

What Everyone Knows...

About the Kingdom of Ostland

as told by Onund Tolundmire, priest of Odin, runemaster and skald, a native of Ostland

The People: "We are a great nation, prosperous, powerful and proud. Our people have always been masters of raiding and warfare. A sword is as natural to the hand of a farmer as is the plow. Our king springs from a line of great warrior-kings, and his jarls and their men are without peer in courage and might of arms. Our nation is blessed by Odin and Thor. None can question our glory and honor, and none shall stand against us in battle.

"Others call us violent and brutal, and condemn our right to raid and make slaves of those who war against us. These are the craven cawings of the weak. None shall win power or glory without strength and determined will.

"Others call us primitive barbarians, and scorn our respect for the old ways. We are doubtful of the honor of 'civilized' men. We do not aspire to be fat merchants or scribbling clerks."

The Land: "The wind blows endlessly, and there are precious few hills and forests to break its force. In winter, the fury of the ocean storms is terrible to bear. Yet, our other seasons are moderate, the growing seasons long, and the land fertile and generous. The main island is thoroughly settled. Folk generally live in large villages and clan settlements, close to their kin, and most of the land is well-cultivated. The other islands are wilder and more sparsely populated."

Zeaburg: "Our capital is an ancient clan seat, the court of the High King Hord Dark-Eye, and the winter quarters for the twenty Great Houses of Ostland. Zeaburg is not like your dark stone cities—it's more a scatter of friendly villages close together. In the center lies Hord's Royal Compound, a great fortress, and center of culture and hospitality among the Ostland folk. Outlander visitors can be too disruptive, and they must keep to the the Foreigners' Compound."

Other Towns: "The fortresses of

Zeafort house the two brigades of King Hord's standing army. Ostmanhaven is a fishing and trading town, perhaps more modern and, I think, more corrupt than most Ostland towns. Thorir the Wealthy, jarl in Ostmanhaven, sets a bad example."

How to Get Rich and Famous: "Join the service of some great jarl or, better yet, join the service of the king himself. Sail with the raiders. The king's armies are fighting in the local squabbles between Thyatis and Alphatia, and there is much glory to be won. Join a colonizing expedition to the Isle of Dawn or go on to more distant shores."

Hot Tips: "Don't look for taverns or inns—there are none. In Ostland, you're either family, a guest, or an enemy. Because it is the heart of the nation, Zeaburg treats foreigners a little differently, but ask for hospitality elsewhere in the islands, and you'll not be denied. Treat your host generously and honorably, and you'll be well-treated in turn.

"In Ostland, we do not mock the Immortals or the ancient traditions, and a traveler is advised to respect that, be he Northman or dwarf, warrior or cleric of some other god. Ostlanders are a proud and proper folk, and we do not tolerate disrespect for the faiths or observances of our fathers."

About The Kingdom of Vestland

according to Dwalinn the Dwarf, adventurer, philosopher, and tavern lout, native of Vestland

The People: "For good or ill, Vestland is what they call a 'modern nation.' In towns along the coast, most buildings are stone—dwarf work, most like—and the

people don't gawk like you're a prince when you show a silver coin.

"Course, up north in the hills and out west to the mountains, things are a lot less civilized. Folk there tend to stick to the old ways, boast proudly of their muddy little huts, and fancy themselves as old style warriors and heroes from the sagas. Real bunch of hayseeds."

The Land: "I prefer the rugged foothills along the southwest border—wild, beautiful country. But there's something to be said for Vestland's fjords, with their fertile lowland farms and steep valley sides leading up to the rocky plateau land. There's some excellent farmland along the coast, I'm told, but inland's no good for anyone but the sheep. The Trollheim hills—well, they have their own beauty, I guess—bare granite tors and wild, wet marshlands. It's no place for sightseeing, though."

Norrvik: "A real, honest-to-Odin city, high on the bluffs over the river. The Market Square district's pretty fine if you're out to blow your money. I prefer the College District. Good folk and quiet, and those charming, worthless students. Students? As the locals brag, they're studying at the only magic college in the Northlands. Now the Docks are another thing: dirty, cheap, but never dull. I stay out of Dwarfstown—no fond memories of my childhood there. It's a rough place, not cheerful."

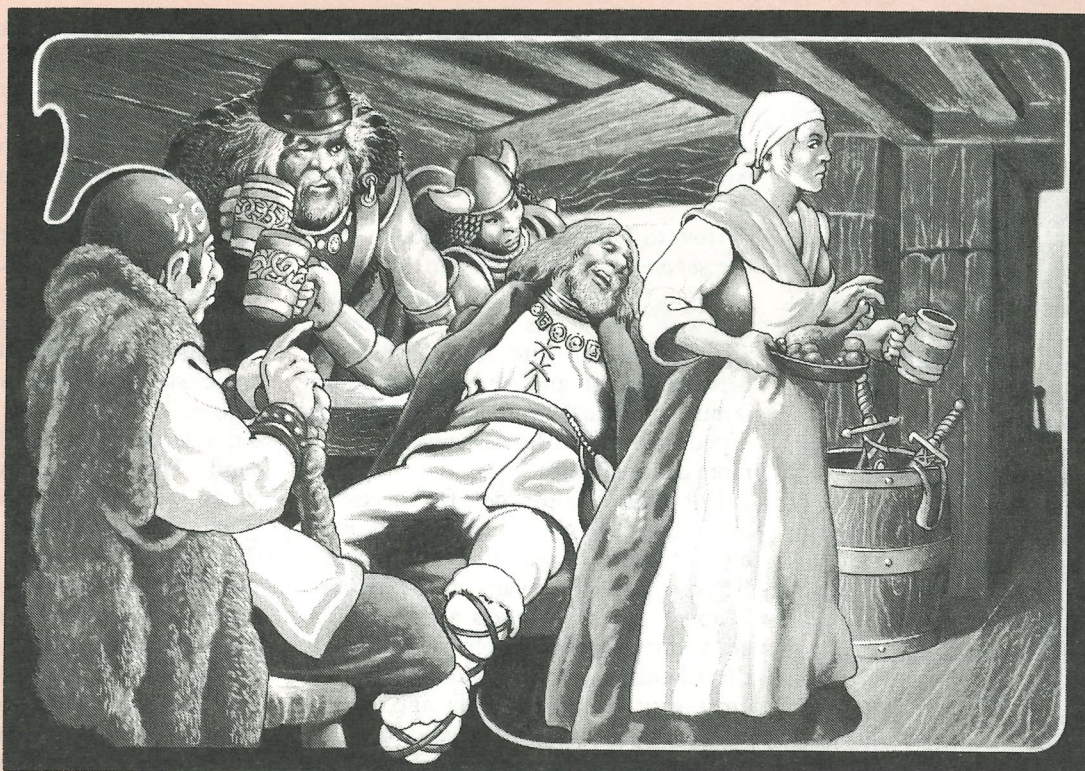
Other Towns: "Rhoona's busy, filthy, a frontier town full of dwarves, merchants, adventurers, and hunters of giants. Rough town, but lots of loose money and plenty of excitement. Landersfjord? Big and getting bigger, right on the Overland Trade Route, with ships heading west and east. Plenty of work with caravans and expeditions."

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What EVERYONE KNOWS...



How to Get Rich and Famous: “Hunt giants and their kin. Join a mercenary band and fight in the Troll Border Wars, or ride the highways with the Home Guard. Join the treasure hunters looking for lost artifacts of the molder dwarves. The pay for caravan guards is pretty good, but you earn every copper.”

Hot Tips: “Watch out for dwarf-haters—every little frontier hamlet has its frothing bigots. Don’t believe that cheery crap the Council’s spreading about peace and prosperity in the Trollheim colonies; things are bad up there, and no mistake. And those hill giants are big! and not as stupid as the stories say. Don’t get cocky.”

About The Soderfjord Jarldoms

as told by Helfdan Halftroll, warrior and roughneck, native of the Jarldoms

The People: “Yeah, the Jarldoms are kinda backward, I guess. You won’t find more friendly folk than our farmers and

steaders, but the poor folk don’t get much peace, what with the clans all squabblin’ with each other, and the bullies that the jarls hire for their guards. Every little headman thinks he’s the High King, an’ he lords it over his people even though they’re all living in mud huts, from the headman on down. Sure, some clanholds are better than others, but it’s no pleasure to travel among ’em. They offer their hospitality, but you’ve got to eat their dirt thanking ’em for it, they figure they done you such a favor.

“And fighters? Well, we’re a loud and rash lot, but not too bad in a fight. Problem is, it’s each man for himself. No one can tell nobody else what to do. No wonder the Ostlanders push us around like nithlings.

“Me, I like the frontier. No big jarls or clans out there, just roughnecks and frontier folk, the hunters, trappers, adventurers. Sure it’s rough, but a man’s respected for his own worth, not his father’s or his clan’s name.”

The Land: “Good farmland along the coast and along the Saltfjord and Oto-

fjord. There’s good farming in the Snowvale Valley north of Castellan, too, I hear. Now inland, it’s all rocky plateau. A farmer’d never prosper there, nothin’ but grass grows, and that just in between the rocks and boulders. The Great Marsh? Wet and wild, they say, but good for hunting. The foothills of the Makkres Mountains to the west are pretty bare, but there’s little trouble with humanoids there. The hills of Gnollheim—well, that’s big trouble these days. Rough country, and thick with gnoll war bands. Finally, there’s the Hardanger Range in the south. That’s nothing but jagged peaks, glaciers, and kobolds.”

Soderfjord Beach: “Compared to Norrvik, it’s pretty mean and muddy, though I think it’s right lively. Merchants and traders a-plenty, from all over. You can get what you need there, and lots of stuff you don’t, but it’s not a real nice place. Ragnar’s the war leader, and his fortress out in the river is something to see, big thing and real ’mpressive, it is.”

Other Towns: “Castellan is a pretty little town, mostly stone. It’s a big trading

center, and there's lots of furriners—elves, Ylari, dwarves, and such like. Lots of outfitters, too, if you've a mind to go trekkin' 'round the backwoods."

How to Get Rich and Famous: "Hire out as a bully for a jarl—or beat up bullies and rob them. You can go pirate raiding, like the Ostlanders do, by finding a captain—ask around. Or buy your own longship, and you captain it. Guarding caravans is good pay, and it keeps you away from the clan bullies. Oh, there's mountains of treasure in the Hardangers, they say, down in those old gnome holes, but those holes've got lotsa dogmen, too. Ragnar's got gold to pay for mercenaries to guard the borderland and caravans against raiding humanoids. Lots o' that kind of work, state and private, down by the Sodervirk—that wall on the Gnollheim border."

Hot Tips: "Stay clear of clan squabbles, unless you hope to make money on the winner. Don't push your luck with clanheads or their bullies. The jarls are the law in Soderfjord. If they don't like you, they can chop your head off, an' it's twice as easy if you're not protected by your kin in some other clan. Don't trust nobody rich or powerful—you're just a pawn to 'em."

An Outsider's Perspective On The Northern Reaches

from Saru the Serpent, sorcerer and scholar, and itinerant citizen of the whole of the Known World

Contrasting the Three Nations: "Ostland clings to tradition, while Vestland struggles to be a modern nation. Soderfjord lies somewhere between. Many folk in the Jarldoms still hold firmly to the Northman values, but small, influential groups—particularly the merchant class in the growing towns—want to see Soderfjord a modern trading nation like Vestland. Their money buys influence and political power, so the traditionalists cannot ignore them.

"Ostland is a barbarian culture, with an emphasis on the warrior virtues, where a leader must defend his authority through

personal strength of arms. Vestland is a more modern nation, where the authority of the law, rather than personal strength of arms, protects its citizens.

"Soderfjord is a young nation in transition from the older barbarian ways like Ostland's, to a more modern culture like Vestland's. In Soderfjord, the larger the town, the more modern the local values. Conversely, the more remote the place, the more traditional and barbaric the people will be.

"Yet even in Soderfjord's current turbulent political climate, it's possible to see in the growing power of the war leader, Ragnar. Every year he looks more capable of unifying the Jarldoms into a nation like Vestland. Unfortunately, there are many other nations—particularly Ostland, Ylaruam, Ethengar, and Thyatis—that prefer to preserve the current political chaos in the Jarldoms."

Prospects for Adventurers: "In general, look to the borders and wildernesses. Vestland and the Jarldoms seek expansion into the wild hills and mountains that surround the nation to the north, west, and south. The humanoid and giantish races must be controlled or removed, and a wealth of plunder may be gained.

"Ostland has no wilderness left. It seeks new land across the ocean to the southeast on the Isle of Dawn. As Ostland cements its ties with Thyatis, perhaps the nation will expand to the north into Norwold."

Prospects for Crusaders: "Do-gooders will find plenty of work in Soderfjord, where the common folk are often caught between feuding clan nobles. Enemies of Chaos may contend with the troll nations to the north, the giantish races to the west, and the growing armies of the kobolds in the Hardanger Range.

"One problem for the thoughtful crusader: the warlike and violent cultures of the Northern Reaches have produced a people who accept brute force as a standard tool of rulership. Crusaders from more peace-loving cultures must be careful before they judge actions as 'evil' or 'chaotic.'"

Comparing Traditional Northland Virtues with Modern Civilized Notions -

Helfdan and Saru examine the differences

Helfdan: "These scribblers and fops, why do Vestlanders put up with them? I step from my ship in Dremmen Harbor, and this pipsqueak in fancy dress comes up, jabs me in the stomach! Says, 'Customs and Immigration. Where's your cargo list?' I grabbed his dinky pink fist, jammed his pen into his palm, and told the little runt what he could do with the cargo list if he ever found it..."

Saru: "...and, in fact, I believe our friend Helfdan might have killed the fellow had we not intervened. You see, Helfdan and other champions of ancient Northland virtues feel that a man has no authority unless he can back it up with his fist. The notion of Vestland government officials making demands on manly warriors... well, it often leads to fatal misunderstandings.

"In Vestland, a government official feels safe from physical threats because of the strength of the law and the Home Guard. Helfdan had some trouble there, I'm afraid, and we had to smooth a few ruffled feathers."

Helfdan: "Pipsqueak. Fines weren't much after I had a good roar at the fellow."

Saru: "Now in Soderfjord, a local official needn't be a warrior to collect a jarl's tribute, but he is wise to accompany himself with a band of persuasive-looking thugs. In Ostland, everything is a personal matter. The king himself, traveling with the Personal Guard, come to his jarls to collect the tribute. And, in turn, the jarls go personally among their freemen to collect their tribute. In Ostland, a man does not make demands he cannot personally back up with force, and it is not considered improper to thrash someone for impudent behavior."

Northlands Society

The Northern Temperament

as told by *Saru the Serpent*

"What's the Northman like?" you ask.

"Well, foremost, a Northman is loyal—loyal to his family, to his clan, and to his friends. A man who honors these bonds and their obligations is well-respected. A man who turns his back on his family, clan, or friends is a scoundrel. A man who allows others to speak ill of family, clan, or friends is a coward.

"The Northlander values hospitality and generosity. The customs concerning a host's duty are detailed and well-established in the Northern Reaches: to welcome, shelter, and protect guests. The guest has a reciprocal obligation to honor and defend the host, without pausing to examine right or wrong. Wealth in itself is not a virtue. A man who gains wealth by being stingy is not respected or trusted, which explains the Northman's scorn and distrust of merchants.

"All Northlanders honor courage, and scorn weak-willed men. This is not only the courage of war, though that is most important, and quickest to mind for most. It also includes courage to face hardship and misfortune, to accept one's fate as assigned by the Immortals, and to remain cheerful and content even in great pain or privation. It is dishonorable to complain of bad luck, or to whine about impossible odds.

"In fact, Northerners greatly appreciate wit and jokes when the prospect is bleakest. I saw Helfdan here jest when we were outnumbered ten to one. 'Ho-hum,' he said. 'I'd hoped for something more exciting. Hate to get this nice floor all awash with their blood, but I don't think they just wanna play tag with us!'

"Forgiveness is not considered a virtue in the North. The Northman is slow to forget an insult or injury, particularly where the injury affects a friend or family or clan member. Northmen look upon cruel and ruthless pursuit of vengeance as simply the most effective method of insuring that everyone behaves himself properly or faces the consequences. On

the other hand, law and tradition require that vengeance be forgotten if wergild is paid—wergild being a mutually agreed-upon payment made in compensation for the injury.

"The Northman prefers impulsive action over cautious deliberation, and quickly grows impatient with long discussions. Some say it is because the Northman believes his fate is already determined by the Immortals. Others say it is because the Northmen are a ferocious, warlike people obsessed by courage rather than reflection. Others say it is because the Northlander is quick-witted and clever at improvisation in the face of danger. There's considerable truth in each of these views.

"I do not see the average Northman as particularly respectful or reverent of the Immortals. There are many traditionalists, of course, especially in Ostland and the backwoods of the other lands. And clerics, of course, are more dedicated. But the modern 'civilized' Northman thinks little of the gods or how to please them. Certain fighters, particularly the berserkers, appear to serve their Immortals energetically but, in truth, I think such folk are more dedicated to the fun of fighting than to the Immortals themselves. It is no disgrace in the cities, at least, to deny the gods—a godless man is not particularly respected, but neither is he scorned.

"Neither are Northmen what I call honest. They are loyal to their word, yes: if they swear an oath, they are honor-bound to respect it. On the other hand, shrewd or clever speech is considered perfectly fair, and misleading by omission or misdirection is not considered wrong or dishonest.

"Thus, when a Northlander gives his word, you are expected to trust him. Otherwise, the listener is expected to be suspicious, and to require proof in doubtful circumstances.

"Now boasting—boasting is not considered a fault. A certain amount of exaggeration is acceptable, particularly if it enhances the story. Idle boasting, or claiming honors to which one has no claim, is considered foolish, and a proper

occasion for a lesson in manners."

The Northland Lifestyle

as told by *Onund Tolundmire*

"Most Northmen are farmers and herders. In the good low-lying farmland, the folk gather in small villages. On the plateau and on the borderlands they live in isolated farmsteads, often fortified against humanoid attackers and clan raiders. The common people raise grain and vegetables, often with enough surplus to sell or trade at local markets. They raise livestock for meat, milk, and wool.

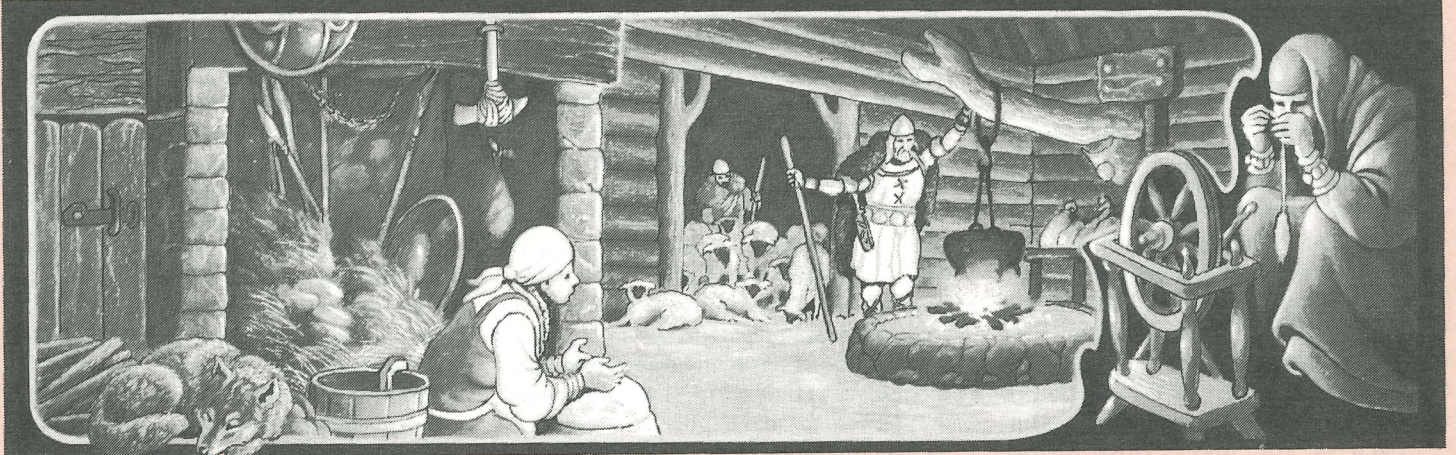
"Nobles and clan guards live in great timbered longhouses, forty to a hundred foot long. Freeman farmers and craftsmen live in smaller houses and huts. They dig below ground level to level their floors. This gives them deep foundations for the walls, and helps to protect the steads and their animals from cold weather.

"The walls are made of logs, planks, or wattle-and-daub, and the high, thatched roofs are supported by thick timber pillars. Hearthfires burn for heat and cooking. Family and guests sleep wrapped in warm furs on sleeping benches along the walls, and not shut away from each other like they do in the south.

"The Northman is self-reliant, and well-rounded in many skills. The farmer can take up the sword or tend a forge as easily as he guides the plow or shears his sheep. Even the soft city folk are less helpless than most civilized folk, and are often no stranger to shield and spear.

"In the warm summers and cool spring and fall, the Northman enjoys working hard outdoors, and takes great pleasure in hunting or weapons-play for leisure. In the harsh, brutal winters, he invites his livestock into his house, for their protection and for his warmth. He barely stirs for months, hibernating like the great bear waiting for spring.

"Life in the larger settlements is scarcely different, though many more men specialize in crafts, and merchants and traders buy their products and sell them throughout the Northern Reaches.



Only in cities like Norrvik and other large Vestland towns do folk live in stone houses along cobbled streets according to southern fashion. Here the nobles and the newly rich middle-class style themselves after the decadent dukes of Karamaikos and Thyatis, forsaking the strict and honest ways of their ancestors.

"The Northmen are renowned sailors and shipbuilders, and their longships range the coasts of the Known World. World travelers, colonizers, and adventurers, the Northmen are fearless and wide-ranging traders. Some call us pirates—perhaps with some justice, but are not all merchants really pirates at heart? The only question is whether they reap their wealth with a sword or with a sharp, lying tongue!"

Social Classes of the North

as told by Saru the Serpent

"The jarls are the noble class of the Northern Reaches. These aristocratic families are the hereditary rulers of the clans. The clanhead is generally the most noted adult of the most powerful family within the clan, and the heads of other family households form the clanhead's house guard, the equivalent of feudal household knights. When a clanhead grows old and feeble, he usually yields his crown or is deposed, and his most suitable offspring or close relative, male or female—not necessarily the oldest child—is chosen as the new ruler. Since

jarls often inherit great treasuries handed down for many generations, and they receive the lion's share of booty taken in war or raiding, many noble families are quite wealthy.

"The karls are the freemen of the Northern Reaches. Karls generally fall into two sub-classes, the common freeman and the merchant middle-class.

"The vast majority of Northland citizens are common freemen, from farmer to craftsman to town-dweller. Northman freemen are relatively well-off compared to other freemen throughout the world. They owe allegiance to their clanheads, but they own their own land, homes, livestock, and may decide their own means of livelihood.

"The merchant middle-class is relatively small and often fairly wealthy. Ostland has no such class, while the power and influence of this class is growing rapidly in Vestland, less dramatically so in the Jarldoms.

"The thrall is literally a slave, the property of his owner, to do with as he chooses. Only in Ostland is slavery still legal. Prisoners of war or raiding become the thralls of their conquerors, or a jarl may condemn a freeman to thralldom for various offenses. Though theoretically illegal in the Jarldoms, many clans still practice slavery or its equivalent. Though thralldom is generally despised by foreigners, it must be noted that thralls are rarely treated harshly, and are often set free at the master's death as a reward for faithful service. In my travels, I have seen many supposedly free men throughout

the Known World who live more wretched lives than most Northman thralls.

"In addition to the three primary social classes of jarl, karl, and thrall, there are a number of other social roles peculiar to the Northman culture.

"The skald is a mixture of scholar, poet, entertainer, and moralist. These students of history and legend travel around the country, accepting the hospitality of a hearth for a time and, in return, they entertain, educate, and inform their hosts on events outside their region. Often the skalds are rune-literate or skilled with rune-magic. Tradition prohibits taking ready offense against a skald—they have a freedom of speech denied to others. Unless you are first attacked, never take up arms against such a one, though many skalds are themselves proficient in arms.

"Witches and wise women are the practitioners of the old, dark magics of the Northman's ancestors. In general their powers are modest, limited primarily to fortune-telling and clumsy hedge-wizardry. Now and then you'll come across one with considerable skill with charms, curses, conjuring, and shape-shifting.

"Northmen have little trust or respect for wizards. They seem to see us in the same light as they see merchants or lawyers: sneaky, evil-spirited, and dangerous, but timid and brittle-necked in combat. Priestly magic tricks are considered honorable and virtuous, but sorcerous stuff is cowardly and unsportsmanlike. These silly, primitive

Northlands Society

notions are partially rooted in the Northlander's awed fear and distrust of witch-wizardry, I suspect. Still, I don't find it surprising that a Northerner prefers the mace-wielding, shield-bashing spirit of clerical spellcasting to the refined and subtle arts of thaumaturgy and enchantment. I imagine a wizard who wore chain mail and charged into battle howling, his axe raised on high, would suit the Northman better. You don't see many elves in the Northern Reaches, but I suspect their more violent tradition of spellcasting suits the Northlander's taste.

"Each of the major cults of the pantheon—Odin, Thor, and Frey/Freyja—has its priests, called *godar*. The *godar* are generally of three types. *Household godar* are attached to the household of the clanhead, or to the chosen headman of whatever the local community is. The *godar* serve and advise the rulers, and provide for the spiritual needs of the local people. *Monastic godar* live in groups apart from other communities, often at the site of some special shrine or location sacred to the cult. *Itinerant godar* are priests who travel from community to community to serve the faithful in remote regions, and also to serve as agents and defenders of their cult's interests.

"In addition to the house guard—the noble supporters of the clanhead—many clan rulers have something called the *Hird*, a group of freemen warriors of common birth who are sworn retainers of the jarl. In earlier times, the *Hird* was simply a skilled reserve force for the clan. In modern times, the *Hird* has become a small standing army of professional warriors in the service of the clanhead. Often enough, the jarl they serve gives the *Hird* a special name, as King Hord of Ostland has named his *Hird* the *Ravenguard*."

RANK AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

as told by Saru the Serpent

"At the top of the social order is the High King. In ancient times there were many kings and many small kingdoms. In Ostland, the clanheads and their domin-

ions are still sometimes referred to as kings and kingdoms, though the title of jarl has become common for less formal occasions.

"However, ever since King Cnute Bear-chest, Ostland has been ruled by a High King, a king among kings. Vestland also has a High King, also a descendant of Cnute, but he shares his power with the Royal Council, becoming less of a monarch and more of a figurehead.

"Soderfjord has many chiefs who style themselves 'High King,' but none have the power to make good their claim. Ragnar the Stout, the war leader of that country, now enjoys some of the powers of a High King, though I think it unlikely that he will officially wear such a title in our lifetimes.

"Northmen think of themselves as a people, not as citizens of particular nations, at least not in the southern sense. Vestlanders are the exception in this regard, but even those in the borderlands regard themselves as clansmen first, and Vestlanders last. Ostlanders think in terms of their personal obligation to their ruler, rather than to their 'nation.' The Jarldoms are still too recently united as a nation to have developed any identity, and the political situation is too unstable to expect significant changes in the near future. The people of the Jarldoms still think in terms of the traditional chain of command: where one might fight one's brother, but brothers join together to fight cousins, who will lay aside arguments to fight together against other families, who will in turn join together against a separate clan.

"Loyalty to clan and clan chief is another important element in the Northman's sense of social identity, sometimes hard for an outsider to comprehend. The Northman owes allegiance to the clanhead, and expects protection and respect in return. At best, the relationship between clansman and clanhead is a personal and generous one; at worst, it is arbitrary and autocratic. One is expected to defend the clan and its reputation as a matter of personal honor.

"Loyalty to family and its patriarch or matriarch is also a potent obligation.

When the demands of the clan and family loyalties are in conflict, intense and tragic feuds result. The traditional obligation to family is the stronger, though the practical goals of power and ambition are more often served by clan loyalty.

"Certain individuals of the Northern Reaches are clanless: they might be of foreign birth, have renounced their clan ties to be free of impossible obligations, or they may have been outlawed for serious offenses. Clanless persons are viewed with suspicion and distrust. Those who wish to change their clanless status, or who wish to change clan allegiances, have little trouble doing so. Marriage between clans is quite common, even expected.

"Family loyalties run deep in the Northern Reaches. Northlanders are expected to respect and obey the head of their family, and to protect and generously aid their siblings and kin. One is expected to stand by one's family, often without regard to the right or wrong of the circumstances. As with the clan, adoption into a family is common. The practice of fosterage—sending an offspring to be raised by a close relative or friend—is another method of strengthening family and social ties.

"Friendship is also a sacred trust among Northmen. It is a great crime to abandon or betray a friend. The ritual of blood brotherhood, where light ceremonial wounds are brought together under a solemn oath, raises friendship to the status of a family bond."

THE WARRIOR'S CODE

as told by Helfdan Half-Troll

"I guess there's a touch of the hero of the sagas in all of us Northerners. Saru says it comes from all those stories our parents and the skalds tell us—stories about gods and giants and trolls, and heroes with magical spears, and about the Final Battle Ragnarok when all good Northmen will stand beside Father Odin to guard the Bridge of Heaven against the giants and the Queen of Hel.

"Well, I s'pose that's true enough. But a Northman has to know how to protect

himself, whether he's a jarl's guard or a farmer. With all them nasty monsters and raiders, it's smart to be handy with shield and spear. And we start young.

"When I was fourteen, I was made a house guard to Askold Ubbison, clanhead of Varmgard, a great jarl.

"House guard? Well, I guess it's like being a household knight to a duke or maybe to a prince in one of them southern nations like Karameikos.

"I spoke this oath, a shield oath, before my jarl and before my shield-brothers. Other Northern warriors speak some sort of oath like this when they join in a common cause. These are good words to live by—even for weaselly little dwarves like Dwalinn...

"Honor thy lord, and avenge any injury upon him.

Honor thy word and oath.

Honor thy friend and fellow warrior, and desert him not in his need.

Honor the hospitality of thy host, and make no breach of the peace.

Honor the stranger, give him shelter and protection.

Honor thy name, and make no false pretense upon it.

Be fearless.

At the end, hope for death in battle, weapon in hand, the bodies of thy enemies heaped about thee."

"Sure, I went raiding when I was a kid. It's a good way to get rich and make your reputation. I never hurt no women or children, and I never burnt no houses—well, 'cept once when we was gettin' even with some other pirates who'd come burning our houses. I killed some men, true, but I never tried to start a fight—and I never finished anybody off while he was down, the way those berserks do, when they get into a chopping fury.

"I don't go raiding no more. I get plenty of action adventuring and campaigning against the trolls and gnolls. I don't miss raiding. I kinda agree with Saru—things are getting too civilized around here to let that old-fashioned raiding go on. It ain't gonna stop, though, not as long as Hord Dark-Eye winks at his Ostlander jarls when they go out for loot.

"There's plenty of work in the Northlands for a fighting man. Now the Northman kings have their professional armies. Hord Dark-Eye's brigades get lots of action, and good pay, I hear, though I'm not too keen on being a Thyatian mercenary like what Dwalinn says the Ostland armies are, mercenaries for them Thyatians. And there's caravan guards and border riders in the outlands—now that's the work for me. Plenty of uglies out there, and poor homesteaders what need an honest warrior to protect 'em. And there's always treasure-hunting folks who need a strong arm and sharp wits to guide 'em to the uglies' lairs."

Northland Law

as told by Onund Tolundmire

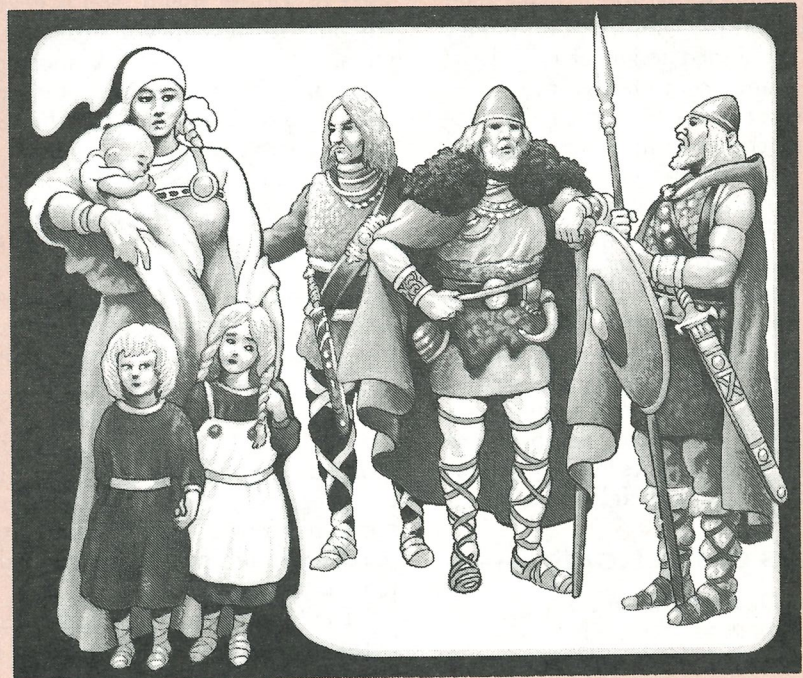
"The Northmen believe that once the facts of a case are made clear, a just judgement is obvious to any sane person. The right and duty of judgement belongs to the leader of the community, whether it is the king, a jarl, a village headman, or the captain of a raiding longship. Although it is the leader's right to judge, it is also his or her responsibility to give consideration to all testimonies of those concerned, and to weigh the advice of

acknowledged wise counselors—the clerics, elders, and wise women of the community, most often. Northmen do not trust written laws and they scorn 'civilized' notions of law and lawyers, which they believe to be elaborate schemes dreamed up by merchants and cowards to cheat and abuse honest men.

"When a man is accused of a crime, notice of the hearing is spread through the community, and the accused is brought before the community leader. In the search for truth, Odin's Ravens—specially-trained clerics of Odin—are summoned to cast the *detect lies* spell on the accused and on witnesses.

"Each community has ground sacred to Odin called the Place of Judgement. Here is a small shrine dedicated to Odin, often marked with runes for the use of Odin's Ravens. These runes have magical powers to help ensure peace during the trial.

"The leader listens to the evidence, then to comments and recommendations for judgement. He or she then retires to consider the case, usually for no more than an hour, but at times for days or even weeks. Then the leader returns and announces his judgement.



Northlands Society

"Because of the vengeful Northern temperament, the most common sentence simply encourages the aggrieved party to take his vengeance on the evil-doer. Neither the judge nor the community necessarily owes any aid in enforcing a sentence, though it is common for the judge and the honest people of the community to side with the victim.

"Because vengeance can be so disruptive to the community, Northmen have evolved the concept of weregild—compensation paid for an injury. Essentially, the victim is offered a payment to abandon his vengeance against the evil-doer.

"The appropriate compensations for various injuries or crimes are established by tradition, though in extreme cases the judge may demand a particularly great or small compensation, according to circumstances. For example, the weregild for manslaying of a freeman is usually 500 gp; for a serious or crippling injury, the weregild might be 250 gp. In the case of the murdered noble, 10,000 gp might be demanded, and for the slaying of a king, 500,000 gp.

"In many cases, the accused's jarl may pay half of the weregild; at the same time, a jarl often demands half the victim's weregild. When you realize that the parties might never be able to make good their claim on the compensation money without the armed might of their jarls, such an arrangement makes sense.

"In certain cases of particularly contemptible crimes—kinslaying, betrayal of one's lord, murder of a cleric, or the like—a man may be outlawed. The common term for an outlaw is 'black sheep' or 'nameless man.' An outlaw is banished from a region—generally from the clan domain, but in some cases, from a group of domains or even a nation—and forbidden to return, even in death. The accusation of treason is a powerful weapon for a jarl, and many men have been banished from their communities for no greater crime than incurring their lord's enmity."

Customs of the North

as told by Dwalinn the Dwarf

"Well, you wouldn't believe some of the quaint practices reported by travelers... and neither would I. I'll speak of what I've seen with my own eyes, or learned through bitter experience.

"Burials, for example, of some king or powerful jarl. The noble got a hollowed-out oak for his coffin, full of finest wools and furs, and they raised a mound of earth above him. They cut the slaves' throats and threw the bodies into the bogs, then followed that with barrels of treasure. Now that I didn't see, but the wise woman who told me could not have been lying, under the circumstances.

"I did see a jarl burned in a longship built just to be his funeral pyre. I watched his wife march right into the fire and sit next down on burning cushions next to her dead lord. Spooky. And this old hag, a wise woman, or as they call them the 'Angels of Death,' hovered around the pyre, jabbering nonsense and waving a wand covered with runes. They say the old kings were buried or burned in deep crypts, with hundreds of warriors slain to guard over the tombs as living dead. Real quaint, huh?

"Another thing—hostages. The Northmen are big for trading hostages. They figure if they have your brother or sister or a close friend, you'll never do anything for fear they'll croak the hostages. And it seems to work, most of the time, though sometimes the hostages are slain in cold blood, and then the vengeance is terrible to see.

"Hospitality. Outsiders find it hard to believe, but the Northman doesn't hesitate to ask a party of adventurers in to share his hearth and bread. And I've had my host—a man I'd never seen before—take up arms against a crowd of bullies who pursued me to his door. Partly it's the fearless courage of the freeman, and his confidence in his weapons. Partly, too, the one who violated the sanctity of hearth and hospitality would risk a terrible vengeance. Admittedly, things are not so nice down in Soderfjord, with all the clan warfare and political brouhaha... too much bad blood, now.

"The Northman blood feud is serious business. Don't get mixed up in it. I once

fell in with a man who I later found was pursued by three brothers who wanted his head for an affront to their sister. Fellow swore he was innocent, but these brothers chased us all over Vestland, ambushing us a couple times a week, until we got lucky and finished them off. Good thing they were stupid, 'cause they were sure enough persistent.

"Northmen have a nice dueling custom—it's called '*holmgang*.' What happens is two parties who have taken offense with one another will put down a cloth about fifteen feet on a side, then drive stakes at the four corners and tie a rope around the area. Then the two men have at each other inside. Any man who touches one of the ropes or steps out of the area is a coward.

"I've seen it run two ways. One is a 'fight to first blood'—the first man to bleed on the cloth is the loser. The other is 'fight until one can't continue.' The two fight until one is unconscious or otherwise incapacitated, usually only with a priest about to keep them both honest. No magic, no magical weapons, just warriors and weapons.

"Northmen love boasting contests. Seems their fussiness about sworn oaths disappears when they start spinning a yarn. Folk take it none amiss when you wildly exaggerate your adventures and accomplishments, particularly around the hearth or when chewing a few flagons down at the tap. They don't like being lied to at all, but you can tell by their attitude whether they expect the straight truth or a rousing epic.

"And drink? Look, I'm a dwarf, and dwarves are no slouches at drinking, but I'm usually legless while those big Northlander clowns are still prancing around with two mugs in each fist. It's an important sign of strong character to be the last man to fall over at a feast or drinking contest. I'm not complaining, no... they do make a passable lager. Stay away from that mead stuff, though. It's fermented honey, sweet as can be. You can drink a tank of it and never even notice you've died. But the headache the morning after? Even a *cure serious* won't touch it."

CREATING NORTHMAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Character Creation

Before you create a character from the Northlands, read through the entire Player Book. Knowledge of the special rules and abilities described may influence your choices in character creation. Be sure to consult with your DM. He or she may prefer that you use the simpler character creation system from the D&D® Basic Player Book.

Use the following procedures to create a beginning character from the Northlands. DMs may also use this procedure to create fully realized NPC characters.

Choosing Character Race: Neither elves nor halflings are common characters in the Northern Reaches. Check with your DM; he or she may prefer that you play human or dwarven characters.

Step One: Create the Basic Character

Follow the procedures in "Making Up a New Character," D&D® Basic Player Book, pages 48-51. Choose your alignment, as section 9 says, but wait to choose your

name until you reach Step Seven below. (Steps Two through Six should give you an idea what your character is like, which will help you pick an appropriate name.)

Step Two (Optional): Determine Personality Traits

Follow the procedure described in the section "Personality Traits" below.

Step Three: Determine Nationality, Clan, and Home Domain

Consult with your DM. He may assign your nationality, clan, and home domain, or allow you to choose them. If you are allowed to choose, see the charts on pages 13 and 14.

Step Four: Determine Training Background and Beginning Skills

To determine the experiences and skills learned by your character before he became an adventurer, use the Training Background Table. If your character has

an Intelligence bonus, select your bonus beginning skills. Record your character's background and beginning skills.

Step Five: Determine Social Class and Family Status

Use the Social Class and Family Status Tables, page 20. Record your social class and family status. Make a note of your Heyday gifts, and note any Charisma bonuses or penalties in parentheses next to your Charisma ability score.

Step Six (Optional): Determine Important Past Experiences

Use the four tables on pages 20-22 to discover important biographical details that may affect your character's abilities or possessions. Some of these details may affect previously-determined characteristics; adjust as necessary.

Step Seven: Choose a Name

Select a name for your character. See the list of suggested names and the accompanying notes on page 23.

Personality Traits (Optional)

Personality traits are a way of establishing a character's individuality, and help decide how a character would act in certain situations. Use of these traits scores is *optional* and should not be used to restrict the actions of a player character.

A player simply chooses his first-level character's initial trait scores when he creates his character. The DM may roll character trait scores for NPCs, or may assign them at will.

When an NPC is confronted with a situation where his personality traits might affect his actions, the DM may make a trait check to decide how the NPC will behave. When making a trait check, the DM rolls a twenty-sided die. If the roll is equal to or lower than the trait score, the NPC's actions are strongly influenced by that trait. If the roll is greater than the trait score, the NPC's actions are more strongly influenced by the opposite of the character trait.

Sometimes two or more traits may influence a decision. In that case, trait checks are made for each relevant trait, and the highest successful check determines which trait more strongly influences the NPC's actions.

For a player character, personality trait scores are an easily referenced summary of a character's personality. You can use trait checks to help decide how your player character might act in a puzzling or confusing situation, although they should be used with caution. *The traits are optional for PCs, serving only as reminders of distinctive characteristics.* The personality traits are not to be used as rules which DMs may apply to force player characters to act in any way other than the way their player chooses to have them behave.

Review the list of traits in the chart on page 10. Next to each trait is a blank line where the trait score is recorded. In parentheses to the right of the trait score is the opposite trait; the opposite trait determines a character's actions when he fails a trait check.

Example #1: Buri the Butcher and Ari Least-Wit are two NPC creeps. They poke their heads into a side passage and are surprised by two PC fighters and a PC magic user. Buri's Courageous Trait is 18. Ari's Courageous Trait is 7. Since they are surprised, the DM makes Courage checks for both NPCs.

Buri rolls a 14 and passes his check. "Who's a-scared of a puny hedge-wizard and his scrawny pals?" he sneers.

Ari rolls a 9 and fails his check. His actions are influenced by the opposite of the Courageous trait—Fearful. He recalls the last time he got toasted by a puny hedge-wizard. "Uh-uh-uh-YAH!!!"—and Ari beats a hasty, disorderly retreat.

Example #2: Onund Tolundmire, a player character, is walking along a trail when he encounters an old crone sitting by her hut, stirring something in a cauldron. The crone invites Onund to share a bowl of soup with her.

Onund is normally a trusting soul (Trusting 13), but he is also wary of stran-

CREATING NORTHMAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Personality Traits Chart ALIGNMENT INITIAL TRAITS

Lawful: 12 + d6
Neutral: 6 + d6
Chaotic: 2d6

Traits

Cautious	_____	(Rash)
Modest	_____	(Proud)
Peaceful	_____	(Violent)
Generous	_____	(Greedy)
Courageous	_____	(Fearful)
Reverent	_____	(Godless)
Forgiving	_____	(Vengeful)
Energetic	_____	(Lazy)
Honest	_____	(Deceitful)
Trusting	_____	(Suspicious)
Loyal	_____	(Unreliable)
Dogmatic	_____	(Open-Minded)

National Modifiers

Karameikos: *no modifiers*
Ylaruam: +2 Reverent, -1 Modest,
-1 Forgiving, +1 Dogmatic
Glantri: -3 Reverent, -2 Dogmatic
Ierendi: +2 Trusting, -2 Energetic,
+1 Generous
Rockhome: *see below, under Dwarves*
Alfheim: *see below, under Elves*
Northern Reaches: +2 Loyal,
-1 Forgiving, +1 Courageous,
-1 Cautious

Character Class Modifiers

Fighters: +3 Courageous, -3 Cautious
Clerics: +3 Reverent, +2 Dogmatic,
+1 Loyal
Magic Users: -2 Courageous,
+2 Cautious, -2 Trusting
Thieves: -2 Honest, +2 Cautious,
-2 Trusting
Dwarves: -2 Trusting, +2 Dogmatic,
-2 Generous
Elves: +2 Honest, -2 Modest, +2 Cautious
Halflings: +2 Peaceful, -2 Cautious,
+2 Energetic

Immortal Served Modifiers

Odin: -1 Peaceful, +1 Courageous
Thor: -6 Peaceful, +3 Courageous,
-3 Cautious
Frey/Freyja: +1 Loyal, +2 Peaceful
Loki: -3 Honest, -3 Dogmatic

gers offering gifts (Cautious 15). Onund's player isn't sure what Onund would do in such a tricky situation, so decides to check both traits to see whether Onund accepts the crone's offer.

The player rolls the dice. Onund passes his Trusting check with a 5, and passes his Cautious check with an 11. Since both checks are successful, the higher score has the greater influence. Onund peers thoughtfully into the cauldron, and cautiously but politely declines her offer.

CHOOSING PC TRAIT SCORES

For each personality trait, choose a number from 1-20 to represent how strongly the character is influenced by that personality trait.

For example, if your character is a fighter, he should probably be fairly Courageous. Choosing a Courage trait score of at least 10, or as high as 20, might be appropriate. A magic user, on the other hand, might think it no shame to be much more Cautious than Courageous, and so might have a Cautious trait score of 10 to 20, and a Courage score of no higher than 10.

Trait scores of 15 or more indicate very strong personality traits. Conversely, trait scores of 5 or less are equally strong expressions of the opposite trait. Note that the characteristics are always referred to in their positive form—Peaceful, Honest, or Forgiving—even if the character has a low rating in that quality, implying the opposite behaviors are a more picturesque assessment of the person—Violent, Deceitful, or Vengeful.

Characters with very high or very low trait scores will develop a reputation for these strong traits. As they become more famous and successful, anyone who recognizes them is likely to know them in terms of those very high and low trait scores. (See "Reputation" on page 12 for more details.)

If a player chooses, he or she may use the NPC Random Traits Score system (below) to determine a character's personality trait scores. In this case, the player has less control over the scores the character will have. However, used with caution, experienced players will find it a

rewarding challenge to play a character with unusual traits that they would never have chosen themselves.

NPC RANDOM TRAIT SCORES

DMs may follow the procedure below to establish a character's trait scores with the aid of dice and random chance. The DM is not obligated to use this table to determine NPC trait scores; he or she may always assign or alter NPC initial trait scores as needed for scenarios. However, once an NPC's traits have been established, major changes are not appropriate without a very good explanation and justification.

Examine the modifiers noted on the Personality Trait Chart to understand how alignment, nationality, character class, and dedication to an Immortal may affect a character's personality. Read the Trait Descriptions below before continuing, so that you understand what kinds of behavior each trait represents.

1. Choose alignment. Characters of each alignment establish their trait scores differently, as indicated on the chart to the left. Alignment must be decided before continuing.

2. For each trait, roll dice as directed to determine the trait score for each alignment. Roll for each trait score separately. Lawfuls roll 1d6 and add 12. Neutrals roll 1d6 and add 6. Chaotics roll 2d6. Record the scores in pencil; you'll continue to alter the scores in the steps below.

Note that Lawfuls generally have high trait scores. Neutrals generally have lower trait scores. Chaotics' trait scores vary the most, and are generally lower than either Lawfuls or Neutrals.

3. Assign National, Character Class, and Immortal Served Modifiers. Certain nations, cultures, and Immortals favor some traits over others, and each character class has its own preferred character traits. Alter the trait scores as directed on the table.

4. Distribute optional points to suit your conception of the character's personality (optional, for PCs developed using the random trait score system). You may add up to six points total to any one trait. You can add fewer than six points' worth,

CREATING NORTHMAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

if you like, or make no changes at all.

Trait Descriptions

The traits described here are organized in the same order the Personality Traits chart is organized. The characteristic and its opposite are treated together.

Cautious (Rash)

Cautious characters like to consider and discuss before they act. They are reluctant to act impulsively, even when haste is necessary. They're happier when back-up plans and escape routes have been plotted out in detail.

Rash characters do the first thing that comes to mind. They might think that acting quickly gives some advantage, or that they are clever at improvising a plan once they have gained the initiative. The other explanation is that they may simply be unable to control their impulses.

Modest (Proud)

Modest characters are humble, tending to understate their own accomplishments and abilities. They are not easily offended when others criticize or mock them, and they easily ignore jokes or taunts.

Proud characters have a poor sense of humor when it comes to themselves, and their principles and beliefs. They are quick to avenge an insult, real or imagined, and feel compelled to answer challenges, even when they are at a considerable disadvantage.

Peaceful (Violent)

Peaceful characters prefer an ordinary normal life to a life of conflict. When possible, they try to resolve disagreements by negotiation and, when threatened by violent enemies, they try to eliminate the threat with the least danger of injury to themselves and others. On the other hand, peaceful personalities need not avoid all violence categorically. They understand that it can be a necessary defense against a violent opponent. A peaceful character will simply try the other choices first.

Violent characters enjoy fighting for

the sake of fighting. They think negotiation is undignified and cowardly, and scorn those who shrink from violence. In hostile dungeons or wildernesses, or in warfare, violent people may make good heroes. In civilized regions, such people are a definite danger to society.

Generous (Greedy)

Generous characters give freely of their time and wealth to friends, family, and clansmen, and are prudently generous even to strangers. They carefully honor the rules of hospitality, extending protection to guests or victims of misfortune or evil.

Greedy characters don't like to share their time or wealth with others, and are always eager to add to their possessions. Such people are scorned by the Northmen but, at the same time, Northmen respect a wealthy man, and the only way to become wealthy is to be careful with the belongings you do have.

Courageous (Fearful)

Courageous characters don't hesitate to confront danger—even when it might be smarter to go around it or to try to confuse it. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between courage and stupidity.

Fearful characters prefer to get out of a dangerous situation, occasionally leaving at a dead run. Fearful behavior can be a matter of careful, sensible evaluation of the odds, and sometimes it is simply a failure of nerve.

Reverent (Godless)

Reverent characters honor and fear the Immortals and their servants on the Prime Plane. They faithfully observe the rituals and strictures of the Immortal's cult, and give great weight to the counsel of priests and holy men. Their faith makes them strong, and occasionally hard-headed or foolish in following the principles of their cult.

Godless characters may refuse to honor the Immortals on principle, or they may simply be careless or frivolous in their religious observances. Even a reverent character might sometimes doubt the

wisdom of an Immortal and his servants, or may compromise his principles in a difficult or ambiguous situation.

Forgiving (Vengeful)

Forgiving characters understand that no one is perfect, and that people sometimes act carelessly or thoughtlessly without necessarily being evil. Forgiving characters also realize that other people may not share their enlightenment, and make allowances for the ignorant and uneducated.

Vengeful characters know that the only way to eradicate evil behavior is to punish it ruthlessly. They treat an offender harshly, believing that he'll hesitate before he offends again. Even normally forgiving persons may sometimes be vengeful, particularly when an important loyalty or principle is involved—or when the person is in a particularly bad mood.

Energetic (Lazy)

Energetic characters are always eager to be doing something, even if it is the wrong thing. They consider laziness a great evil, and consider it a virtue to work for the sake of working, if there is no better reason.

Lazy characters can't see what all the fuss is about. Haste makes waste, they say. They often conceive very elaborate excuses for avoiding tasks that they are just too lazy to do. Even energetic people get tired and fed up sometimes, refusing to budge—because they are usually so energetic, they feel entitled to relax now and then.

Honest (Deceitful)

Honest characters tend to speak the truth, even when it might have been better to keep quiet. They may be painfully frank, and may thoughtlessly reveal information they should have kept secret. On the other hand, you can generally trust what they say.

Deceitful characters seem to actually enjoy telling untruths. Sometimes such characters misrepresent the truth to take advantage of others. Other characters may speak untruths or wild exaggerations just to be entertaining, or to make themselves seem more important. A character who fails

CREATING NORTHMAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

to be honest doesn't necessarily lie. More often, he simply fails to tell the whole truth, or he refuses to say anything.

Trusting (Suspicious)

Trusting characters see themselves as trustworthy, and expect others to be trustworthy also. They tend to accept others at their word, and can be duped by dishonest or deceitful persons.

Suspicious characters may be suspicious because they themselves are sneaky, or they may have learned their suspicious nature after painful experiences with deception. Occasionally even very trusting persons hesitate to trust others, perhaps on the basis of a vague intuition, or when remembering the warnings of other acquaintances.

Loyal (Unreliable)

Loyal characters honor friendships, oaths, and personal, family, and social obligations. Unreliable characters may be consistently self-centered and careless of others, or may seek advantage by betrayal. When normally loyal people act unreliably, it may be an isolated incident of forgetfulness, carelessness, or inconsiderateness.

Dogmatic (Open-Minded)

Dogmatic characters tend to follow the letter of the law, regardless of extenuating circumstances. Law and tradition are sacred, and disagreeing with their principles is evil. They often emphasize justice over mercy, and have a reputation for hardheadedness and moral arrogance.

At their best, open-minded characters can consider both sides of a problem, and are not bound by the blinders of habit and tradition. At their worst, they are completely arbitrary and unpredictable, and honor no principles but their own whims.

DM Note: For all their virtues, Lawfuls can hardly be credited with being open-minded. In fact, their narrow-mindedness often keeps them from appreciating other points of view, and makes them unsympathetic where they could be more understanding and compassionate. On the other hand, being open-minded isn't always a

virtue. Being open-minded about torture or mass slaughter is hardly praiseworthy, for example.

Reputation

Adventurers in the Northern Reaches are like sports personalities in the modern twentieth century world. The more experienced a character becomes, the more people will recognize him or her, and the more they know about that character's history and personal life.

A PC or NPC adventurer may be recognized by another character. Someone who recognizes a character will know that character's Reputation—those character traits that are exceptionally high or low.

Recognizing an Adventurer

Skalds have a chance of recognizing a PC or NPC adventurer equal to 10% multiplied by the character's level. Thus, a skald has a 20% chance of recognizing a second level character, and a 100% chance of recognizing any character at tenth level or higher.

Normal men and adventurers without the Skald skill have only a 5% chance per level of recognizing another adventurer. Consider Attack Ranks as equivalent to levels for purposes of recognizing a non-human adventurer.

Knowing an Adventurer's Reputation

When a character is recognized, his most distinctive traits are known. Any trait with a score of 16 or higher, and any trait with a score of 5 or lower, is identified by the one who recognizes the character as either "high" or "low." The exact trait score is not known. These high or low traits are known as a character's "reputation."

Example: Bjarni Droop-Lid, a 4th level fighter, strolls into the Crushed Thrush Tavern and looks around. He sees a slightly overweight, balding dwarf slumped over a table in the corner, snoring fitfully. **Bjarni's Player:** "Say, do I know that guy?"

DM: "It's pretty dark, and his head is cra-

dled in his arms. Want to go over for a closer look?"

Bjarni's Player: "Sure. I go poke him the ribs until he looks up at me."

DM: "Uh, give me a second." (Bjarni's no skald, for sure, but the snoring figure is Dwalinn, a dwarf with an E Attack Rank. Starting at Dwalinn's 12 levels at 5% each (60%), plus an additional 25% for Attack Ranks A-E, Bjarni has an 85% chance to recognize Dwalinn.) "Okay, roll percentiles."

Bjarni's Player: (Rolls a 43.) "Do I recognize him?"

DM: "Sure enough. That's Dwalinn the Dwarf, a noted adventurer."

Bjarni's Player: "Oh yeah! What's his reputation?"

DM: (Looking at Dwalinn's traits.) Well, he likes to fight (Peaceful 4), he's pretty impulsive (Cautious 5), and he doesn't show much respect to the Immortals (Reverent 3). (Adding a little flourish.) "And you've heard he doesn't like to be disturbed while he's sleeping."

Bjarni's Player: "Oh. Say, did I leave the door open on the way in?"

Determine Nationality, Clan and Domain

Dominions are usually known by the name of the ruling clan; thus, the Olvasford clan's dominion is known as "Olvasford." The Great Hall of the ruling clanhead is located in the town or village indicated on the clan charts printed on the following pages. (Olvasford clan's Great Hall is in the town of Wilmik.) There may be one or more domains under a single clan's dominion. If a character's clan controls more than one domain, then one of them must be chosen as the home domain.

Clan Obligations

1. *Clansmen must obtain permission to travel or take employment outside the clan's dominion.* PCs must visit the clan's Great Hall and apply in person for permission from the clanhead or subordinate clan chief. Such permission is usually automatic for PC adventurers. However, a DM may decide to hold characters with-

CREATING NORTHMAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

in the dominion for campaign reasons.

2. *Clansmen must answer a call to arms from their clanhead.* An adventurer who hears his clan is in trouble is expected to drop everything and come to its aid, even if he must travel long distances and forsake valuable opportunities.

3. *Obey the clanhead.* Normally, when a character is away from his home domain, he won't have to deal with such orders. However, an entire adventure might be based on a character's response to an unjust order.

4. *Protect the reputation of the clan.* Player characters are expected to bring glory to the clan, to make the clan proud. Characters are also expected to stand up for the clan. Failure of a Modest trait check may induce a character to fight to avenge insults to the clan's good name.

Clan Benefits

1. *A clansman is always entitled to the hospitality of the clan from a fellow clansman,* including food, shelter, and weapons.

2. *A clansman may expect the aid and protection of other clansmen in honorable and worthy endeavors.* This doesn't mean a clansman is obligated to drop everything to help, regardless of his own interests—unless the player character has the authority

of a jarl. Defense of the clan as a whole, however, is a strong obligation.

3. *Clansmen are familiar with the land, the climate, and the peoples of his clan and home domain.* A clansman knows his home domain very well. He is familiar with local legends, and knows where to go for the most generous lodgings, best information, or strongest aid. For more difficult or obscure information, the DM may request an Intelligence check.

Obtaining a Dominion (D&D® Companion DM Rules)

A dominion may be obtained in two ways: by a successful challenge of a clanhead, or by colonization of an unoccupied dominion.

Challenging a Clanhead

This is obtaining a dominion by conquest (see D&D® Companion DM Rules, page 4). Normally a dominion must be conquered by armies. The kings of Vestland and Ostland already control armies powerful enough to prevent a player character from raising a force that could threaten their security. Soderfjord, on the other hand, is poorly organized and unable to prevent the small internal wars that result

in dominions changing hands.

A player character may also challenge the clanhead of his own clan for rulership. The character must be of name level, and must defeat the current headman (or his champion) in single combat. A player who wants his character to challenge the head of that character's clan should inform his DM. The DM will then prepare an opponent and decide the conditions of the challenge; these are the rights of the challenged clanhead in disputes over clan leadership.

Colonization

Areas designated as "wilderness" on the large map may be colonized with the permission of the nation's ruler or ruling body. A borderland or wilderness dominion may be obtained with a charter from the King of Vestland or from the Council of Soderfjord. There are no opportunities for colonization in Ostland but the DM may permit landseekers to start or expand colonies on the Isle of Dawn with the support of the King of Ostland.

Any territory not already settled in the Northern Reaches tends to be terrain less than suitable for human habitation, or already occupied by powerful, hostile non-human races.

Ostland Clans and Dominions

Some clans hold more than one of the domains marked on the fold-out map. No Ostland domains are landlocked.

Clan Name	Head of Clan	Great Hall	Domains
Vestpont	Anlaf Geirmundson	Port Swenson	Vestpont
Sumarland	Gest the Hook	Lenvik	Sumarland
Ringmark	Herjolk Eirikson	Fjallasen	Ringmark
Hammersholm	Sigrid Halldorson	Marmaty	Hammersholm
Noslosford	Geirstein Thorgelson	Leirbotn	Noslosford
Vithesford	Ragnar Solmundson	Storm Bay	Vithesford, Thorholm
Varmgard	Askold Ubbison	Zeafort	Varmgard, Aland
Haltimark	Sigvaldi Thorirson	Ankarson	Haltimark
Havardholm	Bodvar Dogleg	Kroken	Havardholm
Suddmore	Gunnhild Svalasdottir	Suddpont	Suddmore
Romaland	Hygelac the Doubter	Shipton	Romaland, Steingard
Fallersholm	Karlsefni Garson	Kirkesdahl	Fallersholm
Zeamark	King Hord Dark-Eye	Zeaburg	Zeamark, Hedmark
Gotland	Mord the Greedy	Bergfors	Gotland
Osterlo	Starkad the Hunter	Saltshore	Osterlo
Sognesholm	Rollo the Cruel	Osknes	Sognesholm
Ostmanland	Thorir the Wealthy	Ostmanhaven	Ostmanland
Kalsloviki	Rognvald the Raven	Galten	Kalsloviki
Oland	Ottar the Swimmer	Abisko	Oland
Kunslo	Hakon Halfdenson	Sati	Kunslo

Characters

Vestland Clans and Dominions

Some clans hold more than one of the domains marked on the fold-out map. Domains marked with an asterisk (*) are landlocked.

Clan Name	Head of Clan	Great Hall	Domains
Hostmore	Askold Steinson	Hostpork	Hostmore
Valgard	Aslak Illugison	Laisvall	Valgard
Grosfold	Erik Rhorvaldson	Halmstad	Grosfold
Marsfjord	Runolf the Dandy	Dremmen	Marsfjord
Sveamark	King Harald Gudmundson	Norrvik	Sveamark
Fosterhead	Alfgeir Vagnson	Valjok	Fosterhed
Ranviki	Gorm the Droll	Bergen	Ranviki
Falsterholm	Thrain Helgason	Namsen	Falsterholm
Fynmark	Rurik Sturlason	Sudorn	Fynmark
Namahed	Eyvind the Odd	Tromso	Namahed, Verfjord, Jamtfjord
Skanicost	Horsi Ulfson	Grebbestad	Skanicost
Norrland	Skapti the Skald	Dovefell	Norrland
Bornbank	Rotolf Kalfson	Vanger	Bornbank, Hrutmark
Brandholm	Erlund the Droll	Kyskmoen	Brandholm
Hennesdalir	Vandrad the Strong	Helaga	Vestfjord
Landersfjord	Arnulf Burison	Landersfjord	Landersfjord
Haverhold	Leif the Lean	Haverfjord	Haverhold
Uplands	Bersi Broadaxe	Hedal	Uplands*
Hallmark	Herigar Tree-Foot	Linghed	Hallmark*
Rhoona	Gudwulf the Golden	Rhoona	Rhoona

Soderfjord Clans and Dominions

Some clans hold more than one of the domains marked on the fold-out map. Domains marked with an asterisk (*) are landlocked. Clanhead marked † is war leader of the Soderfjord Jarldoms.

Clan Name	Head of Clan	Great Hall	Domains
Olvasford	Sokki Sturlson	Wilmik	Olvasford
Suddland	Ulf Kolson	Labbas	Suddland, Moderfeld*
Heddesfjord	Gudrid Thorsdottir	Harby	Heddesfjord, Hordamark
Soderfjord	Ragnar the Stout†	Soderfjord	Soderfjord
Vithesfeld	Thorkell Gydason	Lerum	Vithesfeld
Bergholm	Floki the Fat	Dorna	Bergholm
Vastergard	Harek Hard-Sailer	Rollag	Vastergard
Vandermark	Knute the White	Treungen	Vandermark, Rogaviki
Haltford	Halfden Greybeard	Morden	Haltford, Borkmark
Oberbeck	Vigfus Ketilson	Gargnas	Oberbeck
Ozurfold	Vandrad Horikson	Whiteheart	Ozurfold, Rurrland*
Hedden	Ceowulf War-Tooth	Backwater	Hedden, Gudholm*
Hadmark	Helgi Horse-Killer	Aurskog	Hadmark, Dealand*
Highland	Ketil Skull-Scatterer	Highhold	Highland*
Hillgard	Steinthor Pin-Leg	Maula	Hillgard*
Ranholm	Ottar Heathcock	Kassler	Ranholm*
Boddergard	Guthorm Brittle-Bone	Ranwood	Boddergard*, Hodderland*
Gretmarsh	Thorbjorn Rorikson	Sortfeld	Gretmarsh, Otterland*
Nordcastel	Rollo Harekson	Snowvale	Nordcastel*
Castellan	Solvi Hardhand	Castellan	Castellan*

TRAINING BACKGROUND AND BEGINNING SKILLS

BEGINNING SKILLS: All beginning (first-level) Northman characters know four skills: two skills related to character class, and two background skills. These skills are determined with the Training Background Table found on the next page. Read the table for directions to determine your character's four initial skills.

BONUS SKILLS: A beginning character knows more skills if he is particularly intelligent, exactly as a character knows more languages if he is intelligent. If he has an Intelligence of 13-15, he knows one extra skill (for a total of five). If she has an Intelligence of 16-17, she knows two extra skills (for a total of six.) If he has an Intelligence of 18, he knows three extra skills (for a total of seven.) These skills are selected from the skills described on the next several pages.

Note that the optional Step Six in Northland character creation may affect Intelligence or other ability scores, and therefore change how many skills and which ones may be obtained. Some elements of Step Six depend on earlier steps, so just work in pencil and be prepared to make adjustments as necessary if you use that step.

HOW SKILLS ARE USED: Each skill is based on one of a character's ability scores (Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Constitution, Dexterity, or Charisma).

During a game session, the DM may decide that a character's skill may help him in a situation. Also, the player may ask the DM to consider whether his character's skill might be applicable, but it is the DM's decision.

If the DM decides use of the character's skill is appropriate to the situation, the player is asked to roll a twenty-sided die against the current ability score the skill is based on. If the roll is equal to or less than the ability score, the skill has been used successfully.

Guidelines for Skill Use

- In most circumstances, skills cannot be used against other player characters. Certain skills, particularly Charisma skills, can be used only against NPCs.
- A roll of 20 always fails. The higher the successful roll (so long as it is successful!), the more effectively the skill has been used. The more difficult the task, the more modest the benefits of a successful check.
- A roll of 1 is *not* an automatic success. When a very difficult task is attempted, the DM may assign penalties to the roll to reflect the increased difficulty of the task. If the task is *exceptionally* difficult, the DM may rule before the dice are rolled that, although the effort is remotely possible, it is incredibly unlikely. In such a case he or she may require the player to roll two consecutive 1's to succeed at a task. If the player can roll two consecutive 1's, a case can be made for divine inspiration!
- The DM may decide that use of a skill in easy tasks is automatic, or receives a bonus to the roll.
- The DM determines the amount of time required for a successful use of a skill. Building a small boat may take several days, while identifying a curious artifact may take only seconds.
- The DM determines the conditions concerning the successful use of a skill. He may rule that successful use of the Sailing Weather skill will give advance warning of a storm, or he may rule that it only permits the character to deal with the storm when it strikes, according to circumstances.
- The DM's ruling is final. If, as a player, you think a judgement was unreasonable, discuss it with the DM after the game, with the hope of avoiding misunderstandings in the future.

IMPROVING SKILLS: If you wish, a character's skill score may be raised above the ability score that the skill is based on. To improve a skill score, you must trade in one ordinary skill choice to increase a different skill score by one point.

Such an improved skill is indicated on

a character sheet by marking the number of additional points with a "plus" sign after the skill name (i.e., Jeweler +1, Nature Lore +2, etc.). Improving a skill increases the chance of a successful check against that skill. Other benefits conferred by that skill are not affected. These are permanent choices; you cannot shuffle skill scores after the character starts adventuring.

Notes on the Training Background Table Class-Related Skills

Young fighters learn to be very aggressive in combat. They also learn how to intimidate, which allows them to avoid bloodshed without being cowardly.

A Northman thief wants to avoid violence. He cultivates stealth and avoidance rather than combat skills.

Those destined to be Northman clerics are schooled by local priests in the cult principles and rituals.

In addition to basic spellcasting, magic users learn to read for research, and a general history of the Northern Reaches.

Background Skills

Sailor, Farmer/Herder: Hard physical labor and the associated skills.

Craftsman: This represents a basic apprenticeship in the chosen craft.

Laborer, Servant/Thrall: This represents physical and/or menial work. Even characters of high social class may have such a background due to clan obligations or family disgrace. Labor is not a respected vocation in the North.

Merchant/Trader: Usually working for an experienced merchant or trader for low wages. May include selling in village markets and traveling with caravans.

Hunter: All occupations where one must live off the land in wild regions.

Priest of Odin: Generally important clan counselors, valued for their shrewd thinking and diplomatic skills.

Characters

TRAINING BACKGROUND TABLE

Each Northlander character begins with a background occupation, two skills related to that occupation, and two skills related to character class. The class-related skills reflect a character's early personal tendencies and interests; the background skills reflect training received from various individuals, and experiences as the character grows up. To use this table, start at "A" and only apply those conditions that relate to your character.

- A. If the character is a FIGHTER, ELF, or DWARF:
the two class-related skills are *Fighting Instinct* and *Intimidate*.
- B. If the character is a THIEF or HALFLING:
the two class-related skills are *Surprise* and *Evade*.
- C. Background skills for FIGHTER, ELF, DWARF, THIEF, or HALFLING characters:
Roll 2d4 to determine training background. If the character is from a seacoast or river clan, - 1 to roll. If from a landlocked clan, + 1 to roll. When background is determined, choose two skills from that background.
1. Sailor: *Boating, Navigation, Ship Building, Sailing Weather*
 2. Craftsman: *Carpentry, Metalsmithing, Bowmaking, Tanner, Potter, Tinker, Jeweler*
 - 3-4. Farmer/Herder: *Nature Lore, Stamina, Outdoorsman, Horsemanship*
 - 5-6. Servant/Thrall: *Domestic Crafts, Deceive*
 7. Laborer: *Muscle, Stamina*
 8. Merchant/Trader: *Know Market Value, Persuade, Deceive, Gain Trust, Horsemanship*
 9. Hunter: *Hunting, Nature Lore, Stamina, Outdoorsman, Horsemanship*
- D. If the character is a CLERIC:
the two class-related skills are *Read Runes* and *Honor Immortal*.
- E. Background skills for a CLERIC:
Choose Immortal served, and choose two skills honored by that Immortal. The DM may rule that player characters cannot be Loki clerics, since they are often rabid chaotics deeply distrusted by almost all Northlanders.
1. Priest of Odin (Lawful or Neutral): *Detect Deception, Persuade, Skald*
 2. Priest of Thor (Lawful or Neutral): *Fighting Instinct, Intimidate, Skald*
 3. Priest of Frey/Freyja (Lawful or Neutral): *Nature Lore, Gain Trust, Skald*
 4. Priest of Loki (Chaotic only): *Deceive, Detect Deception, Skald*
- F. If the character is a MAGIC USER:
the two class-related skills are *Read/Write Language* and *Ancient History*.
- G. Background skills for a MAGIC USER:
Roll 1d6 to determine training background, and choose two skills.
- 1-5. Private Apprentice: *Read Runes, Skald*
 6. Magic College Graduate: *Planar Geography, Non-Human Cultures, Magical Engineering, Alchemy, Alternate Magics, Clerical Magics*

Priest of Thor: Generally these are warrior chaplains, sharing the living quarters and lifestyle of warriors.

Priests of Frey/Freyja: Considered the guardians and counselors of the common man, and protectors of the poor and weak, they live humble lifestyles.

Priests of Loki: Loki worship is rarely public. Most priests adopt the disguise of a vagabond or mercenary.

Apprenticeship/Magic College Graduate: Most magic users learn the basics through an apprenticeship to an experienced spellcaster. A select few are admitted to the College of Norrvik. Poorer candidates receive scholarships or earn their keep with part-time jobs.

Learning More Skills: As time goes by, your character may gain more skills or improve existing skills.

All characters get a new skill choice every four experience levels. Thus they get their first skills at Level 1, then a new skill at Level 5, another at Level 9, another at Level 13, and so on.

Each new skill choice may be used to acquire a new skill or to improve an old skill in the manner described above.

Maximum Skills Known

by Character Level and Attack Rank

Level 1: 7 skills.

Level 5: 8 skills.

Level 9: 9 skills.

Level 13/Rank C: 10 skills.

Level 17/Rank E: 11 skills.

Level 21/Rank G: 12 skills.

Level 25/Rank I: 13 skills.

Level 29/Rank K: 14 skills.

Level 33/Rank M: 15 skills.

Skills and the Character Sheet:

Record your skills on your character sheet in this fashion: Find a blank spot on the sheet. Write "Number of Skill Choices: _____", leaving room beneath that. Record on the line the number of starting skill choices your character received.

Below this, write down your character's skills. Record the name of the skill, the abbreviation of the ability the skill is based on, any permanent modifier you have obtained for the skill by devoting extra skill choices to it, and the current skill roll you have with the skill.

Example: Erik the Prune, a sour-faced Vestlander cleric (*S12, I14, W16, C13, D9, Ch7*) is beginning his adventuring career. His Intelligence of 14 gets one extra skill choice. After he determines his skills on the Training Background Table, and selects his bonus skill, his sheet looks like this:

Number of Skill Choices: 5

Read Runes (I): 14

Honor Odin (W): 16

Detect Deception (W): 16

Skald (I): 14

Non-Human Cultures (I): 14

Skill Descriptions

Below are the skills particularly appropriate or useful in a Northern Reaches campaign, listed according to the ability score they are based on. This is not a complete list of all possible skills. You may suggest other skills to your DM, and he or she may have other skills to choose from.

Do not overlook the possibility of essentially useless but entertaining skills. Skills can be useful to characters for in-session problem-solving, but a skill doesn't have to be useful to be desirable—it can just be fun. Don't hesitate to ask your DM for a skill that might not be very useful, but which perfectly fits the personality you've imagined for your character.

Strength Skills

Intimidate: The ability to bully others into doing what you want them to do. Successful use means that NPCs who generally don't like something like fighting (most normal people) are intimidated into doing what they can.

This works best against civilians and non-fighter types. NPC adventurers and other fighter-type NPCs (guards, thugs, bouncers, etc.) may ignore a successful use of this skill if they succeed in either a

Modest or a Courageous check.

Muscle: Knowledge and experience with heavy lifting and hard labor. The character knows how to direct groups of laborers to make their efforts most effective. He understands the use of simple machinery like wedges, pulleys, and levers. Character receives a +2 bonus on Strength checks for difficult tasks like bending bars or smashing through doors and walls.

Intelligence Skills

Boating: The ability to handle small boats or perform as a crewman on a larger ship. Also includes fishing skills. Most simple tasks are performed automatically by characters with this skill; check against this skill only in critical or emergency situations.

Helmsman/Captain: The ability to handle a larger ship and direct a competent crew. This doesn't include handling challenges to a captain's authority—a mutiny, for example—which would be decided by a Charisma check or use of some other appropriate skill (Intimidate, Persuade, Deceive, etc.).

Navigation: The ability to guide a boat or ship to an unfamiliar destination or in unfavorable circumstances (fog, storms, night, etc.). Use of this skill presumes possession of a sextant or sky reader, maps, and other navigational aids. If any of these are not available, a penalty of -4 to -8 may be imposed.

Ship Building: The ability to build boats and ships, and to keep them in good repair. Use of this skill presumes adequate time and access to appropriate tools and materials. Otherwise, penalties may be assessed, or DMs may rule that the task is impossible.

Sailing Weather: The ability to anticipate sea and weather conditions—to take advantage of them, or to avoid their dangers. A successful use might increase a vessel's speed, for example, or warn of an impending storm.

Read Runes: The ability to read the sacred runes of the Northern Reaches. Successful use permits a literal reading of the message. Understanding the sacred or profound meanings of the runes requires separate use of the interpret runes spell.

Characters

Activating a Rune of Power requires use of the *bless* spell (p. 27).

Nature Lore: Knowledge of common plant and animal life of a familiar locality, both domestic and wild. This includes knowing such things as edible and poisonous plants, healing herbs, or signs of unnatural danger like unusually quiet forest, absence of normal plant life, atypical animal behavior, etc.

Use of this skill in the character's home dominion receives a +2 bonus. Use of this skill in an unfamiliar but similar setting is at a -2 to -4 penalty. For example, a hunter from the foothills of the Hardanger Range might be at a -2 penalty on the moors of northern Vestland, or a -4 penalty in the mountains of Rockhome. A native Northlander is presumed to have at least some hearsay knowledge of plants and animals throughout the Northern Reaches.

Know Terrain: The knowledge of the land, water, and weather of a region. This includes knowing the safest or fastest travel routes, pathfinding, local waterways, and dangerous weather conditions.

Use of this skill in the character's home dominion receives a +2 bonus. Use of this skill in an unfamiliar but similar setting is at a -2 to -4 penalty. Northland natives are presumed to have at least some hearsay knowledge of land, water, and weather throughout the Northern Reaches.

Outdoorsman: Experience with and knowledge of wilderness travel, camping, and survival techniques.

Know Market Value: A character with the skill automatically knows the market value of common goods, including standard D&D® game equipment items. Successful checks allow one to estimate the approximate value of special goods like magical items and treasures.

Skald: Knowledge of traditional verses concerning Northland traditions, legends, and heroic figures, and the ability to present the tales to an audience. The higher the successful roll (so long as it is successful), the finer the presentation. To create original verses glorifying the deeds of modern heroes, checks are made at a -4 penalty.

Read/Write Language: Fluency in a language common in the Known World. The language chosen may be from

another D&D® game nation, or may be selected from the List of Common Languages, *D&D Basic DM Rules*, page 18.

Ancient History: Detailed knowledge of Northern Reaches history and prehistory. General knowledge of the history of other D&D game nations and non-human races.

Planar Geography: General knowledge of the Prime, Inner, Outer, Astral, and Ethereal Planes as described in the *D&D Companion Player Manual*. Includes knowledge of techniques of travel among planes and common inhabitants of better-known planes.

Non-Human Cultures: General knowledge of non-human races of the Northern Reaches. Includes incomplete knowledge of non-human customs, methods of warfare, skills with magic, and a very basic vocabulary (about 20-30 common words).

Magical Engineering: Ability to recognize basic principles of some unfamiliar magical devices. Does *not* include practical training in design or fabrication of magical artifacts. Does include recognition of most common magical items.

Alchemy: The ability to recognize and identify common alchemical substances and potions.

Alternate Magics: Basic familiarity with those magics which are not related to standard spellcasting. Includes knowing magical abilities of well-known magical Prime Plane and extra-planar monsters, and of Immortal beings.

Clerical Magics: Ability to recognize and identify magical effects associated with clerical spells and other magical abilities. At the DM's option, may permit occasional operation of clerical items by magic users, but this is universally acknowledged as extremely dangerous—it can result in destruction of the object and the user if the skill check fails.

Wisdom Skills

Detect Deception: The ability to recognize deceptive tricks or behaviors in an NPC. This does not reveal the truth or falsity of statements nor the motivations of the speaker, nor does it reveal the exact nature of the deception. Unlike the

detect lies spell, this skill only warns the character to distrust the NPC who is trying to deceive him. The character gets no clues about which statements are true or untrue. Successful use of this skill just indicates that the speaker is intentionally trying to deceive the character.

Honor (Specific Immortal): The ability to properly honor an Immortal to gain his favor and aid. This includes knowing the code of behavior and the rituals pleasing to the Immortal in question.

This skill enables clerics to obtain use of clerical spells. Use of this skill by a cleric is automatically successful in routine situations. If the cleric has performed actions displeasing to his Immortal, he may be required to make a skill check. Failure may mean that the cleric does not receive one or more of his spells, or that he suffers some other penalty, such as a temporary curse.

Use of this skill by non-clerics normally permits only knowledge of appropriate codes of behavior and rituals. However, any character, cleric or non-cleric, may use this skill to request "divine intervention." The character must permanently sacrifice 1d10 hit points to request an immediate one-time use of any clerical spell, regardless of level. If the skill check is successful, the hit points are lost, even if the Immortal denies the character's request. A character with fewer than 10 hit points risks killing himself this way.

Constitution Skills

Stamina: The ability to continue arduous physical activity for long periods, and to endure physical hardship. Character can run twice as long—40 rounds, 10 minutes—without becoming exhausted (see "Movement", *D&D Basic Player Manual*, p. 56). He moves as though encumbered at one class lower than his actual encumbrance (see Encumbered Movement Rates Table, *D&D Basic Player Manual*, p. 30), and receives a +2 bonus on any Constitution-based checks concerning resistance to effects of adverse weather or resistance to fatigue from extended periods of exertion.

Dexterity Skills

Craftsman (Skill): The ability to make and repair items associated with your craft, and the ability to evaluate the worth of such items. Craftsman skills include Carpentry, Metalsmithing, Bowmaking, Tanner, Potter, Tinker, Jeweler, and so forth.

DMs may choose to designate Craftsman skills as based on Intelligence rather than Dexterity, especially as the craftsmanship approaches the level of artistry. Here the skills have been included among the Dexterity-based skills because manual dexterity, patience, and practice are important in learning the basics of any craft. DMs may decide to use both designations in the same campaign, where an Intelligence-based crafter makes the lovelier products and a Dexterity-based crafter makes solid, serviceable goods.

Domestic Crafts: Knowledge of basic homecrafts providing shelter, food, and garments for a household. Includes cooking, spinning, weaving, sewing, shoemaking, housekeeping, etc.

Fighting Instinct: The reaction of impulsively attacking first in order to gain the advantage in combat. Successful use gives a +1 to Initiative in the first round of a combat.

Surprise: The ability to get the jump on an unsuspecting victim. May be used to attack (e.g., to jump someone from behind) or to avoid a conflict (e.g., to duck out of the hands of the man who caught you picking his pocket). Successful use gives a +1 to Surprise.

Evade: The ability to elude a pursuer. This skill comes through experience in running away from dangers. Successful use permits (where appropriate) a movement bonus of +10 feet per round for 10 rounds, giving the evader a chance to hide or throw the pursuer off his trail. If the situation is one of hiding, dodging, or outguessing a pursuer, a successful check allows the character to find some way to be overlooked.

Hunting: The ability to locate, stalk, and hunt large and small game with the bow. Successful use gives a +1 to hit with a bow in an outdoor setting. It is essentially useless inside a building, cave, or

dungeon.

This skill focuses more on the "hunting" than the "bow" and does not affect combat uses of other missile weapons.

Horsemanship: Knowledge of basic care and feeding of horses, and the ability to control a horse under difficult circumstances. A character can recognize a nag, but buying a suitable mount for a reasonable price requires a minimal skill check, as will attempting to perform various activities from the saddle. For example, most folk can stay in a saddle while a horse is walking, but staying there during a gallop or a combat is a whole different story. To use a weapon, spell, or skill while on horseback, a character must succeed in a horsemanship check, with penalties as the difficulty increases.

Charisma Skills

Persuade: The ability to prove your honesty and sincerity to NPC listeners. This skill cannot be used to deceive a listener; the speaker must believe in the truth of what he says. Successful use of this skill means the listener believes what the speaker tells him. It does not imply that the listener will agree to actions that are proposed by the speaker.

If the NPC listener is hostile, or has reason to distrust the speaker, the DM may assess penalties of -1 to -8 to the check. Alternatively, the DM may ask for opposed Charisma checks, or may require checks between the Persuade skill and the NPC's Trusting trait.

Deceive: The ability to persuade a listener of the truth and sincerity of what is said, despite the fact that the speaker is being untruthful, insincere, or both. Successful use of this skill causes an NPC to believe an untrue statement or to accept a misleading statement as honest and sincere.

The speaker need not actually lie to intend to deceive his listener. For example, the statement "We come in peace" may be literally true, in the sense that the speaker hasn't killed anyone yet. It may be misleading in the sense that the speaker is cheerfully willing to butcher anyone in order to reach his goal.

Leadership: The ability to appeal to an

audience to perform specific actions. A successful use of this skill permits the character to make an appeal to a given personality trait (Courageous, Loyal, Energetic, etc.) of an NPC listener—success means the player can get the listener's attention, not that he has persuaded him.

To actually encourage the desired action, the player decides with the DM which trait he will appeal to, according to the circumstances. For example, if the character is trying to get the listener to attack a dragon, he may appeal to a suspected high Courageous trait, or a low Generous trait (presuming a treasure is at stake). The player then makes a brief speech for his character, appealing to that trait. Then the DM rolls a trait check for the NPC. If the player's speech is really good, the DM should award bonuses to the check. If the check is successful, the NPC acts as the character requests. If the check is a failure, the NPC does not follow the character's request.

If the NPC listener is hostile, or has reason to distrust the speaker, the DM may assess penalties of -1 to -8 to the check. Alternatively, the DM may require opposed Charisma checks, or opposed checks between the Leadership skill and the NPC's Trusting or Loyalty trait, if appropriate.

Gain Trust: The ability to gain the trust of an NPC through a combination of courtesy, respect for traditions, knowledge of human nature, and honorable behavior. Successful use of this skill causes an NPC to accept the character as a trustworthy person until given solid evidence to the contrary.

In routine situations, a successful use of this skill is sufficient. This covers situations like an overnight visit to a roadside inn, seeking food and shelter at a farmstead, etc.

In dangerous or threatening circumstances, or if the NPC listener is hostile or already has reason to distrust the speaker, the DM may assess penalties to the check. The DM must examine the situation, and may require opposed Charisma checks between the PC and the NPC, or require opposed checks between the Gain Trust skill and the NPC's Trusting trait or any other trait appropriate.

Characters

Family Status

A young Northlander's reputation rests firmly upon the reputation of his or her immediate family. Until the Northerner proves himself later by his adult actions, he is judged by the reputation of his family. Outside his home locality, his family's reputation may be unknown.

Roll 1d100 to determine status. Write down the Charisma modifier next to the Charisma ability score on the character sheet, in parentheses. The DM will determine whether one's family's reputation is known outside one's home domain.

Roll	Status	Charisma Modifier
01-05	Honored	+2 Charisma
06-20	Respected	+1 Charisma
21-70	Unremarkable	No Effect
71-85	Doubtful Reputation	-1 Charisma
86-95	Scorned	-2 Charisma
96-00	Outlaw	-1d4 Charisma

Heyday Gifts

In the Northern Reaches, one receives gifts from family, friends, and clansmen when one comes of age at sixteen. The sixteenth birthday is called one's "Heyday." Roll 1d100 to determine one's social status and Heyday inheritance.

Heyday gifts are intended to help the recipient begin a productive adult life. The gifts are generally either in coin or in the form of some useful object the recipient will need in his or her chosen occupation. Heyday gifts are in addition to any coin that the player character received in the Basic Character Creation procedure.

Roll	Social Class	Inheritance
01	Rich Noble	60 + 3d20 gp
02-04	Typical Noble	40 + 1d20 gp
05-10	Poor Noble	20 + 1d10 gp
11-15	Rich Freeman	40 + 1d20 gp
16-70	Typical Freeman	20 + 1d10 gp
71-85	Poor Freeman	1d10 gp
86-00	Servant/Thrall/Vagabond	1d10 sp

Important Past Experiences

The optional tables on the next two pages indicate significant events that happen to your Northern Reaches character before he gives up the relatively safe but unrewarding occupation of "Normal Man" for the exciting life of a D&D® game adventurer.

These tables are only to be used in character creation! Once a character has begun earning experience points in an adventuring life, he or she may not use these tables.

Do not run a character through the tables more than once, although if you use any one table, you must use all. Some tables may yield benefits, others may yield misfortunes. You cannot gain if you are not willing to risk losing.

Use of these tables is subject to your DM's approval. He or she may prefer that you play standard characters as created with the D&D Basic Set Rules, or that you play Northlander PCs without any additional changes.

Before you decide to use the tables, look them over carefully. Although the experiences may improve a character, some may injure or weaken a character. Life is not always kind. There is an element of risk in using these tables, which is one reason they are optional.

Important Past Experiences Procedure

1. Roll first on the "Afflictions and Accidents Table," page 21. (Bad news first.) Change any abilities as directed.

2. Then roll on the "Significant Experiences Table," "Character Building Table," and "Combat Experience Table"

on page 22. Read the notes carefully and follow any instructions that apply to your character. Record any changes to abilities, personality traits, skills, or wealth.

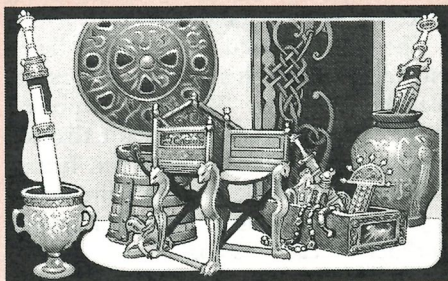
When you are done, you might have a list of notations like this example:

Age 17: Good health.
Generous teacher, +1 Con, gain +1 to
Stamina skill
Saw action in a small raid,
+1 Courage
Resolved to Change, work harder on weapons practice, +1 Energetic.

3. The last step is to figure out a story that fits these details. Add what you learned about the Northern Reaches in this Player Book to fill in the background. Create a brief biography for the character's year of pre-adventuring experience, and keep these notes on the back of your character sheet or on a separate piece of paper.

For the character given as an example, above, you might concoct a story like this:

At 17, Rolf went to live with his uncle in Namahed to work on his sheep farm. The hard work and outdoor life toughened him, and cured him of sleeping late. Ostland pirates attacked a neighbor's stead that summer, and Rolf and his uncle helped drive the raiders off. Rolf didn't get in on much of the fighting, but he'll be better prepared if the raiders come again next year. He considered joining an expedition advertised in Tromso, but figured he wasn't ready for the adventuring life until he'd spent more time practicing his fighting technique.



Afflictions and Accidents Table

Roll 1d100. Subtractions will never drop an ability score below 7.

1	Brown Plague: Roll 1d6 and subtract that score from Constitution.
2	Brain Rot: -1 to all ability scores; no Annual Training, Character Building, or Combat Experience.
3	Fading of Youthful Enthusiasm: -1 Constitution, -1 Strength
4-8	Minor Accidental Injury: Roll 1d10 and see below: 1-2: Minor Injury to Hands, Arms, Feet, or Legs: -1 Dexterity 3: Head Injury: -1 Intelligence 4: Injury Affecting Breathing or Digestion: -1 Constitution 5: Disfiguring Scars: -2 Charisma 6: Bad Fall/Riding Accident/Wild Party: -1 Strength, -1 Dexterity 7-10: No permanent disability
9	Gut Worms: 10% chance of -1 Constitution
10	Arthritis/Back Injury/Hernia: -1 Dexterity
11-90	Good Fortunes and Perfect Health: No ability losses
91-93	Dysentery: 25% chance of -1 Constitution
94-96	Sheep Pox: -1 Charisma; 25% chance of -1 Constitution and -1 Strength
97	Out of Shape: -1 Dexterity, -1 Strength
98	Poor Mental Health: -1 Intelligence, -3 Wisdom
99	Carrot Fever: -1 to all ability scores; no Annual Training, Character Building, or Combat Experience
00	Very Serious Accident: Roll 1d6 and subtract that score from Dexterity

Afflictions and Accidents Table Notes

Brown Plague

Onset of the illness is so rapid that the victim is often desperately ill before treatment can be obtained. Only good fortune can prevent a serious reduction of one's overall health.

Brain Rot

A mysterious disease which exhibits no symptoms until the victim keels over without warning. Affects the brain and nervous system. Victim is bedridden for 1d4 months, and never fully recovers.

Fading of Youthful Enthusiasm

Individual prefers loafing around the tavern over studying or weapons practice. A common affliction, treatable by imposed exercise or desperate peril.

Minor Accidental Injury

This might be getting kicked by a horse,

stabbed in a tavern brawl, caught with the landlord's daughter, or any number of possible situations. Accidents will happen; fortunately, many injuries are not permanently disabling.

Gut Worms

Serious digestive disorder. Parasitic infestations of larger creatures cannot be cured by a *cure disease*, *remove curse*, or other magical spells. Parasites must be poisoned, and victim cannot be treated with *neutralize poison* until the parasites are dead.

Arthritis/Back Injury/Hernia

Unfortunately, these disabilities and others like them are permanently debilitating.

Dysentery

An unpleasant but generally minor ailment. Some victims develop permanent digestive problems in serious cases.

Sheep Pox

A common, highly contagious affliction. Once infected and recovered, victim is immune from further infection.

Out of Shape

Only exercise and dedication can maintain one's youthful trim and vigor. The longer you go without taking care of your body, the harder it is to change your lazy ways.

Poor Mental Health

This can come about by being scared silly, getting locked in a dungeon, joining a weird cult, or by several other imaginable situations.

Carrot Fever

A malaria-like disease transmitted by carrot parasites. (For notes on curing parasitic illnesses, see Gut Worms above.)

Characters

Important Past Experiences Table Notes

This table indicates an important experience affecting the character before he or she makes the decision to become an adventurer.

+1 Bonuses to Skills: These are in addition to your normal beginning skills and bonus skills for high Intelligence, and do not count against future skill choices gained at higher levels.

+1 to A Class-related Skill: A +1 to either of the two skills received as beginning skills. This does not affect bonus skills.

Family Heirloom: If an orphan, is received from a friend or companion. Clerics receive a handsomely carved club. Northman clerics use such wooden clubs carved with runes as holy weapons.

Important Past Experiences Table

Roll 4d6. Fighters: -3 to roll. Magic Users: +3 to roll.

Abilities cannot be raised or reduced beyond the scores noted on the table.

1	Complete Dedication: +1 Strength, +1 Constitution (each, maximum 16)
2	Brutal Schedule: gain +1 to any two different skills
3	Hard Training: +1 Strength, +1 Constitution (each, maximum 15)
4	Training Accident: -1 Dexterity
5	Learn to Concentrate on Work at Hand: +1 Intelligence (maximum 15)
6	Patient Practice: +1 Dexterity (maximum 16)
7	Generous Teacher: +1 Constitution (maximum 15); +1 to any skill
8	Sincere Effort: gain +1 to any class-related skill
9-19	No Benefit
20	Competent Teacher: gain +1 to any class-related skill
21	Good Advisor: +1 Wisdom (maximum 15)
22	Meet a Famous Priest: gain a healing potion; +4 Reverent
23	Good Health, Good Environment: +1 Strength
24	Learn Bad Habits: -1 Intelligence (minimum 12)
25	Access to Good Library: +1 to Intelligence (maximum 15)
26	Inherit Heirloom: gain +1 dagger (Cleric: +1 club) with <i>continual light</i>
27	Fundamental Insight: +1 to Intelligence (maximum 16); +1 to any skill

Character Building Table Notes

Certain experiences have a dramatic effect on a character's personality. This table indicates the one experience that had the *greatest* effect on the character's personality.

Sometimes the impetus for change comes from within the character. For those who resolve to change their ways, think of it as an important New Year's Resolution—an old tradition among the Northmen.

Character Building Table

Roll 1d20. No trait can be raised above 15 or reduced below 6 by this table.

1	Betrayed by a Close Friend: Loyal -2
2	Humiliated and Thrashed by a Bully: Peaceful -2, Forgiving -2
3	Widely Praised for a Small Achievement: Modest -2
4	Cheated by Fast-talking Acquaintance: Trusting -1, Generous -1
5	Inspired by the Actions of a Spiritual Hero: Reverent +3
6	Mocked for Timid Behavior: Courageous +1, Cautious -3
7	Discouraged by Poor Luck: Energetic -1, Cautious -2
8	Achieve Success by Misleading a Comrade: Honest -1, Loyal -1
9	Protect a Friend from an Attack: Loyal +1, Courageous +1
10	Defend the Honor of a Family Member: Loyal +1, Courageous +2
11	Lose Several Opportunities Through Hesitation: Cautious -1
12	Forgive a Miscreant Who Becomes a Close Friend: Forgiving +2
13	Get Caught in a Complicated Lie: Honest +1, Cautious +1
14	Ignore a Personal Principle, with Disastrous Results: Dogmatic +2
15	Accidentally Injure an Innocent Person: Cautious +1, Peaceful +2
16-20	Resolve to Change Your Ways: Alter any single trait score 1 point.

Combat Experience Table Notes

A beginning character may have been involved in fighting before he or she becomes an adventurer. Northland magic users generally avoid combat situations, while fighters eagerly seek them out.

A "war" on this table does include full-scale campaigns. "War" also includes action in the minor but persistent feuds between vengeful clansmen.

"Raid or Small Action" indicates a single, isolated incident—anything from repelling a raid on a farm to beating off bandits ambushing traders.

Combat Experience Table

Roll 4d4. Fighter: -3 to roll. Magic User: +3 to roll.

No trait or ability may be raised above 15 or reduced below 6 by this table.

1	War Veteran/Seriously Injured: -2 Constitution, -1 Strength
2	War Veteran/Uninjured: +2 Courageous, -2 Peaceful
3	War Veteran/Injured: +1 Courageous, -1 Constitution
4	War Veteran: Little Danger: +2 Courageous
5	Raid or Small Action Veteran/Injured: +1 Cautious, -1 Constitution
6	Raid or Small Action Veteran/Uninjured: +1 Courageous, -1 Peaceful
7	Raid or Small Action Veteran/Little Danger: +1 Courageous
8-17	No combat experience
18	Injured in Combat: -1 Courageous, -1 Constitution, +2 Cautious
19	Badly Injured in Combat: -3 Courageous, -1 Constitution, +3 Cautious

Naming Northland Characters

Northlanders have two names: a given name (the common name they are known by), and a family name.

Family names are usually formed by adding the suffixes -son or -sen ("son"), or -dottir ("daughter") to the father's name. Thus, Rolf, son of Ingolf, is Rolf

Ingolfson; Ingrid, daughter of Ingolf, is Ingrid Ingolfsdottir. Some Northland families take their names from revered ancestors or important locations, a less common but quite respectable practice. Many Northlanders are best known by their colorful nicknames. Nicknames can refer to a person's home domain—Sturla of Nemmen, for instance. Other nicknames refer to feats or features the person

is proud of. Thus, Rolf Ingolfson might introduce himself as Rolf the Sea-Wolf, or Rolf of Kroken.

Use the following lists of names as resources and inspirations. Don't hesitate to create your own colorful nicknames to fit the background and personality of your character.

Male Names

Aethelweard	Aslak	Einar	Gest	Hallkel	Hoskuld	Knute	Rhorvald	Stein	Thorhall
Aki	Atli	Eindrini	Gilli	Harald	Hrafn	Kolbein	Rognvald	Steinkel	Thorir
Alf	Aun	Eirik	Gizur	Harek	Hrapp	Kolskegg	Rollo	Steinthor	Thorcell
Alfgeir	Bardi	Eldgrim	Glum	Hastein	Hrethel	Lambi	Rorik	Strybjorn	Thormod
Alrik	Beowulf	Eirik	Godfred	Hauk	Hring	Ljot	Runold	Strykar	Thormond
Amundi	Bergthor	Erlend	Gorm	Havard	Hroald	Ljotolf	Runolf	Sturla	Thorolf
Anlaf	Bersi	Erling	Grani	Heardred	Hrolf	Lodin	Rurik	Sumarlidi	Thorstein
Anskar	Bjarni	Eyolf	Grim	Hedin	Hrothgar	Mord	Saemund	Svan	Thorvald
Ari	Bjorn	Eystein	Gudmund	Helgi	Hrut	Njal	Sam	Svart	Thrain
Arinbjorn	Bodvar	Eyvind	Gudrun	Hemming	Hygelac	Odd	Sighvat	Svein	Thrand
Armod	Bork	Fhorgeir	Gunnar	Hengist	Illugi	Ofeig	Sigmund	Sven	Tosti
Arnfinn	Botolf	Finnbogi	Gunnbjorn	Herijar	Ingald	Ogmund	Sigred	Thjodolf	Tryggvi
Arngrim	Brand	Fjolnir	Gunnlaug	Herjolf	Ingj	Olaf	Sigrid	Thjostolf	Ubbi
Arni	Brynjolf	Floki	Guthorm	Hjalti	Ingjald	Olvir	Sigtrydd	Thorarin	Ulf
Arnlaug	Bui	Flosi	Guthum	Hjorleif	Ingolf	Onund	Sigurd	Thorbjorn	Vagn
Arnor	Bunnbjorn	Fridgeir	Haki	Hjort	Isleif	Orm	Sigvaldi	Thorbrand	Valgard
Arnulf	Buri	Gardi	Hakon	Hogni	Ivar	Otkel	Skamkel	Thord	Vandrad
Asgrim	Ceowulf	Geir	Halfdan	Holgi	Kalf	Otrygg	Snorri	Thorfinn	Vermund
Askold	Egil	Geirmund	Halldor	Hord	Kari	Ottar	Sokki	Thorfeir	Vestein
Askr	Eilif	Geirstein	Hallfred	Horik	Karlsefni	Ozur	Solmund	Thorgest	Vigfus
			Hallfred	Horsa	Knut	Ragnar	Solvi	Thorgils	Volund
						Rhorleif	Starkad	Thorgrim	Ynvar

Female Names

Aelgifu	Groa	Ragnhild
Alfdis	Gunnhild	Rannveig
Alfhild	Gudrid	Rhora
Arnora	Gudris	Saeunn
Asa	Gudrun	Siglinde
Asfrid	Gunnhild	Sigrid
Asgerd	Gyda	Svala
Asleif	Halldis	Thjodhild
Asta	Hallfrid	Thora
Astrid	Hallgerd	Thorbjorg
Aud	Hallveig	Thordis
Bera	Helga	Thorfinna
Bergljot	Herdis	Thorgerd
Bergthor	Hild	Thorgunna
Brynhild	Hildigunn	Thorhalla
Bunnvor	Hlif	Thorhild
Dotta	Hrefna	Thorkatla
Elsa	Hrodyn	Thorunn
Elva	Ingibjorg	Thurid
Erika	Ingigred	Thyra
Freydis	Ingirid	Thyri
Gerloc	Ingunn	Tosti
Gjafaug	Jorunn	Tovi
Grima	Katla	Unn
Grimhilda	Ragna	Valgerd
		Vigdis
		Yrsa

Nicknames

Bag-Nose	Paunch-Shaker	the Fecund	the Quiet
Bare-legs	Pin-Leg	the Fisher	the Rascal
Beard	Rattler	the Flyer	the Raven
Black	Scale-Clatterer	the Fool	the Red
Bloodaxe	Serpent-Tongue	the Fosterer	the Seal
Blue-Tooth	Silk-Beard	the Gentle	the Shabby
Buttered-Bread	Skull-Splitter	the Golden	the Short
Cod-Biter	Smooth-Tongue	the Good	the Slender
Fine-Hair	Swarthy-Skin	the Grey	the Stone
Fish-Hook	Swift-Sailer	the Hairy	the Stout
Flat-Nose	Tree-foot	the Handsome	the Strong
Forkbeard	War-Tooth	the Hook	the Stubborn
Goat-Shoe	Wry-Mouth	the Huntsman	the Tall
Grey-Cloak	Wry-Neck	the Killer	the Thrall
Hairy-Brecks	the Bitter	the Lean	the Unruly
Half troll	the Braggart	the Learned	the Wealthy
Hard-mouth	the Broad-Shouldered	the Lesser	the White
Hard-Sailer	the Candle	the Mighty	the Wild
Hare-Foot	the Clerk	the Old	the Winged
Heath-Cock	the Crow	the Overbearing	the Wise
Horse-Head	the Deep-Minded	the Pale	the Worrier
Iron-Wood	the Dragon-Slayer	the Peaceful	the Yeoman
Iron-Side	the Dueler	the Peacock	the Young
Lace-Cuff	the Easterner	the Pickled	
Long-Leg	the Fat	the Pious	
		the Powerful	
		the Priest	

Clerics of the Northern Realms

Clerics in the Northern Reaches

A cleric in the Northern Reaches is called a "godar" (plural "godar"). There are three types of godar: household godar, monastic and temple godar, and itinerant godar.

Household Godar: A community's cult leaders are usually housed and provided for by the clan leaders. The godar maintain a shrine accessible to the public for the whole community, as well as a private shrine for the use of the master's household. The head godar is available when needed in his host's hall.

Monastic and Temple Godar: For various reasons, certain places become associated with individual Immortals. The Stones of Sky, a circle of rune-inscribed standing stones, are said to have been inscribed by Odin himself. There is also Thor's Anvil, a solitary bald granite hill northwest of Sudorn in Vestland, where Thor is said to have shattered the Chains of Deceit forged for Loki by the Modrigswerg masters, Brokk and Sindri.

Often a community of godar will establish sacred retreats in these holy places for contemplation and worship, and for service to the Immortal's followers. These retreats are called "monasteries" because, like the monks of the southern continental cults, the godar of these communities renounce their ties with the outside world—clan, family, and friends—to dedicate themselves wholly to the service of the Immortal.

Throughout Vestland, and in larger towns like Soderfjord Beach and Castellan, all Northland cults have established temples modeled on the sacred precincts of Immortal cults in other D&D® game cultures. This is a recent and "modern" development, and the practice has not spread to Ostland nor to rural or frontier districts. Northland temples are similar to temples all over the D&D game Known World, in that most have a resident staff of godar dedicated to the service of the cult, its followers, and its divine patrons. Adventurers should note that

most godar of higher levels—those capable of casting *raise dead*, for example—are usually household godar serving the chief of a clan, and are not to be found in local temples, as is the case in most other D&D® game communities. This can present problems for adventurers seeking to get a party member *raised* in a territory where the clan and clanhead are unfriendly.

Itinerant Godar: These priests serve two purposes for their cults. First, they serve the needs of cult members in remote areas where there are no temples or monasteries, and no clanhold or village godar. Second, they serve as agents of their cults, watching out for the interests of their spiritual brothers and seeking the information, treasure, and diplomatic power that ensure the steady growth and security of their cult.

Shrines to the Immortals

In addition to formal temples, shrines are common throughout the Northlands.

Hearth Shrines: Reverent cult members maintain household hearth shrines. In a poor house, it may be no more than a slab of stone by the fire, where small offerings of food are made at mealtimes. In a wealthy jarl's house, it may be an elaborately carved wood or stone altar where the Immortals are honored, or where coins or war trophies might be dedicated to a patron Immortal.

Since personal practices vary, polite guests are careful to observe and follow the lead of one's host. Failure to make offerings, or making offerings to the wrong Immortal, can cause a guest embarrassment or worse.

Roadside Shrines: Throughout the Northern Reaches, small roadside shrines are constructed and consecrated by itinerant godar. Usually they are simple, made of wood or soft stone, and engraved in clerical runes. The runes can be devotional messages, wise sayings, or accounts of historical and legendary events that occurred nearby. It is customary to make

small offerings of spare food, weapons, or other useful gear at these shrines. In desperate circumstances, a cultist may take what he needs from these shrines.

Of course, these remote shrines are seldom guarded, and there is nothing to prevent non-cultists or simple thieves from pilfering objects from these shrines. It is said, however, that the Immortals remember such insults, and any honorable observer will certainly chastise a person so mean as to steal from a shrine.

Observances and Obligations

There's an old saying in the North—"Gods don't notice, but godar do." If you want something from a godar—shelter, blessing, healing, etc.—make a generous gift. If you are poor, the godar make allowances, so long as you make some gesture. If you are rich—and all adventurers are rich by definition, according to the godar—you are expected to be extra-generous.

Household godar expect to live at the same level of luxury as their noble patrons. Some are more greedy; some are kept in poverty by dishonorable lords.

Benefits: The primary benefit of worshipping an Immortal is avoiding his wrath. Northmen are generally a superstitious lot, and much obsessed with the notion of Fate. When something goes wrong, they tend to ascribe their misfortunes to the ill favor of the Immortals. Whether the worship of the Immortals actually helps one avoid misfortune is a topic of lively discussion among believers and unbelievers alike.

In a practical sense, the godar provide great benefits to the individual worshipper and the community. Where the gods do not act, the godar may be more attentive, particularly if properly encouraged with offerings. One important service in the Northlands is the casting of *continual light* on honored family and clan heirlooms, which are thereafter used to light longhouse entrances, hearth halls, and family treasure troves.

In the borderlands, monasteries are centers of trade and communication, and

a source of protection. Monastic godar provide *continual light* for the practical purpose of illuminating remote steads, shelters, and defensive forts against monstrous or human raiders. In return, the monasteries expect substantial donations of food, livestock, and the services of warriors and laborers from the local landholders and clan chiefs.

Important Northland Immortal Cults

Many Northmen honor all of the Immortals of the Northman pantheon, but most worship some particular Immortal. Worship of each Immortal yields specific benefits of special interest to adventurers. All clerics honoring Northland Immortals know the *interpret rune*, *bless rune*, *know rune*, and *inscribe rune* spells at the appropriate levels, and the rituals associated with those spells (see page 27).

Odin

Followers: Worship of Odin and Thor is ordered by royal decree in Ostland. In Vestland and Soderfjord, worship is common among the nobility, less common among the freemen and the thralls.

Benefits: An additional bonus of +1 in combat when blessed by a cleric of Odin.

Obligations: Honor and obey clerics of Odin and the rightful lords acknowledged by Odin's clerics. In Ostland, followers are taxed one-tenth of their annual income by the Church of Odin.

Clerics: Lawfuls and Neutrals.

Special Abilities: Instead of the *purify food and water* spell, godar of Odin receive the *read languages* spell. Instead of the *snake charm* spell, Odin godar receive the *spear of Odin* spell (identical to *magic missile*, except instead of an arrow, a magical spear is formed). Godar of Odin are permitted to use the spear, the weapon sacred to Odin, in melee or as a missile weapon.

Skalds: Most godar are attached to a patron clan leader or to a place of worship, but many are itinerant travelers and adventurers, seeking to learn wisdom by

observing the affairs of men, and by studying runestones and the songs and verses about gods and heroes. These traveling clerics, called skalds, are popular guests of the rich and poor, repaying their hosts with entertainment, including instructive tale-telling and singing.

Odin's Ravens: The clerics of Odin of 7th level and higher may be accorded the special status of being one of "Odin's Ravens." These clerics have the *detect lies* spell and are called upon as judges and counselors when disputes arise. Northmen believe that once the facts of a case are known, a just judgement is obvious to any right-thinking man. Ravens are considered well informed and right-thinking, and are asked to listen to the testimonies of the parties in a dispute (at least two eyewitnesses, or one eyewitness and two reputable character witnesses). Then they are asked to deliver judgement.

There is no means of enforcing a Raven's judgement. Realistically, the Ravens only recommend a judgement and sentence. It is up to the clanheads of those involved to honor the recommendations of the Raven.

In Ostland, Ravens have great power, as the clanheads are greatly influenced by the priests. In Vestland, leaders tend to follow the Ravens' recommendations in spirit, though with considerable freedom of interpretation. In the Soderfjord Jarldoms, the Ravens carry great moral weight, but clanheads commonly delay or ignore the Ravens' judgements when it suits their purposes. In the Jarldoms, justice is whatever pleases the clanhead.

Thor

Followers: Worship of Thor and Odin is ordered by royal decree in Ostland. In Vestland and Soderfjord, worship is very popular among the nobility and their retainers, but rare among freemen and thralls.

Benefits: An additional bonus of +1 in combat when blessed by a cleric of Thor.

Obligations: Never refuse combat. Never abandon your comrades-in-arms.

Honor the Warrior's Code (see page 6). Obey clerics of Thor and the rightful lords acknowledged by Thor's clerics.

Actually, most followers of Thor are fairly sane, and will refuse combat or abandon a comrade when to do otherwise is obviously suicidal. Nonetheless, a follower of Thor would feel shamed by those circumstances, and would swear mighty oaths to Thor promising to atone for his or her weakness with deeds of exceptional fearlessness.

Clerics: Lawfuls and Neutrals.

Special Abilities: Godar of Thor receive *berserk* and *fist of Thor* spells at second level instead of *snake charm* and *speak with animals*. Godar of Thor prefer the hammer, a weapon sacred to Thor.

Most clerics are attached to a patron clan leader. Adventuring clerics of Thor are generally attached to a war band or adventuring party. Clerics of Thor scorn merchants, townsfolk, and farmers, and are only found in the company of warriors and noble chieftains. Thor clerics think of themselves as fighters, "just one of the boys," and show little interest in scholarship, fine speech, table manners, or human decency.

Berserk

(2nd level clerical spell)

Range: Touch

Duration: 10 rounds

Effect: One follower of Thor or Odin

Affects character touched or self. The subject gains one extra attack per round for 10 rounds. When spell ends, the subject is exhausted for 3 turns, with the following penalties: all attackers gain a +2 *bonus to hit*; the subject's AC is calculated without a shield (subject is too weary to use it); and the subject's movement is reduced by half. Two or more spells may affect the subject in sequence. Penalties for a berserk-exhausted subject are temporarily deferred by use of another *berserk* spell, but each use means 3 full turns of penalties as noted.

Fist of Thor

(2nd level clerical spell)

Clerics of the Northern Realms

Range: Touch
Duration: 10 rounds
Effect: One weapon

This spell gives a magical bonus to weapon damage: +3 for war hammer (the weapon sacred to Thor), and +1 to all other weapons and to unarmed combat. Weapon, or fist (if unarmed combat) touched by the cleric glows magically, and permits damage to magical beings as with enchanted weapons.

Frey and Freyja

Followers: Worshipped by freemen and thralls throughout the Northern Reaches.

Benefits: A bonus of -1 AC when blessed by a cleric of Frey/Freyja.

Obligations: Observance of the daily and seasonal rituals honoring the deities—typically prayer with small offerings and sacrifices of food or other possessions.

Clerics: Lawfuls or Neutrals.

Special Abilities: Clerics of Frey/Freyja are druids, with the abilities and restrictions of that class.

Almost every homestead and hearth has a small shrine to Frey/Freyja, and every meal or special occasion is accompanied by thanks for their generosity and protection. Most of these clerics are residents of rural communities and towns, but many travel the roads and wilderness trails, offering blessings and aid to isolated followers.

Loki

Followers: Worship is outlawed in Ostland, and disliked but tolerated in Vestland and the Soderfjord Jarldoms. Most common among thieves, outlaws, and other social outcasts.

Clerics: Chaotics.

Special Abilities: May receive reversed forms of clerical spells at 1st level (normally learned only at 4th level and above). Public worship is extremely rare; the few established Loki cults are hidden and secretive. Loki clerics are usually the itinerant type, and they habitually travel in disguise. Known for their charity and sympathy with outlaws, criminals, cow-

ards, and other social outcasts, Loki clerics are despised by many for their dubious moral character; they have a reputation for treachery, deceit, and glib fast-talk. However, Loki clerics are not automatically untrustworthy, despite their poor reputations.

Hel

Followers and Clerics: Few and secretive outlaws, limited to practitioners and servants of the necromantic arts. This is an NPC class of clerics not open to player characters!

Godar of Hel receive the *animate dead* and the *speak with dead* spells at second level, the reversed version of *cure serious wounds* (*cause serious wounds*) at third level, and the *raise dead* spell at fourth level. Clerics of Hel also may *control undead* instead of *turn undead*, using the same game mechanics as *turning undead*, D&D® Basic Player Book, page 25. Controlled undead will obey the cleric just as if he had created the undead with the *animate dead* spell.

Worship of Hel is universally considered evil, and is outlawed throughout the Northern Reaches. Only in the Jarldoms, where the central government is extremely weak, will rumor or even public demonstration of Hel worship not automatically result in the trial and banishment of the individual. This is particularly true if that individual is wealthy, or has powerful friends. Temples and cult rituals are secretive and hidden.

Raise Dead

As noted above, godar who are capable of casting *raise dead* are not located in the temples. Even when a cleric can be convinced to cast the spell, there will be much moral resistance. A person who has been raised from the dead is a subject of fear and loathing among the Northmen; such beings are considered a form of undead. On the other hand, heroic undead are not uncommon among legendary adventurers.

The spirit remains with the body for 4d6 hours. After that period, the spirit is claimed by the Valkyries or by the ser-

vants of the Queen of Hel. A *raise dead* performed before the spirit is taken will work, although the character is looked upon as a ghost or supernatural figure. Thereafter, any raising of the dead is a matter of negotiation with the Immortals.

A Northman fighter or cleric (and sometimes a dwarf) who dies gloriously in battle is taken up by the Valkyries to Valhalla, an Outer Plane of the Northland Immortals. This is a great honor. That character may henceforth be available for special adventures, sent by the Immortals to aid mortal friends. Clerics wait one day before raising such a character in order to see the will of the Immortals. If after a day the character's body has not been claimed, it is considered proper to raise him.

The spirits of other characters who die go to Hel, another Outer Plane. There the characters can only be rescued by questing to the Outer Plane of Niflheim, to the Court of Hel, there to petition the Queen of Hel or to try to rescue the spirit by guile or heroic valor.

Rune Magic

"The runes are there, for any fool to read," Onund proclaimed. "But only he who has Hung on the Tree, as did Father Odin, one who has gazed on the Abyss and suffered its emptiness, may know their true meanings or tap the Power that lies within."

"Yah, sure. Save that priest-doodle for the peasants," Helfdan scoffed pleasantly.

Saru the Serpent picked a bit of fluff from his mead. "Well, my ignorant, ill-tutored friend, they do say the runes were given to Man by the Immortal Odin All-Father. The legends suggest that the Immortal 'died'—'hung on the tree,' they say. Through the experience of death, through gazing on the incomprehensible void, Odin gained some insight into the magical significance and power of the runes."

"Nice of him to go to all that trouble just for you humans, right?" Dwalinn rolled his head from the table and squint-

ed at the candle. "Well, our pal Odin also expects us all to go through considerable sacrifice to share the meaning of the runes. I suppose you've heard those stories of ritual suicides and raising of the dead associated with learning runes? All true. Right, Onund?"

Onund glared at Dwalinn without replying.

"Folk are just dying to learn the secrets of the runes, right?" asked Helfdan, and collapsed in fits and giggles.

Dwalinn blinked at the others in astonishment. "Helfdan made a pun. Incredible. A punning barbarian. What is the world coming to?"

On one level, runes are simply a special form of written language popular among Northern clerics, used particularly for inscriptions in wood, stone, or other hard surfaces. On a higher level, certain special runes known as "power runes" have special magical meanings. With the aid of certain clerical spells, experienced clerics can enhance the power and significance of those runes.

The most common use of runes is in seeking divine guidance and inspiration. The *interpret runes* spell permits clerics to learn an Immortal's will or to gaze into the future.

Another use of runes is for inscriptions on standing stones. Standing stones are freestanding slabs of rock inscribed with a mixture of practical advice and mystical insights concerning great and humble men, the trials they have faced, and the wisdom to be learned from their deeds.

A third use of runes is in enchanting weapons, jewelry, garments, tombs, and items of ritual value. The cleric must use the *inscribe rune* spell to put the power rune onto the object. Runes used in this way create magical items usable only by clerics. The magical properties of a properly inscribed object are activated by the *bless rune* spell. To properly inscribe an object with a power rune, a cleric must have learned that specific rune through the *know rune* spell and the perilous nine-night rituals associated with that spell.

RUNE SPELLS

The following clerical spells are known at the appropriate levels by all clerics who serve Immortals of the Northland pantheon, and who have the Read Runes skill (if the optional skill system is being used).

SECOND LEVEL SPELLS

Interpret Runes

Range: Touch
Duration: Instantaneous
Effect: One cleric

Using a specially carved and enchanted set of wooden tiles, the subject can ask the Immortal he serves for guidance on a course of action. The subject casts the spell, addresses his Immortal with the proper ritual phrases, describes the course of action he proposes, then casts the wooden tiles before him. In the tiles the subject reads the answer of his Immortal patron.

The Immortals generally answer in one of the following ways:

- "You have chosen well. You have our blessing." (Good idea.)
- "Your fate is uncertain but you have our blessing." (Well, it's not a terrible idea.)
- "Your choice is unwise. May the fates bless your fortune." (Bad idea. If you try this, you'd better be lucky.)
- "Your choice offends us. May you live to regret it." (Not only a bad idea, but against the principles of your cult. Your patron is not pleased, but might forgive you.)
- "SILENCE!" (Could mean anything from "How could you waste my time with something that dumb?" to "Do that, and you're not only dead, but your ghost will be looking for a new Immortal to serve.")

The DM, of course, has the option to make the Immortal's response take any form he wants, from a single word to a long speech on ethics.

Bless Rune

Range: Touch
Duration: 10 rounds unless otherwise specified
Effect: One rune inscription

This spell activates a power rune which has previously been properly inscribed on an object by a cleric.

The best-known magical powers of the 24 Power Runes of Odin are listed beginning on page 29. Other powers of these runes might be learned through adventuring. Different power runes may also exist, and these additional runes might be discovered through adventuring.

Bless rune activates only one of the various powers inherent in the rune. The spellcaster must specify which power he wishes to invoke before casting the spell, or the spell fails and the rune is not activated.

THIRD LEVEL SPELLS

Know Rune

Range: None
Duration: Nine nights
Effect: One cleric

Use of this spell permits a cleric to learn one of the 24 Power Runes of Odin, or some other power rune made available by the DM.

To be effective, this spell must be accompanied by the ritual appropriate to the cleric's cult. (See "Rune Cult Rituals" below.) Each use of this spell results in the permanent loss of one Constitution point.

Inscribe Rune

Range: Touch
Duration: Permanent
Effect: One power rune on one object

This spell permits a cleric to inscribe a power rune on an object. The cleric must know the rune (see the *know rune* spell above) and perform the appropriate rituals (below). Any error or omission in performance of the ritual spoils the spell effect.

Unless inscribed using this spell, a

Clerics of the Northern Realms

power rune has no magical properties and cannot be activated. Once properly inscribed upon an object, a power rune may be activated by a cleric using the *bless rune* spell.

An object inscribed with a power rune becomes linked to the cleric that performs the ritual and casts the spell. Henceforth the cleric will know whenever the rune is activated by a *bless rune* spell, or when it is destroyed physically (*i.e.*, by destruction of the rune or the object) or magically (*i.e.*, by a *dispel magic* or similar spell). This occurs regardless of distance from the object. The cleric knows nothing of the circumstances of the activation or destruction of the rune—only that it has been activated or destroyed.

There is a limit to the number of power runes a cleric may have magically inscribed at any one time. The total is equal to the number of third level spells the cleric may memorize at one time. If the cleric attempts to inscribe a greater number of runes than his limit, all power runes currently inscribed by him immediately lose their magical properties, and his current *inscribe rune* ritual is spoiled as well. Objects properly inscribed by a cleric retain their properties after his death.

Rune Cult Rituals

The following rituals are common among the clerics of the Northlands pantheon.

Interpret Runes: The 24 Power Runes of Odin must be carved into oak tiles by the cleric who casts the spell. The invocation must respectfully ask for the Immortal's attention and plainly describe the course of action upon which the cleric wishes an opinion.

Some say that elaborately-carved and ornamented tiles are no more effective than crudely-improvised tiles, so long as the runes are clearly and accurately represented. Others claim that only the finest materials and the most skilled craftsmanship are pleasing to the the Immortals. *Player Hint:* A handmade set of these tiles can be used as props during game sessions.

Know Rune: A cleric who knows the

rune or an object bearing the properly-inscribed rune must be present during the nine day ceremony. A priest who knows the spell must also be present to speak the proper words.

The *know rune* ritual requires the ceremonial (not real) death of the cleric who is to learn the rune. As a consequence, each use of the *know rune* spell results in the permanent loss of one Constitution point.

The cleric is given a potion—a toxin which does not kill, but paralyzes the cleric's mind and body, inducing a death-like appearance. The cleric remains awake for nine days and nights, but cannot communicate, even by mental magic. Cut off from all perception of the world, the unprepared can actually perish in their brush with the madness which results.

In the Odin cult, a ceremonial hangman's noose is placed around the cleric's neck, and then he is buried in a watertight coffin in a sacred bog for nine nights. In the Thor cult, the ceremony is similar, except that the cleric is buried in the earth for nine nights. In the Frey/Freyja cult, the cleric is laid to rest on a ceremonial funeral pyre, which is not lit, where he remains in a trance for the nine days. In the Loki cult, the cleric drinks the potion and is sealed in darkness.

At the end of the nine-night ceremony, the cleric must be awakened from his ritual death. Thus, a *neutralize poison* spell and *cure critical wounds* must be available, at least.

When the character is awakened, at the DM's option a Reverence check may be required. A successful check means the cleric knows the rune he or she sought to learn.

A failure may indicate that the Immortal has chosen to give the character a rune other than the one requested. In some cases, the Immortal gives the cleric a rune more suitable for the Immortal cult served. In other cases the Immortal may assign a rune at random or, occasionally, more than one rune. Sometimes the rune requested is granted, but only upon accomplishment of some task or quest. In rare circumstances, the Immortal gives

the cleric a hitherto unknown power rune (which must be specially created by the DM).

Note: Most modern nations of the D&D Known World regard the *know rune* rituals with horror and disgust, because of their nearly suicidal associations. Therefore, these practices are kept secret by Northman clerics, though widely-rumored. This may partially explain why rune magic is not common outside the Northern Reaches.

Inscribe Rune: To effectively inscribe an object with a power rune, the object, the cleric making the inscription, and the tools used to make the inscription must be ritually purified and dedicated to the Immortals. The preparations for the ritual require 2d4 hours, and the ritual itself requires 4d6 hours. The preparations and the ritual itself must be performed by the cleric who is to cast the spell and make the inscription. If the cleric is disturbed in any way during the ritual, the ritual is spoiled, and the spell cannot be cast effectively.

The Standing Stones

Skalds carve freestanding stones by roadsides to commemorate important events and to tell tales of the good and evil deeds men do. The inscriptions on standing stones are left so that those who follow after may learn from the experiences of eyewitnesses inspired by the Immortals. The rune inscriptions may only be read by those who have the Read Runes skill.

Neither the *read languages* nor *read magic* spells permit reading rune inscriptions. The special enchanted nature of the runes is clerical, and is not affected by most magic user spells. A *wish* or *contact outer plane*, however, might be effective, depending on circumstances and the decisions of the DM.

These stones and the runes inscribed upon them are sacred to the Immortals. Tampering with or defacing them is a great sacrilege. Those dedicated to Odin will stop at nothing to avenge a slight to the runestones.

The 24 Power Runes of Odin

These power runes (pages 29-31) are those best known by Northern clerics and adventurers. All characters can learn to recognize these runes, paraphrase their meanings, and understand their magical functions. Only those inspired by sacrifice and communion with the Immortal (the *know rune* ritual) can understand and reproduce these runes. Unless otherwise noted, player characters get saving throws against rune spells as if against magic wands.

Other Runes: There are many other runes of power. These runes are the property of the Immortals, and may be bestowed on favorites.

When encountered, these unique runes cannot be comprehended without special knowledge (such as instructions from the original inscriber, extensive scholarly research, or divine guidance). To invoke the power of a rune, one must understand what different effects the rune may produce and specifically request the one desired effect when blessing the rune.

A desperate godi (priest) might try to invoke a rune which he did not understand. If the godi is a PC, the player should tell the DM what magical effect he is trying to invoke. If that effect is in any way related to the power of the rune, there should be a chance that the rune will be activated.

Normally nothing happens. Occasionally something nice happens. Occasionally something horrible happens. Invoking a rune without specific knowledge of its powers is a chaotic act, and not to be lightly undertaken.

A character may occasionally be given his own personal rune by the Immortals. It is a sign of great favor, and often a sign that a great fate awaits the character. Generally that fate is as much of a curse as a blessing.

Fehu Cattle

This rune signifies wealth.

Northmen traditionally figure their wealth in terms of how many cattle they own.

1. Indicates the presence of treasure within a radius of 90 feet.

2. Indicates direction to a specifically identified treasure.

3. Shields a treasure from magical detection.

4. Announces the owner of an inscribed object.

URUR the Auroch

This rune signifies the strength of the wild beast.

1. Causes one hostile wild animal to stand as if hypnotized.

2. Gives the cleric the strength of a bear (Strength 18).

3. Attracts the attention of all attackers within a 30' radius and causes them to attack the cleric instead of other companions (just as the bull auroch challenges a pack of wolves in order to protect the herd).

THURS the Giant

This rune signifies the various creatures of the giantish races.

1. Causes giantish creatures to have a favorable reaction (+2 to reaction roll) to the cleric.

2. Causes one giantish creature to stand as if hypnotized. Creature may make a saving throw vs. spells each round to overcome compulsion.

3. Cleric grows to the size of a hill giant. Cleric in effect temporarily becomes a hill giant, with all associated abilities and liabilities (including a giant's stupidity and savage, brutal nature). Cleric's clothing and armor may be destroyed by the transformation. Normal human weapons are useless.

AS the Immortals

This rune signifies the Immortals and their realms beyond the Prime Plane.

1. Reveals the true appearance of magically disguised creatures, particularly demons, Immortals, and various creatures from beyond the Prime Plane.

2. Creates a circle of protection as with a *protection* scroll which prevents demons from entering the circle of protection.

3. Confers a +2 bonus on all saving throws.

Raidu Journeying

This rune signifies the traveler.

1. For a six hour period, the cleric awakens from sleep if an enemy or creature with hostile intent approaches within 100 feet.

2. If the cleric is lost, or the way is obscured by darkness or bad weather, the cleric senses which direction (but not distance) to travel to reach his destination.

3. For a six-hour period, the cleric receives a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made as a result of fatigue or dangerous weather conditions.

KAUNNA Fire

This rune signifies the warmth-giving hearth, the light-giving torch, and the destructive power of wild-fire.

1. The rune burns like a torch for two hours, yet does not consume the material the rune is inscribed upon. The fire burns even in heavy rain, but not while submerged.

2. The rune burns intensely for the duration of the spell. If a to-hit roll is made, the victim takes 3d4 damage when struck.

Gefu Giving

This rune signifies generosity and hospitality.

1. Causes intelligent creatures to respond positively to requests for food, shelter, and clothing (+3 to reaction rolls).

2. Causes hostile or vengeful persons to positively respond to offers of appropriate gifts or wergild as compensation for injury or offense given (+3 to reaction rolls).

WUNJU Joy

This rune signifies great happiness and appreciation of life.

1. Causes an audience to respond favorably to a tale or song (+2 to reaction rolls).

2. Causes one listener to respond favorably to a request for aid (+4 to reaction roll).

The 24 Power Runes of Odin

3. Causes all intelligent creatures within 20' radius to temporarily stop fighting. Creatures making a save vs. spells may resist the effects of the rune. Creatures no longer within the 20' radius are no longer affected. Alternatively, the DM may require NPCs to make trait checks to resist effect of rune.

H Hagla Cruel Nature

This rune signifies the violent, destructive side of nature.

1. Creates a single lightning bolt as the magic user spell, but doing only 3D6 damage.

2. Creates a violent, miniature wind and rain storm within a 20' radius, centered on the cleric. Creatures within the area of effect must make Strength checks (or Dexterity checks, if more appropriate) each round to perform actions normally. Failure of the check means no action may be taken within that round. The cleric may take no action other than concentrating on the rune.

X Naudir Desperate Need

This rune signifies great danger and the good fortune needed to avoid it.

1. Permits the cleric to delay the effects of any single physical attack once during the spell. The cleric must indicate avoidance of the attack before to-hit and damage rolls are made. The effects of the attack are delayed until the end of the spell's duration.

2. Permits the cleric to move twice as fast as normal for a single round, once per spell.

3. Gives the cleric a +2 bonus to all saving throws for the duration of the spell.

L Isar Ice

This rune signifies ice and cold.

1. Causes a 10' × 10' water surface to freeze solidly, thick enough to support the weight of a normal man. If formed in rapidly-moving water, the ice becomes an ice raft and floats with the current. At the end of the spell, the ice

melts in 1d10 rounds (regardless of surrounding temperature or conditions).

2. Causes a small hail storm, 10' in diameter, within 60' of the cleric. Creatures within the area of effect take 3d6 damage. Successful save causes half damage.



J Jarn Fruitful Nature

This rune signifies the bounty of wild nature (as opposed to domestic animals and crops).

1. The cleric is informed whether plants or animals are edible or poisonous. (This includes natural plants and animals of outdoor and subterranean environments.)

2. Indicates direction to specific species of plants known by cleric to have medical or magical properties. Maximum range is one mile.



I Ihwar the Hunter

This rune signifies the tracking, snaring, and killing skills of the hunter.

1. Missile weapons (leather sling or wooden bow) inscribed with this rune gain a +2 to-hit bonus.

2. Small traps and snares inscribed with this rune permit the cleric to capture small creatures (maximum 20 pounds) without injuring the creatures. If the species is natural to the environment, the creature will be lured to the snare within 24 hours. If the creature is not natural to the environment, the rune has no effect.

3. The cleric may trace the trail of any creature, regardless of the surface traveled, or physical or magical attempts to obscure the path. Effective only during the duration of the spell.



P Pethru the Unseen

This rune signifies concealment and hidden knowledge.

1. Those within a 60' radius of the cleric fail to notice him as if he weren't really there. Even if observers bump into him or see other evidence of his presence (shadows or objects interrupted in flight), the observers fail to recognize the

significance of the evidence. More distant observers are not affected.

2. Messages written in runes are permanently concealed from view if accompanied by the activation of this rune within the message. The message can only be read thereafter by the activation of another *pethru* rune within line of sight of the concealed message.

3. The cleric is aware of, but cannot see, invisible beings within a 60' radius. The cleric is not aware of direction or distance to the invisible being. The only indication of the being's presence is the brilliant, intensified glow of the activated rune.



A Algir the Elk

This rune signifies protection.

1. A shield inscribed with this activated rune acts as a +1 magical shield.

2. The cleric receives a +3 to all magical saving throws.

3. A weapon inscribed with this activated rune will automatically parry any one attack during the spell's duration. The player must indicate which attack he chooses to parry before to-hit and damage dice are rolled.



S Sowelu the Sun

This rune signifies healing and good health.

1. One healing spell thrown by the cleric automatically cures maximum possible number of hit points. Rune activation is immediately canceled.

2. Heals the recently dead. Victim loses one point of Constitution permanently and is raised to zero hit points. Victim must have been reduced to negative hit points no more than ten rounds before the rune is touched to the victim, and the victim may not have been reduced below -11 hit points; otherwise, the rune has no effect.

Tiwar War

This rune signifies might and valor in arms.

1. Causes a rune-inscribed weapon to strike automatically and do maximum damage. Rune activation is automatically canceled.
2. Causes the cleric to ignore the effects of magical fear or illusions.
3. Reduces morale of attackers within a 10' radius by one point.

BERKANA the Birch

This rune signifies the durable vitality of the birch.

1. If wearing no armor, skin becomes as tough as bark. Armor class is 6. Shield may also be used. Wearing any other armor (including magical armor) negates benefits.
2. Cleric takes half damage from one physical or magical attack. Cleric may elect to take half damage after knowing the damage caused by the attack. Rune activation ceases immediately.
- (E)3. Cleric is automatically healed of 10 hit points worth of damage. Rune activation ceases immediately.

Ehwar the Horse

This rune signifies communication with and mastery of horses.

1. Cleric may enter the mind of a horse for the duration of the spell, perceiving as a horse perceives, and with a horse's instincts.
2. Cleric automatically passes all horsemanship skill checks.
3. Cleric may summon a specific horse that is within one mile of the caster. If the horse knows the cleric well and has been well-treated, it will answer the summons immediately: it will arrive as soon as possible, risking combat with other creatures, and risking its life in difficult physical maneuvers if necessary. Otherwise, the horse will take no risks in answering the cleric's summons.

MANNAR Man

This rune signifies knowledge and earthly wisdom.

1. The cleric may know the true intentions and basic personality of one stranger.

2. The cleric may search the mind of another human for the answer to one question. If the subject knows the answer, the cleric learns the answer. If the subject does not know the answer, the cleric is no wiser. The more complicated the question, the more uncertain, unreliable, and obscure is the answer the cleric receives.

3. Upon holding an object belonging to another human, the cleric may know which direction to travel in order to find him. The cleric has no sense of distance, only direction. Rune activation ceases immediately.

LAGUR Water

This rune signifies protection from drowning and from the power of the sea.

1. The cleric can breathe underwater.
2. The cleric can float on the water's surface, regardless of personal encumbrance. He may also buoy up one other person if the person is not wearing armor (or carrying bricks or something equally silly).
3. An activated rune carved into the prow of a ship protects it from shipwreck for 1D10 turns. It does *not* protect crew members.
4. An activated rune carved into a wooden staff will keep an unencumbered person afloat for 24 hours. It will not protect the person from the elements.

INGWAR Growth

This rune signifies the power of growth in natural things.

1. Causes normal plants to grow to fill a 15' radius hemisphere centered on the cleric. This unnatural growth of natural plants causes the plants to distort, collapse, and intertwine, creating a formidable barrier against attackers or blocking a narrow path. The effect proceeds by increments for the ten rounds of the spell, ending in the final round. The plants remain huge and distorted until they are destroyed or die naturally.
2. Causes a single plant or an object made from plant materials to grow up to five times its original height and twice its original width in one round. The effect lasts for the duration of the spell. Thus a staff, hemp rope, or cotton shirt, as well as a tree

or vine, may be grown to a greater size.

3. Causes a natural animal to grow to twice its normal size in one round. The creature may only move at half its normal speed and dexterity, but its hit points, damage done, and carrying capacity are doubled. The effects last for the duration of the spell.

Odala Birthright

This rune signifies power over the fate ordained by the Immortals.

1. During the ten-round period of the spell, the cleric may permit another creature to ignore the effect of one attack that would reduce it to negative hit points or cause its death by poison or magic.

2. This rune permits the cleric to ignore one attack which normally would reduce him to negative hit points or cause him death through poison or magic. The rune need not be currently activated, but the cleric must bear the rune-inscribed object in his hand and must be able to cast the *bless rune* spell. (That is, he must know the spell, must not have exhausted his 2nd level spells for the day, he must be conscious and able to speak the incantation activating the spell.) This action is performed automatically, regardless of other actions taken by the cleric during that round.

DAGAR Day

This rune signifies the powers of light and darkness.

1. This causes the rune to burn as brightly as the sun for ten rounds (bright light, not the sun's heat). All areas within line of sight of the rune are brightly illuminated, up to a distance of 200' from the rune. This magical effect is not affected by reversed *light* or *continual light* spells.

2. This reduces all artificial and magical light sources within 120' of the cleric to 1% effectiveness (*i.e.*, 99% darkness). All attacks are at a -4 penalty.

3. This permits the cleric to see in the dark as with *infravision* (level 3 magic user spell) for the duration of the *bless rune* spell.

1. תחנת מים: נקודה שבה מתחברות שתי נחלים או נחל אחד לנהר.
 2. תחנת מים: נקודה שבה מתחברות שתי נחלים או נחל אחד לנהר.
 3. נחל: נחל ראשי או נחל צדדי.

500 מ' = 1 ס"מ = 300 מטרים

- Ω נחל ראשי
- ⌘ נחל צדדי
- Δ נחל ראשי או נחל צדדי
- ↑ נחל ראשי או נחל צדדי

