

# MIDGARD

## VIKING LEGENDS

# ISLE OF DARKNESS

Violent Viking drama in a world  
of the Norsemen's greatest fears

By Ben Redmond



# CHAPTER 7: ISLE OF DARKNESS

This chapter provides you with a sample adventure to help you build your own **Midgard** campaign. It is set in the town of Terrak, a small independent settlement just south of Halogaland.

soon seduced the monks into his service and began to plot his revenge on the children of Svargrim, sending a force of Svartalfar to raze Terrak to the ground.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

An evil fire giant and his clan of svartalfar servants have infiltrated Lindisfarne priory and have struck out across the north sea to attack Terrak, the character's home village. After successfully defending their village from marauding Svartalfar, the source of the attack is divined and the PCs must travel to face their enemy. There they discover that the fire giant intends to summon further creatures from Muspellheim to wreak his vengeance on Terrak. The party seeks out the wise woman who banished the giant initially, where they learn that an evil Seidr has stolen her wand. She asks the characters to retrieve her wand, promising to enchant it so that they can banish the fire giant themselves.

## BACKGROUND

Decades ago, an evil fire giant named Blotnorr was defeated in battle by Svargrim Gunnarsson, the chieftain of Terrak and banished to Svartalfheim by his Volva, Hengeka. In Svartalfheim Blotnorr was able to seduce a clan of svartalfar into his service, and eventually break free from that dark domain when the monks of Lindisfarne dabbled in an occult ritual that opened a gateway to Svartalfheim. He had

## USING THIS ADVENTURE

As you use this adventure you will be presented with scenes. It is helpful to the players if the scenes are treated as separate entities, rather than flowing too easily into each other. This creates a Viking saga feel to your game. In addition, each scene begins with an introductory verse, provided in a very amateurish approximation of the style of the Viking Eddas. Reading this out at the start of each scene helps to define its start point and set the atmosphere for the rest of the scene.

## SCENE 1: ATTACK IN THE NIGHT

The story begins with the PCs awaking in the black of night to find their village under attack from unknown sources.

**Introductory Verse:** *Quiet night / Clear dark skies / Myriad Stars shine bright / Yet with moon full of wane / Draws dark over noble Terrak / And shadows draw around, Whilst heroes lie a-bed.*

**Elite Svartalfar:** (one per PC); Rank 3 Shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Stealth, Athletics, Alertness; Def 4, WS 3, Co 3, He 4; Weapon: claws (Dam 6, Spd 3, AP 3); Armour: Chain (H 3, Str 20); Gifts: body





of water (1), ambush (1), at one with the shadows (2)

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At the start, ask the PCs to make a simple, opposed Alertness versus Stealth cast, with a +2 skill bonus to the Svartalfar (if the Svartalfar use at one with the shadows they must all spend a point). From this point split the action into short action (2 min) phases to time characters different actions, such as drawing weapons, donning armour, etc. The Svartalfar will act as follows:

In the first phase they will be moving into position. Characters looking can spot them with an opposed Alertness versus Stealth cast, success margin determining how much they manage to see about the attackers (with no margin they see movement only, with a margin of +1 they see hooded humanoids, with two they can identify that the intruders move with a martial bearing, and with three or more they can see the Svartalfar's faces, potentially making a further difficulty 2

Legends cast to identify them as Svartalfar). Success margin can carry over to a ranged attack, after which the Svartalfar attacked will retreat into the woods and start the action sequence again from turn 1.

In the second phase they will charge in to attack any houses where there has been obvious movement or where a character has come out, or light a torch (+2 skill bonus to characters looking for the attackers now). After one attack they will retreat into the shadows. If PCs pursue they will climb trees to avoid them.

In the third phase, if they have lit a torch, they will throw it at a house with a PC in it. If being pursued they will attempt to ambush the PC, if left alone after they retreated they will go back to the first phase on the sequence.

In the fourth phase all PCs should be out of their homes and open to attack, start combat proper at this point.

After one has fallen they will retreat and try to escape, GM fiat for stealth if necessary, as it is critical that the Svartalfar get away and allow you to restart combat on the next wave. Be honest if you have to do this and award the victim with some bonus Wyrd to compensate, say 1 point per point of success margin that they would have otherwise beaten the svartalfar's stealth cast by.

## SCENE 2: THE AFTERMATH

In this scene the PCs and the town chieftain discuss the next course of action.

**Introductory Verse:** *Cold grief / Calls for vengeance / Whence came the Svartalfar*



*from? // Heroes called / Fireplace crackles / Mead is supped with wise council / A quest will begin.*

Terrak's chieftain, Storlu Svargrimsson, summons the PCs to his hall to discuss the attacks. At first he is loathe to believe their reports of Svartalfar, claiming such creatures to be stories told to frighten children.

With proof or persuasive argument he will be convinced to call for a divination (either from a PC or he will call for an NPC volva who can five-stone divine).

This is a difficulty 2 cast. Results as follows:

*Norms:* mostly successful (effectively useless)

*Five-Stone:* meaning: recover a stolen item then cross the sea westwards to an island monastery, problems: a banished enemy of the chieftain's father.

*Seven-Stone:* meaning recover Hengeka's wand then travel to Lindisfarne (island off the north east coast of Northumbria), problems: Blotnorr seeking revenge against Svargrim Gunnarsson.

Following this information being revealed ask the PCs for a Legends cast, which will allow the characters to know some details of the story of Blotnorr and Hengeka—despite it being his father's tale, Storlu does not know the tale as he was very young when his father died. This cast is difficulty 2 for if a seven-stone cast was done and difficulty 3 if a five-stone cast. The following information is known dependent on the success margin achieved:

- » *Basic:* Svargrim and his volva, Hengeka, defeated the fire giant Blotnorr.

- » *Success margin 1:* Hengeka banished Blotnorr to Svartalfarheim, and Blotnorr swore vengeance on Svargrim's lineage.

- » *Success margin 2:* Hengeka left the village after an argument with Storlu.

- » *Success margin 3:* Hengeka and Storlu fought over Storlu's refusal to hunt down a thief who stole Hengeka's wand.

- » *Success margin 5:* Hengeka used her wand to banish Blotnorr.

The characters should now plan to visit Hengeka, who lives in the mountains above the town. Storlu will be reluctant, but can be talked round, but in doing so will tell them that they will have to go without him.

## SCENE 3: THE ANCIENT WISE-WOMAN

Following their encounter with the Svartalfar, the characters travel into the mountains overlooking Terrak to find Hengeka.

**Introductory verse:** *Steep Slope / Cold grey rock / Above the tree line / The snow-white peak rises // Dark cave / Ravens in flight above / The ancient wise woman / And her secrets lie within.*

Hengeka lives in a small wooden hut in the mountains a day's hike from Terrak. She will be friendly as they approach and expect to be able to help them in some way. However, she is reluctant to help those she sees as being sent by Storlu. They will need to win her round with their arguments. She will tell them that her wand was stolen by a selfish, hateful hermit seidr, called Iorek,



but she doesn't know where to find lorek.

By divining on the action of tracking down the thief they will be able to know the following:

*Norns:* mostly successful (effectively useless)

*Five-Stone:* meaning: travel north and find a cave in the mountains, problems: a hermit seidr who was the thief.

*Seven-Stone:* meaning: travel to Nidaros and seek a cave in the mountains above the town, problems: a hermit seidr called lorek.

Whether they make divination or not, the characters can also make a legends cast. The difficulty of this cast depends on whether the characters have successfully divined on the course of action, and if so what level of detail they have divined. If they have successfully completed a seven-stone divination the difficulty is only 2, whereas it is difficulty 3 if a five-stone divination has been completed. If they have not successfully made a divination, the cast is difficulty 5. This cast will reveal the following:

- » *Basic:* They will know of a story of a dark seidr called lorek, who stole a powerful wand
- » *Success margin 1:* lorek lives far to the north in a cave above Nidaros.
- » *Success margin 2:* lorek is known to command the animals and defends his territory aggressively.

Finally, if all of the player's efforts to find out where the thief may have come to no useful outcome, Hengeka will tell them that all she knows is that the thief fled north. They will know that the town of Nidaros is a major trading port in the north and will be a good place to go to ask

around about the wand.

## The Journey North

Journeying to Nidaros is relatively simple. A Tactics check will tell the characters that an approach overland will let them sneak up on lorek, whilst a journey by sea will require them to dock in the town and may lead to lorek being alerted.

A sea voyage is a two-day difficulty 1 sailing action, with no navigation roll required.

An overland journey first requires a difficulty 6 instant Navigation cast (any one character can make this roll). The Legends cast made about lorek's location can be used to carry over success for this cast. This is then followed by all characters making week-long, difficulty 3 athletics cast, with the successes from the Navigation cast being added as a carry-over bonuses to all such casts. Use the worst result to determine travel time. If the worst result is a failure, double the travel time and apply a +1 merkstave penalty due to the environmental effects to all characters for every merkstave token on the worst cast.

If they stop off in Nidaros they will be asked their business, if they reveal too much lorek may be alerted through his rat spies that live in the town. Similarly characters who are travelling to Nidaros to find out more about lorek, they will be able to find out where they can find lorek by asking around the town (Difficulty 2 long diplomacy tests until they achieve success), but this will alert lorek to their presence and intentions.



## SCENE 4: LOREK'S DOMAIN

As the characters approach lorek's domain they will see a single lone mountain that stands out amongst the others – it is black and barren, whilst the others are lined with trees and capped with snow.

**Introductory Verse:** *Black peak / Alone in the range / Barren and foreboding it towers high / Yet no trees line its base / Nor blessed be it by a white cloak of snow.*

As they approach the mountain they realise that the blackness comes from a combination of black rock and twisted, dead tree trunks.

If the lorek is aware of the character's intentions from their time in Nidaros they will be stalked as they even approach the mountain by two of his wolves. If the wolves are detected (opposed Stealth versus Survival casts) and engaged they will simply run away, but will return to tracking them shortly after. The terrain is craggy and broken, providing plenty of cover.

lorek lives in a large hut high up the mountain, made from the twisted, blackened remains of the trees found around the mountain. It can be spotted from the base of the mountain with a quick difficulty 2 survival cast.

If they approach from overland, or from the town but lorek has not been alerted to their presence they will make an opposed stealth versus survival cast to see if the wolf patrols that guard lorek's cave spot them. If they do they will attack them, and will shortly be joined by the rats. When the first wolf is slain lorek himself will join the fight.

The characters can attempt to talk to lorek and bargain with him, but he treats them with hostility from the off. Even if they can talk him round (at which point he will call off his creatures) he will never give up the wand, nor can he be persuaded to leave his mountain for any reason.

**lorek:** rank 3 thane; Skills: Athletics, Sax, Deception, Legends, Seid, Fate Weaving, Rune Divination; Def 3, WS 3, Co 4, He 4; Weapons: broad spear (Dam 5, Spd 12, AP 1); Armour: head bone helm (H 3, str 3), arms thick cloth (H 0, str 10), body thick cloth (H 0, Str 16), Legs thick cloth (H 0, Str 14); Rune gifts: Way of Peace (3), Twist of fate (1), Weaving Strands (2), Bond the Soul (4), Cast for the Other (2), Seven-Stone Cast (3), The Branch that Grows (2).

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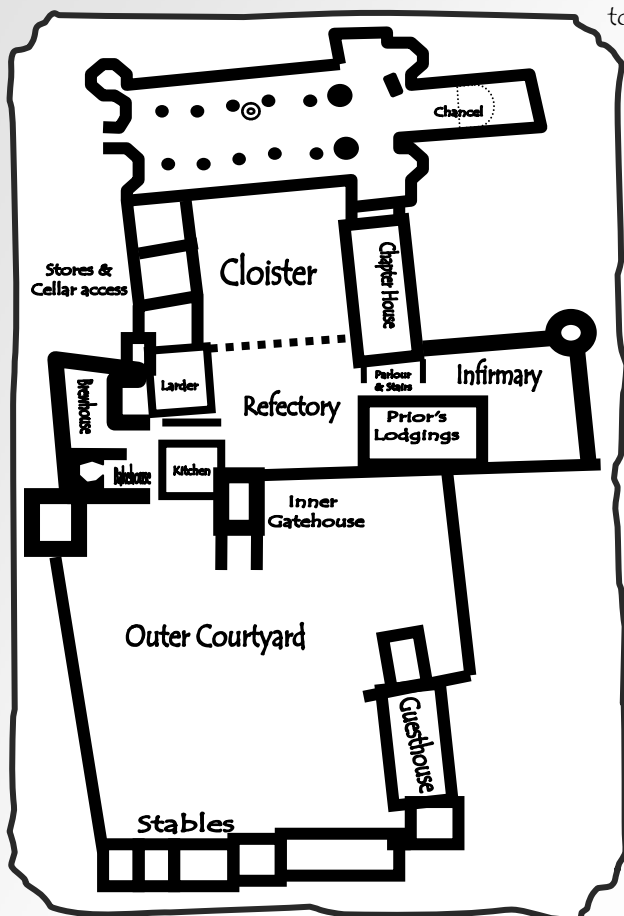
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            00 (+4)

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            legs    00000 0000  
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**Wolves (x4):** Rank 3 Shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Stealth, Wrestling, Survival; Def 4, WS 3, Co 3, He 4; Weapon: claws (Dam 4, Spd 3, AP 1); Armour: natural Fur (H 1);

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**Rats (x20):** rank 1 warriors; Weapon: bite



to wrest the wand from lorek's dead grasp. Whilst using the wand, a character with ranks in either Seid or Fate Weaving gains 3 bonus ranks in the Gateways skill.

### Crossing the Seas

PCs will then travel to Lindisfarne (short diff 3 navigation action, carrying over to a diff 2 week sailing action).

## SCENE 5: THE DARK ISLE

With the wand in hand, the characters will face Blotnorr in a final battle. The characters approach Lindisfarne and must weigh up how to attack. Within the priory more Svartalfar await, along with a corrupt monk who has learnt dark magical powers and Blotnorr himself.

(Dam 2, Spd 4, AP 1), Armour: natural fur (H 1).

lorek will fight to very near death, assuming he is too powerful for the PCs, but once down to his last 3 wounds he will retreat to his hut. Once in this state he will still refuse to hand over the wand, claiming they will have to kill him first. Whilst in the hut he has been spending the time weaving a bind the soul on a suitable character. He will try to keep them talking (opposed deception versus empathy to realise this) so that he can weave a stronger cast and attempt to bind half the party to get them to slay each other.

After the encounter the PCs should be able

**Introductory Verse:** *Sail close / Brave warriors / Under cover of darkness / Strike axes for vengeance / And purge the heart of evil from the dark isle. // Blotnorr / Vile Giant / Defiler of the World / In trepidation approaches / A great battle will begin / And will end only in blood.*

As the characters approach the isle they may make a simple difficulty 3 Tactics casts to identify easy points of access (which will bring them up into the cellar area marked on the map. If they fail this cast, however they must either try subterfuge (opposed Deception versus Empathy) with the monks at the west entrance or outer gatehouse.





## Encounters

If any of the svartalfar who attacked Terrak escaped they will have returned and the monastery will be expecting them. The Church door will be magically sealed (difficulty 5 Gateways cast to break). They will be granted easy access at the outer gatehouse and then attacked in the outer court by the escaped elite Svartalfar plus the Svartalfar monks (two per PC).

As they move around the priory they will encounter human monks who will try to flee and raise the alarm.

If the priory is caught unawares the PCs will not encounter the elite svartalfar, but will encounter the svartalfar monks (half in the Cloister, the other half in the chapter house). If captured and questioned they will be fearful of the prior and his "demons" and may indicate that the master demon performs infernal rites in the chancel.

The prior is to be found in his lodging, but if the PCs beat the Svartalfar he will try to attack them from a distance with his magic.

**Prior:** rank 2 thane; Skills: Sax, Diplomacy, Legends, Seid, Fate Weaving, Gateways\*; Def 3, WS 2, Co 5, He 4; Weapons: Dagger (Dam 2, Spd 8, AP 1), Flame/Frost attack (Dam 10/5, Spd 11, AP 0/5); Armour: head none, arms thick cloth (H 0, str 10), body thick cloth (H 0, Str 16), Legs thick cloth (H 0, Str 14); Rune gifts: Twist of fate (1), Open Gate (1), Gate Strike (2), Summon (3).

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Wounds: OOOOO OOO (no pen),  
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Legs: OOOOO OOOO

**Human Monks:** rank 1 warriors; Weapon: unarmed (Dam 1, Spd 4, AP 0), Armour: none.

**Svartalfar Monks (x 10):** rank 2 shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Athletics, Alertness; Def 3, WS 2, Co 2, He 3; Weapons: claws (Dam 4, Spd 7, AP 2); Armour: thick cloth (H 0; Str 20).

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## The Final Battle

Blotnorr is found in the Chancel, where he is chanting over a brazier. He is accompanied by three elite svartalifar who did not take part in the attack on Terrak. If the PCs manage to gain entry into the chapel without fighting the remaining villains elsewhere in the monastery, they will all flood into the chapel to fight the party before they get to the Chancel to encounter Blotnorr and his bodyguard. Blotnorr appears as a large man, about seven feet tall, with a reddish-copper skin and bright orange flames for his hair, eyebrows and beard. He is naked except for a black loincloth, but his skin shines with a metallic sheen.

When the PCs enter the Chancel area, Blotnorr smashes the brazier to the floor, sending up a wall of flame around him, which he will use to send out fireballs against the PCs (his Gate Strike attacks), but will protect him against all attacks so long as he remains within it. Melee attackers take 4 AP 2 damage just for making the attack. The wall can be dispelled on a Difficulty 5 Gateways cast. The Svartalifar will attack the PCs and fight to the death as they are Blotnorr's most loyal warriors.

Whilst Blotnorr cannot be killed by the PCs weapons, he will take injury as normal. However, when he is reduced to the zero wounds his body will burn up but a small fire will remain, with his face visible within the flames. The flames will not be extinguished by any means, but a difficulty 6 Gateways cast will banish him back to Svartalifarheim.

**Blotnorr:** Rank 4 Jarl; Skills: Athletics, Alertness, Command, Gateways, Might, Sax, Sidr, Tactics, Wrestling. Def: 5, WS 4,

Co 5, He 5. Weapons: Flaming Broadsword (Dam 10, Spd 4 AP 2), Fireball (Dam 12 Spd 5, AP 0); Armour: Natural (H 5, Str 0); Gifts: Open Gate (1), Gate Strike (2), Look of Dread (2), Strike of Thunder (2), Might of the Aurox (2), Simple Strength (2), Breakthrough Defences (1).

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Wounds: 00000 00000 (no pen),  
00000 000 (+1),  
00000 (+2),  
000 (+4)

**Elite Svartalifar (x3):** Rank 3 Shieldbearer; Skills: Sax, Stealth, Athletics, Alertness; Def 4, WS 3, Co 3, He 4; Weapon: claws (Dam 6, Spd 3, AP 3); Armour: Chain (H 3, Str 20); Gifts: body of water (1), ambush (1), Shieldbearer (2).

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