryg's throw.

Everyone throws at the same time. It is a Strength check, to which Aethelfryg gets to add her proficiency bonus of +2; characters that are proficient with improvised weapons are considered proficient in this check. Whoever scores the highest, throws the log the furthest away (5ft every two points of the result, so for example scoring 16 means the log was thrown 40 ft). Those who cannot beat Aethelfryg take 2d6 psychic damage for the humiliation, whoever makes the longest throw gains Inspiration.

The third and last challenge is Breaking-the-Shield: it's about breaking one of two wooden shields with bare hands. Aethelfryg manages to break her shield on her third attempt, using her knee as leverage.

The characters will, one at a time, try to break the other shield: this means successfully beating a **Strength DC 21** check within three attempts. The characters who fail this challenge take one level of exhaustion. Whoever breaks the shield within three attempts gains Inspiration.

Aethelfryg will help the characters if they manage to beat her in at least two out of three challenges.

4. Follow the Pack Leader:

Thunder and Lightning, Edval's hunting wolves, are strangely afraid of something and will not leave the hut. Edval asked the character's help to find out what is scaring his hunting companions; in exchange, he will talk to the priests.

Any character that is able to Speak with Animals will have Advantage on any Wisdom, Intelligence and Charisma checks made to interact with the two wolves.

First of all, it is necessary to beat a **Charisma (Handle Animal)** check with **DC 13** to make the two wolves friendly, allowing the characters to go near them: on a failure, the character will be bitten by the wolves out of fear (just a warning bite, dealing 1d4+2 piercing damage). Once the character has earned their trust, the group can leave the hut with Edval. The wolves walk slowly, with their ears low and their tail between their legs, nervously looking left and right, sniffing the air and jumping at any sudden noise.

Suddenly, a villager that was carrying some wood trips, making a lot of noise: the wolves turn towards the

man, growling, visibly scared. Four or five people that were passing by have witnessed the scene and start mumbling "*Those wolves are no pets, they are dangerous!*" and things along these lines.

The characters will need to succeed at a **Wisdom (Handle Animal)** check with **DC 11** to calm the wolves, and then a **Charisma (Persuasion)** check with **DC 10** to convince the crowd that they are just scared, and they mean no harm. Then the group can resume walking towards the temple.

Right outside the temple, when both Edval and his wolves were regaining their confidence, the group encounters Oleg Greytail who, together with one of his men, had just visited the temple to try and convince the Crows to support him.

Immediately the wolves start growling, their fur puffed up and their claws sinking deep in the ground. With a successful **Wisdom (Handle Animal)** check with **DC 12**, the group can understand that the wolves are evidently disturbed by Oleg's presence. "*My wolves haven't forgotten how you behaved last time we met!*", Edval shouts at Oleg who replies with a raging snarl. His companion seems just as surprised as the characters, and looks around for a moment before putting his hand on his sword.

With a successful **Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Intuition)** check with **DC 12**, the characters can realize that the wolves are behaving as if defending their territory from a rival. They growl to appear aggressive when they are actually scared. (The wolves can perceive the true nature of Oleg as a werewolf!) The group will need a successful **Charisma (Handle Animal)** check with **DC 15** to command the wolves to stay back.

Each character can attempt this check once, but if no one manages to beat the DC, the wolves attack. Thunder will bite Oleg's ankle while Lightning jumps to his neck.

Incredibly, with superhuman reflexes, Oleg manages to catch Lightning in midair by its fur. Oleg's eyes are yellow and savage, his fingers plunge deep into the wolf's fur, making it bleed. With a powerful move, he throws Lightning against Thunder, freeing his ankle. Oleg growls at Edval, and runs to his hideout, followed by his companion. Given the turn that things took, with his wolves hurt and fearing the repercussions of what happened here, Edval refuses to help the characters and goes back to his shut, apologizing.

If instead the check is successful, the wolves are kept in line before they attack Oleg. He will go his way, annoyed. Edval is now ready to talk to the Crows on behalf of the characters.

SOLVING THE QUARREL

There are three ways of solving the quarrel that sees the **Wolves** pitted against the **Eye**. The characters can convince the Icy Crows to support either clan, or they can work for a compromise.

Either way, the Crows will not heed the group unless they can count on at least two of the most influential and respected members of the community: Edval, Tuli, Aethelfryg and Mannfred.

In favor of the Wolves: it's clear, **Odhinn's Eye** provoked the **Wolves of the Shadow** in Dreymandibù, denying them an explanation they caused an inevitable battle.

The only NPCs willing to support the **Wolves** are Aethelfryg, Mannfred and Tuli. Edval will not side with that clan. Once the Icy Crows have been informed, they will tell the characters to expel Gunnar and his men.

Once at the camp, whoever is informing Gunnar of the priests' decision will have to make a **Charisma (Intimidation)** check with **DC 15**.

On a success, two of the guards immediately surrender, throw their swords to the ground and run into the woods. Gunnar and the other two guards instead refuse to leave, wielding their weapons ready to fight.

In favor of the Eye: there is no evidence that the **Eye** soldiers have the blood of the people of Dreymandibù on their hands; what is certain is that the first to attack were the **Wolves**.

The only NPCs willing to support the **Eye** are Aethelfryg, Mannfred and Edval. Tuli will not side with this clan. Once the Icy Crows have been informed, they will tell the characters to expel Oleg and his rangers.

Once at Tuli's warehouse, they will be able to inform Oleg of the Crows' decision; Oleg will go crazy, unleashing his wrath on barrels and crates,

hitting them with his fists and kicking them around. His visage will turn more and more animalistic, his eyes more and more bloodshot, until his body starts growing: his muscles increase in size, up to the point that they rip his clothes, and his skin begins to be covered by a sparse grey fur.

In the end, a inhuman growl reveals his werewolf nature. His archer comrades need to make a successful **Wisdom** saving throw with **DC 13**, running away on a failure as that is not their captain anymore. On a success, their loyalty will prove stronger than fear, and the archer will fight alongside his captain. (**Note for the GM:** Oleg's transformation isn't complete, as he hasn't yet seen the full moon, and it comes to the surprise of everyone, even Oleg himself; however, his rage prevents him from understanding what he is going through)

A fight is inevitable.

A compromise: both clans have their share of guilt in this matter, and the best thing is to relinquish the hostilities and send each their own separate way.

The only NPCs willing to support a neutral solution are Tuli, Mannfred and Edval. Aethelfryg will not support such a weak solution.

Once the Icy Crows have been informed, they will tell the characters to expel both Oleg and Gunnar and send them on their way. Gunnar will accept the Crows' decision, albeit begrudgingly and threatening repercussions when his superiors in Heill Hofn will be informed of what happened here.

Oleg on the other hand will be not so reasonable: he resents this betrayal by the priests, the characters and by the people of this city. In a fit of rage, he will wreck havoc in the warehouse, smashing barrels and crates.

Just like for the decision In support of the **Eye**, the werewolf will reveal itself. His two rangers will try to stop their captain, fighting alongside the characters against Oleg, or whatever is left of him. To avoid unnecessary complications and to represent that the archers are conflicted about hurting their former leader, the two archers can be considered to be using the help action each turn, as they shoot arrows to distract the enemy.

If the fight lasts more than three rounds, the rangers will flee, panicking.

CONCLUSION

Once the quarrel is solved, the priests of the Icy Crows will finally open the doors to the temple.

Old Starri is visibly fatigued and he leans heavily on his twisted oak staff that is embellished by a pendant made out of raven feathers. With a nod, he invites the characters into the temple.

The inside is cozy, rustic and warm thanks to the burning bonfire at the centre of the room. Sacred stone, baubles and decorations adorn the walls, giving the place an air of mystery and mysticism.

Starri will rummage inside a wooden crate by a low altar, and say *"You've shown great skill and wisdom in finding a solution for the issue that troubled the Eye and the Wolf. I am thankful for that. As a reward, let me give you this potion. Whoever drinks it, will wear the black feathers of a raven."*

The effects of the potion last 1 hour and it casts on the user the spell Polymorph, transmuting them into a Raven.

When the characters will reveal the reason of their visit, Starri will nod *"If my dear Thorgest could not help you, this must be truly a mystery! Give me a moment..."* the old rune master will turn towards the bonfire. He will pull out his runic divination necklace made of bones. He will cut the palm of his own hand and, while holding tight onto the necklace, he will utter some mystical words and with a sudden gesture he will sprinkle his blood onto the flames.

The smoke from the fire will start twirling and twisting towards the ceiling, taking the shape of stones engraved with some runes. From beneath, a large hand, made out of darker, denser smoke, will rise and will snatch some of the stone, with talon-like fingers.

The hand will finally come crashing down on Starri, making him cough and bringing him abruptly out of his trance.

"A thief... A rune thief! He is stealing the power of the Gods. Midgard is in danger!" the old man screams, falling to the floor.

The characters have barely the time to understand Starri's words when they hear a sound, coming from an owl tooting from one of the wooden beams that hold up the ceiling of the temple. Tied to its right paw, the owl has a little piece of bark with a message "We are the Bear Warriors. Get ready, Crows, we are coming. Prepare your weapons."

Farlan, the druid of the Icy Crows, intervenes: *"The Wolves and the Eye are two clans that you can reason with... but the Bear Warriors?!"* he stutters, almost overwhelmed by terror *"We implore you, you must stop them before they get here. I don't know what they might want of us, but I tremble at the mere thought of the Bears attacking us"*.

Starri in the meantime has managed to get back on his feet and continues *"Do as Farlan says. Seldom do the Bears come down their mountains and when they do... they are either marching for war or they have an equally serious motivation to do so. Either way, I cannot believe that the rune theft and the sudden march of the Bears to be a coincidence. Your destiny calls you along that path."*

REWARDS

The characters gain 1500 XP, besides the Raven Shape potion (see above).

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES!

Something terrible is about to subvert the order of things in Midgardr, threatening the true foundations of reality and knowledge.

The Rune Thief is a series of 9 adventures set in the world of Journey To Ragnarok, which will be published monthly starting from the 1st of August.

Where to find it:

English Edition: DrivethruRPG

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/browse/pub/12301/Mana-Project-Studio>

Italian Edition: NeedGames!

<https://www.needgames.it/categoria-prodotto/journey-to-ragnarok/>

Dare you face the Rune Thief?

APPENDIX

GUNNAR HALFRITHSSON

GUNNAR HALFRITHSSON

Medium humanoid (human), lawful honorable

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Armor Class 17 (breastplate and shield)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses Passive perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 PE)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gunnar makes two attacks with his Longsword. If he is also wielding a Shield, he can make an additional attack with Shield Slam as a bonus action.

Longsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target.

Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used two-handed.

Shield Slam. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage

BONUS ACTIONS

Battle Fervor. For one minute, Gunnar and all his allies within 30ft receive 2d4 temporary hit points, and they have Advantage on the next melee weapon attack that they make. Gunnar can use this feature once, then he regains its use when he completes a short or long rest.

GUNNAR HALFRITHSSON

“Odhinn’s Eye represents the crown’s authority all over Midgard. And I am representing the Odhinn’s Eye in these lawless lands, so you may want to think over your next words.”

Gunnar is about 6’10” tall, and he is quite stocky. He is tough and muscular, especially considering he is over 40 years old; he wears his platinum hair straight, towards the back, at medium length. He sports a medium length well-groomed beard too. He wears a reinforced metal armor, a red cloak and he never abandons his helmet, upon which dances a red plume. On his breast there is an elaborate golden pin, depicting the **Eye of Odhinn**, and he often polishes it with the back of his hand. He fights elegantly with a longsword that has been handed down from father to son in his family for generations.

Roleplaying Gunnar: Gunnar is a veteran of many battles, in his life he had his share of strife and he is now generally not so patient anymore when it comes to deal with problems or adversities: he always takes the most straightforward and blunt approach, without paying any heed to consequences or losses. Gunnar is driven by a certain self-righteousness, convinced as he is of being always right and of having authority over basically anyone else.

Gunnar’s Goals: Long term, Gunnar wants to serve the crown as long as possible. He has no intention of retiring, he’d rather die with his sword in his hand than laying on a bed, old and sickly. Short term, Gunnar

is determined to have Oleg and the **Wolves of the Shadow** bow down to his authority, in the name of the crown.

OLEG GREYTAIL

OLEG GREYTAIL

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic honorable

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Armor Class 15 (leather armor and shield)

Hit Points 42 (8d8 + 8)

Resistance to bludgeoning, slashing and piercing damage from non-magical weapons that aren’t silvered.

Speed 40 ft

Speed 40 ft

Skills Stealth +6 (with Advantage in vegetation or in dense foliage),

Nature +4, Perception +5, Survival +5

Senses Passive Perception 15

Language Common

Challenge 4 (1100 PE)

Keen Smell and Sight. Oleg has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks based on smell or sight.

Pack Tactics. Oleg has advantage on to hit rolls against a creature if at least one of Oleg’s allies are within 5ft of that creature and that ally isn’t incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Oleg makes two melee or two ranged attacks.

Assault Axe. *Melee Weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 150/600 ft, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

War Howl. When Oleg sees an ally reduced to 0 HP, he can howl: every enemy within 60ft must make a Charisma saving throw with DC 11, taking 1d6 damage on a failure.

OLEG GREYTAIL

“Every man is born free, and he shall live free and, Gods willing, he shall die free. If blood needs to be spilled to defend freedom and independence, let it be the oppressors’ blood.”

Oleg is about 1.9m tall, and he is very fit. His hair is tied in a long braid that got him his nickname. He has a brown bushy beard and his face is covered in scars. He wears few pieces of fur and leather clothing, a grey fur cloak, and a thick belt where he usually hangs his belongings. He fights fiercely, wielding his axe and brandishing the Shadow of Leafage shield, that also helps him when he needs to ambush his enemy.

Roleplaying Oleg: Oleg is an experienced ranger, well known in the Svrtod and just as feared by his enemies and rivals. His famous for his courage, as he often pushes beyond the Great Forest to patrol the frozen wastes. Oleg is a free spirit, impulsive and fierce, leading him to often make judgement mistakes in spite of his virtuous intentions.

Oleg’s Goals: Long term, Oleg wants to serve his clan and make sure that the Odhinn’s Eye does not impose its authority over the free people that live far from the Norvgr. Short term, he wants to have justice for the carnage of Dreymandibù, of which he believes the soldiers of the Eye are guilty.

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